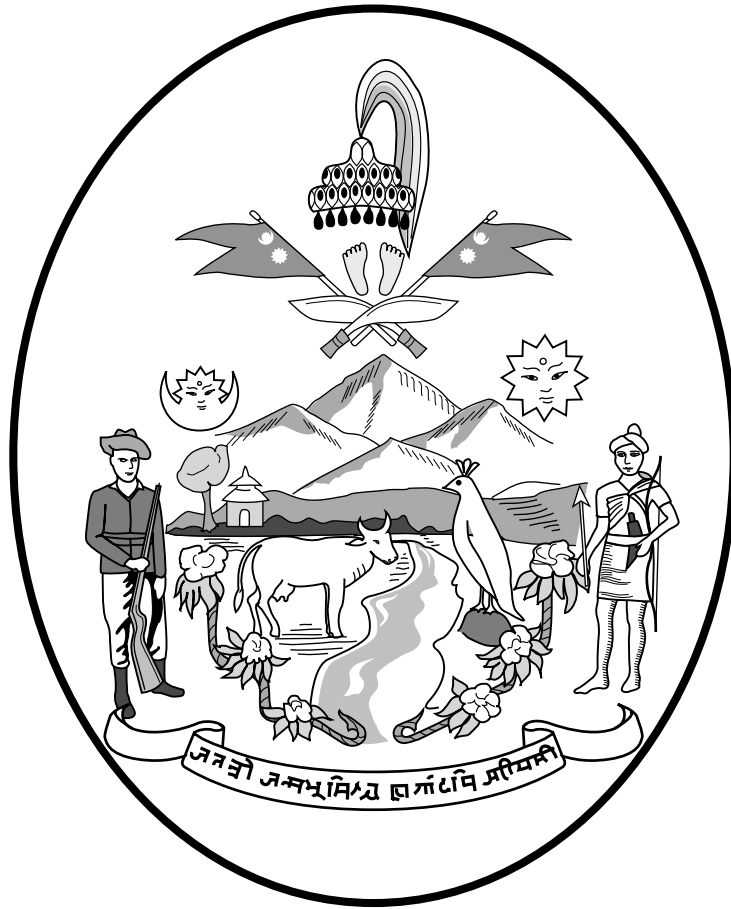
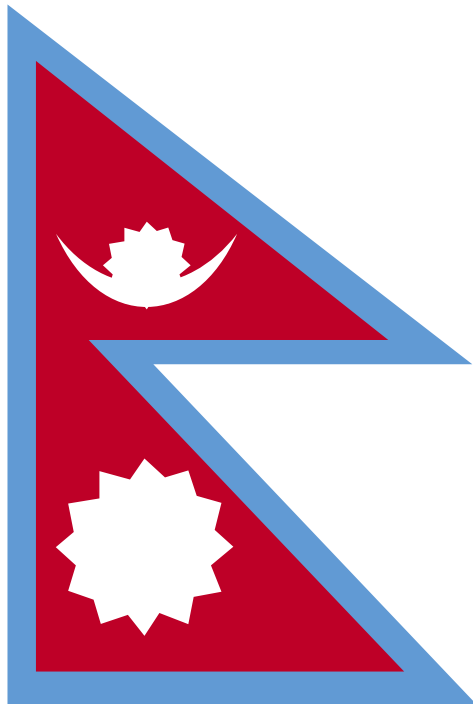


Nepal



NEPAL

Official Name:	Kingdom of Nepal
Capital City:	Katmandu (population 535,000)
Area:	56,827 square miles
Population:	25,873,917 (July 2002)
Language:	Nepali (also called Gurkhali)
Religions:	90% Hindu; 5% Buddhist; 3% Muslim; 2% other
Official Exchange Rate:	1 USD = 71.9553 Nepali Rupees



Description:

The flag of Nepal is the only national flag which is not rectangular, being based upon two separate pennants which belonged to rival branches of the Rana dynasty, which formerly ruled the country. The two pennants were first joined in the last century.

The moon in the upper part represents the royal house. The sun in the lower part symbolizes a branch of the Rana family, members of which acted as prime ministers until 1961. It represents the hope that Nepal itself will last as long as the sun and the moon. Crimson is deemed the national color.

National Anthem of Nepal

Shri mân gumbhira nepâli prachanda pratâpi bhupati
Shri pânc̄h sarkâr mahârâjâdhirâja sadâ rahos unati
Rakhun chi râyu eeshale prajâ phailiyos pukâraun jaya premale
Hâmi nepâli bhaee sârâle.

Adopted in 1924

Written by CHAKRAPANI CHALISE (1884-1959)

Translation

May glory be your crown our brave sovereign
You the chivalrous Nepalese
Shri Pansh Maharajadhiraja our gallant ruler
May he live for many years to come
And may the number of his followers increase
Let every Nepalese sing this with joy

Introduction

Nepal is situated in the greatest heights of the Himalayas. It is a land of sublime scenery, ancient temples, and some of the best walking trails on earth. Shrines, exquisite temples, palaces, palace squares, ageless sculptures and legends are parts without which Nepal is not complete. It is a land of rich cultures and vibrant traditions. Its fast flowing rivers and tropical jungles are the secrets of its wildlife. It is a country where people of different races and religions live in harmony.



History

The ancient history of Nepal is embellished with various legends. The Kirati (of the Rai and Limbu tribes) ruled the land in the sixth century B.C. It is believed that Buddha was born in the plains of Nepal during their reign.

People called Newars are thought to have lived in the Nepal Valley since the fourth century A.D., developing a Hindu-Buddhist culture. During the 10-18th centuries when the Mallas ruled Kathmandu Valley, it was known as Nepal's Golden Age of the Arts. In 1769, Prthvinarayan Shah, who was a Rajput by race defeated the Malla rulers and Gurkha (Brahmans who are Rajput by race) rule was established. After incursions into northern India in which the Gurkhas were defeated, Nepal lost part of its territory to British India but retained its independence and enjoyed close ties with the British. It has maintained its close association with India since the latter gained independence in 1947.

Nepal was controlled by a hereditary prime ministership until 1951. The nation's first election was held in 1959, but in 1960, King Mahendra dismissed the cabinet, dissolved parliament, and banned political parties. A 1962 constitution created a nonparty panchayat (council) system of government. After a 1980 referendum approved a modified version of the panchayat system, direct parliamentary elections were held in 1981.

A dispute with India led to India's closing of most border crossings from March 1989 to July 1990, and the resultant economic crisis fueled demands for political reform. After months of violence, King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev dissolved parliament. The opposition formed an interim government in April, 1990, and a new constitution creating a constitutional monarchy and a two house legislature became effective on November 9, 1990.

Multiparty legislative elections, held in May 1991 were won by the Nepali Congress party. The Communists became the leading opposition party. Mid-term elections in November, 1994, which were called after the government lost a parliamentary vote, resulted in a hung parliament and the Communists, who emerged as the single largest party, formed a government.

In early June 2001, King Birendra and eight other members of the royal family, including Queen Aiswarya, were fatally shot in the royal palace in Kathmandu, allegedly at the hands of Crown Prince Dipendra, who then reportedly attempted suicide. Dipendra survived from his gunshot wounds and went into a coma. His subsequent death officially made his uncle, Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah, the new King of Nepal.

Geography

Nepal covers an area of 56,827 square miles. It is divided into four topographical zones, the Great Himalayas, the Middle Himalayas, the Outer Himalayas and the Tarai.



The highest zone is the Great Himalayas, in northern Nepal. Eight of the ten highest mountains in the world are located either wholly or partially in this area. These include Mount Everest (29,035 ft.), Kanchenjunga (28,209 ft.), Makalu (27,825 ft.), Dhaulgiri (27,825 ft.), and Annapurna (26,545 ft.).

Middle Himalayas are dominated in Nepal by the Mahabharat Range. Several rivers run through Nepal's Middle Himalayas. Most rivers converge and form four main river systems: the Karnali, Narayani, Gandaki, and Kosi, which traverse the Mahabharat Range through deep gorges, make navigation difficult or impossible.

To south of the Middle Himalayas lies the Siwalik

Range of the Outer Himalayas.

The *Tarai*, which is flat and fertile lowland, is the southernmost topographic zone in Nepal. Much of this area comprises the northern extension of the Gangetic Plain of India. Rivers rising in the Himalayas emerge in the *Tarai* and continue southward, some of them becoming tributaries of the Ganges in northern India.



Climate

The climate of Nepal varies according to its elevations. In southern Nepal, the Tarai has a tropical monsoon climate characterized by rainy summers and the southwest winds of monsoons, and almost dry winters. The effect of the southern monsoon climate extends northward into mountain valleys.

In the Middle Himalayan valleys the amount of precipitation varies with the extent of exposure to the rain-bearing monsoon winds. Several high valleys located in the rain shadow (area where precipitation is partially blocked by mountains) are dry. In the Kathmandu Valley the average rainfall is about about 90 inches, most of which occurs from June to September. Between elevations of about 1,640 and 8,860 feet there is a warm climate; between about 8,860 and 9,840 feet a cool climate prevails. Between elevations of about 11,480 and 13,450 feet summers are cool and winters are very cold. A severely cold climate prevails in elevations above 13,450 feet.

Government and Administration

Government: Constitutional Monarchy

Prime Minister: Sher Bahadur Deuba

King: Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah

Nepal's government is a constitutional monarchy. Due to major pro-democracy protests, Nepal adopted a new constitution in 1990 that established a multiparty democracy but preserved the king's status as chief of state. The 1990 constitution ended nearly 30 years of absolute monarchy in which the king dominated Nepal's politics and political parties were banned. All Nepalese who are 18 or older can vote.



King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah



Prime Minister
Thapa Surya

Executive powers are vested in the king and a council of ministers, composed of a prime minister and other ministers. The king appoints the leader of the majority party in parliament as Prime Minister. Other ministers are appointed from the parliament by the king upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister. The Council of Ministers is responsible for the day-to-day administration of Nepal.

The 1990 constitution established a two-chamber legislature consisting of a House of Representatives and a National Council. The House of Representatives has 205 members directly elected by the voters. The National Council has 60 members: 10 nominated by the king, 35 elected by the House of Representatives, and 15 elected by an electoral college comprising the voters, chairs, and deputy chairs of villages, towns, and districts. Members of parliament serve five-year terms unless the parliament is dissolved earlier upon recommendation of the Prime Minister.

The judiciary is made up of three tiers: the Supreme Court, Appellate Courts, and District

Courts. The Supreme Court is the highest court. The king on the recommendation of the Constitutional Council appoints the chief justice. Other judges of the three courts are appointed on the recommendation of the Judicial Council.

Economy

GDP: U.S. \$27.4 billion

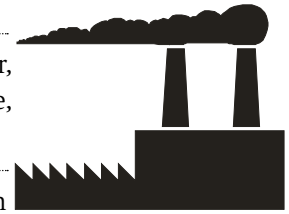
GDP Per Head: U.S. \$1,100

Annual Growth: 6%

Inflation: 2.1%

Major Industries: Tourism, carpet, textile, small rice, jute, sugar, oilseed mills, cigarettes, cement and brick production, rice, corn, wheat, sugarcane, root crops, milk, water buffalo meat

Major Trading Partners: India, U.S.; Germany; UK; Singapore; Japan



The main economy of Nepal is acquired by agriculture and followed by manufacturing, trade and tourism. The chief sources of foreign currency earnings are merchandise export, tourism and remittances of Nepalese abroad. Nepal is making considerable progress by expanding into manufacturing industries and other technological sectors.

Most of the Nepalese are engaged in farming and it accounts for nearly 40% of the GDP. There are rolling fields and neat terraces all over the Terai flatlands and the hills of Nepal. Rice is the main diet in Nepal. Other major crops are maize, wheat, millet and barley. Besides food grains, cash crops like sugar cane, oil seeds, tobacco, jute and tea are also cultivated in large quantities.

Major industries are woolen carpets, garments, textiles, leather products, paper and cement. Other products made in Nepal are steel utensils, cigarettes, beverages and sugar.

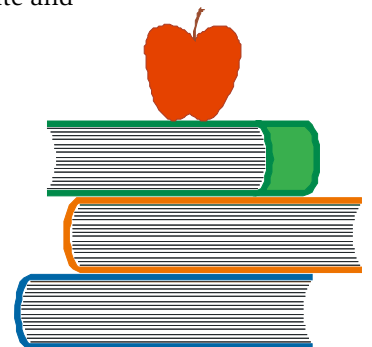
Trade

Foreign trade is characterized mainly by the import of manufactured products and the export of agricultural raw materials. Nepal imports manufactured goods and petroleum products.

Woolen carpets are Nepal's largest export, earning the country over U.S. \$135 million per year. Garment exports account for more than US\$ 74 million and handicraft goods sell for U.S. \$1 million. Other important exports are hides and skins, jute and medicinal herbs.

Education

Primary education is free for all children in Nepal. Primary school begins at the age of 6 and lasts until age 10. Secondary education that follows lasts until the age of 15. Formal schooling in Nepal is constrained by economic and cultural factors such as a bias against educating girls and a need for children to work at home or in the fields.



Even though education is a major concern for the country educational facilities are often inadequate. Urban areas have higher literacy rates than rural areas while in rural areas, girls generally leave school by age 12 to care for younger siblings or help the family cultivate its land.

Secondary school students must pay fees that are too expensive for villagers. These schools are located in large towns and are less accessible to the villagers.

Tribhuvan University, founded in Kathmandu (capital of Nepal) in 1959, is the only institution of higher education in Nepal. Nepal also has a number of colleges, all of which are either affiliated with, or follow standards set by, Tribhuvan University.

Culture and Society

Population: 25,873,917 (July 2002)

People: Newars, Indians, Tibetans, Gurungs, Magars, Tamangs, Bhotias, Rais, Limbus, Sherpas

Language: Nepali (also called Gurkhali)

Religion: 90% Hindu; 5% Buddhist; 3% Muslim; 2% other



The population has grown rapidly since 1950 when there were only 9 million people. The population of Nepal is comprised of diverse ethnic groups having their own languages and cultures. The Sherpas who are renowned for their mountaineering skills, inhabit in the northern mountains, whereas the Newars, who are acclaimed for their unique artistry and culture, dominate the Kathmandu Valley. Two of the nation's most dominant groups, the Brahmins and the Kashtriyas are almost everywhere. The Tamangs, Rais, Limbus, Magars and Gurungs known mostly as the *Gurkha* (or the Nepali soldiers) dwell in the mid-hills.

Maithili, Tharu, Bhojpuri and other ethnic communities have their dwellings in the Terai plains.

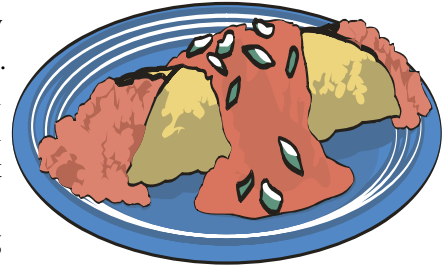
Religious practices play an important part in the lives of the Nepalese people. At dawn, women and children visit neighborhood shrines to offer worship to the gods. They perform *puja* (the prayer) by holding plates of rice, flowers, vermilion powder, lighting incense, ringing of the temple bell, and applying *tika*, a red dot on their foreheads. Passers by stop at temples and show their reverence to the gods by spending a few minutes praying. Occasionally, groups of men sit near temples playing music and singing hymns until the evening.

Language

Nepali is the national language of Nepal and is written in Devanagari script. Other main languages spoken in Nepal include Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tamang, Avadhi, Gurung, Tharu, and Newari. However, most educated Nepalese can also speak and write English.

Food

Nepali food varies from community to community due to the diversity and variety in Nepali culture. Nepali food comprises Nepali cuisine (food common to all communities) and Newari cuisine which comes from “The House of Newars,” the very first settlers of Nepal. Some of the main Nepalese dishes are *Chatanmari*, rice flour pizza with meat or egg topping, *Kwati soup* of different sprouted beans and *Sehuwa*, barbecued meat.



Religion



Brahma

Two main religions are dominant in Nepal, Hinduism and Buddhism. Nepal is the only official Hindu state in the world where about 88% of the population is Hindu. Hinduism, is made up of thousands of gods and goddesses. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are the main three major gods, but each has a complex tapestry of manifestations and incarnations.

Buddhism is the second major religion in Nepal and Shakyamuni Buddha, who was born in Nepal around the sixth century B.C., is the founder of Buddhism. The great Buddhist stupas of Swayambhu and Buddha in the Valley are among the oldest and most beautiful sites of worship in Nepal. Some of the Buddhist practices are the spinning of prayer wheels, prostrating pilgrims, collective chants and burning lamps in which butter is used instead of oil. A slip of paper bearing a *mantra* (a prayer that is chanted) is kept inside the wheels so that prayers are sent to the gods when the wheel is spun.



There is also a small Muslim population mainly located in the Tarai. Religious tolerance and social harmony are an important part of the Nepalese way of life.

Festivals

Mother's Day

Mother's Day is one of the widely celebrated festivals that fall in the first month, Baisakh (April/May), of the Nepali Year and it is also called Mata Tirtha Aunsi as it falls on a new moon night.



Buddha Jayanti

Buddha Jayanti is celebrated to mark the birthday of the Lord Buddha, which dates back to 543 B.C. It falls on Jetha Purnima (full moon night – May/June).

Gathemangal



This festival celebrates the exorcism of the mythical demon Ghantakarna. According to a local legend a savage by the name of Ghantakarna used to terrify the public by stealing their children and womenfolk. He had a pair of bells on his ears so that, at every moment, he made a jangling noise. Because of these bells, he was called *Ghanta* (bell) *Karna* (ears). The rains came and went, but the farmers dared not to go out in fear of the savage. But, help came unexpectedly. A large number of frogs came to the place where the fearsome demon was staying and all of them started to croak. Ghantakarna got very agitated and tried to catch the frogs. But the clever frogs jumped ahead and continued to croak. They led him on to a swamp and then they jumped into the water. He too plunged into the water and was soon up to his ears in the mud. The frogs then swarmed all around his head and the demon sank to his death. Thus, the clever frogs were able to free the residents of the Valley from the tortures of Ghantakarna.



The festival of *Gathemangal* is celebrated towards the end of the Nepalese month of *Shrawan*. The festival is celebrated by acting out the legendary drama in the streets. To begin with, children from every neighborhood collect money from a passerby, which is then used to make an effigy of the demon. While this effigy remains in the center of a rough tent-like structure erected from bamboo poles, one man impersonates Ghantakarna by smearing himself with paint and roaming the streets with a begging bowl asking for donations. At the end of the day, the person imitating Ghantakarna is placed on the bamboo poles, now taken down, and is dragged to a nearby river. This colorful festival, though celebrated mostly only in the Newar community, is especially fun filled for children. They run around the effigy laughing happily and enjoying them thoroughly.

Janai Purnima



Janai Purnima is known as the Sacred Thread Festival. On this day Hindu men, especially the *Brahmans* and *Kashtriya* perform their annual change of *Janai*, a yellow cotton string worn across the chest or tied around the wrist of the right hand. This thread is only given to males during a lengthy and impressive religious ceremony called the “*Bratabandhan*.” This cord initiates them into manhood and commands them to faithfully follow the religion.

On Janai Purnima, there is a big *mela* (fair) in the town of Lalitpur. Devotees come here to worship Lord Mahadev and to tie a knot around their wrists. On the preceding day the wearer makes himself “clean” by shaving, cutting the hair and bathing. He undergoes a partial fast, taking only one meal of foods considered to be “clean,” no meat, onions or garlic. The next morning the

family priest comes to the house. The entire family gathers around him as he reads from a holy book, performs a ceremony, which sanctifies the new thread, and places it about the recipient's neck across the chest. In payment the priest is given foodstuff and money.

Gai Jatra

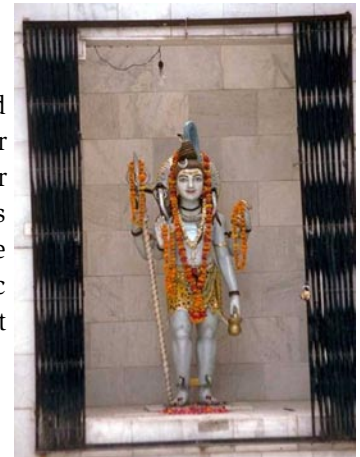


The festival of “Gai Jatra,” the procession of cows, is generally celebrated in the Nepalese month of Bhadra (August-September). The festival of cows is one of the most popular festivals of Nepal. According to the traditions since times immemorial, every family who has lost one relative during the past year must participate in a procession through the streets of Kathmandu leading a cow. In Hinduism, a cow is regarded as the most venerated among all the domestic animals. It is believed that the cow, revered as a holy animal by Hindus, will help the deceased relative's journey to heaven.

After the procession is over, in the afternoon, nearly everyone takes part in another age-old tradition in which the participants dress up and wear masks. The occasion is filled with songs, jokes, mockery and humor of every kind become the order of the day until late evening.

Krishna Janmastami

Krishna Janmastami marks the celebration of the birth of Lord Sri Krishna. This festival is also known as Krishna Jayanti or Janmashtami. Lord Krishna is regarded as the 8th avatar or “incarnation” of Lord Vishnu. His life is filled with numerous dangers over which he ultimately gained victory. The stories of how he killed, one after the other, all the demonic adversaries has made him the peerless savior of mankind. It falls in the month of Bhadra. (August/September).



Gokarna Aunsi (Father's Day)



It is the most auspicious day to honor one's father. It falls on the dark fortnight of Bhadra (in August or in early September.) It is also known as Kuse-Aunsi.

Teej

Teej is the fasting festival for women. Through religious fasting, Hindu women pray for marital bliss, well-being of their spouse and children and purification of their own bodies and souls. It takes place in the month of Bhadra (August/September).



Indra Jatra

It is believed that Indra Jatra is a festival of classical dances. It is on this very day when one is able to observe numerous varieties of traditional dances. The festival is named after Lord Indra who is known as the “god of rain” and also as the king of heaven. The festival of Indra Jatra continues for eight days with much rejoicing, singing, dancing and feasting.

The first day of the festival is viewed by a large number of people. On that day, a long wooden pole is erected in front of the ancient Royal Palace at Hanuman Dhoka, in order to propitiate Lord *Indra*, the “god of rain.” Classical dancers also assemble at the spot, wearing different kinds of traditional masks and costumes. They dance around the courtyard of Hanuman Dhoka to celebrate Indra’s visit. On the third day of the festival of Indra Jatra, the living goddess Kumari’s taken out in procession in a chariot. The chariot is taken around the city for three days.

The excitement of the festival of Indra Jatra comes to an end on the last evening of the festival when the long wooden pole erected on the first day is lowered with religious ceremonies, animal sacrifices and ritual gestures.

Dashain



During the month of Kartik in the Bikram Sambat calendar (late September and early October), the Nepalese people indulge in the biggest festival of the year, Dashain. Dashain is the longest and the most auspicious festival in the Nepalese annual calendar. Throughout the kingdom of Nepal the goddess Durga in all her manifestations is worshiped with innumerable pujas (prayers), abundant offerings and thousands of animal sacrifices for the ritual holy bathing.

Dashain commemorates a great victory of the gods over the wicked demons. One of the victory stories told is the Ramayan, where the lord Ram after a big struggle slaughtered

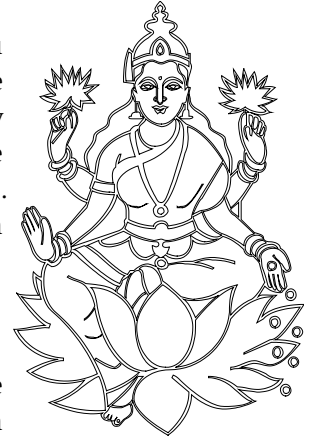
Ravana, the fiendish king of demons. It is said that lord Ram was successful in the battle only when goddess Durga was evoked. The main celebration glorifies the triumph of good over evil.

In preparation for Dashain, every home is cleansed and beautifully decorated, painted as an invitation to the mother goddess, so that she may visit and bless the house with good fortune. During this time the reunion of distant and nearby relatives occur in every household. The market is filled with shoppers seeking new clothing, gifts, luxuries and enormous supplies

of temple offerings for the gods, as well as foodstuffs for the family feasting. Thousands of sheep, goats, ducks, chicken and water buffalo are prepared for the great slaughter. All types of organizations are closed for ten to fifteen days. Laborers are almost impossible to find: from the poor to the rich, all enjoy the festive mood. Anywhere you go the aroma of *Vijaya Dashami* is found.

Tihar

Tihar, the festival of lights is one of the most dazzling of all Hindu festivals. In this festival Nepalese worship Goddess Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth. During the festival all the houses in the city and villages are decorated with lit oil lamps. Thus during the night the entire village or city looks like a sparkling diamond. This festival is celebrated in five days starting from the thirteenth day of the waning moon in October.



Maghe Sankranti

It is the beginning of the holy month of *Magh*, usually in the middle of January. It brings an end to the ill-omened month of *Poush* (mid-December) when all religious ceremonies are forbidden. Even if it is considered the coldest day of the year, it marks the coming of warmer weather and better days of health and fortune.

Shree Panchami

It falls in mid *Magh* (January/February). It is celebrated as the birthday of Saraswati, the Goddess of Learning. She is the daughter of god Shiva and goddess Durga. She is represented in spotless white robe and seated in a full-blown lotus. This day is also dedicated to the martyrs of Nepal and hence celebrated as Martyr's Day.

Shivaratri

Shivaratri is the celebration dedicated to the Lord Shiva, which falls in the the month *Fagun* (February/March).

Fagu Purnima

It is an ancient Hindu festival of Holi which comes in late February or in early March. Allegedly named after the mythical demoness Holika, it is a day when the feast of colors is celebrated. The week long festival, is mainly observed on the last day by all with colors.



Ghode Jatra



Ghode Jatra, the Horse Racing Day, falls in the month of *Chaitra* (March/April). A grand horse parade takes place at Tundikhel, the central point of the city reputed to have been in the former days the largest parade ground in Asia.

Ramnawami

Nepalese have deep belief and extreme faith in Lord Ramnawami. His strength, courage and purity of heart have made him the favorite idol of his people. Ram Nawami is thus celebrated as Lord Ram's Birthday. It is celebrated with much pomp at Janaki temple in Janakpur city, which lies in southern Nepal. Huge processions of elephants, bullock carts and sometimes upto 100,000 pilgrims go through the city, dancing and singing the lord's praises.

In Kathmandu many people, including the royal family, go to the temples to pay homage to Ram, while symposiums are held to exalt the ideal life he lived.

In Bhaktapur, the neighboring town of Kathmandu, the people go to the banks of the river Hanumante, where a temple bearing the idols of Ram and his loyal servant Hanuman is situated.

There are many other festivals that are taken place in different parts of Nepal. Some are celebrated by all Nepalese, some are celebrated by either Hindu or Buddhist communities and some only celebrated on regional basis. Some of these festivals are Bagh Jatra (celebrated only in Pokhar region), Bhairav Kumari Jatra (celebrated in the town of Dolkha), Gaura Parva (celebrated in far western Nepal) and Gunala (Buddhist festival).



Arts And Crafts



In Nepal the great skills, passed on from generation to generation, allow the craftsmen to produce the finest hand crafted goods. The tools used for making these goods and the designs are often unaltered in spite of the advent of new technologies. Religious crafts and inspirational products of Hindu philosophy and Buddhist teachings that are produced in the Kathmandu Valley still stand unsurpassed. Metal carvings, wood carvings, stone carvings, sculptures, paintings, carpets, beads and Pashmina shawls are some of the indigenous products which remain uniquely Nepalese in origin.

Metal Work

The tradition of metal carvings goes back to the Malla period or perhaps beyond that and thus are very well developed. There are different fifth century coins, 7th to 15th century statues and other metal artifacts displayed in different museums and temples scattered around Kathmandu valley, which gives testimony to the fact that it has been a part of Nepalese way of life for a long time. The different forms of this craft are still produced by age-old methods in different parts of Nepal. Metal crafts are made of brass, bronze, copper, aluminum and alloys.

Bronze figures, sometimes alloyed with copper, appeared in the valley around the eighth century A.D. These images usually represented religious deities or legendary figures. The most frequently used production technique is that of "cire perdue," a form of wax casting. Images often contain embedded semi-precious stones, usually coral or turquoise, or are gilded with gold.

Wood Crafts

Carvings done on wood which are well known for the intricacy are very famous in Nepal. Woodcarvings are used both for decorative and religious purposes depicting ancient cultural and religious moods. These carvings done on windows, doors and pillars depict spiritual bliss. The best places to see these carvings are temples, monasteries, palaces and other old buildings.

Woodcrafts, using teak, sal or rosewood, are famous for Peacock windows, teacups, bowls, tables, frames, lamp stands, cigarette holders and boxes.

Clothes



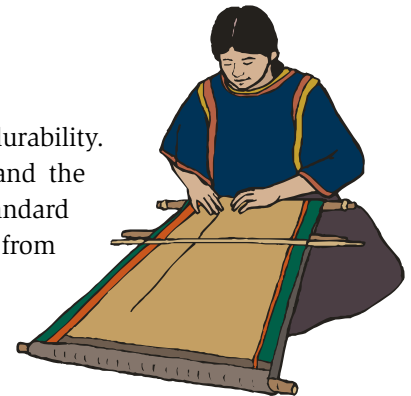
Kathmandu's cotton clothing is entertainingly fashionable and inexpensive. Cotton T-shirts, baggy trousers, colorful shirts, sporty scarves, ornamental Nepalese and Indian design dresses and countless other items.

Village workshop and craft collectives through out Nepal produce a great variety of cloth. The best known is *Dhaka* used in ladies blouses, Nepalese traditional cap handicrafts and curio products. The products are completely handmade using warp of solid dyed cotton yarns, and weft of different attractive solid dyed fine quality yarns.

Tibetan wool jackets and hand-knit yak or sheep wool sweaters are of very good quality. Pashmina shawls made from the wool of highland rare goats are famous for their smooth and warm fur. The stuffs made from this fur are of the best quality.

Carpets

Carpets of Nepal are unique in design, warmth and durability. Their quality and price reflect the type of wool, dye and the density of knots and rows. The best carpets maintain a standard ratio of approximately 32 knots to 24 rows. Colors vary from brilliant reds and blues to dusty roses and lavenders.



Handmade papers

The art of making handmade paper also known as rice-paper has been of great importance to the Himalayan Culture. The industry has come a long way from the seventh century. It is made from the bark of a tree or bush called *Daphne Papyracea* and *Daphne Bholua*. This tree is called *lokta* in Nepalese. In Nepal all legal documentation is done on this paper because of its everlasting character.

Pottery

Kathmandu's potters are extremely proficient in the delicate art of making both terra cotta and glazed earthenware to make various articles from the black clay that abounds in the valley. Their products range from household utensils to inexpensive decorative souvenirs.

Pottery from Patan and Thimi, is also very popular. Common forms of this pottery are terra cotta oil lamps used to light homes during the festival of Dipawali, and flower pots decorated with peacocks and elephants.



Beads

It is common to see Nepalese married women wearing a necklace with many strands of small green or red beads suspending a golden cylinder of raised edges. The beads are known as *Potey*. They come in a variety of colors and designs.

Gems, Jewelry and Stone Carving



Nepal, the Himalayan Kingdom, is gifted with varieties of stones. The usage of these kinds of stone normally confined to religious and spiritual purposes. Stones native to Nepal are sapphire, aquamarine, amethyst, ruby, garnet and tourmaline.

Jewelry of gold and silver reflects the preferences of ethnic groups. Women of Gurung tribe often wear large disc earrings of bronze and copper, while women of Sherpa tribe often have turquoise and silver earrings. Other forms of jewelry include nose rings, pendants, engraved silver belts, anklets and bracelets.

Other very well-known handicrafts in Nepal are filigree or the studding of metals like silver and brass with different stones or glass, masks made of bamboo, cane, jute, hemp and other fiber products, leather products, incense sticks, and cotton shoes.

Popular Sports

National Game: Elephant polo

This game is a lot like regular horse polo. The governing rules for the Elephant Polo Tournament were established by the World Elephant Polo Association (WEPA). It was established in 1982, and has hosted a championship tournament every year since its establishment.

The game is played by four players on each team on a marked pitch 460 x 230 feet, using a standard size polo ball. The game consists of two 10-minute rounds of playing, with an interval of 15 minutes. The whistle blown by the referee stops and starts play. The pitch is marked with a center line, a circle with a radius of 49 feet in the center of the field, and a semi-circle with a radius



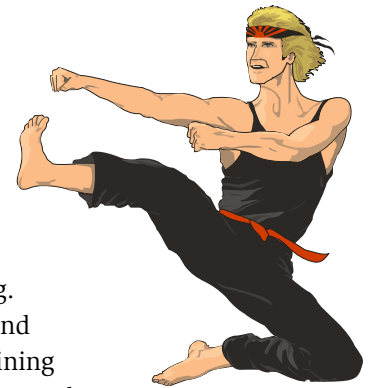
of 98 feet measured from the center of the goal line at either end of the pitch. Elephants and ends are changed at half time. The play is begun when the referee, from outside the center circle, throws the ball in between two opposing elephants inside the ring. No other elephants may enter the ring until the ball has been hit out by either of the two opposing players. To do so is a foul. A spot hit is to be given to the fouled team, from the spot where the offending player fouled. If one's team member hits the ball out of the sidelines, a player from the opposing team hits it back in, from where the ball crossed the side line, when signaled to do so by the referee. Defending players have to be 49 feet from the ball.

Football

Football is another game, which the Nepalese love to play. The year 2001 marked 50 years of active football played in Nepal.

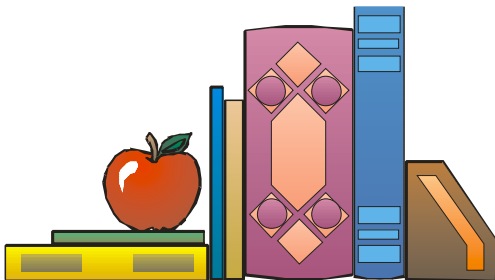
Budokai-do

Budokai-do is one of the most difficult karate styles in the world. It's origin can be found in Nepal. It was brought to Europe (Belgium) in 1990 by Sensei Sagar Shrestha from Nepal. Like many karate styles, Budokai-do is based on self-defense, but the big difference is that all the techniques taught are usable in real life situations. After a few months of training one can develop speed and accuracy in his/her kicks and blows. You need more than force to become strong. Efficient use of force by speed, concentration, calmness and confidence strengthens your mind and body. The hard training and personal guidance of the trainers help develop mental control, offering resistance to all possible attacks. The tactics of Budokai-do are to leave your opponent no chance by:



- staying clear of attacks
- bringing your opponent out of balance as fast as you can
- eliminating your opponent.

Literature



Literature appeared in the valleys of Nepal during the 18th century. Poetry is the predominant form of writing from this period, but most authors are unknown. The following centuries brought more poets and writers inspired by religion as well as social problems. Musical lyrics celebrate the beauty of nature and life, or convey a legend.

Painting

The earliest paintings consisted of illustrated manuscripts on palm leaves or rice paper in the 11th century A.D. *Thang-kas*, a more predominant form of painting, are popular among Buddhists in Nepal as well as in Tibet and date back to the late 14th century. These paintings

on cotton are rectangular in shape and usually longer than they are wide. They are framed with three stripes of Chinese brocade of blue, yellow and red, which represent the rainbow, which separates sacred objects from the material world. In the past, *Thang-kas* consisted of mineral-based colors, while current *Thang-kas* are produced with vegetable-based or chemical colors. Frequent themes of *Thang-kas* include images of Buddhist figures, mandala (geometric patterns which assist meditation and symbolize the nature of the universe) designs, the wheel of life design, or the depiction of scenes or stories.



Most of the other Buddhist symbols are common to *Thang-kas* and wall paintings. Some of them are the wheel of moral law, the umbrella to protect against evil, the victory banner of Buddha's doctrine, two golden fish which represent wealth, the endless knot of eternal re-birth of everything, the flower-vase holding eternal bliss, the conch-shell proclaiming the benefits of enlightenment, and the lotus flower which symbolizes purity and spirituality.

Theatre



Nepal has a unique texture of theatre due to the diverse cultural patterns, unique mélange of the Hindu and Buddhist religio-cultural traditions: the cross-currents of the theatrical practices of the Indic and indigenous origins. The heritage of performances during the medieval to the middle of the 18th century showed that the rulers of Nepal, especially the Malla rulers of the Kathmandu valley, did regard theatre as a

most important activity for two reasons. One was that theatre did symbolize the community spirit and entertainment and the other was that it had a great symbolic significance.

The semi-classical and folk-based performances have great cultural significance. These dual reasons continue to govern the theatre even today.

Formerly theatre houses were inside the court but Balakrishna Sama did break the walls and brought the theatre to the public. He was a great dramatist, director and pioneer in many ways and the main person behind the theatrical activities that have shaped the patterns of performances up until the modern times.

Architecture

Most of the architecture emerged out of the religious concepts extracted out of Buddhist and Hindu mythological perceptions. Unique craftsmanship is most easily found in temples, shrines, fountains and the design of religious buildings. Understanding the various religious creeds as well as the representations of gods and goddesses can enhance the appreciation of Nepalese architecture.

The temples, which are the sites of magnificent stone and woodcarvings are from the eleventh and twelfth centuries and reflect the influence of Indian art from the Gupta Dynasty and Palasena periods. Wood carvings are predominantly from the 18th century, used to decorate pillars, door and window frames, cornices and supporting struts.

Temples are usually one of three types; pagodas, shikaras or stupas. Stupas are exclusively Buddhist temples, but *pagodas* and *shikaras* may be Hindu or Buddhist.

Pagodas

Pagodas (*Devala* in Nepalese) are usually in the shape of a square or rectangular with a simple geometric design. It is usually made of brick although the foundation may consist of stone blocks. The doors and windows are wood with latticed patterns for adornment. A decorative relief called *torana* sits above the door. It is also made of wood or bronze-plated wood, depicting the triumph of good over evil with the image of a gryphon (winged monster) holding in its grip a *naga* (snake).



The temple has several roofs, which get proportionately smaller with height. The number of roofs is usually odd, since odd numbers are more auspicious than even numbers.

A metal ribbon hangs from the upper point almost to the ground, symbolizing the path for the deity to descend to earth and people to rise to the divine. One or two bronze bells also stand near the entrance of the pagoda. The bronze or stone images of dragons or lions protect this entrance.

Shikaras

Shikaras are similar in design to Indian temples, with a majestic dome roof. Some describe the dome as an unopened lotus flower or a royal umbrella. The base of the temple is square with many stories of balconies.

Stupas

They are designed as mounds to bury ashes or Buddhist relics and usually have a cubic base with a spherical body and a towered roof. The cubic base symbolizes the earth's solidity, the spherical mound symbolizes water, the tower is fire, the ring above it air, and the crowned top symbolizes ether. Thirteen steps between the mound and the tower represent the number of steps to attaining perfect knowledge. Most of the stupas are painted masonry white but the four sides of the tower hold the omniscient eyes of Buddha. The eyes watch over the universe, and the symbol between the two prominent eyes is the third eye, which

allows one to see beyond and inside the self. People encircle stupas by walking clockwise, often spinning prayer wheels embedded in the wall surrounding the temple. Largest stupas in Kathmandu are approximately 2,000 years old.



Nepalese Architecture and Painting Word Search

Painting

Thangkas

Mandala

Architecture

Pagoda

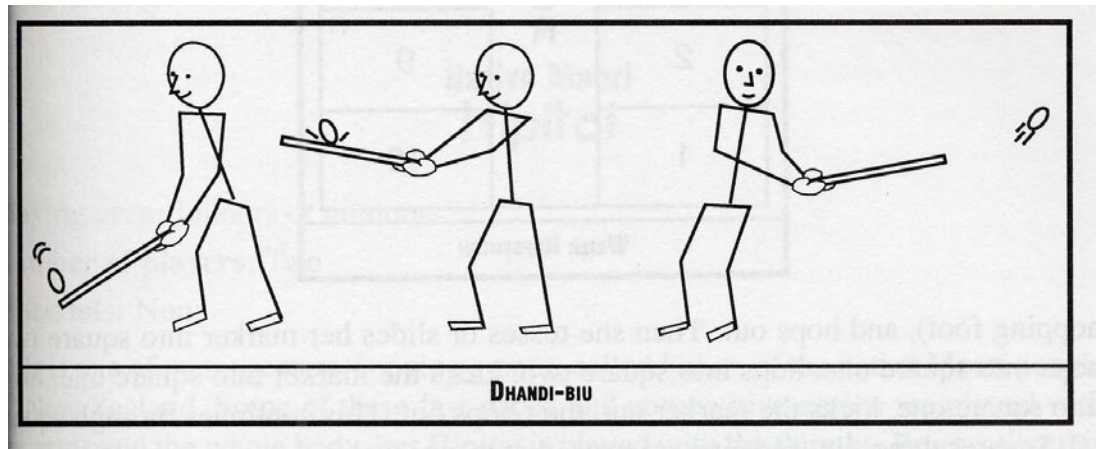
Shikara

Stupa

Q	A	P	T	Y	U	J	K
T	H	A	N	G	K	A	S
N	A	G	S	D	F	N	H
S	R	O	Y	O	U	K	I
M	C	D	X	V	N	G	K
N	M	A	N	D	A	L	A
B	O	H	L	V	I	O	R
S	R	U	S	T	U	P	A

How to play Dhandi-biu – a Nepalese game

- Playing area:** A large, open, outdoor space
- Number of players:** Two or more
- Materials:** A long, flat stick; a large seed, such as a peach or plum pit



Players place the seed on the ground. Using the stick as a bat, a player hits the seed on one end, trying to make it flip into the air. When it does, the player must hit the seed into the air lightly twice more, then on the third hit, knock it as far as possible. The player who hits the seed farthest on his turn is the winner.

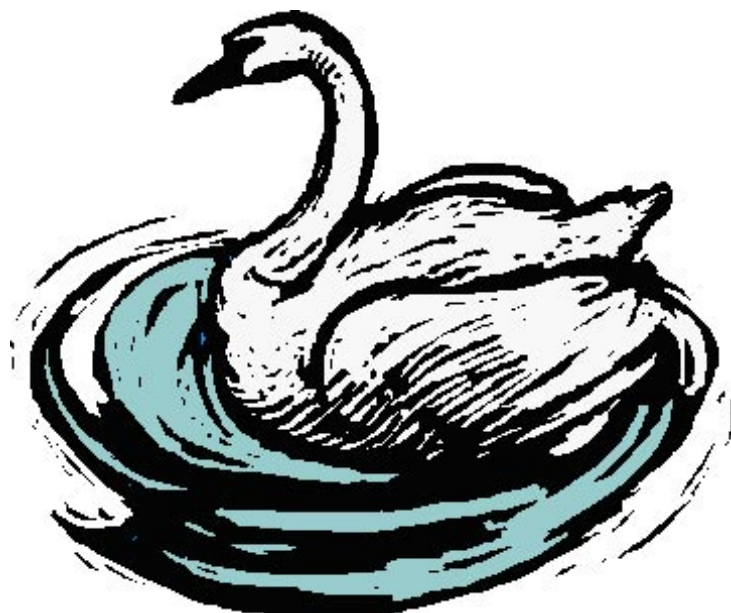
This game is quite like “Topay-Danday” of Afghanistan and “Gilli-Danda” of Pakistan. In these two games a small stick of wood is used instead of a seed. This is also played in India.

Story of Buddha

One of Buddha's cousins, Devadatta, was very jealous of the Buddha and did cruel things to hurt him. One day Devadatta shot a flying swan. The prince caught the bird as it fell, removed the arrow, and nursed the swan back to health. Devadatta demanded the swan from Buddha, claiming it as his prize.

But Buddha refused, and so they brought their disagreement to the royal court. The judges awarded Buddha the swan, saying "Life is more valuable than anything else in the world. Whoever saves a life is in harmony with the Truth: whoever takes away a life is not."

What is the morale of the story?



Name: _____ Date: _____

Goddess Lakshmi Coloring Project

