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What we have enjoyed and deeply loved we can never lose
for all that we deeply love becomes a part of us. ~ Helen Keller

In their name

On 23 September 2006, we suffered a terrible tragedy. Twenty-four people were taken from us in Kangchenjunga. Among them were our leaders, colleagues, and friends. At this time, we rise above the sorrow and seek comfort in the legacy that they left behind. As we make our way into the future, our path is lit by their dedication and passion *for a living planet*.

They will always be a part of us.

Anil Manandhar
Country Representative

For the people

Those who we lost so tragically in Kangchenjunga were there to celebrate a landmark in the Nepal's conservation history. Late Mr Gopal Rai, Minister of State of the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation handed over the management of Kangchenjunga Conservation Area to a local management council at a ceremony in Taplejung on Friday, 22 September 2006.

The people of Kangchenjunga have long expressed their eagerness to take on the responsibility of this conservation area and this move showed the commitment of the Government of Nepal towards the devolution of power to local communities, especially with regard to natural resources and equitable sharing of benefits.

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The Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Council was formed in 2000 and represents stakeholders from seven Conservation Area User Committees, 44 User Groups, and 32 Mother Groups. These community-based institutions were involved in all Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Project activities, implemented by the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation with the technical and financial support of WWF Nepal.

The Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Management Plan was submitted by the council to the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, in July 2004 and was approved by the cabinet of the Government of Nepal on 31 August 2006. The goal of the management plan is that biodiversity of Kangchenjunga Conservation Area is managed by local communities to ensure ecological integrity and bring socio-economic benefits.

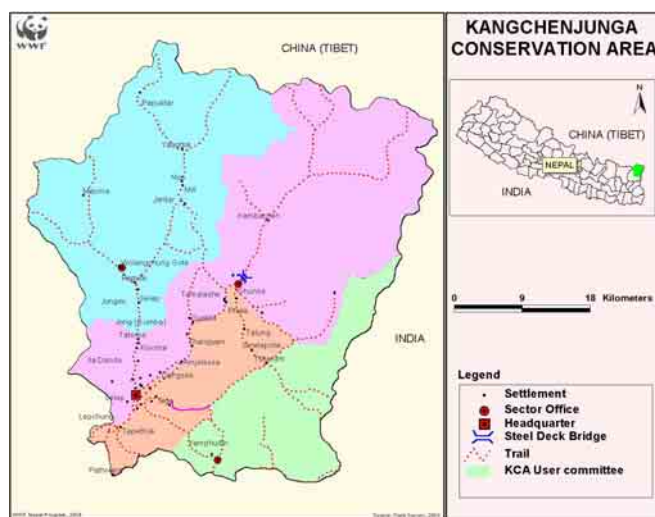


Minister Gopal Rai (Left) handing over the certificate to Dawa Sherpa, Chairperson, KCAMC

The Kangchenjunga Conservation Area is known for its rich biodiversity, its spectacular scenery with Mount Kangchenjunga (8,586m), and rich cultural heritage represented by the 5,254 inhabitants living within the four Village Development Committees (VDCs) of Lelep, Olangchung Gola, Tapethok and Yamphudin. In support of WWF's Living Planet Campaign, it was declared A Gift to the Earth in April 1997.

The Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Project was launched on 22 March 1998 to conserve globally threatened wildlife species such as the snow leopard combined with local development activities like the promotion of health services, informal education, and income generating activities.

The Sacred Himalayan Landscape is a landscape approach to biodiversity conservation and improving local livelihoods in the Eastern Himalaya. The concept and vision has been endorsed by the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation. A Sacred Himalayan Landscape Strategic Plan has been prepared under the leadership



of the ministry and key partners. The vision of the SHL is "a Himalayan landscape where the biological and cultural treasures of the world's highest sacred mountains and deepest valleys are safeguarded while traditional rights over resource use are ensured, and livelihoods of mountain people are enhanced and sustained."

QUOTES



"I am very happy to be part of this significant day when the people of Kangchenjunga take on the responsibility of managing this conservation area. I am convinced that local communities will show even greater commitment to saving the unique natural and cultural heritage of Kangchenjunga."

~ **Minister Gopal Rai**

Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation

"This is a great day for the people of Kangchenjunga. We are ready to take on this responsibility thanks to capacity building and local development supported by organizations like WWF."

~ **Dawa Tshering Sherpa**

Chairman of KCA Management Council



"We are very proud to be part of this effort. The handover will be held up around the world as a positive example of people managing their natural resources and enable learning on how to make conservation more equitable and sustainable."

~ **Dr Chandra P Gurung**

Country Representative of WWF Nepal

"WWF is greatly encouraged by successes like what has happened in Kangchenjunga. I would like to congratulate the Government of Nepal and the people for working through a decade of conflict to reach this pinnacle of achievement."

~ **Mingma Norbu Sherpa**

Manager of Eastern Himalayan Ecoregion Complex, WWF US



"WWF is privileged to be part of such an important occasion. This is indeed a big win that illustrates that governments, partners, and local communities can work together to achieve important conservation results that benefits the grassroots and ensures a living planet for us all."

~ **Dr Jill Bowling**

Conservation Director, WWF UK





Dr Chandra Prasad Gurung

Dr Chandra Prasad Gurung was the Country Representative of WWF Nepal from July 1999.

Born in Siklis, a remote Gurung village in the Annapurna area,

Chandra had a Master's Degree in Rural Development Planning from the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand and a PhD in Geography from the University of Hawaii.

Dr Gurung designed and implemented Nepal's first community-based integrated conservation and development project, the Annapurna Conservation Area Project, and also served as Member Secretary of the King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation.

He was awarded the Knight, First Class, Order of the Lion of Finland, the Birendra Aiswarya Sewa Padak, the Order of the Golden Ark, the Prabal Gorkha Dakshin Bahu and the Mahendra Bidya Bhusan.

He is survived by his wife, one daughter and three sons.



Dr Harka Gurung

Dr Harka Gurung served as an advisor to WWF Nepal and was associated with New ERA, a research and consultancy firm.

He completed his Bachelor's Degree at Patna College in India and had a Post Graduate Diploma in Geography and a

PhD from the University of Edinburgh. His academic assignments include Demonstrator at the University of Edinburgh, Research Fellow at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London, Lecturer at Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu and Visiting Fellow at the Population Institute, the East West Centre in Honolulu.

Dr Gurung served the government of Nepal at different times as Member and Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission, Minister of State for Education, Industry and Commerce, Tourism, Public Works and Transport. He was Director of the Asia Pacific Development Center, an inter-governmental organization based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

He is survived by his wife, two sons and two daughters.



Jennifer Headley

Jenn worked as the WWF-UK's Coordinator for Himalaya/South Asia Programme. She joined WWF-UK in August 2003. Prior to this, Jenn had worked with the Canadian government in Alaska, and in Nepal for two years, one of which was with WWF Nepal supporting species conservation. She was based in Nepal in her current role, focused

on community-based conservation in the Eastern Himalayas, since November 2005.

Jenn had a Bachelors Degree in Political Science & Philosophy from McMaster University in Canada, where she was the recipient of the McMaster Chancellor's Scholarship and Director's Award for Dedication to Residence Government. She also held a Masters Degree in Public Administration (M.P.A.) from Queen's University, Kingston, Canada, 1996, where she received the Queen's University Graduate Award.

Jennifer was an important part of the WWF Nepal family where she lent her expertise and supported important initiatives in the region.

She was a Canadian national who is survived by her parents and two sisters.



Yeshi Choden Lama

Yeshi was part of the WWF Nepal family since 1997. She was responsible for administering, monitoring and reporting on our mountain programs and projects. Yeshi completed her Master's Degree in Sociology and Anthropology from the School of

Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), London, UK and a Bachelors Degree in Sociology and Anthropology from Middlebury College, Vermont, USA.

Among her many achievements was co-authoring publications both in English and Tibetan languages some of which are: Medicinal Plants of Dolpo, Amchis' Knowledge and Conservation: Conservation of Plant Resources, Community Development and Training in Applied Ethnobotany at Shey-Phoksundo National Park and its Buffer Zone, Dolpa: Snow Leopards in Nepal (in Tibetan, with Tulku Orgyen Phuntsok) and Where There Is No Doctor: Building Capacity of the Himalayan Amchi a paper presented at the Rangelands Workshop organized by ICIMOD, Lhasa in May 2002.

Yeshi is survived by her husband and two children.



Dr Tirtha Man Maskey

Dr Tirtha Man Maskey was the co-chair of IUCN Rhino Specialist Group (AsRSG) before which he had a distinguished career in the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation where he was the Director General.

A well-known and respected conservationist, Dr Maskey became a warden of Chitwan National Park in 1972. He completed his Master's Degree on Wildlife Management at the University of Michigan in 1978. He received a PhD in 1979 from the University of Florida for Wildlife and Range Management, specializing in Gharial Conservation. He discovered a new frog species, named *Tomopterna maskeyi* in his honour, and authored several important works.

Along with the prestigious Gorkha Dakshin Bahu, he also received various awards including the Order of Golden Ark and WWF's highest award, the Duke of Edinburgh Conservation Medal in 2005.

Dr Maskey is survived by his wife and two sons.



Dr Jillian Bowling Schlaepfer

Jill worked as WWF-UK Director of Programmes, a role she has held since July 2004.

WWF-UK is a member of the WWF network, which works in over 100 countries. Jill leads the work of WWF-UK to support conservation

programmes around the world and also within the UK tackling global threats, such as climate change through business and government advocacy strategies.

Jill joined WWF-UK from WWF-International where she was Deputy Director the Forests Programme for two years. Prior to that, she worked as a Director at the International Federation of Building and Wood Workers in Switzerland, in the Oregon Department of Forestry (USA) and in the Australian Federal Public Service.

While educated in Australia Jill had dual Swiss and Australian nationality. She was married to Rodolph Schlaepfer and had permanent residence in Switzerland.



Mingma Norbu Sherpa

Mingma Sherpa was the Managing Director of the Eastern Himalayas Ecoregion Complex at WWF US.

He was one of the first students to have graduated from the Hillary Khumjung School. Mingma went

on to receive a diploma in Parks and Recreation from Lincoln College, University of Canterbury in New Zealand and a Masters degree in Natural Resources Management from the University of Manitoba.

He served as the park warden for Sagarmatha National Park in Nepal. He joined WWF as the director of the Himalayan program for WWF's Nepal, Bhutan and Himalayan Program. He was the Country Representative of WWF Bhutan and Nepal for six years prior to his move to the United States in 1998.

Mingma was a recipient of the Gorkha Dhaksin Bahu medal and the Order of the Golden Ark Award from His Royal Highness Prince Bernard of the Netherlands.

Mingma is survived by his wife and a son and daughter.



Matthew Preece

Matthew has been with WWF US since May 2006. He brought to WWF five years of domestic and international non-profit experience and consultancies in India, Chile, Costa Rica, Peru, the Caribbean, Ecuador, and Mexico.

Mathew received his MB.S. Environmental Science, cum laude from Vanderbilt University and a Master's Degree in Sustainable International Development from Brandeis University in the US.

He was an American national, and is survived by his parents, three sisters and one brother.

Six Days: My time with them

NEERA SHRESTHA PRADHAN
Manager, Freshwater Program

The excitement started one day before, almost 5 pm, when I was told to join the team that was going to Kangchenjunga for the historical event – the first time in the history of world’s conservation that a conservation area was to be handed over to a local community. Although I felt a bit uncomfortable to tell my husband and 5-year-old son that I was going the next morning, I was excited to be a part that event since my career in WWF had begun in the mountains.

22 September: The journey started early morning. Jennifer and I had a plan to brief Jill on the Koshi Basin as we would be flying around that area during the entire flight. I got an opportunity to sit beside Dr. Parajuli during the flight and discovered that he knew my father so we talked about our families. We stopped to pick up Minister Gopal Rai but due to bad weather, the pilot had to land in

Okeldhunga army barrack. It took almost 5 hours for the Minister to reach the barrack.

Dr. Chandra Gurung told us to have lunch in Okheldhunga bazaar and said that he will join us later. A hazy day with light rainfall, slippery hills, we managed to reach the main bazaar buying umbrellas and even shoes for Pauli. So the group divided. Mingma ji led us to “Solokhumbu hotel” where we had *masu-bhat*. I still remember Mingma ji talking about his family and how their names are given according to the days that they are born. We also got an opportunity to see Okheldhunga bazaar and the real “Okhel” and “dhunga” after which the name of the place was given. Jill also took the opportunity to buy a souvenir, reminding Jennifer and myself not to bargain much on the price as she was concerned about the shopkeeper’s profit.

It was almost evening when we landed in Phungling in Kangchenjunga. Jill was delighted to see people in colorful dresses waiting for us. We were all very tired but it faded thanks to the enthusiasm and warm welcome expressed by the community. We went directly to the conference hall where the historical event was going to take place – a moment that never came before in the world’s history of conservation!

Finally, amongst the grand ceremony in Kangchenjunga, the Conservation Area was handed over by the Government of Nepal to the local community for its management.

Boarding the helicopter



It was like a dream coming true, especially for Dr. Gurung! I could feel the sense of satisfaction in his dimpled smile and sparkling eyes during Dawa dai's speech. From deep inside my heart I prayed to God for giving me the opportunity to live this historical moment with them! The local people and all the political parties showed their commitment in carrying this responsibility forward. I whispered to Jennifer, "You see, now we will have no problem working in Kangchenjunga!"

The historical evening ended up in a grand party with a short cultural program organized by the local community. I was watching Bhes, Jayanendra and Ang ji who were all in a very good mood. After all, this was *the* day for that they had worked so hard towards with the people of Kangchenjunga. I could see Jennifer and Margret dancing as Dr. Gurung began his favourite song "*Sorah barsae jawani ma mai pani jhilke hudo hu, ahile po bhudo bhaye ni...*"

It was almost 10:30 pm when we walked the ten minutes to the hotel. I remember telling Jennifer and Jill that, "No one could have imagined that people could walk around this late in Kangchenjunga. Now the good times are back!" Jennifer and I had shared the room that night. We were tired that we did not feel like gossiping any more so we went to sleep.

23 September: We woke up early and the first thing Jennifer told me was, "Neera, I am so happy that you are here, *tara ke garne*, I am sad because though we shared the room, we could not talk much. We will have a long chat after we go back to Kathmandu, *huncha*". After breakfast, Dr Gurung told all of us to go to the toilet before leaving the hotel just in case there were no

provisions later. I was the last one and was amazed to find Dr. Gurung waiting for me. I wondered all the way to the helipad about a man who was head of the organization, and cared so much for all his staff!

It was a Saturday and a weekly market was going on. We went around, took photographs and then went to a small shop, very famous in Phungling for its coffee. I did not feel like drinking but Dr. Gurung insisted, "*Leh, ke ho Neera, Kangchenjunga ayera pani yaha ko coffee khayena bhane ta ke Kangchenjunga ayeko bhayo ra? Yo ta bhayena.. khanai parcha.*" So I had a taste and really, his words were very true.

It was time to go to Ghunsa. I called my husband and told him that we were leaving and that I would see him in the evening at Kathmandu. The availability of the seat was to decide my journey to Ghunsa. I hoped there was a free seat for me but at the last moment I was told that all the seats were taken...bad luck this time!

"Come on, Neera, let's go!" said Jennifer with a beaming smile. I explained that I couldn't go and she consoled me. She hugged me and whispered in my ears, "Don't worry, I'll bring good photographs for you so that you can use Photoshop to paste your photo in. It will make others feel as if you have also been there." I gave her my hat to protect her from the rain and sun. We said goodbye, not knowing that it would be last time.

I came back to our office, had lunch and visited the bazaar to buy a few gifts for my son, knowing that the first thing he will do after my arrival will be to open my bag and innocently demand, "What have you brought for me?"



Having lunch in Okhaldhunga



Dr. Chandra Gurung at the handover ceremony



Jennifer Headley and Neera with local women



From L-R: Bijan Acharya, Dr. Chandra Gurung and Mingma Norbu Sherpa



At the 'haat', the local market in Phungling



Jennifer Headley at the market

Waiting for the return of the helicopter, I was watching TV together with our local staff, Mukti bhai's family. We received a message that the helicopter had flown from Ghunsa. We gathered our luggage

and waited...and waited...and waited. Half an hour turned into forty-five minutes. They did not come. Suddenly a helicopter landed in Suketar. We thought that they could not land in Phungling so went to Suketar. Then we were informed that the helicopter was not ours. It had come for a rescue. "A rescue? Why? For whom?" I wondered.

Mukti bhai's sister entered the room. She was crying and told me that something might have gone wrong with our helicopter because the flight from Ghunsa to Phungling is only fifteen minutes. I shouted, "Nonsense! What are you talking about?" My legs were shaking. I was frightened. I ran out from the room and saw Ghana ji and Ang ji very tense. They told me that our helicopter was missing – with everyone on board, including Yeshe ji and Matt.

TV channels started giving the flashing news of the missing helicopter. I suddenly thought of the phone call that I made to my husband

earlier in the day. I quickly called home to tell him that I had not gone.

Now we all knew that the helicopter was missing. Where could it have gone, we wondered. Perhaps it went to Pathivara Bagwati temple, maybe a forced landing. No one had an answer. I was unfamiliar with the situation but Ghana ji, Ang ji, Thakur ji, Bhesh and Jayanendra, were able to analyze the situation and tentatively locate where the helicopter might have gone missing according to local information.

It was late. There was no news. Thakur ji and I were asked to identify the luggage at the helipad. Since I had flown with them from Kathmandu, I could easily identify some. The rest, we had to open. I remember Narayan Sir's bag. There was a big holy book and special clothes (*lungi*) that wore while reading it early in the morning. I thought, "God, how can you do this someone who had so much faith in you!" Afterwards, everything was sealed together with army officials and left in the barracks.

Back to the office, the tension had grown. I was really frightened and called home, asking my husband to bring me back to Kathmandu by any means. A phone call from Anil ji changed my decision. "Neera, we know you are strong, and now you have to coordinate the situation from there," he told me, making me realize that all of us were given specific tasks to help the rescue and I could not disappoint them. I knew that my friends in Kathmandu were also working very hard to handle this unexpected situation but I always felt how lucky they were. At least they could go back to their home at night and share their pain! During this time I was fully supported by Mukti bhai's family, especially his 12-year-old daughter who kept me company when our days in Phungling were a nightmare.

24 September: The weather was very unpredictable, which was frustrating. I wished I had a big pair of scissors to cut the clouds so that the four rescue helicopters could do their job. But alas, nothing was possible the

whole day. Given the difficulty of the terrain and the time, some locals suggested there might not be any survivors. "Don't be pessimistic!" I told them strongly, "God cannot be so cruel to those who came here for a good cause!" I did not want to even listen to any negative comments. I told them that they must be somewhere in a cave, a safe landing. I closed my eyes and I saw Dr. Gurung clapping and singing, and Jennifer dancing in the middle of a forest. "Forests, are there any forests around?" I asked them. To my dismay, the reply was no, just steep rocky hills.

The day passed without any progress. I answered every phone call, longing to hear some good news. There were regular phone calls from my home and friends. One of them was Laxmi didi with whom I poured my heart out. At last, the news came that Ang ji and Ghana ji had reached Gyabla. We were confident that within 5 hours there would be some news about the helicopter.

25 September: The weather cleared—as clear as crystal. Oh, how I wish we had postponed our trip for two days! Every time I picked up the phone, I wished it was good news of a safe landing with every one alive, no matter if bones are broken or other major injuries.

Then we heard that the helicopter was found. I was very happy because now there was a ray of hope. I was confident that it would be good news. The phone rang. It was Anil ji who said, "Neera, you must have heard what has happened. Be strong. Stay there and we will let you know what to do next." I thought, yes, I know, the helicopter was found. Immediately there was a second phone call. Mohan ji said, "Neera ji, the helicopter was found. No one survived!" Was that what Anil ji meant? The phone rang almost immediately. It was Sarala didi, "Neera, *ke bhayo? Ke chha khabar?*" She wanted the status as she was not in Kathmandu. But the previous news had left me speechless. I just cried my heart out, cried like I never have before. "Didi, bad news, please call Kathmandu." I could speak no more. I cried and with me, the

whole room wept. No one had the courage to lend a shoulder. Our hearts were broken and the pain was unbearable.

26 September: I heard that due to the difficult terrain, the work was getting difficult. So it took the whole day to get them together.

27 September: Kiran bahini took me to Suketar airport in the morning, from where I was to take another helicopter to Kathmandu. I was leaving Kangchunjunga with heavy heart. "Why did this happen? What went wrong?" we asked each other all the way to the airport. Maybe that was their common destiny.

I tried my best not to cry but tears came rolling from my eyes all the way to Kathmandu. I kept thinking of how excited we were when we came to hand over the conservation area to the local community and making history. How happy we all were. Instead of being on the WWF Family retreat the following day, I was returning on a helicopter, alone, followed by another helicopter, which was carrying the "bodies" of those whom I had so much respect—my friends, my conservation leaders.

Neera samples the coffee recommended by Dr. Gurung



In Kathmandu, I realized that my husband had gone through as much pain as me in those days. Since I was not able to think about myself when I was in Kangchenjunga, maybe my husband was doing all that for me. We sometimes reflect upon those days. Painful as it was before, but now I can share my feelings with my husband and my little son, no longer as alone as I was during those days in Kangchenjunga.

I still ask myself why it happened. My eyes fill with tears when people talk about them. It still hurts, perhaps because I was so close to the end of those with whom we worked together with as a family. It must be the bond that Dr. Gurung rooted into us: the strength to help each other, the courage to stand for our rights, the care and the 'panda pats' he gave us to acknowledge even our smallest achievements.

We had gone there for one day and stayed for six days. Those six days, I learnt a lot, as if I have lived six hundred years. I realized the dedication of our field staffs and felt the willingness of the community to help each other. I saw people ready to walk together for the rescue operation without warm clothes or food in such cold weather. I believed in their faith, I trusted their belief. We shared our pain. We cried together with during the tragedy. But we also shared happiness during the handover of the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area, which made a history in world's conservation. Most of all, I lived the historical moment with all the conservation leaders who rested in peace on the lap of the sacred Himalayas- Kangchenjunga!

They have not died. They lived and showed us a path to follow.

People of Kangchenjunga

Ghunsa 23 September 2006

~ Jennifer Headley





In Ghunsa, 23 September 2006

That Last Day

BHESH RAJ OLI, Field Project Officer
Kangchenjunga Conservation Area Project

Dr Jill Bowling, Jennifer, Khagendra who is the Secretary of District Journalist Federation, and I had a 20-minute talk near the helipad waiting for the weather to clear as Dr. Chandra Gurung was being interviewed by local journalists. Jill was congratulating me on the grand success of the KCA handover ceremony. She was very curious to know more about our work in the project and I briefed her concisely. Jill was so happy with KCAP that just before departing to Ghunsa she gave me four very old stones saying that in her culture it was given thank someone. She told me love, happiness and appreciation. I wish that her love for Kangchenjunga continues forever now that she is not with us.

Dr. Harka Gurung lost a spectacle on 22 September, the day of the handover ceremony when he slipped in the dark. Early next morning, I searched for his spectacles all around the edges of the wall and finally found it. It had been stepped upon and the lens had fallen out. I washed it carefully and gave it to him. He was so thankful to me that he said,

"You gave me my eyes, thank you bhai," and started to write something in his notebook. Sorry Dr. Harka, the eyes that I found for you will no longer see the brightness of Kangchenjunga. But the future you gave to the people in your short and important speech at the ceremony will continue to inspire us.

And I remember the last few words of love from Dr Chandra Gurung on his way into the helicopter. He told us that we had done a great job making the handover ceremony a success. He also told me to get ready to fly for Kathmandu after they return back from Ghunsa. After they took off, we started arranging for the *bidai*, the farewell. We cut ceremonial *khatas*, made packets of *churpi* and cardamom for every guest including the helicopter crew. Dr. Gurung had instructed me to buy the spice for everyone to have a little of. In my excitement I told Ang Phuri ji, "*Antim bidai ta ramrai sanga garaun na*" (Let's do their last farewell properly). I meant to Kathmandu. Little did I know that was the final goodbye.

These are just a few memories I have of the final days that I spent with our friends in Kangchenjunga.



Bhesh with Jill Bowling



Ghunsa pics: Carlos Fuentes Tovar

Remembering Dr Chandra Gurung



Prajana (bottom) with Dr. Gurung
13th WWF Nepal Anniversary, 19 May 2006

He never failed to say ‘Thank you’ at the end of every day

PRAJANA WAIBA PRADHAN, Assistant to the Country Representative

I never seen or met a leader like Dr Chandra P Gurung. He was a true motivator and an employer who actually wanted the best for his employees, be it personal or professional. He was always inquiring whether everyone was fine or was passing through a bad phase and he would make sure that he did something in this grasp to make it easier.

His conservation efforts and achievements are widely known to all but being his assistant for just one year and a little more taught me how focused he was. He motivated me to move ahead and always had time to listen. He was a father figure not just to me but I guess to everyone in the office. There were times when he couldn't understand the complexities of the modern IT world. I used to have a difficult time whenever I heard him on the other end of the phone or telling me in person that his broadband did not work or his mobile had been infected by a virus! It was times like these that made me tense as he would call at any time of the day but it made also made me smile and laugh to see the child in him with all his inquisitiveness.

I will miss his smile at the end of the day whenever he was ready to leave for home. He would say, “Maisaab, I’m gone,” and there was something that always touched me at the end of the day when he always said “Thank you”. I had never heard of anything like that, we all wish good byes and good nights but he was one person who never failed to say “Thank you” at the end of every day.

The day before the fateful crash, I last heard him on the phone when he called to tell me that they were at Okhaldhunga and had been delayed. He said it was raining and sounded a bit frustrated but I could sense the excitement in his voice as he chuckled speaking of the event that was scheduled at Taplejung later that afternoon. That was the last time I spoke to him.

I mourn him deeply but I also believe that we should celebrate his life and what he did for conservation and community. I will miss you Sir! I thank you for teaching me and guiding me. I can never forget this exceptional year that I spent with you working as your assistant!

“My boss, a great learner”

PRASHANT SINGH, Director –
Business Relations and Operations

My boss Chandra was a great learner. While he taught all of us invaluable lessons in some way or the other, he also learnt a lot from this organization.

I remember my first serious conversation with him in October of 2000, only a day after my joining this office. I asked him a very straight question. I asked “As a student of management, I know for sure that management is not a ‘science’; at best it is an ‘applied philosophy’, as there could be several (not just one) ways of achieving success. I, therefore, need to know from you as to what kind of management philosophy you believe in so that I could do my bit to help you.” He took a good 10-15 minutes to answer this, full of anecdotes in his usual style. I will not tell you what he said (as he fine tuned his thoughts every six months or so when asked the same question admitting by and large that we are moving in the right direction), but with my head held high in esteem I can tell you this, he would have been truly proud of each one of you had he been here amidst us in last couple of weeks. This is precisely the culture and ethics he wanted to inculcate in all of us if I summarize all that he said over the years. Hats off to you!!

In my one-on-one meeting with him, I always used to debate with him on the definition of a good leader. Remember him giving example umpteenth number of times of an ACAP junior staffer who was apparently so indispensable that without him nothing used to move. Dr. Gurung used to term “that staff” as a true leader. To him, as leaders, we should be missed when we are no around. I had a big difference of opinion. To me a leader’s job was to make the system and organization so strong that no one remains indispensable, not even the leader himself. In our most recent discussion on this subject, he saw value in my argument, and conceded that I was right. His demise taught me that it was not me but he who was right again. Today, I terribly miss you Dr. Gurung. And I have no qualms about you being our true leader.



Dr. Gurung with staff
Dashain, 2002

“Khai natch gan chhaina?”

BASANT SUBBA,
Field Communications Officer

It was on the eve of an important conservation event in Chitwan National Park about four or five years ago. One by one the bigwigs and conservationists worth their salt congregated in front of a bonfire at Sauraha. A Tharu cultural group was entertaining the early arrivals with their traditional dance when there was a sudden change in the atmosphere. A beaming Dr. Gurung entered the scene. “Khai natch gan chhaina?” he asked.

Suddenly a *madal* appeared out of nowhere and then the place came alive with *jhyaurey* songs. Dr. Gurung joined the singers. He was so natural. Almost all the people seated there were left with no choice but to join him in the dance except Dr. Harka Gurung. I looked at the senior Gurung. He appeared to be glued to the chair. With a grim look on his scholarly face he was anything but the dancing type. But I was amazed when Chandra sir teased and cajoled him mimicking the *jhyaurey laya* to join others in the dance. That was the first and last time I saw Chandra sir sing and Harks sir dance. I’ll always cherish the moment.

अचेत मनका तरंगहरु

तारा प्रसाद जवाली

Sustainable Livelihoods Expert

संरक्षणको भाषा बुझ्यौ तिमिले
तर मृत्युको भाषा बुझ्न सकेनौ
जैविक मार्ग बुझ्यौ तिमिले
तर मृत्यु मार्ग बुझ्न सकेनौ
जिव जन्तुको व्यथा बुझ्यौ तिमिले
तर मृत्युको कथा बुझ्न सकेनौ

तिम्रो पीडामा रेड पाण्डा रोए होलान्
तिम्रो पीडामा हिम चितुवा गर्जे होलान्
तिम्रो पीडामा नाउरले चित्कार गरे होलान्
तिम्रो पीडामा डाँफेले सिउर भुकाए होलान्
तिम्रो पीडामा मयुरले प्वाँख लुकाए होलान्

हामीलाई थाहा छ, एउटा गैंडा घाईते हुँदा
तिम्रो मन कति रुन्थ्यो
एउटा हात्तिको मृत्यु हुँदा कसरी तिम्रो आँसु पुग्थ्यो
कसैले हिमचितुवाको जाकेट लगाएको देख्दा
कसरी तिम्रो व्यथा भल्किन्थ्यो
कस्तुरी, लगुनाको शिकार भएको सुन्दा
कसरी तिमिले आफूलाई संभाल्थ्यौ

प्रकृतिकै लागि उदाएका रहेछौ
प्रकृतिकै काखमा अस्त भयौ
संरक्षणको बाटो वनाएका थियौ
यात्रीको जिम्मामा छाडेर गयौ

बगेको आँसु देखिंदो रहेछ
तर मनको आँसु कसरी देखाउने
सारा जगतले तिम्रो अभाव महसुस गरिरहेछ
तिमीलाई यो यथार्थ कसरी बुझाउने
तिम्रो प्रतिक्रिया बसेका गैंडाहरुलाई
तिम्रो खबर कसरी सुनाउने

बेदनामा बाटो बिराएका हिमचीतुवालाई
तिम्रो अनुपस्थिति कसरी बुझाउने
जब सबैका आँसु सुकिसके अनि मेरो रसाउन थालेको छ
जब तिम्रो नामका बत्ति बुझिसके अनि मेरो बत्ति बल्न थालेको छ

जब तिम्रो नामका शोक सभा, शोक भाषण सकिसके
अनि यो मनले शोक शब्द कोर्न थालेको छ
जब सबैका पाईला तिम्रो खोजीमा थाकिसके
अनि मेरो पैताला चलबलाउन थालेको छ
तिम्रो मृत्यु भन्दा कठिन अवस्था अब तिम्रो शुन्यताले दिन
थालेको छ

सबैले आफूलाई सामान्य भएको देखाएपनि
भावनाको आवेग बल्ल खुल्न थालेको छ
तिम्रो रिक्तताको आभाष बल्ल यो मनले बुझ्न थालेको छ

हामिलाई विश्वास छ
हात्तिको प्रत्येक छावा जन्मिँदा तिम्रो जन्मिने छौं
गैंडाको प्रत्येक केटी जन्मिँदा तिम्रो जन्मिने छौं
बाघको प्रत्येक डमरु जन्मिँदा तिम्रो जन्मिने छौं
मयुरको प्रत्येक नाचमा तिम्रो नाँचेको हुनेछौं
प्रत्येक कस्तुरीको सुगन्धमा तिम्रो उपस्थित हुनेछौं
प्रत्येक वनका हरियालीमा तिम्रो उपस्थित हुनेछौं
प्रत्येक गुराँसका थुंगाहरुमा तिम्रो हाँसेको हुनेछौं

हामी प्रतिबद्ध छौं
तिमीले देखाएका संरक्षणका बाटाहरु
हामीले पछ्याइरहने छौं
तिमीले व्युँताएका हरियालीहरु
हामीले जोगाईरहने छौं
तिमीले चिनाएका डाँडा काँडा, संस्कृति
मनमा सजाई रहने छौं



गाँउ देखि शहरसम्मको डाक्टर साब

डा.घनश्याम गुरुङ्ग

Director – Program Development and Support

डा. चन्द्र प्रसाद गुरुङ्गको अकल्पनीय मृत्युले एउटा होनहार व्यक्तित्व र संरक्षण क्षेत्रका जमातमा ठूलो खाडल उत्पन्न गरेको छ । जुन खाडल भर्न सायदै सकिएला । वहाँ एउटा यस्तो बहुप्रतिभाशाली दूरदृष्टि एवं वाकपटुताले भरिएको व्यक्ति जुनसुकै स्तर र उमेरको व्यक्तिलाई पनि सम्मोहित गर्नसक्ने क्षमता भएको भनाई भने भगवानको वरदान भने पनि अनुपयुक्त नहुने मेरो वहाँसँगको १५ वर्ष कार्यकाल र भोगाइको अनुभव हो । वहाँमा गराई र भनाईमा कहिल्यै पाखण्डपन थिएन । वहाँको भनाई भन्नु या कथन जहिले पनि मेरो मानसपटलमा घुमिरहन्छ "बोल्नेको पिठो बिक्रि, नबोल्नेको चामलपनि बिक्रि" हरेक कुरालाई व्यवहारमा उतार्नुपर्छ भनेर हामीलाई अति सुझाव दिनुहुन्थ्यो । जसलाई मैले आत्मसात गर्ने कोशिश गरेको छु र गरिरहने छ । वहाँको धेरै चमत्कारि गुणहरू मध्ये सबैलाई समान व्यवहार, समान अवसर र सबैको कुरा ध्यानसँग सुन्न र अवसर नपाएका व्यक्तिहरूलाई होष्टमा हैस गरेर काम गर्ने मौका दिनुपर्छ तब पो त व्यक्ति बल्ल अनुभवी, सक्षम र सवल नागरिक बन्छ भनेर सबैको उन्नती र प्रगतिमा उत्तिकै चासो दिनुहुन्थ्यो ।

पढाईको सिलसिलामा मेरो Switzerland बसाईको बेलापनि "तिमी सक्दो छिटो आऊ घन " धेरै काम गर्नुछ भनेर email गर्नुहुन्थ्यो । म Oct मा फर्कनुपर्ने तर दुईमहिना अगाडी Aug मा नै फर्कै र कञ्चनजंघा संरक्षण क्षेत्र हस्तान्तरण गर्न जाने कममा वहाँजस्तो होनहार गुरुलाई गुमाए तर सायद यो एउटा लेखान्त नै रहेछ हामी बिच कुनै रगतको नाता नभएपनि डाक्टरसाब प्रतिको मेरो सच्चा हृदयदेखिको नाता रगतको नाता भन्दा गहिरो थियो । त्यसैले वहाँको दिवंगत पार्थिव अवशेषलाई त्यो घुन्साको अक्कारिलो भिरबाट ल्याएर अन्त्येष्टि कार्यसम्म सहभागी हुन पाएकोमा म आफूलाई धन्य ठान्छु ।

मैले माथि उल्लेखित गरेको "गाँउदेखि शहरसम्मको डाक्टरसाब" भनेको विषय वहाँमाथि सतप्रतिशत लागु हुन्छ किनभने वहाँसँगै गाँउमा काम गर्दा गाँउले दिदीबहिनी दाजुभाईहरूसँग पलेटी कसेर, भांग्रा भिरेर वहाँको अत्यन्तै प्यारो गित "सोह्रै वर्ष उमैरेमा म पनि भिल्के हुदो हो अहिले पो बुढो भयो र" भन्ने गीत गाउँदा वहाँ अत्यन्तै जोशिलो पारामा नाचेर अरु सबैलाई पनि नचाउनु हुन्थ्यो । वहाँको यो अतिनै गहिरो जोश, जाँगर, फूर्ति वँहाको निधन हुनुभन्दा अधिल्लो रात ताप्लेजुझमा फेरि उही गित, भाका नाचमा परिणत भई संरक्षण क्षेत्रका संरक्षण प्रेमी हामी छोराछोरीलाई दुहुरो बनाई कञ्चनजंघाको काखमा विलिन हुनुपुग्नु भयो ।

डाक्टरसाबले संरक्षण किताबी ज्ञानबाट भन्दा व्यक्तिगत र सामुहिक त्याग तपस्या र प्रतिबद्धताबाट बढि सम्भव छ भनेर वारम्बार भकभकाई रहनुहुन्थ्यो जसलाई आज मैले मुलमन्त्रको रूपमा लिएर वँहाको बृहत एकीकृत संरक्षण र दिगो विकासको अवधारणा र सपनालाई साकारपार्न आफ्नो कर्तव्य ठानि निरन्तरता दिनेछु यो मेरो डाक्टरसाब प्रतिको हृदयदेखिको सच्चा हार्दिक श्रद्धाञ्जलि !



चन्द्र तिम्रो सम्भनामा

दीर्घ गान्धारी

Extensions and Education Officer

बिहानीको मिर्मिरे र गोधुलीमा नआए पनि
चन्द्र सदा खुला आकाशमा चम्की रहनु
प्रत्यक्ष सल्लाह सुझाव नआए पनि
सपनीमा हामीलाई भकभकाइ रहनु
किनकी चन्द्र हाम्रो दुकदुकी हो, चन्द्र हाम्रो शान हो ।

अग्लो कद हसिलो मुहार याद सधैं आइरहने
संरक्षणको सिलसिलामा सधैं फिल्ड धाइरहने
याद आउँछ घरी घरी बिसर्ने छैनौं कहिले पनि
तिम्ले कोरेको गोरेटोमा हिँड्छौ सदा जीवन भरी
किनकी चन्द्र हाम्रो दुकदुकी हो, चन्द्र हाम्रो शान हो ।

फिल्डकै लागि जीवन दियो आज हामीलाई गाह्रो भो
तिम्रो नेतृत्व र माया बिना काम गर्न साह्रो भो
हामीसँग नभए पनि माथिबाट हेरि रहनु
स्वर्गमा राम्रो वास होस हामीलाई सदा बेरि रहनु
किनकी चन्द्र हाम्रो दुकदुकी हो, चन्द्र हाम्रो शान हो ।

हामी तिम्रो सन्तती हौं काम गर्छौं चन्द्र जस्तै
संरक्षणको कार्यमा कम्मर कसौ सधैं भरी यस्तै यस्तै
सिकाई तिमिसंगको फैलाउँछौ सदा गाउँ भरी
आपुरा र अधुरा योजना पुरा गर्छौ सधैं तिम्रो नाम छरी
किनकी चन्द्र हाम्रो दुकदुकी हो, चन्द्र हाम्रो शान हो ।

Remembering Dr Chandra Gurung

Losing him has orphaned many of us

BANDANA YONZON LEPCHA, Human Resource & Facilities Officer

I consider myself one of those privileged ones who had an opportunity to work with Dr. Gurung very closely for more than 6 years. He was much more than a boss. You could say he was more like a 'Big Dad' to the whole organization always taking us in his wing. Losing him has, beyond doubt, orphaned many of us.

For me, he was a transformational leader exemplified by his enigmatic personality, his compassionate ways and his simplicity. He was so motivational that when he talked he projected his ideas into images and it excited all of us and drove us into achieving them. He had an exceptional ability to touch emotions. He was also a visionary and was unafraid of risks to benefit the organization. In this tenure of a little more than 7 years in WWF, he brought about a strong culture and a team with one common vision. A perfect coach and mentor, he always lived by his values and instilled positive feelings in each one of us. He related to us in an intuitive and empathetic way. Most importantly, Dr. Gurung practiced what he preached, a quality rarely found in people of his caliber.

He never forgot to commend a job well done and always made us believe that we are the best of the best. Small things made him happy like *haku choela* made especially for him by our lunch didi, hot *jeris* to round off a good meal or watching Hindi movies. He was fascinated by the new mobile set bought for himself, a Motorola V3i, and acted like a teenage boy with his first expensive gadget! The look of pride on his face when he used to talk about how he won a game of golf (his latest leisure pursuit) was really amusing.

Not a very computer savvy person, everything that popped up on his computer screen had to be virus. It always alarmed him enough to immediately call for

Prakash, our IT consultant. I remember when I had created a yahoo mail account for him and several days later he asked me he could check his mail. I thought he was joking but he seriously didn't know. He learnt emailing somehow but not without forgetting his password and I had to create another mail id for him! One thing he never did learn however is to fill out his electronic timesheets, inspite of his very sincere efforts! Umpteenth times, I sat with him and ran a step by step demonstration but to no avail. Prajana continued to fill out his timesheets...



With staff on the 10th WWF Nepal Anniversary, 2003

He was a life long learner, even enthralled by small things that he did not know. Yet he always provided intellectual stimulation, sharing his knowledge and intelligence with all of us. We were all in awe of his wisdom. He was driven by strong values and he gained respect and trust from every soul.

What I most admired about this larger than life figure was the way he communicated high expectations showing simple ways. I miss his one-on-one advice, coaching, mentoring and the concern that he had for each and every one of his staff. I think he lived a full life, reached the pinnacle of success. He traveled around the globe, enjoyed every single moment, and ultimately lost his life for what he loved—conservation and communities.

I consider all of us at WWF Nepal very blessed to have shared wonderful moments with this great man but very unfortunate that we lost a true leader and above all an extraordinary human being.

Dr Gurung, I continue to take inspiration from you as you were and will always be the best of the best...

Black Ink, Oranges and Life Lessons

TRISHNA GURUNG

Communications and Marketing Manager

As Dr Gurung's things were cleared from what I still think of his office, I noticed his bottle of ink. It was in its box, a little dusty and forlorn on top of a pile of circa 2000 floppy disks, slides, and old magazines. That black ink ran in his favourite pen, a maroon Mont Blanc pen, which he'd use for special occasions. Dr Gurung was a man who valued tradition but was impatient with dull routine. He learned from the past and kept pushing forward. He loved his family, made friends easily, and always left a lasting impression.

Dr Gurung also loved ink in the printed form of books. His personal library sent me into raptures. He invested in global bestsellers as well as obscure titles that intrigued him. He was a voracious reader whose interest spanned conservation, business, travel, science, and everything in-between. To be honest, there were a few of us who lived in dread of Monday morning when he'd publicly quiz us on current affairs, which could have a direct or indirect bearing on conservation. Dr Gurung thrived on challenges and taught us not to be afraid of failure. In his eyes, failure meant a worthy attempt was made, and had merit. As a result, we strove to live up to his expectations and found we could be and do more than we thought possible.

One of Dr Gurung's favourite parables was passed down from his father, which loses some of the original charm without his expressive narration. "My father was a simple man who always told me what I'm going to tell you," he'd say. "An unproductive orange tree is the one that stands straight and tall but one that bears fruit lowers its branches closer to the ground so that others can enjoy its bounty. From this we must remember that the higher and more accomplished we become, it is important to remain humble and give back to others." I will never forget that lesson on humility, grace and giving, not in the least because my boss lived by those words.

Today his bottle of ink sits on a shelf where I can see it every time I look up from my desk. It reminds me of a remarkable man and what he believed in. It also reminds me to seek opportunities, strive to do my best, welcome challenges, and indulge in life's simple pleasures.

The big guy is big by the way he treats the small guy

SHANTI GURUNG,

Intern – Sacred Himalayan Landscape

There are few people who come into your life for a short period of time yet make a lasting impression. Such was Dr Chandra P Gurung, for me. He was always a part of family conversations, especially when the topic was about high-achievers from Sikles, our ancestral village. Indeed, his success was a matter of pride for all of us.

I recall my first meeting with him at my eldest sister's wedding party in 2000 when I was barely 16. I had heard so much about him since childhood that I felt I knew him for ages. He was a hero, someone I've always tried to emulate. So when I met him at first, I was intimidated by his height; second but most importantly, by his larger-than-life persona. His charming personality, handsome smile, and generosity always warmed my heart.

There are a few behavioral similarities between him and my dad. Or, maybe it's just me who's seen him as a father figure. One of such is their passion for golf. He was highly enthusiastic about the sport. Dr. Gurung has encouraged plenty of people to seek direction and find their goals in life. He stressed the importance of good education, hard work, and belief in one's own abilities. Passionate about his work, he would never miss a chance to let everyone know how dedicated, talented and efficient his WWF team was—even at family parties!! He took immense pride in his staff.

Dr. Gurung treated all his staff equally and never let them feel any different than the others. Whether it was a smile, a wave or a hello, he made sure everyone felt welcome. There's a saying that goes, 'The big guy is big by the way he treats the small guy.' Dr Gurung truly exemplified it. He was a gem of a person and will be greatly missed.



Remembering Dr Chandra Gurung

Remembering Yeshi Choden Lama



We are the never-say-no people

PRAJANA WAIBA PRADHAN, Assistant to the
Country Representative

Yeshi di was someone who would always lend a helping hand when you requested. She also guided me with my specialization for the final year of my MSc, earlier this year. Dr. Chandra Gurung would always have her name in his list of invitees for every official dinner meeting. She would laugh and say, “We are the ‘never say no’ people, Sarala and me, he knows we won’t send our regrets - we are always there to support”. On my birthday this year, after I returned from Dr. Saab’s office I found an envelope with my name marked and it read “Happy Birthday, Regards Yeshi”. That was a complete surprise! I will never forget her willingness to help others and the grace with which she conducted herself. I will miss you Yeshi di and all that knew you and shared your life were very lucky to have known you.



Dancing with locals and Mathew Preece at Lelep, September 2006.

The Real Thing

TRISHNA GURUNG, Communications
and Marketing Manager

Oddly, I remember her laugh. It was easy to tell when Yeshi wasn’t doing a polite version of her laugh because the real one was almost explosive. It burst out in merriment, loud and spontaneous. Her kajal-rimmed eyes would shine with mirth as her body flowed into the joy of that moment. I never met anyone more dedicated to her work than Yeshi, and this is not to make her a saint. I suppose that’s the difference really. To Yeshi, WWF was *her* work and not just a job. She was the real thing and I was awed by her dedication and humility. But today it is her laugh that I miss hearing the most. Perhaps its because when Yeshi laughed it reflected how she lived—wholeheartedly.

Unsung Hero

Eric Wikramanayake, Sarala Khaling, and
Jenny Gurung

She was the unsung hero. For over a decade Yeshi Choden Lama worked with a quiet diligence to help conserve the mountain biodiversity and cultures of the Himalaya. During her early years at WWF Nepal—before she became Senior Program Manager for the mountain program and oversaw the Sacred Himalayan Landscape—she worked with the *amchis*, the traditional healers in the mountains, to understand their practices. She worked with them to substitute alternatives to endangered plant and animal products in traditional medicines. Her understanding of conservation was much wider and more complete than many of us who become easily enamored with charismatic species. She was quick to point out that conservation is not only about ‘rhinos, tigers and elephants’, but is also about the other less charismatic, but equally important Himalayan plants and animals that have become threatened because of over-exploitation. Several publications and books such as *Medicinal Plants of Dolpo*; *Amchis’ Knowledge and Conservation*; and *Where There Is No Doctor: Building Capacity of the Himalayan Amchi* remain as testament to her scholarly work, but the unending stream of *amchis* and other community members from remote parts of Nepal who would arrive unannounced at her home to meet her is a larger tribute. Her home was a refuge where they were made welcome.

Yeshi’s philosophy personified her. She was not given to flamboyance, but her dedication earned her the deepest respect from her peers and colleagues, especially from those in the field. She was willing to travel to the most remote and difficult places in the Himalayas, that many would hesitate to undertake. Ten days before the fateful flight, Yeshi trekked to Ghunsa, and met with community leaders in the Kangchenjunga Conservation Area along the way to discuss conservation issues. Although several of us advised her to postpone the trip till after the monsoon because of the unpleasant conditions, her



Yeshi with Sarala

response was “I’m not going there as a tourist.” Such was her dedication. She joined the helicopter in Ghunsa.

Yeshi was reticent with strangers. But she was quick with a laugh and enjoyed life with friends. And she had many, who consider her one of the brightest stars of the constellation aboard that helicopter.

Yeshi, you will always be remembered and loved by those whose lives you touched. We will miss your laughter, which echoed through the WWF Nepal office and your profound thoughts and comments about work, people, and life. Be in peace on Kangchenjunga, the Five Treasures of the Snows, a sacred mountain you strove so hard to conserve.

Remembering Jennifer Headley



From L – R: Sarala, Jenn and Bandana

She spread her magic wings of warmth and friendship

BANDANA YONZON LEPCHA
Human Resource & Facilities Officer

“It was impossible to know Jennifer without loving her,” someone said at the memorial service. This was the remark that said everything about Jenn, as nothing could describe her more closely as this. More than a colleague, she was a very special friend and confidante to me. She had this infectious aura about her, the warmth of her personality, her explicit way of expressing her feelings, her huge bear hugs, her love for Meesha her pet dog, her passion for tarot cards and feng shui, her fancy for rings and pendants, and above all, her way of caring for people and those around her. Everywhere she went, she spread her magic wings of warmth and friendship.

I feel fortunate to have known such a beautiful human being so full of energy and vivaciousness. Most of my conversations with her were girly chats full of giggles and laughter. I couldn't help but stop by her room after lunch whenever she was around for a small chit chat. Once she told me she actually wanted to become a politician! She fondly talked about her sisters and her niece and nephew and about her trips around the region. She told me about the people she met and how she made friends like with this particular girl from WWF Pakistan whom she simply loved. She even had a photo of her in her office. She loved dosas and had started to like Newari food. She was so full of life and had such diverse interests. She was into yoga and wanted a guitar! She took me around London on my last visit there and I have some wonderful memories of wandering around with her totally footloose and fancy free.

Jennifer was a very spiritual person. She promised to read my tarot cards but we could never manage time for that. When both my husband and I were not keeping well lately, she gave me a book entitled *Nutritional Healing*. Probably she wanted us to be in good health...She loved children and my son adores his Jennifer Aunty. He is even more excited now when I tell him that she has turned into a beautiful fairy angel.

Thank you Jenn for those wonderful memories... Your smile and the way you clapped your hands when you were happy, makes me smile even now. I will always cherish your friendship.

Glad for the time we shared

PRAJANA WAIBA PRADHAN

Assistant to the Country Representative

I first met Jenn last year after a few months I joined office. We automatically became friends. I remember Bandana di looking for a house for her and the excitement she had when she finally found one! Next, she wanted a dog and I gave her one of my pups, in fact two as the first one died and I remember the two of us shedding tears for its poor little departed soul. I still see her in her cream overalls with that sweet smile on a sunny afternoon when she came to my brother's house to pick up the first pup. I remember handing over Meesha (she had already named the second pup before even having it) to her in the office. She even bought identical collars for Meesha and my cat Kitty. We had plans to meet at my place for Dasai this year as I would not be going home. We were also supposed to get all the dogs together at her place and have some kind of a doggie get-together!! I spent more personal moments with her rather than official ones. We had just worked together only for the Landscape Coordinators meeting last month. She said that she wanted to thank all who had helped organize it by taking all out to dinner. There were many who were closer to Jenn than I was but I am so glad that I shared whatever time I had with her and I will always remember and cherish her as one of the most simple and loving persons one can ever encounter. She was always up for any kind of ideas and would be ready to help anyone in need. I'll miss you Jenn. I wish we had more time together.



Those Bright Eyes, Quick Smile and Big Heart

TRISHNA GURUNG, Communications and Marketing Manager

Jenn loved and was loved by all of us at WWF Nepal. She brought to our lives her special joyous spirit that touched everyone from our maali dai and Dr Gurung to communities in our project sites. "Namaste, *kasto hunnunchha?*" she would ask in accent tinged Nepali that immediately charmed the person because Jenn was making an effort to reach out. That's the thing about Jenn. She was interested in everyone and that meant she was never a bystander and always an enthusiastic participant. Whether it was a 12-hour marathon workshop or a Teej dress-up session with the office girls, Jenn was there. It seems almost unnecessary to say that Jenn was passionate about her job. Right across the region there is a Jenn sized chasm that will never be filled. We will miss her bright eyes, quick smile and big heart.



Remembering Jennifer Headley

Remembering Dr Tirtha Man Maskey



Friends Forever

TRISHNA GURUNG

Communications and Marketing Manager

I miss seeing Dr Maskey drive up to the office in his shiny red car and hearing “*Ke chha ba?*” followed by a big smile. The former Director General and then Co-Chair of the Asian Rhino Specialist Group that we were privileged to know was a very down-to-earth gentleman who was unfailingly courteous, quick with a smile, valued hard work and was a great story teller with a vast storehouse of anecdotes. Dr Maskey was also a family man who doted on his dog and thought his wife was the world’s best chef.

The friendship that Dr Maskey and Dr Gurung shared went beyond their official roles. “He would come here after his golf in the morning and ask me, ‘*Bhauju*, where is my *jeri-swaari?*’” recalls Mrs Maskey on one of my visits.

One unforgettable incident is a dinner hosted in Dr Maskey’s honour about a year ago. It was late in the evening and Dr Gurung, as usual, really got the party started. He soon had everyone dancing, including Dr Maskey who had a grin across his face that lit up the room. And then, the two of them got a hold of a microphone and started to sing, “*Ye dosti hum nahin todengae...*” Theirs was a real friendship that will remain unbroken in our memory.

Whatever we can do should be done now without hesitation

BHAWANA SYANGDEN

Assistant to AsRSG Co-Chair for South Asia

We received the news of the chopper crash and that none had survived. It seemed as if the whole world crumbled. It’s only been six months since I’ve joined WWF and started working as an assistant to Dr. Maskey. Somehow, I feel I’ve been really close to him though for a short period of time. Having dedicated himself for the benefit of wildlife and conservation, he selflessly served and that too with so much of dedication that one feels guilty of not being able to reach up to a fraction of what he was.

He loved his work immensely. It was never drudgery for him as he did it willingly, with great enthusiasm. I remember him telling me once that whatever we can do should be done now without hesitation for no one knows if there will be another chance. His golden words of advice will never be forgotten; I’ve treasured his invaluable advice and will use it to better myself.

Working under him had been a great experience I feel I’ve been very lucky to have him as my Boss. His nobility and humbleness distinctly reflected in his character. He was dignified and a very kind hearted person. Even on some point when I used to make silly mistakes he would never raise his voice but very emphatically in a gentle tone he used to say, “*Baa ...you learn from your mistakes.*”

On 23rd September 2006, he left us. He was an exceptional and gifted person. To me, WWF will never be the same without his presence, we will miss him no doubt, but his memories will live in our heart forever.

Remembering Mingma Norbu Sherpa

A Letter

CORONA RANJIT GHIMIRE, Senior Facilities Asst

Dear sir,

It was a pleasure to work for you. Since 1993, when WWF Nepal office began its full fledged operations with about 5 of us, you ensured that all of us put in our best efforts. With such a bare minimum of staff we were all multitaskers. Your professionalism and encouragement inspired us.

You considered the fact that I was a fresher right out of school and it was my first job. You were patient while assigning duties. You always asked me to do something explaining how it should be done. Since your were a Country Representative both for WWF Bhutan and WWF Nepal I remember you were constantly commuting between Kathmandu and Paro. Your very presence in the office drove us instinctively to be alert!

You treated us all with equal respect. On every occasion you made sure that you would invite a family member as well and thank them because you believed that staff can work well if the environment at home is good. All of us and our respective family members respected you.

You practiced what you preached. The office environment was that of very little paper work but very quick and effective decision making, less hierarchy, not lavish offices but decent ones, not extravagant parties but occasions where staff members and their families could meet and interact with each other. It was almost like one big family. No discrimination amongst senior and junior staff members and everyone treated with dignity. There was no partiality to any specific staff member but an environment where everybody felt they were on equal footing. I have very fond memories of those days at WWF Nepal under your gentle leadership...



Remembering Matthew Preece

IOU chocolate cake

TRISHNA GURUNG, Communications and Marketing Manager

It was at one of my last dinner party at Dr Gurung's that Matt and I discovered we had something special in common – a weakness for chocolate cake. This was after discovering that he too knew Charles Haviland, the BBC correspondent in Nepal, who was also at that dinner. "I love chocolate cake!" I remember him exclaiming with delight when I told him about a place in Thamel. We decided to go when he got back from his field visit to Kangchenjunga. That was a lovely summer night, despite the threat of the occasional drizzle. Matt and I were found that we shared not only a professional mission to save a living planet but also a sweet tooth that had a particular preference for dark, rich, and moist chocolate cake.



Matt's warm welcome at Ghunsa

WWF Memorial Service

28 September 2006
Kathmandu, Nepal

We remember with admiration, respect and love those who were tragically taken from us on Saturday, 23 September 2006.

They were among the best and the brightest.

We seek a measure of peace in the knowledge that their legacy will continue to light our future as they live on in our hearts.



Clockwise from top: Gallery, lighting butter lamps, Mr. Schlaepfer signs the condolence book, Buddhist prayer, standing in silence, James Leape - WWF Intl, Carter Roberts - WWF US, Adesh Gurung reads his family's message, Tenzing Sherpa speaks about his father, Dawa Tshering's sister, and people offering khatas.

We apologize for the unavoidable delay in producing the EcoCircular. Please send us your feedback!

EcoCircular

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