

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

**Narrative and Symbolic Construction of Nation in BP Koirala's *Sumnima* and**

***Narendra Dai***

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
M.Phil. in English**

**By**

**Dipendra Parajuli**

**Central Department of English**

**Kirtipur, Kathmandu**

**September, 2012**

**Tribhuvan University**  
**Central Department of English**

**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Dipendra Parajuli has completed this thesis entitled “Narrative and Symbolic Construction of Nation in BP Koirala’s *Sumnima* and *Narendra Dai*” under my supervision. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva-voce.

---

Dr. Amma Raj Joshi

Associate Professor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Tribhuvan University**  
**Faculty of Humanities and Social Science**

**Letter of Approval**

This thesis entitled “Narrative and Symbolic Construction of Nation in BP Koirala’s *Sumnima* and *Narendra Dai*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Dipendra Parajuli has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head  
Central Department of English

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep and sincere acknowledgement to my supervisor Associate Professor Dr. Amma Raj Joshi who provided me with scholarly guidance, encouragement and support. His constructive suggestion has significant role in shaping up this thesis in the present form.

My acknowledgements go to my teachers. Professor Dr. Abhi Subedi and Dr Sanjeev Upreti helped me with insights on nation and nationalism. Talk with Professor Subedi about Nepalese nationalism has crucial role in selecting this research topic. I am obliged to Dr. Ramchandra Paudel for his suggestion to write this thesis. Dr Arun Gupta and Dr. Anirudra Thapa always supported me with their suggestions. Dr. Shiva Rijal deserves my acknowledgement for his friendly cooperation.

I would like to thank Dr. Taranath Sharma, the English translator of *Sumnima* for providing me the novel. My mates Ashok, Laxman, Khem and Mahendra helped me with books, suggestions and inspiration. Thanks are also to the staffs of the Central Department of English for their cooperation.

Without support from my parents and wife Sarita, this study would never take the final form. Their inspiration is beyond the description in words.

## Abstract

This project looks into BP Koirala's novels *Sumnima* and *Narendra Dai* from the perspective of the narration of his vision of nation. Koirala's concept of nation emphasizes on common spirit and joint effort of people that give rise to the feeling of unity. He foregrounds humanitarian values and backgrounds ethnic, religious supremacy. His notion is close to Benedict Anderson's and Ernest Renan's idea of nation since all of them focus on humanitarian ground, emotional connection achieved through either 'shared history' or 'images' and 'symbols', and a sense of collective effort or desire to live together. Koirala, aware of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity of Nepal, focuses on compromise and new culture or narrative that can incorporate people of diverse background together to raise the sense of collective effort to knit them together in the fabric of nationhood. Homi K. Bhabha's idea of narrating a nation combining both 'pedagogical' or historical and 'performative' or working together in present and future dimensions looks similar to Koirala's view of creation of new unity with respect to historical background. *Sumnima* begins with 'pedagogical' conflict between the Aryan and the Kirat culture resembling cultural combination of Nepalese society. By shattering the Aryan's sense of ethnic and religious supremacy, by making the voice of humanity, spoken through Sumnima, victorious and ending the novel happily with commitment between the two cultures to go ahead with collective effort, Koirala constructs nation with an attempt to awaken Nepalese people to the significance of coexistence, reconciliation and cultural harmony. *Narendra Dai* connects Narendra's comeback from foreign to his wife with the idea of nation. His coming back to home or the 'imagined community' where he can share the 'images' 'history', his readiness to 'split' and live the life of 'joint effort' with his wife whom he hated reflect the features of nation. At the same time the use of symbols like Nepal, the Koshi river and *Holi* give the impression that the 'interior life of the novel' matches with 'the exterior life of the reader's life.'

## Contents

Letter of Recommendation	
Letter of Approval	
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
I. Koirala and His Concept of Nation	1
II. Nation as Imagined Community, Spiritual Principle, Collective Effort and Feeling of Unity	14
III. Nation and Narration	25
IV. Narrative and Symbolic Construction of Nation in <i>Sumnima</i> and <i>Narendra Dai</i>	34
V. Awakening of Cultural Coexistence, Collective Effort and Unity	62
Works Cited	