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Counter-Hegemonic Currents in *SeemaRekha*

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Abstract

This research tries to explore how Kishor Rana Magar's 1997 Nepali feature film SeemaRekha projects counter-hegemonic currents on the notion of shilanyas of Nepali nation-state beginning with Dravya Shah's conquest of Liglig. It further examines how the employment of cinematographic rhetoric serves for the SeemaRekha's politics of drawing the border line of the Magar chiefdom Liglig in the rise of the House of Gorkha. It also shows this film does not picturize the state-sponsored line of ideology which records the history from aristocracy to get consent from the Magar nationality for approval of Dravya Shah's of victory over Liglig without shedding a single drop of blood from winning Liglig race competition. By taking theoretical sights on motion picture photography by James Monaco and Jon Lewis and Gramscian approach of hegemony and idea of representation by Stuart Hall, the present research concludes that the movie projects counter-hegemonic currents featuring the people of Liglig including their chief Dalasur Ghale Magar in the silver screen from behind the black curtain of history of hegemony to represent, speak out for, and testify to the sufferings of the Magar indigenous group.

Keywords: counter-hegemony, representation, identity, discourse of nationality, foundational narrative

This thesis delves into Kishor Rana Magar's 1997 Nepali cinematic performing art *SeemaRekha*, based on Naru Thapa Magar's 1994 historical novella with the same title, as primary text, and attempts to explore how *SeemaRekha* projects counter-hegemonic currents in the silver screen to resist the foundational narrative of Nepali nation-state beginning with Dravya Shah's conquest of Liglig through the theoretical lens of Hegemony proposed by Antonio

Gramsci in his *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. It further studies how the color film has used different cinematic techniques to unearth the forgotten, to make connections that were denied which means making up for overruled the national history in the rise of the house of Gorkha. The feature film reveals the truth that the borderline of Gorkha state which is said to have been drawn by the prince of Lamjung Dravya Shah after winning the race of Liglig is not painted with the white color of peace, as it is claimed by the history of hegemony, instead it is drawn with the red color of blood. A ruler needs hegemony to perpetuate his throne and every victory needs victims to govern, and the big screen represents the victim community, i.e., the Magar ethnic group.

In line with Mao Tse-Tung, “Investigation may be likened to the long months of pregnancy, and solving a problem to the day of birth. To investigate a problem is, indeed, to solve it” (233). This thesis investigates the problems: How does the myth of ‘Ghale Daud’ of Dravya Shah become an expansive hegemony ? What is the cause behind the dissimilar narratives of the similar history of Gorkha ? If alternative history is more truthful, why is it so much difficult to establish in the core of masses ? The ruling classes and their intellectuals can cooperate to take away the ideology of the masses or they utilize the ideology of masses in their favor. That’s why, alternative histories are needed to project counter-hegemonic currents in order to shape the true identity of the people. The historical ‘click’ *SeemaRekha* boycotts the hegemony of mythical incident of involvement of Dravya Shah in ‘Ghale Daud’ to build a solid foundation of the Magar values, ideas, and aspirations.

This research is likely to have significance in two domains: theoretically and practically. First, it is expected to increase knowledge in literary criticism and contribute to the highlighting the importance of Antonio Gramsci’s hegemony theory in the context of sixteenth century

history of Liglig. Aside from that, it promotes film studies, in particular those targeted on Kishor Rana Magar's *SeemaRekha*. As good as, this thesis is expected to contribute to an academic space; in other words, it can give a hand to those learners and researchers who wish to undertake in the same area under discussion, the history from below against the history from above.

In the modern era of advanced science and technology, films explode in the mind of the audience, as they are the Time Bombs of entertainment released or dropped every weekend at theaters. By reason of their audio-visual representation, movies play a meaningful role in the fulfillment of counter-hegemonic agendas. Every movie shows as much as its story demands and hides more things than its story does not, so its interpretation is necessary from multiple angles, otherwise it should be considered that it has made the mind of the audience devoid of logic. James Monaco, in his book *How to Read a Film*, makes a sense, “It is no longer sufficient to know how to read a film. Now, we must also understand, in a profound way, how to use a film” (561). It unmistakably indicates that motion pictures need to be analyzed not only from a technical standpoint, but also from the socio-economic, cultural and political conflicts they depict.

Naru Thapa's historical novella *SeemaRekha*, which is an answer against the drama *Shilanyas* (The Foundation Stone) written by Bhim Nidhi Tiwari, has won the 1995 Krishna Bahadur Ale Magar Puraskar. In the similar vein, the film based on the novella becomes commercially successful and critically acclaimed as it has bagged the Kollywood Awards 1997 under the category of Best Feature Film, Best Debut in Leading Role- Male for Sanubaba Subba, Best Art Direction for Nandoo Adhikari, and Best Editing for Rajani Raj Pant. Similarly, Nandoo Adhikari and Veer Man Gharti Magar were awarded for Best Art Direction and Best Action Direction respectively at Nepal Motion Picture Award and Nepal Film Festival 1997.

From book to film, the details, both Thapa and Rana presented there, are critical of Dravya Shah's hegemony over Liglig. Kishor Rana Magar is also the director of the film *Bandhaki* (The Debt-Slave), based on Naru Thapa Magar's novel *Ramita* (Spectacle), that celebrated 100 days and was awarded in 10 different category including Best Film by National Film Festival 2005. Bishnu Gopal Shrestha's presentation first Nepali cinemascope motion picture *Ranko* (A Light carried in the Hand; 1996) director Rana's *SeemaRekha* begins with an introductory shot put into the beginning of a motion picture to show what happened at the end of the motion picture, in which the cinematic narrator (Jaya Prakash Rijal) shows the sixteenth century principalities of Gorkha with its map, "Four and half centuries ago in Nepal, Lamjung is ruled by the Khan Kings of Shah dynasty, while Liglig is in its border and there is the dominance of the Magar nationality, where the king is called *bang* and the kingdom *hang*. After the Shah dynasty conquered Liglig and other *hangs*, the borderline of present-day Nepal is drawn." (0:00:31-0:01:33).

The audience of the film can see the sunrise at Ligligkot in 1549. In a Magar *kauda* song "Laideu Maya Timile Kaleji Chheu Khani" women and men are performing *kauda* dance together in an open space. No one owns the land. It seeks to create a space for the cultural identities of the Magar indigenous community. Tomorrow, a *bang* will be elected through a race. Dilsara (Rajani Rana Magar) comes to Dalasur (Sanubaba Subba)'s house carrying milk in a *theki*, wooden jar. They tease each other. Dilsara's *phupu*, Dalasur's mother, reveals, "You two meet and fight like cats and dogs. Dilsara, later, you have to take hold of Dalasur's pigtail and make him walk on the right path" (0:09:07-0:09:31). *Phupu*, paternal aunt, clearly indicates that one day the cross-cousins will be a married couple. When his mother is out of sight, Dalasur teases Dilsara again by showing his head's pigtail.

The responsibility of conducting the race and crowning the winner is on the shoulders of Baram Jhankri (Bhim Var Singh Thapa). Dalasur participates in the race and succeeds in becoming a *bang*. Nevertheless, Dalasur says sadly, “Baram Baje, Ganga Ram *dai* is not satisfied with the result. He left the field angrily. How about making him the *bang* this time ?” Baram shaman reminds him, “Don’t make upset the whole Liglig by appeasing single Ganga Ram. It is a custom that has been going on for a long time. It should not be spoiled. The decision of victory and defeat is in front of everyone’s eyes. You are the *bang* of Liglig. From now on, not Dalasur will speak from your mouth, but the people here” (0:14:30-0:15:03).

Jaisara, Veer Man Gharti aka Maila’s spouse, is attacked by a bear in the forest. She screams desperately for help. Hearing Jaisara, Sane Rana comes running. Jaisara is fending off the bear with a tree branch. By the time Sane arrives, the bear has died from not being able to breathe through its throat. Jaisara bear hugs Sane. From here their love for each other springs forth. Maila complains about Jaisara to the *bang*. The *bang* calls the Panchayat and conducts discussions. Sane tells his decision that if she comes back, he will accept, if not then she can go with Maila. Jaisara wants to go with Sane and advises Maila to tie the knot again. The *bang* pronounces the verdict of justice that since Jaisara willingly went with Sane, now the borderline of husband-and-wife relationship of Maila and Jaisara has been erased. When Lamjung attacks Liglig, Maila is stabbed in the chest with a spear and he takes his last breath asking Sane to take good care of Jaisara.

If Ganga Ram Bhusal Rana Magar (Bhimsen Lama) is not able to become *bang*, he leaves his homeland in and links up with Yasho Brahma Shah (Jayanendra Chand Thakur). Late lamented, Ganga Ram’s information makes easier Lamjung defeat Liglig. Meanwhile, when royal astrologer Narayan Arjyal (Jitendra Mahat ‘Abhilashi’) predicts that Dravya (Sudhanshu

Joshi), the younger of the two sons of Yasho Brahma Shah, will become the king someday. After hearing the prediction Rani Vasantawati (Laxmi Giri) is worried about the future possibility of clash between her two sons, but Yasho Brahma makes Dravya inhabit at Raginas, become master in the four arts of *sam*, *dam*, *dand*, and *bhed* (persuade, purchase, punish, and exploit the weakness). Then, Dravya sets out to attack Ligligkot with his soldiers, but they are badly defeated in front of patriotism and bravery of the people of Liglig. Thenceforth, in Ligligkot they blocked the way of salt coming from Bhot and sent their *char* or spies with salt.

Chandeshwar, the chief spy who arrives at Liglig, turns out to be a servant of the Magar priest and healer by pretending that he is wounded. In the crescendo of *SeemaRekha*, Baram Jhankri is writhing in pain on a bed of wooden spears in a ditch dug inside his house. He asks his disciple, “Chande, Are you Dravya’s spy ?” Chande answers back, “Yes Guru, not only me, but in ins and outs of Liglig spies of Lamjung are scattered; that salt merchant is also one of us, from whose wedding you have just returned home.” Baram shaman asks again, “Ah, what will your proverb prove you in the future ?” Chande reacts, “You say proverb, we say history; even if the winner makes a mistake, history will correct it; truth is like a controlled horse of a clever master” (1:53:55-1:55:15).

As the cinema starts the ball rolling with the sunrise scene of a day in Liglig, the loss of life of the Magar priest is the beginning of the end of the days of Liglig. At the end of the day, the forces of Lamjung executes the chief of Liglig. Right way, a Magar *hang* becomes a kingdom. No one owned the land, this day and age, Dravya Shah is the sole owner of Liglig. The borderline of Liglig, which extended to the feet of the people of the entire Liglig, has in half a shake shrunk at to the feet of the king. In the closing stages, presenting the fleeing people and the soldiers chasing them through images, the narrator declares, “In this way, the descendants of

Dravya Shah began to move forward with the help of state organization, military training, and intelligentsia to expand their kingdom by making various efforts during their reign. Dravya Shah himself was able to establish a large Gorkha state getting victory over the petty principalities such as Upalokot, Siranchok, and Azigarh. It is known all of us that the current borderline of Nepal was determined from that Gorkha under the leadership of the Shah dynasty” (2:10:02-2:10:14).

Krishna Bhattarai disapproves *SeemaRekha*, “There is no place to be satisfied with the ending of the movie. No patriotic Nepali citizen can agree to take the words that Jaya Prakash Rijal speaks in the background” (6). *SeemaRekha* does not address the audience who would like to see the scene of the Queen Mother’s oath from her blood. Dravya Shah, who was well-thought-out unfit to be in the palace of Lamjung in the beginning, extends his own realm to the neighboring petty states and lays the foundation stone of Gorkha kingdom, which later on flourishes to be Modern Nepal. Dying out with the rising power of his younger brother, elder brother King Narahari Shah of Lamjung expresses his fear with queen mother Vasantawati. Vasantawati calls upon Dravya Shah on the banks of Chepe River that runs between Lamjung and Majhkot. She lets her milk flow into Chepe and takes oath from both brothers in the name of her blood and milk that they never cross Chepe with ill intentions. As specified by Bhattarai, Nepal’s borderline was extended to Tista in the east and Sutlej in the west; the present-day borderline of Nepal is drawn selfish elements who do not understand history well. Viewed in this way, *SeemaRekha* has not become an image of revolution. Instead of searching for the hidden pages of history, this movie sticks to the discourse that “history is the horse of those who win.” Bhattarai asserts, “Instead of expanding Nepal’s borderline, *SeemaRekha* extracts” (Ibid.). Following Bhattarai’s path, *Sanghu Saptahik* (Vernacular Weekly) under the title “Nepalko

Seemana Nai Harayeko *SeemaRekha*” expresses an indirect disagreement with the dialogue spoken by the narrator at the end of the movie: “The dialogue is spoken at the end of the film that the present borderline of Nepal is drawn due to the contribution of Dravya Shah to Prithvi Narayan Shah. As a result, the outline of the earlier Nepal, which is spread from Tista to Kangra and from the Himalayas to the banks of the Ganges, this movie has managed to hide” (7).

Yuba Raj Gautam communicates a thought in his article “Sanghiyatama 'Box Office” published on August 11, 2018 in *Kantipur*, that films *Balidan* (Martyrdom; 1997), *SeemaRekha* (The Borderline; 1997), *Ago* (Fire; 2000), which are influenced by the People’s Movement of 1990 and the movement after 1996, have started a new era. Fiction film director Mek Bahadur Pun ‘Mejan,’ in his book *Magar Chalchitra: Hijo Dekhi Aja Samma* (Magar Motion Picture: From Past to Present), accepts the truth, “*SeemaRekha* made in Nepali language by covering the story of Magar on the big screen is the sole representation of Magar” (98). In the line of Mejan, Yangesh, writer of a crime thriller fiction film *Fitkiri* (Alum; 2014) and a non-fiction book *Bhuinya* (Earthlings; 2017), writes in *Setopati* online under the title “Yi Chha Film Jasale Dekhaunchha Ajako Nepal” (These Six Films that Show Present Nepal): “*SeemaRekha* is aimed at establishing an alternative truth that Gorkha is occupied by Dravya Shah not by winning the race but by a series of conspiracies.”

Shobha Gautam, in her Saturday film review published in *Himalaya Times*, has called *SeemaRekha* “a bridge connecting history and cinema” (5). She expresses admiration for the shooting location, costumes and folk dance by including the most authentic folk songs of the film. From her point of view any critic can give debutantes Sanubaba and Rajani two thumbs up. She insists that Laxmi Giri in the role of Queen Vasantawati looks weak compared to the new actors. After publishing Gautam’s Saturday piece, on Sunday *Himalaya Times* praises

SeemaRekha again for its excellent combination of folk tunes, costumes, rural language and historical characters. “*SeemaRekha* proves that the historical story can be presented accurately” (2). Unlike Gautam, Vishwa Mani Subedi gives Sanubaba and Rajani in the leading role two thumbs down. He feels that the performances of Rajpal Thapa, Sudhanshu Joshi, Laxmi Giri, Jayanendra Chand Thakur are truly praiseworthy. And he unites with Gautam, “*SeemaRekha* is a saga of heroes who sacrificed their lives for their country before the unification of Nepal, when Dravya Shah attacked Liglig. From the point of view of the story, this movie is an educational movie” (6).

Samjhana (Memories; 1983) is a directorial debut of Shambhu Pradhan. It starred the first golden couple of Nepali cinemas, Bhuwan KC and Tripti Nadakar. *Kusume Rumal* (Silk Handkerchief; 1985), directed by Tulsi Gimire, is the first Nepali film to celebrate silver jubilee. It is produced and co-produced by Sumitra Poudel and Kusum Kumari Singh respectively under the banner of Sayapatri Films. Prakash Sayami inaugurates the truth, “Two Nepali films are released as imitation of the Assamese film *Chameli Memsab* and the Hindi film *Milan*, respectively, *Samjhana* and *Kusume Rumal*.” (27). *Seemana* (1996) director Sayami confirms, “Kishor Rana’s *SeemaRekha* is the most notable film in the year 1997; it successfully introduced Rajani Rana and Sanubaba Subba to the big screen,” and unlike *Samjhana* and *Kusume Rumal* after decades it “gave new taste in terms of storyline” (35). He considers costumes to be one of the problems of Nepali cinema. In the name of Nepaliness, Nepali films are not aware of anything other than *gunyu choli* and *dhaka topi*. He submits, “Half-nakedness in clothing and unnaturalness in make-up are maintained in Nepali films from the beginning” (135).

In an interview conducted by Dabhu Chhetri for *Gorkha Express*, Kiran Dahal Chhetri ‘DC’, who has acted as a heroine in films such as *Ghaite*, *Aaphno Virano*, *Sun Chandi*, etc.,

admits, “*Hiroin Huna Kapada Ta Kholnaiparchha*” (7). ‘To be a heroine, you have to take off your clothes.’ Prem Krishana Shrestha asks, “*Cheer Haran le matrai chalchitra safal hune bhaye Balidan ko kun drishyama nayikako vastra chyatiyeko chaa ?*” (9). ‘If a film is only successful only by incision or stripping of clothes, in which scene of *Martyrdom* is heroine’s clothes torn ?’ Shrestha is under the impression that movies like *Balidan*, *Darpan Chhaya* (Reflections in the Mirror, 2001), *Vasudev* (1985), *SeemaRekha* are liked by the Nepali audience because of their organic content. Shrestha thinks these movies has taken pictures of Nepali people’s life and presented Nepali rural dialogues, and in them liveliness in the acting can be easily discovered. These Nepali films are not under the shadow of the Bollywood tree, as they have created their own visual image based on their particular culture. Sayami expresses concern that dialogue writing in Nepali films is nothing but a translation or imitation of the country across the border; and as evidences he presents *Yug Dekhi Yug Samma* (From Doomsday till Doomsday; 1988), *Chino* (Souvenir; 1991), *Kasam* (Promise; 1992) etc. Due to the fact that there are many movies directly influenced by Indian cinema, the organic story could not be revealed in Nepali color cinema for decades. Even in color film, thematic possibilities can be explored and a balance can be struck between the splendor of colors and various levels of social consciousness and cultural values. “For instance, *Prem Pinda*, *Rajmati*, *Vasanti* and *SeemaRekha* have tried to give a mirror to the social reality in the crowd of formalist and fruitless films” (136).

ShantiPriya calls *SeemaRekha* a living example of history existing for four centuries; who builds a bridge of praise with his brilliant words, “Looking at the history of four centuries ago when Dravya Shah won Ligligkot, Majhkot etc. along with the custom of becoming a *bang* after winning a race, it seems that we are also stuck four centuries ago” (6). He talks about director Rana’s success, “After the success of commercial films such as *Karja*, *Ranko*, *Crorepati*, Rana

has achieved the success of an artistic film” (Ibid.). Matching the tone with ShantiPriya’s voice, Radha Prasad Joshi lets the cat out of the bag, “*Nepali Chalchitrama ‘SeemaRekha’ Koriyo*” (7). ‘The Borderline’ was drawn in the field of Nepali movies.’ He discloses the fact that *SeemaRekha* tries to give an initial impression of Nepali history centuries ago focusing on King Yasho Brahma Shah of Lamjung, his younger son Dravya Shah, the Ghales of Ligligkot. He declares that in the contemporary crowd of Nepali movies full of three fight scenes, four songs, rape and artificiality, *SeemaRekha* will surely succeed as a meaningful presentation. The film is strong in terms of technical aspects. Rajani Pant's editing has succeeded in keeping this film within a limit. As stated by Joshi, Chandra Prakash Ghimire has shown his skills well in cinematography. For those who have seen bow and arrow scenes only in Hindi serials *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, the archery scene of this movie is eye-catching. The conclusion of Joshi is: Kishor Rana, with his commercial film *Crorepati*, became the Nepali counterpart of the contemporary Bollywood film director David Dhawan; but due to the direction of *SeemaRekha*, he can be called a talented director. Through *SeemaRekha*, Rana has not only drawn border line in the field of Nepali cinema, rather he has also drawn border line for himself, who directed films by applying the formula of Bollywood films.

Anne De Sales looks at carefully the posters advertising *SeemaRekha* in the time of its theatrical release and the politics of color revealed through it. She figures out the claim of its posters, “You studied History but you have never seen it” (78). In keeping with Sales, *SeemaRekha* “underestimates the truth that this is a cinematographic fiction: what you will see is true, contrary to what you read or studied at school, which was not” (Ibid.). The several posters advertising *SeemaRekha* lets two men see, the chiefs of the Thakurs and the Magars. There are Thakurs and the Magars are dressed in medieval outfits, former in black, and later in white. “The

former ride horses, the latter are on foot drawing bows. The opposition is, so to speak, color coded: there was no “unification” of Nepal, but a victory of the “baddies”, the black ones, the Thakurs, over the “goodies”, the white ones, the indigenous people” (Ibid.). In relation to Sales, *SeemaRekha* shots counter to stereotypes that were put on the air within the popular culture and brings to light the standpoint of the ethnic groups that take into account themselves not unified under the banner of unanimously accepted monarchy but rather defeated by violence and stratagem. In the Nepali movie industry, *SeemaRekha* “is the first one to attempt a revised interpretation of a historical event and to be so successful and widely acclaimed” (Ibid.). On the word of Sales, what *SeemaRekha* shows is that history is not monolithic; that it may be called into question and subjected to a range of interpretations; in short, that work can start. “*SeemaRekha* may, after all be a historical borderline” (84).

Most of the above-mentioned brains have praised *SeemaRekha* for its acting, costume design, fight sequences, background score and choreography. They have seen *SeemaRekha* as a pure entertainment Masala with Nepali origin free of Bollywood influence. The origin of Nepali movie industry is closely linked to the Panchayat policy of ‘one language, one culture, one nation’ so, which particular movie made during the Panchayat period is *SeemaRekha* firing at ? Even a film pundit has no idea about it. It is not a smart deal to just say what the characters in the film are wearing, rather it is relevant to find out what they want to reveal by wearing them. As far as Krishna Bhattraï is concerned, *SeemaRekha* hit a hurtful kick to the spirit of Greater Nepal. For him, the lost territory of Greater Nepal in the Sugauli Treaty is more significant than the lost identity of the indigenous peoples, which he tries to capture through his eyes in *SeemaRekha*, but the big screen poured cold water on his wishes, because in this movie, Nepal lost more territory than in the Sugauli Treaty of 1816. Among the scholars, Anne De Sales’ review provides some

relief. She unravels the politics behind the posters, the costumes worn by characters, etc. in *SeemaRekha*, but her study is not practically theoretical. Why is the history standing on its head (Gorkha) being made to stand on its feet (Liglig) ? No one able to make clear how the film projects counter-hegemonic currents using camera as a weapon and its every shot as a “political bomb,” so this thesis will fill that gap well.

The theoretical framework of hegemony is applied for the close analysis of *SeemaRekha*. Hegemony is the “spontaneous consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group” (Gramsci 12). In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci argues that the state’s control over the people can be maintained by two and only two means: coercive power and hegemony. He brings up Machiavelli’s metaphor of the Centaur, a Greek mythological creature with a half-human and half-horse form. He states, “They are the levels of force and of consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilization, etc.” (170). The Centaur’s animal side stands for the state’s violent side: its domination through coercion. The Centaur’s human side signifies the state’s civilized side: its control through the spontaneous consent of hegemony. Hegemony is the act of “convincing, cajoling and coercing (others) that they should want what they want” (Agnew 2). Lajos Brons exposes Gramscian notion of hegemony in an easiest way, “In its simplest possible terms, Gramsci’s Machiavellian idea is that Jane can make John do what she wants him to do by two and only two means. Either John accepts Jane’s power or authority and follows her instructions, or Jane forces him by means of violence or the threat of violence” (35).

In *Communist Manifesto*, published on February 26, 1848, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels claims, “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (35) — meaning the struggles in society is mainly because of economy. In accordance with Marx

and Engels, every society is a battleground of the two classes, the ruling and the ruled, and the battleground is in the mode of production. None other than Gramsci, the battle between the two classes in any society, the oppressor and the oppressed, occurs at continual hegemonic level. In Gramscian way, hegemony is the battle and the battle is whose ideologies go over to sweepingly approve in the society. In hegemonic process, the dominant group goes through in order to get the consent of the subordinate groups. Based on Gramsci, Felluga pens, “The only way to counter the pervasive nature of the dominant class’s cultural hegemony was not simply to attack it directly through military means (a “war of maneuver”). Rather the ground for military action must be prepared through the gradual consolidation of one’s cultural influence (a “war of position”)” (129). The subaltern classes must enter into the continual ideological struggle in order to make their ideas more powerful than the ideas of ruling class. In another sense, the subordinate classes must enter the ideological battleground and contest with the dominant class at the hegemonic level.

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci brings forward the political struggle of India against the English, “Gandhi’s passive resistance is a war of position, which at certain moments becomes a war of movement, and at others underground warfare. Boycotts are a form of war of position, strikes of war of movement, the secret preparation of weapons and combat troops belongs to underground warfare” (229-230). Hegemonic power is more power obtained not through oppression or domination of one group against another group, but by means of consensus or emotional acceptance. Gramsci first talks about hegemony in “Notes on the Southern Question.” Mouffe observes:

The Turin communists posed concretely the question the ‘hegemony of the proletariat’: i.e., of the social basis of the proletarian dictatorship and the workers’ State. The

proletariat can become the leading (*dirigente*) and the dominant class to the extent that it succeeds in creating a system of alliances which allows it to mobilize the majority of the working population against capitalism and bourgeoisie State. (186)

Alan Hunt kicks around counter-hegemony in his article and clarifies it using Gramscian concept of counter-hegemony as “the process by which subordinate classes challenge the dominant hegemony and seek to supplant it by articulating an alternative hegemony” (312). Counter-hegemony is an opposition to the pockets of power such as history, media, etc. In *SeemaRekha*, the dominant hegemony is the history of Dravya Shah written from above. *SeemaRekha* as a war of position of the Magar nationality refuses the hegemonic stability, exercised over an extended period of time, and strives to revolutionize or substitute it.

Stuart Hall’s theory of representation is used to examine the meaning-making politics of the visual storytelling. Hall states, “Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between the members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, sign and images which stand for or represent things” (15). To get a profound or unfathomable understanding of the plot and the contents of the motion picture, it is watched plentiful times conscientiously. The length of the feature film is 2:11:09. Then again, James Monaco’s concept of film’s function in meaning formation in addition to particular shot selection as well as Jon Lewis’ ideas regarding analysis of big screens are used to explore the technical aspects of *SeemaRekha*. Since Louis Althusser’s concept of Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs) is largely compatible with Gramscian hegemony, it has been used in this study to analyze how ISAs function in a society. A couple of photos taken during the study-observation visit to Ligligkot and Chandragiri have been included in the data analysis section. Since the origin of Nepali movie industry is from the womb of monarchy or ‘*Desh suhaundo panchayati vyavastha*,’

Panchayat system that suits the country, an attempt has been made to make a comparative study of *SeemaRekha* by connecting it with three films made during the genesis of Nepali cinema, especially the first Nepali film *Maitighar* made by the private sector.



Fig. 1. Panchyan, Gorkha: The Place of the Grave of the Five. Photo Courtesy of the Researcher.

Based off of Gramsci, Peter D. Thomas agrees, “Hegemony denotes a strategy aiming at the production of consent, as opposed to coercion” (160). The history from above makes an effort to create a consensus that Dravya Shah won Ligligkot without bloodshed by defeating the Ghales in the foot race. Oppositely, In *Gorkha ko Itihas* (Pahilo Bhag) (The History of Gorkha, First Part), Dinesh Raj Pant writes, “Mahibal is among the four hamlets of Liglig, and the outskirts of Mahibal is Panchyan, where Dravya Shah has beheaded five leaders of Liglig. The race was from Chorkate to Liglig, whoever was first in the race was the king that year, and the same legend can be heard even today” (49). Relatedly, Prof. Dr. Shiwakoti is in touch, “To be a bang, one had to run about fourteen kilometers from Chorkate, Shivalaya and Chhoprang” (60).

In keeping with Pant, “It is written in the piece of genealogy in the envelope number 190 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that Purna Shah took possession of Liglig later because it was lost from the Gorkha rights” (67). How can a perpetual monarchy be established in the republic of Liglig, where one can only be *bang* for one year after winning the race ? If Liglig happily accepted the kingship of Dravya Shah, then why did his son Purandar or Purna Shah have to capture Liglig again ?

In his May 1938 lecture “On Protracted War,” Mao puts under our nose, “War is the continuation of politics. In this sense, war is politics and war itself is a political action; since ancient times there has never been a war that did not have a political character. It can therefore be said that politics is war without bloodshed while war is politics with bloodshed.” (152-153). The battle between Liglig and Lamjung is a political action, and Liglig and Lamjung have their main political characters, Dravya Shah and Ghales, who represent two different battlegrounds in course of their politics. The beheading of five Liglige leaders along with Dalasur Ghale is a politics with bloodshed, and the mainstream discourse of Dravya Shah becoming the king of Liglig winning the ‘Liglige Daud’ is a war without bloodshed.

If a ‘historical’ war without bloodshed is true, why does the oppressed class not give consent ? There was no consensus on Panchyan, otherwise Panchyan would not have been formed. As Henry Glassie says, “It is not the date matters, it is the place. Time passes, but the land endures, demanding attention ... for that is the most obvious way the past forces itself on the present, and the past unalive in the present is not history” (196, 650). In this study, ‘the past unalive in the present’ is the history of Dravya Shah, where there is no Panchyan. Panchyan (See, Fig. 1) can become the site of class struggle, “resistance of the exploited classes is able to find means and occasions to express itself there” (Althusser 111). Kishor Rana Magar’s 1997

historical feature film *SeemaRekha* is a visual war without bloodshed against a politics with bloodshed.

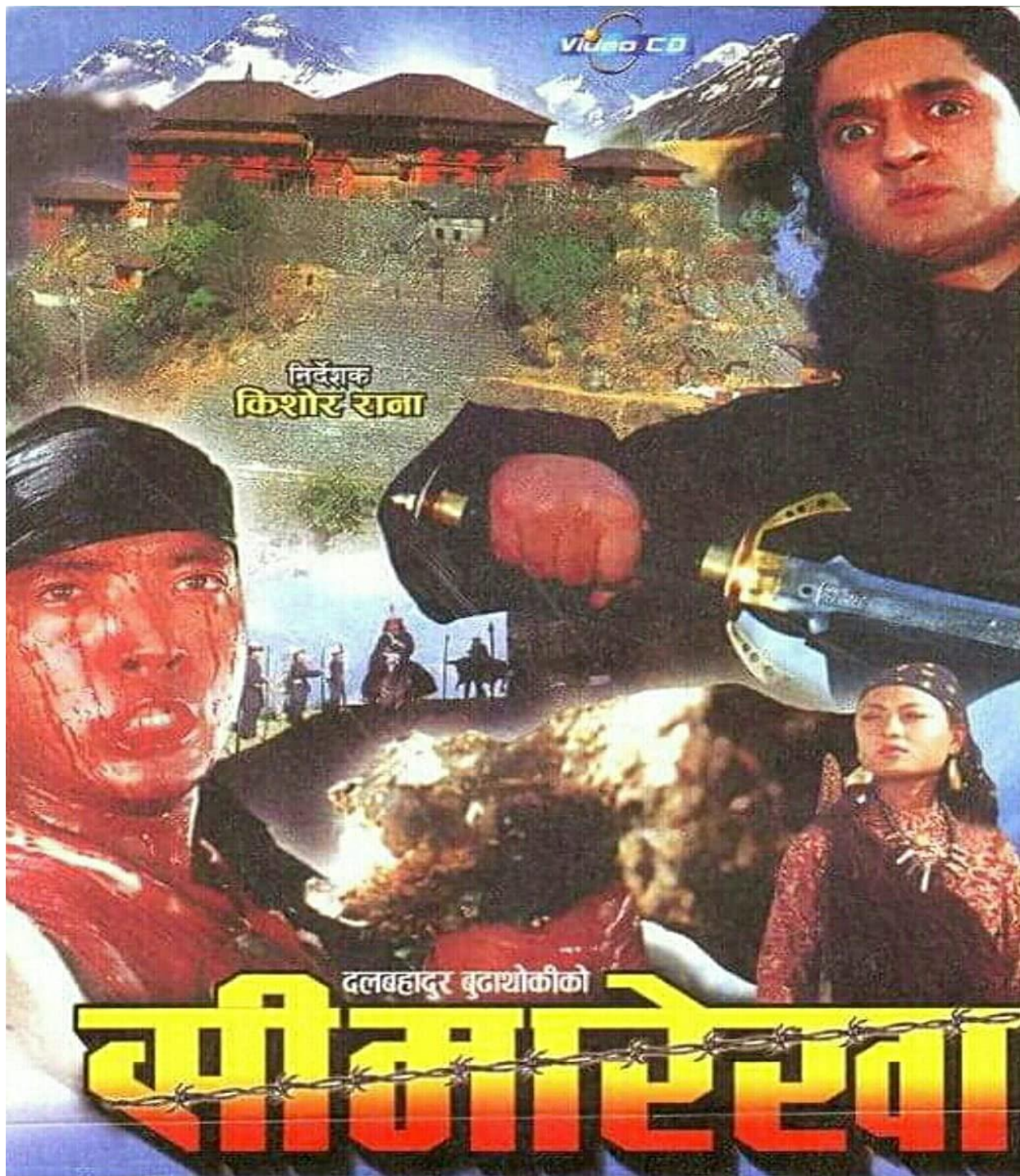


Fig. 2. *SeemaRekha* Poster. 'We learn from movie that we don't learn from history.' Image

Courtesy of Resunga Films.

Theo van Leeuwen features several angles of visual representations. He draws attention to meaning of images with the treat of Berger's thoughts, 'Images provide interpretations, ideologically colored angles, and they do so not explicitly, but by suggestion, by connotation, by appealing to barely conscious, half-forgotten language' (136). Visual depictions involve guaranteed motive and politics. In the poster of *SeemaRekha*, Dalasur is at the bottom, in need of revision of history from below. Dravya Shah, at the top, holding a sword in his hand, points towards hegemony in terms of coercion. Dalasur's face, covered in blood, and clothes, soaked with blood, indicate the history of Gorkha is not black and white. Shah is dressed in black, and Dalasur's black band on his head is a counter-hegemonic symbol. The Gorkha palace in the background hints at the Shah's rise to power began with the shedding of Dalasur's blood in its first staircase, Liglig. Dalasur and Dilsara are next to each other, because they are cross-cousin lovebirds. Just like the staircases of the Gorkha palace, colorful images arrange for compressed meaning with numerous coatings or covers. Monaco makes a case for color, "Black-and-white communicates significantly less visual information than color film, and that limitation can have the effect of involving us more deeply in the story, dialogue, and psychology of the film experience instead of the spectacle" (117).

In addition, a colorful map shown in Fig. 8 refers to the bloodshed of Dravya Shah in the foundation of Gorkhali nation-state. Fig. 8 boycotts Fig. 9, which issues a black-and-white map and indicates that not a drop of blood was spilled at the Gorkha entrance. "History is the past," Henry Glassie, as quoted by Christopher Bigsby, reminds us, "but a map of the past drawn from a particular point of view to be useful to the modern traveler ... Reality is not the present but between the past and the future" (151). *Shilanyas* or the foundational narrative of the 'past' seems to present a challenge to *SeemaRekha* of the 'future' to draw a map of reality.

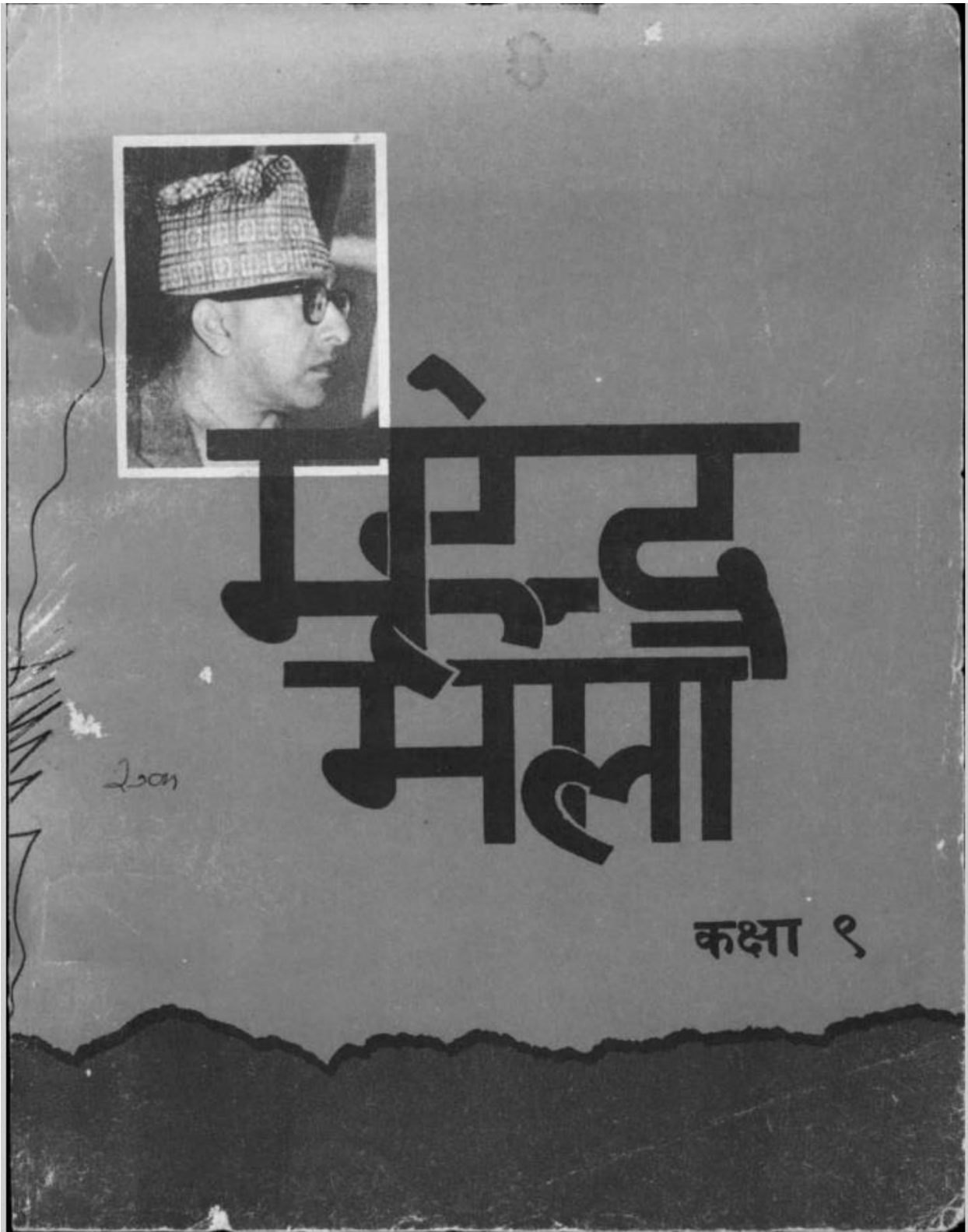


Fig. 3. Mahendra Mala Class 9. 'Not only is knowledge power, but power is knowledge as well.'

Image Courtesy of Ministry of Education, Nepal.

नेपालको राजतन्त्रात्म संस्कृति



नेपाल राजाको देश हो । आजको नेपाल श्री ५ बडामहाराज पृथ्वीनारायण शाहको उघाउनी हो । त्यसैले राजतन्त्र नेपालको संस्कृति हो ।

हामी नेपालीहरू हजारौं वर्ष अधिदेखि राजाका काखमा हुकेर आएका हौं । यसो हुनाले राजालाई आफ्नै बाबुसरह मान्छौं । राजाका कुलमा पहिलो बालक जन्मेदा हामीहरू खुशी मनाउँछौं । घरघरमा दिपावली मनाउँछौं । राजाको शोक पनि उत्तिकै व्यथाले मनाउँछौं । जूठो बाछ्छौं, कपाल खौरन्छौं ।

नेपालीहरू राजालाई भगवान् नै सम्झन्छन् । राजालाई विष्णुको अवतार मान्दछन् । राजाको दर्शन पाउँदा दिनभरको पाप काटिन्छ भन्छन् । तागाधारीहरू भात खानेवेलामा पहिले “भूपतये स्वाहा” भनेर राजालाई बली चढाउँछन्, अनि मात्र “भुवनपतये स्वाहा” भनेर भगवान्को भाग चढाउँछन् । यो आज चलेको कुरा होइन हजारौं वर्ष अधिदेखिको हो । त्यसैले यसलाई नेपाली संस्कृति मानिन्छ ।

नेपालमा घेरै नै प्रतापी र असल राजाहरू भए । ती सबै प्रजाको हित हुने काम गरेर गए । तर सबभन्दा बयान गर्न लायकका पहिला नेपाली राजा श्री ५ पृथ्वीनारायण शाह नै भए, किनभने आधुनिक विशाल नेपालका जन्मदाता उनी नै थिए ।

पृथ्वीनारायण शाह पहिलो गोरखाका राजा थिए । तिनताक नेपालमा अनगिन्ति साना तिना राज्यहरू थिए । काठमाडौं उपत्यका पनि काठमाडौं, पाटन र भादगाउँ गरी छुट्टाछुट्टै राज्यमा बाँडिएको थियो । यी सबै राजा रजौटाहरू आपसमा बराबर लडिरहन्थे । त्यसो हुँदा कुनै राज्यमा पनि शान्ति थिएन । कुनै राज्यले पनि उन्नति गर्न सकेको थिएन ।

गोरखाका राजा पृथ्वीनारायण शाहलाई त्यो स्थितिले सारै चिन्तित तुल्यायो । नेपाल विदेशीहरूको हात पर्ला भन्ने डरले उनलाई घच्चच्यायो । नेपालीहरू विदेशीका कमारा बन्न पुग्ने हुन् कि भन्ने शङ्काले पृथ्वीनारायण शाहलाई चनाखो तुल्यायो । किनभने तिनताक छिमेकी देश भारतमा अङ्ग्रेजहरू राज्य गर्थे । उनीहरू राज्य बढाउन लागेका थिए । चिसो हावापानी भएको देश नेपालमा उनीहरूको आँखा लाग्न सक्थ्यो । नेपालको सुन्दर प्राकृतिक दृश्यले उनीहरूको मन लोभ्याउन सक्थ्यो । त्यस अवस्थामा नेपालका भारेभुरे राजा रजौटाहरूलाई जित्न अङ्ग्रेजहरूलाई फुट्टी गाह्रो पर्ने थिएन ।

Fig. 4. A Discourse of Monarchy: The First and the Last Page of History. A French philosopher Denis Diderot opines, “Men will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest.” Image Courtesy of Ministry of Education, Nepal.

Why are there only Kings and Queens in history ? Why does a fairy-tale begin like this, “Once upon a time there was a King ?” Why does a Prince become a King later in a legend ? Does a Queen’s womb determine a prince’s ability to become a King ? Mohammed Ayooob brings to light, “Put simply, we can sum up this issue as follows: not only is knowledge power, but power is knowledge as well” (29). There are only Kings and Queens in history, because they wrote it, because they make to weave *Mahendra Mala*, the Garland of Indra, the King of heaven; and they create a discourse, ‘Where there are Kings, there is heaven.’ In 1975, the ninth-grade Nepali students had to read the history of ‘a flower garden of four castes and thirty-six creeds’ as *Mahendra Mala*, the Garland of Mahendra. *Mahendra Mala*’s first chapter is “Nepalko Rajtantratmak Sanskriti” (Monarchical Culture of Nepal). The ninth-grade students read well, “Nepal is the country of the King. Today’s Nepal is the creation of His Highness Prithvi Narayan Shah. Therefore, Monarchy is the culture of Nepal” (1). *Mahendra Mala* taught monarchy as the ultimate truth, so the people were never going to get rid of it ? Was Nepal not a country of people ? Didn’t people practice republic in history ? Resham Virahi, in his article titled ““Raja” Mardaina Bhanne Thaha Napaune Pangu Pani Samsad ?,” published in *Naya Kiran Weekly* on 3 October 1997, strongly criticizes the leaders like Man Mohan Adhikari, Modnath Prasrit, Madhav Kumar Nepal, Mohan Bikram Singh, who are called Communists of Nepal by associating them with Lenin, Stalin and Mao. His article concludes:

The King and monarchy are the way of life and culture of Nepal and Nepali people. This culture is not thrown on the street. Even if some Hakucha and Bhakucha die on the streets of the Capital, the King does not run. Expressing condolences on the death of a Nepali citizen is enough. Tomorrow condolences will also be expressed on the demise of your

Guru who holds the level of ‘Communism Trademark.’ Running ‘bargaining’ on the streets would be like throwing an axe at your own feet. (3)

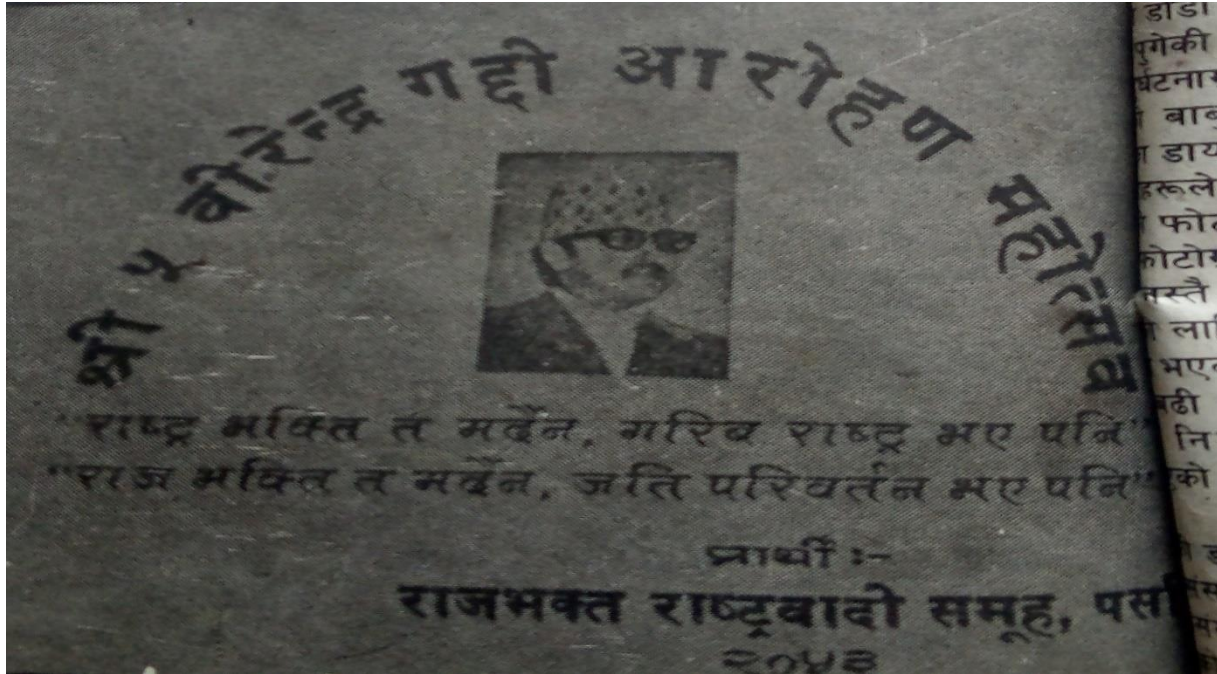


Fig. 5. Ascension Festival of Shree 5 Birendra. A Discourse of Nationality: ‘Devotion to the Nation never dies, even if it is a poor Nation. Devotion to the King never dies, no matter how many changes occur.’ It reminds us of Indira’s dialogue in 1937 verse drama *Mukund Indira* by Bala Krishna Sama, known as the Shakespeare of Nepal, “Devotion to the country never dies, even if it is a lowly country. Devotion to one’s husband does not die, even if the husband is a sinner.’ Published on Friday 5 September 1997 in *Naya Kiran Weekly*. Photo Courtesy of *Naya Kiran Weekly*.

The 1990 Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal defines ‘The Kingdom,’ “Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, democratic, independent, indivisible, sovereign, Hindu and constitutional Monarchical Kingdom” (1). According to which the indigenous groups now have their own Kingdom, but for that they still need to be Hindu. The Constitution communicates, “The Nepali language in the Devanagari script is the language of the Nation (*Rastra bhasha*) of

Nepal. The Nepali language shall be the official language. All the languages spoken as the mother tongue in the various parts of Nepal are the national languages (*Rastriya bhasha*) of Nepal” (2). According to which the nationalities of Nepal have their nation in their own languages, but the nation is declared a Hindu rather than a secular state. Shiwakoti pushes his pencil:

During the construction of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990, the indigenous communities of Nepal suggested that the Kingdom should be secular. But the Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal, 1990, which is said to be the best and most democratic in the world, continued the oppression of the indigenous communities by the state power since the historical period and tried to impose Hinduism on the indigenous communities by calling Nepal a Hindu Kingdom. While continuing the existing unitary and centralized state power in Nepal, it made the racial, regional, linguistic, cultural, religious and gender discrimination more complicated. (13)

During the 1990s, movies such as *Balidan* and *SeemaRekha* point the finger at the crude imitation of Bollywood aesthetics and demanded indigenous aesthetics and a more realistic line of attack. Lecomte-Tilouine writes, “With the 1990s, two successive, yet interrelated, contestatory movements emerged: ethnic revivalism, which transformed the society while itself emerging from that transformation; and the Maoist rebellion, which attracted worldwide attention both for its bloody aftermath and its anachronism” (3). Kishor Rana Magar’s *SeemaRekha*, released in 1997, reengineers the mainstream history of establishment of Shah dynasty in Gorkha. Conversely, *SeemaRekha* consciously seems rediscovering the perception and presentation of the historical victory of Dravya Shah from Lamjung over the then Magar *hang Liglig*.



Fig. 6. 'To see the whole staircase of Nepal, just take the First Step.' After climbing about 500 meters from Bijuli Danda on the Thanti Pokhari-Amp Pipal road section of the Dravya Shah Highway, one can reach Ligligkot, located in Palungtar municipality-2. Photo Courtesy of the researcher.

Politician, Poet and novelist Bishwa Bhakta Dulal 'Ahuti' talks to Pradeep Shrestha, host of the program "The Power of View" of *Shilapatra Online*:

You may ask, is there possibility of democracy without representatives ? Such was the era. Before the advent of feudalism, no matter how many tribal societies there were, even in the race competition of our Nepal's Ligligkot, every member of the society was present. There was direct voting. The chief was elected by saying, "You must do certain things during a year." The representative could not make any decision; he only used to implement the decision of the people. Capitalism once bows down at the feet of the people during elections. When the elections are over, then for five years, it hits the stick to the people. This is capitalism, not democracy. It is a democracy of representatives, not a democracy of the people. Political system provides training. If a new political schooling is not started as an alternative to that training, people will continue to live in the same pit for hundreds of years. (37:00-43:25)

Lecomte-Tilouine puts in writing, "The throne of Liglig has given for one year to the winner of an annual race" (96). "The genealogies confirm the fact the kingdom of Ghales was in Liglig," Surya Bikram Gyawali argues, "The rule of the Ghales was a form of underdeveloped monarchy based on physical force-tests. On the Tika day of Dashain, the Ghales used to have a running competition. On the occasion of the race, the conspirators took Dravya Shah to the throne where the winner of the race is seated and conquered Liglig" (53). He adds in his note, "The system of electing a ruler every year is like the ancient republican system prevalent in the Shakyas, but the fact that the person who wins the race becomes the ruler is monarchical. Such custom may have started when the republic was about to change into a monarchy. It is possible that before the republican community took the form of monarchy, the custom of electing a leader on the basis of

physical test developed” (Ibid.). Then again, Anne De Sales compares Liglig with the chiefdom in the Tibetan province of Amdo, citing Philippe Sagant, “An annual hunt is used to determine the future of the community. If the candidate came back empty-handed, it was understood that he was not a good hunter but also that the god did not approve of him. If on the other hand he was successful, his trophy was the sign that they had invested him with the authority to lead his community for a year” (80).



Fig. 7. Ruins of Ligligkot Palace. History is His Majesty’s Story. There is a saying of a Turkish Playwright, Mehmet Murat ildan: “Throughout human history, palaces have taught us this: Those who live in palaces have always exploited those who do not live in the palace !” Photo Courtesy of the Researcher.

In 1558, with the accession of Dravya Shah, the son of Lamjung King Yasho Brahma Shah, to the throne of Liglig, its republic comes to an end and the monarchy of the Shah dynasty emerges successfully here. After four hundred and forty-nine years later, *SeemaRekha* boycotts the history of monarchy, which the historians of Nepal believe to have started from Liglig without bloodshed. It presents the real history of Nepal into the reel and kicks out the discourse that ‘Monarchy is the only culture of Nepal.’ Two years before the release of the movie, on 13 February 1996, the People’s War or the Maoist Armed Struggle began with the stated purpose of overthrowing the Nepali monarchy and establishing a People’s Republic, which ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord on 21 November 2006. Prashant Jha, in his *Battles of the New Republic*, brings up-to-date, “The Shah dynasty was originally from Gorkha district in the mid-hills of Nepal. It was ironic that the man who could justifiably take a large part of the credit for ensuring the end of monarchy also happened to be from Gorkha” (9). Jha informs the readers that Babu Ram Bhattarai is born in 1954 in Khoplang village which traced its lineage back to the Gorkha kingdom’s priestly clan.

In *SeemaRekha*, before the exposition, the narrator recounts the sixteenth century history of Gorkha with its drawing (see, Fig. 8), “Lamjung is ruled by the Khan chiefs, while Liglig in its border is a chiefdom of the Magar, where the chief is called *bang* and the chiefdom *hang*” (0:01:06-0:01:21). Thapa Magar informs, “*Magar bhashama ‘hang’ ko artha ‘rajya’ hunchha*” (2). Every year in the Magar *hang*, there is a custom of electing a new *bang* through a race competition. Rishikesh Shah blows the whistle on, “The credit for founding the ruling house of Gorkha belongs to Dravya Shah (1559-1570), who conquered the tribal kingdom of Gorkha and founded the Shah dynasty of that principality, which later became the ruling house of Nepal” (24).

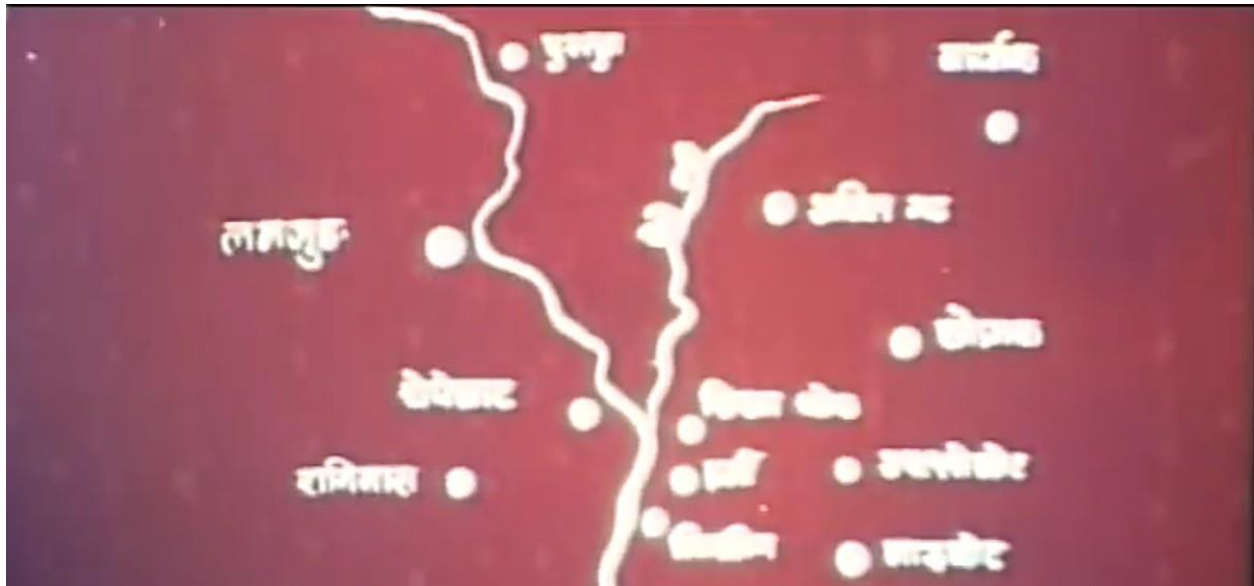


Fig. 8. 'Either we're going to solve this by realistic negotiation or there will be blood on the border'. The white lines of the principalities are drawn on the blood-red ground, which shows how the state of Nepal came into being. (00:00:41)

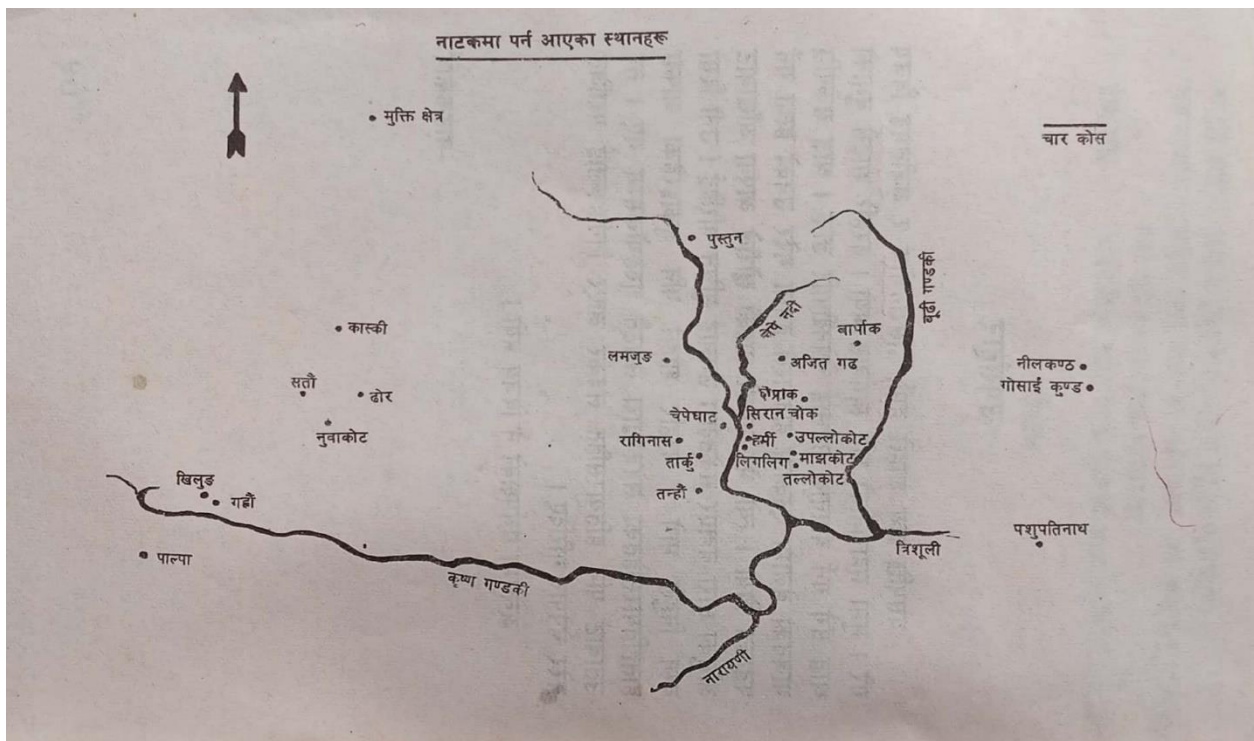


Fig. 9. 'History is not the past but a map of the past, drawn from a particular point of view.' The Map drawn in Bhim Nidhi Tiwari's play, *Shilanyas*. Image Courtesy of Sajha Prakashan.

SeemaRekha is a color film, as “color film reproduces more reality than does black and white” (Monaco 7). In the silver screen, *SeemaRekha* puts on show the colorful initial limited hegemony over Liglig, in terms of coercion, in other words, a politics with bloodshed. The history of Shah Dynasty confirms Liglig in “black and white” condition, a war without bloodshed. The 1960 Madan Prize winning poetic volume *Bisphot* (Explosion) author Bhim Nidhi Tiwari, in the preface of his 1964 ‘historical’ play *Shilanyas*, admits, “Like in social drama, it is not possible to sit in one place and fly the kite of imagination in historical drama. I wrote this play for the Ministry of Publicity and Culture Department of His Majesty’s Government. (1964, November 11, Wednesday, Tiwari-Hermitage, Dillibazar.” *Shilanyas* is in terms of the top-down model of history of the fabrication of the step of Dravya Shah’s *shilanyas* of Gorkha. *Shilanyas*, the word itself, is ideally closer to the positivist idea of history. Tiwari’s *Shilanyas* is *shilanyas* of Dravya Shah and the foundation of modern Nepal.



Fig. 10. “Deep Focus.” The Ghaes running to be a *bang* of Ligligkot in *Seemarekha*. (0:10:45)

In *Shilanyas*, a Brahman Ganesh Pande tells a fortuneteller Narayan Arjyal, “Guru, on the Tika day of Dashain, the Ghaes gather in the bank of Marsyangdi and Chepe. Those who want

to be the king take part in the race. The one who leaves everyone behind and succeeds in entering the *kot* (fort) and sitting on the throne, becomes the king that year. Let's make him (Dravya) run with them. The body that has consumed milk rather than *jaand* (roughly speaking, beer or alcohol) is stronger" (37-38). Here, the line of distinction between Matawali and Tagadhari is drawn, which is indicated by *jaand* and milk respectively. Stuart Hall argues, "Representation is the production of meaning through language. Languages can use signs to symbolize, stand for, or reference objects, people and events in the so-called real world" (28).

There is an old blind man in *Shilanyas*, who is told by his son what is happening in Liglige daud. The fact that the prince of Lamjung is also going to participate in the race makes the father even more excited to hear every detail of the competition. This reference is similar to Sanjay telling DhritaRashtra the story of the Kurukshetra crusade in the *Mahabharata*. In Sanskrit, Dhrita and Rashtra mean blind and kingdom respectively. Through this, Tiwari wants to show Shah's occupation of Liglig as a crusade, where no one died, as in the *Mahabharata*, Krishna tells Arjuna that body dies but neither soul does. In *Shilanyas*, after Dravya sits on the throne of Liglig, the father enlightens his son, "As I have revealed before, the Ghales cannot compete with the king's son, who has a muscle body" (46). At this time, through the dialogue of the father, it is indicated that the indigenous groups are not capable of being a ruler.

In *SeemaRekha*, Ligligkot looks like a mini-Soviet power. In his *Lenin: Ek Adhyayan*, Pradeep Giri quotes Lenin, "Soviet power is such a state, where there is no bureaucracy, no police, no army. The Soviet state is a new kind of democracy, but it is not a 'bourgeois democracy.' The Soviet Republic is in fact the direct rule of the proletariat where they have taken over all the functions of the state" (55). Through the above deep focus (see, Fig. 10), *SeemaRekha* shows that anyone who wants to be the chief of Ligligkot can take part in the race.

Actually, Ghale means, roughly speaking, king. Of course, Ghale Magar means Magar King. In this way, in *SeemaRekha*, Ghale Magar is added to Dalasur's name, which means Dalasur is the chief of Magarat. Professor Balkrishna Pokharel makes himself felt, "In Magar language, Ghanghal (means) Maharaj or His Majesty, Mahaghanghal (means) Maharajadhiraj or His Highness. Still in Magarat, the word Ghale means king" (551). In the same page, Pokharel uses the word "Lig-Mantri (local ruler ?)," in this way, Ligligkot stands for the fort (kot) of local (Lig-Lig) people. The Magars were the aborigines of Liglig. In *SeemaRekha*, Ghales are cast opposite Khans. According to Pokharel, "Khan is a title of Mongol origin. Just as the kingdom of a Sultan is called a Sultanate, the kingdom of a Khan a Khanate" (612). In *SeemaRekha*, Shahs are Khans and Lamjung is a Khanate. Pro. Dr. Upadhyaya lists twelve types of polities of Baisi, Chaubisi, Malla and Sen kingdoms in medieval Nepal, among which Lamjung is a *bansha rajya* or dynastic kingdom derived from the eldest son or crown prince and a *jat rajya* or caste kingdom ruled by a particular clan, and "the Magar chiefdom Liglig is an example of a *barga rajya* or class principality ruled by a particular nationality. In medieval Nepal there were 12 Magarat and 220 sub-Magarat chiefdoms which were established on *thum* or hilltops and were called *thum rajyas*" (277-278).

Said says, "I do not want to be misunderstood. Intellectuals are not required to be humorless complainers" (xviii). In a humorous intellectual way, *SeemaRekha* as far as possible does real correction of His Majesty's (his) story as such portrayed by Tiwari. Bringing the opposite direction of Tiwari's presentation, the diction itself, captures the meaning of Liglig, the *hang* closer to the border of Majhkot and Lamjung. Purna Rana recognizes, "Liglig is originated from the Magar word '*lingling*' which means clear, clean and pure" (8). There is no other place than Liglig from where (the history of) Gorkha can be seen clearly. Furthermore, Liglig can also

be derived from ‘*likhlikh*’ means border. It is clear that *SeemaRekha* is really closer to *likhlikh* or border (see, Fig. 8). In the Medieval Gorkha, Liglig was considered as *saat saya lingling* or seven hundred borders because of the formation of Liglig as the administrative unit of the assimilation of the seven hundred *ghardhuri* or households of the five villages, which are Amp Pipal, Khoplang, Palungtar and Chhoprak.

Shiwakoti emphasizes, “From Gandaki to Kali there were eighteen independent principalities of Magarat. In the west there is a place called Garkha, means dense settlement in Magar language. The name of the Gorkha state must have been derived from the dense settlements of the Magar principalities” (104). In the preface of their editorial volume *Lahureka Katha* (The Legend of the Gurkha Soldier) Basant Thapa and Mohan Mainali points out, “The word of the state Gorkha is associated with a hill top of eastern Daraudi and originates from the colloquial term ‘*gurkha*’ which means geographical area of territory” (vii). The word and state Gorkha are connected with Ligligkot in which Liglig and *kot* respectively mean territorial border and area. *SeemaRekha* (The Borderline) clicks the idea that the word ‘Gorkha’ not only connected with ‘gurkha’ beyond Darundi River but also with ‘linglingkot’ beyond Chepe stream from Lamjung.

Hegemony is the consent given by the subordinate classes to the ruling class saying ‘we are ready to be ruled by you.’ People do not accept to be ruled easily, so it is necessary for the ruler to create such a state of mind of the ruled. Eric Hobsbawm, in his *How to Change the World: Tales of Marx and Marxism*, says, “What Gramsci called ‘hegemony,’ i.e., the ways in which authority is maintained which are not simply based on coercive force” (318). Hegemony is created by the dominant groups through various ideologies and discourses. The ruling ideology refers to the network of social beliefs that the subordinate groups accept as truth. Hobsbawm

explains, “It is not obvious that a ruling class relies not only coercive power and authority but on constant deriving from hegemony—what Gramsci calls ‘the intellectual and moral leadership’ exercised by the ruling group and ‘the general direction imposed upon social life by the dominant fundamental group” (324).

Louis Althusser suggests to differentiate “Ideological State Apparatuses” from the repressive State Apparatuses. The ISA contains “the Government, the Administration, the Army, the Police, the Courts, the Prisons, etc.” (96). The core factor that singles out ISAs from the SAs is: “the Repressive State Apparatus functions ‘by violence,’ whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function ‘by ideology’” (97). The SA functions for the most part by repression and only secondarily by ideology. By the same token, the ISAs perform predominantly by ideology but can include punishment secondarily: “Schools and churches use suitable methods of punishment, expulsion, selection, etc., to ‘discipline’ not only their shepherds, but also their flocks. The same is true of the Family. ... The same is true of the cultural ISA” (98). As per Althusser, the cultural ISA takes account of literature, the arts, sports, etc. *Shilanyas* is a cultural ISA of the Ministry of Publicity and Culture Department of His Majesty’s Government. As quoted by Tek Bahadur Pun, Ram Chandra Malhotra, the then Acting Secretary of the Department of Culture, states, “This play has been painstakingly prepared by the author at the request of the Department of Culture, saying that this play can play a role in imparting historical knowledge of Nepal to the students in an interesting way” (1). *Shilanyas* was included “in the syllabus under compulsory Nepali Subject of the Proficiency Certificate Level at Tribhuvan University for a long time” (Pun 3). Althusser asserts, “To my knowledge, no class can hold state power, no class can hold state power over a long period without at the same time exercising its hegemony over and, in the State Ideological Apparatuses” (98).

Schools are the apparatuses to have power over and manipulate children's state of mind at a very young age. Schoolbooks do have a key role in order to extend and widen the ruling class region of domination "ideologically". Sales brings to mind, "Nepalese schoolchildren learn that Dravya Shah conquered Gorkha by being the strongest runner in a foot race" (79). In 1996, His Majesty's government Curriculum Development Center published *Hamro Nepali Kitab* (Our Nepali Book) for children studying in class seven, authored by Bharat Nepali Pyakurel. The third chapter of this school book is titled, "Daudma Patham Hune Raja" (He who won a race became King). The textbook takes us to the history of the 16th century of Bikram era and introduces us to Dravya Shah, the younger prince of King Yasho Brahma Shah of Lamjung. Dravya has been sent to live in a cow barn by the palace. One day a *jogi* or hermit visits the barn. When trying to give alms to the ascetic, he expresses his desire to eat something instead. Dravya prepares *kheer* or sweet rice pudding for his guest. In the course of their talk, *jogi* forecasts, "You are wise. Keep up the good work. One day you will be a famous King" (Pyakurel 12). The news that Dravya Shah will participate in the Liglige race set fires to the minds of the Ghale. A fierce ensues among the Ghale. Some say he should be allowed; some say he shouldn't. After a long discussion, it is decided to allow him in the race. "Dravya Shah, like the Ghale, participated in the race. Decisively, Dravya Shah came first in the race and won the competition. Thus, he became the king of Liglig in 1559" (Ibid. 14). In the same way, Shree Prasad Upadhyaya aka SP Asha's historical novel *Dravya Shah* makes our ears perk up that the title character succeeds in winning Liglige Daud and attaining the throne of Liglig. Everyone is familiar with Dravya Shah in *Shilanyas*, while in Asha's novel, Dravya Shah informs his supporters, "According to the rules of Liglig, anyone can participate in the race; nevertheless, my identity will still be kept secret" (31).

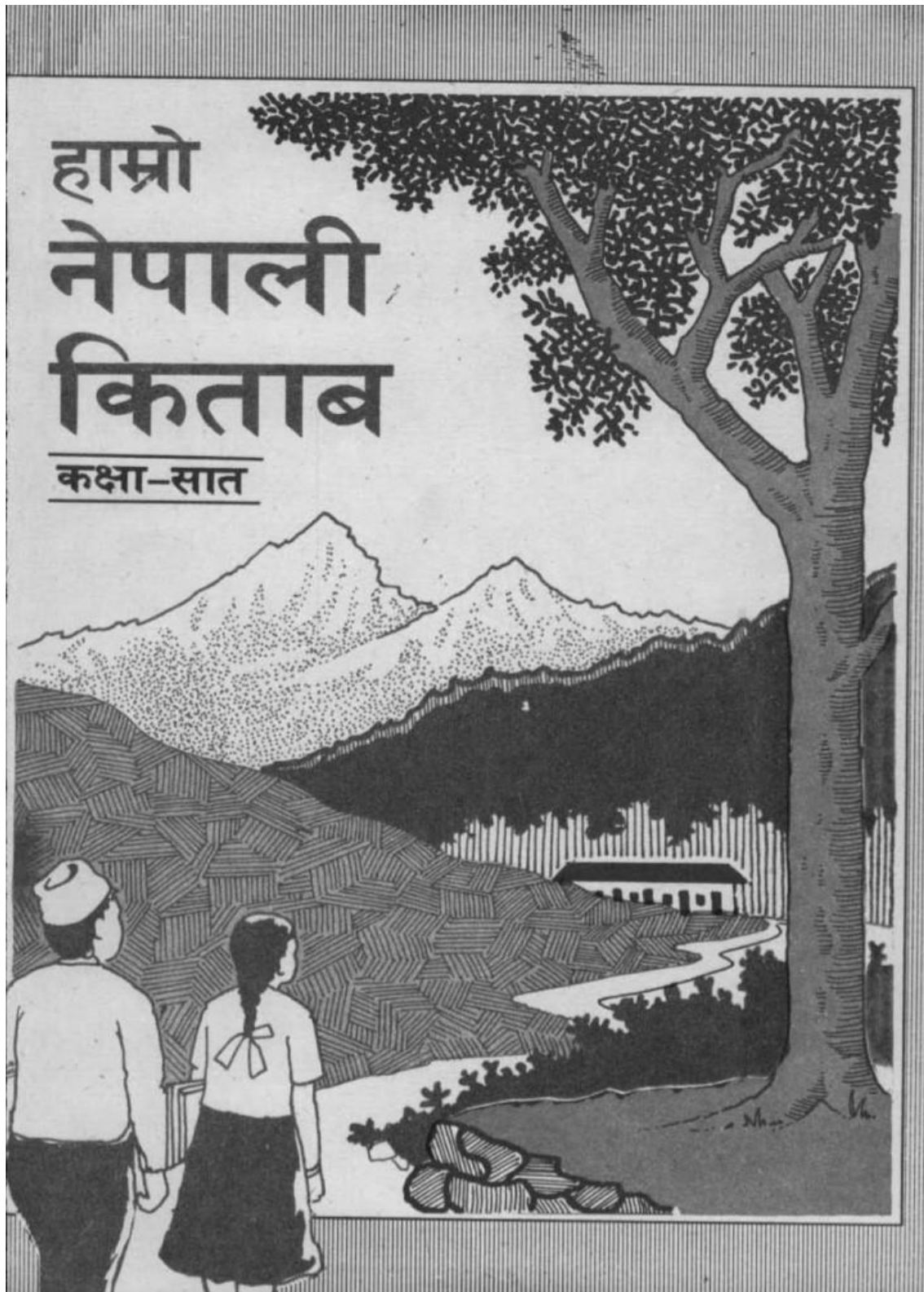


Fig. 11. Our Nepali Book for children studying in class seven. 'To be ignorant of the past is to be forever a child.' Image Courtesy of Ministry of Education, Nepal.

दौडमा विजयी हुने राजा

हाम्रो देश नेपाल एकीकरण हुनुअघि स-साना राज्यहरूमा विभाजित थियो । पश्चिमतिर बाइसे, चौबिसे राज्य, काठमाडौं उपत्यकाभित्र मल्ल राज्य थिए भने पूर्वतिर किराँत र सेनहरूको राज्य थियो । यी राज्यका राजाहरू मध्ये लमजुडे राजा यशोब्रम्ह शाहचाहिँ बढी प्रभावशाली थिए । राजनीतिका कुरामा खासै चासो नदिने कान्छा राजकुमारको नाम थियो द्रव्य शाह । छोराको रुचि र कार्यदक्षताको पहिचान गरी राजाले उनलाई गोठका सर्वेसर्वा बनाएका थिए । मातृ-पितृभक्त द्रव्य शाह गोठको अधिपति भई वस्तुभाउको राम्रो हेरचाह गरेर आफ्नो दिनचर्या बिताइरहेका थिए ।



एक दिनको कुरा हो । द्रव्य शाह आफ्नो गोठमा बसिरहँदा एउटा जोगी टुप्लुक्क आइपुगे । जोगीलाई भिक्षा दिन खोज्दा उनले मलाई भिक्षा होइन, बरु केही खान देऊ भन्ने इच्छा व्यक्त गरे । उनले आफ्नो गोठमा आएका अभ्यागतलाई सत्कारस्वरूप खीर खान दिए । कुराकानीकै सन्दर्भमा जोगीले सोधे- तिमी राजाका छोरा भएर पनि किन गोठमा बसेका ? यस्तो प्रश्न सुनी द्रव्य शाहले जवाफ दिए- म बुद्धिहीन भएकाले र कुनै गतिला काम गर्न नसक्ने भएपछि गोठमा आई बसेको हूँ । द्रव्य शाहको उत्तर सुनेपछि जोगीले सम्झाउँदै भने- जो कोही पनि एकैचोटि बुद्धिमान् र असल मानिस बन्न सक्तैन । यसका निमित्त प्रयास गर्न छाड्नु हुन्न । जसरी खेतबारीमा राम्ररी खनजोत, मलजल गरी बीउ छरेपछि मात्र प्रशस्त अन्न उब्जिन्छ, त्यसरी नै असल कामहरू गर्दै गएपछि महान् बन्न सकिन्छ । तिमी पनि बुद्धिमान् छौ, सत्कार्य गर्दै जाऊ, एक दिन प्रसिद्ध राजा हुनेछौ ।

जोगीका प्रेरणादायी उपदेश सुनेपछि द्रव्य शाहमा मनै उथलपुथल हुने गरी विभिन्न विचारहरू आए । उनीभित्र असल कार्य गर्ने र विशेष गुणहरूले युक्त हुने धुन चढ्यो । उनका

Fig. 12. Dravya Shah: He who won a race became King. 'The most important thing we learn at school is the fact that the most important things can't be learned at school.' Image Courtesy of Ministry of Education, Nepal.

A perfect example of a mind that falls victim to the foundational narrative of the nation even after the establishment of the Republic in the country is KB Masal, who runs his pen, “The one who became the first in the Liglig race would be the king. In 1558, Dravya Shah won the race and became the King” (4). History is “like the air we breathe, it enters us unconsciously, without our knowledge or alternative participation: it does the work through books, all books” (Ismail 421). The ability of Shah Dynasty to make history seem peaceful through books made it easier to silence the descendants of people they began to rule. Preferring to present history in ‘black and white’ implies that not a single drop of blood ever shed in Liglig and legitimizes the Shah dynasty’s dominance over the Magar nationality since the founding of the Gorkha state. To put it another way, the history from above always corroborates through Liglig that the Shah dynasty was necessary because the indigenous people were forever unfit to rule. Along these lines, to understand the oppression of the Magar till present, the entire marginalized groups as a whole, the excluded history of Liglig, the cornerstone of modern Nepal, must be understood thoroughly.



Fig. 13. ‘Children must be taught how to think, not what to think.’ Winning has nothing to do with racing. The *Bang* under Siege in *SeemaRekha*. (2:05:57)



Fig. 14. Every Truth of History from Above is Under Erasure. Khukuri and Dalasur in *SeemaRekha*. (2:05:57)



Fig. 15. (Re-) Writing the History of Sub Alter or Under Other. *SeemaRekha* tries to draw the attention of the audience fully to this one particular scene so that it can establish the Magar mode of hegemony. (2:06:02)

Jon Lewis asserts, “Close-ups and extreme close-ups obliterate background” (93).

Through the long shot (LS; Fig. 13) following extreme close up shot (ECU; Fig. 14 and 15),

SeemaRekha shows the hidden faces of history on the big screen. The background is green. Blood is flowing from Dalasur's face. The (his) story of Majesty informs no one's single drop of blood is spilled in the battle of Liglig. The 'traditional wisdom' or 'truth of the ages' of the nation claims that Dravya Shah is elected a king of Liglig by winning the race. The black band tied on Dalasur's head is a protest against such version of history. By enlarging the face of Dalasur the ECU frames the *bang* to isolate from his *hang* (background); in other words, it shows the highest moment of tension i.e., now the Magar principality as well as nationality have been captured by the enemy. In this reference, Van Leewen argues, "In pictures, distance become symbolic. People shown in a long shot, from far away, are shown as if they are strangers; people shown in a "close up" are shown as if they are "one of us" (138).

After the invasion of Dravya Shah, the truth of *saat saya lingling* is under erasure. *SeemaRekha* catches the eyes that Shah began to send spies in Liglig and such launch of action of detection is inception of deletion of seven hundred border of Ligligkot and the indication of the establishment of history of Shah Ancestry in Gorkha. In *SeemaRekha*, Dalasur is a representative of subaltern groups. Subaltern comes from the Latin 'Sub' and 'alter' which respectively means 'under' and 'other.' Subaltern refers people who are socially, politically outside of the hegemonic power structure. As stated by Gramsci, "The history of the subaltern is necessarily fragmented and episodic" (357-358). History is assured as the records of the past events which are based on facts; the facts do not exist unless they are interpreted. Motion picture photography is the best ways to disclose the socio-political reality. Stuart Hall explains the power of visual imagery, "Visual signs and images, even when they bear a close resemblance to the things to which they refer, are still signs: they carry meaning and thus have to be interpreted" (19).

The narrator of *SeemaRekha* voices over in the exposition, ‘Khan Kings used to rule in Lamjung.’ In the LS (see, Fig. 16), the index finger of the Magar *Bang* Dalasur is a challenge on Shah Dynasty and its history. The LS is used when the spatial relationships of the people of Liglig make statements using distance or depth. His men and he are wearing *kachhar*. “*Kachhar* comes from the Magar *katchhatr*, which means the Magar sovereign nation or Magarat” (Rana Magar Ibid.). The *Kachhar* they wear indicates their national dress of *leesa* i.e., Liglig. Be in harmony with Man Bahadur Bagale’s *Magar Dhut Lawajkhat* (The Grammer of Magar Language), “‘*leesa*’ stand for ‘*des*’ or nation” (5). Dalasur claims, “*Ladakaharu nai mulukko baliyo jag ho. Hamra ladakaharu tyasai baseka chhainan, ladainka lagi talim liiraheka chhan. Hami tyasai Khan bhayeka chhainaun*” (1:02:28-1:02:42). ‘Fighters are the strong foundation of the chiefdom. Our fighters are not sitting idle. They are training for fighting. We belong to the same clan of Khan.’ Monaco claims, “Cinema is an art and a medium of extensions and indexes. Much of its meaning comes not from what we do not see (hear) but from what we don’t see or, more accurately, from an ongoing process of comparison of what we see with what we don’t see” (136). Dalasur’s pointed finger sticks in the debate that Shahi royal family is Magar. Is the borderline of Shahi clan connected with the Magar bloodline ?



Fig. 16. “Hami Tyasai Khan Bhayeka Chhainaun” in *SeemaRekha*. (1:02:42)

Dalatur's claim reminds *Divyo Padesh* (Celestial Advice) of Prithvi Narayan Shah, where he declares himself, "*Magarantko raja mai hun*" (Pant 52). 'I am the King of Magarat.' As Dalatur spelled out, 'Fighters are the strong foundation of the chieftdom,' Shah assured, "*Rajaka sar bhaneka sipahi ra raitiharu hun*" (Ibid. 43). 'The crux of the matter is that soldiers are especially important to the king.' The 'Father of Nepali Anthropology' Dor Bahadur Bista, in his *Fatalism and Development: Nepal's Struggle's for Modernization*, asserts, "The Shah Thakuris have been given a Rajput ancestry by a few historians, yet all their clan deities and family tutelary deities are worshiped and cared for exclusively by Magars – by Brahminic standards a polluted low caste ethnic group; the Gorkha Kali, Manakamana, and the goddess at Lasargha, are in the exclusive care of the Magars" (38)

In all his research, Bista has been "unable to discover any genuine evidence that any Thakuri (aristocratic) family has its origins in India" (Ibid.). The royal family, "although it pretends to come from Chitaur, is, in reality, of the Magar tribe" (Hamilton 26). On the word of Francis Buchanan Hamilton, Shah is one of the branches of Magar and the first persons of the Gorkha family are two bothers named Khancha and Mincha, or Nimcha. The name Khancha and Mincha is the adaptation from the Magar diction Karhancha and Mirhancha, meaning respectively *jetha ra kanchha*, the elder son and the younger son. *SeemaRekha* displays Yaso Brahma Shah and Dravya Shah as the continuity of generation of Khancha Khan, Mincha Khan and Kul Mandan Khan to discover the truth that 'Khan' is not the cast, but the position of governance. That's why, *SeemaRekha* presents Dalatur Ghale as the 'Khan' of Liglig who is elected as a chief in the annual race of 'bang' in 'hang.' Gramsci confirms, "The starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is "knowing thyself" as a

product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory” (324).



Fig. 17. From Chandragiri Hill: The atrocities committed by PN Shah on the people of the defeated states during the expansion campaign of ‘Asil Hindustan’ were covered up by the discourse of ‘the Unification of Nepal.’ Shah breathed his last in 1775, but the discourse he launched shows no signs of biting its tongue. Photo Courtesy of the Researcher.

In *SeemaRekha*, Dalasur and Dilsara are about to get married to each other, who are *phupuchela* and *mamacheli*, cross-cousins, respectively. Dilsara is the daughter of Dalasur's *maiju*, maternal aunt, Dhanisara (Bhuwan Chand). She asks Dalasur when he will bring *sagun* to her house. Dalasur replies, "*Keko hataar chha ra ? Mamaki chhori hos ke re tta*" (0:53:35-0:53:40). 'What is the hurry ? You are my maternal uncle's daughter.' Gyan Mani Nepal pens, "In Magarat, the Magar and the *jharra* Thakuri also had a custom of marrying mother's brother's daughter" (262). Nar Bahadur Thapa aka Naru Thapa mentions "Prithvi Narayan Shah's marriage with Indra Kumari, daughter of Hemkarna Sen, the King of Makawanpur" (8-9), as proof of Shahs marrying their maternal uncle's daughters. There are sayings among the Magars, '*Mamako Chhori Khoji Khoji, aruko chhori roji roji. Pani khanu mulko, chhori lyaunu kulko.*' The history of Shah Dynasty begins with '*ka*' and ends in '*gya*'. '*Ka*' denotes Kul Mandan Khan who "obtained the sovereignty over Kaski. He pleased the emperor (of Delhi) in something, and received from him the title of Shah (Wright 298)" and '*Gya*' stands for Gyanendra Shah who is the last King of Shah dynasty. If Shah and Magar belong to the same *kul*, ancestral, why is the history of only one of them under erasure and only the other is written ?

For understanding this, one has to reach Kurukshetra, where Krishna is reciting *Geeta* to Arjuna. In history, Sardesai reveals, "War and violence were there in tribal societies. But that took place different tribes, not connected with one another by blood. Violence against a member of one's own tribe i.e., within the periphery of blood relations, was unknown to tribal societies" (22). In the tribal kingdoms, it was 'borderline' of blood relation between the clans of the tribe that provided the bond of unity and loyalty. In this connection, Dalasur's dialogue must be remembered again, 'We belong to the same clan of Khan.' With the role played by Ganga Ram Rana Magar in the defeat of the Ghales of Liglig "we may presume that internal conflicts among

Magar clans generally led some of them to the side with the enemy” (Lecomte-Tilouine 95). In *Geeta*, ultimately, Shree Krishna, the champion of the territorial principle, wins, against Arjuna loses, who doesn't want to kill Kauravas; it means he is still devoted to tribal unity and loyalty. SG Sardesai and Dilip Bose, in their *Marxism and the Bhagvat Geeta*, asks and answers themselves, “What was to replace it in the territorial kingdoms ? It was the conquest of the king as the representative of God (in Europe) and as an element of Godhood (in India) that became the new basis of loyalty and obedience to the state power” (21). According to the sixteenth rule set by King Ram Shah, which is in Appendix ‘A’ of *Muluki Ain* published by Law Commission, “Only the Queen should wear gold ornaments on her feet. Because gold is the form of Narayan, the King is also the form of Narayan, and the Queen is the form of Lakshmi” (661).

Sanskritisation “is the process by which a “low” Hindu caste or tribal or other groups changes its customs, rituals and ideology, and way of line in the direction of a high and frequently, “twice born” caste” (Srinivas 6). PN Shah, in his *Celestial Advice*, claims, “*Mera sana dukkhale arjyako muluk hoina. Sabai jatko fulbari ho*” (Pant 36). ‘I have suffered a lot to build this Nation. This is a garden of all castes; everybody should acknowledge it. Everybody from all the four jat (castes) and thirty-six varna (creeds) should protect and promote this garden. This is the real Hindustan. Do not give up the kula-dharma (religion) inherited by the dynasty.’ Jung Bahadur’s *Muluki Ain*, Legal Code started a formal and legal campaign to Hindunize the entire indigenous communities. When the boundaries of tribal chiefdoms were erased, then the caste boundaries were assigned to them. In this arrangement among Tagadhari, twice-born or thread-wearing castes, specified by *Manusmriti*, Chhetri will run the state and Brahmin will be the mastermind of that institution. *Muluki Ain* “tried to comprehend the pluralistic cultures of Nepal into a single scheme of Hindu caste universe” (Sharma 132). Those who were among the

Matawali (alcohol-drinking castes), Pani nachalne chhiochhito halnunaparne (castes from whom water could not be accepted but whose touch does not require aspergation of water), Pani nachalne chhiochhito halnuparne (untouchable castes) were declared to be ruled in *Muluki Ain*. Their past history is also written by the present power that they have been ruled in this way since the dawn of time. Bista puts pen to paper, “Besides, the people who imposed the caste system upon the Nepali society were not Bahuns. They could not have done it by themselves as they were weak, dependent immigrants at the time. It was the local ruling elite who were responsible for doing this by applying the Bahunistic principles for further entrenchment of their own class status” (3-4).

The story of *SeemaRekha* “compares two different political systems: on the one hand kingship is open to everyone but questioned every year; on the other hand kingship is hereditary, and is likely to involve either divisions among brothers in the kingdom or new conquests in order to satisfy everyone’s ambitions” (Sales 79). The movie deals with the representation of “difference.” Theo van in talking about the depiction of people through visual representation says, “In looking at how images depict people and, I ask two questions: how are people depicted? And how are depicted people related to the viewer?” (137). In *SeemaRekha*, the high priest Narayan Das Arjyal predicts that Dravya Shah will be a king in the future. Arjyal wants to build another monarchy, which is determined by the pregnancy of the queen, in Liglig with a fatalistic prediction. On the contrary, in *SeemaRekha*, the Magar shaman Baram Jhankri from Liglig appears in favor of democracy. Simply speaking, Arjyal is the symbol of Brahminism, on the other, Baram of Shamanism. Tagadharis are represented by Arjyal. The borderline of Nepal is stretched with the threat, in the same time with the consent, of the sacred thread. Extending the thread means expanding the borders of the state.

After signing on the Sugauli Treaty, the campaign of the expansion of the nation stopped completely; the four new countries (*naya muluk*) brought back by Jung Bahadur, Banke, Bardia, Kailali, Kanchanpur were not due to the power of the sacred thread, but because of the recruitment of the Gurkha soldiers. *Muluki Ain* had already waged a legal battle to Hindunize the tribal groups. After the Gorkha recruitment scheme was approved, the Rana government made it compulsory to appoint a Brahman Pandit in every Gorkha Paltan. As a result, the soldiers from the tribal background were Hindunized. When the Lahures (foreign soldiers) came home on leave, they had to get a certificate of purity at the border of Nepal. The Lahures helped to spread the campaign of Hindunization in every corner of the villages. In this regard *Laura M. Ahearn* in her *Invitation to Love*, cites Hofer and reminds, “Once Nepal had become a nation and was in the process of attempting to incorporate the many people within its borders under one main law, the *Muluki Ain*, in 1854, Magars were inserted into the Hindu Caste Hierarchy as “water acceptable, non-enslavable alcohol drinkers” (15).



Fig. 18. The Power, Property and Prestige of ‘Real Hindustan’ desired by King Prithvi Narayan Shah is based on the Hindu Caste System of Kshatriya-Brahmin supremacy. The “Tagadhari” Holy Thread Wearing Kingmaker, Narayana Das Arjyal. (2:09:58)



Fig. 19. The *Rig Veda* (10:90) describes the origins of the universe from Virat Purusha's (the Cosmic Being) sacrifice in himself on the funeral pyre. From Purusha's mouth came the Brahmin (as priest), from Purusha's arms the Kshatriya (as ruler), from Purusha's thighs the Vaishya, and from Purusha's feet the Shudra. The Caste System, which is rooted in the *Rig Veda*, is forcefully imposed on the ethnic groups. The "Namasinya Matawali" Non-Enslavable Alcohol Drinker Magar Shaman, Baram Jhankri. (1:07:22).

Anirudh Deshpande claims, "Fearless writing and creative cinematic history can help counter our power" (115). The history of Nepali movie industry under the umbrella of His Majesty must be studied for how same pit for hundreds of years. (37:00-43:25). *SeemaRekha* negates the Hegemony of Nepal state over the Magar nationality. The first Nepali feature film is *Harishchandra* (1951), which is produced from Calcutta, India; and the first Nepali feature film produced in Nepal is *Ama* (Mother; 1965). Poet, playwright, short-story writer, and editor Avinash Shrestha shares a poster of *Harishchandra* in his article entitled "Who is the 'Director' of the First Nepali Film *Harishchandra* ?", published in Annapurna Post, on 2015 November 28. The film poster shared by Shrestha confirms that the name of the first Nepali film is called *Satyā Harishchandra* and some say it is *Raja Harishchandra*, but actually the name of the film is

Harishchandra. Based on the discussion of Shrestha and the evidence available to Shrestha, it can be concluded that the director of *Harishchandra* is not DB Pariyar. The director's name is written as 'Sangh Rathi' in the available poster and credit casting of the movie *Harishchandra*. But the existence of a person named 'Sangh Rathi' is not known. Since all the works of *Harishchandra* were carried out in a joint effort, it is taxing to conclude that the word 'Sangh Rathi' was used while naming the director. The literal meaning of 'Sangh Rathi' is also that 'Sangh' means 'group' and 'Rathi' means 'to drive', that means *Harishchandra* is driven by a group or made by the combined efforts of all, so it is clear that the name of the director is 'Sangh Rathi.' However, the production of the first Nepali movie *Harishchandra* was the result of the collective efforts of two non-Nepali producers Thakur Prasad Chaurasiya and SP Mukherjee, non-Nepali Cinematographer Suresh Das, many non-Nepali film technicians, non-Nepali hero, and some Nepali actors.

It is *Satya* or true the Nepali Khas language was built as a bridge to connect the state and cinema. A film based on a Hindu myth, *Harishchandra*, addressed 'Hindu' in the lingua franca of a Hindu state, not in its own monarchy but in the world's largest democracy. Though *Harishchandra* is not *Satya Harishchandra*, the *Satya*, bright as the Sun (or Heera or diamond), is King Mahendra's hegemonic nationalism of Panchayat regime is presented in the visual storytelling from the first movie produced in Nepal *Ama*. Laxmi Nath Sharma reveals, "*Ama* directed by Heera Singh aims to explain the basics of the Panchayat system to the common people and embraces the feeling of patriotism" (213). Yale University Graduate Kesang Doma Sherpa, majored in Film Studies, and Ethnicity, Race, and Migration Studies, in her Howard R. Lamer prize winning best senior essay "Un/Re-Imagining National Nepali Cinema", puts in the picture, "Official Nepali film history begins in 1965 with the highly patriotic film *Ama* (Mother;

1965). Produced by the Ministry of Information under the aegis of the then King Mahendra, *Ama* was clearly a nation-building tool. *Desh suhaudo panchayati bewastha-* love the *Panchayat* that suits our nation was communicated to a diverse national public divided along regional and ethnic lines” (4).



Fig. 20. The Poster of the First Nepali Language Film, *Harishchandra*. The director's name is clearly written as 'Sangh Rathi' on the poster. Image Courtesy of Avinash Shrestha.

In 2017 BS, Heera Singh Khatri, who was in the world's largest democracy, was invited by King Mahendra to direct a movie in the only Hindu Kingdom in the world, so he came under 'hamro raja hamro desh' or 'our monarchy, our country.' The film *Ama*, produced by King Mahendra under Singh's directorial debut, was screened by His Majesty's Government Information Department, Films Division on 7 October 1965. *Ama* stars Shiva Shankar Manandhar and Bhuwan Chand, with Basundhara Bhusal, Heera Singh Khatri, and Hari Prasad Rimal in supporting roles. In *Ama*, Man Bahadur (Shiva Shankar) returns motherland after serving in a foreign army for two years. Man hears about his mother's death, and decides to leave Nepal but his neighbor persuades him, "*Timro Ama, mero Ama, timro Amako Ama, mero Amako Ama, hami sabaiko Ama, Nepal Ama hun, timile aphno Amako sewa Nepal Amako sewa garera pura gara. janani janmabhumischa swargadapi gariyasi*" (00:38:43-39:01). 'Your mother, my mother, your mother's mother, my mother's mother, mother of all of us is Nepal. Service of the motherland is equally virtuous as service to a mother. Mother and motherland are superior to heaven.' Man wants to stay in Nepal to serve *Ama*. Serving *Ama* means serving Panchayat. In line with Peter J. Karthak, "The 'Made in Nepal' *Ama*, though paraded as the country's first feature film, was mere propaganda for the monarchist Panchayat regime. It urged those who had left home to return to their motherland" (100).

Maitighar (The Mother's Home of a Married Woman; December 16, 1966) is the third Nepali film produced and the first featured film under a private banner in Nepal. This film features Bollywood female actor Mala Sinha in the lead role with Nepali actor Chidambar Prasad Lohani. Maya (Mala Sinha) becomes a widow and as a *sati* or widow-burning she remains loyal to her dead husband Moha or Mohan (CP Lohani), as a result, she sings and dances but does not sell her *satitwa*. In accordance with Dzihana and Volcic, the media engineers an exactness of

what nationalism is and provide rhetorical space for nationalistic discourse. “Members of the (national) media audience are variously invited to construct a sense of who ‘we’ as nationals are, and who ‘we’ are not (or who is not ‘one of us’)” (13). In *Maitighar*, Maya is depicted as a nation; but she has no distinct existence in her isolation from her husband. On the topic of Hindu patriarchal system Anjani Kant puts down on paper, “Widows remarriage was totally nonexistent among the Hindus” (55).



Fig. 21. Never End Peace and Love: ‘Nepal’ ko Maya-Moha. The Introduction of an Image-Life in Nepal in *Maitighar*. (0:00:17)

Sherpa confirms in her writing, “Likewise the historical conditions for an emerging visual culture in Nepal were tightly controlled by the mechanisms of state vision. The introduction of an image-life in Nepal can in fact directly linked to the state’s attempts at modernization and nationalization” (4). In the foundation campaign of Nepal, the geographies of

hundreds of states like Liglig were not only merged in one map, its ‘great’ founders like Prithvi Narayan Shah, Jung Bahadur Rana, Mahendra Bikram Shah imposed the Hindu caste-based culture and language on the non-Hindu and non-caste based indigenous people. *Muluki Ain* was a legal way to destroy cultural diversity; another continuation of this was the Panchayat system of the only Hindu state in the world. Karl Marx, in his *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, comments, “Hegel remarks somewhere that all the events and personalities of great importance in world history occur, as it were twice, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce” (19).



Fig. 22. Maya (Mala Sinha) and Mohan (Chidambar Prasad Lohan) in *Maitighar*. Both of their names suggest love with the autocratic Panchayat system and its ideology of unity in diversity, which is reflected more deeply through the attire they wear; in fact, love is a system. Image Courtesy of Sumononjali Films. (00:23:27)

Maya and Mohan are nationalist characters whose relation to the nation “is one of *mimesis*: citizens recognize themselves in the state” (Poole 276) (see, Fig. 21 and 22). About *Ama*, Sherpa is sure in her idea, “The image of the mother, a universal symbol of national unity, was used to forward themes of nationalization” (4). Likewise, the characters are in *Ama*, Mohan is dressed in *daura suruwal* and *dhaka topi*, and Maya in *cholo fariya*; as the hill based upper caste Hindu nationalistic costumes, *Ama* can nicely be met in *Maitighar*. In the similar vein of *Ama*, Maya’s chastity circles around her Hindu Kingdom; she says to herself, “After three days, my chastity is getting tested” (1:03:16-20). ‘After three days, my chastity is getting tested.’ Tanika Sarkar says, “The *sati* was an adored nationalist symbol, her figure representing the moment of climax in expositions of Hindu nationalism” (42). A pimp, Gofle Dai, vows, “You called me brother from your true heart. I shall fulfill the duty of a brother. Till I live nobody will be able to touch you” (1:07:29-39). Maya’s body becomes his country, which as a patriotic citizen Gofle Dai must protect. In Hindu society, after marriage a woman is considered to have no existence apart from her *swami* or owner, and chastity is demanded even after her husband is dead.

The medium shot (MS; see, Fig. 22) starts above the waist, but below the chest and ends just above the head. It utilizes a true middle ground approach. It captures the subject in a size similar to how we interact with people. The medium shot of Maya and Mohan brings to mind the love of them for each other from their heart. Contrariwise, *Maitighar* wears and tears Maya and Moha’s beauty and body’s capacity to act as a site of ruling class hegemony. In other words, *Maitighar* passes the monolithic nationalism based on one religion, one language and one culture of the ruling class. Maya’s devotion to her dead husband is equivalent to her devotion to the nation.

The *dhaka topi*, high on one side, low on the other, worn by Moha, is connecting the discourse of Nepal as the land of the crown, the highest mountain and the storehouse of grain. As their names and the similar meanings of their names suggest to be a nation it is necessary to have one language and one religion, one costume and one culture. The Panchayat Constitution of 2019 became a legal apparatus to lead to ‘unity in diversity’. It gave the nation a religion Hindu, a language Nepali.

Daura suruwal was introduced by the first Rana Prime Minister of Nepal Jang Bahadur. Jung Bahadur had worn *daura suruwal* during his visit to England. Nepal threw away the Rana rule but wore the clothes of Jang Bahadur. History stores room that Queen Elizabeth had gifted a coat which Jung Bahadur used to wear over the *daura*. The *dhaka topa* had become famous during the Panchayat rule of King Mahendra. A Nepali national was made to wear *dhaka topi* in photographs for citizenship and passport. In Nepal, even today, National Topi Day is celebrated on 1st January. As quoted by Sherpa, in relation to Higson, “The process of identification is thus invariably a hegemonizing, mythologizing process, involving both the production and assignation of a certain set of meanings, the attempt to contain or prevent a proliferation of other meanings” (20). In 1965 Her Majesty’s Stationery Office published a book from London, entitled *Nepal and the Gurkhas*, which clearly states:

The national dress of the upper classes of Nepal is a double-breasted garment, known as a *chaubandi*, fitting tight over the waist, and fastened inside and outside at the shoulders, and at the waist, by tapes. They wear loose trousers of the same material as the coat, a long length of thin white cloth wound around the waist, the distinctive Nepali cap, high on one side, low on the other, or more often now-a-days, European shoes. A tweed coat of European cut and pattern is often worn over the *chaubandi*. (49)

In Fig. 23, Medium Full Shot or Cowboy (FS) is arranged to the top of Dalasur and Dilsara's head to below their waist. In *SeemaRekha*, the Cowboy Shot, which is based on the height of gun holsters, especially when weapons might be drawn, is used to present Dalasur and Dilsara as challenging, dangerous or confident in a thoughtful state- they are always on the move, on the make. It goes in the opposite direction of the neutral medium shot of Maya and Moha in *Maitighar*. Dalasur has a white *bhangra* over heart part of his body, which is knotted about the edge of his chest in such a line of attack as to have the result that his arms bare, and forming a large bag in his back. He is wearing a turban wound around his head. He has a kilt with a wide belt around his waist. And he is in the cloth of *bhoto* as the shirt or vest and white *kachhad*, or wrap on lion-cloth to cover the lower part of his body.



Fig. 23. A Two Cowboy and 'Cowgirl' Shot of Dalasur and Dilsara in *SeemaRekha*. (1:37:14)

In the close shot (CS) of Fig. 24, Dilsara is dressed in a *chhitko gunyu* or *lungi* with a *cholo*. She has a *patuka* in her waist, a *majetro* or scarf like garments on her head, and a *ghalek* binding on her shoulder. For ornaments, she is wearing the *madwari* in the ears, *bulaki* and *phuli* on the nostrils, silver coin *mala* on the neck, etc. The CS shows her facial expressions and

conveys her emotions to the audiences. It removes background and fills the screen with her face. Without hesitation her on cloud nine facial expressions are driving the narrative. The CS enlarges her garments and ornaments to add narrative significance. Dilsara is on a porch swing, which means she is on happy face in her traditional dress. “It has become a truism that a stage actor acts with his voice, while a film actor uses his face” (Monaco 33).



Fig. 24. A “On Cloud Nine” Head-and-shoulder Shot of Dilsara in *SeemaRekha*. (00:24:05)

Alan Hunt argues, “The subordinate class must first hegemonic so that the majority will start to follow it. By incorporating the intentions of other people in their agenda, it is easier to get the majority on the side of the counter-hegemony” (313). In *SeemaRekha*, the body of Dalasur and Dilsara dressed in the Magar dress and jewelry (re-)creates an alternative hegemony on the terrain of civil society in preparation for political change. Through their costumes, *SeemaRekha* exemplifies how the oppressed group has become unbecoming citizens within their own homeland caused by the apparatuses of monolithic nationalism. The *bhangra* and *ghalek* binding on their shoulder hint at a need of plural nationalisms. Since *SeemaRekha* is made, “it brought a radical consciousness and attachment to the Magar costume especially to new generation. They

have fascinated as they watch such costume worn by the actress and the actor” (Thapa 42). *SeemaRekha*’s success in the case of actors’ dress signifies its influence in shaping today’s culture as well as establishing the hegemony. *SeemaRekha*, a reel journey of history, holds power to create a reality and makes indigenous groups believe that created reality. In this connection, Karl Marx explains, “Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under given circumstances directly encountered and inherited from the past” (Ibid.). Monaco claims, “The politics of the film determines its structure that is, the way it relates to the world. It plays a very important part in modern culture, socio-culturally, because it provides such a powerful and convincing representation of reality” (261). The most modern form of (hi)storytelling presents the characters dressed in the old costumes of the Magar as heroes and heroines, who communicate the most advanced love and when they part, both deserve justice.



Fig. 25. “Extreme Close Up (ECU).” Not His *sati* Not Her *pati*: Jaisara and Sane. (00:46:10)

The ECU (see, Fig. 25) emphasizes the highest moment of tension as well as the most intimate relationship of Jaisara with Sane. In *Maitighar*, after the death of Moha, Maya has to

live as *sati*. Moha is not in the house, that house is no longer hers, it is only her *Maitighar*, mother's home, where she cannot live forever. *Maitighar* favors the patriarchal ideology of the Panchayat system. *SeemaRekha* attacks the patriarchy of *Maitighar*. In *SeemaRekha*, Maila's wife Jaisara falls in love with Sane Rana. Sane Rana also accepts Jaisara's love for him. Here Maila gets hurt the most and he goes to *bang* to complain about Jaisara. Jaisara makes it clear to everyone that she will stay with Sane instead of going back with Maila and *bang* also decides in her favor. *SeemaRekha* does not advocate the *Lakshman Rekha*, boundary of chastity, for a woman, which is drawn by her father, husband and son respectively when she is virgin, when she gets married and when she grows old. Jaisara draws her own *SeemaRekha*, for which no Lakshman is needed. Jaisara and Maila stand opposite to Moha and Maya. The portrayal of Jaisara, Maila and Sane makes us turn the pages of Henry Rider Haggard's Victorian Novel *She*. *She* shows Amahagar women, who are not only upon terms of perfect equality with the men, but are not held to them by any binding ties. In Amahagar, descent is traced only through the line of the mother. They never acknowledge any man as their father. There is but one titular male parent of each tribe, as they call it, "Household," and he is elected and immediate ruler, with the title of 'Father.' Haggard writes:

For instance, the man Billali was the father of this 'household,' which consisted of about seven thousand individuals all told, and no other man was called by that man. When a woman took a fancy to a man, she signified her preference by advancing and embracing him publicly, in the same ... If he kissed her back it was a token that he accepted her, and the arrangement continued till one of them wearied of it. ... the change of husbands was not nearly so frequent as might have been expected. Nor did the quarrels arise out of it, at least among the man, ... (81)

In the case of *SeemaRekha*, ‘She’ is Jaisara. She seeks the acceptance of Sane by grasping his hand. Without rivalry, Maila and Sane together achieve heroism in the battle of Liglig. *Maitighar* lies upon the patriarchy; it is made with the sunrise of Panchayat, on the other, *SeemaRekha* is made after the restoration of democracy because of the farm of lies of Panchayat. Cohn points out, “Counterhegemony is an alternative ethical view of society that poses a challenge to the hegemonic power” (204). Liglig is a kind of Amahagar, where the *bang* is in the place of Billali. The *bang* is the ruler of *sat saya lingling* or seven hundred households. The ‘mother’ households of Liglig and the ‘Hindu patriarchal’ households of Gorkha stand opposite each other. Nepal acquaints, “The Gorkha Kings were titled as ‘Nar Narayan’ ‘Girirajchakrachudamani’ (The World Class among the Hill Kings). The King of Gorkha called himself ‘The Head among the Hill Kings,’ but in true sense he was only the ruler of twelve thousand households” (110). The incarnation of Nar Narayan appeared on Earth to erase the ‘tribal’ bloodline of Liglig and Gorkha. MS Thapa, as cited by Lecomte-Tilouine in her *Hindu Kingship, Ethnic Revival and Maoist Rebellion in Nepal*, argues, “PN Shah changed his *gotra* because his previous one was not famous, being a Magar one. It is also often said that PN Shah changed his *gotra* to facilitate his attack of the Shah of Lamjung, thereby avoiding the crime of *gotrahatya*, killing someone from within the same *gotra*” (95). Hindu politics is a good way to suppress the reality with fake self-respect and maintain the power of the Shah dynasty.

Jon Lewis believes, “Close reading in film also requires attention to the variety of sounds that accompany the images on screen. These sounds are as carefully designed, produced, and edited as the images and are integral to a film’s meanings” (149). In the beginning of *Maitighar*, Surya Narayan appears to be rising. Surya Narayan is the sun as well as the solar deity in Hinduism. The lyrics of the patriotic prayer, composed by MaViVi Shah, flashes on the screen,

“*jun matoma mero janma line saubhagya bhayo; jasko sparshale mero sansarma aankha khulyo.*” (0:00:53-0:02:00). The letters of Shah start to echo from the background. Shah’s rise to power has been compared to Surya Narayan, and the soil of the nation to the mother, whose touch opens his eyes in this world. The title of the film ‘maternal home’ itself suggests motherland. As if the borderline of Liglig is erased and becomes Gorkha, Maya’s ‘*Mero pyaro, pyaro maitighar, maitighar, maitighar*’ homeland Pokhara here lengthens and takes the form of motherland, Nepal. Roughly speaking, Maya is the personal of Mahendra Shah, while Mahendra Shah is the political of Maya. Personal is political. Aloysius puts down in black and white, “Unity represents the dominant and uniformizing culture-ideological and mythical Brahminic factors and is thus oppressive. Diversity, on the other hand, stands for movement away from these uniformizing factors, the tendencies of the resistance of the subaltern ...” (186-187).



Fig. 26. The Sun never set on the ‘Hindu Empire.’ Panchayat from 1961 placed all governmental power under the King. *Maitighar* starts with [Ma]hendra [Vi]r [Vi]kram Shah’s patriotic prayer. (0:00:27)



Fig. 27. 'Every sunrise gives you a new beginning and a new ending.' In Nepal Democracy was restored in the year 1990. The 1990 multiparty movement brought an end to absolute monarchy and the beginning of constitutional monarchy. (00:04:37)

Satyajit Ray breaks his silence, "The same function that words perform in literature is performed together by images and words in a film. Words are not needed to describe a scene; images can do that job" (120). In the beginning of *SeemaRekha*, the 'democratic' sunrise is seen. 'Kokori kwaan.' A rooster is heard crowing. 'Gwaan bhaalyaa raakaa Kokori kwaan,' (Bagale Magar 41) in the Magar dhut (language). Then, a Magar *kauda* song follows the sound of the rooster. On the screen, men and women are seen dancing to the beat of the song, *kauda* dance. The sound of the rooster "Cock-a-doodle-doo" and the *kauda* song and dance are juxtaposed here. According to *Magar Dhut Lawajkhath* (The Grammer of Magar Language) by Man Bahadur Bagale magar, *kauda* comes from "kang raha" through "kau raha," which respectively means "We came" (160). The good morning is came. *Kauda* is the main song program to exchange hearts between men and women. A special program is held to welcome guets in the village. In the village, where men goes to the house where there are young girls to sing *kauda*, they informs, "La hai, kang raha" (Shrees Magar 126). 'Well, we came.' Edward Said clarifies the connection

of language and human activity, “Every individual intellectual is born into a language, and for the most part spends the rest of his or her life in that language, which is the principal medium of intellectual activity” (27).



Fig. 28. Laidinisa Pirati: The Musical History to Live. The Liglige Women in the *Kauda Move*. (00:04:42)

Hall claims, “Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced” (1). In 1951, the ‘First Poets of Magar Language’ Jeet Bahadur Sinjali and Rekh Baahdur Thapa published *Magar Bhashang Lheeng Da Tukkawau Kitab* (Book of Songs and Poems in Magar Language), in which there is a song “Kanchhi Matyang Tyang.” The song begins with, “*Mayale mayale, kanchhi matyang tyang, laidinisa pirati, kanchhi matyang tyang*” (Lafa Magar 64). The film presents “*laidinisa pirati*” in Nepali, “*Ho, ho, Maya, laideu maya timile kaleji chheu khaani*” (0:04:41-0:04:58). In a movie music acts as medium of flashback. Tejaswini Ganti gives leave to enter, “In addition to expressing intense emotion and signifying physical intimacy, songs are frequently used to facilitate the passage of time as well as evoke memories: children can become adults over the course of a song, or a song take a character back to an earlier time” (171). In *SeemaRekha* the song “*Ho, ho, Maya*” acts as medium of

flashback of “Kanchhi Matyang Tyang.” Broadly communicating, *SeemaRekha* itself is a ‘hegemonic’ flashback of history from the Magar nationality. Hegemony can be applied equally to Shah and Magar, “because it is *in nuce* a generic and formal theory of social power” (Thomas 160).

Keith Jenkins, as cited by Marine Hughes Warrington in *History Goes to the Movies: studying History on Film*, comes with an argument, “In the end, history is theory and theory is ideological and ideology is just material intersets. Ideology sleeps into every nook and cranny of history” (160). Althusser contends that ideology has a material existence because “an ideology exists in an apparatus, and its practice, or practices” (112). Ideological State Apparatuses include religion, education, the media, Culture, the family structure and so on. In the teaching of Nepali history, which is told from the perspective of Shah dynasty, Dravya Shah and PN Shah are presented as heroes and founders of Nepal. While founding fathers are seen as representing the nation as a whole the history of monarchy often admits that the cruelty is committed against indigenous people and of conquest and genocide in the name of *shilanyas* and unification. The foundational narrative of the nation till today states that the inability of the tribal peoples to govern is the reason of the Shah dynasty in the house of Gorkha and this would mean that the atrocities committed by the Shahs on the tribal peoples are also justified. Isn’t this the symbolic meaning of saying ‘I am the King of Magarat’ and no one else ? Doesn’t it set the boundaries of a consensus based hegemony ?

MS Thapa Magar makes public, “Like Gurungs and Magars, PN Shah sent a basket of sacred thread to convert Limbus into Chhetri in his Hinduization campaign, but Limbus refused to accept and were ready to pay the penalty” (43). Like PN Shah’s ideology of ‘Real Hindustan,’ *Mahendra Mala* is an educational ISA, which uses psychological means of conditioning and

leading society to behave and think in a certain way. In 1986, *Mahendra Mala* makes even those first grade children stand under the banner of a country and sing the National Anthem, which is not in their mother tongue; and it makes even the children of those indigenous backgrounds turn the pages of the textbook, which has a Hindu deity on the cover (see, Fig. 29 and 30). Poole remarks, “Part of secret of national identity lies in the emergence of vernacular print languages, their spread through large numbers of the population, and their coming to play a privileged role in public and private life. As these languages formed the identities of those who lived in particular region, they provided the foundation for a shared sense of belonging to the same community” (272).

To understand the oppression of the Shah dynasty on the tribal peoples of Nepal, we have to start our adventure from Ligligkot, which is said to be the *shilanyas* of modern Nepal. There is no mention of Dalasur Ghale Magar in the written history, doesn't the process of Magars unbecoming citizens of this country from there? Purna Rana notes down, “After Ligligkot was captured by Dravya Shah, the Ghales were chased away. They reached Khotang, Sindhuli, Udaypur, Dhankuta via Okhaldhunga. When Ghale Magars reached Dhankuta from Okhaldhunga, the Magars of Dhankuta asked, ‘Where did you come from?’ They replied in Magar language, ‘Ligiligya.’ Dhankute Magars heard ‘Ligiligya’ as ‘Nigiliya.’ Ghale Magars displaced from Liglig are discovered in Nigiliya of Dhankuta” (11-12). In the coda of *SeemaRekha*, the Ghales are fleeing after Dravya Shah captures their *hang*; and the flag of present-day Nepal keeps fluttering, and no one is seen under the banner (see, Fig. 31 and Fig. 32) as first grade schoolchildren can be seen in Fig. 29 and Fig. 30. Deep down, it is a sign of wanting to be freed from the discourse of nationality of ‘one country, one religion, one language, one culture.’



Fig. 29. *Mahendra Mala* Class One. The Elephant in the Hindu deva Ganesha symbolizes intellect and wisdom. A non-Hindu child needs an Elephant's head to become an educated person ? Photo Courtesy of Ministry of Education, Nepal.



Fig. 30. As per Stiller and Yadav, some of the instructions of 'Back to the Village' National Campaign of Nepal's Panchayat regime from 1967 to 1975 were: to teach the villagers about the saga of Gorkhali heroism, encourage them to speak Nepali language, make them remember the glory of the monarchy, etc. Photo Courtesy of Ministry of Education, Nepal.



Fig. 31. The Tail Shot of *SeemaRekha* I. (2:10:22)



Fig. 32. The Tail Shot of *SeemaRekha* II. (2:10:47)

In a nutshell, the dominant discourse created by the power gradually creates a consensus. In course of time, it captures the mind of the subaltern and makes even the oppressed think according to the oppressor's favor. *SeemaRekha* bends such history written by the rulers' Heads at the feet of the common people, and shows on the big screen that the dominant history that was claimed not to shed a single drop of blood, in fact, completely bloody. In other words, in its reel journey *SeemaRekha* shows that the Magar indigenous community does not want to be trapped in the hegemonic borderline of Shah dynasty, where their identity is erased. At a time when Nepal

was said to be the only Hindu sovereign nation in the world, this motion picture was advocating a kind of 'primitive' communism, which was once as true as the sun, where no ruler declared the nation as the hanging garden of castes. In this way, the film does not observe a nation as a flower garden, and the history of nation as *Mahendra Mala*. Made in a state where *cholo*, *fariya* and *dhaka topi*, worn by the dominant class, are considered the national dress, the motion picture explores the identity of those subaltern who cover their bodies with *bhangra* and *ghalek*. Attacking the nationalistic rhetoric of 'one nation, one language, one culture,' roughly speaking, the feature film grabs the neck of the foundational narrative of Nepali nation-state.

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