Swimming in the "Cold Ashtray"[1]: Reading Tales of Migration to "the city of Nepal"[2]

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"Those who come
come with hearts full of fire,
with flames on their lips, but those who live here
live with hands full of ash
and eyes full of smoke.
Those who leave take with them
a bundle of extinguished beliefs,
the stub-ends of their dreams.
Such is this Valley of Four Passes
it's a cold ashtray,
this Valley of Four Passes.[3]

Nepali literature is relatively more recent than other literatures of the regions of Nepal, for instance Newari literature which is not less than five hundred years old. The oldest specimen of written Nepali is generally traced back to the thirteenth century royal edicts of western Nepal. These along with royal biographies and translations from Sanskrit into Nepali are regarded as early written documents in the Nepali language. Though these documents possess a historical value, their literary merit is very little. The most notable poet of Nepali literature, Bhanubhakta Acharya (1814-1868) is regarded as the founder-poet ('adi-kavi') of Nepali literature. As the first poet to shake off the influence of sophisticated Indian literatures, Bhanubhakta's *Ramayana* was shorn of heavily sanskritised language. However, the credit for the popularity of Bhanubhakta's *Ramayana* goes to another great writer of Nepali literature, Motiram Bhatta (1866-1896). Concerned about the

development of Nepali literature, Bhatta would hold discussions with his contemporaries in Benaras and Kathmandu. The ideas and themes of Nepali nationalism were conceptualised by thinkers and writers in Benares and Darjeeling. Since the eighteenth century there was a small Nepali quarter in Benares. In the 1880s, the movement for Hindi led by Harishchandra Bharatendu influenced Benares-based Nepalis to produce a literature of their own. In Darjeeling, the upper caste Nepalis (Bahuns) were present in smaller numbers, "but their language became the lingua franca, owned and passionately fought for by Darjeeling Nepalis."[4] Bhatta's poems broke away from the conventional devotional verse of the times and instead fostered an interest in 'ghazals' and 'shringar' poetry. He encouraged publishing projects. However, printing presses in Nepal were few, resulting in unstandardized spelling and grammar and a readership comprising an educated elite.

It was only in 1901, when Deva Shamsher Rana established *Gorkhapatra* (Gorkha Paper), that a forum for the publication of literary works was found. In fact, Gorkhapatra is credited with publishing the first prototypes of the modern Nepali short story and starting a trend towards social realism which finds its fruition in *Sharada*.[5] Chandra Shamsher Rana went on to establish *Gorkha Bhasha Prakashini Samiti* (Gorkha Language Publication Committee) in 1913. However, the committee started to censor literary works; books published in Nepal without the approval of the committee were levied heavy fines. This led to a sense of resentment against the committee and the strict Rana regime. Periodicals like the *Gorkhali* (1915) and *Gorkha Sansar* (1926) were significant in their contribution to the development of the Nepali short story. *Gorkha Sansar*, published from Dehradun, was an important forum for writers who could not publish in Nepal due to the strict censorship of the Rana regime.[6] In the 1930s, intellectuals who intended to escape censorship sought to publish their works in Benaras and Darjeeling in India. In 1934, came a turning point in Nepali publishing, which propelled its literature toward 'modernity'—the publication of *Sharada*, the first literary journal of Kathmandu.

"Naso" by Guruprasad Mainali published in *Sharada* in 1935 is regarded as the first modern short story. *Sharada* was a 'compromise' or middle ground between the censorious attitudes of the regime and the impatience felt by the intellectuals of the time. In 1938, *Nepali Sahitya Sammelan* (Darjeeling) published an anthology of short stories titled *Katha Kusum (Story Flower)* where contributions were made by major Nepali writers from across the border. *Katha Kusum* published works by all writers considered 'modern'—Lekhnath Paudyal, Balkrishna Sama, L.P. Devkota and B.P. Koirala, to name a few. It was in this decade that Nepali short story focussed upon issues relating to caste, gender, internal migration and the urban-rural divide. These 'modern' short stories were set in contemporary contexts and were realistic in representation. There was a rapid departure from the didactic tone and fantastical elements of earlier writings. Consequently, the strict Rana regime decided to ban such modern and progressive writers and their works in Nepal, leading to a surge in publishing in Dehradun, India.

While critics state the establishment of *Sharada* as heralding the modern era in Nepali literature, others believe the socio-political implications of Nepal opening its doors to the world in the 1950s as a watershed event. World literature and philosophy entered the hitherto insular kingdom and brought about new trends in literature and criticism. Psychological analysis (based on Freudian principles) became a new element in modern short stories. However, in the 1960s, the literary atmosphere changed when King Mahendra revoked the Constitution and the brief period of parliamentary democracy in Nepal came to an abrupt end.

Several literary movements including Ralpha (a nonce term), *Aswikrit Jamat* ('Unaccepted Generation'), *Amlekh* (liberated poets) Movement and Boot Polish Group gathered force. However, the most prominent modern literary movement was *Tesro Ayam (the Third Dimension)* which is regarded as spearheading the *Navayug* ('new era') of Nepali literature. The term 'dimensional' was taken as a synonym of 'new' literature. Indra Bahadur Rai's[7] deep insight gave birth to the Tesro Ayam writings.

Rai preferred the term 'writings' to 'movement' to describe 'Tesro Ayam'. The main objective was to analyse the three dimensions of a subject and present it in a holistic manner. Iswar Ballabh's poetry was born out of this objective. He started the newspaper *Phulpat Patkar,* in which Bairagi Kainla's poems were published.[8] Indra Bahadur Rai, defined the writing thus, "Contemporary literature should aim to raise the totality of a man. A man is not only an eye, an ear or a mind. He is an aggregate of all senses, heart and brain, so each and every sentence that we are going to write should hold, should set up his totality. To do so, our each and every writing should be proficient to bring the third dimension in itself."[9] Rai's "Maina's Mother is Just Like Us" (Hami Jastai Mainaki Ama) is regarded as a classic specimen of third dimensional writing, with a focus on the life of vegetable seller in the Darjeeling market, referred to as "Mainaki Ama". Her life is presented in an achronological fashion, through the goings on of a regular market day. As a customer rejects yellowing leafy greens, we catch glimpses of her migration from 'muluk' (Nepal), where there was very little to support her, to 'muglan' (India), from where she desires to go nowhere else. As a 'pravasi' (foreigner) she recalls her home and fields with little intention to return since the memories of being on an empty stomach and braving poverty in the 'muluk' also crowds her mind.[10] All she desired was a view of the heavenly Himalayas to call her own. "Wherever we will go we will take this land with us, wrapped up in little bundles."[11] With the passage of time, her insignificant presence is further endangered by the rapidly urbanised capitalistic society and her dilemma at migration is highlighted by all the onlookers and passersby at the market who keep asking her, "Why then did you come here?"[12] The fear of natural calamities like landslides, add to her insecurities and further emphasize her vulnerable position in society, where everyday she covers her spot in the market, unsure whether she will find it safe the next morning. The presentation of the dilemma of the migrant in 'pravas', the nostalgia for the homeland mixed with the insecurity of the present, the pathos felt by a long-term migrant reaching the

winter of her life and its burden of insecurities have been given an added dimension by the holistic approach of third dimensional writing.

The modern short story in Nepali literature uses satire to attack the traditions and conventions of society and in doing so, casts an unflinching eye upon the socio-political issues crippling the freedom of an individual in Nepal. The themes of casteist attitudes, corruption, city life, the status of women and the perception of national identity are prominent in the writings of the modern era in Nepali literature. A glimpse of a few representative writers and their works will shed light on the battle waged by modern Nepali writers in their struggle to challenge outmoded traditions inherent in the social fabric of Nepali life and customs.

Parashu Pradhan's short story "A Relationship" ("Sambandha") portrays the predicament of the urban poor of Kathmandu. The characters Gyancha, a street sweeper and a madwoman represent the grim side of life in the city. "Gyancha had held out his arms and begged for a mother's embrace, a father's affection. But all he was given was a sweeping brush, and now after all these long years he still went on accepting it. In summer and winter he wandered aimlessly through the city…"[13] The story revolves around the ambiguous but tender relationship shared by Gyancha and Ganga, an abandoned woman. Everyone called her "crazy Kanchi"[14] with a glass dot on her forehead and her dirty, tangled hair.[15] Pradhan gives a subtle impression of affection felt by Gyancha for the widow. "Trust had bloomed between them. Gyancha touched its flower and vowed, 'Truly I love you, crazy woman, why do you always elude me.'"[16] The story takes an unexpected turn when he discovers her lifeless body lying on the street with no one willing to take responsibility for her cremation.

Despite having "banknotes in his belt"[17] Gyancha does not volunteer to do the last rites for Ganga lying "as cold as the dawn".18 Intimidated by the interrogations of the policeman, "Hey, were you something to her? You over there, the one sitting quiet! Is she your wife?",[19] he breaks into a sweat and suddenly loses his voice. As the bearers

pick up Ganga's body, Gyancha recalls a request she had once made by way of a question, "If I died, would you light my pyre for me? I need a man to do that, not a husband....who drinks all night, then beats me black and blue".[20] He failed to grant her only wish, fearing he may be sacked by his employer and heckled by the policeman if he dared to establish a "sambandh" with the crazy woman, "now as cold as a stone".[21] He realises "Ganga's was just one more anonymous death...he was nothing."[22] As an abstraction over death, Pradhan's short story portrays characters from the poorest of the poor, the 'streetizens' so to speak.

And then the historians will write,

> "At that time in Nepal
> There were two kinds of men:
> One rested on newspaper headlines,
> He was important news,
> The other wrapped himself in them to keep warm,
> Surviving the winter..."[23]

In Manu Brajaki's short story "A Small Fish Squats by the Dhobi Khola", the plight of a petty official ("small fish") is presented by Brajaki. Caught accepting bribes, he was transferred from a rural area to the city (migration as punishment), where finding a decent lodging had become nearly impossible, given his meagre income. The corrupt "big fish" escaped unscathed, owing to their position. The story revolved around the "ugly iron Aligarh padlock"[24] and the pitiable condition of the official denied access to a lavatory by his landlady ("Bajai Ama") indicates the life of helpless migrants to the city. Upon the denial of a basic tenant right, "[h]e stared at the locked lavatory [since eight in the morning], deep in thought."[25] He would have to clear his bowels at a small washerman's stream ('dhobi khola') on most days.

The urban centre of Kathmandu valley, the "historic heart of the whole country",[26] is the backdrop to these stories of alienation. Both

Pradhan and Brajaki are unapologetic in their realistic representation of the casteist attitudes and exploitative rent rules for rural migrants in urban centres.

The journey from rural areas to the promised land is portrayed by renowned modern writer Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala's "Madhestira" ("To the Lowlands"). It sketches the journey taken by four unemployed and homeless men, Gore, Budho, Bhote and Dhane, accompanied by a young widow towards the lowlands in search of menial jobs and security. Budho explains, "[W]e are all homeless. There is no prospect of work here anymore. We're off to look for work somewhere else... you say there is work in the lowlands, let's go there then! There we can eat our fill".[27] The young widow leaves home upon being harrassed by her brother-in-law. She has some food on her, so the men let her accompany them, like the Goddess Annapurna she gives them 'chiura' (parched rice) and sugar keeping their stomachs from being empty. Budho, the old man, laments that his weak old bones do not allow him to till fields and carry luggage any more, but his pangs of hunger force him to move from one place to another in search of work.

> The people of my country
> Have cancelled their meals, and are struggling: look!
> No smoke comes from their chimneys[28]

The widow had taken a fancy towards one of the men, Gore. To him, she had expressed the dream she had packed in her bags and bundles, "[i]n the lowlands, I will grow some crops. I wish to set up a home there. But what's a home without a man! So I thought—why don't you and I set up house together?".[29] In a bid to attract Gore, the widow told him that she had some jewellery and a little money in her bag. The next morning, she was rewarded by Gore, who left the group and ran away with her money and jewels. Penniless and truly alone, she trailed behind the three men.

Insignificant bodies with an indomitable thirst,
Unseeing eyes watching the endless road
They rush with the swiftness of clouds,
Carrying with them, their limited means.[30]

When they finally reached the top of a hill, their eyes gleaming with excitement, "[t]here, I see the lowlands! There lies our salvation! There we will get to eat our fill!"[31] Their eyes shone with wonder, their parched throats croaked with joy, they smiled from ear to ear, unable to contain their excitement. But the widow only gazed with joyless eyes. The lowlands held no promise for her anymore.[32]

"There have been continual waves of migration into and along the Himalayas, and this is likely to have been so even in prehistoric times. Within historic times the dominant trend has been for migration to be in a north-west to south-east direction along the Himalayan foothills."[33] *The Population Monograph of Nepal* 2014 states that historically Nepal has witnessed three distinct waves of internal migration. "The first wave of internal migration occurred during the unification of Nepal by King Prithivi Narayan Shah and his successors."[34] It continued until the early eighteenth century. The strict Rana regime encouraged migration within Nepal with an intention of expanding the state's tax base, while controlling movement of people in and out of the country.[35] The rulers had laid down rules for compulsory services called 'Jhara' labour. Youth employed as such labourers were required to leave their villages to provide services in distant communities to construct temples, palaces, bridges and to supply military goods. This form of forced and unpaid labour was one of the reasons for internal migration of adult populations of the time.[36]

The *Monograph* states that the second wave of internal migration emerged in the mid-50s when the State sponsored a resettlement programme of hill people to Tarai. "The main objective of the resettlement programme was land colonisation of Tarai and increased

agricultural production. Launched by Rapti Valley Development Project (RVDP) and Nepal Resettlement Company (NRC), the resettlement programme continued until the late 80s."[37] The third wave of internal migration emerged when the country was undergoing various socio-economic transformations. "With the advent of democracy in 1951, the country embarked upon planned economic development of the country. This required increasing investment in various sectors of the economy, such as expansion of roads and transport, development of agriculture, health, education, and industrial development... people from less developed areas started migrating to more developed areas, where there was better infrastructure and economic opportunities. Internal migration in Nepal is considered to be a survival strategy of mountain and hill people to cope with the hardships of their lives, arising from low agricultural productivity, lack of employment and poor infrastructural development.[38]

Parashu Pradhan portrays such a story of rural-to-urban migration by a tourist guide. It is not uncommon to find guides as narrators and characters in the writings of the 1950s and 60s, for this was the decade when Nepal saw a tourism boom. From being an insular Hindu kingdom in the Himalayas, it was transformed into a hub of tourism and hospitality. To make the most of this nascent industry, young men from the villages migrated to the city of Kathmandu and its neighbouring areas. In their search for prospects they left behind their families, their homesteads, their fields, carrying only the memories they held dear. Parashu Pradhan's "The Telegram on the Table" ("Tebalmathiko Tyas Akashvani") sketches the predicament of such a migrant to the city. Krishna is a guide who spends all day "relating the entire history of the country to tourists and answering their multicoloured questions"[39] and "smiling at strange faces as if he knew them well".[40] The reader's curiosity is aroused in the opening sentence, "Once more he read the telegram that lay on the table".[41] The telegram had been lying on the table for weeks, it contents unable to elicit a response from Krishna. However, it is only in the penultimate paragraph of the short story that

the content of the telegram is mentioned in a single sentence, "Your wife died yesterday."[42] As a young village boy, Krishna had dreamed of winning people over by speaking in English. After his move to the city to become a tourist guide, he imagined "Judiths and Jennies amazed by his words"[43] and his carefully culled stories of Nepalese mythology and religion. Someday he wished to follow a foreign lady across the seas, she eager to host him and be his guide. "But then there was the telegram, which he would rather not have received".[44] Perhaps, the reader rereads the text to glean clues to gauge the cold distance and indifference shown by Krishna to his deceased wife. The text yields that his wife reminds him of the life before his urban migration to Kathmandu, she reminds him of the failure of the "seedling dream" he had packed along with his clothes upon leaving home, a dream which never really saw fruition. His struggle for the last ten years in the city and the little impact he made all came rushing with the words on the paper.

> When he looks at his face,
> Primordial, unwashed,
> In a mirror on a table,
> A man has to say to himself—
> A dream should last the whole night long.[45]

Like him, his friends had also come from his village to the city and became "trapped in some menial job".[46] He lived in dingy lodgings, paying a high rent, but always worried if he slept too long, there'd be no water for the day. Like Manu Brajaki's small fish, he lives in a house he is ashamed of and cannot bring "Miss Pande from the travel service home for dinner".[47] The telegram on the table brings back memories of the distant hills he calls home, the home he wanted to visit every 'dasain' (Dussehra), join his family in the dancing and merrymaking[48] in an attempt to forget the emptiness of the city. But that never came to be. The emptiness of the city had seeped into his very being. It had

wired him in a way that "no current ran along [the wires]. Nothing ever touched him."[49] The story ends with the reiteration of the contents of the telegram, "Your wife died yesterday, it said. Your wife died; your wife died...for weeks he had slept there within sight of that message, but tonight for some reason his mind was filled with desired and unwanted connections, thoughts of the present and the past, all of them in discord…having lived alone for so long in the city, had he become like a stone?"[50]

Another tourist guide is portrayed in Shankar Lamichhane's short story "The Half-closed Eyes of the Buddha and the Slowly Setting Sun ("Ardhamudit Nayan ra Dubna Lageko Gham") published in 1968. We see an interesting interpretation of the symbolic eyes of the Buddha as perceived by a tourist and challenged by the unnamed native guide. In and around Kathmandu, on the Buddhist 'stupas' (reliquaries) are painted a pair of enigmatic eyes, which looks over the city, its residents and catches the attention of the tourists. Lamichhane's take on the perception of Nepal as an idyllic Shangri—la becomes interesting since it was in the 1950s that Nepal opened its doors to the world and a boom in tourism gave the Himalayan kingdom opportunities to connect with the West as well as generate revenue. The glossy travel guides highlighting the glamorous side of Kathmandu city is contrasted with the guide's version of the eyes of the Buddha. The story opens with the foreign tourist exclaiming, "Oh guide! You will never know the thrill we Westerners feel when we first set foot upon the soil of your country! No, you will never understand it!"[51] They come seeking "its green fields, its mud houses painted red, yellow and white. The air saturated with the fragrance of rich soil and the snow of the Himalayas. Peace descending silently upon the valley."[52]

With his myopic view, the tourist passes a judgement saying that the native does not appreciate the embrace of the blue hills and instead finds it confining. The mode of narration is interesting since the first half of the story is a monologue by the tourist presenting his views regarding Nepal, its life and culture. What follows is an answer to

the lopsided, incomplete perception of the tourist, who during his short stay, passes a judgement upon the locals believing his Western education has given him a perspective upon things and people. With great confidence he says, "My friend, I know your history. Before coming to your country, I have spent several years in our libraries, reading books on your history and culture...you may guide me through the present city, but I can walk you down its ancient roads...One cannot totally grasp its beauty by reading books alone, one has to come here to soak in its atmosphere...Let us drink to your great country, and to mine. Cheers!...Another peg to the beautiful Nepalese smile".[53] After having proclaimed himself an authority on Nepalese folklore by mentioning the names of Bodhisattva Manjushri[54] and Princess Bhrikuti,[55] the tourist waxes eloquent on the eyes which greet him in Nepal. They are everywhere—on carved latticed windows, door panels, 'stupas', the Himalayas. He states, "To quench my thirst for the half-closed eyes of the Buddha let us go tomorrow to a 'stupa' in a quiet place to watch their hypnotic gaze".[56]

As instructed the previous day, the guide does his job saying "Come, my guest, today I will show you the eyes you desire to see"[57] and goes on to show him "the pulse of reality".[58] This opens the next section of the story, where the guide speaks and the tourist listens. The technique is very effective for it gives a perspective to the perceptions held by the tourist after he has spoken his part, uninterrupted. The guide discloses that he will not take the tourist up Chobar Hill to see the cleft made by Manjushri's sword while draining the lake to create Kathmandu valley, a place frequented by regular tourists. He will also not take him to see the various shrines and reliquaries, he has read about, seen pictures of in glossy tourist guides and preached to the guide. Instead the guide plans to take the tourist to the house of a Nepalese farmer's family, who sweat and toil in the fields "to pay off the proceeds to someone in the city".[59] Neither do they enjoy the luxury of a warm hearth as depicted in books, nor do they have the leisure of telling tales of Bodhisattva Manjushri and Princess Bhrikuti. He then shows

him the child of the house, attacked by polio, his body lying useless and his eyes having the uninterested gaze of the "half-closed eyes of the Buddha". "Only his eyes are alive in his inactive body. We know he is living only through his gaze. Mostly his gaze is without expression, it is listless, yet it is alive. My guest, this is the 'samyak' gaze you wanted to see.[60] The young boy's sister is an active, mischievous girl and his eyes follow her movements. Watching his sister, the boy wishes to be active, mischievous, playing around the house, crawling on the grass, bruising knees, tasting new foods, breaking things around the house, being scolded by the mother, learning new words and using them. The story evokes questions of representation of a culture, a nation and its peoples through the interpretations of the eyes of the Buddha as perceived by the tourist and by the native guide. In doing so, the story is path-breaking in bringing to the fore the native's voice and agency by a crippling social comment on the lived experiences of the villagers, unlike the glamour of the city as portrayed in Finally the boss decides to do a lottery and pick the ten poorest families. But they decide to give Rs 400 instead of the stipulated amount of Rs 500, make them sign they received Rs 500, and keep the excess as their travel allowance. Upon shuffling the lottery tickets, the boss sneezes and the tickets fall on the ground. The mad scramble for the paper chits shows the desperation of the villagers to receive aid, however insignificant it may be. "[T]he villagers began to push and shove one another and descended upon the tickets. For a while, none of them even managed to pick one up, they were trying too hard to prevent each other, and they were too afraid of ending up with nothing."[61]

The boss watched this scramble for lottery tickets with great amusement, betraying a cold indifference to the plight of the rural poor. Upon having executed his corrupt plan, he got on his horse and trotted back to the city. The narrator and Ram Prasad, despite being the boss' accomplices, felt uneasy about what had passed. They stood near the dried up pool, lighted dimly by the setting sun and saw figures resembling human beings, "[t]heir legs, their arms, even their faces were

muddy, and the mud could not dry because they were sweating. They didn't appear to have found any fish for a long time."[62]

"When I pause for a few days
to look at these squares steeped in hunger,
these streets like withered flowers,
I think my country's history is a lie." [63]

"The Fire" still smouldered inside them, the burning sensation of hunger, of lying on string cots while gazing at the sky and remembering the roof that once was, the fire in the belly of the nursing mother whose "baby caught hold of a nipple and sucked, let go of it and cried, then suddenly found it and began to suck again, but his mother seemed oblivious to him".[64] Gautum's prose feels the pulse of poverty throbbing in the rural areas of the country, where welfare schemes are implemented on paper, with little regard to the effect it has on the poor. In this regard, the report presented by Sri Arjun Narasingha KC, Minister for Urban Development of Nepal at the Habitat-III (2016) held in Equador is worthy to take note of.[65] The major challenges in implementing the New Urban Agenda included the issues hindering progress since the advent of the modern era. Poverty ranked first, followed by lack of investment and weak technical capacity. The basic infrastructural services are yet to be widely available to the masses. Even in 2016, the concerns highlighted by the modern writers since the middle of the twentieth century hold true.

The Himalayan Times had published a report on December 25, 2017 discussing the said report and concluding that "Although various policies, programmes and projects are being formulated and implemented, the population growth rate fueled mainly by rural-to-urban migration will remain high in major cities and towns for a foreseeable future, warns a recent national report 'Inclusive Cities: Resilient Communities' published by the Ministry of Urban Development."[66]

The Ministry of Urban Development of Nepal recognises that, "On [the] one hand, technical and financial resource constraints will limit [the] capacity of emerging towns in keeping pace with rapid growth management needs. On the other hand, small towns will have to work towards retaining the existing population and promoting urbanisation."[67]

The report also acknowledges that,

> "labor and employment policies, and operational plans and programmes so far implemented for the utilisation of the youths have not been adequate to address the problems of youths both in the rural and urban areas. This is mainly due to the lack of job-oriented vocational education and skill development training, business-related security, and foreign employment promotion."[68]

Sri Narasingha had delivered a statement mentioning that *"Inclusive Cities: Resilient Communities"* was the slogan of the New Urban Agenda. He stated,

> "[t]he least developed and landlocked countries like Nepal need to undergo a paradigm shift with a new type of competence geared towards scaling-up investments for sustainable and resilient settlements… Like most of the developing countries, Nepal is urbanizing rapidly with nearly half of the population living in urban and semi-urban concentrations. As most of them remain deprived of basic infrastructure services including safe drinking water, health, and education, we are implementing newer plans, policies and strategies in collaboration with local authorities and other stakeholders for improving quality of life."[69]

One is reminded of Minbahadur Bisht's lines from "Thus a Nation

Pretends to Live" ("Yasari Euta Rashtra Banchne Bahana Garcha")

Respected visitor,
This is Kathmandu Valley.
Here there are three cities:
Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur.
Please cover your nose with a handkerchief,
No sewage system is possible,
the building of toilets has not been feasible.
Our next five-year plan has a clean city campaign:
Could you make a donation?[70]

While, several translations have been sourced from the edition of Michael J.Hutt's Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature (Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Private Limited: Delhi, 1993, 2007), others are the author's translations from the original texts.

NOTES

1 "Cold Ashtray" ("Chiso Aishtre") by Bhupi Sherchan, transl. Michael J.Hutt, ed., *Himalayan Voices: An Introduction to Modern Nepali Literature* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Private Limited, 2007), 131.

2 *Muna and Madan (Muna-Madan)* by Lakshmiprasad Devkota, transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices,* 49.

3 B. Sherchan, "Cold Ashtray" transl. Hutt, Himalayan Voices, 131.

4 David N.Gellner and Sondra L. Hausner, *Global Nepalis: Religion, Culture, and Community in a New and Diaspora* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018), 6.

5 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices,* 174.

6 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices,* 174.

7 I. B.Rai's stories are published in *Bipana Katipaya* (1960) and *Kathasta* (1971). His novel Aja Ramita Cha (1964) is a much-read work of Nepali literature. The other two contributors to Tesro Ayam, Bairagi Kainla and Iswar Ballabh have several works to their credit. Kainla's collection of poems

Ful-Pat-Patjhar (1960) was edited by Ballabh. His two poems famous for dimensionalist style are "Mateko Mancheko Bhashan: Madhyaratpachiko Sadaksita" and "Hat Bharne Manis". His poems are collected in *Bairagi Kainlako Kavitaharu* (1974). The third of the trio, Iswar Ballabh's works are collected in *Agoka Phulharu Hun, Agoka Phulharu Hoinan* (1972), *Samantara* (1981) and *Kasmai Devaya* (1985).

8 Taranath Sharma, *Nepali Sahityako Itihas* (Kathmandu: Vidyarthi Pustak Bhandar, 1973), 165, own translation.
9 Chandra Sharma, ed., *Vartaharuma Sri Indra Bahadur Rai* (Darjeeling: New (India) Publication, 2016), 165.
10 T. B. Subba et al., *Indian Nepalis: Issues and Perspectives* (Concept Publishing Company: New Delhi, 2009), 34.
11 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 263.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid., 287-88.
14 Ibid., 287.
15 Ibid.
16 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 287.
17 Ibid., 289.
18 Ibid., 287.
19 Ibid., 289.
20 Ibid., 288.
21 Ibid., 287.
22 Ibid., 289.
23 B. Sherchan "A Poem", transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices,* 130.
24 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 298.
25 Ibid.
26 L. Dudley Stamp, *Asia: A Regional and Economic Geography*. (New Delhi: B.I. Publications, 1986), 363.
27 Bhairav Aryal, ed., *Sajha Katha.* (Lalitpur: Sajha Prakashan, 2011), 79, own translation.
28 Shreshtha, "No Smoke from the Chimneys", transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices,* 61.
29 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 80, own translation.
30 Kedar Man "Vyathit", Chudamani Bandhu, ed., *Sajha Kavita* (Lalitpur: Sajha Prakashan, 2011)122, own translation.

31 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 81, own translation.
32 Ibid.
33 Gellner,*Global Nepalis*, 2.
34 *Population Monograph of Nepal 2014.* (Vol 1 , Population Dynamics, Government of Nepal. National Planning Commission Secretariat. Central Bureau of Statistics. Kathmandu, Nepal 2014. https://nepal.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/PopulationMonograph2014Volume1.pdf, 241.
35 Gellner, Global Nepalis, 5.
36 *Monograph*, 241.
37 *Monograph*, 242.
38 Ibid.
39 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 284.
40 Ibid., 285.
41 Hutt, 284.
42 Ibid., 286.
43 Ibid., 285.
44 Ibid.
45 Bairagi Kainla, "The Corpse of a Dream", transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 103.
46 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 285.
47 Ibid., 286.
48 The singing of 'deusure' or songs sung for the "lamp lit for the gods" (Khemraj Nepal, Nepali Lok Sahityako Ruprekha, (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2003), 71) hold a special place in the rituals surrounding Dussehra and Diwali, known as Tihar in Nepal and Darjeeling. The song "Jhilimili jhilimili deusure" refers to the hills lighting up during the festive season and is a much–loved song sung at home and in communities during this time.
49 Hutt, Himalayan Voices, 286.
50 Ibid.
51 Aryal, Sajha Katha, 125, own translation.
52 Ibid., own translation.
53 Aryal, Sajha Katha, 126-127, own translation.
54 According to a popular legend, Manjushri had come from the north to see a flame manifested on the surface of the lake above Swayambhu Hill. He drained the lake so it could be inhabited by people and the valley after being drained became the Kathmandu Valley.

55 The daughter of Nepalese king Amshuvarman and one of the wives of Tibetan king Songsten Gampo. She was responsible for the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. (Trilok Chandra Majupuria and Rohit Kumar (Majupuria), *Religions in Nepal.* (Kathmandu: Modern Printing Press, 2004), 21).
56 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 127, own translation.
57 Ibid., own translation.
58 Ibid., own translation.
59 Aryal, *Sajha Katha*, 127, own translation.
60 Ibid., 128, own translation.
61 Ibid., 296.
62 Ibid., 296-297.
63 B.Sherchan, "I Think My Country's History is a Lie", transl. Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 124.
64 Ibid., 293.
65 "Statement delivered by the Hon. Mr. Arjun Narasingha KC, Minister for Urban Development of Nepal", at the Habitat-III in Quito, *Equador* (17-20 October 2016, http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/Statement-of-Nepal-in-English.pdf).
66 "Rural-to-urban migration to remain high", *The Himalayan Times* (December 25, 2017 4:45 am. https://thehimalayantimes.com/kathmandu/rural-urban-migration-remain-high/ Accessed on December 15, 2018), n.p.
67 "Rural-to-urban migration to remain high", n.pag.
68 "Rural-to-urban migration to remain high", n.pag.
69 "Statement", 2.
70 Hutt, *Himalayan Voices*, 157.