

UKNFS Nepal – Britain Bicentenary Exhibition Peoples-to-Peoples Supplement Resource



NEPAL
INTERNATIONAL
ARTS
PROGRAMME



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Preface:



I wish the UK Nepal Friendship Society all success; with the creation of this UK - Nepal legacy, celebrating two hundred years of the special friendship and relationship between our peoples, many little known facts will emerge, binding our two countries ever closer.

This will only enrich the development and deepening of that relationship; and the special mention of the Gurkhas demonstrates what they have brought, and continue to bring, to the security of the UK in times of war and peace, as matchless warriors and incomparable peacekeepers.

This wonderful resource will be used widely in the UK, thanks to the support of those agencies with responsibilities to furthering links between Nepal and the UK. Its contribution will be of the greatest importance, and we look forward to the fascinating historic images initiated by the Nepal Arts Council and supported by UKNFS. This is a brave and wonderful project and I commend it with all my heart.

Joanna Lumley

Some Background:

In creating this much-needed information resources about the dynamic links between the peoples of Nepal and the UK consideration has been given by the resource creator, the UK Nepal Friendship Society (www.uknfs.org) through its Nepal International Arts Programme (NIAP: www.creativenepal.co.uk) initiative, to provide examples that represent the depth and breadth of those myriad connections.

As Ms Joanna Lumley OBE, FRGS, refers to above, the UKNFS through its lead, Mr Alan Mercel-Sanca, without receiving any UK Government funding support for what was a major two years length research and content compilation project, successfully enabled the Nepal art Council (NAC) Vice-President, Mr Sagar Rana's goal to have the NAC create a historic and symbolically important Nepal – Britain Bicentenary Exhibition. This was realised solely by the UKNFS, from the in-Britain / UK crucially important side, as the UK images from the main UK museums/institutes was at the heart of the project: <https://uknfs.org/april-2017-update-launch-of-the-nepal-art-council-uknfs-nepal-uk-bicentenary-exhibition/>

It was realised quickly by the UKNFS that the concept of the NAC exhibition project, allied to both the extensive content from the British museums, libraries, institutes, and collections, and its core People to People friendship, Nepal – Britain meaningful relations support and development inclusive, respectful and transcultural learning & education perspectives and values, signalled the need for

creation of this **Peoples-to-Peoples Supplement Resource**, which the UKNFS is privileged to provide through this e-book/PDF.

It should at the outset be stressed that the supplement is Not a comprehensive resource (but can serve as a basis for creation of such) nor intended to so be, but one which covers key themes of the Nepal – UK special relationship at peoples-to-peoples level across all the main domains of interaction. In some places online/website information has been the most suitable for inclusion on an individual, group or organisation, and in such cases attribution of sources are provided.

The supplement resource is intended to be open to receive any relevant additional themes and examples to demonstrate these from work and activity of individuals and groups and organisations – not least in the fields of the arts, education, equality and social empowerment, as well as business and commerce.

A note on links/references included in this resource:

Throughout this supplement, and in the ‘further study’ appendix of articles accompanying the PDF version of this resource, are found useful and relevant links to articles and items that can be considered as either seminal in importance, or of value in opening up subjects of importance, and interest, that relate to the story of the relationship between the Peoples of the two nations. Not all topics, can of course in such a space, be provided in the supplement itself, but great care has been taken to provide good breadth and depth in subject matter, with emphasis on quality and informative value.

For more information on utilising or linking to this information resource, please email:
uknfs.contact@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION:

Britain
Nepal



1816 - 2016

In so short a space it is not possible to do full justice through comprehensive coverage of the special two hundred year's deep and ever fruitful relationship between the peoples of Nepal and the UK.

The British Empire has given place to both creation and subsequent evolution of the Commonwealth and also special relations with Europe and the establishment of the UK as self-confidently proud of its multicultural and multiracial identity. Nepal has similarly traversed these two centuries through great evolutions. But the story of the relationship between the Peoples of the two nations has transcended the currents of political history and international relations, to bring forth inspirational surprises and great accomplishments of the human spirit.

This resource, in some small measure, provides some introductions to topics that make up this great story; it is to be hoped it will both inform and inspire, and maybe lead its readers to contribute in some way, to this story of two great nations enriching each other on a human front through their special friendship.

At a direct human level, each year thousands of British people visit Nepal for the first time – and thousands more return for a second, third or more visits to '*sundar ta*' ('beautiful') Nepal having been captured by the charm of Nepal's great people and majestic and sacred landscape though a first visit – are living embodiments of the special relationship between the two peoples and lands.

Yet many more could do so, including business community members that would find the country to offer exceptional opportunities for commercial links if they were aware of the fantastic resources (human [skills, etc.] and other [material and other]) the country possesses for UK trade and commerce, if known of. This supplement seeks through examples to remedy this lack of important knowledge, that carries the capability of enabling many, many more British people to come to visit and form lifelong relationships with Nepal and her great people. We shall see though too that in the UK itself the story of great contribution to the nation made by Nepali community members, the legendary Gurkhas, academics and others, is one that is of substantial importance socially, culturally, geo-politically for the United Kingdom and for Nepal – UK relations.

Please now enjoy the panorama of examples of the special relationship between the peoples of the two nations and its important and wholesome effects and fruits in both countries, though the thematic information provided in this supplement.

Alan Mercel-Sanca

CEO, UK Nepal Friendship Society

February, 2017

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PART ONE: Nepal in the British Heart & the UK in the Nepali Heart

The Spirituality of Nepal in the UK-Nepal relationship:

This exhibition has a number of themes but it is right to start with the topic of spirituality, and the topics of humanity linked to human endeavour that run throughout in different forms.

The special friendship between the two peoples of Nepal and the UK, for this sets the scene for describing that friendship in the world of the early 21st Century, presents a rich human tapestry of heroes and inspired and inspirational figures different yet in many ways no less important than those who have appeared in our story, charted through the exhibition images, that began 200 years ago.

Many are the themes which make up the story of the deep personal connections between the two peoples, and this article attempts to highlight the major, but also little known ones to inform all reading it about how each nation contributes to the other. Friendship between two individuals is a spiritual phenomenon, and no less so between two peoples, and so we begin and pay respect to this throughout. Spirituality of course takes many forms and touches us through spiritual practices & philosophies, art, courage, contemplation and of course human solidarity in social justice and human rights.



Those from the UK who go to Nepal in search of spiritual learning and experience, whether it be through pilgrimages to the place of birth of the Lord Buddha, Lumbini, land of origin of the pagoda, or to the shrines in the mountain fastness locations of Nepal, to Vipassana meditation centres (<http://www.dhamma.org.np/>), or sacred Pashupatinath and Janakpur, must be reckoned for their importance as human bridges between East & West, whose hearts have been conquered by the spiritual majesty and sublime beauty of Nepal matched by the inspirational friendliness of Nepal's great people.

Those travellers are not alone, for along with them we find too that lives of artists and the very many individuals with interest in the equality and social activist dynamism that exists in Nepal are deeply uplifted and transformed by the impact of all they learn, see, and meet in this magical land. Such are some of the usually little known ambassadors for the land, people and life of Beautiful Nepal, who bring back tales of their new learning whilst visiting and often forming life-long, life changing connections with the peoples of this great nation.

We meet too those who in turn carry across to the context of Nepal expertise, passions and spiritually important causes from UK and the West to join with brothers and sisters in Nepal who share the same visions, values and interests, building in the process truly global phenomena. We see this in Nepali and British pioneers for gender equality, for the sexual and gender minorities, and for the increasingly important cause of work to counteract pollution and climate change.

These Nepali-UK, UK-Nepali global citizens, along with the increasing numbers of British artists of all kinds, and those who travel from the UK to Nepal as what they realise to be spiritually one of the richest and most sacred of lands on the globe, constitute a still too little recognised major phenomenon of human interaction between the two peoples and nations. In not a few cases, British citizens come to Nepal, and form a love for her greatness that they seek to remain to the end of their days.

We salute these modern, 21st century representatives and unnamed heroes and heroines of the Nepal-UK relationship, a relationship at a human level so different to that of the age of the Treaty of Sugauli, that of the British Raj, and the subsequent creation of the modern Indian sub-continent.

Of global as well as direct Nepal-UK relationship importance, is the fact that Nepal was the birthplace of the 'Light of Asia' (the Lord Buddha) and that Nepal retains a vibrancy of different forms of Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as other beliefs, unequalled in Asia, the continent possessed of almost all of the oldest and greatest spiritual philosophies and religions, and geographically the very joining point of the broader South and East Asian worlds.



Temple and religious architecture, from the humble wayside shrines to the great temple complexes of sacred Pashupatinath, Janakpur, Swayambunath, and Boudhanath, all not only unite devotion and pilgrimage, but teach through the artworks of humble spiritually inspired craftsmen and artists.

Nepal's distinct beautiful and cheerful music and vast range of different culture related clothing bear witness to all who experience and see them, the spiritual inspiration underlying and pervading them, conveyed so well by their creators ancient and contemporary.



Nepal is also the land of origin of the pagoda, a particular architectural feature closely linked in its classical form to ancient Buddhism (Nepal has many forms of Buddhism, including the original form,

and Tantric/Vajrayana Buddhism), more than any other country in the world; appropriate as the land where the birthplace of the Lord Buddha – Lumbini – is located, with its vast temple complexes, and nearby Tilaukot, the ancient Kapilvastu, capital and palace of the Shakya Kingdom, from where Prince Siddhartha set out at the age of 29 to seek enlightenment.

Festivals and the interconnections these provide teach precious lessons. Fellowship, the interconnection of humanity with Nature, and the sublime journey of the human experience through Creativity and conquest of the soul over materialism and unchecked selfishness and egotism, and about the disastrous costs the latter inflict on the those they blind.

Education and self-education in particular are at the very heart of Nepali spirituality, and all teach the interconnection of the individual human soul with God for all who come through them to piece the veils of samsara.

Nepal has much to teach that is badly needed in the the West, particularly for younger people, who are often bereft of contact with the ancient traditions of ethical-spiritual teaching through tales, sutras, classics and epics that in Nepal continue to be dynamic parts of everyday life, worship and thinking.

It is an undoubted fact that Nature herself runs as a constant, ever present leitmotiv throughout the daily life of the peoples and diverse cultures of Nepal. Not only is Nepal the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, and the home to ancient forms of Hinduism & Buddhism as well as shamanic and animistic belief systems wedded to the natural environment, but also the land of the mighty Himalaya (8 of the World's highest mountains being located within her frontiers) and most of the great tributaries of the sacred Ganga. Within daily sight of almost every Nepali and those who are drawn to the land from across the globe, Nature inspires and compels reverence for its mystery and splendour.

At this time of concluding the period of 200 years of relations and special friendship between Nepal and the UK we must not only look back, but forward, and to do so noting the incredible accomplishments of that special friendship that have been taking place, accelerating rather than slackening in recent decades and years. Uniting all is the theme of spiritual development, spiritual motivation in broader and diverse senses for both peoples. In the next section we continue this theme with some examples .



The Nepal Tourism Board's website provides introductory helpful information for UK travellers to Nepal particularly interested in the main UNESCO world heritage sites of Nepal relating to the nation's famous temples such as Boudhanath: <http://www.welcomenepal.com/places-to-see/Boudhanath.html>

A new 'Journey to the West':

How Nepal through the spirituality of its people casts a spell over those who come to know and love it, transforming and enriching their lives:

The story of contemporary Nepali youth, whose thirst for improving the life of their fellow man, only equalled by their dedication in endeavours and purity of motivation, a phenomena that strikes so many who come to know Nepal and its people.

It is humbling to learn that only English is now taught at HE level in Nepal, for British people, especially British youth, to learn of primary school children in Nepal studying by candlelight, craning over English language study books whilst their teachers guide them.

So different we often find the character of learning in British schools and colleges, with of course some honourable exceptions (please see final pages of this supplement) in which the same diligence and enthusiasm as can be found in Nepali youth's passion for learning and contributing to humanity.



The spiritual character of street art in which often very serious ethical issues are brought to the attention of passing motorists, pedestrians and tourists, is a further example of how the earnestness and humanity of the people of Nepal is made plain to see, and which often contrasts with the UK which has so much need of seeing the presence of such voices which remind all who view them of the bigger picture about the human condition and Life itself. For examples of Nepali street art: <http://creativenepal.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Kathmandu-street-art-images-selection-October-2014.pdf>

It has been said that true greatness is found in the vigour and spiritual motivations found in a people and nation. Upon such a basis Nepal is great indeed. Countless examples in Nepal can be cited to demonstrate this, but we include reference to three here: Vipassana meditation (that many British people have come to study in Nepal); a short tale in the parable style; and a piece of poetry from Nepal's most nationally renowned poet of recent history.

Vipassana Meditation:

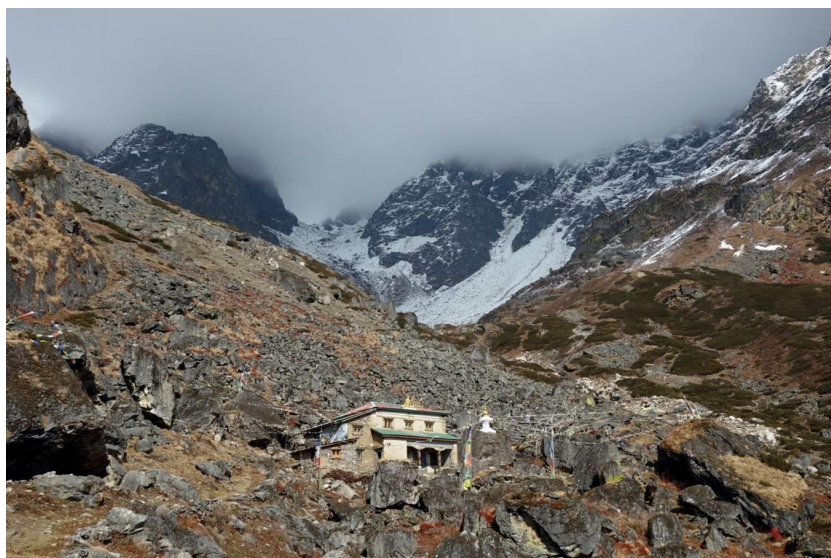
This form of meditation is particularly renowned in and associated with Nepal. Vipassana means to see things as they really are. Ten-day courses in this ancient meditation practice are offered in the major cities of Nepal.

The technique is a pure science of mind and matter. It is also an art of living, an antidote to all the stresses and strains of life. It provides a deep pool of peace and harmony within, and ultimately leads to the end of suffering. Read more at: <http://www.dhamma.org.np/>

NATURALLY NEPAL
ONCE IS NOT ENOUGH

For more on meditation in Nepal please visit the Nepal Tourism Board's website: <http://www.welcomenepal.com/things-to-do/meditation.html>

A moral tale: Dolma and the Last Yeti:



Characteristic of the spirituality that pervades so many aspects of the life of Nepali people, not least in the tales genre, is this recently completed work by Sunil Babu Pant. Sunil is a former member of Nepal's parliament, better known for being the founder of Nepal's LGBTI human rights & equality movement. What is less well-known is that he is also a devoutly spiritual talented writer, whose interest in literature is particularly rooted in conveying spiritual truths about the human condition and life as a spiritual journey. His recently published story *'HimMaya, the Last Yeti and Dolma'* conveys in its subject matter both pathos, spiritual instruction and a deep and readily accessible depiction of both the greatness and the vicious meanness of the human soul.

My voice echoed back to me. But there was no sound of her, nothing from HimMaya. My love was lost forever. I felt too sad; I could not even cry real tears. I just pined for my lost love. My father held me and dragged me back from the brink of the cliff, fearing I would follow her. He said to me, 'She is no more my child. Our HimMaya is gone. Her entire species was wiped out by the cruelty of humankind.' 'Shame on us. Shame on us humans. Shame on us' I cried."

You can read the full tale by visiting: <http://creativenepal.co.uk/himmaya-the-last-yeti-and-dolma-tale-by-sunil-babu-pant/>

Laxmi Prasad Devkota:



Laxmi Prasad Devkota's poems are nationally famous in Nepal and have an international reputation for his beautiful and poignant works. You can read more about Laxmi Prasad Devkota at: <http://creativenepal.co.uk/the-poems-of-laxmi-prasad-devkota/>

We include below a particularly special excerpt from his poem 'The Woods' ('Ban') which encapsulates so well the great poet's genius and how spiritual reflection on the experience of life is so important in understanding the uniqueness of Nepal's people in seeing life and the experience of life in spiritual terms.

‘Many of his poems focus on mundane elements of the human and the natural world. The titles of his poems like "Ban वन" ("Woods"), "Kisaan किसान" ("The Peasant"), "Baadal बादल" ("Clouds") show that he sought his poetic inspiration in the commonplace and proximal aspects of the world. What resonates throughout most of his poetry is his profound faith in humanity. For instance, in the poem "Woods," the speaker goes through a series of interrogations rejecting all forms of comfort and solace that could be offered solely to him as an individual. Instead he embraces his responsibility and concern for his fellow beings. The poem ends with the following quatrain that highlights his humanistic inclinations:

दोस्त कहाँ छन? साथ छ को को? घर हो तिम्रो कुन देश?	Where are your friends? Who go with you? Which land is your home?
जान्छौ कुन पुर भवन मुसाफिर, ल्यायौ कुन सन्देश?	What place do you seek, Traveller? With what news do you roam?"
दोस्त मेरो शुभ उद्योगी, साथ छ साहस बेश ।	"My friend is decent diligence. Courage comes with me.
विश्व सबै घर, हृदय-पुरीतिर ल्याउछु सेवा सन्देश ।।	whole world's my home. To heart-land I roam with hues of Humanity"

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laxmi_Prasad_Devkota

Nepal and Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs]:

On a note of Humanity, Nepal has many NGO's (**Non-Governmental Organisations**) with strong relations to the UK. These often carry out highly important welfare and development functions for different locations, making huge differences to quality of life of those in whose areas they work. Some of these have extensive and important connections with the UK, including schools and even occasionally having British officers or trustees supporting their work.

Another Devkota from Gorkha, Bijaya Devkota is seeking to contribute to the welfare of the locality and people of the region established the Gorkha Foundation.



The foundation undertakes important work in a number of areas, including education and healthcare to improve the quality of life and general well-being of the whole community. The foundation not only has a British trustee but has special links with the UK through the Poole based famous Baden-Powell St Peters School (named after the founder of the Scout Movement), through which it has involved hundreds of pupils and all the staff in initiatives to learn about Nepal, its culture and people. This including a major fundraising campaign, in partnership with the UK Nepal Friendship Society, after the devastating Nepal earthquake of April 25th 2015 that saw Gorkha and neighbouring districts particularly affected.

We see another example of education based work through the arts workshop organised in Gaumukhi (Gaumukhi Development Area) by the NIAP (UKNFS) and local area community organisation, the United Network, in late 2014.



This NIAP project (through UKNFS facilitators and teachers Shishir Dhakal and Dipak Mehta), in partnership with the Gaumukhi – Dorpatan – Pyuthan United Network (UNESEEN), seeks to profile the artisans, artists and broader community of the Gaumukhi Development Area (GDA), which lies to the west / south-west of the Greater Himalaya Trail, yet remains a still little known and visited area of the Mid-West of Nepal. The image at the bottom of this page features a map of the area.

The initial phase of the Gaumukhi Development Area NIAP – UNESEEN project — aims to provide teaching about the arts and their value for personal and professional skills self-development to youth and the broader community, with the more long-term purpose of this beautiful yet remote area of Nepal gaining opportunities for greater economic development through cultural tourism — took place with a two-day arts learning/awareness workshop at the Gaumukhi Higher Secondary School, Pyuthan (GHSS), on the 18th & 19th December 2014.

The Himalaya:



Much better known is the phenomenon of adventure and especially mountaineer travellers to the land of Mount Everest, which begins with the famous story of Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa, and in whose steps so many British mountaineers have since trod in the indispensable care of the ever friendly and indomitable Sherpa people.

Coming to Nepal and the impact of its great People and Culture is THE experience, ascending Everest (Sagarmatha) and the other great Nepali Himalayan peaks is the affirmation and physical denouement of that experience:

Nepal is arguably and rightly the world's most desirable and rewarding mountaineering and trekking destination. This story began with the historic ascent of Everest (Sagarmatha: it's Nepali Name) by Edmund Hillary (subsequently Sir Edmund Hillary) and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa on May 29, 1953. You can read more about their epic ascent of Everest at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1953_British_Mount_Everest_expedition

'I've always hated the danger part of climbing, and it's great to come down again because it's safe ... But there is something about building up a comradeship — that I still believe is the greatest of all feats — and sharing in the dangers with your company of peers...' Source: ["Sir Edmund Hillary, a Pioneering Conquerer of Everest, Dies at 88" in The New York Times \(online edition\) \(10 January 2008\)](#)

This quote sums up so well the spirit of the universal phenomenon of the greatest human accomplishments always being achieved through team work and the experience of camaraderie dedicated to the greatest objectives.

Much better known, and probably one of the most famous quotes of all time, and certainly of modern history, expressed by Sir Edmund to George Lowe is *"Well, we knocked the bastard off!"* It encapsulates too the reality that without the Nepali – British courageous endeavour of Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Edmund Hillary, no conquest of Everest would have been possible: Nepali-British collaboration has of course broader 21st Century contexts beyond mountaineering, for each people and nation can and do have so much to learn from each other in so many ways and domains as this exhibition demonstrates.



Since 1953 and in a very changed world, thousands have followed courageously in Tenzing and Sir Edmund's footsteps in 'going for the mountain' and reaching its summit, including of course Annapurna and the other great Nepali Himalayan peaks.

The abiding and most important experience however remains that of the opportunity and privilege to meet the great people of Nepal and learn of their great, ancient, diverse spiritual culture and tenacity.

Nepal leads the way in the world also, in regard to a Government of Nepal imposition on international mountaineers to not only not cast aside en-route to the summit of Everest waste detritus but to be required to take away a certain quantity of such waste left carelessly by others that had preceded them in making the ascent. This shows a valuable, and very spiritual based perspective that is uniquely Nepali, in not only combatting an environmental ill, but showing to the world that respect must be shown to the special and sacred physical terrain that international mountaineers traverse, and also respect to the local inhabitants of the Himalaya and Everest, including the internationally renowned Sherpa people.

We conclude with some words by James Lamb in regard to the Sherpa people following the catastrophe of the earthquake of 25th April 2015:

"The Sherpas from the Khumbu region lost 16 local mountaineering guides in April 2014 when an avalanche struck just above Everest base camp. They were still struggling to come to terms with this tragedy when the area was devastated by the earthquakes which hit Nepal.

The Sherpa people have shown such determination, resilience and optimism. Their willingness to never shy away from hard work left me in awe when I visited the area in September 2015. Clearly, their religious beliefs are pivotal to the way in which they have emerged from such troubled times. I have such admiration for my Sherpa friends." **James Lamb (internationally renowned landscape photographer and friend of Nepal)**



The Nepal Tourism Board website provides very helpful information for the many new British visitors to Nepal that seek the experience of mountaineering and trekking in Nepal's Himalaya, 'The Roof of the World': <http://www.welcomenepal.com/places-to-see/everest.html>

The Arts: writers, artists, and actors:

The interactions and influences between Nepal and the UK are long-lived, diverse and vibrant. The main exhibition touches on many of these in almost every work of art included, from paintings and cartographical representations to historic photographs, spiritual (masks to Paubha and Mandalas) and utilitarian artefacts and crafts goods, to music (sacred and popular) to writing and acting.

One of the most exceptional examples of the latter that links directly to the [British] Father Figure of modern acting, and playwriting is New Shakespeare Wallahs; itself having key figures and founders that are senior officers and revered members of the Nepal-Britain Society....

The New Shakespeare Wallahs is a drama group associated with Nepal Britain Society. This group is stages plays each year to raise funds for the educational charity: it also seeks to revive and install a drama culture in Nepal. Source: <http://newshakespearewallahs.blogspot.co.uk/2009/01/team.html>

'A Winter Revue

The auditorium of The British School roared with laughter to the delightful comic presentations of the performers. Seven sketch comedies were performed by The British School's secondary section production in partnership with Nepal Britain Society's The New Shakespeare Wallahs. The sketches attempted to satirize some aspects of the vagueness of news channels, government personnel and the Facebook generation. Little Britain, Harry Potter and the Deathly Falafel, and Sherlock Holmes and the Case of Brutal Bananas were the other sketches presented by the students. The absurdities and obscurity of the pop culture were derived into the sketch, Little Britain, in a humorous way. The event was part of a fundraising campaign. All the proceeds from the show will be handed over to the Children's Burns Violence Victims Unit at Kanti Hospital. 27 November 2011

Source: http://www.fridayweekly.com.np/spotlight.php?g_id=245848&img_id=6900

In 2016, November, New Shakespeare Wallahs put on an all- Nepali actors' presentation of A Midsummer Nights' Dream' at the British school. The President of Nepal-Britain, Pratima Pande MBE and Greta Rana contributed substantial funds from their own pockets and Nepal Mercantile made a contribution that enabled them to hire the British School stage. They recruited a mix of young Nepali professional actors with others who were selected as likely talents. New costumes were made to replace those lost in the 2015 earthquake. Over a thousand people saw the play over 3 nights. One British Shakespeare fan sent this message to the cast " The Bard would have been proud of you."

Following this, two of the actors with training and skills in theatre direction became life members of Nepal-Britain Society and the succeeding Directors of New Shakespeare Wallahs. Although they are working professional actors, they are committed to continuing the mandate of New Shakespeare Wallahs to bring Shakespeare to Nepal and to generate funds for education of children whose parents would not be able to afford school fees. Their own dreams include showing how they interpret the Bard of Avon at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe." Hence Nepal- Britain Society has accomplished one of their more ambitious goals.

Greta Pennington-Rana (MBE), wife of Madhukar Rana, is the initiator of New Shakespeare Wallahs, and in her work and life an exceptional example of a British citizen whose heart was captured by Nepal, and who in turn through New Shakespeare Wallahs has brought to Nepal through its creation learning and inspiration of British arts heritage.

In 1991 Greta Rana was joint winner of the Arnsberger Internationale Kurzprosa and in that year she delivered a paper at the International PEN Congress in Vienna on 'Mondialism: The Future Looking at the Past,' which outlines the unchangeability of human nature across cultures and continents based on three recurring themes from the Iliad and the Mahabharat; viz, 'War is futile' but war is inevitable, and it is the duty of the warrior to fight. Against such human destructiveness, the future lies not in the call to conform as in the call to "When in Rome do as the Romans do," but in a human capacity to tolerate and celebrate difference and the whole kaleidoscope of human cultures and creativity.

She has a committed interest in children's education, especially children whose families cannot afford to send them to school, led to the founding of the 'New Shakespeare Wallahs' an amateur drama group working under the auspices of the Nepal Britain Society to raise money for children's education amongst the poorest communities.

Awarded an MBE in 2005, Greta is one of the leading officers of the Nepal Britain Society, married to former Government of Nepal Finance Minister Madhukar Rana, Greta is an exemplary writer with a clear message. From Greta's combined Nepali-British artistic socio-cultural heritage, we see a unique example of the arts, especially writing (from biography to poetry) having the power and potentiality to teach spiritual and ethical truths directly and effectively, that bridge the perspectives of West and East, and ancient South Asian spiritual philosophy and to apply these in 21st century global perspectives human existential contexts.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greta_Rana

The Kathmandu International Art Festival (KIAF) and the Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre (KCAC) combine as one of the most extraordinary and renowned examples of special Nepali-British arts context friendship and collaboration.

The Kathmandu International Art Festival of 2011/12? Is still regarded internationally as a globally important example of what can be accomplished by the synthesis in contemporary arts of international art uniting with that of a given South Asian nation/Nepal that has such a rich and vibrant art scene informed by traditional artistic mediums and responses to the socio-cultural and existential challenges and great potentialities of life in the early 21st Century in Nepal and the broader world.

Core elements of the vision and purpose behind the KIAF are fulfilled through the KCAC in Kathmandu and the KCAC in London.

The KIAF was the initiative of Nepal's most celebrated promoter of Nepali art internationally and in Nepal, Sangeeta Thapa of the Siddhartha Art Foundation & Siddhartha Art Gallery (Baber Mahal Revisited, Kathmandu), with the strong collaborative support of Celia Washington. Subsequently Sangeeta and Celia developed the concept that became KCAC, with Kathmandu Contemporary art Centres being created and undertaking important work for bridging the Nepali and international contemporary visual art worlds at each KCAC in London and Kathmandu.

<http://www.ica-sofia.org/en/ica-gallery/events/item/335-presentation-of-kathmandu-international-art-festival>

Sangeeta Thapa and KCAC:



"Over the last twenty years I have felt that Nepal lacked a lively world-class contemporary art space that showcased a collection of art works that we as a nation, could take pride in. Situated between India and China, from ancient times Kathmandu served as a conduit for Hindu and Buddhist art. Her architects, craftsmen and artists were in demand in the far-flung regions of Tibet. The city of Kathmandu was regarded as a "museum without walls" and the entire valley of Kathmandu, is a world heritage site.

Even today, Kathmandu, is a city that inspires artists around the world. Keeping this in mind, I feel that a Centre that brings together artists, musicians, writers and poets to a multifunctional space that reveres the past and at the same time is in tune with global trends and international artists, is essential to give a renewed vision and vigour to the contemporary art scene in Nepal. I am delighted to be working with Celia Washington."

Sangeeta Thapa is founder and director of the Siddhartha Art Gallery in Kathmandu, and for twenty years she has been actively involved in the promotion of contemporary art in Nepal. She has curated over 300 art shows of Nepali and international artists at Siddhartha Art Gallery. She has won awards such as the Annapurna Award Celebrating Womanhood Navadevi Award 2006 (jointly presented by Ministry for Women and Social Welfare and Creative Statements for contribution in the field of arts), and the Best Gallery of the Year Award 2005 (presented by the Artist's Society of Nepal).

Source: http://www.kathmanduarts.org/Kathmandu_Arts/sangeeta.html

Celia Washington and KCAC UK:

Celia Washington is a practising artist based between London and Kathmandu. After a nomadic childhood, she studied painting at the Byam Shaw Art School in London 1977-81. Since then she has lived and worked in Florence, Edinburgh, Paris, Tokyo, Madrid, London and Kathmandu - painting, printing and searching. In 2006 she became Artist in Residence at Kathmandu University. In 2007 she set up the British Charity Kathmandu Contemporary Arts Centre.

“In 2006 I spent seven months as artist in residence at Kathmandu University. I was impressed by the creativity and determination of a newer, younger generation of artists despite their difficulties and felt their voice deserved to be heard by the outside world. I wanted to help and began collecting books to expand the University Art Library... Then I met Sangeeta Thapa, of the Siddhartha Art Gallery, Kathmandu and we discovered that we shared the same vision. I am excited to be involved with her on such an extraordinary and ground-breaking project.”

Source: http://www.kathmanduarts.org/Kathmandu_Arts/celia.html

Two UK-based Nepali artists bringing spiritual and social conscience perspectives from London to the wider world:

Govinda Sah 'Azad'



Govinda Sah 'Azad' was born in 1974, in Rajbiraj, Nepal. From an early age he was interested in drawing and sculpture. He left Nepal to live in India and from 1991-94, worked as a sign board and wall painter in Delhi. In 1995, he returned to Kathmandu and joined the Fine Art College to realise his dream to become a painter. It was at this point that the Professor and Campus Chief of the Fine Art College and prominent artist Govinda Dongol dubbed Govinda Sah as “Lion Heart”.

From March-June 2000, Govinda began a nation-wide cycle tour to spread the awareness of peace through art under title *The 21st Century is the Century of Art and Peace*. During the three month tour, he held several art shows, workshops, and gave lectures in schools and to community groups.

Govinda obtained a MA in Fine Art from Wimbledon College of Art in 2008. Some of his exhibitions have been sponsored and organised by the British Council in Nepal and Egypt's Ambassador to Nepal. Govinda Sah's works can be found in private collections worldwide.

Source: <http://www.octobergallery.co.uk/artists/sah/>

Subash Thebe:

Nepalese artist. Born and raised in a small town, Dharan in eastern Nepal, Subash Thebe graduated from Middlesex University London in 2011 in BA Fine Art. Currently, he is the recipient of Vice Chancellor's International Scholarship and doing his Masters at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London (UAL). He explores the contemporary socio-political issues and its relation with media and technology. Subash lives and works in London.

Source: <http://www.subashthebe.com/BIO/>

'It has often been debated whether art has a moral obligation to make a political stand. Perhaps the very act of making art is a political act. Though it will never be possible to pin down any rules and expectations on artists, perhaps as human beings we are morally obliged, in the least, to inform ourselves about power.

Subash Thebe ... writes in his artist's statement, "Maybe it was because of the losses we endured, I never even had the slightest thought of pursuing the British Gurkha military tradition of my community. Unconsciously, maybe I was choosing everything opposed to war and violence like art and music." Source: <http://mydreamsmag.com/article/subash-thebe/>

We conclude our examples of special interrelationship between the Nepali and British peoples in the field of the arts and artisanship by looking at the Bikalpa Arts Centre (Kathmandu) and 'A Suit That Fits' (UK) and the internationally renowned musician, and music therapist, Sita Maya Rajchal, and international best seller and Gurkha rights campaigner DB Gurung.

Bikalpa Arts Centre:



Bikalpa Arts Centre, Pulchowk, Kathmandu is a non-profit, non-funded and non-government organization lead by a group of dynamic self-motivated youth who are entirely devoted to introducing art to the general public of Nepal by increasing access and providing innovative art experiences for a variety of audiences, not least outreaching to and welcoming artists and creative individuals from the UK.

In today's era of modernization, our society is gradually trailing its ethnicity, values and norms. Regardless of the affluence of culture and various forms of local arts and architectures, they are yet to be esteemed and appreciated. But the verity that the scope of intervention as such local roots still remains overlooked. Thus, Bikalpa Art Centre's core intent is to fortify such local form of arts and utilize them to inspire the art lovers and practitioners to come up with something creative, innovative and imaginative.

The main goal of the centre is endorsement and promotion of the Nepalese art and culture through diverse forms of contemporary art practices. Bikalpa Art Center strongly believes in long term impact of any of its activities at the targeted areas. Source: <http://www.bikalpaartcenter.org/>

A meeting place where symposia and projects planning discussions take place, and artist residencies take place under the lead of centre lead Saroj Mahato, through the medium of visual arts, performing art and film, Bikalpa Arts Centre is fast becoming a place where progressive, inclusive values expressed through the centre's activities that promote the uniqueness and importance of Nepali arts and debate on social change and empowerment, and the role international arts communities play in similar ways. As such, the centre has become a special hub for ideas exchange and debate in many of its activities. Projection of these interactions is being planned with the UK, building on the centre's participation in aspects of the UK Nepal Friendship Society's arts programme.

A Suit That Fits:



A Suit That Fits (ASTF) is a high-end and designer bespoke tailoring service operating in the UK. However, most of its tailors are located in Kathmandu due to the exceptional quality of their skills and access to high quality cloth. The Marketing Lead of ASTF provided in December 2016 an important presentation at a Britain Nepal Chamber of Commerce event at the Embassy of

Nepal, London, drawing attention to the fact that in this specialist field, Nepal, land of the authentic Pashmina, is pre-eminent in Asia, and has so much to offer in terms of skills, British and Western couture luxury markets.

This is an unusual example of how Nepal can outreach commercially through its artisans to the UK in innovative and important ways that can generate jobs and promote internationally the still too little generally known prestige of its artisans. Nepal also boasts burgeoning fashion and film industries, that produce creativity that is even influential in the neighbouring Republic of India, but which could greatly benefit from more effective connection with the film and fashion worlds and industries of London and the UK.

You can read more about A Suit That Fits at: <http://www.asuitthatfits.com/shop/index.php>

Sita Maiya Rajchal and Music Therapy:

Returning directly to the theme of spirituality, Nepal, rich in its music and dance traditional and contemporary, has many notable musicians. One of these, Sita Maiya Rachal is the Nepal International Arts Programme (NIAP) Classical Nepali Music Technical Advisor. Sita, is an internationally renowned player of the Sita, as well as one of Nepal's foremost music therapists.

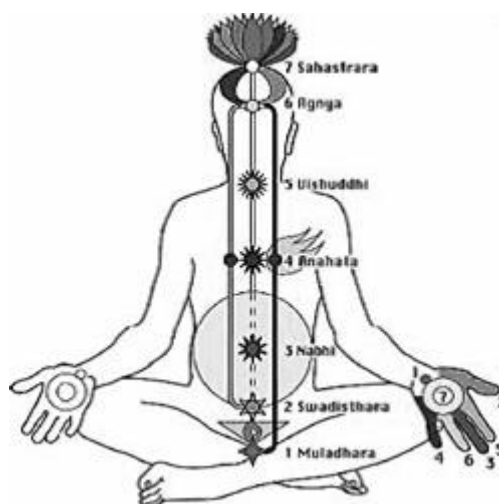
She joined the NIAP team in its formative stage in the autumn of 2013 following a historic exploratory workshop at the Lalit Kala Arts Campus (Lalitpur, Kathmandu) when the NIAP was being developed at a conceptual level. Her subsequent input to the NIAP has been invaluable. Sita's guru is the internationally renowned Nepali and South Asian traditional music expert Dr Dhrubesh Regmi, whose tutelage and inspiration have been instrumental in Sita's development as a world class musician.



Music Therapy:

Some information about the philosophy of the music therapy taught by Sita.

Music therapy is well-known in the West, but in South Asia, Music Therapy as known and practised in the Nepali-Indian cultural zone is very ancient — a part of the Ayurvedic system — and has both a philosophic-spiritual basis, that relates to the Elements, the distinct characteristics for health restoration or maintenance associated with the bodies internal organs, and particularly the Chakras (the bodies energy centres — see illustration below).



In Nepal Music Therapy is highly efficacious for a range of physical health and emotional-mental health conditions. The NIAP's Classical Nepali Music technical advisor, Sita Maiya Rajchal is one of the country's foremost Music Therapists, gaining striking results from her work with a wide range of patients. You can read more about Sita and music therapy at: <http://creativenepal.co.uk/sita-maiya-rajchal-2/> and <http://creativenepal.co.uk/music-therapy/>

DB Gurung:

The writer DB Gurung, our final example of the links between the UK and Nepal's creative communities, brings to the English-speaking world through his writings, a better awareness of Nepali contemporary literature and the inclusive and social justice values it commonly extols. He is an internationally renowned and greatly respected member of the Nepali Gurkha community, as well as being a poet and musician.



DB has an international reputation for his incisive and passionate novels and other forms of literature that provide to the English-speaking world an insight into the socio-political, challenges and strengths of contemporary Nepal, encapsulated in particular in his seminal novel *Breaking Twilight*, a best seller in India.

DB has a special connection with the UK for he was one of the senior supporters for Gurkha rights, and had been a guest of honour at a supportive meeting with the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and followed in the footsteps of renowned British orators by addressing large crowds of Gurkha rights campaigners at Hyde Park's famous 'Speakers Corner.' His

most enduring contribution to the English-speaking world is through his writings which give 'must read' invaluable glimpses into the socio-cultural and socio-political characteristics of contemporary Nepal.

Source: <http://creativenepal.co.uk/db-gurung/>

We turn presently from Nepal and the arts to the UK, including the contribution that Nepal through the Gurkhas in the British Army has made to British military history, and by extension its safety, continuity and global geo-political influence.

PART TWO: Britain in the Nepali Heart:

Mirroring the experience of countless British people who have gone to Nepal and had their hearts conquered by the spirituality, joy and smiles, genius and courage of the peoples of this Himalayan land, are those Nepali people who have come to the UK making bold and wonderful cultural and human imprints on contemporary British society of our great multicultural and multiracial land.

The most renowned of these are the legendary Gurkhas, but less well known, yet know less important, albeit in different ways are the academics (we have already looked at the artists) and others with a deep respect for Nepal and the Nepali people shown through work with Nepal focused humanitarian and other organisations.

Before turning to the theme of the Gurkhas, mention must be made of four organisations intimately linked to the UK – Nepali relationship. The first of these, with a sister/parallel organisation in Nepal (the Nepal-Britain Society) is the Britain Nepal Society: <http://www.britain-nepal-society.org.uk/history.htm>

Britain Nepal Society:



The Britain-Nepal Society (BNS) was founded in 1960 to promote good relations between the peoples of the UK and Nepal. It particularly seeks to foster friendship between UK citizens with a particular interest in Nepal and Nepalese citizens' resident in the UK.

A much-valued feature of the Society is the ease and conviviality with which members of every background and all ages mingle together. Members are drawn from all walks of life including mountaineers, travellers, students, teachers, returned volunteers, aid workers, doctors, business people, members of the Diplomatic Service and the Armed Forces. The bond they all share is an abiding interest in and affection for Nepal and the Nepalese people. For decades, the BNS has been active in providing high quality fundraising events for Nepal, including for the Gurkha community, post-earthquake recovery work; it regularly provides talks by renowned specialists on Nepali culture,

mountaineering, and many more subjects. You can learn more about the activities and great history of the Britain Nepal Society at: <http://britainnepalsociety.org/>

In Nepal, the sister organisation to the BNS, the **Nepal-Britain Society** has particular special interests in the arts and good causes, and enjoys a special relationship with the British Embassy in the same way the BNS does with the Embassy of Nepal in London. The Nepal Britain Society, as we have seen, is particularly linked to the visual and performing arts as mediums for British & Nepali friendship bonds.

The NRNA:



The Non-Residential Nepali Association (NRNA) UK is the official umbrella representational organisation for all Nepali people and community groups in the UK. As such it constitutes a distinct Nepali-British institution of great value and importance, and includes Nepalese expatriates from all walks-of-life: academics, businessmen, doctors, scientists, professionals, Gurkha British Army and unskilled labourers.

You can find out more about the origins, role and activities of the NRNA by visiting the NRNA website: <http://www.nrnuk.org/about/>

The Britain Nepal Chamber of Commerce:



The chamber BRITAIN-NEPAL CHAMBER of COMMERCE ("BNCC" or "the Chamber") is an independent organisation of companies and associations, wishing to increase the level and quality of trade between Britain and Nepal and to assist other people who intend to initiate or foster business between Britain and Nepal.

The Chamber is increasing awareness of the opportunities for trade with Nepal, so that the Economy of Nepal is less dependent on aid, and one slogan of the BNCC is "Trade not Aid."

To learn more about the BNCC please visit: <http://www.nepal-trade.org.uk/about.php>

The UKNFS:



The UK Nepal Friendship Society [UKNFS] is a projects-driven organisation. It is through these a catalyst and, to a certain extent, a lobbying and solutions to issues-driven, organisation. It seeks to support All strands – mainstream, and Nepali ethnic minorities, women, and other minorities that suffer any form of marginalisation or discrimination — of the UK Nepali community, and in addition through its projects that have a direct dimension in Nepal [the UKNFS initiated [NIAP](#) is a major example of this] to support the same equality and inclusion values for all sections of Nepal's society and nation.

UKNFS projects and programmes are formed and facilitated by specialist teams in conjunction with support from or direct participation by a wide range of groups and organisations. Healthcare related (seeking better experiences for Nepali UK community members, from the NHS, etc.), the arts and Nepali cultural heritage promotion, and a Nepal air ambulance initiative are current main examples.

You can read more about the UKNFS projects at: <https://uknfs.org/projects/>

One of the projects, the Nepal International Arts Programme (NIAP) has its own website – www.creativenepal.co.uk – with educational, cultural, equality, and promotion of UK – Nepal trade, and Nepal cultural tourism and creatives sectors characteristics and objectives.

The Gurkhas:



"I never saw more steadiness or bravery exhibited in my life. Run they would not, and of death they seemed to have no fear, though their comrades were falling thick around them".

It is a fact that the Gurkhas have played significant parts in major British military engagements from the early 19th century to the present. It is accurate to say that through them the people of Nepal have through their courage an honourable share in shaping the UK's modern history (including both the First – including with Lawrence of Arabia-- and Second World Wars, and the Falklands), which could have been very different if they had not served, and not infrequently sacrificed their lives.

How do they come to be in the British Army?

Almost 200 years ago troops in support of the British East India Company invaded Nepal. They suffered heavy casualties at the hands of the Gurkhas and signed a hasty peace deal and offered to pay the Gurkhas to join their army. A soldier of the 87th Foot wrote in his memoirs: "I never saw more steadiness or bravery exhibited in my life. Run they would not, and of death they seemed to have no fear, though their comrades were falling thick around them".

Some 200,000 Gurkhas then fought in the British Army in the First and Second World Wars - in France, Flanders, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt, Gallipoli, Palestine, Salonika and in the desert with Lawrence of Arabia and then across Europe and the Far East in World War II. They have since served in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Borneo, Cyprus, the Falklands, Sierra Leone, East Timor, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan.

Source (April 29th 2009): <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/the-big-question-who-are-the-gurkhas-and-what-is-their-contribution-to-military-history-1676354.html>

We provide below three different accounts of the impact of the Gurkhas on the British nation; that of The Gurkha Museum, Winchester; the Gurkha Welfare Trust, and Gurkha rights campaigner Ms Joanna Lumley.

The Gurkha Museum:

Britain's Brigade of Gurkhas is a unique organisation within today's modern British Army and the Gurkha Museum is the only Museum to record its history.

The present day Brigade can trace its history back to 1815 and we have documents in the Archives that date from that period. In 1947 with the Independence of India, four Regiments of Gurkhas, namely 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles joined the British Army whilst the remaining 6 Regiments of Gurkhas, 1st, 3rd, 4th, 8th and 9th Gurkha Rifles with 5th Royal Gurkha Rifles (FF) remained in the present Indian Army.

At this time the Regimental records of the Regiments that joined the British army came with them and are now deposited at the Gurkha Museum. The records of the other Regiments remained in India at their respective regimental centres.

We hold archive material for all Gurkha Regiments, mainly British army, including the more recently formed The Royal Gurkha Rifles, The Queen's Gurkha Engineers, Queen's Gurkha Signals, The Queen's Own Gurkha Logistic Regiment, The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas, Gurkha Staff and Personnel Support, and other shorter lived units such as Gurkha Military Police.

Nepalese culture, religion, topography and wildlife is covered extensively in our archives, as is the history of the land and people of Nepal. This is an important educational resource for those children and adults who wish to study these topics.

The history and conflict of Afghanistan and the North West and North East Frontiers of India are well covered as are all the major and minor conflicts in which Gurkhas have been involved.

The modern Brigade of Gurkhas is an integral part of the British Army in the 21st century, providing well-trained and fully manned units, deployable across the full spectrum of operations and environments. The Gurkhas remain a strategic source of manpower, able to expand rapidly as required, with an unsurpassed competition for recruiting. Gurkhas can boast no wastage in initial training and full retention, which leads to an enviable accumulation of experience. All Gurkhas are trained as 'Infantry first', and thus all Gurkhas are Riflemen at heart even if they join one of the Corps units. The Brigade of Gurkhas Corps units provide high end engineer, signal and logistic capabilities, using the latest military technologies. The main body of the Gurkhas form two battalions in The Royal Gurkha Rifles.

One battalion is in the UK as part of 16 Air Assault Brigade and they are the specialist Air Assault Task Force. The other battalion is based in Brunei in South-East Asia and is the UK's Jungle Warfare specialist battalion. **All Brigade of Gurkha units continue to be heavily involved and at the forefront of all UK military operations.**

Please visit the museum's website to learn more: <https://thegurkhamuseum.co.uk/>

The Gurkha Welfare Trust:



Of UK national as well as international importance, The Gurkha Welfare Trust, is an institution that takes all Nepali and British people together, to the heart of the special historical relationship between our two peoples. Starting with the heroism displayed in countless battles across the globe, and grimly marked in British military cemeteries across the world, the story of the heroic Gurkha soldiery in the very heart of the British national consciousness, also includes the courage and sometimes the suffering of retired and elderly Gurkhas in Britain and Nepal, and of their less well-known brave families.

The Gurkha Welfare Trust (GWT) was originally established in 1969 to relieve poverty and distress amongst ex-Gurkha soldiers and their dependants in Nepal. The Gurkha Welfare Trust provides welfare to enable Gurkha ex-servicemen, their dependants and their communities to live their lives with dignity, primarily in Nepal but increasingly in the UK and elsewhere.

The GWT provides advice and information to Gurkhas who have chosen to make their home in Britain, and assists veterans by signposting the support offered by other Service charities and Government bodies, yet its main focus remains Nepal and the retired Gurkha soldiers and widows living there who face hardship every day. This includes helping more than 6000 elderly Gurkha veterans and their widows in Nepal who aren't eligible for the standard Army pension and face poverty, but also delivering community aid to rural villages, through building and refurbishing schools, and installing clean water and sanitation. In the UK the GWT has a special place in the hearts of countless British people.

You can read more about the Gurkha Welfare Trust, its important work, and how to support at <https://www.gwt.org.uk/>

Honouring the role and place of the Gurkhas in British national life: -- British people working for the voice of and to honour the contribution the Gurkha's have made to the UK's history and society:



So many individuals warrant mention regarding their deep respect and love for the Gurkhas, but we do not have space to include all their names here. However, special reference must be made of Joanna Lumley OBE FRGS.

In 2008 the actress Joanna, whose father served in the [6th Gurkha Rifles](#), became the public face of the campaign to provide all Gurkha veterans who served in the British Army before 1997 the right to settle in Britain, and ran a highly publicised and successful campaign. Those serving after 1997 had already been granted permission but the UK Government has not extended the offer to all the Gurkhas, who are natives of [Nepal](#). They have served Britain for almost 200 years with over 50,000 dying in service, and 13 have been awarded the [Victoria Cross](#). On 20 November 2008, Lumley led a large all party group including Gurkhas starting from Parliament Square to 10 Downing Street with a petition signed by 250,000 people.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gurkha_Justice_Campaign

The respect and affection held in the British heart for the Gurkhas, and therefore Nepal, cannot be expressed in such a short space, yet but for this the rights accorded by the UK to the Gurkhas, through the tireless work of those such as in particular Joanna Lumley, would never have been able to succeed.

"Ayo Gorkhali" (Nepalese: "The Gurkhas are coming") - traditional Nepalese rallying cry, used to celebrate the UK government's decision to give all Gurkhas who served in UK armed forces the right to live in Britain.

I wish the UK Nepal Friendship Society all success; with the creation of this UK - Nepal legacy, celebrating two hundred years of the special friendship and relationship between our peoples, many little known facts will emerge, binding our two countries ever closer.

This will only enrich the development and deepening of that relationship; and the special mention of

the Gurkhas demonstrates what they have brought, and continue to bring, to the security of the UK in times of war and peace, as matchless warriors and incomparable peacekeepers.

This wonderful resource will be used widely in the UK, thanks to the support of those agencies with responsibilities to furthering links between Nepal and the UK. Its contribution will be of the greatest importance, and we look forward to the fascinating historic images initiated by the Nepal Arts Council and supported by UKNFS. This is a brave and wonderful project and I commend it with all my heart.

Joanna Lumley

Academia and the relationship with Nepal and between the British and the Nepali Community:

The Britain Nepal Academic Council and the Centre for Nepalese Studies and some examples of academic luminaries:

In the field of Nepal studies at British universities, extensive links have been formed not only between academics specialising in Nepal related subject areas but between academia in the two countries; some of the outcomes resulting are having increasingly important and far-reaching impacts, including material (reports) for effective lobbying at governmental levels, and even initiation of projects and programmes, including in public health, etc.

In this section we highlight just some of the great names and figures whose passion for the specialist subjects that they enjoy world renown is only matched by that to use this knowledge to further greater understanding on both UK and Nepal sides for these fascinating and important subjects, and in some cases initiate change and solutions to challenges. Before providing some details about the example figures (again many more exist than it is possible to detail here) we give some information about the two key organisations involved for enabling contexts for so much important research and educational work to take place over the past two decades in the UK.

Britain Nepal Academic Council:



On May 23rd 2000 at a large meeting at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London of British academics and researchers interested in various aspects of Nepal, the Britain Nepal Academic Council (BNAC) was formed.

The objective of the BNAC is to promote academic and scholarly links between Britain and Nepal through, inter alia, collaborative research, exchange programmes and organisation of annual lectures, and seminars on areas of mutual interest to both British and Nepali academics and researchers. Professor Surya Subedi, who was the founding chairperson of the Council, served in this capacity for ten years before handing over responsibilities to Professor Michael Hutt in 2009. Professor David Gellner, who is the current Chairman (at time of creation of this NAC Britain-Nepal Bicentenary Exhibition resource), took this post on 25 April 2014.

The Council has as a part of its important work annual Nepal Study Days, which are thematic covering many topics of importance and interest in furtherance of greater awareness in the UK about Nepal and for interrelationship of Nepali UK communities with the broader nation.

BNAC publications and articles: <http://bnac.ac.uk/publications/>

You can read more about the BNAC at: <http://bnac.ac.uk/>

Closely linked with the work of the BNAC is that of the Centre for Nepalese Studies UK (CNSUK).

The Centre for Nepalese Studies UK:



The Centre for Nepal Studies UK (CNSUK) is a research organisation registered in England and Wales under the Companies Act 2006. CNSUK's areas of research include ethnic minority and integration; community cohesion; population and migration; social mobility; labour market; health; education; gender; religion and culture; conflicts; British Gurkhas; rural and international development; and environment in the UK and elsewhere.

CNSUK is founded and run by a team of high-level professionals, trained from reputed UK and other international universities, and have significant research experiences, including in the United Nations and other international institutions. Furthermore, the organisation benefits from a range of skills and experiences of well-established university professors, who act as the advisors of CNSUK.

Source: <http://www.cnsuk.org.uk/>

Some examples of British universities pioneers in Nepal studies:

There are a number of key names in the field of Nepal related studies and research activities. It is not possible to detail all in the space available, but the following examples of just some of the important figures in the UK – Nepali family of renowned academics are included in this section, with special additional reference to Dr Mark Watson in the next section.

Dr Krishna Adhikari:

Krishna Adhikari is affiliated to the CNSUK as a senior researcher and member. In 2007 he joined the CNSUK as a researcher and member, and between 2010 and 2011 he was its Executive Director. Currently he is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology (ISCA), the University of Oxford, and the Co-Investigator on the ESRC funded research project, 'Caste, Class, and Culture: Changing Bahun and Dalit Identities in Nepal'. Since 2011 he has been a post-doctoral researcher at the ISCA and from October 2009 he was a team member and research associate

researching diaspora religion. He has conducted several researches on rural and international development, focusing on Asia and Nepal, and Diaspora Nepali communities in the UK.

In 2007 he obtained his doctorate from the International and Rural Development Department of the University of Reading. Previously, he worked for 12 years in Nepal at various governmental and non-governmental organisations. His research interests include: caste and ethnic relations and identity politics; education, employment, and social mobility; migration and diaspora communities; poverty and exclusion; social capital and community-based institutions; international and rural development; collective action and the governance of natural resource management.

Source: <http://www.cnsuk.org.uk/detail/dr.-krishna-adhikari,-senior-research-officer>

Dr. Chandra Laksamba:

Chandra Laksamba holds a PhD degree in lifelong learning from the University of Surrey. He is a founding member, former Executive Director and Senior Researcher of CNSUK. He coordinated CNSUK's 'Large-scale Survey 2007 – 09 on Nepalis Living in the UK'. He was a researcher and member of the University of Oxford/CNSUK's 'Vernacular Religion Project 2009 – 12' funded by ESRC and AHRC. He was a Lead Researcher of 'Gurkha Research Project 2012 – 14' and currently, he is leading CNSUK's 'Social Mobility Research Project on Nepali Diaspora in the UK 2015 - 16'. In addition, he is an ex-British Gurkha soldier served 19 years in the army. During his time in the army, he experienced life and work in various countries. His research interests are: Anthropology of Nepali Diaspora and social mobility, Gurkhas and issues of equality, lifelong learning, globalisation, active citizenship and youth movement.

Source: <http://www.cnsuk.org.uk/detail/dr.-chandra-laksamba,-senior-research-officer>

Professor David Gellner:

David Gellner is Professor of Social Anthropology and a Fellow of All Souls. He was Head of the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography from 2009-2012.

His doctoral research (1982-4) was on the traditional, Vajrayana Buddhism of the Newars and on Newar social organization, in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. He has carried out fieldwork in the Kathmandu Valley on many subsequent occasions, broadening his interests to include politics and ethnicity, healers, mediums, and popular approaches to misfortune, and religious change, in particular the history and effects of the newly introduced Theravada Buddhist movement.

In 1991 he did three months' exploratory fieldwork on Buddhist priests in Japan. For eight years he taught at Brunel University, west London, the first British university to introduce a Master's course in medical anthropology. For three years from 2002-5 he held a Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship for research into the social history and practice of activism in Nepal (for the academic year 2003-4 he combined this with a Visiting Professorship at the Research Institute for Cultures and Languages of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies).

Source: <http://www.cnsuk.org.uk/detail/prof.-david-gellner,-advisor>

Professor Ian Harper

Ian Harper is a trained medical practitioner who has worked in hospital medicine and general practice in the UK. For three and a half years he managed a tuberculosis control project in Nepal, and for two years worked with NGOs throughout India in supporting community health programmes. His experiences of practicing medicine and public health in such diverse cultural and political situations led him to study medical anthropology.

He served on the ASA committee as the ethics officer (2005-7) and is a co-founder of [Anthropology Matters](#), the ASA's national web-based postgraduate network. He was secretary of the [Britain Nepal Academic Council](#) till 2014 and was an associate editor of the [International Journal of Tuberculosis and Lung Disease](#). He was chair of the organising committee of the [2014 ASA Decennial Conference](#) run jointly with the Social Anthropology departments of the University of Aberdeen and University of St Andrews, under the [STAR consortium](#).

From August 1998 to March 2000 he researched into the social relations around, and the effects of, a series of public health programmes in Palpa district, Nepal. Briefly researching into the privatisation of technical training in the health sector in Nepal, between 2007-9 he researched as part of a multidisciplinary team on a DfID / ESRC funded research project ["tracing pharmaceuticals in South Asia"](#). Between August and December 2008, at the invitation of the Director, he worked in the Nepal National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP) assisting with the implementation of Global Fund funded programmes

Link: http://www.san.ed.ac.uk/people/faculty/ian_harper

Professor Michael Hutt:

Michael Hutt is Professor of Nepali and Himalayan Studies at SOAS (the School of Oriental and African Studies), University of London. He has written and edited thirteen books and over fifty chapters and articles on various aspects of the language, literature, politics and culture of Nepal and the Himalayan region. These include *Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature* (1991, University of California Press); *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood, and the Flight of Refugees from Bhutan* (2003, Oxford University Press); and *The Life of Bhupi Sherchan: Poetry and Politics in Post-Rana Nepal* (2010, Oxford University Press).

Source: <http://www.martinchautari.org.np/for-more-chautari-books/318-eloquent-hills-essays-on-nepali-literature.html>

'Eloquent Hills: Essays on Nepali Literature' brings together nine essays written between 1989–2007 by Michael Hutt, the leading foreign scholar of Nepali literature. It contains essays that discuss *Muna-Madan* by Lakshmi Prasad Devkota, *Sumnima* by BP Koirala, *Sirishko Phul* by Parijat, and *Ghumne Mechmathi Andho Manche* by Bhupi Sherchan, four of the best-known classics of Nepali literature. Hutt's take on the poetry of Mohan Koirala and the early life of Bhupi are also featured here. Thematic essays based on Nepali literary sources on the notions of Shangri-la and an ideal Nepal, the portrayal of Gurkha soldiers, migration, and literary movements before and after the 1990 People's Movement provide interesting commentary on Nepali literature. All who are curious about modern Nepali society must read this book.'

Other higher education institutes and Nepal:

Bournemouth University is a valuable example of a UK higher education institute that has developed special and deep connections with Nepal and also with the UK Nepali community. The university has long had a small but dynamic and pro-active Nepali post-graduate students' community, which in recent years became nationally and internationally important for its role in helping create and develop the UK Nepal Friendship Society and involve, as continues to strongly be the case, in its projects.

This is but one example of how the special UK – Nepal relationship has in a given UK university enabled valuable links across to Nepali higher education institutes, and in this case led to workshops being provided in 2014 to the Nepal Press Institute, Tribhuvan University, and also a set of seminars by a world expert, based at Bournemouth University, on disaster management to Nepal's military and government departments.

Another illustrious name, **Professor Edwin Van Teijlingen** of the Faculty of Health & Social Care (Professor of Reproductive Health) at Bournemouth University and Green Tara Trust, must be mentioned here, due to his ground-breaking research and related work in the field of midwifery to bring British healthcare expertise to the setting of midwifery services in Nepal. Research on nutrition for expectant and young mothers, is a further instance of pioneering work -- in this case by Jib Acharya, one of Professor Van Teijlingen's PhD students, and one of the original founders of the UK Nepal Friendship Society -- that unites the context of urban and rural Nepal with experience in the UK.

Bournemouth University, was the setting for the creation of the UK Nepal Friendship Society. Initiated by postgraduate student Ram Hari Adhikari, the society broke new ground in being projects driven with technical specialists leading and supporting UKNFS initiatives, which whilst where appropriate incorporating academic research, in fact are of interventionist kinds geared in particular to empowerment agendas for assisting the UK Nepali community on inclusion and combatting perceived disadvantage compared to members of mainstream UK society. The society also works on transformational initiatives for assisting Nepal in socio-economic advance, and raising the profile of Nepal, its rich culture and particular resources for informing the UK.

Botanical herbal and homeopathic interconnections between Nepal and the UK:

The relationship between Nepal and the UK seen through botany and medicinal herbs and plants: The Royal Botanical Gardens (Edinburgh) and Royal Botanical Society (Kew Gardens):

These two internationally renowned British institutes have special relationships with Nepal of historic importance, ranging from the earliest years of the 200 year relationship between the UK and Nepal, through legendary figures, botanical explorers and artists, to the present day. In the early 21st century world, the relationship of the two institutes with Nepal, increasingly highlights the growing awareness of Nepal as an almost peerless land in regard to homeopathic and medicinal plants and herbs of scientific, and commercial importance to the global contemporary and alternative healthcare sectors.

Dr Mark Watson:

Nepal Botanical Education Centre, Kathmandu: Article

'..... Mark also briefed the Prime Minister on the recently completed Biodiversity Education Garden in the National Botanic Garden, Kathmandu. This was supported by the British Embassy in Kathmandu,

and created by RBGE joining hands with the Department of Plant Resources, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation. The Biodiversity Education Garden is intended to inspire people and raise awareness of the importance of plant biodiversity in Nepal, particularly for school children and students. The Garden also commemorates the bicentenary of the Britain-Nepal bilateral relationship being celebrated in 2016. In parallel, RBGE is developing a Nepal area in the Inverleith garden, and we will be celebrating the bicentenary with a major exhibition of botanical art in the John Hope Gateway, opening in August.

The Prime Minister was interested to hear about the DFID-funded *Plants and You* project which presents scientifically accurate information in user-friendly, bilingual, pictorial guides for use by everyone: from villagers in remote communities to high-level decision-makers in Government. The Prime Minister recognised the importance of these kinds of tools in supporting livelihoods and sustainable development, and stressed the use of local plant names for effective communication and to promote wider understanding.

Source: <http://stories.rbge.org.uk/archives/author/mwatson>

Flora of Nepal

With about 7000 species of vascular plants, Nepal is a globally important biodiversity hot-spot.



Although Nepal is a small country it boasts a huge diversity of plant species because of its enormous range of habitats. Although most famous for the alpine vegetation of its high mountains, Nepal rises from subtropical lowland forests only 60 m above sea level. The effects of the monsoonal climate vary widely across the country, with lush rhododendron forest on the southern slopes of the Himalayas receiving over 5000 mm of rain annually, while semi desert areas to the north of the main ranges receive barely 250 mm per year.

Source: www.rbge.org.uk/science/major-floras/flora-of-nepal

Also: www.floraofnepal.org/ and www.floraofnepal.org/?page=Companion%20Volume

Nepal and herbal and complementary medicine:

Nepal, as we have seen in regard to the examples of Vipassana meditation and music therapy has a natural affinity of major kinds in regarded to complementary health & wellbeing therapies of ancient origins in Nepal's culture. However special reference must be made here to Nepal's exceptional range of biodiversity mentioned above in Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh section regarding Nepal's flora. Nepal is a herbalist's paradise for across its different climatic zones we find in addition to many different types of culinary herbs, myriad others that have medical and therapeutic applications.



Work is underway between Nepali and British botanical and herbal related institutes such as RBG Edinburgh to thoroughly document all of Nepal's medicinal and therapeutic herbs and plants from the snow clad peaks and glacial valleys of the Himalaya to the plains of the Terai. A part of this work is dedicated to Nepal's development as a major global source of replenishable medicinal and therapeutic herbs and plants grown in their natural environments, rather than artificial cultivation. As such this work has major implications for complementary and alternative medicine institutes, wholesalers, retailers, and of course practitioners and those who use medicinal and therapeutic herbs and vegetables.

Nepal is not therefore only the fabled abode of many of the Hindu deities and birthplace of the Lord Buddha, but also a part of the ancient Vedic civilisation's heartland in which ancient therapeutic practices, including Yoga and Ayurveda emerged and thrived. Consequently, there are very strong affinities between the continuing and vibrant Ayurvedic and other therapeutic practices, philosophies and lifestyles of many of Nepal's people, and those in the UK and broader West who have wisely adopted complementary and alternative medicines and therapies based on Nepali and South Asian ancient practices. Nepal therefore has a special affinity with many people in the UK who share respect for and have to varying degrees adopted herbal and other preventative and remedial medicines and therapeutic practices in managing their health and wellbeing.

At this time as the first 200 years of the special friendship between the two peoples and nations closes, and a new 200-year era of that special relationship dawns it is apt to reflect that whilst the first 200 years began in war in an age of Western imperialism, that the conquering of the hearts and minds of millions of British people in the very different age of the global village, that these profound and ancient therapeutic practices and of course herblore, should matter so much.

The opportunity for growth and expansion of therapeutic arts and related herbal and homeopathic study tourism can only go from strength to strength for British people who have wisely adopted complementary and alternative health and wellbeing practices that derive from the beautiful ancient land of Nepal. Clearly the scope and opportunity for such tourism, connected to spiritual related tourism (in which Nepal is one of the top most sought destinations in the world) is exponential, as to is the still considerably underdeveloped medicinal homeopathic export potential of Nepal, but which British institutes are assisting to see develop through key educational work.

The Rhododendron

We conclude this section on a symbolic botanical note with the example of the Rhododendron, a deeply loved shrub originating in Nepal and found across Britain:

The Rhododendron is the national flower of Nepal, and yet, originating in the Himalaya, has a deep importance to gardeners, including to those who have planned and developed so many parks and public gardens across the UK (also known in affectionate terms as 'the weed of Dorset').



Healthcare context collaborations and work:

We include two different examples of Nepal – UK and UK Nepali community pioneering work.

The Britain Nepal Medical Trust and Healthcare services connections:



The Britain Nepal Medical Trust is an important institution, existing in both the UK and Nepal, involved in key medical and healthcare programmes, including preventative and remedial ones directed at a number of major medical conditions, diseases, and also healthcare providing organisations. You can read more about the BNMT at their website: <http://www.britainnepalmedicaltrust.org.uk/>

'The Britain Nepal Medical Trust was established in 1967 by a group of young doctors (from St Thomas') who had an ambition of doing something of value in a part of the world where their medical skills were more urgently required than UK. They departed overland – excited and inspired by the opportunity of working in the mountains of the Himalaya – and on arrival they were sent to Biratnagar to run the regional hospital.

Hungry for the mountains – a couple of the team headed off north and within a year the BNMT programme had expanded into the hill districts of the eastern Region – starting with a BCG programme they rapidly expanded into tuberculosis control – an area which we continue to play and active part today. Some outstanding accomplishments of the BNMT:

- one of the first INGOs to work in Nepal
- one of the longest serving INGOs in Nepal
- with a strong track record of working in partnership with the National TB programme in TB control – bringing in some of the world's most famous experts over the years – including Sir John Crofton, Dr Wallace Fox and Dr Knut Ovreberg..
- a world leader in piloting models of essential drug supply to rural areas – to ensure a year round supply of essential drugs

- an early implementer of community health and development programmes – training of CHWs/CHVs – which evolved in to FCHVs, with a focus on female literacy, savings funds, income generation projects, nutrition, water supply and sanitation as part of an approach to tackling the wider determinants of health
- international recognition for our work on health rights – with disadvantaged groups – and a focus of advocacy, community and social mobilization
- recognized for its commitment to partnership working across a broad spectrum of organizations – MOHP, community based organizations, INGOs, NTP, multilateral and bilateral donors and communities.

The UK Nepal Friendship Society's Equality & Inclusion in Health & Social Care Project:



This project provides a further example of UK-Nepal collaboration and mutual assistance, and whose completed first phase has led to strong resonance for areas of development that the BNMT Nepali wing is also interested in – i.e. mental health issues and services support and development; inclusion and anti-discrimination in mainstream healthcare for Nepali LGBT people; the role of herbal and holistic preventative and remedial healthcare in Nepal, and more broadly (including for Nepali and South Asian people in the UK in the NHS context) – in the related report and its recommendations, is unique for its nature and purpose.

You can read more about the project and report through the following links:

<https://uknfs.org/equality-in-healthcare/> and <http://uknfs.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/UKNFS-Health-Wellbeing-Nepalese-Report-Short-Version.pdf>

The project itself in its second phase involves Nepali people working with other South Asian UK community members to help the NHS (National Health Service) develop a stronger relationship that gives more confidence in services provided being culturally sensitive, equitable and appropriate. This pioneering work demonstrates how the UK Nepali community can play a special and leading role to benefit not only the NHS but broader South Asian UK community.

The initiative is unique in contributing to making the NHS become more inclusive in terms of customer services and communications with service users from UK ethnic minority communities. Something urgently needed as despite the NHS having many ethnic minority community staff up to a certain level

(beyond which underrepresentation increases rapidly) many ethnic minority community members still question its credibility on racial inclusivity. In this way UK Nepalis through the project make a huge contribution to the United Kingdom becoming in fact, not concept only, a multicultural and inclusive nation – a great de facto patriotic endeavour.

The next section of this resource highlights some examples of how the theme of improving quality of life for all Nepali people is being led by pioneering groups and organisations that set examples that are globally relevant, but also involve substantial links with the UK.

Equality and related empowerment activity: sharing perspectives to shape change:

The work of three example organisations: the Janaki Women Awareness Society, the Blue Diamond Society, and Child Nepal organisation: Nepali – British relationships changing perspectives and empowering lives

Nepal of Everest and Gurkha fame is known throughout the English-speaking world, Nepal as a spiritual land of myriad temples and religious devotion, attractive as a place of inspiration to not a few Western visitors dissatisfied with and sick at heart about the cult of consumerist materialism so long king in the West, is not unknown too. However, Nepal as one of the developing world's foremost nations for effective and courageous women's empowerment and LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender) equality and emancipation, and in work to develop children's human rights AND global perspectives through art, is virtually unknown to the UK general public. Even here there are stories that show the unique bond between the peoples of Nepal and the UK delivering change.

Janaki Women Awareness Society:



JWAS is sharing its experiences to liberate, protect and inspire UK Nepali and South Asian women. The Janaki Women Awareness Society is a unique women's human rights educational organisation. Its members celebrate the spiritual nature of ancient religious beliefs, but rightly seek to highlight how the phenomenon of degradations and indeed blasphemous abuses of those ancient beliefs cannot and should not be tolerated in the Nepal of the 21st century. The JWAS feels it has a special affinity with the British people due to the founder of the modern global women's emancipation movement, Emily Pankhurst (below left) of the Suffragette Movement, being British (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emmeline_Pankhurst).



The connections that JWAS has with the UK are both inspiring and deeply interesting, for on the one hand the organisation has the breadth of vision to realise that the abuses of ancient religious beliefs it seeks to see removed and overcome, can be as relevant to South Asian and other ethnic minority communities in the UK (it offers its great experience in educating about these and advising information and remedies), and on the other practical solutions such as the sale of beautiful and spiritually inspired Mithila artwork to UK people.

Introduction:

Janaki Women Awareness Society (JWAS) is a non-profit making non-governmental organization. It was established in 1993 in Dhanusha district of Nepal. The organization was formed and is operated by a group of women social workers. The formation of a democratic government provided space to the women social workers who were very much disturbed and concerned about the social evils of child marriage, Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS, dowry system, domestic violence, Conflict affected people, Disables, discrimination against women and lower castes. They decided to work in an organized way to uplift their economic, health, social and political conditions.

Vision:

We cherish to change our Society through sustainable community development based on social, economic, political and gender equality.

Mission

Our mission is to organize the targeted groups- Women, children Youths and marginalized communities against Caste/ Gender in-equality, other social evils and help them to improve their health and economical status. We hope to make them self-reliant so that they have a proper participation in the decision-making bodies of the society and are able to enjoy their rights.

To learn more about the JWAS please visit: <http://www.jwas.org.np/>

Blue Diamond Society:



The special relationship that has been built up between the two countries LGBT human rights organisations; the Blue Diamond Society (Nepal), and Stonewall (UK). It is significant that the LGBT 'rainbow' flag has by direction and in symbolic solidarity with LGBT people in Nepal, has been flown during LGBT History Month at the British Embassy, and within the past three years the Director of the British Council attended in support an LGBT human rights themed 'Mr Handsome Nepal: Gay Talent & Courage Contest' fashion and beauty contest (2014), the only one to have ever been staged in South Asia.

The Blue Diamond Society was established in 2001. BDS works in Kathmandu with local communities and on a national level with the mission to improve the human rights and well-being of sexual and gender minorities in Nepal. BDS outreach work has reached up to 350000 LGBTI people, promoting human rights and sexual health, documenting human right violations and providing legal counselling and litigation services to victims and families, legal and constitutional campaign, lobbying for policy change, BDS also provides advocacy and media campaigning services, as well as income generation activities for poor LGBTI/MSM. The organisation has documented violence, abuse, attempted murder, rape, blackmail, and many varieties of physical and verbal abuse, as well as discrimination in the workplace, school, medical facilities and other settings, publicizing these incidents at local, national and international level, bringing attention to this situation. **Source:** <http://www.bds.org.np/about-us/>

The Blue Diamond Society has a strong and dynamic relationship with Stonewall (the UK's LGBT human rights and equality organisation), through which the highlighting of BDS work and its importance is shared with UK government departments. Notable leaders of the BDS have had British universities education, and the organisation's founder Sunil Babu Pant has provided keynote talks through

Stonewall. In particular the BDS with the support of the UKNFS, has contributed on Stonewall invitation/request important review input to the DFID's late 2016 'LGBT Approach,' potentially assisting the DFID strongly as it builds in support in its programmes and perspectives support for sexual & gender minorities; input that can benefit many other countries LGBT populations, where DFID has programmes.

Child Nepal:

Initiating a Child Friendly Culture



The UK has special connections with Child Nepal, a major long-established Nepal children's rights organisation. When the devastating earthquake of 25th April 2015 struck the famous Dorset-based private school, Yarrell's, donated the £1000 it raised through the incredible fundraising efforts of a group of its pupils led by one particular pupil, to Child Nepal. A single donor also from Dorset provided a similar size donation to Child Nepal: as a result of these donations hundreds of orphaned children in the care of Child Nepal, were assisted. These opportunities arose through the good offices of the UK Nepal Friendship Society, that at the time of creating this resource is involved in supporting a UK national and internationally renowned children's protection and rights organisation that advises the UK Government's Department for Education with a UK – Nepal initiative in which Child Nepal will take part.

Child Nepal (CN) is a non-governmental organization working for children's rights in general and child protection and child development in particular. It was established in 2003 by a group of social activists with an aim to initiate a child friendly culture. Child neglect, corporal punishment, education and Health are the major areas of interventions. It is a leading civil society organization in Nepal that coordinates to submit the children's situation report to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Also, it carries out advocacy programs to ensure children's rights in domestic laws and policies. Source: <http://www.childnepal.org/index.php/who-we-are/introduction>

Child Nepal has a number of major projects, these include:

- 1. CRC Monitoring and Reporting to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child:** CN coordinates to prepare and submit the civil society supplementary reports on child rights and submits to UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. CN has presented itself several times in UN forums and dialogues and raised the issues of Nepali Children. It is a part of CN's global advocacy on child rights.
- 2. Longest Painting in the World on Peace and Child Rights by Children:** CN, as a coordinator of National Initiative for Peace and Child Rights Nepal, initiated the national campaign in preparing the Longest Painting in the World on Peace and Child Rights by Children. The objectives of the campaign are to widely disseminate the message of peace and children in grassroots communities, make relevant stakeholders accountable in respecting rights of children and widely promote the message of Children and School as Zone of Peace. Source: <http://www.childnepal.org/index.php/major-programs?id=34>

The UK Nepal Friendship Society is seeking to involve UK schools in awareness of this symbolically important arts initiative. It is also collaborating on children's protection and rights with the internationally renowned Victoria Climbié Foundation <http://vcf-uk.org/>

3. **Community Participation for Education and Child Protection (CPECP):** CPECP project aims to create child friendly learning environment in 11 schools of Sindhupalchok district extremely devastated by the Earthquake 2015. Child Nepal is collaborating with We World Onlus for this project.
4. **Program on Child Protection, Education and Livelihood in Nepal (RECOVERY):** CN in collaboration with Caritas Germany is implementing the RECOVERY project that helps to enhance the livelihood conditions of people in Sindhupalchok that further promotes children's protection from various forms of violence and ensure their regular schooling in the communities.
5. **Fighting Against Child Trafficking in Emergency (FACTE):** The project contributes to government actions in preventing trafficking of children and women in Sindhupalchok district and protect those who have been rescued from trafficking or are vulnerable to abuse, exploitation and violence. CN is having partnership with PLAN International Nepal for this project. Source: <http://www.childnepal.org/index.php/major-programs?id=37>
6. **Program on Resilience Building among Adolescents in Earthquake affected District:** CN is collaborating with UNICEF and launching this project to develop resilience within adolescent girls and boys through life skills education and trainings on "Transformation" and "Child Friendly Local Governance (CFLF)". The project anticipates these adolescents to work as peer educators and leaders in their respective communities.
7. **Emergency Interventions:** CN in collaboration with Freedom Matters, UK supplied food stuffs to the earthquake victims, provided winterization support in collaboration with The Salvation Mission and education in emergency programs with UKNFS, Nepalhilfe B.H Germany, The Salvation Mission and We World Onlus. All these emergency interventions were focused in Sindhupalchok district, one of the most affected districts from the Earthquake.

We are always grateful to all the development partners who believed in our capacity and initiated hands for joint venture and partnerships. We cannot forget the support of UKNFS who initiated cooperation with CN in a very difficult circumstance caused due to the earthquake. We jointly were successful in helping children to recover from the stress of earthquake and were able to bring them back to school. The coordination and support of UKNFS will always be remembered. We look forward for a fruitful and cordial partnership and collaborations in the years to come and hereby share my best wishes on the bicentenary exhibition educational supplement of the UKNFS, and main Nepal Art Council – UKNFS supported exhibition itself. Hope this day enriches UKNFS's spirit to work for the children and the arts. Thank you.

Krishna Subedi. Chairperson: Child Nepal

Chairperson: National Coalition on Children as Zone of Peace (CZOP)

Coordinator:

CRC Committee Human Rights Treaty Monitoring Coordination Centre (HRTMCC)

National Initiative for Peace and Child Rights Nepal

National Convener, Human Rights National Magna Meet- 2014

Nepali Food in a UK global and South Asian cuisines context:



For those who have travelled in Nepal, authentic Nepali food is a well-known and much beloved part of daily life and social focus. In the UK there are increasing numbers of Nepali owned restaurants providing both well-known Western Indian food and some items of Nepali food. However, at such restaurants there is generally still a preponderance of Indian foods that are known to most British people.

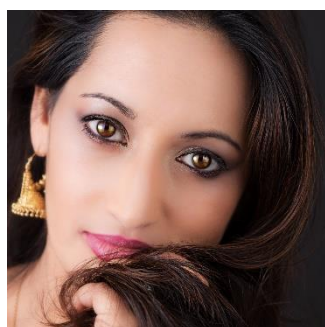


Occasionally some distinctly Nepali dishes appear such as Nepali dumplings 'Momos' (which are essentially the same as some of the much better known Chinese dumplings ('Shanghai/Beijing,' etc.) – see above from Everest Inn. What the Nepalese bring to these dumplings, are not only exceptional cooking techniques and combinations of ingredients and seasoning, but very original accompanying sauces (commonly known as 'Achar' – also the name for a great number of pickled vegetable side dishes), in particular 'GolbheDaa Achar' (Tomato pickle).

For those who have travelled in Nepal many of the distinctive dishes are very hard to find in the UK, unless in domestic settings of UK Nepali community members. Many Indian restaurant owners in the UK often have a very high regard however for the capabilities of Nepali chefs, who are always in high demand, for cuisine in Nepal is taken very seriously as an important part of the nation's life.

Almost as important as film and other art forms and craftsmanship, authentic cuisine is a powerful way of introducing a different culture to those in other lands. This is especially the case for Nepal. Its authentic cuisine is still a massively underutilised asset for introducing Nepal and Nepali culture as unique, distinct. There are good developments taking place to remedy this in the UK. The Everest Inn Group of restaurants have Momos and some other forms of authentic Nepali cuisine on their menus, but still so much remains to be done.

Action is however being taken to initiate awareness raising about authentic Nepali food as a distinct world cuisine, with its own dishes, culinary techniques and philosophies. TV personality chef, Sarah Ali Choudhury ('My Kitchen Rules': Channel 4) who describes herself as feeling as an honorary Nepali because of her great respect for and affinity with authentic Nepali cuisine is seeking to change the position in the UK regarding awareness raising about Nepali food.



"It is exciting and great honour to be involved in such a way here in the UK celebrating Pan-South Asian food with its many national and regional variations, and the pioneering work of raising up national level awareness in the United Kingdom and broader West, of authentic Nepali food. With my particular skills and vision the challenge of introducing to the British public, food and restaurant industries, the charms of this amazing delicious South Asian regional cuisine, is one I am delighted to take up." **Sarah Ali Choudhury**

For British people who have been to Nepal, or not yet had the opportunity to visit that beautiful Himalayan land, friendship connections with Nepali people invariably bring the opportunity to be introduced to authentic Nepali cuisine in domestic social settings. Dishes and side dishes are extremely varied with evidence of a philosophy of nutrition being seen throughout.

A wide range of spices and fresh ingredients are used, and Mono Sodium Glutamate (which is harmful to health and causes bloating) missing, with the result that fantastically combined tastes are Natural and easily discernible to the palate. In some cases aspects of Nepal's spiritual cultures has helped to shape some forms of cuisine (especially vegetarian options) and in others (Nepali regional cuisines) local raw ingredients help shape the types of dishes and side dishes available. Supportive dedication from **Yadav Bhandari, Managing Director of Everest Inn Group:**

"Greater knowledge about Nepali cuisine in the UK is very important. At the award winning Everest Inn Group, we are renowned for providing the highest quality Nepalese and Indian food throughout our ever changing menus. With over twenty years of experience in the restaurant industry, Everest Inn is thoroughly knowledgeable in the world of cuisine and hospitality, whilst remaining passionate for promoting Nepal and Nepalese cuisine throughout the UK."

So we must not forget in celebrating the interconnections between the people of Nepal and those of the UK, Nepali authentic food as an important element, hopefully soon to emerge as a distinct and much better known nutritious and comprised of many different complimentary tastes, in the United Kingdom.

Conclusion:

The story of the relationship between the peoples of Nepal and the UK is therefore one that needs to be told for it sets the scene at so many direct levels for how that special relationship is and can develop in the next few years, setting the scene for the next 200 years of that relationship. It is right to conclude such a subject with recording some of the experiences of British youth and teachers at a major South-West England college (Bournemouth & Poole College), through the Nepal International Art Programme (NIAP) of the UK Nepal Friendship Society, for these are very representative of the spirit of the bicentenary. Below an image of Srijana Thapa and Alan of the UKNFS working with college students on the project.



Examples of feedback on learning and multicultural awareness outcomes of the project:

1. Nathan (photography student):

I found this project to be a new experience and found it even more Interesting as it is near my home.

I learnt things I never knew before as the country has so much cultural diversity and it was important for me to connect with this and producing the work has made me feel more a part of the world's global citizenship.

2. Lucinda (photography student):

'In response to the project I found the research interesting ...My overall feeling of working on the exhibition was that not a lot of people know about Nepal and I would say I learnt more about the culture and religion and where it fitted on the world map.

My experience was positive and after the earthquake I was very upset and deeply moved to find out how poor the people were, it sounds bad but if I had not taken part in this project the earthquake would not have been at the forefront of my mind "it's like I know the place!"

3. Ellie Douglas and Guy Butler(Photography):

'To begin with the students found the subject matter challenging, yet it opened their eyes to the incredible ethnic and cultural diversity of this beautiful country.

Its history and cultural origins along with its spiritual culture inspired the students to really look deeply into the project and effectively produce outstanding work of the highest quality.

Through detailed investigations and research ... they soon found themselves looking at different ways to produce the work either through location or studio-based still life and portraiture

The students were lucky enough to be able to photograph members of the local Nepali community (with particular thanks to Srijana Thapa) and the students pushed themselves to the highest level of professionalism when taking part in this exciting opportunity.

In the aftermath of hearing about the earthquake students were vocal and concerned about the impact such an event would have on the communities which they felt they had become part of.

The ethnic diversity of the student work and the project itself impacted on the engagement of the student's working practise and allowed full autonomy in producing such a rich and culturally diverse set of works that the public can engage with on many levels.

I am incredibly proud of all of the students and appreciate the time and effort they have put into the (photography) work as it has shown a high level of motivation and commitment in producing the final outcomes.

It has been an honour and a privilege to have been able to work on such an important project and one that I hope we can continue to support and develop in the future with thanks to Alan Mercel-Sanca for this amazing opportunity from the staff and students.

Source: <http://creativenepal.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/BPC-NIAP-Project-feedback-from-students-teachers-and-head-of-department.pdf>

As we have seen, the telling of the tale of these direct personal and communities and groups and organisations interrelationships is one that is, except for those involved, still all too little known to the broader societies of the two nations. It, being told in all its richness and diversity, albeit very briefly, through just a few examples, takes forward the purpose of the bicentenary exhibition itself.

At a real, meaningful, peoples to peoples,' level the special bond of friendship between the nations and peoples of Nepal and the UK is one that is unequalled. It has been seen throughout this supplementary special section of the Britain-Nepal Bicentenary Exhibition that there are numerous areas and ways that this unique bond of friendship has taken form in recent decades and years.

Whilst some of these have been little known by the broader general publics of the two countries, the instances we have considered, have and are continuing to have huge personal, societal, spiritual and other forms of transformational impact.

Long may this bond continue, for Nepal has much to teach and offer the UK and its people in exchange for the special historic and personal links that Britain has developed with this fabled and beautiful land during the past 200 years, and in turn Nepal from Britain.

Alan Mercel-Sanca

UK Nepal Friendship Society

February 2017