



Historical Evolution and Cultural Significance of Nabahī in Kathmandu

Junu Maiya Basukala, PhD

Assistant Professor, Patan Multiple Campus
Tribhuvan University

Article History: Submitted: 09/11/2024 Reviewed: 19/03/2025 Accepted: 13/06/2025

Corresponding Author: Junu Maiya Basukala, Email: junu.basukala@pmc.tu.edu.np

Copyright 2025© Author/s and the Publisher

Abstract

Nabahī is one of the sixteen Bahīs in Kathmandu Metropolitan City, located Ward No. 23 at Ombahal. It was constructed during Malla period and its historically associated with the Shakya community. Even though its prominence, the exact date of its establishment, the identity of its founder, and its historical events, cultural activities, and characteristics remain unknown. This paper aims to examine the founder historical development, features, and cultural practices of Nabahī. The study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on human activities and relevant primary sources such as inscriptions. By offering a comprehensive analysis of these sources, the paper provides rich historical context about Nabahī. The findings suggest that the original name of the Bahī was Khoitānaka, and its foundation, evolution, and cultural activities closely mirror those of other vihāras and Bahīs. Furthermore, the current condition of Nabahī deviates from traditional Bahī vāstuśāstra as outlined in the vāstuśāstra.

Keywords: Bahī, Nabahī, Ombahal, Shakya, Vihāra.

Background

Nabahīla is located in the core area of Kathmandu, at Ombahal, within Ward 23 of the Kathmandu Metropolitan City. It is one of the sixteen Bahīs of Kathmandu and the only Bahī in Ward 23. Locally, this vihāra is referred to as 'Nabahī.' The residents of the surrounding area are also known as 'Nabahī.' The Bahī was constructed during the Malla period, and since then, daily, semi-annual, and annual *pujas* have been regularly performed

at the Bahī, continuing from the Malla period to the present day. The Bahī has thirteen members from five families, all of whom belong to the Sakya clan. The *kulaputras* of these families are honored *pravajya* in this Bahī. Every vihāra in the Kathmandu Valley has an own name, but the original name of this particular vihāra remains unknown. The identity of the builder and the exact date of construction of the Bahi remain unknown. A vihāra traditionally built outside the city is referred to as a Bahī; however, how does this particular Bahi within the city consist? The Bahī structure has its distinct features. Why does this Bahī construction differ from Bahi *vāstuśāstra* tradition? What does the Present condition of this Bahī? The paper aims to explore the history, cultural significance, and preservation status of Nabahi. The specific objectives are to investigate the establishment of the Bahī, including its founder, original name, and historical development; examine the cultural activities associated with the Bahi; and assess the current condition of Bahi, with a focus on preservation. This paper demonstrates that certain activities of this Nabahī contribute to the preservation, promotion, and conservation of Buddhist heritage and culture, while also facilitating the continuation of these traditions in new generations. This study is limited to an examination of this specific Bahi.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design, which integrates multiple data collection methods including direct observation, unstructured interviews, and the analysis of historical documents and inscriptions. It provides focusing on the meanings, experiences, and events of the individuals involved, as well as the cultural and historical context. Direct observation was conducted at the Bahī and its surrounding areas, documentation the current state of architecture and human activities associated with the site. Photographs and original inscriptions were used as supplementary evidence to support the findings. The study places particular emphasis on the analysis of stone inscriptions, specifically those written in and Newari script. In addition to observational data, unstructured interviews were conducted with key individuals associated with the Bahī. These interviews provided further insights into the traditions, practices, and behaviors of those involved in the ongoing activities at the site. The data sources for this research include both primary and secondary materials. The primary sources consist of direct observations at the Bahī, unstructured interviews with key individuals associated with the Bahī, and the analysis of original inscriptions. Secondary sources include published literature, historical records, and scholarly articles, which provide contextual background and support the analysis.

Foundation and Historicity of Nabahī

The copper plate inscription, dated N. S. 631 is affixed to the doorway at the front of the *kvāpādyah*. It inscribes that the foundation was laid on Saturday, during the *Pūrṇimā* in 1508 (N.S. 628), and that the installation and consecration took place on the Friday *Pañcamī* of the same month. In 1509 (N.S.629) golden images of Akṣobhya Buddha and Dīpaṅkara Buddha were installed. On Sunday the *Saptamī* of the dark half of the month of *Mārga* in 1507 (N.S. 631), a grand *yajña* commenced. On the *Navamī* the images of Akṣobhya Buddha, Dīpaṅkara Buddha and Samvara were consecrated. The *yajña* was concluded on the *Daśamī* of the fortnight. The main officiating priest for this ceremony was Vajrācārya Jiva Harsha of Surya Candra Mahāvihāra, while the Upādhyāya was Vajrācārya Jina Candra of Maṇi Saṅgha Vihāra. The donors were Sakya Bhikṣu Sri Jyoti Raja Pala, his mother Ulasa Lakṣmi, his wife Abhaya Laxmi his brother Sakya Bhikṣu Sri Suta Pala, Bhikṣu Sri Kamalaja Pala, and his mother Sri Asula Laxmi, all of Manjusirnakā Mahāvihāra (Locke, 1985). Hasha Muni Shakya writes that the copper plate from 1511 (N.S. 631) mentions that during the reign of Ratna Malla of Kantipur, Jay Kesh Raj Pala, the son of Sakya Bhikṣu Ujota Raj Pala, wished to build a *Bahī* on land measuring 65 breadths from north to south and 82 lengths from west to east, adjacent to a water conduit. This was established on *Baiśākha śukla pūrṇimā* in 1510 (N.S. 628). Later, Ujota Raj Pala and his brother Suo Pala passed away after the *bahī* was completed in 1511 (N. S. 629) on *Jeṣṭha caturdarśī*. Thus, Jay Kesh Pala, born into the Sakya clan, established the Akshobhya Buddha on *Māgha śukla saptamī* of 1511 (N.S. 631) (Shakya, 2006, V. S. 2063). The copper plate from 1518 (N.S. 639), affixed to the right side of the entrance of *kvāpādyah*, states that the Buddha image built by Sakya Bhikṣu Jay Kesh Pala was damaged. Abhaya Laxmi and her son Kesh Raj Bharo, who resided at Libiche of Srinaka Vihāra, performed *yajña* and re-established the Akṣobhya Buddha (Index, Inscription I). Thus, although John K. Locke and Harsha Muni Shakya provide different details based on the copperplate inscription of 1510 (N.S. 631), it indicates that the donor of this Bahī was Ujota Raj Pala. The image of Mahākāla, located beside the main entrance gateway, was installed on 1538 (*Māgha kṛṣṇa caturdarśī* N.S. 658), during the reign of King Jagat Ratna Malla, as recorded on the pedestal of image (Index, Inscription II). The tympanum was placed above the main shrine entrance gate in 1669 (N.S. 790) (Locke, 1985).

During the reign of King Jaya Prakash Malla, on the occasion of the completion of the Svayambhū restoration work, two deities from this Nabahī were present. Dīpaṅkara Buddha of Nabahī is also listed among the *samyak dāna* deities of the Kantipur Mahānagara. It is also noted that the god was restored in 1802 (N.S. 923) (Shakya, 1977 (N. S. 1098)). On the first floor of Nabahī, located on the right side of the *āgama koṭhā*, there is an inscription

dated 1860 (N.S. 981). It mentions that during the reign of King Surendra Bikram Shah Deva, fifteen individuals from the Sakya Bhikshu community of Ombahal Tole, Laghuantanak Mahāvihāra of Kasthamandap Mahanagara, Jyeshtha Bhajudham, Bhajuman, Kurpati, Bhansingh, Sujapati, Dhijapati, Shanapati, Chakrapati, Dhambajunanda, Amitmukhi, Bhinkhaal, Shravalmuni, Tejapati, Dhijamuni, and Ratnumani, renovated a house that had been burned down, particularly the roof to the north of this Bahī, on the 12th day of the *kṛṣṇa pakṣa* in the month of *Āṣāḍha*. The members of this *saṅgha*, having developed a religious disposition, installed a wooden roof in the *āgama koṭhā*, renovated the shrine of Hey Vajra Nairātmā, and performed the necessary rituals, including painting, in accordance with prescribed procedures. Subsequently, two stone *Kākāśyā* and *Ulkāśyā* were installed on either side of the entrance, followed by the performance of the *guhyakarma yajña* ritual for their consecration. It is mentioned that during the renovation of the *āgama koṭhā* of this Bahī, Guru Devananda Vajrācārya of Jhwabahal served as Mulācārya, and Vidhya Nanda Vajrācārya was the Upādhyāya. Bhāju Nanda, Valampulacheyā Shakya Bhikṣu Raj Man, Dhija Nani Chitrakar were participated. It is noted that a total expenditure of one rupee, eleven *ānnās*, and ten *paisā* was incurred for the renovation, with an additional cost of one *mohar* (50 *paisā*) for the offering of pinnacle (Index, Inscription III).

In the name of the late Shakya Bhikṣu Teja Man and his wife Thakumati, who lived in Kathmandu Khuītānaka Mahāvihāra, their son Candra Man, his wife Hira Maya, and their son Surya Man renovated *kuladevatā*, śrī Hevajra Nairātmā on the day of *Āśvina kṛṣṇa pakṣa aṣṭamī* 1925 (N.S. 1046). For this restoration work, Vajramananda Mulācārya of Jhvābāhāla, Bhāju Ratna Upadhyaya of Dhwakabahal, and Vilasa Harṣha Karmacharya of Ombahal kept *jivanyāsa* and established on the day of *Āṣāḍha kṛṣṇa pakṣa āuēusī*. It is mentioned that the entire establishment was completed on the day of *Māgha kṛṣṇa pañcamī* of 1927 (N.S. 1047) (Index, Inscription IV). Moti Man Shakya has stated that although Bahī was restored 15 years ago, the northern side of Bahī was destroyed by the great earthquake of 2015. The Bahī *saṅgha* member subsequently rebuilt it (Moti Man Shakya. *Personal Interview*. 9th July 2018).

Present Scenario of Architecture

This Bahī has four floors that face west. It resembles a twostory vihāra, with a temple featuring a twostory Newari roof above it (Fig. 1.). On the ground floor, before entering the sanctum *gandhurī* deity, there are two small stone lions



Fig 1: Vihāra Architecture
Source: Researcher Collection



Fig 2: Tympanum
Source: Researcher Collection

on the right and left. *Gandhurī* deity refers to Akṣobhya Buddha. Above the entrance to the *gandhurī* deity, a three-tiered joined a five-piece wooden tympanum (Fig. 2.), there are a *garuḍa* with *Nāga* and *Nāginī* carvings on both the right and left sides beneath it. Beneath the *Nāga* and *Nāginī* is the three-faced, six-armed Vairocana in the *vajraparyāṅkāśana* posture. To the right of this large figure, smaller forms of Vairocana in the same form are engraved on both the right and left

sides. Vairocana has a *śārdūla* on both the right and left sides. It is placed in 1669 (N.S. 790) (Locke, 1985). A copper plate is hung on the right side of the entrance to the *gandhurī* deity. There is a door on the left side that leads to the first floor. The Cakrasamvara *Vajravārāhī* Hevajra *Nairātmā* deity has been installed in the *āgama koṭhā* of the first floor. On the outer facade of this floor, the five interconnected wooden windows are positioned to be visible from the outside. There are three levels of zinc roofing above this floor. On the second floor, there are three connected small windows, along with additional small windows on the right and left, which do not provide an outside view. The zinc roofing on the second level has been installed in four directions, featuring 12 struts and four *kunsalas* inclined at a 45-degree angle. Above that, there are windows facing all four directions. It has been designed like a balcony on top of it. The topmost roof features four struts and four *kunsalas* in all four directions.

There are three caityas same lines in the center of the courtyard. The Licchavi Caitya (Fig. 3) features a *ghaṇṭa* and a dome placed on an octagonal plinth. Both the *ghaṇṭa* and the dome are carved from a single stone, which is polished. The dome is adorned with a *harmikā*, with *halipatas* on all four directions, and a *trayodaśabhuvan*. The dimensions of this caitya are as follows: 1 ft. 8.5 inches in length, 1 ft. 8.5 inches in width, 2 ft. 6 inches in height, and 4 ft. 2.5 inches in circumference (Bajracharya, 1998, N. S. 1119). The Dharmadhātu caitya (Fig. 4) consists of four rectangular plinths, arranged in ascending order from bottom to top. Above these plinths, Bodhisattvas are carved on the pillars with *āsanas* and tympanums, positioned in the four cardinal directions: Maitreya in the east, Ratnapani in the south, Padmapani



Fig 3: Licchavi Caitya
Source: Researcher Collection



Fig 4: Dharmadhātu Caitya
Source: Researcher Collection

to face north. The plinth is adorned with Lokapāla deities on thrones in the four directions: Dhritarastra in the east, Virupakṣa in the south, and Vaiśravaṇa in the north. Above this, there is a *padmāsama* on a *vimśatikona* plinth, with a throne featuring Lokapāla deities in all four directions. Above the throne are representations of the Buddhas: Akṣobhya Buddha in the east, Ratnasambhava Buddha in the south, Amitabha Buddha in the west, and Amoghasiddhi Buddha in the north. The Buddha figures are surrounded by three tiers of lotuses. Four Buddhas are depicted on the bell in the four directions, and the structure includes a *garbha*, *harmikā*, *bhagi*, *halipaṭa*, *trayodaśabhuvan*, *āmalaka*, *uṣṇiṣa*, and *ratna*. This caitya was established in the year 1954 (1074) by Bekha Ratna, Triratna, Buddhar Ratna, and Hiramaya. The dimensions of the caitya are 4 ft. 6.5 inches in length, 4 ft. 6.5 inches in width, 6 ft. in height, and 4 ft. 6 inches in circumference (Bajracharya, 1998 (N.S. 1119)). On the day of *akṣaya tritīyā* in the month of *Baiśākha śukla*, 1954 (1074), the religious thoughts of Bekha Ratna, Triratna, Buddha Ratna, and Hiramaya, who were the late Buddhas of this monastery, inspired the construction of this Vajradhātu Caitya (Index, Inscription V).

in the west, and Mañjuśrī in the north. Above this, there is a two-tiered octagonal roof. On top of these two roofs are two tiers of octagonal plinths. Further above, there are additional two-tiered octagonal roofs with arches on all four sides. Above these, the structure features a lotus *āsana*, *ghaṇṭa*, dome, *harmikā*, *bhagi*, *halipaṭa*, *trayodaśabhuvan*, *āmalaka*, *uṣṇiṣa*, and *ratna*. The dimensions of this caitya are 4 ft. 6 inches in length, 4 ft. 6 inches in width, 5 ft. 9 inches in height, and 6 ft. 8 inches in circumference (Bajracharya, 1998 (N.S. 1119)). The Vajradhātu Caitya (Fig. 5) features a thick, foursided plinth set on a quarter circle. Engraved on the west side of this plinth are the names of the year, day, and donor. The serpent's head and tail are positioned



Fig 5: Vajradhātu Caitya
Source: Researcher Collection
Vajradhātu Caitya

Cultural Activities

Nitya pūjā: Daily *nitya pūjā* is performed in this Bahī. For the past ten years, members of the Bahī association have been taking turns to oversee the daily worship, with each member responsible for one month at a time.

Pravajyā: Shakyas are considered *pravajyā* only. Every 11 years, the sons of the *saṅgha* members are honored. The grandsons of the members of the Nahaḃyakan Bahī and Chwakan Bahī are also included in this Bahīla.

Gunlā Parva: Every year during the month of Gunlā, *stotras* are recited in the Bahī.

Pañjarā: On the annually celebrated day of *Śrāvaṇa kṛṣṇa trayodaśī*, *pañjarā* is both offered and accepted.

Diśi pūjā: Every year, all members of the *saṅgha* come together to conduct *diśi pūjā* during the month of *Pauṣa* (Ranjitkar, V. S. 2075).

Relation with Thābahī of Khoitānaka Mahāvihāra

It is customary to place betel nut on the Bahī when the *kulaputras* of the *saṅgha*'s members get *pravajyā*. Sixteen Bahī *saṅghas* of Kathmandu have been organized to perform the *pravajyā* for the *kulaputras* of Shakyas from this Bahī. Following that, in accordance with the *pravajyā* tradition, the *kulaputras* of the Bahīs will visit the *saṅgha* of Thābahī to have their hair shaved in the presence of the five main *sthaviras* and the elders, representing the sixteen Bahīs. It is customary for the Bahī *saṅgha* to provide a fee to the Thābahī *saṅgha* for performing this work (Moti Man Shakya. *Personal Interview*. 9th July 2018).

Result and Discussion

Based on a copper plate inscription of N. S. 631, it is noted that during the reign of King Ratna Malla of Kantipur, Jay Kesa Raj Pala, the son of the Shakya Bhikṣu Ujota Raj Pala, initiate the foundation of this Bahī on the full moon day of *Baiśākha śukla pūrṇimā* in 1508 (N.S. 628) and completed it on the *Jeṣṭha caturdarśī* in 1509 (N.S. 629). Thus, the donors of this Bahī were the elder brother of the Sakya Bhikṣu Ujota Raj Pala and his brother Suo Pala. This indicates that they spent one year constructing this Bahī. According to this copperplate, both of them passed away after the completion of the Bahī. This copperplate also mentions that Ujot Raj Pala's son, Jaya Kesa Pala, installed the image of Akṣobhya Buddha on *Māgha śukla sapṭamī* in 1511 (N. S. 631). But the copper plate of 1511 is no longer in existence in Bahī. This information is mentioned by Moti Man Shakya (Shakya, 2006 (V.S. 2063)). According to the copper plate of 1518 (N. S. 639), Jay Kesh Raj Pala, the son of Sakya Bhikṣu Ujota Raj Pala is established during the reign of Ratna Malla of

Kantipur. Although the origin of Ujota Raj Pala Shakya Bhikṣu's lineage is not specified, it is believed that his name appears in the caitya constructed from joined stone pieces in Jajarkot. Therefore, it is likely that this *Bahī* was established by Ujot Raj Pala in 1508 (N. S. 628). After the *Bahī* was built, it seems that members of the Shakya clan or Shakya Bhiksus settled there (Shakya, n.d).

The name of this Bahī seems to be *Khoitā*, derived from *Khvoḥṭākī* or *Khvoḥṭākila*. A bamboo fence buried along the riverside is termed as "Khvoḥṭākī" or "Khvoḥṭākila" in Nepāla Bhāṣā (Mali, 2009 (N. S. 1130)). A small document written by Moti Man Shakya's father mentions that when establishing this Bahī, the Shakya Bhikṣu Ujota Raj Pala wishing to build a Bahī on the joint border of *caurāghāṭa* on the northern route is 65 in width in the south, caitya in the west, 82 in length in the east his land acquired through self-earning have been established on the day of 1508 (628 *Baiśākha śukla pūrṇimā*) (Shakya, n.d.). From this, it can be seen that it was built on the joint border of *ghāṭa*. 'Naka' signifies new (Omkareswara Sherstha. *Mobile Interview*. 15th Dec. 2024). It appears that a new Bahī was constructed using buried bamboo sticks near the river, which is why it is referred to as *Khoitānaka Mahāvihāra*. The term 'Bahī' in Sanskrit means 'outside'. It is said that Buddhist architecture constructed outside the city is referred to as a Bahī. Most Bahīs are built on riverbanks, and the term 'Bahī' refers to monasteries constructed in such locations. Given that these Bahīs were situated near rivers, it seems that numerous stone steps were constructed to provide access, in order to mitigate the risk of flooding during the rainy season. In the note collection of Moti Man Shakya, it is stated that the term '*caurāghāṭa*' suggests that the Bahī was built in proximity to a *ghāṭa*. Since it is a tradition to build *ghāṭas* on the banks of rivers, some distance from human settlements, and given that *ghāṭas* are typically constructed outside the city, it appears that this *ghāṭa* was built on the river bank. There is evidence of a river to the west of this Bahī. Even today, the Jyāpu and Shrestha communities in the region maintain the practice of offering *pinḍa* on the southern side of the caitya, in the area between the Nabahī and water conduit of Ombahal, during their *śraddha* ceremonies. It is possible that, during that time, the Bahī was constructed by setting up a bamboo fence at the riverbank of the *ghāṭa*. In this way, the original name of this Bahī seems *Khvoḥṭākī* or *Khvoḥṭākila Bahī*. Later it seems to have referred to as *Khoitānaka Mahāvihāra*. Aside from the members of the *saṅgha*, the name *Khoitānaka Mahāvihāra* is unfamiliar to the local residents of this vihāra. The local residents refer to it as 'Nabahī'. However, considering that rivers change their course over time, it is striking that the Bahīs found today were once located on riverbanks, as current Bahīs are within city limits. In this context, the Bahī, which was originally situated on the west bank of the river but now lies within the city, is referred to as *Khoitānaka Vihāra* or Bahī. It appears that the name has evolved into *Nakabahīla*, as the location of *Khoitaki* no longer exists.

The name of this Bahī has been referred to by different terms over time. The copper plate inscription from 1518 (N. S. 639), located on the right side of the gateways of *kvāpādyah*, mentions *Nakavahāra*. Furthermore, the Dharmadhātu Caitya facing west at Svayambhū in the year 1833 (N.S. 954 (Rastriya Abhilekhalaya, V. S. 2070 & Index VI), as well as the Vajradhātu Caitya in front of the Svayambhū *kvāpādyah* in the year 1835 (N.S. 956) (Rastriya Abhilekhalaya, V.S. 2069 & Index VII), inscribe the inscription of Nakabahī. On the first floor, situated on the right side of *āgamakoṭha*, a northern-faced stone inscription from N. S. 981 records the term *Nakabahī*. Additionally, on the right side wall of *āgamakoṭha* on the first floor, a western-faced stone inscription of N. S. 1046, refers to *Khuītānaka Mahāvihāra*. The term '*Khuītanaku*' is also inscribed on the stone Vajradhātu caitya inscription from N. S. 1075. located in the courtyard of this Bahī.

Different writers have used a variety of Names to refer to this Bahī. Ratna Kazee and Vijay Ratna Vajracarya mention in their book *Nepah Deyhya Vihāraya tah ca* that this Bahī is referred to as Khoitānaka Mahāvihāra (Vajracarya, N. S. 1103). John K. Locke, on the other hand, states that the Sanskrit name of this Bahī is Sri Udyotakirti Vihāra, as indicated by an inscription (Locke, 1985). However, Locke does not specify which inscription mentions this name. The copper plate inscription from 1518 (N.S. 639), located on the right side of the gateways of *kvāpādyah*, does not reference Udyota kirti Vihāra; instead, it mentions only the name of Sakya Bhikṣu Draṇota Raja Pala. Therefore, Locke's interpretation of the Sanskrit name does not align with the inscription. Rajendra Man Bajracharya also refers to the Vihāra as Udyotakirti Khoitānaka Mahāvihāra in his book *Kantipurka Mahāvihāra/ Vihāraharu* (Vajracarya, 1017 (N.S. 1138), likely drawing from Locke's work. Additionally, the signboard at this Bahī indicates the name "Khuitanak Vihāra" as used by the members of the *saṅgha*. Ratna Kaji and Vijay Ratna Vajracharya, as well as Rajendra Man Bajracharya, use the term Nah Bahī where as John K. Locke uses Na Bahī. Nowadays, the locals call it Nabahī. The surrounding area of this Bahī is referred to as *Nabahī*.

When John K. Locke studied this Bahī three decades ago, he examined the situation of the *saṅgha* and their activities. He writes, "The *saṅgha* of Nabahī consisted of only two initiated Sakyas, and it had close connections with the *saṅghas* of Nhaykan Bahī and Cwakan Bahī, though the origins of this connection are now forgotten. Currently, these three Bahīs have separate *saṅghas*, but initiations for all three communities are still performed at Nabahī. Initiations are no longer conducted at Nhaykan Bahī or Cwakan Bahī. For six months each year, people from Nhaykan Bahī serve as *dyapālās* at Nabahī and a 'Vajrayogini' was brought from Cwakan Bahī, though Cwakan Bahī claims it was brought from Nabahī. This discrepancy is believed to result from the capture of an abandoned site by another *saṅgha* after the original *saṅgha* disappeared. While informants claim Nabahī is the oldest of the three

Bahīs, evidence contradicts this. Traditional rituals are performed daily by the two Shakyas living at Nabahī and for six months by the people of the Nhaykan Bahī. However, most other traditional practices have diminished, including the annual festival and the recitation of hymns during Gunla. The *saṅgha* now has one elder, and during the 'demonstrating of the gods', only the image of Dīpaṅkara is displayed, although the *saṅgha* once had a rich collection of images". He also writes that in 1508 (N.S.629) golden images of Akṣobhya Buddha and Dīpaṅkara Buddha were set up. Harsha Muni Shakya writes that Jay Kesh Pala established the Akṣobhya Buddha on *Māgha śukla saptamī* of 1511 (N.S. 631). The copper plate from 1518 (N.S. 639) inscribes that the Buddha image built by Sakya Bhikṣu Jay Kesh Pala was damaged. Thus, Abhaya Laxmi and her son Kesh Raj Bharo, who resided at Libiche of Srinaka Mahavihāra, performed *yajña* and re-established the Akṣobhya Buddha. From this, it can be inferred that the Akṣobhya Buddha statue established in 1511 (N.S.631) might have been made of clay. It is possible that this statue was either one of the restored or newly installed ones. After three decades, when the writer tried to examine the date on the Dīpaṅkara statue, Moti Man Shakya was not allowed to see it, even though it was displayed in his home. Therefore, it was not possible to determine when and by whom the *pañjarā* was performed. According to the Buddhist tradition, the practice of performing the *pañjarā* after the establishment of Dīpaṅkara Buddha image remains ongoing. Buddhist Scholar Hem Raj Shakya has also stated that the *pañjarā* might have been performed during the establishment



Fig 6: Ganeśa

Source: Researcher Collection

of the Dīpaṅkara Buddha (Ranjitkar, 2017 (V.S 2074). Therefore, it might be establishing Dīpaṅkara Buddha and performing *pañjarā* from the *saṅgha* of this Bahī in 1511 (N.S. 629). The Dīpaṅkara Buddha statue is displayed every year on *Śrāvaṇa kṛṣṇa trayodaśī* day. However,



Fig 7: Mahākāla

Source: Researcher Collection

instead of performing in front of the *kvāpādyah* in the vihāra, Moti Man conducts the performance at Sakya's house (Moti Man Shakya, *Personal Interview*. 2018). But it is not cleared the image of Dīpaṅkara Buddha is made of gold or clay. John K. Locke say that the image of Dīpaṅkara is gold as per as the member of the *saṅgha* when he has studied of this Bahī. Hem Raj Shakya notes that the image of Dīpaṅkara Buddha from this Bahī is listed among the Samyak deities of Kantipur Mahānagar, and its image was restored in N. S. 923. John K. Locke has written the image of Dīpaṅkara Buddha is made of

gold, based on his study of this Bahī. The tradition of restoring clay image when it breaks for various reasons has been practiced for centuries. Some images are renovated annually, others every 12 years, while some are restored as needed (Ranjitkar, V. S. 2067 & Shakya, N. S. 1129). In this way, the image of Dīpaṅkara Buddha appears to be a clay image as it was renovated in 1508 (N.S. 629).

According to the Bahī *vāstu śāstra* tradition, the Bahī is a twostorey brick and wood structure around a central courtyard, resembling the vihāra but with simpler design and minimal ornamentation. The ground floor features a single entrance and a continuous open hall, with images of Ganeśa (Fig. 6) and Mahākāla (Fig. 7) near the main entrance. The primary shrine is a small sanctum, positioned opposite the entrance, where the *gandhurī* deity is placed in windowless room. The upper floor features a balcony, an open hall, and a small room known as the *āgama koṭha*, which house *tāntric* deities. The exterior of the structure has fewer windows above the shrine, and its decorative elements are more restrained compared to those found in vihāras. However, the Bahī has diverged from traditional Bahī *vāstu śāstra* principles. Today, while the twostory structure and the Newari temple style of the main shrine and courtyard remain intact, the other sections of the Bahī have been converted into private residences by the members of the *saṅgha*. The stone images of Ganesh and Mahakala, located upon entering the Bahī, are housed in a small room to the left of the main entrance, with access to this room restricted to *saṅgha* members only. The image of Mahakala was installed in 1538 (N.S. 658); however, the establishment date of the Ganeśa image remains unclear due to the absence of an inscription on its pedestal. John k. Locke states that the tympanum was placed in 1669 (N.S. 790), but he does not mention the name of donor. The researcher made two attempts to identify the donor, but the *saṅgha* member, Moti Man Shakya and Asta Ratna Shakya, did not permit further study. Therefore, this paper does not address the identity of the donor. A typical characteristic of the tympanum is the carving of the deity or a symbolic representation of the deity associated with the main shrine. However, despite Akṣobhya Buddha being the main deity in this Bahī, tympanum features a carving of Vairocana Buddha. The reason for this discrepancy remains unclear.

Conclusion

The river shifts its course during heavy rainfall. Over time, human settlements were established in the area where the river once flowed, after it had changed its course. These settlements eventually became part of the city. Member of the Bahī's *saṅgha* has reported finding sand and stones while laying the foundations of houses in the vicinity of Nabahī. Consequently, the document related to this Bahī, along with the sand and stones found during the construction in this area, indicate that Bahī was built along the riverbank. Therefore, the presence of Bahīs in areas along the river suggests that they were constructed near the river

in the past. As a result, Bahīs are elevated above street level to protect against the threat of heavy flooding. It is also evident that the original name of this Bahī, *Khoitānaka* Mahāvihāra refers to a structure built near the river.

The lineage of the Pala brothers, Ujota Raj and Suo, donated the Bahī for the Shakya Bhiksus, Although the three *saṅghas* of Bhakan Bahī, Cwakan Bahī, and NaBahī were historically interconnected, the three remaining families are now the sole members of the *saṅgha*. These families are primarily engaged in performing daily and annual *pūjās*, as well as in the performed of *pravajyā*. The original architecture of the Bahī has been largely lost, with only the *kvāpādyah* building remaining; the rest of the structure has been repurposed into a private residence. It is possible that the land was donated for the purpose of conducting daily and annual *pūjās*, and renovating the Bahī in a manner similar to other vihāras and Bahīs, by earlier donors. Additionally, it is plausible that some land documents may have been concealed by members. Various documents raise questions regarding the existing of images of Akṣobhya Buddha, Dīpaṅkara Buddha, Samvara, Cakrasamvara, Vajra Vārāhi, Heyvajra, and Nairātmā, though it remains unclear whether these images exist or not. Unfortunately, this paper cannot offer detailed information about the Bahī due to a lack of documents and the reluctance of *saṅgha* members to share information. A more comprehensive study of the Bahī may only be possible when newer generations of the *saṅgha* recognize the importance of its preservation and promotion, potentially leading to the revelation of further details in the future.

References

- Apte, V. S. (2004). *The Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. IV Edition. Motilal Banarsidas Publihers.
- Bajrachaya, R. K. (N.S. 1119). *Yē Deyā Caitya Vivaraṇātmaka Adhyayana*. (A Survey of the Caityas of Kantipur). Nepal Mandalaya Boudha Sanskriti Sammelana Ayojaka Samiti.
- Bajracharya, R. M. (N. S. 1138). *Kāntipurakā Mahāvihāra-Vihāraharū*. (Mahaviharas/ Viharas of Kantipur). Vajrayana Mahasngaha.
- Locke, J. K. (1985). *Buddhist Monastraises of Nepal*. Sahayogi Press Pvt. Ltd.
- Mali, I. (Edit.). (N.S. 1130). *Nepāla Bhāṣā Taḥkhāgvaḥ Dhukū*. (Practical Nepal Bhasa Dictionary). Nepāla Bhāṣā Academy.
- Ranjitkar, J. B. (V.S. 2064). *Bhaktapurako Pañcadāna Parva*, (Pañcadāna Festival of Bhaktapur). Nhuja Guthi Samaj, Boudha Adhayan Samaj & Bhaktapur Vikash Sahayoga Samaja.

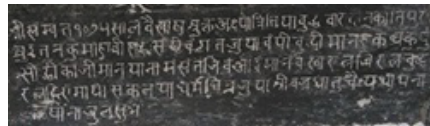
- (V. S. 2067). 'Māṭodvārā mūrti banāune paramparāko Nepālī maulikātā'. (Nepali originality in the tradition of making clay sculptures) *Historical Journal*. 1(1). 48-58.
- (V.S. 2075). *Kāṭhamāḍau Mahānagarapālikā Vaḍā naṁ 23 mā Avasthita Vihāraharūkā Aitihāsika, Dhārmika, Sāskṛtika ra Vāstukalā Sambandhamā Vistṛta Anusandhāna*. (A Detailed Study of the Historical, Religious, Cultural, and Architectural Aspects of Viharas in Ward No. 23 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City) Danfe Engineering Consultancy.
- RastriyaAbhilekhalaya. (V.S. 2069). *Kāntipura Śilālekha Sūcī*. (List of Kantipur Inscriptions). Part III. Rastriya Abhilekhalaya.
- (V.S. 2070). *Kāntipura Śilālekha Sūcī*. (List of Kantipur Inscriptions). Part IV. Rastriya Abhilekhalaya.
- Shakya, B. K. (N. S. 1129). Shakya, *Mañjuśrīnaka Mahāvihārayā Śākya Nivāḥ Khalah*. Manjusrinaka Mahavihara Samrksana Sudhar Sangha.
- H. (N. S. 1098). *Sri Svayambhu Mahacaitya*. Svayambu Vikash Mandala.
- Shakya, H. M. (V. S. 2063). *Buddha Dharmakō Vikāsamā Śākyaharūkō dena* (Contribution of the Shakyas to the Development of Buddhism). Sakya Foundation, Nepal.
- Shakya, M.M. (n.d.). 'Svābhimānayāta barhaḥṭayāḥ dāsatva svīkāra yāyegu pakṣay madu'. *Śākya Ṛtupau*. (Mukhapatra). 9(1). 25. 1-4.
- Vajracharya, R. K. & B. R. (N. S. 1103). *Nepā Deyā Vihāriyā Tāḥcā*. (A key to Viharas of Nepal). Ratna Kajee, Bijaya Ratna- Vajracharya.

Index

Inscription I

खोइतानक विहारको स्वाचपाल देवताको प्रवेशद्वारको दाहिनेपट्टि टाँगिएको ताम्रपत्र

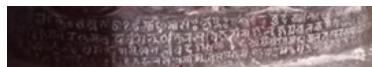
१. शुभ ॥ श्रयोस्तु सम्बत ६३९ मार्गशिर कृष दसम्यां तिथौ दे भ
२. नक्षत्रे, यौ. ज जोगे सोमवासरे वदिरि श्री अक्षोभ्य वतास
३. न द्वयका शाक्य भिक्षु द्रजोत राजपालजु समव क्षत
४. लिख्य देव थापरया पुत्रं दानपति चित्रय क्षे त्यायां श्री नक
५. ब्राह्मर निम्हं लिखिछे माताड ल्हासल .. भाचर्या अभयलक्ष्मि
६. पुत्र जयकेसराज भारो चाव वु बुदिवगा अपुजोत राजपाल
७. जुसदुदेसन थापितं दयका जुरो, बहिरिनो, केषनीं पतिष्ठा
८. पे जज्ञ संपूर्णा याडा जुरो सधम्म र – शुभमस्तु ।



Inscription II

महाकालको पादपीठमा कुँदिएको अभिलेख

१. श्रेयोस्तु सम्बत ६५८ माघ मासे कृष्ण पक्षे चतुर्दस्यान्तिथौ
२. जगतरतु मल्लदेवताभूठक्षर विजयराजेलं जूल(त्व) खलकमता तकारक
३. इथ मुखन चवदश धम्म छस्यं श्री श्री श्री महाकाल भत्तारकाय त
४. फलन धम्म अतिसग इहेतु मोक्ष गत्र मोक्ष भवतु ग



Inscription III

खोइतानक विहारका पहिलो तल्ला आगमकोठाको दायाँतर्फ उत्तरतिर फर्काएर राखेको शिलालेख

श्री ३ चक्रसम्बर वज्रवाही हे वज्र नैरात्मा वज्रधातु चैत्याय नमः
स्वस्ति श्री गिरि राज चक्र चूडामणि नरनारायनैत्पादि विविध विरु दाव
लि विराजमान मन्वन्तरे श्री मन्महाराजाधिराज श्री ३ सुरेन्द्र विक्र
म साह समसेर जंग देवाना सदासमर विजयीनी विजयराज्ये
अद्य आखाढ मासे कृष्ण पक्षे द्वादसी तिथौ रोहिनी नक्षत्र वृद्धि जोगे यथाकण्ण मुहु
त्रे बूधवासरे कक्कट रासिगतेस वितरि वृषरासिगते चन्द्रमसि ॥ ॥ दानपति का
ष्टमण्डप महानगर ओ वाहार तोल नकबही लघुयंतानक माहा व्यालया शाक्य
भिक्षु ज्येष्ठ भाजुधं भाजुमन कुरपति भानसिं सृजपति धिजपति षानेपति चक्र
पति धंभाजुनन्द अमितमुखि भिखाल श्रभलमुनि तेजपति धिजमुनि रत्न मु
नि ध्वतेपगुलि कजेलयां ग्वत्र म्ह १५भाओ साहति सलाया जओ ध्वते व
हिलया पुर्व्या उत्तहयाछे मिन नयाओ पौ पूम कोद्वनाओ जिर्णउद्वार याना जुरो ॥ हे र
हनं खलक छिया धम्मचित्त जुयाओ आगं देवयाके उजओ सियागु पौ तया श्री हे
वज्र नैरात्मा जिर्णउद्वार याओओ सपिक यामा मार्ग विधिकर्म याडा रंग
न पाडा मालक विधि सकतां याय धून काओ लोहंयाम्ह काकाश्या उलुका
श्या निम्ह न्हल दयकाओ दुवारस स्थापना याडाओ गुह्य कर्म जज्ञ विधि या



डाओ पतिष्ठा याडा जुरो ॥ थ्व बहि आगछे जिर्णउद्धार याना वेलस
गुरु मुलाचार्य ऊवा बाहालया वज्राचार्य देवानन्द उपाध्याय बहिचा छेया
वज्राचार्य विधानन्द ॥ चितायाकम्ह, दथुछेया शाक्यभिक्षु भाजुनन्द जुरो
वेपालि वलंपूलछेया शाक्यभिक्षु राजमां ॥ चित्रकार कोतवया धि
जनानीजुनो ॥ थुलि जिर्णउद्धार कम्म विधियाडाया खर्च ...
धनिमो छतका ११ आना १० .. गं देव नं गच्छायागुया खर्च
मोहतका जुरो ॥ संवत् ९८१ मिति आषाढ कृष्ण
पक्षे जुरो ॥

Inscription IV

खोइतानक विहारको वज्रधातु चैत्यको अभिलेख

ॐ नमः श्री हे वज्राय ॥ ॥ हे वज्राय नमस्तुभ्यंमा र माया प्रमर्दनीम ॥ श्रुन्य
ता करुणा भीन्त श्री हे वज्रनाथं नमाम्यहं ॥ ॥ अद्यत्पादी ॥ सम्वत् १०४६ साल आ
शिवण मासे कृष्णपक्ष षष्ठीमा तीथौ रोहीनी नक्षत्रे शिवजोगे, स्वम्वारसरे त : ...
दानपति यजमानः नेपाल मण्डले काष्ठमण्डप महानगरे खुईतानक म
हाविहारेवस्थित शाक्यभिक्षुक दीपणत तेजमान तस्य भार्या थकुंमती
तस्य सतजीव पुत्र चन्द्रमान तस्य भार्या हिरामाया तस्य पुत्र सुर्यमान प्र
भृति सकल जाहानया धर्मचित्त उत्पति जुया व श्री कुलदेवता श्री व हे
वज्रनैरात्मा जीर्णोद्धारयाना जुलः मुलाचार्य ऊवावहालया वज्रमा
नंद उपाध्याय ध्वाका बाहालया भाजु रत्न कर्माचार्य औबाहालया
विलास हर्ष थुषुनुया दिन जीवन्त्यास सोद्धारन याना आशिवण
कृष्ण अमावाश्या उत्र भाद्र नक्षत्र, बुद्धवार षुनु जिवन्त्यास स्था
पना याना सम्वत् १०४७ साल माघ कृष्ण पंचमी उत्र भाद्र नक्षत्र
आदित्यवार थ्व षुनु प्रतिष्ठा संपुर्ण याना जुलो ॥ ॥ थुगु धम्म
जगत् संसार सत्व प्राणी उद्धार जुय मालः दानपत्ये चन्द्र
मान प्रभृती सकल जनयात धर्म अर्थ काम मोक्ष चतुर्वगफल प्रा
प्त जुयमाल जुलो शुभ ॥

०००

००

०

तेजमान थकुंमति चन्द्रमान

हिरामाया सुर्यमान

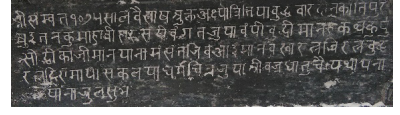
.....



Inscription V

खोइतानक विहारको वज्रधातु चैत्यको अभिलेख

श्री सम्वत् १०७५ साल वैसाख शुक्ल अक्षय्यो त्रितिया बुद्धवार दीन कातिपुर
षुइतनकु माहावीहारस दीवंगत जुया वंपी बुद्धीमान हकथकु पु
न्सीद्वी काजीमानया नाम सतजिव आइमान वेखारत्त त्रिरत्त बुद्ध
रत्त हिरामाया सकलया धर्मचित्त जुया श्री वज्रधातु चैत्य थापना
याना जुल सुभ



Inscription VI

स्वयम्भूको पश्चिमाभिमुखमा रहेको धर्मधातु चैत्य

ओं नमो श्री ३ धर्मधातु बागी ..महाराजाधिराज श्री ३ राजेन्द्रविक्रम साह
बहादुर स्मसेर जंगदेवानां सदासमर विजयीना प्रभुथाकुरस्य विजयराज्ये ॥
दानपते न....नेपारमण्डल काष्ठमण्डप महानगले ओबाल तोल नकबहिलवसिस्थि
काश्यपगोत्र श्रीनारांतस्य भार्या गृलक्ष्मी पृष्ठभार्या..... प्रथम पुत्री
....मालवति...थुति परिवार उभयसेन धर्मचित्त उत्पत्ति जुयाव श्री ३ धर्मधातुण
प्रतिष्ठा.... सम्वत् १५४.....

Inscription VII

स्वयम्भूको पश्चिमाभिमुखमा रहेको वज्रधातु चैत्य

ओ नमो । श्री ३ धर्मधातु बागी ॥ स्वस्ति श्री ३ मन्महाराजाधिराज श्री ३
राजेन्द्रविक्रमसाहा बहादुरस्मसेर जंगदेवानां सदासमर विजयीनां प्रभु थाकुरस्य
विजयराज्ये ॥ ॥... काष्ठमण्डप महानगल ओबालतोल नकबहिललयता गृहस्थित
काश्यप गोत्र धर्मनारां तत्य भार्या भलक्ष्मी, पृष्ठभार्या शिवलक्ष्मी प्रथम पुत्री
हेमावति द्वितिय पुत्री महारुयाति, थुति पलिवार उभय जुस चोनावेले धर्मचित्त,
उत्पत्ति जुयाओ श्रीधर्मधातुबागीश्वरया स्थाने वज्रधातु चैत्य दयकाओ स्थापना
याडा ॥ संवत् १५६ म्ति वैशाखशुदि १२ रोज ५ स प्रतिष्ठा संपूर्ण याडा जुलो

शुभंभुयात् ॥ ॥