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## Reminiscing Bhim Darshan Roka<sup>1</sup>

- Jangab Chauhan

Standing on the cliffs  
On the banks of the river that carries the flood and **bore**

Walking alone  
Gazing at the horizons for shore  
I am drawing shape deep within the cloud's inner core  
(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

A poet sketching images along the sky across the horizon – this was my impression of poet Bhimdarshan Roka through his poems. After *Gham dubi tara naudaeko aakash hoon ma*<sup>2</sup> I knew him better. I know him also because some of his poems have been translated in Russian language, and that he is loved by the Nepalese in Russia. Many of my friends recite his lyrical poems word by word. The soothing, intoxicating melody in his poems invigorates the senses, and gets everyone tap their feet unstopably. We were introduced to this affectionate poet resonating soothing emotions amidst our agonies in foreign shores. My friends and I were in Moscow and had never met him in person. But the spellbinding magic of his poems that left us mesmerized was striking and vivid. Without is poems we would feel emptiness in our gatherings. Though there was no dearth of Nepali poems, somehow *Gham dubi...* always caressed us affectionately like no other poems ever did.

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<sup>1</sup> A longer version of this article was originally published in Nepali as "Gham dubi tara naudaeko aakash" in 2002 in *Garima*, 20 (8), 23-35.

<sup>2</sup> Literal translation: I am such a sky in which the sun has set but the stars have not risen.

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Moscow's *freenepl.com* family had given us the responsibility to arrange a meeting with poet Roka in Kathmandu. One rainy January day we reached his residence in Maharajgunj. Spread around one *ropani* stood a two storied house painted in yellow. There was a small room to the right of the main door which the poet, who had lost his voice, shared with his better-half Meena Roka. She was the first woman to enter civil service as deputy Secretary, who had now given up her job to take care of her husband, to give voice to his feelings. The sight was as tender as his poems. That morning we had the opportunity to talk with his youngest son Ajay also. But the person whose words used to sway us seemed to have a lot to communicate yet nothing to say. He just sat there silently, signaling sometimes. His thoughts (poems) were passed to us through Meena bhauju's translation.

How tragic! Poet Roka, who served the education sector for fifty one years, who in his youthful years had captivated poetry lovers with hypnotizing recitals, who played soulful flute tunes transporting people to a whole new world, now lived with a fragile ill body swallowing empty words and staring into the infinite vista of Nepali poems.

Before 2000, there was no single anthology of his poems, and he was rather known as a *phutkar* poet<sup>3</sup>. His creations, scattered across different publications, had the whiff of his literary merits. Poet the Great Laxmi Prasad Devkota had wholeheartedly praised his literary endowment. Not only the figures like Balkrishna Sama, Chittadhaar Hridhaya, Sankhar Lamichane, Bhupi Sherchan, Tulsi Dhungel, Uttam Nepali, but also many of his friends from non-literary background had an irrepressible desire that Bhimdarshan continue writing poems. Today, after reading some of his poems, the same question echoes in everyone's heart- why did his poems stop streaming so abruptly?

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<sup>3</sup> A poet of short poems scattered in different irregular publications. This meant that he did not write long epics, or poetic dramas.

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The walls of his bedroom were adorned with awards and honors for his contribution to Nepali society. Among them were letters of appreciation presented by Siddhartha Vansathali School for translating Devkota's literary works and introducing them in the international arena. There was another one by Kanya Mandir School on its occasion of golden jubilee for his contribution in the field of education. Besides these two, all the seven other honors were presented to him in the year 1999 and 2000. It is striking that his only anthology of poems '*Gham Dubi Tara Naudaeko Aakash Hoo Ma*' was published in the year 2000. Prior to the publication of this anthology we were unable to gauge his literary talent and personality through his poems published in numerous publications.

Describing Roka's physical built and character Shankar Lamichhane writes that guns instead of pens and bombs instead of words seem to suit him. Being born into a family with army background, taking up a delicate art like poetry and earning livelihood as a teacher is the biggest revolution in his life. Admiring his strong recitation style Lamichhane writes, "His face glowed with radiance every time he stood to recite. Such carefree and fun his recitals were that with each stanza the whole ambience used to light up. Every time he shut his eyes and gave a powerful nod recalling his words, we felt like we were thrown towards the sky."

His theatrical style of poem recitations will now never be heard nor seen. The voice that once blazed powerful literary expressions through Radio Nepal wasn't preserved. Even many years after the inception of Nepal Television no one really bothered to capture and document his artistic talent. The anthology of poems was published only after silence had become his voice.

There is an unforgettable moment regarding poet Roka's poem recital. Poet Manjul who sensed the gravity of this misfortune read out one of Roka's poems in a program aired through Sagarmatha Radio. The same evening, when poet Roka heard

the recitation, he let out a stream of tears. Everybody at home broke down. It was an expression of a painful joy; a joy that brought the agony out. After this incident, Manjul wanted to make Bhimdarshan's poetic expressions heard even more. Bhimdarshan readily agreed to it with tears of joy and pain. This is how Roka's anthology of poems became heard through Manjul's voice along with Aavash's soothing music playing in the background.

Lamichhane adored Roka a lot. Among the six members of Kavya Academy there was a special bonding between them. Working together in the various activities of the academy had transformed their relationship from formal colleagues to life-long friends. Lamichhane was particularly fond of the following verses from one of Roka's poems. He often used to hum-

Alone alone aloof and sad

I am the sky in which the sun has set

but the stars have not yet risen

(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

Lamichhane had profound reasons to like these verses. In the backdrop of these very lyrical melodies, he had unveiled many of his emotional aspects to his friend. Equally fond was Roka of Lamichhane, which we can see in one of his reminiscences: "I get lost in his memories. The relationship that we shared is unparalleled. He was a man of big heart. He never held anything to his heart. It is difficult to find a person like Shankar. Friends meant the world to him."

Possibly because of the deep bond that he shared with Shankar Lamichhane, he named his anthology *Gham dubi...* (which was published after Lamichhane's death) in memory of his late friend.

Bhupi Sherchan was another equally close friend of Roka. Roka has played significant part in the metamorphosis of Bhupendraman into Bhupi. Bhimdarshan was working as a teacher in Pokhara when he was shown one of Bhupi's poems.

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He just didn't like the poem that went like 'Oh lady, your saree...' Without being diplomatic he plainly stated his dislike, "Is this really a poem!"

A year or so after that, Bhupi presented another poem to Roka. This time Bhimdarshan's happiness knew no bounds. He embraced him in his arms and congratulated him. And what followed was Bhupi's masterpiece "Ghume mech maathiko andho manchhe" (A blind man on a revolving chair), which went on to become one of the most prized creations in the world of Nepali poems.

Bhimdarshan shared a close and affectionate relationship with *Poet the Great* Laxmi Prasad Devkota also. He was deeply moved by the latter's poems while being recited at a poetry summit in the year 1951. Devkota was also taken aback after hearing a poem by a 21 year old boy who had come from Punjab, India. Roka had made his way to Nepal crossing different routes and singing songs to the mountains. His songs had found a fresh tune:

Running, a hurricane  
Resting, a shadow  
Meandering, youth  
And arriving here, as love  
I have come by many roads

(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

Devkota was so affected by Roka's poem that he went to the hotel he was staying to understand the depth of his poetic expressions up close.

Bhimdarshan had many unforgettable memories with the Great Poet Devkota. He had seen Devkota crying from the bottom of his heart. It is really a sympathetic moment when a poet's sentiments metamorphoses to heart rending scene. To feel the agony of such pungent feelings the onlooker should also be carrying a heart as soulful as the poet's. Bhimdarshan also housed an equally emotional heart. He cried along with

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Devkota. The instance was the untimely demise of Devkota's eldest son Prakash Prasad because of pneumonia. Bhimdarshan had visited Devkota's home just a few days before the tragedy had occurred. When he reached there, Prakash was asking him to buy a warm coat. But Devkota didn't have the money. Not being able to provide warmth to his son's body to fight the cold had become an unbearable moment for Devkota. Some payments were due for the lessons he gave on English plays. Devkota and Roka had gone together to collect the payments. But they returned disappointed. On their arrival, Devkota's son asked in a faltering voice, "When will you buy it, baba?" The question haunted Roka throughout his life.

Bhimdarshan vividly remembered yet another interesting incident with Devkota. It was during the preparation of *Indreni*, a bilingual literary magazine. Devkota, Madhav Ghimire, Ishwar Baral, Bhimdarshan and others had to spend the night on the top floor of the Indian Library. It was freezing cold and there was just one blanket. Just when Bhimdarshan tried to pull little bit of the blanket towards his body, Devkota asked him to give the blanket to others and embraced him in the warmth of his arms.

Devkota was impressed by Roka's amazing poetic energy. Devkota had requested him to pen poems on many occasions. Devkota believed that Bhimdarshan was a poet of high stature and fine sensibilities, and that his short, melodic poems had their own individuality. Bhimdarshan for him was a courageous poet advocating humanity and justice.

Roka spent his childhood and adolescence in a family with all the sufferings and anguishes that emigrant Nepalese faced. That's why he was so full of agony of being an emigrant. He used to paint vivid recollections of the memories of spending childhood in barracks and in *Dharmashala* in his descriptions. During the initial years of his stay in Nepal, his spoken Nepali still had an Indian zing like when he used Hindi words like *yaaron* for friends that made his Nepali even sweeter.

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Describing Roka's musical inclination and artistic expression, Shankar Lamichhane wrote:

He doesn't sing, but lets out beautiful melodies from his flute. He doesn't paint but his descriptions are just as much artistic. Elaborate descriptions are not his cup of tea, 'Just say what you have to, people who understand will get it'; that is more like Roka's style. In some ways he is the type of person who can comprehend without being clued in on everything- his poems also reflect the same nature.

Roka never had sky high dreams. He loved where he had his feet firmly rested. He never lost track of his dedication towards the education field. None of the opportunities and allurements that came along his way could change that. In his poem he had stated the same:

Let me not go skyward,  
Leaving back my own earth

Children always fascinated Roka. For him they were like poems that breathed and lived. He sensed unfathomable poetic melody playing inside all of them. He has expressed his love for teaching profession and the close bond he shared with children in his own words: 'I am very content. It gives me immense pleasure teaching students. Life of a teacher is no less pleasurable than that of others. The small children whom I teach in schools are poems themselves. Walking, talking, moving poems. Amusing poems.'

Bhimdarshan abruptly disappeared from the literary scene and dedicated himself entirely towards teaching profession. He became submerged with living poems. Concerning this sudden change, Lamichhane wrote:

And I miss my friend, a poet who has begun to teach setting poetry aside. And, he is just a teacher now. Name he did earn, he built his own school of poetry. And



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although he has put his pen down for a while, he is still as much talked about.

Bhimdarshan was an easy-going poet by nature. He never wrote poems just for the sake of it and never stopped writing poems just to prove his point. He emerged from the words carrying symbols and images into the lively world of poems and faded back to nature:

Far away from death,  
Miles apart from closeness

Bhimdarshan was born in 1930 in Kathmandu as the third son to Hastalal Roka and Basantadevi Roka. He was born while his father was working in India for the Gorkha Rifles under British Army. Roka was only three months when his family moved to Bhakshu, Punjab, India, where his father had service.

Kathmandu was more beautiful than now when the Roka family left Kathmandu. The valley was green with clean environment and scattered population. The hills surrounding Kathmandu and the mountain range visible in the winters made it a piece of earthly paradise. Those images of Kathmandu described to him by his mother Basantadevi flashed across his innocent eyes like a dream.

He spent childhood in the army barrack in Bhakshu under his parents' loving care and affection. Having grown up under the strict army discipline, Roka developed the habit of working hard. This quality that he acquired during his formative years shaped his way of living.

Years went by as Bhimdarshan preserved the images of fairy tale like beautiful Nepal, and spent his childhood amidst the magnificent beauty of Bhakshu in Dharamshala. This place which was adorned with pine trees in the lap of Himalayas had become his playground. Swimming in the rivers, listening to sounds of waterfall, sweet chirping of colorful birds had made his life there as an immigrant very musical. The poetic heart

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inside him was many a times caressed by the waves of Bhakshunag and Dallekh lake. Wild flowers and bushes enveloping the surrounding hills brought a sense of warmth in him. Bhimdarshan grew up in the lap of nature, where the warm rays of sunrise and sunset brought along peace, calmness, compassion and gratitude that touched his life each day. Playing with the beautiful colors of nature, his beautiful heart was touched by poetic emotions from a very young age. It was only natural for him to grow up as poet after being surrounded by such beauty and the world around him became as affectionate, natural, beautiful, easy and simple as his poems. His deeply moving poems are the emanation of these emotions that found way into his heart since his childhood.

Bhimdarshan completed his schooling from a government school in Dharamshala in Kangada district, Himachal Pradesh. He did his Bachelor in English Literature from Solan University situated in the same place. Since his school days, he used to write poems every now and then. This habit stayed with him throughout his college life. Not just in his mother tongue, but he also used to write in Hindi, English and Urdu and recite them in various programs. His college life ended in 1952. It was when democracy had just dawned on Nepal. Twenty one year old Bhimdarshan was selected in the representative committee of United Indian Student Union in Solan University to come to Nepal. This was the first group of foreign students visiting Nepal in the post-democracy period.

This was an epic turn in his life. He hadn't gone to Nepal, in fact, but had come to it. He hadn't come to visit his birthplace after two decades; he had come to reach here. Exchanging the agonies of their lives as immigrants, they had come crossing various routes, carrying love in abundance. Roka had come to the same city from the fairytales he had heard as a child, to see the union of lovebirds, to feel the waves of the Fewa lake that would stir his soul and to see the breaking dawn near the water springs. The memory of early morning childhood dreams flashed across his mind, the old memory returned again:

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 Seeing Nepal it seems familiar  
 in the morning it seems somewhere I have stepped in  
 this courtyard before

In my heart it seems  
 I've met this place in dreams

(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

It took him full eighteen years to return to the place from where he had begun the journey to his destination. A whole era. But nobody could take him away from the place where he was marching towards, such was his state. He had become a part of the reflection of Machhhapuchre on Fewa lake, the mountains had already embraced him with warm love that promised to last for many eras to come:

Walking and walking at last I've reached the end,  
 Come to the house I have abandoned at dawn  
 and how will I be able to go?  
 It seems these Himalayas have blocked the road

Bhimdarshan was more emotional than poems, melodic than music and sweeter than any song. The moment his feet touched his motherland, he swept the earth's mud across his forehead exemplifying his immense love for the land of his ancestors and his birth place.

His choice to begin life in Nepal was noteworthy, a teaching job at Pokhara. So, draining the cup of flowers, with ecstasy in heart, the young poet crossed Damauli to reach the city of lakes and magnificent natural beauty. The twinkling sky was calling him, golden rays of hope that shone like distant mountains were calling him too. His each step was being followed by the sweet fragrance of flowers that only leapt forward. Emotions burst out along with his footsteps-

The heart carries me with it  
 Childhood plays tag  
 Whoever I lay my eyes upon  
 He draws me in

I drink, yes that's my habit  
Intoxicated, immersed, conscious my story  
Who has been violated come close  
For I am young, for I am vital

(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

With Machapucchre firmly on its chest, it seemed as if the Fewa had been waiting for young Roka at lakeside. The waves that it brought along not just stirred his soul but also the deep blue sky within it. And with dreams of touching the sky, Roka began working as teacher in a school at Patan Nadipur in Pokhara. It was his first gesture of service to his motherland that was lagging far behind in education.

But Nepal wasn't perfect like in Roka's dream. There were plenty of evil practices lurking beneath the beautiful guise. They had been firmly rooted in Nepalese societies for ages. One such practice had been nurtured in the school where he had begun teaching. Only children from high caste families studied there. The school's doors were closed for children from lower castes. But Roka treated the children from *Damai* caste which according to the society was supposedly 'untouchable caste' just like others and taught them along with students from other castes. He fiercely protested the discriminatory wall of castes created by the society. But there were plenty of people with traditional views who couldn't tolerate his opposition and the fact that his humanitarian thoughts that promoted equality. People who didn't want the society to progress along with the elements that detested Roka's equality-based approach staged protest against him. There were many people in his support, too. However, he had been deeply hurt and returned Kathmandu with a wounded heart.

After returning to Kathmandu, he taught at Kanyamandir Madhyamik School, and Siddhartha Vanasthali School and Collge for as long as his health allowed. He taught for fifty one years.

Four years after his return, Bhimdarshan got an opportunity to visit People's Republic of China as member of the first cultural delegation. The committee headed by the then education minister Balchandra Sharma comprised of several members like Balkrishna Sama, Chiittadhar Hridaya, so this visit held historical importance for young poet Bhimdarshan. Later he received yet another invitation to participate in Afro-Asian writers summit held in Delhi but couldn't go because of some practical reasons. However, he had the opportunity to visit Hong Kong and Burma as a cultural delegate on different occasions.

After his homecoming in 1952, young Bhimdarshan's senses remained enchanted with everything he saw, heard and felt in his motherland. He was deeply immersed in the native beauty: sometimes by the waves that rose in Fewa lake, by the collage of beautiful Himalayas, by the twinkling stars across the infinite blue sky, and other times by the boat afloat in water, by the arrival of Spring, in the soft music during solo travels, in the moments of loneliness. In these moments of soul-searching in the homeland, the poet came across Meena Ghimire from Kaldhara, Kathmandu, and fell in love. The love fast culminated into a promise to live together and got immortalized in these lines:

After every star's been counted  
 And every breath's become a sigh,  
 What more? Now love that you are with me,  
 And now that I have called you mine

(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

With the birth of two sons Amar and Ajay and daughter Aarti the couple rejoiced in the bliss of family life. The ageing Bhimdarshan and his wife Meena walking together in the final stretch of their lives looked an ideal couple who were still going on so strongly for ever. This vividly reminds us of the collage art of Roka's own poem "Just a quarter of the night remains."

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Bhimdarshan Roka's poems started getting published in different newspapers in the year 1953. He was one of the most energetic poetic talents among the six active members of Kabya Academy established under the chairmanship of Laxmi Prasad Devkota in 1955. Other members included Balkrishna Sama, Madhav Ghimire, Kedarman Byathit and Shankar Lamichhane. Later Bhupi Sherchan was also included. Roka was the first poet to write short poems on love and tragedy. His poems were known for setting the mood in every occasion. About this critic Ishwar Baral wrote that Roka had brought the gems from Urdu language and ascended in the horizon of Nepali poetry and that his poems had the zing of *aachar* (pickles). There was a sparkle and a jump in his poems, the extent of giving a dagger's blow in the veil of a flower's smiles. An example-

Just one quarter of the night remains  
The collected consequences of the first three parts  
The moon, which alone reached the east  
Has now in me just a single hope

Just one quarter of the night is left  
How many there were who began the song of night  
Each lighting their own individual stars  
And now, who is left?  
You, I and with us our desires  
Just one quarter of the night is left.

(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

Roka has been able to assume a distinct name in Nepali poetry despite writing fewer poems. When his health started deteriorating, Shiva Regmi, a devotee of Nepali literature went to Roka's residence with the manuscript of twenty nine of his published and unpublished poems with a proposition to publish them. Roka had never brought such moving creations in the form of a book. Not just Shiva Regmi but Roka's wife Meena and the entire Nepalese literature fraternity had made similar request. But Roka, who refused to consider himself a poet worth remembering, didn't agree to publish the anthology of his

poems. So leaving behind the manuscript, Shiva Regmi had to return disappointed.

In the year 1999 Shiva Regmi's efforts did pay off when poet Roka finally agreed to publish his anthology *Gham Dubi Tara Naudaeko*.... Regmi truly deserves accolades for introducing a gem from Nepali poetry like Bhimdarshan Roka to general readers.

Young Bhimdarshan was in Bhakshu in the mid 1950s, during the first uprisal for democracy in Nepal. He was drawn to the ongoing revolution and actively contributed in raising fund and support for it. But he never chose to become a member of any political party. He, in fact, did not possess the nature to be ever inclined to any school of political thought.

Roka was fond of Urdu gazals and romantic poems in English and Hindi. He was deeply moved by the poems of writers like Rabindranath Thakur, Haribansha Raya Bachhchan and Shivamangal Singh Suman. He was equally fond of English poems by romantic poets like Lord Byron, William Wordsworth, John Keats, and P.B. Shelly. There are sentiments of nature, love, patriotism and affection along with contemplation towards materialism in his poems. From the romanticism of western literature to the traditions of eastern literature, Roka has in-depth study of both the extremes. Therefore his intellectual standing gives a sense of appropriate amalgamation of the aspects of beauty from both sides. He was a staunch protestor of all the evil practices and superstition lurking under the guise of traditions. In this sense he was a rebellious poet. His rebellion isn't just limited to his words, rather they echoed in every aspect of his lifestyle. However, it is not brash but is rather very civil. His courteous personality was a blend of sensible awareness and eternal feelings that has been the cornerstone in his poetry and lifestyle.

Bhimdarshan left Punjab, the land where he enjoyed his youthful days, and came to Nepal without any second thoughts.

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Then he always sang praises for his motherland in words and work:

When I see you,  
I feel like running lifelong  
Along your own banks.

But to hold onto his song's melody, one needs to be as courteous as he; to understand the beauty in his songs one needs to be as compassionate and welcoming.

Besides his poetic skills, he was equally competent in translation. In collaboration with Devkota he had translated several representative Nepali poems in the special issues of *Indreni*. He was felicitated by Siddharatha Vanasthali School in 1985 for his contribution in the field of translation. Kanya Mandir School also felicitated Roka on the occasion of its golden jubilee celebration, for his significant contribution towards female education.

Similarly, in 1999 he was the recipient of Yugkabi Siddhicharan award for contributing significantly towards the development of Nepali poetry through his novel approach and style in portraying beauty and creative ideas. For his significant literary contribution he received the National Talent Award in 2000, letter of appreciation by the Literary Journalists' Federation and letters of appreciation by Saramsha Nepal and Himali Milankendra Pariwar.

After the publication of his anthology *Gham dubi tara na udaeko* ... some of the poems have been translated in English by American poet Maya Watson. Some of his poems have also been translated in Urdu and Russian.

Roka wasn't just the author to beautiful poems; he was as gracious as his poems and was a teacher of very high caliber. Because of his in-depth study of English literature, he had the ability to deeply analyze different works of literature like poems, stories, novels, plays, and had beautiful skill in



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translating the analysis in simple and comprehensible language. His presentations used to be pleasing and melodic with a spellbinding style. His hypnotizing voice touched the crevices and corners of the student's hearts and minds. He kept playing like his melodic poems in their affectionate presence and cherished his bond with them. He had created a different soothing world inside the school's premise, within the classroom and outside. He was content in this world, miles away from money, appeasement, punishment and discrimination. Time and again he had received financial rewards for his selfless efforts in the teaching profession. But such rewards had become normal for him. He was a living actor amidst his students; his craftsmanship was as untainted as his life. His unforgettable poetic personality as a teacher won't ever be erased from his students' memory.

In the year 1973 he was first struck by high blood pressure. Earlier, in 1970, he had fainted all of a sudden and was rushed to the Teaching Hospital. During the treatment he lost his voice. His tongue loosened up and became inactive. There was no improvement even after months of 'speech therapy'. So doctors concluded that the brain had affected it and there was hardly a possibility of his voice being heard again. He resorted to sign language to express his emotions. He wrote down things when his signs failed to get across. But when illness gripped him he was unable to write either.

Roka, who lost his voice and creative yearnings at the same time, needed help to walk as well. Right side of his body felt feeble and made it very difficult for him to chew food. Once a person who had set an incomparable example of self-reliance by delving deep into sensitive humanitarian emotions, it was surely hard for him to live with so much agony and dependence at this stage of life. The year the tragedy struck him was the most painful. His eyes welled up when he wasn't able to utter a single word to the visitors at his home. Gradually he became used to these discomforts, and his well-wishers who visited him learned to become the mute audience.

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We Nepalis have been reduced to frail shadows of those entangled in the web of power play. Amidst the fall and rise in power we have also failed to bring ashore the hurricane. We couldn't even lend our hand to the poet who immersed himself in intense love for Nepal. When his boat was standing still on the peaceful lake water, we didn't dare lift the wave that took over his boat. These lines uttered by the poet in a totally different context, now prick us like burning needles:

If you gamble all with me  
I will surrender all to you.

(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

But poet Roka's horizons weren't constricted. Roka as person and his greatness can be best exemplified through his poems:

Circumference of the earth, border of your thought  
Rising, silent growing thin  
Thinner than gesture  
Lighter than sweet summons  
Silk brushed our silk  
Touching me  
Shapes of sky.

(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

Roka, who spent half of the century serving the education sector, is the Kohinoor in the world of Nepali poems. He was a very simple person. There wasn't a single soul who remained untouched by his genuine smile, gentle words and affectionate behavior. However, it wasn't easy to take his interview. "What have I done that you want to interview me?" he'd question to every interviewer. He spoke very less of himself and his literary life. He had never harbored dreams of publishing his poems in a book. Without any motive or greed he had let go himself and his poems, affectionately searching for the unblemished emotions within children's heart. This was his religion and his duty. He had no ego and never wanted to be advertised.

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Probing deep into his life makes it clear that he was a rare personality. In today's commercial world, which is under the guise of so many masks, where materialism rules and greed is piled in every corner, there are very few people like Bhimdarshan. Bhimdarshan as a poet stands tall; rises above the verses of beautiful poems and is more melodious than the music of soothing songs. From the surrounding areas, forest and hills, easy and twisted routes and everyday sighs he makes it in to our hearts like a soulful melody. He doesn't have an ounce of contradiction of pacifying words and harsh behavior which has become like a fashion in contemporary art, literature and culture. Despite being extraordinarily deep and talented poet, he seems as normal and average as anyone:

In the thousands and thousands  
 if you can't pick out my voice  
 if you can't recognize it  
 I'll be happy, I'll know that it has merged completely  
 that that's no wrong, that there isn't far to go  
 that I can reach this destination  
 that I have become ripe, ready to fall

(Trans. Watson, *Nepalikavita.com*)

[Translated by Bhrikuti Rai]

**Editorial Note:**

Though the present article does not provide any information regarding the demise of poet Bhimdarshan Roka it is to note that he died on April 7, 2003 (Chaitra 24, 2059 B.S.).

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