

## UPF, IAPP and Nepal's Search for Development and Peace

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*The head table at UPF's International Leadership Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal*

At their July 28–31 International Leadership Conference in Kathmandu, Nepal, UPF launched another chapter of its International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP). This is a wonderful opportunity for UPF to continue its great work of demonstrating the value of our True Parents' vision of one family under God to a people with desperate needs. Nepalese parliamentarians will have the opportunity to interact with their counterparts from other parts of the world, from other nations whose governments have also endured similar long periods of continual political tumult and instability but have managed to rise above their difficulties and create a calmer political atmosphere in which their people might find hope. The more we learn about remote Nepal, the more likely we are to feel compassion for her people and send out prayers for the success of the Nepalese chapter of IAPP.



*Nanda Kishor Pun, vice-president of Nepal at the IAPP inaugural event*

### **Economic difficulties**

A feisty old American woman, Elizabeth Hawley, lives and works in Nepal. When she came to the country as a foreign journalist, she thought she would stay for two or three years.

Fifty-six years later, she remains in Kathmandu. She has never climbed any of the high mountains Nepal is famous for, but for all these years, she has recorded the success of those that have reached the summits any of "more than 340 significant Nepalese peaks." She uses her journalist skills to confirm or dispute claims of success by asking many questions and interviewing others who would likely have seen a group as it reaches the top of the mountain in question. Miss Hawley records, too, the deaths of climbers and guides. She adds the data to the Himalayan Database, which has records of climbs going back to 1905.

Naturally, Mt. Everest, the world's highest peak, attracts particular attention. For the first time in

more than forty years, the Himalayan Database records that no one climbed to Mt. Everest's summit in 2015. The last year without a summit record for Everest was 1974. This is of course in part because of the devastating Gorkha Earthquake on April 25, 2015, that killed more than nine thousand people and caused \$4 billion dollars of direct economic loss (repair or replacement costs).

One of many indirect areas of economic loss is the decline in tourists visiting the country. Tourism accounts for 8 percent of the economy in the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

## Severe living conditions

What is life like for the average Nepali? We could look at the 2014 Human Development Index, which the UN released last December, but sometimes less direct sources are better at getting to the heart of a matter. A 2014 article on an avalanche that killed thirteen Nepali climbing guides on Mt. Everest stated, "a lead mountain guide earns as much as \$6,000 during the three-month climbing season. The monthly average salary of Nepalis is \$48."

Forty-eight dollars a month is very little, but let us take a closer look at those that earned the higher figure: these guides are the famous Sherpa, which literally means "of Tibetan origin; akin to a Tibetan."

Sherpa live on the high southern slopes of the Himalayan Mountains in Nepal. Their work involves much more than guiding wealthy clients from Base Camp to the summit of Mt. Everest or another Himalayan peak. Before the season begins, they climb to great heights to position ropes, ladders and other climbing aids to help their clients, who might pay \$30,000 to \$60,000 to ascend Mt. Everest. A person with more knowledge in the subject included "stocking camps, shuttling clients' gear, food, tents and oxygen up and down the mountain" in a list of Sherpa chores.



*Dr. Thomas Walsh, president of UPF, addressing the audience at which IAPP was launched in Kathmandu, Nepal*

## Reward divided by risks

An understanding of what these Sherpa are willing to go through to gain this higher income provides further anecdotal evidence of economic conditions among the common people in Nepal. Apa Sherpa, one of only two people who have climbed Everest twenty-one times, explained in a Washington Post interview, "We are way behind in education. There are no other options to meet our most basic [needs]. Regardless of all the risks involved in climbing the mountain, the Sherpas do it... People climb Everest once in a lifetime to experience the adventure. Things are different for us. We keep on climbing more than once because we have to do it. I climbed Everest the first sixteen times to support my family."

Outside magazine ([outsideonline.com](http://outsideonline.com)), which covers topics appealing to outdoor sports enthusiasts, including mountaineering, ran an article by its senior editor Grayson Schaffer on the profession of Sherpa guides, titled "The Disposable Man." It tells the story of forty-three-year-old Sherpa guide, Chhewang Nima, who

had reached Mt. Everest's summit nineteen times. On October 24, 2010, on a peak near Everest, while connected by rope to another Sherpa, Chhewang was hammering a pointed stake into a small shelf of ice and hardened snow. Abruptly, the shelf beneath his feet separated from the mountain and Chhewang plunged to his death. Both men would have died in that instant if something had not cut through the rope connecting Chhewang to his fellow guide as he hurled through the air.

## A perilous occupation

Outside did more, though, than simply describe one Sherpa as a disposable man. Outside put into context the very high risk of death that follows these Sherpa -- as if it were their own shadow -- every moment they are on the mountain for the only ninety days a year during which they will earn \$2,000 a month.

Mr. Shafer's article looked at deaths by nationality among mountaineers. At the time he wrote it, ten Americans, seventeen Britons, seventeen Indians, eighteen Japanese and seventy-two Sherpa had lost their lives climbing Everest since 1922. Another article on Outside's web site, "Everest Deaths: How Many Sherpas Have Been Killed?" by Jonah Ogles, provides a broader understanding of the risks the Sherpa guides have to contend with. Ogles' article includes a comparison of annual fatality rates of Sherpa guides with workers in several other notoriously dangerous occupations.

Some of these occupations employ many thousands of people and some a much smaller number. In this study, Ogles compared how many workers would die in a year among groups of a hundred thousand Nepali Sherpa guides on Mt. Everest, commercial fishermen, pilots who deliver goods and people throughout the Alaskan wilderness (bush pilots) and US military personnel in Iraq (2003–2007). (He notes that the Center for Disease Control and Prevention considers the job of a commercial fisherman the most dangerous non-military job in the US.) By comparing groups with an equal number of people, he

can show how high the risk of death is for an individual person in each of these hazardous jobs. He writes, "A Sherpa working above Base Camp on Everest is nearly ten times more likely to die than a commercial fisherman... and more than three and a half times more likely to perish than an infantryman during the first four years of the Iraq war."



*Jose de Venecia, the recently elected chairman of the IAPP, was the first to sign the conference declaration.*

### **An extreme job hazard**

Looking at the circumstances from this perspective, Ogles concludes that for the wealthy clients who are paying for a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, taking on this high degree of risk may be rational. The Sherpa, though, Ogles sees as daily employees in a service industry. He concludes, "As a workplace safety statistic 1.2 percent mortality is outrageous." His article also covers other gruesome realities. Among those that did not die as guides, "many Sherpas were disabled by rock-fall, frostbite and altitude-related illnesses like stroke and edema." From what these Sherpa and their families endure just to make a living, we can begin to appreciate the hardscrabble lives that the millions of low-income Nepalis lead.

### **Human resources**

Of course, bright young people, likely from wealthier families, are able to find ways forward in Nepal as they are elsewhere. The ingenuity and verve of Nepalese youth made a difference when their nation needed them desperately, soon after the 2015 earthquake hit. As República, an online Nepalese media outlet described it, "Organizations could subscribe to alerts about remote locations that had still not seen any rescue because dozen of youths with laptops in front and phones vibrating in synchronization with the [still quaking] ground underneath, laid out a 'quakemap' from a temporary lab they had set up outside their office.... Within an hour of the first major jolt, Bibeksheel Nepali -- a youth run political initiative, was on the grounds at Teaching Hospital, setting up a help desk to assist and manage the victims there."

Soon after the quake, a young engineer called Bipin Gaire set up Bhukampa, which rallied engineers to help assess the structural safety of buildings free of charge. One posting on the group's site reads, "Can we do little things for our respected senior citizens? Housing should be a fundamental right of every citizen and our history -- senior citizens -- deserve [housing] more."

### **The struggles of governing**

Some individual rulers stand out in Nepalese history, and just as in the political world of most countries today, people have conflicting views on these powerful figures. Long ago, three kingdoms in the Kathmandu Valley -- Kathmandu, Patan and Bhadgaon, all of which remain important cities today -- had had acrimonious relations for centuries, when the ruler of Gorkha came from hundreds of miles away and conducted a twenty-five-year military campaign until he had conquered them all. Gradually he united them. This ruler, Prithvi Narayan Shah, chose to move the capital of his kingdom to Kathmandu. All Nepalese kings (called shahs) up to modern times descended from Prithvi Narayan Shah, who died in 1716.

### **An ambitious individual**

Through *History of Nepal*, by Daniel Wright, a physician who worked at the British Residency in Kathmandu (1866–1876) we learn of another significant figure, Jung Bahadur, whom the British knighted in 1857 for having led troops against and defeated Indian "mutineers" fighting the British Raj in Hindustan. Jung Bahadur came into the world in 1817, one of seven sons of a Nepalese official. When young, he entered the military. For some time, he was the personal attendant of a young prince, so he was able to make connections within the royal court. By 1843, the year his uncle, Matabar Singh, became Nepal's prime minister, Jung Bahadur had reached the rank of colonel.

As prime minister, Matabar Singh expressed his anxiety to others about Jung Bahadur's influence on the royal court and within the army. Meanwhile, noting that Jung Bahadur had ingratiated himself to one of the king's younger wives, a queen who held great sway over the royal court, Henry Lawrence, a representative of the British government to Nepal, described Jung Bahadur as an intelligent military expert who despite his youth was "profoundly versed in intrigue."

### **Darkness descends**

On May 18, 1845, expecting to meet the king, Matabar Singh entered a room in the palace, where someone shot him dead and then threw his body out a window, whereupon it was dragged behind an elephant and left on a riverbank. On September 14, Gagan Singh, a friend of the queen's, was shot and killed while at home performing religious devotions.

The queen blamed her enemies within the royal government and pushed the king to gather them all for a meeting to uncover her friend's killer. The meeting occurred at the Kot, a large building near the palace. Jung Bahadur, his bodyguards and his brothers, all with guns, joined the queen and her party of similarly armed men. They were waiting when the noblemen arrived. Whether they had planned it or they had overreacted to some emotional spark, Jung Bahadur and his mob killed dozens of noblemen and many more men of a lower rank, perhaps more than a hundred. This was the Kot Massacre.

### **The prime ministerial coup**

In the wake of this, Jung Bahadur maneuvered so that the king became completely powerless as did all the kings that followed him. They were feeble figureheads, kings in name only. They did not rule Nepal, the prime ministers did. The post of prime minister became hereditary.

The post did not go from father to son, because Jung Bahadur did not want his family to risk losing this powerful position by making it possible for a vulnerable child to inherit the post. Instead, he ruled the country as prime minister first and then his brothers did, one by one. When their sons became adults, from oldest to youngest, those males in the next generation were prime minister. This went on, generation after generation, for more than a hundred years. Members of this familial ruling system had the title "rana," and in English, we call them "the ranas."

### **Stepping toward the light**

In the early 1950s, restive political figures agitated for democracy, sparking a movement that eventually ousted the ranas and reinstated King Tribhuvan. The king set up a government in which he was head of state but he did not allow political parties. He was the sole ruler.

In 1955, Nepal became a UN member. King Tribhuvan died that same year and his son, King Mahendra ascended the throne. In 1959, Nepal adopted a multi-party political system under a new constitution. A year later, after elections had been held, the king reneged, shutting down the government.

Two years after that, government was allowed but without political parties. When King Mahendra died in 1972, his son, King Birendra allowed multi-party politics again. (The objection to political parties might be because progress is hard when every small group in the country has a party representing their special interest. Currently Nepal has more than a hundred and twenty parties.) In 1980, in response to a public referendum, the King Birendra disallowed parties again. In 1990, huge street demonstrations, known as Jana Andolan, the people's movement, led to King Birendra allowing a democratic constitution once again.

### **The Maoist uprising**

A few communist parties exist in Nepal. This trend toward local adoption of these foreign ideologies began in the 1940s when Nepalis fought alongside Indians in their struggles to end British colonialism in India (1858–1947). Nepal has a Marxist Leninist Party and even the Nepal Workers Peasants' Party, which adheres to North Korean Juche Ideology. In 1995, Maoists began an armed revolt, the primary goal of which was the end of the monarchy. A shadowy figure, whose nickname was Pachandra, "the fierce one," led what was essentially a civil war that claimed more than sixteen thousand lives. Pachandra, whose real name is Pushpa Kamal Dahal, came down from the mountains (voluntarily, by government helicopter) in 2005. A peace accord ended the insurgency in November 2006.

## **SAPI, Nepal Parivar Dal**

Nepal Parivar Dal (Family Party) is a political party led by Ek Nath Dhakal (32) who was the FFWPU national leader and head of UPF in Nepal. In government, he was the Minister for Co-operatives and Poverty Alleviation beginning May 2012–March 2013 and since December 2015, he has been the Minister of Peace and Reconstruction.

Among his early efforts, he set up South Asian Peace Initiative, based on True Parents' teaching and utilizing UPF resources. Pushpa Kamal Dahal took part in some SAPI session. In his own words Mr. Dhakal explained another signal event in the Nepal's difficult political history: "On June 1, 2001, at Narayanhity Royal Palace, twenty-nine-year-old Crown Prince Dipendra killed ten members of the royal family, including his father, his mother, his sister, his brother and three paternal aunts, before shooting himself. He died three days later. Officially, Nepal's State Council had named Crown Prince Dipendra king as his father's successor. On his death, the late king's younger brother, Gyanendra was named king."

SAPI was part of the peace process when massive protests broke out over King Gyanendra's autocratic rule. Gyanendra today is a private citizen; Nepal no longer has a monarchical family.



*A Little Angel hugging Bidhya Devi Bhandari, president of Nepal*

## **IAPP-Nepal**

UPF held an International Leadership Conference in Kathmandu beginning on July 28. K. P. Sharma Oli was the guest of honor. Only three days earlier Mr. Sharma Oli had resigned as prime minister and the Nepal's president had approved the resignation.

Four cabinet ministers attended the founding of IAPP-Nepal as did 237 parliament members. Anot Tong, the longtime president of the Republic of Kiribati and Sunhak Peace prizewinner spoke.

On August 10, Jose de Venecia Jr., longtime speaker of the House of Representatives in the Philippines, visited the Nepal's new prime minister, Pushpa Kamal Dahal. De Venecia, who brokered a peace deal with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front is likely to have the compassion and insight necessary to see ways the IAPP can serve the people of the Nepal in finding stability and development.

## **True Mother's love**

True Mother expressed her deep love for the Nepalese people by sending her daughter-in-law Yeon Ah Moon to deliver her speech and the Little Angels to express Heaven's deep grace and love for people. The Nepalese people have endured much and it seems the IAPP is an instrument of Heaven and of True Parents deep concern for peace in Nepal and throughout the world.