

Report on the Monuments of Northern Nepal

(Continued)

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Monuments of Rasuwa District

Elements of History

The history of the Rasuwa Nuwakot Districts is linked with the valley of Kyirong in Tibet.

For the past centuries the records of temples and monasteries provide information out of which one can extrapolate the social and economical life of the human settlements which supported the religious communities.

For the last three hundred years (1700-1980 A. D.), period during which the existing monuments were built or restored, a number of data are available (biographies of lamas, documents concerning donations, historical treaties).

It is normal that populations have moved along a natural corridor along the Bhote Kosi and Tibetan influence has extended far downstreams.

A number of forts called *Dzong* in Tibetan and Tamang, have been built on cliffs dominating the valley. One can still see the ruins of such constructions near :

Tangjet	at Dzong Gang
Padzom	Dzong Gi Gompo
Rongka	Dzong

Goldjung	Chulmu Dzong
Chilime	Kato
Tonmen	Yale Dzong
	Pledor Dzong
	Panchymi Dzong
	Marla Dzong

Chorten and prayer walls which seem very old - below Gatlang, Chilime, Goljung and Tonmen - were built, according to the tradition about two hundred years ago.

A number of temples are related to a Tibetan lama who lived in the XVIIth century: Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (Zhab-drung Ngagdbang Rnamrgyal) (1594-1651 A. D.). He lived in the Ralung monastery in southern Tibet, entered Bhutan in 1616, founded the independent theocracy of Bhutan (Drugyul), and impressed his religious and political seal on the country.

The links between the Valley of the Trisuli and the region of Tibet around Kyirong due to a geographical continuity is also expressed in various economical, religious and political connexions.

There is also a continuum of ecological

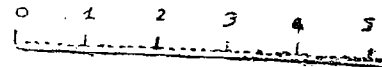
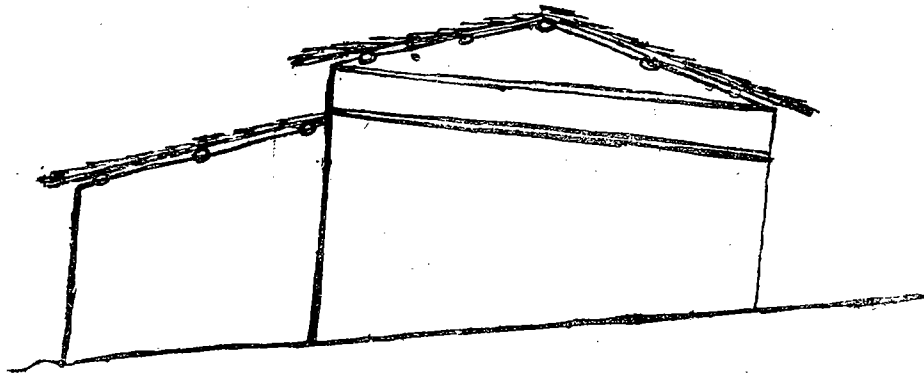
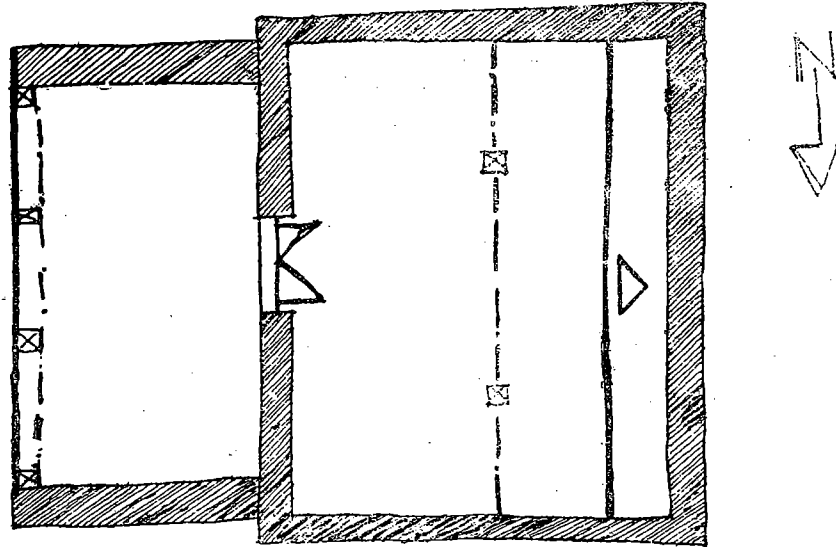
integration, the inhabitants from the South gazing their cattle at high altitude in summer trade and barter.

During the second half of the XIXth century a local chief and lama, Depa khamsum

wangdu was a leading figure of the region.*

Temple of Haku (S. I. Haku)

The temple of Haku is located above the village, on a gentle slope, at an altitude of 2170 m.



(Temple of Haku; Extern. dim : 9,70 X 7,40 m; Chapel : 4,70 X 6,00 m)

* A. W. MacDonald.- A Nepalese copper-plate from the time of Prithvinarayan's father Kailash, 1, 1973, p. 6-8. Plate.

L. Boulnois.-Le Nepal et la Chine en 1732-1734, *Journal Asiatique*, Paris, 1972, pp. 131-154.

The temple stands in a courtyard, within the courtyard on the southern side there is a small building serving as the communal kitchen during festivals, constructed in stone and roofed with shingles. On the eastern side stand two gigantic Juniperus (*Juniperus indica*) called locally *Chin Dhub* "the incense tree from China", the legend says that they have been planted by the lama founder.

A porch gives access to the assembly hall (4,70 x 6,00 m - H : 2,90 m).

The roof is a light structure covered with shingles (about a thousand).

Two pillars support the ceiling. floor is made of planks.

Who altar is a construction of stone, on which rests a wooden frame. In the center, a clay image of Opame.

Present Condition

The temple is in very bad condition. The murals are destroyed and the statues of the altar have been broken by thieves (1980).

The caretaker is Kringyal Lama. There are five lamas in Baku (sect : Cheshing Drugpa).

Religious festivals

Full moon of Munsir
Full moon of Baisakh

Elements of history

The temple was built 12 generations ago on the slope high above the village. It is a holy site as it is the only place where landslides did not occur.

A donation of land has been made in former times, it consists of two *Halo* of non-irrigated land.

The temple is also registered at the *Guthi Sansthan* as a *Raj Guthi*.

Temple of Gatlang (S. I. Gatlang)

History of the Settlement of Gatlang

Gatlang was a "hidden valley", completely covered with forests. The valley was "opened to Man" by Guru Rinpoche. High above the settlements on a flat land there is a sacred lake which is compared to Tso Pema, the lake of Guru Rinpoche in the Indian Himalaya.

According to the local tradition one can trace four successive locations of the settlements of the village of Gatlang : ruined houses can be seen on the North facing slope and from East to West. The *chorten* and *Mani* walls are also very numerous.

The present village of Gatlang (called Yarsa) is situated at an altitude of 2400 m.

The temple of Gatlang is located at an altitude of 2700 m. high above the village. On the Eastern side of the temple at a little distance there is the sacred lake, residence of Tseding-mo, an aquatic divinity.

The temple is a single unit with a caretaker's unit on the western side. There is no front court as one can find in other locations, instead the entrance porch has been extended and covered by a roof. The lama stated that in Gatlang the weather is often bad and one has to have a good shelter for the worshipers.

The temple (ext. dim. : 16,40 m x 8,60 m.) is built of random stone bedded in a mud mortar (walls : 1,00 m) and the exterior is whitewashed.

The open porch on the northern side is formed by a plain lintel supported on posts and brackets. It was extended by 4,50 m. in 1969.

The building has no window.

The roof is of a very low pitch, with plain gable ends, and is covered with slates of big size (0,40 m X 0,60 m).

The interior consists of a porch (inside dim. : 9,00 x 7,00 m), open to the North, with a board floor. The walls are partly decorated with murals (the Guardians of the Four Quarters) above a wooden plinth (h. : 1,50 m)

Centrally placed in the wall is the entrance door to the chapel over a threshold (Chapel : 5,00 m X 6,35 m - H : 3,00 m).

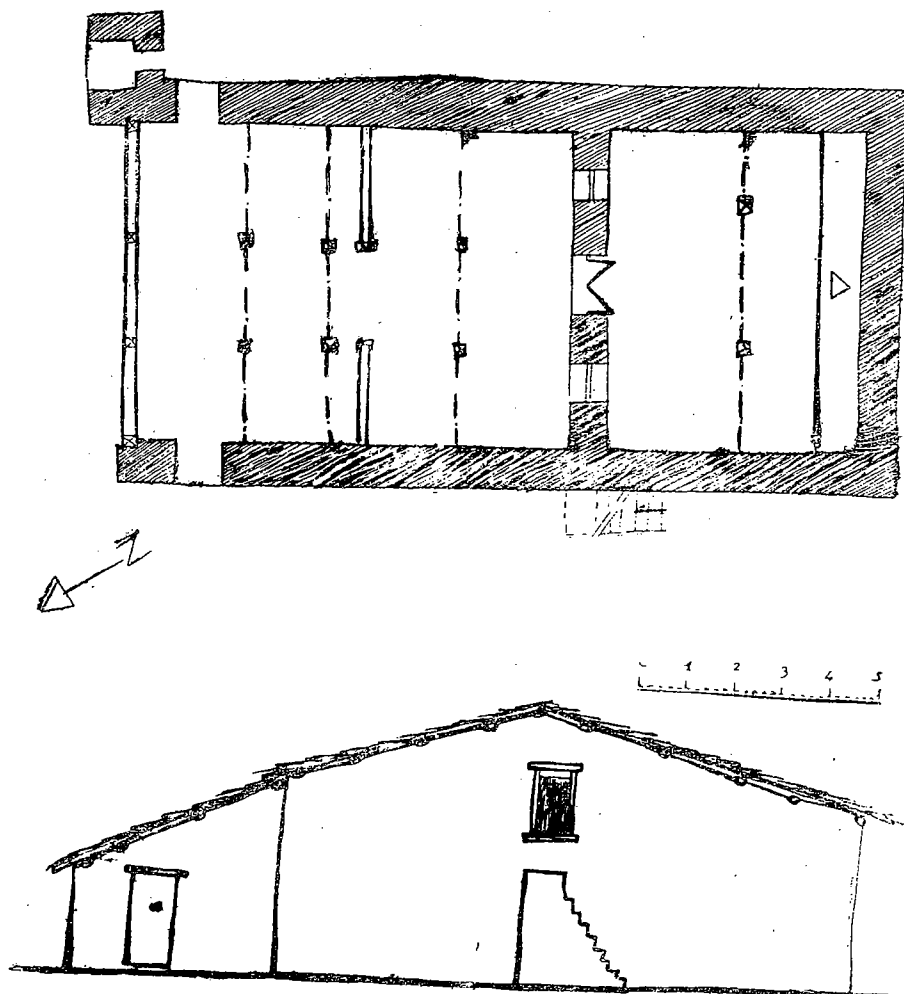
Directly opposite the entrance is the altar, a stone construction. The images of

Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, Sakyamuni, Guru Rinpoche and his two consorts are set within intricately painted frames.

On the left of the altar, racks contain the 20 volumes of the *Yum* and *Domang*.

The walls are covered with wooden panels which are painted. Centrally placed in the room are two large pillars supporting the ceiling. The posts, brackets, and beams are carved and decorated.

The Floor is planked with loosely laid boards.



(Temple of Gatlang; extern. dim. : 16,40 x 8,60 m; Chapel ; 5,00 x 6,30).

There are no tables or carpets and the community sits directly on the floor.

Present Condition

The building is in bad condition, the walls and roof need repair.

The temple has been built in its actual site by the carpenter, Karchen Tawa Tamang, from Gatlang around 1920.

The caretaker is Lama Pasang Chompel Titung, living in Gre.

The temple owns 10 *hal* of land.

Temple of Gre (S. I. Gre)

Gre is a Tamang village of 60 houses at an altitude of 2080 m. on the left bank of the Bhote Kosi (Trisuli).

In 1980 the villagers built a temple above the settlement under the guidance of Lama Pasang Chompel Titung of the Drugpa Kagyu order.

The plan is square (8 x 8 m), the porch oriented to the east. The chapel is not yet decorated.

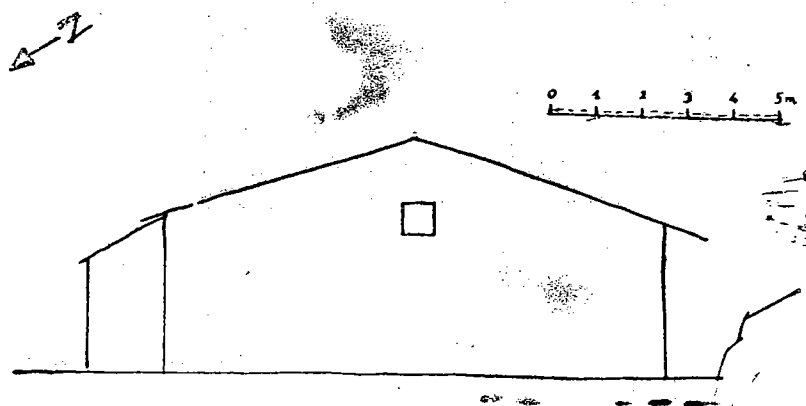
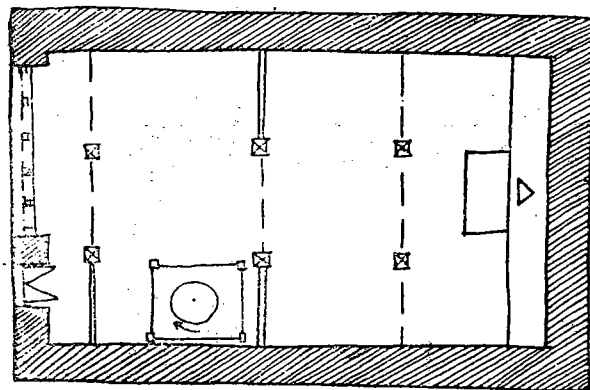
Temple of Goljung (S. I. Gholjong)

The temple of Goljung is centrally placed in the village (ext. dim. 12,70 m x 8,15 m) at an altitude of 2080 m.

The porch (4,60 m x 6,40 m) opens to the North.

The chapel (6,10 m X 6,40 m - H : 3,00 m).

On the altar : images of Chenresi, Opame



Rasuwa district. temple of Goljung.
temple extern. dim. 12,70 x 8,15 m.
Chapel : 6,40 x 6,10 m.

and Guru Rinpoche. The murals have been badly damaged.

The floor is boarded with planks.

Present condition

The walls and roof are in a vary bad state.

Pal Gombo (Goldjung)

The temple Pal Gombo high above the settlement of Goldjung has been built by Lama Tsebda Dorje.

It contains images of Chenresi, Tsepame, Chomden, Guru Rinpoche and Dorje Chang.

Present condition

The building is in a very bad condition and one wall has collapsed.

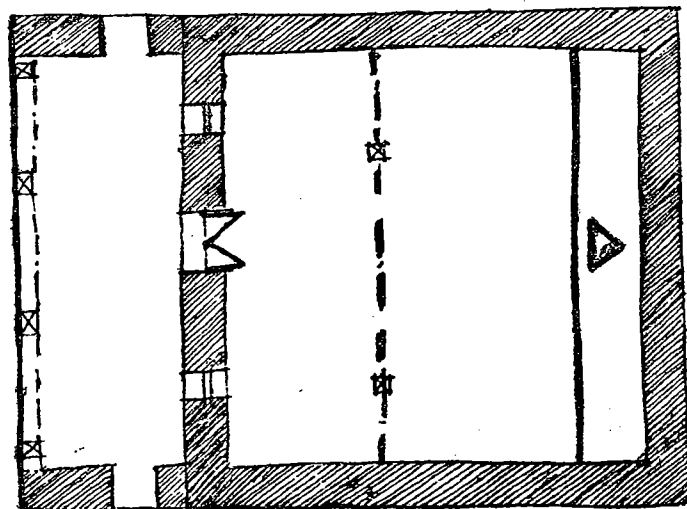
Temple of Chilime (S. I. Chilime)

There are two temples in Chilime, the village temple and Nagsa Gombo is on a ridge dominating the valley.

The village temple is built on a gentle slope facing north (external dim. : 10,00 m x 7,50 m). The walls are constructed with stones bedded in mortar, the roof is covered with slates of big size.

The facade opens on to a porch consisting of wooden structure.

The assembly hall (6,30 m x 6,20 m - H : 2,40m) is preceded by an entrance porch. The ceiling is supported by two pillars and beams. The floor is made of planks.



0 1 2 3 4 5 m

(Temple of Chilime; extern. dim : 10,00 x 7,50 m; Chapel : 6,30 x 6,20 m.)

Decoration : on the altar, from left to right, the images of Chenresi, Guru Rinpoche, Tsepame, Guru Chowang, Maha Guru.

In front of the temple a paved space where villagers gather for the festivals.

Present condition

The roof was repaired in 1979 and is in good condition.

Temple of Bremdang (S. I. Brindang)

The temple *Ye she Lhendrup Gombo* is built on a ridge above the group of houses of Bremdang at an altitude of 2920 m.

The plan is rectangular (10,50m x 8,30 m).

A porch gives access to the chapel (6,50 m x 6,30 m - H : 3,15m). Two posts

support the ceiling.

In the entrance porch there is a big prayer wheel, *Mani dungyur*.

The images of Chenresi, Opame, Guru Rinpoche are set within painted frames. On the right of the table of offerings the statue of Lama Tsebda Dorje (Lama Founder of the community.)

The murals are almost destroyed.

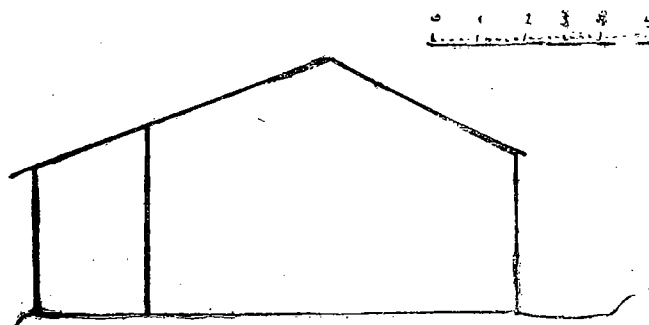
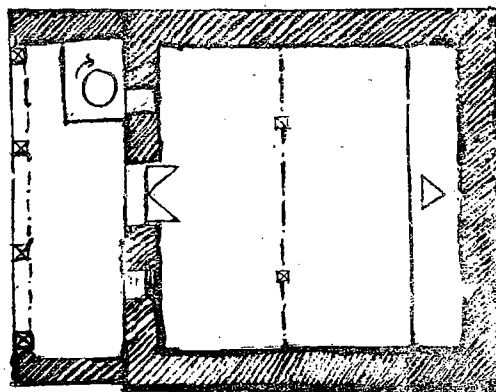
The temple was partly destroyed by fire forty eight years ago.

Present condition

The building is in fair condition.

Religious ceremonies

During the 11th tibetan month (Pus) : *Drumcho* with dances.



(Temple of Bremdang; extern. dim 10,50x8,30 m; Chapel: 6,50 x 6,30 m.)

History of the foundation of Bremdang

The name of Bremdang, according to tradition, comes from two terms : 'bre female yak (clas. tib. : 'bri) and *thang*, a flat land.

The lama founder is Tsebda Dorje of the Lha-lung-pa gi Dorje clan, born in Gang Barchung, one day's journey from Kyirong. Tsebada Dorje had two brothers: Tomden Wangpo, who stayed in Gang Barchung near Kyirong, Ngawang Sakya Sangpo who went to Malemchi (Yolmo).

Tsebda Dorje settled first in the valley of the Chilime Khola above the actual village of Goljung; he cleared the forest and built a temple called Pal Gompa "the temple in the clearing". One day looking toward north he saw a beautiful site, Bremdang, so he settled there, built an hermitage on a rock. The village of Bremdang had up to 40 houses.

The present Lama family is a direct descendent of Tsebda Dorje, Gyaltsab Dorje, Trutob Dorje, Drandul Dorje....

Four generations ago a member of the clan went to Bhutan and settled in Bayul Khamba-Chung.

Temple of Nagtali (S. I. Nagthali) Ghyang/Thungmen

The temple is located on a ridge running East-West and part of the Ganesh Himal Range, at an altitude of 3270 m. The flat land is occupied by fields, pastures and a series of depressions where rain water stays during the summer months. A few trees remain from what was once a dense forested area, nearby a small hermitage (*tsamkhang*).

The temple was built near the site of old constructions of the typical Tibetan structure with thick earthen walls.

The temple, free standing, is of fearly big size for the region (external dim. : 10,00 m : x 12,10 m). The walls are in rubble stone bedded in mortar. The roof is of a very low pitch covered with stone slates.

The open porch is formed by a lintel supported off brackets and posts. The building has no window.

The structure stands on a low platform on the eastern side.

The interior consists of a porch (7,60 m x 2,80 m) open to the East. The porch gives access to the assembly hall (7,80 m x 6,50 m -H : 3,00 m).

Directly opposite the entrance there is the altar. The altar is a stone construction (3,60 m long) centered on the western wall. On the altar stand three statues of importance: Guru Rinpoche, Opame, centrally placed and Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal.

On the left of the altar, racks for religious books (the 16 volumes of the *Yum/Domang* are at present sheltered in the Lama's house in Tonmon). A pair of elephant tusks are placed on the sides of the altar. (They are an essential ornament to the altar in every Bhutanese chapel).

Centrally placed in the room: two large posts support the ceiling and roof above. Posts and brackets are carved and ornately painted.

Murals: there are traces of murals but the support has entirely disappeared, due to dampness.

The floor is planked with wide loosely laid boards.

Present condition

The building is in very bad condition. The western and southern walls are weak and not far from collapsing. As a conse-

quence the murals have been destroyed. Wood work is in very bad state.

Religious festivals

8th lunar month, full moon : Tsechu

3rd lunar month, full moon : Kanso

The temple of Nagtali belongs to the Drug-pa Ka-gyu sect, the history of the settlement is linked with Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (the founder of the Bhutanese church). There are statues of this lama in Nagtali and the temple of Gatlang.

According to the local tradition a *tamapatra* has been given to Lama Drandul

Dorje by the king Prithvi Narayan (end of the XVIIIth century) in the text, the locations of Bremdang and Nagtali are quoted and three donations of land designated : one at Tangbojet Tar along the Chilime Khola.

Lama Tar near Trisuli

Lobon near Tonmon.

A younger sister of Prithvi Narayan is said to have married Drandul Dorje. She died in Bremdang and was cremated there. At present four lamas (they are brothers) Dawa Senge, Nyima Galden, Chogang Tenzing, Pasang Tinle are in charge of the shrines of Bremdang, Nagtali, Chilime ; they are members of the Nyingma-pa sect.

(To be continued)