

Post 2015 Earthquake, 2016

BHAKTAPUR

THE HISTORICAL CITY – *A World Heritage Site*

Professor Purushottam Lochan Shrestha, Ph.D.



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CHAPTER I

BHAKTAPUR: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Meaning of 'Bhaktapur'

The district is known as 'Bhaktapur' in general. The Newars call it 'Khwopa'. Its former form is *Khwopring*, the non-Sanskrit oldest name of Bhaktapur. *Khwopring* as a name prevailed even before the advent of the Lichchhavis i.e. in the Kirat Period. *Khopring*, the ancient place name of the present Bhaktapur was first mentioned in an inscription set up in 477 A.D. as 'Khopringgrampradesha' during the reign of Manadeva the historical Lichchhavi king.¹ This epigraphic evidence furthermore reveals Bhaktapur district as one of the oldest peripheral settlements in the Kathmandu valley. It is also important to note that without any major change, even the Tamang inhabitants still call Bhaktapur as *Khobang* in their language which is so close to the word *Khopring*. According to Vajracharya, the Kirat word 'kho' perhaps denotes 'Bhaat' (cooked rice) which in the later times translated into Sanskrit word as Bhakta, so as the word 'Pring' denotes a village. In Sanskrit, a village is called 'Gram'.²

From the aforementioned fact, it is to be known that 'Khopringgrampradesha' was an extensive rural area, particularly famous for 'Bhaat'. In course of time due to this feature 'Khopring' transformed into the Sanskrit name 'Bhaktagram'. 'Bhadgaon' is the corrupt form of *Bhaktagram*. The name *Bhadgaon* seems to have been used frequently but only after the end of the Malla period. A well developed town is called 'Pur' in Sanskrit. Bhaktapur either exclaimed 'Bhaktagram' or 'Bhaktapur' in the medieval period. The name 'Bhaktapur' is first referred in a Manuscript titled 'Kiran Tantra' written in 924 A.D. Since then not only the city but the entire region up to this day has been calling as 'Bhaktapur'. It is interesting to note that the name of a certain territory was used in two different languages in the past. Thus we have

1 Dhanavajra Vajracharya, **Lichchhavikalka Avilekh**, Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, Kirtipur: 2030 V. S. pp 50.

2 Dhanavajra Vajracharya, 'Madhyakalka Suruka Kehi Avhilekh', **Contributions to Nepalese Studies**, Vol.V, no.1, 1977, pp 112.

Khopring in the Newari language, *Khwopa* the later form of *Khopring* in the Newar dialect and *Bhaktapur* in the Sanskrit language. It can be concluded that the root *Bhakta* not only denotes *Devotee* but also the food i.e. the staple *Bhaat* (cooked rice). For instance, a vessel containing cooked rice in Sanskrit is called *Bhaktapurita bhandam*. Therefore it must be borne in mind that not only the single city of Bhaktapur but the rest of the regions - or so to say that not only the city or a village, but each and every land of Nepal is the land of the devotees.

The People

As in the national context, the people of Bhaktapur may be divided into two main groups – The Indo Aryans and the Mongoloid (non Aryans). *Brahmins*, *Chhetris* and other occupational castes such as *Kami* (Blacksmith), *Damai* (Tailor), *Sunar* (Goldsmith), *Sarki* (cobbler) etc. belong to the Indo Aryan race and speak Nepali national language as mother tongue. The Mongoloid race is divided into many ethnic groups. In the case of Bhaktapur district, Newars, Tamangs, Magars, Gurungs etc. belong to the Mongoloid race in general. It is to be considered that the Newars and the Tamangs are the indigenous inhabitants of the valley and it seems, before the advent of the Lichchhavis they were popularly known as the Kirats. About the Newars, Bangdel writes:

*Among the Mongoloid race, the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley and environs have played a unique role in the history of Nepal. The Newars have excelled in all forms of craftsmanship and artwork. They are mainly responsible for the architecture of the Valley. Examples of their unique contributions are the magnificent wood carving of temples, shrines, palaces and private houses. Among other art works, their bronze sculptures rank among the finest in the world. Thus, the Newars have achieved the highest level of culture among the people of Southeast Asia.*³

Historical Background

Although Bhaktapur is geographically a small district, the national history is inevitably connected with the history of Bhaktapur. Bhaktapur appears to be remarkably either in the political or the religious history, economic or socio-cultural history, or in the case of arts and architecture.

3 Lain S. Bangdel, **Stolen Images of Nepal**, Royal Nepal Academy, Kathmandu: 1989, pp22.

The prehistory of Nepal is still in its infancy. Nevertheless Neolithic stone tools from Nankhel and Tathali V.D.C. (the south-east and north-east regions respectively) of Bhaktapur has been recently discovered indicating that it was also the appropriate place for the prehistoric settlers in the Valley.⁴ We have not yet found our recorded history prior to the 5th century A.D. The traditional history commences with the tribal rule of the Gopals and *Mahishapals* i.e. the **Abhiras** in the Valley as it is known from the **Gopalrajyamsavali** including other **Vamsavalies** (Chronicles).⁵ The **Vamsavalies** credited them for the expansion of human habitation in the Valley, consecration of lord Pashupatinath etc. Moreover, they are attributed by 'Nipa'. It is supposed that by Nipa, the country was named as 'Nepal'.

The Abhiras were succeeded by the Kiratas. Although no contemporary epigraphic evidences is found so far to corroborate the Kirat rule in Nepal, the later documents i.e. Lichchhavi inscriptions and other available sources have verified that prior to the penetration of the Lichchhavis into the Valley, they were the ruling dynasty of Nepal. Lichchhavi inscriptions are found in certain places of the Bhaktapur District, in which the non Sanskrit place names have been mentioned. Evidently they belonged to the Kirat language. *Khopring*, *Khripung*, *Makhodulu*, *Makhopring*, *Themring*, *Bosing* etc. are some of the examples to testify this fact. It is to be known that *Khripung*, *Makhodulu* and *Makhopring* were the existing villages inside the **Khopring** territory and were generally called 'Khopring'. The Present day Thimi in those days was called 'Themring' and Bode as 'Bosing'. In this regard, it is also perceived that Bhaktapur in the Kirat time was a well-organized city having varied cultural richness.

The Kirats were the follower of lord Shiva, the universal god of the valley. In some places of Bhaktapur district there are a few numbers of *Shivalingas* whose styles are quite different than the Lichchhavi Shivalingas. They seem to be the oldest and might be built during the Kirat time. Buddhism probably was introduced into the valley during the reign of the Kirats as it is known from the literary accounts.

It is important to realize, that the recorded national history of Nepal begins with the Changunarayana pillar inscription (A.D.464) dedicated to lord Vishnu by the

4 Purushottam Lochan Shrestha **Rock Edicts and other Heritages**, Babita Shrestha, Bhaktapur: 2067 V.S., pp 66-67, 115.

5 Dhanavajra Vajracharya and Kamal P.Malla, **The Gopalrajyamsavali**, , Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden :1985, folio17.

first historical ruler King Manadeva I. This is indeed the earliest dated document of Lichchhavi rule. As mentioned earlier, this epigraphic evidence is also the best example proving how the recorded history is connected with Bhaktapur.

We have more than two hundred Lichchhavi inscriptions as well as a large number of stone sculptures elsewhere in the valley. From these evidences, it is evidently known to us the highly advanced socio cultural and religious life in those days. The two main religions i.e. Hinduism and Buddhism of Nepal were flourishing side by side in a tolerating and coexisting manner. As a result of this, religious tolerance and cultural harmony is still pervasive in Nepal. Interestingly it can be considered as the fundamental basis and characteristics of the religious life of Nepal. Although Lichchhavi Art and architecture in different times influenced from the different Indian schools of art i.e. the *Mathura*, the *Gupta*, the *Pala* but the Nepalese artists never forgot to apply their own indigenous style and structural skills. Art and architecture in this period reached a high point of development. The archetypes of Changunarayana temple namely Visvarupa-Visnu (7th century A.D.), Vishnu Vikranta (8th century A.D.), *Vishnu with Laxmi and Garuda* (9th century A.D.), are some of the most beautiful stone sculptures from the Bhaktapur district to corroborate the aforesaid fact.

Again in the context of religion, it is doubtless that Bhaktapur is predominantly a Hindu territory since the distant past. Even though, the development and the popularity of early Buddhism cannot be overlooked. Even before 1st century B.C., Buddhism was divided into two sects. Those who do not want any change were called Hinayanist (**Hinayana** known as the small path). The other progressive groups regarded Buddha not just a human being but the Supreme Being – the lord of the universe. They were known as the Mahayanist (**Mahayana** or the the greater path). Mahayana Buddhism seems to have prevailed in the north eastern region of ancient Bhaktapur. Sankhu is an adjoining territory of Bhaktapur. In this context, it is important to mention the Lichchhavi inscription at Sankhu, which has mentioned ‘Mahasanghik Vikshu sangha’. Indeed, this evidence clearly marked the advent of the ‘Mahasanghik’ Buddhist monks in the Valley before they were called ‘Mahayanist’.⁶ The other important Lichchhavi inscription of Chyamhasimha in Bhaktapur also verifies this fact. In that inscription, ‘Vikshunisangha’ is mentioned.⁷ This is the

6 Dhanavajra Vajracharya, **Lichchhavi kalka Avilekh**, ibid, pp 508,510.

7 Yogeshraj, ‘Bhaktapurko Hallsamma Aprakasita sarvaprachin Boudha Avilekh’, **Pasuka**, 2/11, 2055V.S., p 3.

earliest Buddhist inscription discovered in Bhaktapur district. Furthermore we have another Lichchhavi inscription found at Baghhiti in Bagesvori of Bhaktapur, in which 'Udhyotak vihar' is noticed.⁸ It no longer stands; overall it is known that there was also the Buddhist habitation having oldest monasteries in Bhaktapur even during the pre Lichchhavi period.

The core area of ancient rural Bhaktapur was gradually stepping towards urbanization around 6th century A.D. Golmadhi tole: the Lichchhavi site 'Makhopring' is still situated in the centre of Bhaktapur city. The Golmadhi tole inscription of the Lichchhavi king Shivadeva and Amshuvarma, dated 516 (594A.D.) speaks of *Makhopring* as a 'Dranga'. *Dranga* is a Sanskrit word which denotes a well-developed town with a custom office and being a trade centre having many economic activities.

The Lichchhavis were disappeared from the political scene somewhere around the 10th century A.D. During the early medieval period there was a great change in the habitations due to the various reasons. Whatsoever, the *Makhopringdranga* of the Lichchhavi period got its great importance when it became the capital of Nepal (Nepal Mandala) in the 12th century A.D. In this regard, to Ananda Dev (1146-1167A.D.) one of the renowned early medieval rulers goes the credit for having built and established Bhaktapur as a capital city, including the Tripura palace in it. Notwithstanding the fact that the **Tripura Rajkula** (royal palace) no longer stands, the available sources shows that even as the goddess *Tripurasundari* (the leading deity of the nine mother goddesses namely the 'Navadurga') existed in the heart of the city, so the palace appears to have been built in the same position. The name of the palace obviously comes after the name of the goddess.¹⁰ Literary sources and legends also credits Ananda Dev with installing the Navadurga in the proper places of the inner and outer city for purposes of protecting his newly built capital city and his fellow country-people from intruders and other dangers. Why Ananda Dev shifted his capital and established the Durbar in Bhaktapur along with installing Navadurga Gana is interesting to note. In fact, the wide popularity of the mother goddess cult during the high time of the Tantric Shaktism of the early medieval period seems to be one of the tumultuous of all times. This took the form of natural

8 Purushottam Lochan Shrestha, **Bhaktapurma Tantric Shaktiko Yuga**, Ph.D. Dissertation, T.U., 2050 V.S., pp132.

9 Dhanavajra Vajracharua, **Lichchhavikalka Avilekh**, up cit, pp 249.

10 Purushottam Lochan Shrestha, **The Navadurga Gana of Bhaktapur**, Babita Shrestha, Bhaktapur: 2060 V.S. pp 15-17.

calamities, repeated invasions, a breakdown in law and order situation, declining prosperity etc. That the common people neglected the male deities and started worshiping and expecting such blessings from the blood thirsty ferocious female deities i.e. the *Astamatrika/Navadurga Gana* reveals that the people in those days firmly believed that the true protectors of king, country and fellow countrymen were the female deities. The mother goddess cult of the eight or nine along with their other counterparts such as Ganesha, Bhairava, Bhimshen, Kumara etc. as the basis of tantric protection seems to have been installed not only in Bhaktapur but also in the rest towns of the valley around the first half of the 12th century.

Since the twelfth century A.D., as capital of the kingdom of Nepal, Bhaktapur not only became the political centre, but was also the mid-point of religious, cultural and educational activities for more than three centuries. At that time in India, the Muslim invaders were ruthlessly suppressing the Buddhists and the Hindus. In those crucial moments, the Buddhist and Hindu tutors along with their disciples entered the Nepal valley carrying the valuable manuscripts with them for the protection and preservation of these documents. In reality, in those historic days Bhaktapur as the supreme power center, also played an important role to preserve and enhance Hinduism as well as tantric Buddhism.

Bhaktapur was specifically the homeland of the tantric Shaktism in the valley during the medieval period. The high divinities i.e. the *Taleju*, the *Dumaju* and the *Manesvori* (the different tantric manifestation of goddess Durga/Bhagavati in general) also corroborate this fact. Since the Malla rulers were staunch supporters of *Shakti* – the supreme power, Shaktism reached a high degree in religious and cultural development in the valley. The royal palaces not only remained as royal residences, but also the god-houses or the holy places of the religious-cultural life. They also appeared in the art and architecture, fairs and festivals and so on.

The political situation of Bhaktapur was not satisfactory due to the attacks, counter-attacks, and intrigues and counter-intrigues between two groups. In such a situation, Sultan Shamasuddin of Bengal attacked Kathmandu valley from the east. The Muslim army first attacked Bhaktapur in 1349 A.D. because it was the capital.¹¹ They captured Bhaktapur, looted the property and destroyed the cultural heritages in Bhaktapur. This was a devastating loss to Bhaktapur.

11 Dhanavajra Vajracharya, 'Shamasuddinko Aakramana', **Purnima**, 2/4, 2022V.S. pp 10-11.

During the reign of King Yaksha Malla (1428-1481 A.D.) the Kathmandu valley marks an important period in the history of the medieval Nepal. He fortified his capital, Bhaktapur surrounded by the great wall with strong gates in the cardinal points with a strategic purpose to protect from outsiders and invaders. According to the golden gate inscription dated 1453 A.D. fortification was completed by the cooperation of all caste of people for the initiation of the king.¹² Recently, in course of our field study in the surrounding hills of Bhaktapur, we have discovered a number of forts in such hills viz. the *Duwakot*, the *Changukot*, the *Telkot*, the *Nagarkot*, the *Nalagadha*, The four Gadhis of Aitavare Samudayak Van situated in the Tathali, the Sangha Gadha, the Ranikot Gadhi, the Gundu Gadhi, the Katunge kot, Dadhikot etc. 'Kotta' is a Sanskrit word, which means a fort. 'Kot' is the corrupted form of *Kotta*. A fortified hill was called either 'Kot' or 'Killa' or 'Gadhi' in the past. Likewise, the rural territories outside the city boundaries were also remained as strong forts for the defensive purpose.

The demise of Yaksha Malla brought a political instability in the Nepal Mandala. As a result, the Nepal Mandala was divided into three kingdoms i.e. Bhaktapur, Kantipur and Lalitpur. At length, this separation proved to be a curse. In spite of this, the political rivalry and the showing superiority against the rival rulers was like a boon to the valley till the end of the Malla period. Due to this reason, the Kathmandu valley was filled with tangible and intangible heritages of great significance. Politically, Bhaktapur became a small kingdom and the city itself as a capital of a tiny kingdom. Destruction, in some respect, also brings construction and development. For example, during the reign of Jitmitra Malla and his son Bhupatindra Malla in 1681 A.D., a massive earthquake destroyed many monuments including the newly built Durbar viz. 'Tanthu Rajkul'.¹³ Nevertheless, with their great efforts, not only the ruined heritages were recovered, but also new heritages were built. The five storied temple i.e. Nyatapola and the fifty-five window palace are the best examples to prove this fact. In fact, credit goes to them for the beautification of Bhaktapur.

Bhaktapur lost its political importance after the conquest of Gorkhali in 1769 A.D. Since then it remained as an ordinary district only. Advancing art and architecture,

12 D.R.Ragmi, **Medieval Nepal**, Part III, Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyaya, Calcutta: 1965, p 27.

13 Dr. Purushottam Lochan Shrestha, **Pachpanna-jhale-durbar**, a research work submitted to Bhaktapur Municipality, 2058 V.S., p 6.

rites and rituals, fairs and festivals, all culminated in a way so that they continued just a tradition. Although it lost almost everything, it somehow sustained the glory of being a cultural-core. In this respect, viewing from the still surviving heritages, it can be assumed that Bhaktapur is still the cultural capital of Nepal.

Art and Architecture

The history of Nepali arts and architecture seem to have been apparent since the 5th century A.D. Nepali art through the centuries have appeared in sculptures and paintings belonging to both Hinduism and Buddhism in particular. There are countless images of the Hindu and Buddhist divinities belonging to the different period scattered in the valley. Bhaktapur is also renowned for age-old sculptural, bronze and wooden artworks. Likewise, miniature painting (manuscript painting), wall painting and the scroll painting (Paubha/Thangka) were prevalent in the medieval Bhaktapur. Particularly, before the 14th century, the subject matter of sculptures and paintings were religious ones. Onwards, due to the influence of different Indian school of arts i.e. the *Mughal*, *Rajput*, *Pahari* and so on, various subject matters like erotic postures, folklore as well as the court scenes of war and army, self-portrait of the royal families, hunting scenes, celebrations scenes etc. also appeared in the Nepalese scrolls, bronzes and miniatures. Bhaktapur is an open museum of these highly evolved varieties of art forms.

Traditional architecture of Bhaktapur also represents her ancient and still living convention, a visible geographical setting and shape, religion and culture, crafts and industries and utilitarian creations. The *patis* (way-farers rest house/simplest Dharma Salas), *sattals* (a larger pati where pilgrims may stay for a few days), *dhunge-dharas* (water spouts) and *jaladronis* (a rectangular stone water-tank), dwellings etc. are in general the best instances of traditional architecture which is secular.

Viewing the former shape and style of Bhaktapur palace, indeed, it has changed a lot, but it is somehow surviving in its pristine condition. Nevertheless, the very palace can be regarded as the masterpiece of the medieval palace architecture.

Bhaktapur palace, one of the oldest royal palaces of the Kathmandu valley, from where the entire kingdom of Nepal was ruled for more than three centuries, was the most extensive palace complex with ninety-nine courtyards and many famous

adjoining parts. Some parts no longer stands viz., *Basantapur Durbar*, *Choukot Durbar* and *Thanthu Rajkul*. Besides, *Simhadhoka Durbar* (where the National Art Gallery is housed), *Pachpanna-jhale Durbar* (the world famous fifty-five windows palace) and some remaining part of the *Thanthu Rajkul* (where the office of Bhaktapur Municipality is housed) still exist. At present, only a few courtyards are in existence viz. *Mulchook*, *Bhairavchook*, *Kumarichook*, *Bhandarkhalchook*, *Malatichook*, *Sundharachook*, *Dumajuchook*, *Mahadevachook*, *Jiswaanchook*, *Jama-dwarachook*, *Bekochook* etc. Overall, the Bhaktapur palace complex with excellent artistic woodworks, bronzes, paintings, stone crafts and terracotta figures is one of the most glorious architectural contributions of the Newar civilization of Nepal of which Nepal is proud.

There are numerous Stupas/Chaityas all over the place. Besides, there are a number of Vihars (Buddhist monasteries), which in Newari dialect are called 'Baha' and 'Bahi' exists particularly in the Bhaktapur city, Thimi, Nagadesha and Bode. They belong to the **Buddhist architecture**. Likewise, there are a number of roofed temples as well as *Shikhara* temples also existing elsewhere in the district, which as a whole, represent the **Hindu architecture**. The world famous five-storied temple of the 'Nyatapola' is one of the rare examples of a multi-roofed temple of Nepal.

CHAPTER II

FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

Bhaktapur is enriched by her intangible cultural heritages too. It is to be considered that the still living ancient festivals, which are mysterious, colorful and fun, were evolved in course of time due to the highest popularity of the paramount deities belonging to the two great religions i.e. Hinduism and the Buddhism. Their rites and rituals possess the background of interesting myths, delightful legends, and captivating folktales. The common belief is that celebrating the festival will ward off evil spirits and dangers, boost growth in agriculture production and the economy; maintain peace and prosperity and ensure the protection of the country from the outside invaders. Some significant festivals of Bhaktapur are as follows:

Biska/Bisket Jatra (the solar New Year festival)

In the town of Bhaktapur, Lord Bhairabnath and his terrifying wife Bhadrakali are the main deities of this festival. The festival marks the beginning of the New Year, according to the official Nepali calendar, which always falls in the middle of April. The festival last for nine conjunctive days and is celebrated with great joy and fanfare by the city crowds. The same festival at Thimi and Bode are quite unique and different. Katunje also celebrates this festival. Overall, it can be perceived from the schedule of the main festive days, which runs as follows:

1. **Ratha Jatra:** Four days before the New Year, Bhairab and Bhadrakali are enshrined in their respective temple



shaped *Ratha*: chariots, which inaugurate the Bisket celebration. The Ratha Jatra starts from the Taumadhi tole of the city of Bhaktapur. The swarming mobs of celebrators try their level best to pull and move the chariot in their own direction aspiring for growth and abundance.

2. On the day before New Year the *lingam* pole (some eighty feet long wooden pole flanked by a pair of flags, which is worshipped as Lord Bhairabnath) is erected at the festive place called: Yosinkhel'. This celebration is called **vis-wodhojathanam**. But before performing this celebration, a lingam belonging to Lord Ganesha is first erected at Bolachhen/Kumale tole, for auspiciousness in the early morning.
3. On the afternoon of the New Year's Day the lingam pole is laid down on the ground. This ceremony is called '**Yosin-ko-thueigu jatra**' in Newari, and hence the New Year actually commences as it is believed.
4. **Balkumari Jatra of Thimi**: Goddess Balkumari of Thimi is very famous. She resides in a three-storied roofed temple, which is in the heart of Thimi. The temple is thronged with musicians and worshippers throughout the New Year's Day. She along with the subordinate deities is worshipped. The next day brings the annual festival. The honored goddess Balkumari including the rest of the deities are enshrined in the temple-like khats, in a total number of 32, start the ceremonial procession. In the ceremonial moments the worshippers/ common people throw clouds of vermillion powder viz. 'Sindur'/'Bhui Sinha' which is popularly known as 'Sindur Jatra'. At Bode, the awesome '**Jivro-Chedne**' (tongue-boring) Jatra/ceremony is observed.
5. The ninth day of the Bisket Jatra at Bhaktapur town concludes with the chariot pulling ceremony of Lord Bhairabnath. Overall during festive days other small celebrations are also observed in the Bhaktapur town. Some of them run as follows:
 - › **Mahakali and Mahalaxmi Jatra**: April 15
 - › **Bramhyani Jatra** April 16
 - › **Chhuma-Ganesha Ratha Jatra** April 17
 - › **Bhairab Bhadrakali Jatra** April 18

Aamako Mukh Herne (literally: looking at one's Mother's face or mothers day)

This festival falls in the last day of the dark fortnight of April/May.

Changunarayana, Chhinnamasta, Kileswor Rathajatra

This ceremony is held at the premises of Changunarayana. The celebration is observed in the last day of the dark fortnight of April/May. Chhinnamasta is an awesome, esoteric tantric goddess. She is also worshipped in the form of 'Navadurga'. The nearby temple in the Changunarayana complex is dedicated to her where the images of nine Mother goddesses 'Navadurga' comes to view. She is regarded as the counterpart of Lord Vishnu. The principal gods of this ceremony are Lord Vishnu as Changunarayana, Chhinnamasta and Lord Shiva as Kileswor. There is a small two storied tiered roof temple in front of the Changunarayana temple which is called the 'Kileswor Mandir'.

Buddha Jayanti Purnima

The full moon day of late April or early May viz. 'Vaisakh Purnima' is the birth day of Lord Buddha. Stupas and Chaityas are the focal point for Buddhist activities on the great master's birthday. As he is the light of Asia and actually the glory of the whole world, the non-Buddhist people also celebrate this sacred day.

Ghantakarna Chaturdasi

This celebration falls on the fourteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight in July or early August. The day traditionally marks the end of the rice-planting season and commences the beginning of the local fares and festivals.

The people called him 'Ghantakarna', often known as 'Gathamoga' a horrifying giant Devil. Legends tell us that as Ghantakarna was killed on this day, the fellow countrymen celebrate his death and beg their gods for protection against the evil spirits. It is believed that celebrating this festival will ward off the evil spirits, get rid of the witches and evil eyes and ghosts.

To some extent, Ghantakarna can be considered as a manifestation of Lord Shiva because he is also regarded as the Lord of the Ghosts and Witches. In the case of the *Navadurga Gana* of Bhaktapur, on this sacred day, the masked performers (Gatha) receive the first clay from the potters of *Talako* and prepare the ritual mask of Lord Shiva.

Gunla-Dharma

It is regarded as the sacred month of Lord Buddha. It falls in the sacred lunar month of August or early September. The Stupas and Chaityas and the Vihars are the focal point for the Buddhist worshippers during the sacred days of GUNLA. They celebrate hurrying through the city streets in groups, playing musical instruments in the early mornings.

Naga-Panchami

This is the day of the Serpent Gods. It falls during the monsoon rains on the fifth of the brightening lunar fortnight late in July or early August actually within the Buddhist holy month of 'Gunla'.

Janai-Purni/Raksha-Bandhan

This is the sacred thread festival, which falls on the full moon day of August. The high caste-Hindu males annually change the sacred thread on this very day. It is interesting that the farmers customarily feed the frogs in their fields early in the morning of the same day.

Gai-Jatra/Saparu

Gai-Jatra means the procession of sacred cows. The Newars called it 'Saparu'. It is celebrated on the day after the Janai Purnima. Actually this is the festival of honoring the souls of the dead. In Bhaktapur, *Ghintanghisi* dance attracts throngs of viewers. The Saparu lasts for a week displaying street-dramas that comprises of satires and of poking fun at others.



Gai Jatra celebration



Krisnna-Janmastami

Lord Krishna is one of the most adored of all deities among the Hindus. Krishna is the ideal of manhood. During the seventh day of the dark lunar fortnight in August or early September in the midnight hour is glorified by Krishna's birth. He is the Vishnu incarnate and was born on earth to save the good, destroy evil and to re-establish Dharma (righteousness).

Tij-Vrata

This is a three-day fasting festival for women only. They wish for a happy and productive marriage, good fortune and long lives of their husbands. The festival falls in August or early September and ends on the full moon.

Ganesh-Chaturthi (Chatha)

Lord Ganesha is regarded as the god of knowledge and wisdom. He is first worshipped to remove obstacles. It falls in the month of September. On this festive day Ganesha's shrines are the focal points for his devotees and amongst them Suryavinayak of Bhaktapur is most remarkable.

Indra Jatra

Indra is the god of rain, a great warrior, ruler of heaven and the king of the gods. This is an eight-day long festival dedicated to Lord Indra, which starts on the twelfth day of

the waxing moon in September. Just as the Bisket festival of Bhaktapur is famous so is the Indrajatra of Kathmandu as the most popular festival. The festival is also observed in Bhaktapur. The wooden poles are erected in the different parts of the town of Bhaktapur. Indrayani Khatjatra is celebrated and the Pulukishi jatra also fascinate the viewers and the celebrators.



Indra Jatra celebration at Siddhapokhari

Dasain/Mohani

One of the most longest, auspicious and joyous festivals celebrated countrywide, is generally called ‘Dasain’ and particularly among the Newars as ‘Mohani’. Goddess Durga is the main deity of this festival. She as the collective force assuming the powers of the nine mother goddesses and she defeat the Demons to protect all her followers. Culturally this festival is regarded as a great festival signifying the ultimate victory of good over evil.

The Dasain festival in Bhaktapur seems significant and fascinates everyone. For instance, through such tantric rituals, Durga Bhavani manifests in the form of the corporal Navadurga Gana: the protector of the country and the fellow countrymen. On the ninth day of Mohani, a buffalo representing the mythic demon slain by Durga, known as ‘Khome’ is chased from the Navadurga god house towards the shrine of Brahmayani east of the town. This buffalo-chasing jatra is popularly known among the local inhabitants as ‘Khome Bwakegu-jatra’

Tihar/Sunti

The five day long festival celebrated in October or early November is another glorious festival which brings the worshipping of the ill-omened message bearer crow, lowly dog, a sacred cow, Laxmi: the goddess of wealth, and the Yamaraj: who is the god of death respectively. The Newars celebrate the New Year day in the 4th day of Tihar. On the same day, they have the significant culture of worshipping of the self called ‘Mha puja’.

Besides, some worthwhile festivals celebrated without cast creed in Bhaktapur district are HARIBODHINI EKADASI, CHANGUNARAYANA-AKHANDA-DIPA, BALA-CHATURDASHI, SITA-VIVAHA-PANCHAMI, YOMARHI PUNI/DHANYA PURNIMA, CHANGUNARAYANA-MILAPUNHI, LHOSAR (New year festival celebrate by the Gurungs and Tamangs as Tol-Lhosar and Tamu-Lhosar respectively), THE HOLY MONTH OF MAGH, BHIMSEN PUJA, JAGGAN-NATH-YATRA, MAHASHIVA-RATRI, HOLI and others.¹⁴

Music in brief

In Sanskrit ‘Sangit’ (Music) is defined as *Gitam Vadyam tatha nrityam trayam sangitamuchyate*. Hence the term ‘Sangit’ means the vocal music, instrumental music and also the art of dancing.

Fundamentally, since the bygone centuries the music lover inhabitants of Bhaktapur have been preserving their traditional Music even to this day. Therefore Bhaktapur is also rich in traditional music. Folk songs, Dafa bhajans, classical Rag-Raginis and dramas, varieties of dances viz. the Navadurga Dance, Devi Dance, Mahakali and Mahalaxmi Dance, Lakhe Dance, Maka Dance, Bhairab Dance, Ghintanghisi, the mass street-dance, (Bhaktapur town), Nil-Varahi Dance (Bode), Bhairab Dance (Thimi), Mahakali Dance (Nagadesha) etc. are still in existence. Regarding the Musical instruments in general, Sarangi, Sanai, Damaha, Madal, Dhyangro etc. are common in the rural regions where as a large number of musical instruments viz. Dhime, Dhalak, Ta, Khin, Kayan, Bhuchhyan, Khwalimali, Jhyali, Pachhima, Bansuri etc. are still practiced by the Newar musicians in Bhaktapur town. The oriental Music somewhat gives us the glimpses of social, cultural and religious life of the bygone days and hence from this point of view it also seems: the past is still alive in Bhaktapur.

14 a) Field observation. b) Mary M. Anderson, **The Festivals of Nepal**, Rupa & co. Calcutta: 1977.

CHAPTER III

THE LOST AND EXISTING HERITAGES OF BHAKTAPUR DURBAR SQUARE

Tripura Rajkula

Bhaktapur is one of the oldest peripheral settlements in the Kathmandu Valley. Even though the entire Lichchhavi-royal durbars viz. the *Mnagriha*, *Kailashakuta* and *Bhadrardhivasbhavan* appear to have existed in the Kathmandu region. Later, due to the various reasons and particularly as the central government faced two critical problems – one the outsiders’ invasions and the other revolts of the unruly feudatories. So a king was in need of a safe place to shift the capital and his residential court. Bhaktapur, an elevated area surrounded by rivulet in all sides as if fortified by nature, was found safer than Kathmandu and Patan and strategically in a better position. Thus Ananda Dev [1146-1167], one of the renowned early medieval rulers, built and established Bhaktapur as the capital city, including the ‘Tripura-Rajkula’ palace in it. It was the earliest royal palaces of the medieval Nepal and in fact the first one of Bhaktapur. From here the entire medieval kingdom of Nepal was ruled for more than three centuries.¹⁵

Yuthunimam Rajkula

Due to the co-partnership in the rule as well as the political rivalry between the two royal families it eventually compelled to the building of another independent Rajkula [royal palace] called ‘Yuthunam-Rajkula’. The rulers with the end name ‘Dev’ resided at Tripura-Rajkula whereas other Mallas resided at the Yuthunimam-Rajkula. After the emergence of Jayasthiti Malla [1382-1395 A.D.], the importance of Yuthunimam increased highly, not only from the residential viewpoint but also from all sides i.e. politically, socio-culturally and religiously. Tripura-Rajkula lost its political supremacy and remained only as a residence.¹⁶

15 Prof. Dr.T.R.Vaidya, Dr. Purushottam Lochan Shrestha, **Bhaktapur Rajdurbar**, CNAS, Kirtipur : 2002. p.1.

16 Vaidya and Shrestha, *ibid.* p 17.

Precise locations of the Tripura and Yuthunimam Rajkulas

Tripura and the Yuthunam Rajkulas were the famous royal palaces in the early medieval period. Evidences show that Tripura-Rajkula was a seven storied multiple pagoda styled palace and architecturally identical to that of the internationally far-famed 'Kailashakuta-bhavan'. This architecturally very strong and massive building seems to have survived for three centuries. We did not find any records about this Rajkula after Raya Malla [1482-1505 A.D.] the first ruler of the separate kingdom of Bhaktapur. The oldest Rajdurbar then seems to have disappeared during the Malla period. In the course of time the name and location of the Durbar was forgotten as well. Its courtyards and gates were turned into toles/localities/market places viz. **Sukuldhoka** [main entrance], **Tibukchhen** [a strong inner-fort] and **Kwachhen** [the southern fort] and others. Yuthunimam also suffered the same feat as Tripura-rajkula but in a different way. In course of time Tripura lost everything whereas the site of Yuthunimam was restrained within the present-day Bhaktapur Durbar Square although its old name was forgotten. The potential reasons for ignoring old name might be the great earthquakes which resulted into complete destruction of the old palaces and new kings' interest to construct new palaces with new names. In spite of it the present Bhaktapur Durbar Square with different palaces is situated in the old Yuthunimam-rajkula complex. Precisely, in the royal residential complex of the obliterated Yuthunimam, there appeared different buildings adjoining one with another, including several courtyards proffering particular names. Hence before the end of the Malla period the largely extended Durbar enriched with fabulous tangible and intangible heritages, having 99 courtyards, popularly known as 'Khwopa layaku' among the locals, 'Bhaktapur Rajdurbar' known nationally, and 'Bhaktapur Durbar Square' known internationally as a world heritage site.¹⁷

In the above context, up to a decade ago, the exact locations of both the Tripura and Yuthunimam were unknown. Untiring explorations eventually enabled to trace the exact locations of the above mentioned oldest Durbars. The Tripura existed in the heart of the town, the present-day Sukuldhoka where now there is a very busy market place and Tripura-Vidyapitha-Agama house exists. Tulacheen where the paramount goddesses Tripurasundari resides and Kwachhen where the remains of the southern fort including the shrine of the tantric goddess Bhagvati is still to be viewed. Likewise, so as in the case of the former Durbar, the Yuthunimam

17 Dr.Purushottam Lochan Shrestha, **Tripura ra Yuthunimam Rajkul**, Bhaktapur Municipality, Bhaktapur: 2058, pp. 1-37.

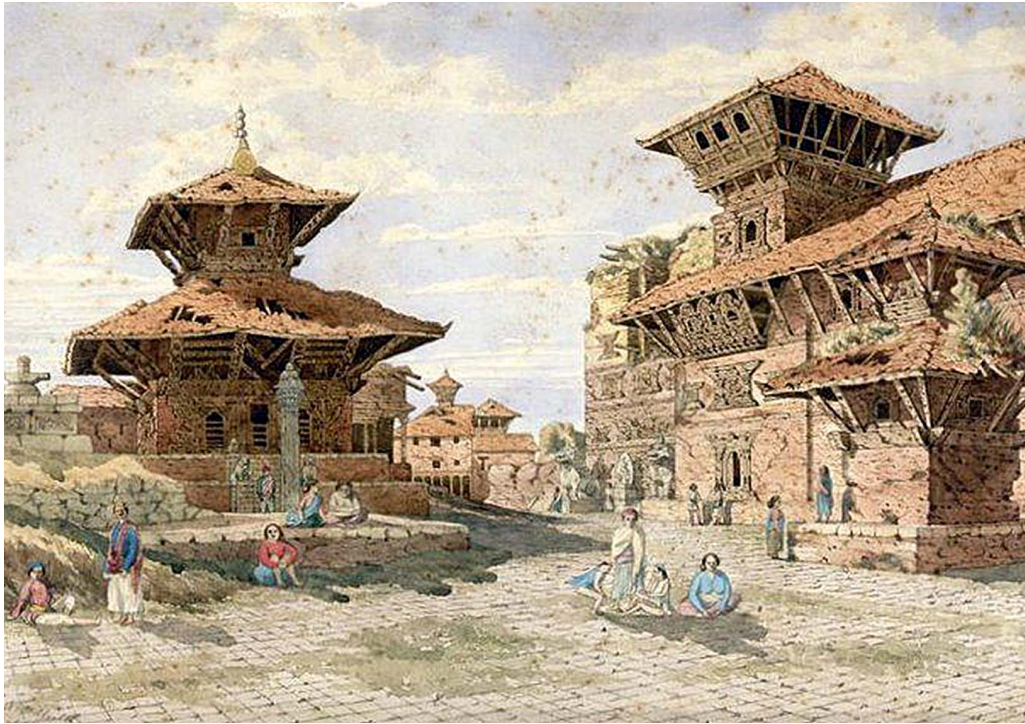
existed in the present-day Bhaktapur Durbar Square. Hence, out of the mud of Yuthunimam, Bhaktapur Rajdurbar was created. Indeed, Bhaktapur Rajdurbar/Square was not built in a day as well. The Square was not only the residential compound of the rulers but the eternal abode of the gods and goddesses i.e. *Manesvari, Dumaju, Taleju, Kumari, Bhairav, Nrityanath* etc. and is still regarded as the centre-shrine of the cultural and religious life, fairs and festivals, and where caste and creed is overlooked and where the act [Karma] is respectfully honored even to this day. Bhaktapur Durbar has also been the symbol of religious tolerance and cultural harmony since the medieval past. The Square not only comprises of the Hindu temples and gods but a Buddhist Vihar [monastery] called 'Chatubrahma-mahavihar' as well. *Ekanta Kumari* the living goddess of Bhaktapur visits this Vihar during the festive days of Dashain. She, including the *Gana-kumaries* identical to nine mother goddesses visit the Kumarichok [dedicated to Kumari] inside the Bhaktapur Rajdurbar on the ninth day of Dashain where she and the rest of the living Kumaries are worshipped respectfully. Hence in this context it is a fact to be simply known that Taleju the icon-less goddess transmigrates into 'Ekanta Kumari' a Vajracharya/Sakya girl through tantric rituals. Therefore at the festive moments, it seems the Durbar has no specific religion and the Square appears as this a secular place where Taleju is to be viewed as in the living form of *Ekanta Kumari*. These are some rare examples to prove the above mentioned facts.

Inventory of the monumental heritages of the Bhaktapur Durbar Square

Bhaktapur is the Rome of Nepal and Bhaktapur Durbar Square is the monumental treasure of Bhaktapur. Enriched with the specimens of richest art and architecture, which in due course of time, the Durbar Square appears to have lost many of its splendid heritages and is now left with few remnants. Despite this, the remaining heritages have, and still are alluring a large number of locals and tourists as well as historical and cultural scholars. Some of the significant lost heritages and some of the still existing heritages are as follows:

Chaukot Durbar

The Chaukot, a part of the Bhaktapur Rajurbar was fully deserted in the great earthquake of 1934 A.D. It was a fort-like palace with four observatories at four corners for the defensive purpose. Jagajyotir Malla [1613-1637 A.D.] might have



Choukot Durbar (having a quadrille tower)

Basantapur Durbar (dilapidated six storied building having a lion gate entrance)

built this Durbar embracing some courtyards particularly the Bhandarkhal Chok. This Chok holds a tank it still exists.

Basantapur Durbar

Basantapur Durbar was one of the eminent palaces of Bhaktapur Durbar Square. The contemporary water color-painting is an evidence to show that it was adjoined with the Choukot Durbar. In the painting Basantapur is to be seen existing in the right side of Choukot Durbar and its seventh floor is in a run-down condition.

Basantapur Durbar was built by King Jagatprakash Malla [1644-1673 A.D.]. Later, his grandson king Bhupatindra Malla [1696-1722 A.D.] seemed to have beautified this Durbar in 1707 A.D. affixing south-facing entrance comprising a pair of massive stone-lions and goddess Ugrachandi Bhagvati and god Bhairav on either side.

Basantapur Durbar was entirely deserted during the great earthquake of 1934 A.D. It was not restored then after the quake but the compound of the durbar was given to build the Sri Padma High School.

Simhadhwaka Durbar

Although this Durbar lost its original shape and style in the great earthquake of 1934 A.D., it survived to some extent and was reconstructed but in a neo-classical style. The National Art Gallery is housed in this Durbar at present.

As the main entrance of this Durbar is decorated by a pair of prodigious stone-lions like that of the Basantapur, the local people called the Durbar in general as **Simhadhwaka**



Simhadhwaka Durbar

Layaku which means the ‘Lion-gate-palace’. Moreover the gate is embellished with the stone images of Hanumanta-Bhairav and Nri-simha on the either side of the gate. In fact these are the most rarest and world-class masterpieces of the sculpture, the pride and the glory of the whole world indeed. King Bhupatindra Malla built this Durbar along with the picturesque Malatichok in 1698 A.D. Although he named his newly built Durbar as ‘Malatickok’ the locals call it as **Simhadhwka** instead and the name prevails till today.

Pachpanna-jhyale Durbar

This is indeed one of the most world-renowned Durbar having fifty-five windows in one row, a masterpiece of awesome wood art and as well as famous for the world-class wall paintings. It is important to mention here that the recent discovery of 147 classical song-names including the miniature-carvings of the classical Rag-raginis from these 147 tiny niches of this Durbar. It is quite appropriate from this, to mark the palace as a musical-palace. The discoveries of this Durbar also unveiled the fact that King Bhupatindra Malla built this Durbar in 1708 A.D. It has now been reconstructed and is now a well preserved Durbar; the pride and the glory of the whole world.



Durbar with Fifty-five windows

Thanthu Rajkula

Destruction is the root cause of the creation as well. In fact credit goes to Jitmitra Malla [1673-1696 A.D.], one of the reputed Malla rulers, for the beautification of the Durbar Square including the new temples, stone water conduits and a splendid Durbar as he named it as 'Thanthu Rajkula'- the Durbar which was situated in the upper part of Bhaktapur Durbar Square. He built the Thanthu-rajkula in 1678 A.D. including two courtyards viz. the Lun hiti chuka and the Siddhi-chuka and a beautiful garden which had covered an extensive area in its north side.

Like Choukot and Basantapur, the Thanthu-rajkula no longer stands; the remains of the courtyards are still in existence but in a disappearing condition. This Durbar was extended in the north and east having with a big Square in the south-east. Bhaktapur Municipality is housed in a reconstructed part of this Durbar. Likewise, it is regrettable that its beautiful garden has been brutally encroached by constructing several administrative buildings at present.



Thanthu Rajkula

Lun-dhwaka/Swornadvara (Golden Gate)

Locally known as Lun-dhwaka, the Golden gate is the main entrance of the Bhaktapur Rajdurbar complex. Jagajyotir Malla initiated to build the main gate but he was not successful due to such reasons and his successor's i.e. Jagatprakash Malla and Jitamitra Malla also tried their level best to make the gate but were unsuccessful. Although there was a long delay, Ranajit Malla became successful in building the gate in 1757 A.D. since he earned much gold by the trade with Tibet-via Khasa and Kuti. The gate was dedicated to goddess Taleju, the lineage deity of the Malla rulers.

The golden gate was the latest masterpiece of the richest metal art that was not only memory of the last king Ranajit Malla, but it is still symbolizing along with the entire Durbar Square, the centre of the Malla administration, high days of the practice of the esoteric tantric religion and culture, prestigious way of socio-economic life of the common people, as well as a magnificent model of the Newar architecture and civilization.

Ranajit Malla himself in his inscription has praised his newly built picturesque main gate as **Nepal-dhwaka** - 'the gate of Nepal'.¹⁸ In fact its artistic beauty has attracted the attention of many scholarly foreigners even to this day. Percy Brown had praised the Golden gate in 1912 A.D. as the great work adding 'wonderful doorway' ... 'the richest piece of art work in the whole kingdom'.¹⁹ E. Alexander Powel in 1929 A.D. became so spellbound viewing the beauty that he acclaimed '...Of surpassing beauty under any condition, the best time to see the Golden Gate is in the late afternoon when the full force of the sun bursts upon it like a bomb from the west'.²⁰ Besides, Landon has remarked it as a chief jewel of the magnificent Bhaktapur Rajdurbar.²¹ Fergusson has made remarks that the ornamentation of the *Golden Door* resembles that of *Nankow gate* thirty-five miles northwest of Peking.²² Moreover, Mary Slusser has commented on the gate as ...Artistically largely successful as an ensemble... It is an arresting example of the Malla king's efforts to please the gods with costly offerings, ...the Golden Gate is the symbol of the astounding wealth...²³

18 Prof. Vaidya and Dr. Shrestha, **Bhaktapur Rajdurbar**, op.cit., p. 44.

19 Percy Brown, **Picturesque Nepal**, Adams and Charles Black, London : 1912, pp. 71-73.

20 Alexander Powel, **Adventures in Nepal the Last Home of Mystery** (reprint), SBW Publishers, New Delhi : 1991, pp. 219-20.

21 Perceval Landon, **Nepal**, Part 1, (reprint), Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Kathmandu : 1976, P. 217.

22 James Fergusson, **History of Indian and Eastern Architecture**, LPP, Delhi : 1994.

23 Mary Slusser, **Nepal Mandala**, Vol.1, Princeton University Press, New Jersey : 1982, pp.207-208.

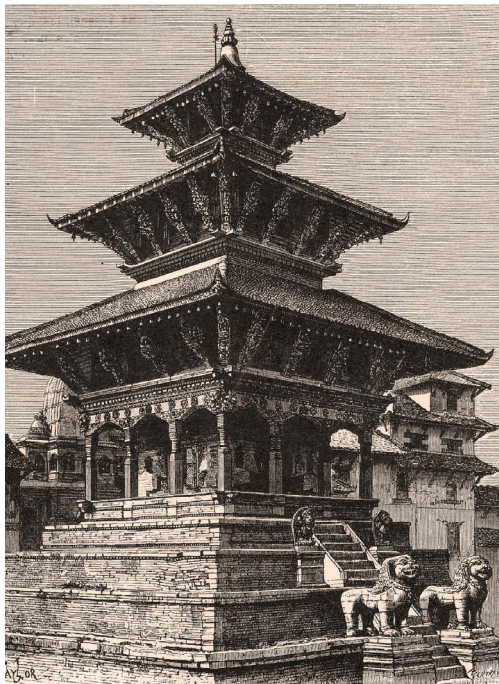
Temples and other heritages around the Bhaktapur Durbar Square

Bhaktapur is still the town of the temples as well. Not only Bhaktapur Rajdurbar, but the rest two Medieval Durbars of Kathmandu [Hanumandhoka] and Patan [Choukot] are immensely honored and revered by the common people as ‘Dega’-the temple, the sacred-seat of the gods and goddesses. Like other two Durbars, Bhaktapur Durbar also lost many magnificent temples in the past due to the destructive invasions, great earthquakes and other reasons. Examples of Some of the lost temples are: *Purvesvar Mahadev-mandir*, *Lun-Dega* [the golden temple], *Lapan-dega* [Hari-sankar mandir] etc. The contemporary pictures as well as the account of the old people are quite evident to prove this fact. Some still existing temples and other heritages around the Durbar Square are as follows:

The Chardham temples: Jagannath, Rameswor, Badrinath and Kedarnath. The Krishna temple [also called ‘Gopinath mandir’], Dabali [platefarm], Golden statue of *King Bhupatindra Malla* in front of the Golden Gate, The Big Bell [dedicated to goddess Taleju by Ranajit Malla in 1737 A.D., the bell is called ‘Brahma-ghanta’



Lun Dega (the golden temple)



Lapan Dega (Hari-sankar mandir)

as well as inscribed on it.], The *Vatsala temples* [there are three Vatsala temples. among them one is red and a single tiered and the rest two are the Shikhara styled stone temples which resemble the Krishna temple of Patan. These three temples are dedicated to *Yantra-vatsala*, *Siddhi-vatsala* and *Nritya-vatsala* respectively], *Yakshesvar Mandir* [this two tiered mandir is one of the most excellent artistic buildings with beautiful masterpieces of woodworks. The wooden-struts of this temple have the erotic postures which are based on the traditional erotic text i.e. *Kamasutra*. This temple is named after Yaksha Malla 1428-1482 A.D.], *Trivikram-narayana temple* [It is a Shikhara styled temple, existed in the

south of Yakshesvar mandir], *Vatsalesvari mandir* [in the south of Yakshasvar temple, a dome like small temple with four entrance gates], *Layaku-hiti* [water conduit of the Royal palace, lies east in the Vatsalesvari temple, facing west], *Pandhwakha-ganesh* [just in the left side of the Golden Gate, a small domed temple], *Chyasilan-mandap* [just in front of the Fifty-five window palace, restored in 1992 A.D. by the German Govt], *Shankarnarayana mandir* [existed in the southeast corner of the Fifty-five window palace], *Phasi-dega* [It is the newari name which means 'pumpkin like temple', It is massive domed temple dedicated to lord Nilkanthesvar Mahadev], *Harisankar Mandir* [It lies in the east of Phasidega], *Chatubrahma mahavihar* [situated in the east of Durbar Square], *Dattatreya temple* [a west faced shikhara styled white temple that existed adjoining to the Chatubrahma mahavihar].

Bhaktapur Rajdurbar, one of the oldest royal palaces of the Kathmandu valley, from where the entire kingdom of Nepal was ruled for more than three centuries, was the most extensive palace complex with ninety-nine courtyards and many famous adjoining parts. Some parts are no longer stands viz., *Basantapur Durbar*, *Choukot Durbar* and *Thanthu Rajkul*. Besides, *Simhadhoka Durbar* (where the

National Art Gallery is housed), *Pachpanna-jhale Durbar* (the world famous fiftyfive windo palace) and some remaining part of the *Thanthu Rajkul* (where the office of Bhaktapur Municipality is housed) still exist. At present, only a few courtyards are in existence viz. *Mulchhook*, *Bhairavchhook*, *Kumarichhook*, *Bhandarkhalchhook*, *Malatichhook*, *Sundharachhook*, *Dumajuchook*, *Mahadevachhook*, *Jiswaanchook*, *Jamadwarachhook*, *Bekochook* etc. Overall, the Bhaktapur Rajdurbar complex with excellent artistic woodworks, bronzes, paintings, stone crafts and terracotta figures are the most glorious architectural contributions of the Newar civilization of Nepal of which Nepal is proud.

Bhaktapur Durbar Square is still the centre of tangible and intangible heritages. Remarkably we have explored and achieved new discoveries but even so there are more hidden heritages yet to come into light.

Concerning the case of preservation and conservation, viewing such unique heritages lying here and there, we at one side feel great as they were handed down to us by our ancestors, but on the other hand, we feel sad and despaired viewing the poor faith of our superb heritages. As for example, one can viewed the poor faith of the still surviving but gradually disappearing *Siddhichok* of **Thanthu Rajkula** [just lies east of Phasidega] At present it seems the *Chok* is like an open toilet where the holy stone water conduit is covered with the human excretion and urine, and that make us difficult to reach there even because of the nauseating smell... Besides, the compound of Siddhichok seems as a parking area... Likewise the beautiful garden of Thanthu Rajkula has been perished and many modern office-buildings have been constructed for administrative purpose. Moreover, the inner sides [garvasthan; where the image of the god is installed] of many temples and shrines at present seems empty because their images have been stolen. Many temples and shrines have become life-less. These are some very sad and regrettable examples, which challenge preservationists and conservationists, and the concerned authorities and institutions as well. Besides, as it is known from the valuable informative descriptions of the art historians that a great number of Nepali art objects such as stone, wood and metal sculptures, manuscripts, paintings etc. have been stolen and they have been seen in the museums of Europe, America, or in different parts of the world as well as in private collections. It is a great loss. Exhibition of such stolen heritages is a shameful act and a heinous crime. They must be restored. A few among them have been restored after Lain S. Bangdel published his work entitled 'STOLEN

IMAGES OF NEPAL'. In the conclusion of this book he appeals to al the civilized world in this way:

*All the stolen images ...are religious objects. For generations and centuries they have been worshipped and venerated by the people of Nepal. ... They go to their gods and goddesses both in happiness and sorrow to offer prayers. ... When the devotees and the people of the country are deprived to their gods and goddesses their hearts bleed. The stealing of such religious images is an atrocity, a serious crime, which the civilized world should take steps to stop. Let us hope that someday these stolen sculptures will be returned to their respective temples and shrines.*²⁴

Overall, in the case of tangible heritages, many of them are either lost or stolen, or due to carelessness, ignorance and the lack of awareness among the public, they are either in a dilapidated or in poor shape and condition, or fragmented or archaeological remains are being carried by the locals as construction raw materials, or remain in a very unsafe condition. We need keep in our minds that we have to preserve these precious heritages not only for our future generation but also for the greater glory of humanity. Bhaktapur Durbar Square is not only our own heritage. It is also the heritage of the entire humankind. It is the pride and glory of the whole world. Let us preserve and conserve it. Hence, Powel writes:

*...I who have seen all, or nearly all, the famous cities and buildings of the world, give you my word that were there nothing else in Nepal save the Darbar square of Bhadgaon, it would still be amply worth making a journey half way round the globe to see...*²⁵

24 Lain S. Bangdel, **Stolen Images of Nepal**, Royal Nepal Academy, Kathmandu : 1989, p.319.

25 Powel, *ibid*, pp. 216-217.

SOME OTHER REMARKABLE HERITAGES OF BHAKTAPUR

Taumadhi Square

Nyatapola: is the tallest multi-tiered pagoda temple of Nepal. Believe it or not, but the wonder is that the construction-work of this temple was completed within eight month. The then contemporary records, which are now preserved in the National Archives, are testimony to this fact. It was built in 1702 A.D. This temple is dedicated to Goddess Siddhilaxmi.

Bhairavnath temple: Lord Bhairavnath is the supreme deity of Bhaktapur and he resides in a three-tiered rectangular temple. Initially, it was a single-tiered temple, built in N.S. 667 (1547 A.D.). Later, in 1718 A.D., King Bhupatindra Malla enlarged it adding the two more roofs.²⁶

Inside the courtyard of this temple is a stone image of Umamahesvor (around 7th century A.D.) and remarkably *a stone vessel having a Lichchhavi inscription dated 88 (664 A.D.)*, which mentions 'Laditmahesvor'. These evidences help us acquire important information that the present Taumadhi square was one of the important sacred Shaiva shrine and Lord Shiva was popular here in this particular form and name. Later due to the impact of Tantrism, the former Shiva in his peaceful form also appeared in a terrifying dangerous form, which is popularly known among the people as 'Bhairavnath'. He is particularly known as **Kasi-Viswonath/Akasha-Bhairav**. The temple complex also includes a nice water conduit having the wonderful nine figurines of the astral deities i.e. 'Navagraha' It was built in about 15th century A.D.

Tilmadhavnarayana temple: On the south of the Taumadhi square comes into view the fence like recent houses and behind them is this temple. Lord Vishnu of

²⁶ Yogesh Raj, More information about the Historicity of Bhairavnath temple (in Nepali), **Suthan**, Bhaktapur, 2061 V.S., pp 5-11.

this two-tiered temple is known as ‘Tilmadhavnarayana’. This temple seems to have built around 11th century A.D.

Nearby the north of the aforesaid temple is a three-tiered Umbrella shaped stone temple as well. The uniqueness of this peculiar temple is that it stands on a single stone pillar. There are altogether 24 encircled niches in which 24 incarnate images of Lord Vishnu are being depicted. The three encircled tiers of this temple symbolize the nether world, terrestrial land, and Heaven. Hence this temple is called ‘**Bhugol-mandir**’ (Globe-temple). It was built around 15th century A.D.

Dattatreya Square

The square is called ‘Tachapal’ and it was named after a largest ‘chapli’ (rest-house) which is but somehow still surviving. It is indeed an internationally far-famed Shaiva shrine because of the most honored *Dattatreya temple* is in this square. The Indian pilgrimages visit this shrine every year in the auspicious days of the Shivaratri festival. Furthermore, there are thirteen Shaiva maths around Bhaktapur town and interestingly among all of them this square alone comprises of seven Maths. Even among them, **Pujari Math** is the most renowned. This Math is famous for its unique wood-work having the world famous **Peacock window** and Pancha-Jhyal respectively. The **Woodcarving Museum** is housed in this Math.

Dattatreya Temple: is built about the 15th century A.D., and is the main attraction of this square. **Dattatreya** is the mythological combination of three supreme gods – Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Shiva the Destroyer. Ichnographically Dattatreya is represented as a three headed god who is also viewed in this temple evidently. It is said that the temple was built with the trunk of a single tree.

Besides, these some other invaluable heritages of this square are: **Wane Layaku** (the initial Taleju shrine, 14th century A.D.), **Bhimsen Temple** (very strong, protector god of merchants and traders, 16th century). **Salan Ganesha Temple** (Initial Ganesha, 12th century A.D.), and **Wakupati Changunarayana Temple** (17th century).

Some other remarkable heritages and destinations in the surrounding of this square are: Pottery Square, Chyamhasimha, Garudakunda, Brahmayani Shrine, Navadurga god house, and Yatubahar.

Besides, there are innumerable heritages here and there in Bhaktapur town. Religiously and culturally important water conduits including a number of east facing nine **Gupu hiti**, ponds i.e. Siddha Pokhari, Na-pukhu, Vajya pukhu, Kaldaha, Aancha pukhu, Khancha pukhu (one can view the reflected image of Nyatapola from the water space of this pond), wells, as well as the nine shrines (both the open shrine and the god house) of the Nine Mother Goddesses accompanying with the eight Cremation Ghats (amongst, Hanuman Ghat is the best known where the largest Shivalinga of Nepal is located), the Ganesha temples, Mangalesvor Mahadeva temple (at Nasamana), The open theatres viz. Dabu/Dabalīs.

Buddhist Vihars and Bahis (Buddhist Monastries and Courtyards)

Bhaktapur is a Buddhist town as well. Almost every section of the town boasts of Baha and Bahis. Although Lichchhavi period **Udhyotak Vihar** and the **Vichhuni Sangha** at *Chamhasimba* no longer exists. It has recently been known that the remains of the Vihars were found from the Jhaukhel region just a few days ago. Whatsoever the existing Vihars of this town appear to have flourished during the Malla period. Among them are listed below:

Dipankar Mahavihar/Dhyo Nani Baha/Ajudhyo Baha

Location: Kwathandau Tole
 Deity: Dipankar Tathagat, Akshyobhaya, Pragyaparamita, Namasangiti, Sadakshari Lokesvor, Vajrasattva,
 Priest: Vajracharya
 Remarks: Dipankar, the principal of the five Dipankars of Bhaktapur. The oldest Vihar which appears to have built around 10th century A.D. Nearby south of this Vihar is the God house of Akanta Kumari.

Prasannasil Mahavihar/Pasu Baha/Pashupati Mahavihar

Location: Kwathandau Tole
 Deity: Akshobhaya, Pragyaparamita, Avalokitesvor, Kwapa Dhyo
 Priest: Vajracharya and Shakya

Viswovihar/Biku Baha

Location: Kwathandau Tole

Deity: Padhmapani Lokesvor
Priest: Vajracharya

Adipadhma Mahavihar/Ta Baha

Location: Suryamadhi Tole
Deity: Padhmapani Lokesvor, Vairochan, Kwapa dhyo
Priest: Vajracharya, Shakya and Lama
Remarks: It also boasts a Akshobhaya-Gumba

Manjuvarna Mahavihar/Wom Baha

Location: Bekhal Tole
Deity: Lokesvor, Mahamanjusri, Mahavairochan, Pragyaparamita,

Indravarta Mahavihar/Inacho Baha

Location: Inacho Tole
Deity: Akshobhaya, Pragyaparamita, Sadakshyari Lokesvor, Kwapadhyo
Priest: Vajracharya

Dharmauttam Mahavihar/Muni Baha

Location: Inacho Tole
Deity: Dhyani Buddha

Mangaldharmadwipa Mahavihar/Jhour Bahi

Location: Golmadhi Tole
Deity: Dipankar, Kwapadhyo
Priest: Shakya and Lama

Lun Vihar/Lun Baha

Location: Sukuldhoka Tole
Deity: Bhimsen

Chatu Brahma Mahavihar/Tarichen Baha

Location: Sakotha (Bhaktapur Durbar Square)

Deity: Dipankar (Ajajudhyo), Kumari, Karunamaya, Kwapadhyo,
Padhmapani Lokesvor, Viswokarma
Priest: Vajracharya

Akhandasil Mahavihar/Akha Baha

Location: Bolachen Tole
Deity: Mahavairochan, Kwapadhyo, Lokesvor
Priest: Vajracharya

Lokesvor Mahavihar/Laskadhyo Baha

Location: Tapalachi Tole
Deity: Red Matsyandranath / Annapurna Lokesvor
Priest: Vajracharya

Sukravarna Mahavihar/Thathu Bahi

Location: Itachen Tole
Deity: Dipankar, Pancha-Buddha, Kwapadhyo, Akshobhaya,
Priest: Vajracharya and Shakya

Jayakirti Mahavihar/Kuthu Bahi

Location: Varvacho Tole
Deity: Dipankar, Kwapadhyo
Priest: Vajracharya and Shakya

Jetvarna Mahavihar/Ni Baha

Location: Tekhacho Tole
Deity: Kwapadhyo, Lokesvor, Viswokarma
Priest: Vajracharya

Punyajetvan Mahavihar/Tankone Baha

Location: Itachen Tole
Deity: Akshobhaya, Kwapadhyo
Priest: Buddhacharya and Vajracharya

Existing JAME-MASJID and vanished CHURCH the hidden heritages

There is an age old **Jame-Masjid** that lies in the south-eastern outskirts of the proper town, on the way to *Hanumanghat*. Indeed this heritage also shows the religious richness of Bhaktapur and testifies to the harmonious behavior, which was practically secularized among the socio-religious life of Bhaktapur in general. It appears to have been established around the late Malla Period. Another example is **the vanished Church**. According to the local hearsay, there was a Church, which was built during the end of the Malla Period. As Ranajit Malla the last Malla king of Bhaktapur granted permission to the Christian Missionaries to stay in his kingdom and to propagate their religion legally.²⁷ In this regard, they seem to have built the Church in the vicinity of the Royal palace. Whatsoever, from this above point it can be considered that it was the first historic Church in the Valley.

²⁷ Baburam Acharya, **Prithvinarayana Shahko Samchhipta Jivani**, Vol.2, Press Secretariat, Royal Palace, Kathmandu: 2024, pp.218

POST 2015 EARTHQUAKE

Rupture and Repair

Eventually at present as a year passed, we have come across the crucial phase as the great earthquake of 25th April 2015 and the continued aftershocks particularly a major aftershock occurred on 12 May 2015, which severely hit and ruined the country. It was a deadly natural disaster, which took the lives of more than 8,969 people; injured nearly 22,321, and thousands of houses were destroyed. Several monuments were demolished and many more badly damaged by the quake. The survey report of the Department of Archaeology has recently divulged that four hundred forty seven monuments have been affected within the Kathmandu valley and out of them eighty-three monuments have collapsed from the ground of its construction.²⁸

In the case of the monuments of Bhaktapur city, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Nritya-Vatsala, the Fasi dega/Nilkanthesvar temples were fully destroyed whereas the Kedaresvara temple, the all stone temple of Siddhilaxmi including other temples of the Durbar Square are partially damaged. The western gateway of Bhaktapur rajdurbar collapsed. The Simha-dhoka durbar/Art Gallery including Lal Baithak are partially damaged. The Nyatapola and Bhairavanath temples partially damaged whereas Betal-pati of Bhairavnath collapsed. Further, Chyasinmandip of Bhelukhel, Varahi pith and Sattal, Jangammath, god house of Bhairavnath of Taumadhi tole also collapsed, whereas Pujari Math, Kwathandou Math, Ekhalakhi Math, Dattatreya Math and other Maths (Shaiva monasteries) are partially damaged. Furthermore, Changunarayana temple and Kilesvar temple are badly damaged. The Changunarayana-sattal and other monuments in the Changunarayana complex are partially destroyed. In general, more than hundred monuments of Bhaktapur district appear to have entirely collapsed or are partially damaged.

28 Damodar Gautam, Saubhagya Pradhananga, Ram Bahadur Kunwar, Min Kumar Sharma, **Preliminary report of Monuments affected by earthquake April 25, 2015**, Kathmandu : Department of Archaeology, 2015, pp.12

No doubt, there comes creation after destruction. Now we have a golden opportunity to repair and rebuild our cultural heritages and to restore them to their original states. The good thing is that our age-old traditional skills and workmanships are still being practiced. Consequently, we will rebuild them to bring them to their pristine conditions. We need to conserve and preserve them for succeeding generation.

List of the destroyed and partially destroyed heritages of Bhaktapur district

The great earthquake painfully destroyed many beautiful monuments along with the age-old houses of the public all around the Bhaktapur district. Among them some outstanding monuments are listed below:²⁹

S.No.	Name of the monuments	Location	Situation
1	Balkumari temple	Balkumari	Partially destroyed
2	Twochaa Ganesh temple	Twochaa	Partially destroyed
3	Garudakunda Mahadeva temple	Garudakunda	Partially destroyed
4	Chayamhaasimha Dhwakha (gate)	Chayamhaasimha	Destroyed
5	Degainaa temple	Degainaa	destroyed/indisposed
6	Pati close to Degainaa temple	Degainna	Destroyed
7	Brahmaayani temple	Brahmayaaani pith	Destroyed
8	Suryamadhi-Pati	Suryamadhi	Partially destroyed/ indisposed
9	Wakupati Narayana temple	Suryamadhi	Partially destroyed
10	Sattal, east of Wakupati Narayana temple	Suryamadki	Partially destroyed

29 a. **Bhaktapur Masik**, "Mahabhukampa vishesa"32/2015

b. Gautam, **Preliminary report of Monuments affected by earthquake April 25, 2015**. ibid, pp.24-26.

c. Field survey.

11	Macho-Bhairav Pati-1	Macho Galli	Destroyed
12	Macho-Bhairav Pati-2	Macho Galli	Destroyed
13	Metan Pati	Macho	Partially destroyed
14	Pati, west of Samajsudhar school	Jhattapo Galli	Destroyed
15	Dhalcha-bhajan Sattal, in front of Mahesvari	Mahesvari	Destroyed
16	Pangrachagalli-pati-1	Pangracha	Destroyed
17	Pangrachagalli-pati-2	Pangracha	Destroyed
18	Mankadhyo	Macho	Destroyed
19	Bhimsen temple	Tachapal/ Dattatreya square	Partially destroyed
20	Sakulan-pati	Sakulan	Partially destroyed
21	Lamgal-pati	Lamgal	Destroyed
22	Sija-Mahadev	Lamgal	Destroyed
23	Pujari Math, consist of Peacock window	Tachapal	Partially destroyed
24	Kkhalakhi Math,	Dattatreya	Partially destroyed
25	Prasannasil-agamcheen	Kwathandou	Destroyed
26	Om vaha	Bekhal	Partially destroyed
27	Devali-agamcheen	Yalacheen	Partially destroyed
28	Swet Bhairav temple	Kwathandou	Destroyed
29	Swet Bhairav dyocheen (god house)	Kwathandou	Partially destroyed
30	Mahalaxmi Bhajan-pati	Mahalaxmi	Destroyed
31	Dhungedhara/Stone water conduit	Kwathandou	Destroyed
32	Tuchhimala-bhajuan-pati	Tuchhimala	Destroyed

33	Pati, north of Bholachhen-pukhu (pond)	Bholachhen	Destroyed
34	Mahakali Dyochhen (god house)	Bholachhen	Partially destroyed
35	Mahakali-pith complex	Dekocha	Destroyed
36	Ancha-pukhu complex	Dekocha	Partially destroyed
37	Mahesvari Dyodheen/ godhouse	Inacho	Partially destroyed
38	Narayana temple	Inacho	Partially destroyed
39	Inacho-chaitya	Inacho	Destroyed
40	Maheshvari-sattal/Guest house)	Inacho	Destroyed
41	Nrityanath temple	Inacho	Partially destroyed
42	Priest house of Damodar Sharma Mahadev	Hanumanghat	Destroyed
43	Madhavanarayan Sattal	Hanumanghat	Destroyed
44	Krishnamadir Bhajan Sattal	Hanumanghat	Destroyed
45	Kriyaputri-ghar Sattal	Hanumanghat	Destroyed
46	Kriyaputri-Pati	Hanumanghat	Destroyed
47	Ramayana-puran Sattal	Hanumanghat	Destroyed
48	Hanumanghat Samajik Sewabhavan	Hanumanghat	Partially destroyed
49	Krishna temple	Hanumanghat	Partially destroyed
50	Ram-Janaki temple	Hanumanghat	Partially destroyed
51	Santa-Samparka tatha Brahma Sabha	Hanumanghat	Destroyed
52	Pambo-Ganesh temple	Khancha	Partially destroyed
53	Ten Temples around Hanumanghat	Hanumanghat	Destroyed

54	Muni Vihar	Inacho	Partially destroyed
55	Siddhi-Ganesh Bhajan Pati	Chorcha	Destroyed
56	Siddhi-Ganesh temple	Chorcha	Destroyed
57	Golmadhi-Ganesh temple	Palikhel	Partially destroyed
58	Hiti-falcha	Yata	Destroyed
59	Bhajan Pati	Galsi	Partially destroyed
60	Narayana temple	Tulachhen	Partially destroyed
61	Safu-kotha (named after a Medieval Library)	Sakotha	Destroyed
62	Kwachhen-Pati	Kwachhen	Partially destroyed
63	Bhagvati god house	Kwachhen	Partially destroyed
64	Jagannath temple	Tulachhen	Partially destroyed
65	Tripursundari god house	Tulachhen	Partially destroyed
66	Vyasi-Bhajan Pati	Tarhaan-Vyasi	Destroyed
67	Fasi-dega /Silu Mahadev temple	Durbar Square	Destroyed
68	Narayan temple, Balakhu	Durbar Square	Destroyed
69	Namobuddha temple	Tarhan-Vyasi	Destroyed
70	Tava-Sattal / Jangi Pala	Durbar Square	Destroyed
71	Vetal god house	Taumadhi	Destroyed
72	Bhairavnath-god house	Taumadhi	Partially destroyed
73	Nyatapola temple/ Five storey temple	Taumadhi	Partially destroyed
74	Bhagvati complex	Kwachhen	Partially destroyed
75	Bhadrakali Pith	Bhelukhel	Partially destroyed
76	Chyasilan-Mandap	Bhelukhel	Destroyed

77	Yosin-Pati	Bhelukhel	Destroyed
78	Chatubramha Mahavihar	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed
79	Ganesh Pati	Kwachhen	Partially destroyed
80	Yesamari Sattal	Taumadhi	Partially destroyed
81	Jangam Math	Gahiti	Destroyed
82	Bhairavnath-godhouse	Lakolachhen	Partially destroyed
83	Lakulachhen-Pati	Lakulachhen	Partially destroyed
84	Main courtyard complex of Taleju	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed
85	National Art Gallery	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed
86	Municipality building	Durbar Square	Destroyed
87	White gate (western entrance of Durbar Square)	Durbar Square	Destroyed
88	Ramesvar temple	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed
89	Nritya-Vatsala temple	Durbar Square	Destroyed
90	Narayana temple in front of Fifty five window palace	Durbar Square	Destroyed
91	Narayana temple, south of Yakshesvar	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed
92	Lawsuit branch office building	Durbar Square	Destroyed
93	Siddhilaxmi stone temple	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed
94	Narayan temple, in front of Fiftyfive window palace	Durbar Square	Destroyed
95	Nrityanath god house	Nasamana	Destroyed
96	Visworupa temple	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed
97	Bhadrakali god house	Ichhu	Partially destroyed
98	Bhandar-ghar	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed

99	Bhandar-ghar, northern part	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed
100	Nrityanath Sattal	Nasamana	Destroyed
101	Shiva temple	close to Varahi bridge	Destroyed
102	Pati in front of Indrayani pith	Indrayani pith	Partially destroyed
103	Lancha pali	Taralaan	Destroyed
104	Vansigopal bhajan ghar	Tekhacho	Destroyed
105	Bhuju pati	Varahisthan	Destroyed
106	Gopal-Maharaj Sanyaasram	Varahisthan	Destroyed
107	Thathubahi	Thathubahi	Partially destroyed
108	Mahalaxmi-virajman-pati	Bharvaacho	Partially destroyed
109	Kayastha-sattal	Dudhpati	Destroyed
110	Walls of Siddhapokhari	Dudhpati	Partially destroyed
111	Lal Baithak	Durbar Square	Destroyed
112	More than thirty customary houses, associated under the protective monument zone	Various places of protective monument zone	Destroyed
113	Metal Museum	Dattatreya complex	Partially destroyed
114	Police house	Durbar Square	Partially destroyed
115	Kwathandou Math	Kwathandou	Partially destroyed
116	Dattatreya Math	Dattatreya	Partially destroyed
117	Chikamfaa Math	Suryamadhi	Partially destroyed
118	Navadurga temple and Sattal	Gahiti	Partially destroyed
119	Tripur-Vidyhyapith Agam	Sukuldhoka	Partially destroyed
120	Dakshan-Varahi temple	Thimi	Partially destroyed
121	Mahalaxmi	Bode	Partially destroyed

122	Sattal of south direction	Changunarayan	Destroyed
123	Sattal of south-west direction	Changunarayan	Destroyed
124	Sattal of north-east direction	Changunarayan	Destroyed
125	Sattal of south-east direction	Changunarayan	Destroyed
126	Laxminarayan temple	Changunarayan	Destroyed
127	More than ten traditional residential houses belong to protected area	Changunarayan	Destroyed
128	Changunarayan temple	Changunarayan	Partially destroyed
129	Kilesvar temple	Changunarayan	Partially destroyed
130	Anantalingesvar temple	Anantalingesvar-Gundu	Partially destroyed
131	Dolesvar temple	Sipadol	Destroyed

Threats and Challenges

Monuments as well as the old homes of the citizens are not merely archaeologically and historically important objects and dwelling spots needing to be esteemed. They have been integral part of the socio-cultural and religious life since the time of their existence. We need to bear in our mind that once an image or temple, Sattal or Durbar, or even a minor pati, anything belonging in the area of art and architecture at the time of creation; they have a direct or an indirect concern with the people and the country. There are ample examples which allow feeling and observing this fact. Bhaktapur durbar square is the best example to corroborate this fact as well. Although the Durbar lost its political and administrative power along with the end of the Malla rule but it is still surviving as a living central-point of the socio-religious and and cultural activities of the people of Bhaktapur and Nepal. Having the paramount deities i.e. Taleju, Manesvari and Dumaju and their Agamas including other deities and their temples around the Durbar square has fashioned the entire square as a pilgrimage shrine for the common mass. It is seen as being a sacred shrine and considered as a cultural central-point for the main fairs and festivals, socio-religious and cultural programs which inevitably proceeds annually in the

Durbar square. The Taleju priests perform their daily and annual tantric rituals inside and outside of the Agams and the courtyards of the Durbar square, and all of these are still in practice. Furthermore in the Durbar complex, the existence of Nilkanthesvar and Yakshesvar Mahadev temples provide an opportunity to pay homage to Nilkanthesvar Mahadev/Silu-Mahadev and Lord Pashupatinath instead of visiting the nearby area of the Pashupati temple of Kathmandu, or in the central west area where Muktinath resides, in Mustang district respectively. Similarly the four temples of the famous four *dham*s – Jagannath, Ramesvar, Kedarnath and Badrinath gave/give an opportunity to the local people to worship them without going to holy shrines situated in India. Such temples were built from religious point of view. Religious minded people throng to the char-dham of Bhaktapur durbar complex to offer prayers on the day of Bala Chaturdasi in remembrance of their deceased souls. As the earthquake destroyed or partially destroyed the buildings and temples of the durbar complex so did it also disrupt the daily rites and rituals of the residents.³⁰ Similarly other monuments of religious importance in Bhaktapur district are not exceptions to these facts. Indeed the present damage is a huge threat. Besides, in order to resume and to relive the daily and annual rituals, fairs and festivals, when aftershocks on the aftermath of the earthquake, is still recurring seems to be a challenge.

The earthquake also mangled social and economic life of Bhaktapur as the public lost their age old houses.³¹ They were compelled to move into the earthquake relief-camp and tents and are still surviving there as quake victims. According to the Bhaktapur Municipality's preliminary reports, it is known that in the city of Bhaktapur, 5950 houses were destroyed, 2092 houses partially destroyed, 252 persons killed and 397 persons were wounded.³² For nearly a month of the aftermath of the earthquake, the entire city seemed like a war zone and everywhere the massive debris of the

30 According to the Taleju priests the quake compelled them to hinder their rites and rituals for a few weeks.

31 Dr. Purushottam Lochan Shrestha, "Some archaeologically and historically important houses of Bhaktapur-A field survey" (in Nepali), A research report presented to I.D.R.S. for the purpose of Archaeology Department. 2056. pp.1-35

Field survey shows that there were even such houses standing since 15th century, during the reign of Sthiti Malla. The house which is known as 'Mul-Chhen' with its excellent artistic windows and doors, existed at Golmadhi tole is the best example to prove this fact. The next example is 'Khauma bahal'. This palace like house is said to have built by Ranajit Malla for his sons, the last king of Bhaktapur kingdom. The house has two parts and one part consists of an eleven fold window and other part consists of nine fold window. Notably these couple windows are renowned as Shiva and Parvati among the religious minded people of Bhaktapur. The 25th April quake destroyed the Mul-cheen where as the Khauma bahal still standing but severely damaged.

32 **Bhaktapur** monthly, 'Mahabhukampa vises', 1/2015, pp.26.

destroyed houses have blocked the main roads and by-lanes, the crowded city had been turned into a quiet and a fore lone city. Sadly, the earthquake brought poverty and the people have become poorer overnight. Indeed, it is a huge threat. However, social life continued and is still surviving. Those who lost their homes are surviving in the tents and those who are still staying in their damaged and cracked homes are even more unsafe. Despite these the social life in Bhaktapur, without great pomp and show, have gorgeously enjoyed and observed culturally important fairs and festivals i.e. Ghantakarna, Gunla (The sacred month of Lord Buddha), Gunhi-Punhi (Nine days celebrations like Janai purnima-Gaijatra including Krishna Janmastami), Indra Jatra, Dashain and Tihar, Yomhari puni or Dhanya purnima, Pancha-dan and Dipankar Jatra, Shivaratri and Holi, including the recently celebrated Visket jatra. The earthquake temporally disturbed lives, the crafts and culturally important traditional practices, rites and rituals.

The year 2072 VS will also always be remembered as a natural disaster year of tears and fears and in general, a great national suffering. The aftershocks have not yet ceased but have been scarifying the people till to this day. Particularly in the case of Bhaktapur, the Bhaktapurians have suffered a lot and are still suffering. Moreover, for the first time, immediately after the great quake, they faced a horrible hurricane which blew away and disheveled the tents of the quake victims, likewise the uncommon flood that plunged the bridges, streets and houses which the Bhaktapurians had never ever seen and felt before. Furthermore the economic blockade imposed by India also ruined and pushed the daily life into much more despair, difficulties and scarcity. Post quake brought immense threats in various aspects.

Yosinkhel is the main festive place of Visket jatra festival. This age old far famed festival has been the different cultural-identification of Bhaktapur since time immemorial. The great quake destroyed the ceremonial Chyasimha-mandip and the massive debris covered the traditional festive road of the Chariot of Lord Bhairavnath, the supreme god of the Visket jatra festival. The festive holy place had been turned into a safest place for many earthquake victims as their several tents had covered that area. It was a quake-threat and to conduct the festival was a challenge. Notwithstanding, in such a situation with great enthusiasm, the Bhaktapurians successfully celebrated this eight nights and nine days long festival. Besides Visket, the cultural and religious minded people have observed and celebrated other fairs and festivals throughout a year. It shows that although habitats and monuments

might have lay down to the ground but the age old risen traditions and customs, fairs and festivals may always remain rise or continue as before even in the critical situations. Notably in the case of monuments and public houses, the fact appears to be quite different.

The massive earthquake of 25th April 2015 and the strong aftershocks not only destroyed and mangled the monuments of world heritage sites but also destroyed and disheveled so many age old, architecturally important individual's houses. The great challenge of the day is that the heritage-monuments and such houses have not yet been reconstructed. Experts say that the reconstruction works is taking place at a snail's pace and government has not yet received the grant.³³ In the case of Durbar square, except the Shankar-narayana temple, the Vatsala temple, the Phasi dega, the Kedarnath temple and the tawa Sattal remained same as before the post-quake period.³⁴ It seems the reconstruction works is still in its planning phage. And in the case of the individual's houses, up to this day, it seems we have lost countless pieces of incomparable world class wooden windows, struts, doors, paintings, columns along with the collapse of these traditional houses. In my field visit to different parts of the town and in Gachhen tole in particular, I have had seen such quake damaged-houses comprised of 'Viman-Jhal/Koso-Jhals' having rich carvings on these windows. A few months after, as the damaged parts of the houses were demolished; those windows were removed or disposed. Therefore along with the collapse of the traditional houses, the carved doors and windows etc. were destroyed as well. In Chochhen tole, there was a locally popular traditional house. According to the locals, the house was built at the same time when Nyatapola was shaped. This house however was standing even after a few months of the post-quake period. And I did not found it, two months ago when I again reached there. Beautiful but fragmentary pieces of wood art can be seen overthrown or seems piled up elsewhere in the town.

A disastrous year has passed and the individuals are gradually renovating or reconstructing their traditional houses in a modern style and structure instead of age old wall system. In fact it is a grave threat to our traditional art and architecture and seems that they are breathing their last.

33 Abhilasha Rayamajhi, 'Reconstruction moving at snail's pace', **The Himilayan Times**, March 13,2016, p.3

34 Bhaktapur Municipality has initiated the reconstruction of the Shankar-narayan temple.

Inscriptions are the most reliable archaeological sources to make the authentic history. There are still unpublished stone and metal-plate inscriptions (since post ancient period) elsewhere in Bhaktapur. They appear to have attached to the wall of the temples, Shaiva as well as Buddhist monasteries and patis, inscribed on the pedestal of the images, columns and Chaityas and Shivalingums etc. The disaster earthquake seems to have shattered large number of inscriptions as well. Many of them are either buried under the debris or have been found lying stranded. In fact they are unsafe. In my field study, I found two unsafe Lichchhavi inscriptions from Changunarayan complex. Among them, one was the stone plate inscription (inside the temple complex) which was cracked into three pieces and another was a Jalahari (on which the Lichchhavi script has been inscribed) lying stranded in the garbage near by the road at the residential area. There was a stone plate inscription attached to the wall of the Talako-math, a shaiva monastery at pottery square of Bhaktapur town. Aftermath of the quake, the Math completely destroyed and the inscription is missing. Likewise after the Pati of Jhattapw-Taulachhen tole completely destroyed, its post medieval inscription is missing as well. Inscriptions are the assets of the nation. We must find out them and preserve for the future generation.

Recovery and Opportunities

Bhaktapur is the priceless storehouse of monumental gems. There are still standing world-class monuments i.e. the Bhaktapur rajdurbar with beautiful courtyards, Fifty-five window palace, Sattals and temples, Buddhist viharas, Dattatreya and Taumadhi squares with the precious temples, Shaiva and Buddhist monasteries, Bhairavanath and Nyatapola temples and including the age-old traditional houses of the individuals. They had and are still attracting a large number of local and foreign scholars as well as the tourists. These heritages with excellent artistic wood-crafts, stone crafts, metal crafts as well as terracotta figures etc. can be regarded as the pride of Nepal. They are indeed the most beautiful, magnificent and picturesque monuments of the glorious past.

The monuments which were destroyed and have been partially destroyed including the age-old traditional houses of the individuals are the main concern of all. No doubt that the monuments, which were lost and need to be restored and the damaged heritages need to be renovated without changing their former shapes and sizes. They need to be conserved and preserved for the future generations. If

possible, some destroyed sites can be instituted as open-air museums.

Besides the monuments of the world heritage sites, also in the case of the wall-system houses, most of the people appear to be afraid to renovate or repair them in their former form. It will be a great challenge to reassure them that constructing/repairing a house with traditional shape and style on the basis of using and applying local construction-materials with such traditional skill and technique is stronger than a modern pillar-system. In fact the still standing temples like Nyatapola and Bhairavanath, and other buildings around the city are examples to prove this fact. It is the lock-system technique that appears to have been inevitably applied to build either a multiple roof styled temple i.e. the Nyatapola or a common single roofed temple or pati or a family home in order to make the building more stronger and earthquake resistant. Why did the three hundred years old Nyatapola still survived? The answer is simple. The lock-system building style including its pyramidal structure firmly supports and keeps it so strong.

Hopefully such recovery attempts and activities will appear to have been initiated immediately on the aftermath of the earthquake. The road-blocked debris will be removed. Surprisingly the quake-damaged Ganesh temple of Golmadhi tole was rebuilt in its original shape and style. This is a good sign of the beginning of the restoration and rebuilding of the priceless heritages.

Besides the government of Nepal, the donor agencies and governments of the different countries have shown their sympathy and declared to restore the monuments. In the case of Bhaktapur, the German Government has declared that it will help restore the destroyed and damaged monuments as well. Indeed opportunity has come to restore even such monuments such as the Basantapur durbar, Purvesvar Mahadev temple, Harishankar temple etc., which were lost during the great earthquake of 1934. Bhaktapur Municipality, Department of Archaeology, District Development committee including other concerned and interested institutions have the golden opportunity to rebuild, conserve and to preserve the far famed richest monuments of Bhaktapur including a planned urbanization giving attractive traditional look under one umbrella.

Besides Dattatreya and the Durbar Square, the completely devastated settlements are Taulachhen, Taulachhen-tahamala, Suryamadhi, Jalan, Vyasi including Mako-galli

where so many persons lost their lives and the completely ruined settlements are still bleak and lonesome and looks like a body without a life. Notably, two settlements i.e. Bungmati and Pilaachhen of Lalitpur can be considered as the role model-ideal of these ruined settlements to resume or restore them into community based settlements like Bungmati and Pilaachhen.³⁵ Let us not lose the opportunity of the quake.

Conclusion

A disastrous year has passed. We are still suffering. Although the April and May quakes have left behind ample issues and challenges but side by side have bestowed abundant opportunities to do better than before. At this moment, right decision, coordination and cooperation along with rigid will power are inevitable. However people have resumed their normal life but it is not the recovery. They are still staying at the tents and unsafe damaged houses with tears and fears. Furthermore, still rattling aftershocks scarifying us. Morally and legally, the government and the concerned institutions must give first priority to the quake victims to reconstruct their houses with needful proper assistance. Our traditional houses of the individuals must be restore in their original shape and styles.

In comparing the three major towns of the valley, Bhaktapur has yet preserved its age-old tangible and intangible heritages. It is important that even throughout a difficult year of natural disasters and economic blockades, the Bhaktapurians have celebrated their fairs and festivals. Henceforth, still standing heritages and traditional lifestyle all remind us that the glorious past is still alive in Bhaktapur. And in the case of our tangible heritages, let us restore them. They are all world-class, fabulous and incomparable. They are our pride, symbols of our own national entity and cultural identification. When we lose these priceless monuments, we lose ourselves and will be nowhere. So let us all restore, conserve, and preserve our monuments for our future generation as well as our present lives.

35 Sunil Bohaju, 'Bhukampapachiko Bhaktapur' **Bhaktapur**, 33/5/2072, pp.12.

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PHOTO GALLERY

SOME OF BHAKTAPUR'S HERITAGES DEVASTATED BY 2015 EARTHQUAKE



Fasi Dega, Durbar Square



Changunarayan temple complex



Vatsala temple rubbles touch Big Bell pedestal



Sattal at Durbar Square



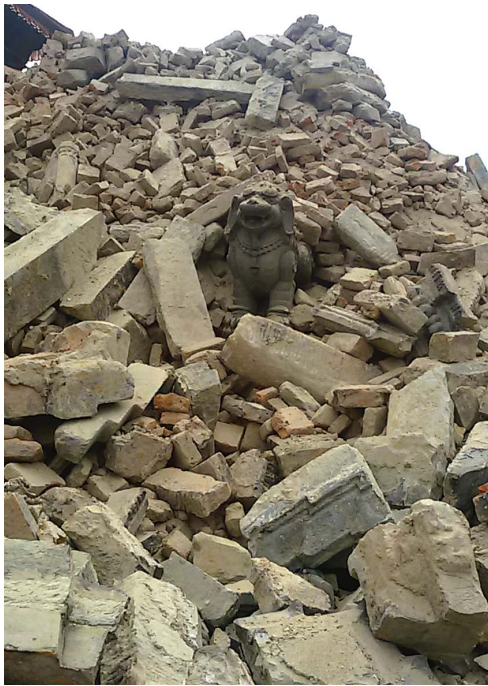
Thanthu Rajkula (now Bhaktapur Municipality Office)



A broken Stone-dragon (part of the Vatsala temple)



Famous Peacock Window



Stone-lion covered in the Vatsala temple rubbles



The Kedarnath temple at Durbar Square



Shankar-narayan temple at Durbar Square



Vyasi



Taumadhi Tole



South-east of Golmadhi-yaataa



Southern part of Taulachhen-tahamala Galli



Dozens of lives were lost here in Taulache Tole



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www.nagarikaawaz.org.np