

The Cultural Policy of the Government

The administration and management of culture and cultural affairs are divided into a number of discrete and separate sets of functions within the government ministries, departments, and the autonomous/semi-autonomous bodies, which then carry them out. Five ministries in the government are involved in the management of culture and environment, not counting the Tourism Ministry. They are, the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Social Welfare (the management of archaeology, museums, archives, the Cultural Undertaking Centre, Universities, Academies for Arts and Sciences, the Fine Arts Centre and the Lumbini Development Trust), the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (hotels, handicrafts, and carpet production), the Ministry of Physical Planning and Development (urban planning, housing construction, and preservation of the urban cultural environment), the Ministry of Land Reform (the office of the *Guthi Sansthan*, the custodian of the country's religious and cultural trust lands), and, finally, the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (which looks after the work of environmental and natural heritage protection). All this makes the cultural responsibility of the government extremely diffuse and scattered. This segmentary approach, to some extent, becomes unavoidable. There should, however, be an attempt to bring them all in line and within the ambits of a national cultural policy. This is where the problem actually is. There is, unfortunately, nothing like an overall cultural policy beyond the "say-good" and "seem-good" intentions of the government. From the above, it becomes clear that the aspect of culture that becomes most linked to tourism falls within the purview of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation. All that one finds treated under cultural heritage falls in the domain of archaeology, museums, arts, restoration of monuments, music, dance, and painting. In like manner, the natural heritage part relates to land and

forests mainly. The cultural policy relating to some of the segments above involves the display, preservation, and restoration work that the Department of Archaeology of HMG/N is supposed to conduct or coordinate. There is an Act-- the Ancient Monuments' Protection Act of 1956--which is supposed to bring all notable specimens or sites of cultural heritage under the government's protection. But only a few of the most prominent specimens are restored. This plight faced by the cultural heritage in Nepal does not lend much credence to what is being done in the context of tourism promotion. The few monuments that are more regularly looked after mostly have foreign donors who are looking after them (Amatya 1983a: 26-37).