



## Narayan Shrestha: our self-made cultural adviser

Narayan is a self-made Kathmandu businessman who left his poor village with nothing as a 16-year-old in 1985 to try to make a life for himself.

As someone who was fortunate enough to have a way of learning about the art that is now the basis of his business, Narayan decided in 2007 to help children who would have not even that break.

Today, he is a busy volunteer and committee member for Dharmik Australia. He helps us navigate the Nepali way of life as our cultural advisor and he has donated the use of an office near his Thangka art shop in the Nepalese capital.

“His value to our children is indicated by his negotiation of a reduced rate to take all the children from the Sai children’s home (a Dharmik project – see Projects) for their very first trip to the dentist”, said Dharmik co-founder Mark.

Mark and Mary-Louise met Narayan in 2007 when he moved in to the house next door to where they were staying in Kathmandu. “It was a general strike day and Narayan was visiting the Sai children's home nearby, as were we. All three of us were so moved by the bad state of the accommodation and poverty of the home’s resources that we three made an agreement to help the children in that home to have a better life. It was the beginning of our Dharmik charity.”

Life in Narayan’s village in the Kavre District, about 55km east of Kathmandu, was very difficult throughout his childhood. When aged 16 and without completing secondary schooling he came to Kathmandu seeking work, he found a relative who had a business selling the Himalayan Buddhist Thangka painting.

Narayan spent the next few years working and learning about the business and eventually set up his own Thangka shop in the capital’s main tourist area. During this time Narayan met an American professor from Montana. They became good friends and the professor helped Narayan establish an export market to America and also invited him to go to America to establish the business.



Narayan and Kubita – Kathmandu April 2008

By the time he was about 20 he also had started a real estate business, had fallen in love at first sight with Kubita, the young woman who became his wife, and soon after started to build a house.

This energetic young man by this time had met some well known Lamas from Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong who liked the art and workmanship that he was providing and his primary business took off. Since then, Narayan has made more than 35 trips to Singapore and has been to Taiwan, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Thailand.

The real estate business prospered during the first 10 years as values increased steeply. By 2000 Narayan had built the 100 bed Hotel Tradition in the tourist area, Thamel, in Kathmandu.

When you visit Nepal, don't miss going to the Lucky Thangka shop to meet Narayan. As a volunteer or supporter you are sure to get on well.



Narayan in the old Naya Bazaar office