

# **Banira Giri**

**(A Woman-Icon in the World of Nepali Literature)**



# Banira Giri

(Biography)

**Narendra Raj Prasai**

Translated by

**Durga Banwasi**

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A Biography of Dr. Banira Giri  
(A Woman-Icon in the World of Nepali Literature)  
by Narendra Raj Prasai, Translated by Durga Banwasi

*People who dream and pay attention to express their dreams beautifully are the people who understand life. They pay attention to fulfill their duties and make hard efforts to get to their dreams inspiring others as well.*

*It's my great pleasure that Mr. Narendra Raj Prasai, one of the founders of the Trimurti Niketan (Academy) and Nai Prakashsn (Academy) is the author of the book 'Banira Giri' that contains the autograph of Mrs. Indira Prasai, the chairperson of the Trimurti Niketan & Nai Prakashsn as well that has added more delight to my happiness.*

*In this book, author Narendra has portrayed the real picture of me and my families. I have no words to express my heartily gratitude to my brother Narendra. Narendra addresses me thrice 'meri didee, meri didee, meri didee' (my sister, my sister, my sister). Likewise I address him as 'mero bhai, mero bhai, mero bhai' (my brother, my brother, my brother).*

**• Dr. Banira Giri**

## **Publisher's note**

Nai Prakashan, ever since its establishment on January 29, 1996, is meditating in the world of Nepali Language – concentrating on the ideal of ‘universal brotherhood’. Founded with the aim of uplifting ‘Nepali Literature’, it has always honored norms and values of tradition and culture, and will always continue to do so. Due recognition of talents in the country and abroad is one of the main objectives of this literary organization.

Nai Prakashan has been engaged in identifying and appreciating talents in the field of Nepali art and culture, language and literature, social services, science and technology, school of thoughts, games and sports, and alike. It is also engaged in conducting various cultural programs from time to time as well as in the publication of different series of books.

Nai Prakashan, ever adhering to pure Nepali values, norms and assumptions, is well on course to give exposure to every talent’s constructive skills in a nice and pleasant manner. Indeed, after being born and expecting a cherishing life, it is solemn duty of each and everyone to dedicate oneself in singing in praise of one’s motherland. In this context, this organization is proudly inspired by the belief that service in the literary field is also an important aspect of service to the whole nation.

Mr. Narendra Raj Prasai, the founder and the member-secretary of the Trimurti Academy has very good organizational skills as well as has equal involvement in literary creations. Among

his creative works, Mr. Prasai has proficiency in biography writing. Till date, twenty five books in biography and more than 500 pieces of articles in biography by Mr. Prasai are published. In the same process, here, in the hands of readers is the biography of Banira Giri.

Banira Giri is a prominent name among Nepali female literati who has her own top space in Nepali literature especially in poetry, novels and essays. She has the credit of being the first Nepali lady having the PHD in Nepali literature. Likewise she was the second person and the first female participant from Nepal representing the 'Young Afro-Asian Writers' Conference in Russia (the then USSR).

As an honor to her incredible works in the Nepali literature and as a motivation to all Nepali female writers in Nepal and abroad, the 'World Women's Nepali Literary Conference' has decided to confer on her the title of 'A Woman-Icon in the World of Nepali Literature.'

We hope this book helps the readers to know about Banira Giri and her contributions towards Nepali literature.

The original of this book authored by Narendra Raj Prasai in Nepali was published by Trimurti Niketan in 2013. As established translator Durga Banwasi has painstakingly carried out the translation work, we, on behalf of Nai Prakashan and also on behalf of myself, thank her for this valuable deed.

Nai Prakashan values this book on Banira Giri, a woman icon in Nepali literature, by Narendra Raj Prasai as a glorious deed and considers the intensive responsibility of publishing it a golden opportunity.

• **Nai Prakashan**

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## **Dr. Banira Giri, Another Name For Self-Pride**

Banira Giri is a woman icon of Nepali literature. She is a never bending head and the whole existence representing women populace that Nepali literature has to await long to get another Banira. She is a strong pillar of Nepali literature and an ideal character for all Nepali female literati around the globe.

Though Banira's father had left his birth place and went to India because of the intolerable harshness of his step mother and spent rest of his lifetime there, Banira returned to her motherland and sparkled as a bright star in the sky of Nepali literature.

Banira lived her personal; family as well as specific life in Nepal devoted her in the service of Nepali literature by heart, mind and deeds and stood at front among other temporary female literati.

Banira didn't involve herself in any party, sect or group and worked restlessly to develop Nepali literature and make it known to the world. A number of jealous so called nationalists had blamed her of being Indian and tried their best to enforce her return back to India. Banira didn't care and continued with her efforts. She established her separate and special place in Nepali literature and finally was awarded with the greatest honor of international woman icon in Nepali literature. Neither she was afraid nor did she bend her head in front of such obstacles. Banira

had heard and seen the bitter behaviors on Kavi Shiromani, BalkrishnaSama and the great poet Devkota that had made her aware herself from such people. They were the people very polite and liberal in the front and the worst back biters as well. Banira didn't care and never enroll herself in pleasing the rulers for her success. Her capabilities and talents were strong enough to take her to the peak of success.

Banira alone climbed the hills of Nepali literature without hesitation. Her aptitudes had developed self confidence in her. She is extra ordinary among all. She is sharp, solid and bold in nature. She is a lioness. The barking dogs and cunning foxes never succeeded in their game. Finally, they realized it and accepted the truth.

Banira is equally soft hearted too. She doesn't want to participate in unnecessary and meaningless debates and discussion. Realism depicts in her writings. She writes the facts that make her writing of high value. She is the flow of literature and the queen bee for female literati; she has blossomed spreading the fragrance of literature in world context.

Most people often have dissimilar views and arguments with Banira. A true author is full of self-esteem and honor. They can't bow unnecessarily. I am one of the witnesses that have seen Banira standing for truth and mostly alone. I had heard her name and know her since 1973. I had got close to her because of my in-law Indreni Prasai (wife of my nephew). When I knew more about her, I felt more respect and affection towards her. Indreni and Banira taught in Padmakanya Campus those days. I had met Banira at Indreni's abode at the special moment of Indreni's birth day in Ghattekulo. Banira had come there along with her two children. I had talked to her for the first time. Banira was a known name in Nepali literature and I used to write lyrics of song and poems only. Slowly we became close.

In the year 1983, I had written a letter to Banira didee (sister) but I didn't get response. I often wrote her but she didn't response. Poet Ishwor Balabh had also tried to narrow the distance between us but he also couldn't get noticeable success, though I had felt some changes in her behaviors regarding me. In the year 1993, poet Vairagi Kanhila had stated among a mass of authors and poets that Banira was only the tigress in the jungle of literature.

After the establishment of Trimurti Niketan (Academy) with the restless efforts of Indira Prasai, Ghata Raj Bhattarai and me along with some other members, we had held the first conference of Nepali literature at international level. After its successful completion, Indira Prasai placed another proposal of organizing a literary conference of Nepali women around the globe. As a result, World women Nepali literature conference was formed under the chairmanship of Prof. Dr. Gargi Sharma. The member secretary of Trimurti Academy was the secretary to that conference as well. In this way, I had to handle the responsibility as a secretary of the conference.

Brother Ishwor Ballabh and I had similarities in thoughts, especially about Nepali literature. We many often, held literary and intellectual discussions. He suggested me among all contemporary female authors and poets of Nepali literature, Banira had no comparison. Then, I started looking for several Baniras and their performances in Nepali literature from all fourteen zones of Nepal and many countries in the world. A number of people suggested the name of Banira as the topper most living female icon of Nepali literature. Other contemporary respected female names were Prema Shah, Maya Thakuri, Kundan Sharma, Lakkhi Devi Sundas, Bhuwan Dhungana, Dr. Benju Sharma, and Toya Gurung and so on. Banira and other seven names were nominated for the honor. As a result of the survey conducted widely, Banira's name came at first. Finally a

meeting held on Oct. 6. 2012 reached the conclusion to adorn Banira with the title of World Woman Icon in Nepali Literature.

Nepali literature is also not away from dirty politics in which several Baniras are neglected. The political crane pulls the literati with short height and keeps them at the top but they can't remain there for a long. In the past many such talents were suppressed but they left some mark in the history because of their noble deeds. History in fact doesn't record the deeds of those people who want to be highlighted riding on the back of others. People write their names in history with their remarkable deeds and become immortal. Time appreciates them and erects their statues. Kavi Shiromani Lekhnath Poudyal, Great poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Prem Rajeshwori, Parijat, Goma and so many other names have proved it. In the same line, Banira's name has depicted with golden letters.

Banira is an inspiration to woman writers and poets in Nepal and abroad. She is a pillar, she is a lamp. According to Prof. Dr. Gargi Sharma, "In this globe, Banira is a peak of female literature at present context." In the same way Prof. Dr. Usha Thakur praises Banira- "Banira is another name for women literature in the world." She is the pride of female literati in Nepali literature. "Banira is a golden spire of Nepali literature in the world", Geeta Khatri, the central chairperson of International Nepali Literary Society says.

I was inspired to write Banira's biography as I knew her better than before. In the book titled 'Narichuli' (women at peak), I had written a short introduction of Banira but that couldn't satisfy me. I wanted to write a solo book on her. Poet Ishwor Ballabh time to time praised her that had encouraged me to inscribe her in a detailed biography. Indira too was reminding me very often but I was unable to manage sufficient time from my demanding schedule. Once, Usha didee (poet Usha Sherchan) had told me

that Banira was a walnut, hard from outside and sweet inside." I felt Usha didee and Indira had also read Banira didee properly.

After Banira was honored with the title of world woman icon in Nepali literature, Indira reminded me that a biography regarding Banira is a must. We should try our best to kill the dirty germs in literature by honoring such a precious gem as Banira. Then, I managed my time and we continued visiting Banira's abode for some months. Finally, I was capable of publishing her biography.

I hope this book will pacify so many inquiries and enthusiasm about Banira Giri. Mr. Shankar Giri (Banira's husband) has substantially supported us in the writing and publication of Banira. We can't forget the intimate hospitality of Bhim Bahadur Bote at Banira didee's abode.

Banira Giri itself is an inspiring name of the warrior for truth and self-dignity. She devoted her life to establish the existence of women through her powerful literary creations. In spite of several obstacles and threats Banira continued with her battle. Her ever bending head has the equivalent height to Mt. Everest. Banira in fact is a top peak among female literati in Nepali literature. As a whole, Banira is a woman celeb or personage in world Nepali literature.

• **Narendra Raj Prasai**

## Translator's Note

It's my great pleasure to handle the responsibility as a translator to the book titled 'Banira', a biography of Dr. Banira Giri, an established and emotive name among women literati in Nepali literature. Mr. Narendra Raj Prasai as a primary writer has authored the book and I've translated it in English to ease the readers from other languages.

Translation itself is a tough and challenging task. In most of the cases, only the words and sentences are translated and the soul dies. The readers can't entertain the same smell and taste as of the primary writing. Therefore, it's equally important not to kill the spirit of the creation in translation. In this book I've tried my best to laugh and cry along with the flow of writing. Narendra Raj Prasai is a promising name especially in biography writing in Nepali literature. Prasai's 'Banira Giri' pulls and swings the readers with the tides and waves.

'Banira' was published in the year 2011 and the second edition was published in 1912 from Trimurti Niketan (Academy) established with endless efforts of Nai couple (Narendra and Indira) along with some intellectuals. Mrs. Prasai is the founder chairperson and Mr. Prasai is the founding secretary of Trimurti as well as Nai Academy, the sister organizations.

Except in some cases, the beginning is very ordinary in the life of almost all people. I remember those days I was in search of works that could satisfy me. I was tired of being a teacher in

private schools and my inner core was looking for something especial and fit for me. I had lost my way in the middle. I'm thankful to Mr. Prawin Sapkota for his precious suggestions to decide the further path of my life. Prawin was my student in Mahananda Shiksha Sadan and he became my teacher at that point of life from where my life took a turn though it was not easy. I determined to dedicate my lifetime in writing, editing and translation.

It was not cool to live in Kathmandu without a permanent job but I determined. Even some of my family members, relatives and well-wishers had suggested me either to work in some school or college or go back home. It was really a suffocating moment but I didn't lose hope. I continued with some irregular jobs as an editor in some papers and magazines. There are some unforgettable names such as Kamala Oli Thapa, Bikas Lama, Anil Poudyal, Achyut Ghimire and so on who had handed me some responsibilities as an editor and proof reader. In the field of translation, 'Jhola' by Krishna Dharabasi was my first work, yet to be published. I had translated some of stories and poems written by myself but they were closed in my diary. Mr. Vinay Kumar Sharma offered a novel title Buddha by SP Asa. It was my first step towards professional translation. My professional journey as a translator took pace after I met with the honorable Nai couple. At first meeting, I had to return empty hand with warm words only. After few days I got an email and a phone call from Nai couple. I translated the piece sent in email. Anukritika [the youngest daughter to Nai couple preparing for her PHD those days] had gone through it and appreciated the way of my writing. Slowly, Nai couple gave me some more works and showed my translation to some other intellects. Then, I opened an account in the literary bank of Nai. Recently, a collection of science fiction 'Mero Katha Nalekhidinu' written by Indira Prasai and translated by me with the title 'Don't inscribe my story please'

has been published by Educreation Publication' in India that has proved Mrs. Prasai's capabilities as a story writer as well as my possibilities in translation. Some other books by Nai and other writers are in hand.

I'm grateful to honorable Nai couple whose trust and blessings have revealed the translator within Durga Banwasi, a nervous and reserved nature lady. I'm grateful to all the unforgettable names mentioned above. I'm grateful to several well-wishers who precise and motivate me from their heart.

Finally, in the translation of Banira, I've got liberal support, guidance and suggestion from honorable Nai couple, loving sister Anukritika and adorable Shankar Giri sir. I'm appreciative to all these names along with our valued readers.

• **Durga Banwasi**



# **Banira Giri**

## Parental of Banira

Banira's grandfather Mr. Dev Raj Giri had been residing at Chaunrikattike in Kabhrepalanchowk that is situated to the eastern number 1 in Nepal. After matrimony with Dev Kala, they lived there permanently being involved in agricultural activities. It was among one of the back warded areas of Nepal those days. In spite of their hard efforts, their economic condition was not satisfactory. However the couple tried their best to comfort their family.

Among the five sons Giri couple had, Shree Ram and Indra Raj had a very close bond of brotherhood. Whatever the elder brother Shree Ram told, Indra Raj blindly agreed and followed his footsteps without thinking twice.

Unfortunately, Dev Kala met an untimely demise. The whole Giri house had sunk in vast darkness of misery. Dev Raj's sons were not capable of fulfilling all the responsibilities and the household. It was very suffocating for Dev Raj to make a balance in his work and kitchen duties. The situation enforced him for remarriage. His sons, relatives and the villagers too suggested him for it. As a result, he married Savitri Devi, a lady of the same village many years junior to him.

Savitri Devi didn't like her step-sons. Her face was always gloomy and aggressive. She scolded her step-sons even without a reason. Sometimes, they had to sleep with empty stomachs.

Most of the time, she used to complained Dev Raj against his sons. There was no single day; she had not fought with Shree Ram and Indra Raj. She even beat them harshly. It seemed that there was no relation of peace and harmony in Dev Raj's family.

## **Giri Brothers Entering India**

After the re-marriage of their father, the Giri family had to face a very hard time. There was quarrelling each day. Indra Raj Giri was more sensitive. He talked to his elder brother Shree Ram Giri and decided to leave home. Going to Darjeeling in India was only an option they had in their mind like other villagers. So, they left home at midnight.

12 years old Indra Raj had cried a lot missing his father. His brother Shree Ram had consoled each time he had yelled. Facing some troubles they had reached Kharsang after 60 days. They were so tired that they couldn't even move. In a house of an Indian, they asked for shelter that night. It was almost late evening. The owner of the house was a merchant belonging to the Marwari community of India. He didn't offer the shelter only, also appointed them as domestic servants to his family.

With their dedication and honesty, they had won the heart of their boss. As a result he allowed them to work in his shop as well. Both of the brothers performed their work of selling clothes smartly.

After spending 5 years in that house, they became successful, winning the faith of their boss. The merchant sent them to villages with clothes from which they got commission as well.

After completing household responsibilities, the Giri brothers used to visit several villages selling clothes. Because of

their hard labor and honest efforts, their boss had satisfactory income and profit. So, in addition to the commission, they were given salary too. The Giri brothers had some progress to their life standard as well. However, they never misused the trust of their boss on them. They never intended deceiving him. They used to visit far off villages of India and Nepal selling clothes and giving details honestly. As a result, the merchant was much pleased with their devotion and enthusiasm. So, he thought of doing something better for them. One day he called them and said- "Now, you can start your own business. I'll help you. Take the clothes from me and after selling pay my credit back."

They were so glad and thankful to their boss. Then they had started selling clothes in temporary markets too. From Kharsang they used to visit Darjeeling and in nearby villages of Ilam in Nepal. Slowly, they earned name and fame as merchants. More than Shree Ram, Indra Raj liked to talk and convince people. He had beautiful handwriting that he had learnt from the Ramayana (A holy epic of Hindus).

## **Matrimony of Banira's Parents**

Banira's father Indra Raj Giri was 24 when he was married to Januka Devi, a girl of 14 years of age. She was the daughter of Krishna Bahadur Sutar Karki and Naina Kala Karki from Ilam, Nepal. After marriage, Indra Raj had made remarkable progress in his business.

Januka Devi was a beautiful and smart girl. She talked polite and was practical too. She was a skilled and talented lady with adequate knowledge of life and nature.

There is an interesting fact about their marriage. At the age of 20, Indra Raj had gained some name and fame as an expert merchant. People from different villages knew and respected him. He used to lend money to the people in need. Krishna Bahadur was one of his debtors who often borrowed money from him and paid back on time. In this process, he had owed some money and was unable paying back due to some inappropriate situation. As a result, he begged some more time for it.

Giri often visited Karki's abode to get the money back. Most of the time, he was unable to meet him at his home. Once, he had told Karki's daughter- "Listen Nani [word used for a girl]! Your dad has played hide and seek many often. Now, it's enough! Tell him either to pay my money back or surrender."

Januka felt a bit sad but fulfilled all the formalities with him as a guest to their family. Along with good hospitality, she told

him- "You are right! All need to be honest and true. My father is also an honest man. He often worries about your money. This morning too, he has gone to the next village to manage money for the debt. He has deceived no one till this date. Be sure, he'll pay your money soon."

Indra Raj had some feelings for her. After that conversation, he became happy. From that day, he regularly visited Karki's home pretending to meet him up. Being unable to pay his money back, Karki felt ashamed and walked away from home. He had no more option to convince Giri.

Giri continued visiting Karki's abode and Januka tried her best to please him with her polite hospitality and sweet and soft voice.

Giri thought of making her his life partner. So, he decided to talk to Karki regarding this matter. He decided to stay at Karki's abode as Karki was unavailable during the day time. Karki came late at night. Seeing Giri waiting for him, he felt much nervous. Then Giri consoled him- Don't worry Mr. Krishna Bahadur! I won't ask you my debt to be returned. I know you can't pay my money back."

Karki had replied in a soft tone- "I'll pay your money back at any cost. I don't have any legal bond till this date."

Then Giri had told- "You don't need to pay me back. I won't come again for this. In return you require fulfilling my demand. Now, we are no longer debtors and lenders."

Krishna Bahadur became a bit happy and looked at him curiously. He wanted to know about Giri's demand instead of the debt. Giri made him promise to fulfill his demand. Krishna Bahadur promised to accept and fulfill his wish. Then, Indra Raj Giri spoke- "Listen Mr. Karki! Your daughter is unmarried and

I'm looking for a practical and skillful girl as my bride. If you give me her hands, you never require paying my money and you'll be liberated from the sin of 'Brahmaswo' (Taking money or property without paying)."

Karki was overjoyed. He accepted Giri's proposal very happily. Then he told Giri- "I'm so happy Mr. Giri! I accept you as my son-in-law from this very moment."

Indra Raj Giri was so glad that he bent his head and saluted Karki.

After the wedding with Januka Devi, Giri had made remarkable progress. Laborious Giri and his devoted wife Januka were renowned and wealthy merchants in Kharsang. Giri had bought a beautiful house from a British lady. After selling her house to Giri, the lady had returned to her country. So, the Giri couple was famous because of the beautiful and expensive house too. Seeing the progress of his daughter and in-law, Krishna Bahadur was overjoyous.

Karki often visited his daughter's village situated near Balasan River in Kharsang between Nepal and India. Once, the flooded river swept him away. Januka Devi was badly hurt with that incident. Through the window pane, she used to glance over the river with sad eyes. Her children used to ask her about her sadness. She used to tell them about that incident with her filled eyes.

Indra Raj loved his wife lavishly. As his perfect life partner, he had got Januka Devi who had made all his dreams come true. Even the villagers wondered seeing their bond and affection to each other.

As time passed, Januka Devi's status in the society widened. She was an expert in discussion, debates and speaking



as well. Impressed with her intellect and social status, even the politicians visited her abode. Two female politicians of that time named Maya Devi Kshetry and Shani Khati often visited her and requested to join their political parties.

Januka Devi had a high sense of intellectuality. Maya Devi Kshetry was a capable lady with leadership skills and she wished Januka Devi to join them at any cost.

The then parliament members Maya Devi Kshetry and Shani Khati often visited the abode of JAI (Januka Devi and Indra Raj in combination) couple. They had been compelling Januka Devi to join politics however Indra Raj couldn't entertain it. He didn't say anything at their face but tried his best to discourage them not to enforce his wife to be involved in politics. While he failed convincing them, he had told them- "Hey ladies! It's your wish to involve in politics but don't enforce my wife joining you." They ignored his advice and continued coming and talking to Januka Devi about politics. Then Giri told in a harsh voice- "Why don't you listen to me ladies? Now, you don't need to come here. I never allow my wife to participate in political affairs. Do you understand?"

Januka Devi was a very beautiful lady and 10 years younger than him. It was the only reason he had disliked her involvement in politics. He never allowed her to go out alone.

Januka Devi loved music. She possessed an amazingly sweet voice. She used to recite and sing holy hymns every morning and evening. She used to recite holy verses in Sanskrit language as well.

She was expert in playing 'Murchunga' (a kind of music player that is helped with teeth and then sounded with the index finger). Once, it was a popular musical instrument in eastern Nepal.

Though Indra Raj Giri himself was a professional and experienced merchant, he used to take advice from his brother Shree Ram Giri. He always acted upon his guidance and advice. There was a sturdy bond of brotherhood in them. Shree Ram also loved his younger brother a lot. They lived in a joint family under the same roof and sharing the same kitchen. In fact, they were the example of brotherhood in true sense.

Shree Ram Giri had wedded with three ladies. His first wife died and he wedded another lady. She too, passed away and he had married for the third time. Unfortunately, his third wife too died. Then, he didn't marry again. He spent the rest of his life with his children and Indra Raj's family.

Shree Ram Giri had a son and a daughter named Paramananda and Dhana Maya respectively. Paramananda was the first electrical engineer in Darjeeling from Nepalese origin. He was also a famous personality there. Dhana Maya was merely a housewife as she was married at a tender age. Early marriage of daughters was common those days in society.

In Giri's family, the children addressed Shree Ram as Dad and Indra Raj as Uncle; hence, Indra Raj and Januka Devi were uncle and aunt to their own children too. All the children were given ranks according to their date of birth. So, other people as well as the children themselves were unaware about their actual parents till they sufficiently grew up.

Indra Raj and Januka Devi had four daughters and a son. Dhana Maya from Shree Ram Giri was known as the eldest daughter in the family and Paramananda was the eldest son. Indra Raj's son was known as the youngest son in the family. Likewise, Indra Raj's four daughters were given the ranks as the second, third, fourth and the youngest daughters. Banira was the youngest daughter in the Giri family.

## Family of Banira's Father

April 11, 1946

Indra Raj and Januka had four daughters and a son. Basanti Giri was their first child. She was born on April 19, 1935 in Darjeeling. Though she was the first child from them, she was known as the second daughter in Giri's family. Shree Ram's daughter Dhana Maya had got the rank as the eldest daughter in the family.

Basanti had taught her mother to read and write. Being literate, Januka Devi had started reciting the holy epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

Basanti was one of the four girls passing matriculation exams from St. Joseph Girls' High School at Kharsang in Darjeeling. Along with her, Sariyu Subba, Maharani and Snehlata were the girls who had the credit of passing matriculation for the first time.

Basanti had a love affair with an Indian militant named Khadga Bahadur Giri. As a result, they had married secretly without the consent of their families. Furiously, Indra had told- 'What the hell to that fellow? How dare he marry my daughter?'

Indra Raj had heard of their secret marriage but couldn't get them. He sent some people in their search and finally reached them. Bringing them home, he managed their formal wedding and sent them home.

Madhusudan was the eldest child of Basanti and Khadga Bahadur. He was sharp in studies and always got the first rank in

school and college. He was the first engineer to Indian army from Nepalese origin. He became popular among the Indians from Nepalese origin as well as in his working field.

Basanti's second son Dr. Manoj Giri is a renowned child specialist in Darjeeling. Their third son Mr. Mukunda Giri is an assistant Professor in the Sikkim University. The youngest son Mrinal Giri served parents staying at home. Banira had named the two as Mukunda and Mrinal.

Prithvi Raj Giri is the son of Indra Raj and Januka Devi. He had passed LLB from Calcutta University. He was born on June 23, 1938 in Darjeeling. He was a famous lawyer known for his honesty and dedication.

Prithvi Raj was married to Indira Giri, the daughter of Mr. Mitra Lal Giri. The Prithvi couple had two sons named Pranav and Prashanta respectively.

Sheela Giri was the second daughter to Indra Raj and Januka Devi. She was born in the year 1940 . She had passed SLC exams from St. Joseph School of Kharsang. She was married to Mr. Satish Chandra Giri from Dharan, Nepal. They had five children. They were gradually engineer Binod Giri, Binay Giri, Dr. Kamlesh Giri, Nayan Giri and daughter Rajju Giri. Binay Giri had gained name and fame in banking service in Nepal.

Indra Raj and Januka's third daughter was Saraswoti Giri. She had married after completing the education of college. She was married to an agricultural engineer Mr. Tej Prasad Giri from Khotang, Nepal. The couple had only a daughter named Tejasvi. She was a sharp minded girl like her name.

Indra Raj and Januka Devi had Satya Devi as their youngest daughter. Later, she was known as Banira.

## **Banira's Childhood**

Banira's name of birth was Satya Devi. She was born to the youngest daughter of the Giri couple. She was born at Kharsang in India. She was born on April 11, 1946.

Banira had weak health in her childhood. She was an obedient girl. She started her schooling at the age of four from the Scott Mission school of her village.

During her school days, Banira had a tattoo on her right arm like her friends. The tattoo reads BRG (Banira Rani Giri) that she had made at the age of near 10.

Banira had great interest in singing and dancing. Once, she participated in a dance program in school and won a prize. Next morning her brother asked her about it. She happily answered him that she had won the prize in the dance competition. Her brother gave a tight slap which made her away from singing and dancing.

While she was in grade three, she had participated in a drama too. She had played the role of Gaunthali in the story of Chame and Gaunthali.

Being the youngest child to Giri family, Banira was a pampered girl but was good in her studies. Their guardians motivated her towards reading and writing and kept her away from the households. She had only the duty of reading but she sometimes used to do some work at home. Whatever she did, all liked it as she used to do all works from the heart.

Banira was aware of self-dependence. She used to help her big father Shree Ram at the shop. Her art of attracting customers had impressed Shree Ram a lot.

Banira was a sentimental girl from her childhood. She was a nature lover as well. Till the age of 22, she used to look at the beauty of Mt. Kanchenjunga visible through her window pane. According to her Kanchenjunga was her mirror.

Shree Ram had told her several stories and taught the holy verses from the holy epics of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. From that very moment she had her interest in reading and creating literature.

Banira's mother was no more while Banira was only 7 years old. Then her father Indra Raj and big father Shree Ram used to carry her on their back wherever they went. They were satisfied with her study. They wished making her a doctor. Banira was preparing for the final examinations of I.Sc, her father passed away. Banira felt her life as the ship among the hurricanes. Somehow, she managed to pass the I.Sc exams.

After her father's demise, Banira felt hurt and broken within. She had to face some financial crisis as well. She didn't give up and continued with her struggle.

## **Banira's Education**

Banira had passed grade four from the Scott Mission School in Kharsang. Then, she was admitted in 5<sup>th</sup> grade at St. Joseph school and passed her matriculation from there. Almost, each year she stood first in the class and was awarded with the best student award too.

She used to participate in debate and other extra activities of the school as well as represented her school. In most of the activities she rarely got the second position. So, her teachers had given her the title name as 'Prathamaa' means the first.

Banira was popular in Darjeeling district because of her active participation in debate, poetry etc. She was popular because of her bold and crystal clear attitudes. She used to be involved in cultural programs of the school and acted in dramas as well. Her performance and creations were of high standard. She encouraged others in writing and published a wall magazine titled 'Mutu' (the heart). Seeing the talent of an 11 years old child, even the teachers wondered and praised her.

By the time Banira had passed her matriculation, her brother (cousin) had become an engineer in Calcutta, India. He called Banira to Calcutta and admitted her in ISc. in Siudi Bidhyasagar college. The college was in Kalyani village near Calcutta. Paramananda, Indra Raj and Shree Ram wished to make her a doctor.

During her study there, a program was held on the auspicious occasion of 100<sup>th</sup> birth ceremony of the great poet Rabindra Nath Tagore. She had recited a poem written by Rabindra Nath in Bengali language. With her sweet and simple reciting, she had impressed the great literary figures and a number of intellectual personalities there. Even the Bengali writer and poets had amazed a lot. She had won the first rank in the symposium that made her more demanding and popular.

During her stay at Calcutta, Banira was actively involved in literature in Nepali, English and Bengali languages. She had learned a lot about literature. Along with her studies, she had made notable progress in literature.

In the laboratory room, she had to operate frogs and other creatures that discouraged her continuing with her studies in biology. After completing ISc, she informed her family members not to continue her studies in science; rather she wished to study arts. Her big father Shree Ram strongly opposed her decision and warned her not to give any penny for her study in other faculty. Though she was a bit scared, she didn't change her decision.

After economic blockade from her family, it was suffocating for Banira to continue with her further studies. Then, she looked for a solution and started a job in St. Joseph school. Beside this, she operated a tuition class in the morning and evening. In the meantime, the epidemic disease of smallpox spread taking the lives of a number of children and adults. Then Shree Ram Giri hurriedly sent her to Calcutta.

After sometime Banira returned to Kharsang and began her usual routine. Studying and working, she completed her bachelors from Calcutta University.



## **Banira's Entry to Nepal and her Further Education**

After completing the bachelors' level of her studies, Banira wanted to study further but it seemed almost impossible. Luckily she was invited by poet Siddhicharan Shrestha to take part in the first poem symposium organized by Royal Nepal Academy.

Receiving a letter of invitation from the renowned poet Siddhicharan, Banira's happiness had no bound. She recited a poem titled 'Morality' and stood second. Poet Bhairav Aryal had won the first rank. Banira was awarded with some cash prize and medals by the then king Mahendra.

(According to Kanchan Pudasaini, Banira had won the first position in the symposium but being an Indian resident, she couldn't get the honor of being first. Poet Madhav Ghimire had suggested giving her the third prize but poet Siddhicharan had insisted to appreciate her talent at least with the second award.)

While Banira was preparing her travel to Kathmandu, Nepal, her big dad Shree Ram had told her that she might have the opportunity to meet King Mahendra. He had warned her to talk politely and be much formal with the King. He had suggested her not speak much.

Her dad's instructions had made her cautious enough to honor the King.

During the award function, King Mahendra himself had asked her when she had come and about her stay in Kathmandu as well. Banira was much delighted and had answered much politely- "Your Majesty! I came here just yesterday and I'm staying in Dillibazar with Ms. Pramila Giri." Then she had requested the King indirectly for her further studies. She had told- "Your Majesty! I've completed my bachelors. Unfortunately, there is no provision for Masters in Nepalese language in our place." The King had nodded his head but said nothing that made her a bit sad.

From the poem competition, Banira had got Nepalese currency of Rs. 500 as cash prize. Among that amount, she had bought 1 'tola' (weight of 11.66 grams) of gold coins. She bought a Russian camera and some clothes. She bought some gifts for her family members and returned Kharsang.

No sooner she had reached her home; she got a letter from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. The letter read that she was selected for the 'Mahendra Scholarship' to study Masters. In fact Mahendra Scholarship was initiated from that very year. She was very grateful to King Mahendra.

Banira came to Kathmandu and shared a rented flat of Pramila Giri. Pramila Giri is an artist. Though, Banira's sister-in-law is Pramila's own sister, Banira and Pramila were familiar to each other from the time of their stay in Calcutta. When Banira had been studying in ISc in Calcutta, Pramila was also a student at Shanti Niketan in Calcutta. They were very good friends.

Banira started her Masters in Tripureshwor. Those days, the administrative works of TU were held from Tripureshwor and the classes of Masters as well.

After joining MA, Banira called her third sister Saraswati to Kathmandu and made her entry to Radio Nepal. Banira herself

joined as a news editor. The then director of radio Nepal Mr. Prakash Man Singh had appointed her but Sushila Thapa had eased them reaching Mr. Singh. Saraswati worked there for three years and returned to Kharsang. Those days Banira had recorded some songs written by her. Though she had entered there as a news editor, she wrote songs and dramas as well.

Along with her part time job, she struggled hard in her studies. After two years she completed her Masters.

## **Banira's Teaching Profession**

After the completion of MA, Banira began searching for a suitable job. In the beginning, she couldn't get a job on a salary basis. So, she started working as a voluntary lecturer at Padmakanya Campus. She worked there for about 7 months. Then she was appointed in the Fine art campus in Bhotahity, Kathmandu as an impermanent lecturer. She was appointed by the famous painter and artist Mr. Kalidas Shrestha. She worked there till the last of Asar month, Mid July, 1973 starting from 1968. At that time, she had joined M Ed too. The amount from her salary and Rs 400 as the scholarship in M Ed comforted her a lot. Except spending in her studies and households, she began saving some of the amount in a bank. In the year 1973 she started her job as a permanent lecturer in TU. Again she joined Fine art campus in Bhotahity till 1974.

After her M. Ed, she was sent to Prithvi Narayan Campus in Pokhara. While she got the information letter, she refused in a clear voice. Ms. Chandra Kala Kiran was the then head of the Department of M. Ed. She told Chandra Kala that being a married lady, it was not appropriate for her working in Pokhara. Rather she was ready to pay the money spent in her scholarship. Chandra Kala was much impressed with her honesty and bold nature.

When Banira refused to go Pokhara, she was given her responsibility in Padmakanya Campus. She worked there as a

lecturer from 1974 to 1986. Then she got the promotion as an associate professor. On 2008, she retired.

Banira was encouraged for further studies and got ready for her PHD. For this, she preferred her ideal poet Gopal Prasad Rimal and his distinctness in poetry writing as the topic of her PHD. In the year 1985 she completed her PHD and won the title of being the first PHD holder lady in Nepalese literature.

Though, she couldn't meet Gopal Prasad. According to her she got no one helping her reach him. She had heard that Gopal Prasad was a poet of very hot nature and often attacked the visitors because of which she couldn't dare meet him up.

After the revolution of 1989, Tribhuvan University was divided among political groups. Due to the selfish intentions of political parties and their people in power, actual talents like Banira and some others couldn't get promotion. Rather, incapable people were appreciated. This attitude of prejudice had hurt Banira's self-esteem a lot.

Besides TU, other sectors had also the same effect of political trends. Even the Royal Nepal Academy was facing instability and dishonesty. People not suitable even to compare with Banira had promotion to higher ranks and as the academy members. Dirty politics polluted the dignity of such places. Though, Banira and some other devoted people got public honor and support. High officials in Government rank had no honor and fame among the populace. In such a critical condition, Banira and other dedicated figures didn't bend down. Instead they continued with their good efforts and earned name and fame widely.

Banira's promotion from assistant professor to the professor was stopped up intentionally. Banira had to appeal in the Supreme Court. UNESCO, France had sent a letter suggesting Banira

continuing with her job on salary basis for some time. Unfortunately, the then head of TU had hidden the letter instead of giving her.

The case of Banira against TU had its hearing after two years. Mr. Kalyan Shrestha was the then Judge of the court. During the discussion, Banira often tried to speak but the Judge made her quiet. The Judge told Banira that she didn't need to say anything. He had added that the evidence spoke for itself. The assistant professor 8<sup>th</sup> grade junior to Banira had gotten the promotion. Then the judge announced that Banira had won the case.

Broken and emotional Banira had cursed the scholars of Nepal in front of the court. She had cursed that the intellects would marry female monkeys instead of learned ladies. Poor judge had protested it in a gloomy and soft tone.

The courts of Nepal have their popularity in just decision making though the process goes very long. By the time the court decided in her favor, Banira had retired due to her age limit.

## **Banira's Literary Personality**

Banira had her recognition as a poet from her school days. At the age of 11, she was awarded in a poem symposium. Those days, she mostly wrote poems, stories and essays. She wrote not only for self-satisfaction, for economic support too. She was a role model in Nepalese literature in her locality. Many people wrote about her. Lt. Poet Ishwor Ballabh frequently said that she was a capable poet with lots of possibilities in future. He had handed her some books on literature in a literary program held by Mr. Agam Singh Giri.

Several incidents and crises in her life made her interested in literature. Her poems and other literary creations are real, vast and beautiful. She finds life in poems and depicts life in poems. Her poetic pen never gets tired of pouring reality, love to nature and the earth in her poems.

In fact, Banira blossomed in poems and sprayed the fragrance of poetry far and wide. Adorned with the poetic symbols and liveliness, her poems speak about the philosophy of life. Furnished with a number of symbols, her poems look a bit different in meaning. The symbols carry deep and meaningful values. In a poem she has compared the moon with the nature of human beings. She writes that the moon looks bright in the front but the back portion may remain dark. In the same way, humans also have dual nature. They show one face in the front and may deceive from the backside. She has compared both

the moon and the humans to a female ghost. It's just an example. Most of her poems talk about another meaning behind the words and symbols.

Banira is an honest and fearless poet. Possessing a charming physical beauty, she was determined to live a simple life. Smartness in simplicity was her individual specialty. She never told lies for any advantages.

She wrote the pains and struggles of females in her poems. According to her 'pain' is another name for women. Even the pains are defeated with females. She warns pains and aches that either they may get empty, her storage of hurts and aches never empty.

In her writing existentialism can be found in abundance. Her distinct, simple and easy flowing of poems depicts humanity and society. Because of such specialties her name in Nepalese literature is highly honored. In fact she was the Queen of her poetic world and declared herself as an emperor of her own world.

Several obstacles and struggles full of ups and downs sharpened her poetic personality day by day. She continued with her journey to literature with more activeness and refinement. As a result she made her place in Nepalese literature as an immortal scholar.

In an unseen corner of your heart  
I want to carve a greeting  
My friend!  
Making the high mountains the witness  
You are my emblem  
Sprinkled with your infinity  
I am your representation  
For me,



You were the big moon  
Of the autumn-sky,  
Not only this,  
You are the sun  
And the moon  
At the clear blue sky

In her poems, epithet thinking is found in plenty. In her words- "Whenever I'm creating poems, I'm lost within and become face to face with my soul only." So, her poetic creations can be compared with Metaphysics.

Her creations are prospering enough in intellectuality as well. It's one of the reasons for her wide literary dignity. She possesses highly admirable space among women literates in Nepalese literature. Among the women literary figures in Nepalese literature starting from the first poet Lalit Tripura Sundari till this date, her place has its own glory. Because of this, her name is honored as an icon in Nepalese literature around the globe.

Banira has established her name in prose writing as well. Besides poetry, her capability and skills is well seen in other sectors of writing as well. Though she mixes some words of Hindi [Indian language] and English in her creations, her base is always Nepali and Nepalese surrounding. According to her, some incidents sometimes enforce her towards essay writing. She is equally expert in writing novels and travelogue.

Banira was the first Nepalese poet taking part in international programs in literature. Not only this, her poems are translated in different languages by different scholars abroad. Though she had to face intellectual deficiency by some jealous so-called scholars, her writing broke all barriers and reached the hearts of a number of readers in different countries. Wherever she went, she made Nepalese literature known and readable. In

spite of lots of obstacles, she was blessed with love and respect from her readers. She never let her talent be shadowed and always worshipped Nepalese land Nepalese sky.

She never dreamt of selling the name and fame of Nepal. She never tried selling her creativity. 'Long live Nepal and Nepalese' was the song of her soul. With active participation in international literary programs organized abroad, she earned unforgettable name and fame for Nepal and finally won the title of women-celeb in Nepalese literature.

## **Banira's International Journey**

Representing Nepalese literature Banira has travelled to some countries in Asia and other continents as well. In such international literature festivals, she either led Nepalese participants or became involved as a member.

Though Banira was born and brought up in India, she always sang the patriot song of Nepal in such seminars and gatherings. According to her Nepalese are the real descents of Nepal, the country of Mt. Everest. So, they have their dignity as high as Everest itself.

In the year 1976, Banira had reached Russia [the then USSR] to participate in the 'Young Afro-Asian Writers' Conference, Tashkent, USSR representing Nepalese group. Great poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota had gone there 18 years before her. Both of these literary figures from Nepal had a very good impact on the foreign land that had eased them understanding Nepalese literature.

In the year 1989, Banira had participated in the conference titled 'Moral Education and Regional Culture' held in the USA. Likewise, she had participated as a panelist in the 'First Asian Cultural Forum' in Osaka, Japan. Dr. Harka Gurung from Nepal was another participant as a panellist to that forum. Banira had presented a brief history of Nepalese literature there.

Banira had participated in the ‘Seminar of Female Literacy’ in Pakistan in the year 1992. In 2002, she had spoken about violation of human rights and assassination in Bangladesh.

In 1997, The Japan Foundation Asia Centre gave Banira the Takeshi Kaiko Memorial Award for one person poetry reading and lectures in three major cities of Japan- Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto.

She had influenced all the participants by her intellect and skills of presentation. Her participation in several such conferences increased Nepal’s glory and recognition in the world.

Wherever Banira went, she tried to make Nepalese literature known well. In 2003, she participated in the ‘International Poetry Festival’ held in France.

In 2004, Banira was selected to be a part of the Library of Congress and Archive of World Literature as well.

Banira has travelled to China [Hong Kong], Thailand, Singapore, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan, Italy, Russia, France, Norway, Netherland, Denmark, Switzerland, UK and so on.

Banira has her own space and status in Nepalese literature. Her literary creations are translated in English, Hindi, Bangla, Urdu, Japanese and some other languages. Because of such translated literary works, Banira’s reputation has widened at international level.

Banira has her recognition in the field of Nepalese art and culture too. Besides literature, she also has sowed the seeds of morality, skills and enthusiasm in the institutions and places she was involved.

The ‘Narayan Gopal Music Trust’ was established in the name of great singer Narayan Gopal because of Banira’s restless

efforts. Narayan Gopal's wife Pemala Guruwacharya had invested their property in its funding. During its establishment, Banira was an executive member. Later she was promoted to the general secretary, then to the chairperson.

Banira had an immense interest towards Nepalese painting and sculpture. For the overall welfare of the painters and artists, she had her presence in the 'Nepal Art Council' as an executive member. During her active involvement in different institutes and organizations, Banira had her presence as the Board of Director in the 'BP Koirala Nepal-India Foundation'.

In Nepalese Literature Banira has recognized her own sky. She has her literary growth inscribing her pen in different compositions of literature and publishing them in weekly, bi-weekly, monthly and other literary magazines. Even her contemporary poets and authors with dissimilar views with her have accepted the truth that no one can be compared with her among the literary faces of her time. Even today, Banira has her very high standing and appreciation among the female writers. Because of the political pollution at present, such personalities are shadowed and disregarded. The sandalwood sprinkles its fragrance wherever is kept. In the same way Banira Giri doesn't need pleasing any party, group or individual to leave her mark in Nepalese literature.

## **Banira's Love Affairs and Matrimony**

Banira was beautiful, balanced and cultured from her childhood and was full of self-respect. She never bent in front of others without a reason. She was crystal clear in her practical dealings as well. It was the reason her seniors, juniors and friends loved, valued and trusted her. During her schooling, she got a number of love letters from many boy students of senior as well as her own class. Banira wondered getting so many love messages at that tender age.

One of Banira's aunt had warned her about male nature. According to her, no male gives even a piece of nuts without their selfish desires inside. She had suggested Banira to be aware of boys while she was merely a teen girl. Banira always followed her advice and stayed away from such boys and their love proposals.

During her college life in Kharsang and Calcutta too, several boys wrote her love letters and proposed to her but she neglected them simply without being violent or afraid.

While Banira was a young and grown up girl she had seen Shankar Giri's photo through her sister-in-law. For the first sight, that photo left some influence in her tender soul. Shankar was a relative of her sister-in-law Indira Giri. Those days, Shankar had been studying Engineering in the then USSR. Indira had brought his photo returning to Kharsang from Nepal. At the first sight of

that photo, Banira felt some soft corner for Shankar. Before this, she didn't have heard his name even.

Banira eagerly inquired about him with Indira, Indira gave her all information regarding Shankar. Banira felt one sided love with Shankar. It was the reason that no one else won her heart during her college days in Nepal though a number of capable and competent boys wanted a conjugal life with her.

During her studies in MA, she met with Meena Acharya. Meena also had been studying in Russia. Banira had met with Meena personally and asked about Shankar. She had asked her whether Shankar had any girlfriend or not. Meena had replied that she had heard about Shankar's love affairs many times in the past but those days, she had heard nothing. Meena's last words that she had not heard about Shankar's affairs recently had relieved her a lot.

Shankar Giri and his group was the first lucky group that had got a scholarship from the, then, Government of Russia. Among the 15 seats of Nepalese students, King Mahendra had selected Shankar as well.

During her studies of MA, Banira had met Shankar in Kathmandu. That day, she was heading to her college on the way from Tripureshwor to Putalisadak. Suddenly, her eyes tripped on a handsome appearance at the window of Pashupati Giri's house. She was a little shocked as it was the same face she had seen in the photograph brought by her sister-in-law Indira Giri. That whole day, she had been thinking about that handsome boy brushing teeth taking his head a bit out of the window. Shankar too, had seen her through the window.

One of the relatives had been waiting for her till her return from the college. He invited her for the afternoon tea at his abode in Hattisar. While she reached there, she saw the same handsome

man sitting at the veranda of her relative's abode. Her happiness had no bound. She wished to peep on that appearance often and often. It was the most pleasing moment of her life.

At that very first meeting, Shankar had offered her a cigarette. Though Banira felt a bit uneasy, she politely rejected his offer.

After that day, the two met many often. Once, Shankar invited her at hotel Indira in New Road for afternoon tea. Poet Shyamdas Vaishnav says that the boys who were crazy of Banira had noticed their frequent meetings and many of them had stopped following her after they saw her with Shankar. According to Prof. Thakur Parajuli, seeing their love affair and dating almost every day to the new road, a number of boys used to peep with sad eyes and broken hearts.

They had a love affair for about 10 months. Then Shankar wished to marry her. She proposed that the bridegroom's party had to go to Kharsang as she wanted to get farewell from her father's home. Shankar had happily accepted it.

Shankar was so happy that he was going to marry a very beautiful as well as an intellect girl. He had heard that Banira is a bit naughty. He had a little fear too, spending the rest of his life time with her. Though, many people from rich families were ready to marry their daughters with him from India and Nepal, but he liked only Banira. On the other hand, Banira also had neglected a number of proposals from many boys. Both of them were solely committed and devoted to each other that finally made their conjugal tie as husband and wife.

Shankar went to Kharsang along with the bridegroom party and made Banira his legal and formal life partner according to Hindu rituals. March 6, 1967 was the lucky date they had initiated their combined journey of life.



From Kharsang, both the bride and the bridegroom had come to Siliguri in the bus along with the bridegroom party. From Siliguri, they went to Janakpur by train. Shankar's father had managed the first class ticket for the two with the facility of air conditioning.

From the railway station of Janakpur, the bridegroom party along with Banira and Shankar as an attraction headed to the mill area, the abode of Shankar. It was about a kilometer from the railway station so they didn't take any vehicle and went by walking.

Shankar's grandfather 'dittha' (a post of personnel in judiciary) Gaurinarayan Giri was so glad getting an in-law who was highly educated as well as a litterateur. Banira's father-in-law and mother-in-law were also proud of her. They loved her as if they were her own parents.

They spent 15 days joyfully in a rented house at Putalisadak. Before this, Shankar had been staying in his uncle Pashupati Giri's house at Putalisadak.

After 15 days, Banira continued with her studies in MA while Shankar had started his first job as an engineer at the road department.

In fact, Shankar is a way for Banira. She got what support she wanted from him. Emotionally, physically, economically, Shankar always stood as her back. They have a son named Apurva and a daughter called Aparajita. With the support and motivation of Shankar and the children, Banira continued with her efforts and imprinted her name as one of the top literary figures in Nepali literature.

## **Banira's Children**

Within four years of marriage, the Banira couple had two children, daughter Aparajita and son Apurva respectively.

Like her mother, Aparajita was a talented girl from her childhood though she had centered herself only in studies during her schooling. She completed her primary education from Kharsang. Then she came back to Nepal and continued with her studies of lower and secondary levels and passed the SLC [SEE at present]. Then she passed the examinations of IA in journalism from Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Kathmandu. She got a scholarship to Pakistan for further studies.

After completing BA in journalism from Pakistan she went to America. There she joined computer engineering as her subject of study. She married a computer engineer Mr. Umesh Chandra Puri and continued with her studies as well. Though, she didn't join any job or institution related to her studies, rather she started a business of subway [restaurant]. She made remarkable progress from that business. They have two children Sawani [daughter] and Special (son).

Banira's son Apurva is three years younger than his sister Aparajita. He completed his schooling from Gothels school in Kharsang. Then, he passed I.Sc from St. Anthony college of Silong, India. After completing I.Sc, he went to Bangalore and joined civil engineering. After that he returned to Nepal along with the certificates of civil engineering.

Apurva had wedded Dr. Doma Sengbo Lama in the year 2002. The Apurva-Doma couple had twin sons named Aadi and Anaadi respectively. They settled in the US engaging themselves in the professions they had expertise in.

## **Banira's Abode**

It was in the year 1979; Banira was looking for land to make a house for their permanent settlement. Though she found lands elsewhere before, she couldn't be satisfied. Finally she got the desired land about 100 meters south from Minbhawan Campus in Baneshwor. In fact the land was a bit steep and reminded Banira of her father's home in Kharsang. She bought two ropani and ten aanas of land but they couldn't build a house in that lonely place where foxes howled in the morning and evening. It was dangerous even walking alone there.

After seven years only they had made a house there. Banira was not extravagant. She invested money very wisely. With the savings she used to buy gold. She used to invest a small amount to purchase small pieces of land and sold them with some profit. In this way, she had saved some amount and they had bought that land and made the house.

A boy of nearly 12 years of age named Bhim Bahadur Bote from Baireni; Damauli (District Tanahun) had joined them as an assistant to their households before they had built that house. Bhim Bahadur spent his rest of days under the patronage of Shankar and Banira. He married and brought his wife too. His wife Bibha is also from the same village and belongs to the Bote community. Now, they have two daughters named Bulu and Baby and the Bote couple has been serving the Banira couple till date.

The Banira couple built a beautiful and glorious house. The Banira couple didn't have to face poverty and scarcity after their matrimony. Even their children are living prosperous and comfortable lives abroad.

## Honor to Banira

Banira has been appreciated with a number of rewards, medals and honors. In the year 2012, the 'World Nepali Women's Literature Festival' was organized by the Trimurti Academy and Banira was honored with the title of 'Woman Celeb in the World Nepali Literature.' Before this she was revered with 'Prabal Gorkha Dakshin Bahu', 'Mahendra Vidhyabhushan First', 'Ratnashree Gold Medal', 'Royal Pragya Padak', 'Sainyadhvaj-Nandakumari Award', 'Madhuparka Honor', 'Lokpriya Award' and so on. She was the first woman litterateur to get 'Sajha Puraskar' (award). Likewise she had got the 'International Visiting Fellowship' from the USA.

The Council of World Nepali Women's Literature held by the Trimurti Niketan (Academy) decided to honor Banira with the title of Woman Celeb in World Nepali Literature along with the cash prize of Nepali Rs. 5,00000.

Banira joyfully had announced that after achieving the title as a woman icon in the world Nepali literature, she had no more wish as it was the best attainment of her life. She was grateful to the whole Nepali literature society in the world.

Banira is equally proficient in different sects of literature such as poetry, fiction, novel, essays, and articles and so on. She was the first Nepali lady honored with the title of PHD in Nepali literature. She was the second literary representative from Nepal to Russia and the first lady participating in the 'Afro-Asian authors'

conference' held in Russia. She has visited a number of countries representing Nepali literature. Her works have been translated in different languages that have increased her name and fame wider.

Her contribution towards Nepali literature is unforgettable and inspiring. It was the sensible and precise decision made by the World Nepali Literature Festival to respect her as an ideal woman in Nepali literature. In fact it's a praiseworthy and judgmental deed of Nepali soil appreciating Banira as a celebrity of Nepali literature in the world context.

### **Trimurti Niketan (Academy)**

(World Nepali Women's Literature Festival)

*In the history of Nepali literature, involvement of women literati is seen from the 19th century initiated from late Lalita Tripura Sundari. It's already two centuries of female participation in writing literature in Nepali language. In this context, Banira, prominent woman literati in Nepali literature is honored with the title of 'a woman icon of world Nepali literature.'*

*In this era of the 21st century, Banira is regarded as a precise inspiration to all women literati of Nepali literature in the world. Herein, the title is reverently offered to Banira, pride and glory of Nepali literature not in Nepal only but in abroad as well.*

*The first Nepali woman with her PHD in Nepali literature and for running her pen in almost all themes of literature such as poems, novels, stories, essays, research and so on, Banira has earned national and international fame making the country identified in world literature. As a tribute to her good deeds and consistent service in Nepali literature, Banira is esteemed with the treasured title of 'woman icon'*

*along with the cash prize of Nepali Rupees Five Lakhs, a copper plate and other medals and letters of appreciation.*

**Sushil Koirala**  
(Prime Minister)

**Bamdev Gautam**  
(Deputy Prime Minister)

**Indira Prasai**  
(Chairperson, Trimurti Niketan)

**Prof. Dr. Gargi Sharma**  
(Chairperson, World's Nepali Women's Literature Festival)

**Dr. Modnath Prashrit**  
(Coordinator, Trinari Ratna Smarak)

**Narendra Raj Prasai**  
(Member Secretary, Trimurti Niketan)

Kathmandu, Nepal  
May 30, 2014



## **Chariot Ascending of Banira**

Banira Giri is a specific name in Nepali literature. Only her name can represent whole Nepali literature till date. Her contribution is unforgettable in the expansion of Nepali literature in the world context. She, herself is a representative litterateur, the Trimurti Niketan has an equal credit to honor and make her more special among the litterateurs of Nepali language not only in Nepal, in the world as well.

The year of 2014 was a historic year for all Nepalese female litterateurs in the world. The World Women Nepali Literature Festival was organized by the Trimurti Academy under the chairmanship of Prof. Gargi Sharma in which there was an active participation of Nepali female litterateurs from 20 countries. It was held for three days starting from 29<sup>th</sup> of May till 31<sup>st</sup>. In that festival, Banira was adorned with the title of 'A Woman-Icon in the World of Nepali Literature.' In fact Banira had made her proficient space of achieving that honor.

Extremely happy and thankful Banira prepared a written commitment titled "The three days at World Women Nepali Literature Festival.

She wrote- "Mr. Narendra Raj Prasai, the member secretary of the Trimurti Niketan affectionately addresses me thrice as 'Meri didee, meri didee, meri didee' (my elder sister) and I too entertain responding him in the same way as 'Mero bhai, mero bhai, mero bhai' (my younger brother). My brother

Narendra had informed me about the festival and its decision of honoring me. Before this, we were not so intimate, so it was a bit uneasy to believe in him that they had decided to honor me with the great title of ‘A Woman-Icon in the World of Nepali Literature.’ The two literary figures Mrs. Indira Prasai and Mrs. Usha Sherchan congratulated me. Later the Trimurti Niketan had informed me through a formal letter. On that day, I felt Narendra’s love and devotion towards Nepali literature. I felt so emotional.

The second day of the program May 30, 2014 had the formal program of honoring me from the hands of the then Prime Minister of Nepal, Rt.Hon'ble Sushil Koirala. I reached the ‘Amrapali Banquet’ at Bhatbhateni. The program hall was full of a number of female litterateurs. I felt they were centered towards me after my arrival there.

It was really a wonderful day of my life. Prime Minister inaugurated the program formally in the presence of the then Deputy Prime Minister Bamdev Gautam, Mr. Narahari Aacharya, the minister of law, Hon'ble Mr. Lokman Singh Karki the chief commissioner of Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority and so many other prominent people and litterateurs. I was honored with a copper plate of my height crafted with seven serpents in a wooden frame and the cash prize of Nepali Rs. 5, 00,000. I assumed either it was a dream or reality. I can’t describe the moment in words.

In fact it’s a very great award in Nepali literature and I’m that first lucky person getting a copper plate of self-size in Nepali literature. Perhaps, it is the first grand award in the continent of Asia. I had mixed expressions of joy, self-pride and sadness as well. I was a bit sad thinking about the struggles of a Nepali lady till getting this stage. I didn’t take it as my personal respect; in fact it was a great honor for all Nepali authors.

Honoring the title, I was made seated in a chariot and went round the city. The Prime Minister had held my hands from the stage and taken me to the chariot. I felt much glad and nervous in the meantime. The Deputy prime minister made me seated in the chariot with high respect. The Prime Minister sat with me in the chariot. It was in fact a cherished moment of my life.

Professor Gargi Sharma, the chairperson of that festival and Prof. Usha Thakur and Mrs. Usha Sherchan, (both of them were the deputy chairperson of the festival) were with me in the chariot of Nepali Army. The band party of Nepal Police had supported their bands. In the process of rounding the city, the city people had shown much admiration and grace. Making a round around the city, the chariot had returned to the spot. Brother Narendra had carried me on his back to the stage from the chariot as a brother does in the farewell of his sister at her wedding. It was a rare incident in the world context. Brother Narendra has been lifting me all the time.

I had heard about such honor of eminent people, I became the lucky one experiencing the same. It's because of the endless efforts of brother Narendra and his better half dear Indira. The NAI couple (Narendra and Indira respectively) really respect, encourage and evaluate the aptitudes and contributions of people without any prejudice of caste, race, religion or nationality. I hope the Nai couple would make a number of Baniras known to the world. Those who appreciate time, make it mighty. I bless the Nai couple to their devout accomplishments.

## **Banira Foundation**

In the holy epic of 'Shree Swasthani Brata Katha', God Mahadev had wandered insanely carrying the dead body of his beloved wife for a month till the body parts decayed and broke down to pieces. For the readers of that story, it's not a new topic that Mr. Shankar Giri has devoted himself to the nursing of his sick wife Banira Giri. His dedication towards her by all means of wealth, body and will is really an example of his true love and sacrifice that is rare to find in this modern world full of self-interest and greediness. He has established the 'Banira Foundation' to honor his wife Banira who has been living a lifeless life for the past three years extremely suffered by depression and Alzheimers. Mr. Giri's devotion and selfless love can be compared with 'Tajmahal' built by Shahjahan in the memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz. In another word, the Banira Foundation is another Tajmahal of literature made by Shankar Giri for his adored wife Banira.

Till date, Banira Foundation is the largest institute for scholars and is built with the cash and material investment of more than fifty million Nepali rupees. The foundation is registered in the accounts of the local government officer of the government of Nepal. The proposal reads- 'With the strong determination of Mr. Shankar Giri, Banira Foundation is established to study, analyze and do some research works on Banira and her books as well as to study about other literati and to assist and reward the contributions of poets and authors.'

Solely devoted to his dear wife Banira, Mr. Shankar has provided their land to the foundation. He has established the foundation under his chairmanship along with Mrs. Indira Prasai as its Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Narendra Raj Prasai as the Member Secretary and Mrs. Bhagawati Basnet as its Coordinator. Mr. Subodh Giri, Mr. Pushkar Giri and Mr. Baburam Giri are other members of the foundation.

Banira Giri is the woman idol of Nepali literature. She has occupied a very special and prominent place in Nepali literature. Though there are a number of trusts, literary institutions and organizations, Banira foundation has its specific honor and importance as it is the foundation established by his dedicated husband in her name and during her lifetime. By the name, the foundation represents its aims, vision and works. It's a fully non-political and non-profitable institution related to literature only. Its key objectives are as mentioned below:

- a. This will be a non-profitable social institution working for wellbeing of people
- b. It is related to literature, art and culture
- c. To establish literary museums and libraries
- d. To establish a museum and a library about Dr. Banira Giri and her books
- e. To publish Banira's unpublished books and to re-publish her already published books
- f. To publish different books on different themes of literature
- g. To provide scholarship to the deprived and talented students
- h. To honor and reward the scholars and literati

- i. To organize different workshops, programs and symposiums on Nepali language, literature, art and culture.
- j. To honor and reward the talents in the country and abroad and motivate others for the same
- k. To conduct research works regarding art, culture and literature and motivate others for the same
- l. To organize and held different works on literature, art and culture

Thus, the Banira Foundation is not limited merely to the works of Banira Giri; rather it has followed the principles of Universal Brotherhood.

Though Banira Giri herself has a specific space in Nepali literature, her name and fame would flourish wider through Banira Foundation. It's an association that is established by a dedicated husband for his sick wife. Such devotion can be seen hardly that has made this foundation distinct among others. Because of this foundation Mr. Shankar Giri has earned a very prominent and adorable space and reputation in Nepali literature.

## Poems in Honor of Banira by Female Poets

A number of female poets of Nepali literature have privileged and made Banira more conspicuous poetic personality in Nepali literature. According to them, Banira has represented Nepali female literati in true sense; hence the honor with the title of 'A Woman-Icon in the World of Nepali Literature' is fairly appreciable and appropriate. Some of the pieces of poems for Banira by a number of female poets in Nepali literature are as included:

The sky is sweet-smelling  
Because of your good name  
Oh! Woman-celeb!  
**.Anukritika (Delhi, India)**

Banira! You spilled over  
And people learned reading self  
You stood up  
Carrying the light of words  
And chased  
The dark phase of time.  
**.Anupam Roshi**

Banira! Wherever you reach  
The women there  
Play the drum of consciousness.  
**.Apsara Dahal (Sikkim, India)**

Banira! You continue wandering  
Holding an unknown light  
And  
Carry the heavyweight poems.  
**.Aastha Kopila Rai**

Banira is a star  
That never fades away  
Just examine inner self  
A world icon is Banira.  
**. Indira Prasai**

Dazzling woman literati  
Long live Banira!  
Being a wish yielding tree  
On the soil of  
Nepali literature!  
**. Ishwari Gautam (America)**

Love, unity, freedom and equality  
Your immortal literary messages  
Oh woman celeb!  
You are our pride,  
Our strength and our glory!  
**. Prof. Dr. Usha Thakur**

Banira,  
Defiant literati  
And a scholar  
Fighting for  
Self-existence  
**. Usha Sherchan**



You are  
As pure and sparkling  
As my Kanchanjungha  
Oh Banira!

**. Elina Sangroula ( UK)**

Multitalented literati  
Appeared as the sun and the moon  
Prospered Nepali literature  
With endless commitment and labor

**. Kamala Rai**

Dear Banira!  
You smiled and bloomed  
In the land of  
Nepali literature!

**. Kalpana Giri (Israel)**

The Goddess of truth  
The boss of imperishable strength  
In Nepali literature  
An unforgettable name is Banira

**. Krishna Devi Shrestha**

Banira! You outshined  
As the sun in the dawn  
Brightening each corner  
With the gleams of literature

**. K. B. Birahi**

On the dark streets  
Banira reached her destination  
Pouring the lights of the moon  
From the sky above

**. Ganga Poudel**

You are the brightest star  
In the blue sky  
You are the crown  
Of all Nepali heads  
**. Gayatri Gharti Magar**

Dear Banira!  
Accept the garland of  
Precious pearls  
Accept our  
Heartily salutation of lexis  
**. Geeta Karki**

You had lost  
In the sun and shade of life  
Oh Banira!  
We just followed you!  
**. Geeta Khatri (America)**

You, yourself is a seed,  
You, yourself is a tree  
Oh fairy of poetry Banira!  
In your poems  
I hear the song of life  
And find the beauty of bliss  
**. Geeta Tripathi**

Let's honor the great literati  
Let's understand the real  
Poetic perception within Banira!  
**. Chhandika Ghimire**

Your journey from  
Kanchanjungha to Chomolongma

Is still continue  
I wish  
This journey  
Goes round the Universe  
**. Jaya Rai (UK)**

You smile  
Along with the rhododendron  
And the whole Charkose Jhadi  
[Dense forest in the Terai Region of Nepal]  
Becomes gleaming  
**. Deepa Ewai Rai (Hong Kong, China)**

Carving beautiful creation  
In the leaves of time  
You bring zeal and stimulus  
Among common people  
Dear Banira!  
**. Deeps Shah (Israel)**

A new sparkle of lights  
Among millions of stars  
Oh Banira!  
You are the expectation  
You are the usefulness  
**. Nirmala Khadka (Israel)**

Oh Banira!  
Ask yourself decently  
Like our relatives  
Aren't you a character  
in the jail?  
Aren't I a facade  
in the prison as well?  
**. Neelam Karki 'Niharika' (Japan)**

It's not mere honor to Banira  
It's in fact  
Respect of the whole womanhood  
And reverence of  
The whole Nation indeed!  
**. Peetambara Upadhyay 'Peeyush'**

Banira!  
I wish you shine  
as the sun rays in the morning  
sprinkling brightness everywhere  
**. Pushpalata Acharya**

A reflection of the solar system  
You are the first ray of warmth  
Dear Banira!  
**. Purnima G Shah (Hong Kong, China)**

Dear Banira!  
You topped the mountain  
Being snow yourself  
**. Baba Basnet**

Stepping ahead constantly  
Towards the new era  
You are a real woman icon  
Oh Banira!  
**. Bhagawati Basnet (Israel)**

Distinct and different  
Among the flowers in the garden  
Banira is a rhododendron  
Smiling in the hills  
**. Mamata Shrestha**

Holding your fingers  
I just walked with you  
On the way you made  
. **Meena Devkota**

There may appear  
A number of steeps and height  
You just march parade  
On the top dear Banira!  
. **Meera Man Thapa (Israel)**

Dear Banira!  
I realized my existence  
In your love,  
In your guardianship  
. **Muna Shrestha (Oman)**

On your leadership  
The flowers and thorns wake up  
Dried leaves bend on your feet  
The sun and the moon  
Safeguard the sky you stand  
. **Momila**

See your mother  
In fresh rhododendron  
At that moment  
You wouldn't have  
Any unpleasant update  
Your mother now  
Has become Banira  
. **Dr. Rajani Dhakal**

Your literary journey  
Reached at every corner

You earned honor  
As a woman celeb  
As fragrant outcome  
Of your hard penance  
**. Ranjana Niroula**

You are the Universe  
Carrying a number of stars  
In your literary womb  
Hard to get  
The beginning and the end  
So, you became  
The woman icon  
**. Rashmi Rimal**

Dear Banira!  
Continue climbing up  
The global journey of literature  
**. Radhika Guragai**

Small rivulets  
From Mechi to Mahakali  
Are following you  
To get the  
Destination to the ocean  
**. Radhika Dahal**

You woke up  
In the river of literature  
And exceled bright  
The mother Earth is  
Glad to you  
**. Ruku Karki**

You are a precious pearl  
Beautifully decorated  
And carved in hearts  
**. Rumu Nyaupane (Australia)**

Solely devoted  
By body, mind and work  
A vast storage of  
Intellectual perception  
**. Dr. Renuka Thapa 'Solu'**

Trying to touch you  
I came up myself  
Following your footsteps  
**. Laxmi Apsara Panday**

Oh literary charioteer!  
All eager hearts  
Are awaiting keenly  
To celebrate your day  
**. Laxmi Uprety**

An overpass  
Between the two countries  
A reputable name  
In Nepali literature  
And queen of  
World Literature  
A noble name is Banira  
**. Latika Joshi (Darjeeling, India)**

On the green branches  
You bloomed in full

Oh Banira!  
Go on blossoming more  
**. Lalita 'Doshi'**

Dear Banira!  
Wish your voice  
Echoes till times  
Your pen represents  
Reality till the era  
**. Basudha Nepal**

Once again  
A flower has fragranced  
As a woman idol  
**. Bindya Subba (Darjeeling, India)**

Dear Banira!  
Melting with words  
And as the heart of the Earth  
Do climb the peak of dignity  
**. Bishnu Sharma**

You are inspiration  
You are dignity  
You are the temple of  
Goddess Saraswoti (The goddess of knowledge)  
**Dr. Bishnu Maya Bibhu (Norway)**

With the balanced feet  
Banira colored  
The braids of success  
**. Shashi Thapa Pandit**

Banira!  
As you won the honor



As a woman idol  
I felt so glad  
And delightful  
**. Shanti Kumari Rai**

Wish the spring of creations  
Flow playing hide and seek  
In the crystal clear water  
Amongst hills and rocks  
**. Shanti Risal**

Playing cheerily amongst lexis  
Banira blossoms  
On the bush of words and letters  
**. Sharada Parajuli**

Living a desired life  
With self- recognition  
Till centuries to come  
Oh Banira! Salute you!  
**. Sharada Subedi**

As the heartbeat  
Of Nepali women  
You will palpitate forever  
**. Shrestha Priya 'Patthar'**

Wish the creepers  
Of your good deeds  
Sprinkle worldwide  
Wish the country honors  
Your firm religious  
Devotion and conception  
**. Shobha Khatiwada**

A shining star  
Pride of Nepali literature  
A glorious name is Banira  
**. Santu Shrestha**

Echo in Bithowin melody  
In the violin of Mozart  
Banira is a sweet song  
**. Sandhya Regmi (Vietnam)**

As high as the Everest  
A cherished personality  
A dutiful lady  
Indeed is Banira!  
**. Sapana Gautam (Canada)**

You have been dusting  
Social evils and perversions  
Yet, it's not enough Banira!  
I'm coming behind you!  
**. Sarala Ghimire**

It's not the story of travellers  
In fact, it's the story of the path itself  
Because it's the story of Banira  
**. Saraswati Prateeksha**

Dear Banira!  
Thankful to your  
'Kathmandu, Kathmandu'  
That gives light  
Melting itself  
**. Saraswati Shrestha 'Saru'**

In this battle  
Now, you are  
Not alone Banira!  
Half of the world  
Is with you  
**. Savita Shrestha 'Behoshi'**

Driven by you,  
The lapsed steps  
Now, follow you  
And the Everest  
Of your altitude  
**. Saru Pokharel**

An artistic gardener  
A daring pen holder  
No doubt, Banira is  
**. Sanu Ghimire (Australia)**

Different appreciation  
Amongst crowd  
Banira, in fact  
Is a treasured name  
**. Suchitra Khania (Israel)**

Who else dares to earn  
The glorious honor  
As an ideal woman  
Except you?!  
**. Sunita Karki**

The hands raised  
In the reverence of Banira

The eyes witnessed  
The procession held  
In her integrity  
**. Suman Barsha**

Banira! You are the pride of Nepal  
You are the flow of sensations  
You are the moon, you are the stars  
In the blue sky above  
**. Sumitra Poudel (Israel)**

You are a sparkling gold  
You are a diamond  
You are the beauty  
Of Nepali literature  
Oh daughter of snow!  
**. Haridevi Koirala**

## Books of Banira

Though Banira wrote from her childhood, her poem was formally published in the year 1974. Her poem titled 'my friend says' was published in the literary magazine 'Diyo' [the lamp]. It was published in Darjeeling and Mr. DK Khaling was the editor. This made her gain more popularity eventually encouraging her towards poetry. Though different magazines in Darjeeling and Nepal included her poems, she got success publishing a collection of poems in a book in 1974.

Evaluating her creations Prof. Dr. Gargi Sharma Writes- "Banira is equally successful and skilled in poetry, novel writing and in essays. In her writing, she sketches natural pictures of society, politics and humanity. Through her empowered pen, she evokes social awareness and writes about perversions, romance as well as other human feelings. Studying human nature and pouring in her writing is a specialty of her pen. Using symbols and metaphors, she writes willingly from the heart and wins the readers."

Banira has earned worldwide fame through her literary works of high measure. Her works represent her personality. She emphasized in quality writing rather than raising only the quantity. A number of scholars have evaluated her creations. Nearly 500 of her writing pieces are published separately and 10 books in different forms such as poetry, novel, essays etc.

### **1. Each One A Living Jung Bahadur (1974)**

Pick me up  
As a swan  
Picking its prey  
Swipe me  
As the flood  
Swipes the field  
Sweep me out  
As my daughter  
Sweeps the floor every day

According to Mr. Yadav Bhattarai, most of the poems in this collection portray the bitter experiences of life. Life looks so simple and beautiful outside but it's really tough and ugly within. In this sense, most of her poems in this collection express sadness, dissatisfaction, agitation, repulsiveness etc. However some of the poems are optimistic searching for existence and anticipation too.

'A Living Jung Bahadur' has made Banira's entry as a highly intellectual poet. In this collection, she has mentioned the poems written during her study period of 7 years in Kathmandu. According to Mr. Shankar Giri (Banira's husband), her poems at her teen ages and early twenty are collected and Mr. Giri intends publishing them as a book.

According to Dr. Kavita Lama, Banira Giri is the name that comes on top in the history of Nepalese literature. Establishing a separate way and writing in a different way are special features of her writing that has given her a distinct height. She never hurries in quantity writing, neither writes for competition. Her specific writing itself has depicted her name among the Nobel ones.

## **2. Jeewan Thaymaru (Life is nonentity) 1977**

In this collection, Banira's poems written from the period of 1974 to 1977 are included. It was published from Sajha Prakashan. In this collection, she has used impressionism, a new way of writing. However, her poems carry the taste of reality and bitter truth and evils of life and society. In some poems, love, romance, obstruction, life etc. are slightly included whereas these elements are found in abundance in some creations. Different readers having diverse taste and nature require enjoying her poems carrying the density of each poem.

Her poems touch the core of readers because she writes reality. For an instance:

I am an oven to lit fire  
I am a bush for thorns  
I am a sheath for a sword  
I am toxic teeth of a cobra  
I am a black night of the dark moon.

Regarding the collection of 'Jeewan Thaymaru' Prof. Dr. Khagendra Prasad Luitel has said that it is a praiseworthy deed of Banira. According to him, the combination of reality and impressionism can be found in this collection of Banira. The concreteness of her poems can't be approved by all readers.

Her poems are sensitive as she writes reality. For instance:

I have become an oven to be burned  
I have become a bush for thrones  
I have become a knife- shield  
I have become noxious teeth of a cobra  
I have become a dark, black night.

## **3. Karagar (The Jail) 1978**

Karagar, published from Sajha Academy has introduced Banira as a novelist. Though written in essayist style, this book

possesses her intellectual philosophy. It has certainly helped measure her literary height. In this female dominant book, she has sketched the pictures of struggle in search of peace and pleasures of life. Though people struggle for comforts and bliss, they fail gaining real peace and joy in life. It's the theme of the book.

According to Dr. Durga Prasad Dahal, Karagar has the specialism of feminism and disparity. In this novel, Banira has portrayed an unmarried female character and an adult married man and their discordant love life.

#### **4. Mero Aawishkar (My Innovation) 1984**

'My innovation' is one of the best collections of poems by Banira. The poems are written in a self- expressive way. It's a blend of life, creation and nature. In the words of Prof. Dr. Keshav Prasad Upadhaya, "It's the best and the highest achievement of Banira's literary journey. My Innovation is one of the best literary creations in Nepalese literature." It was printed from 'Apurva Publication.'

According to Dr. Laxman Prasad Gautam, Banira had begun her poetic journey when there was the supremacy of remodeled ways in Nepalese poetry. She was equally demanding in the latest phase of poetry writing. In her poems, symbols and metaphors are used abundantly and powerfully. She has gained competent success in novel and essay writing as well.

#### **5. Nirbandha (Obstinacy) 1985**

'Nirbandha' is a social novel of womankind by Banira. In this novel she has spoken with a sharp brain against women mistreatment and exploitation. She has presented the characters in an amusing and satirical way. This novel gained notable popularity among the intellectual readers and writers.

According to Gyanu Pandey, "Nirbandha is a story of a woman and her widowhood in autobiographical approach. A



bold and daring widow lady has analyzed self though she has no complaint to life. It is a story of a lady in a well riches family and the conflict between parents. Though people seem happy outside, they suffer a lot within. The art of word selection and expression is remarkable. The woman character in this novel has made the topic meaningful and this is one of the notable works by Banira in Nepalese literature."

#### **6. Shabdatit Shantanu (Glorious) 1999**

'Shabdatit Shantanu' is another novel based on intellectual viewpoint. It was published from Sajha Academy. The story is centered in a village Bastipur in Siraha. An ideal male character born in the soil of Bastipur is the main character of the story. Banira has used local language patterns to make the novel more realistic and significant. Shantanu did a lot for the people and died but nobody returned his good deeds.

Professor Rajendra Subedi writes- "Shabdatit Shantanu' of Banira is a social novel based in a locality with the central character Shantanu from his birth till death. The novel is of medium volume having about 100 pages. Shantanu is compared with father of Bhishma Pitamah of the Hindu epic Mahabharata and even with Bhishma Pitamah. Shantanu has somehow alike turns and experiences. On the root ground of idealism, Shantanu has the unpleasant and factual feelings of life as of Pitamah in the Mahabharata."

According to Dr. Renuka Solu, "Banira has emphasized female characters. Compared to Shabdatit Shantanu, her female characters are bolder and more open in the two novels 'Karagar' and 'Nirbandha.' In this way, Banira has tried to establish new thoughts revolting against traditional blind views full of preconceptions. Using the first pronoun (I) in her novels as a key character, Banira has tried to establish co-existence raising opinion against women exploitation and biasness."

### **7. Paarvati, Another Name to Parvat (Hill) 2010**

It is another collection of essays by Banira published by Ratnapustak Bhandar. This book also gained much popularity in Nepalese literature as her other collections did.

Though she wasn't involved in politics, she has written about it in this collection. Her poetic and melodious way of inscribing touches the core of readers. This is the specialty of her writing.

According to Dr. Geeta Tripathi, 'Well rich in intellectuality, Dr. Banira's way of writing is always outstanding. In this collection, she has included the essays she had initiated writing from 1983, 2040 BS. Then she wrote about a number of contemporary topics. Some of the essays were published in some literary journals and magazines as well. Using several mythical symbols, she has decorated each essay in a logical manner. Her essays have precise as well as socio-cultural values and norms.'

### **8. Kathmandu Kathmandu, 2011**

Kathmandu Kathmandu is Banira's collection of poems published from Ratnapustak Bhandar. The standard of poems in this collection has made her popular as an international poet. Though she has inscribed her pen in other themes such as essays, novels and so on, she has her appreciation as a poet. Her poetry lures the readers. She writes about love, affection, tenderness. Her love spreads worldwide through her poems. A small drop of her poetic ocean is preserved in Kathmandu through this piece:

Kathmandu  
Is a branch of a tree  
On which we are sitting  
Let's not to chop  
The branch down!

Kathmandu  
Sells us  
Defective future!

Poor Kathmandu

.....  
Sometimes  
Dreams of  
Selling self!

Kathmandu Kathmandu is one of Banira's very widespread creations. Professor Gopi Krishna Sharma writes, "Creating poems by mind and soul, Banira has made specific space in Nepalese literature. In her poems, the combination of intellectuality and spirituality can be found. Her sentiments and feelings are not oppressed by intellectuality, rather they are supported genuinely. As she has already her reputation as a poet, this collection has added her fame higher and wider."

Regarding Banira's poems Dr. Pushpa Sharma writes, "Great authors themselves are a precious reward for literature. The real creators make their name and fame themselves however regular and hard efforts require for it. If an author is capable of being 'charu' and 'havi' [holy pot and holy things offered to fire god] of the 'yagyakunda' [holy ditch to make the fire burn] in literature, they can earn a reputation far and high. In this sense, Banira is fortunate enough inscribing her name on that ground."

### **9. Jungle Jungle, 2012**

In this book published from Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Banira's essays and articles are included.

Among her latest creations, Jungle Jungle earned remarkable recognition. About this book Rajani Dhakal writes- "It's a collection of Banira's essays about contemporary topics. It's a mixture of literature, music, social issues, politics etc. Most of the articles seem like journals and dairy. In this collection she has mentioned lots of her personal experiences and incidents in an interesting way. Because she has included the incidents about her family, relatives, friends and profession, the essays seem

personal. Her knowledge and experiences seem wide even regarding the matters of international issues as well. Interest towards numerous subjects, people and events and her open views towards them have made this collection really readable and fascinating."

In fact this collection of essays is a strong proof of Banira's competence in essay writing. Her writings have a solid connection to life, society, art, music, and politics and so on.

In the very introduction of the book, Banira herself has written in a poetic way—

"Oh, don't kill the birdie  
What will you get killing her?  
What fruitlet?  
What advantage?"

Above four lines are the key elements of the collection of 'Jungle Jungle'. It proves Banira's multidimensional talent.

#### **10. Rokinele Aakar Dina Sakdaina (Quitters Can Not Impart Shape) 2014**

It's a travelogue by Banira Giri published from Ratna Pustak Bhandar. In this travelogue, Banira has included her experiences abroad, so she has dedicated this book to all Nepali literati around the globe. It is big in volume and equally has weight in quality. Her husband engineer Shankar Giri has also travelled with her in most of such travels and visits. It is another significance of the book.

#### **11. From The Other End, 1987**

It's an English translation of Banira's poems published from Nirala Publication of Jaypur in India. RD Yuyutsu has translated them.

#### **12. My Discovery, 1996**

This is a collection of Banira's poems about self, published in Nepali as 'Mero Aawishkar'. RD Yuyutsu has translated it in

English and it was published by Apurva Publication in Kathmandu.

### **13. From The Lake, Love, 2000**

It's a translation of Banira's poems in English by the poets Wayne Amtzis, Machael Hutt, Ann Hunkins and Manjushree Thapa. It was edited by the American poet Wayne Amtzis and was published by the Himshikhar Publication in Kathmandu.

### **14. The Prison, 2005**

The Prison is an English translation of Banira's 'Karagar' by Ann Hunkins of America. It was published by Jiwa Lamichhane.

### **15. Kara, 2016**

Kara is a Hindi translation of Banira's Karagar by Pardeep Bihari of India. It was published by Sahitya academy, New Delhi.

### **Two poems translated by Ann Hunkins**

#### **1. Woman**

Naked

Unhindered

Without fear

Without shame

Woman stands at the crossroads  
in her pure primordial form

A crowd of blind men  
are eager  
to discover the nature of woman

One strokes her flowing hair  
and mutters  
ah! Woman is a waterfall, woman is the *Ganges*  
flowing from the head of *Shiva*

Another  
Strokes her hands and fingers  
And announces happily,  
Woman is the lotus of *Saraswati's* hand.

Another  
Grasps her firm thigh and shouts,  
Woman is the trunk of a young banana tree  
at the wedding pavilion.  
Another touches her lips, which sing  
the sweet song of creation and says,  
Ah! Woman is a ripe raspberry!

Yet another  
Strokes the boon of motherhood,  
her breasts, and says slowly,  
Woman is *Mt. Kailash*, the gift of *Laxmi*.

Another,  
discovering  
the half-secret place of creation, leaps up and cries,  
No, listen to me!  
Woman is nothing but a vile hole!

Her eyes stream with tears  
at the blind man's revelation  
and another man  
touches her brimming eyes and says,  
You stupid fool!  
Woman is not just a vile hole,  
She is also Lake Baikal, Lake Ural  
She is also Lake *Gosainkunda*,  
Lake *Manasarovar*

## **2. Kathmandu**

Kathmandu was forged a superheated furnace  
fired by a hundred thousand volts

Like Sita at her trial by fire,  
the helpless girls of this capital  
sit upon it, tender bodies ready to be branded,  
ensnared in its bondage of desire

The white dove in flight  
across the boundless blue sky  
are locked inside every citizen's eye  
Every swarthy smuggler,  
fat con-artist, cruel back-biter  
and hypocrite of the land comes here  
to plunge into the waters of Rani Pokhari  
and be made pure

The poplar, comb-tree and mimosa,  
bottle-brush and pine  
fan all who live here, pure and foul

But  
Kathmandu is not just pure coolness  
Kathmandu is also hexes and jinxes

That Toyota Corolla  
with the white government plates,  
guzzling liters and liters of gasoline, never sated  
isn't that Kathmandu?  
Isn't it Nanicha's liquor-shop  
Where the GunjaMans and Ram Bahadurs daily crowd  
tossing their heads back to drink  
then going home to beat their wives?  
The Toyota's deep tire tracks in the street  
the greenish kick-marks on the bodies of their wives  
Kathmandu is something  
my dear son babbles in his dreams  
half I understand, half I do not  
but I want to hear more  
always wedged in and driven between

attraction and repulsion  
I know  
many curse me  
few like me  
I feel that  
since I have come to live in Kathmandu  
hasn't Kathmandu also come to live in me?

Kathmandu's endless protest marches  
pour daily into my dreams  
Alas!  
My nights are filled with riot  
But how silent my cold mornings,  
Kathmandu covered over in mist,  
as if the city's dead were exhausted  
after a long night's wait

This beloved Kathmandu  
is an epic  
of fascinating, sweet and bitter tales  
the horrifying opening lines of politicians' speeches  
the people's chorus of poverty and want  
wages - the fortunate increase  
prices – the cursed rise  
the ceaseless hide-and-seek of kerosene and sugar  
It's all here

Poor Kathmandu!  
Everyone darling  
Cursed by all  
It's people,  
like the narrator of the *Satyanarayan puja*  
forever repeating the story  
of *Lilavati* and *Kalavati*  
forever repeating the same laments



walking the same narrow lanes  
bringing out the same processions  
thronging to the same festivals  
celebrating the same holidays  
like a Ka-ka-kul bird's chant:  
Kathmandu Kathmandu  
Kathmandu Kathmandu

### **Three poems translated by Wayne Amtzis**

#### **1. From The Lake, Love**

Far somewhere far, stunning *Manasarovar*  
on the far side of a mountain range  
beneath a gift of blue sky rippling splashing  
It's said that "*Sarovar*" ever waiting  
towards the road looks out  
there are those who are drawn to her  
enamored of her; others experience her  
and there are those enchanted by her  
The old ones say – time before time, who knows when –  
Once – from the *untold vastness* of the Himalayas  
a woman without compare  
became enchanted with Sarovar's unrivaled beauty  
and immersed herself, emerging  
her gentle comely youth turned at once to gold  
and then and there a gaggle of young men  
grabbed her, tore her to pieces  
and shared her among themselves  
some go so far as to say  
that among them a handsome and youthful hunter  
lovingly stole away with her heart  
and in a moment and with gestures that would not be seen  
pressed it against his own warm heart  
On full moon nights

In the dreamlike *shimmerings* of Sarovar  
those two hearts transformed into white swans  
murmuring their love talk  
they say – they are waiting for the wedding procession,  
the wedding band, the ritual implements  
for the ceremony, the hand-woven leaves for the wedding feast,  
colored rice grains for the procession  
and those leading the procession  
and most of all, from the lake born language,  
in that diamond clear voice, for love

## **2. Wound**

Your full force was first raised against me

Let this spear-tipped stream flow on..  
The gullies of my eyes greening your fields  
Let this crop of pain ripen,  
this harvest ripening from wounds

You and I? Let's  
enjoin ourselves in friendship  
Always!  
How engaging!

Before dark where the forked road joins I ran into you  
Before I knew what was happening, you raped me  
Then and there, witness of this cruel intimacy,  
Drops of virgin blood spread on the gravel of the crossroads  
Like an unclaimed corpse

At each moment  
every day  
be it morning or night  
every minute  
coming & going time & again

those stains return to me  
my memory of you

Violation!

From the outset  
your every thrust  
blazed at fire  
tore through the skin as thorns do,  
pierced as a blade,  
appeared as the night of the dark moon

But these days  
your every stroke  
a mere touch,  
and as for myself  
I've become  
the oven that contains the flame,  
the bush that raises up thorns,  
the sheath that holds the blade,  
fangs for the cobra's deadly poison,  
darkness of the night that swallows the moon

Like a tigress tamed in the circus,  
a female snake soothed by the charmer's tune,  
*wound*, so quickly was I transformed in you

Now you and I  
have become nail and flesh,  
miser and money,  
footpath and foot sole

Tread upon me with all your thieves and robbers  
For this is certain: you'll tire, not me!

Let the variegated wishes for life germinating in me  
be winnowed by your stormy gusts. Finish it! Destroy!

Wound! Maul and smother me  
Lick me with your slathering flames  
For I convert your force I'm hardened to it

Where you store your weaponry of thrust and violation,  
I burrow and hide, grazed from all sides by your firing guns  
flameburst upon flameburst everywhere in every corner

But it is surely so, violator  
*Violation!* tearing your ears, listen

Your armory will be emptied – I will not  
Your armory will be emptied – I will not

### **3. A Human Face: The Moon's**

Each of us  
bares the face of the moon  
There's brightness there,  
but what's behind?  
How duplicitous the moon is  
– a *Kitchkani*  
On frail bones of light  
she steals to your window  
Fling a ball of wool  
though the ruins of her back  
Far away and farther still  
she'll escape Hold the thread  
through to the unraveling  
till that foul form is exposed –  
rubble of musk, splinter of bone,  
shard of ash, a grub –  
nesting in its hole  
Into the void  
she'll have vanished,  
for now wiped out,  
extinguished...

Craving wholeness –  
blinded, we see, poisoned,  
we taste – each of us  
casts of aura.. Be wary  
of the moon – of the Kitchkani!  
or is it a human face?

**Time You Are Always The Winner**

**Translated by Michael Hutt**

In infinite wild lead  
a solitary life.  
Just a naming ceremony,  
set aside, forgotten;  
even in the *Ramayana*, *Lakshaman's* line  
had first to be drawn  
before Sita could cross it?

Time, you are always the winner,  
I bent my knee before you  
like *Barbarik* faced by compulsion,  
like king *Yayati* faced by old age,  
I fell prostrate like grandfather *Bhishma*  
before the arrows from your arms.

Touch my defeated existence just once  
with your hands of ironwood;  
how numb I am,  
how hard to grasp, how lifeless  
in the presence of your strength and power.

You spread out forever like the seas,  
I rippled like the foaming waves,  
you blazed up fiercely like a volcano.  
I smoldered, slow as a forest fire.  
You are power, wholly embodied,  
Ready to drink even poison,

we follow-my fellows and I a party,  
we descend on a wheel of birth and death.  
Bearing bags full of gifts,  
gifts of alcohol and oxygen,  
blood and cancer,  
tumors and polio.

My grandson will be born  
with sleeping pills in his eyes,  
his potency is already dead.  
needing no vasectomy.

Perhaps he will be born as a war,  
Embracing every cripple,  
perhaps he will be born as a void,  
to replace the meaningless babble  
of revolt, lack of faith, and being.

Perhaps he will even refuse to be born  
from a natural mother's womb;  
Time, you are always the winner  
revealed like a crazy *Bhairava*,  
keep burning like the sun,  
keep flowing like a river,  
keep rustling like the bamboo leaves.

Upon your victory,  
I will let loose the calves from the tethering post.  
Fling open the doors of grain stores and barns,  
hand over my jewels to my daughter-in-law,  
and lay out green dung, neatly,  
around the *tulsi* shrine.

So snatch me up like an eagle  
swooping down on a chicken,  
wash me away like a flood destroying the fields,

and, like my daughter carelessly sweeping out dirt,  
sweep me from the threshold with a single stroke.

**Each One a Living Despot Jung Bahadr**

**Translated by Manjushree Thapa**

I offer no brilliance  
to the owl  
Pleasure, though-

Become-a cave in a hunting age  
a blow-pipe in the eternal dark  
Paint insignificant  
golden colors  
in the hair of the *Sunakeshari* queen  
Our rationales have come undone  
with *Draupadi's* stripping  
The currents of the Bagmati river  
have swept away  
the moon's reflection  
and emptied the whole sky.

Apart from the hordes I;  
One-  
not walk, not stop and not reach  
not seek and not be found  
not look and not see  
not feel and not be found.

The endless sky-quelling, stretching, lying  
as it leaves the edge of my vision

How indifferent, how monotonous  
how tiresome  
my mornings, middays-  
like my evenings and nights.

Somewhere far off-the strings of a fiddle  
play in solitude  
The undulation of a breeze  
spreads, unbinds, disappears  
gets disarrayed, becomes restive  
The restiveness of an undulation-  
falls on the tender leaves  
of a geranium plant

A conviction falls  
With a comet in the sky  
with a waterfall about to drop in panic  
from a mountainside  
with a bus conductor bloodied  
by a rush of crowds  
while opening a door.  
Conviction keeps changing form  
at each moment here.

Years ago  
I believe I plucked gardenia  
in the bounds of an embrace  
of a cool misty night.

This life lit up  
in a bounded fortress-  
a single memory of  
plucking gardenia.  
Like a song erased from a tape  
I've lost  
all my memories.

Not a single  
Golden letter  
legible  
in the folds of the mind.



My mind is a mere  
fractured slateboard  
erased inscription  
ripped *purana*.

Trees,  
single trees  
stand witness  
by the sides of the road.

Nights lacking alibis  
for pairs of footsteps  
lodge themselves in the vision  
of men  
and women  
approaching middle age.

A terrifying night  
not a night a snakebite  
not a night-but a desert mirage  
not a night but the tremor of an  
earthquake.

Like a hippy who slings on her back a baby  
each man and woman  
roaming the sidewalks of New Road at dusk  
clasps onto one or another attachment

Each one an ambition  
Each one a living despot Jung Bahadur  
Each one a living despot Jung Bahadur

## **Banira in the eyes of Wayne Amtzis**

Several poets and translators have translated the poems of Banira Giri. Amongst them, 'FROM THE LAKE, LOVE' (2000) was Banira's favorite one. Wayne Amtzis, a renowned poet in America was the editor of the book. In this process, Wayne had written introduction that Banira had preferred a lot. This proves importance of Banira and her precise works in the eyes of foreign authors. So, in this section, it's relevant to include that article by Wayne.

### **Sovereign Woman the Poetry of Banira Giri**

When a voice of assured affirmation anchors itself in an act of violation and violence as victim, the words "*transformation*" and "*overcoming*" can only approximate the writer's intention. In the poem "*Wound*", Banira Giri does more than raise a voice against rape and the personal wound the victim bears, she transforms through the powers of language and the inner strength of adversity overcome, the stigmata of violation into an emblem of power. "*Wound*" - already the softening occurs, the doubling of the act, the vowels, not the disavowal, the "V" for violation, like a flag waving in the wind, like something touched not with one lip but two. And so the tongue takes over: man misleads, sentences us; woman miraculizes, brings forth out of emptiness.. and we take note - of the images drawn through the eye of her affirmation. Creation borne out of memory. Where innocence is

victimized, where rape follows upon avowals of friendship, where chance meeting where brute strength overwhelms, what remains is the ad infinitum of Violation, the signs of blood of "cruel intimacy.... spread on the gravel of the crossroads like an unclaimed corpse.

"Violation !

From the outset  
your every thrust  
blazed as fire,  
tore through the skin as thorns do,  
pierced as a blade,  
appeared as the night of the dark moon  
But these days  
your every stroke,  
a mere touch,  
and as for my self  
I've become  
oven that contains the flame,  
bush that raises up thorns,  
sheath that holds the blade,  
fangs for the cobra's deadly poison,  
darkness of the night that swallows the moon

Only intensity of language and conciseness of imagery can assimilate what has happened. The stigmata of rape like an unhealing wound, like a brand claiming an animal is turned round not at the point of entry but from the deepest recesses of consciousness. It is there that woman triumphs. Man cannot go deep enough, he can not find her to claim her, for the vehicle of his claiming lacks depth, for it is always in retreat even as it attacks. Violation is all that he is. Wound is the source of her triumph, and in that triumph resistance cries out: you have done this to me, you will not do it again.

Wound ! Maul and smother me  
Lick with your slathering flames  
Your force converted  
for I'm hardened to it

Where your weapons of thrust and violation are stored,  
I burrow and hide, grazed from all angles guns afire  
Flameburst upon flameburst here and everywhere  
But it is surely so, violator  
Violation! tearing your ears, listen  
Your armory will be emptied - I will not  
your armory will be emptied - I will not

Giri's voice insistent in its climatic victory resounds with an insurgent force. In "From The Lake Love" the author works with an imagined act of violence. A high mountain lake is taken to be the body of a woman that all are drawn to and partake of in a ritual of rape and dismemberment. The aware reader recoils as she is drawn in. The woman of the lake in forced submission to the many gives herself to the one who fathoms to the depths her worth. Against a preconscious memory marked by collective violation, legend would have its readers overcome trauma within the amnesia of love and the cultural rites of marriage. Beneath the beauty of the language one asks; Is this not rape? Is this not violation? Is this what culture conceals?

a woman without compare...  
immersed herself, emerging  
her gentle comely form turned to gold  
Then and there a gaggle of youths  
grabbed her, tore her to pieces  
and shared her among themselves  
...among them a youthful hunter  
...stole away with her heart.  
...On full moon nights

in the dreamlike shimmering of Sarover  
...transformed into white swans  
murmuring their love talk,  
...waiting for the wedding procession,  
...band...implements...ceremony...  
hand-woven leaves for the feast.

For Giri and for the culture she seeks to reclaim in her poetry, a crime more consequential than violation is abandonment. Within her writing the ideal of wholeness, of man and woman complementing and completing, of world and beings sustaining and surpassing, is seen as a given within nature and when seen well, when understood, is taken up and affirmed in human creation and in culture. In "Pashugayatri" she portrays the cultural loss when the task of sustaining has been abandoned.

in this holy land of Pashupati,  
completely helpless, bereft and naked,  
pitiful Bagmati... .. stagnant within  
...only scars of memory...  
the rush of her waters, an encrusted scab  
... through the dry banks of her chest  
(she) whispers the Pashugayatri mantra..  
and she is shocked  
"Ay. ai, Men are men after all,  
though they throw a flood of filth into the Bagmati,  
though they make the Bagmati a River-Of- Sand  
...who is she to have them listen...?"  
She herself feels ashamed, troubled, sobs  
In preparation to enter the underworld for ever,  
seen by no one, for the last time,  
  
stops for a moment during the still of night, tries to wash the feet  
of Lord Pashupati, but cannot  
Bagmati, of only a thin line, only a name,

breathless, weak, waterless, Bagmati  
disheartened while trying to bid farewell to  
Pashupati  
the whips of sand  
chase her  
the whips of sand  
drive her out

In a world where culture mattered, where symbol embodied living force, the writing of Banira Giri would be recognized for its sustaining power, for its capacity to project enduring sources of creativity into a mode of awareness. At the heart of her enterprise the Sovereign Female reigns. Where it should be praised, it has been diminished; where it should be established, it is abandoned; where it should be protected it is assaulted. Unfortunately the power of her voice, the intensity of her language and willingness to take up the forms of traditional culture and revitalize them from a more deeply realized source does not warn nor awaken those who will not hear it. Where man appropriates, woman creates; where creation itself is violated, what is poetry ?

The dominant culture lodges its verdict. Where a woman's body is not her own, the wound of rape marks every woman as does the glance of indifference which casts her out. It's not that in Kathmandu history, time and culture conspire, but that life is shaped in their name. That Giri sees and characterizes acts against woman in the language of poetry does not invalidate her work's objective understanding and wider more inclusive range. In "Kathmandu", the dominant image of violence against woman characterizes the city itself. Ensnared, branded, beaten and kicked, the bodies of woman, the consciousness of all:

Kathmandu was forged a superheated furnace  
fired by a hundred thousand volts

Like Sita at her trial by fire,  
the helpless girls of this capital  
sit upon it, tender bodies ready to be branded,  
ensnared in its bondage of desire

Isn't it Nanicha's liquor-shop  
where the GunjaMans and RamBahadurs daily crowd  
tossing their heads back to drink  
then going home to beat their wives ?  
The Toyota's deep tire tracks in the street  
the greenish kick-marks on the bodies of their wives  
Kathmandu's daily fare

Dis abled (in fact)\ un stable (in name) stabled in a  
destabilizing world, standing for every woman (and man), the  
poetess senses society and culture's failure to sustain wholeness.  
Without mutuality of integrity and openness, forces that would  
complement, contradict. And where sustaining would bring forth,  
it undermines. In the history (of the present) and in the  
consciousness of those who endure it, where the emergent is  
denied and the dominant affirmed, contradictions arise as  
unresolvable oppositions and the only truth is deceit. Thus purity  
is claimed in the stigmata of the impure and praise in the curse of  
the damned.

...hypocrites of the land come here  
to plunge into the waters of Rani Pokhari  
and be made pure...

...not just pure coolness  
Kathmandu is also hexes and jinxes...  
...the horrifying opening lines of politicians' speeches  
the people's chorus of poverty...  
...Everyone darling  
Cursed by all...

In Kathmandu contemporary history takes on the pretensions of literature, but without an inner dynamic. Lack repeat itself; what seduces, traps and the refrains of culture dead end. Not only is poetry without use, history itself is useless.

This beloved Kathmandu  
is an epic...  
...forever repeating the same laments

In "Each One A Living Despot Jung Bahadur" Giri finds the citizen-to-be at the nexus of a stalemate where culture and history have yet to decide their fate. More displaced than settled, without public stance, each person, lacking definition, sensing but not knowing the what to be or the who they are, turns inward where wealth of images impressed upon the eye are lacking in substance, fleeting, and gone - only to deepen their striving, their unrealized claims.

A conviction falls -  
with a comet in the sky  
with a waterfall about to drop in panic  
from a mountainside  
with a bus conductor bloodied  
by a rush of crowds while opening a door  
Conviction keeps changing form  
each moment -

Within this inward dynamic is a wariness that parallels the tentativeness of events. One is ever on the verge of action, but the what and how of changing possibility and the threat of violence can neither cohere nor stop the drift apart from the identity-less crowd. In aimless anomie nurtured by nostalgia, memory neither holds nor shapes affirmation. Left to grasp at what it can, the self, until and only if it can void the threat it feels in a coup of the self, in a victory of its solitary affirmation, lives in suppressed



fear, in prophetic panic, in a state of self imposed tyranny.  
Powerless until it can turn its tyranny outward on others.

Nights lacking alibis  
for pairs of footsteps

A terrifying night  
not a night a snakebite  
not a night-but a desert mirage  
not a night but the tremor of an  
earthquake.

each man and woman  
roaming the sidewalks of New Road at dusk  
clasps onto one or another attachment

Each one an ambition  
Each one a living despot Jung Bahadur  
Each one a living despot Jung Bahadur

In "Time You Are Always A Winner" Giri graphs the trope  
of her concern within a more human helplessness. Time has  
sovereignty over the human realm: a rule against which there is  
no resistance other than the recognition of its power. Here, as in  
'Wound', the poetess takes on the force of the victor, identifying  
herself with its impress almost as a challenge a dare

Snatch me up like an eagle  
Swooping down on a chicken  
wash me away  
like a flood destroying the fields,  
and, like my daughter sweeping out dirt,  
sweep me from the threshold  
with a single stroke,  
sweep me from the threshold with a single stroke.

The fiat of that sudden act separates the writer from those, and from that within her, that would "descend on the wheel of birth and death, \ bearing bags full of gifts \ gifts of alcohol and oxygen." For Giri the sovereignty of time can only be faced with fundamental honesty and true admission. In "I Am A Torn Poster" she states "I am a torn poster on the wall of Time," and caveats that with declamation " Man, do not vary the meanings you give \ to pieces of splintered sentences \ I have forgotten my story."

After centuries I stand, a folktale  
upon a bank of Time  
my Time is ragged and thin,  
it feels its scars and its wounds  
Our feet leave only prints, soon erased from the  
desert's breast,  
the cold mountain breeze, like drunkenness,  
adds more pain as it leaves next day,  
lightening by miscarriage  
of belief and dreams, security, rights

I am cursed  
by this womb, these flowers,  
like a broken pot, thrown away, useless,  
like a grape with no juice, dried up,  
inedible

In "The Signature Of Time" a more ameliorative view of the shaping power of Time delimits the world we live in. Time known by its shaping, shapeless itself, through its work, but is not the work itself.

Handing out to life and the world

Appointments  
Re- appointments  
Memos of termination

Time is the engineer of the great parikrama  
It plumbs the depths of this world of beauty and non-beauty,  
it drives the living world of beauty onwards,  
it drives the living world of non-beauty onwards.

In her body of poetry as the world would have it, Time is recognized, but Space is taken for granted. A given, and as the world would have it: unspoken and denied. Time is the sovereign Male, the great appropriator; Space is the sovereign Female, through which life emerges. By her work it seems the poet, whether female or male, should fall on the side of life, in the way of bringing forth. S/he cannot hide from the dictates of time, but the poet is no dictator. She immerses herself in the work and brings forth meaning, beauty, and belief in all that is human. The fundamental honesty of Giri's writing challenges those who write and those who will not listen to the words, who do not hear in the saying their own words, but only speak as if Time dictated through them the pulse of the world, as if Time's dictates granted them warranty, granted them pardon for suppressing, for misappropriating, for claiming for violating the human realm. As if history was parsed in the squabblings and catchwords of their dictates.

And where is the victor, the modern day despot who speaks in time's name, who occupies the space of awakening? In "Poem For The Man Of Today" he holds to his isolation, his mirroring isolate isolation: " he is himself alone, \ He has a color TV \ And there he has only his face \ And there he has only his face." Baleful witness to his acts or baying to those who speak and act in his name. Against this verdict, the voice of reprieve, of rectification wants to be heard in Banira Giri's writing. If the reader identifies the predicament, the endgame of anomie and isolation, produced by and with the (small s) self and is willing to hear the call out of the void of her (woman's) banishment, the clarioned absence of a larger self, (the capital S) of sovereignty bequeathed to all, then the writer sanctions a way out.

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In the book-length poem "My Discovery", the poetess in a coup of the self proclaims victory not as a despot but as a troubadour would, securing her will's fulfillment. No unrepentant memory of the inferno of rape and abandonment nor sidestepping backward glance through the purgatory of anomie and isolation maps entry to a newfound paradise of contentment; nor is unrivaled gladness at the expense of those who would harm or contain us. "My Discovery" offers a revaluation of the self that in its will to belief, in its want to transcend limits, would redefine relations and establish a world where mutuality between a man and a woman precipitates and sustains ongoing discovery. A man, complete unto himself, not needing (ab)use of the other and a woman already assured of her being is for the poetess not just the end, the ideal, but the beginning, the praxis of a history, the nexus through which her nation's history and culture must pass. Attentive to the map of this realm the reader asks: is this an island, a world without limit unto itself, to be imitated for the joyful transforming power it bares?

Embracing you  
I'm walking without end  
to the northern and southern tundra poles  
in the plains of white snow and silver  
printing blocks with my soles  
I'm walking sand dunes along with me  
erasing with the duster of my feet  
the wavy designs cut into the back of the Sahara

Or the dynamic of an ongoing engagement with the world,  
to be undertaken for the concern it declares?

My Precious expanse of land!  
In your cold passageways

by the hundreds of thousands tubercular lives  
survive retching blood  
darker than the red you heave on the horizon  
I beg you  
oracle of our transformation  
warm them, rouse, enliven them  
without end

The poetess would have us believe through intimate disclosures and sustained rhetoric that it is, of necessity, both. There is of this discovery an intention, almost willful, a presumption that surpasses restrictive limits of belief. Here the power of engagement with the world has been underwritten by the joyful dialectics of self and other. For the woman who refuses her captors their culturally procured rights, there is an avatar in man she will ultimately recognize, one who would not bind others through the conceit of his manhood.

Midst a maelstrom cursed by the centuries  
Shiva's bow is broken  
He that did so  
bows his head in wisdom to receive  
the engagement garland  
freely given by a man's daughter

Not for his self does he accept their engagement,  
but as human being  
he does

Here the sovereign act that defines man and woman is beyond the misuse of words and the traction of laws. Its affirmation proclaims a world where all that is human shall find its place, and where all that confines, diminishes and violates our capacity and potential will be recognized for what it is. That My Discovery's resonance is personal and not yet a praxis of a history is to recognize not just the limits of poetry but that of politics and

religion as well. On the horizon of our world, My Discovery remains an idyllic passage, and the writer's voyage exemplary. Concurrent with the belief that poetry can create a world and affirm a self, Banira Giri's poems stand as witness, warning and celebration, not to be read as a personal history of triumph over life, but as ongoing encounter: the cry "Violation" can still be heard, "the whips of sand" still drive the goddess out, bodies are still branded, wives still beaten, but the epic can no longer repeat the same laments, and no Jung Bahadur, no living man nor woman shall, with human acquiescence, feed the night with alibis. Banira Giri's poems testify in her culture and society to what can no longer be as it was.

## Demise of Banira

Banira Giri was awarded with the title of 'World Nepali Literary Woman Icon' by the then prime minister Sushil Koirala on May 30, 2014. On the occasion, she thanked the Nai Academy- "The Nai Academy has added color in my life that was beyond my imagination. This honor is not merely a reward; it has brought divine pleasure and bliss inside me. Now, I don't need anything. I assume that I'm Ahilya who got emancipation from her cursed life as a stone while lord Rama touched the stone with his feet. I'm thankful to our Nepali society as well. "

After a few months of this event, Banira had her bad health that had been worsening each day. Her writing journey became slower; she was not capable of reading books as before. Her relatives and well-wishers distanced themselves from her. Doctors suggested that she lacked Vitamin-12 and tried to cure the health issue. In fact, it was the initial stage of the disease called Alzheimers. No treatment and medicines worked and her health condition couldn't improve. Meanwhile, diabetes also attacked her. All efforts of Mr. Shankar Giri were fruitless. Her illness had no accurate cure. Finally she forgot everything and everyone including her husband Shankar and her maid Bibha Bote.

On April 28, 2021, Bibha fell sick. Thinking that it was simply a common cold and light headache, nobody paid much caution in the beginning. She was a healthy lady and had been taking care of Banira for a long time. Till date engineer Shankar Giri and other members were unaware of the ferocious entry of

Covid-19 at Banira-Griha (their abode). When Bibha had a serious health condition, she was taken to hospital. As hospitals were packed, she didn't get immediate entry. She was taken to another hospital. After some minutes they reached hospital, Bibha met the tragic end of her life. It made them all worried and scared. Mr. Giri managed for a nurse to take care of Banira. After Bibha's death on April 30, 2021, all members of Banira Griha had their Covid Pcr test. The Banira couple and BhimBahadurBote, husband of Bibha also had Covid-19 positive. Just after the demise of Bibha, Mr. Shankar Giri had a severe health condition. Till that time, Banira had no symptoms of Covid-19. Mr. Giri was taken to hospital as he felt suffocation in breathing. After fourteen days in the Everest Hospital at Baneshwor in Kathmandu, he returned home with the Pcr negative results.

After three days of Mr. Shankar Giri's return from hospital, Banira got a severe condition and was taken to the Civil Hospital on May 23, 2021. After some minutes they reached the hospital, the doctors declared the death of Banira. Her dead body was taken to Pashupati by Nepalese army. It was really heartbreaking that the Woman-Icon in Nepali Literature had her tragic end without her own family members, relatives or well-wishers beside her. Luckily Banira's Dewar and Devrani (husband's younger brother and his wife) had offered flowers on her dead body from a distance. The body was incinerated in electric crematorium by the armies as the second phase of Covid-19 pandemic was in its extremity in some countries including Nepal. Banira became news only and her readers and other litterateurs could do nothing except being sad and broken in her miserable departure.

Her sudden and despondent loss made poet Mrs. Indira Prasai much hurt and shattered. She wrote a poem regarding struggles and bitter experiences of Banira that she had faced by some jealous people not only in her literary journey but in her



profession too. Poet Prasai has expressed her heartily spirits in the poem titled 'Never you come back Banira !'

### **Never You Come Back Banira**

Banira, the daughter of Vagdevi<sup>1</sup>  
You sowed the seeds of literacies  
And cared for them regularly  
You,  
A steady proficient of expressions  
An unceasing devotee of lexis  
Persistent with your journey  
Unwavering as Ekalavya<sup>2</sup>  
You were supposed  
To be honored  
With medals and appreciation  
But  
Your tender heart  
Many often got wounded  
With the shrill arrows of  
Discrepancy and humiliation

Neither could I express  
Nor Could I count  
How sharp those shots  
Under your pillow  
As the bed of arrows  
Of Bhishma Pitamah<sup>3</sup>

1. Vagdevi– Hindu Goddess of learning, music and poetry.
2. Ekalavya– is a character in the Hindu epic Mahabharata who determined learning under Sage Dronacharya (teacher of the prince Pandavas and Kauravas) though Ekalavya was born in a so-called low-caste family. As he couldn't join them, he managed an idol of Guru Dronacharya and learned archery and other skills making the idol his instructor.
3. Bhishma Pitamah is a character in the Mahabharata who had the boon of unconstrained death and till the war between the Pandavas and Kauravas ended, he remained alive sleeping on the bed of arrows by Arjuna, his grandson's son.

How deep were they  
And who were the felons?

The heartless people  
Without their true-self  
Looking like humans  
But with no humanity  
Many often tried  
To burn your immensity  
With the flame of  
Differences and prejudices  
The wicked people  
Like wolves in behaviors  
Tried to scratch you  
With their blunt claws  
You were tortured  
Often and often  
And finally,  
Became total quiet  
Sinking in the  
Inlet of pains

The thankless and  
Unwise crowd of  
So-called intellectuals  
Who never know the  
Actual meaning of self-pride  
And having the  
Mentality of enslavement  
Were always envious  
To your natural brilliance  
The insensibly deaf  
Retailled their patriotism  
With a fistful of self-interest

And devalued your dignity  
The National flag  
Erected with your piety  
Was made colorless  
And your astu<sup>4</sup> got filthy  
In the 'infected' water of  
The holy river of Bagmati  
Why did you come Banira!  
To this intellectual brothel  
Taunted and polluted  
By the majority of  
Scholarly hawks and eagles  
You were to be cremated

With reverence and honor  
Along with bands and flowers  
On your corporeal body  
The harsh army boots  
And the hands of PPE  
Disappeared taking you away

But, whatever they did  
To fade you away  
How much they suppressed  
You and your deeds  
They can never be successful  
You will be alive  
You will be immortal  
With the strength  
Of your lexicons  
That is flourished  
As the evergreen grass  
Grown spontaneously

4. Astu is a remaining piece of bone of head of the dead human body to be flown into the sacred rivers after it is burnt in suitable time within a year.

And your songs  
Will be sung  
Every dawn and morning  
And the sun rises  
With the melody  
Of your songs

I don't know Banira!  
Either the prescript  
Was judicial or not  
You burnt to ashes  
In the flame of  
Self-esteem as Sati Devi<sup>5</sup>

Whatever and However  
You have gone,  
Don't come back again.  
I thank the divine power  
You went away  
From this ungrateful town  
And indifferent people  
Please Banira!  
Never ever return  
To this egocentric town!

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5. Sati Devi- According to ancient myths, Sati Devi had a marriage with lord Mahadev against the will of her sage father Daksha. She had visited her father's home without her husband, uninvited in a religious ceremony. Meanwhile her father insulted Mahadev. She couldn't tolerate insult of her husband and committed suicide in the holy fire there. And Banira's birth name was also Sati Devi.

**Banira Giri**