

Literature, Art, and Culture in New Nepal

[From *The Worker*, #11, July 2007.]

— Com. Kiran

Nepal is still in a semi-feudal and semi-colonial condition. Nepalese people have been victimized economically, politically and culturally by feudal, imperialist and expansionist oppression. In Nepal, the oppressions based on nationality, regional, gender, class and caste system still exist. Still the old type of economic, political, social relations continues to exist in Nepal. The New Nepal ostensibly seems to be close at hand while considering various significant achievements as a result of the great People's War waged by C P N (Maoist), historical Second Mass Movement based on the twelve point agreement that continued up to the interim constitution reached among the eight parties. Nevertheless, it is not yet ensured. Now the country is in a state of transition. The old is not yet destroyed and the new has not yet been in place.

The New Nepal can [be] born after making revolution and by breaking the relation with the old social relation and it is in the process. The New Nepal is related to the establishment of local autonomy including the right of self determination along with the assurance of full fledged democracy and federal democratic republic by abolishing the monarchy, caste-system, patriarchal system including the nationality and regional oppression. It is essential for the New Nepal economically to abolish the bureaucratic capitalism, initiation of revolutionary land reform and resolution of the basic problems of livelihood. The New Nepal will [be] born being based on the new relation of equality and mutual interest in the new treatise and agreements by abolishing all interferences of the foreign reactionaries and abrogation of all unequal treaties. Comprehensively, the New Nepal is nothing but the new People's Republic of Nepal based on democracy, national sovereignty and people's livelihood. Economically, politically and culturally new Nepal can be established only after the abolition of the old and the establishment of the new. New Nepal of this type can be established on the basis of new idea and theory not that of the old ones. The new idea and theory is nothing but Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and Prachanda path. In a real sense the New Nepal can be built along with the masses fighting against feudalism, imperialism and expansionism under the leadership of the proletariat.

According to this concept of New Nepal, it is self evident that the feature of literature, art and culture should also be new. In this regard, it is necessary to talk about the culture before we discuss about the literature and art.

In Nepal there is struggle going on in between two types of cultures – the retrogressive and the democratic cultures. The retrogressive culture is the mixture of the culture of feudalism, expansionism and imperialism. The retrogressive culture is based on the idealistic and mysterious concept of religious concept, traditionalism, conservatism, god, fortune, destiny, prebirth, rebirth, heaven-hell, etc, idealistic and mysterious concepts. This culture assumes king to be Lord Bishnu's incarnation and people to be his subjects feudal, feudal lords, money lenders and priests etc are to be respected and people should be their server. This is what the Hindu religious caste system and Manuist ethics preaches. This culture encourages casteism, untouchability and considers woman as helpless and slave of man. This culture has placed peoples' relation to disparity and discrimination. This culture has abducted the

human values and identity of oppressed castes, women, indigenous tribes, working class and other toiling masses. Their labor and creative ability has been shattered.

Many elements of expansionism have been mixed into it and many obstacles have been created in the national dignity. Apart from that the influence of consumerist, anarchist and hegemonic culture is battering the Nepalese masses and big challenge has been posed against the national pride and indigenous culture. There is hegemony of feudalism and imperialism and is continuing in education sector. The development of democratic culture is taking place since long back against the regressive culture. This new type of culture has been created and developed in the midst of the struggle of the people of Nepal for the production and many forms of struggles and synthesis of the new values and concepts developed through the socialist, democratic and national liberation movement waged by the people of the world and the proletariat and many scientific values and concepts and also through the mass movement and the great people's war waged by the people of Nepal.

The basic concepts of the new culture are as follows:

To abolish the feudal moral values including the religious oppression and castism Manuist ethics, concepts of rebirth. To establish secularism and religious freedom.

To stop the infiltration of imperialist and expansionist culture. To oppose the pollution of imperialist culture and oppose the globalization.

To liberate the traditional concepts in relation to birth, marriage and death and organize in a new way.

The outdated festivals be renewed and movement, bravery and martyrs' days be celebrated as new festivals.

The cultural heritage of historical, archeological and artistic importance and monuments be preserved.

Hatred be spread against the enemy of people and nation.

Relation based on Mutual friendship, respect, cooperation, and love be developed among people of all caste, ethnicity, sex, region and class.

New culture be developed based on democracy, patriotism and scientific values.

Democratic educational system be established against the old educational one.

Labor be respected, labor be made artistic and the environment be prepared for flourishing the creative potential of the labors without any obstacle.

Solving the existing class conflict and contradiction life be made more cooperative, beautiful and exultant as far as possible.

While talking about New Culture, it is necessary to criticize nihilism and status-quoism. Nihilism is against even the whole historical or positive values and beliefs. It is necessary to oppose even positive nihilism which negates positive values. So we should fight also against status-quoism in order to construct new culture. The struggle against old culture and construction of new culture is closely related with the question of ideological struggle and for this protracted process will be required. In new Nepal the literature and art is certainly to be influenced by new concept regarding economy, politics and culture. In this respect it is

necessary to discard the influence and hegemony of aristocratism, bourgeois modernism and post modernism based on feudal concept. It is necessary to establish the progressive and democratic concept in the field of literature and culture. The basic points to be noted are as follows.

To discard the aristocratism based on eulogist, lavishness and academic inertia which put the kings-monarchs, feudal, priests etc. at the centre and treat the masses as subjects.

To discard foreign imported anarchist, mystical, nihilist, deformist and negativist and all the anti-people, anti-national and unscientific arts and culture.

To accept all the languages of Nepal as the national languages and provide all opportunities to them for their full fledged development.

Guarantee the right to speak. To implement the policy of let all the flowers blossom and carry on the ideological struggle.

To democratize all the institutions and academics related to the publication and propaganda of art and culture. To establish various academic institutions to preserve, develop and create all the languages, cultures and arts.

To promote democracy, patriotism and class consciousness and create people's enthusiasm in it.

To enhance and protect the peoples art and people's music.

To establish people as the creator of history in the field of literature and art.

To support firmly all the movements, class struggles and people's war waged by the masses for the liberation against domestic and foreign oppression and to revere the sacrifice, heroism and renunciation of the masses, liberation fighters and leaders and cadres of the movements.

To establish the people's writers and artists and create conducive atmosphere for the creation of art and culture. To discard the existing trends of professorism, academicianism and eulogism in the field of literature and culture.

Our aim is to develop and enrich the literature and art in the light of Marxist aesthetics and socialist reality. It is essential to pay attention accordingly on items committed with aims, artistic reflection of reality, creation of representative items, unity between the content and form. This type of literature and art is playing and will play important role in refining cultural, intellectual and conceptual things and creates happiness in ideals, labor, collectivity, class consciousness and assumes the life in beautiful way and changing the life according to that concept. In the context of New Nepal, many of the points mentioned above in relation to literature, art and culture have also been implemented.

In Nepal in the light of Marxist aesthetic thinking and socialist reality, new culture, art and culture is being constructed right away since 1950. It is obvious that in the course of the great people's war in great part of the country including the rural area new people's power had been established and it had played very significant role to develop and establish new literature, art and culture on the basis of new idea, feeling and rich themes. Comprehensively and concisely the situation of literature, art and culture is far better than before. However, there is hegemony of the old and status-quoists in the state; it has hegemony in the field of literature, art and culture.

New Nepal is in the tongue of almost every Nepali in Nepal. Objectively, the concept of New Nepal should be expressed in a real essence and content not in the empty word and form. Until the proletariat and masses replace the leadership of the feudal, bureaucrat and comprador capitalist in the state power, whatever may be proclaimed in the word as New Nepal, in content it is nothing but the same old Nepal. If New Nepal has to be established in the real sense there should be revolution in the old social relation and it is essential to establish new social relation.

February 20, 2007

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.

— Marx and Engels (German Ideology)