

THE ARTS AND CREATIVE COMMUNITY OF NEPAL:

The challenge for Nepal of realising, respecting and mobilising this great yet poorly promoted and supported Living National Heritage resource

The historic ties between the UK and Nepal have been renowned in both nations for generations. It is a mere platitude to state the unique contribution of the Nepalese soldiery -- 'the Gurkhas' -- to the history of the British Army, and by extension that of the geo-political influence of pre and post imperial Britain of the past 200 years. The names 'Everest,' 'Mount Everest' enjoy an equivalent fame, with those of 'the North Face,' 'Mustang,' and 'Sherpa' having an almost comparable renown in the UK and the wider world.

May these associations between Nepal, the UK and the broader Western world long remain -- yet what of the present, and especially the future: this is what matters.

The bicentenary of the friendship between the peoples and nations of Nepal and the UK is approaching. This presents a historic opportunity of the greatest kind for both Kathmandu and London; an opportunity of enormous proportions for both countries and peoples, but a no less great challenge too. The latter concerns the urgent need to 'not travel down the usual paths of self-satisfied and complacent nostalgia,' but to look at the strengths of our two nations outside of the usual political and formal diplomatic relations contexts.

In other words, to be meaningful, and to deliver real results, the celebration of the bicentenary needs to focus rather upon the strengths and unique contributions to global civilisation and global citizenship of the peoples of our two lands. In this the arts in the broadest sense, and the creative communities of the two nations and peoples need to be and should be a prime focus of the bicentenary celebrations in both countries.

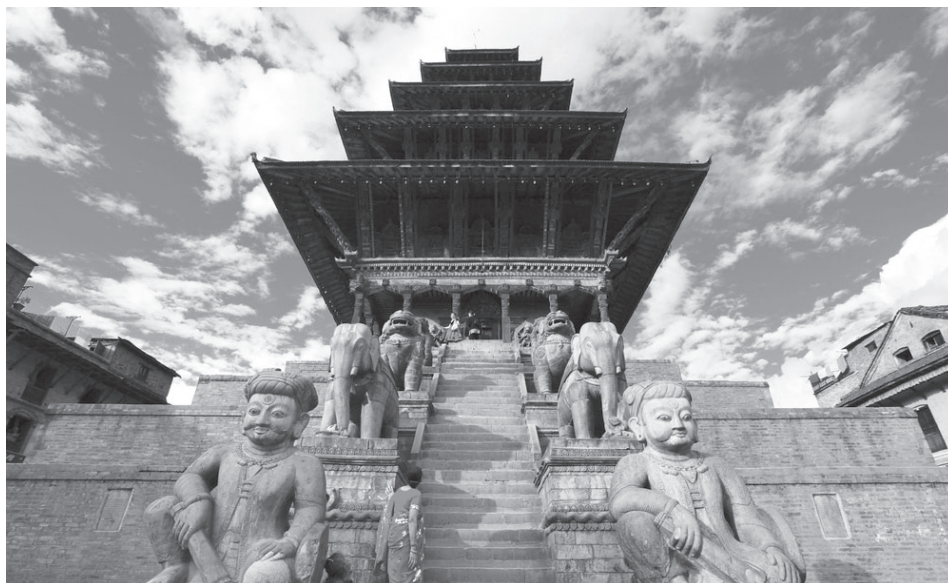
What is the most meaningful contribution that can be made to honourably represent the past 200 years from the UK side?

Is it the amount of foreign aid benignly bestowed upon one of the so called 'Third World's' poorest countries? Is it kind and sometimes slightly condescending words about the special contribution made by Nepalese soldiery -- the shedding of their blood and loss of life -- from the early 19th century to the present in the story of a Britain that has moved from being an imperial, to a global financial power?

Neither of these: it should be rather about 'people' and 'international amity' rather than formal international political and

name substantial parts of national economies. If they were removed it is not an understatement to say that the latter would be crippled, and a return to the old divisive nationalism of the pre IT age would very rapidly occur.

Arts driven culture (from traditional and religious forms to street art to fashion, popular music, theatre and dance), is therefore not a tertiary 'luxury item,' but a key component of the proper functioning of the global economy and by extension indispensable to positive and thriving international relations.



diplomatic gestures and mantra's. The global spiritual and cross-cultural language of communication that is found uniquely through the arts should deservedly be a prime focus of the bicentenary 'the Arts,' not 'the Art of War.' This is the big change that has taken place over the past decades: the introduction of social media has freed individuals and whole peoples to forge international friendship free of control and direction by political factors, as was prior to the social media and preceding e-communications revolution, the case.

No politically powerful nation has ever ignored its artistic heritage, and in the global economy of the early 21st century, culture -- and therefore the related creative arts which give culture material form -- unites under its

This reality is rarely stated explicitly by governments, not deliberately but by common oversight.

Nepal needs to be wary that it can no longer ignore its greatest human asset: its creative community. It should be looking at this in a more far-sighted and strategic way. It is not good enough to argue that the arts are not as important as 'overseas aid,' 'promotion of tourism,' or DFID US Aid and EU funded projects, for they link directly at a core level to the national economy in an enduring and very extensive way.

There are positive signs of change taking place and a re-evaluation of the role of the arts for both international prestige and economic benefit. During the past year there have been a couple of important arts related initiatives by the Embassy of Nepal,

London. In addition at a private business rather than broader community level there are regular Nepalese music festivals/concerts in the UK, and there has been a screening of a Nepalese movie at a British university.

However much more needs to be done. The UK Nepal Friendship Society, a UK based INGO with a chapter in Nepal is leading a large scale three year project. This initiative, the Nepal International arts Programme, will be starting from April 2014 when a start-up website will be complete, designed by a

team of the NHD students of the art department of one of South West England's largest colleges, the Bournemouth and Poole College and by the autumn have developed a strong social media support and potential campaigning dimension. The project aims to give a powerful voice to the whole of the creative community of Nepal, encompassing visual, performing and musical arts, and ranging from traditional culture related forms of art through to street art, fashion and popular music. Its agenda is to empower the Nepalese creative community and will follow British Council equality and inclusion values. A core feature of the initiative will be an online journal where experts and practitioners of the range of Nepalese arts will be able to provide articles. In addition a glossary of technical terms and information about the different art forms will become an invaluable 'one-stop' educational resource that will stimulate arts orientated cultural tourism; enabling visitors to Nepal to gain valuable knowledge of what they can see, visit and purchase before they travel. Finally, the project website will develop an online market where artists and whole communities engaged in ethnic culture related art can project directly to the world market.

Already in its formative stage, this bicentenary related initiative, which is being strongly encouraged by British Council Nepal Director Mr Brendan McSharry, is gaining the technical support of experts at a UK university, the Wave and Soundstorm South West England based arts and music organisations, as well the internationally renowned UK Nepalese Artist Govinda Sah Azad, Subash Thebe, and the Dorset Race Equality Council. In Nepal extensive interest and support is developing

including from the Lali Kala Arts Campus, Kathmandu, the Mithili Arts Gallery of Janakpur, renowned for its women's led art movement, and a range of individual artists including Sita Maiya Rajchal, Nepal's most renowned music therapist. In addition, one aspect of the project will link to spiritual/sacred art in conjunction with the intention to better raise awareness of Lumbini, the birthplace of the Lord Buddha.

The project's ethos is to be able to also highlight in the UK the incomparable richness in terms of spiritual motivation in artist creativity that exists in Nepal; it is intended to use the project online resources as cultural awareness material for dissemination in UK schools, and to connect these to schools in Nepal through interconnecting young people in both lands to share culture and awareness of the differences in what it means to practice art as a shared global phenomenon.

Such an initiative is a suitable tribute to the bicentenary of the historic relations between the two peoples and nations, and it is to be hoped will bring further leverage for the new government of Nepal and the Nepal Tourism Board, to reprioritise the arts of Nepal as a key living national treasure, as a resource that can be of much greater benefit to socio-economic development through cultural tourism.

Alan Mercel-Sanca
Vice chairperson
UK Nepal Friendship
Society
(www.uknfs.org)

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नेपाली तथा ईण्डियन खाना बनाउन पोस्ट एकजान हेड सेफ र एकजना तन्दुर सेफको आवश्यकता परेका हुंदा इच्छुकले निम्न ठेगानामा सम्पर्क गर्नुहोला ।

आकर्षक तलबका साथै खान र बस्नको व्यवस्था छ ।

सम्पर्क

कपिन्द्र रेग्मी, फोन नं: 01923772381, मोबाइल: 07958798539
Chursh Street, Rickmans Worth, Hardfordshire, Post code WD3 1JQ