CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEPALESE STUDIES

Contributions to Nepalese Studies

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THE VALUE OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS AMONG THE GURUNGS IN NEPAL

Narayani Tiwari

Introduction

This paper[1] addresses the issue on the value of sons and daughters in the Gurung village where the fieldwork was carried out. The conceptual framework of this paper is based on theoretical literature about the fertility transition. In the literatures, questions are raised about the relationship between fertility and value of children, as well as the relationship of high fertility with preference for sons or daughters. In this paper, the value of children and the preference for sons or daughters is placed in the context of household activities and the role of sons and daughters in those activities.

Literature review and conceptual framework

The value of children in Nepal involves certain socio-economic, cultural and religious factors, which sometimes conflict with the interests of the family and the inheritance rules. The values attached to the role of sons and daughters can influence fertility trends. Various factors are responsible for the fertility patterns and changes in Nepal and elsewhere. Many demographers (Davis and Blake 1956; Bongaarts 1978; Freedman 1987; Jones 1990; Caldwell 1996; Cleland 1993; Voland 1998; Crow and Allan, 2001; Singh *et al.*, 2003) have noted factors affecting fertility through proximate variables (Bongaarts 1978) or intermediate variables. These can be clustered into three groups: first, variables relating exposure to intercourse; second, variables relating to conception; and, third, variables relating to pregnancy outcome (Jones, 1990). Age at marriage is an important variable in the first cluster, the use of contraception is an important one in the second cluster and socio-economic and cultural factors affecting fertility are placed in the third cluster.

Authors like Karki (1988), Niraula and Morgan (1995) and Riley (1999) have reported that the meaning of masculinity and femininity in patriarchal society is often such that it contributes the population growth. The meanings and value attached to masculinity and femininity will influence parental investments in sons and daughters. While the latter should be equal, this is often not the case (Sieff, 1990; Casimir and Dutilh, 2003). Also the status of women, their fertility choices and gender preferences have direct effect on fertility trends in any country.

Due to socio-economic and cultural differences, the demand for and the value of children vary between the developing and developed countries. Freedman (1974) observed that the preferred number of sons is relatively

high in many Asian countries. The decisions on whether to have a child and on how to share education, food, work, health care and local resources are in large measure made locally at the household level (Dasgupta 1995). Children are needed for household chores, but sometimes they are also regarded as a nuisance because they put emotional strain and an economic burden on their parents (Bulatao 1979). Bulatao further added the demands of more work create problems for disciplining children and worrying about their future increases parents' aspirations to make good provisions for their children or to make them more successful in the family.

Demographic transition is one of the most important theories in demography. It was developed in relation to the European demographic history before being applied to recent population change in the Third World (Jones 1990; Caldwell 1991; McDonald 1993). The demographic transition theory describes the change from high levels of fertility and mortality to low levels of birth and death rates as a traditional, rural or pre-modern society develops into an urbanized and industrialized modern society (Caldwell 1991; Jones 2003). The goal to reduce fertility in many developing countries resulted in strengthening family planning programs (Cleland 1993). Fertility regulation has thus been an important element of population policy throughout the world (Alam 1993).

Caldwell and Mackensen (1980) observed that the high fertility has greatest economic value in family-based production, like traditional agrarian subsistence farming. On the one hand, children are costly to feed and educate and need to be looked after. On the other hand, children are important for family welfare and can contribute to the household economy. Once a traditional society changes, family-based production becomes less important, and the value of children declines. In a modernizing society parents have to invest in their children's education. What happens then is a reversal of the wealth flows: changing from flowing from children to parents to flowing from parents to children. Children become a net loss instead of a net gain. In another way children also can give economic support to the family by looking after their parents in their old age. This is why Caldwell and Mackensen (1980: 172) note that the benefits and disadvantages of high fertility must be measured over the rest of a person's lifetime. This means that the value of children includes their perceived future contribution to a secure old age of their parents.

Edmondson (1992) tested the theory of the reversal of wealth flows in a rural area in Bali (Indonesia). She looked at an intergenerational exchange and the fertility transition over for a period of more than a decade. She found a relationship between economic change and family size. The economic transition (from a traditional rice-growing economy to an economy with an important services sector) stimulated the fertility transition. The study showed the importance of the economic responsibilities of male children for

the parental household and kinship group. The exchange of wealth is stretched over a longer period of time. Parents provide economic and educational support to the children first and then the children are expected to support the parents in old age.

While looking at the fertility transition in Asia, several demographers use cultural and institutional factors as explanatory variables for fertility behaviour (McNicoll 1992; Dahal and Fricke 1998; McDonald 1993; 2000). McDonald (2000) notes that the particular social and cultural values that play a role in using contraception, timing of first marriage, timing of first birth, and status of women, determine the fertility transition. The fertility intervals between births, and using contraception, which prevents women from having children determine the number of children that a women may have during her lifetime (McNicoll 1992; McDonald 2000). The fertility decline relates to different associations between socio-economic and demographic variables that help to stop child bearing after the birth of son (Leone *et al.*, 2003). Fertility decline often depends upon prior institutional change of gender equality in a particular society (McDonald 2000: 403):

> Firstly, fertility in a society falls as a result of the cumulative actions of individual women and men to prevent birth. Secondly, sustained lower fertility in any society will lead to fundamental changes in the nature of women's life. Thirdly, in pre-transitioned societies, high fertility was socially determined, not naturally determined. Lastly, the transition from high fertility to fertility around replacement level is accompanied by an increase in gender equity within the institution of the family.

Freedman (1987) mentioned that many countries that face a long uphill struggle for development should reduce fertility levels. In this context, the status of women determines the conditions for successful family planning. Another approach that could explain fertility patterns and levels is to examine the value of children in society. Caldwell (1996) and Cleland (1993) noted that changes of fertility patterns from Europe to Asia resulted from the decline of infant mortality and the transformation of illiterate agricultural societies to literate industrializing societies. The high value attached to children leads to mortality reduction, raises aspirations, and reduces child labour. It also leads to emergence of the conjugal family, and weakening of cultural props for high fertility (Bulatao 1979; Bongaarts and Greenhalgh 1985; Caldwell 1996).

Parental preference for a particular gender of child, or preference for a balanced number of each gender exists throughout the world (Krishnan 1993). Demographically, a strong preference for sons may lead to higher fertility, as exemplified by the case of the patrilineal Batak in Indonesia (Tan and Soeradji 1986). The higher values attached to sons than daughters in India as compared to a greater gender equality in Indonesia partly explains

the persistent higher fertility in large parts of India in comparison with substantial fertility decline in Indonesia (Niehof 2001). For the case of Indonesia the significant fertility decline has to be placed in the context of comparative gender equity and ongoing social change, leading to different reproductive choices of women (Niehof 2003; Niehof and Lubis 2003).

Value of children in Nepal

In this study, the value of children approach was applied to the Gurung community, looking more specifically at different values attached to sons or daughters. Generally, the Gurungs prefer to have equal numbers of sons and daughters (Macfarlane 1976). In this paper, specific attention is paid to gender preferences. Son preference is an important determinant of fertility in Nepal (Karki 1988; Niraula and Morgan 1995). Preferences for sons and daughters and their social and cultural relationships to values of masculinity and femininity in society make a difference for fertility patterns. In Nepal, fertility regulation was started through family planning services (MOH 1986). Son preference is far more prevalent, especially in South and Central Asia than a preference for daughters (Freedman 1974; Niraula and Morgan 1995). Gender discrimination and son preference are key demographic features of South Asia, from which Nepal cannot escape (Leone et al. 2003).

Nepal is an agriculture-based traditional society. There is a strong preference for sons, which can be attributed to the patriarchal norms and values among the Gurungs nearly the same as "Hindu" and the cultural and economic roles, the sons play in the family and society. For example, they continue the family name and the use of parental property and provide support to their parents during their old age. Although different ethnic groups and communities have their own socio-cultural traditions and practices with regard to gender preference, some surveys and micro-level studies have proved that there are strong preferences for sons (MOH/Nepal 1976; MOH/Nepal 1986; MOH/Nepal 1981; MOH/Nepal 1986; MOH/Nepal 1991; MOH/Nepal, 1996).

During the 1970s, the value of children in Nepal was studied at the community level (Karki 1988). In spite of the general preference for sons, daughters are also valued for their religious and cultural roles in relation to certain social practices. Son preference affects fertility regulation because a couple stops child bearing only when they have one or more sons. To have one or more sons and at least one daughter is perceived as the ideal family in large parts of Nepali society (Karki 1988). In Hindu culture the birth of a daughter is considered to be fated. The expression "late birth but son birth" proves that in the Nepali culture a family does not exist without a son. Some people in Nepal still think that children are God's gift and it is immoral to interfere with the Will of God (Karki 1988). This expression is also exists among the Gurungs.

The level of son preference in Nepal is substantial (Leone et al. 2003). Rural women in Nepal frequently express a strong preference for sons, mostly for economic reasons, which reflects women's subordinate position in society and the low economic value placed on women's work (Winkvist and Akhtar 2000). Mothers of sons have higher status in the family and society. They even get more attention with respect to their nutrition and health during the pregnancy and child-rearing period than mothers of daughters.

Table 1 below presents some gender and fertility indicators of Nepal in the Asian context.

Table 1: Gender and Fertility Indicators in Nepal

Gender Disparities	Nepal	South Central Asia
Primary school enrolment M/F	126/112	
Illiterate percentage >15 years M/F	37/65	
Mortality under –5 years M/F	78/83	92/97
Reproductive health and fertility		
Births per 1000 women aged 15-19	113	72
Contraceptive prevalence modern methods	35	41
Total fertility rate	3.50	3.04

Source: UNFPA, 2005: 108,112

There are clearly gender disparities in Nepal, as can be seen from the male-female differences with regard to schooling and illiteracy in the table. The table also shows that the female mortality below five years old is higher compared to that of males. Fertility birth per 1000 women aged 15-19 is much higher in Nepal compared to the Asian average, which indicates a very early start of the childbearing period in Nepal. Likewise, contraceptive prevalence is relatively low and the total fertility rate is high in Nepal compared to the Asian averages. The sections below briefly discuss the Gurung community of Lamjung district and values of sons and daughters within their community.

The Gurungs

The Gurungs belong to the Tibeto-Burman group of the Himalayans region. They live predominantly in the Himalayan range or high hill region in central Nepal, in closely tied communities surrounded by other groups (Macfarlane and Gurung 1990). According to Macfarlane (1976), almost certainly many thousand years ago their ancestors lived in the high mountain of western China and their language is still variation of Chinese and Tibetan. Gurung caste system has been fragmented into two parts: the four-caste (Charjat) and sixteen-caste (Sorajat) systems. Donald (1976) and Macfarlane (1976) report about the conflict inherent in a dual social organization in this case consisting

of two Gurung sub-tribes called *Sorajat* (coming from south) and *Charjat* (coming from North), each comprised of many clans and lineages. In the research area the Gurungs of both groups can be found. The common belief is that *Charjat* is supposed to be superior to *Sorajat*.

Many Gurung men join the Indian and British army or in the UN peace keeping forces. If the family has a son with a job in the army, the parents feel proud of their son and are financially secure in the present and the future. Mostly, the wives of men in the army or in other employment stay at home as housewives while their husbands are away. In this way women are the main household managers and look after the house, the farm, their children and other members of the family. Gurung women are rarely employed and are generally minimally educated. Gurung women's opinions and attitudes towards having sons and daughters and fertility-regulating behavior seem to be similar to those of other ethnic groups in Nepal.

Kinship and marriage

Marriage among the Gurungs within the same caste (*Jat*) has traditionally been important. Marriages between *Charjat* and *Sorajat* are not accepted. There is a fair amount of cross cousin marriage where ego (male) can marry the daughter of the maternal uncle (MBD) or the daughter of the paternal aunt (FSD) (Bhattarai, 2003). These types of marriages are still common among the Gurungs, but individual selection by boys and girls and love marriages are increasing these days. Gurung girls are taking initiatives and decisions for postponing marriage, freedom in mate selection and changes in the attitude towards marriage. Religious culture and taboos still have a strong influence on the marriage ceremony. Formerly, it was customary for the father's sister's daughter (FSD) to tie a knot with the mother's brothers' son (MBS). However, this custom is dying out now. The kinship system is patrilineal with virilocal residence.

Importance of sons and daughters

Sons are the inheritors of parental property and the representatives of Nepali orthodox Hindu culture that exists among the Gurungs as well. Also in Gurung society, traditionally, culturally and by law property rights family formation inheritance goes from the parents to the sons. The recent law on property rights (2003) indicates that daughters can acquire parental property up to the marriage. Once married, she loses all her property rights. In this way, sons are the link for the continuation of family property. Furthermore, the sons have to take the dead body of the parents to the place of cremation.

Daughters are also important in the family in different ways. A daughter is needed during the funeral ceremony. Unlike in many other communities and ethnic groups, among the Gurung sons and daughters hold equal importance and have equally important ritual functions at the time of a

parent's death. Gurung daughters are allowed to participate in the funeral ceremony like their brothers. Without the presence of a daughter and son-in-law, the funeral cannot proceed. The daughter has to leave her hair loose and uncovered and has to stand in front of the corpse and put some money to the corpse before it leaves the house. The Gurungs believe that they will not reach heaven if they fail to continue these practices.

Findings from the field

In this section, the results from the survey of 350 households and the focus group discussions and case studies are presented and discussed. First, we will look at the expressed desire for (more) sons or daughters. The data in Table 2 shows that the expressed desire for more sons or daughters of respondents who have either no sons living with them or no daughters living with them.

Table 2: Expressed desire for sons or daughters in relation to having sons or daughters

Not having sons or daughters living with	Expressed desire for more son or daughters in percentage			Total Numbers
	Desire for more sons[1]	Desire for more daughters[1]	Neither sons nor daughters	
No sons	59 (58 %)	36 (35 %)	7 (7 %)	102
No daughters	40 (27 %)	59 (40 %)	47 (32%)	146
Total	99 (40 %)	95 (38 %)	54 (22%)	248

[1] The respondents include only wishing for more sons and daughters.

Son preference is significance on Chi-square 31.4 ($P < 0.01$).

Table 2 shows that of the 102 respondents who do not have sons living with them (only daughters), 59 desire more sons and 36 desire more daughters. However, of the 146 respondents with no daughters living with them (only sons), 59 desire more daughters and 40 desire more sons, in spite of the fact that they have no daughters. Only 54 respondents both with no sons and no daughters desired neither sons nor daughters. The table indicates that for people who don't have sons they desire to have a son is more important than the desire to have a daughter for people who don't have daughters. Hence, the significant chi-square value ($p<0.01$) seems to indicate a slighter preference for sons than daughters, in spite of the more or less equal cultural value attached to sons and daughters in the Gurung culture. The important role of both sons and daughters in the funeral ceremony of their parent is clearly visible in Figure 1 below.

Activities of sons and daughters

There are some common activities in the Gurung households that involve a gender division of labour. The activities of sons and daughters in the household are described in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Reasons for wanting sons and daughters
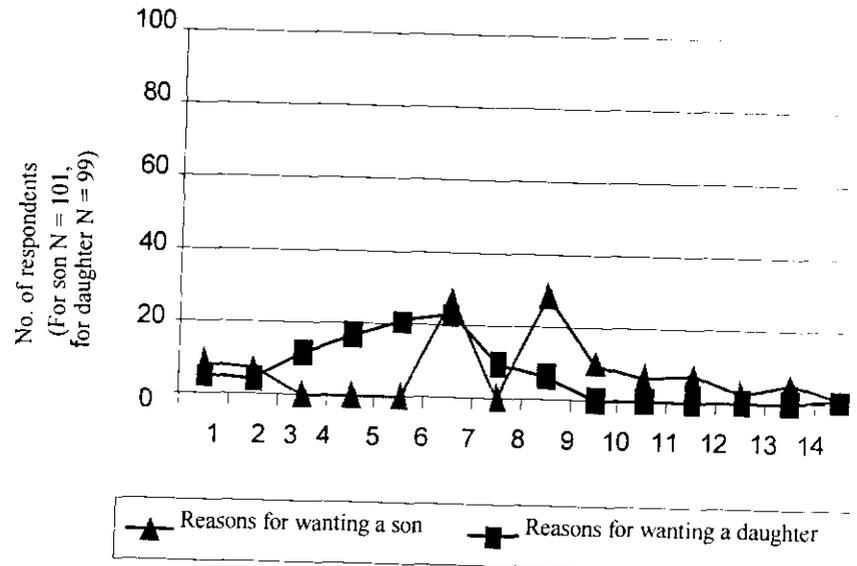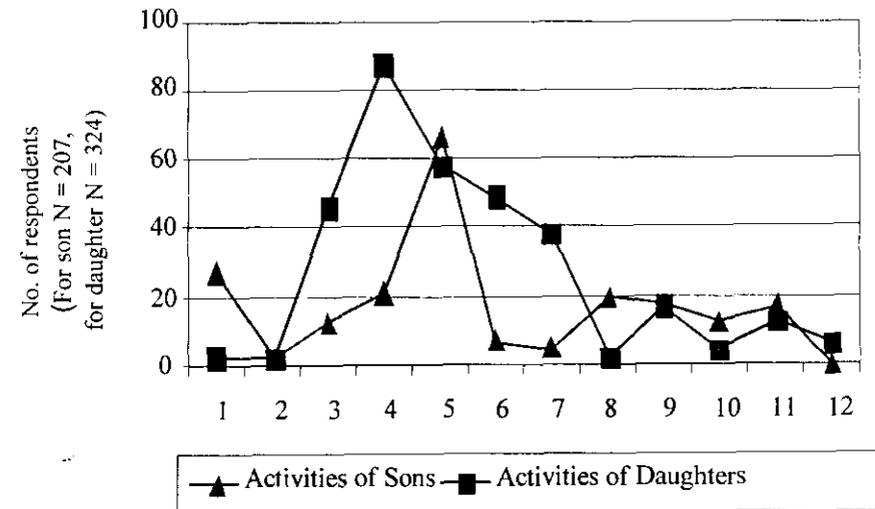

Source: Households and Fertility Survey 2003
*Multiple answers of respondents
Note: 1 = Already have sons/daughters, 2 = Both are essential for family, 3= Daughter as jewel of the house, 4 = To love the parents, 5 = Help in the household work, 6 = Attend the funeral ceremony, 7 = Understand the parent's problem, 8 = Look after the parent at old age, 9 = Gain ·prestige in society, 10 = Maintain family reputation, 11 = Support the family, 12 = Access to the public sphere, 13 = Continue the progeny, 14 = Others.

The importance attached to sons for looking after their parents in old age is related to the pattern of virilocal residence. Traditionally, the son stays with the parents because of the patrilineal society while the daughter follows the husband. Because the son stays at home and inherits the property, he is obliged to look after the parents in old age. The daughters follow their husbands. There are some common activities in the Gurung households that involve a sexual division of labour. Figure 1 shows the different activities of sons and daughters in the household. Sons are highly involved in fetching water for the household and also participate in agricultural work. Notably, almost an equal number of respondents said that their sons also do cooking and go to the market or the shop. Daughters, on the other hand, are involved

more in food preparation, washing clothes and cleaning the dishes. But just like the sons, daughters also fetch water. The daughters work more in the house and reflect women's reproductive role. Sons do more work outside the house and in agriculture, which reflects their future role as provider.

Figure 2: Activities for which sons and daughters valued

Source: Households and Fertility Survey 2003
*Multiple answers of respondents
Note: 1 = Agriculture work, 2 = Child care, 3 = Washing clothes, 4 = Cooking food, 5 = Fetching water, 6 = Cleaning dishes, 7 = Cleaning houses, 8 = Marketing/Shopping, 9 = Fuel wood collection, 10 = Livestock stalling/grazing, 11 = Grass/Fodder collection, 12 = Cow dung removal

The main reasons for wanting sons are that they are supposed to look and their role in after the parents at their old age and the funeral ceremony. The main reasons for wanting daughters are for their role in the funeral ceremony in the household, and for love and affection. The important role of both sons and daughters in the funeral ceremony of their parent is clearly visible in the figure above. The importance attached to sons for looking after their parents in old age is related to the pattern of virilocal Gurung residence. Traditionally, the son stays with the parents because of the patrimonial society while the daughter goes to her husband's house when married. Because the son stays at home and inherits the property, he is obliged to look after the parents in old age.

Personal statements by respondents about sons and daughters

The birth of daughter is welcome because of religious, cultural and social values. Daughters are valued for their help with housework, taking care of younger children and companionship with the mother. Sons and daughters are valued equally because of their importance during the parents' funeral ceremony. The ceremony is not conducted unless a daughter is present. This is not the case in some communities where daughters are not allowed to attend the funeral of their parents.

One case study shows that Shreemaya, who has two sons, desires a daughter. She has a strong desire for a daughter in her family which is a wish of almost every Gurung family. Shreemaya prefers a daughter to a son because she believes that daughters give more love and care to their parents. She also considers them a source of inspiration and crutch for old age. She expressed her wish as follows:

> If I would have a daughter, she would give me deep love, care and affection until old age. I love to hear a lovely voice of "Ama" from my lovely daughter now and in my very old age. She would be looking after my health and help me address female-oriented personal problems. Unfortunately, I do not have a daughter in my life.

Shreemaya is not sure whether her sons love her. Neither son shows love and care to her. Hence, she feels insecure now as she is getting old. She is worried about her future, particularly about her funeral where a daughter is needed to take the dead body from the house to place of cremation. Her husband had a vasectomy in Chitwan without informing her. She laments that all she has left is the dream of having a daughter.

Kumari Gurung, another respondent who is a mother of four daughters, was married at the age of twenty-two years with a young man of the Indian army. Her husband remarried another wife when she was thirty-five years old. Her children were all below twelve years old at that time. The eldest daughter was eleven year old, the second was six, the third was four, and the youngest was only one year old. She has fourteen stepchildren with the second wife of her husband. Kumari's husband has now eighteen children all together. Kumari feels rich because she considers her four daughters her wealth. Hence, she does not desire a son. She also doesn't care for her husband and the co-wife anymore.

> Being a mother of four daughters makes me feel proud of them and I never feel something is missing because of having no sons. I am enjoying my four daughters and I did not like to maintain a male partner after separation. The males always want to take advantage of the women. I could remarry if I wanted to but I did not because I want to give my attention to my four daughters. I also do not

> wish to have a son because I am happy with my four daughters now. Sons and daughters are equal in my two eyes.

Another respondent, Ashmaya, does not expect to have more children. She has already a son. Her husband married a second wife when she was pregnant and now she is separated from him. Being a single mother it is would be difficult for her to look after her child because of financial constraints. However, she wants to give a good education to her son.

> I simply did not marry again for the future of my son. If I remarry and have another children, that will affect my son's economic security and education as well. I do not have the capacity to provide all the needs of my son. His father does not give me any money for his education. My parents-in-law would like me to remarry so that they can get back the land from my son and me. I did not remarry for my son's future.

Rukumaya has different views of sons and daughters. Rukumaya likes to look after her children and think their future. She expressed this as follows:

> I have twin sons and two daughters, who I consider my precious property. Actually I wanted only two children but because my first two children were daughters I waited for sons and had twin sons. Hence, I now have four children. Gurung families do not have any preference for sons or daughters. We provide education to our daughters and sons equally, if daughters like to have education. However, daughters marry at an early age without completing their education. Daughters feel life is better after marriage. This is the case for myself; I also did not continue my education. Anyway, we treat our daughters and sons equally in my family and in the community. We value our sons and daughters equally especially for their role in the funeral ceremony.

In Ratanpur, a thirty-one year-old male respondent, father of a boy, disclosed that he had a vasectomy a year ago without his wife's permission. He inherited limited land from his parental property and now he has no source of income to continue livelihood. He is worried about the production from his parental land, which is not enough to feed his family. He said that his land is already small since his grandfather's property was divided into parts for him and his two brothers. Later his father's brother divided the land into four small parts. His father gave him one part of the land among the three of his own brothers. This is the case when there are more sons in the family so that at least part of the land will be theirs. Therefore, he thinks that it is difficult to maintain the livelihood and produce enough food from decreasing land resources. He said:

I have no regular job and even no enough parental property either. I, therefore, did a vasectomy after a birth of my first son. I am sure, one son gives every good value as a single moon giving light at night all over the world.

The case studies show that mostly women strongly feel about contributing their life to their children. They feel a great responsibility for the children's welfare, education and future. This is illustrated by the case of the single mother who does not intend to remarry and have more children. She is happy remaining single and looking after her child. The women are very affectionate with the children. Women's feeling is that either sons or daughters are their wealth and source of happiness.

Conclusion

Among the different demographic theories with regard to the fertility transition the value-of-children approach proved to be fruitful for looking at the Gurung community. The Gurungs seem to prefer slightly sons to daughters, mainly because of the importance of sons for the security in old age. However, both sons and daughters are important in the funeral ceremony. There does not seem to be a great gender disparity to the effect that people want sons and will not stop childbearing until they have a son. Hence, the Gurung son preference is not an issue and a cause of high fertility. On the other, the necessity to have at least one daughter might influence fertility. The need for having a daughter would require a gross reproduction rate of at least one.

Based on the statements of the informants a picture of masculinity and femininity among the Gurungs can be constructed. It seems that masculinity is associated with providing for the family and providing for the parents at old age. Femininity is associated with nurturing and duties to family and household, as well as with giving love and affection to children. Contributing to the funeral ceremony of the parents is part of both masculine and feminine roles. National legislation with regard to inheritance in Nepal still favours sons. The fact that parental property goes to sons rather than daughters influences the value attached to having sons and daughters and discriminates against women, also among the Gurungs. Thus, although there is a great measure of gender equality among the Gurungs, they are also affected by discriminatory national legislation.

Note

1. This paper presents the partial findings of a PhD research project on "Women's Agency in relation to Population and Environment in Rural Nepal". The fieldwork was done in October 2002-December 2003 in Bhoteodar and Udipur, Lamjung, Nepal. The data were collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The quantitative data are derived from the household and fertility survey conducted by the author in February 2003 (sample size 350). The respondents were married women between the ages of 15-49 years. The qualitative statements in this paper are taken from the results of the focus group discussions and case studies that were conducted. The given names of the respondents are pseudonyms.

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THE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL AUTONOMY ON BMI SCORES: A STUDY OF WOMEN IN NEPAL

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Gender differences in health and health care services have become the focus of an unprecedented mobilization of social resources and research in South Central Asia. Women in Nepal, India, and elsewhere in the region experience poorer health than men, and social factors, particularly inequities in status, account for these differences (Dreze and Sen 2002; DeRose, Das, and Millman 2000; Gittelsohn 1991). Accordingly, women's autonomy and self-empowerment have been central concepts in researching the relationship between women's social status and health.

Although research in both western and non-western societies has demonstrated the positive effects of women's autonomy on quality of life in general and health in particular (Jun, Subramanian, Gortmaker, and Kawachi 2004; Kalipeni 2000), these studies have not defined autonomy consistently. Women's autonomy is often described operationally without consideration of autonomy as a broad, multi-dimensional concept. Studies typically have relied upon a varied number of indicators of autonomy without clarifying which facet of women's agency may be most salient in predicting women's quality of life. With this in mind, the purpose of this paper is twofold: first, we want to investigate the relationship between autonomy, using a broad operationalization of the term, and a specific and objective measure of health status (Body Mass Index (BMI)); and, second, we will compare the effects of different indicators of autonomy on BMI.

Autonomy and Women's Health

At the core of the international women's movement has been efforts to invigorate and enhance women's autonomy and reduce women's dependence on and vulnerability to men (c.f. Nelson, et al., 1996). Empowerment is both mantra and strategy to individuals, groups, and societies that strive to reduce gender-based social, economic, and political divisions, and has considerable influence over health and health behavior. For example, increasing women's social agency in westernizing cultures has positive results on self-reported health (Berhane, Gossagye, Emmelin, and Hogberg 2001), antenatal care (Bloom, Wypij and Das Gupta 2001), and contraceptive use (Al Riyami, Afifi, and Mabry 2004), and a negative impact on fertility in India (Murthi, Guio, and Dreze 1995) and Nepal (Axinn and Fricke 1996; Morgan and Niraula 1995).

Although enhancing women's agency in both western and westernizing societies has a positive effect on health and health behavior, the causal mechanisms linking autonomy to improved health intersect in a complex web of factors that bridges all levels of social life, albeit with cultural variations. In essence, raising women's social capital reduces dependency and heightens both status and bargaining power. In taking control of their economic and political lives, women are more likely to invest in themselves and their daughters and lessen their dependence on sons for security in old age (MacCormack 1988). As an example of cultural specificity in this process, increasing women's labor force participation in India lowers dowry levels, which has reduced the cost of raising girls (Murthi, Guio, and Dreze 1995). Given the weight of the findings of the studies cited above, among others, it is clear that empowerment improves women's health and well-being. Based on these ideas, the research hypothesis driving the first part of the present study predicts that among women in Nepal, greater autonomy will be associated with better health as measured by BMI levels.

A problem in this literature, however, is that studies lack consistency in defining what is meant by autonomy. Autonomy is a complex, multifaceted concept, yet studies rarely include more than a couple of autonomy's attributes in their operationalizations. Consequently, when a study concludes that autonomy influences health, it is not clear which facets of autonomy are contributing to the effects, and a certain degree of meaning is lost.

Agency and autonomy refer to individuals' ability to act independently of the constraints of social structure. For Giddens (1984), agency is equivalent to power and is behaviour that leads to changes in social outcomes from what may ordinarily be expected given knowledge of structural conditions and history. Specific to women, autonomy is typically framed in terms of structural norms, particularly power dynamics, governing women's associations with men. Therefore, a definition of women's autonomy should include the many forms in which gender-based power relations can take.

Jejeebhoy's (1995) definition is among the most thorough in the literature and serves as the basis for the present paper. Jejeebhoy suggests that autonomy is a reflection of women's degree of freedom, relative to men, along five structured dimensions: access to economic resources (economic autonomy); freedom of movement (physical autonomy); opportunity to participate in decisions (decision-making autonomy); freedom within intimate relationships (emotional autonomy); and freedom to learn and possess knowledge (knowledge autonomy). In order to maximize content validity in an operationalization of women's autonomy, all five of these dimensions should be considered.

What is not apparent in the literature on the effect of women's autonomy on health, however, is the relative influence of the various attributes representing the autonomy concept. Operationalized indicators of

autonomy have not necessarily been derived from a central and agreed-upon definition. For example, Table 1 shows a number of operationalizations of autonomy in the literature on health among women in South Asia and indicates considerable variation in conceptualization.

Table 1: Previously Used Operationalizations of Women's Autonomy with Author, and Asian Countries Sampled

Authors &County Studied	operationalization
Axinn & Fricke (1996) (Nepal)	ties to natal kin
Balk (1997) (Bangladesh)	freedom of movement; household decision-making
Bloom, Wypij, & Gupta (2001) (India)	control of finances; decision-making power; freedom of movement
Dyson & Moore (1983)	freedom of movement; postmarital residence; behavior (India) norms limiting natal contact; freedom to inherit, control, and sell property; control over own sexuality; choice of mate
Ghuman (2003) (India, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand)	freedom of movement; discretion over income; economic decision-making; freedom from violence and intimidation; decision-making power concerning ill children
Morgan & Niraula (1995) (Nepal)	freedom of movement; household decision-making
Morgan, Stash, Smith, & Mason (2002) (Thailand, Philippines)	freedom of movement; economic decision-making; interpersonal controls e.g. free from domestic violence and (India, Malaysia, Philippines, Thialand) free to disagree with husband
Murthi, Guio, & Dreze (1995) (India)	education; literacy; labor force participation
Rani and Bonu (2003) (India)	health care decision-making
Rayman & Rao (2004) (India)	household decisions-making; freedom of mobility
Pothukuchi (2001) (India)	freedom from family networks

Previous uses of the autonomy concept in quantitative analyses of health have demonstrated poor content validity because studies have used a number of combinations of the various dimensions of the term. Autonomy has been

identified as predicting health and certain health behaviors, yet not all dimensions of the conceptual definition of the term have been included in studies' measurements. Although it would seem intuitive that various indicators of autonomy would predict health similarly, this question has yet to be tested. Therefore, the second objective of the present study was to determine if the various qualities of autonomy have common variability on an objective health measure.

Body Mass Index (BMI)

Body Mass Index, a computed number based on height and weight, BMI is a widely used anthropometric indicator of health, especially regarding nutritional status and nutrition-related disease. Designed primarily for public health studies, the BMI allows researchers to determine nutritional correlates in health outcomes and is used as both independent and dependent variables. BMI is not an absolute measure but is best understood if employed as a general guideline for assessing nutritional status, especially at the extremes. Because differences between any two particular BMI numbers is of limited value, BMI's use is most appropriate in public health and sociology of health studies for identifying individuals and population groups within the established ranges defining malnutrition and adiposity (obesity) in adults. Conventional health standards specify BMIs at 18.5 or below as malnourished, with 15 indicating near starvation; 30 and over are considered obese. Body Mass Index, the dependent variable in this study, is calculated by dividing weight by height squared, multiplied by 703.

Because of its strong reliability and validity as a measure of nutritional status, BMI can be found throughout the medical and public health literature. The measure has been used successfully in health studies with Asian samples. Examples of its recent use in studies of south Asian samples include Reddy, Reddy, and Rao's (2004) finding that lower BMI correlated with lower self-reported health among Indian elderly; Hutter's (1996) study that found that BMI is a key measure for identifying chronic energy deficiency among pregnant women in rural south India; an assessment of Nepalese refugees (Anonymous 2000); and Misra, Sharma, Pandey, and Khanna's (2001) work that BMI predicted atherosclerosis among economically deprived Indian urban residents.

Some health researchers have questioned the application of universal standards of BMI to Asian populations, citing cross-ethnic variability in BMI's reliability in classifying risk of metabolic disease. The BMI threshold for predicting these disorders is not consistent when comparing ethnic groups in Europe and Asia (Shiwaku, Anuurad, Enkhmaa, Kitajima, and Yamane 2004). This reliability matter, however, seems to be limited to the identification of metabolic disease and is not a concern in the present study.

Methods

Study Population: The data used in this study come from the 2001 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), a nationally representative survey of 8,726 women aged 15-49 years (Ministry of Health [Nepal] 2002). The DHS is an extensive data set focusing on women and children's health, family planning, fertility, and nutrition. The data set includes variables that allow us to compare several dimensions of autonomy, although these terms do not correspond exactly to Jejeebhoy's scheme. Interviews were conducted in Nepali and several local languages, and informed consent was obtained from each respondent. The data were used with permission.

Because BMI was not adjusted for pregnancy, pregnant women were eliminated from the final study sample leaving 7,989 cases.

Variables: The DHS allows us to compare four of the five dimensions specified by Jejeebhoy. Economic autonomy is represented by two variables. First, having income paid as cash rather than "in-kind" (1=cash) proffers recipients greater discretion, hence power, over their personal and household resources. The second variable, the percentage of household income contributed by each respondent, was used to indicate relative household economic power.

Physical autonomy, the freedom of movement, was indicated by several variables. Because of the predominance of traditional sex roles in Nepalese households, we centered this concept on family composition variables. Assuming that in households women generally carry a greater work burden and hold lower status, we sought to identify markers in the DHS of these concepts. Three variables were selected: sex of the head of household (1=female), household size, and fertility. To tap into women's immediate child-bearing burden, fertility was indicated by the number of births in the last five years. It must be noted, however, that child-rearing is not the only factor in the relationship between fertility and BMI. Because of the impact that rapid serial pregnancies can have on women's bodies, this variable may act independently of the other variables in this group.

Decision-making autonomy was represented by two variables. First, health care autonomy was measured by summing two items that asked for respondents' freedom to seek medical treatment. The DHS asked women in the sample how big of a problem they have getting permission to seek treatment and knowing where to receive treatment. The two items loaded together in a factor analysis (data not shown) and were positively correlated ($r = .231; p \leq .01$).

Second, household decision-making autonomy was measured by indexing the following five items: Who has the final say on: (1) your own health care, (2) large household purchases; (3) making purchases of everyday household items, (4) making visits to family or relatives, and (5) what food is to be cooked? The response options reflected an ordinal ranking of distance

from autonomy each respondent had in making these decisions. A high score reflected greater social distance from making decisions (low autonomy). The items demonstrated strong reliability (alpha = .867).

Next, knowledge autonomy was represented by two variables. First, literacy level, which was operationalized by respondents' demonstrated ability to read four standardized statements, was used to indicate ability. Second, formal education was measured as years achieved. Education, however, was excluded from the final analyses because of high colinearity effects with literacy ($r = .716$), and the relationships between them and BMI were very similar. Of the two, literacy was preferred in light of prior research that has suggested that literacy competency rather than school attainment is the pathway through which education affects women's health behavior in Nepal (LeVine, LeVine, Rowe, and Schnell-Anzola 2004).

Jejeebhoy's measure of emotional autonomy could not be represented by DHS data with satisfactory validity and was excluded from consideration. Lastly, age and marital status were originally included as control variables, but were parsimoniously eliminated from the final analysis because they contributed little of consequence to the models.

The dependent variable for this study was BMI. To enhance reliability in measurement, the DHS interviewer's manual provides detailed instructions for obtaining height and weight data from respondents. Both measures required the interviewer and a health technician to use a measuring board to determine height and a solar powered scale to determine weight. In addition, the manual provides instructions for calibrating the scale.

For the present purposes, BMI was operationalized in two ways. First, we used BMI as the interval variable in which it is usually reported. Using BMI in this manner allowed us to study the associations of independent variables on the full range of BMI values. Second, for reasons to be described below, we dichotomized BMI into two groups: malnourished ($\leq$ 18.5) and non-malnourished (U.S. Centers for Disease Control, 2005).

Results

As can be seen in Table 2, the bivariate analysis indicated that all of the measures of women's agency were associated with BMI in the predicted direction. Household decision-making autonomy, freedom to seek medical care, literacy, and percentage of income were significantly related to higher BMI. Respondents living in households headed by women and having a cash income had higher BMIs as well. Household size and the number of births in the last five years had statistically significant negative correlations with BMIs. From the bivariate coefficients presented here, the argument that women's autonomy has an impact on an objective health measure was sustained.

Table 2. Bivariate Analyses of Associations between BMI and Indicators of Autonomy.

	BMI	HHSize	Sex of HH Head	5-Year Births	Income Share	Cash	Dec-Mak Auto.	Med. Auto.	Literacy
BMI	1.000								
Household Size	-.032**	1.000							
Sex of Head of Household	-.029**	-.227**	1.000						
Number of births within 5 years	-.090**	.130**	.130**	1.000					
Income Share	.160**	-.135**	-.062**	-.091**	1.000				
Cash Income	.179**	-.131**	.045**	-.086**	.132**	1.000			
Dec-Making Autonomy	-.095**	.394**	-.319**	.103**	-.176**	-.182**	1.000		
Medical Autonomy	.060**	-.040**	.070**	-.063**	.104**	.094**	-.154**	1.000	
Literacy	.235**	-.023*	.043**	-.059**	.111**	.158**	.013	.187**	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Although BMI has been widely used as a health indicator, the findings presented thus far should be interpreted with caution because fluctuations in BMIs do not necessarily reflect meaningful differences in health status. A number of factors contribute to height and weight ratios that render many distinctions between BMI levels irrelevant at the interval-ratio level of measurement. For example, the difference between a BMI of 21 and 22 is of no particular interest in that the "22" does npt necessarily reflect better health status, which is implicated by rule in an interval or ratio measure. In addition, the distribution of BMI values in relationship to quality of health is not linear; values of 30 and over are considered indicators of obesity (Centers for Disease Control, 2005).

On the other hand, categorizing BMI is both a suitable and reliable indicator of extreme conditions of nourishment status (Nube and Van Den Boom, 2003). With this scheme, an ordinal or even nominal BMI becomes a meaningful biosocial marker of health status in populations, which separate women in the sample into groups according to real and valid health conditions.

With a dichotomized BMI, however, the pattern of the bivariate relationships changes. As Table 3 shows, both autonomy in decision-making and the freedom to seek health care were unrelated to BMI categories. Household factors and fertility, which correlated with the interval measure of BMI, were not associated with the dichotomous version of BMI. The strongest predictors of malnourished status (low BMI) were literacy, percentage of income, and having cash income.

The hierarchical regression models reported in Table 4 show the results of regressing BMI on the various dimensions of autonomy; Model 1 included the economic variables; Model 2 added the physical autonomy factors; Model 3 decision-making; and Model 4 knowledge. As the table shows, the tangible assets (income share and having a cash income) remain significant predictors of BMI when all other autonomy variables are added to the model. Similarly, decision-making autonomy and the number of births in the last five years were strong predictors. The medical autonomy variable, however, was marginally significant when other factors are controlled. Each of the four dimensions of autonomy produced statistically significant gains in the amount of explained variance in BMI values.

Table 3: Bivariate Analyses of Associations between Categorical BMIs and Indicators of Autonomy (Spearman's rho).

	Malnour (BMI <18.5)	HH Size	Sex of HH Head	5-Year Births	Income Share	Cash	Dec-Mak Auto.	Med. Auto.	Literacy
Malnourished	1.000								
Household Size	.021	1.000							
Sex of Head of Household	-.020	-.289**	1.000						
Number of births within 5 years	-.003	.165**	-.062**	1.000					
Income Share	-.158*	-.135**	.078*	-.119**	1.000				
Cash Income	-.068**	-.131**	.045**	-.085**	.174**	1.000			
Dec-Making Autonomy	.017	.411**	-.313**	.131**	-.157**	-.184**	1.000		
Medical Autonomy	-.004	-.067**	.071**	-.065**	.092**	.101**	-.167**	1.000	
Literacy	-.156**	-.047**	.038**	-.034**	.187	.153**	.006	.187**	1.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4: Multiple Linear Regression of BMI on Factors of Autonomy

Model		B	SE	Beta
1	Income Share	.327***	.084	.117
	Cash Income	2.541***	.235	.325
	(constant)	18.719***	.293	
	R² .132			
2	Income Share	.288***	.084	.103
	Cash Income	2.453***	.235	.314
	Household Size	.002	.038	.001
	Sex of Head of Household (1=male)	-.007	.293	-.001
	Births Last 5 Years	-.653***	.142	-.138
	(constant)	19.284***	.544	
	R² .150***			
3	Income Share	.247**	.084	.088
	Cash Income	2.312***	.236	.296
	Household Size	.046	.039	.038
	Sex of Head of Household (1=male)	-.354	.303	-.037
	Births Last 5 Years	-.579***	.142	-.123
	Decision-Making Autonomy	-.086***	.023	-.126
	Medical Autonomy	.171*	.087	.058
	(constant)	19.790***	.761	
	R² .167***			
4	Income Share	.183*	.082	.065
	Cash Income	1.766***	.243	.226
	Household Size	.038	.038	.031
	Sex of Head of Household (1=male)	-.399	.296	-.041
	Births Last 5 Years	-.593***	.139	-.125
	Decision-Making Autonomy	-.090***	.023	-.132
	Medical Autonomy	.069	.087	.023
	Literacy	.843***	.120	.219
	(constant)	20.279***	.746	
	R² .207***			

*** $p \leq .001$
** $p \leq .01$
* $p \leq .05$

Finally, the same analysis was conducted with dichotomized BMI as the dependent variable. To compare the impact of the four dimensions of autonomy on R^2 changes, linear regression models were run. As Table 5 shows, the same variables accounted for most of the explained variance as in Table 4; however, the physical and decision-making equations did not contribute to a significant change in R^2. Once literacy entered the equation, only the economic and knowledge dimensions of autonomy were significant. Births in the last five years was also significant, but as stated earlier, it is not clear if this effect is due to the physical limitations of child-rearing or the pregnancies. Logistic regression models were run on the dichotomized BMI variable and produced similar findings (data not shown).

Table 5: Dichotomized BMI Regressed on Indicators of Autonomy

Model		B	SE	Beta
1	Income Share	-.034***	.010	-.110
	Cash Income	-.221***	.027	-.254
	(constant)	.463***	.033	
	R² .085			
2	Income Share	-.031***	.010	-.101
	Cash Income	-.213***	.027	-.245
	Household Size	.001	.004	.009
	Sex of Head of Household (1=male)	-.024	.034	-.022
	Births Last 5 Years	.038*	.016	.073
	(constant)	.448***	.062	
	R² .092			
3	Income Share	-.030**	.010	-.095
	Cash Income	-.209***	.027	-.240
	Household Size	-.001	.005	-.009
	Sex of Head of Household (1=male)	-.006	.035	-.005
	Births Last 5 Years	.035*	.016	.066
	Decision-Making Autonomy	.005***	.003	.062
	Medical Autonomy	-.002	.010	-.006
	(constant)	.387***	.088	
	R² .095			

4	Income Share	-.024*	.010	-.077
	Cash Income	-.158***	.028	-.181
	Household Size	-.001	.004	-.005
	Sex of Head of Household (1=male)	-.001	.035	-.002
	Births Last 5 Years	-.036*	.016	.068
	Decision-Making Autonomy	.005	.003	.067
	Medical Autonomy	.008	.010	.024
	Literacy	-.078***	.014	-.183
	(constant)	.342***	.087	
	R^2 .122***			

*** $p \leq .001$

** $p \leq .01$

* $p \leq .05$

Discussion

This study sought to investigate the relationship between four dimensions of women's autonomy (economic, physical, decision-making, and knowledge) and Body Mass Index, an objective health outcome measure, on a national sample of non-pregnant Nepalese women. As expected, greater autonomy correlated with higher BMI. All variables representing the four aspects of autonomy produced the predicted correlations in the bivariate analysis. When BMI was dichotomized to separate the sample into two groups, malnourished and all others, however, only the market-related qualities of autonomy were significant predictors of BMI: literacy and the two income variables.

The findings presented here suggest that while decision-making autonomy and physical autonomy at home contributed to higher BMIs, they had small and not significant utility in predicting women who fell into the malnourished category. Other autonomy factors, literacy, income conditions, and fewer recent births, however, do contribute to women staying out of the lowest range of BMIs. What may explain these differences?

Perhaps the single most important factor influencing women's well-being in Nepal is the control of property and market assets. Increasing women's control of market tangibles promotes women's ability to bargain, both within and outside the household. These assets work independently of household and decision-making autonomy, especially in terms of women avoiding malnourishment. With the exception of the fertility variable, the

qualities of autonomy that predict non-malnourishment were those that link women directly to social systems outside the family.

The research question driving this study was rooted in the concern that women's autonomy has not been considered in its broadest depth. Previous research has used an array of operations but has not attempted to explore the various dimensions of autonomy. The present investigation found that while autonomy was a critical variable in understanding women's health in South Asia, the concept was multi-faceted and particular indicators should be justified in the context of their usage. The data presented here are sufficiently robust to indicate the lack of equivalence between the terms if used individually without first having been subject to a factor analysis.

This being said, the study had limitations. First, the measure of physical limitations is not hardy and does not exactly correspond to Jejeebhoy's concept. Second, we could not include emotional autonomy in the models. Third, pregnant women, who are often vulnerable to nutritional inequities in Nepal, were excluded from the study.

To conclude, this research finds that while autonomy is a critical variable in understanding women's health in South Asia, care should be taken to specify what aspects of autonomy are at work under specific circumstances. Given that the content validity of the term has yet to be established, these data suggest that researchers should, in future, generate a standardized and indexed operationalization of autonomy that includes all five of Jejeebhoy's dimensions.

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SOCIAL NETWORKING AND THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS AMONG ACTIVISTS IN NEPAL[1]

Mrigendra Bahadur Karki

As a result of the signing of the 12- point agreement between the seven-party (parliamentary) alliance and the Communist Party of Nepal, Maoist,[2] from the 6th to the 24th of April, 2006, for the first time in Nepal's history, millions of people marched on the streets of entire cities and most of the villages of the country. They crossed all state coercive measures, defied curfew, and cleared security barricades, all the while chanting 'Loktantra' (democracy). People from to all walks of life took part, at their own high risk. These demonstrations were not merely a coincidence or a form of spontaneous mobilization; they were a manifestation of undercurrent activism, contentious politics, collective action, and social movements. Over the last 200 years, Nepal has changed considerably (Gellner 1997a) and in recent decades the rate, intensity, and spectrum of change has been noteworthy. This may be compared to Tarrow's (2003) "movement society," concept, which he created for contemporary global contexts. In the same vein, in the 1960s, sociologist Daniel Bell proclaimed the "end of ideology" (Lloyd 2003); following his footsteps many social scientists predicted a stage of societal development where ideological conflict would gradually be translated into a more pluralistic, pragmatic consensus (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). This seems to ring true for Nepal, where ethnic organizations, regional movements, civil societies, Dalit groups, and women movements, to name a few, are proliferating as new alternative intermediaries, somehow challenging/replacing political parties in mediating between people and the state. All these mobilizations are triggering social scientists to ask some serious questions: why have the collective actions, mass mobilizations (movements, revolution) come into being? Why do people join these mass mobilizations? What are the motivating and networking patterns of activists? What recruitment technologies and processes are being deployed by activists?

Social Political Upheaval 1990
Almost every day from the 1990s onwards, particularly post 1996, after the introduction of the Maoist insurgency, both printed and electronic media have been cultivating column and airing news on various levels, forms, types, and natures of collective actions, protests, activisms, movements, insurgencies, and counter insurgencies as well as their strategies and tactical repertoires. The promulgation of the new constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal in 1990 produced avenues for the mobilization of all sorts of activism

in the country– both individual and collective. From that time onwards, activism, movements, and collective actions became a perennial and routine part of Nepali life, especially in urban areas (nevertheless the Maoist insurgency has emerged from rural areas). Enormous public discourses were initiated and organizations materialized; activists, academics, and intellectuals began to engage in the expression and exchange of views in a way that had previously been banned.[3] As noted earlier, varied forms of activism took place as political groups, cultural nationalists, Dalit, women, Madheshi, etc., asserted their ethnic and territorial autonomy, the right to self determination, linguistic revitalization, and so on. Dalits, women, the disabled, and numerous social organizations and religious groups have since advocated their rights and identities as Weigert, Smith, and Teitge state, "social organization is the principle of self-organization, and both together explain social action" (1986: 5). Lesbian, gay, and sex worker movements started up. Many of these have or seek links with International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs). Activist organizations have a key role in the ongoing transformation of Nepali society. Since 1990 it is estimated that more than 30,000 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been registered in Nepal, focusing particularly on development, awareness, advocacy, civic and human rights, the environment, children, women, peace, and so on (Gellner and Karki forthcoming).

Modern Nepali political activism can be divided into five generations by key historical events: prior to 1951 Rana Regime, 1952-1961 multiparty system, 1962-1979 party-less political Panchayat system, 1980-1990 reformed party-less Panchayat system, and the post- 1990 reinstallation of multiparty system. These events have offered opportunities for contentions, oppositions, and original activist dynamics, producing new generations of activists. One major outcome of mobilization is the formation of a political generation, a cohort of activists who are committed to the cause in enduring ways (Mannheim 1928 quoted by Whittier 2004: 541). Cultural nationalist, Dalit, women's, social, and Tarai activisms, are also seen to be analogous to political events (religious activism may be a partial exception here). The 2001 census recorded over 100 castes/ethnicities and 92 mother tongues, each of which could be said to constitute separate cultural entities. Cultural nationalists have claimed that the original culture of those units goes back to the period prior to the modern administrative unification after 1769 initiated by King Prithivi Narayan Shah.

Many of the existing studies have focused on identity formation or reformation as well as agenda production (Gellner, Pfaff-Czarnecka, and Whelpton 1997; de Sales 2000; Lecomte-Tilouine and Dollfus 2003; Fisher 2004), ideology and agenda building through the process of grievances construction (Bhattachan 1995, 2000), and issue claiming and counter

claiming (Dahal 1995; Adams 1998; and Shah 2005). Hachhethu (2002), Rawal (1990), and KC (2001) have focused on political party/institution building through political process perspectives. Dahal (2004) analyzes an emerging new social movement in Nepal from a western theoretical position. Even if social movements are not acknowledged as such, they are a vital social force in mass mobilizations and socio-political change in general, as is evidenced by the last seven-eight decades. Although many activists have greatly contributed to those movements, the sociological study of their recruitment process in Nepal has been neglected, with the exception of de Sales (2003), Lecomte-Tilouine (2006), Gellner and Karki (2004, 2005), who have produced two preliminary articles addressing motivation and trends in recruitment.[4]

> Opposition to existing (unequal) social conditions was revealed to be a major motivation for activism, as the single biggest first response (21.6%) to the direct question on this matter, going up to 35.3% when up to three responses are allowed. 'Ideology' is given as a first response by only 12.5%, though this increases to 34% when up to three responses are included. Once the responses are broken down by type of activist some perhaps predictable regularities can be observed: political activists are much more likely to have been influenced by an ideology or a text than others; Janajati, women, and Dalit activists are much more likely to be influenced by a desire to resist social evils or by events than others; and business or commercial activists are influenced by neither, with over 50% saying that the advancement of their professional interests was their motivation. (Gellner and Karki 2005:14)

In this article, I attempt to further explore a) how individuals become involved in/recruited for activism, b) what types of social and political process one needs to undergo to be an activist, and finally, c) what motivations are affective during the recruitment process?

General Literature
The growth of social movements[5] is a global phenomenon these days (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996), which has come to be regarded as permanent components of western democracies (Porta and Diani 2004), but I think these are omnipresent. However, movement has been variously conceptualized in different eras and places. Zirakzadeh (1997) states that immediately following the few decades after the Second World War, social movement theorists of Western Europe and Northern America had negative associations with social movements due to their painful memories of National Socialism in Germany, Fascism in Italy, and McCarthyism in the United

States. These theorists therefore depicted social movements in a derogatory way and dwelt on their childish, immoral, and anti-democratic features.

Initially during the last century, sociological theories of ideology and later, theories of organization and rationality dominated as perspectives from which to address issues of social movement (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994). In the late sixties and early seventies, two principal theoretical models in particular evolved; the Marxist model and the structural-functionalist model. However, reactions to those theoretical lacunae developed in both settings; collective behaviour (in its interactionist version), resource mobilization, and the political processes perspective developed in response to structural-functionalist model in the United States and the 'new social movement' evolved in response to the Marxists model in the Europe (Porta and Diani 2004). Garner and Zald (1985:138) and Diani (2004: 341) claim protest and contentious collective action are ultimately "politics by other means", and social movements were merely one of the options that challengers could draw upon to pursue their policy outcomes and their quest for membership in the polity.

> It is difficult to grasp the nature of social movements, neither they could be reduced to specific insurrections or revolts, but rather resemble strings of more or less connected events, scattered across time and space; they cannot be identified with specific organizations either, rather, they consist of groups and organizations, with various levels of formalization, linked in patterns of interactions which run from the fairly centralized to the totally decentralized, from cooperative to the explicitly hostile. In another word social movements are complex and highly heterogeneous network structures. (Diani 2003:1)

It has been observed that modern social movements developed with the creation of the nation-state (Porta and Tarrow 2005). Nepal too has followed the same trajectory, where modern forms of activism began from the 1920s with action against the Rana regime (Gellner and Karki forthcoming). However, it is equally true that contention, opposition, grievances, collective action, and movement in any form are ubiquitous throughout space and time (Klandermans 2004a). To complicate matters, everywhere movements as ideology and instrument (ibid) have been mobilized on the basis of various social and ethnic groups, castes, and geographical markers. It is very difficult to measure their scale and scope because of the changing face of transnational activism, which complicates the local processes of the diffusion of movements with crosscutting trends of internationalization (Porta and Tarrow 2005). In addition, Matsuda (2001: 128) points out, that human beings are active subjects with creativity and initiative in the existential world.

Many theorists have concentrated on exploring how movements and revolutions emerge and develop. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald (1996) tease out three factors: firstly, the structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the movements; secondly, the form of organization (formal and informal) available to insurgents; and lastly, the collective process of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action. In same vein, Kandermans and Oegema (1987) claim four stages of social movements: forming mobilization potentials; forming and motivating recruitment networks; arousing motivation to participate; and removing barriers to participation. Chong (1991) observes that in every social movement some proportion of the activists primarily seek immediate gratification and private benefits such as an increase in local prestige, and are neither steadfastly nor deeply committed to long term social change. People who do not become activists are those for whom the costs is too great, they tend to have little economic security and few, if any ties to a political base from which they may be granted political protection (Migdal 1974; Piven 1976: 316-18; Scott 1985 quoted by Zirakzadeh 1997).

Undoubtedly, activism and social movements share more or less the same trajectories, and overlap their meanings and conceptualizations to a great extent. However, implicit differences in the recruitment pattern exist. Essentially, social movements recruit participants not members (Porta and Diani 2004); participants in social movements do not make up a collectivity activists and may not follow the same recruitment processes as activists. Participants in social movements are recruited at any point of time across a given society through the intense interactions, fusions, conflicts, collective identities, and resources of activist organizations. In answering the question of why participation in movements is appealing to people, various factors have to be taken into account. "People may want to change their circumstances, they may want to act as a member of their groups, or they may want to give meaning to their world and express their views and feelings" (Klandermans 2004b: 361). Hirsch (1990: 243) has developed the steps to recruitment and commitment to protest movements: consciousness-raising, collective empowerment, polarization, and group decision-making.

McAdam (1988) observes that structural availability is more important than attitudinal affinity in accounting for differential involvement in movement activities. Ideological disposition towards participation matters little if the individual lacks the structural contact to 'pull' her or him into protest. Consistent with this argument, a number of studies have demonstrated the decisive role of structural, rather than attitudinal, factors in encouraging activism. Very few would disagree that social network analysis facilitates the study of social movements through individual embeddedness in

a pre-existing network and how new networks build up across the society and time.

The Study

'The impact of activism in Nepal: an anthropological and historical study' research project covers a wide range of data as I mention above. This article attempts to investigate the underlying social and political mechanisms and processes of activist recruitment through network analysis.[6] How does a neutral individual advance from the role of sympathizer to supporter, and ultimately become involved in activism? How have motivational, ultimately become involved in activism? How have motivational, networking, and recruitment processes worked and what types of techniques (physical, non-physical) are being adopted? Even though the political, ethnic, and religious organizations deploy their member activists for different goals, are the basic mobilization and recruitment technologies similar or not? This project and its resulting publications endeavour to seek to uncover the ways in which political parties and ethnic and religious institutions contact, influence, recruit, and organize activists in their cause. This article excludes from its quantitative survey activists who discontinued their activities or were expelled from their organizations. Primarily, it focuses on activists and does not look at non-activists or regular individuals.

As noted above, Nepal has faced several political movements/ revolutions so this research has attempted to cover the activism of each generation and a great diversity of movements from different political, social and cultural domains. As a consequence of this diversity of activists and movements, the project has also included analysis of many different environments or motivational contexts because of the vital role they play in generating the requisite networking that ultimately leads to the recruitment of activists. Fararo and Kosaka (2003) say "structure itself is as networking". However, structural motivation and inter-structural/inter-organizational networking are not my only focus and I try to explore other possibilities. Structural choice (opportunities/obstacles) and rational choice networking may create possible spaces in which individuals may be led into recruitment through networking, nonetheless; one needs to overcome some barriers. Additionally, motivation gains momentum from structural opposition and contention. One important question is how these forces, as well as 'positive' networking factors, result in the production of activists. I have found that activists are recruited through various situations, environments, and prevailing knowledge. As our research has shown, an individual becomes an activist by borrowing from various concepts and existing theoretical. It would therefore be inappropriate to overlay a unified theoretical position with which to analyse their networking and recruitment on to their activities. Instead, I will present their various perspectives and begin to chart a course for an analysis based on their recruitment processes as they identify them.

Research Design

Urban-based activism is very common in Nepal. This may be due to the availability of modern infrastructures, which provide multiple means of disseminating ideology choices, and access to international links to advocacy and lobbying; consequently, cities are in focus. This does not mean, however, that activists are totally absent in the rural areas. Most eminent activists live in cities and conduct most of their activism within cities (national, regional, zonal, district, or rural-urban). Activism draws upon potentially mobilizing structures[7] (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996) and resources, which are located in cities. Therefore, most activists commence their activism in urban areas and then diffuse their activities to villages. During the survey conducted as part of the 'Impact of Activism project', I found that just as up-grading occurs in a promotional system, if one gets good expertise, name and fame, a migrant will migrate to cities to do more. All of the central offices of national political parties, INGOs, and NGOs are located in Kathmandu. In other words, almost entire prominent activist leaders stay in the capital city. For example, of the fifty member organizations that are members of NEFIN (Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities), thirty are based in Kathmandu, including its central office, three are in Pokhara and one in Janakpur (Gellner and Karki 2005). Additionally, the Maoist insurgency has compelled opposing activists to migrate to the cities. Realizing this hard reality and high risk, our study excludes the country side and declined to survey Maoist activists (this decision was also taken out of concerns over the state, because at that time the Maoists were declared terrorists and all their activities were banned by the government of Nepal).

Taking into consideration those facts, the ecological setting and the location of the major concentrations of activists, from late 2003s to early 2004s, 109 pilot questionnaires were filled out. These covered three districts, namely Kathmandu, the capital city, Kaski (Pokhara), the western regional development centre, and Dhanusa (Janakpur), the zonal head quarter of Sagarmatha. From December 2004 to April 2005, of 800 quantitative interviews, fifty per cent (400) were obtained from Kathmandu, and twenty five per cent (200) from Pokhara and Janakpur, the district head quarters of Kaski and Dhanusa districts respectively. A questionnaire schedule containing 38 questions and divided into three major parts (organizational, personal, and political ideology inclination) was used for the quantitative interview. Respondents were selected through 'snowball sampling' from several types of activist groups, namely political, ethnic, Dalit, religious, Madheshi, caste, women, social, and economic. Of the 200 respondents in each area outside Kathmandu, 50 respondents were from political parties, 30 from women's organizations, and 20 each from indigenous/nationalities, Dalit, economic, social, and religious activists. Within Kathmandu this number was doubled for each category.

An activist is a person who is consciously and voluntarily engages (full time or part time) in at least one organization that has certain end goals, whether those be halting or changing extant authority whatever its form: culture, institution, group etc. It is not simple, however, to depict the concrete definitional boundaries of an activist and any such project must acknowledge their overlapping meanings, conceptualisations, and shifting positions. For the sake of the study's feasibility, we do not include participants 'of the moment' or claimants in our definition of activists. However, in general, one could identify and claim that an activist is an individual who is just participating in any protest, movement, or collective action.

In this article, I defined the recruitment of an activist to be a state of recognition of involvement in an organization, either legally (formal membership) or socio-politically. The ties between individual or collective emotions and the end goals of any organization are an essential component in activism recruitment but this is not a formal requirement. I have observed cross directional processes in recruitment where legal (formal) recruitment motives, which I will here refer to as object-driven recruitment, and individual or emotional motivations, here referred to as subject-driven recruitment, can predicate one another, depending on the activist in question. For this study, an activist is the unit of analysis. A network is a set of nodes connected by specific types of relations. The very network helps an individual to participate in an activism. A node could be a person, a society, a cultural meaning, an organization, an ideology, protest tactics, etc. Side by side, the dependent variable would be a multiplicity of causes: against social evils, an ideology, a person, an ego, a family, a work or body of literature, etc., across the context and type of activism. In this quantitative survey, the operational definition of an activist is inseparable from 'the organization'. Activists who are members (executive or working committee) of mono or multi-level organizations were respondents.[8] Nevertheless, movement veterans who had a key role in past but were retired were interviewed for qualitative purposes in order to access the feelings, emotions, life histories, and interpretations of this complex phenomena (Klandermans and Staggenburg 2002) even if they were no longer affiliated with an organization.

The processes of individual recruitment are relative phenomena that may occur variously because of several factors under different regime models over time (Passy 2003). The questionnaire was designed to generate personal information about activists, focusing on individual profiling (involvement history, overlapping membership commitments, family history, location of ancestral home, family migration patterns, birth, education, etc.), formation/networking/recruitment on activism, socio-metric choices (motivation and intermediary agencies), and political ideological inclination. Generally, it took about 25 minutes to fill out a questionnaire. However, the

qualitative interviews took an average of 2 hours. The interview included asking in detail about life history (motivation, networking, and recruitment) depending on the activist's level of activism.

Discussion and Analysis
Social Status and Recruitment

The social activist (reformer) category is the most popularly preferred identity marker amongst activists, irrespective of what type of activism they are involved in, be it political, ethnic, Dalit, women, religion, etc. The very category captures first and third largest position securing 27.3 and 21.5 per cent in the father's and grandfather's generation respectively (Table 1). Thalu/Mukhiya decreases by 10.8 per cent and is pushed down into fifth rank in the father's generation although it occupied the second position in the grandfather's generation. This is unlike the teacher/Karmachari category which, in the grand father's generation emerged with 11.8 per cent, replacing the Thalu/Mukhiya as a new local elite group in the father's generation. These days, the tag of Thalu/Mukhiya is politically constructed to mean a member of the exploitative class and is now a derogative status. As a result, activists who would formerly have belonged to this group have been intentionally exchanging this identity with that of 'social reformer'.[9] Even though during the Rana regime their very name was supposed to be a prestigious social status. Along with the end of Rana regime such state-economic structures legally also came to an end. The new democratic movement has changed the social subjective consciousness, plotting society into two major camps: feudal (in a relative sense) and general. Groups like the Thalu/Mukhiya have been placed in domain of traditional forces and have been labelled 'Samanti' (local feudal). To a great extent activism recruitment processes evolve in the relationships (ties or conflict) between those two groups particularly political activism is produced and reproduced.

Table 1 : Social status of activist's father and grandfather

Social Status	Father		Grand Father	
	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Social activist	218	27.3	172	21.5
General people	205	25.6	309	38.6
Political leader	122	15.3	18	2.3
Karmachari/Teacher	121	15.1	26	3.3
Thalu/Mukhiya	104	13.0	190	23.8
Ex. Army/police	94	11.8	38	4.8
Merchant	92	11.5	91	11.4
Others	57	7.1	48	6.0
Religious activist	42	5.3	51	6.4

Pandit	37	4.6	48	6.0
Ethnic leader	3	0.4	5	0.6
DK	1	0.1	7	0.9
Total	**800**	**137.0**	**800**	**125.4**

Note: Per cent based on multiple responses.

Only 25.6 per cent of activists' father's social status is identified as 'general people', while it increases to 38.6 per cent in the grandfather's case. This clearly indicates that the majority of activists (the single largest position in the grandfather's generation and second in the father's generation) belong to locally well known or respectable elite families including (*Thalu/ Mukhiya/Jimawal*), merchant/trader, priest/astrologer, social activist, ethnic leader, etc. The 'general people' category decreases by 13 per cent in the most father's generation compared to that of the grandfather, which reveals that in a democracy[10] and a more open/modern socio-political environment, general people were able to earn a good social position. Nevertheless, even in a democracy, the recruitment from the 'general people' sphere is still tends to be low; only one fourth of the total. Interestingly, few degrade to 'general people' in the father's generation, whatever their grandfather's social status, and indeed regained the title of activist in third generation, suggesting that such a commitment 'missed a generation' in terms of activism recruitment. It also indicates that structural potentiality might be an eminent factor in recruitment containing pre-existing social capital.

Of the total 800 respondents, 45 per cent of activists replied that they have elite relatives within their circle of core relations (uncle, aunt, brother and sister-in-law, and sister and brother-in-law). Out of them, 59.2 per cent belong to government offices as section officers or above, 41.4 and 33.3 per cent are to be found in political, military, or police professions (as senior officers including second lieutenant and inspector) (Table 2).

Table 2: Activists and their core relatives' occupational position

Field of recognized post of the close relatives – combined		
Politics	149	41.4
Govternment office, officer level	213	59.2
Police/Army officer level	120	33.3
Industrialist/Businessman	26	7.2
Occupation	9	2.5
International service	14	3.9
Others	16	4.4
Total	360	151.9

Note: Percentages based on multiple responses.

Overwhelmingly, 66.8 and 11.6 per cent of activists are sending their children to private school, college, or university, and to foreign countries respectively, as compared to the 27.8 per cent who have their children in government school/campus (Table 3).

Table 3: Educational institutes where activists' children are getting education

Place of educational center of the children – combined	Number	Per eent
Public	156	27.8
Private	375	66.8
Foreign	65	11.6
Others	42	7.5
No where	17	3.0
Total	561	116.8

Note: Percentages based on multiple responses.

These results may appear unusual according to Marxist theory concerning which groups lead and dominate class conflict and class struggle, but activism in Nepal is generated and sustained by elite groups because of the social movement culture of each elite activist family in which family and individual identity asserted through participation in activism.[11] The term 'political dynasty' is used both in practice and academically in the context of describing the 'political landscape'; however, it applies to the rest of activism too. Those members who are socially recognized as '*Khandaniya/ Kulin/Gharaniy*' (aristocratic or blue-blooded) (relative to their socio-politio-economic milieu) might be able to leverage their power in the name of recruitment to activism. Generally, one would proudly claim, '*Hing Navayepani Hing Badheko Talo*' which literarily means that presently one may not have noble social status now, but he or she can still claim a noble family lineage. Similarly, another very popular idiomatic expression is '*Mul Ko Pani Kul Ko Chhori*', 'drink water from the spring and choose a girl from a noble family (for marriage)'; implicitly those social meanings express a message about the socio-psychological importance of family capital. In the context of activism recruitment, such social capital is particularly valued and given special credibility regardless of the type of activism. Furthermore, one may observe a trend of formerly elite status-gaining members seeking more power through inventing a new identity or involving themselves in an organization.

Ethnicity/Caste and Recruitment
Few would deny that ethnicities are not new entities; however, the very term 'ethnicity' was coined early in the 1950s and was slowly shaped on the

conceptual boundaries of that time (Chapman 1993). Nevertheless, there are some who have historical roots and have manifested themselves variously over time, though sometimes in a dormant state (Joireman 2003). However, it is equally true that social role activation based on ethnicity is not very old in Nepal. As Gellner (1997b) writes- it would be quite wrong, however, to see the wars of the eighteenth century in terms of ethnic struggle. There were Newar artisans and traders settled in Gorkha from the seventeenth century, who owed allegiance to the Shah Kings.[12] Even though multinational and multicultural identities have been merged in Nepal, and are more or less assumed to be inseparable identities, Oommen (2003:123) claims multinational polities and multicultural polities have unambiguous separate boundaries.[13] Regardless, a new state-led identity was later constructed through the imposition of a Hinduism-based socio-cultural order introduced by the state in 1854 with the first civil code (Höfer 2004). Cultural, linguistic, and regional differences were largely ignored during the partyless Panchayat system (1960-1990), which placed its emphasis on one language, one form of national dress, and one national policy (Whelpton 1997; Pfaff-Czarnecka 1997; Gellner and Karki forthcoming).

Table 4 shows that the Hill Brahmans constitute the single largest percentage (21.5 per cent) of the total number of activists surveyed, whereas they make up 12.74 per cent of the national population. The Newars are 15.1 per cent among the activists, about triple the size of their total national population, resulting in over representation compared to the Hill Brahmans. The Chhetris/Thakuris occupy 12.8 per cent, quite a bit less than their national population of 17.27 per cent. The Chhetri (15.80) are the single most populous group in Nepal (CBS 2001). The Hill and Mountain ethnic groups reported 13.6 per cent activists, which is an extremely low representation but if the Newars are included it increases significantly to 28.7, giving them over representation since their percentage of the total population is 27.39 per cent. The Newars are one of the enlisted indigenous hill nationalities groups of Nepal. While the Dalits constitute 9.3 per cent of all activists, all of the Tarai groups together secure 17.1 per cent, excluding Musalmans who maintain 1.6 per cent. The remaining groups cover only 6.8 per cent.

Interestingly, these results match the national human development ranking. Here, the question arises about whether there is any correlation between the level of human development ranking and activist recruitment potential. The Newars, Hill Brahmans, and Chhetris secure first, second, and third position in the human development index ranking (NESAC 1998), which places them well above the average national level. The hill ethic groups maintain the average national level, but this does not mean that all indigenous nationalities occupy the same status. The 59 government-recognized indigenous nationalities groups are divided into a further five categories: endangered, highly marginalized, marginalized, disadvantage, and

advanced groups,[14] based on literacy rate, housing, land holdings, occupation, language, education level (graduate and above), and population size. Here, apparently, the Dalits are highly over represented in respect to the human development ranking, but this results from our project's intentional sampling in which we set a compulsory 10 per cent Dalit respondents (see research design). However, their low status implicitly indicates by the decreasing order of allocated 10 per cent respondents to Dalit that decreases to 9.3 per cent in absence of their involvement.[15]

Table 4: Ethnicity/Caste and Activist

Ethnicity/Caste	National Population and Percentage		Activist	
	Number	Percent	Number	%
Brahmin-Hill	2896477	12.74	172	21.5
Newar	1245232	5.48	121	15.1
Ethnic Groups- Hill and Mountain	4983957	21.91	109	13.6
Chhetri- Hill and Thakuri	3927616	17.27	102	12.8
Yadav and other Tarai Castes	2409075	10.6	92	11.4
Hill Dalit	1605248	7.00	58	7.3
Brahmin-Tarai	134496	0.59	29	3.6
Dalit-Tarai	674859	2.98	16	2.0
Musalman	971056	4.27	13	1.6
Kayastha/Rajput	94525	0.41	12	1.5
Ethnic Groups- Tarai and Inner Tarai	2225593	9.81	11	1.4
Sanyasi	199127	0.88	11	1.4
Others	1369673	6.00	54	6.8
Total	22736934	100	800	100.0

Source: Field Survey 2005 and 2001 census.

Numerically, the Newars are the dominant community of the Kathmandu valley and have migrated to other major cities as a successful business community. The survey was carried out in cities/urban areas so a possible argument could be that it is natural for there to be overrepresentation of this group. Nevertheless, cost benefit ratio, potentiality, and future visibility factors do play prominent roles in activism motivation and recruitment.[16] This seems to ring true in terms of ethnic activism too; out of government recognized 59 groups, only 50 groups have succeeded in forming their own community organizations. Of 59, very few have envisioned their own current and future programmes and policies and have succeeded in setting up branch offices or holding periodic elections following their own organizations'

constitutions (see Gellner and Karki 2004). The remaining groups are mainly quite behind on several political and economic measures and in their ability to access power. They are adhering to Tilly's ideas on how people may be divided into three camps: "idea people, behaviour people, and relation people" (2003: 5-6). Those groups that have not been successful in these areas follow the leading ethnic activists and organizations activism and create opportunities for themselves under the banner of indigenous nationalities recognition and identity. Those groups lack intellectual, political, and financial resources. In other words, conducive and fertile contexts exist in abundance but most of the requisites for subjective consciousness and actions have been lacking.

Resource mobilization theorists, McCarthy and Zald (1977) claim a group or person who has the appropriate political experience, vision, and/or resources to help an aggrieved constituent may be termed an 'issue entrepreneur'. Significantly, in all national political parties Hill Brahmins[17] and Chhetris are in control, regardless of whether the party is extremist, centralist, or liberal, which clearly indicates that social capital, education, and family background, and recruitment opportunity are strongly interrelated and have been so since the inception of the state. Similarly, all eminent indigenous nationalities leaders come either from the Newars or a few hill ethnic communities who had traditional access to the British/Indian army. Of all five general secretaries elected to the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities[18] (NEFIN, earlier called the Nepal Federation of Nationalities, NEFEN) three are meant to represent groups from the disadvantaged category. In fact, only one belongs to a highly marginalized group, and even he is an academic and therefore relatively privileged. None comes from the Tarai and Mountain regions or women's groups. Within ethnic groups who have traditionally had access to the Indian and British military, ex-army members have been greatly mobilized in the lower levels of organizational formation. Almost all eminent activists are from the upper strata of the indigenous nationalities whether their group is itself categorized as disadvantaged or advanced.

It is common in Nepal for activists to hold overlapping memberships. In most cases, an activist is a political activist, an academic, a civil society leader, an ethnic activist, a human rights activist, a development activist, and usually this state of affairs would be articulated as a form of coalition building. I argue that just the hill Brahmins and Chhetris dominate the state and its mechanisms of power, a few ethnicities and a handful of activist families have a monopoly over the cultural nationalist activism of their constituency. Through social networks, cultural capital, size of population and social, intellectual or economic resources these groups have had control over identity production and reproduction, policy and strategy formation, as

well as the benefits of activism. In other words, few are the core actors in activism and the remaining people are just allies.

Activists who are directly involved in the indigenous nationalities movements claimed that they were motivated 47.7 per cent by opposition to social evils, 27.5 per cent by ethnic causes, and 22.2 percent by families. Although it might seem contradictory, the high hill Hindu caste activists as a group, reported deriving 66.7 per cent of their motivation from the opposition to social evils category. However, it must be said that the 'opposition to social evils' response included a variety of meanings. In the case of indigenous nationalities, Dalits, and women, high percentages of 'opposition to social evils' suggest discrimination from the state and the high caste people in legal, public, and private spheres, whereas the high caste hill group also reports high numbers of this response, but in their case they explained this choice a reaction to the decrease or diminishment of their own socio-cultural values and identities. I argue that there are basically two types of motivating philosophies guiding recruitment which may be divided into two broad categories of activisms: a) identity seeking activism and b) identity preservation activism.

Identity seeking activism envisages a twofold aim, firstly to regain their own autonomous identity from a subordinated position, and secondly to fight against the state for some direct political ends, i.e. autonomy, right of self determination, the secular state, etc. The second type of activists are campaigning for the status quo (according to their socio-cultural meanings); they demand nothing of the state. Those activists are much more concerned with preserving and protecting their decaying identity and "dignity". They seem on a defensive mode, which I observed in the Kshetry Mahasang [Kshetry (Chhetry) Federation] assembly and during interviews with high caste Hindu activists. They feel loyalty to their historical role, identity, and culture values, excluding direct political ends.[19] In other words, the two types of activisms being discussed here, might generally be termed right-based activism and duty-based activism. Within these, the motiving categories of 'opposition to social evil' and 'family' are factors in identity seeking activism and identity preservation activism respectively.

Religion and Activism
Resource mobilization, new social movements, and ethnicity theories strongly propose religion as one of the most powerful allies that shapes the identity. It has been an effective and most convincing resource with which to construct the grievances that recruits an individual into an activism. Nevertheless, some ambiguities exist in the analysis of religion as a context of activism recruitment. 'Preservation', 'conversion', and 'retention' are frequently used terms and tendencies, those multiplicities of position would be difficult to assimilate into an analysis of activism. In this article, therefore,

I restrict myself to the meanings of activism and activists defined in the research design. Respondents were found from almost all nationally recognized religious beliefs: Hinduism, Buddhism, Muslim, Christianity, and Kirat are 70.1, 17.0, 2.5, 2.0, and 2.5 per cent respectively. Hindus are 10.5 per cent less than as recorded in the national census. However, Buddhists are 6.3 per cent more compared to 10.7 per cent in the 2001 census. Compared to the national size of the population, Christians represent more than double but the Muslims are about fifty per cent less than its national population. The then dissatisfaction with the continuation of the official declaration of the country as a Hindu state[20] in the constitution of Nepal 1990, accelerated the cultural nationalities' activism demanding the then secular state. However, I argue that just as the British found 'Sikh Hindu' or 'Hindu Sikh' in India during their eighteenth century survey (Brass 2005), during my field work I also encountered some dilemmas within activists when asked to point out their religion. The performance of multiple religious rituals and practices during a single individual's lifespan prevail. Religio-politicians impose and claim identity from a top down perspective, the *Vishwa Hindu Mahasang* (The Word Hindu Federation) and its Nepal chapter advocate membership across ethnicity and caste through the concept of 'Sanaatana Dharma[21] and 'Omkar Pariwar'[22]. As Gellner observes "the state was still proud to call itself the only Hindu skingdom in the world, and the official doctrine was that Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism were 'branches' of Hinduism; only a minority of Buddhist activists were seriously offended by this" (2001: 194). On the other hand, NEFIN creates these boundaries stating that those group are indigenous nationalities who do not belong to the four fold Varna system of Hinduism. Nonetheless, in 2001, in Dhanusa district some Tarain activists have formed a separate federation with which to pressure the state called 'DKKA',[23] claming that they are a Tarain federation of nationalities opposed to the defining criteria of NEFIN.[24]

During the 2001 census, NEFIN summoned its member organizations to campaign within their communities to endorse their own 'original' religions other than Hinduism. Consequently the number of Hindus decreased by 5.9 per cent in the 2001 census compared to the 1991 census. Whereas 3.4 per cent of activists reported their religion 'others' (Animism, Bon, etc.), 2.5 per cent of activists intentionally refused to associate themselves with any religion. It is quite a precarious position; on the one hand, in a country that states religion as the foundation of ethnicity and caste identity or as a key property that shapes the ethnic and caste boundaries, activism flows from religion. On the other hand, some activists are entirely denouncing religious recognition. Fundamentally, the confrontation occurs between two basic principles; individual identity (autonomy) and collective identity, or whether an individual is a socialized product or is capable of or wholly constituted by subjective meaning; all of which has been at the core of sociological debates

for some time. Political (communist) cadres and members of the younger generations in particular have refused to associate with any religious position, arguing that we are just human beings may choose to be independent from the human construct that is religion. This may be partly true at the macro level where we can say that communists are non-religious. Nonetheless, in Nepal it is wrong to generalize about communists in this way. Activists of the Ekata Kendra Nepal and Janamorcha parties were surveyed as 16.7 per cent non-religious compared to activists of the communist party of Nepal-United Marxist and Leninist of whom 11.5 per cent responded that they were non-religious[25]. The remaining political parties' activists were entirely linked with religion.

Table 5 : Religious Activists and their motivating factors

Inspired from	Hinduism		Bauddhism		Muslim		Christianity		Kirat		Others		Not reported		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Opposition to social evils	192	34.2	54	39.7	8	40.0	5	31.3	7	35.0	12	44.4	8	40.0	286	35.8
Ideology	186	33.2	41	30.1	7	35.0	9	56.3	10	50.0	14	51.9	5	25.0	272	34.0
Family	125	22.3	30	22.1	5	25.0	4	25.0	7	35.0	2	7.4	4	20.0	177	22.1
Person	124	22.1	28	20.6	3	15.0	4	25.0	2	10.0	5	18.5	4	20.0	170	21.3
Events	83	14.8	18	13.2	5	25.0	1	6.3	4	20.0	2	7.4	5	25.0	118	14.8
Books	44	7.8	9	6.6	0	0.0	4	25.0	2	10.0	5	18.5	4	20.0	68	8.5
Ethnic cause	30	5.3	14	10.3	3	15.0	0	0.0	6	30.0	4	14.8	1	5.0	58	7.3
Social service	37	6.6	11	8.1	2	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	7.4	2	10.0	54	6.8
Self awareness	40	7.1	6	4.4	2	10.0	1	6.3	0	0.0	1	3.7	2	10.0	52	6.5
Promotion of own professional/group interest	32	5.7	6	4.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	38	4.8
Peer association	16	2.9	9	6.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.0	3	11.1	0	0.0	29	3.6
Resistance	14	2.5	3	2.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	11.1	1	5.0	21	2.6
Preservation of art, religion and culture	8	1.4	7	5.1	1	.0	0	0.0	2	10.0	2	7.4	0	0.0	20	2.5
Others	25	4.5	7	5.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	32	4.1
Social environment	12	2.1	5	3.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.0	0	0.0	1	5.0	19	2.4
Historical tradition	9	1.6	0	0.0	2	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.7	0	0.0	12	1.5
Social exclusion	8	1.4	1	0.7	0	0.0	1	6.3	0	0.0	1	3.7	0	0.0	11	1.4
Educational institute	7	1.2	1	0.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	1.1
Total	561	176.8	136	183.8	20	190.0	16	181.3	20	215.0	27	211.1	20	185.0	800	180.8

Percentages are based on multiple responses.

Some key variables, namely opposition to social evils (35.8%), ideology (34%), family (22.1%), person (21.3%), and events (14.8%) are dominant across the religious groups in aggregate. Undoubtedly, compared to inter-religious groups those variables contradict each other in their rankings (Table 5). Nonetheless, these figures demonstrate these motivating factors are essential across all types of activism recruitment. Sometimes, religious activism might seem the sub-field of national political and cultural nationalist activism. I find commonalities with Paul Brass's perspectives on northern Indian political development, when he writes that "political elite choose the cultural symbols upon which they wish to base their claims for group rights, that they make a determination as to wish symbol is decisive, and that they make other cleavages congruent with the primary cleavage. Therefore, political conflict may induce cumulated cleavages just as the reverse process may occur in which cumulated cleavages produce political conflict" (Brass 2005: 28). The same is true in Nepal, where ethnic activists have been claiming religion as an inseparable component in cultural nationalist activism or movement emergence. Reversely, adherents of certain religions and languages are now capable of (and are) generating activism based on their own needs and agendas. Language is used as an instrument in the mounting ethnic activism. For example, now within the Rai community, a new language-based identity has emerged. The criteria (material or philosophical) which was formerly used to define activism, now becomes the basis of activism itself; what was initially an object or goal has become the subjective purpose of activism. A major question then becomes how to define ethnicity and caste, whether it be on the grounds of the primordial or based in social constructivism.

Women and Activism Recruitment
Few would deny that no one could recruit activists in a state of isolation. By this I mean that rational choice theory fails to include the recruitment process to a great extent. Some sort of agencies and mechanisms are needed to join any activism. Consequently, an examination of social networks and ties is essential in order to evaluate each case. In the process of recruiting women into women's activism the major categories of opposition to social evils, family, ideology, and person occupies first to fourth position, comprising 42.9, 37.9, 32.9 and 24.7 per cent respectively for women activists.

It is interesting to compare those motivations with the highest ranking ideology, opposition to social evils, person, family and events securing 34.4, 33.0, 20.0, 16.2 and 16.2 per cent respectively for male activist. Those interfacing facts clearly express that every case of activism recruitment demands a different set of subjective, motivational mechanisms. The reporting of ethnic causes is highly dominated by male activists rather than female activists, with men claiming 8.8 per cent in this area compared to 3.2 per cent amongst the total 15 per cent of ethnic female activists (excluding

female Newar activists). However, in total, ethnicity as a motivating variable claims about half (7.3%) of the total respondents (15%) from ethnic groups. It communicates how perception and meaning are constructed through the nearest environmental corolla. It means that each salient level of an individual's identity may be invoked by activist recruitment and its multiplicity of issues and agendas. Women seem greatly engaged in social disparity issues; that is, towards gender sensitivity. Conversely, males might be involved in societal and state discrimination issues rather than be aware of gender inequality. Even though both may share the same treatment and identity at a macro level, i.e. ethnic, caste, etc., the 'opposition to social evils' category does not denote the same meaning to women as it does to men or even within the total pool of women interviewed. The hierarchical position of individual women in society also helps determine a woman's activist concerns, i.e. one Dalit woman might be dominated by high caste/ethnicity women. 'Family' appears as second vital recruitment factor for women, while it is identified as being relatively less important for male activists.

Table 6: Factors that inspired involvement in the activities of organizations

| Inspired from | Sex | | | | Total | |
| | Female | | Male | | | |
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Opposition to social evils	94	42.9	192	33.0	286	35.8
Family	83	37.9	94	16.2	177	22.1
Ideology	72	32.9	200	34.4	272	34.0
Person	54	24.7	116	20.0	170	21.3
Events	24	11.0	94	16.2	118	14.8
Books	17	7.8	51	8.8	68	8.5
Social service	16	7.3	38	6.5	54	6.8
Self awareness	14	6.4	38	6.5	52	6.5
Social environment	8	3.7	11	1.9	19	2.4
Ethnic cause	7	3.2	51	8.8	58	7.3
Others	6	2.8	26	4.5	32	4.1
Educational institute	4	1.8	5	0.9	9	1.1
Peer association	4	1.8	25	4.3	29	3.6
Preservation of art, religion and culture	4	1.8	16	2.8	20	2.5
Historical tradition	4	1.8	8	1.4	12	1.5
Resistance	3	1.4	18	3.1	21	2.6
Promotion of own professional/group interest	2	0.9	36	6.2	38	4.8
Social exclusion	1	0.5	10	1.7	11	1.4
Total	219	190.4	581	177.1	800	180.8

Note: Percentages are based on multiple responses.

The female activists who are engaged in specifically feminist organizations suggest different motivational factors. For them, 'opposition to social evils' is 10 per cent more in this category than among the total, women activists (Table 7). Further other agencies – family (7.0) ideology (12.3), and person (5.6) – are found less than the other motivating factors among the women activists. The 'events' variable increases by about 5 per cent, which indicates structural reasons, and events are more responsible for encouraging activists to become feminist in orientation.

Table 7: Factors inspiring to various activisms

| Inspired from | Q.1 Name of the associated organization – grouped | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Political | | BS | | Religious | | Janajati | | Women | | Total | |
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Opposition to social evils	15	13.6	32	24.2	17	22.7	52	47.7	36	52.9	286	35.8
Ideology	57	51.8	50	37.9	43	57.3	24	22.0	14	20.6	272	34.0
Family	25	22.7	43	32.6	16	21.3	22	20.2	21	30.9	177	22.1
Person	51	46.4	34	25.8	15	20.0	12	11.0	13	19.1	170	21.3
Events	26	23.6	24	18.2	8	10.7	9	8.3	11	16.2	118	14.8
Books	19	17.3	16	12.1	7	9.3	4	3.7	2	2.9	68	8.5
Ethnic cause	0	0.0	1	0.8	1	1.3	30	27.5	0	0.0	58	7.3
Social service	2	1.8	5	3.8	5	6.7	8	7.3	8	11.8	54	6.8
Self awareness	2	1.8	3	2.3	7	9.3	6	5.5	6	8.8	52	6.5
Promotion of prof'nal/ group interest	0	0.0	9	6.8	0	0.0	1	0.9	0	0.0	38	4.8
Peer association	4	3.6	5	3.8	2	2.7	2	1.8	2	2.9	29	3.6
Resistance	6	5.5	3	2.3	0	0.0	3	2.8	2	2.9	21	2.6
Preservation of art, religion and culture	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	4.0	11	10.1	1	1.5	20	2.5
Others	4	3.6	3	2.3	3	4.0	1	0.9	0	0.0	20	2.5
Social environment	2	1.8	2	1.5	5	6.7	1	0.9	5	7.4	19	2.4
Historical tradition	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	10.7	2	1.8	0	0.0	12	1.5
Social exclusion	1	0.9	1	0.8	1	1.3	3	2.8	0	0.0	11	1.4
Educational institute	3	2.7	3	2.3	0	0.0	1	0.9	1	1.5	9	1.1
Political party	1	0.9	3	2.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	0.8
Knowledge	1	0.9	1	0.8	0	0.0	1	0.9	0	0.0	4	0.5
Extension of political ideology	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0		
Total	110	199.1	132	180.3	75	188.0	109	177.1	68	179.4	800	180.8

Note: Percentages based on multiple responses

Despite 15 per cent allocated to female respondents in the study and the tradition of the dominating patriarchy, 27.6 per cent of women activists were surveyed in the study (though this still under represents women's 50 per cent of the total national population). Nevertheless, we felt that our sampling of women was reasonable and appropriate to the context of Nepal, particularly in the field of activism. Among women activists of Tarain origin, we were able to maintain just the allocated 15 per cent though a deliberate attempt was made to include the maximum number of Tarain women activists (women originating from the hill and mountain areas who were resident in the Tarai were intended to exclude). On the subject of low participation, some educated Maithali women activists commented:

> I am 21 years old but I have not graduated. I fear if I graduate my husband choices would be fewer so an intentional consensus has been reached within my family for me not to participate in further study before marriage. If one is under SLC [School Leaving Certificate], an SLC holder a boy would be eligible to marry you but if one holds an MA it is not easy to get a partner because he has to pay a high *dahej* (dowry). On the other hand, traditional parents feel that it is their attributive social, cultural, and religious responsibility to give their daughter's hand in marriage both socially as well as religiously. So sometimes when a husband's family assassinates a girl [because her family did not provide enough dowry], the girl's parent's side are compelled not to report them to the police because they believe their remaining daughter will not get a husband for herself if they do. Once the killing is publicized no one will come to ask the remaining daughters to marry them because they will assume that they too will not be able to negotiate a good price for her dowry. [She adds that such events happen in the Mithila region so it is very challenging to find women activists before they are married or get permission from a husband's family to participate in outside activities after marriage.] A 21 year old Maithil woman activist

Putting these issues to one side, the nature of the state is equally responsible for catalyzing activist recruitment. A leading political and development activist describes it is a result of centralized system:

> Kathmanduites provide all the resources to the rest of the country. In Dhanusa, Mahattari, Sarlahi, and other few hilly districts, the NGO network has been being captured by one hill Brahman family in which the husband had a key government position and his wife founded one of the leading NGOs in Kathmandu. She is also a central member of the Women Pressure Group, while their remaining family members are running NGOs in about five

> districts including three in Tarai. They have good connections and networks with INGOs and international agencies. Consequently, we Tarai people are discriminated and left out of the power structure.
> A leading political and development Tarai women activist

Political Generation and Activism
As examined earlier, many organizations emerged after the reinstallation of multiparty democracy in 1990 or just before (see also Gellner and Karki 2004). The new constitution created a platform for political opportunities and the possibilities of organizing for diverse causes. Individuals, even those belonging to the 'older' generation, joined organizations in the democratic period. An 81 year old person joined an organization post 1990, which unambiguously indicates that political opportunities have been and are integral to the emergence of organizations and the production of a conducive environment that leads to individuals becoming involved in activism. It also reveals that activists capitalize on an individual's social capital to influence and establish the organization itself. Initially, this man was a *Pradhan Pancha* (elected chief of the Panchayat or Nagar Panchayat) in his municipality and later joined the community organization, *Kshetri Mahasang*, all of which expresses the shifting trend of activism. This also presents an account of how one may be motivated to follow a new, even contradictory form of activism on the basis of common identity. Technically, activists are generally defined as occupying an executive position of any functioning organization or movement, however, in some cases those activists are not personally or intellectually committed to the end objectives of a particular cause or movement, but instead are compelled to accept the activist role by their community, neighborhood networking, and moral pressure. In turn, the activist recruiter utilizes the social capital of the organization's members to communicate and address their goals as well to attract new activist members.

Formal and informal organizations (indigenous socio-cultural institutions) have directly and indirectly supported activism and mass mobilization. Earlier the *Tharu Kalyan Karini Sabha*, the *Thakali Sewa Samiti*, and the *Tamang Ghedung* were formally organized, side by side, in the local teashop, schools, colleges, at *banbhoj* (picnics), *Tiz* (Hindu women's festival), and other ethnic and caste ritual assemblies, these being places where there were opportunities to exchange views and to convince and consolidate individuals in the non-democratic era. Table 8 shows that almost all activists above 18 years of age have become active since 1990. This explicitly demonstrates that low risk/cost environment is conducive to galvanizing the activism, both in terms of individual recruitment and mass mobilization. In general, it has been claimed that historical exclusion,

alienation, and poverty produces activism. Table 8 communicates that political opportunity structures are the most important agencies to recruit individuals. Without opportunity structures the activism recruitment level stays in the low numbers. In the following cases, all social, economic, cultural, and political causes were in abundance in all generations but created mounting activism in fifth generation (1991-05).

Table 8: Cross-sectional cohort of activists

Age of Respondent	Time when involved in the activities of the organization[26]					
	Before 2007 (Prior to 1951)	2008-2017 (1952-1961)	2018-2036 (1962-1979)	2037-2046 (1980-1990)	2047-2062 (1991-2005)	Total
	First Gen.	Second Gen.	Third Gen.	Fourth Gen.	Fifth Gen.	
18-27					58	58
28				1	12	13
29				2	14	16
30				5	19	24
31				3	11	14
32				3	17	20
33				3	10	13
34				11	16	27
35				14	21	35
36			2	5	12	19
37			2	9	13	24
38				10	7	17
39			4	6	11	21
40			2	8	22	32
41				9	10	19
42			6	8	20	34
43			3	4	14	21
44			2	6	8	16
45			2	11	12	25
46			6	9	11	26
47			10	3	7	20
48			7	1	6	14
49			4	6	12	22
50			5	9	11	25
51		1	2	4	5	12
52			7	4	8	19
53			3	1	7	11
54			5	1	4	10
55			5	2	1	8
56			7	1	2	10
57			6	2	2	10
58			3	1	5	9
59			3		3	6
60			4	1	3	8
61			5	2	3	10
62			2	1	6	9
63			2	4	4	10
64		1	1	1	2	5
65			2	1	3	6
66	1		3	1	1	6
67			2		4	6
68	2			1	1	4
69				1		1
70			1		2	3
71			2	1	1	4
72			1	1	1	3
75				2		2
76				1		1
78	2		1			3
81					1	1
85	1					1
Total	**6**	**2**	**122**	**180**	**423**	**733**

Source: Field Survey 2005.

After 1990, a rigorous current of diverse activism and movements gained a significant advancement including the 'recognition' (self, social, and political) of traditionally subordinate groups including Dalit, women, indigenous nationalities, etc., and formation of other organizations. Consequently, political parties and social organizations have been compelled to endorse those new identities formally in their agenda and have introduced new departments (ethnic, Dalit, social issues) into their own organizations organizational structure. Now, all political parties have introduced those departments as part of their integral wings.[27] Previously, those ethic, Dalit, and regional movements were supposed as communally and sectarally motivated tendencies and it is interesting to note that those political activists who are now in their parties' front organizations and central committees, were previously hesitant to reveal their involvement in and commitment to the previously independent social and ethnic concerns. Activist organizations or groups that have served as gateways into the necessary networks that promote the mobilization and advancement of activism, but which are also activism groups in their own right, including women's associations (*Ama Samuha*), clubs, and developmental organizations.

Some Cases (from the Qualitative Interview)
Ideology Indoctrination and Activism Recruitment

The deployment of ideology (as a dependent variable in the recruitment of an individual) for polemic division has been observed as a common cultural trend in Nepal. Generally, even from the first encounter, leading activists attempt to create an optimum level of moral outrage and anger against oppositional camps to obtain their end goals. Immediately after the 1990 people's movement, oppositional political activists were cut off from each other even in their day to day lives and socio-cultural interactions i.e. the historically popular *Parma* (labor exchange) system, *Malami* (funeral procession), in their use of the public tap etc. particularly in rural areas. The following cases indicate what types of instruction and indoctrination are being offered to a new recruit at various political camps and how sentiment is constructed and accumulated to create an ideological space.

'Would you mind telling me about your father and family background?'

My father was in the British Gorkha army but later he came back to the village, resigned from his job, and studied. He became school teacher in the village and became known as social worker. I remember when I was a child, I visited villagers with him on two missions: first, to request that the villagers enroll their children in the school, and second to beg for votes for my uncle as part of his local election campaign. Both times after he won the election, my uncle arranged a huge feast at his house honoring his supporters, we had goat, chicken, and pork, managed in separate kitchens for high caste Hindus and others. He [uncle] used to address supporters in different places during the victory procession on the way back home. They used to offer him lots of flowers and smeared red powder (*Abhir*) [on him]. Having had such experiences, I used to repeatedly imitate the mass addresses alone, even after several days following him (uncle). In my child psychology those were very wonderful, heroic, and glorious events.

'When and where did you hear the word communist?'

In childhood, I first heard word 'communist' in my house, however, I was also influenced by a local elder who was a communist cadre. Nevertheless, I felt an affinity through peer-acquaintance as well as through my social surrounding (*samajik mahaul ra sampark*), particularly consolidated at the school. Later I received the ideological [communist] classes in the village. Instructors used to attempt to convince us by making aggressive statements and telling interesting stories. *Yi Haat Pani Ke*

Communistka Haat Jun Haat Samantika Rato Ragatle Narangiyaka Hun. [What are these hands of a communist which are not 'tinted with the blood of feudals'.] He adds, I was also very much impressed by listening to a very exciting dialogue between two leaders who were farmers and also cadres of Chinese Communist Party, the Maoist.

A group of farmers smashed a huge, hard rock that was in the way of the path from one village to another. Generally, that was assumed take ten days to clear out but they finished it within four days. Very inquisitively, another friend [group leader] asked what techniques were used to achieve such great success. The leader of the first group replied, "We used chisels and hammers to hit the rock, at that moment, you know, we saw our enemies' head instead of the rock. So we then started to charge again and again and again. We neither knew where we got the energy from or how fast it fell apart.

Actually, these days, I realize it was a story to encourage ideological plotting for the production of motivation and cadre recruitment. Now, Maoists are also repeating the same thing, dividing friends alliance and from enemies' cluster (*Mitra Sakti Ra Satru Barga*), which ultimately produces a deep gap within the social landscape that consequently, a future impact of which, will be an obstacle in the route to consensual democracy.

An educated young leftist activist

I was influenced by kin who used to convince me, saying that the communist destroys our social and cultural heritage, faith, and values; i.e. that they force us to marry within our core kin [blood] members, destroy temples, monasteries etc. They kill older generations; our parents and grandparents who are above a certain age, and support a one party autocracy. In the communist regime all basic human rights like freedom of reading, writing, and speech would be totally prohibited. It is an anti-human and anti-nature political ideology.

Congress supporter woman activist, aged 54.

'Were you politically active from your school days?'

In school I was not involved in politics is there was no political activity either. I joined politics in Dehradoon, after my school life finished in Gorakhpur. This [Dehradoon] was where, I met Puspa Lal and Yek Dev Aale and then gradually became active in

politics. My acquaintances a agged me to politics. Initially, as new political recruits, we had very strict rules, regulations and timetables. Usually we faced three sessions in the holidays and two sessions a day during college days, not like today. In the morning between 4-6 am instructions class used to be held, focusing on national and international scenarios and books. From 2-4 pm they used to teach about various historical and contemporary political issues. Puspa Lal, Yek Dev Aale, Hikmat Bhandari, and others were our instructors.

They used to teach all the cadres together but a few of them were selected for further special classes. However, everyone started from general classes and then were promoted into higher positions, *Prarambhik Sadashya, Sadharan Sadashya* (initial or primary membership and general membership). One comrade was teaching at the Butwal campus but had joined the communist party, who was initially affiliated with the Congress Party. Therefore, our leaders doubted him.
However, he didn't know about it though they [our leaders] used to talk about it with us. Puspa Lal looked upon him with doubt. An internal hierarchy existed; one Brahman comrade held an education in Sanskrit therefore they did not fully trust him. Comrades like those had less powerful departments in the party organization.

The respondent later became a politburo member in the party and visited various villages as a school teacher in order to organize the people in their party. He said that by capitalizing on a teacher's social status he was able to influence people and to recruit them into leftist political activism.
'What strategies did you use to convince people during the underground period?'
I used to visit students' houses, try to explore their psychology during the conversation, and decide whether it would be useful or not to talk with them about our political mission. In some cases I had to make four or five visits, walking for three or four hours to evaluate a single family. I used to wake up before the rooster crowed and come to school for teaching. It was necessary to judge people because once one was politically exposed the state would arrest them.
Janajati Leader, aged 61, (Formerly-Communist)

On the recruitment in political activism and the shift to ethnic activism:

Actually, I was influenced by the 1980 (VS 2036) student movement. I used to hear on the radio that policemen had physically attacked students and in response the students resisted and beat policemen; such news impressed me. I was very impressed by the information about the fight between students and police reported by villagers who used to go to the district headquarters to bring the daily necessities like and clothes. I used to imagine how those students were bravely and honestly fighting for us and the nation. Even when in police custody and bearing intense torture, they did not disclose their friends' names and organizational secrecy. Later, I joined Akhil Panchau. I was studying in class seven. Some senior colleagues (*Dai-haru*) came from the nearby school, Khong Ling High School. Those seniors gave us political instruction classes, focusing on existing social discrimination and inequalities. Their progressive songs motivated me, but sometimes I used to think of them as cunning elders during their instruction (*Prasikshan*). Anyway, their teachings gave me a political direction. Later they used to visit our school regularly.

He too turned to ethnic activism:
I have an interesting story. I do not know how important it is. I am the first person to come to Kathmandu from the Tokpegola community and anyone who moved to or visited Kathmandu before was supposed to be a wealthy, *Thulo Manchhe* [big man]. One of the villagers belonging to the Tokpegola community came after a while but I was quite busy with my business; I had opened a carpet factory, therefore we did not have frequent contact. Unfortunately, his wife suffered from a brain tumor and he failed to contact me so our neighboring community Olangchunge, who were living and doing business in Kathmandu helped them, but after many days of care in the hospital she did not improve so they stopped caring for her. Then her husband brought her back to a room in Dalkhu where she died. The Newar house owner pressured them immediately to take away the dead body but the husband had not contacted anybody about a funeral procession, so he asked his brother-in-law, though he also belonged other than outside the Tokpegola community. Anyway, they carried the dead body on a motorcycle, putting it in the middle between two people like a cooking gas cylinder, wrapping it in a huge jute bag [*Bora*]. They rested three times on the way to a crematory for cremation. That became an anecdote within our neighboring communities. During our participation in any function like a funeral procession, marriage, and cultural activity, that event became the song [*Geet*];

a satirical story about how Tokpegola lived in Kathmandu, about how we bury dead bodies. They [members of other community] used to laugh at us, talking about the cremation, and that used to pinch me, used gave a heat to me [humiliate me].

Later, many Tokpegola members came to Kathamandu saying "if Pasang could survive in Kathmandu why not I?" On 1999 (VS 2056), in my initiation, we introduced *Tokpegola Samaj Sewa Samiti*, (Tokpegola Society Helping Committee), targeting the enhancement of mutual understanding, helping each other, and the organization of Tokpegola community members who are living in Kathmandu. At the same time, *Janajati Videyak* was passed by the parliament and consequently our community was also listed in the 59 ethnic communities.

An Executive Member, NEFIN

On the inspiration to join ethnic activism as well as to form an ethnic organization:

'How did you become inspired to found the community organization?'

There are several motivational tiers to form this community organization. On the one hand, [I experienced] discriminatory events, both individual and social, which have pushed me, and in another, the loss of our culture, sacraments, etc., are responsible. Outsiders' cultures, adaptations, and ways of lives have handicapped our community; we are living under poverty, illiteracy, and one could say in a *Jangali* (uncivilized) condition. I stayed in Sanischare, Morang district for about 12 years. One day, I heard someone mentioning Majhi (the community to which I belong) to a Brahman's child who was wearing poor clothes, full of mud, and who had dust on his face. His mother maltreated him saying how he was a dirty boy, like a Majhi child. I heard this maltreatment of the Majhi community and it hurt me deeply. Such inequitable events and social practices exist in society in day to day life Uncounted, discriminatory events exist in the society.

My father was also social worker. Undoubtedly, he directly and indirectly influenced me, otherwise I would be a general Nepali Majhi as others are.

I reached Puthauli, a Majhi village in Sindhuli district in the Panchyat era. They were drinking alcohol in group under a huge tree but went away after seeing me. There, both old and many of

the young men wore *Lagauti* [a traditional, male Nepali dress]. One man, from a Majhi Gaoun of Sindhuli district had told me about the Majhis' social and economic condition. He had told me that at that village they would run away from seeing new visitors but then if one offered them *Jad-Raksi* (alcohol), they would come back again. I remembered that suggestion so I spoke to one old man who was looking at me from his nearby doorway. I called him using my finger, then he came slowly and I offered him one bowl of *Jad.* Gradually all the other villagers came too, even from the jungle. I spent about five hundred rupees on local *Jad* and *Raksi*. I compared them to a pig, to first run away, looking at me, and then come close when offered food. That night I went to their homes and they did their best to be hospitable, offering *Jad-Raksi*, chicken, and talking a lot. That is the real position of Majhi. I don't know whether they are still at the same position. I guess they have relatively slightly changed. That event really hurt me and I committed myself to dedicating my life to the Majhi community.

'Had you just gone there to walk or did you have any specific objective?'

I had deliberately gone there to explore the Majhis' lifestyle because I had heard about them. I felt that we Majhis are also human beings so we need to do something for us.

An Executive Member, Nepal Majhi Utthan Sang.

To a great extent, social networks facilitate as well as intervene in individual recruitment. Such stories are very common means of influencing neutral individuals for a cause. During the periods of non-democracy (I mean prior to 1951 and during the Panchyat system from 1961-1990) interpersonal contact and kin, or socio-cultural ties were popularly used methods of recruitment across the board. Those were probably the most convenient and reliable agencies with which to recruit in an isolated geographical regions, as well methods most appropriate to the socio-cultural construction of Nepali lives, where people were bound by collectiveness or community life, especially in rural areas. The formation of organizations were outlawed, with the exception of religious ones, therefore organizations were clandestine in nature. At that time, the government had a monopoly over modern facilities. Things like telephones were prestigious symbols, and were used by wealthy and government-sponsored individuals or families. Ordinary people, and oppositional activists in particular, had little access to such facilities. Newspapers were strictly censored. Consequently, recruiters played upon known and ubiquitous factors of inherited identity and socio-cultural markers to recruit into desired ends. Caste/ethnic and family background as well as

acquired social identity play predominant roles in the evaluation and selection of an individual by activist organizations and agents.

Summary and Conclusion

All types of activism are motivated by some basic variables, namely opposition to social evils, ideology, family, person, and events. Some variables dominate, which indicate that both 'push and pull' factors, that is, motivations based on affinity and opposition, have a prominent role in activism recruitment. Recruiters play upon inherited identity and use ideology to create productive divisions between new recruits and the rest of society. The correlation between activism and the human development index is both evidence of this kind of manoeuvring and fodder for these tactics. As long as the cost/benefit ratio makes it worthwhile, groups that are the least developed tend to be the most active.

In this paper, the process of Nepali activist recruitment that I have described through activist's own words has demonstrated that networking is essential to activism recruitment in Nepal. This is in contradiction with Western and American processes of recruitment, which are basically evolving based on the state of individual autonomy and the grounds of secular loci. In Nepal, networks and linkages, based on not only ideology but family and socialization experiences, are an essential part of how activists describe their activism histories. During the non-democratic system (Rana and Panchayat) individual formal contacts (individual, kin, community, geographical blocks) used to be deployed more often as means of recruiting individuals because all party and community based activism were banned and organizations were in clandestine forms. Today, we still see that activist organizations are led by elites and that those possessing cultural capital are consciously targeted by recruiters and are means by which organizations attract future members and leverage power in the political arena.

Notes:
1. This article is a product of an academic programme entitled, "The Impact of Activism in Nepal: An Anthropological and Historical Study" which was jointly carried out by Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies CNAS, TU and Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford from 2003 to 2006. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. David N. Gellner, the principal researcher of this project and Dr. Krishna Hachhethu, the country supervisor. This paper would not be in this form and version without the help of Ms. Jessamine Dana. I would also like to thank Dr. Morimoto Izumi for kindly providing related materials and Dr. Maire Lecomte-Tilouine for her useful comments. An earlier version of this paper was delivered on the workshop on "Globalization and Local Knowledge" at CNAS, TU, on September 3, 2006. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Prof. Dr. Furukawa Akira, Prof. Dr. Matsuda Motoji, and Dr. Shaubhagya Shah for their valuable suggestions.

2. The Maoist's supreme leader, Puspa Kamal Dahal alias 'Prachanda', has proposed an innovation of the multi-party political structure other than conventional (Western) parliamentary model. *'Post: What about your goals?* Prachanda: Since we belong to a communist party, our maximum goals are socialism and communism. Those are the maximum goals of all those accepting Marxism, Leninism and Maoism as philosophical and ideological assumptions. Given the international power balance and the overall economic, political and social realities of the country, we can't attain those goals at the moment. We must accept this ground reality. We have mentioned democratic republic and constituent assembly, with the understanding that we should be flexible given the balance in the class struggle and international situation. This is a policy, not tactics. This is a necessary process for the bourgeoisie and the national capitalists alike, let alone the middle-class. *Post: Constituent assembly?* Prachanda: Yes. Constituent assembly is not a demand of the communists. It's a democratic process established by the capitalists a long time back. We are not saying this as a tactic. We have adopted this policy due to today's balance in class powers and today's world situation so that the Nepali people won't have to endure any more troubles. (See *The Kathmandu Post*, February 9, 2006).

3. Phrases *Bagiyan, Gath-gadi Taakne, Rajdrohi, Ratradrohi, Adaharmi, Arastriya Tatwa, Gobar, Kharani, Kulakshani, Sampradahik, Kshetriyabadi,* etc, used to hold tag to various types of oppositional activists in different political regimes. Still it is conceptualize as careerists as well as interest groups to some extent to some activists. It would not be illogical to level as earliest women activists in Nepal to Yogmaya and Durga Devi, however, 'even today rumours persists that Shakti Yogmaya was (just) a religious fanatic who threw herself into the river in an nihilistic fever. Sexual laxity was another characterization, a prostitute and kind followers were sexual deviates as well as a communist. At least that appellation acknowledges her political character' (Aziz 2001: xxix prologue).

4. Increasing interest in social movements is also indicated by the proportion of articles on collective action and social movement, published in four top American journals (Sociology: American Sociological Review, American Journal of Sociology, Social Forces, and Social Problems). Since the middle of the past century these subjects have accounted for 2.23 per cent of the total articles included in these journals in the 1950s, 4.13 per cent in the 1970s, and 9.45 per cent in the 1990s (Snow, Soule, and Kriesi 2004: 5).

5. Snow, Soule, and Kriesi (2004: 3) state that "social movements are one of the principal social forms through which collectivities give voice to their grievances and concerns about the rights, welfare, and well-being of themselves and others by engaging in various types of collective actions (such as protesting in the streets) that dramatize those grievances and concerns and demand that something be done about them".

6. I worked for an academic research program entitled 'The Impact of Activism in Nepal: An Anthropological and Historical Study'. This began on 1 February, 2003, and lasted for three years. The project was a joint undertaking between my research centre, the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, and the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford, UK. Dr. David N. Gellner was the principal researcher, Dr. Krishna Hachhethu was the country supervisor, and I was the research associate in the project. Mr.

Suresh Dhakal, Mr. Basanta Maharjan, and Ms Babee Shrestha were also part of the project during the quantitative interview phase.

7. Universities, colleges, industries, business houses, religious, ethnic organizations, media (electronic and print) state facilities etc.

8. Existing organizations and institutions may be divided into major two camps according to the nature of their structure; the mono-level denotes organizations and institutions having only one registered committee, whereas multi-level contains a centre and districts or more than two branches. Political parties, some ethnic organizations, and religious organizations follow the second category, ie Tamu Chhoj Djin, Tamang Ghedung, Vishwa Hindu Mahasang Nepal chapter, Nepali Congress, and the Communist Party of Nepal United Marxist Leninist. Social organizations, youth organizations, women associations *Ama Samuha* fall in the mono structure and issues like *Bagmati Bachau Abiyan, Phewa Tal Samrakshan Samiti, Ratamate Ama Smuha, Bajarang Yuwa Samaj*. In terms of membership distribution, general and active/*Sangathith* those two types tradition is popular in political parties, however, in ethnic organizations and social organizations honorary, life long, executive *Visistha* are being popular. From those memberships an executive body is formed or elected which deserves executive rights to day to day functioning, however, need to rectify from general convention along with active members or in some cases general members' assembly.

9. Earlier the *Thekibethi Uthaune* (local tax collectors) authorities were known as '*Jimmawal*', though *Mukhiya* was/is lower level state official.

10. Defining democracy may come into view to be easy, nevertheless in fact full of problems. Which deserves varieties of concept, definition and ideology therefore, here, I am intended to express for conducive environment to form the organization, to recruit member, and right of expression through the peaceful means. These rights have assured in the 'Constitution of the Nepal 1990'.

11. I take the lead here from Stryker who writes that "identities are conceptualized as being organized into a hierarchy of salience defined by the probability of the various identities being invoked in a given situation or over many situations" (Styker 1981: 23-24) See McAdam and Pulsen (1993) for similar.

12. Siller writes, 'the Newar kings themselves made extensive use of Parbatiya and Magar mercenaries, who were quite happy to fight against Parbatiya opponents, until Jaya Prakash, King of Kathmandu, made the mistake of assassinating his Parbatiya general, Kaji Ram Thapa, and seven companions, for being defeated by Prithvi Narayan Shah. Only on one occasion during Prothvi Narayan's campaign against the Valley did Newars from other kingdoms come to the aid of fellow Newars: when Prithvi Narayan made his first attack on Kirtipur in 1757" (1973: 111-12, quoted in D. N. Gellner 1997b).

13. "The case of multinational polities: people with distinct homelands and cultures, particularly language and religion, coexist in one polity. In contrast, multicultural polities are products of the deterritorization of national groups who migrated to new homelands" (Oommen 2004: 123).

14. The 59 indigenous nationalities groups divided into the five categories by NEFIN on 1 March 2004 are: 1) Endengered Group: Kusunda, Bankariya, Raute, Surel, Hayu, Raji, Kisan, Lepcha, Meche and Kusbadiya. 2) Highly Marginalized Group: Majhi, Siyar, Lohmi, Thudam, Dhanuk, Chepang, Satar (Santhal),

Jhangad, Thami, Bote, Danuwar and Baramu. 3) Marginalized Group: Sunuwar, Tharu, Tamang, Bhujel, Kumal, Rajbansi, Gangai, Dhimal, Bhote, Darai, Tajpuriya, Pahari, Topkegola, Dolpo, Free, Mugal, Larke, Lohpa, Dura and Walung. 4) Disadvantaged Group: Gurung, Magar, Rai, Limbu, Chhairotan, Tangbe, Tinganule Thakali, Bargaule, Marphali Thakali, Sherpa, Yakkha, Chhantyal, Jirel, Byansi, and Yolmo, and 5) Advanced Group: Newar, Thakali (See Gellner and Karki 2004).

15. We did not find enough independent Dalit organizations and even in their involvement in other area of activism, however, it does not mean that Dalit Activists are absent but because of February 1st, 2005, King's political move and our time schedule we covered other activists in the place of Dalit activists.

16. Zirakzadeh (1997) argues that the poorest, most socially disorganized, and most politically powerless strata in every society has a tendency to avoid participation in movements despite the daily indignities and deprivations they endure. This is because an individual immediately visualizes the avowed aims of the movement pertinent to his or her current position and calculates the cost benefit ratio of any involvement.

17. Hill Brahmans have dominated the Nepali Congress (NC) central committee; out of 19 elected posts including its president, 10 are hill Brahmans, of them, five belongs to a Koirala family (a high hill Hindu caste), and only four hill Kshetries succeeded to win. The Nepali Congress Democratic (split from the NC) central committee has an equal share of the hill Brahman and Kshetry members in central committee election securing seven each of 19 seats. The NC and the NC (D) are headed by Brahman and the Kshetry leaders respectively. This may demonstrate that once the primary foundation breaks the second boundary creates or merged on other common identities sharing whatever these might be it caste, ethnicity, region, etc. Even in private conversation amongst the party cadres it is usually said that they are parties of Kshetries or Brahmans, such types of motivation attempted.

18. Academicians have been controlling general secretary of NEFIN which is most powerful post in the organization. Suresh Ale Magar, Parsuram Tamang (two tenure), Bal Krishna Mabuhang and Om Gurung all are lecturer of Tribhuvan University.

19. Here, I do not claim all members of first category entirely fall into right-based activism and vice versa, with second category it is but a general trend.

20. On 18 May 2006, a nine-point proclamation of the reinstated House of Representatives declared Nepal 'a Religiously Secular State'.

21. Since this religion is not only about the infinite but also about the eternal; and its principles are based on the internal principles if the cosmos, they called their religion as Sanaatan Dharma. (see "SSJB Rana, 1978)

22. Hindus claim that 'Omkar' refers to those adhering to the 'Omkar', which refers to the Vaidic, Jains, Buddhist and Sikh; but Buddhist (Majority) have strong contention with this concept.

23. The DKKA (Dhanuk, Koiri, Kewat, Amat), an organization of nationalities from the Tarai, was established in 1998. They claim that they meet all economic, historical, and social measures as existing Tarain members of the NEFIN but because they practice the Hindu religion they are excluded from NEFIN membership. The *Gopal Sewa Samiti*, a community organization of Yadav/Ahir

raised a question; "we were the first kings of Nepal, the 'Gopal Vanshi', which is entirely recognized fact, but it is ridiculous not to include us in indigenous communities. The Kirati Kings came very late in the Kathmandu valley, however, they are pure indigenous, '*Khatti Adhibasi*', why aren't we?' Another, executive member of the *Gopal Sewa Samiti* pointed out that the Newar Kings also ruled in a later period. There seems to be a contradiction in the selection of Indigenous/Nationalities to Danuwar, actually they have their Danuwar Kuti, at Ramanda Chouk, Janakpur where they worship Hindu gods (as claimed by its priest), they also have *Gotra*, and some wear the sacred thread, like involved in *Kshetri Saamaj* at Sarlahi District but recognized as Nationalities that contradicts with the existing definition of 'indigenous/nationalities'.

24. Significant events happened during the King's visit to Janakpur in the *Vivaha Panchami*. *Mithila Natya Kala Parisad* is one of the oldest renowned clubs in Janakpur. It is basically focused on Maithili arts, literature, and dances. The president of the Parisad illustrated the cultural misunderstanding/gap between the hill people and the people of the Tarai. They had prepared '*Ahipan/Aripan*'(commonly used both) to welcome the king on the road spending about four hours but an army officer came and ordered them to erase it. Initially they tried to convince him explaining the importance of *Aripan* but the officer told him to either erase it or be arrested. In fact, the *Aripan* is prepared through *Trantic Vidi* to welcome a god during great occasions in the Mithila region, so they prepared it supposing the king to be a god but the army officer did not understand its significance. The members of Parisad were naturally very disappointed with the soldier's refusal.

25. In this research, we have surveyed all national constitutional political parties and some local parties except the Maoist. Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal, United Marxist and Leninist, Nepali Congress Democratic, Janamorcha, Rastriya Prajatanta Party, Nepal Majdoor Kisan Party, Ekata Kendra Nepal, Nepal Sadbahwana Party, Nepal Sadhawana Party Anandidevi etc.

26. The "time when involved in the activities of the organization" pertains to the definition of activist which we have used in our project and in this paper. It may not reflect the length of time in which individuals have been informally active.

27. As a first in the political history of Nepal, the Nepali Congress Democratic party introduced reservation practices at their 11th national party convention in 2005. The party allocated two reserved seats in its central committee for indigenous ethnic people, women, and Tarain people, including one seats to Dalits, and backward region (Karnali).

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STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH IN NEPAL

Pashupati Nepal

Introduction

The study of diseases is really the study of man and his environment. The interplay and integration of two ecological universes– the internal environment of man himself and the external environment– determine the health status of an individual, a community or a nation, which surround him. World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is evident from the definition that there is rather an extension of elements of health as social well being than a limited general concepts of health as against sickness. In the modern concept, disease is due to a disturbance in the delicate balance between man and his environment. Three ecological factors (agent, host and environment) are responsible for disease. The disease agent of disease is usually identified with the help of laboratory. The host is available for study; but the environment from which the patient comes is largely unknown. Yet frequently, the key to the nature, occurrence, prevention and control of diseases lies in the environment. Without such knowledge, this key may not be available to the physician who desires to cure disease, prevent or control it (Park 1994). Hence, the study of diseases is really the study of man and his environment.

Many of the health problems have been perceived to be the direct fall-out of the environment. The high incidence of heart disease and cancer, for instance, has been increasing linked to diet, lifestyle, exposure to toxic wastes, etc., all of which, can be controlled by changes in a given environment (Voluntary Health Association of India 1992).

Disease can not arise without the convergence at a certain point in time and space of two orders of factors: factors that take the form of an environmental stimulus...and second, factors that condition the response of the tissues. These stimuli, these challenges to adjustments, are not the same in every environment. They vary with...location (Husain 1994)

Population explosion, deteriorating environmental conditions and resource constraints to tackle the key environmental health problems have affected human health and the health of the ecosystem. Planners and policy makers in Nepal are more concerned today than ever in the past about the deteriorating environmental health issues. The ability to link health and environmental data, and thereby to understand relationships between the levels of exposure and health outcome, is clearly vital in attempts to control

exposures and protect health. This capability is particularly important for countries like Nepal where the issues of environmental pollution have traditionally taken a second place to demands for economic development (UNEP/WHO 1996). However, the present study attempts to present the environment health hazard pathway and the linkage between environment and health in Nepal with special reference to environmental pollution. Simultaneously, some recommendations are suggested to keep positive link between environment and health in Nepal.

The Environment Health Hazard Pathway

Environmental health hazards take many forms. They range from traditional hazards such as human faeces, in densely populated areas, to the wide mix of air pollutants emitted by road vehicles. The hazard pathway is described in Figure 1. In most cases, the starting point is some form of human activity and rarely, a natural process, which release pollutants into the environment (UNEP/WHO 1996)

Emission Sources and Processes: The process of release of pollutants is known as *emission*. The emission of pollutants due to the human activities are highly varied with time and space. The major sources of emission include mining and quarrying, energy production, manufacturing, transport, agriculture, domestic activities and waste management but other sources such as tourism, forestry and commercial services may also be important. There involve a wide range of emission processes. For example, energy combustion in vehicles, manufacturing industry, electricity generation and home heating is one of the most important emission processes, especially to the air.

Dispersion Processes: Pollutants may be dispersed through air, water, soil, living organisms and/ or human products (i.e. food) in the environment. The pathways of dispersion vary greatly. It depends mainly upon both the emission source and the pollutant concerned. Rates and patterns of dispersion also depend upon the environmental conditions to a large extent. For example, pollution dispersion in the air is affected by weather conditions (especially wind speed, wind direction and atmospheric stability) by the emission height and by the local and regional topography. Pollution dispersion in the soil is influenced by soil conditions, such as its texture, structure, and degree of compaction and drainage characteristics. Dispersal by living organisms or human products depends upon the patterns of movement, contact and exchange. The intensity of these different processes varies substantially over both time and space and often very short periods and distances. As a result, many pollutants show extremely complex patterns, especially in complex environments such as cities and towns where there are

a large number of emission sources and major variations in environmental conditions.

Exposure Processes: Pollutants enter the human body in a number of ways – by inhalation, ingestion or dose, dermal absorption. The amount of any given pollutant that is absorbed is often termed *the dose*, and may be dependent on the duration and intensity of the exposure. *Target organ dose* refers specifically to the amount that reaches the human organ where the relevant effects can occur. The first effects may be sub-clinical changes, which in turn may be followed by disease and in some cases even death.

Measuring exposures accurately and precisely is of great importance when seeking to establish exact associations with health outcomes. Almost all these measurements, however, are extremely costly and time consuming, and consequently cannot easily be applied to a large number of individuals as part of a population study. Therefore, more commonly, exposure is assessed indirectly, for example on the basis of measured pollution levels for a whole area. The measured levels are then used to give an exposure score to all individuals living or working within the area. Such an approach clearly ignores local or individual variations in exposures and results in miss-classification of exposure level.

Fig.1: **The environmental health hazard pathway: conceptual framework at the individual level**
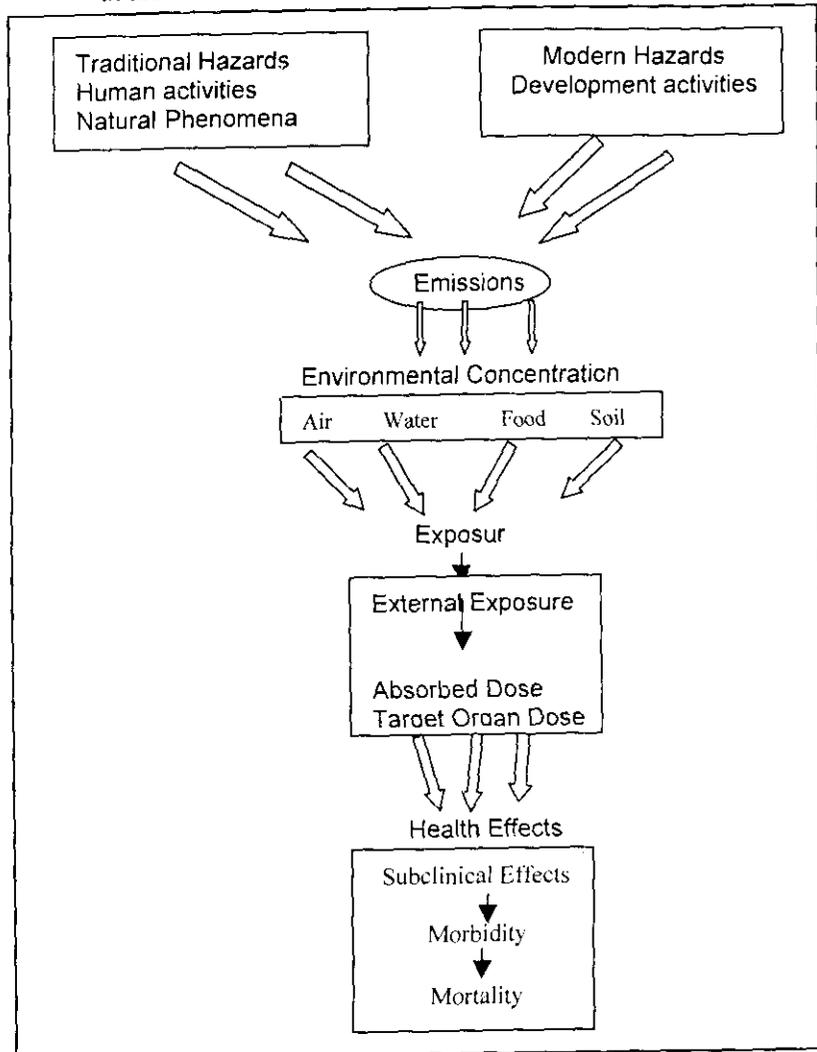
Source: UNEP/WHO, *Linkage Methods for Environment and Health Analysis: General Guidelines*, 1996, p.8.

Environment and Health Problems in Nepal
General: Most of the health problems in Nepal are rooted in the environment. Communicable diseases are very much predominant in the country and a large number of them, are caused by microbes in water, food and air. Gastrointestinal disorders, respiratory tract infections, infections of eye, ear and nose, etc., are common in Nepal. Health statistics indicate that more than half of the total numbers of patients suffer from gastrointestinal diseases in Nepal. Worms are endemic in children and adults. Diarrhea and dysentery have been the main cause of deaths in children. Typhoid and cholera are almost endemic in urban areas in Nepal. About 80 percent of the communicable diseases are caused by polluted drinking water in Nepal (Nepal 1997). Infant mortality rate is still utmost high (102/1000 live birth). Diarrhea diseases still top the list in the country. Water available to an average Nepali is inadequate in quantity and poor in quality. Rivers and ponds are the major sources of water for all domestic purposes in most of the rural areas. Only few people use tube-well water. Pipe water is available to only about 66 percent people of the urban area and 34 percent people of the rural area. The state of sanitation, all over the country, is not satisfactory. The country has three broad distinct physiographic regions viz. Terai Region (17 percent), Hilly Region (68 percent) and Himalaya Region (15 percent)

The ecological destruction that has taken place in the Himalayas over the last half century has led to an unprecedented level of poverty and a serious decline in the health status of its inhabitants. Soil erosion, deforestation, landslides etc. have been threatening the people in the hills who are hardly able to survive on the local base. These hardships have impacted upon their health. Many of the poor are engaged in subsistence farming. A typical poor hill farming family is compelled to borrow loan from landlords or moneylenders to meet catastrophic circumstances. In such a family there is continuing malnutrition and illness. For women particularly, the excessive labour required in cultivating food crops and collecting biomass, fodder and fuel has weakened their health considerably in addition to the high incidence of worm infestation from contaminated water. For this reason, the people in this area are highly susceptible to Tuberculosis Women suffer from anemia and other gynaecological diseases like leucorrhoea, primarily because they lack the time to maintain their personal hygiene and to take rest adequately during their menstrual cycle and pregnancy.

Floods have become a hazard primarily in Terai Region. The pressures on the resource base in the Hills with consequent deforestation and soil erosion prevent water from being leached into the soil. There is increasing run-off and hence an increased amount of water that flows into the plains. The water with large amount of silts raises the river beds and reservoirs, which ultimately creates flood hazards in Terai. The tropical and subtropical types of climate and depleted resource base have also contributed to different

diseases in Terai Region. Malnutrition manifested in gastro-enteritis leads to higher mortality among children. Along with increased humidity come the vectors born diseases such as malaria. Increasing infrastructures development programs, forest depletion, use of marginal land, etc., have created an adverse environment and thus changed the relationship between people and land. It has threatened the means of survival especially of subsistence households, which in turn has resulted the high prevalence of different diseases.

Specific Environmental Health Problem

Water Pollution: Water is never 'pure' in chemical sense. It contains impurities of various kinds– both dissolved (e.g. hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide, ammonia, salts of calcium, magnesium, etc.) and suspended impurities (e.g. clay, silt, sand, mud, etc.) and microscopic plants and animals (Park 1994). Water is polluted by various anthropogenic activities and natural events. But more serious kind of water pollution is that, caused by human activity–urbanization and industrialization, which is the ultimate result of rapid population growth. Increased water pollution is one of the major public health issues in Nepal. Diseases caused by contaminated water are the most common diseases in Nepal (HMG/DoHS, 1998). Factors contributing to deterioration in water quality are given in Fig. 2.

Fig. 2: Factors contributing to deterioration in water quality
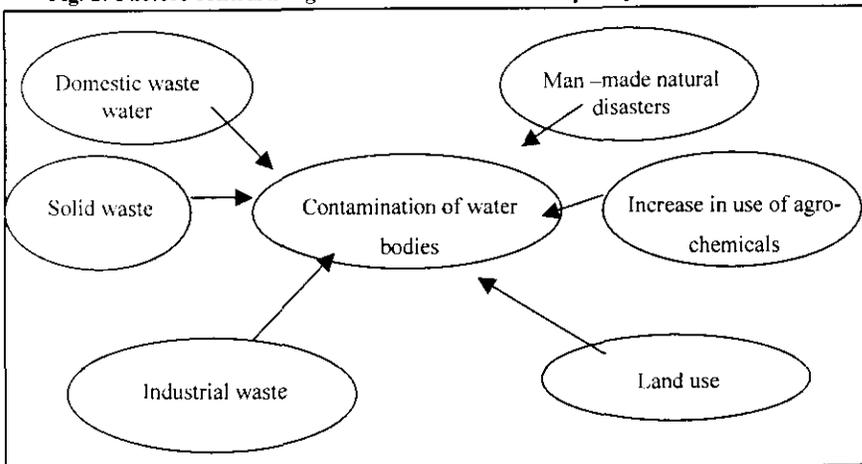
Source: UNEP, *Nepal: State of the Environment 2001, P. 23.*

In Nepal, while urbanization is crucial for industrial expansion and accelerated economic growth, yet the unplanned but fast expansion of urban centers has been leading to the problems of congestion, solid waste disposal, shortage of basic necessities (water electricity etc.) and environmental pollution. Water pollution resulting from sewage and industrial waste provides clear examples of the effect of rapid population growth on environment. The carrying and decomposing capacities of the rivers are sustained to their maximum by the increase in urban population and by the development of industrial complexes leading to the disturbance in river ecosystem. Industries based on local raw materials such as cement and marble factories and boulder and stone crushing industries pollute the environment and de-stabilize soil. Similarly paper, plastic, and leather pollute water. In Nepal, rivers frequently change their color due to the discharge of effluents from those industries, which use chemicals during their production process (NPC/IUCN 1991).

The anthropogenic activities are of serious concern in polluting surface water. Some traditional practices of disposing all forms of domestic waste into the river specifically, the disposal of night soil and solid wastes in near by open places, surface drains, yard and on the bank of the river has been a common practice in Nepal. Likewise, the ground water quality, particularly in Kathmandu valley, is contaminated. None of the ground water sources, such as dug-wells, deep tube wells, stone spouts, ponds and piped water is free from faecal contamination. Bacteriological water quality of the Kathmandu valley is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Bacteriological water quality from different sources in the Kathmandu Valley

Faecal coliform/100 ml	Value as % of sample units of 15						
	Dug well	Shallow well	Deep well	Spring	Stone spout	Pond	Pipe
0	0	60	80	40	20	0	60
1-100	40	30	15	30	40	0	20
101-1000	30	5	5	30	40	0	30
>1000	30	5	0	0	0	100	0

Source: NHRC/WHO, *Environmental Health in Nepal: Situation Analysis*, P. 26, 2002.

Health statistics indicate that more than half of the total numbers of patients suffer from gastro-intestinal diseases in Nepal. Worms are endemic in children and adults. Diarrhea and dysentery are the main cause of the infant mortality. Typhoid and cholera are almost endemic in urban areas in Nepal. The paucity of safe water supplies and adequate sanitation facilities have no

doubt worsened the situation for which rapid population growth of Nepal is highly responsible. About 80 percent of the communicable diseases are caused by polluted drinking water. Although 66 percent people of the urban area and 34 percent people of the rural area have been facilitated by drinking water in Nepal available water is not hygienic.

Sporadic studies on water quality indicate the degradation of both river and drinking water supply. Such a deteriorations exists in urban and riverside settlement areas. Drinking water in most of the rural parts is also biologically contaminated (HMG/MoPE 1998).

Air Pollution: 'Air pollution' in general terms describes the admixture of potentially harmful substances in the air we breathe. Air becomes impure by respiration of men and animals, combustion of coal, gas, oil etc., decomposition of organic matter and trade traffic and manufacturing processes which give off dust, fumes, pavours and gases. Air pollution is one of the major environmental problems of Nepal particularly in the urban areas. The typical pollutants are sulpher oxides (SO_2), nitrogen oxides (NO_2), carbon monoxide (CO), photochemical oxidants and suspended particular matters.

Atmospheric sulfur oxides result largely from the burning of oil and other fossil fuels. The pollution of the air by these substances is mostly caused by use of petroleum. In Nepalese context, main sources of air pollution may be regarded as deforestation and bio-mass burning, followed by the utilization of fossil fuel.

Evidently, the combination and concentration of outdoor air pollutants varies from city to city, according to the quantity and composition of fossil fuel used. But they also depend on other environmental factors such as geographical and meteorological characteristics of the area concerned (UNEP/WHO, 1996). The air quality monitoring result in the Kathmandu valley is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Air Quality Monitoring Result in Kathmandu Microgram per cubic meter (PM_{10})

Date of collection	Statinon Name					
	Putalisadak	T.U	Thamel	Bhaktapur	Matchhegaon	Patan Hospital
1 Jan. 1999	117	35	61	37	29	121
23 Aug. 2003	102	16	58	31	17	124
23 Aug. 2004	92	14	54	29	N.A.	162

Source: CBS, Environment Statistics of Nepal, 2004, p. 19.

Indoor air pollution in same the situation is considered to be more serious than outdoor air pollution. This is due to the tendency of entrapment of

pollutants indoors, resulting to higher concentration. In addition, most people spend a much larger proportion of their time indoor often in close proximity to indoor emission sources. Indoor air pollution is an especially serious problem in Nepal (UNEP/WHO 1996).

Information on indoor air quality is very limited. A recent study (NHRC/NESS 2001) indicates PM_{10} concentration for cooking place is utmost high where biomass (wood) is burnt and low at the places where kerosene and LPG are used as fuel respectively (NHRC/WHO 2002).

Various studies suggest that the high prevalence of chronic bronchitis is primarily due to the exposure to domestic smoke while using biomass as fuel in cooking. The information provided by CBS in 2001 shows that about 80 percent of total households still use biomass as fuel. The rural population depends mainly on firewood to meet their energy demand. The use of other traditional sources of energy like animal dung and agricultural residue are also in practice.

Air pollution affects human health. Some pollutants are actually toxic, fluorides, hydrogen sulfide and arsenic. Most commonly, the results are irritation of throat and lungs, coughing, lesion of the respiratory tract, and in severe cases, death from respiratory failure. In regard to heavy metal, certain forms of mercury and lead attack the central nervous system, affecting the lungs and heart.

Noise Pollution: Noise is often defined as unwanted sound; but this definition is subjective because of the facts that sound for one man may be noise for another man. Perhaps a better definition of noise is: "wrong sound, in the wrong place, at the wrong time". As the population has been increasing rapidly, the intensity of noise pollution is also growing faster and faster in Nepal especially in the urban and industrial areas where the population agglomerates highly. The sources of noise are many and various. These are automobiles, factories, industries, aircraft, and the domestic noises from the radio, transistors – all adding to the quantum of noise in daily life in Nepal. There exists positive relationship between population growth and the acceleration of noise sources, i.e. urban centres, industries, radio, films, automobiles etc. The noise pollution greater than 60 dBA is considered as hazard for man and when it reaches more than 80 dBA noise levels, he becomes deaf. Acceptable noise levels (dBA) is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Acceptable Noise Levels (dBA)

Residential	Bedroom	25
	Living room	40
Commercial	Office	35 – 45
	Conference	40 – 45
	Restaurants	40 – 60
Industrial	Workshop	40 – 50
	Laboratory	40 – 50
Educational	Classroom	30 – 40
	Library	35 – 40
Hospitals	Wards	25 - 35

Source: Park, *Text Book of Preventive and Social Medicine*, 1994, p. 414.

If we compare the situation of noise pollution in Nepal with the suggested acceptable noise levels (dBA), we find worse condition. Noise level in decibels (dB) in different areas of Kathmandu is given in Table 4.

Table 4: Noise level in decibels (dB) in different areas of Kathmandu

Areas	Noise Level equivalent (N leq)	Noise level as % of samples			
		NI_{10}	NI_{50}	NI_{95}	NI_{max}
High traffic	78.97	80.97	75.34	69.04	97.11
Low traffic	75.21	78.00	71.96	64.62	94.19
Public places	69.67	72.00	67.04	62.34	86.82
Residential and commercial places	74.52	77.02	70.44	63.38	92.27

Source: *Nepal: State of the Environment 2001*, UNEP, p. 35.
Note: Subscript values indicate sample size.

The information given in Table 5 reveals the fact that the degree of industrial noise pollution in Nepal is highly excessive than the acceptable noise level.

Table 5: Industrial Noise Level in Nepal

Industrial Area	Activity	Noise Level (dBA)
Balaju Almunium Industry	Spinning	90-98
Plastic Industries	Molding	97
Balaju Yantra Shala Industry	Gutting	104
Birganj Sugar Mill Biganj	Turbine	105
Hulas Steel Industry Pvt, Ltd., Bara	Galvanizing	94

Source: CBS, *Environment Statistics of Nepal*, 2004, p.21.

Food and soil contamination: Environmental pollution can also be transmitted through food and via soil. The soil may be chemically contaminated with a wide range of pollutants, including pesticides and heavy metals such as lead and cadmium. Agricultural activities, industry, landfill, and emission from road transport are all main sources of soil pollution. Direct contamination of foodstuffs may also occur as a result of the deposition of pollutants from the atmosphere, through the use of contaminated irrigation water, by application of pesticides and other substances to growing crops or livestock, and through contamination during processing and distribution (UNEP/WHO 1996).

Nepal is one of the few countries where food adulteration is posing a serious threat to public life. It is creating havoc in the society, as the large numbers of people are becoming its victims. Many people, particularly from the lower and middle income earning groups, fall victim of different diseases, though no statistical account is available to substantiate the fact.

Nepalese society is gradually becoming modernized with people's dependence growing on foodstuffs prepared on street corners, restaurants and small hotels. The foodstuffs in such places are prepared in most unhygienic environment close to public toilets and garbage containers. Such scenes are seen in most part of the country particularly at the bus-parks. Quite often, the utensils used for serving foodstuffs or liquor are not properly washed or washed with dirty water. Besides, most of the foodstuffs are badly exposed to dust, dirt, flies and the fumes of the vehicular traffic. The foodstuffs are also contaminated with harmful chemicals, colour, food additives and preservatives, which are detrimental to the health of the consumers.

Of the 2000 to 3000 items identified by the Department of Food Technology and Quality Control, nearly 20 percent are either of below standard or adulterated. Among these items, the adulteration is utmost high in items like oil and ghee where there is serious violation of food safety measures. Most of the consumer items, including vegetable oils, vegetable ghee, milk and milk products, cereal grains, spices, sweets, confectionery, tea and mineral water are contaminated, though in varying degrees (NHRC/WHO 2002).

Conclusion
The natural environment is suffering from pollution in almost all important areas related to air, water, noise, etc. Outdoor air pollution is caused primarily by vehicular pollution and poor road conditions while biomass burning has contributed to severe indoor pollution. Improper discharge of industrial and domestic wastewater has contributed to surface and ground water pollution. The growth in traffic, establishment of certain industries in particular localities and modern ways of urban life styles have contributed to noise pollution particularly in urban areas.

Though direct correlation is not found between the environmental degradation and the major diseases in Nepal, it can not be ignored that some of the diseases like diarrhea, meningitis, kala-azar, viral hepatitis, parasitic infection, ulcer, respiratory infection, etc., affecting public health and killing so many people in different parts of the country are caused by environmental degradation. As a result of these problems, the public health is affected predominantly. It demands rational and effective measures from the planners and policy makers to control and minimize the situation.

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RESEARCH NOTE

BUDDHA'S LIFE DEPICTED IN THE SCULPTURS OF KAKREBIHAR

Dilli Raj Sharma

The Context

For quite some time Kakrebihar has been an archaeological enigma for the students of cultural history of Nepal, more precisely of west Nepal hills. The site of Kakrebihar (28°34' north 81°38' east) lies in the southern fringe of the Surkhet Valley, almost three kilometers from Birendranagar, the headquarters of Surkhet district in the mid-western development region of Nepal. The ruined site of Kakrebihar is known for the conglomeration of its superb art and architectural remains associated with Hinduism and Buddhism.

This article is intended to identify some of the notable sculptures whose descriptions have not been published yet. More specifically, the rich art of Kakrebihar shows the distinct knowledge about the advancement of Buddhist religion and art skill that had long been fostered in the region.

The Valley of Surkhet was popularly known as the central point, an entrepot of trade in the medieval period. This valley links the northern Himalayas to southern plains of Nepalgunj bordering India. From Tarai the route enters the Surkhet Valley and then passing through the mountainous regions, embracing the towns of Dullu and Sinja, capitals of the Khasa Malla rulers of the medieval period, proceeds further north towards the Tibetan border. During the medieval period this area was important not only for trade and commerce but also for peculiar forms of culture and art.

The site of Kakrebihar, well known as the centre of Buddhist art and culture of medieval times, yields many masterpiece sculptures as well as designs carved on independent stone slabs of the frieze which must have been the part of old shrine. The temple, which might have been plunged by the attack most brobably from outsiders, indicates the northern Indian *sikhara* styled (i.e. curvilinear) temple fully decorated with Buddhist sculptural art and several other designs. The remains of carved doorjambs confirm the entrance of the temple was beautifully delineatd with several figures of minor Buddhist deities in the niches and decorative scroll motifs around. In the year 2003 the Department of Archaeology of Nepal excavated the Kakrebihar site and successfully unearthed the debris of ruined structure of a stone temple. Hence, many sculptures of the Buddha and Buddhist subsidiary deities are recordable. This made us possible to assess the popularity of the developed form of sculptural art in this region.

Early attempts to identify Kakrebihar

Interestingly, the famous Italian Orientologist Prof. Giuseppe Tucci has not mentioned Kakrebihar in his book. He must have missed to visit the site during his historical survey of western Nepal. Yogi Naraharinath reported briefly about the site during the time of his exploration in 2012 VS (1956 A. D.). According to Yogi, the site could be linked to Asokachalla, a ruler of Malla dynasty during 12th century A.D. (Yogi I ii 2013 VS: 170-172). Before excavation only a handful of sculptures and limited number of carved stones were recorded on the surface of the mound.

Although the name, Kakrebihar, implies a *vihara* or monastery but, in fact, the site is nothing more than a *sikhara* styled temple that consist of several miniature *sikharas* in successive layers of the superstructure. We can easily discern skillfully carved images of the Buddha, Bodhisattva and other minor Buddhist deities. Many such images are now preserved in the Birendranagar Regional Museum of the Government of Nepal. The rest of the sculptures and other artistic carvings can be seen still lying on the site. Thus, the art activity of Kakrebihar features the beautifully carved images indicating the spread of the Buddhist art belonging to the Mahayana school of Buddhism in that part of western Nepal. The interesting part of the images can be ascertained exclusively carving the life history of the Buddha. No such other sites of the region have done so.

The tradition of the depiction life scenes of the Buddha in stone art can be traced out from the inspiration of Gandhara and Mathura School at the beginning of Christian era. Bharhut art illustrated the narrative scenes related to the story of previous birth of the Buddha symbolizing Chaitya, Bodhi tree, disc, etc. during 2nd century B.C. The Gandhara school, on the other, laid the landmark history of Buddhist sculptural art, and started to make the images of the Buddha that denote different scenes based on his life activities only after 1st century A.D. (Choudhary 1956: 48).

Buddhist sculptures at Kakrebihar

Many Buddhist sculptures found around the ruins of Kakrebihar suggest that the site was a developed Mahayana centre of art in this region. Most of the carved images display the theme of *dhyani* Buddha, sitting independently on the pedestal whilst other sculptures narrate several themes relating the incidences of the life history of the Buddha. Interestingly, many Buddhist sculptures of historical sites represent the scenes based on the life history of the Buddha, such as birth, death, Sravasti miracle, monkey's offering of honey, taming of the mad elephant, enlightenment at Bodhgaya, the first sermon of Saranath, and Buddha's descend from *Traystrimsa* heaven, are noteworthy from the point of view of the development of Buddhist sculptural art equally in India, Nepal and Tibet. Among these, Kakrebihar promoted some life incidences of the Buddha through the sculptural art of the region. In

this sense, as in other Buddhist sites, Kakrebihar played a prominent role for inspiring on carving the beautiful and expressive images during the 12th century A.D. The followings are the newly recovered important images of the site.

Birth scene of the Buddha (Figure 1)

A single stone slab with the scene of birth story of Lord Buddha is no doubt a significant art specimen of Kakrebihar. In this relief, Mayadevi is seen standing on the pedestal together with her newlyborn baby prince Siddhartha in *samabhanga* pose. Mayadevi's head is decorated with *usnisha* and she has a lower garment around her waist, which is delineated in beautiful textile pattern. Although her left hand is missing, the remaining raised right hand can be identified in the *abhaya* pose. Beside Mayadevi, her son Siddhartha is also standing on the back of the lion clinging on to his mother. Although the head of the child is damaged, ascribed designs clearly show the beautiful figure in representation.

Both the upper corners of the stone slab have the design of half circle wheels while the lower corner depicts the design of tendrils. The representation of a lion here, no doubt, symbolizes the clan-name *sakyasimha* to which the Buddha belonged. Next to the lion there is a projected band with decorative niche which contains the figure of an elephant. The elephant must have been a white elephant Mayadevi, as literary tradition narrates, dreamed before giving birth to Siddhartha. This relief, thus, indicates the birth-story of the Buddha. Below the pedestal, one can see the design of rolling scrolls with the bud in the centre.

Buddha in the scene of Enlightenment (Figure 2)

The seated image, depicting the scene of the Buddha's Enlightenment at Buddhagaya after a rigorous practice of *dhyana*, has been a widely accepted theme in Buddhism. Normally, in this scene the Buddha is seated in *dhyana* touching the earth *(bhusparsha mudra)* with his right hand showing the gesture of envoking the earth goddess for the witness of his long awaited success. It is said that when he was sitting on penance Mara, the demon, sent his three daughters including Tanha with an army to create disturbance in his final attainment. But despite the attempt he made, the Buddha succeeded to defeat him and achieved Enlightenment. This was at this historical and critical juncture when the determined Buddha invoked the earth goddess to be the witness of his entering Buddhahood. This scene is nicely portrayed in this relief. The figure of the Buddha is carved seated in *dhyana*. He is flanked by two other unidentified figures in seperate niches. Since the image is badly abraded so one cannot describe its artistic features in details. However, the niche is embellished with trefoil *torana* overarching the figure and an additional small *chhatra* can be seen above the head of the Buddha. The side

figures must be Mara and his assistants in the act of disturbing the Buddha. Thus, the scene very interestingly represents one of the illustrable themes on the stone.

Buddha in Dharmachakra Mudra (Turning of the Wheel of Dhamma (Figure 3)

Many Buddha images portray the important event of the first sermon the Buddha gave in Saranath. This incident of the Buddha is known as *Dharmachakraparvartana* or first turning of the Wheel in Buddhist literature. The beautifully carved image has broken hands. The mark made by the broken right hand on the chest no doubt indicates the gesture of *dharmachakraparvartana*. Normally, the depiction of hand gesture should meaningfully be raised up to chest and the forefinger and thumb of the right hand form a circle in the gesture like *vitarka*. According to Ghose (1998: 24), the gesture of the left hand raised slightly at low level suggests the Tibetan character. The Buddha, in this popular scene, should be flanked by two deities i.e. Padmapani and Vajrapani on left and right respectively (Snellgrove 1978:251). In Kakrebihar the figure of Padmapani, on the left, has worn a wisdom cap while the figure on the right shows the character of a Brahmin ascetic with shaved head and wearing *dhoti* as a lower garment. The seat of the Buddha reveals square shape of which the frontal part bears the figure of two lions facing and butting each other. Below the seat, there are two tendrils similarly winding in circular motif on both sides of the lower section of the niche. The design of the *chhatra* above the head and arching trefoil *torana* is noticeable and exhibit higher art skill. The flanking pilasters are decorated in cage-motif at the top with embellishing lozenges around. Here, the carved design of the trefoil *torana* and pilasters suggest the meticulous decorative skill. The half-exposed bodies of the side deities are given special consideration in this relief. The robe worn by the Buddha, which cling tightly, is falling from the left shoulder and passing under the right shoulder. The swelling chest and thinner waist, no doubt, represent the notable physical character of the Buddha. Similarly, the half-closed eyes considerably supports the fact of ascetic nature of the deity.

Buddha in the Sravasti Miracle (Figure 4)

This particular image based on the story of the Sravasti miracle is believed to have performed by the Buddha. It is stated that the Buddha performed a miracle before King Prasenjit at a specially built pavilion in Sravasti. In many of these types of scenes, the Buddha is seen sitting on the lotus with special hand gesture for performing the miracle. This piece is considered a very well created art form in term of expression and modeling.

The sculpture is carved in a decorative niche on the single stone slab. The image is flanked by two beautifully carved pilasters on both sides of the

niche. The figure of the Buddha is seated in *padmasana* pose on a double-petalled lotus. The lotus itself rests on a square base decorated with the design of lozenges. Below this, there is the symbol of two tendrils that have full-blown tiny flowers in the centre. This design associates with the wheels probably giving the shape of a *ratha*. In addition, two half *chakra* symbol can be seen on the upper section of the niche. The carved image indicates the Buddha's serene expression. The figure of the deity shows his right hand raising up to the chest with the gesture of forming the circle with the thumb and the index fingure. The gesture of the left hand is not clear as it is broken off. The Buddha in this relief is decorated with *usnisha* (wisdom cap) on the head while the *chivara* (robe) can be seen with very thinner line on the body. This is marked by the folded lines on his left arm, indicating the robe spreading down between the legs.

The figure of the Buddha exhibits an anatomical perfection. The physiognomy is visible in a round shape and the body of the image is modeled with soft and energetic movement. The half-closed eyes portray the serene attitude which is common in the sculptures of the Buddha. Similarly, the eyelids are delineated in arching lines that emerge from the root of the nose. The lips are gently closed while the chin is modeled in round shape. Thus, the sculptor very ably presents the divine perfection in this figure. On both the sides of the deity are carved small, seated figures in *anjali* posture. Several other figures can also be seen carved on both corners of the niche. They might be the figures of disciples who are gazing at the Buddha's miracle. Above the head of the Buddha's image has the decoration of the branch of a tree and further above is overshadowed by a trefoil arched-band resting on two pilasters. The arched-band is stamped with scroll designs and groove pattern. Similarly, cylindrical pilasters show the design of circular bands in a vertical arrangement. The finial of the pilasters is embellished with small cage-motif with lozenges. This makes the niche of the figure beautiful and elegant.

Buddha in Abhaya Mudra (Figure 5)

Buddha images in *abhaya mudra* (the gesture of assurance or fearlessness) are also popular in the Kakrebihar site. In this particular scene the Buddha is depicted in seated posture on a simple square pedestal with his right hand raised up to the level of chest showing open palm and the left palm is resting on the lap. This posture of Buddha is considerably associated with the theme of religious sermon. It is also notable that Buddha's *abhaya mudra* can be interpreted as his assurance to the world of his ability to withstand all temptations and find out the cause and remedy of sorrow and suffering (Sitaramamma 2004: 150). The dress and other attributes of the image are similar to other images mentioned in the text. The Buddha in *abhaya mudra*

is, as has been said, based on the expression of Amoghasiddhi, one of the *dhyani buddhas*, sitting on the northern direction of the Chaityas.

In the Kakrebihar relief the Buddha is seated in *dhyana* on a seat made of double-petalled flower. The right hand of the figure is however broken off. The mark on the abdomen level suggests *abhaya* posture. The remaining right hand is resting on the lap. Although the head of the image is partly damaged, the other feature can, no doubt, be ascertained a beautiful representation of the body. The half-closed eyes signify the gesture of deep meditation. The robe worn by the deity is marked in various pleated lines across the chest leaving the right shoulder bare. Here, it clearly indicates the fringe of the robe swinging out of the left elbow. The image shows a carving in the niche flanked by beautiful design of pilasters. The decoration of the remaining pilasters suggest cylindrical in shape including the cage-motif design and a trefoil arch *torana* above.

Buddha in Dana Mudra (Figure 6)
This figure portrays the feature of Ratnasambhava, one of the five *dhyani buddhas* who is normally seen facing to the southern direction. The Buddha is touching the earth with his upturned palm of the right hand while his left hand rests on the lap, represents the theme of life activity of the Buddha particularly giving *dana* in this relief. The Buddha is seated on a decorated seat which is embellished in the foliages designs. Although the head of the Buddha is missing the other features suggest its notable hand gesture. As with other Buddha images, the robe worn by the Buddha displays several pleats at the edge that emerges from the left shoulder and is hidden behind his lower right chest. This may slightly be considered dissimilar with the above images so far. The edge of the robe is clinging out of the left elbow of the deity, which could be the common features of images. One of the distinct characters of this image is the representation of solid and columnar limbs of the deity.

The Buddha holding noney offered by the monkeys (Figure 7)
This is a unique image and can be identified as the first sculptural example of Nepalese Buddhism so far recovered in the country. In this context, the image places a prominent role not only for Kakrebihar but also for the whole country from the point of view of the developed Buddhist sculptural art. The image, no doubt, portrays the life story of the Buddha based on honey offering to him by the monkey. The legend tells us that in course of the offering the honey to the Buddha, a group of monkeys danced in extreme ecstasy but while doing so one monkey fell down into the well and immediately died. This story is described in Dhammapada Commentatory and also narrated by Xuan Zang (Huen Tsang) (Pal 1984: 48).

In this relief, the Buddha's figure is beautifully carved in a seated posture on a three-tier seat with both legs pendent. Another remarkable feature of the image is the representation of aureole around the head of the Buddha indicating a divine status. This is embellished with sun-rays around. He also wears the usual *usnisha* on his head and a thin robe can be seen on his body across the chest. The left arm of this image is broken off while his right hand carries the bowl type object. This might have been the bowl of honey as it is dripping down from the palm of the deity. In front of the deity there is a tiny figure of a monkey carved in the lower corner of the niche in an acrobatic posture. This, no doubt, is the expression based on the literary tradition of Buddhism.

The expression of the deity is cheerful and is seen with opening his mouth and eyes slightly. The physical appearance of the Buddha reveals younger in both modeling and expression. It is noteworthy that one Thanka painting from Tibet which has 16 various life incidences of Buddha. One of them shows the scene offering honey to the Buddha by monkey. Here, the Buddha is seated on the pedestal as the one in the figure of Kakrebihar. In the Tibetan Thanka the monkey is touching the knees of the Buddha (Pal 1984: 63), but this feature is not found in the Kakrebihar figure.

Above the central image, the tree indicates the beautiful scenery of a forest. Similarly, the niche is carved in trefoil arch and side pilasters are decorated with cage-motifs. Below the seat is the design of two tendrils culminating in a tiny bud carved on both sides, while the central section depicts *kirtimukha* design. Thus, the image carries skillfully the idea of narrative scene of the Buddha on stone.

Narrative Scenes in a single stone-slab (Figure 8)
It is interesting to note yet another illustrative scene based on Buddha's life history in a single stone slab. There are three different narrative scenes representing the distinct postures of the Buddha seated in the separate niches, while additional two niches that are carved in alternate row contain the standing figures of the demon-like creature. These figures might have been associated with the story of Mara and his daughters that are giving a trouble to the Buddha during his *dhyana*.

Almost three scenes of the life of Buddha can be identified in this single slab. The first scene, from the right, displays *dhyana*, the second exhibits the first sermon while the third reveals the miracle performed by the Buddha in Sravasti. The rest of the figures, depicted in two alternate niches, can be identified with Mara and his assistant, represent in their unique posture.

Finally, the historic site of Kakrebihar offers the marvelous collection of monumental art comparable in the whole region, which confirms the fact that the region has a higher advancement of the Buddhist Mahayana tradition that might have been under the inspiration of western part of India

particularly of Gujarat during the medieval period. The Mahayana knowledge in practice might have been blended with Hindu ideology and popularized it as a social harmony of the region. The site, therefore, unfolds the history of Buddhism in the framework of higher degree of art skill developed in the region. In conclusion, it can be asserted that Kakrebihar now faces a serious conservation problem despite its historic and artistic/ archaeological significance. The Government of Nepal has carried out preliminary excavation and the conservation to salvage the shrine and the remains. But proper care of the whole site and further conservation and research are warranted in order to save the legacy of art asset of the region as a whole.

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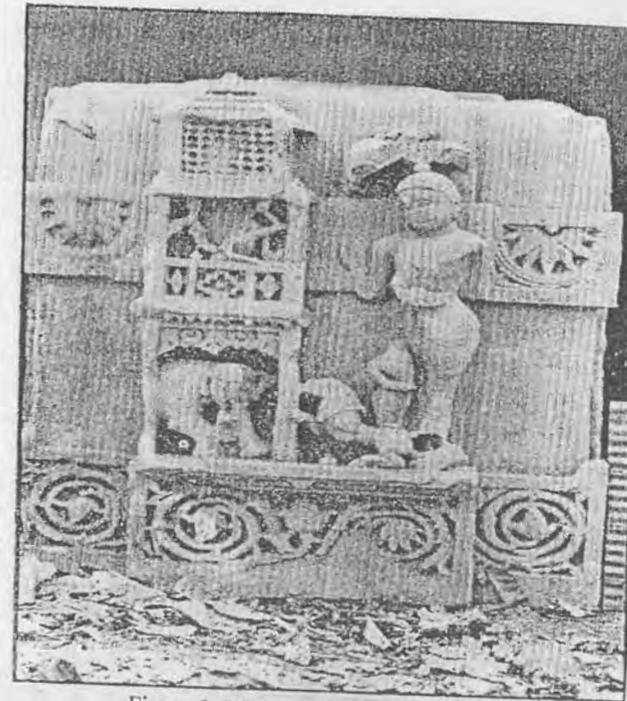Yogi, Naraharinath. 2013 VS. *Itihas Prakash* (in Nepali) Vol. I No.II Kathmandu: Itihas Prakash Sangha.
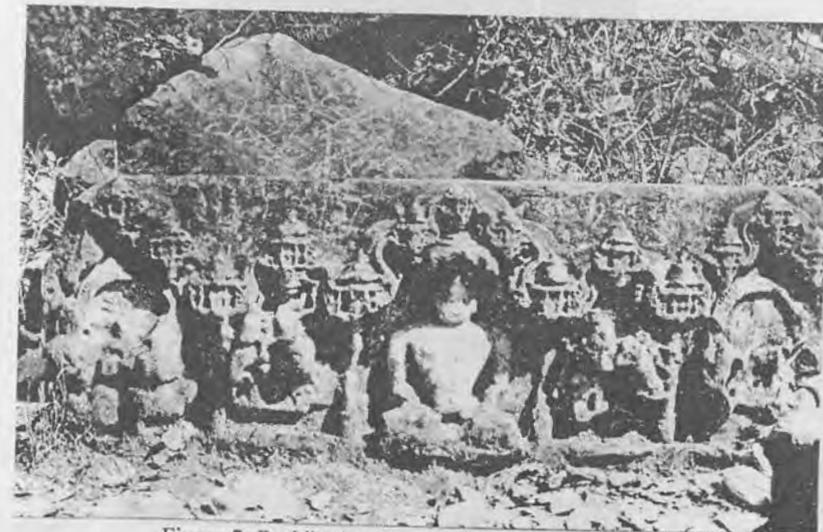
Figure 1: Birth scene of the Buddha

Figure 2: Buddha in the scene of Enlightenment

Figure 3: Buddha in Dharmachakra Mudra

Figure 4: Buddha in the Sravasti Miracle

Figure 5: Buddha in Abhaya Mudra

Figure 6: Buddha in Dana Mudra

Figure 7: The Buddha holding honey offered by the monkeys

Figure 8: Narrative Scenes in a single stone-slab

राजवैद्य दण्डपाणिको घर र वैद्य आगमका कलाकृति

पुरुषोत्तमलोचन श्रेष्ठ

भक्तपुरको मूलनगरबस्तीको मुटु–सुकुलढोका <(<सुखुध्वाखा<सुगलद्वाखा) को व्यस्त बजारमा, मूलबाटोको पश्चिम किनारस्थित दक्षिण-पूर्व मोहडा भएको परम्परागत शैलीमा बनेको एउटा चारतले घर (चित्र संख्या १) छ । राणा प्रधानमन्त्री जङ्गबहादुरको समयतिर सो घरसँग सम्बद्ध वर्तमान वैद्यहरूका पूर्वज दण्डपाणिले बनाउन लगाएको भनिन्छ ।[1] त्यसपछि त्यो घर एवं त्यस परिसरमा रहेका नारायण, श्रीकृष्ण आदि देवताका नित्य नैमित्तिक पूजाआजा, नित्य भजन, आरति आदि धार्मिक कृत्यलाई निरन्तरता दिनका निमित्त निजी गुठीकै रूपमा दण्डपाणिकी पत्नी विद्यालक्ष्मीले त्यस घरको भुईंतलामा सम्बद्ध अमात्य र श्रेष्ठहरूलाई विशेषगरी उनीहरूले कृष्णजन्माष्टमी पर्व/गुठी अनवरतरूपले चलाइरहुञ्जेल तिनका सन्तान दरसन्तान वा अनन्तकालसम्मन् पनि उनीहरूलाई उठाउन नपाउने गरी ने. सं. १०१३ (वि.सं.१९५०) मा स्वहस्ते- कबुलियत-कागज गरी पसल बहालमा अर्पित गरेकी थिइन् । यो कुरा यस विषयका सम्बद्ध प्रमाणका आधारमा ज्ञात हुन्छ ।[2]

त्यसैगरी घरका नारायण र श्रीकृष्ण आदि देवताका नित्य नैमित्तिक पूजाआजा चलाउने पूजारीका रूपमा सम्बद्ध राजोपाध्याय ब्राह्मणलाई पनि त्यस घरको भुईंतलामाथिका भागमा बसोबास गराइयो ।[3] यसप्रकार दण्डपाणिले सो घर बनाइसकेपछि त्यस घरमा पूजारीका रूपमा बसोबास गर्दै आएका राजोपाध्याय ब्राह्मण एवं पसल चलाउँदै आएका अमात्य, श्रेष्ठहरूका माध्यमबाट एउटा नयाँ संस्कृति विकसित हुँदै वर्तमानमा पनि जीवन्त रहँदै आएको देखिन्छ ।

घर र सो परिसरमा रहेका कलाकृति[4]

दण्डपाणिहरूको सालिगसहितको आरति (चित्र संख्या २, क)

सालिगसहितको यस ढलौटको आरतिमा लहरै छवटा सालिगहरू भक्तिभाव-मुद्रामा बसेका छन् । ती सालिगहरू माथि कलात्मक तोरणाकृति (कदम) सजाइएको छ र त्यसको शीर्षभागमा लहरै पाँचवटा आरति देखापर्छन् (चित्र संख्या २, ख) सालिगहरूको आसनमा निम्न अभिलेख कुँदिएको छ –

संख्या १
मूलपाठ

१. ॐस्वंत् १९३३ मिति मार्गसिल शुदि १४ रोज४स राजवैद दन्दपानि १ स्त्रि विद्याल-

२. क्ष्मी १ पुत्र देवानन्द १ रामदास १ कृष्णानन्द १ निलकंथ सकलसेन श्री३ नारायन प्रिति याता थो आरति थव क्षस नित्ये भजन यायगुलि च्यायमाल सुभ

अनुवाद

वि.सं. १९३३ साल मिति मार्ग शुदि १४ रोज ४ मा राजवैद्य दण्डपाणि १, स्त्री विद्यालक्ष्मी १, पुत्र देवानन्द १, रामदास १, कृष्णानन्द १, नीलकण्ठ सबैले श्री ३ नारायणलाई प्रीति गरी यो आरति आफ्नो घरमा नित्य भजन गर्नाका लागि बाल्नुपर्यो। शुभ होस्।

व्याख्या

विद्यालक्ष्मी राजवैद्य दण्डपाणिकी पत्नी हुन्, अनि देवानन्द, रामदास, कृष्णानन्द र नीलकण्ठ उनीहरूका छोरा हुन्; आफ्नो परिवारका सालिकसहितको यो आरति आफ्नो घरमा नित्य भजन गर्नाका निमित्त बाल्न उनले वि.सं.१९३३ मा बनाउन लगाई श्री ३ नारायणलाई प्रीति गरी राखिदिएका हुन् भन्ने कुरा यस अभिलेख प्रमाणबाट थाहा हुन्छ।

श्रीकृष्णको सिंहासन (चित्र संख्या २, ख)

कलात्मक सुन्दर फुलबुट्टा एवं चराका आकृति आदिले सजाइएको कदमसहितको (शीर्षभागमा छत्र हालिएको) यो ढलोट सिंहासनमा पहिले श्रीकृष्णको मूर्ति विराजमान थियो। अहिले त्यहाँ सो मूर्ति छैन,[x] गरुडनारायणको मूर्ति राखिएकोचाहिँ देख्न सकिन्छ। सो कदमसहितको सिंहासन राखिएको पार्श्वभागको भित्तामा नवनागको सुन्दर भित्तेचित्र लेखिएको छ। त्यसले यथोचित ढङ्गबाट सो सिंहासनको शोभालाई बढाईरहेको छ। त्यस सिंहासनको तलतिरको घेरामा निम्न अभिलेख कुँदिएको छ -

संख्या २
मूलपाठ

१. स्वस्ति श्री संवत् १९६८ साल मिती कार्त्तिकशुदि १० रोज ४ थो डीनस राजवैद नीलकं व व या तृती भार्य्य मैयानानी निम्ह त्रिपुरुषन:

२. श्रीकृष्ण प्रीतीनं लिधलवटया सींघासन कदमस्मेतया धार्नि ४<३ द्रुताजुल शुभ्म्

अनुवाद

स्वस्तिश्री वि.सं. १९६८ साल मिति कार्त्तिक शुदि १० रोज ४ मा, राजवैद्य नीलकण्ठ र उनकी तृतीय पत्नी मैयाँनानी दुवै स्त्रीपुरुषसहित श्रीकृष्णलाई प्रीति गरी ४ धार्नी ३ पाउ भएको कदमसहितको पित्तलको ढलोट सिंहासन चढायौँ। शुभ होस्।

व्याख्या

वि.सं.१९६८ मा दण्डपाणिका पुत्र नीलकण्ठ र उनकी पत्नी मैयाँनानीले यो सिंहासन भगवान् श्रीकृष्णलाई प्रीति गरी चढाएका थिए भन्ने कुरा यस अभिलेखबाट थाहा हुन्छ।

सो घर पसलका राजोपाध्याय,अमात्य एवं श्रेष्ठहरूका अतिरिक्त स्थानीय वासिन्दाहरूका अनुसार पहिले त्यस घरसँगै दक्षिणपट्टि पूर्वाभिमुख खुला

दलानसहितको सत्तल,[६] छाँदा कृष्ण जन्माष्टमीका अवसरमा त्यस घरको कृष्णको मूर्ति सोही सत्तलमा ल्याई राख्ने चलन थियो; टोलवासी र श्रद्धालु भक्तजनहरूबाट पूजामान ग्रहण गराइसकेपछि/धलं दाने गरिसकेपछि बेलुकीपख फेरी पूजा गरी पुनः घरभित्र लाने चलन थियो। अहिले सो चलन बन्द भइसकेको भए तापनि हरेक वर्ष कृष्ण जन्माष्टमीका दिन कृष्णको विशेष पूजा सो घर पसलमा बस्नेहरूले चलाउँदै आएको थाहा हुन्छ।[७]

गरुडनारायण (चित्र संख्या ३)

गरुडनारायणको यो धातुनिर्मित सुन्दर र आकर्षक मूर्ति आधुनिक कालमा बनेको भएतापनि यसप्रकारका मूर्तिमा पाइने शैलीलक्षण-अनुकरण हाम्रो यहाँ प्राचीनकालदेखि नै लोकप्रिय रहँदै आएको कुरामा सन्देह छैन।

चोकभित्रका कलाकृति

घरपछाडिको चोकको पश्चिमतिर पर्खालसँगै *गरुडनारायण*को एउटा प्राचीन प्रस्तर मूर्ति[८] र एउटा मध्यकालिक शिवलिङ्ग देखापर्छन्। (चित्र संख्या ४)

गरुडनारायणको यस प्रस्तर मूर्ति (चित्र संख्या ५) ले नेपाल-उपत्यकाका अनेक स्थानका यस्तै शैलीलक्षणका प्राचीन मूर्तिहरूको स्मरण गराएको छ। तात्कालिक-नित्यपूजा- प्रयोजन, समयचक्रको मार, घामपानी आदि अनेक कारणले यो पूरै मूर्ति ज्यादै नै खिइसकेको अवस्थामा छ। शायद त्यसैकारण पनि यस मूर्तिमा नारायण र उनको वाहन गरुडका अनुहार चिन्नै नसकिने गरी विलुप्त हुनपुगेका छ। त्यसैगरी नारायणले आफ्ना हातमा लिएका आयुध एवं धारण गरेका मुद्रा, अलङ्कार आदि पनि नदेखिने भइसकेका छन्। यस्तै शैलीका चाँगुको स्वर्णमूर्ति[१०] र सिद्धपोखरीको प्रस्तरमूर्ति[१०] मा गरुडले आफ्नो गलामा धारण गरेका सर्पालङ्कार यस मूर्तिका गरुडका गलामा चाहिँ खिइएर झण्डै झण्डै पूरै विलुप्त हुनपुगेको छ। यसबाट पनि चतुर्बाहु गरुडनारायणको यस मूर्तिको प्राचीनता झल्कन्छ।

विशेषगरी चाँगु र सिद्धपोखरीका मूर्तिमा झैँ यस मूर्तिका चतुर्बाहु नारायण पनि गरुडको पिठ्यूँमाथि पलेटी कसेर आसन जमाई बसेका छन्। सिद्धपोखरीका नारायणले आफ्ना अधिल्तिरका दुई हात काखमा अड्याई योगमुद्रा धारण गरेका छन्। तर यस मूर्तिका नारायणले चाहिँ आफ्ना अधिल्तिरका दायाँ हात छातिसम्म पुर्याएका छन्। तीनै स्थानका मूर्तिमा आफ्ना दुवै मानव-हातसहितका पखेटा हावामा फिँजाएर, पिठ्यूँमा नारायणलाई बसाली उडीरहेका[११] गरुडहरू मानव-मुखाकृतिका छन्। त्यसरी उडीरहेको अवस्थालाई दर्शाउन यस मूर्तिमा गरुडनारायणको दायाँ बायाँ बादलका टुका देखाइएका छन्। यसरी यस मूर्तिमा देखापर्ने प्राचीन शैली,लक्षण आदितर्फ विचार गर्दा यसलाई विक्रमको सातौँ शताब्दीतिरको मान्न सकिन्छ।[१२]

टिबुक्छे-सुकुलढोकाटोलको उत्तर-दक्षिण मूलमार्गदेखि पश्चिमपट्टि एकनासका ६ वटा शिवलिङ्गहरू ६ स्थानमा रहेको देख्न सकिन्छ । नीमध्येकै एउटा शिवलिङ्ग यस चोकभित्रको पर्खालसँगैको यो शिवलिङ्ग (चित्र संख्या ६) पनि हो ।[१३]

श्रीधर नारायण

हाल सो घरको पसल सामुन्ने पूर्वपट्टि (मूलबाटोको पश्चिमपट्टि) झण्डै मानवकदको चतुर्बाहु नारायण(को सुन्दर प्रस्तर मूर्ति (चित्र संख्या ७) दक्षिणाभिमुख अवस्थामा स्थापित रहेको छ । यस मूर्तिका नारायण श्रीधर नारायण नामले जनजीवनमा लोकप्रिय छन् । सो घरमा बस्दै आएका जीवनराज राजोपाध्याय एवं त्यस घरमुनि पसल चलाउँदै आएका निर्वाणचरण अमात्य, तुलसीभक्त श्रेष्ठलगायतका स्थानीय वासिन्दाहरूका अनुसार- यी श्रीधर नारायणको एक सुन्दर मन्दिर दण्डपाणिले सो घर बनाउनअघि त्यहाँ थियो । (यस विषयमा माथि पनि चर्चा भइसकेको छ) दण्डपाणिले सो प्राचीन नारायण मन्दिर हटाई त्यहाँ घर बनाउने क्रममा सो मन्दिरका श्रीधर नारायणलाई अहिलेको यस ठाउँमा त्यसरी सारेर राखीदिएका हुन् । त्यसपछि पहिले श्रीधर नारायणको मूर्ति स्थापित रहेको मूलस्थानमा चाहिँ त्यसैको सानो ठुड्ड प्रतिमूर्ति (चित्र संख्या ८) बनाउन लगाई राखिदिएका हुन् ।[१४]

उक्त परिप्रेक्ष्यमा उक्त मन्दिर नष्ट भएर विचलनको भारमा परेनापनि पूर्वकालदेखि यहाँको धार्मिक लोकजीवनद्वारा पाउँदै आएको सांस्कृतिक सम्मान एवं धार्मिक श्रद्धाबाट चाहिँ यस श्रीधर नारायणले अहिले पनि वञ्चित हुनुपरेको छैन । कार्तिकशुक्ल पूर्णिमाका दिनमा गरिने नसा व्येगु पर्वपूजा[१५] (चित्र संख्या ९) र आश्विनशुक्ल पूर्णिमादेखि कार्तिक शुक्ल पूर्णिमासम्म १ महिना आलुमता[१६] (आकाशदीप) बाल्ने चलन (चित्र संख्या १०) यस कुराका उदाहरण हुन् ।

यस चतुर्बाहु श्रीधर नारायणको मूर्तिको बनौट, शैलीलक्षण आदिले यस्तै एक्लै, स्थिर मुद्रामा उभिएका हाँडीगाउँ, कुम्भेश्वरका ई.को तेस्रो चौथो शताब्दीतिरका मानिने नारायणका मूर्ति[१७] लगायत चाँगुनारायणको दशौं शताब्दीतिरको मानिने नारायण[१८] का प्राचीन मूर्तिहरूको सम्झना गराएको छ । मूर्तिकलाको विकासक्रमका प्रसङ्गमा यहाँनिर विचारणीय कुरो के छ भने चाँगुका दशौं शताब्दीका चतुर्बाहु नारायणका तुलनामा सुकुलढोकाका श्रीधर नारायणको मूर्तिले प्राचीन सरल शैली र लक्षणलाई त्यनि साह्रो उछिनेर मध्यकालिक जटिलतातिर प्रवेश गरिसकेको प्रतीत हुँदैन । यसरी शैली लक्षणका आधारमा यस श्रीधर नारायणलाई नवम शताब्दीतिरको मान्न सकिन्छ ।

वैद्य आगँ (आगांछे) का कलाकृति[१९]

सुकुलढोकाटोलक्षेत्रको भीमसेनस्थानदेखि सीधा उत्तरतर्फ लाग्ने केही ठाडो-उकालो बाटोमा भिसिंग्रो तंचाको पश्चिमतर्फ परम्परागत नेवारशैलीमा बनेको वैद्यहरूको आगमघर (चित्र संख्या ११) छ ।[२०] तीन तले यस आगमघरको काष्ठनिर्मित कलात्मक मूल प्रवेशद्वारको तोरण (चित्र संख्या १२), माथिल्लो तलाको झ्याल र त्यसको दायाँ

बायाँका दुईवटा टुंडाल (चित्र संख्या १३) अनि त्यसैगरि माथिल्लो तलाभित्र (चित्र संख्या १४) मूल आगमकोठामा पस्ने धानुनिर्मित प्रवेशद्वारको तोरण (चित्र संख्या १५) मा दर्शाइएका शिवपरिवार (शिव, पार्वती, गणेश, कुमार) + भैरव र शक्तिका नान्त्रिक भाव झल्कने सुन्दर आकृतिहरूले पनि हिन्दु-नेवार आगम परम्परामा शैव+शाक्त तन्त्रको मिश्रण प्रभाव प्रबलरूपले रहँदै आएको कुरा दृष्टिगत हुन्छ ।

माथिल्लो तलाको मूल आगमकोठा पस्ने बन्द ढोकाका खापामा (चित्र संख्या १६) *आगम* को प्रतीकस्वरूप त्रिनेत्र, खड्ग र एकजोडी त्रिखुटी आसनमा जोडा कलश चित्रित छन् । सो ढोकाका खापामा तल माथि भोटे ताल्चा (सां न) मारिएका छ । यस ढोका र यससँगै अहिलेका सम्बद्ध वैद्यहरूका विभिन्न कालका पूर्वजहरूले विभिन्न कालमा सो आगमका आफ्ना इष्टदेवतालाई अर्पित गरी राखेका निम्नलिखित कलाकृति एवं सालिगहरू देखापर्छन्-

सालिगस्थापित आसनको अभिलेख

आगमद्वारसँगै दायाँपट्टि एउटा लाम्चो परेको प्रस्तर-आसन छ । सो आसनमाथि लहरै दुई स्त्री र एक पुरुषका गरी तीनवटा प्रस्तर-सालिग छन् । सो प्रस्तर-आसनमा निम्न अभिलेख (चित्र संख्या १७) कुँदिएको छ -

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संख्या ३
मूलपाठ

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१. कुशल वैद्य डो.सुभद्रामयी डोसेन सालिक
२. सोम्हा दयका जुरो,सम्वत ७९८ कार्तिक
३. वदि पर्चमि कुन्हु ॥ शुभ ॥

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अनुवाद

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ने.सं.७९८ (वि.सं.१७३५) कार्तिक वदि पंचमीका दिनमा डो (डोय) कुशल वैद्य, सुभद्रामयी डो (डोय) हरूले तीनजनाका सालिग बनाई राखियो ।

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व्याख्या

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आसनमाथिका पुरुष सालिग कुशल वैद्य र दायाँ बायाँका स्त्री सालिग सुभद्राहरू हुन् भन्ने कुरा यस अभिलेखबाट स्पष्ट हुन्छ । ने.सं.७९८ मा तात्कालिक भक्तपुर एक स्वतन्त्र राज्य थियो, त्यसबखत राजा जिनामित्र मल्लको शासन चलीरहेको थियो । यहाँ कुशल वैद्यहरूले आफूहरूलाई 'डो' भनेका छन् । यो कुरा विचारणीय छ । वैद्यहरूको पारिवारिक भनाइअनुसार तात्कालिक निर्गृहत राज्यका डोय शासक हर्सिंहदेवका एक गजकुमारले उनीहरूका पूर्वजलाई वैद्यशास्त्र पढाएका हुनाले वैद्यहरू पनि डोय कहलिएका थिए ।[२१]

गोपालराजवंशावलीका ५६, ५७, ५९ र ६३ पत्रमा तात्कालिक भक्तपुरका मूलमीलाई 'डोय' भनिएको छ, ठिमीका एक बासिन्दालाई पनि 'डोय' भनिएको छ ।[२२]

त्यसैगरी ने.सं. ६७१-७२ का भूमिसम्बन्धी तमसूक नाडपत्रहरूमा तात्कालिक भक्तपुरकाउपाध्याय उल्हासगज[23] लाई मात्र नभएर भक्तपुर गछेटोलस्थित-बालकुमारी देवगृहको काठको तोरणमा कुँदिएको ने.सं.८७७ को अभिलेखमा उल्लेखित सम्बद्ध मानन्धरलाई पनि 'डोय' भनिएको छ ।[24] यसप्रकार तात्कालिक नेपाल-उपत्यकामा 'डोय' नाम-विशेषणले वढ्ता प्रसिद्ध रहेका पूर्वमध्यकालका निर्ह्त राज्यका शासकहरूले वाह्रौं शताव्दीदेखि नै (निर्ह्त राज्य खडा भएको केही कालपछि) नेपाल-उपत्यकाको राजनीति, समाज, धर्म संस्कृतिमा पछिसम्म असर पर्नेगरी वज्र-प्रभाव जमाउन सफल भएका थिए, यसो हुँदा अनेक समयमा निर्हतनिरका अनेक थरीका मानिसहरूको स्थायी बसोबास समेत नेपाल-उपत्यकामा हुन थाल्यो; अनि यहींकै रैथाने-वासिन्दा भएर, पछि विस्तारै यहाँको समाज, धर्म-संस्कृतिकै अभिन्न अङ्ग बने । केहीले यहाँका उच्च प्रशासनिक पदहरूमा पनि स्थान पाउन थाले, अनि यसरी निर्हतका डोय शासकहरू मात्र नभएर अनेक कालमा त्यहाँबाट यहाँ आएर बसेका सामान्य-जन पनि तात्कालिक नेपाल-उपत्यकाको जनजीवनमा 'डोय' कहलिन पुगेका थिए । यो विशेषण सम्मानसूचक पर्यायालझारका रूपमा प्रयुक्त हुँदै परम्परागतरूपमा मल्लकालको उत्तरार्द्धसम्म पनि व्यवहृत आएको देखिन्छ ।

ठव सिंहको आसनको अभिलेख

आगमकोठा प्रवेश गर्ने ढोकाको दायाँ बायाँ धातुनिर्मित साह्रै सुन्दर एकजोडी भाले पोथी ब्व सिंह (उड्न लागेका सिंह) ले पनि त्यस आगमकोठाको बाहिरी भाग र त्यो ढोका अलंकृत छ । त्यस ढोकाको बायाँपट्टिको पोथी ब्व सिंह (चित्र संख्या १८) उभिएको आसनमा निम्न अभिलेख (चित्र संख्या १९) कुँदिएको छ -

संख्या ४
श्रीस्वेष्टदेवता

१. शुभ सम्वत् १९६६ साल वैसाखमैन्हामा --- का घर जोडियेको प -
२. शिचम लङ् --- का घर लमाई हात १७।४गज हात १० लगापात्समेत
३. जिर्णोद्धार गरि वैद्य हिरालालले आफ्ना विवाहिता पत्नि सन्तकुमारीसहित
४. भै ---प्रिति गरि चढाऊं ॥ १९६७ साल वैसाख गते २९ रोज ४ शुभम् ॥

शुभमस्तु ॥

संख्या ५

आर्गंढोकाको दायाँपट्टिको भाले ब्व सिंह (चित्र संख्या २०) उभिएको आसनको अभिलेख (चित्र संख्या २१)

श्रीस्वेष्टदेवता

१. शुभ सम्वत् १९६७ साल वैसाख गते २९ रोज ४ का दिन श्रीवैद्य दण्डपाणिको पुत्र श्री

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२. राजवैद्य देवानन्द.नत्पुत्र वैद्य हिरालालले आफ्नु विवाहिता पत्नी सन्नकुमारीसहित
३. भै ---प्रिति गरि ढरवटको सिंह १ सिंहिनि १ चढाऊयूं ॥ शुभमस्तु ॥   ॥

संख्या ६
आगमढोकाको तोरणको अभिलेख
मूलपाठ

१. श्रीनेपाली संम्वत १०७८ साल जेष्ठशुक्ल ६ गेज ७ या दीन श्री ३ कुलदेवतायात ली या द्वार १ तोलन सहीत भ.पु. टिवकछे टोलया दिवंगत जीवाजु लम्बोधर या काय पूर्णधर्ग्या वामांगी
कैलाशनानी वैद्यनीन् प्रीती याना दुता जुल शुभ्म .

अनुवाद

श्रीनेपालसंवत् १०७८ (वि.सं.२०१५) साल जेष्ठशुक्ल ६ गेज ७ का दिन श्री ३ कुलदेवतालाई पित्तलको द्वार १ तोरणसहित भक्तपुर टिवुक्छेटोलका दिवंगत जीवाजु लम्बोधरका छोरा पूर्णधरकी वामांगी (धर्मपत्नी) कैलाशनानी वैद्यनीले प्रीति गरी चढाएँ ।

काष्ठमन्दिर

आगमढोकासँगै दायाँपट्टि नेवार्शैलीको एउटा सानो एकछाने काष्ठनिर्मित मन्दिर (चित्र संख्या २२) छ । नि.सन्देह सबैको ध्यान सहजै तान्ने पछिल्लो मल्लकालताकाका यस सानो सुन्दर मन्दिरलाई पनि नेवार काष्ठ-कारीगरीको एक अनुपम नमुनाका रूपमा लिन सकिन्छ ।[25] यस मन्दिरमा कुमारीलाई विराजमान गगई तान्त्रिक विधिवमोजिम पूजा गर्ने परम्परा रहँदै आएको परिप्रेक्ष्यमा[26] सोही प्रयोजनका निमित्त यो मन्दिर बनाइएको बुझिन्छ ।

बोर्लीचाली र लिपिका परिप्रेक्ष्यमा, नेपाल-उपत्यकाका नेवारहरूमा भाषिक उतार चढाव एवं नेपाली भाषा- (खे भाय) र लिपिको असर खासगरी मल्लकालपछि देखिन थालेको कुरालाई दण्डपाणिको घर र वैद्य आगममा रहेका माथि प्रस्तुत विभिन्न कालका अभिलेखका लिपि र भाषाका सन्दर्भ-प्रमाणका आधारमा पनि विचार गन सकिन्छ ।

झण्डै सवा सय वर्षअधि बनेको दण्डपाणिको सुकुलढोकाको सो घर परिवेश पुरातात्विक दृष्टिले मात्र नभै उक्त घर बनेपछिका दिनहरुमा त्यहाँ विकसित हुन पुगेको नयाँ संस्कृति एवं सामाजिक व्यवहार, चलन आदिका दृष्टिले पनि महत्त्वपूर्ण एवं संवेदनशील मान्न सकिन्छ । सय वर्षभन्दा अघिदेखि सो घरमा पुजारीका रूपमा बसोबास गर्दै आएका अहिलेको पुस्तासम्मका राजोपाध्यायहरूको पारिश्रमिक भन्नु यथार्थमा अरु केही नभएर उनीहरूले सो घरमा बसी नित्य नैमित्तिक पूजाआजा चलाइरहुञ्जेलसम्मन्का लागि बसोबास गर्न पाउनु नै 'खानगी' हो भन्ने कुरा

परम्परा चलन-प्रमाणका आधारमा दृष्टिगत हुन्छ । त्यसैगरी सय वर्ष अधिदेखि पसल चलाउदै आएका अमात्य श्रेष्ठहरूका अहिलेका पुस्ताले श्रीधर नारायणलगायतका देवताहरूको नित्य नैमित्तिक पूजाआजाका लागि आर्थिक आधार जुटाउदै सांस्कृतिक परम्परालाई धान्दै, जीवन्त तुल्याउदै आइरहेका छन् । लोक संस्कृति अनि सामाजिक व्यवहार आदि यसरी पनि चल्दो रहेछ भन्ने कुराको एउटा उदाहरण यताबाट मिल्छ ।

पाददिप्पणी

१. राणा प्रधानमन्त्री जङ्ग बहादुरका समकालिक दण्डपाणि तत्कालिक भक्तपुरका एक प्रभावशाली व्यक्तित्वका रूपमा देखापछन् । वैद्यहरूको पारिवारिक वंशावली : अप्रकाशित, एवं प्रचलित-पारिवारिक भनाइ, अनेक स्थानका कृति अभिलेख आदिका अन्तरिक्त, दण्डपाणिका वर्तमानका एक वंशज कान्तिपुर त्रिपुरेश्वरनिवासी प्रा.डा. तुलसीराम वैद्यका अनुसार दण्डपाणि चक्रपाणिका भाइ हुन् भन्ने कुरा ज्ञात हुन आएको छ ।

पशुपतिको रणबहादुर शाहको वि.सं.१८५५को अभिलेखमा- "वल्लभ वैद्य यज्ञवल्लभ वैद्य राधावल्लभ वैद्य एकदेव वैद्य साह्या वैद्य मिल्हा वैद्य आनन्द वैद्यले विहान ब्यालुका रोजन्ना र बेर सब परिवारका नाडी हेरी सन्च विसन्चको, विचार गरी व्यथाअनुसारको औषधि शास्त्र हेरी ठहराई बनाई टक्र्याउन् ...साह्या वैद्यले आफ्ना कुलदेवतालाई चोषि नीति भाव भक्ति गरी नपुन्याइ प्रसन्न राषि मेग परिवार सबको रक्षा गर्दै रहनु ...." धनवज्र वज्राचार्य, टेकबहादुर श्रेष्ठ, शाहकालका अभिलेख, काठमाडौं, नेपाल र एसियाली अनुसन्धान केन्द्र, वि.सं.२०३७, पृ.२५१) भन्ने उल्लेख परेको छ । यताबाट वैद्यहरूले मल्लकालमा मात्र नभएर शाहकालमा पनि तन्त्रोक्त वा शास्त्रोक्त विधिपूर्वक अनेक रोगको उपचार गर्ने अनेक थरीका राजवैद्यका रूपमा मान्यता र महत्व पाउदै आएका थाहा हुन्छ । यसै प्रसङ्गमा परवर्तीकालका चक्रपाणिहरू जङ्गबहादुर र उनको परिवारका राजवैद्य थिए, त्यसैले जङ्गबहादुरले वि.सं.१९०६-०७ मा बेलायतयात्रा गर्दा चक्रपाणिलाई पनि साथै लगेका थिए । जङ्गबहादुरका छोरा पद्म जङ्गले यस कुराको उल्लेख यसरी गरेका छन्- 'On the 15th of January 1850, Jung Bahadur's mission left Kathmandu en route for England. Besides Jung Bahadur, the party consisted of Colonel Jagat Shumsher Rana, Colonel Dhir Shumsher Rana, Captain Ran Mehar Adhikari, Kaji Karbar Khatri, Kaji Hemdal Thapa, Kazi Dilli Singh Basnait, Lieuetenant Lal Singh Khatri, Lieuetenant Karbar Khatri, Lieuetenant Bhimsen Rana, Subba Siddhiman, Subha Sum Narsingh, Subedar Dalmardan Thapa, baidya Chakrapani, Artist Bhajuman, four cooks ' (Life of Jung Bahadur, Kathmandu, Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1974, pp.116)

यसप्रकार उक्त परिप्रेक्ष्यमा शासकवर्गसित चक्रपाणिहरू निकट हुनपुगेका कारण प्रकारान्तरमा दण्डपाणिको प्रभाव टोलछिमेकमा बढेको थियो भन्ने कुरा दृष्टिगत हुन्छ । भक्तपुरमा चलेको लोकवादअनुसार दण्डपाणिले सो घर बनाउनुअघि त्यहां नारायणको मन्दिर थियो । सो मन्दिर मासेर उनले त्यहां यो घर बनाएका हुन् ।

२. हाल त्यस घरका २ वटा पसलहरू झण्डै पाँचौ पुस्तापछिका निर्वाणचरण अमात्य र तुलसीभक्त श्रेष्ठहरूले चलाउदै आएका छन् । राजवैद्यनी विद्यालक्ष्मीले उनीहरूका पूर्वजहरूलाई गरिदिएको ने.सं. १०१३ को स्वहस्ते-कागजपत्रमा- उक्त धार्मिक

सांस्कृतिक कृत्यका लागि निजी गुठी चलाउन पसल बहालमा अर्पित गरेको, पसल चलाउनेहरूले वार्षिक साढे चार रुपैयां सो गुठी चलाउन बुझाउनुपर्ने, उनीहरूले नै सो गुठी चलाइरहेसम्म तिनका सन्ततिहरूलाई पसलबाट उठाउन नपाउने, सो रकममध्ये एक मोहरले एक महिनासम्म आकाशदीप बाल्नुपर्ने र बांकी चार रुपैयांले कृष्णाष्टमी पर्व चलाउनुपर्ने आदि कुरा उल्लेख छ ।

३. हाल त्यस घरमा बस्दैआएका पूजारी श्रीजीवनराज राजोपाध्याय, पसल चलाउदै आएका श्रीनिर्वाणचरण अमात्य एवं तुलसीभक्त श्रेष्ठ तथा सुकुलढोकाटोलका अन्य स्थानीय वासिन्दाहरूबाट प्राप्त जानकारीका आधारमा ।

४. प्रस्तुत कलाकृति सो घर/पसलका श्रीजीवनराज राजोपाध्याय-परिवार, श्रीनिर्वाणचरण अमात्य, श्रीतुलसीभक्त श्रेष्ठज्यूहरूले देखाउनुभएको हो । त्यसैगरी यहां प्रस्तुत समग्र चित्र स्मारक संरक्षण कार्यालय, भक्तपुरका फोटोग्राफर श्रीसूर्यप्रसाद श्रेष्ठज्यूको सौजन्यबाट प्राप्त भएका हुन् ।

५. जीवनराज राजोपाध्यायका परिवार, निर्वाणचरण अमात्य एवं तुलसीभक्त श्रेष्ठ लगायतका स्थानीय वासिन्दाहरूका अनुसार ।

६. अहिले सो सत्तल घर पसलको रूपमा परिणत हुनपुगेको छ ।

७. स्थानीय वासिन्दाहरूबाट प्राप्त जानकारीका आधारमा ।

८. जीवनराज राजोपाध्यायका अनुसार झण्डै चार दशकअघि अहिले पर्खाल उठेको त्यस ठाउँमा झारपात, फोहर आदि सफा गर्दा सो मूर्ति फेला परेको थियो ।

९. मोहनप्रसाद खनालले विवरणसहित यसको चित्र चांगुनारायणका ऐतिहासिक सामग्री (काठमाण्डौं: नेपाल र एसियाली अनुसन्धान केन्द्र, वि.सं.२०४०, पृ.६६,६७, चित्र संख्या १०,११ मा छपाएका छन् ।

१०. यसको विवरणसहितको चित्र मैले सिद्धपोखरी एक ऐतिहासिक विश्लेषण (भक्तपुर, भक्तपुर नगरपालिका, वि.सं.२०५४, पृ.२६-३१, चित्र संख्या १३) मा छपाएको छ ।

११. तर चांगुको स्वर्णमूर्तिका गरुडका खुट्टा पनि छन्, ती खुट्टा चराका जस्ता छन् । यस्ता खुट्टा सिद्धपोखरी र यस मूर्तिका गरुडमा देखाइएका छैनन् । यताबाट चांगुको गरुडनारायणले उड्न लागेको अवस्था र सिद्धपोखरी एवं यस मूर्तिका गरुडनारायणले चाहिं आकाशमा उडीरहेका अवस्था दर्शाइरहेको दृष्टिगत हुन्छ ।

१२. यस विषयमा थप अध्ययन अनुसन्धान हुनु आवश्यक छ ।

१३. विनोदराज शर्मा, जीवनराज राजोपाध्याय, कृष्णलाल कर्माचार्य, सुरेन्द्रवीर कर्माचार्य, निर्वाणचरण अमात्यलगायतका स्थानीय वासिन्दाहरूका अनुसार अहिले शिवलिङ्ग रहेको त्यस क्षेत्रमा वा घेराभित्र पहिले मार्कण्डेय तलाउ थियो । जीवनराज राजोपाध्यायका अनुसार सो तलाउमा तीर्थस्नान, पूजापाठ गरिसकेपछि ती शिवलिङ्ग दर्शन गर्ने चलन थियो । विनोदराज शर्माका अनुसार केही दशकअघि सोही क्षेत्रका मेघपतिगज शर्मासित जगन्नाथ परिसरसहित देखिने सो मार्कण्डेय तलाउको सुन्दर नक्सा-चित्र थियो । सो नक्सा-चित्रमा त्यस तलाउको चार कुनामा-४ वटा र तलाउको मध्य-खण्डका दायां बायां किनारमा २ वटा गरी जम्मा ६ वटा शिवलिङ्ग स्थापित रहेको दर्शाइएको थियो । सो तलाउ लाम्चो परेर गएको चारपाटे आकारको थियो ।

यस तलाउका बारेमा प्रचलित एक रोचक किंवदन्ती यस्तो छ - यस तलाउमा कसैले आफ्नो पूर्वजन्मको स्वरूप हेर्ने इच्छा राखी हेरेको खण्डमा सो स्वरूप देखिने

अद्भुत विशेषता थियो । एकपल्ट तात्कालिक एक राजाले (?) यस्तै इच्छा राखी हेर्न पुग्दा आफ्नो प्रतिविम्बमा सुंगुर रूप देखेछन् र त्यसपछि सो तलाउ नै पुरिदिएछन् ।

उक्त परिप्रेक्ष्यमा विचारणीय कुरा के छ भने तात्कालिक मार्कण्डेय तलाउ रहेको हालको यस परिसरमा कम्तीमा पनि सातौं शताब्दीदेखिका ऐतिहासिक पुरातात्त्विक सामग्रीहरू पाइएका छन् । अन्धकारयुगतिरको दुर्लभ एउटा ऐतिहासिक सामग्री पनि हालै यहीं पाइएको छ । त्यसैगरी पूर्व मध्यकालमा नेपालमण्डलको राजधानी र त्यसको केन्द्रको रूपमा महत्त्व पाएको त्रिपुर राजकुल (त्रिपुर राजदरबार) पनि यसै परिसर भित्र रहेको थियो भन्ने कुरा हालैको अन्वेषणबाट देखिन आएको परिप्रेक्ष्यमा मार्कण्डेय तलाउ तात्कालिक त्रिपुर राजदरबार परिसरमा रहेको राजकीय-स्नानागार थियो कि भन्ने अनुमान हुन्छ । यस क्षेत्रको पुरातात्त्विक अन्वेषण हुन सकेमा नखुलेका ऐतिहासिक रहस्य र थप नयाँ कुरा प्रकाशमा आउने छन् । जे होस्, यस क्षेत्रमा उत्तर प्राचीनकालतिरको देखिने विष्णु मुखलिङ्ग भएको (वासुदेव,प्रद्युम्न,अनिरुद्ध,सङ्कर्षण) हरिहरको चतुर्मूर्ति लगायत पूर्व मध्यकालतिर स्थापित त्रिपुरसुन्दरी पीठ, देवगृह, त्रिपुर विद्यापीठ आदि तथा उत्तर मल्लकालसम्मका अनेक कलाकृति, मन्दिर, मूर्ति एवं भवन आदिका अवशेष देखिन आएको परिप्रेक्ष्यमा पनि यो क्षेत्र अनेक दृष्टिले (निकै चहलपहल भएको) समृद्ध थियो भन्ने कुरा दृष्टिगोचर हुन्छ ।

१४. यो प्रतिमूर्ति- नारायण (पूर्वाभिमुख) तुलसीभक्तको पसलभित्र स्थापित छ । यताबाट अहिलेको यस दामोदर नारायण स्थापित रहेको भागमा प्राचीन श्रीधर नारायण मन्दिरको मूल गर्भगृह थियो र सो स्थानमा अहिले बाटोको छेउमा सारेर राखिएका अवस्थाका श्रीधर नारायण विराजमान थिए भन्ने कुरा स्पष्ट हुन्छ ।

१५. भिुसिमिसे साँझ शुरु भएपछि देवदेवीका मन्दिर/मूर्ति सामुन्ने भुटेका अन्न/ गेडागुडीबाट सम्बद्ध देवदेवीका आकृति बनाई फलफूल,रोटी आदि चढाई सुन्दर एवं आकर्षक ढङ्गले सजाई प्रदर्शित गर्ने सो रमाइलो पर्व स्थानीय नेवार जनजीवनमा *नसा ब्वयेगु* नामले प्रचलित छ ।

१६. आकाशमा आसादित देवदेवीलाई आरती प्रदान गर्ने अभिप्रायले यस्ता आकाशदीप (आलुमता/आल मत /मता कंलालि) खासगरी बाँसको टुप्पोमा झुण्ड्याई बाल्ने चलन छ ।

१७. लैनसिंह बाङ्देल, *प्राचीन नेपाली मूर्तिकलाको इतिहास,* काठमाडौं, नेपाल राजकीय प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठान, वि.सं.२०३९, पृ.१११-१४, चित्र संख्या ७७,७८,८०,८१ ।

१८. खनाल, *चांगुनारायणका ऐतिहासिक सामग्री,* पूर्वोक्त, पृ.७३,७४ ।

१९. यस आगमका कलाकृतिको अध्ययन गर्ने अनुमति त्यस आगमसित सम्बद्ध राधा कर्मांचार्यज्यूले दिनुभएको हो ।

२०. *तन्त्रको* अर्को नाम *आगम* पनि प्रचलित रहेको पाइन्छ । तान्त्रिक पद्धति/परम्परा कर्मप्रधान, प्रयोगात्मक र व्यावहारिक पक्षसित बढ्ता सम्बद्ध रहँदै आएको परिप्रेक्ष्यमा विशेषगरी पूर्वमध्यकालतिर शिक्षा-दीक्षा एवं गुह्य कर्मकाण्ड, साधना आदिका लागि उपयुक्त स्थलका रूपमा *आगम-संस्कृति* विकसित एवं लोकप्रिय भइसकेको स्पष्ट हुन्छ । तान्त्रिक धर्म प्रबलरूपमा प्रचलित रहेको तात्कालिक समयमा मूलनगरबस्तीका प्रत्येक टोलमा अपरिहार्य रूरूमा कम्तीमा पनि सम्बद्ध जातविशेषका एउटा आगमघर रहेको अनुमान वर्तमानमा पनि जीवित रहँदै आएको विभिन्न टोलमा अवस्थित आगमघरहरूका परिप्रेक्ष्यमा हुन्छ । वैद्यहरूको यो आगमघर पनि तीमध्ये एउटा हो ।

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२१. वैद्यहरूको पारिवारिक वंशावली (अप्रकाशित) का आधारमा प्रा.डा.तुलसीराम वैद्यबाट प्राप्त जानकारीअनुसार ।

२२. 'स ४९० ...स ५०० ... क्वाछें *डोय सुल्मी '* (५६,५९पत्र), 'स ४९६ ...थ्यमी डोयया, बाबु ...' (५७ पत्र) "स ५०८ आषाढ शुदि १० श्रीद्विजराज उपाध्यास्यम् थव केंजा व *डोय सुलमीटो* दामढ तानका ...*डोय सुलमीन्...*" ६३ पत्र) (धनवज्र वज्राचार्य, कमल प्रकाश मल्ल, दि *गोपालराजवंशावली,* वेशवाडेन: फ्राञ्ज स्टेनर वेर्लाग, ई.स.१९८५,)

२३. "स्वस्ति ॥ श्रीश्रीजय विश्वमल्लदेवप्रभुठाकुरसन ...श्रीखप्वंभूम्यां श्रीचनिगलस्ठाने तलमडेंतोल ...अत्रपत्रार्थे दृष्टसाक्षी उपाध्याय *डोयजु* उल्हासराज ...सम्वत् ६७१" "स्वस्ति ॥ श्रीश्रीजयजीतमल्लदेव प्रभुठाकुरसनं, श्रीश्रीजयविश्वमल्लदेव प्रभुठाकुरसन, ...अत्रार्थे दृष्ट श्रुतसाक्षि ...उपाध्याय डुयजु उल्हासराजजु ...सम्वत ६७२ " (विनोदराज शर्मा, 'केही अप्रकाशित ताडपत्रहरू', *पासूका,* वर्ष ३, अङ्क १०, आषाढ, वि.सं.२०५६, पृ.६)

२४. 'स्वस्ति ॥ श्रीः गमलयाकामातिप्रतिसुर्जरंदेव *दोयमानधर* ...सम्बत ८७७ ...' योगेश राज (स), सुथा अभिलेख प्रकाश, ख्वप, सुथां, ने.सं.१११९, पृ.२५, अभिलेख संख्या ४४)

२५. यस विषयमा छुट्टै अध्ययन अनुसन्धान हुनु आवश्यक छ ।

२६. शायद यसै कारणले पनि हुन सक्छ, दुई तीन पल्ट यहाँ चोरले भित्ता फोरेर चोर्ने व्यर्थ प्रयास गरिसकेको कुरा सो आगमघरका राधा कर्मांचार्यज्यूले यस पङ्क्तिकारलाई अन्वेषणका क्रममा बताउनुभएको थियो । अरु कोही नहुँदा अहिले सो आगमघरको सुरक्षाका लागि उहाँले पाल्नुभएका दुईवटा कुकुरहरूले दिनरात पहरा दिई रखबारी गरिरहेका छन् । (चित्र संख्या २३)

२७. राधा कर्मांचार्यबाट प्राप्त जानकारीका आधारमा ।

चित्र १ : राणा प्रधानमन्त्री जङ्गबहादुरको पालामा बनाइएको सुकुलढोकास्थित दण्डपाणिको घर
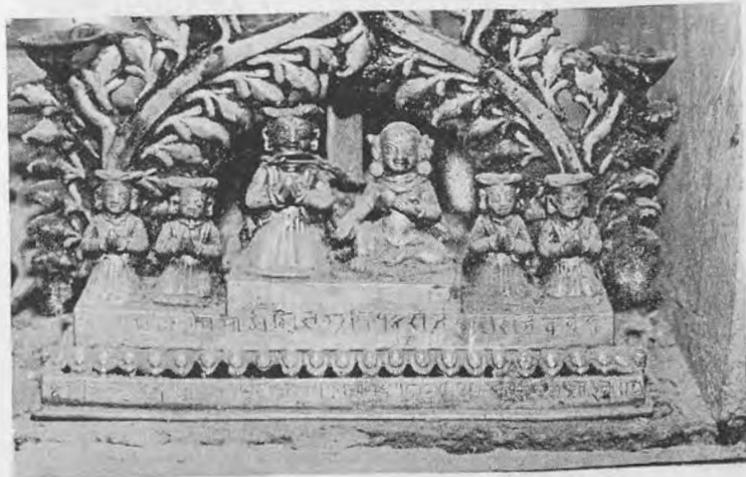
चित्र २ क: दण्डपाणि परिवारका सालिगसहितको आरति

चित्र २ ख: दण्डपाणि परिवारको सालिगसहितको आरति; कदमसहितको श्रीकृष्णको सिंहासनमा अहिले श्रीकृष्ण नहुँदा चतुर्बाहु गरुडनारायण विराजमान छन्; सिंहासनको पार्श्वभागको भित्तामा चित्रित नवनाग

चित्र ३: चतुर्बाहु गरुडनारायण

चित्र नं. ४ चोकभित्रका गरुडनारायण र शिवलिङ्ग

चित्र नं. ६ हाल पुरिएर विलुप्त भइसकेको 'मार्कण्डेय तलाउ' को एक चिनो-अंश-शिवलिङ्ग, तेह्रौं शताब्दी

चित्र नं. ५: चारदशक जति अघि झारपात सफा गर्ने क्रममा फेला परेको, उडिरहेका गरुडमाथि पलेंटी कसेर बसेका, प्रस्तरको चर्तुबाहु नारायणको मूर्ति, सातौं शताब्दी

चित्र नं. ७: पूर्व मौलिक स्थानबाट विस्थापित हुन पुगेका– 'श्रीधर नारायण', नवम शताब्दी

चित्र नं. ८ पहिलेको मूल- श्रीधरनारायणको गर्भगृहस्थानमा (दण्डपाणिको घर) स्थापित सोही 'श्रीधरनारायण' को प्रतिमूर्ति

चित्र ९: आखिर, जहाँ गए पनि परम्परा/ संस्कार चाहिँ साथमै छ; भक्तहरुले अर्पित गरेको श्रद्धाभक्ति-सम्मान पनि सामुन्ने नै छ । सकिमना पुन्ही (आश्विन शुक्ल पूर्णिमा) को बेलुका श्रीधर नारायणको मूर्ति सामुन्ने 'नसा ब्वयेगु' पर्व पूजा-प्रदर्शन

चित्र १०: आश्विनशुक्ल पूर्णिमादेखि कार्तिकशुक्ल पूर्णिमासम्म १ महीना यसरी आलुमता (आकाशदीप) बाल्ने चलन छ । यहाँ दण्डपाणिको घरमा पसल चलाउँदै आएका तुलसीभक्त श्रेष्ठ श्रीधर नारायणको अघिल्तिर आलुमता झुण्डाइरहेका छन् ।

चित्र ११: भिसिंद्यो तँचाको पश्चिमतर्फ अवस्थित वैद्यहरुको आगंघर

चित्र १२: वैद्य आगँघर पस्ने काण्डनिर्मित यो कलात्मक ढोकाको तोरणको बीचमा उमामहेश्वर र दायाँ बायाँ गणेश र कुमार छन् ।

चित्र १४: वैद्य आगँघरको मूल आगमकोठाको बाहिरी भाग

चित्र १३: वैद्य आगँघरको, आँगकोठाको यस एकमुखे आँखीभ्यालको तोरणमा उमामहेश्वर; सो भ्यालको दायाँपट्टिको टुँडालमा भैरव(वेताल-आसन) र गणेश र त्यसैगरी बायाँपट्टिको टुँडालमा सिंहवाहिनी भवानी र कुमार देखापर्छन् । भैरवका चार हातमध्ये अगाडिका दुई हात र त्यसैगरी भवानीको दायाँपट्टिका दुई हात कालक्रमले गर्दा झरिसकेको अवस्थामा छ ।
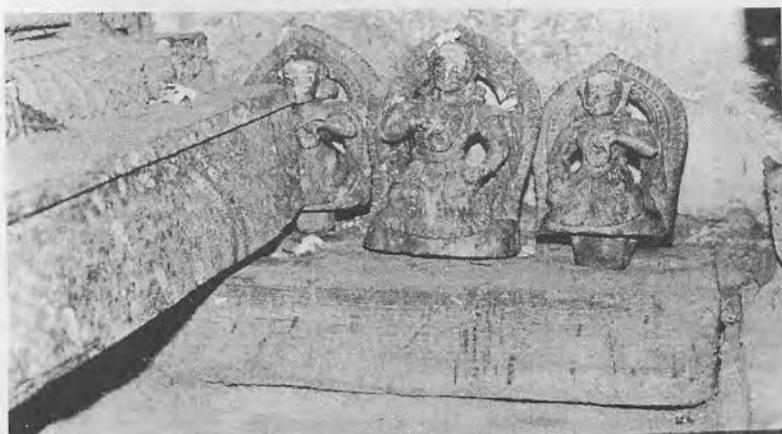

चित्र १५: ने.सं. १०७८(वि.सं. २०१५) मा पूर्णधर वैद्यका वामांगी कैलाशनानी वैद्यनीले आगँका कुलदेवतालाई चढाएको पित्तलको तोरणसहितको द्वारको सो तोरणमा पनि उमामहेश्वर, गणेश र कुमार छन् ।

चित्र १६: आगँ कोठा जाने ढोका

चित्र १८: आगँ कोठाको ढोकाको बायाँपट्टि स्थापित उड्न लागेका पोथी 'ब्व संह'

चित्र १७: (ने.सं. ७९८) अभिलेखसहितको आसनमा बसेका कुशल वैद्य डो (डोय) र सुभद्रामयी डो (डोय) हरुका प्रस्तर–सालिग

चित्र १९: आगँ कोठाको ढोकाको बायाँपट्टि स्थापित सिंहिनीको आसनमा कुँदिएको वि.सं. १९६७ को अभिलेख ।

चित्र २०: आगँ कोठाको ढोकाको दायाँपट्टि स्थापित उड्न लागेका भाले 'ब्व सिंह'

चित्र २१: भाले ब्य सिंहको आसनको वि.सं. १९६७ को अभिलेख

चित्र २२ जीवित-कुमारी विराजमान गराई पूजा गर्न बनाइएको मल्लकालिक कलात्मक काष्ठ मन्दिर

चित्र २३: "के दिन रात कस्को भर छ र ! ... आखिर सुरक्षाका लागि मानिसहरु हाम्रै भरमा ढुक्क हुँदा रहेछन् !" वैद्य आगँघरको सुरक्षा प्रदान गरिरहेका दुइवटा (कलो, खैरो रङ्गका) कुकुरहरु ।

नेपाली संस्कृतिमा कलशको महत्त्व: एक चर्चा

गंगा खरेल

प्राक्कथन

मानव सभ्यताको विकास क्रममा प्रतीकहरू (symbols) को स्थान विशिष्ट छ । मानिसले आफ्नो आहार खोज्ने क्रममा होस् वा बोली, संस्कार र व्यवहारको प्रदर्शनमा होस्, विभिन्न प्रतिक चिन्हहरूको आविष्कार, विकास र व्यापक प्रयोग गरेको छ । प्रतीकको प्रयोगबाट मानिसले आफ्नो इच्छा पुरा गर्ने, सोच र चिन्तनको तहलाई गहन र विशिष्ट बनाउने गर्‍यो । पछि, भाषा, लिपि, धर्म, कला, वास्तुकला, संस्कार-पर्व आदिको विकास भएपछि ता प्रतीक मानव सोच र व्यवहारको एक अनिवार्य अंग नै मानियो । मानवशास्त्रीहरूले एसिया, अफ्रिका र प्रशान्त क्षेत्रका आदि संस्कृतिमा प्रतीकको महत्त्वबारे व्यापक अनुसन्धान र तिनको प्रकाशन गरेका छन् । फ्रेजर, मालिनोअस्कीदेखि रेमण्ड फर्थ, भिक्टर टर्नर, मेरी डग्लस, लेभी स्ट्रससम्मका कृतिमा प्रतीकबारे विस्तृत चर्चा पाइन्छ । मानिसले अनेक वस्तुहरू, चिह्न, रंग, गन्ध, मानव शरीर, यसको गति, इसारा र बोली, स्थान विशेषलाई पवित्र र अपवित्रको वर्गमा राखी प्रतीकको व्याख्या गरेका छन् ।

बहुजातीय र बहुधार्मिक नेपाली संस्कृतिमा प्रतीकको व्यापक प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ । प्रस्तुत लेखमा नेपालका विभिन्न धर्म र संस्कृतिमा प्रयोग गरिने एक पात्र वा आकृति विशेष– कलशको प्रतीकात्मक महत्त्वबारे चर्चा गरिएको छ ।

परिचय

पूर्वीय धार्मिक एवं सांस्कृतिक परम्परामा कलशको स्थान सर्वोपरी छ । पवित्र जललाई माटाको घट अर्थात् घडामा राखेर विभिन्न पूजा-पर्व, संस्कार उपासना सम्पन्न गर्नु पूर्वीय सभ्यतामा पुरानो प्रचलन हो । यस्ता प्रयोजनको घट वा घडालाई कलश भनिन्छ । कलश एक पवित्र वर्त्तन हो । यो जल (पानी) राख्ने एउटा वर्त्तन हो । यो एउटा घडा, घट वा पवित्र जलपात्र हो तर पानी राख्ने सबै वर्त्तनहरूमा कलशको स्थान सर्वोच्च छ । कुनै देवताको पूजा आराधना गर्दा देवताको आह्वानमा नै कलश प्रयोग हुने भएकाले पूजाको क्रममा कलशलाई समेत पूजा गरिन्छ । जलसहितको कलश स्वयम् एक दिव्य जीवको प्रतीक मानिन्छ । यसका सत्व, रजस र तमस गरी तीनवटा गुण छन् भन्ने पनि मान्यता छ (शाक्य: २०६०:२) । कलशलाई यज्ञलगायत पूजा आदि धार्मिक अनुष्ठानको आयोजना गर्दा देवताको आह्वान गरिने शुभकामनाका ध्येयले पानी भरेर निश्चित स्थानमा स्थापित गरिन्छ । विभिन्न पर्व-पूजा विशेषमा देवताको आह्वान गरेर जल कलशको स्थापना गरेपछि देवता कलशमा प्रवेश गर्नुहुन्छ भन्ने धारणा छ । यसरी स्थापना गरिने धातु वा माटाको

घडा (कलश) लाई चन्दन, फूल माला, रातो-सेतो कपडा आदिले सिंगारिएको हुन्छ । जलविनाको कलशचाहिँ पूज्य हुन सक्दैन ।

'कलश' शब्दमा शुरुमा 'क' वर्ण आएको छ । संस्कृतमा 'क' वर्ण पृथक वा संयुक्त रूपमा आएमा त्यसको एउटा अर्थ हुन्छ– जल वा पानी । यसैले 'कलश' जल भएको वर्तन हो भन्ने बुझ्नु पर्छ । जलबाहेक यसमा अमृत पनि हुनसक्छ जसले जीवनलाई अमरत्व प्रदान गर्छ । पानी जीवनको अत्यन्त आवश्यक पदार्थ भएकोले जीवनदाता पानीलाई सबै संस्कारमा अनिवार्य गरियो र यसलाई अमृतकै दर्जा दिइयो । कलशमा राखेपछि त्यसले विशेष पवित्रता पाउने हुनाले नै पर्व-पूजाहरूमा जीवन र पूर्णताको प्रतीक 'जलकलश' को स्थापना गरिएको हो । कलशको जल पवित्र हुने हुनाले त्यसले यज्ञस्थल, अनुष्ठानका आयोजक, परिवार र अपवित्रबाट पवित्रताको लागि अनुष्ठान आयोजना गर्ने सबैलाई सिंचन गरिन्छ । जलले भरिएको पूर्णकलशलाई भगवतीको प्रतीक मान्ने प्रचलन पनि पुरानो हो ।

कलशको निर्माण

एक वर्तनको रूपमा कलशको भौतिक स्वरूप के हो यसबारे पनि छोटो चर्चा गरौं । पवित्र वर्तनमा जल राखेर कलश मानेपछि त्यस वर्तनले कलशको स्थान पाउँछ । तर हिन्दू, बौद्ध संस्कार र परम्परामा शास्त्रीय विवरणको आधारमा कलाकारले कलशको सिर्जना गर्यो । यो जल हाल्ने अन्य वर्तनभन्दा पृथक आकार-प्रकारको स्थायी भौतिक वस्तु नै बन्यो । यसरी हामीकहाँ अहिले विभिन्न आकार प्रकारमा बनेका सुन, चाँदी, तामा, पित्तल आदि धातुका कलश प्रचलनमा पाइन्छन् ।

यसबारे स्कन्द पुराणमा यस्तो उल्लेख छ–

"सौवर्णं कलशं रम्यं गैष्यं नाम्रमथापि वा ।
निर्दोष मृण्मयं चापि चन्दनेव विलोपयेत् ॥" (उपाध्याय: २६८)

अर्थात् सुन र तामाको अत्यन्त राम्रो देखिने वा शुद्ध माटाकै भएपनि कलश बनाउनु राम्रो हो । यस्तो कलशलाई चन्दनले लेपन गरियोस् ।

धर्मे शास्त्रहरूमा कलशको नापको पनि चर्चा पाइन्छ । स्कन्दपुराणअनुसार ५० अंगुल बाटुलो वा गोलाकार, १६ अंगुल उचाई भएको र ८ अंगुलको मुख भएको कलशलाई उत्तम वा शुभकलश मानिन्छ । तर सबै कलश यही अनुपातका हुन्छन् भन्नेचाहिँ होइन । वर्तनको रूपमा कलश दुई प्रकारका हुन्छन्– टुटी नभएका र टुटी भएका । टुटी भएको कलशको गोलो भागले सृष्टिको आधारलाई बुझाउँछ भने टुटीले सृष्टिको नाभि जहाँबाट सृष्टिको विकास एवं विनाश हुन्छ (ध्रुवकृष्ण दीप :२०५२: ९) । कलशमा तीन भाग हुन्छन्– कलशको मुख, कलशको घाँटी तथा कलशको शरीर । नेपालमा यज्ञ-यज्ञादि र विवाह-व्रतबन्ध आदि अवसरमा प्रयोग गरिने कलशमा टुटी भएको, लामो घाँटीयुक्त, सानो मुख, तल पींधमा बैठक भएको र कनैकनै बीच भागमा नागहरूका आकृति पनि टाँसिएको हुन्छ । तर विचारणीय के छ भने पहिले पहिले माटाको कलशको नै बढी प्रयोग गरिन्थ्यो ।

हिन्दू संस्कारमा कैं बौद्धधर्मको वज्रयान सम्प्रदायमा सबै प्रकारका पूजाआजामा कलश र पवित्र जलको प्रयोग भैरहन्छ । वज्राचार्यहरूले प्रयोग गर्ने कलशहरू चार प्रकारका छन्–

- (क) विमर्श
- (ख) विलक्षण
- (ग) विजय र
- (घ) विचित्र

बौद्ध अनुश्रुतिअनुसार यी चारथरी कलशका प्रकार बौद्ध धर्मशास्त्रहरूमा वर्णित ब्रह्माण्डका ४ वटा सागरका प्रतीक हुन् (फ्रेडमेन : ५१) ।

निर्माण विधि

प्राचीन साहित्यमा वर्णित कलश माटाको देखिन्छ तर पछिको समयमा कलशको निर्माण पित्तल वा ढलौटका धातुबाट गरिन्छ । तीनवटा मुख्य अंगलाई अलग-अलग ढालेर तयार गरेपछि तिनलाई जोडेर कलश बनाइन्छ । तीनवटा खण्ड भन्नाले घाँटी र शिरको भाग, पेटको भाग र बैठक भाग (base) भन्ने बुझिन्छ । घाँटीनिर २।३ तहका घेरा (lining) पनि बुट्टाको रूपमा बनाउने चलन छ । यिनलाई ढाँचामा ढालेर, जोडेर तयार गर्नु, त्यसमाथि पनि बुट्टेदार ढंगले तयार गर्नु कठिन काम हो तर नेपाली खासगरी नेवारी ढलौट कला विश्वमै ख्यातिप्राप्त हुनाले कलशका पनि विविध शैली बन्न सकेका हुन् ।

कलश अलि परिश्रम र होसियारीले बनाइने पात्र भएकाले यो त्यति सस्तो वस्तु होइन । लोटा, अन्ति र भारीभन्दा कलशको निर्माण जटिल नै छ । कुनै कलश भारीजस्तै सादा र कोही बुट्टेदार बनाइन्छ । जति धेरैबुट्टा भए त्यति नै आकर्षक र महंगो पनि हुन्छ । महंगो र सर्वसुलभ नभएकै कारण गाउँ-बस्तीहरूमा सबैतिर कलश पाइँदैन । यस्तो स्थितिमा लोटा-अमखोरा, करुवा र भारीलाई कलशको रूपमा प्रयोग गरिन्छ । यहाँ वस्तुको आकार-प्रकारभन्दा त्यसमा आरोपित नाउँ (कलश) र भावको बढी महत्त्व छ । बुट्टेदार कलशको मूल्य सर्वसाधारणको क्रय क्षमताभन्दा धेरै माथि हुन्छ ।

कलशको प्रतीकात्मक प्रयोग

कलशलाई मंगल घडाको प्रतीकको रूपमा लिइएको छ । कलशलाई सामान्य प्रयोगको जलको लागि प्रयोग गर्न सकिँदैन भने अन्य वर्तनलाई परिस्थितिअनुसार कलश (अस्थायी) बनाई प्रयोग गर्ने प्रचलन छ । शुरुमा माटोबाट बनाइएको कलशको उपयोग हुन्थ्यो । समय र विकासको गतिसँगै विभिन्न प्रकारका धातुले निर्मित कलश प्रयोगमा आयो । जस्तो– पित्तल, काँस, चाँदी, सुन आदि । परिस्थितिअनुसार माटोको पानी राख्ने वर्तनलाई पनि कलशको रूपमा प्रयोग गरिन्छ (आचार्य: १९३४: १२१-१२४) । कलश कुनै पनि कार्यको सफलताको प्रतीक मानिने

हुँदा पूजा-आजा, पर्व-संस्कार, साइत (गृहप्रवेश, बिदाई) आदि। धार्मिक प्रकृतिका कार्यमा कलश (जोडी वा एउटा) राखी कार्य सम्पन्न गरिन्छ । कार्यालय, व्यवसाय तथा घरका प्रवेशद्वारमा पनि कलशको आकृति शुभ मानिन्छ । (चित्र)

हिन्दू शास्त्रहरूमा कलशका विविध नाम र प्रकारको उल्लेख पाइन्छ । कलश शब्द अति पछिल्ला साहित्यहरूमा पाइने नाम हो भने यसका प्रारम्भिक नामहरूमा कुम्भ, निधि, घटजस्ता शब्द प्रयोगमा देखिन्छन् । यी नामका अगाडि भद्र अर्थात् 'शुभ' (auspicious) भन्ने विशेषण पनि लागेको पाइन्छ । यसरी कलशको पूर्ववर्ती उपरोक्त नामहरूको यस्तो परिभाषा पाइन्छ –

(क) भद्रकुम्भ– यो एक विशिष्ट वर्तन हो, जो सुनले बनेको हुन्थ्यो र गजाहरूको शुभ राज्याभिषेक (Coronation ceremony) मा मात्र यसको प्रयोग गरिन्थ्यो ।

(ख) भद्रनिधि– यो एक शुभलाभको प्रतीक वर्तन हो । निकै बहुमूल्य ढंगले बनाइएको यो वर्तन विष्णुलाई चढाइन्थ्यो ।

(ग) भद्रघट– समृद्धिको प्रतीक यो वर्तन वा घडाचाहिँ सौभाग्यको प्रतीक लक्ष्मीलाई चढाउन बनाइ गरिन्थ्यो । यसबाट कमलको फूल उत्पन्न हुन्थ्यो । कहिँ कहिँ यस्ता घट वा कुम्भलाई 'वर्पमाण' पनि भनिएको पाइन्छ (मार्गेट र जेम्स स्टटली १९७७) ।

पूर्णकलश समृद्धि र सम्पन्नताको प्रतीक हो । यसमा अमृताको रस वा आध्यात्मिक सम्पत्तिको प्रतीक अमृत रहेको छ भन्ने विश्वास गरिन्छ (सन्टिगो: १९९९) । कलशलाई पहिले अमृतपात्र भनेर चिनिन्थ्यो । पछि 'अमृत' शब्द जलमा रूढ भइ जल कलशलाई पनि अमृतपात्र नै मानियो । वास्तवमा जलले पनि जीवन नै दिने भएकाले यो अवधारणा सही छ ।

कलशको अर्को प्रतीक कुम्भलाई सन्तानवृद्धि (fertility), उन्नति र सम्पत्तिको प्रतीक मानिन्छ । कुवेर र गणेशलाई पनि धनधान्यको लागि पूजा गरिन्छ । उनीहरूको पेटलाई कुम्भको प्रतीक मानिन्छ । विविध धार्मिक अवसर- पूजा आदिमा झैं वृद्धवस्थामा गरिने चौरासी पूजाको यज्ञ मण्डपमा पनि कलश स्थापना गरिन्छ । यहाँ स्थापना गरिने कलशलाई आठ ऐश्वर्यका प्रतीक 'अष्टदल' को ज्यामितीय रेखाचित्र बनाएर त्यसमाथि राख्ने विधान छ । यही अष्टकलश अथवा कलशका जलले स्नान गरिन्छ । अणिमा (सानो बन्न सक्नु), महिमा (ठूला बन्न सक्नु), गरिमा (गहुंगो हुने), लघिमा (हलुंगो), प्राप्ति (जेसुकै पाउन सक्ने), प्राकाम्य (भनेको पुग्ने), ईशित्व (नेतृत्व), र वशित्व (सबैलाई वशमा पार्ने) गुणको प्रतीक अष्टदललाई पत्र र 'पत्र कमल' पनि भनिन्छ (अधिकारी, २०६१:५०) ।

कलशको प्राचीनता तथा इतिहास

ऋग्वेदमा एक कविको नाम 'कलश' छ । Latin मा कलशलाई Hemionitis, Cordifolia र Calix भनिन्छ । ग्रीकमा कलश नै भनिन्छ । स्कन्दपुराणमा अगस्त्यका विविध नाममध्ये एक कलश मानिन्छ । महाभारतको अनुसार स्कन्दको सेनामा

'कलशोदर' नामका एक गणसदस्य थिए (विलियम:२६०-२६१) । यसरी कलश शब्दले ग्रीक, ल्याटिन र संस्कृत भाषाबीचको सम्बन्धलाई पनि प्रष्ट पार्छ ।

कलशलाई बुझाउने प्राचीन संस्कृत शब्द 'घट' हो । मानिसको सभ्यताको शुरुमा माटाका घट प्रयोग हुन्थे र मानिसले त्यसमा पानी तथा अन्य सामान सुरक्षित राख्ने गर्थे । सभ्यताको विकासका साथै समय परिवर्तन अनुसार 'घट' लाई पवित्र मानी कलशको रूपमा प्रतिस्थापित गरियो । गंगा र यमुना पुगना नदी देवता हुन् । शुरुमा यिनीहरूको हातमा पूर्णकलश या कमलको फूल हुन्थ्यो, वाहन विशेष केही हुँदैनथ्यो । (ध्रुवकृष्ण दीप, २०५२: ७-८) पछि आएर विभिन्न देवी देवताहरूलाई एउटा एउटा वाहन विशेषमा आरुढ देखाउन थालियो । पूर्णकलशमा पनि देव देवता प्रतिबिम्बित राखी स्थापना गरिन्छ । जस्तो– भक्तपुर दरबार नजिकको वत्सला मन्दिर, गुह्येश्वरी मन्दिर आदिमा देवी देवताको सट्टामा पूर्णकलश मात्र स्थापना गरिएको पाइन्छ ।

कलशको उत्पत्ति र विकास हिन्दू धर्म, कला र संस्कृतिसित गाँसिएकाले प्राचीन हिन्दू शास्त्रहरूमा यसको उल्लेख पाइनु स्वाभाविकै हो । कलशको उद्भव ऋषि अगस्त्यमुनिबाट भएको मानिन्छ । (आप्टे: १९६६) अगस्त्य ऋषिलाई कलशयोनि पनि भनिएको छ । प्राचीन जनविश्वासमा कलश एक ब्रह्माण्डको प्रतीक थियो । पछि 'मण्डल' सिद्धान्तको विकास भएपछि यसलाई मण्डलको एक अभिन्न अंगको रूपमा लिइयो र पूजा आदि संस्कारमा मण्डलको रूपमा स्थापित गर्न थालियो । यसरी पूजा-संस्कारमा कलशलाई आह्वान गरी स्थापना गर्नुको कारण त्यसमा देवता आएर बसून् भन्ने नै हो । कलश र यस वरिपरि देवताले आफ्नो उपस्थिति देखाउँछन् भन्ने हिन्दू मान्यता छ (स्टेन्ले, १९७७: १३६) । बौद्ध धर्म र संस्कारमा कलशको प्रयोग कहिलेदेखि भयो भन्नेबारे छुट्टै अनुसन्धान हुनु आवश्यक छ ।

यस्तै अर्को भैषज्य भगवान्को हातमा रहेको औषधिमणि तथा वसुन्धरा देवीको हातमा रहेको अमृतकलश, कुबेरको हातमा रहेको पैसाको थैलो आदि सबै पूर्णकलशकै पर्यायवाची शब्द हुन् । सबै गुण सम्पदा एवं दिव्य लक्षणहरूले परिपूर्ण कलात्मक पात्र भएकोले नै यसको नाम पूर्णकलश भनिएको हो । देव साधनाको लागि कलशको प्रयोग अनिवार्य मानिन्छ । वैदिक देवता वरुणलाई माङ्गलिक पूर्णकलशका मूल संरक्षक मानिन्छ । (ध्रुवकृष्ण दीप: २०५२: ७-८) किनकि वरुण पानीका स्रोत हुन् ।

माथि विष्णु र लक्ष्मीलाई कलश चढाउने कुराको चर्चा गरियो । सृष्टिकर्ता ब्रह्मा पनि हातमा कलश लिन्छन् जसलाई 'ज्ञानको वर्तन' (vase of wisdom) भनिन्छ । ब्रह्माको यो कलश सृष्टिको पूर्णताको प्रतीक हो र पृथ्वीका सबै प्राणी एवम् वस्तुहरू त्यस कलशमा अटाएका छन् भन्ने त्यसको प्रतीकात्मक अर्थ हो । पछिका साहित्यमा कुम्भ र कलशबीच तादात्म्य भए पनि यी फरक वस्तु थिए भन्ने बुझ्नु आवश्यक छ । कुम्भ प्रजनन ऊर्जा (fertility) समृद्धि र सम्पत्तिको प्रतीक मानिन्थ्यो । प्रसिद्ध हिन्दू देवता कुबेर र गणेश त्यस प्रतीकका मूर्तरूप हुन् ।

उनीहरूका पेटलाई 'कुम्भ' भनिन्छ । आफ्नो त्यही पेट (कुम्भ)बाट उनीहरूले भक्तजनको पालना गर्ने हुन् ।

कुम्भको निर्माण गर्दा कुबेर र गणेशकै पेटको ढाँचामा गरिन्थ्यो तर कलश भने केही लामो घाँटी भएको र बैठक वा पींध (base) पनि भएको बनाइयो । यो सानो बोक्न प्रयोग गर्न हलुका आकारको बनाइनाले पूजा-पर्व-संस्कारमा र साइतमा यसको प्रचलन बढ्यो । कुम्भ ठूलो हुनुको कारण यसमा धेरै वस्तु अटाउँछन् भन्ने हो । कलशको चाहिं आकारभन्दा अमृतजस्तो शीतल र पवित्र, जीवनदायी वस्तु अटाउने, शुद्धता, पवित्रता र सफलताको प्रतीक भन्ने मान्यता प्रचलित भयो ।

हिन्दू तथा बौद्ध वास्तुकला साहित्यमा 'कलश' को स्वरूप तथा कार्यबारे चर्चा पाइन्छ । वास्तुसाहित्यमा 'कलश' भन्नाले मन्दिर वा चैत्यको शीर्षभाग वा गजुर (pinnacle) भन्ने बुझिन्छ । मन्दिरको शीर्षभागमा धातुको (यदाकदा सुनको लेप भएको) चम्किलो कलश-गजुर राख्नुको तात्पर्य मन्दिर पूर्ण छ भन्ने हो । यहाँ पनि कलश पूर्णता र समृद्धिको प्रतीक हो । त्यहाँ रहेको कलश पनि जलले पूर्ण घडा हो भन्ने प्रतीकात्मक अर्थ दिन प्राचीनकालदेखि नै कलश त्यसरी गजुरको रूपमा राख्ने गरेको देखिन्छ (उपाध्याय: १२२) । कहीं-कहीं गजुरमा मात्र होइन अन्यत्र पनि सुनौला कलशहरू पंक्तिबद्ध पारेर राखिन्थ्यो । यसरी मन्दिर र अन्य भव्य भवनहरूमा कलशको प्रयोग व्यापक रूपमा भएको पाइन्छ । भारतको प्रसिद्ध एलोरामा अवस्थित एक मन्दिरका खम्बाको शिरभागमा विशाल कलश कुँदिएको छ । (चित्र)

नेपाली कलामा पूर्णकलशको प्राचीनताबारे चर्चा गर्दा नेपालमा अहिलेसम्म फेला परेको सबैभन्दा पुरानो पूर्णकलश दोस्रो शताब्दीको मानिएको छ । यो हाल राष्ट्रिय संग्रहालयमा सुरक्षित छ । यो कलशको मुखमा वरुणको (टाउको मात्र) मूर्ति छ (चित्र) । जैसिदेवलको पूर्वपट्टि रहेको प्रस्तरको ठूलो पूर्णकलश र पशुपति घाटको दायाँपट्टि रहेको प्रस्तर कलशलाई लिच्छविकालका मानिएको छ । जैसिदेवलमै लिच्छवि राजा वसन्तदेवको शिलापत्रको अगाडिपट्टि अन्नपूर्णा देवीका प्रतिनिधिको रूपमा प्रस्तरका ३ वटा पूर्ण कलश स्थापना गरिएको छ । यिनको समय बाह्रौं तेह्रौं शताब्दी मानिएको छ । (चित्र)

नेपाली संस्कृतिमा कतिपय शुभमंगल कार्यहरूमा अष्टमंगल प्रतीक चिन्हहरू राख्ने गरिन्छ । यसलाई प्रायःजसो ढोकाका शिरोभाग, दायाँ बायाँ राख्ने गरेको पाइन्छ । यसको कारण घरबाट बाहिर गमन गर्दा र पुनः घर प्रवेश गर्दा शुभ होस्, अनिष्ट नहोस् र घरमा अष्टमंगलले सधैं मुख शान्ति र समृद्धि दिउन् भन्ने हो । यी अष्टमंगल चिन्हहरूमध्ये कलश पनि एक पर्दछ । यी चिन्हहरूलाई शुभलक्षणको प्रतीक मानिन्छ । आठवटा मांगलिक चिन्हहरू– श्रीवत्स, पुण्डरीक, ध्वज, कलश, चामर, मत्स्ययुग्म, छत्र र शंखलाई मानिन्छ (शाक्य: ने.सं. १०८९:२) । (चित्र)

यी मांगलिक चिन्हहरूको अर्थ र विशेषण निम्नानुसार रहेका छन्–

नाम विशेषण	बौद्ध धर्ममा	हिन्दू धर्ममा	अर्थ
श्रीवत्स	वागीश्वर	श्री विष्णु	पुराणअनुसार विष्णुको छातिमा

पुण्डरीक	आर्यावलोकितेश्वर, पद्मपाणि		अंकित भृगु ऋषिको पादचिन्ह सेतो कमल, तिलक
ध्वज	ध्वजाग्रकेयुरी	ध्वजराज, वायुदेवता	डण्डाका टुप्पामा झुण्ड्याएर वा बाँधेर कुनै संस्था वा विशिष्ट व्यक्तिको चिन्हका रूपमा राखिने कपडा, झण्डा, पताका, निशाना
कलश	वसुन्धरादेवी, अमोघपाशलोकेश्वर	कुम्भेश्वर	पूजाआजामा वरुण, नवग्रह आदि देवताको आव्हान गर्न स्थापना गरिने जलपूर्ण कलश
चामर	बोधिसत्व, भिक्षु	लक्ष्मी	चमर, राजाको दायाँबायाँ बसेर चमर डोलाउने व्यक्ति
मत्स्ययुग्म	मत्स्येन्द्रनाथ, मामकीदेवी	मत्स्यावतार विष्णु	विष्णुका दश अवतारमध्ये एक (मत्स्यावतार), माछ्रा सृष्टि भएको युग
छत्र	महाप्रत्यंगिरा	वामन, इन्द्र	सुनको दण्ड भएको र रत्नजडित मोतीको झल्लर लागेको छाता, शुभअशुभ फकल बताउने ज्योतिषको एक चक्र
शंख	सागरमति	नारायण, भगीरथ, गंगादेवी	कुनै माङ्गलिक कार्य वा पूजाआजामा दोहोरो र वाहन क्षेत्रीको मलामीमा एकोहोरो बजाइने बाजा, पुराणअनुसार विष्णुको बाजा
(शाक्य: ने.सं. १०८९:७)			(शब्दकोश: २०६०)

यी अष्टमंगल चिन्हहरूले पूर्ण भएको कलशलाई पूर्णकलश भनिएको छ । हाम्रो सांस्कृतिक परम्पराअनुसार पूर्णकलशलाई विभिन्न नामबाट सम्बोधन गरिन्छ । जस्तो: पूर्णकलश, भद्रघट, साधनकलश, सर्वार्थसिद्ध कलश, सुवर्णकलश तथा अष्टमंगलयुक्त कलश आदि (शाक्य: ने.सं. १०८९: १२०) । (चित्र)

लिच्छविकालिक अभिलेखहरू खासगरी अंशुवर्माका अभिलेखको शिरोभागमा अन्न, फलफूलका पात भएको समृद्धिको प्रतीक बुट्टेदार जलकलश कुँदिएको पाइन्छ । प्रतीकवादमा विश्वास राख्ने नेपाली कलामा कलशलाई विविध अवसरमा देवताको प्रतीकको रूपमा लिने गरिन्छ । गणेशको पूजा अनुष्ठान गर्दा कलशलाई नै गणेश मानिन्छ । मत्स्येन्द्रनाथ काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा प्रवेश गर्दा उनका आफन्तले उसलाई

लैजाने डरले उनी भँवरको रूप लिई कलशमा प्रवेश गरेका थिए । प्रत्येक वर्ष कोटवाल दहबाट कलशमा जल भरेर ल्याई मत्स्येन्द्रलाई पुल्चोकमा पूजा गरिन्छ ।

दशैंमा कलशले भगवतीको रूप लिन्छ । यसै सन्दर्भमा गेहेन्द्रमान अमात्य लेख्नुहुन्छ:

"भगवती तुलजा भवानी अथवा तलेजु आकाररहित छिन् र उनलाई जलले भरिएको पवित्र वर्त्तन पूर्णकलशको रूपमा चित्रित गरिन्छ ।" (Amatya, 1998:56)

नेपाली तथा तिब्बती कला-परम्परामा अष्टमंगललाई मण्डलचित्रमा उतार्ने गरिन्छ । यस्ता चित्रहरूमा आठवटा मंगलसूचक वस्तु (श्रीवत्स, पुण्डरीक, ध्वज, कलश, चामर, मत्स्ययुग्म, छत्र र शंख) लाई एकाकार रूप दिइन्छ । यी आठवटा वस्तुले व्यक्तिगत रूपमा वा सामूहिक रूपमा जीवनका सकारात्मक पक्षलाई अभिव्यक्त गर्छन् । यी चिन्हहरूले सांसारिक जीवनमा आनन्द, सफलता र समृद्धिको सुरक्षा गर्छन् भन्ने मान्यता नेपालमा छ । तिब्बती बौद्ध सांस्कृतिक परम्परामा सनातन नेपाली परम्परामा पाइने चामरको सट्टा चक्रलाई अष्टमंगल समूहमा लिइएको छ (ढुंगेल: १९८५:५१) । यस परम्परामा कलश या कुम्भलाई टेर्-छेन्-पोही (gTer-Chen-poki-bun-pa = बुम्ब) भनिन्छ । पूर्ण कलशमा यी आठवटा प्रतीक चिन्ह अंकित हुने हुनाले पूर्णकलशले मानवसमृद्धि र सुखको प्रतीकको अभिव्यक्ति दिन्छ । अष्टमंगलयुक्त चित्रलाई भित्तामा झुन्ड्याएमा जीवनमा सधैं सकारात्मक भाव निःसृत हुने र सबैको भलो हुने विश्वास गरिन्छ (खत्री: १९८९:९९) ।

हिन्दूजस्तै बौद्ध मूर्तिकलामा पनि कलशलाई अमृतले भरिएको पात्रको रूपमा लिइन्छ । दुवै धार्मिक परम्परामा अमृत अमरत्वको पेय (elixir of immortality) मानिन्छ । बोधिसत्व पद्मपाणिले पनि हातमा यस्तै अमरताको प्रतीक कलश लिएका हुन्छन् (शाक्य: १९९९: १६) ।

तिब्बती भाषामा कलशलाई फुम्पा (Phumpa) भनिन्छ । तिब्बती धार्मिक परम्पराअनुसार कलशलाई 'बुम्ब' पनि भनिन्छ । कलशलाई अमृत राख्ने पात्रको रूपमा लिइन्छ साथै यसलाई मैत्रेय बुद्ध, मान्ला, पद्मपाणि, अवलोकितेश्वर, अमितायूस, कुवेर उष्णीषविजय, वसुधरा र चुन्दाको प्रतीक पनि मानिन्छ (K. Gordon: 1998) । कलश जलपात्र वा जल राख्ने वर्त्तन हो जो सधैं पूर्ण रहन्छ । रित्तो कलशले अशुभ संकेत गर्दछ । यो मान्यताचाहिँ नेपालका सबै धार्मिक विश्वास र परम्परामा एकनासले पाइन्छ ।

कलशको बीचको भाग सानो गोलो भूमण्डलको आकारमा बनाइएको हुन्छ । यसको मुख कमलको आकारमा धार्मिक उद्देश्यले बनाइएको हुन्छ । कलशलाई समृद्धि र सौभाग्यका साथै शुद्धता, सत्यता र शक्तिको प्रतीकको रूपमा पनि मानिन्छ । यसलाई कहिल्यै नसुक्ने अमृतको घर पनि मान्ने प्रचलन छ । धार्मिक विश्वासअनुसार मन्त्र पढेर कलशको पानी छर्कनाले शरीर शुद्ध हुन्छ, ज्ञान विवेक बढ्छ, सौभाग्य मिल्दछ र घरमा भूत प्रेतको बास हुँदैन भन्ने धारणा पाइन्छ । कलशले समृद्धि, शुद्धता र सौभाग्य प्रदान गर्दछ । अतः हाम्रो धर्म संस्कृतिमा

कलशको ठूलो महत्त्व रहेको छ । हाम्रा देवी देवतालाई कलशमा प्रतिष्ठापित गरी पूजा गर्ने प्रचलन पनि पाइन्छ । कलशको यो सांस्कृतिक, विशुद्ध र धार्मिक प्रतीकवादी प्रयोग पर्व-संस्कारहरूमा व्यापक छ । विवाह र अन्य संस्कारहरूको बेला यज्ञस्थलमा कलशको स्थापना सर्वप्रथम गरिन्छ अनि अन्य विधि अघि बढ्छन् ।

पर्व-संस्कारमा कलशको प्रयोग र महत्त्व

कलश धेरै पर्व-संस्कार र पूजामा स्थापना गरिए तापनि दशैंका अवसरमा सम्पन्न गरिने सबै प्रकारका पूजा विधिहरूमा कलशको प्रयोग विशिष्ट महत्त्वको छ । फूलपातीका दिन काठमाडौंमा गरिने कलशको पूजन विशिष्ट छ । विशेष प्रकारले सिंगारिएको कलशमा फूलहरू, केराका पात, उखु (तलेजुका प्रतीक) राखी गोरखा दरबारबाट यसै दिन राजधानी भित्र्याइन्छ । त्यस अवसरमा आयोजित सैनिक परेड र विविध कार्यक्रम बीच राजाबाट कलशको स्वागत हुन्छ । लावालस्करका साथ सैनिकहरूद्वारा यस अवसरमा सलामी चढाई बन्दूक र तोप पड्काइन्छन् । त्यसपछि त्यस डोलालाई हनुमानढोका दरबारमा पुर्‍याइन्छ र दशैं घरमा कलश स्थापना गरिन्छ ।

हाम्रा विभिन्न चाडपर्वहरूमध्ये दशैंमा कलशको बढी प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ । यो भगवती दुर्गाको प्रतीक हो । दुर्गालाई धनधान्य र सुखको प्रतीक मानिन्छ । दशैंमा हिन्दूहरूका घरमा नवदुर्गाका प्रतीक कलशहरू स्थापना गरी पूजा गरिन्छ । (चित्र)

हिन्दूहरूले मनाउने चाड दशैंको पहिलो दिन आश्विनशुक्ल पूर्णिमालाई 'घटस्थापना' भनिन्छ । महिषासुरमर्दिनी भगवती दुर्गालाई सिंगारिएको कलशको रूपमा घर-घरमा स्थापना गरेर नेपालीहरू दशैं पर्व मनाउँछन् । पवित्र जलले पूर्ण सो घट (माटाको वर्त्तन) पूर्णता, आरोग्य, समृद्धि, दीर्घायु सफलताका प्रतीक हो । देवीले पौराणिककालमा राक्षसमाथि विजय पाई लोकमा स्थायी शान्ति स्थापना गरेअनुरूप अहिले सबै विकृति-विसंगति, नराम्रा प्रवृत्तिमाथि राम्रा प्रवृत्तिको विजय होस् भन्ने चाहना नेपालीहरूको हुन्छ । कलशले यही सन्देश दिएको हुन्छ । नौ दिनको पाठपूजापछि दशौं (विजयादशमी) दिन देवीलाई विसर्जन गरिन्छ । देवीको प्रसादको रूपमा टीका ग्रहण हुन्छ । कलशको नल (टुटी) को अभिषेकले सुख शान्ति-समृद्धिको स्थापना गर्छ भन्ने विश्वास गरिन्छ ।

दशैंमा घटस्थापनाको दिनदेखि देवीलाई आह्वान गरेको कलशको नियमित रूपमा पूजा गरी दशमीका दिन विसर्जनपश्चात् मनाइने पाया: (खड्ग) जात्रामा घटकलशको महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान छ । यस पर्वमा कलशलाई देवी मानेर पूजा विसर्जनका समयमा सम्बन्धित आचार्यबाट त्यसको पानीले शान्ति र कल्याणको कामना तथा दुष्ट तथा दोष नाश भई यश वृद्धि होस् भन्ने आशिषसहित अभिषेक दिइन्छ । काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा खञ्जन चरा तथा क्षेमंकारी चरा नपाइने हुनाले विसर्जन गरिएको कलशलाई नै ती चराहरूसमेत सम्झेर दर्शन गरिन्छ । महाकालसहित, मेरुतन्त्र तिथितत्त्व आदि ग्रन्थहरूमा त्यसदिन खञ्जन चरालाई निश्चित स्थानमा दर्शन गर्नाले वर्षभरी शुभ हुने र सबै इच्छा पूरा हुने उल्लेख गरिएको छ । यसप्रकार

यहाँ कलशले दुई किसिमको महत्त्व राख्दछ । पहिलो, देवीको आह्वानसहित घटस्थापना गर्ने र दोस्रो, खञ्जन चराको रूपमा दर्शन गर्ने । जुनसुकै धार्मिक तथा सांस्कृतिक मङ्गल कार्यमा यसको महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान रहिआएको छ । देवी देवताका अतिरिक्त अतिथिको स्वागत सत्कारमासमेत यसको प्रयोग गर्ने परम्परा छ । पायोःमा सम्मिलित व्यक्तिहरूलाई निश्चित क्षेत्रको परिक्रमा गरी फर्केका सहभागीहरूलाई गृहप्रवेशको क्रममा विधिपूर्वक स्वागत गर्दा द्वारको दायाँबायाँ कलश राख्ने परम्परा छ । कलशलाई शुभसाइतको प्रतीक भानी हरेक शुभकार्यमा यसलाई अगाडि राख्ने गरेको देखिन्छ । यस विधिले कलशको महत्त्वमाथि प्रकाश पार्दछ ।

यसरी कलशलाई देवी देवताको प्रतिकात्मक स्वरूप मानेर प्रतिष्ठा गरी पूजा गर्ने चलन छ । केही धार्मिक स्थानहरूको उदाहरण तल प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ–

काठमाडौँ मृगस्थलीमा वागमती किनारामा गुह्येश्वरी पीठ अवस्थित छ । माता जगज्जननी भगवती गुह्येश्वरीलाई मानवाकार स्वरुप (anthropomorphic form) मा पूजा नगरी उच्च प्रतीकवादी नेपाली परम्परालाई कायम राख्दै कलशको रूपमा पूजा-उपासना गरिन्छ भन्ने तथ्य यहाँ सान्दर्भिक हुनेछ । हिन्दू तथा बौद्ध उपासकहरूले शक्तिको स्रोत मानिएकी तान्त्रिक दर्शनको प्रतिनिधित्व गर्ने गुह्येश्वरीलाई पूर्णकलशको रूपमा पूजा गर्नुको तात्पर्य त्यस पवित्रस्थलमा जलको मुहान भएकोले हो भन्ने धारणा संस्कृतिविद् सुदर्शनराज तिवारीको छ (तिवारी: २००२: ११२) ।

काठमाडौँकै असन चोकको दक्षिण-पूर्व कुनामा प्रसिद्ध अन्नपूर्णा मन्दिर अवस्थित छ । भगवतीको यस मन्दिरभित्र अजिमा (असंभलु अजिमा) को प्रतीकस्वरूप पूर्ण कलश स्थापना गरिएको छ । जनश्रुतिअनुसार यी अजिमाको गोप्य रूपमा पूजा हुन्छ । यसको मूल कलश (घिता चपाल) को देवनाघर (द्यः कुथि) मा स्थापित छ र यसको प्रतिकृति प्रस्तरको कलश बनाई यस मन्दिरभित्र प्रतिष्ठापित गरिएको छ । पछि भक्तहरूले चन्दा उठाई अर्को ढलौटको कलशमा चाँदीको जलप लगाई मन्दिरमा प्रतिष्ठापित गरिएको हो । अचेल भक्तजनहरूले यसैलाई अन्नपूर्णा देवीका रूपमा पूजा गर्दै आएका छन् । यसमा तान्त्रिक विधिअनुसार पूजा गरिन्छ । यो प्रतीकवादको अर्को महत्वपूर्ण उदाहरण हो । (चित्र)

भक्तपुर र पशुपतिको वत्सला मन्दिरमा पनि मुख्य आराध्य पूर्णकलश नै हो जो भगवतीको प्रतीकको रूपमा अवस्थित छ । यसरी भगवतीलाई पूर्णकलशको रूपमा पूजा गर्नु प्राचीन किरातकालीन सभ्यताकै निरन्तरता हो भन्ने धारणा तिवारीको छ । उही पृ.११३) ।

हाम्रो धर्म संस्कृतिमा देवी देवताको प्रतीक रूप कलशको प्रतिष्ठापन गरी पूजा गर्ने प्रचलनको रूपमा पौष पूर्णिमाको दिन चाँगुबाट चाँगुनारायण, सरस्वती र लक्ष्मीका प्रतीकको रूपमा तीनवटा कलशलाई तीनजना पुरुषले बोकी हनुमानढोका दरबारमा भित्र्याई पूजा गरिन्छ । यसरी ल्याउँदा बाटा बाटामा माटाका भाँडाहरू फुटाउने गरिन्छ । यी चाँगुनारायण देश छाडी भागेर बाहिर नजाउन् भनी उनी जाने सम्भाव्य मार्गमा अपसकुन देखाउनका निम्ति यसो गरिन्छ । पूजा सकिएपछि कलशलाई शोभा भगवतीको भचाखुसीमा विसर्जन गरिन्छ । यसरी फुटेको कलशचाँहि अमंगलको प्रतीक हो भन्ने बुझिन्छ ।

कलशको चर्चा गर्दा दीप वा बत्तीबारे उल्लेख गर्नु पनि सान्दर्भिक हुनेछ । पूजा-आजा आदि कार्यमा कलश स्थापना गर्दा साथैमा दियो पनि राखिन्छ । जुन प्रयोजनले जुन कार्य गर्न लागिएको हो त्यसलाई दीपको प्रकाशले सजीवता दिन, आह्वान गरिएका देवता वा पितृजनको सम्मान गर्दै उनीहरूलाई त्यस स्थलमा रही रक्षा गर्न अनुनय गरिएको प्रतीक दीपलाई मान्न सकिन्छ । यी कार्यहरूमा दीपको महत्त्व ठूलो छ । अज्ञानता, अन्धकारलाई नाश गर्ने शक्तिको प्रतीक दीपविनाको यज्ञ संस्कार हुन सक्दैन । यस्ता धेरै संस्कारमा कलश र दियो जोडीको रूपमा रहन्छन् र बोलीमा पनि दियो-कलश पूजा' भनिन्छ ।

हिन्दू पूजा विधिअनुसार कुनै किसिमको पूजा, यज्ञ अनुष्ठान आदि कार्यमा कलशलाई दोस्रो स्थानमा राखी पूजा गरिन्छ (दियो, कलश, गणेश) । कलशको स्थापना गर्दा निम्न मन्त्रहरू उच्चारण गरिन्छ –

ॐ कलशस्य मुखे विष्णुः कण्ठेरुद्रः समाश्रिता
मूलेत्वस्य स्थितो ब्रह्मा मध्येमातृगणाःस्मृता
कुक्षौन् सागरः सप्त सप्तद्वीपा वसुन्धरा ॥
ऋग्वेदोऽय यजुर्वेद सामवेदोऽदय्यथर्वण
अङ्गैरुच सहिता सर्वे कलशंतु समाश्रिताः ॥

कलशको मुखमा विष्णु, कण्ठमा रुद्र,
मूलस्थानमा ब्रह्मा, मध्यमा मातृगण,
पेट भागमा सप्तसागर र सप्तद्वीप वसुन्धरा समाहित भएका छन् ।
ऋग्वेद, यजुर्वेद, सामवेदमा वर्णन गरिएको
सुन्दर चम्किलो अंग कलशमा समाहित भएको छ ।
यो मन्त्र पाठ नगरी कलश स्थापना गरेमा कलश पूर्ण भएको मानिदैन ।

कलशाभिषेक

कलश र यसमा राखिएको जल पवित्र मानिने कुरा अन्यत्र पनि उल्लेख भैसकेको छ । कलशको यस्तो पवित्र जलबाट देवतालाई स्नान गराउनु, भक्तले अभिषेक लिनु पवित्रता, समृद्धि र देवभक्तिको प्रतीक मानिन्छ । यस्तो अभिषेकलाई 'कलशाभिषेक' भनिन्छ । नेपालका नयाँ प्रवेशी धार्मिक सम्प्रदायमध्येको एउटा 'अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय कृष्णभावनामृत संघ' ले वर्षभरिमा नववर्ष (बैशाख १ गते) कृष्ण जन्माष्टमी, राधा अष्टमी जस्ता अवसरहरूमा विशेष पूजाको आयोजना गर्छ । यस्ता अवसरमा विशेष सेवा पुर्‍याएका कृष्णभक्तलाई विशेष पूजा समारोहबीच १०८ कलशाभिषेक सिंचन गरिन्छ । कलशमा रहेको दही, घ्यू, मह, दूध मिश्रित जलले सवैको शान्ति र प्रगतिको

कामना गर्दै मठका स्वामी मुख्य सन्यासीले यज्ञमा स्थापित कलश उठाई कृष्ण-राधालाई जलले अभिषेक गर्छन् र भक्तहरूलाई पनि सिंचन गर्छन् (सन्यासी, भेटवार्ता) ।

कलश र अभिषेक दुइटा छुट्टाछुट्टै शब्दहरू सन्धि भई कलशाभिषेक शब्द बनेको छ । कुनै पनि पवित्र कार्यहरू जस्तै रुद्री, यज्ञ, दैवी अनुष्ठान कार्यहरू गरिंदा पूर्वाङ्गका दिन (कार्य शुरु गर्दा) हिन्दू परम्पराअनुसार दियो, कलश र गणेशको स्थापना गरी पूजा गरिन्छ । कलश त्यसैले एक पवित्र घडा हो भने अभिषेक भनेको कलशमा राखेको शुद्ध जलले पवित्र मन्त्रोचारण गर्दै यज्ञस्थल र कर्ताहरूमा छर्किने कार्य हो । सुख शान्ति, समृद्धिको कामना गर्दै शुद्ध जल राखिएको कलशले छर्किने कार्यलाई कलशाभिषेक भनिन्छ । हिन्दू धर्मशास्त्रअनुसार नयाँ राजालाई गद्दीमा आसीन गराउँदा शुद्ध जल भरिएको सुनको कलशले राजालाई सुखसमृद्धिको कामना गर्दै पवित्र मन्त्रोचारणबीच कलशाभिषेक गरिन्छ । यस विधानपछि मात्र राजा दैवीशक्ति प्राप्त वैधानिक शासक भएको मानिन्थ्यो ।

सबै शुभ कार्यमा कलश

शुद्ध जलसहितको पूर्णकलश सबै शुभकार्यको सफलताको प्रतीक हो । यसैले शुभ कार्यको आयोजना गर्दा सर्वप्रथम कलशको नै स्थापना गरिन्छ । कलशका साथमा दियो पनि आउँछ । अशुभ कार्य– जस्तो मृत्युसित सम्बन्धित श्राद्धहरू– पनि कलशको स्थापना गरेर नै सम्पन्न गरिन्छन् । दियो जलाई धूप, नैबेद्य, जल, तिल, जौ, अक्षताले दियो र कलशको पूजा गरेपछि पूजा वा श्राद्धका अन्य विधिहरू अगाडि बढ्छन् । जन्मदेखि मृत्युसम्मका सबै संस्कार तथा परिवार, समुदायसित सम्बन्धित सबै संस्कार अवसरहरूमा कलशको साक्ष्यलाई अनिवार्य मानिन्छ ।

नेपालका दनुवार जातिमा व्रतबन्धको अवसरमा दिदी तथा मामाघरबाट नयाँ गाग्री, करुवा, थाल आदि कोसेली ल्याउनु पर्ने चलन छ । नयाँ गाग्रीहरूमा चोखो पानी भरी, त्यसमा फूल राखी पूजा गर्ने ठाउँ नजिक राखिन्छ । यसलाई कलशको प्रतीकको रूपमा मानिन्छ । कलश कार्यको सफलता र पूर्णताको प्रतीक हो । (खरेल:२०५६:४९)

नेपालका हिन्दू एवम् बौद्ध धर्मावलम्बीहरूका विवाह विधि धर्मशास्त्रमा आधारित छन् । यसमा थेरवादी बौद्ध समुदाय र आदिवासी परम्परा अपवाद हुन सक्छन् । विवाहका विधिहरूमा केही भिन्नता पाइएता पनि कलशको महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रयोगको प्रसङ्ग भने विवाहका सबै विधिहरूमा एकनास पाइन्छ ।

हिन्दू विवाहमा स्वयम्बर र विवाह गरी दुइवटा मुख्य विधि प्रचलित छन् । स्वयम्बरमा दुलहीले दुलाहालाई वरको रूपमा वरण गर्ने अवसरमा सर्वप्रथम कलश नै साक्षी राखिन्छ । यो आयोजित कार्यको पूर्णताको प्रतीक हो । विवाहमा दुलहा र दुलहीका घरमा पूर्वाङ्ग विधि गरिन्छ । त्यहाँ पनि कलशको आवश्यकता हुन्छ । स्वयम्बरमा दुलहीले जलकलशले वरको परिक्रमा गरी माला पहिऱ्याएपछि विधि पूर्ण हुन्छ ।

विवाहमा दुलाहाको टोली अर्थात् जन्ती दुलही लिन जाने परम्परा प्राय सबै नेपाली समाजमा लोकप्रिय छ । हिन्दू समाजमा गरिने विवाहमा जन्तीको क्रम विशेष ढंगले निर्धारित हुन्छ । सर्वप्रथम बाजा बजाउने टोली, त्यसपछि कलश बोक्ने महिला (कलस्यौली) त्यसपछि दुलहा र पछिपछि जन्ती हिँड्छन् । यो कलश दुलहा अन्माउँदा उसको घरबाट कलस्यौलीले बोकेर दुलहीकहाँ पुऱ्याइन्छ । त्यहाँ पुगेपछि विवाहयज्ञमा पनि कलशको स्थान महत्वको हुन्छ । कलश शोभाको लागि मात्र नभएर त्यसमा राखिएको जलबाट सम्बन्धित कर्ता र अन्य व्यक्तिलाई पुरोहितले जल छर्किंदै गर्छन् । यो विधि सबै प्रकारका पूजा र संस्कारमा गरिन्छ । पछि दुलहीलाई कलशसहित वरको घरमा प्रवेश गराइन्छ ।

व्रतबन्ध, विवाह एउटा शुभ कार्य भएकोले विवाहको निमन्त्रणापत्र छपाउँदा पत्र, कार्ड र खाममासमेत कलशका राम्रा राम्रा आकृति चित्रहरू छपाउने चलन छ । (चित्र)

कलशको स्थापना कुनै पनि कार्यको निर्विघ्न सफलताका लागि गरिन्छ भन्ने कुराको अन्यत्र पनि चर्चा भएको छ । यस प्रसङ्गमा विविध अवसरमा तयार गरिने अस्थायी तथा कहीं कहीं स्थायी रूपमा देखा पर्ने स्वागतद्वारको उल्लेख गर्न सकिन्छ । विशिष्ट पाहुनाहरूको स्वागतार्थ कपडा, नाम्ला, माटा वा अन्य घडाहरूलाई अस्थायी कलशको स्वरूप दिई स्वागतार्थ राखिन्छ । परिवारको कुनै सदस्य घरबाट बाहिर जाँदा बिदाई तथा परदेशबाट घर प्रवेश गर्दा घरको ढोकामा दुवैतर्फ घडा राखी स्वागत गर्ने प्रचलन पनि नेपालमा लोकप्रिय छ । कतिपय ठूला स्थायी स्वागतद्वारमा स्थायीरूपले कलशाकृति बनाइएको पनि पाइन्छ ।

धार्मिक र सांस्कृतिक जात्रा पर्वहरूमा कलशले शोभा, सफलता र पूर्णताका प्रतीकात्मक भूमिका खेलेको हुन्छ । जात्रा-पर्वअनुसार विशेषरूपले सिंगारिएको जलयुक्त कलशलाई बोकेर गन्तव्यतिर गएको लावा-लस्करको दृश्य बडा मनोरम हुन्छ । कहीं वर्षभरि पुराणस्थल, अन्य तीर्थ र धार्मिक अनुष्ठानहरूमा यस्तो दृश्य निकै लोकप्रिय हुँदै गएको देखिन्छ (चित्र) । हालसालै काठमाडौंका जैन महिलाहरूले 'गणी सती धार्मिक यात्रा' मा 'स्वस्तिक' चिन्ह अंकित तथा फूलहरूले सज्जित सयकडौं एकनासका माटाका कलश बडो यत्नसाथ शिरमा बोकेर मन्दिरतर्फ गएको यात्रा अत्यन्त चित्राकर्षक र आध्यात्मिक प्रेरणादायक देखिएको थियो । यस्तो शोभायात्रा र कलश जुलुसको प्रसंग कोट्याउँदा नेपाल भारतका उत्तरी क्षेत्रमा हाल प्रसिद्धि पाएको 'बोल बम' यात्रालाई पनि सम्झिनु पर्ने हुन्छ । भारतको विहारमा अवस्थित बाबाधाममा जाने तीर्थालुहरू बाँसको एक खर्पन बनाई त्यसमा माटाका घडामा तीर्थको जल बोकी राता पहिरनमा उक्त धाम जान्छन् । यो यात्रामा नेपालीहरू विजयपुर (सुनसरी) को पिण्डेश्वर महादेव र सकेसम्म काठमाडौंमा पशुपतिनाथको समेत दर्शनार्थ आउने गर्छन् । एक तीर्थको पवित्र जल अर्को तीर्थमा नाङ्गै खुट्टाले कलश बोकी पुऱ्याउनुलाई पवित्र कार्य मानिन्छ । यस यात्रामा पनि माटाको कलश वा घटले ठूलो सांकेतिक र व्यावहारिक भूमिका खेलेको हुन्छ ।

यसै वर्ष (२०६३) शुभ दीपावलीको अवसर पारी जनकपुरधामस्थित जानकी मन्दिरमा कालीगण्डकीबाट संकलन गरी ल्याइएका एकलाख शालिग्रामलाई सिंगारिएका सयौं कलशहरूमा राखी कलशयात्राबीच मन्दिर भित्र्याउने ऐतिहासिक कार्य सुसम्पन्न भयो। मन्दिरका मूल पुजारीका अनुसार जनकपुर र जानकी मन्दिरकै इतिहासमा यो पहिलो घटना हो। यसरी धार्मिक अवसर-अनुष्ठानहरूमा कलशको व्यापक प्रयोग हुने गरेको पाइन्छ।

घरसित मानिसको जीवनको घनिष्ठ सम्बन्ध छ। घरको वाह्य र भित्री वातावरण सन्तुलित भएमा मात्र मानव जीवन सफल मानिन्छ। कुनैबेला घरमा अशान्ति भएमा, वाञ्छित लाभ नभएमा वा कुनै अनिष्ठ पर्न गएमा 'गृह (घर) शान्ति' पूजा गर्ने चलन नेपाली समाजमा छ। ग्रहदशाले उन्नतिमा बाधा पुऱ्याए ग्रहशान्ति' गरिन्छ। घरकै कारणले अशान्ति भएमा चाहिँ घर शान्ति पूजा गरिन्छ। यस पूजामा कलशको जलको ठूलो महिमा छ। पूजा गरेपछि घर वरिपरि कलशको पवित्र जल छर्ने, देवी-देवताको पूजा, बलि आदि कार्य गर्ने गरिन्छ।

कलशको जलले रोगी वा अशक्त शरीर, अनिष्ठ बाधाबाट पीडित व्यक्तिलाई अभिषेष गरेमा उक्त अनिष्ठ हट्न गई सुख शान्ति मिल्छ भन्ने विश्वास छ। मठ-मन्दिर, यज्ञादि स्थल वा अन्य स्थलमा कलशको जल सिंचन गर्नाले पनि अभिष्ठ प्राप्त हुन्छ, अनिष्ठ नाश हुन्छ। रोग व्याधीबाट पीडित व्यक्ति वा अन्यलाई पनि यस्तै विशेष अवसरमा प्रयुक्त कलशको जल सेवन गर्न दिएमा त्यसले अमृतको काम गर्छ भन्ने लोकधारणा छ। पवित्र अवसरका लागि सजाइएको कलशमा जल प्रवेश गर्नेपछि त्यसले अमृतको स्थान पाउँछ भन्ने धारणाले कलश जलको विशिष्ट महत्त्व भएको हो। यस्तो जलबाट सिद्धि वा मोक्ष प्राप्त हुन्छ भन्ने विश्वास छ।

कलश सबैजसो धर्मसित सम्बन्धित पर्व-पूजा र संस्कारहरूमा प्रयोग गरिन्छ। मृत्यु संस्कारमा भने कलशकै वर्ग समूहको 'भ्यारी' (pitcher) को प्रयोग हुन्छ। परिवारमा कसैको मृत्यु भएपछि कियाकर्म कालभरि कियापुत्रीले कलशकै आकारको भ्यारीको प्रयोग गर्छन् (फ्रेडमेन : ४७)। (चित्र)

मत्स्येन्द्रनाथ यात्रा र कलश

यसै प्रसङ्गमा मत्स्येन्द्रको कलशसितको सम्बन्धबारे पनि चर्चा हुनु आवश्यक छ। मत्स्येन्द्र वर्षाका देवता हुन्। काठमाडौंको खडेरीबाट उद्धार पाउन मत्स्येन्द्रलाई लिन कामरूप कामाक्षा गएका बन्धुदत्त आचार्यको नेतृत्वको नेपाली टोलीले भोग्नु परेको कष्टको प्रसङ्ग यहाँ पुनः सान्दर्भिक हुन्छ। 'शी' परिवारका कान्छा छोराको रूपमा त्यहाँ जन्म लिन पुगेका मत्स्येन्द्र आफ्नो परिवार र कुलका पनि प्रिय थिए। अतएव, उनले नेपाली टोलीसित नेपाल आउन चाहे पनि उनको परिवार र उनको जातिले उनलाई नेपाल आउन दिन चाहेनन्। बन्धुदत्त र उनको टोलीले विशेष उपाय अपनाउनु परेको थियो। तन्त्रशास्त्रमा पारंगत बन्धुदत्तले मत्स्येन्द्रलाई एक भँवरामा परिणत गरी एक कलशमा राखी बोकेर बाटो लागे। कलशभित्र थुनिएका मत्स्येन्द्रलाई पुनः खोसेर फिर्ता लैजान 'शी'हरूले गरेको प्रयास व्यर्थ भयो। उनलाई

नेपाली टोलीले नेपाल ल्याएरै छोड्यो। पछि उनका नाममा रथयात्रा चलाइयो। यसबारे संस्कृतिविद् जीतबहादुर मानन्धर लेख्नुहुन्छ–

"मत्स्येन्द्रलाई सुखाग्रस्त नेपाल उपत्यका ल्याउनेक्रममा नेपाली टोली (बन्धुदत्त) ले निकै तन्त्रसाधना गर्नुपरेको कुरा वंशावलीले लेखेको छ। कामरूप पर्वतबाट उनलाई नेपाल ल्याउन मत्स्येन्द्रलाई मौरीको रूपमा परिणत गरी कलशमा बन्द गरेर ल्याइएको कुरा पनि वंशावलीले उल्लेख गरेको छ। पछि नेपाल आइपुग्ने क्रममा बन्धुदत्तले हयग्रीव, हरिसिद्धि, नन्दकुण्ड र लुप्त-सम्वर नामका भैरवको रचना गरी मौरीरूपी मत्स्येन्द्रलाई अवलोकितेश्वर मत्स्येन्द्रनाथमा परिणत गरी सुरक्षा दिएर नेपाल ल्याइयो।" (मानन्धरः २००२, पृ. ७६-७७)

मत्स्येन्द्र, कोटवाल दह र रथयात्राको थालनीबारे माथि उल्लेख भैसकेको छ। कोटवाल दहनिर पुगेपछि शी हरूका जत्थाले मत्स्येन्द्रलाई फिर्ता लान निकै प्रयास गऱ्यो। बन्धुदत्तको तन्त्रको पुनः आवश्यकता भयो। उनले त्यहाँ एक विशाल प्रस्तरको पर्खाल खडा गरे। अन्य थुप्रै विधि पनि त्यहाँ पूरा गरिए। पुनः कलशमा मत्स्येन्द्रलाई प्रवेश गराएर अघि अघि कन्या (कुमारी)लाई लगाई राजा नरेन्द्रदेवका प्रतिनिधि, ज्यापू कृषक तथा बन्धुदत्त वागमतीको किनारै-किनार उत्तरतिर लागे। बुझमती र ललितपुर नगरमा उनलाई स्थापना गरियो।

मन्दिरमा मत्स्येन्द्रलाई करीब ४ फूट उँचाईको मूर्तिको रूपमा स्थापना गरिए पनि उनलाई कलशमा विराजमान गराउने सांकेतिक विधि अहिले पनि पूरा गरिन्छ। सर्वप्रथम उनलाई नेपाल ल्याएको सम्झनामा मातातीर्थ अमावस्याको दिन कोटवालदहमा मेला लाग्दछ। उसबेलाको घटनालाई सजीव गर्ने हेतुले प्रत्येकवर्ष तान्त्रिक साधनाबाट पवित्र जल-कलशको साधना र प्राणसंचारण विधि गरिन्छ। नेपालका सबै मुख्य जात्रा-पर्व वार्षिक नवीकरणको प्रक्रियाबाटै जीवित रहेका छन्। यहाँ पनि त्यही विधि पूरा गरिन्छ। अघिल्लो रात नै राजा नरेन्द्रदेव, बन्धुदत्त र कृषकका प्रतिनिधि त्यहाँ पुग्छन्। भोलिपल्ट उषापूर्वको शुभ साइतमा मत्स्येन्द्रको पूजा उपासना, तान्त्रिक विधिबाट जल-कलशको साधना तथा मत्स्येन्द्रकी आमाको समेत पूजा र उनलाई एक पाठी बलि दिने काम सम्पन्न गरिन्छ। विशेष तान्त्रिक विधिबाट शुभ-मुहूर्त्तमा कलश र वागमतीको कोटवालदहबाट संकलन गरिएको जल वा जलकलश नै त्यस वर्षको मत्स्येन्द्रनाथको रथयात्राको थालनीको मुख्य पक्ष हो। जल कलशलाई मत्स्येन्द्रको नयाँ जीवनको प्रतीक मानिन्छ र सो लिएर आएको लावालस्कर पुल्चोक, ललितपुर आइपुग्छ। त्यस पवित्र कलशलाई बाजा-गाजा, राजकीय सम्मान-सुरक्षा र भक्तहरूका बीच 'मलेनी' ले बोक्छिन्। कलशको त्यही जल रथमा ल्याएपछि विधिवत रथयात्राको थालनी हुन्छ। यसरी कलशको विशिष्ट महत्त्व छ। जात्राभरि कामरूपबाट भँवरारूपी मत्स्येन्द्रलाई लुकाई ल्याएको सो कलशको पूजा-अर्चना भैरहन्छ (खरेलः २०५६:८८)।

माथिका अवसरबाहेक मत्स्येन्द्रको बाह्रवर्षे जात्रामा पनि कलशको प्रसङ्ग आउँछ। यस अवसरमा मत्स्येन्द्रनाथको रथ पुल्चोकमा नभई·बुझमतीमा तयार

गरिन्छ र बुङ्मतीबाटै रथयात्रा थालिन्छ । यो जात्रा वार्षिकरूपमा सम्पन्न हुने मत्स्येन्द्रको पाटन आगमनको अवसर वा बुङ्मती फिर्ता हुँदाको बेला पनि कलशको आवागमन भैरहन्छ । बाच-वादन, कोलाहल र अन्य आवाज-उत्साहसहितको सो यात्रा पाटनको भैसेपाटीनिर पुगेपछि बाजाका ध्वनिहरूलाई अचानक रोकिन्छ । त्यहाँ एक निश्चित स्थानमा मत्स्येन्द्रलाई ल्याउने टोली पुगेपछि शीहरूले उनलाई पुनः फर्काएर लैजाने अन्तिम प्रयास गरेका थिए । अहिले त्यस घटनाको स्मरणस्वरूप अर्थात् कतै मत्स्येन्द्रलाई कामाक्षातर्फ ता नलगिएला भन्ने आशंकाले हत्तपत्त कलशमा भँवररूपी मत्स्येन्द्रलाई बन्द र सुरक्षित राख्ने प्रयास गरिन्छ । अलि माथि नपुगेसम्म बाजा बजाईदैन ।

सारांशमा, मत्स्येन्द्रनाथको यात्रा, नियमित पूजा-अर्चना र पर्वहरूमा, मेलाहरूमा कलशको विशिष्ट महत्त्व छ । वास्तवमा कोटवालदहबाट जलसहितको कलश ल्याई रथयात्राको थालनी हुने तथा त्यस सम्पूर्ण अवधिभरि कलश रथमा राखिन्छ । यसैले मत्स्येन्द्रको जीवन्तताको प्रतीक कलशको विशिष्ट महत्त्व हुनु स्वाभाविकै हो ।

नेपालको कला तथा वास्तुकलामा कलशको भूमिका

कलशलाईनेपाली कला तथा वास्तुकलामा कलात्मक स्वरूपले प्रयोग गरिएको पाइन्छ । स्वागतद्वारको दायाँ बायाँ होस्, ढोकाको माथि, अभिलेखको शिरोभाग आदि विभिन्न स्थानमा कलश राखिएको हुन्छ । कलशमा विभिन्न देवी देवताका प्रतीकात्मक चिन्हहरू उत्कीर्ण गरिएका हुन्छन् । जस्तोः विष्णु, लक्ष्मी, कुवेर, वरुण, भवानीको प्रतिकात्मक मूर्ति । मुद्राहरूमा पनि देवीदेवताको प्रतीकको रूपमा कलश अंकित गरेको पाइन्छ । नेपाली एक रूपैयाँको सिक्कामा एकापट्टि लक्ष्मी वा कुवेरको प्रतीकको रूपमा पूर्णकलशको चित्र अंकित गरिएको पाइन्छ (अमात्यः १९९८ः ६ र २९६) ।

कलश वा पूर्णकलश जलको र पूर्णताको प्रतीक हो । यसैगरी ऋग्वैदिक देवता वरुण पनि जलकै प्रतीक हुन् । अझ वरुण ता जलका पर्याय र स्रोत नै हुन् । यसैले यहाँ कलश र वरुणको सम्बन्धका बारेमा पनि संक्षिप्त चर्चा हुनु प्रासंगिक हुनेछ । वरुणको औपचारिक पूजा गर्नु पर्दा हिन्दूहरू कलशकै पूजा गर्छन् (अमात्यः ३०) । चित्र तथा मूर्तिहरूमा वरुणलाई सातवटा सेता हाँसले तानेको रथमा विराजमान भएर गंगालाई काखमा राखेको देखाइन्छ । हाँस र गंगा दुवै जलका प्रतीक हुन् र वरुणका वाहन र अर्धाङ्गिनीको रूपमा उनीहरू चित्रित हुनु स्वाभाविक लाग्छ । जल जीवनको पूर्णताका लागि अपरिहार्य वस्तु भएकाले वरुणलाई कलशको रूपमा पूजा गर्नु अत्यन्त सार्थक र सान्दर्भिक लाग्छ । (अमात्यः १९९८ः ३०-३३) । नेपाली मन्दिर र चैत्यहरूको गजुरमा पनि कलशको निर्माण गरिएको पाइन्छ ।

उपसंहार

यस लेखमा कलशको धार्मिक-सांस्कृतिक महत्वबारे केही चर्चा गरियो । यस पवित्र वर्तनविना हाम्रा कुनै पनि संस्कार र पर्व सम्पन्न हुन सक्दैनन् । यसैले कलश हेर्दा

साधारण वर्तनजस्तो देखिए तापनि नेपाली समाज, धर्म र संस्कृतिमा यसको महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान रहेको छ । हरेक शुभ कार्य, शुभ साइतमा यसको उपयोग गरिन्छ । कलशमा विभिन्न देवी देवताहरूका प्रतीकको प्रतिष्ठापना गरी पूजा गरिन्छ । धार्मिक तथा सामाजिक संस्कारहरूमा कलशको प्रतिष्ठापन अपरिहार्य मानिन्छ ।

विशेष पर्व-समारोहहरूमा सबैतिर 'कलश' प्रतिष्ठापित गर्न सम्भव नभए कार्यक्रमको सफलताको प्रतीक कलशको चित्र साना-ठूला तूलहरूमा भित्तामा लेखी टाँस्ने वा झुण्ड्याउने गरेको देख्न सकिन्छ ।

प्रायः सबै संस्कृतिहरूमा प्रतीकहरूको, व्यापक प्रयोग र महत्त्व हुने गर्छ । नेपाली संस्कृति खासगरी नेपाली कलामा त प्रतीकवाद अत्यन्त प्रभावकारी तत्त्वको रूपमा देख्न सकिन्छ । कलश त्यस्तै एक तत्त्व हो । मिश्र, ग्रीस र अन्य सभ्यतामा पनि कलशको प्रयोग हुन्थ्यो भन्ने कुरा ती देशका भाषा तथा कलाको अध्ययनबाट थाहा पाइन्छ । प्राचीन भारतीय शास्त्र– वेद, पुराण र पछिका साहित्य तथा कलामा पनि अमृत, समृद्धि, सम्पन्नता र पूर्णताका प्रतीक कलशको महत्व व्यापक छ । प्राचीन मिश्रको सभ्यतामा पनि कलशको प्रयोग हुने गरेको पाइन्छ ।

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नेपाली संस्कृतिका विविध अवसरमा कलशको प्रयोग भल्किने चित्रहरू
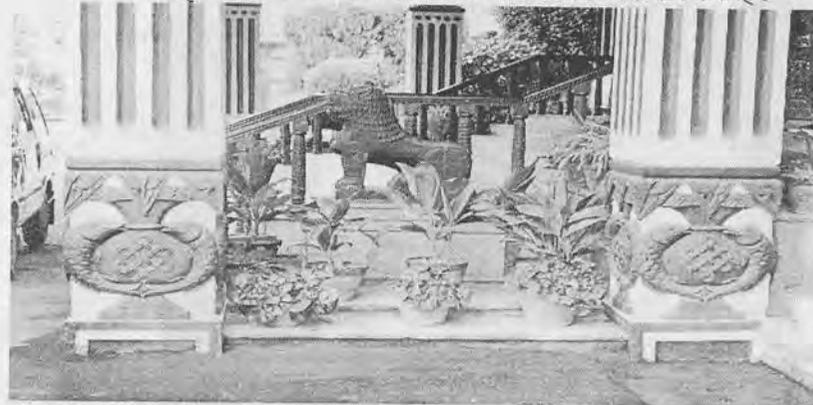
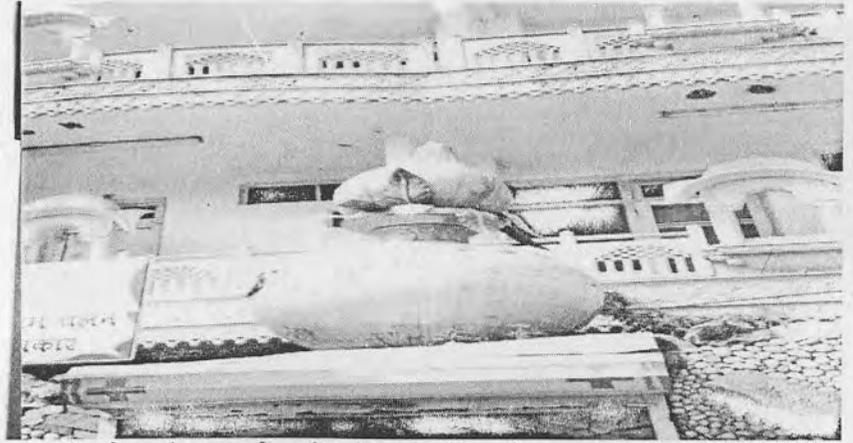नेपाल प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठानको प्रवेशद्वार अगाडिको खम्बामा अंकित कलश

रत्नपार्कको सैनिकमञ्च अगाडि प्रवेशद्वारको दायाँबायाँ अंकित कलश

भारतको प्राचीन एलोरा प्रस्तर गुफामा अवस्थित विशाल प्रस्तर खम्बामा कुँदिएको कलश (सौजन्य: प्रा. प्रेम खत्री)

भारतको काशी विश्वविद्यालयस्थित विश्वनाथ मन्दिरको शिव प्रतिमाको अगाडि राखिएको मार्वलको साधारण कलश (सौजन्य: प्रा. प्रेम खत्री)

भारतको हरिद्वारको एक मन्दिरको प्रवेशद्वारमास्थित विशाल कलश (सौजन्य: प्रा. प्रेम खत्री)

छाउनी राष्ट्रिय संग्रहालयमा राखिएको वरुणको टाउको भएको प्रस्तर कलश

जैसिदेवलस्थित मन्दिरको अगाडिपट्टि अन्नापूर्णादेवीको प्रतीक प्रस्तरका कलशसमूह

पाटन दरबारको प्रवेशद्वारमाथिको चौकोसको दायाँबायाँ अंकित अष्टमाङ्लिक चिह्नहरु

पाटनको हिरण्यवर्ण महाविहारको भित्री प्रवेशद्वारमा अंकित अष्टमङ्लयुक्त पूर्ण कलश

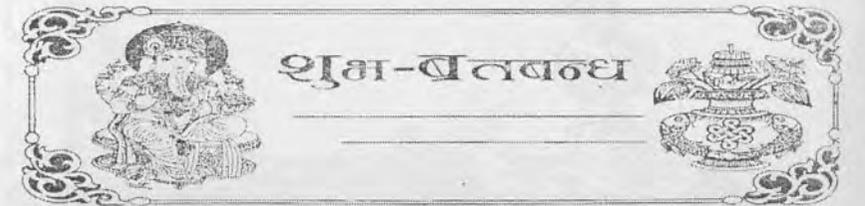पाटनको एउटा घरको प्रवेश काष्ठढोकाको दायाँबायाँ अंकित अष्टमाङ्लिक चिह्नहरु

बौद्ध गुम्बाको प्रवेशद्वारको दायाँबायाँ अंकित अष्टमाङ्गलिक चिह्नहरु

असनमा अन्नपूर्णा मन्दिरमा प्रतिष्ठापित अन्नापूर्णा देवीको प्रतीक कलश

दशैंमा नवदुर्गाको प्रतीक स्थापना गरिएको कलश

व्रतबन्ध तथा विवाहको निमन्त्रणापत्रमा छापिएको गणेश र कलशको चित्र

वीरगंजमा नवदुर्गामाता मन्दिर स्थापनाका लागि वाराको त्रिवेणीबाट कलशमा जल लिएर फर्कन्दै युवतीहरु (सौजन्य: अन्नपूर्णपोष्ट पत्रिका, २०६३ असोज १० गते)

भारतको कोलकाताका हिन्दूपूजारीहरु शुक्रवार वैदिक मन्त्रोच्चारणसहित गंगा नदीबाट जल ल्याउँदै (सौजन्य: अन्नपूर्णपोष्ट पत्रिका, २०६३ असोज १४ गते)

मृत्यु संस्कारमा क्रियापुत्रीले प्रयोग गरिएको कलशस्वरुपको भारी

BOOK REVIEW

LeVine, Sarah and David N. Gellner. 2005. *Rebuilding Buddhism: The Theravada Movement in Twentieth-Century Nepal*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University. xiii+377 pages. Price ? Hardcover. ISBN 0-674-0908-3

Buddhism in Nepal has traditionally been of two forms: First, Tibetan Buddhism, mainly of the Nyingma tradition, found among the ethnically Tibetan peoples along the northern border plus the Tamangs and secondly, the Buddhism of the Newar people of the Kathmandu Valley This is also Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism but with direct links to the ancient Indian tradition. In fact, it has been called, the "only surviving community of Indian Buddhism".

This book recounts the story of a modern development in Nepal: the growth of a Theravada Movement in Twentieth century Nepal. This movement traces its origins back to the 1930s but has grown considerably since the overthrow of the Rana government in 1951. As Nepal has developed, education has spread and the people of Nepal have tried to find their place in the contemporary world, this movement has gained momentum and legitimacy. It is an unusual book in that it was written by two different people with different backgrounds: David Gellner, long recognised as an expert on the traditional Buddhism of the Newar community of the Valley and Sarah Levine, an Associate in Sanskrit and Indian Studies at Harvard University, whose main interest has been female asceticism. It has been truly a collaborative effort, not just some chapters written by one and others by the other. The authors say in the introduction that they feel the book is better for this collaboration. They are right.

Chapter One traces the origins of what has been called "Modernist Buddhism" which originated in Sri Lanka through the work of Dharmapala who in turn had been influenced by a lecture given in Colombo in 1880 by Colonel Olcott. Yet, there was a difference in their approaches: Olcott's thrust was anti-Christian whereas Dharmapala's thrust was anti-Hindu. It was an attempt to clearly mark Buddhism off as distinct from Hinduism. This was not the view of ancient India where Buddhism was always seen as a spiritual path that had its origins in the culture of India and which was one of many spiritual paths that grew up within the fold of the cultural phenomenon which was "Hinduism". This was not the view of the people of the Newar community of the Valley who never made such a clear distinction but considered themselves as sharers of a common culture based on the Newari language and the round of festivals, Hindu and Buddhist, in which all took part. There were among them followers of the way of Shiva (*saiva*

margi) and followers of the way of the Buddha (*bauddha margi*), but they never saw any sharp distinctions. Nor was this the view that the rulers of modern Nepal had attempted to enshrine in their vision of Nepal as a truly traditional Hindu society. However, things began to change in Nepal as outside influences began to affect the people of Nepal with a large number of Nepalis serving in the British Gurkhas in both World War I and World War II, with the growth of education (especially in Eastern Nepal) and with the growing independence movement in India where many disaffected Nepalis found refuge. These changes gained momentum in the days of the Pancayat regime which made good use of modern means of communication to spread a strictly Brahminical and Sanskrit Hinduism as the norm. This was not the tradition of the majority of the people of Nepal who were content to identify themselves as "Hindu" is a broad sense as along as this term accepted their cultural traditions as of equal value. This has resulted in a growing awakening among the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic peoples of the country giving rise to the *jan-jati* movements which have been a characteristic of the past fifteen years and many of which clearly state "We are not Hindu". This study fits into that context.

This first chapter also recounts the origin and development of female renouncers in the Buddhist traditions of South and South East Asia, a movement which had a profound affect on the development of the Theravada movement in Nepal. One cannot understand this movement without a study of the role played by women. They have been paramount and their stories are recounted in this study.

Chapter Two traces the origins of the movement in Nepal and gives an excellent account of the context, i.e. traditional Newar Society and the role of Buddhism in that society and its attempts to preserve its traditions under the strict Hindu regime of the Ranas. The tale begins with the story of Jagat Man Vaidya, a Sakya from Chikañ Bahi in Lalitpur who was the first to embrace the new Buddhism, taking the name of Dharmaditya Dharmacharyya in 1923. The next trailblazer was Mahapragya who was ordained by a truly charismatic Burmese monk called Chandramani who resided at Kushinagara in India. By 1931 three Newar women had found their way to Kushinagara and requested ordination. Chandramani was unable to ordain them as the Theravada tradition held that the order of nuns had become extinct. He did, however, give them the ten precepts and called them *angáriká*, or "homeless ones". This was the origin of the so-called nuns. The chapter than recounts the difficulties that both the monks and nuns encountered as they tried to live as monks and nuns in a Buddhist society that was not used to such people during the strict Rana regime resulting in their eventual exile from Nepal.

Chapters Three through Eight are based on the detailed ethnographic material collected by LeVine over several years of research and detail the growth and development of this movement after the overthrow of the Ranas. This is where the book really comes alive with the stories of the men and women who have sponsored this movement and have faced numerous trials and difficulties. It is also the story of how this movement has fit into the traditional Newar Society and how it has appealed to the increasingly educated population of the Valley, providing them with the means to carry on their traditions in a way that makes sense to them in a modern context. The following chapters trace the creation of a tradition (Chapter Three), the development of the Nuns' Order under the charismatic Dhammawati (Chapter Four), the changes among the Buddhist laity (Chapter Five), the question of educating the monks (Chapter Six), the status of the nuns and the controversy over Bhikkuni Ordination (Chapter Seven), and finally the changes brought about by increased interest in Buddhist Meditation and Social Activism (Chapter Eight).

Chapter Nine expands the scope of the book beyond the Newar community to look at other Buddhist Revival Movements among the so called Tibetan Mahayana community and compares this to what has happened in the Newar community. This chapter ends with a note on the future of traditional Newar Buddhism. The authors note a comment by Todd Lewis in 2000 that the Newars could follow the example of the exiled Tibetans who have succeeded in making their local tradition a global tradition. This suggestion meets with a difficulty that I have often pointed out to those who want to revive the Mahayana-Vajrayana tradition of the Valley. This tradition cannot be revived without scholars of the Mahayana-Vajrayana tradition and men and women who actually and seriously practice the tantric yoga. Though Buddhism among the ordinary Tibetans may have been mostly ritual Buddhism of which the ordinary people understood little, there were always eminent scholars and true practitioners among the monks. If one wanted to learn he or she could find someone who could teach with authority. This is generally lacking in the Newar community today. The authors point out another difficulty. Lewis does not mention the place of women in the tradition. In the tradition women cannot be ritual specialists or teachers. From the modern female perspective this is a great hurdle. When one places this fact within the context of a larger problem, i.e. that all non-Vajracaryas are excluded from the highest teachings and from tantric initiation, one wonders what the future holds when more and more educated Vajracaryas take to other occupations and the community is left with the least educated to carry on the tradition and there are no openings for those of other groups who show an aptitude and interest in carrying on the tradition.

The final chapter is a conclusion which looks toward the future looking at the status of the monks, the nuns and the lay people and the difficulties that

they all face. This is an excellent chapter which does not lend itself to facile summaries. It should be studied and pondered, not just in the context of Newar Buddhism but in the larger context of what is happening to all religious and cultural communities in Nepal. In conclusion the book is an excellent investment for anyone who wants to understand what is going on in Nepal today and what the future might hold not only for the Newar community but for all the peoples of Nepal.

The book concludes with two appendices: one, short biographical notes on the prominent personalities in the Theravada Movement and the second a complete list of the Theravada Viharas in Nepal. There is also a glossary of technical terms.

— John K. Locke

Notes to Contributors

The hard copy as well as soft copy of manuscripts in Times New Roman font size of 12 should be submitted. The hard copy should be on A4 paper with a 4 cm margin on all four sides. The first page of the manuscript should have only, the title, authors' name, the authors' affiliation, and any necessary footnotes. Mailing and e-mail address should be included. The text should refer to notes numbered consecutively throughout the article, and bibliographical references should be cited in the text by the author's last name, date of publication and page number, e.g., (Tiwari 2001: 108) or if the author's name is mentioned in the text, by the date and page reference only, (1965:108). Entries in the references should be in alphabetical and chronological order of authors. They should include the details in the following order: Name of the author(s) – surname first, date, title, name of the periodical, volume number (Arabic numerals to be used throughout), pagination (for article in periodicals and books with several authors), place of publication (and name of the publisher for a book). Examples of reference format are as follows:

Tiwari, Sudarshan Raj. 2001. *The Ancient Settlements of the Kathmandu Valley*. Kathmandu: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University.

Maharjan, Pancha Narayan. 2000. "The Maoist Insurgency and Crisis of Governability in Nepal." In Dhruba Kumar (ed.), *Domestic Conflict and Crisis of Governability in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University, pp. 163-196.

Khatri, Sridhar K. 2001. "Teaching of International Relations in Nepal." *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 28:2, pp 139-154.

Shrestha, Bal Gopal. 2002. "The Ritual Composition of Sankhu: The Socio-Religious Anthropology of a Newar Town in Nepal." Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Leiden University.

Spelling should follow that of the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Authors are responsible for consistency in spelling. Words in other languages other than English should be in italics.

Tables should be numbered with arabic nemerals, have a brief title, and be referred to in the text. A copy of the journal should be consulted to see how tables are set up. Footnotes in tables should be designated by symbols or superscript small italic letters. Descriptive material not designated by a footnote may be placed under a table as a Note.

Each figure, drawing or photograph should fit into the area of 11 × 16 cm maximum. Captions should be in italics.