

# USEF NEPAL

VOLUME 26 NO. 2  
**July 2009**

A Bulletin of activities and events from the Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal

The Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal

Post Box 380, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Tel: 444-4780, 444-4779, 441-4598 (Advising)  
Fax: 977-1-4410881  
email: fulbcomm@fulbrightnepal.org.np  
www.fulbrightnepal.org.np



## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR...

As always, the year is marked by comings and goings, and by our memories of events, friends, and places past. The Commission has just finished its annual competition for Fulbright and East-West Center nominees, just as the grantees selected last year prepare to depart to the United States in the next two months.

Our annual Fulbright Day celebration—which was hosted by Ambassador Nancy Powell at her residence on June 9—commemorates the signing of the Binational Agreement in 1961 that formally established the Commission for Educational Exchange between the United States and Nepal. This year was hot and sunny, and the assembled alumni heard from Ms. Rachana Shrestha, Fulbright alumna at Duke University (2006-2008), along with remarks from the Ambassador (please see photos on back page). All the grantees about to depart were introduced to the crowd, including three young men who were selected in January to take part in the Near East and South Asia Undergraduate program, which sends grantees for one year of Bachelor's level study, internships, and community service work in the United States. Ramchandra Gaihre, Santosh Nepali and Rajan Pandit will be the first Nepalis to participate in this program—and we are very proud to see them go!

In March, Fulbright Nepal lost one of our closest friends and mentors, Father John Locke, who passed away after a long struggle with cancer. His protégé and successor on the Fulbright Commission Board, Father Greg Sharkey, was kind enough to let us reprint here the words he delivered at the funeral

Mass in Patan. We also bid farewell to outgoing Board members—both American and Nepali—and I would like to especially thank Mark Larsen, our Board Chair, and Public Affairs Officer of the US Embassy in Nepal, for his leadership and support. Mark is a long-time friend of Nepal who will be leaving this post, but he will certainly be back to the mountains he loves soon enough.

Farewell and thank you, also, to Assistant Fiscal Officer Ms. Monica Chhetri, who has worked at the Commission since 2001. Monica-ji is gracious, professional and laughs easily—we'll miss her but wish her the best as she embarks on a new adventure in Texas! Finally, after four years as the Executive Director of the Commission, and ten years this time in Nepal, I have decided to take up a new post at the University of Washington in Seattle in September, where I'll serve as Director of International Programs and Exchanges. I have enjoyed this work tremendously, mostly because of the contact I had with excellent colleagues at the Commission office in Gyaneshwor, and with all of our recent and more senior alumni. I will be back again and again to Nepal, I know, and I look forward to that greatly.



Peter K. Moran

# Father John Locke, S.J.

*In the early hours of March 18, USEF Nepal was just one of the many organizations, not to mention thousands of individuals, who lost a wonderful guide and friend. John K. Locke, of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuit Order), was many things—among them, a loyal and active member of the Fulbright Commission Board of Directors. Here we reproduce the homily remarks made at Fr. Locke's Funeral Mass by another Board member, Father Gregory Sharkey, who agreed to serve on the Board when Father Locke could no longer attend.*

When Fr John Locke slipped away from this life peacefully, not long after midnight [on March 17], the Church of Nepal, the Society of Jesus, and the St Xavier's family lost one of its most remarkable and beloved figures. We gather here this afternoon to comfort and console one another, but also to remember the life of a truly gifted and good man. While it is an honor to pay tribute to someone who achieved so much in his long life; it is a daunting task to do his memory justice. He was a gifted linguist, a diligent scholar, and renowned author. A skilled administrator, an advisor to bishops and cardinals; but first and foremost, he was a teacher and mentor.

John Locke was born in Chicago. He and his sister Mary Jane moved to Iowa when he was in high school, after his widowed father remarried. But a half century, nearly two-thirds of his life, he spent among the people of Nepal, where he became a citizen in 1976. John's intellectual abilities were noted early on. His choir master and music teacher was sure he was headed to a career in music. But that was not to be, though John nurtured a lifelong love of good music. When he studied Greek and Latin, his teachers were convinced he would be a classicist. During his Theology studies in Kurseong [near Darjeeling] in the early 60s they thought he should be assigned to teach theology, he was so good at it.

But John knew that assignment would take him away from the country he had come to love—and whose language he mastered so well that he could write a book to teach native speakers of Nepali how to spell their own language. Instead he accepted an assignment as teacher, then principal, at Godavari School. It was only after bringing much needed innovations there that John turned to the work for which he is so rightly famous – the study of Buddhism and the culture of the Newars.

It is no exaggeration to say that John Locke founded the field of Newar Buddhist Studies. In his research and writings on Newar Buddhism he framed the questions that guide others' research to this day.



Those of us who have followed in his footsteps merely elaborate on the clear insights that he laid out in his books, articles and presentations. This past year I worked with John to edit new editions of his books *Karunamaya* and *Buddhist Monasteries of Nepal*, which are still in constant demand. Again and again I was amazed at his modest and simple presentation of exhaustive, meticulous research. Days and even weeks of tireless investigation are often summed up in one elegant, brief sentence. But that matter of fact modesty was typical of John. He never pursued his intellectual work for the sake of gaining honor or a great reputation. Nor did he do it out of a sheer love of learning, noble as that might be. Instead, his academic and research efforts were always oriented toward a practical end, the enlightening of others. With his razor sharp intellect he probed and explored skillfully. But with his compassionate and open heart he shared the fruits of his learning generously.

Over the last three decades hundreds upon hundreds of Peace Corps and VSO volunteers, exchange students from Pitzer, Cornell, Wisconsin and SIT first began to make sense of their experience of Nepal by sitting at the feet of Fr Locke as he explained the religions and cultures of Nepal. His graduate students

at T.U. often marveled at the depth of his knowledge and sympathetic insight into their own religious beliefs and practices. John`s deep and sympathetic understanding of Asian religion and culture bore fruit in two other notable ways. As a delegate to the Jesuits` 34th General Congregation in Rome he helped frame the document that urges Jesuits to pursue religious and cultural dialogue. He continued this work in a decade of service to the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, where he was an expert theological consultant to the leaders of the church in Asia. Pope Benedict XVI, in his address to the delegates of the 35th General Congregation, held just a year ago, called on Jesuits to continue to “build bridges of understanding and dialogue with those [of other faiths and cultures]. This is the goal toward which all John`s efforts led.

But to focus only on his scholarly achievements would be misleading. For decades he served as a much loved spiritual father and retreat master to the Cluny Sisters, the sisters at St Mary`s and Mary Ward Schools, and to so many other congregations of sisters. In John Locke, too, a generation of younger Jesuits in training found a wise counselor. His warm sense of humor, his compassion, his deep understanding of the spirituality of St Ignatius, our Founder, and his solid common sense made him an ideal, much sought-after guide for our younger men. Though never ostentatious in his piety, he was manifestly a man of prayer and a man of deep faith.

This deep faith was revealed during these past few months during his long and patient struggle with cancer and its complications, with surgeries and hospitalizations. John went through a period of fear and anxiety. Who wouldn`t? He had some difficult days, especially as the pain increased. But shining through all of that was a deeper sense of calm acceptance and realism that was under-girded by his faith. He was, through it all, a man at peace with his God and ready to be gathered home to his Father`s house. Despite our sorrow and sense of loss we can be thankful to God for John`s long and fruitful life and for his service God`s people through his many gifts and through the love he shared with us so generously.

May the Father of Mercies, the God of all consolation, look with love on John, and be with us all.

GCS

## Good Luck to departing Nepali Fulbrighters

### Post-doctoral Researchers

- Dr. Baidya Nath Mahto, North Dakota State University
- Dr. Subodh Sharma, Towson University
- Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, Yale University

### Fulbright Students

- Ms. Anunaya Banstola, M.S. in Food Science, Illinois Institute of Technology
- Mr. Umesh Dhimal, M.Arch in Architecture, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
- Ms. Sachchi Ghimire Karki, M.A. in International Human Rights, University of Denver
- Mr. Binab Karmacharya, M.S. in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida
- Ms. Bisakha Yonzon Tamang, M.A. in Conflict Transformation, Eastern Mennonite University
- Mr. Krishna K. Thakur, M.S. in Epidemiology & Public Health, Purdue University

### Science & Technology Ph.D.

- Mr. Dhilung Hang Kirat, Ph.D. in Computer Science, University of California-Santa Barbara
- Ms. Archana Shrestha, Ph.D. in Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison

### NESA/UGRAD

- Mr. Ramchandra Gaihre
- Mr. Santosh Nepali
- Mr. Rajan Pandit

# Seeing Through the Mirror

*Liz Lance, Fulbright Scholar in Journalism*



*Miss Nepal contestants line up in front of the judges at the International Club in Sanepa.*

*Last September, I trudged up the red-carpeted steps inside the International Club in Sanepa, heavy messenger bag and camera bag slung over one shoulder. My pants were flecked with mud, my hair haphazardly pulled back into a ponytail, sweat dripped down my face. It was the end of the monsoon, hot and humid, and this six-foot-tall bideshi was in search of the 15 or so young women competing for the Miss Nepal title.*

I returned to Nepal to document the effects of mass media on beauty and body image in young women in Nepal. Since my first stay in Nepal in 1998, I had seen significant changes in Nepal's media landscape and also in how young women dressed and presented themselves in public. Modesty seemed to be out, and tight jeans and cleavage-baring shirts were in. With my own history of rebelling against my American Southern upbringing that valued dainty women who drewled their way into the arms of eligible young men, I began my research with a strong agenda. I was going to spend time with beauty contestants and models and expose them for the insecure attention-seekers they must be, all the while blaming the media and advertising industries for promoting unrealistic standards of beauty to women. Oh, yes, I had an agenda.

As I walked through a set of French doors into the tired, dark room where the contestants were rehearsing, I carried assumptions and judgment about the kind of women who would subject themselves to being judged on their appearance. They must be silly, uneducated girls, I reasoned, more interested in showing off their bodies than using their minds, not critical enough to question the ideals served up to them by the media. I was afraid of being outed as a feminist in a room full of beauty queen wannabes. And suddenly I was a cliché – a 30-year-old woman intimidated in the presence of thinner, prettier, better-dressed women ten years or more her junior. The next day I wore mascara.

But then I started to spend time with these and other young women. These women may spend a lot of

time putting on their makeup and threading their eyebrows, but they are not silly or uneducated. As I formed closer relationships with these women and they opened themselves up to my questions about beauty and how they view their bodies, I naturally reflected on my own answers to those same questions. And I realized what a hypocrite I had been to walk into that room of Miss Nepal contestants loaded with my agenda six months earlier.

I like to think of myself as an educated woman, a critical media consumer, someone who is confident in herself and comfortable with her own body. But I would be lying if I said I didn't fantasize about what it would be like to be thin, to wear a bikini, to turn the heads of people as I walked down the street. Every woman in this world who has been exposed to any media has a conflicted relationship with her own body image. And I can't condemn these young women for their conflicted body image any more than I can condemn myself. If an educated young woman wants to participate in a beauty contest, she's smarter than I've ever thought of giving her credit for, because her participation is going to open professional doors for her, and there shouldn't be anything wrong with that. There isn't anything wrong with that.

I still demonize the media and advertising industries for propagating outrageous standards of beauty, here in Nepal and across the world. And I still think the idea of a beauty contest with male judges crowning one woman the most beautiful of all is patriarchal and archaic. But I no longer judge these women I meet and talk to about beauty. Instead, I hope for them to find confidence, success and happiness without worrying about measuring up to societal standards, the same as I hope for myself. Because the whole point of the feminist movement is to let women make their own decisions and take control of their bodies without judgment, even if they choose to wear Fair and Lovely skin lightening cream.

*--Liz Lance holds a bachelor's degree in Languages and Cultures of Asia from the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and has completed graduate work at Tribhuvan University's Bishwa Bhasha Campus and the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies. After completing her Fulbright research in June, Liz begins her MA studies at the University of Missouri School of Journalism in August 2009.*



*Singer Indira Joshi fixes her hair on the set of a video shoot in Kathmandu.*



*American Fulbrighter Liz Lance in Dhaka, Bangladesh, for the international photography festival Chobi Mela (as taken by a friend).*



*A billboard near Bhat Bhateni Super Store, a popular supermarket in Kathmandu.*

# Sangeeta's Graduation: A Journey into My Mind

Mrs. Sagun Basnet *is studying American Studies at New York University, New York, NY*

*Sagun and her friend mentioned here, Sangeeta Mishra, began their Fulbright-funded studies in the fall and summer respectively of 2008; Ms. Mishra graduated after an accelerated 11 month MPH program at Johns Hopkins University and just returned to Nepal.*

“Yoo-hoo! Bravo!” I was screaming hard when Sangeeta Mishra received her graduation certificate for Master's in Public Health degree. The feeling of attending a graduation ceremony to applaud for someone was brand new to me. Being present to cheer for her attainment overwhelmed me with such disparate feelings that I find it difficult to describe in letters and sentences. If only all the feelings could be expressed in one brush stroke! When I started my journey from New York to Baltimore to attend Sangeeta's graduation ceremony, I never had the faintest idea that being a part of that ceremony would culminate in this write up.

However, as an audience member, who was clapping for a friend's graduation, I realized what it means to our near ones to see us receive a degree and be recognized as having specialized in a subject. The very feeling of recognition and honor in front of so many people, I guess, was the pivotal factor that overwhelmed everyone in that particular location. I looked around me and saw that happiness ran as tears on the cheeks of so many people as they watched their loved ones receive a degree. A stream of thoughts ran over my mind as I saw the new graduates on the stage. It seemed as if the applause from the audience made them walk more confidently and increased the stretch of their lips. A combination of smiling faces and wet eyes made me think: when human beings forget discriminating against others, and feel happy in the achievement of every other human being collectively, our body also responds by releasing smiles and tears, the two emotions usually associated with opposite feelings, at the same time. So I saw that so-called oppositions can exist simultaneously.

I also pondered over the dreams that the parents/guardians/friends of the graduates, and the graduates themselves, must have had associated with the degree they received. At this point, I got an answer to the question I was asking myself about the relationship between a graduate degree and happiness. I was asking myself, why does a piece of paper with our names scripted as Masters of some discipline generate so much happiness in us and our near ones? Then,



*Sagun and Sangeeta*

*Sagun and class friends*



as the association of dreams to the degree came to my mind, I had the answer ready in front of me. The dreams of success, career, income, family, stability and the list goes on, that people associate with a degree make them so happy and so confident to face and build a future.

This fact is so evident, but interestingly I had never thought about it in this detail. However I said to myself, “Wait a moment.” The dreams are a part of future which may or may not come true— what about the experiential earnings one gains from being with a variety of different people? And what about knowledge itself? Doesn't the happiness in the face of the audience as well as the graduates have anything to do with learning? And my heart said “oh yes!”

I felt overwhelmed by the realization that gaining knowledge gives such bliss. However, the same realization also gave me a feeling that this is only a beginning of knowing and not an end. Applying the gained knowledge in the world of work will give deeper and further feelings of “graduating” through so many experiences. Thus, suddenly a shift of perception occurred, which made me see that the huge ceremony actually celebrates the inception of a process of learning, not the end result of being fulfilled and satisfied. This was the aha! moment for me: to realize that I am not done but I have just started.

# Nepali and American Fulbright Grantees in the US & Nepal

Dr. Lawrence George Wilson, Associate Professor Emeritus in Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences the University of Washington, in Seattle, worked as a Senior Specialist in the field of Mental Health in the Department of Psychiatry at the B.P.Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Ghopa, Dharan. His grant was for six weeks; and he arrived in Nepal on March 5, 2009.

Dr. Anthony P. Knight, Professor of Agriculture at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado, is working as a Senior Specialist in the field of Agriculture at the Himalayan College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (HICAST) in Gattaghar, Bhaktapur. This is his first of two 3-week visits to HICAST; Dr. Knight arrived in Kathmandu on May 24, 2009.

Dr. Naresh Man Bajracharya, Assistant Professor and the Head of the Central Department of Buddhist Studies at Tribhuvan University, was selected for a Fulbright Scholar-In-Residence Award at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, where he will teach "Art and Buddhist Studies: Vajrayana (Tantric) Art Ritual Expression." His grant is from September 1, 2009 to May 31, 2010.

Dr. Bina Pradhan, Gender and Socio-Economist at the Alliance for Development Alternatives, in Kathmandu, was selected for the 2009-2010 Fulbright New Century Scholar program. She is one of about 30 distinguished international and American scholars selected for the program. This year's research theme is

"The University as Innovation Driver and Knowledge Center." Her grant is for 14 months, and her host in the US is the University of California Berkeley.

*The following four candidates were selected for the Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship program.*

Mr. Mandip Rai, Agricultural Economist, Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives in Kathmandu, will work in Agricultural and Rural Development, at the University of California, Davis. Mr. Rai leaves for the US on September 7, 2009.

Mr. Bikash Rai, Executive Coordinator at Janasewa Samaj Nepal in Jalapa VDC in Khotang, will work in Agricultural and Rural Development at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. He left for the US on March 27, 2009, to complete Intensive English study before his Humphrey year begins.

Ms. Sarmila Shrestha, Program Manager at Women Acting Together for Change (WATCH) in Kathmandu, will concentrate on HIV/AIDS Policy and Prevention at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. She left for the US on March 28, 2009, to complete Intensive English study before her Humphrey year begins.

Ms. Manju Thapa (Magar), Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Specialist at the Ministry of Local Development in Shreemahal, Lalitpur, will work in the field of Human Resource Management at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. Ms. Thapa Magar left for the US on March 27, 2009, to complete Intensive English study before her Humphrey year begins.

**Attention All Alumni!** From the next newsletter in September—we will cease paper printing and send to you via email attachment. Please provide us your best email address to [fulbcomm@fulbrightnepal.org.np](mailto:fulbcomm@fulbrightnepal.org.np) if you wish to receive the newsletter. Thank you!

# Talk Programs

Fulbright Alumni Association of Nepal (FAAN) organized a talk program on May 26th by Dr. Hiroya Fujisaki, Professor Emeritus, The University of Tokyo in 'What Do We Send & Receive by Using Language?'

Ms. Lisa Labita Woodson, a Fulbright Student of Public Health from the University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ gave her presentation in a Fulbright Forum 'Measuring Receptiveness of Health Messages from Students to Households in Rural Nepal' on May 28th.

# Fulbright Day 2009



American Fulbright Student Mr. Franz Knopffer with Ambassador Nancy J. Powell.



Dr. Peter Moran, Mr. Mark Larsen, Mr. Sujeev Shakya, and Mr. Yamal Rajbhandary.



Dr. Baidya Nath Mahto, Ambassador Powell, Mr. Mark Larsen, Dr. Peter Moran, and Mr. Yamal Rajbhandary.



Mr. Dipak Gyawali, Mr. Anil Pokharel, and Dr. Dwarika Dhungel.



Mr. Mark Larsen, Ms. Victoria Chou, Ms. Elizabeth Lance, Ms. Lael Carter (back), and Ms. Sarah Shepherd.



Dr. Subodh Sharma, Dr. Baidya N. Mahto, Mr. Nirendra Maske, Dr. Naresh Man Bajracharya, Dr. Soorya Lal Amatya, and Ms. Gyannu Chhetri.



Departing Nepali Fulbrighters: 1st row: Dr. Naresh Man Bajracharya, Dr. Baidya N. Mahto, Ms. Bisakha Yonzon Tamang, Ms. Annaya Banstola, Dr. Lakpa N. Sherpa, and Dr. Subodh Sharma. 2nd row: Mr. Rajan Pandit, Ms. Archana Shrestha, Mr. Dhiling Hang Kirat, Ms. Sachchi Ghimire Karki, Mr. Mandip Rai, and Mr. Umesh Dhimal. 3rd row: Mr. Santosh Nepali, Mr. Ramchandra Gaubre, Mr. Binab Karmacharya, Ambassador Nancy Powell, Mr. Krishna Thakur, and Dr. Peter Moran.



Mr. Umesh Malla, Ms. Sbarada Jnawali, Mr. Prem Raj Goutam, Ms. Usha Nepal, and Mr. Krishna Hari Maharjan.



American Fulbright Students with Ambassador Powell and Dr. Peter Moran: Mr. Daniel Coyle, Ms. Danielle Preiss, Ms. Lisa Labita Woodson, Ms. Elizabeth Lance, and Mr. Arthur McKeown.