

**METAL SCULPTURE MAKING TRADITION IN SHAKYA
FAMILIES OF PATAN**

A Thesis

Submitted To

Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology

Tribhuvan University

In the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master in Art (MA)

Submitted by:

Prasanna Kumar Shakya

TU Registration No: 6-3-28-68-2016

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis on “Metal Sculpture Making Tradition in Shakya Families of Patan|” has been submitted as the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of master's in Nepalese history, Culture and Archaeology under the Department of Culture, Tribhuvan University. I would like to thank my respected teachers and every individual including this institution for their continuous help and support.

First, I would like to express my special thanks to Professor Dr. Som Prasad Khatiwoda, the former Head of Department of NeHCA, Dr. Mahesh Kumar Acharya (Present Department Head) Central Department of Tribhuvan University for providing professor Dr. Tina Manandhar, as my thesis supervisor, who guided me to complete my thesis on time without any hassles. I would also like show my gratitude to Professor Dr. Poonam Rana for her valuable insights. I am so thankful to all my teachers and administration staffs who helped me to gather important information related to my thesis topic.

Similarly, I would like to acknowledge librarian of Central Library of Tribhuvan University for providing books and reports about metal arts and Patan. I would also like thank Mr. Pukesh Shakya, Raju Shakya, Durga Shakya, Ratn Bahadur Shakya, Rikish Shakya, Raj Shakya, Suraj Shakya and Yubraj Shakya from Nag Bahal and Oku Baha for providing information for the research.

Lastly, I would like to thank to all my friends as well as all those individual and institution

Prasanna Kumar Shakya

NeHCA

Tribhuvan University

RECOMMENDATION LETTER

Mr. Prasanna Kumar Shakya has prepared this thesis entitled “Metal Sculpture Making Tradition in Shakya Families of Patan” under my guidance and supervision for his partial fulfillment of Master’s Degree in Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology under the Faculty of Humanities and Social sciences of Tribhuvan University. He has worked in accordance with my suggestion and guidance, and I, therefore, would like to recommend the thesis for evaluation and examination.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tayami", written in a cursive style and underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Dr. Tina Manandhar

Thesis Supervisor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS	vi
List of Tables	vii
CHAPTER I.....	1
Introduction of the Study	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	2
1.3 Research questions.	3
1.4 Objective of Study.....	4
1.5 Methodology.....	4
1.9. 1 Primary Data Collection	4
Interviews.....	5
1.9. 2 Secondary Data Collection	5
1.6 Limitation of the Study.....	6
1.7 Delimitation of the Study	7
1.8 Significance of the study	7
1.9 Expected Findings	8
1.10 Literature Review	8
CHAPTER II:	11
Introduction and History of Metal Sculpture making Tradition of Shakya	11
2.2 Metal Sculpture making and Handicraft Industry of Nepal.....	15
2.2.1 Early Development:.....	19
2.2.2 Growth and Evolution:	19
2.2.3 Modern Era:.....	19
2.2.4 Contemporary Challenges and Innovations:.....	20
2.2.5 Innovation and Adaptation:	20
2.2.6 Popular Nepalese Handicrafts:	20

2.3	Shakya families in Metal art of Kathmandu Valley	20
	Buddhist Influence in the Metal art of Shakya Families of Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal	23
CHAPTER III:		26
Insights, Constraints and Potential of Sculpture making Profession of Shakya Families of Patan		26
3.1	Introduction.....	26
1.2	Shakya clan of Kathmandu Valley and their surnames	27
3.3	Historicity of Shakyas of Patan.....	28
3.4	Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal of Patan.....	31
3.4.1	Background of Vihara Architecture of Patan.....	31
3.4.2	Oku Bahal of Patan	32
3.4.3	Naga Bahal of Patan.....	33
3.5	Legacies of Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal	34
3.5.1	Lost Wax Method of Sculpture making.....	35
3.5.2	Traditional mold making process.....	36
3.5.3	Hammer Beaten Technique.....	38
3.6	Insights to Sculpture making Profession in Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal:.....	38
	Historical and Cultural Context	39
3.7	Challenges of the Metal Sculpture making Profession in Shakyas	41
3.8	Present Condition of the Sculpture Makers and Metal arts Business Holder	42
Chapter IV.....		43
Present Condition of Sculpture making in Shakya Family		43
Chapter V		46
Major Finding		46
4.1	Findings of the Study	46
Chapter VI.....		56
5.3	Recommendation	58
Appendix A.....		59
References.....		68

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photo 1 Clay Molding Process Source: self	60
Photo 2 Copper parts of Statue Source: self	62
Photo 3 Hand made tools from locally available raw materials Source: self.....	63
Photo 4 wax model Source: self.....	64
Photo 5 Melted Bee wax Source: self	65
Photo 6 model coated with a finger white clay-cow dung mix and dried source: self.....	66
Photo 7 Interview with artist Yubraj Shakya Source: self	67

List of Tables

Table 1 List of Details of Interviewees	46
Table 2 Shakya Householder in the Metal Business	55

CHAPTER I

Introduction of the Study

1.1 Introduction

Nepal's temples and statues of gods, and other figures reflect the glorious past when art flourished in the capital city. From the very typical households to melting iron for making the statues, traditional skills like woodcarving have been handed down for centuries in the Kathmandu Valley. Nepalese traditional art and architecture are totally dominant of Hindu and Buddhist religious philosophy which are reflected by various kind of painting images, statue sculpture of deities, temples, monasteries, old squares, and other monuments. For centuries, Buddhists belonging to Nepal's Newar caste specially belongings to Shakya families have been making and selling metal statues and figurines of their sacred deities (*Global Press Journal*).

Nepal has an abundance of temples and palaces, art and crafts, music and war history. To this day there are skilled craftsmen who can make equally beautiful woodcarvings and intricate statues. Nepal is the birthplace of Araniko, a famous artist, of the late 12th century, from the Kathmandu Valley who traveled to Shangdu (Xanadu) and built the famous White Stupa at the Miaoying Temple. He is a key figure in Chinese culture because he introduced the pagoda style architecture in China, for the first time and the rest is history.

The Shakya were a clan of late Vedic India (c. 1000 – c. 500 BCE) and the later so-called second urbanization period (c. 600 – c. 200 BCE) in the Indian subcontinent (present-day nations of India and Nepal). The Shakya's are mentioned in later Buddhist texts as well, including the Mahāvastu (c. late 2nd century BCE), Buddhaghōṣa and Sumaṅgalavilāsinī, a commentary by Buddhaghōṣa on the Dīgha Nikāya (c. 5th century CE), mostly in the accounts of the birth of the Buddha, as a part of the Adicchabandhus (kinsmen of the sun) or the Ādichchas and as descendants of the legendary king Ikshvaku. Pali canon traces Gautama gotra (patriline) of Shakya to Rigvedic sage Angirasa. The Shakya formed an independent oligarchic republican state known as the Śākya Gaṇarājya. The Shakya capital

was Kapilavastu, which been located either in present-day Tilaurakot, Nepal. Mulsarvastivada Vinayavastu, the authentic Buddhist text, signifies that the Shakya of Kapilvastu, after the massacre, entered the Valley in mass.

The metallurgical arts of ancient Nepal have long been famous and their antiquity well established. The metal casting artists are localized in Patan areas especially in Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal. Two Buddhist communities of Vanras caste of Newari Buddhists. These two communities have traditionally been centers of metal crafting and they still are. It is estimated that approximately 60% of families of Oku Bahal are involved in casting as opposed to perhaps 15 to 25% in Naga Bahal (Ian and Jill, 1973).

There is a pressing need to equip young Shakya with the means to develop their entrepreneurial potential. In this context, there is the need for the government to create a support mechanism to help integrate young people into the job market, through the handicraft entrepreneurship. However, the handicraft sector is performing at a level far below its potential in Nepal.

The tradition of Shakya families continues to the present day. The art and craft of producing metal icons still continues among the Shakya's of Patan who to this day provide fine metal work to visiting tourists and to the Buddhists of the world. However, the literature reviews on sculpture making in Shakya families is still lacking in Nepal. To provide a glimpse of the present context of Sculpture making in Shakya Families living in Naghbahal and Okubahal areas. This study examines the current scenarios of statues making, the perception towards metal crafting.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The arts and crafts of Nepal, particularly the metal crafts produced by the Shakya families in Patan, Kathmandu Valley, represent a significant component of the nation's cultural heritage. These traditional crafts not only embody the legacy of artisanship and craftsmanship but also serve as an instructional foundation for future production. However, the advent of new technologies and changing market trends has led to an increase in the production of such metal crafts by various industries, impacting the quality and authenticity traditionally maintained by the Shakya craftsmen.

Historically, the Shakya families have been renowned for their unique style and exceptional skills in statue-making, contributing immensely to the artistic landscape of Nepal. Despite this rich heritage, contemporary challenges in manufacturing and meeting international demand have resulted in a decline in the quality of statues produced by these families.

Moreover, there is a noticeable decline in the interest of the younger generation within the Shakya families to continue this labor-intensive craft. This lack of interest is largely attributed to the demanding nature of the work, which requires significant dedication and patience. For instance, crafting an image of Shakyamuni Buddha involves studying iconography, facial features, and adhering to traditional metal art manuals to achieve perfection. This meticulous process is essential to understanding the cultural and religious significance of the statues produced.

Additionally, the trend of youth migrating abroad for various opportunities has further exacerbated the decline in the number of skilled artisans within the Shakya community. This migration threatens the continuity of the statue-making tradition, placing the cultural heritage of the Shakya families in a vulnerable state. Without intervention, there is a real risk that this artisanal legacy may disappear.

This research aims to identify the reasons behind the decline in interest among the younger generation of Shakya families and to understand the factors contributing to this trend. It is vital to trace these reasons to devise strategies for preserving this cultural heritage at a critical juncture.

1.3 Research questions.

This research on sculpture making traditions in Shakya families of Patan seeks to address the following specific questions:

1. What is the historicity of statue making tradition of Shakya families of Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal of Patan?
2. What are the insights, constraints and potential of statue making in Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal?

3. What are the present situation of statue making among the Shakya family?

1.4 Objective of Study

The general objective of the study is to find out the past and present context of sculpture making among Shakya families living in Naga Bahal and Oku Bahal. Besides that, this study aims to bring information about the techniques of the metal arts forward. There are numerous reasons why the study and the topic of this research is important. Some of them are for historical documentation, cultural studies, religious impact, Socio-economic influence, anthropological research and architectural and urban contributions. Besides all Besides all these the objective of the study is listed below;

1. To study the historicity of metal sculpture making tradition of Shakya families of Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal of Patan.
2. To identify the insights, constraints and potential of statue making.
3. To explain the current situation of metal sculpture making among Shakya family.

All the mentioned objectives are expected to be achieved from this study. There are also some shadow objectives regarding this study.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology of this study has been done by following the qualitative research methods. Naghbahal and Okubahal. In Patan areas, image casting artists are further localized in Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal. These two communities have traditionally been centers of metal casting and they still are (Ian Alsop and Jill Charlton, 1973). Respondents will be from Shakya families those involve in Sculpture making.

1.9. 1 Primary Data Collection

This one of the major methods of data collection which are collected by interacting and exploring the study area in person. Qualitatively in-depth interview was conducted covering the questionnaire including age of respondents, duration of work, years of involvement in statues making, factors responsible for increase in new generation losing its interest in this occupation and how these families can retain its new generation.

Following are the lists of headings name, date and age of the participants of interview as the primary sources;

Interviews

Sampling Method: Purposive sampling was used to select interviewees who are directly involved or highly knowledgeable about the Shakya family's metal craft tradition.

- Besides, there are various topic which were covered with these interviews and they are listed below, Historicity of the practice of the metal art and craft by Shakya families of Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal.
- Present condition of the craft and business
- About Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal
- Challenges and potential of sculpture making in the market.
- Factors responsible for the decline in the craftsmanship of statue makers.

Interview Technique: In-depth interviews were conducted with the selected individuals, allowing for detailed and in-depth insights.

Question Schedule: Open-ended questions were used in the interviews to encourage detailed responses and to explore the interviewees' perspectives, experiences, and insights comprehensively.

Personal Observation:

Observation Focus: Observations were made during the actual statue-making process to understand the techniques, tools, and workflow involved.

Observation Context: Observing the artisans at work provided first-hand insights into the intricacies of their craft, the challenges they face, and the dedication required to maintain their traditional practices.

1.9. 2 Secondary Data Collection

The secondary data are the source which supports the findings of the primary data. There are various secondary sources that has been collected for the sculpture making crafts of

Shakya families of Naga Bahal and Oku Bahal. Following are the lists of secondary sources which are studied for the findings;

I. Published books and journals form national and international writers

The books of various writers are one of the most significant sources of research. They help on understanding the areas of study. For this research as well books written by various artists on metal arts and sculpture making were gathered.

II. Published reports and articles by national and international writers.

There are various articles published about the craftsmen of Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu. Such articles were studied as one of the major secondary sources for this research.

III. MA and PhD thesis and dissertations

Besides, the central library of Tribhuvan University also provides the previous thesis and dissertations done by the students of Masters' and PhD. In this research as well, the previous done thesis is studied and taken as a base of the further research.

IV. Social media publications like YouTube videos, interviews, and photos.

In today's digital world the contents in social media also plays key role in providing the information of any subject matter. Thus, for better understanding the above-mentioned social media publications were used for information.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

Every research or study has particular limitation. While talking about this research thesis about the legacy of Shakya families of Nag Bahal and Oku Bahal on metal sculpture making has its academic and geographical limitation. This study only focuses on the households of Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal of Patan of Lalitpur district. Those craftsmen who have been doing this work as their family's traditional occupation were interviewed and asked for the research questions. The newly established business who are outside of the Shakya Clan were not involved in this research. While taking about the legacy, those

families of at least of three generations working in the field were taken as the major source of information and study.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

Geographical Scope:

The research is confined to two specific locations: Nag Bahal and Oku Bahal within the Patan area of the Kathmandu Valley. This focus may limit the generalizability of the findings to other areas where Shakya families might reside.

Participant Selection:

Only families who have been involved in the statue-making business for two or three generations were selected for interviews. This excludes perspectives from newly entered families in the statue-making business, which might offer different insights.

Sampling Method:

Purposive sampling was used to select interviewees, focusing on those with a deep generational involvement in the craft. This deliberate selection may not capture a wide range of experiences and viewpoints within the broader Shakya community.

Data Collection Methods:

The study relies solely on two primary data collection methods: in-depth interviews and personal observations. The absence of other data collection methods, such as surveys or focus groups, may limit the breadth of data and potential triangulation of findings.

Temporal Context:

Observations were made during the statue-making process at specific times. This temporal limitation may not fully capture seasonal variations or changes in production methods over time.

1.8 Significance of the study

Shakya's of Kathmandu have been in art and business sector from long period of time. Most Shakya were special in making bronze statues, wood craft, stone craft, jewelry making etc. They have also been actively involved in business activities as many business houses were run by Shakya families.

But this study will be focused on sculpture making occupation which has been identity of Shakya families living in Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal (Ian and Jill, 1973). They have long history in contributing Nepal's art all over the world. This study will show when and how did they start this occupation. This study might be able to add value to the heritage of metal crafts and the skilled manpower behind it. Moreover, there are various other significant of this research study which are listed below;

1. Helps in providing information about the history and current status of the Shakya craftsmen of Oku Baha and Naga Baha.
2. Bring more information about their crafts and experience in metal art.
3. Help in conservation of the heritage and knowledge of the craftsmen.
4. Provide information regarding the present market of the products from their crafts.
5. Help in understanding the present situation of the artists and their crafts.
6. Provide additional information on challenges they are facing regarding their ancestral occupation.

1.9 Expected Findings

This research shall help Shakya families to find the current situation of Shakya families involved in sculpture making. It will help to provide an improved understanding and answer of losing interest among new generation. Also, result expect that lack of training, platform and less earning to be the main factors leading to involvement in this occupation.

1.10 Literature Review

The literature review in every research is important to understand the study area and full the objective of the study. Here, in this research the books written by national and international writers on various topics related to arts, iconography, metal art and architecture of Nepal.

Writer Alex R. Furger, 2017 in his book; *The gilded Buddha* explains in detail about the step-by-step method of metal arts of Oku Bahal of Patan. The book was also contributed by Mr. Ratna Jyoti Shakya who is one of the metal craftsmen of Patan by profession. The book is one of the significant sources of information regarding the study of making bronze arts, its historicity and status as a family business.

Buddhaghosa's work (II, 1–24) traces the origin of the Shakyas to king Ikshvaku and gives their genealogy from Maha Sammata, an ancestor of Ikshvaku. This list comprises the names of a number of prominent kings of the Ikshvaku dynasty, which include Mandhata and Sagara. According to this text, Okkamukha was the eldest son of Ikshvaku. Svisamjaya and Sihassara were the son and grandson of Okkamukha. King Sihassara had eighty-two thousand sons and grandsons, who were together known as the Shakyas. The youngest son of Sihassara was Jayasena. Jayasena had a son, Sihahanu, and a daughter, Yashodhara (not to be confused with Prince Siddhartha's wife), who was married to Devadahasakka. Devadahasakka had two daughters, Anjana and Kaccana. Sihahanu married Kaccana, and they had five sons and two daughters; Suddhodana was one of them. Suddhodana had two queens, Maya and Prajapati, both daughters of Anjana. Siddhartha (Gautama Buddha) was the son of Suddhodana and Maya. Rahula was the son of Siddhartha and Yashodara (also known as Bhaddakaccana), daughter of Suppabuddha and granddaughter of Añjana.

Buddhist Monks or Kinsmen of the Buddha, 1989, reflections on the titles traditionally used by Shakyas in the Kathmandu Valley is the article that was taken as one of the source for origin and historicity of Shakya of Kathmandu valley. The article states various stories written in Buddhist scripture regarding the title of Shakya. Here the writer distinguishes between the Shakya of Kathmandu and Lalitpur along Vajracharya and Bhuddhacharya.

According to Rustam J. Mehta 2015, during the regime of the Imperial Guptas in India (A.D. 320-600), the art of image casting was introduced in Nepal. Afterward, Nepalese image casting flourished in the Kathmandu valley and began to take its own direction with a blend of Indian style as well. During that period, Newari craftsmen gained prominence among the Tibetan and Chinese as high-quality artists. Patan is well known for its art and also coined as the city of fine arts. The traditional image casting of Patan is localized into

two Buddhist communities at Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal. These two communities traditionally have been casting the image and they still are doing it to this date. On the other hand, the art of casting in Nepal is now in a state of flux and transition. The casters who are working today belongs to a crucial generation of Nepalese sculptors, for they live between a past that had not changed appreciably for several centuries and a future which may hold more change than even most far side can predict. With the opening of Kathmandu valley to tourism and the accompanying western ideas and values, all Nepalese are subject to influence which might tend to draw them away from the traditions of the past. Some observers have predicted that ancient skills will be lost in a rush towards the modern age.

Global Khabar, A minister of State for Industry Kanchan Chandra Bade has said that Nepali youth can earn more than what they are earning in gulf countries by producing and selling handicraft products.

Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN) 1997, The metal craft industry in Nepal runs mostly by household units clustered around the city of Patan. Individual artisans follow age old design and production technology.

Mr. S.R Shakya, 1974 in his study “The prospects of Developing handicraft and curious industry in Nepal” has given a lot of suggestions on the promotion of handicrafts export. His focus was on the artisan’s side of the industry. According to Mr. Shakya artisans have been exploited by the exporters and the collectors of handicrafts. He was right in this point up to the year 1974. But this is not true in present situation when the artisan has been taking full benefits of their skills. Moreover, the highly skilled artisans want unnecessary benefits because of monopoly skill. This has increased the wage of artisans more than two times within years. He has also shown the problem of unavailability of raw materials.

Bijendra D. Shakya, 1977, in his dissertation “A study on the export promotion of Nepalese Handicraft” has observed more than necessary problems but he didn’t try to find out the main problem of this industry. His main focus is on the promotion side of export trade. His finding with regards to the promotion of handicrafts is, however, important for the betterment of this industry.

CHAPTER II:

Introduction and History of Metal Sculpture making Tradition of Shakya

2.1 Introduction

Statue or image of any kind is made with great consideration in Indian-sub continent. To understand the history of the making of Statue, we must first discuss Iconography. Generally, Iconography is defined as the science of description, classification and interpretation of the subject matter of a work of art. The term was first used by the Greeks as “Ikon” which directly means image. They are the pioneer of worshipping and manifesting gods in the form of Idols and worshipping them for the grace and blessings. There are various research which support that human began to worship god and goddess in material form during Indus Valley Civilization in south Asia. In the archaeological excavation and research, scientists have come across to similar seal as the description of “Pashupati” from the sites of Indus Valley. If we look at the prehistoric arts and iconography we can find interesting objects of ivory, woods and stone which represents the female (Venus), animal figurine and amulets. They were on the initial stage of developing any kind of where the concept of religion was not developed (Rao, 1971, p. 20).

After the development of religion and different believe system in human being, there has been drastic development in production of Stone image which belonged to Gods and Goddess. I strongly believe that the development of Hinduism as the major religion in South Asia is one of the significant reasons behind this. As we know Rigved, Samaved, Yajurved and Atharva Ved are known as the pillars of Hindu civilization. Though the people in Veds gave priorities to the Yagyas and Dana as a form of prayers and manifestation, they described various forms of gods and goddess with their specific iconography. For examples there are ancient Hindu Scriptures like Taittiriya Samhita, Shatapatha Brahman, Vayu Puran, Agni Puran, Shiva Puran, Linga Purana, Garuda Purana,

Devi Bhagavata Purana, Brahma Purana which describes different characteristics of Gods and Goddesses along with their armaments, gesture, posture and expressions (Rao, 1971, p. 35).

The history of iconography in the Indian subcontinent is vast and complex, reflecting the region's rich cultural, religious, and artistic heritage. It spans several millennia and includes a wide range of influences and styles. Here is a detailed overview:

I. Indus Valley Civilization (c. 3300–1300 BCE)

Seals and Figurines: The earliest examples of iconography in the Indian subcontinent come from the Indus Valley Civilization, where seals, pottery, and terracotta figurines depict animals, humans, and possibly deities. **Symbolism:** Common symbols include the "Pashupati" seal, which is believed to represent a proto-Shiva figure, and various animal motifs.

II. Vedic and Post-Vedic Periods (c. 1500–500 BCE)

Minimal Iconography: The Vedic period is marked by minimalistic religious imagery, with a focus on oral tradition and rituals rather than visual representations. **Early Deities:** Simple symbols and motifs start to appear, representing early Vedic deities such as Indra, Agni, and Varuna.

III. Maurya and Shunga Periods (c. 322–185 BCE)

Ashokan Pillars: The Mauryan emperor Ashoka commissioned numerous pillars and stupas adorned with symbolic animals and the Dharma chakra (wheel of law), marking the beginning of Buddhist iconography.

Yakshas and Yakshinis: Terracotta and stone sculptures of nature spirits (yakshas and yakshinis) become prominent.

IV. Kushan Period (c. 1st–3rd century CE)

Buddhist Art: This period saw the flourishing of Gandhara and Mathura schools of art, which created iconic representations of the Buddha, bodhisattvas, and other figures.

Greek Influence: The Gandhara school incorporated Greco-Roman artistic styles, leading to unique depictions of Buddhist subjects.

V. Gupta Period (c. 4th–6th century CE)

Classical Hindu Iconography: The Gupta period is considered a classical age for Hindu art, with the development of standardized iconography for deities such as Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi. Buddhist and Jain Iconography: Buddhist and Jain art also flourished, with intricate carvings and sculptures in stupas, caves, and temples.

VI. Medieval Period (c. 7th–13th century CE)

Temple Architecture: This period saw the rise of grand temple complexes in South India (e.g., Chola, Pallava) and North India (e.g., Khajuraho, Orissa) adorned with detailed iconography. Regional Styles: Distinct regional styles emerged, such as the Chalukya and Hoysala in the Deccan, each with unique iconographic traditions.

VII. Mughal Period (c. 16th–18th century CE)

Syncretic Art: Mughal art blended Persian, Islamic, and Indian elements, seen in the intricate miniatures and architectural decorations. Naturalistic Themes: Iconography during this period often included detailed portrayals of court scenes, flora and fauna, and Sufi themes.

VIII. Colonial and Modern Periods (c. 18th century CE–present)

Colonial Influence: European colonial presence introduced new artistic styles and iconographic subjects, leading to hybrid forms.

Modern Interpretations: In the modern era, Indian artists have reinterpreted traditional iconography in contemporary contexts, blending traditional and modern elements.

Religious and Cultural Impact

Hinduism: Hindu iconography is rich and diverse, depicting a multitude of deities, each with specific attributes, vehicles (vahanas), and symbols. Buddhist iconography includes depictions of the Buddha, bodhisattvas, and various symbols such as the lotus, the wheel,

and the stupa. Additionally, Jain iconography is characterized by the representation of tirthankaras (spiritual teachers) in meditative postures, along with auspicious symbols.

IX. Artistic Techniques and Materials

Sculpture and Relief: Stone, bronze, and terracotta sculptures, along with intricate relief carvings, are common mediums for Indian iconography. Besides that, Frescoes, murals, and miniature paintings, such as those found in Ajanta and Ellora caves or the Mughal miniatures, are significant. Also, Textiles and Manuscripts: Iconographic themes are also found in textiles (e.g., temple hangings, embroideries) and illustrated manuscripts (e.g., palm-leaf manuscripts).

Besides that, another Hindu literature Shilpa Sahastra is the major source of arts and crafts which details about the design, crafts, arts, design rule, principle and standard regarding any production. Any individual who wanted to make an idol of Hindu Gods and Goddess are bound to follow the exact manual of this literature. Later the book was developed in different smaller books like Brahmasamhita, Manasara, Devta Murtiprakarana, Samrangan Sutradhara, Mansollas, Shilpa Ratna, Roop Mandan, Aprajit Prichchha and Prasad Mandan (Parajuli, 2018, p. 25).

There are great examples of stone arts from neo-lithic age in South Asian countries like India, Nepal, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Most of them are found in the form of rock-cut cave arts, ancient temples, historical stone pillars, inscription and images of various gods and goddesses. The majority of these stone arts are influenced by the Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain mythologies, events and gods. It is safe to say that the iconography and arts of South Asia are dominated by these three religions (Rao, 1971, p. 55).

Likewise, with the development of stronger state, country and the king, there was a trend of hoarding rare gems, metals and precious stones. The practice could be seen from the time of Pharaohs of Egypt. They used gold in maximum about in the royal household and court. The Pharaohs of Egypt believed that bring gold to their tomb could make their life easier in the afterlife or reincarnation. The Hindu scripture also believe that Gold is one of the purest forms of dedication when it comes to anything sacred or God. Thus, people

began to use metals like Gold, Silver, Copper and Brass in the means of raw material for making precious objects like Gods Idol or image. This kind of practice was done for the king as well because the royal family especially king was taken as the incarnation of God (Rao, 1971, p. 61).

The above-mentioned form of practice can be found in Nepal as well as South Asian countries. Besides, with the development of technologies and mining equipment there has been tremendous development of metal arts around the world. Gold, silver and brass were taken as the major source for the idol making or statue of any kind. The trend of making golden statue of gods and goddess developed around medieval period in Nepal. We can find exceptional craftsmen around the valley majorly in Patan and Basantapur who have mastered the art of metal crafting in Nepal (Parajuli, 2018, p. 30; Handicraft Association Nepal, 2022).

2.2 Metal Sculpture making and Handicraft Industry of Nepal

The history of sculpture making in Nepal is a rich and intricate narrative that reflects the country's diverse cultural, religious, and artistic traditions. The craft has evolved over centuries, with significant contributions from various dynasties and communities. Based on information collected from interviews, it appears that the Shakya family began making metal statues around 200 years ago. Prior to this, they were involved in the production of brass utensils, although the exact timeline of when they started metal casting of utensils remains unclear due to a lack of written documentation. While bronze statues from the 8th and 10th centuries have been found, the identities of the casters remain unknown. It is believed that metal casting was introduced in Nepal during the Lichchhavi period, but there is no concrete evidence of early metal statues. Despite the existence of bronze images from the 8th century, the creators of these works are not documented (Chandra, 1987, p. 55).

According to interview data, the Shakyas of Okubahal and Naga Bahal began making statues around 200 years ago. Initially, statue production was likely limited to pieces for ritual purposes. However, after the 18th century, following the invasion of India by Muslims, Nepal saw a flourishing of sculpture making, with an increase in exports to Tibet and China. Here is an overview of the key periods and developments in the history of sculpture making in Nepal:

I. Ancient and Early Medieval Periods (c. 5th century BCE - 12th century CE)

Licchavi Period (c. 400-750 CE)

Early Influences: The earliest statues in Nepal can be traced back to the Licchavi period, which saw the influence of Indian Gupta art.

Material and Style: Statues were primarily made from stone and bronze, characterized by elegant and refined features.

Iconography: Hindu and Buddhist deities, such as Vishnu, Shiva, and Avalokiteshvara, were commonly depicted. Notable examples include the Changu Narayan Vishnu statue and the Budhanilkantha Vishnu.

II. Transitional Period (c. 750-1200 CE)

Artistic Development: This period marked a transition with the rise of unique Nepali styles, incorporating both Hindu and Buddhist themes.

Stone and Metal Works: Artists began creating more intricate stone and metal statues, evident in the proliferation of religious iconography.

III. Medieval Period (c. 12th - 18th century CE)

IV. Malla Period (c. 1200-1769 CE)

Golden Age: The Malla period is often regarded as the golden age of Nepali art and culture, with significant advancements in sculpture making.

Bronze and Gilt Statues: The use of bronze and gilding techniques became prominent, leading to the creation of exquisite statues with detailed craftsmanship.

Newar Artisans: Newar artisans from the Kathmandu Valley played a pivotal role, known for their skill in metalwork and sculpture.

Iconographic Innovation: Statues from this period include multi-armed deities, complex tantric figures, and finely detailed representations of Buddha and Bodhisattvas.

V. Modern Period (c. 18th century - Present)

VI. Shah Dynasty (c. 1769-2008 CE)

Continuity and Change: The Shah dynasty continued the artistic traditions of the Malla period while introducing new influences.

Royal Patronage: Kings and nobility patronized the arts, commissioning statues for temples, palaces, and public spaces.

Cultural Synthesis: The period saw a blend of traditional Nepali styles with influences from neighboring Tibet and India.

VII. Contemporary Era

Revival and Innovation: There has been a revival of traditional statue-making techniques, with contemporary artists blending classical styles with modern aesthetics.

Tourism and Global Influence: The rise of tourism has led to increased demand for Nepali statues, influencing both the style and production methods.

Cultural Preservation: Efforts are being made to preserve traditional techniques and train new generations of artisans.

Key Characteristics and Techniques

Materials: Statues in Nepal have been traditionally made from a variety of materials, including stone, bronze, copper, wood, and clay (Furger, 2017, p. 45).

Techniques:

Lost-Wax Casting: A significant technique used for creating detailed metal statues, particularly during the Malla period.

Stone Carving: Skilled stone carving techniques have been employed since the Licchavi period, producing intricate reliefs and freestanding sculptures.

Gilding and Inlay: Techniques involving gilding (applying gold leaf) and inlaying precious stones to enhance the statues' aesthetic and spiritual value.

Iconography: Nepalese statues are known for their rich iconography, depicting a wide range of Hindu and Buddhist deities, often with intricate symbolism and tantric elements.

Notable Examples

Patan Durbar Square: Renowned for its array of statues, including the famous statue of King Yoganarendra Malla and various Hindu deities.

Swayambhunath and Boudhanath: Major Buddhist sites with numerous statues of Buddha, bodhisattvas, and other figures.

Bhaktapur: Known for its artistic heritage, including statues like the colossal Bhairava at the Bhaktapur Durbar Square.

The history of sculpture making in Nepal is a testament to the country's rich artistic heritage, deeply intertwined with its religious and cultural traditions. The craftsmanship and aesthetic appeal of Nepali statues continue to captivate admirers both within the country and around the world (Furger, 2017, p. 67).

Handicraft refers to any form of skilled work done by hand to create decorative or functional objects. It involves using traditional tools and techniques to produce items that have aesthetic, cultural, and often utilitarian value. Handicrafts are typically made in small quantities, emphasizing craftsmanship, creativity, and individuality. The primary characteristic of handicrafts is that they are crafted by hand, often using traditional tools and methods passed down through generations. Handicrafts often reflect the cultural heritage and artistic traditions of a specific community or region. They may incorporate local materials, motifs, and techniques that are unique to that culture. Besides that, they can serve practical purposes (e.g., pottery, textiles) or be purely decorative (e.g., sculptures, paintings). They can range from everyday items to ceremonial or religious artifacts. Each handmade item is unique, showcasing the artisan's skill, creativity, and attention to detail. Handicrafts often carry a sense of authenticity and personal touch that mass-produced goods may lack. Many handicrafts use natural materials and production processes that are environmentally sustainable, contributing to a eco-friendlier consumer choice (Handicraft Association Nepal, 2022).

Examples of handicrafts include pottery, ceramics, textiles (e.g., weaving, embroidery), metalwork (e.g., jewelry, sculptures), woodcarving, basketry, glassblowing, and paper crafts. Handicrafts are valued not only for their beauty and craftsmanship but also for their role in preserving cultural traditions and supporting local economies. The handicraft industry in Nepal has a rich and diverse history, deeply intertwined with the country's cultural heritage and economic development. Here's an overview of its history (Handicraft Association Nepal, 2022).

2.2.1 Early Development:

Ancient Origins: Handicrafts in Nepal have ancient roots, dating back to the Lichhavi period (4th to 9th centuries AD) and further developed during the Malla period (10th to 18th centuries AD). During these times, skilled artisans produced intricate metalwork, woodcarving, pottery, and textiles, often influenced by Hindu and Buddhist iconography.

Influence of Trade Routes: Nepal's position on the ancient trade routes between India and Tibet facilitated the exchange of ideas, materials, and craftsmanship. This led to the development of unique styles and techniques in various handicrafts (Handicraft Association Nepal, 2022).

2.2.2 Growth and Evolution:

Patronage by Royalty and Nobility: The patronage of royalty and nobility during different historical periods contributed to the development and refinement of handicraft skills. Artisans were often supported and encouraged to create works of art for temples, palaces, and wealthy patrons. **Cultural and Religious Influence:** The rich cultural and religious diversity of Nepal influenced the handicraft industry significantly. Artisans crafted items for religious rituals, ceremonies, and daily life, reflecting both Hindu and Buddhist traditions (Handicraft Association Nepal, 2022).

2.2.3 Modern Era:

Impact of Tourism: With the growth of tourism in Nepal from the mid-20th century onwards, there was a surge in demand for traditional handicrafts as souvenirs and decorative items. This provided new opportunities for artisans to showcase and sell their craft. Recognizing the importance of the handicraft sector for cultural preservation and

economic development, the Nepalese government has provided support through training programs, marketing initiatives, and infrastructure development (Handicraft Association Nepal, 2022).

2.2.4 Contemporary Challenges and Innovations:

Globalization and Competition: In recent decades, the Nepalese handicraft industry has faced challenges from mass-produced goods and global markets. However, there has also been a growing appreciation for handmade, sustainable products, which has helped sustain demand for traditional Nepalese crafts.

2.2.5 Innovation and Adaptation:

Artisans in Nepal have adapted to modern trends and consumer preferences while preserving traditional techniques and designs. This includes incorporating contemporary designs, using eco-friendly materials, and expanding their market reach through online platforms.

2.2.6 Popular Nepalese Handicrafts:

Thangka Paintings: Intricate Buddhist paintings on cotton or silk, often depicting deities, mandalas, or religious scenes.

Metalwork: Brass and copper items including statues, ritual objects, and utensils.

Woodcarving: Elaborate carvings used in architecture, furniture, and decorative items.

Handmade Paper Products: Lokta paper and products made from it, such as journals, cards, and lampshades.

2.3 Shakya families in Metal art of Kathmandu Valley

The Shakya families of the Kathmandu Valley including the artists of Oku Bahall and Bahal of Patan are renowned for their exceptional skills in metal art, particularly in creating statues, religious artifacts, and other metal works. Their contributions are deeply rooted in the history and culture of the region, making them an integral part of Nepal's artistic heritage. The Shakya families are traditionally from the Newar community, an indigenous group in the Kathmandu Valley known for their rich cultural and artistic traditions. They trace their ancestry to the Shakya clan, to which Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha)

belonged, although their artistic lineage is specifically associated with metalwork and sculpture.

Patronage and Influence

Historically, the Shakya families received patronage from various dynasties, including the Malla kings, who were great patrons of the arts. Their work has adorned numerous temples, monasteries, and palaces, playing a crucial role in religious and cultural rituals.

Artistic Techniques and Traditions

Lost-Wax Casting

A significant technique used by Shakya artisans is the lost-wax casting process, known as "cire perdue." This ancient method allows for intricate details and precision in metal sculptures. The process involves creating a wax model of the statue, covering it with clay to form a mold, heating the mold to melt away the wax, and then pouring molten metal into the cavity.

Gilding and Inlay

Shakya artisans are also skilled in gilding, applying thin layers of gold leaf to their metal works to enhance their beauty and significance. They often use inlay techniques to embed precious and semi-precious stones, adding color and value to the statues.

Iconography and Symbolism

The Shakya families specialize in religious iconography, creating statues of Hindu and Buddhist deities, bodhisattvas, and other significant figures. Their works are rich in symbolism, often reflecting tantric elements and intricate detailing that convey religious narratives and spiritual meanings.

Notable Contributions and Works

Temples and Monasteries

Shakya artisans have created numerous statues and religious artifacts for prominent temples and monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley, such as Swayambhunath, Boudhanath, and Patan Durbar Square. Their works include large statues of Buddha, Avalokiteshvara, and various Hindu gods and goddesses.

Royal Palaces and Public Spaces

The Shakya families have also contributed to the decoration of royal palaces and public spaces, producing metal sculptures, ceremonial objects, and decorative elements.

Modern and Contemporary Works

In recent times, Shakya artisans have continued to innovate while preserving traditional techniques. They create both traditional religious statues and contemporary art pieces for local and international markets. Their works are highly sought after by collectors, museums, and art enthusiasts around the world.

Cultural and Social Significance

Preservation of Tradition

The Shakya families play a crucial role in preserving the traditional art of metalwork in the Kathmandu Valley. They pass down their skills and knowledge through generations, ensuring the continuity of their craft. Many Shakya artisans are involved in teaching and mentoring young artists, keeping the tradition alive and adapting it to modern contexts.

Economic Impact

The metal art created by Shakya families contributes significantly to the local economy. Their works attract tourism and generate income through sales to both domestic and international clients. Artisans often collaborate with local and international organizations to promote their craft and expand their reach.

Religious and Cultural Identity

The metal art of the Shakya families is deeply intertwined with the religious and cultural identity of the Newar community and the broader Nepali society. Their works are integral to religious practices, festivals, and cultural celebrations, reflecting the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. Thus, the Shakya families of the Kathmandu Valley are master metal artisans whose work has significantly shaped the artistic and cultural landscape of Nepal. Their dedication to their craft and their ability to blend tradition with innovation continue to make them a vital part of Nepal's artistic heritage.

Buddhist Influence in the Metal art of Shakya Families of Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal

The Shakya families of Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal in the Kathmandu Valley have played a pivotal role in the development and perpetuation of Buddhist metal art. Their intricate and spiritually significant creations are renowned both locally and internationally. The influence of Buddhism on their metal art can be observed through various aspects, including iconography, techniques, and cultural practice. The Kathmandu Valley, a major center of Buddhism, has been a hub of Buddhist art and culture for centuries. The Shakya families, tracing their lineage to the same clan as the historical Buddha, have a long tradition of creating religious art that serves the needs of Buddhist practitioners and institutions. Monasteries and religious leaders have historically commissioned the Shakya artisans to create statues and ritual objects, ensuring a steady demand for their craftsmanship.

Buddhist Deities and Figures

Buddha: Statues of Shakyamuni Buddha in various postures (mudras), such as the earth-touching and teaching mudras, are prominent in their work.

Bodhisattvas: Figures like Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezig), Tara, and Manjushri are common, each with their specific attributes and iconographic features.

Tantric Deities: Complex and esoteric figures from Vajrayana Buddhism, such as Vajrasattva and Heruka, are also depicted with meticulous detail.

Symbolic Motifs

Lotus Flower: Represents purity and enlightenment.

Dharmachakra (Wheel of Dharma): Symbolizes the teachings of the Buddha.

Vajra (Thunderbolt): Represents indestructibility and power in Vajrayana Buddhism.

This ancient technique, known as “cire perdue,” allows for the creation of detailed and intricate metal sculptures. It has been perfected by the Shakya artisans over generations.

Cultural Practices and Workshops

Family Workshops

The craft is traditionally passed down through generations within Shakya families, with skills and techniques being taught from a young age. Workshops are often family-run enterprises, with each member contributing to different aspects of the production process.

Community Collaboration

Artisans from Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal often collaborate with local monasteries and religious institutions, ensuring that their work meets the liturgical and aesthetic needs of the Buddhist community. Efforts are made to preserve ancient methods and pass them on to new generations of artisans, while adhering to traditional forms, Shakya artisans also adapt to contemporary tastes and market demands. Modern works may include variations in style and design while retaining the essential Buddhist iconography and symbolism. The Buddhist influence in the metal art of the Shakya families of Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal is profound and multifaceted. Their works are not only artistic masterpieces but also serve as important religious icons that aid in the practice and propagation of Buddhism. The dedication to preserving traditional methods while adapting to contemporary contexts ensures that the legacy of Shakya metal art continues to thrive (Shakya R. , 2024).

While discussing further about the metal arts of Kathmandu valley and Patan, it is very important to state how the development of Buddhist sects influenced the crafts and production. However, if we study deeply about the life of Buddha (Shakyamuni), he never

influenced his followers on comparing him to the gods nor he wanted himself to be worshiped. He was strictly against the culture of idol worshipping of any Gods and Goddesses. On the contrary, with the division of philosophy of Buddhism as Theravada and Mahayana in fourth council around 72 A.D, the followers and devotees of Shakyamuni Buddha started to remember him in a symbolic form. The earliest anthropomorphic representation of Shakyamuni Buddha is believed to be from 2nd century C.E to 1st century A.D. This gets more evolved with the time and development of Vajrayana and Tibetan Buddhism in Indian Sub-continent (Chandra, 1987, p. 23).

While talking about the metal artists of Kathmandu valley, there (Rao, 1971) are communities in Patan who are in this business for generations. The 12th century artist Araniko from Nepal is given credit for the exposure to the Tibetan culture and society for Nepali artist. Moreover, there is an historical event which says the Nepali princess married Songtsen Gampo (Emperor of Tibet) in 6th century A.D. It is believed that she brought the metal crafts like golden image of Buddha, pancha dhyani, Buddha Bodhisattva and other form of metal objects with her in Tibet. This marked as the initial phase of popularity received by Nepalese metal crafts in Tibet and China. This increased the metal handicraft market to Nepalese artisans. With this Nepalese group of artists and business men were welcomed for business in Tibet and via silk road they would export Nepalese products in middle east and around the world. Around the year 1640 A.D there has been a treaty between the Lhasa and Newar merchant of Kathmandu which stated that they were allowed to establish 32 business houses in Lhasa. Most of these householders were businessmen, craftsmen, architecture, painters and artists (Chandra, 1987, p. 25).

This course of event is taken as a milestone in the development of Buddhist crafts, idol and statue in Patan. The large number of demands in the idols of Buddha and Bodhisattvas in China, Tibet, Mongolia, Myanmar, Thailand etc south Asian countries make this craft a successful business. The Shakyamuni house holders of Patan were the top suppliers of the idols of Buddha which has great value in the international market. They use to bring raw materials like gold, silver and gems from Lhasa, India and China and make the statue in Patan and export them to the designated couple.

CHAPTER III:

Insights, Constraints and Potential of Sculpture making Profession of Shakya Families of Patan

3.1 Introduction

Shakyas are one of the major ethnic Newar communities of Kathmandu Valley. According to Ambattha Sutta the origin of the Shakya clan is related to king Okkaka; who banished his brother from the kingdom. After being banished they travelled long distance and took shelter in the slopes of Himalaya. At that time a sage named Kapila use to reside in the area. He told them to live in that place and suggested to marry their own sisters so that they can continue their lineage. The offspring produced from their marriage titled themselves Shakyas and made Kapilavastu their capital. This theory is supported by most of the scholars around the world (Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1833, p. 355).

Currently, Shakyas are categorized as Newar community whose features are similar with Tibeto Burman ethnic group. However, some of the research gives a different perspective regarding the origin of Shakya. But they agree to the story of Sumangalavilsini (commentary on Digha Nikaya) that cross-cousins' marriage between Shakya and Koliya clans were in practice. Scholars in their theory suggest that these practices of marrying one's cousin sister or brother are still in practice middle eastern culture and Dravidian of south India. Besides that, there are theories related to the migration of Aryan and non-Aryan communities in the Indus valley from present middle east. Thus, historians believe that the culture non-Aryan followed allowed them to marry their cousins whereas Aryans were opposite and strict about it. All these above-mentioned theories suggest that the origin of the Shakya clan must be from Iran. However, there are still research left to do in that area (Attwood, 2012, p. 12).

Another interesting theory states that Siddhartha Gautam belonged to the Tharu Indigenous community of the Terai of Nepal. Scholar Subodh Kumar Singh in his book "The Great Sons of the Tharus: Shakyamuni Buddha and Emperor Ashoka" states that the Tharu

communities were living in the jungles of the Terai from the ancient period. Thus, it is most likely that Siddhartha Gautam had belonged to the Shakya clan and Tharu originality (Gellner, 1989, p. 15).

When Kapilavastu was thriving as a fortified kingdom of Shakya clan, they were self-sufficient. The archaeological evidence of Fortification walls, paved road inside the kingdom, iron slags, silver coin hoards and potteries including terracotta arts shows that they were thriving as a culture. King Suddhodhan wanted his son Siddhartha to be a mighty king and protector of his kingdom, but Siddhartha chose the life of spirituality and became a great teacher. After the Mahaparinirvana of Shakyamuni Buddha, the kingdom of Kapilvastu which was already in the verge of collapse got targeted by king Virudhaka of Kosala dynasty who massacred the remaining Shakyas and burned their capital Kapilvastu. It is believed that those who could escape travelled great distance to the territory of South India, Srilanka and Kathmandu valley. Thus, the migrated people from the capital of Kapilvastu established themselves in Kathmandu valley and started practicing their distinct culture (Gellner, 1989, p. 19).

1.2 Shakya clan of Kathmandu Valley and their surnames

We can find the Shakya community very tight knitted group. They have a practice of marriage only with the family of Shakya and Vajracharya. Both communities are given higher respect than the other Newari community of Kathmandu valley. Mostly they reside on cities of Patan, Basantapur, Bhaktapur and some of them migrated to the nearest towns like Banepa, Panauti and Dhulikhel. Most of the houses of Shakya of Kathmandu valley are follower's Buddhism and Vajrayana. They also worship the idols of Shakyamuni Buddha, Tara, Pancha Dhyani Buddha and Bodhisattva. Their culture and rituals are related to the Vihara (Bahal or Bahi) that they are connected to and a Guthi (Gellner, 1989, p. 20).

Although, there are modern practices in the inter-caste and inter-religion marriage these days, the Shakya on the other hand are very strict in marriage inside the clan and community. Even if the marriage takes place with someone outside the clan, the family and the offspring are never allowed to inter inside the Bihara once again. They face abandonment for the lifetime from the rituals. Following are the different caste or surnames that are used by Shakyas of Kathmandu Valley.

- I. Shakyavansa (Bare) : of the Shakya Lineage
- II. Shakyabhiksu (Bare): Buddhist monk
- III. Brahmacharya Bhiksu (Bhikshu Bare) ; celibate monk
- IV. Bauddhacharya/Buddhacharya (Bare): Buddhist preceptor
- V. Cailaka Bhiksu (Cibha Bare): Chaitya Monk

The above-mentioned surname Shakyavamsa call themselves to be from the Shakya lineage which belong to Buddha. Shakyabhiksu, on the other hand is the monk from a Shakya family who renounced his life and is living as a monk. Besides that, Brahmacharya Bhiksu as a surname is used by only the members of the Bahi of Patan. They remain celibate and practice the oldest tradition taught by Shakyamuni Buddha. On the other hand, Buddhacharya, Bauddhacharya or Vajracharya emphasis on learning and practicing the mysticism of Vajrayana Buddhism. They are also known as the priest to Shakyas and other Newar community. The Vajracharya are the members of Syangu Bahah of Swoyambhu. Besides that, those Shakyas who live in the Basantapur or Makhan area and are connected to the Makhan Bahi are known as Bauddhacharya. Lastly, Cailaka are the Chaitya monk who was initiated at a Chaitya. The children from the lower-caste women who married to the Shakya men are basically referred as Chiba Bare (Gellner, 1989, p. 20).

3.3 Historicity of Shakyas of Patan

Patan is one of the ancient cities of Kathmandu valley where UNESCO World Heritage Site; Patan durbar Square is located. Historically the city was known as Yala and Manigal in local term. Historians and Archaeologist believe that the city was used as habitat by Kirat as well. The city of Patan developed as an independent kingdom after the death of King Yakshya Malla. It was around 15th century when the Valley of Kathmandu got divided in three different kingdoms between the three sons of Yakhsya Malla which are Bhaktapur, Lalitpur and Kathmandu.

As the name Lalitpur, the city is filled with artistic designs and crafts. There are some exquisite examples of Nepalese architecture which can be witnessed around the Patan. As one of the historically significant cities Patan Durbar Square is known the Buddhist city with Bahil and Bihar in every corner. Those Bahal, Bahi and Vihara are the umbrella organizations which helped in development of the Vajrayana and unique Newari culture of

Patan. There are hundreds of artisans who are still in the traditional business of sculpture making (Gutschow & Michaels, 1987).

Over centuries, the Shakya community settled in various parts of the Kathmandu Valley, including Patan (Lalitpur). Patan, along with Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, forms one of the three major cities of the valley, known for their rich cultural heritage and Newar traditions. Within the Shakya community of Patan, there are distinct social structures and hierarchies based on family lineage, occupation, and historical roles. Certain surnames and family names within the community reflect these distinctions. Historically, the Shakyas of Patan have been followers of both Buddhism and Hinduism. They have contributed significantly to the religious and cultural life of the Kathmandu Valley, participating in religious rituals, festivals, and maintaining sacred sites.

In modern times, efforts are being made to preserve and promote the cultural heritage of the Shakyas of Patan, including their traditional arts, crafts, and language. Organizations and community initiatives play a crucial role in these endeavors. Like other indigenous communities, the Shakyas of Patan face challenges such as urbanization, globalization, and maintaining traditional practices in a rapidly changing world. However, there is also a strong sense of pride and identity within the community, driving efforts to safeguard their cultural heritage (Gutschow & Michaels, 1987).

There are maximum number of Shakya householders who are residing in the core areas of Patan. The story behind their migration is already mentioned before. The credit for keeping the heritage of the city alive undoubtedly goes to the Newar community living in the area. There are various culturally significant places which is taken as one of the major attractions in Patan as well as the canvas for showcasing the crafts of the artists living here. Following are the list of such examples ((Patan Museum, 2022) ;

1. Patan Durbar Square
2. Patan Museum (Krist, Friedl, Trummer, Bayerová, & Schmidt, 2014)
3. Patan Dhoka
4. Pimbahal Pokhari
5. Nagabahal

6. Kumbeshwar Temple
7. Golden Temple
8. Bubahal
9. Padmavati Mahavihar
10. Purnachandi Temple
11. Hakha Bahal
12. Momaru Galli
13. Minnath Temple
14. Rato Macchindranath Temple
15. Ikhalkhu
16. Agnishala Temple
17. Haugal Bahal
18. Rudra Varna Mahavihar
19. Mahabaudha Temple
20. Guji Bahal
21. Chapat Ganesh
22. Rato Chaitya
23. Terracotta Chaitya
24. Akash Bhairav Temple
25. Balkumari Mandir
26. Guita
27. Bhincche Bahal
28. Jaya Manohar Mahavihar
29. Bhindyo Lachhi
30. Yempi Vihar
31. Jyapu Museum
32. Jagat Narayan Temple

In summary, the Shakyas of Patan, Nepal, have a long and storied history that reflects the broader cultural richness of the Kathmandu Valley. Their traditions, social structures, and contributions to the region's cultural landscape continue to be significant in both historical

and contemporary contexts. The above mentioned architecture of Patan are the best example of their tradition and craftsmanship.

3.4 Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal of Patan

3.4.1 Background of Vihara Architecture of Patan

Vihara is known as Baha or Bahil in local Newari term in Kathmandu Valley. But first we need to understand its historicity. Vihara architecture in Nepal has a deep historical significance, intertwined with both Buddhist architectural evolution in the region. Viharas are Buddhist monasteries or retreats, serving as centers for religious practice, meditation, and learning. Here's a brief overview of the historicity of Vihara architecture in Nepal. Viharas in Nepal trace their origins back to the ancient period, influenced by the spread of Buddhism across South Asia from the 3rd century BCE onwards. Early viharas were often simple structures built to accommodate monks and provide space for communal activities and religious rituals (Slusser, 2005, p. 150).

During the Gupta period (4th to 6th centuries CE), there was a significant cultural and religious exchange between India and Nepal. This period saw the establishment of more elaborate Vihara complexes in Nepal, characterized by square or rectangular layouts with multiple cells for monks, a central courtyard, and often adorned with intricate carvings and sculptures.

In the medieval period, especially under the influence of the Newar people who are indigenous to the Kathmandu Valley, Vihara architecture flourished. The Newar architecture style blended local traditions with influences from Tibetan and Indian architecture, resulting in distinctive features such as multi-tiered pagoda roofs, intricately carved wooden beams and struts (known as "peacock windows"), and stone carvings depicting Buddhist motifs (Slusser, 2005).

The cities of Patan and Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley became important centers for Vihara architecture. The Patan Durbar Square and Bhaktapur Durbar Square are renowned for their numerous Vihara complexes, some dating back to the Licchavi and Malla periods

(4th to 18th centuries CE). Today, Vihara architecture in Nepal continues to be revered and maintained. Many ancient Viharas have been restored and are still used as places of worship and meditation. They also attract tourists and scholars interested in Buddhist art and architecture. The historicity of Vihara architecture in Nepal reflects the rich cultural heritage and the profound influence of Buddhism on the region. The architectural styles evolved over centuries, blending local traditions with influences from neighboring regions, resulting in a unique and enduring architectural legacy (Gutschow & Michaels, 1987).

3.4.2 Oku Bahal of Patan

The Oku Bahal (Uku Bahi) of Patan, also known as Oku Bahal, is a unique architectural structure located in Patan Durbar Square in the Kathmandu Valley of Nepal. Here's an overview of Oku Bahal. Oku Bahal is situated in the southern part of Patan Durbar Square, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Patan, also known as Lalitpur, is one of the three medieval city-states in the Kathmandu Valley, renowned for its rich cultural heritage and Newar architecture (Shakya R. , 2024).

The Baha is a five-storied temple-like structure with a distinctive pagoda-style roof. It is characterized by its wooden struts and carvings, which are typical of Newar architecture. The building has a square base and rises in tiers, each adorned with intricate woodwork. Historically, Oku Bahal served as a rest house for pilgrims and travelers visiting Patan. It provided lodging and sanctuary, particularly for those engaged in religious activities in the nearby temples and monasteries (Shakya R. , 2024).

The structure reflects the cultural and architectural heritage of the Newar people, who have a unique tradition of woodcarving and craftsmanship. The carvings on Oku Bahal depict various deities, mythical creatures, and intricate patterns, showcasing the skill and artistry of Newar artisans. Over the years, Oku Bahal has undergone several renovations and restorations to preserve its architectural integrity. The efforts have been part of broader initiatives to conserve the cultural heritage of Patan Durbar Square and ensure its continued significance.

Today, Oku Bahal attracts tourists and visitors interested in Newar architecture and the cultural history of Nepal. It stands as a testament to the artistic and architectural

achievements of the Newar community and offers insights into the religious and social practices of ancient Patan. Oku Bahal is not only a notable architectural landmark in Patan Durbar Square but also a symbol of the artistic prowess and cultural heritage of the Newar people in the Kathmandu Valley. Its unique design and historical significance make it an important site for both locals and international visitors exploring Nepal's rich cultural tapestry.

3.4.3 Naga Bahal of Patan

Nag Bahal" or "Naga Bahal" is another significant cultural and religious site located in Patan, Nepal. Nagabahal originally served as a Buddhist monastery. Today, the most prominent remnant of this monastery is the Dyalko Bhagwan temple, which once functioned as a Buddhist school. The courtyard also holds historical evidence from the Lichhavi period, featuring two stupas and four Buddhist sculptures. These artifacts underscore the long-standing religious and cultural significance of Nagabahal in the Kathmandu Valley.

Nagabahal is home to approximately 5,000 people living in about 350 households. The residents predominantly belong to the Shakya, Joshi, Bajracharya, Maharjan, Dhakhwa, and Napit communities. Many Shakya, Bajracharya, and Dhakhwa families are affiliated with the Sangha of the Hiranya Varna Mahavihar, reflecting the strong Buddhist heritage of the area.

Nagabahal is a focal point for numerous cultural and religious activities. The most significant of these is the Samyak festival, held every four years, which draws large crowds and is celebrated with great fervor. This festival, along with other local religious ceremonies, highlights the courtyard's role as a center for community life and spiritual practice.

Nag Bahal is situated in the northern part of Patan Durbar Square, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Patan, also known as Lalitpur, is renowned for its rich Newar culture and architecture. The Bahal is a Buddhist monastery complex (Bahal) characterized by its traditional Newar architecture. The main structure includes a courtyard surrounded by

residential quarters for monks, a central shrine (often dedicated to the Buddha or Avalokitesvara), and a stupa or chaitya (Shakya R. , 2024).

The exact origins of Nag Bahal date back many centuries, possibly to the medieval period when Buddhism was flourishing in the Kathmandu Valley. It has been a center of religious practice, meditation, and community gatherings for Buddhist monks and followers. Nag Bahal holds cultural and religious significance for the Newar community and Buddhists in Nepal. It serves as a place of worship, learning, and social interaction. The architecture and artwork within the Bahal reflect the Newar tradition of intricate woodcarving, stone sculpture, and metalwork, often depicting Buddhist motifs and deities.

The courtyard of Nag Bahal typically features a central water source, such as a stone waterspout (hiti), surrounded by prayer wheels, stupas, and small shrines. The monastery's architecture includes ornate wooden windows and doors, which are characteristic of Newar craftsmanship. Nag Bahal is not only a religious site but also a hub for community activities. Festivals, rituals, and ceremonies are often held within the Bahal, fostering a sense of communal unity and religious devotion among its inhabitants and visitors.

Like many historic sites in the Kathmandu Valley, Nag Bahal has undergone conservation efforts to preserve its architectural heritage and cultural significance. It attracts tourists and scholars interested in Buddhism, Newar culture, and traditional architecture. Nag Bahal of Patan stands as a testament to the rich cultural and religious heritage of Nepal, particularly within the Newar community. Its architecture, history, and community activities make it a valuable cultural asset and a significant site of Buddhist worship and learning in the Kathmandu Valley.

3.5 Legacies of Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal

The Shakya community, particularly associated with Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal in Patan, Nepal, has a rich legacy in metal arts that significantly contributes to the cultural and artistic heritage of the region. Here's an exploration of their legacy. The Shakya community in Nepal, known for their craftsmanship in various artistic disciplines, including metal arts, has a longstanding presence in Patan and other parts of the Kathmandu Valley. They are

considered hereditary artisans, passing down their skills and knowledge through generations (Furger, 2017, p. 11).

3.5.1 Lost Wax Method of Sculpture making

The lost wax method, also known as cire-perdue, is a traditional method of casting metal sculptures that has been practiced for centuries, including in the ancient city of Patan, Nepal. Here's an overview of how this method is typically carried out:

Creation of the Model:

An artist first creates a detailed model of the sculpture using wax. This wax model is meticulously crafted to capture the fine details and intricacies of the final sculpture.

Assembly of the Wax Model:

Once the wax model is complete, it is carefully assembled onto a wax "tree" along with other wax models. This tree forms the basis for the entire casting process.

Coating with Ceramic:

The wax tree is then coated with several layers of ceramic material. This coating will eventually form the mold into which the molten metal will be poured. Each layer of ceramic is allowed to dry and harden before the next layer is applied.

Melting Away the Wax:

The ceramic-coated assembly is heated in a kiln, causing the wax inside to melt and flow out through channels designed for this purpose. Hence the name "lost wax" — the wax is lost, leaving behind a hollow ceramic mold.

Metal Casting:

Molten metal, often brass or bronze, is poured into the hollow ceramic mold. The metal fills the space previously occupied by the wax, taking on the exact shape of the original wax model.

Cooling and Finishing:

After the metal has cooled and solidified, the ceramic mold is carefully broken away, revealing the rough metal casting. The casting then undergoes extensive finishing work, including polishing and detailing by skilled craftsmen to achieve the final desired appearance.

In Patan, a historic city in Nepal renowned for its rich tradition of metal craftsmanship and sculpture making, artisans have long practiced this method to create intricate statues of deities, religious figures, and other culturally significant sculptures. The process not only requires technical skill but also embodies a deep cultural and artistic heritage that has been passed down through generations. Today, Patan remains a center of excellence for metal casting and continues to produce exquisite statues using the ancient lost wax method (Furger, 2017, p. 31).

3.5.2 Traditional mold making process.

In Patan, traditional metal sculpture making involves a meticulous process of mold making that supports the intricate artistry and craftsmanship for which the region is renowned. Here's a detailed look at the traditional mold making process used in Patan:

Model Creation:

The process begins with an artisan creating a detailed model of the statue using materials such as clay, wax, or a combination of both. This model serves as the prototype for the final statue.

Mold Preparation:

Once the model is perfected, a mold is crafted around it. Traditionally, molds in Patan are made using a mixture of materials like clay, sand, and organic fibers. This mixture is carefully applied in layers over the model, building up the mold.

Layering and Reinforcement:

The mold-making process involves applying several layers of the clay-sand mixture. Each layer is allowed to dry and harden before the next layer is added. Artisans often reinforce

the mold with additional layers or support structures to ensure it can withstand the casting process.

Drying and Curing:

After the mold is fully constructed, it is left to dry and cure thoroughly. This drying process is crucial to ensure the mold maintains its shape and strength during the casting of the metal.

Wax Model Removal (if applicable):

In some cases, especially for more complex statues, a wax model may be created separately and then embedded into the mold. Once the mold is dry, the wax model is carefully removed or melted away (if using the lost wax method), leaving behind a cavity that mirrors the original model.

Metal Casting:

The prepared mold is then heated to a specific temperature to harden it further and to prepare it for the metal casting. Molten metal, typically brass or bronze, is poured into the mold cavity. The metal fills the mold and takes the shape of the original model.

Cooling and Removal:

After the metal has cooled and solidified, the mold is carefully broken away or peeled off to reveal the rough metal casting inside. This process requires precision to avoid damaging the newly cast statue.

Finishing and Detailing:

Once the metal casting is removed from the mold, skilled craftsmen meticulously finish the statue. This involves cleaning up any rough edges, polishing the surface, and adding intricate details such as facial features, clothing folds, and decorative elements. This step is crucial in bringing out the beauty and intricacy of the final statue.

Final Touches:

Finally, the completed statue may undergo additional treatments such as patination (chemical treatments to create various surface colors) or lacquering to preserve its finish and protect it from environmental elements.

In Patan, this traditional mold making process is not just a technical craft but also a cultural heritage passed down through generations. It requires a blend of artistic vision, technical skill, and deep cultural understanding to produce the exquisite metal statues that are highly valued both locally and internationally.

3.5.3 Hammer Beaten Technique

Another method of making metal sculptures and utensils in Patan is by hammer beaten technique. Here the metal like gold, silver, brass and copper are melted first as a plain sheet of paper. Then by beating it with a hammer from one side of the metal an impression and decoration of the sculpture is created. The artist continuously creates the face, body and whole structure of the sculpture separately and later assemble it with melting the joints and assure it does not get dismantled easily.

3.6 Insights to Sculpture making Profession in Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal:

Metal Sculptures and Statues: The Shakya artisans have created numerous metal sculptures and statues that adorn the temples, shrines, and courtyards of Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal. These sculptures often depict Buddhist deities, figures, and symbolic motifs central to the religious practices of the Bahals.

Ritual Objects: They are also known for crafting ritual objects used in religious ceremonies and practices within the Bahals. These objects include ritual lamps, offering bowls, bells, and other items essential for Buddhist rituals and ceremonies.

Artistic Excellence: The Shakya community is renowned for their mastery of metalworking techniques, such as casting, hammering, engraving, and polishing. Their craftsmanship is characterized by intricate designs, fine details, and a high level of artistic expression, reflecting their dedication to preserving and promoting traditional Nepalese aesthetics.

Cultural Preservation: Through their work in metal arts, the Shakya community plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting Nepalese cultural heritage. They contribute to the maintenance and restoration of metal artworks within Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal, ensuring these sites continue to serve as repositories of artistic and spiritual significance.

Transmission of Knowledge: The Shakya artisans pass on their skills and expertise to younger generations, ensuring the continuity of their craft traditions. This transmission of knowledge is vital for the preservation of traditional metalworking techniques and the perpetuation of Shakya community's cultural legacy.

Recognition and Influence: The metal artworks created by the Shakya community have gained recognition both locally and internationally for their artistic merit and cultural significance. Their influence extends beyond Nepal, contributing to the global appreciation of Himalayan art and craftsmanship. The Shakya community's legacy in metal arts at Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal in Patan underscores their integral role in the cultural and artistic fabric of Nepal. Through their craftsmanship, they uphold traditions, enrich religious practices, and contribute to the enduring beauty and spiritual resonance of these historic Buddhist sites.

The Shakya families of Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal in Patan have a profound legacy in the production of metal statues, which extends deep into the cultural and religious heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. Here's a detailed exploration of their legacy:

Historical and Cultural Context

Hereditary Craftsmanship: The Shakya families have practiced metal statue production for generations, passing down their skills and knowledge from father to son within their lineage. This hereditary craftsmanship is a hallmark of their community's cultural identity and expertise in metalworking.

Buddhist Art Tradition: The metal statues crafted by Shakya artisans primarily depict Buddhist deities, bodhisattvas, and symbolic figures essential to Buddhist worship and iconography. These statues serve both religious and artistic purposes, embodying spiritual ideals and conveying profound religious meanings.

Artistic Excellence: Shakya artisans are known for their exceptional craftsmanship and artistic innovation in metal statue production. They employ traditional techniques such as lost-wax casting (also known as "cire perdue"), hammering, chasing, and engraving to create statues with exquisite details, refined features, and a high level of aesthetic beauty.

Iconography and Symbolism: Each metal statue crafted by the Shakya families is imbued with deep symbolism and iconographic significance. The choice of deity, posture, gestures (mudras), and accompanying attributes (such as weapons, implements, or animals) all convey specific meanings related to Buddhist teachings and practices.

I. Cultural Significance:

Religious Practice: The statues produced by Shakya artisans play a crucial role in Buddhist rituals, ceremonies, and devotional practices within Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal. They serve as focal points for meditation, offerings, and acts of reverence by monks and lay practitioners alike.

Community Identity: The production of metal statues is integral to the cultural identity of the Shakya families. It reinforces their role as custodians of a sacred art form and strengthens community cohesion through shared traditions and values associated with craftsmanship and spirituality.

Economic Livelihood: For many Shakya artisans, metal statue production is not only a cultural heritage but also a means of livelihood. The sale and commissioning of statues sustain their families and contribute to the local economy, supporting a network of artisans, suppliers, and patrons involved in the craft.

II. Contemporary Impact:

Preservation Efforts: The Shakya families actively engage in preserving and promoting their traditional craft amidst modern challenges. Efforts include training younger generations, collaborating with cultural institutions for conservation projects, and participating in exhibitions to showcase their artworks.

Global Recognition: Shakya metal statues have garnered international acclaim for their artistic merit and cultural significance. They are sought after by collectors, museums, and Buddhist communities worldwide, contributing to the global appreciation of Himalayan art and craftsmanship.

The legacy of metal statue production by the Shakya families of Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal epitomizes the intersection of artistic excellence, cultural heritage, and religious devotion. Their statues not only adorn sacred spaces but also serve as enduring symbols of Nepal's rich artistic traditions and Buddhist spirituality.

3.7 Challenges of the Metal Sculpture making Profession in Shakyas

The metal statue-making industry in Nepal, renowned for its exquisite craftsmanship, faces several challenges that impact its sustainability and growth (Shakya R. , 2024).

Skill Transfer and Training: Traditionally, metal statue-making has been a closely guarded craft passed down through generations within specific castes, particularly the Shakyas of the Newar community. However, the younger generation is increasingly moving away from traditional crafts in favor of formal jobs, leading to a shortage of skilled artisans. This shift necessitates training individuals from other castes, which can dilute the traditional methods and techniques over time.

Economic Factors: The production of metal statues is labor-intensive and requires significant time and effort. For instance, creating a single 12-inch statue can take up to three months, resulting in high production costs. While high-quality, detailed statues crafted by master artisans command higher prices, cheaper and less detailed versions produced by less experienced craftsmen are becoming more common, impacting overall quality and market dynamics (Global Press Journal.p.5).

Preservation of Traditional Techniques: The traditional lost-wax casting method and other intricate techniques are essential to the authenticity and cultural value of Nepalese metal statues. However, maintaining these methods in the face of modern, quicker production techniques is challenging. There is a risk that the unique qualities of these traditional crafts may be lost as new methods are adopted to meet increasing demand (termatree) (Yuna Handicrafts Nepal).

Market and Economic Viability: While there is demand for Nepalese metal statues both domestically and internationally, economic factors such as fluctuating metal prices, limited access to markets, and competition from mass-produced goods pose significant challenges. Artisans often struggle to achieve fair pricing and sustain their livelihoods, especially when competing with cheaper, lower quality imports (termatree).

Conservation and Maintenance: The preservation of existing metal statues, many of which are of significant historical and religious value, is another challenge. Environmental factors, neglect, and lack of proper maintenance can lead to deterioration. Efforts by the Nepalese government and various organizations to conserve these cultural artifacts are crucial but require continuous support and resources (Yuna Handicrafts Nepal). Addressing these challenges involves a combination of preserving traditional skills through dedicated training programs, supporting artisans economically, and ensuring that the cultural significance of these crafts is recognized and maintained.

3.8 Present Condition of the Sculpture Makers and Metal arts Business Holder

The Shakya families and statue makers are going through very challenging and uncertain situations regarding their business and profession. When they look back the business was one of the highly respected, profitable and satisfactory. They were valued by the people and government as well. They would take great pride on learning and later on teaching about the skills regarding the crafts. However, due to the modern technology, business market, raw materials and countries financial situation. The legacy and business are on the verge of being closed forever (Shakya R. , 2024).

The policy of government of Nepal is in less favor towards such artists and they are forced to be bound by the rules. Lack of vision and planning on the part of Nepalese government can easily deducted in this. Also, most of the youth these days do not know what kind of goods, products and services are produced in their home country. They are not encouraging that Nepalese crafts and skills are the best and cannot be compared to the rest of the world. The metal statue and utensils produced in Nepal with hands are of excellent quality. This kind of information and knowledge gap is turning out to be harmful.

Thus, due to lack of proper direction and management the whole industry is now limited to producing souvenirs for the tourists and guests only. The raw materials that are used in the making of the product are imported from India which most of the time is very costly and lower in quality.

Chapter IV

Present Condition of Sculpture making in Shakya Family

One of the Major findings of this study is that the legacy of Metal art and sculpture making of Shakya families from Patan is tentatively 150-200 years old. Based on research and feedback from artists, the current state of sculpture making is unsatisfactory. While new generations aspire to pursue professions that align with modern lifestyles, where old generation of artisans and craftsmen are eager to pass down their legacy. However, economic constraints, labor-intensive tasks, and an uncertain future compel them to reconsider introducing the younger generation to this profession or encouraging them to pursue alternative careers.

Times have indeed changed. Today, our work styles and lifestyles have evolved, demanding efficiency and speed, whereas handicrafts require dedication and patience to achieve top quality. Statue makers face challenges in integrating new technologies to enhance production speed without compromising craftsmanship. Struggling to meet international market demands while maintaining domestic quality standards, they find themselves at a crossroads. Despite being one of Nepal's oldest industries, contributing

significantly to the foreign economy and offering employment to a million people, the government appears unaware and uninterested in addressing these issues.

In this era of advanced technology, the documentation of handicraft data remains inadequate. Without thorough research, industry potential cannot be maximized. Furthermore, Nepali artists remain underrecognized, despite proudly showcasing our heritage to tourists. The failure to acknowledge and value these craftsmen threatens the industry's sustainability.

No single initiative can uplift the industry without government involvement. If current trends persist, we may find ourselves importing machine-made statues from China for our temples, diminishing our heritage's pride. Already, brass statues from India, China, and Thailand flood the market, supplemented by fiber replicas of traditional wooden windows and statues. While adaptation to new technology is necessary, the priority remains preserving and innovating to safeguard our heritage skills.

It is safe to say that the generation of millennials are one of the cursed and blessed at the same time. On one hand they wanted to follow the legacy of the family and on the other hand due to the lesser demand, higher corruption and the trend of getting 9-5 jobs made them confused and overwhelmed. Most of the people from this generation are already in their 30s and 40s today. Some of them practice the crafts out of respects for their ancestors whereas other practice the craft only as a side hustle. They are on a huge dilemma to transfer this skill to younger generation of the family due to the uncertain future of this intangible heritage.

Younger generation on the other hand are in more confusion due to the labor-intensive nature of this profession. They do not want to limit their potential in the handicraft industry, they want some thing that is profitable, secure and steady in the future. Some of them want to pursue other profession beside this craft while most of the other are already planning on studying abroad. The younger generation of the families are somewhat detached towards the craft.

The situation of Nag Bahal is very similar. Two of the baha members of Shakya family with profession of craftsmen and business owner were interviewed. Yubraj Shakya and

Ratn Bahadur Shakya are the business owner as well as craftsmen of the Baha. Yubraj have 44 years of experience whereas Ratn Bahadur have almost 50 years of experience in handicrafts. They have seen the good, bad and everything in between when it comes to the legacy of their craft. If we look close enough at the situation and the crisis of the craft, we may be able to understand how serious the situation has become for the heritage of Nepal. This not only decline in practice of a profession but a huge loss for the future generation who won't be able to witness the Legacy.

Chapter V

Major Finding

4.1 Findings of the Study

The legacy of metal crafts is one of the major intangible cultural heritages of Nepal. However there seems to be a gap between the young generation and latest generation who are still in the business. This thesis here is trying to bring the light on the Legacy of Shakya families of Oku Bahal and Naga Bahal of Patan on metal craft specially sculpture making. The study was supported by various interviews of the Shakya community and focal person of both Bahals. The details about the interviewee are listed below in the table;

Table 1 List of Details of Interviewees

S. N	Name	Age	Location	Date of Interview
1.	Pukesh Shakya	38	Oku Bahal	14th Ashar 2081
2.	Raju Shakya	42	Oku Bahal	15th Ashar 2081
3.	Durga Shakya	55	Oku Bahal	11th Ashar 2081
4.	Rikish Shakya	30	Oku Bahal	27th Ashar 2081
5.	Raju Shakya	38	Oku Bahal	27th Ashar 2081
6.	Ratna Bahadur Shakya	65	Nag Bahal	25th Ashar 2081
7.	Rajendra Shakya	56	Nag Bahal	29th Ashar 2081
8.	Suraj Shakya	31	Nag Bahal	28th Ashar 2081
9.	Yubraj Shakya	56	Nag Bahal	21st Ashar 2081

Source: Personal Interview

Name: Pukesh Shakya

Address: Okubahal

Year of work experience: 26 years

He started working with his father during his school days. It's been 26 years now since he's been involved in statue making and carving. His grandfather was also in this profession, making him the third generation to carry on this legacy of craft. His father taught him, and he also learned from other artists.

According to his understanding, statue making might have started around 200 years ago by the Shakyas of Okubahal. Before that, they were making brass utensils. At that time, people were more into traveling to Tibet for jobs and business, and the Tibetan influence also affected the Shakyas of Okubahal, leading them to start making statues of brass and copper. Thus, the statue-making techniques were most likely brought from India to Nepal.

Looking at the current situation of the handicraft industry, it is not satisfactory. The demand is decreasing day by day. Now, the Shakya families involved in handicrafts are more like following their legacy. Most of these families continue their profession as a hobby. Most skilled artists and craftsmen are over 40 and 50 years old, so they continue their work out of habit and are not in a position to change professions at this stage.

Most of this work is exported to China nowadays through local businessmen. The low income has demotivated the new generation from continuing this profession, and demand is very low compared to previous years. The lifestyle of craftsmen and artists has not improved compared to other professions in society, which is why the new generation is not interested. The increasing price of raw materials has also affected manufacturing and the people working in it.

He seems unsure about his profession at the moment, waiting for the market to recover. Depending on the market, he might continue his work, but he is ready to change his profession if necessary.

For the betterment of the industry, government policies play an important role. If the rules and policies are friendly towards handicrafts, there are still ways to revive this profession or industry.

Name: Raju Shakya

Address: Okubahal

Year of work experience: 20 years

Raju Shakya has been working in the statue making and handicraft profession for 20 years. Before making statues, his family was involved in making brass utensils. He chose this profession to continue his family legacy.

Now, he works with his helpers to craft brass images of gods and goddesses. However, with the changing market demand, he is now more focused on making brass hiti.

According to him, the Shakyas of Lalitpur started working in statue making around 100 years ago. A person named Bharu from Okhubahal began making metal statues and brought these handicraft techniques to Nepal. Thus, the Shakya families have been making statues for about 100 years.

The market is very challenging, affected by inflation and low demand for products. As a result, the handicraft industry is not in good condition. Most of their work is sold in the local market. Nowadays, people don't value handmade work. The increase in production, combined with low demand and a decrease in quality, has negatively impacted the handicraft industry, demotivating the new generation from continuing this profession. Additionally, the labor-intensive nature of the job does not attract the new generation.

He joined this profession just to continue his family tradition, and at that time, other professions were not given priority in Shakya families besides handicrafts. He is unsure if his next generation will carry on this profession, but he doesn't want them to continue it.

Durga Shakya

Okubahal

Durga Shakya, a resident of Okubahal, started working in this field from an early age. His grandfather and father transferred their skills of making brass utensils to him, and later he learned statue making. Now, he continues to work towards modernizing the handicraft industry.

According to his understanding, the Shakya family has been making statues for around 100 years. A person named Bhau from Okubahal started making metal statues, and through his motivation, the Shakya families began making statues, leaving behind brass utensil manufacturing.

Nowadays, the handicraft industry faces increasing challenges. The rise in raw material costs and inflation has affected manufacturing, making it difficult to sustain in the market. Most of his crafts are exported to China and sold in the local market these days.

Shakya families continue in this profession mainly to uphold their legacy. At the beginning of his career, there were not many other career options for the Shakya family, so he learned from his father and transitioned from making utensils to making statues. He seems unsure about the future of the handicraft industry and is pessimistic about its prospects. He sees very limited scope for the industry in the future.

Nowadays, the increasing trend of working abroad and seeking better opportunities overseas has decreased the interest of the new generation in continuing this profession. The new generation seems more inclined towards other professions where they can earn more with less work, and since this profession is labor-intensive, they are not interested.

Rikish Shakya**Okubahal****Work experience 8 years**

Rikish Shakya, a member of the younger generation in statue making, has been involved in the craft for eight years. Despite holding a degree in management, he chose to pursue a career in statue making, continuing his family's legacy. His family history reveals that they initially worked with brass utensils before his grandfather transitioned to statue making, a tradition that has endured for over 200 years.

As the third generation in his family, Rikish sees greater opportunities in today's market due to modern communication technologies and globalization. While advancements such as 3D scanning and printing have accelerated the statue-making process, they also pose challenges. Countries like China, with their advanced technological applications, present stiff competition to the Nepali market.

Although there is a growing interest in art among the younger generation, there is a noticeable decline in interest in statue making. This trend threatens the continuity of the profession. Limited platforms for learning and exploring statue making demotivate those who might otherwise pursue it as a career. To address this, dedicated training programs, workshops, and academic courses could help rekindle interest.

Economic challenges also drive the new generation to seek other opportunities, while a lack of innovation has diminished market demand. To uplift the statue-making industry, the government must play a crucial role. Providing subsidies, promoting handmade products, and assisting in exports are essential measures to support and sustain this traditional craft.

Raju Shakya

Okubahal

work experience 30 year

Raju Shakya, along with his brother, has been making statues for over 30 years. As the third generation to continue this profession, he is proud to be part of this legacy. Reflecting on the history of statue making, he explains that while the craft existed in Nepal before the 19th century, it was practiced by only a few people for ritual purposes, with no documented evidence to support this. However, in the late 19th century, statue making experienced a revival in Patan.

He recalls that his grandfather was involved in manufacturing brass utensils, and later, his father began making statues, a tradition that continues to this day.

Currently, there has been a drastic change in the demand for statues and other handmade products from Nepal. Mass production from China has made it difficult to compete, negatively impacting the handicraft business. Poor government copyright policies prevent artists from securing their work, discouraging them from creating new designs to avoid their art being copied by others. This has led to a decline in artistic motivation.

The advent of 3D scanning and printing technology offers opportunities to improve work efficiency. Unfortunately, this technology is often used to copy others' work, which undermines originality. While adopting new technology is necessary, its use must be managed carefully.

The market now favors mass production and cheaper products over quality craftsmanship, affecting the Shakyas' focus on quality work. Raju believes that only through a collective effort from individual artists and government support can the industry be revived and new markets found to sell their quality products.

Suraj Shakya

Naga Bahal

Work experience 5 years

Suraj Shakya has been working with his family in statue making for five years. As the fourth generation in his family to continue this legacy, he believes their involvement in this profession spans over 200 years.

Following the lockdown, there has been a noticeable decrease in demand for statue making. Orders have significantly dwindled compared to previous decades, making it feel like a prolonged holiday period. Despite this, Suraj remains optimistic about a revival, as business trends often fluctuate. Historically, they have manufactured and sold most of their artwork to Tibet and China. Now, with the spread of Buddhism in Europe, they hope to tap into the European market.

The current low demand, coupled with people pursuing new professions, exacerbates the problem. The scarcity of skilled artisans has led to a decline in the quality of work. The younger generation appears disinterested in investing the time required to master this intricate craft, preferring jobs that are easier and quicker to support their lifestyle. This makes Suraj feel less hopeful about the next generation continuing the profession.

The trend of seeking opportunities abroad for higher studies and a more comfortable lifestyle further impacts this industry by reducing available manpower. Without significant economic improvement and government intervention to support and uplift the statue-making industry, the chances of meeting customer demand and passing on these skills to the next generation appear slim.

Rajendra Shakya**Naga Bahal****Work experience 40 Years**

Rajendra Shakya, a third-generation practitioner in his family's statue-making profession, is now more focused on the business aspect. Tracing back through their family history, they initially created statues from crystal, later transitioned to ivory, and eventually to metal statue making. It is believed that his family began their curio business in Patan approximately 200 years ago.

Rajendra started by collecting art and gradually expanded the business, though he used to be involved in carving in the earlier days. Compared to the past, there are now very few skilled artisans left. The younger generation is increasingly pursuing careers abroad, which hinders the transfer of these age-old skills to the next generation.

While technological advancements in statue making present both opportunities and challenges, there is still a gap in meeting the demands of the international market. To uplift this market, it is essential to explore new markets and develop innovative products.

Name: Yubraj Shakya**Location: Naga Bahal****Work experience: 44 years**

Mr. Yubraj followed his father's path of making brass utensils at the beginning of his career. There were not many opportunities at the time, so he decided to continue the legacy of his family in making brass utensils. At that time, for the Shakya community, involving in an organizational job was not considered a suitable career. According to him, his father and grandfather were involved in making brass utensils. Later, Mr. Yubraj learned to craft images of gods and goddesses and started producing them. He believes it must have been around 150 years since the Shakya of Nagabahal started making god images, as his father was also involved in brass utensils.

As a self-learner, he was given the opportunity to work at Lalit Kala Campus but was not allowed to work. After the 2015 earthquake, there has been a decrease in the demand for work. Even though his customers are domestic, the increase in craftsmen has made it challenging to work in the domestic market.

Looking at the current situation of the handicraft industry, the new generation seems to be searching for better opportunities. The situation has worsened compared to the last few years. The newer generation doesn't seem interested in carrying on this legacy. The increasing trend of youth traveling abroad has decreased interest in this profession.

Now, with the increase in raw materials, it is difficult to save and give best price for the customers.

He thinks government can only bring effect impact to uplift this industry and help to transfer this skill to next generation.

Name: Ratn Bhadur Shakya

Location: Naga Bahal

Work experience: 50 years

At a young age, he got the opportunity to work for Rana families doing business in handicraft products. He started his carving profession with statues. He learned more after joining his uncle's work, where he improved his carving skills and focused on creating image idols.

According to him, his father and grandfather were into crafting brass utensils. However, he chose to work on images of gods and goddesses from the beginning of his career, despite the very limited opportunities at the time. Based on his experience, it seems that the Shakyas of Nagabahal have been working in statue-making for only about 100 years. Before that, most Shakya families were into making brass utensils.

There have been huge changes in the working style of people. Previously, people worked for quality, but nowadays, it's all commercial. There's been a change in customer demand, but in the challenging situation, he and his sons have been busy carving high-quality work. He believes there are still more opportunities for those who produce quality work.

He is happy to transfer his skills to his sons and many people in the community. He is still involved in carving statues, inspiring the new generation to pursue a career in handicrafts.

With the demand of modern life, more people are into easy earning. Handicraft is labor-intensive and difficult to work in, so the new generation seems not interested in investing time in this profession.

He believes if we keep working on quality, there are still opportunities to uplift this entire industry.

These questionnaires were asked to the traditional business owners or craftsmen of Shakya family residing in Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal. Among them three main interviewees from Oku Bahal are Pukesh Shakya, Raju Shakya and Durga Shakya. All the three of them are both craftsmen and business owner themselves. They have more than 20 years of experience in the field. The skill and knowledge of metal arts had bestowed them by their fathers and grandfather who were also in the same business. According to them their ancestors were able to practice the crafts due to the popularity of handmade metal objects and statue of gods in the past. Their fathers and grandfathers took great pride on being the metal craftsmen and work with their whole heart to make its established in international market. They were never lured by the fancy 9-5 clerical desk jobs. They always thought that this legacy of the metal crafts must be passed to the future generation and doing so was one of the major tasks of their lifetime. Their grand fathers were successful on passing the family legacy to their sons. However, the situation of the handicraft market was already getting a new shape and changing its dynamic due to the intervention of machines for the production of metal crafts. The list of total number of households in the business and profession are listed below in the table;

Table 2 Shakya Householder in the Metal Business

Type of Business	No of House hold in Oku Bahal	No. of Household in Nag Bahal
Metal Statue and Utensils	Around 250	Around 350

Source: Interview

Chapter VI

Conclusion and recommendation

The study on the Legacy of Sculpture making of the Shakya families of Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal shows that the area of Patan has major contribution when it comes to art, craft and metal industry. The statue and utensils produced from the area are exclusively handmade. Those who understand the importance and the intensive work of the craftsman behind it knows the value of the art. However, the market of machinery metal product, costly raw material and highly competitive handicraft market are the main reasons behind the decrease in the practice of such crafts.

Lalitpur city, known as the City of Fine Arts, is a remarkable blend of diverse religions and cultures, creating a unique community. It is also celebrated as the city of Bahas and Bahis, where various rituals and festivals are held throughout the year. Lalitpur's art and architecture draw heavily from both Buddhism and Hinduism, resulting in a landscape rich with temples and monuments that exhibit exceptional craftsmanship. Among the 127 Bahas in Lalitpur, Okubahal and Nagabahal are renowned for their skilled artisans, with over 60% of Okubahal's population and 25% of Nagabahal's population involved in handicrafts. The Shakya caste, in particular, is noted for its expertise in crafting metal sculptures. However, the available history of the Shakya artisans only spans 200 years, making it difficult to trace their earlier occupations.

Only a 200-year history is available, making it challenging to trace what occupations the Shakyas were engaged in before this period. Despite such a rich history, the new generation of Shakya families shows little interest in continuing this occupation. If this trend persists, the tradition of statue making could disappear in a short time. Despite the long history, we were unable to find authentic resources detailing how many people from households in both areas were involved in statue making.

This survey highlights the need for further research on the involvement of the Shakya community in the creation of metal statues, which can provide a comprehensive understanding of the Shakya community's involvement in metal statue making and help in preserving and promoting this traditional art form.

Given the current situation, there appears to be a lack of interest among the younger generation in inheriting the legacy of metal statue making within the Shakya community. This highlights the need for a study to understand why the younger generation is not interested in continuing this traditional craft.

On the other hand, the traditional methods like lost wax technique, clay molding, serial model making, Preparing the clay mold for casting, large bronze casting, Cold work: trimming, cleaning, Chasing, grinding, Fire gliding, Patinating and Painting are the techniques which are used by these Shakya craftsmen to produce metal images of Buddhist deities and Hindu gods and goddess. This is one of the renowned handicraft production methods around the world as well. These traditional methods of metal sculpture making are important for several reasons, including cultural preservation, craftsmanship, historical continuity, artistic value, and educational significance.

These kinds of metal working techniques require a high level of skill and expertise that has been honed over centuries. These methods often involve intricate and precise work that modern techniques may not replicate with the same level of detail and artistry. The handcraftsmanship involved in crafts adds a unique and personal touch to each piece, making every statue a one-of-a-kind work of art. Besides that, the crafts of these artists connect us to the past, allowing us to understand and appreciate the technological and artistic advancements of previous generations.

Each piece created using traditional methods serves as a historical document, providing insights into the materials, tools, and processes used in different historical periods. These statues produced by the craftsmen of Patan often reflect the artistic expressions and styles of the culture from which they originate, providing a window into the creative minds of past artisans. Also, the techniques provide valuable educational opportunities for students

of art, history, and anthropology. It allows them to learn about the materials, tools, and processes used in the past.

Learning about these Indigenous traditional arts and craft offers a hands-on experience that can be both educational and fulfilling, fostering a deeper appreciation for the art and the effort involved. They often use natural and locally sourced materials, and the processes can be more sustainable compared to some modern manufacturing techniques that rely on synthetic materials and mass production. Metal statues made using traditional techniques are often highly durable and can last for centuries, reducing the need for frequent replacements and contributing to sustainability.

5.3 Recommendation

I highly recommend further study and research about the legacy of sculpture making and crafts of Shakya of Patan in more detail. The metal sculpture making crafts of Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal are integral to the cultural and artistic heritage of Nepal. These traditional techniques, passed down through generations, are not only a testament to the community's craftsmanship but also hold significant cultural and religious value. Despite their importance, there is a notable lack of comprehensive research documenting these methods. I strongly believe the findings of the research and interview mentioned in this study opens door for further study about the legacy of handicrafts in Patan.

Though, this research covered the theoretical parts of the information, it is highly recommended to take the process of documentation digitally. Moreover, the documentary and visual record of these techniques will help the future artists in case the crafts no longer be in practice in the future. To avoid such unfortunate situation in the future, the local authorities along with Nepal government and international bodies like UNESCO must act as soon as possible. The initiatives like education and training of crafts with apprenticeship must be launched for traditional arts and crafts. I strongly believe the education and training on the crafts are the only method to sustain and practice the legacy of our ancestors.

Appendix A

For that professional craftsmen who are involved in the business of metal handicrafts from generations were asked questions which are listed below.

1. How long have you been working as sculpture making? How it used to be to work with families? Pros and cons... (probe)
2. How Shakya's families started this occupation?
3. What are the present conditions of Shakyas working in this occupation?
4. What is your perception of sculpture making regarding statue product? (probe)
5. What you do after completion of sculpture making (probe), sell to international / national market? How is market response in the past and in the present context (probe)
6. What are the constraints and potentials faced by the sculpture making among youth?
7. Why did you choose for the initiations of statues making as main occupation among Shakya's families in Kathmandu valley?
8. Where did you see yourself in coming years?
9. In your opinion, what are the factors responsible for increase in new generation losing its interest in this occupation and how these families can retain its new generation.
10. Will you allow your future generation to continue the sculpture making as a professional work? (probe)
11. In your opinion, what will help to enhance the sculpture making among youth of Shakya families.

Individual interviews were taken with the artists of both Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal regarding the profession and business of Metal arts and sculpture making. The details of their interview are listed below;

Appendix B



Photo 1 Clay Molding Process Source: self

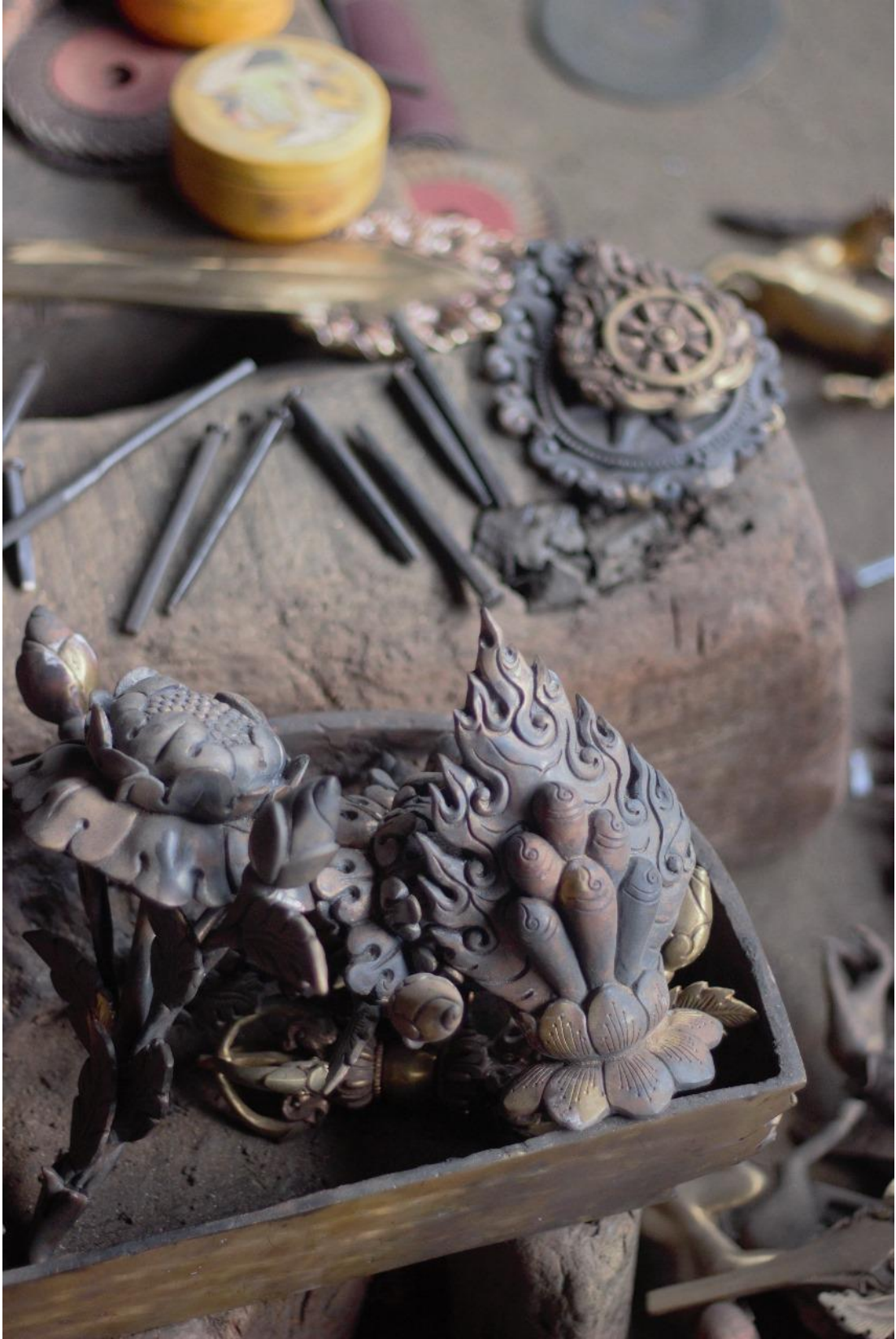




Photo 2 Copper parts of Statue Source: self



Photo 3 Hand made tools from locally available raw materials Source: self



Photo 4 wax model Source: self

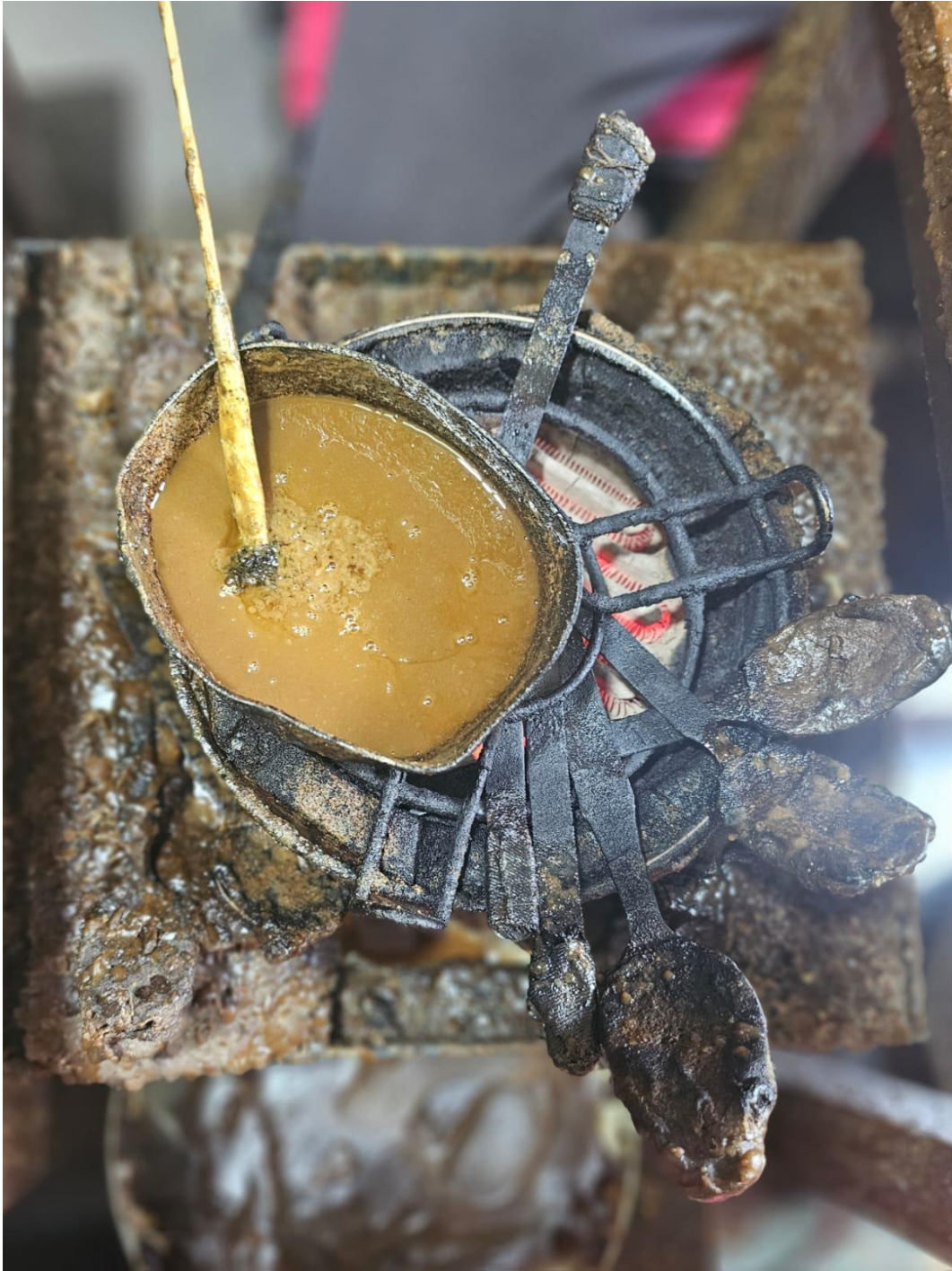


Photo 5 Melted Bee wax Source: self



Photo 6 model coated with a finger white clay-cow dung mix and dried source: self



Photo 7 Interview with artist Yubraj Shakya Source: self

References

- Attwood, J. (2012). Possible Iranian origin for the Shakays and aspects of Buddhism. *Journal of the Oxford Center of Buddhism, 23*.
- Bajracharya, D. V. (1973). *Licchavi kal ka abhilekh*. Kritipur: Center of Nepal and Asia Studies.
- Chandra, L. (1987). *Elements of Buddhist iconography*. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan.
- Furger, A. R. (2017). *The gilded Buddha*. Frankfurt: LIBRUM Publisher and Editors.
- Gellner, D. N. (1989). Buddhist monks or kinsmen of the Buddha. *Kailash, 20*.
- Gutschow, N., & Michaels, A. (1987). Heritage of Kathmandu Valley. *VGH Wissenschaftsverlag* (p. 522). Lubeck: Nepalica.
- Handicraft Association Nepal. (2022, 01 01). *Historical Background of Nepal*. Retrieved from Federation of Handicraft Association of Nepal: www.fhan.org.np
- Krist, G., Friedl, R. A., Trummer, M., Bayerová, T., & Schmidt, K. (2014). Looking through a window: The conservation and reconstruction of an ivory window of Sundari Cok at the Patan Royal Palace, Nepal. *Studies in Conservation, 59*. Retrieved 7 12, 2024, from <http://tandfonline.com/doi/ref/10.1179/204705814x13975704317994?scroll=top>
- Mehta, R. J. (2015). *The handicraft and industrial arts of India*. Bombay: TARAPOREVALA'S SONS AND CO. PVT LTD.
- Parajuli, D. K. (2018). *Pratima Lakshyan*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Patan Museum. (2022). *Patan*. Patan: Lalitpur Municipality.
- Rao, T. G. (1971). *Elements of Hindu Iconography*. Varanashi: Indological Book House.
- Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. (1833). Origin of Shakya Race. *Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 8*.
- Shakya, D. (2024, July 5). Metal sculpture making profession of Oku Bahall and Nag Bahall. (P. Shakya, Interviewer)
- Shakya, P. (2024, July 3). Sculpture making craft of Oku Bahall and Nag Bahall. (P. K. Sahakya, Interviewer)
- Shakya, R. (2024, July 1). About Oku Bahal and Nag Bahal of Patan. (P. Shakya, Interviewer)

Shakya, Y. (2024, July 7). Metal Sculpture making of Shakya from Oku Bahall and Nag Bahall. (P. K. Shakya, Interviewer)

Slusser, M. S. (2005). *Art and culture of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point.