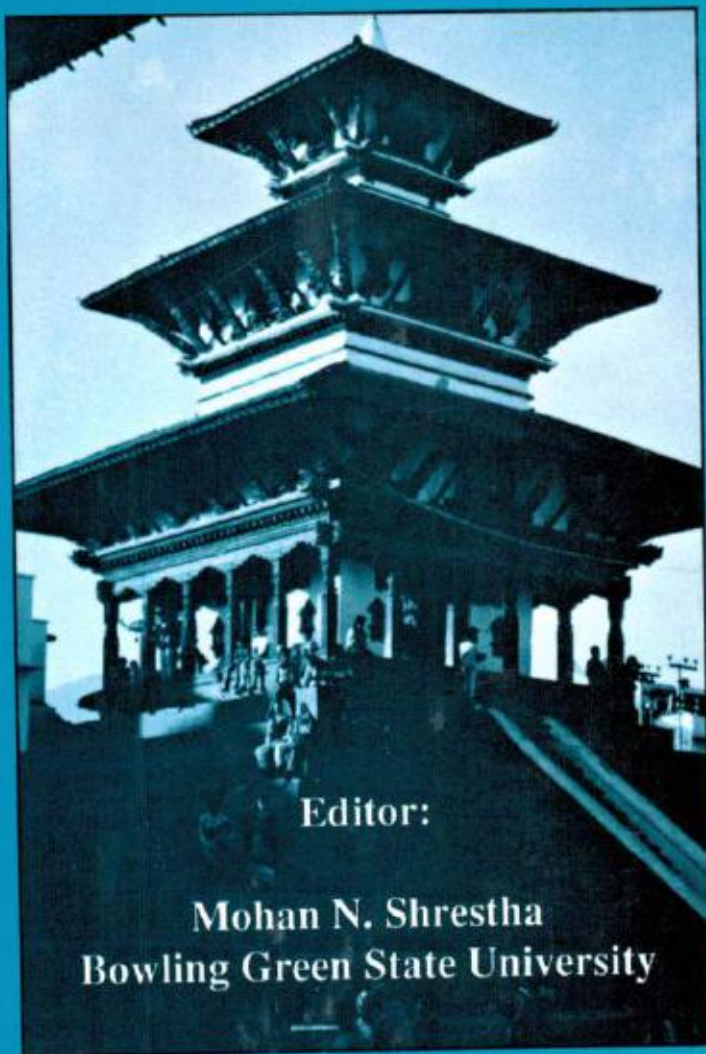


Nepalese American Perspectives:

Proceedings of the First National Convention of
Nepalese and Friends of Nepal in North America



Editor:

Mohan N. Shrestha
Bowling Green State University

Association of Nepalese in Midwest America, University
of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, USA.

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[Photograph by Mohan N. Shrestha]

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**Nepalese American Perspectives: Proceedings of the First National
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Contents

Section A: Opening Remarks:

Welcome Speech <i>Prahlad D. Pant</i>	1
Welcome Address <i>Mohan Man Sainju</i>	3
Keynote Address <i>Leon J. Weil</i>	7

Section B: Nepal

Constitutional Development in Nepal: A Brief Survey <i>Jaya Raj Acharya</i>	17
The Politics of Ideologies in the Context of Nepalese Political Development <i>Pramod K. Mishra</i>	27
Nepal's Political Transition and Democratic Aspirations of Non-Resident Nepalese <i>Kamal R. Pande</i>	37
Prospects of Nepalese Democracy <i>Sukhdev Shah</i>	41
Why Should Democracy Succeed in Nepal? A Reflection on the Political Change in 1990 <i>Jagdish Pokharel</i>	47
State and Religion in Nepal <i>Sunanda Putuwar</i>	51

Distribution of Languages in Nepal <i>Daya R. Shakya</i>	65
Higher Education in Nepal - Major Issues <i>Madhav Sharma and Charles B. Klasek</i>	85
Alternatives and Choices of a Minority Group: A Study of the Satar <i>Premalata Ghimire</i>	97
Partnership Between Indigenous and Modern Medicine in Nepal <i>Janardhan Subedi</i>	109
Section C: Nepalese Americans	
Nepalese in America - A Historical Perspective <i>Mohan N. Shrestha</i>	115
Social Life of Nepalese Immigrants in the United States <i>Pratima Upadhyay</i>	125
Becoming an American <i>Bishnu Poudel</i>	137
Problems of Nepalese Community in America <i>Dibya Hada</i>	141
Growing up in America: A Nepalese Parent's Perspective <i>Jagadish Upadhyay</i>	145
International Nepalese Community: Its Potential Contribution in the Development of Nepal <i>Ambika Prasad Adhikari</i>	147
Section D: Conclusion	
National Convention - A Synthesis <i>Prahlad D. Pant</i>	155
Presentation of the Resolution <i>Tika Thapa</i>	159
Appendix	
Program Outline	163

Welcome Speech

Prahlad D. Pant

ANMA President
(1990-92)
and
Convention Chair

On behalf of the Convention Organizing Committee and the Association of Nepalese in Midwest America (ANMA), I am pleased to welcome you to this First National Convention of Nepalese and Friends of Nepal in North America. The first national convention has been organized with two primary goals:

1. To provide a forum for intellectual interaction among Nepalese and friends of Nepal in North America; and
2. To explore and initiate ways for collective participation in areas of mutual interests in the future.

The preparation for this convention began about twenty-one months ago, to be exact in August 1989 when a group of people from the Association of Nepalese in Midwest America met in Cincinnati, Ohio and began preliminary discussions on the planning and organization of a national convention. In January 1990, I visited Washington and discussed the ideas of a national convention with several individuals in the area, all of whom, I believe, are now sitting in this auditorium. Finally, as a result of the cooperation received from a large number of individuals and seven associations and societies in the United States, this convention has been, for many of us, just like a dream come true.

This convention holds a special importance for all Nepalese who live in this great country, the United States of America. Nepal is a small country. The Nepalese population in the United States is small too; perhaps a total of 3000 persons scattered in fifty states. Obviously, it is a very small fraction of America's total ethnic population. Remember the saying "Small is beautiful." We want to show the American public that, "Small is not only beautiful, it is also the best."

We have designed the convention in such a way that it provides you with a good mix of opportunities for intellectual interactions, discussions, and social and cultural activities. In order to encourage the maximum participation, the registration fee for this convention has been

2 Nepalese American Perspectives

subsidized by the Association of Nepalese in Midwest America and offered as a package deal for two days that covers every event except the movie. If you have not already registered, I urge you to do as soon as this session is over. Our volunteers are standing by for any assistance that you may need.

Again, I welcome you to this convention from the bottom of my heart. I am sure, with your cooperation, we will have a successful convention -- the first ever to be held in North America.

Thank you very much.

Welcome Address¹

Mohan Man Sainju

Ambassador
to the USA

Convention Chairman Dr. Pant, my distinguished colleague and friend Ambassador Leon Weil, Dr. Shrestha, distinguished presidents of sister organizations, distinguished editor representative of Friends of Nepal, and distinguished friends, ladies and gentlemen. Please allow me to record my appreciation for the invitation to speak in this important first plenary session of this convention. Also, as a resident of Washington, DC allow me to extend a hearty welcome to all of you who have traveled long distances to attend this convention. We are particularly grateful that many of you could spare the time and joined us last evening at the reception.

This National Convention and its importance need not be repeated and highlighted. The organizers have explicitly identified its goals why this National Convention has been organized. I must say, the timing of this National Convention has been most appropriate, because back home in Nepal we ourselves are going through a dramatic transition: a transition toward democracy, a revival of multi-party democracy and the institutionalization of a constitutional monarchy in the country. Just recently, on 12 May, the national election was concluded and the Nepalese people have clearly given their choice as to who should represent them. They have also reminded the social scientists all over the world, who have kept saying that illiteracy, ignorance and poverty do not help democracy, that provided the opportunity, even poor and illiterate people can make a correct decision and can contribute to the democratization of a country.

Nepal's election, the way it was handled, the ways it went through and the way, I think, the results are coming are clear indications of the political maturity of the Nepalese people. I would not like to dwell on that because we have an excellent friend of Nepal, Ambassador Leon Weil, who himself was one of the six distinguished international observers to observe the election and the present Nepalese situation. We

¹ This address was transcribed from a recorded tape -- Ed.

4 Nepalese American Perspectives

are going to hear him in this plenary session. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the sister organizations including ANMA (Association of Nepalese in Midwest America), which is the principal organizer of this convention for their excellent work in their respective areas.

I must say, since I came to the United States, I had the privilege and honor of participating in almost all the annual Nepalese conferences. I not only have had the opportunity of meeting the Nepalese community but also have benefited from their interaction in these sessions. The newsletters and the different projects, such as the cultural heritage complex, the scholarship fund, or the project on Nepalese immigrants in the United States are some examples of the commendable work by the different organizations. I would like to say that all of you need to be congratulated for the wonderful work that you are doing.

The Nepalese community as a whole also needs to be congratulated because of its moral support for the democratization process in Nepal. I think the principal issues that are before the Nepalese community in this country are manifold. I would not like to go into each of these issues, but one of the principal issues is enhancing our bilateral relations. Our relations with the United States and Canada have been excellent for years. Both countries have lent support since the initial days of Nepal's emergence toward modernization. Since the early 1950's, these countries were always open to help Nepal's development efforts. Now, we would like to go beyond that. We want to promote Nepal. We want to let our American friends know what Nepal is, what Nepalese people are like, and to inform them of Nepal's cultures and traditions. We want to encourage them to visit Nepal so that they will better appreciate the country and its people. We would like to see our relationship of donor and recipient be translated into a trade relationship, and economic collaboration, so that the new technology, the capital, the know-how, and the management talent of this country could be of benefit to Nepal. We are not talking in terms of charity, we are talking in terms of mutual benefits. Enterprising investors, trades people and business people are all invited to Nepal. It is as an area of economic collaboration where they themselves can benefit and at the same time they can also contribute to Nepal's development.

America's Nepalese community can also contribute in pursuing this course. We have an emerging Nepalese community that is becoming economically strong. It can contribute by starting new economic ventures, economic collaborations and new capital investments in Nepal. This transfer of new technology and new capital to Nepal can greatly help the development process in the country.

Welcome Address 5

As I said, bilateral relations have been excellent. The United States has been one of the countries that has always supported an independent, stable and prosperous Nepal. Our Nepalese desire of becoming an independent and proud nation has always been supported by this country. This was one of the reasons why in 1983 the United States supported Nepal's proposal of declaring itself as a zone of peace. Today, 116 countries have supported this proposal.

I had a very interesting experience here in America. When I went to the State Department, one official told me: "Mr. Ambassador, the field is open. You should go yourself and talk to the people. You are most welcome to contact any community in the society." In how many countries can you have that kind of freedom? In this country it is possible. I urge the Nepalese community to help develop contacts so that bilateral relations can be further enhanced in more concrete ways. I know that there are Nepalese who can contact governors of many states. I have just heard that a president of one of the sister organizations has been designated as the chairman of an ethnic commission in a mayor's cabinet. I think that is a matter of special privilege and a matter of special satisfaction to the Nepalese community. I know that there are many Nepalese in this country who can contact senators, congressmen, governors, mayors and the Secretary of Commerce to promote both bilateral economic relations and academic relations between Nepal's Tribhuvan University and various educational institutions of this country. I know by my own experience that universities here are very excited about establishing such relations. I have talked to officials of Cornell University and Texas A & M University. They all have shown interest in academic collaborations. If we contact other such institutions in this country, there may be nothing but goodwill for Nepal. I hope that with your capacity, and your contacts, Nepal can benefit from these institutional linkages in the future.

So, in the final analysis, what I really would like to urge you to do is to also think in terms of cultural heritage. As Nepalese immigration to the United States is increasing every year, a younger generation that has been completely brought up in this country is also growing. They should always be reminded of Nepal and the Nepalese culture. This is a great country where despite being American you are allowed to preserve your own culture; you are encouraged to preserve your identity and to develop your own personality. So, this is a land of opportunity where these things are possible. I hope that with conventions like this the Nepalese communities and its organizations can be of tremendous help.

We all are aware that Peace Corps volunteers have been our informal and unofficial ambassadors in this country. They have been doing great things for Nepal. They have nothing but goodwill for Nepal. They are a very active group in the United States. Similarly, I also know

6 Nepalese American Perspectives

that many Americans have gone to Nepal, stayed there for different assignments, and bring back nothing but the desire to help the country. The best example is the principal speaker we have this morning, Ambassador Leon Weil. He was there as an ambassador for three years, but he has been a permanent ambassador in the United States who has nothing but a feeling of goodwill and always a concern for the betterment of the Nepalese people. Finally, I say that the climate is a most suited one now because of the democratization process back home, the commitment to human rights and the strong desire to develop the country. The opportunity is before us. What is needed perhaps is the will to do this and do this unitedly.

I thank you very much.

Keynote Address

Leon J. Weil

*US Ambassador
to Nepal*

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It's really a very special honor for me to have been asked to be the keynote speaker for this First National Convention of Nepalese and Friends of Nepal in North America.

What's special about this meeting, which I hope will be the first of many, is that it, for the first time, brings together many people and groups throughout North America, who share a love for Nepal. Some here are Nepalese by birth and heritage. Others are non-Nepalese who, at some point in their lives, developed ties with Nepal. What all of us have in common is deep concern and high hopes for the future of the country and its wonderful people.

We meet at a decisive moment in Nepal's history. I have just returned from serving as a United States observer of the first truly democratic national elections in Nepal since 1959. Our mission, as well as observer missions from over 20 other countries, unanimously concluded that, with minor exceptions, "the election was conducted in a manner fair, free and open, enabling the full expression of the will of the people." As you know, the election produced quite a few surprises, especially in the Kathmandu Valley. Many leading political personalities, including the Prime Minister himself, were defeated. I am also thankful to add, looking back on the tragedy we have just seen in India, that the elections in Nepal were conducted in a relatively peaceful environment.

It is not my purpose here to comment on Nepali politics except to say that the principles of political democracy have been firmly established. All Nepalese can and should take pride in this fact. But now let us put politics aside, and talk about the policies that will guide Nepal's future.

Four years ago, while America's Ambassador to Nepal, I made a speech to the Kathmandu Rotary Club. Some of you may have heard of

8 Nepalese American Perspectives

it. It was, in essence, a critique of Nepal's economic strategies. At that time, I said:

- that Nepal needed a more realistic economic strategy;
- that it needed to compensate for the lack of a strong resource base with policies geared to attract investment, encourage local business, and promote economic development;
- that, while others could help, it was up to Nepal's leaders to make the hard choices needed to get this process started; and
- that, without such a process, any level of assistance from outside would not really help very much.

My speech was controversial. It provoked intense debate. Some people, especially in the old National Panchayat, felt it was "undiplomatic." Others, speaking more privately, expressed appreciation that a foreign diplomat would say publicly some of what many Nepalese had been saying confidentially to us, and to one another.

Let me say several things about it. First, it reflected my own thoughts, and also to a great extent, the considered concerns of my government. Second, I believe that its analysis of Nepal's economic situation in 1987 was correct. Third, it laid some issues on the table that had not been there before, and the ensuing discussion was valuable.

I said at that time: "True friendship, I have always believed, is best served by candor. Good friends talk, they communicate. They do not conceal their differences, but they talk about the differences on the basis of equality and frankness." I am speaking today, as I did in 1987, as a friend. I am going to be just as frank as I was then.

First of all, I applaud the arrival of political democracy in Nepal. I applaud the courage of those who stood up to be counted. I salute the wisdom of those who wrote Nepal's Constitution affirming that sovereignty is derived from and resides in the people. Thomas Jefferson expressed this same basic idea over 200 years ago--that governments, instituted to secure basic rights of all the people, derive their just powers from the consent of the governed. Many in Nepal have argued for years that real economic growth in Nepal could not take place unless the political system was first transformed, made more democratic and accountable to the people.

Well, freedom and democracy have now arrived. The fundamental question facing Nepal today is: will the political freedom so dramatically affirmed by the new Constitution and again by the elections two weeks ago be followed by economic freedom? Or will Nepal see a continuation of the same policies that have stifled growth, discouraged private initiative, and prevented the nation from moving forward?

We live in a bewildering new world—one in which old assumptions, and even the vocabulary itself, have been turned upside down. The term "conservative" is now being applied to old-line Stalinists and Leninists who still believe, for some reason, in the concentration of political and economic power in an all-embracing state—although "reactionary" is the correct term for those people who are being left behind by history.

Who, today, are the revolutionaries? That word is now applied to a mix of liberals, former communists, former socialists, and millions of just plain folks, who have said "enough!" to the prescriptions of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and joined the worldwide battle for freedom:

- A former playwright who now heads Czechoslovakia;
- German students, betrayed by the promises of East German Communism just as their fathers and grandfathers were by the promises of Hitler's National Socialism, who ripped down the Berlin Wall;
- Chinese youth who battled tanks and guns in Tien An Men Square;
- A former labor leader who is the President of Poland, and
- Russian mineworkers who struck not just for better working conditions, but for an end to communism.

These are today's new revolutionaries. Also in this category are the teachers, doctors, students, government workers, and politicians of Nepal who, a little over a year ago, put their jobs and their lives on the line so they and others could have a better life. Their efforts were no less courageous, and their objective no less just. While the system they opposed had a different ideology, its main features were similar: an entrenched oligarchy and bureaucracy that was neither willing to share power nor to use it effectively to promote the welfare of the nation.

So what has happened in Nepal, clearly, is one part of the broader world revolution—a transformation so profound, and so important, that we can barely keep up with the pace of events, much less

10 Nepalese American Perspectives

understand all of their implications. Let me offer some examples of what I mean:

— The relationship between what we used to call "the two superpowers" has evolved from rivalry to a large measure of genuine cooperation on global issues.

— A true revolution, both political and economic, has swept across Central Europe from Poland to Albania, while in Western Europe we have seen the steady march toward economic union and possible political confederation.

— Old alliances have fragmented and new coalitions--for example, in the Gulf War--have emerged.

— In country after country in Latin America, from Chile to Mexico, political liberalism has been followed by innovative policies that foster entrepreneurship and market forces.

— There are bewildering new relationships in East Asia: a dialogue between North and South Korea; unprecedented links between China and Taiwan; top-level Soviet-Japanese talks; the opening of a Chinese Embassy in Seoul.

— Vietnam, long in the tragic grip of orthodox Communism, is now relaxing political controls, seeking Western investment, and introducing progressive economic liberalization.

— A whole new group of Asian states--including Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia--are making strong bids to join the original East Asian "tigers."

— Singapore--a tiny island state with almost no natural resources--has become an economic power in the region.

— Thailand is booming--attracting 20 times as much foreign investment last year as India.

— Malaysia, a country with fewer people than Nepal, has become a dynamic growth center based mostly on sound economic policies, skilled labor and skillful penetration of foreign markets.

Looking at South Asia, Nepal's neighbors have, over recent years, posted steady economic growth figures, which for the most part have averaged four to six percent. By comparison, for 1988-89 and 1989-90, Nepal's real GDP (Gross Domestic Product) growth was a mere 2.3% and two percent respectively--as against an annual population growth of

2.7 %. I realize, of course, that the trade and transit dispute with India hit Nepal hard, but even prior to that, Nepal's rate of economic growth compared poorly to other countries in the region. That pattern has not changed.

— Bangladesh, which had a 6.2 percent growth rate last year, has undertaken a program to aggressively recruit foreign investment, privatize many state corporations, liberalize its economic policies, and set up Export Processing Zones.

— Sri Lanka similarly has abandoned the statist policies of the past, and despite the insurgency in the north and east, it is making impressive strides in economic development. Government red tape is being slashed and the government payroll is being reduced, former bureaucrats are leaping at new opportunities in the rapidly growing private sector. Investors from Japan, Korea, Europe and the United States are responding to Colombo's invitation to join in business partnerships, and the respected Templeton Emerging Markets Fund has begun investing in shares listed on the Colombo Stock Exchange.

One lesson that emerges from this is clear: there is no way to separate the quest for political freedom from the quest for economic freedom. Nowhere in today's world have people gained political power only to impose new economic burden and regulations upon themselves. Political democracy is contagious. So is economic democracy.

None of the countries I have mentioned have abandoned an important role for the central government, nor have they turned their backs on their social responsibilities. All of them are committed, and properly so, to ensuring education, health care, and other basic services. All of them have also adopted, or are adopting, policies aimed at freeing the individual to make his own economic decisions, opening up the marketplace so that local business has a decent chance to prosper and to grow, protecting private property, and creating a buoyant economy that can both sustain essential government services and provide a foundation for sustained growth.

Look at the American success story. The United States in the late 18th century had recently freed itself from colonial rule and, although it had a good resource base, had a weak government, was nearly bankrupt, and had a currency no other nation valued. It had virtually no infrastructure. It had received some foreign military assistance but no development aid whatsoever. Its roads, bridges, industries and farms had to be built by its citizens. And those citizens were from the lowest or poorest classes of society of the world at that time. Many of them were poorly educated refugees from other lands, some forced to leave their native countries as undesirables. But our nation grew prosperous and

12 Nepalese American Perspectives

powerful. The secret, I think, is not what this nation's government decided to do so much as the ways in which it restricted its own powers. It deliberately limited and balanced the powers of the central government, and reserved a whole range of political and civil liberties to the individual citizen, including property rights.

I do not want to overstate the case. We had space, relative freedom from foreign influence, and impressive resources to draw upon. But the vital lesson remains: no country--rich or poor, large or small--has prospered, nor can prosper, without utilizing the genius of its individual citizens, and allowing them the political and economic scope to achieve what they will.

You who are at this convention are the people who know this best of all. It is the reason many of you came to this country. It is the reason that many of you have stayed. It is a vital lesson that those of you who return to Nepal will take back. I hope all Nepalese, and Nepalese Americans, in the weeks to come, will find ways to communicate with your new leaders back home. I hope you will share with them the relevant lessons of your life here. And I hope you agree with me that the essence of economic growth and prosperity--whether in Nepal, the United States, or anywhere else--is not how to divide the existing pie, but how to make that pie larger.

I read, several weeks ago, a summary of the platforms of some of Nepal's principal political parties. They, of course, vary a good deal among themselves and like party platforms in our own country they talk much more about goals than about how to achieve them. I did notice there was much discussion about how resources and wealth should be allocated and very little about how Nepal should go about creating *new* wealth. As an American and a friend of Nepal, I must say that in my view this kind of approach will not achieve the kind of economic growth that is necessary in order to meet the people's rightful expectations.

We should be clear about the economic system which Nepal has had, and which it still has. It is a highly centralized system that has relied heavily on planning. It is a system that concentrates power and resources in the hands of bureaucrats and officials in Kathmandu, paying little more than lip service to decentralization and local government. It is a system that daily confronts its own entrepreneurs with red tape, bureaucratic inconsistency, and delay--not to mention the burden of so-called "commissions" to smooth the way through the maze of government regulations. It is a system characterized by inefficient state enterprises, subsidies, unrealistic prices, and a huge gap between law and daily practice. It is not, by any reasonable definition, a free market system. Yet, in Nepal's political dialogue today, one hears warnings of the evils of capitalism. Where is the logic in criticizing the free market

system that has brought unparalleled prosperity to much of the planet, but one that has never had a fair trial in Nepal itself?

The new political situation in Nepal opens some tremendous economic opportunities, if the new leadership in partnership with the private sector has the will and imagination to seize upon them. Here are some specific ones that occur to me:

- There has been talk for years about new projects for the development of tourism, yet relatively little has been done. There are ways, I am convinced, to build this sector as a big revenue earner while at the same time protecting Nepal's culture from undue foreign influences. There are tremendous possibilities for value-added products both for Nepal's domestic market and for export to neighboring countries.
- Nepalese can and should look for ways, as have entrepreneurs elsewhere in the region, to expand the garment industry. The key will be identifying niches in the United States and other Western markets that are not covered by quotas, and quickly and imaginatively pursuing those export opportunities.
- The experience of one United States firm based in Kathmandu has proved to me that Nepalese can--and should--aggressively market Nepal's potential as a source of software and data entry products. Nepal has the human skills and labor cost benefits to allow it to be very competitive in this field.
- The whole field of agro-business remains largely untouched. This too, if foreign partners can be found, holds out huge opportunities.
- Finally, Nepal's hydropower resources are immense. One of our keenest observers said some years ago that the key to Nepal's overall economic development lay in a coherent, comprehensive strategy to develop and market its hydropower. But, he predicted, this could never happen until there was a strong, popularly based government that would have the confidence to make the tough decisions, and undertake the hard international bargaining, needed in this area. That door is now, at long last, open--and much of Nepal's future success will

14 Nepalese American Perspectives

depend on a solid working partnership between government, international lending institutions, and local and international business.

These are just some of my own ideas. I am sure that those of you here have many other good ones. It does seem to me, though, that to the extent that Nepal's new policies permit, those involved in the business world, and who have ties to Nepal, should be asking: What are the opportunities? How can I get involved--with ideas, with energy, with capital--in helping the new Nepalese economy get off the ground? I'd like to close with a few basic propositions for your consideration:

1. While I was Ambassador, Nepal had no comprehensive, effective strategy for economic growth. It still doesn't.
2. The new political order in Nepal--with a government of the people's representatives firmly in charge--makes the development and implementation of such a strategy, for the first time, a real possibility.
3. This will be a daunting, terribly difficult task, demanding of Nepal's elected leaders the utmost in courage, skill, and intelligence. Probably the greatest challenge they will face will be the expectations of the people that rapid economic progress will quickly follow political change and the all-too-human tendency to sacrifice long-term needs to short-term expediencies.
4. Much as it pains me to say this, nowhere is it written that Nepal will succeed in this task. Nepalese are keenly aware that Nepal is not a country whose prosperity, or even survival, is assured. Failure is, therefore, an option--and the wrong policies will make it a certainty.
5. I believe that Nepal, which has always been able to count on the interest and financial support of much of the world community, can look even more confidently to that source in the future now that it has fully embraced representative government. But, this is an important qualification, sympathy for Nepal will be no substitute for effective domestic policies that promote real economic growth. Foreign assistance is limited. The competition from countries with market-oriented development policies for these resources is keen. Hence, more than ever before, the question for donors is: What

works? There is little donor interest in supporting statist, discredited economic strategies that have consistently produced poor results.

6. Finally and most importantly, if Nepal is to succeed in this task of constructing a comprehensive economic development strategy, the rest of us can offer our ideas but only the Nepalese can make it happen. New economic policies must be a home-grown product, reflecting as always the very special circumstances of geography and economy that have always shaped Nepal's options but also reflecting the real interests and aspirations of the Nepalese people.

Over the years, many Nepalese have come to America to study, to work, to live. Some have adopted this as their country; others retain Nepalese nationality. Many here are in this category, and all of you, in one way or another, have both responded to the American dream and contributed to it. I am sure that many young Nepalese of today, and their children will as you have done, seek educational and professional opportunities in the United States and in other countries. But I also hope:

- that on some future day every boy or girl born in Nepal will find, without ever leaving home, the opportunity to develop his or her skills to the fullest;
- that every citizen will be guaranteed fundamental political, civil and economic property rights;
- that Nepal's friends around the world will have the opportunity, within a confident, purely Nepalese framework, to make, through investment and joint ventures, their contribution to the country's economic development; and
- that such policies in Nepal, over time, will allow the people to achieve that measure of economic independence and prosperity which they so richly deserve.

President Bush said, not so long ago: "The most powerful engine for economic development and growth--in fact, the only engine that works--is the entrepreneur, large and small. And entrepreneurship is a product not of massive aid packages, but of free and open economies that do not carry crushing burdens of taxation and regulation and that maintain the rule of law, including contract and property law." In

16 Nepalese American Perspectives

countries around the world--in Africa and Asia and Europe and Latin America--this hard lesson has been learned. We've seen this massive, historic, shift toward open markets and open societies.

What I hope, most of all, as a friend of Nepal, is that its new leaders will avoid policies that so many other nations, after decades of bitter experience, have at long last abandoned and instead create an environment that will safeguard Nepal's sovereignty and lead her people toward prosperity and sustained growth.

Pages 17 – 154 are papers as outlined in the Table of Contents.
Currently they are only available in print format.

National Convention -- A Synthesis

Prahlad D. Pant

The First National Convention of Nepalese and Friends of Nepal in North America is almost coming to an end except for a few, but important, social and cultural events that are scheduled for later this evening. I believe it is appropriate at this time to spend a few minutes to recall the goals that we had established before the convention and to examine where we should be heading in the future.

As described in the program, the first national convention had been organized with two primary goals:

- (1) To provide a forum for intellectual interaction among Nepalese and Friends of Nepal in North America; and
- (2) To explore and initiate ways for collective participation in areas of mutual interest in the future.

As you know, the Association of Nepalese in Midwest America took the lead in the planning and organization of the convention. Almost twenty-one months ago, when ANMA began to discuss preliminary ideas about the national convention, at least two questions were asked:

- (1) Why is ANMA, a regional association, organizing a national convention?, and
- (2) Why is the convention being held in the Washington, DC area?

The answers to these questions were simple. First, there exist seven Nepalese associations and societies in the United States. (Recently, we have learned that a new sister organization called America-Nepal Society of Southwest has been born in Texas.) Personally, I anticipate that more Nepalese associations and societies will be born in the future as the number of Nepalese immigrants increases in different regions of the country. These regional associations and societies form the backbone of the Nepalese community in this vast country, the United States of America. However, there are many social, cultural, and governmental

156 Nepalese American Perspectives

issues that are common among the Nepalese population as a whole. For instance, how do we preserve Nepalese identity and culture in the United States? How do we contribute to the development of Nepal? There are many issues that have no geographical boundaries and may be equally applicable to individuals or families living in New York, or Ohio, or California. Hence, we determined that the regional character of the Association of Nepalese in Midwest America (AMA) should not stop it from organizing a national convention in cooperation with the existing Nepalese associations and societies.

Once we decided to organize a national convention, the answer to the second question, that is, why the convention is being held in the Washington, DC area, was simple. We believed that a national convention should be held in the nation's capital or its vicinity.

Now going back to each of the original goals of the national convention, I believe that we have accomplished the first goal, that is, the goal of providing a forum for intellectual interaction among Nepalese and Friends of Nepal in North America. Over these two days, we learned from many speakers about the recent political developments in Nepal, Nepalese identity and culture in the United States, immigration issues and several other issues confronting the Nepalese population in the United States. Now a challenge before us is to continue the process of discussion and interaction in the future.

I believe that the second goal, that is, the goal of exploring and initiating ways for collective participation in the future, has been fulfilled too. We have proved that all existing Nepalese associations and societies can be successfully brought together to a common platform for a common cause. Again, a challenge before us is to continue this process in the future.

Historically, most Nepalese have come to the United States as a professional, or a student, or a relative. Many forward-looking Nepalese professionals enter into and settle in the United States, without any particular preference for one geographical location or the other. Many Nepalese students come here for higher education and decide to live permanently in this country upon the completion of their studies. In general, the choice of a city or a state by Nepalese for their new homes in the United States has been mostly determined by job opportunities. Personally, I came to Cincinnati, and for that matter to the Midwest, about eleven years ago, purely for a professional reason. However, I always consider myself a member of the large Nepalese community in the United States. What difference does it make whether we live in the Northeast, or Midwest, or South, or West?

National Convention—A Synthesis 157

I am pleased and satisfied that, with the cooperation of everyone involved in the process, we have fulfilled the two goals of the national convention that we had set out to accomplish twenty-one months ago. I invite you and challenge you to collectively continue this process in the future for the benefit of the Nepalese community in the United States.

Presentation of the Resolution

Tika Thapa

Mr. president, His Excellency the Nepalese Ambassador to the United States and Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is the second full day of our convention. I hope that you are finding this convention as interesting, provocative and useful to our Nepalese American community as I am. I also hope that the friendship and fellowship you are enjoying now will be remembered long after we depart from here.

The Nepalese American community is undergoing a period of transition and change, a statement that I believe cannot be challenged. Slowly but surely the Nepalese community is growing into adulthood. It is only natural to experience growing pain. Just in the last few years, several Nepalese organizations have been formed. As the population grows we can expect many more. I see organizations imbued with new enthusiasm and excitement wanting to involve themselves in community services both here in the United States and in Nepal. I applaud the enthusiasm and efforts of all the organizers. I salute the noble cause in which you have involved yourselves.

When we speak of the Nepalese American community, we often ask: How big is this community? How old is this community? My guess will be less than 2500 individuals in all. I would also guess that the first group of Nepalese arrived in the United States in the early 1950s.

Given the fact that the Nepalese community is fairly new in this country and the group of Nepalese Americans is small, our resources are limited- both in terms of man power and finance. This is the reality. In the last few months some individuals have spoken to me and others have written suggesting the establishment of professional groups; cultural groups; youth groups, a Nepalese American retirement community; Nepalese American women's groups, and so on. I am appreciative of all the excellent suggestions and it would be wonderful to be able to form these groups.

160 Nepalese American Perspectives

Although our needs are similar to the needs of other communities in America, we do not have the numbers to justify a proliferation of these groups. It makes sense to form an organization when a particular need exists. Then it receives full support from the community. What other organizations have accomplished in 50, 100, or even 200 years, we are attempting to do the same in a relatively a short period of time. I have no doubt in my mind that we will be a successful community as our population grows, and in no time we will be joining the ranks of more successful immigrants in this country. In order for us to achieve our desired objectives and goals, we must do some strategic planning. With sound planning, and sincere and strong support from the community at large, we will be successful.

In view of our small population, net-working among the various Nepalese associations and societies could be most conducive to achieve both short term and long term goals. Mobilizing our limited resources and know-how we could expedite the completion of the projects we want to accomplish. Collectively we can be a power house. No task will be insurmountable when we spread it among the various associations and societies. I am reminded of an old cliché -- united we stand, divided we fall. Therefore, cooperation and mutual trust among the Nepalese associations and societies are necessary. This cooperation will ultimately lead the Nepalese American community to a success that we can all be proud of. What is needed now is a broader base support from everyone. Then we can make a difference.

Therefore, if I may, I would like to submit the following resolution for your consideration. After the motion is seconded and discussed we will vote on it. Your support will help us get the job done and done well.

Now let me read the resolution.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the Nepalese American Community is fairly new in the American scene;

WHEREAS the Nepalese American Community is small and scattered throughout the Americas;

WHEREAS the different Nepalese Associations and Societies are new, relatively small and have limited resources;

WHEREAS the transition for Nepalese immigrants, students, visitors, and trainees, scholars, etc., can be painful and stressful;

WHEREAS the different Nepalese Associations and societies could pool their resources to address the common concerns and issues;

BE IT, THEREFORE, RESOLVED that on this occasion of the First National Convention of Nepalese and Friends of Nepal in North America held at the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland on May 25-26, 1991, organized by the Associations of Nepalese in Midwest America in cooperation with America-Nepal Society, Washington, DC.; America-Nepal Friendship Society, New York; America-Nepal Society of California; Nepalese Community of Greater Boston; Nepal Association of Greater Kansas City, and Association of Nepal in the Americas, that a permanent council known as "NEPALESE AMERICAN COUNCIL" be established for the purpose of coordinating and facilitating activities among the various Nepalese organizations to avoid duplication of effort to mobilize their limited resources and know-how; to maintain and foster Nepalese identity and cultural heritage; to further academic and professional advancement; to explore business opportunities and contribute to the overall development of Nepal.

BE IT, FURTHER RESOLVED that an "ad hoc committee" be established for the purpose of writing the by-laws of the "NEPALESE AMERICAN COUNCIL" comprising of one representative each from the above named organizations and that these seven representatives may invite additional members to the "ad hoc committee" representing the broadest spectrum of Nepalese Community in the Americas.

Approved by the general membership and the representatives of the following associations on May 26, 1991

America-Nepal Society, Washington, DC.
America-Nepal Friendship Society, New York, NY
America-Nepal Society of California, Los Angeles, CA
Nepalese Community of Greater Boston, Boston, MA
Nepal Association of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City, KS
Association of Nepalese in Midwest America, Chicago, IL
Association of Nepal in the Americas, Corning, NY (abstained).

Program Outline

**The First National Conference of Nepalese in North America
University of Maryland, College Park, May 25-26, 1991**

Conference Organizing Committee

Representatives of the participating organizations:

- Prahlad D. Pant, Association of Nepalese in Midwest America -- Convention Chairman
- Mohan N. Shrestha, Association of Nepalese in Midwest America, Program Chairman
- Ram Malakar, America Nepal Society, Washington DC.
- Dibya Hada and Tulsi Maharjan, America Nepal Friendship Society, New York
- Jitendra Amatya and Veda Joshi, America Nepal Society, California
- Amar Giri, Association of Nepal in the Americas
- Mahendra Shakya, Nepalese Community in Greater Boston
- Tika Thapa, Nepal Association of Greater Kansas City
- Cathy Marona, Friends of Nepal

Chairpersons and Members of the subcommittees (in alphabetical order):

Accommodations:	Krishna Nirola
Children:	Vijaya Shah, Ram Bashyal
Cultural Program:	Tulsi Maharjan, Sashi Dhital, Dig Bahadur Tamang, Ram Malakar, Rita Nirola
Facilities:	Chintamani Lamichhane
Finance:	Padam Paudel Sohan Khatiwada, Dinesh Koirala, Janardan Subedi, Sharda Thapa
Food:	Ram Malakar, Vijaya Shrestha
Raffle:	Indira Koirala, Mahesh Rathi
Registration:	Sohan Khatiwada, Sharda Thapa, Suresh Baral
Resolutions:	Tika Thapa
Souvenir:	Dinesh Koirala, Khim Sharma, Pradeep Dhital
Students:	Baikuntha Sharma, Mahendra Shakya

All A.N.M.A. Executive committee members (ex-officio).

164 Nepalese American Perspectives

FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 24, 1991

6:30 P.M.

Reception by H.E. Dr. and Mrs. Mohan Man Sainju, Royal Nepalese Embassy

Place: 2730 34th Place, N.W. (off Massachusetts Avenue); 2nd house on the left; Near Washington Cathedral, Washington DC.

SATURDAY MORNING, MAY 25, 1991

8:30: A.M. Registration begins.
(Tea, coffee, and donuts will be available.)

10:00 A.M. -- 11:45 A.M., Hoff Theater

Session 1 -- Plenary Session

Introduction: MOHAN N. SHRESTHA, Program Chairman

Welcoming Remarks: PRAHLAD D. PANT, Chairman, Convention Organizing Committee and President, Association of Nepalese in Midwest America

Remarks by representatives of participating organizations:

RAM MALAKAR, President, America-Nepal Society, Washington, DC.

DIBYA HADA, President, America-Nepal Friendship Society, NY

JITENDRA AMATYA, President, America-Nepal Society, California

AMAR GIRI, Vice President, Association of Nepalis in the Americas

MAHENDRA SHAKYA, President, Nepalese Community of Greater Boston

TIKA THAPA, President, Nepal Association of Greater Kansas City

CATHY MARONA, Newsletter Editor, Friends of Nepal

Remarks by H.E. MOHAN MAN SAINJU, Royal Nepalese Ambassador to the United States.

Keynote Address: Honorable LEON J. WEIL, U.S. Ambassador to Nepal, 1984-1987.
Ambassador Weil will be returning after observing the May 12 national election in Nepal.

SATURDAY MIDDAY, MAY 25, 1991

11:45 A.M. - 1:30 P.M., Grand Ballroom

Luncheon (free for all registered participants)

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 25, 1991

1:30 P.M. - 3:00 P.M., Hoff Theater

Session 2 -- Recent Political Developments in Nepal

Moderator: ARUN SHARMA, Applied Magnetics Corporation, CA

Papers:

Constitutional Development in Nepal: A Brief Survey: JAYA RAJ ACHARYA, Georgetown University, District of Columbia

Prospects of Nepalese Democracy: SUKHDEV SHAH, Economist, Virginia

Economic Challenges for Future Leadership in Nepal: VISHWA SHUKLA, Ohio University, Ohio

Politics of Ideologies in The Context of Nepalese Political Development: PRAMOD K. MISHRA, Northern Illinois University, IL.

Why Should Democracy Succeed in Nepal: JAGADISH POKHAREL, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Massachusetts

3:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M. Break

166 Nepalese American Perspectives

3:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M., Hoff Theater

Session 3 -- Nepalese in America

Moderator: KHIM SHARMA, University of Cincinnati, Ohio

Papers:

Social Demography and the Nature of Social Life of Nepalese Immigrants in the U.S.: PRATIMA UPADHYAY, University of Connecticut, Connecticut

Nepal's Political Transition: Non-Resident Nepalese's Democratic Aspirations: KAMAL R. PANDE, Investment Analyst, New York

International Nepalese Community - Its Potential Contributions to The Development of Nepal: AMBIKA ADHIKARI, Harvard University, Massachusetts

Becoming an American: BISHNU POUDEL, President, Greater Vienna Chamber of Commerce, Virginia

SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 25, 1991

6:00 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

Buffet Dinner: hosted by America-Nepal Society, Washington DC
(President: Ram Malakar)
All participants are invited for the dinner.

Place: Off-campus -- to be announced during the convention

9:00 P.M. - 12:00 A.M., Hoff Theater

Nepalese movie specially brought from Nepal for the convention.
(At the time of the printing of this program, the movie had not yet arrived from Nepal. Please check at the registration desk for the latest information.)

Admission: \$5 for adults; \$2.50 for children under 10 years; and free for children under 6.
Tickets will be sold at the Registration Desk.

SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 26, 1991

7:30 A.M. Games & Sports for Early Risers (Bring your own shoes & shorts)
Meet in the motel lobby at 7:30 A.M.
Coordinator: Mahendra Shakya, President, Nepalese Community in Greater Boston

9:00 A.M. Registration continues
(Tea, coffee, and donuts will be available)

10:00 A.M. - 11:45 A.M. CONCURRENT SESSIONS

(a) Session 4 (Room 1137)--Nepalese Identity, Culture and Language
Moderator: PADAM PAUDEL, Past President, Association of Nepalese in Midwest America

Papers::

Growing Up in America - Parents' Perspectives: JAGADISH UPADHYAY, Virginia

State and Religion in Nepal: BHANTE SUNANDA PUTUWAR, President, Lumbini Vihara Society, District of Columbia

Problem of Nepalese Community in America: DIBYA HADA, President, America Nepal Friendship Society, New York

(b) Session 5 (Room 1139) -- Nepal: People, Culture, and Development

Moderator: JANARDAN SUBEDI, Miami University, Ohio

Papers:

Production Credit for Rural Women: An Instance of Credit Used as a Tool for Alleviating Poverty in Nepal: MEETA SAINJU, George Mason University, Virginia

Distribution of Languages in Nepal: DAYA R. SHAKYA, University of Oregon

Higher Education in Nepal - Major Issues: MADHAV SHARMA, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Illinois

168 Nepalese American Perspectives

Alternatives and Choices of A Minority Group: A Study of The Satar: PREMALATA GHIMIRE, Hartwick College, New York

B.P. Eye Foundation in Nepal: MADAN UPADHAYA,
Medical Institute, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

Towards An Integration of Modern Medicine and Indigenous Medicine in Nepal: JANARDAN SUBEDI, Miami University,
Ohio

SUNDAY MIDDAY, MAY 26, 1991

11:45 A.M. - 1:30 P.M., Grand Ballroom

Luncheon (free for all registered participants)

SUNDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 26, 1991

1:30 P.M. - 2:45 P.M., Hoff Theater

Session 6 -- Current Immigration/Visa Issues

Moderator: KRISHNA NIROLA, Washington Metropolitan
Transit Authority

Paper:

Nepalese in America - A Historical Perspective: MOHAN N.
SHRESTHA, Bowling Green State University, Ohio

Impacts of the New Immigration Act and Other Issues Concerning Nepalese Immigrants: ONKAR N. SHARMA, Attorney-at-law,
District of Columbia and Maryland

Impacts of the New Immigration Act for Non-Immigrant Nepalese in the U.S: KHAGENDRA GHARTI CHHETRI, Attorney-at-Law,
New York and President, Alliance for Democracy and Human Rights in Nepal, New York

Nepalese Constitution and Laws Concerning Immigrants/U.S. Citizens in Nepal: GIRIJA GAUTAM, Attorney-at-Law, New York and General Secretary, Alliance for Democracy and Human Rights in Nepal, New York

2:45 P.M. - 3:15 P.M.

Break

3:15 P.M. - 4:30 P.M., Hoff Theater

**Session 7 -- Concluding Session : Perspectives on the Future of
Nepalese Community in America**

Moderator: MOHAN N. SHRESTHA, Bowling Green State
University, Ohio

Remarks by representatives of cooperating organizations:

DIBYA HADA, America Nepal Friendship Society, New York

TULASI JOSHI/ARUN SHARMA/AMAR GIRI, Association of
Nepalis in the Americas

CATHY MARONA, Friends of Nepal

National Convention - A Synthesis: PRAHLAD D. PANT, Chairman,
Convention Organizing Committee

Resolutions: TIKA THAPA, Chairman, Resolutions Subcommittee

Concluding Remarks: MOHAN N. SHRESTHA, Program Chairman

4:30 P.M. - 5:30 P.M., Hoff Theater

Annual Business Meeting of the Association of Nepalese in
Midwest America (ANMA)

(Open to all convention participants)

170 Nepalese American Perspectives

SUNDAY EVENING, MAY 26, 1991

5:30 P.M. - 6:30 P.M., Grand Ballroom Lounge

Social Hour (Cash Bar)

6:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M., Grand Ballroom

Dinner (free for all registered participants)

8:30 P.M. - 10:30 P.M., Hoff Theater

Nepalese cultural program

Master of Ceremonies: TULSI MAHARJAN, Secretary,
America Nepal Friendship Society, New York

10:30 P.M. - 11:00 P.M., Hoff Theater

Awards, Recognition