

BUDDHIST CULTURAL HERITAGE OF COBAHĀ

A Dissertation submitted to
Central Department of Buddhist Studies,
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Tribhuvan University for the Tenth Paper of Master Degree
in Buddhist Studies

Submitted by
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Batch 2068/69

Central Department of Buddhist Studies
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur
Kathmandu
2071 BS

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RECOMMENDATION LETTER

This is to certify that Mr. Karna Bahadur Maharjan, (Roll No: 2, 2068/69), the student of Central Department of Buddhist Studies has written this dissertation entitled "Buddhist Cultural Heritage of Cobahā" to fulfil partial requirement of 10th paper (2nd Year) of M.A. in Buddhist Studies under my supervision.

I hereby, recommend this dissertation for approval.

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LETTER OF APPROVAL

This thesis entitled "Buddhist Cultural Heritage of Cobahā" submitted by Mr. Karna Bahadur Maharjan, has been approved in fulfillment for the degree of Master of Arts in Buddhist Studies by the expert committee comprises of:

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NEWARI TRANSLITERATION

अ	a	क	ka	प	pa
आ	ā	ख	kha	फ	pha
इ	i	ग	ga	ब	ba
ई	ī	घ	gha	भ	bha
उ	u	ङ	ng	म	ma
ऊ	ū	च	c	य	ya
ए	e	छ	cha	र	ra
ऐ	ai	ज	ja	ल	la
ओ	o	झ	jha	व	va
औ	au	ञ	ñ	श	sha
अं	m	ट	ta	ष	sa
अः	ah	ठ	tha	स	sa
		ड	da	ह	ha
		ढ	dha	क्ष	ksha
		ण	na	त्र	tra
		त	ta	ज्ञ	jna
		थ	tha		
		द	da		
		ध	dha		
		न	na		

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Kathmandu valley is considered as a sacred place for both Hindu and Buddhist from time immemorial. The mythological texts of Hinduism and Buddhism mention that the valley was once a huge lake where varieties of water creatures including nine great *Nāgas*, along with Karkotak *Nāga*, the king of serpents, so was it called Nāgarhad, the abode of serpents. According to *Svayambhu purāna*, the Buddhist mythological text, the first mortal Buddha, Vipasvi came here while the valley was still a huge lake, realizing the sacredness of the lake the first mortal Buddha sowed a lotus seed in the lake. Over the time a lotus with thousand petals blossomed from the middle of paleo-lake illuminating rays of five different colors which later on came to known as Svayambhu Jyotirupa, the self emanating primordial Buddha, the Ādibuddha. The text further mentions about coming of several mortal Buddhas and Bodhisattva to witness the Svayambhu Jyotirupa. Similarly Manjushrī from Mahāchīna came to pay homage to the self emanated primordial Ādibuddha. He thought of draining water out of the lake to make the valley suitable for human settlement. With his magical sword Candrahansa, he opened an outlet at the eastern side of the Kacchapālagiri and formed a narrow Gorge to drain water out of the lake. Some texts mention he had opened several gorges in different places of the valley such as Gokarna, Gaurighat, Cobahā and Kotwal. Eventually the huge lake turned into bowl shaped valley fit for human habitation. On the flip side Hindu mythological text has credited Krishna and his son Pradhyumna, for draining water out of the valley. According to *Nepālmahātmya*, a demon named Dānāsura based in Sonitpur, (present day Thānkot) blocked gorge in the eastern side of Kacchapālgiri in order to make a pond to let his daughter Prabhāvatī to play, seeing the plight of valley dwellers Lord Krishna who hailed from Mathura opened the gorge at Cobahā, a demon called Kacchapāsura hastened to block the gorge to retain water in the pond. However, Pradhyumna, the son of Krishna spent no

time and killed the Kacchapāsura and drained the water out from the valley¹. Landon states that geologists admit that the valley was probably at one time a lake, and that, either by some terrestrial upheaval or by constant erosion of the outlet through the southern barrier, the waters were drained off and the land reclaimed.²

The Kathmandu valley lies at 1,320 meters above the sea level covering an area of 665 square kilometers surrounded by the Mahabhārata mountain range, comprising four major hills namely Phulcva (Phulchowki) in the south-east, Dhyānācva (Ĉampādevi), in the south, Jāmācva (Nāgarjuna) in the north-west, and Siphucva (Sivapuri) in the north. The bowl shaped valley is locally known as *Nepāgā*, means Nepal valley was surrounded by thick forest, local people call it as *Hākagun* which means the black (dark) forest, which was evident until mid-early 20th century. The above mentioned four major hills around the valley are linked with the earlier Buddhas, the predecessor of Buddha Sākyāmuni. In this connection Vipaswi, the first mortal Buddha stayed at Jāmācva, Sikhi Buddha, the second mortal Buddha believed to be stayed at Dhyānācva, Visvabhu who came to pay homage to Svayambhu jyotirupa stayed at Phulcva and Krakuchanda who was believed to have created Bāgmati and Vishnumati stayed at Siphucva, hence these mountains are considered as place of reverence from Buddhist perspective for the valley dwellers. The people of Kathmandu valley still visit these places in different occasions with pious motive. Cobahā, a small hillock which lies southern part of the valley is elevated about 1407 meters above Bāgmati river basin at the Cobahā gorge, is one of the earliest settlements of Kathmandu valley. It is considered as one of the most sacred religious sites for Buddhist practitioners from the ancient period. Tiwari is of opinion that the above mentioned four hills along with Cobahā (Kacchapālgiri) and Manichud-Mahādev Pokhari were the Kirāt religious sites later converted to Buddhist sites³.

¹ Jayaraj Acharya, *Nepālmahātmya*. (New Delhi: Nirala Publications. 1992), p.120.

² Parceval Landon, *Nepal (Vol I and II)*. (Delhi: Rupa and Co. 2007), pp.11-12

³ Sudarshan R Tiwari. *The Ancient Settlements of the Kathmandu Valley*. (Kirtipur: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies. 2001), p.190.

1.2 Statement of problem

Antiquity of Cobahā as one of the earliest settlements of Kathmandu valley is also closely connected with origin of Kathmandu valley itself. The early habitants of the Cobahā no doubt were predominantly the Newār Buddhists. Presence of several monolithic votive caityas of Lichchhavi period and the two Buddhist monasteries, though one of them is no longer exists at present attests Cobahā as an ancient Buddhist settlement. Beside these caityas the other Buddhist monuments so far found in this settlement are one commemorative caitya which was believed to be built by Bandhudatta,⁴ one who served as the officiating priest to bring Bungama Lokesvar to Kathmandu valley. Being one of the ancient Buddhist settlements, cultural landscape of Cobahā has great significance from historical and cultural aspects of valley itself, however due to several reasons its' historical and cultural significances as an ancient Buddhist site has not been yet brought into light as much as it deserves. On this backdrop a systematic study of Buddhist cultural heritage of Cobahā is felt needed.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to investigate on socio-cultural life of Cobahā with special focus on tangible and intangible cultural heritage from Buddhist perspectives that includes:

- i) to document the tangible and intangible Buddhist cultural heritage of Cobahā;
- ii) to analyze socio-cultural and religious significances of Cobahā from Buddhists perspective;
- iii) to provide with suggestions for preservation of Buddhist Cultural Heritage of Cobahā

⁴ Badri R. Bajracharya. *Nyapāyāpin Prasiddha Bajrāchāryapi*. (Kathmandu: Svayambhu Anadakuti Vihār Guthi 1989), p.12.

1.4 Literature Review

Much has been written on different aspects of Cobahā from different perspectives which can be broadly divided into three categories. The first category of works are exclusively based on the legends whereas second category falls under cultural and/or anthropological studies and the third category comprises geological studies of Kathmandu valley with some references of Cobahā and/or Kacchapālgiri.

The works of Varna Bajra Bajracharya entitled *Cobahādyoyā Bākhan*⁵ (Story of Deity of Cobahā) and Amoghvajra Bajracharya's *Lokesvaryā Parichaya*⁶ (Introduction of Lokesvaras) are fall under first categories which are based on mythological stories. The former work presents legendary story of appearance, disappearance, and reappearance of Karunāmaya of Cobahā in due course of Chariot festival with special focus on story of Nandagvālā, the cow-herd who reinstated the image of Karunāmaya on the hill top of Kacchapālagiri. Here, the story of Karunāmaya is presented as being narrated by Upagupta to Asoka, the Emperor of Indian Empire around 250 BC. The narrative story seems to be contradictory on its' own as the story has somehow linked to Siddhinarasingh Malla, the 17th century King of Patan. The second book primarily deals with the development of Lokesvar cult in Nepal Mandala along with illustrations of 108 Lokesvars attached around the temple of Janabahādyo. The author depicts Lokesvar as synonyms of Bodhisattva and gives some brief stories associated with some 35 Bodhisattva/ Lokesvars. Among them stories two Bodhisattvas included in the book belongs to Cobahā, namely Ānandādi Lokesvar and Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva.

In the second category there are series of studies undertaken by students and research scholars from home and abroad. Father John Locke's *Karunāmaya*⁷ made a comprehensive study on Avalokiteswor, popularly known as Karunāmaya, the compassionate one among the Newār Buddhist of Kathmandu valley. The author presents

⁵ Varna Bajra Bajracharya, *Cobahā Karunamayaya Bākhan*. (Bhonta: Author) 1088 NS.

⁶ Amogh Vajra Bajracharya, *Lokesvaryā Parichaya*. (Nepal: Lokeswor Sangh)1099 NS.

⁷ John K Locke, *Karunāmaya*. (Kathmandu: Sahayogi Prakashan) 1980.

elaborative historical background of development of Avalokitesvar cult in Nepālmandala with special focus on Janabahā dyo (Seto Matsyendranāth) and Bungadyo (Rāto Matsyendranāth) along with rites and rituals observed in Bahās (Monasteries). While presenting the accounts of four Karunāmayas, author throws some light on Karunāmaya of Cobahā popularly known as Ānandādi Lokesvar or Cobahādyo and the Sristikānta Lokesvar of the Nālā widely known as Nālā Karunāmaya. The author elaborates on the architecture of Ādināth temple along with other structural monuments within the Cobahā monastery premises and surroundings. At the same time author precisely elucidates annual rituals associated with the cult. The same author as conducted a survey of the Bahās and Bahis of the Kathmandu Valley. This mimeograph entitled *A Survey of Buddhist Monasteries of Kathmandu valley*⁸ incorporates detailed inventory of the Buddhist monasteries in Kathmandu, Patan, Bhaktapur and peripheral villages. It provides architectural descriptions of each monastery, with historical background, structures of Sanghas associated with the respective monasteries, annual rituals that take place in the Bahās and Bahis. The mimeograph mapped two monasteries from Cobahā, one being Indradeva Sanskārita Mahāvihār, popularly known as Cobahā and other being Coyabahi, which is no more exist at present but the locality is still known as Coyabahi amongst the local residents. The author gives description of architectural structures of Cobahā complex, the abode the Lokesvar, along with historical background of the inceptions of the monastery.

Dr Jagdish Chandra Regmi and Pasupati Dwivedi jointly conducted brief study of Karunāmaya of Cobahā. In their brief report the author duo highlight significance of Ādināth in Buddhism and its' synchronous nature with Saivism. The report entitled *Sri Ādināth*⁹ gives brief account of four Karunāmayas of Kathmandu with special focus on origin, historicity and popularity of Ādināth. The report elucidates brief accounts of different Guthi arrangements and land endowment as appendices.

⁸ John K. Locke, *Buddhist Monasteries of Kathmandu Valley*. (Kirtipur: CNAS,1985)

⁹ Jagdish Chandra Regmi and Pashupati K. Dwivedi *Shree Adinath - A Brief Study on Cobhar Karunāmaya*.(Lalitpur: Adinath Anusandhan Nidhi, 2046 BS).

Munindra Bajracharya has come up with a book entitled *Chariot Festivals of Lokesvars of Nepālmandala*¹⁰ in Nepali. As the title suggests the book primarily deals with annual festival of four Lokesvars of Nepal Mandala namely Bungdyo, Janabahādyo, Cobahādyo and Nālā Karunāmaya. Besides the annual chariot festivals of the four Karunāmaya, the author throws some light on different rituals observed throughout the year with special focus on annual chariot festival of Bungdyo and Janabahādyo. Similarly a special issue of *Palesvān*,¹¹ dedicated to the Lokesvar of Cobahā is in fact the report of the field work conducted by group of trainees who underwent two weeks training on Research Methodology organized by Lotus Research Centre. The report includes different versions of legends related to the Lokesvar and development of Cobahā as an abode of the cult. The report presents long list of art and architectural details eg. idols, caityas, open shrines, etc. in and around Cobahā monastery with detailed description of main temple of the Lokesvar. The report gives an account of different types of functional Guthis that carry out different rituals and/or of the Lokesvar in a periodical basis. The report also appended detailed information about Guthi Land and materials endowed for accomplishing the all the rituals of the cult.

David N Gellner has brought out a very interesting book entitled *Monks, Householders and Tantric Priest*¹² which deals with Newār Buddhism which describes liturgical way of life of Newār Buddhist along with their social organization, the guthi systems of different types prevailed in Newār community in general and Sākyas and Bajracharya of Patan city in particular. The book also presents the syncretistic relationships between Buddhism and Hinduism, and highlights the importance of religion rites and rituals including religious observations (vrata), asceticism for the laity in the life of Newār Buddhist. Similarly Gopal Singh Nepali's *The Newārs*¹³ elaborates religious and social life of Newārs along with Newār pantheon, their rituals, caste system, family and kinship and so on from ethno-

¹⁰ Munindra Bajrāchārya, *Nepalka Car Prasiddha Karunāmaya Lokesvar*, (Kathmandu: Pramodh Harsh Bajracharya, 2002).

¹¹ Bajraraj Sakya, et. al. (ed), "Special Issue on Anandadi Lokesvar of Cobhar," *Paleswan*, 8, no .11 (1996)

¹² David N. Gellner, *Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest : Newār Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Rituals*. (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press India. 2009)

¹³ Gopal Singh Nepali, *The Newārs: An Ethno-Socialological Study of a Himalayan Community*. (1969) reprint (Kathmandu: Himalayan Book Seller) 1988.

sociological aspect. Moreover, author highlights socio-economic and religious significances of Guthi organization in Newār social life.

Down the land, Yamuna Maharjan gives an account of geographical, historical and cultural aspects of Cobahā in her MA thesis entitled *Cultural Study of Chobhār*¹⁴. Moreover, she elaborates on architectural details of temple of Ādināth and Gandheswar along with several stupas in and around the Cobahā. The author further elaborates pans and pots nailed in all around the temple of Cobahādyo which is considered as one of heavily ornamented temples with household utensils in the valley. At the same time the author highlights on two major festivals, one being five days long fasting ceremony popularly known as *Māyeabsan* and another being fetching the Lokesvar at Jayatirth also known as crossing the Nakhu river which are observed annually in Cobahā. However, the monograph lacks philosophical explanations of those festivals.

In the third category, several writers from home and abroad have conducted geological study of Kathmandu valley and unanimous agreed that the Kathmandu valley was once a great lake¹⁵ Quoting Government of Nepal, 1969, Yonechi emphasizes that the deposits of the Kathmandu paleo-lake were identified as Pleistocene period by the presence of fossils. The radiocarbon measurement carried out by K Kigoshi of Gakushuim University, Tokyo, dated the lacustrine at the road cutting near Khajahl village dated 33,200 before present (BP) (+ 6,100 to -3450 years).¹⁶ Yonichi confirms that the Cobahā gorge is composed of limestone and observed some karst landscapes on the hill besides the gorge.

¹⁴ Yamuna Maharjan, *A Cultural Study of Chobhar*, Master Dissertation, Central Department of NeHCA, TU, Kathmandu, (2003).

¹⁵ a) Andrea Kern. "A Pleistocene Palynological Assemblage from the Lukundol Formation (Kathmandu Basin, Nepal)" *Geologie Und Palaontologie*, 112, (2010), pp.111-168.

b) Mukunda Paudel and Harutaka Sakai, "Stratigraphy and depositional environment on basin-fill sediments in southern Kathmandu Valley, Central Nepal", *Bulletin of the Department of Geology*, II, (2008), pp.61-70.

c) Fumio Yonechi, "A Preliminary Report on the Geomorphology of Kathmandu Valley", Nepal. (1970) pp.153-160.

¹⁶ Fumio Yonichi. op. cit. pp.155.

1.5 Methodology

The study is primarily based on first hand information gathered through field observation, interviews and discussions with key informants. However secondary sources of information such as published and unpublished documents on the subject were consulted as required. In order to collect required information different methods of data collection techniques were applied.

A purposive sampling technique was applied to select key informants which local residents, cultural experts, officiating priests, sangha members and devotees coming from surrounding areas in different occasions during study period.

Observation: Intensive direct observations were made in and around Cobahā at the time of the major festivals taken place during the study period and subsequently interviews were conducted with the stakeholders. Moreover the researcher has involved active participatory observation wherever possible.

Interview: In order to acquire adequate information on the subject matter series of focus group discussion and /or interviews were conducted with key informants which included officiating *Gurju* (Vajrācārya priest), *Pānju*, the temple priests of the Lokesvar temple, *Thāpājus* and other member of Sakya Sangha, *Guthiyārs* (member of Guthis) of different *Guthis* (traditional community organizations) exist in Cobahā, regular temple visitors and *vrata* (fasting) observants.

Maps and Photographs: In addition to text-based and verbal information, visual materials of different kinds related to subject matter were collected from various sources, which are appended in the final report.

1.6 Justification of the Study

Several Mahāyāni and Vajrayāni text depicts the Ādināth or Ānandādi Lokesvar is the emanation of Ādibuddha. On the flip side, in the Hindu text depicts the deity as the foremost Guru of Matshyandranāth and Gorkhanāth. Scholars and/or Missionaries who

came to Nepal from late 18th century and early 19th centuries to mid 20th centuries were fascinated with religious and cultural life of Kathmandu valley, who had mentioned about popularity of Ādināth amongst the valley dwellers. Many writers from home and abroad have written about different aspects of Cobahā and/or the Ānandādi Lokeshvar in their works which have revealed many aspects of the cult from different perspectives, however, there seems some gaps in between glorious history of Cobahā and its socio-cultural linkage along with living heritage of Cobahā from Buddhist perspective. Therefore, the present study is hopes to be an instrumental in fulfilling those gaps so that a more elaborate socio-cultural picture of Cobahā from Buddhist perspective would be portrayed.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

Historically, Cobahā is a traditional Newār settlement. The core area of Cobahā is predominately occupied by Jyāpu (Maharjan and Dangol) and Sākyas with few households of Nāya, Tulādhār, Kushle, Gopāli, etc.. Besides that all non-Newār communities seems to be hailed from different parts of Nepal only after late 18th century. The present study is intentionally focused on cultural life of Newār community of core area. However, historical sequences of peripherals areas are taken into consideration as point of reference in order to interpret historical background of Cobahā. Similarly, thrust of study is more specifically focused on Cobahā specific religious and cultural event rather than cultural festivals of Newār community in general. Hence, common festivals like Dasain, Tihār, Gāijātrā and so on are deliberately excluded from scope of study.

CHAPTER II

COBAHĀ - AN ANCIENT BUDDHIST SITE

2.1 Geographical Location

The Cobahā is an ancient Buddhist settlement located six kilometers south of the Kathmandu city. It is located 1407 meters above the sea level and 87 meters above the Kathmandu basin level. This small hillock is originally known as Kacchapālgiri, which is derived from Kacchapā means tortoise and giri means a hillock, which is named after its' shape as of tortoise. In some sources Cobahā is also called as Kurmāgiri, which is also used as synonyms of Kacchapā or tortoise. Once a bahā, the Buddhist monastery has constructed on the top of Kacchapālgiri, the hillock is came to known as Cobahā means a monastery situated on the top of the hillock. The Cobahā word is derived from two Newāri words, *Co* means on the top or a higher elevation and *bahā* means Buddhist monastery. This bahā is the seat of Ānandādi Lokesvar, one of the four famous Lokesvars popularly known as Karunāmaya, the compassionate one among the valley dwellers. The other three Karunāmayas are Padampāni Lokesvar of Bungamati, Āryāvalokitesvar of Kathmandu and Shristikānta Lokesvar of Nālā. Ānandādi Lokesvar or Ādināth Lokesvar is locally known as Cobahādyo means the deity located in the Cobahā, who is well known as a healer of chronic diseases like leprosy and the one who bestows blissful life that is how he came to known as Ānandādi Lokesvar.

2.2 Geological Features/Interpretation

The former palaeo-lake, Kathmandu valley located along the southern slope of Himalaya, is biggest basin system in Nepal with diameter of 30 KM east-west and 25 KM north-south directions. It has a more or less circular outline covering an area of about 650 square KM, the average elevation of the valley today is around 1340 meters.¹⁷ Geologists from home and abroad have unanimously attested that the valley was once a huge lake as

¹⁷ Andrea Kern, op. cit., p.12.

claimed by different legendaries. This indicates that there is some accuracy in the legends that narrate the Kathmandu valley was once a huge lake in the remote past. Geological studies have revealed that the Palaeo-lake Kathmandu valley had its maximum extension about 30,000 year before present (BP), at that time it must have covered nearly the whole basin. The maximum depth of the lake at that time was calculated about 1400 to 1440 meter.¹⁸ It was believed that the process of draining out the water from the Nagahrad began after 30,000 years BP. However, geologists are of opinion that the valley was a lake till 11000 BP as quoted by Mukunda and Harataka.¹⁹ Yet another source reveals that the lake of Kathmandu valley was drained out by 11000 to 10,000 BP. The geologists argue that the active fault system of Chandragiri and Cobahā in the south must be responsible for draining out water from the lake. However Piya²⁰ is of opinion that the detail study has still to prove this theory. Poudyal and Ferguson are of opinion that the Cobahā gorge reached its present depth during the Holocene period, at this stage the lake drained away exposing the lower terrace deposits.²¹

The flat tops of hills spreading in the southern part of the Kathmandu valley, about 130 meters above the lowland are named as Kirtipur Surface which stretched from its western edge basin to eastern edge of the Cobahā hill, where the deep gorge composed of limestone about 500 meters long cut through the ridge lets Bāgmati river leave the valley, Yonechi has observed some karst landscapes on the hill beside the gorge.²² Haffner further adds the ridge of Kirtipur which is formed of pre-devonian rocks of limestone towers up to 150 meters above the basin bottom which extends from the western edge of the basin to almost its center, and gradually disappears beneath the recent sedimentation and rock debris to the east of the Bāgmati river near Cobahā hillock.²³ Cobahā and

¹⁸ Ibid., p.114.

¹⁹ Mukunda R Paudel and Harutaka Sakai, op.cit. p.61

²⁰ Birendra K Piya, *Generation of a geological database for the liquefaction hazard assessment in Kathmandu valley*. (Master Thesis, International Institute for Geo-information Science and Earth Observation, Enschede, 2004), p.35

²¹ Khum N. Paudyal and David K Ferguson. "Pleistocene palynology of Nepal", *Quarterly International*, 117 (2004), p.70.

²² Yonechi, op cit, p.156.

²³ Willibald Haffner, "The Kathmandu Valley - A Study of Regional Geography", *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre*, 5/6, (1981/82).p.4.

Kirtipur being situated on an eminence which forms a kind of saddle hill, the locals believe that Kirtipur is said to be represent the body and the Cobahā is the head of Mahadeva (Siva).²⁴

Presenting geological interpretation of forming the gorge near Cobahā, Yonichi argues that the Cobahā hill had resisted the erosion of the river and dammed up the water of lake in Northern side of the hill. Quoting K Nishimura, he further adds hill the groundwater had made a kind of karst tunnel, and a part of water had been drained through this tunnel. Eventually it collapsed and the deep gorge was formed which drained the water out of the lake.²⁵

2.3 Socio-Economic Background

The historical accounts indicate that Cobahā has been inhabited by Newārs, the indigenous people of Nepal valley from the ancient time. The core area of Cobahā is still densely populated with mainly two caste groups of Newārs, namely Jyāpus (Maharjan/Dangol) which accounts 140 households and secondly the Sākyas which consists of 44 household of the core area. Besides that, there are Tulādihars, Nanda-gvālās, and Nāyes residing in lesser numbers. However, outside the core area of Cobahā, in the peripherals slopes of the hillock there are many non-Newār communities residing. Most of them told to be came only after the valley took over by Prithvi Narayana Shah.

Majority of people living in the core area are Jyāpus, traditionally farming community, their livelihood is stilled driven by farming followed by carpentry, mason as their off the farm occupation. They are broadly categorized as lay Buddhist who tender service of Bajrācārya priest for their life cycle rituals. Beside that there are stone sculptor mainly Sākyas. After establishment of Himal Cement in foothill of Cobahā, many people were employed there which compensate them economically for losing land taken over by Himal Cement. Since the Factory has been closed in 2058 BS many people lost their jobs. These

²⁴ Kirkpatrick, *An Account of Kingdom of Nepal*. (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2006), p.165.

²⁵ Yonichi, op. cit., p.158.

people of Cobahā are working in different fields from farm to factory and government offices and businesses.

2.4 Historical Background

The four major hills surrounding the bowl shaped valley namely Phūlcva, Jāmācva, Dhinācva, Siphucva are considered as sacred mountains which are visited by Buddhist community of Kathmandu valley from dawn of Kathmandu valley civilization as they are linked to the preceding Buddhas and Bodhisattva who hailed from different places. The life-line of valley dwellers, two major river systems Bāgmati and Vishnumati along with several tributaries serve as nerve system of cultural life of Kathmandu valley. Hence these mountains along with water bodies (rivers and/or huge lakes) are considered as important components of cultural landscape of Kathmandu valley civilization. Postulating mountains and river systems as places and/or objects of reverence prevail throughout the world from time immemorial. For example Mount Kailash located in western Tibet is considered as a sacred place for Hindus, Buddhist, Jain and Bon. Similarly Mount Sinai, in present day Egypt is equally place of reverence for Jews. Likewise, Giddhakuta and Dhānyakatak parvat in India is highly revered by Buddhist and Badrināth and Kedārnāth in India equally sacred places for Hindus.

Mountains are not only revered as sacred sites but these are also equally important from strategic purposes. The famous mountain pilgrims in the Kathmandu valley seemed to be developed and/or established as the forest fort "*Vandurga*" in the ancient time, for instance, Svayambhu, Pasupati, Vajrayogini along with Cobahā were the sacred religious sites (*Devasthān*) in the form of forest forts.²⁶ Although no inscription so far found in core area of Cobahā that establishes historicity of Cobahā to Licchavi period, however, a Licchavi inscription found in Cārghare, a small village situated about half kilometer south of Cobahā might establish some linkage with Cobahā. Though the inscription is completely ruined due to weathering and/or natural process, scholars have been able to

²⁶ Dhanvajra Bajracharya, *Licchavikalkā Abhilekha*. (Kirtipur: Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Kirtipur. 2030 BS), p.30.

read a very few words such as '*Kulaketu*', '*Solla*', '*Lingval*' and so on. D R Regmi is of opinion that the word '*kulketu*' must have been preceded by the word Licchavi²⁷ as in the inscription of Sivadeva dated samvat 512 of Buddhānilkanth, which denotes flag of the Licchavi dynasty. He further writes this inscription seems to a kind of charter issued by the ruler with a view to enforce royal orders making land grants and tax exemptions in the interest of the people. The two non-Sanskrit words *Solla* and *Lingval* are obviously the Licchavi administrative system which has been used in several Licchavi inscriptions found in Sitalikā (Thānkot-Balambu) area.

History of Cobahā is somehow linked with dawn of Kathmandu valley civilization ie. when the valley was still a huge lake called Nāgarhad. According to *Svayambhupurana* Bodhisavta Mahā-Manjushrī came all the way from Mahāchina to pay homage to the self emanating Primordial Buddha, the Ādibuddha. Realizing the sacredness of the valley, the Bodhisattva with his magical sword cut the tortoise shaped hillock at the eastern ridge forming a narrow gorge to drain the water out of lake to make the valley suitable for human habitation. After some time, Manjushrī developed a city in the middle of lake turned valley which later on came to known as Manjupattan. One of his devotees named Dharmākar was made a king of the newly developed city.

Like Buddhist mythological texts, the Hindu legends also accept that the Kathmandu valley was a huge lake in the remote past. However it present different story regarding the lake turning in to valley. *Nepālmahātmya*, under *Sakandapurāna - Himvatkhanda*, which is one of the eighteen Purānas of Hindu scripture credited Krishna and his son Pradhyumna for draining out out from the Nāgarhad. The text further mention the legend of a demon King named Mahendradaman who was based in Suprabha (nearby present day Thankot), who had blocked the Cobahā gorge to make a huge pool for her sister to play. On the request of Vāgmati, the only river system that runs through Cobahā gorge, Krishna broke the dam near Cobahā gorge with his *cakra*, one of his emblem. When the dam was opened by Almighty, instantly a most dreadful Virādha or Kacchapāsura (turtle-demon),

²⁷ Dilli R Regmi, *Inscriptions of Ancient Nepal*. (New Delhi: Abinav Publications, (1985), p.198.

jumped out from there. Seeing the dam broken, the cruel Kacchapāsura began to pull down Dolādri (Chāngu) and Svarnasringa to rebuild the dam. When Krishna saw the mountains being held by the demon, he installed the Kileswara linga in Dolādri and Svarnesvar linga in Svarnesvar²⁸ so that none of these hillock could be moved. Seeing the Kacchapā, as bright as the rising sun, lying on the ground, Pradhyumna hastened to chop his head apart with the cakra, the emblem of his father (Krishna), finally the Kacchapāsura was killed. The gods, with their minds blooming out of joy, happily rained flowers over Pradyumna.²⁹ Daniel Wright has presented same story but slight differently. Here it goes, one thousand years after the death of Dharmākar (one who was made the first king of Manjupatan by Manjushrī), an Asur (demon) named Dānāsūr came to the city of Suprabhā, (present Thānkot) and reigned there for 1000 years. He made the valley into a great pond in order to let his daughter Prabhāvati to play in, by blocking the Kvenā gorge.³⁰ While the valley turned lake was serving as an amusement pool of Prabhāvati, yet another legend mentions that Bhimsen, one of the brothers of Pāndavas of the Mahābhārat used to come from Dolkhā to amuse himself in a stone boat. Prabhāvati, the daughter of Dānāsūr, seeing Bhimsen, ran away. After this Vishnu came, and having killed Dānāsūr, opened a passage for draining the water through the Cobahā gorge and carried off Prabhāvati.³¹ Considering the linkage between these two view points regarding the valley, the Manjushrī opened gorge was later on blocked by the Danāsūr, which was subsequently reopened by Krishna and Pradhyumna.

2.5 Cultural history of Kathmandu valley

Buddhist cultural history of Kathmandu valley dates back to the dawn of human habitation in the valley. Once the palaeo-lake Nāgarhad was turned into a human habitable valley, the early inhabitants were believed to be Buddhist laities, the follower of Bodhisattva Mahā-Manjushrī, who made one of his followers Dharmākar the king of newly established city named Manjupattan. The Buddhist text further mentions

²⁸ Jayaraj Acharya, op. cit., p.117.

²⁹ Ibid., pp.117-121.

³⁰ Daniel Wrights, *Nepal - History of Country and People*. (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications.1993), p.94.

³¹ a) Ibid., 96, b) Parceval Landon, op cit., p.229

Manjudeva, an emanation of Manjushrī established a vihār named 'Pi' which later on came to known as Pimbihār and propogated the Dharma to inhabitants of Manjupattan city.³² Over the time, Prachanda Deva, a king of Gauda hearing of the glory of self emanated Buddha, the Svayambhu , came to the valley to pay homage to the Svayambhu. Having paying homage to the Svayambhu, he constructed a Dharmadhātumandal over the self-emanating Buddha to safe-guard/protect the Svayambhu from possible destructions from ill-mannered people of Kaliyuga. Afater that he took renounce leaving royal status and got initiated as a Buddhist ārcārya, who was later on came to known as Sāntikārācārya. He was ordained under Gunākara Ācārya who was the disciple of Manjudevācārya, the emanation of Manjushrī. The Shāntipur at Svayambhu was believed to be his seat of meditation.

Several Mahāyāni texts mention that Sākyamuni Buddha himself came to valley and paid homage to the Svayambhu and Guhyaswari – Nairitya Devi, the text further mentions that Sākyāmuni also visited to Namo Buddha, where he preached Jātaka story of Mahāsattva, story of his previous life as a prince Mahāsattva. Since there is no any historical evidence of the Sākyamuni's visit to Kathmandu valley, historians have taken this as merely a finctious. However, Theravadi texts too mention about some connections in between Pātaliputra/Magadh and the then Nepal valley through traders. *Manjushrīmulakalpa*, which is believed to be composed in 8th century mention about Buddha and/or his disciple Ānanda along with some other monks visited Kathmandu valley. Although Sākyamuni Buddha's visit to Kathmandu valley is not yet proved historically, Landon sees it is likely that the Master had visited the Nepal valley, if so he further adds his teachings were of course promulgated there as early as the six century BC.³³

Nearly two and half century after Buddha's Mahāprinirvāna, Emperor Asoka after taking refuge in Buddhism, sent Buddhist missions in eight different places within his empire and beyond to propagate the teaching of Tathāgata. A team led by Venerable

³² Varnabajra Bajracharya, op. cit. p.13.

³³ Parceval Landon, op. cit. p.211.

Majjhim headed towards the Himalaya Pradesh³⁴ which was believed to be the Nepal valley. Similarly some other Buddhist text mentions that emperor Asoka personally came to valley as pilgrims and erected several caityas in different parts of valley. Four *Thupas* in four cardinal direction of Patan and one in the centre along with caitya in Kirtipur are believed to be erected by Emperor Asoka. It is also believed that he got his daughter Cārumati married off to the prince of the valley and constructed a Buddhist monastery named Cārumati vihār which still exists in Cābahil.³⁵ Regarding Asoka's arrival in Kathmandu valley Landon further argues that the erection of six stupas and a record of the establishment of a shrine and vihār at Deopātan, which can be identified today, is a proof that the Emperor Asoka visited the valley of Kathmandu as well Rummindei.³⁶

Beside these legendary claims, there are some archaeological evidences found from different parts of Kathmandu valley which shows the prevalence of Buddhism in early Licchavi period. Vrishdeva, the great grand father of Mānadeva, the first historical King of Nepal was attributed as "*Sugatashāsanpakshapāti*" by one of his descendents, Jaya Deva II samvat (713-733 AD). He was also credited for construction of Gum-vihār, the Khāsti caitya and Dhandva caitya of Cābahil.³⁷ Several of ancient inscriptions of different dates released by Kings of that period, such as Amsuvarma, Siva Deva, Narendra Deva and Jaya Deva II reveals around 14 Buddhist vihār establishments, fund allocation and land endowment arrangements made on behalf of Kings. Besides that Buddhism seemed to be popular amongst subjects as well which was evident from an inscription of Cābahil which states a Buddhist laity woman who donated land endowment for "*sanghabhojan*" and story of Kinnari Jātaka story³⁸ and Licchavi caityas erected all around the Kathmandu valley, many of them still exist. These facts strongly endorse that Buddhism was popular amongst the subjects and fairly favored/supported by the Licchavi Kings, if not laity followers.

³⁴ Vincent A Smith, *Asoka: The Buddhist Emperor of India*. (London: Oxford University, 1901), p.55.

³⁵ Ibid....

³⁶ Parceval Landon, op. cit., p.211

³⁷ Dhanbajra Bajracharya, op cit.pp.3-8.

³⁸ Ibid, pp.2-3.

The early medieval period was in a way considered as the dark age of history of Nepal as there were no archaeological evidences (inscription) found from earlier three centuries of this period. However, this period witnessed development of scriptures more than ever before, specifically large volumes of Buddhist scriptures were composed, translated and copied during this period. This was evident from the large number of Buddhist text that belongs to this period was recovered from various sources, the earliest Buddhist manuscript so far recovered from this period was *Prajñāpāramitā* dated 140 NS.³⁹ Similar this period witnessed development of Paubha painting and roll painting based on Buddhist tantra/vajrayana. Kathmandu valley is not only conglomeration of magnificent architectural monuments of Buddhist antiquities, but also a unique oasis of surviving Mahayan Buddhist doctrines, cultural practices and colorful festivals.⁴⁰ Buddhism seemed to have reached its zenith during the transitional period. Despite the uncontested triumph of Siva Pasupati, there were even occasional kings who apparently professed Buddhism. Simhadeva/Shivadeva (1099-1122 AD) who abdicated to enter the Buddhist monkhood and spent remaining life in vihārs. Similarly Māndeva (1137-1140 AD) and Rudra deva (1167-1174 AD) are said to have abdicated in favour of Buddhist monastic life.⁴¹ If these statemens to be true, then the Buddhism was not only popular amongst the subject, but ruling elites too were fascinated by Buddhism. Although Saivism and Vaisnavism were more favored by the rulers but Buddhism was more popular amongst the subjects this was evident from the huge number of Buddhist monasteries established during this period, almost all the vajrayāna vihārs that exist today are the establishment of this period. From the presence of large number of Buddhist monasteries, memorial and votive caityas scattered all around the Kathmandu valley along with Buddhist festivals throughout the calendar year shows the magnitude of Buddhist culture prevailed in Kathmandu valley.

Nepal, geographically located between India and Tibet became not only trade route in between these countris, rather it became a transit point of Buddhist teachers travelling to

³⁹ Shankar Thapa, *Buddhist Sanskrit Literature of Nepal*. (Seoul, Minjoska Publishing Co. 2005), p.6.

⁴⁰ Mary S Slusser, *Nepal Manadala: A Cultural Study of Kathmandu Valley*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press.1998), p.270.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.281.

and from Tibet and India, en route to their destination they spend some time, even some years to acclimatize themselves or for retreat, or for study from Vajracharya teachers in Kathmandu. During this period of time, Vajrayāna/Tantric Buddhism was flourished more than every before. Slusser concludes that it is probable that Patan had become a Buddhist education center during the early medieval period. Moreover she further argues that the vihārs of valley, no less than Indian ones, were centres to which the Tibetan gravitated for Buddhist instruction. Tibetan sources attests that several great Buddhist teacher from India and Tibet such as Padmasambhava, Shāntarakshita, Atisa, Rwa Lotsava, Drokmi and so on spent considerable amount time here in Kathmandu for study, or retreat. The Muslim invasion in Northern India in 13th century triggered the influx of Buddhist teacher from India to Kathmandu, at the same time many Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures were brought to Nepal by those teachers.

In the present context when we talk about Buddhism of Kathmandu valley, obviously it is Vajrayana sect of Buddhism which was rooted in the valley in the late Licchavi period and flourished during the early medieval period once Muslim invaders entered in Northern India and destroyed large number of Buddhist monuments including Buddhist educational establishments such as Vikramshīla, Nālandā, Odantpuri, etc. As a consequence of many Buddhist teachers from India took refugee in Nepal, where they not only practiced but also propagated Vajrayāna in Kathmandu valley and beyond in Tibet.

2.6 Buddhist Cultural Heritage of Cobahā

Before we talk about the Buddhist Cultural Heritage of Cobahā, it would be appropriate to look into definition of cultural heritage. UNESCO defines Cultural Heritage as "the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations".⁴² The definition embraces both materials cultural heritage that can be physically capable of being perceived especially by sense of touch such as monuments, buildings and sites while the non-material cultural heritage that is not corporeal such as

⁴² <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/cairo/culture/tangible-cultural-heritage/> accessed on 1st September 2014

rituals, songs, legends, myths, beliefs, dances, festivals, etc. of cultural groups, community or society that are being transformed from one generation to another. Cobahā, being an ancient Buddhist settlement, has both tangible and intangible cultural heritage carried forward from centuries which needs to be preserved for the benefits of future generations.

2.6.1 Cobahā as an Ancient Buddhist Site

When we talk about Buddhism of Kathmandu valley in the context of present study, the term denotes Vajrayāna tradition of Mahāyāna Buddhism which is also known as Newār Buddhism amongst the westerners. Similarly the Buddhist cultural heritage denote here the material and non-materials cultural traits that are being inherited from generations to date. In this context material cultural heritage denotes Buddhist art and architectural components which are constructed at least a century ago and exist as of now with its' original form or in renovated/restored state. Similarly non-materials cultural heritage denotes socio-religious traditions, festivals, rites and rituals which are being practiced from several generations until now.

As of now there is no any archaeological evidence so far found which tells about the authentic history of the monastery of Cobahā, known as Indradeva Sanskārita Sri Suvarnagiri Mahavihār or Indradeva Sanskārita Kacchapāla Mahavihār as mentioned in inscriptions found here in Cobahā monastery complex. The phrase "Indradeva Sanskārita" the proper name of vihār speaks about its history itself which indicates that the monastery was consecrated by King Indradeva who was the ruling king of Kathmandu during (1026-1036 AD). The word "*Sanskārita*" sometimes denotes either consecration of newly constructed vihār or already existed structured but renovation. It is strongly believed that the word *Sanskārita* here denotes consecration of the vihār renovated by Indradeva, this shows that the vihār was existed prior to Indradeva. Devamālāvansāvali mention that the King Ansuvarma (605-621 AD) built a vihār in Cobahā. Some sources mention that the Suryasana Vihār in Cobahā was established by a Vajrāchārya Bhāro (1040 AD) from

Patan who used to stay in Cobahā for retreat.⁴³ There are two magnificent architectural monuments within the bahā complex one being the Newāri style tired temple which houses the Ānandādi Lokesvar, other being the Shikhar style temple of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva. Chapter III will deal with more elaboration on these monuments.

Besides the Cobahā, the one King Indradeva consecrated, there was a bahi in the western edge the hillock which exists now as merely a private courtyard named "Coyebahā-bahi". No structural remain of the bahi exist at present, except the name, however the name itself is evident to belief that there was a bahi in the past. This is further supports by the tradition of circumambulation of Dipankar-jātrā which takes place in the month *Gunlā* along with other important rituals such as *Ihi* (mock marriage of Newār girl, or *Janko* (sacramental rituals of elderly people) in this courtyard as of now. Interestingly like so called Bandhudatta caitya of Tebahāl bears three monolithic caityas placed at the three corners of the plinth, the Bandhudatta caitya of Cobahā also bears four licchavi chaitys at the four corners of the plinth. However, none of respondent have any idea about original location of these ancient caityas, most probably these caitya too belongs to the same bahi.

2.6.2 Seat of Ānandādi Lokesvar and Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva

The hillock of Cobahā is considered as a sacred place from Buddhist perspective from the ancient time, it is the seat of two prominent Buddhist deities namely Ānandādi Lokesvar and Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva. After the lake turned into a sacred valley with fertile land and pious inhabitants, there appeared eight great Bodhisattvas or *Astavaitarāgs*, the ones who have eliminated all the desires or passionless, in eight different places of the valley in the forms of illuminating light for the benefits of all sentient beings residing in the valley.⁴⁴ One of them, Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva also

⁴³ Hubert Decler, "Bajracharya transmission in XIth century Chobhar: Bharo 'Maimed Hand's main disciple Vajra-kirti, the translator from Rwa" *Buddhist Himalaya*, VI, no. 1 & 2 (1994-95) p.6.

⁴⁴ Min B Sakya and Shanta H Bajracharya (Trans.), *Svayambhu Purāna*. (Lalitpur: Nagarjuna Institut of Exact Methods. 2001), p.39.

known as Gandhesvar Vaitarāg appeared in the Cobahā who has got his seat in the centre of the Cobahā monastery courtyard.

Similarly, there are twelve riverside sacred places at the confluxes, where different tributaries came to meet two major river systems of the valley, namely Bāgmati and Vishnumati. Buddhist community of Kathmandu valley highly revere these confluxes as sacred places called *Dvādashīrth*, mean 12 pilgrimages, out of them two of such sacred places namely Sulakshana-tirth and Jaya-tirth are located at the foothill of Cobahā. Sulakshana tirth, located at confluence where Cārumati meet Bāgmati river at northern foothill of Cobahā is believed to be the abode of a serpent god Mahāpadma. Those who take bath in this *tirth*, pilgrim will not suffer from misfortune and blessed with good luck and intelligence and finally attain enlightenment. It is generally believed that if one take bath and worship/pay homage to Ānandādi Lokesvar one is blessed with good health, heals leprosy or not suffer from leprosy.⁴⁵ So is the deity popularly came to known as healer of leprosy. Another important *tirth* located in the eastern foot hill of hillock, where Nakhu river meets Bāgmati is known as Jaya-tirth. It is believed to be the abode of the serpent god called Sukra. There is interesting legend regarding this tirth, the demon king Dānāsura's wife having no offspring for several years observed vrata of Basundharādevi, who is considered as goddess of fertility. Subsequently she was born with a daughter named Pravāvati.⁴⁶

The Kacchapālgiri, once the Buddhist monastery known as Kacchapālagiri/Suvarnagiri Mahavihār was built on the top of the hill, the hillock is came to known as Cobahā, means the monastery located on the hillock. The vihār complex consists of a three storied pagoda style temple, the abode of Ānandādi Lokesvar in the south of the courtyard and in the centre, an octagonal all stone Shikhar style temple dedicated to Bodhisattva Khsitigarbha also known as Gandhesvar Vaitarāg, one of the eight Vaitarāgas prevailed in Kathmandu valley. Besides these two major monuments in the courtyard, there stands a Dharmadhātu mandal in front of the temple of the Vaitarāg, which is not much older.

⁴⁵ Jagdish C Regmi and Pashupati K Dvivedi, op. cit., p. 7.

⁴⁶ Hem Raj Sakhya, *Sri Swayabhumaha Chaitya*. (Kathmandu: Svayambhu Vikash Mandal), p.37.

There are several votive caityas of different time frame in and around monastery complex. It is worth mention here the five monolithic votive Licchavi caityas of 6th to 7th century AD, one lying adjacent to the eastern door way of the monastery and rest four are erected at the four corners of the commemorate caitya situated some 50 meters east of the Cobahā monastery. Prevalence of these Licchavi caitya attests the historicity of Buddhist occupancy in Cobahā from the Licchavi period. The dilapidated and undecipherable Licchavi inscription found in Cārghare located less than kilometer south-west of Cobahā⁴⁷ could endorse antiquity of Cobahā hillock which might have close connection with Cobahā.

Similarly, different vansāvalis mention that there was a chariot festival of Ānandādi Lokesvar, even before introduction of chariot festival of Bungām Lokesvar ie. Matsyandranāth⁴⁸ by King Narendra Deva and Bandhudatta, though scholars differs their opinion regarding Macchendranāth's entry to Nepal valley. But prevalence of Ānandādi Lokesvar is no doubt one of the earliest Lokesvar exist in Kathmandu valley.

No tangible cultural heritage can exist stand alone without any connection to living cultural traits, same is true in the case of Cobahā. There are series of rituals, celebrations and cultural practices closely linked with main deities of Cobahā such as ritual bath (Nhavan), fetching Karunamaya (Dyolāyegu) followed by procession, Sacramental rituals, Carriot festival (Bahāyā), Kartik sevā followed by Māye-absan, *Gunlā* Dharma and Dipankar-jātrā, etc. Attempts will be made to bring out cultural and religious significances of each of the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Cobahā.

2.6.3 Cobahā as a Sacred Site for Tantric Buddhist Practices

Since early medieval period Kathmandu valley have been increasingly became attractive place for acquiring Buddhist monastic education, Buddhist scriptures texts high level of initiations. After invasions of Muslim in Northeast India and the decline of

⁴⁷ a) Dilli R Regmi, *Inscriptions of Ancient Nepal Vol I*, (New Delhi: Abhinav Publications. 1983), p.69.

b) Hari R Joshi, *Nepalko Prachina Abhilekh*. (Kathmandu: Royal Nepal Academy. 2030 BS), p.381.

c) Landon, Perceval, op.cit., p.228.

⁴⁸ Bal Chandra Sharma, "Kathmandu Upatyakako Eka Rajvansavali". *Ancient Nepal*, 4, (1968), p.13.

Buddhism in India by 1400 AD, valley became a centre Buddhist monastic education for the Tibetans. Being situated in between India and Tibet, Nepal valley was not only trade route in between these two neighboring countries, but flourished as destination of pious Buddhist teachers and students as a teaching/learning centre. Vikramashila Mahāvihār of Thambahil, Hiranyavarna Mahāvihār and other several Monasteries were centre of Buddhist education in early medieval period. Different sources mention that many Buddhist Ācāryas from India and Tibet including Padmasambhava, Sāntaraksita, Atisā, Ratnarakshita, Rwa Lotsava came to valley for retreat. They choose different mountains and caves for their retreat such Asur Guphā, Yanglesho in Pharping, where Guru Padmasambhava believed to went through retreats⁴⁹, Nāgarjuna hill and cave, Cakhunti Bakhunti caves in Cobahā, and a cave in Sankhu Vajrayogini were the popular retreat centres in the Kathmandu valley.⁵⁰ It is believed that two Buddhist teachers Tilopā and Nāropā choose a cave 200 yards above the Suryaghat, Pasupati and sat for meditation/retreat there.⁵¹ Jarugkhashor, Godāvāri, Tsha-ba tsha-shod, Namo Buddha, Manicura and Svayambhu are some other sites that the Buddhist teachers worshipped and sat for retreat/meditations.

Cobahā is no doubt from the remote past considered as sacred site of tantric practitioners. Buddhist teachers such as Odiyānāchārya , Mahakaruna also maintained as maimed hand Vajrāchārya Guru Bhāro, Rwa Lotsava and so on have come to Cobahā for tantric retreat. Some of the most prominent Buddhist teacher who sat for retreat in Cobahā are as follows:

Odiyānāchārya : Several sources mention that a Buddhist Guru named Odiyānā also known as Odiyānāchārya on completion the retreat of Bajrayogini in Asura cave in Phanikesvar (Pharping) came to Cobahā and sat upon elephant hide and a cushion of *Kush* grass for meditation. In the beginning of his retreat he invoked (called on meeting

⁴⁹ Keith Dowmen, "A Buddhist Guide to the Power Places of the Kathmandu Valley". *Kailash*, 8, no 3 and 4, (1981) pp.255-56.

⁵⁰ Todd Lewis, "Newārs and Tibetans in Kathmandu Valley Ethnic Boundaries and Religious History". *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 38 (1981), p.37.

⁵¹ Keith Dowmen, op cit., pp.269-70.

of) all the god and goddesses except the Ganesh who reside near by the gorge caused obstacle to the Guru, Lokesvar envisioning the obstacle sent Kshitigarbha to pacify the agry ridden Ganesh through Vighnantaka and advised Guru to propitiate the Ganesh to success his mission. Identification of Odiyānāchārya seems to be bit confusing as different sources mention his origin as differently. The *Svayambhupurāna* mention that Odiyānāchārya was well known Pandit from Kapilvastu.⁵² On the flip side, a later chronicle portrays him as an Ācārya from Oria who was spent some time in Asur Guphā, Pharping then went to the northern direction along with the bank of Bāgmati who eventually arrived near the Kacchapā or Cobahā hillock, where he performed his devotions. There he evoked Vighnantaka, and the deity called Gandhesvara voluntarily appeared and the Ācārya built a temple for him in the top of Kacchapālagiri.⁵³ One other source mentions that Odiyānāchārya was the great teacher from Odiyānā where the Great Buddhist teacher Padmasambhava was believed to be born. Hence many scholars have concluded that the Odiyānāchārya must be not other than the Guru Padasambhava. Tibetan sources too attests that Guru Padmsambhava stayed for some time in Pharping *Asura Guphā* as part of his retreat.⁵⁴ This statement strengthens the argument that the Guru Padmasambhava came here in Cobahā and went through the rigorous retreat and eventually established Kshitigarbha on the top of hillock.

Bharo 'Maimed Hand' born in Patan especially remembered as the founder of the Ādināth Vihār of Cobahā hillock, who was believed to be great Vajrācārya master of his time used to sat in meditation in *Cakhunti Bakhunti*. Todd Lewis narrates quoting former Lhasa traders that:

"once a lama came all way from Tibet to get ordination of Vajabarahi and Vajrabhairava under the Vajrācārya Guru, who was the only person to posses with it. The Guru refused to give ordinance to him outright on hearing his rquest, the lama waited for on and on eventually for three years, but he was still refused

⁵² a) Hemraj Sakya, op.cit., p.41.

b) Badri Ratna Bajrachaya, op. cit., p.8.

⁵³ Vikramjeet Hasarat, History of Nepal: as Told by its Own and Contemporary Chroniclers, (1970),13.

⁵⁴ a) George N Roerich, *The Blue Annals Part One*, (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949):..

b) Yeshe Tsogyal, *The Lotus-Burn - The Life Story of Padmasambhava*. (Massachusetts: Shambhala, 1993), p.59.

stating that this initiation was too difficult as Meka Samvara required a greatest level of devotion. The lama still insisted him but he just left without a word. The lama asked Vajracharya's wife, where he had gone, she first said that she didn't know however, finally, she revealed that he had gone to *Cakhunti Bakhunti* a cave near the Cobahā gorge for meditation. As lama approached the Cobahā gorge, he heard a voice "today your guru will come by you – look for him". After sometime a herd of deer came by, the lama keeps on looking for the Guru. Again voice resounds "your Guru came by and left. Didn't you notice him? Look again along this road". The lama kept on looking. A flock of ducks passed by but the lama saw only ducks. Again the voice resounds "for second time he came but you did not recognize him. Keep looking carefully, this is your last chance you to see the Guru." After some time, a group of young women came by who were dancing and singing. The lama was desperate and puzzled but decided to close his eyes and grabbed one, bowed down and clasped her feet. In fact it was the Guru, eventually Guru initiated him as he requested.⁵⁵

The lama referred here was non other than the Tibetan monk Rwa Lotsava who was also known as Rwa lo-tsa-ba rDo-rje-grags (1016-1198 AD), who got high level of vajrayana ordination from teacher named Bhāro from Cobahā.⁵⁶ The Blue Annal mentions that the Rwa received ordination of Yamantaka under Mahākarunā, who is also known as Bhāro Changjum, the prominent teacher of Vajravairava or Yamantaka of his time. According to Lewis, Rwa received ordination of Yamantaka inside cave of Cobahā known as Cakhunti Bakhunti, where he met the Guru in his first visit to Nepal valley. The source further clarifies that by the time of the great Tibetan monk Dharmaswami and Rwa Lotsava renowned teachers from North come regularly to Nepal where they elicited support among local Buddhist.⁵⁷ From above statements it was evident that the Cakhunti Bakhunti cave of Cobahā seems to be used as sacred site by Buddhist teachers for high level of initiations in early medieval period.

Cave System

There are several natural caves around the Cobahā gorge, some of them are even a kilometer long ones and other are shorter ones. These caves are known by different names

⁵⁵ Todd Lewis, op cit., p.38.

⁵⁶ Punya Prasad Parajuli, "Himālibhekma Prachalan Bhaiāyeko Boudha Dharmako Bikashmā Nepal Manadalkā Boudha Braktitva ra Kalākārharuko Yogdāna", *Palesvan*, 16, no. 22 (1975) pp.73-77.

⁵⁷ Todd Lewis., op cit., p.36

such as Cakuhiti, Bakhuhiti, Padmahansa guphā, Caktratirth, Twang Reng Guphā, Cakhumba, etc. This complex cave system is considered as second largest cave system of Nepal and the third one of the whole of Indian Sub-continent, where the clues to the oldest history of Kathmandu valley can be found.⁵⁸ This cave system seems to be a complex network of several caves leading from different entrances. There are some five entrances most commonly used. Some entrances are located at the steep cliffs either side of the gorge, and four other entrances are on the different places of the hillock above the suspension bridge, which are now enclosed by recently developed Manjushrī Park. Entire park area is enclosed by boundary walls with iron bar, entry points are fixed with lockable iron doorways, foot trails are made along the park, trees of wide varieties are planted and wild trees are properly preserved. Guided tour service is made available for the visitors inside the cave. A well trained rescue team is arranged in case of emergency while exploring inside the cave.

Since the cave system being a complex one, different people entered from different entrances come across different objects such as stone idols, Siva Linga, natural spring, small pond, etc. inside the cave. According to the cave explorers there are some place widened by human interference which can accommodate 15-20 people. One of informant who have explored the cave system mentions that there are some roughly chasaed idols made of stone including a Siva Linga inside the cave which are applied with red and yellow vermilion powders which indicates these images were worship by cave visitor and/or the people who go inside for religious retreats.

There is an interesting story (legend) regarding formation of the cave system. Once Odiyānāchārya was going through a deep meditation while invoking all the gods and goddesses except the Kvenā-Ganesh. Feeling dishonored by Odiyānāchārya, the Ganesh sent his vehicle mouse to put obstacles to Odiyānācārya , soon after a large number of mice start digging the hole all the way from Kvenā to Cobahā and cause obstructions to the Guru. The all the gods and goddesses present there were flown out of cave in the

⁵⁸ Von Vanclav Cilek and D. Gebauer, "Die Hohlen de Schlucht von Cobhar bei Kathmandu (Nepal). Verbad Osterreichischer Hohlenforscher (accessed on 1st August 2014). p.1.

forms of sparrows and pigeons. This is how the cave came to known as Cakhun-tirth and Bakhun-tirth later shortened Cakhunti Bakhunti.

On the flip side, geologists have their own interpretation regarding the formation of cave system of Cobahā. Nishimura judging from the topography of the Cobahā hill concludes that it had resisted the erosion of the river and dammed up the water of lake in northern side of the hill. Over the time gradually the groundwater had made a kind of karsts tunnel under the hill and a part of water had been drained through the tunnel and eventually it collapsed and the deep gorge remained which drained all lake water.⁵⁹

2.6.4 Kvenā Ganesh

Ganesh, the elephant-headed god is known by different names such as *Ganapati*, the lord of squad (team), *Lambodar*, big belly, *Vighnesvara* means lord of obstacle or *Vighnaharta* or *Vighnantaka* the obstacle and regulator of success, which is also symbolises auspicious beginning and is believed to confer good luck on all ceremonies, from ancient times he has been the insurer of right beginning.⁶⁰ He is very popular among the Newārs of Kathmandu valley and worshipped in the beginning of any rituals irrespective to their religious affinities, be it Buddhist or Hindu hoping to meet the goal without any obstacles.

One can notice at least a shrine of Ganesh in every settlement if not many in every locality of all the Newār settlements of Kathmandu valley. Bigger Newār cities/settlements like Kathmandu city, Patan, Bhaktapur, Kirtipur, Thimi and so on have several Ganesh temples installed in every neighbourhood (tol). In every occasion, people worship the Ganesh located in their own locality in the beginning of any religious or social rituals. Similarly, every ritual begins with lighting a traditional oil lamp called Sukunda made of brass in which an image of Ganesh is engraved. It represents the local emanation of Kvenā Ganesh, one who caused obstacle Odiyānācārya (Padmasambhāva) while the later was going through spiritual exercise, who omitted to invite the Kvenā Ganesh, who

⁵⁹ Fumio Yonichi, op cit. pp.158-59

⁶⁰ Milan R Sakya, *Ganesh in Medieval Nepal*, (New Delhi: Rupa & Co., 2006), p.xii.

laid down the tradition of worshipping the Ganesh to pacify angry Ganesh before any mission.⁶¹

Ganesh is not only worshipped in the beginning of any mission, he is equally worshipped in the completion major rituals and/or the desired wishes are fulfilled. People from surrounding area (Kirtipur, Pāngā, Cobahā, Bhājangal, Itagval, and even Patan) organise a Kvenāpujā after completion of major rituals such as wedding, Vratibandh or Janko. Such Kvenāpujā is held even after completion of Cobahādyo-jātrā and Bungadyo-jātrā. In course of Kvenāpujā, after a ritual pujā of Ganesh, feast is served to all the people involved. After completion annual festival of Cobahādyo, the Cobahādyo Guthi organise a Kvenāpujā in which *Thāpājus* of Cobahā, two officiating Gurjus, *Pānju* in duty and Dhangu-in-rotā are involved. This pujā is considered as an appreciating Ganesh in completion of annual jātrā without any obstacle. Similarly after completion of annual chariot festival of Bungadyo-jātrā, the Yonvās, a group of people belongs to Jyāpu community from Cyāsal, who are the builder of chait and responsible for decorating chariot with *Sijapatāsvān* or *Silusvān* (a kind of green leave flower) organise Kvenā-pujā in the shrine of Ganesh located in Pulchow, as this Ganesh is considered as emanation of Kvena-Ganesh or local version of Kvena-Ganesh invoked through a ritual.

Similarly, there is a tradition, sometime after marriage, the newly married bride along with other family members organise a pujā to Ganesh located near Pakunajol which is popularly known as Pokonaidyo. According to Dr Milan R Sakya the term Pokonaidyo is derived from *Poko*, means fermented rice for brewing the traditional beer⁶². It is believed that this Ganesh bestows the bride with a skill of making good rice beer. Hence he is called as "*Thonsākim Ganedyo*" means Ganesh who makes beer tasty. There is a tradition of fasting observance on Tuesdays which is widely known as "*Mangalbār-absan*" in the name of Ganesh as Tuesday is the day of devotion to Ganesh. It is believed that by fasting observance on Tuesdays one's wish be fulfilled or bestowed with desired conjugal partner or off springs. There are four Ganeshs highly revered by the Newars of Kathmandu valley,

⁶¹ David N Gellner, op. cit., p.84.

⁶² Milan Ratna Sakya, op.cit. p.29.

known as Pyamha Ganedyo, namely Asoka-vināyaka located near Kasthmandap, Candra-vināyaka in Cābahil, Kārya-vināyaka near Khokan ānd Jala-vināyak (Kvenā Ganesh) in the south-east foothill of Cobahā. Sometime Suryavināyak of Bhaktapur is also included in the four Ganesh, in this case Kāryavināyak is omitted.

Temple of Kvenā Ganesh

The magnificent three tire Newāri style temple of Ganesh temple is located at the western bank of Bāgmati near the gorge. The Kvenā Ganesh, which literally means Ganesh residing in south or lower rung of Kathmandu valley⁶³ is an important segment of cultural landscape of the Cobahā. There is no any historical evidence found so far which prevails the origin of Kvenā Ganesh. However, stating the origin and antiquity of Kvenā Ganesh, Dr. Sakya is of opinion that the Kvenā or Jala-vināyak of Cobahā is to be the primordial, so is venerated as Adi-vināyak who was believed to the only eye-witness to the creation of a passage that drained out water from the palaeo-lake of Nāgarhad and subsequently flourished human civilization in the valley by the effort of Manjusrī.⁶⁴ He further concludes that the Ganesh was previously known as a lord of hurdle, later transformed into a benevolent deity, popularly came to known as god of obstacle remover or symbol of auspicious beginning, who brings good luck.⁶⁵

Iconographically Ganesh is depicted as elephant headed, one tasked, three eyes, big belly, two hands, right hand holding rosary and left hand holding a bowel full of *laddu* (sweet), sitting in *Lalitāshan*. Besides this there are many form of Ganesh with four handed, six handed, eight handed, 10 handed, 12 and 16 hands Ganesh in standing or dancing posture with different types of attribute in his hand depending upon the number of hands. An icon of Ganesh is always depicted with a mouse as his vehicle. In tantric rituals of Newār Buddhis practices in Kathmandu valley, *Gvajā* symbolizes the Ganesh. However, the Kvenā Ganesh is worshipped in an anaconic form, which is a huge natural stone in the clif of Bāgmati.

⁶³ Ibid., p.11

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.10

⁶⁵ Ibid.

The temple of Kvenā-Ganesh lies on the western bank of the Bāgmati river besides the Cobahā gorge. The three tiered Newāri style temple is raised on the three feet high plinth of square base plan in the centre of courtyard surrounded by rest-houses all around. The temple premises is pierced with three entrances, the main entrance in the west, then north which leads to gorge and in the east, which leads to the Bagmari river. All the three roofs are made of gilded copper-sheets, however lower two roof seems to be replaced with gilded copper sheets only after 1978. The bell shaped pinnacle on the apex of the temple is surmounted by *chatra* with triangular support. The upper most roof is supported by eight struts at four cardinal directions and four corner struts known as *kunsals*. In each floor level there are entablatures with different motifs topped with cornice in each corners. The second tier of roof is supported by sixteen intricately carved struts with different deities along with four *kunsalas* (corner struts) in the four corners. Similarly the lower most roof is supported by 16 intricately carved struts with the middle part carved with different deities where as the lower part of the struts are carved with erotic arts. There are small windows flanked by two fake/blind windows underneath the each roof in all four directions.

The temple is facing towards the south, the entrance of the temple is big enough which is surmounted with a cressent shaped repousee tympanum engraved with *chepu* in the centre and eight auspicious symbols (*astamangala*) four on each side flanked with two whirlpool followed by two *makars*. The openings in other three sides are fixed with latticed shutters which bear cressant tympanums flanked by flags made of brass in all three directions. The tympanum is rested on the capital of two intricately engraved gilded copper colonnades. Besides either of the two colonnades there stands two metal flas with sun and moon engraved on it. On the either side of main entrance there are two stone lions guarded which are flanked with two bell posts. Opposite the main entrance there is an image of huge rat made of gilded copper surmounted on the raised platform. The entablature on the first floor is intricately carved wooden banner, carved joist ends and cornices on each corners.

The sactum is houses with anaconic image of hugh natural rock about nearly 5 feet height, with a crown surmounted on the top of the anaconic image, usually decorated with ornated with different kinds of ornaments and/or jweleries. Inside the sanctum, four wooden colonnades on four corners leaving a circumambulatory path around the image of Ganesh. There are enumerable temple bells hanged all around across the two front colonnades. On the back side of the temple there is a huge natural stone which seems to be the part of image of Ganesh. The locals believe that if one lean on the stone rest entire weight backing on the stone heals backache. The priest of the Ganesh is a Karmacharya from Patan, now residing here in Kvenā.

An inscription dated NS 723 found inside the temple to the left of the Ganesh image in Jala-vināyak temple mentions that in the during duel reign of King Shivasimhadeva and Harisimhadeva, the thakali of the Guthi, Bhukun erected the temple of Jalavinayaka.⁶⁶ The then kings seems to have keen interest in preservation of environment of around the Kvenā Ganesh, this is evident from a copper plate inscription dated NS 880 located in Kvenā Ganesh temple issued by Visvajita Malla his mother Harshalaxmi Malla mention about maintenance of the forest of Cobahā by prohibiting cutting the fodder trees this area. A copy of this inscription is also found in the temple of Ādināth as well.⁶⁷ Until mid 20th century, the Cobahā, Kvenā along with entire south-west part of valley was under jurisdiction of Lalitpur.

⁶⁶ Hemraj Sakya, *Medieval Nepal - Colophons and Inscriptions*. (Kathmandu: T R Vaidya. 1970), p.93.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.235.

CHAPTER III

MATERIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Settlement pattern of Cobahā

Cobahā lies six kilometers south of Kathmandu city, which is under the jurisdiction of Kirtipur Municipality, Ward No 14. It shares border with Bāgmati river in the north and east, Chārghare and Takkarchā in the south, Itagol and Bhājāngal in the west. The core area which is flat surface on the top was the ancient settlement which could be date back even before Licchavi period as claimed by Tiwari.⁶⁸ However, the existing settlement pattern resembles the traditional Newār settlements of the medieval period. Cobahā is a temple centric settlement, which expands from centre to peripherals, concentrating the Sākyas and Dhangus in the proximity to Cobahādyo as they are more involved in rituals of the deity. Ānandādi Lokesvar, the principal deity of the settlement is considered as the protective deity, local people call him as *Hyaunkhvā Āju*, literally means red faced Grandfather (the protector). Newārs propiciate Bhairav or one of the eight divine mothers as the protective deity of their settlements are called as *Āji* in case of goddess and *Āju* in case of god. Like most of Newar settlements divided into two halves as observed by Tofin, the core area of Cobahā is also broadly divided into two halves, firstly, *Coye* means upper part which consists of Cobahā monastery complex, Coyedabū, Nani, Cibahā and Ikhā and secondly *Koye*, means lower part which consists of Kunchen, Dathu, Gvānani, Dabū and Coyebahā-Bahi.

Cobahā , being one of the ancient Buddhist settlements there are many Buddhist monuments in and around. Some of the surviving important ancient monuments are obviously the five monolithic Lichhavi caityas, the memorial caitya located eastern side of the hillock. The Buddhist monastery known as Indradeva Sanskārit Kacchapālagiri

⁶⁸ Sudarshan R Tiwari, op. cit, p.10.

Mahāvihār along with Newāri style temple Ānandādi Lokesvar and Shikhar style temple of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva within the monastery complex are the main architectural monuments of the Cobahā. The preceding paragraphs will elaborate further on these monuments.

3.2 Indradeva Sanskarit Kachhpalagiri Mahavihār

3.2.1 Historical Background

The Indradeva Sanskārita Kacchapālagiri Mahavihār is located on the top of the hillock originally known as Kacchapālgiri. Once the Vihār is constructed at the Kacchapālagiri, the entire hillock is came to known as Cobahā, literally means the monastery situated on the top of the hill or upper elevation. It would be appropriate to give a glance on the history of Buddhist monastery in Kathmandu valley before we deal on monastery of Cobahā in particular.

According to Buddhist legends the first vihār establishment in the valley must be the vihār known as Pimbahā⁶⁹ erected by Manjudeva, an emanation of Manjushrī Bodhisattva, who ordained the Gunākarācārya, the teacher of Pracandadeva, under whom he got ordination of Ācārya and became Shāntikarācārya. Some other sources mention about emperor Asoka's visit to Kathmandu in third century 250 BC and erected five stupas in Patan and one stupa in Kirtipur. The text further mentions that he got his daughter Cārumati married to a prince from Deopātan and constructed a monastery in her name which is still exists as Cārumati vihār in Cābahil. However, there is no any historical evidence so far available to prove the above statements.

On the basis of historical documents the existence of vihār in Kathandu valley could trace back to reign of Vrishdeva, the great grand father of Māna Deva, the first historical King of Nepal. According to *Gopālarajvansāvali* Vrishdeva consecrated Gumvihār located on the hillock north of Sānkhu. He was portrayed as Buddhist follower and attributed as *Sugatasāsanpakshapāti*, means the follower of Buddha's regime or teaching.

⁶⁹ Varnavajra Bajracharya, op. cit. p.13.

The Licchavi inscriptions mention about 14 Buddhist monasteries which includes Gumvihāra, Manavihār, Rajvihār, Khajurikā vihār, Siva Singh vihār and so on exist in Licchavi period. An inscription dated *samvat* 32 of Ansuvarma from Hadigaon reveals five major vihārs which were allocated with state donation of 6 *purāna* and 3 *pana*, and other ordinary vihārs with 3 *purāna*,⁷⁰ indicates that during Licchavi period Buddhist vihārs were well recognized by the state. Moreover, most of these vihāras seems to be built or consecrated by Licchavi Kings. From the historical facts, we can conclude that the Buddhism was popular amongst ruling elites and traders in the Licchavi period and then after throughout the Malla period as well. The large numbers of medieval monasteries surviving to date are the testimony of the popularity of Buddhism among the ruling elites, practitioners, and Buddhist laities throughout the medieval period.

The monastery of Cobahā, an inscription found in the premises of bahā testifies as Indradeva Sansakārīta Mahāvihār was also known as Shrī-Asan Mahāvihār, and popularly known simply Cobahā, the monastery located on the top of hillock. This monastery was consecrated by the then King Indradeva of who ruled from 1126-1136 AD, some sources mentions he ruled for 12 years. One another source reveals that the monastery of the Cobahā was founded in 11th century by a Bajracharya from Patan who was better known as Maimed-hand-Bharo.⁷¹ He was also knowns as different names, the *Blue Annal* introduced him as Mahākarunā, under whom Rwa Lotsava learned main tantras.⁷²

As Decler's mention Rwa Lotsava came to valley around 1030 AD, this clearly shows that by this time the Maimed-Hand Bhāropā must had founded the Suryasan vihār of Cobahā, so the vihār Indradeva consecrated in his tenure in between 1126-1136 AD must be the same vihār which might be renovated by Indradeva and renamed as Indradeva Sanskārīta Kacchapālagiri Mahāvihār. The vihār was known by different names such as Indradeva Sanskarit Kacchpālagiri Mahāvihār, Suvarnagiri Mahāvihār, Asanā-Lokesvar Mahāvihār, Suryāsan vihār, Ādināth vihār and so on. The etymology of two names

⁷⁰ Dhanbajra Bajracharya, op cit.,p. 321

⁷¹ Hubert Decler, op cit., p.1

⁷² George N Roetich op cit. p.375.

mentioned above *Asan* and *Suryāsan* seems to be linked *asan* being a common term either the word *Surya* might be added or omitted over the time.

But archaeological evidences so far found from the *vihār* premises are of later dates installed in due course of renovation of the temple of *Cobahādyo* in different time spans. The earliest inscription so far found is the inscription with an image of *Padmapāni* on the stele dated 761 NS. This inscription describes repair works carried out on the temple and donation of golden finial by *Shrī Hari Krishna*. The inscription reveals that King *Siddhi Narasimha Malla* and the Crown Prince *Srinivasa Malla* were also present on this occasion.⁷³ Another historical copper plate inscription dated 782 NS nailed in the western side of the doorway of *Lokesvar* temple mentions that devotees from *Sikomaguthi*, *Vanta vihār* and *Casāpasha* of *Kathmandu* donated gifts made of gold to *Cobahādyo*.⁷⁴ Similarly, yet another copper plate inscription dated 801 NS found in the *vihār* complex refers to public notice released by the King in prohibition in digging of canals to irrigate the land in *Thashimbu* area from where water for ritual bath of *Cobahādyo* was fetched and the water porters are to be paid accordingly for the service they rendered, the inscription further prohibits extraction black clay from the *Dipa*, crematory near by and several people are assigned to take care of the *guthi* accordingly.⁷⁵

3.2.2 Kacchapālagiri Mahāvihār Complex

Indradeva Sanskarit Kacchapālagiri Mahāvihār on the top of the *Kacchapālagiri* locally came to known as *Cobahā* means the *vihār* situated on the top, *Co* in *Newāri* means on the top and *bahā* means monastery. However consecrated name of the *vihār* as inscription attests was *Indradeva Samsakārit Asanalokesvar Mahāvihār*. In some other text the name of *bahā* is also mention the as *Suryasan* (Sun throne) *Mahāvihār* founded by a *Bajrācārya* named *Bhāro* from *Patna*.⁷⁶ It is one of the three *vihārs* outside the *Patan* city

⁷³ Hem Raj Sakya, op. cit (f.n.51), p.104.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p.128.

⁷⁵ ibid., p.153.

⁷⁶ Hubert Decler, op. cit.p.1.

those are affiliated with 18 Mahāvihārs of Patan, the other two vihārs are Jagatpāl Mahāvihār of Kirtipur and Amarāpuri Mahāvihār of Bungamati.

Like other bahās of Kathmandu valley, this bahā is also made in quadrangular base in a courtyard style on the top of hillock. The courtyard is enclosed from all the four sides with two storied buildings on three sides; east, west and north and in the south of courtyard there stands a four storied Newāri style temple with three tiers of roofs in diminishing order. The courtyard is pierced with three doorways on its north, the main gateway, on the eastern gateway lead to *Nani* where the ritual bathing platform is located and in the south. There are two doorways on the either sides of the temple which connects to the backyard of the bahā. There is a layer of plinth about 18" high raised from the ground level which is paved with black stone slabs all around courtyard. The temple of Cobahādyo which is the oldest structure within the monastery complex is raised on two layers of plinth. The temple stands out rest of other surrounding two storied monastery complex. The make and design shows the surrounding complex were reconstructed in different phases by different donors, even some portions of the building are constructed using cement and concrete mixtures. The main entrance of vihar in the north is surmounted with an intricately carved wooden tympanum with tantric forms of panchdhyani Buddhas. On the top centre a garuda is carved which is flanked by two nagakanyas in two sides. On bottom centre, an image of Mahā-Vairocana is flanked by Mahā-Akshobhy on the left and Mahā-Ratnasambhava on the right. Next to the two *nāgakanyās*, there are images of Mahā -Amitabh and Mahā-Amoghsiddhi are carved in either sides, below that, two whirlpools are flanked by two artistically carved makars on either sides.

In the north of the vihār complex there is a molded doorway in the middle load bearing wall, and *phalcās* in the either bay, the phalcā in the outer bay is merely a open rest house while the phalcā in the inner bay is made of wooden planks. Just opposite the *phalcā* in a left corner there stands three images of Mahākāl, one being bigger, about 3 feet height, and two smaller ones are with 10-12 inches height. Next to the Mahākāl there is niche of Nāsandyo, the god of music and dance covered with brass repousee with images Nāsandyo engraved which generally depicted with third eye in its' forehead. In the eastern

wing, the central part of the ground floor pierced with a doorway that leads to Nani, there is a open space, *phalcā* in either side of doorway with wooden platforms which is used by *strota* reciters. In the north section of eastern wing is left vacant, which is occasionally used by devotees to prepared food during annual festivals of Cobahādyo and also use as over night staying for the five day fasting observants during the Kartik sevā, so is the southern section left vacant, also used by observants during the Kartik sevā. The northern part of western wing is being used as *bhajan phalcā*, the place of playing devotional songs. A small portion of the middle part of western wing is used for keeping the idol of Dipankar Buddha which is generally displayed during the *Pancadān* and taken out for procession of Dipankar-jātrā in the month of *Gunlā*. The southern section of the western wing is used to store small palanquins of the Buddha and Cobahādyo, and also partly used by observant during the Kartik-sevā. The ground floor of the southern wing of the monastery is left vacant purposively as the one at eastern section called as *Āgamcheli*, which is just below the *Āgam* of the Cobahādyo, where image of Lokesvar is placed for sacramental ritual whereas the western part of this wing is allocated as gateway passage. The first floor of the surrounding building complexes are used for storage and different purposes, but the eastern half of the southern wing is housed with Āgamdyo of the Lokesvar as well as the Sākyas of Cobahā.

The other structures within the monastery premises are the temple of Cobahādyo at southern wing, which stands out the rest of building complex. The central sanctum in the ground floor of temple houses the idol of Lokesvar. In front of the main entrance of the Lokesvar there is a *yajnakunda*, beside that there stands couple of statues of the devotees. On the north-east corner of the temple, there is a small raised platform made of stone, where annual sacramental rituals of Cobahādyo take place. Next to the statues of devotee stands a Shikhar style octagonal temple made of all stone, which is dedicated to Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva. On the north of the temple of Kshitigarbha stands a Dharmadhādumandal molded with brass with vajra made of gilded copper rested on it. There are several inscriptions of different times installed in different places within the courtyard. The proceeding paragraphs further elaborate on these structures.

3.2.3 Ānandādi Lokesvar Temple

The temple of Cobahādyo is the only magnificent monument of Cobahā. This four storied Newāri style (Pagoda) temple with three tiers of roof stands in the southern part of the monastery courtyard. The temple is the seat of Ānandādi Lokesvar installed as a Kvāpādyo of the bahā.

The temple is raised on the two layers of square base plinths raised from the ground level of courtyard. The façade of ground floor is covered with repousee brass sheets engraved with imitation of brick which is built during the reign of King Tribhuvan. The main entrance of the central sanctum was molded with repousee brass sheets with two devinities engraved in either sides of door jamb, similarly in the upper door jamb images of three deities namely Vajrasatva in the middle flanked by Prajnaparamita in the left and Avalokitesvar in the right, combine they represents triple gems of Buddhism, the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangh respectively. The door wings, called as *lancho* is embossed with *astamangal* (eight auspicious symbols) out of them *sankha*, *pāss*, *kalash*, *chatra* in the left door wing and fish, flag, *cvāmo*, *padma* are embossed in the right door wing. Above the main entrance just below the tympanum a small image of Amitabh, the spiritual father of Avolokitesvar is attached. The main doorway is overarched by a gilded copper repousee tympanum with embossed images of five transcendental Buddhas along with the Vajrasatva in the centre. A *chepu* is placed at the topmost centre, below that two whirlpools are engraved in either sides, further down the two *makars* stands facing outward. The tympanum is surmounted with *chatra* on the top. A garland of more than 24 small bells hanged above the doorway. Similarly three large *dalumata*, oil lamp made of brass hanged down from lowest eave which extended over the main entrance.

The main entrance is about three feet above the ground level of the courtyard, which is accessible through stone ladder flanked by a pair of lions made of stone. Next to each of the lions two brass repousee flags engraved with sun and moon are erected in both sides. There are two bell posts erected on the either sides of the stair way besides the guardian stone lions in which a big bell along with several small bells are hanged. The entablature consists of several layers repousee copper/brass work in the façade which includes

horizontal banners of inscription, bell and flower motif banner, *nāgva* (snake motif), *dhalinmva*, (joist-ends) with motifs of different animal heads, and above that there are cornices at the two corners. On the façade there are two small lattices windows molded with brass repousee work in lattice texture on the either side of main door way.

On the façade of first floor just above the entablature there is an intricately carved *pasukājhyā* with five opening, above the three central openings of *pasukājhyā*, three wooden tympanums intricately carved with images of Buddhist deities along with floral and aqua-animal motifs are surmounted. The central tympanum is carved with images of three transdental Buddhas out of five namely Vajrasatva in the centre flanked by Akshyobhya on the left and Ratnasambhav on its' right, similarly the two tympanums on either sides are carved with Amitabh Buddha on the left tympanum and Amoghsiddhi on the right tympanum. All the tympanums bear *chipu*, *makars* and floral motif as most tympanum bears. The rest two opening without tympanum are decorated with eye-brows made of *cikan-appā*. There are two fake windows in either side of the *pasukājhyā*. The entire façade of first and second floor made of *dāchi-appā*, specially baked trapezoid brick, where as rest of the exterior wall are made of ordinary kiln baked brick.

The facade of the second floor is surmounted with an intricately carved projected window called *bimānjhyā* with three openings with lattice shutters fixed just below the eave of the lowest roof. The projected part of *bimānjhyā* is supported with five small struts. On the either side of the *bimānjhyā* there are two moderately carved small lattice windows. On the entablature level of the first floor there is simple wooden banner encircled all around the temple. The roof the second tire is supported by 24 struts including four corner strust known as *kunsal*. Out of these 24 struts, six struts, of which four in the façade and one each in the east and west elevations are intricately carved with Buddhist devinities in standing posture the middle parts, floral motifs in the upper parts and the erotic figurines are carved in the lower parts of the struts. The erotic carvings in Buddhist temples are very rare. The rests of struts are made of simple plain log of timbers.

The rear elevation is comparatively less ornated, the temple ground floor is fixture of simple three opening door frames dalan filled with brick wall which seems to be raised in

later dates. Similarly the first floor rear elevation bears three intricately carved lattice windows surmounted with eye-brows of specially molded kiln baked bricks. On the second floor relatively less carved *bimānjhyā*, projecting window with three opening is fixed, there are two small windows in the either sides of the *bimānjhyā*.

As mentioned earlier, the temple has three tire of roofs, the top most roof is made of gilded copper sheet which is supported by four struts in all four sides. Each of the eave corners are ornated with *halipaus* engraved with *caturmahārājas*, the four protective deities of Buddhist pantheons namely Kubera, Virudhaka, Dhritrāstra and Virupāksha are hanged. The eave board is ornated with repousee gilded copper sheet with floral motifs all around. The apex of temple is surmounted with a gold gilded bell shaped pinnacle with *chatra* (umbrella) supported by triangular stand. From the pinnacle there are three gilded copper banners locally known as *patāh* embossed with images Lokesvar are hanged down which extends further down the lower eave.

The two lower roofs are made of modern fire baked tile, locally known as *deshi* tile means foreign tile introduced first time in Nepal by Ranas priministers, which seems to be introduced in this temple in course of later renovation. The entire weight of middle roof is supported by slanted lattice windows in all four sides. Each of the eave corners are ornated with *phayegan*, wind bells and *phayegulu*, also known as *ladkan* are hanged. The space under the second layer of roof is almost covered by hoards of utensils offered by devotees. The lower roof, ie third from top is the widest roof among the three is also made of *deshi* tile. The front elevation of the roof is ornated with small wind bells hanged from the eave. There are four *halipaus* engraved with image of *caturmahārājas*, the four protecting deities of Buddhist pantheon hanged in four corners.

The temple of Cobahādyo itself and the surrounding monastery complex have hardly left blank spaces, almost covered with pots and pans offered by devotees. This temple is considered as most ornamented temple with household utensils. There are various explanations regarding the purpose of nailing the household utensils in this temple. Few of the mostly likely versed explanations for nailing utensils are as follows: "objects for use by the donor or someone close to him in an after life, portions of the dowries of brides-to-

be given to the gods, offering to be used by the gods themselves, and simply as expensive tokens of the donor's devotion."⁷⁷ John K Locke has connected this with the commemoration of the deceased female family members.⁷⁸ One very common explanation presented by most of authors is "in case of death of woman without having off spring, her utensils are brought to hang here" in the temple Cobahā. But this researcher got some different explanations which is not merely the death of women without offspring, there are various reasons for nailing the utensils such as: people who made *bhākal*, a kind promised made in case of their wishes are fulfilled, they offer utensils, some offer utensils in commemoration of their deceased family member, some vrata observants also offer utensils in temple of Cobahā, in due course of observing the concluding ritual of māyeabsan, this author has witnessed a family member of a vrata observant nailing set of utensils in the bahā. Likewise, and some devotees offer utensils to express their devotions towards the Cobahādyo.

3.2.4 Four Karunāmaya in Kathmandu valley

In the Buddhist tradition of Kathmandu valley, Lokeshvar and Karunāmaya are being used as synonyms to Bodhisattva. Mahayani Buddhist define Bodhisattva as one who aspire to supreme enlightenment and Buddhahood for themselves and all beings so the term can equally applied to the realization of beings such as Avalokitesvara or Samanthabhadra or anyone who has developed the Bodhicitta - the aspiration to save oneself and others. However, the concept of Bodhisattva does not aspire to Nirvana but to the condition to end suffering of all sentient beings.⁷⁹ On the other hand the Pali canon defines Bodhisattva slightly in different notion which denotes 'Enlightenment Being' who is destined to Buddhahood, a future Buddha. Traditionally Bodhisattva is considered as the one before reaching his last birth as a Buddha on this earth, who is living in the Tusitā heaven. Hence the 'Bodhisattva' is designated only to Prince Siddhartha before his

⁷⁷ Ronald M Bernier, *The Temple of Nepal*, (1970) revised (New Delhi: S. Chand & Company, 1978), p.160.

⁷⁸ John K Locke, op cit., (f.n.7) p.346.

⁷⁹ Van Hien Study Group (ed), *The Seeker's Glossary of Buddhism*, (Taipei: The Corporate Boddy of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2003), p.87.

enlightenment and to his former existences.⁸⁰ The above definitions clarify the concept of Bodhisattva and its application distinctly amongst the two sectarians of Buddhism.

The cult of Karunāmaya is very important religious treat among the Buddhist of Kathmandu valley. Karunāmaya – Lokesvar is revered as one aspires to end the sufferings of all sentient beings in the world. *Gunakarandvyuhasutra*, one of the Mahāyāni scripture depicts the Avalokitesvar as one who is watchful all the time with great compassion to end the sufferings of all the seintient beings. There is tradition of revering group of four, eight, 12, 16, 108 and 1008 Loksvaras in Mahāyāni tradition. Moreover, the four famous Lokesvars of Kathmandu valley are revered. They are, Raktāvalokitesvar, popularly known as Bungdyo of Bungamati, who is worshipped as savior or a rain god, Aryāvalokitesvar of Janabahā, Kathmandu worshipped as god of amitayu means long life, similarly Sristikānta Lokesvar of Nālā is worshipped as god of creator and Ānandādi Lokesvar of Cobahā is worshipped as a god of good health or healer of chronic diseases including leprosy.

3.2.5 Ānandādi Avalokitesvar (Karunāmaya) of Cobahā

Ānandādi Lokesvar or Ādināth, the Karunāmaya of Cobahā, locally known as Cobahādyo is one of the four popular Lokesvars in Kathmandu valley. He is considered as the god of bliss-full life and healer of the chronic diseases like leprosy and so on. Iconographically he is depicted as red face with two hands, his left hand holding a lotus and right hand in bliss (*varada*) giving posture.⁸¹ His two eyes portrayed as staring upwards. There is an interesting hearsay regarding the god staring upwards. When the Gvālā (cowherd) found him (Lokesvar) laying on the bank of Nakhu river, the Gvālā rushed to Cobahā to call villager to take the Lokesvar up to the Cobahā in procession. Meanwhile the deity was curiously looking Gvālā's way upwards toward the top of hill, so is his eyes are shown staring upwards.

⁸⁰ Nyanponik, *Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, (Kendy: Buddhist Publications Society, 1980), p.74.

⁸¹ Tutah Khala, *Shree Ānandādi Lokesvaryā Stotra Katisevāya Tutah Saphu*, (Yala: Yajna Ratna Sakya and Jvarinani Sakya, 2010), p.61.

Concept of Avalokitesvar cult is derived from *Gunakarnavyuha Sutra* is exclusively devoted to Avalokitesvar and his philanthropic activities in various realms even the realm of insects. The sutra was transmitted by Uggupta to the Emperor Asoka at the Kukkutārāma vihār. The earliest version of this sutra is believed to be composed in 3rd century.⁸² This was the time Lord Maitriya transmitted the teaching of Buddha nature to Ācārya Asanga in 350 AD.⁸³ Briggs is of opinion that the cult of Avalokitesvar to be possibly trace back to the dawn of the Christian era, who is considered as an ascetic and magician, demiurge and savior, who became great Yogi and possesses the great mantra, or spell, *Om mani padme hum* which means "Om, the jewel in the lotus", quoted from Thomas, JRAS, 1906 p. 464.⁸⁴ The appearance of Avalokitesvar out of Svayambhu, the self existent, the Ādibuddha, the Primordial Buddha, also called Ādināth, is related in the later metrical version of the *Karandavyuha*⁸⁵ shows how Ādināth came to be revered as an emanation of the Adibuddha in later period.

As archaeological sources indicate the Lokeshvar cult seems to be popular in Kathmandu valley from the 6th century which is evident from an image of Avalokitesvar found in Ganabāhāl believed to be of Ramadeva (AD 545).⁸⁶ Similarly, Amsuvarma's inscription of Badanhitī, Kathmandu which bears statements such as "*Sarvosatvabuddho Bhavete*" means may all the sentient being become Buddha and "*Bhagavatosyalokitesvarsya dhupa depen ma 2 aryasanghasya*" which indicates popularity of Avalokitesvar and the tradition of lighting incense and oil lamps to Avalokitesvar during that time.⁸⁷ Similarly yet another inscription of Amsuvarma in Tyagal, Patan which bears name such as Akshyobhya, Samantabhadra, Manjusrī, Lokeshvar, Amitabha reveals popularity of Mahāyāni Buddhism in Kathmandu valley⁸⁸.

⁸² Vajracharya, Jog Muni (Tr.), *Arya Guna Karandavyuha Sutra*. (Lalitpur: Nagarjun Institute of Exact Methods, 1996), p.16.

⁸³ Min Bahadur Sakya, "A Note on Shristikanta Lokeshvar", *Buddhist Himalaya*, VIII, no 1 & 2 (1995), p.36.

⁸⁴ George Weston Briggs, *Gorakhnāth and the Kānphata Yogis*. (Delhi: Morilal Banarsidass. 1973), p.231

⁸⁵ Nalinaksha Dutta, Buddhism in Nepal, *Bulletin of Tibetology*, no 2 (1966) 43.

⁸⁶ Mary Slusser, op. cit. p. 272.

⁸⁷ Dhanvajra Vajracharya, op. cit. p.386.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.387

Jaya Deva II's inscription dated Samvat 157 of Pasupati endorsed the prevalence of Karunāmaya or Lokeshvar cult in Kathmandu valley during the late Licchavi period.⁸⁹

Moreover, Amsuvarma's inscriptions of Pharping which mention *Bodhisattva*, *Aryavas*, *Pranidhi*, and inscription of Gokarna mention *Vikshunisangha* attest the flourishing of Buddhism including prevalence of Buddhist nuns in Nepal Mandala in Licchavi period. Although most of historians have portrayed Amsuvarma as diehard follower of Siva or Pasupati, but several of his inscriptions revealed that he had made significant contribution for nurturing Buddhism in ancient Nepal so we can conclude him as a great religiously tolerant King if not a Buddhist laity. This is more evident from donations he made for five major monasteries along Cāngu Nārāyan and Pasupatināth.⁹⁰

Coming back to antiquity of Cobahā , as *Devamālāvansāvali* credited Amsuvarma as the founder of temple of Cobahādyo indicates that Ānandādi Lokeshvar was exist during the time of Amsuvarma⁹¹, however we cannot say with certain due to lack of archaeological evidences. Some sources tend to identify Jatādhāri Lokeshvar in Lalitpur and Ānandādi Lokeshvar of Cobahā are the two genuinely old Lokeshvars of the valley.⁹² On the other hand, identity of Ādināth or Ānandādi Lokeshvar seems to be synchronised with the Nāth sect of Saiva cult. *Nāth-panthis* (the followers of Nāth) claim that the Ādināth was the first Guru of Nāth cult, Matsyandranāth and Jālandhar were his two disciple and Gorkhnāth was Matsyandranāth's disciple⁹³. Nāth literally means Lord or teacher/master or protector who derived their names from Ādināth, or Siva. According to Nāth sects, there are nine great Nāth or Gurus deified teachers and Ādināth was considered as a great Yogi preceding Matsyandranāth and Gorkhnāth sometimes identified with Siva, and the name is used in an attempt to trace the origin of the sect to the greatest of Yogis, the god Siva.⁹⁴ Syncretic nature of Avalokitesvar with Siva is more evident in case of Cobahādyo

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.555.

⁹⁰ Dhanvajra Vajracharya, op cit., p.321.

⁹¹ Yogi Narhari Nath, *Devamala Vansavali*, (Mrigasthali: Sri Pirmahanta Kshipranath Yogiraj, 2013), p.101

⁹² Will Tuladhar-Douglas, *Remaking Buddhism for Medieval Nepal: the Fifteenth-century Reformation of Newār Buddhism*, (London: Routledge. 2006), p.200

⁹³ George Weston Briggs, op. cit. p.75.

⁹⁴ Ibid, p.231.

as he is considered as an emanation of Ādibuddha by Buddhist and an emanation of Siva himself from Saivic perspective. Slusser argues that Avalokitesvar would be especially popular in Nepal may be correlated in some measure with his confusion with Siva, a deity who shares many of the Bodhisattva attributes, and who is known as Lokesvar, the Lord of the world.⁹⁵

Ānandādi Lokesvar, the Cobahādyo is popularly known as the healer of chronic diseases like leprosy. In the olden days, it is believed that a person with leprosy if one takes bath in the Sulakshana-tirth on the northern foothill of Cobahā and pays homage to the Lokesvar one gets healed from leprosy. Stating the compassionate nature of Cobahādyo, an afflicted person, possibly one suffering with leprosy, has composed a song expressing pity state of mind due to unrecoverable diseases after going through all available treatment prays for blessing from the compassionate one residing on the top of Kacchapālagiri . The song was composed during the reign of King Jayaprakāsh Malla (1736-68 AD).⁹⁶ This indicates that the Cobahādyo was highly revered by people of with leprosy and/or other chronic disease regularly visit hoping for blisses from the compassionate one. A large number of people still visit temple of Cobahādyo from early in the morning irrespective to their age. Because of its' high elevation, clean environment, obviously it is ideal place to walk around in the morning which keep them physically fit. All all the respondents while the present researcher inquired about their aspiration in visiting temple of Cobahā early in the mornings responded as "for good health", "get rid of health problems, they are undergoing" or "to keep physically fit" or "as part of their morning". Mostly elderly ones seem to be driven from former two aspirations while the middle-aged and youngsters are driven by later two aspirations. It was interesting to witness considerable number of devotees over seventies who visit the temple of Cobahā in a regularly basis, seeing their stamina to ascend uphill all the way from foot to top of the hillock indicates they are keeping well with their health, whether it be due of blessing

⁹⁵ Mary S Slusser, op. cit., p.283.

⁹⁶ Tutah Khalah, op.cit., p.59.

from the compassionate one or their effort to keep themselves physically active by walking in morning.

3.2.6 Temple of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva

The temple of Kshitigava Bodhisattva stands in the centre of the Cobahā, just in front of the temple of Cobahādyo, which is made of all stone in Shikhar style on octagonal base. *Svayambhupurāna* mentions about eight great Bodhisattvas namely Maitreya, Gaganganja, Samantabhadra, Vajrapāni, Sarvanivāraṇa Viskambhi, Manjughosa, Ksitigarbha and Akāśagarbha appeared in eight different places of Kathmandu valley in the form of light in order to benefit all sentient being. Among the eight great Bodhisattvas, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva was appeared in Cobahā as Gandhesvar Vaitarāga, the passionless one.⁹⁷

An another story narrates that Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva appeared while Odiyānācārya, the Buddhist teacher from Odiyāna in due course of his retreat invoked all gods and goddesses except the Kvenā Ganesh who reside in the south-east foothill of Cobahā, caused obstacle to the Guru, becoming upset for not being invited. In the meanwhile Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva appeared and asked Odiyānācārya to pacify the anger ridden Ganesh before he undertakes further retreat,⁹⁸ and later on after acquiring *astamahāsiddhi*, eight high level perfection, through rigorous retreat, the Odiyānācārya built a temple for the Bodhisattva.

The main structure of this temple forms a tempering tower like mountain peak (Shikhar) from which it got named as Shikhar style. Ratna Kāji Bajrācārya has categorized this temple as *Byadiko Parismrity Caitya*⁹⁹, and Māila Bajrācārya, the officiating Gurju of Cobahādyo called it as Dharmadhātu caitya housed with transcendental Buddhas in four cardinal directions, four Tārās and *Caturmahārājas* in four respective corners. The temple is raised on an octangular base with two layers of plinths.

⁹⁷ Min B Sakya and Shanta H Bajracharya, op.cit., p.39.

⁹⁸ Daniel Wright, op cit. p.103.

⁹⁹ Ratna Kaji Bajracharya, *Yendeya caityat: A Survey of the Caityas of Kantipur*, (Yala: Nepalmandala Buddhist Cultural Convention Organising Committee, 1998), p.473.

There is a layer of *nāgva*, (serpent motif) stone course on the very base of the plinth, on which a layer of plinth about one feet height is raised which serves as circumambulatory path. Above this plinth yet one another layer of plinth is raised about a foot height, on which eight octagonal monolithic load bearing pillars with capital are erected on each angle of the octagonal plinth. The sactorium of the temple is raised in *bimsatikakon*, (20 angled) base measuring 64 x 64 inches. Above the eight columns in the level of first floor there is entablature with different motifs all eight sides of the temple.

On the terrace there are four porticoes attached to the four cardinal directions of the main tempering tower, The central tempering tower comprises two layers of vertical patches up to the *Amalaka*. The porticoes resembles miniature temples which house four transcendental Buddhas in trantric form namely Mahā-Akshobya, Mahā-Ratnasambhava, Mahā-Amitābh and Mahā-Amoghhsidhi with multiple heads and several pair of hands. Similar tantric forms of transcendental Buddhas can seen in the inner entrance gate of Hiranyavarna Mahāvihār and Ratnakar Mahāvihār of Patan where are surmounted above the tympanum of the entrance gates. On the four corners, four Taras, the spiritual concert of each transcedental Buddhas namely Pandora, Mamaki, Lochani and Tara are installed. About 1.5 feet above the Tārās, in each corner four *Dikpālas*, the protective deities of each directions also known as *Caturmahārājās* namely Kubera holding a banner and a mongoose, Virudhaka holding sword, Dhritrāstra holding *Vinā* and Virupāksha holding a small shrine and a serpent are installed in four corners. About one and half feet above the pinnacle of four miniature temples, there are four small niches in the four sides above that there is *Amlaka* on which the lotus base of the bell shaped pinnacle is rested. The temple is about 38 feet high, on the apex, a gold gilded pinnacle is surmounted with *Chatra*, umbrella.

People have different opinion about this temple, some of the respondents say that it is temple of Gandhesvar Mahādeva. John Locke also got same sort of responses from some of his informants. But on the basis of the presence of Buddhist deities installed around the temple refutes this claim. Moreover, most of Siva or Mahādeva temples usually have four openings at four cardinal directions and either image of Siva or Linga is installed in it.

More specifically an opening in the west is very common if not in all four directions and the temple is usually attended by a sitting *nandi*, an ox. But, in case of this temple, there are only two openings in the north (main entrance) and south, the other two sides have merely two fake doors made of stone with lattice texture. None of architectural features meet this temple to be consider as temple of Siva or Mahadyo. Moreover, in side the sanctum, there is an image in *dharmacakramudra*, discourse giving posture and similar type of image is engraved on the upper jamb of main entrance in the north which is identical to image of Vairocana. One of the forms of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva is described as identical with Vairocana *dharmacakramudrā* and the cakra symbol.¹⁰⁰ More over the eight faces of octagonal structure is symbolic representation of eight Bodhisattva normally attached in the Dharmadhātumandal. From symbolic representation of structural components, and the presence of different Buddhist pantheons undoubtably attests that the temple is none other than Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva. Although there are fragmented objects accumulated inside the sanctum including a recently made trishul and *akshamāla* (rosary) are kept which are later additions inside the temple.

Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva is one of the highly revered Bodhisattvas, along with Manjusrī, Avalokitesvar and Samantabhadra who represent the four basic Mahāyāni qualities such as Manjusrī, the great wisdom, Avalokitesvar, the great compassion, Samantabhadra, the great meritorious deeds, and Kshitigarbha, the great vow – which lead to ceasation of suffering of all the sentient beings. The Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva commissioned to a great vow to help the sentient being pronouncing "If I do not go to hell (to help the sentient being suffering there), who else will do?"¹⁰¹ This indicates the degree of compassion that Kshitigarbha had towards the sentient beings suffering in the hell. According to *Svayambhupurāna* he had blessed Odiyānāchārya with the eight mundane power (*Astasidhi*) and left his emanation in the form of a stone image and became popular as Gandhesvara Vaitarāga. After this Kshitigarbha went away, leaving his spirit in the

¹⁰⁰ Benoytosh Bhattacharya (ed), *Nispannayogāvali of Mahāpandita Abhayākaragupta*. (Baroda: Orianta Institute. 1949), p.25.

¹⁰¹ Min Bahadur Sakya, *Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Pranidhan Sutra*. Lalitpur: (Nepal Buddhist Scripture Translation Committee. 2000), p.i.

chatra established by Odiyānāchārya and this chatra became known as Gandhesvar. The people who went to live there erected an image of Loksva, naming it Ānandādi Lokesvar, or the giver of happiness to the people at the world.¹⁰² In Buddhist tradition in Kathmandu valley *puṇakalash* with eight auspicious symbols are considered as eight bodhisattvas, in which Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva is represented by *chatra*, so during pilgrimage of eight bodhisattvas, Kshitigarbha is offered with a *chatra*, one of the eight auspicious sign of the *Astamangal*.

Nispannayogavali mentions 16 Bodhisattvas, out of them the third in row is the Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva. In *Nispannayogavali*, he is described twice firstly he is depicted in *Dharmacakramudrā* and the *cakra* symbol and secondly he is depicted as yellow in colour showing his right hand in *bhusparsh mudra*, earth touching posture and his left hand holding a lotus and *kapla* tree.¹⁰³ Kshitigarbha is extremely popular Bodhisattva among the Chinese and Japanese Buddhist who is known as Ti Tsang which means Earth-Store, literal translation of Kshitigarbha, among the countless Bodhisattvas¹⁰⁴. The Chinese specimens depict him his right hand in *varadamudrā*, boon giving posture and left hand holding lotus, another image depicts him as three-faced and six-armed and yet another image depicts him holding a fruit in his right hand and lotus in his left hand.¹⁰⁵

3.2.7 Dharmadhātumandal

In the middle of the courtyard, next to the north of Shikhar style temple of Kshitigarbha stands a Dharmadhātumandal which is raised in an octagonal base with one layer of plinth on the bottom. There are images of eight bodhisattvas namely i) Vajrapāni or Maitreya, 2) Gaganganj, iii) Ratnapāni, iv) Padmapāni, v) Ratnagarva, vi) Kshitigarbha, vii) Visvapāni and viii) Sarvanivāraṇa Visakambhi engraved in eight side of the octagonal structure. A Dharmadhātumandal moulded with repoussé brass engraved mandala is rested

¹⁰² Daniel Wright, op cit., p.103.

¹⁰³ Benoytosh Bhattacharya (ed), op. cit., p.25.

¹⁰⁴ <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/tstang-txt.htm>

¹⁰⁵ Benoytosh Bhattacharya, op cit. p.25.

on the double lotus pedestal above the octagonal structure base. A gold gilded Vajra is surmounted on the top of the mandala.

One another source mentions that Dharmadhātumandala is a short form of Dharmadhātuvāgisvar mandala, which is symbolic form of Bodhisattva Manjusri. It is believed that Manjusri appeared as a Dharmadhātumandal and taught the secrets of Mandala to his laities in the valley after he reclaimed the valley by draining out water from here. One can see numerous free-standing Dharmadhātumandala and the caitya with Vajradhātu-mandala in every Newar settlements including all the Buddhist monastery of the valley.

3.2.8 Mahākāl

Mahākāl, a fierce deity is known as Dharmapāla, the protector of Dharma in all sects of Buddhism. He is also considered as a fierce and powerful emanation of Avalokitesvar to subdue the degenerate beings of this darkness age¹⁰⁶. It is customary to install image of Mahākāl in the Vajrayani vihārs of Kathmandu valley as he is considered as protecting deity of the Buddhist vihārs. Like in other vihārs of Kathmandu valley, in Cobahā as well three images of Mahākāl are installed in the inner bay of the north wing of monastery complex towards the left side of doorway as one enter. Out of three images of Mahākāl installed over there, one of them is about three feet high and other two are smaller ones are 10 to 12 inches high. Iconographically all the three images are identical, in standing posture, with two hands, one holding a *kapālpātra* (skull cup) and other holding *katri* (a kind of axe). He is ornated with bangle of snake in his arms and wrists, neckles of snake, garland of skulls and ear ornament of snakes along with crown engraved with skulls. He is standing on betel. There is customary of erecting image of Ganesh side by side with Mahākāl, which is missing here in Cobahā.

¹⁰⁶ Chandra B Sakya, *Buddhist Deities and Masters - An introduction*. (New Delhi: Adarsh Books. 2009), p.118

3.2.9 Nāsandyo

On the left of the doorway, next to the Mahākāl there is a square repousee image of Nāsandyo made of brass hanged on the wall facing west. The Nāsandyo is god of song and dance known as one of emanation of Mahādeva/Siva. Presence of Nāsandyo within the Buddhist monastery complex is something unusual, none of my respondents were able to give satisfactory reason for having Nāsandyo inside the monastery complex, which still a subject of further research.

3.3 *Nhavan-dabū*

Nhavan Daboo literally means a platform raised to under take great ritual bath of the Cobahādho. The *nhawan-dabū* of Cobahādyo is located in the place called Nani, in the eastern side of the Cobahā monastery complex. The square shaped platform made of stone raised nearly five feet height. A stone ladder led to the platform surface, in the centre of the platform a lotus throne is made in which the idol of Cobahādyo is placed for performing ritual bath. In front of bathing platform there stands a *phalcha*, a public resthouse where ritual oil lamp along with worshipping implements are kept during the time of *nhavan*. The entire platform is shaded with zink sheet with flower motive decorative fixed all around the eave of zinc roofing. In the north side of the bathing platform a *maker* made of stone is installed which is to release the water out from the platform.

3.4 Bandhudutta Caitya

In the eastern side of Cobahā, about 200 metres east from the Cobahā monastery complex there stands a caitya erected on nearly two feet high plinth. The *bimsatikākona* base Caitya with four niches in the plinth level houses four transcendental Buddhas in each cardinal direction. Each of niches of transcendental Buddhas are surmounted with pinnacle made of stone. On the *bimsatikākona* base a cylindrical dome is raised about 6 feet height on which a cubical *hermika* painted with pair of eyes along with *urna* in the middle in all four directions. Above the *hermika* a spiral of *trayodash bhuvan* (13 stage of spiral) is rested. On the four four sides of lower part of spiral, there are tympanums with

symbols of respective Buddha family of transcendental Buddhas engraved on it. On the upper spiral of *trayodash bhuvan* a lotus shaped *amalaka* is placed in which the parasol or *ushnish* is rested which is surmounted with a *chatra*. A *yasti*, central pole is erected from the base of caitya to *ushnish*, which in most cases made of wooden log, but in case of this caitya it was told that the *yasti* was made of monolithic stone pillar which extended from foundation to apex.

On the base plinth of this caitya, there are four monolithic caityas stylistically of Licchavi period are erected on the four corners, which seems to be relocated from somewhere else, which is still a matter of further study. There are few other examples placing monolithic votive caitya on the plinth of main structure, one in Tebahā and other being in Kathesimbu caitya in Srighavihār where several monolithic caityas are placed on the plinth of main caitya. The caitya as it appears is of cement plastered, but originally the main structure of caitya above the plinth was made of bricks. The caitya was said to be built by Bandhudutta Ācharya,¹⁰⁷ who was officiating priest to bring the Bungma Lokesvar in Nepal valley. The source also mentions that Bandhudatta had erected similar caitya in Kvenā near Ganesh temple, but this researcher could not trace any caityas around there in and around Kvenā Ganesh.

3.5 Monolithic Licchavi caityas

There are five monolithic Licchavi caityas dateable from 5th to 8th century found in Cobahā. Out of them four caityas are erected on the plinth of so called Bandhudutta caitya located in the Cibahā tol. Stylistically these four caityas are identical except minor differences. Two of four caityas have one layer of empty niches in each cardinal direction. The peripherals of niches are decorated with floral motifs. Above the niches there is a course of embossed ring encircled on which dome is rested. On the top of the dome there stands a *hermika* surmounted with toran marked with symbols which represent respective Buddha family of four transcendental Buddhas. On the other hand, one of the caitya among remain two do not have any niches but two layer of banner in *bimstikakona* motif

¹⁰⁷ Badri R. Bajracharya, op. cit. p.12.

and the above the *bimstikakone* banner like in other two caityas, there is ring banner embossed on which the dome is based, and the remaining one caitya has two layer of empty niches with each door of all the niches at four directions are carved with floral motifs. The fifth monolithic caitya erected on the Jalahari base located in front of eastern gate of Cobahā monastery has two layers of empty niches. The doors of empty niches in four cardinal directions are carved with flower motives. Above the dome a cubical *harmikā* is placed with torans with symbols of transcendental Buddha family are engraved. This caitya is identical to the caitya erected in the south-west corner of socalled Bandhudutta caitya. None of these monolithic Licchavi caityas seem to be in situ. According to elderly local residents, the caitya in front of eastern gate of Cobahā monastery was originally from the Coyebahā-bahi, which is believed to the only bahi of Cobahā which was relocatd to present location some eight decades ago.

In due course of field study, this research found a fragment of caitya which consist few spiral of *trayodash bhuvan* along with *toran* engraved with symbols of Buddha family is relocated and erected as Siva linga on a square plinth in which ceramic tiles with pictures of Siva Parvati is affixed on the platform near the Cundevi. Stylistically the fragment of caitya seems to be of medieval period. This structural remain of caitya being worshipped as Siva linga some 100 meters down the location of Coyebahā-bahi indicates there must be a medieval caitya dilapidated over the time due to some vandalism or natural disaster which might be probably located in the proximity of Coyebahā-bahi. There is strong possibility to find further structural elements from surrounding area if properly excavated.

3.6 Caityas and open Shrines of Buddha and Buddhsit Deities

Most of caityas established in Kathmandu valley in last two centuries were stylistically categorisd as Sumerukuta Caityas, the style first appeared in 1854.¹⁰⁸ There are around 12 Sumerukuta caityas found in Cobahā established in different dates. Most of those Sumerukuta caityas are annexed with Dharmadhātumandal except three. The Sumerukuta

¹⁰⁸ Niels Gutschew, *The Nepalese Chaitya - 1500 Years of Buddhist Votive Architecture in the Kathmandu Valley*. (Stuttgart: Axel Menges. 1997), p.293.

caityas in Cobahā are located as follows: Backyard of temple of Cobahādyo (5) with 3 Dharmadhādumandal; Dathu (1); Dabū (1); In the premises of Nunery further west from Coyebahā Bahi (1); Half way up hill from Cobahā gate (1); Samapukhu (1), Near foresty group office (2), Cobahā gate (1). Besides above mentioned caityas there are several open shrines housed with Buddhsit deities including Sākyāmuni Buddha, Amitabh Buddha, Amoghshidhia, Tara, Vasundharā in and around the Cobahā. But most of them are established not earlier than 100 years, except an open shrine of Tārā near the Amitabh Tathāgat Vihār shrine, the standing image of Tārā holding lotus on her left hand seems to of late medieval period from its stylistic appearance.

There are two Buddhist monasteries of Tibetan tradition, one being nunnery on the eastern side of the Cobahā with a huge monastery complex is one of the few nunnery of Kathmandu valley. The monastery belongs to Kargyupā sect of Tibetan tradition. Similarly one more Buddhist monastery is recently established near Coyebahā Bahi, at the western edge of the Cobahā. It was believed that the location of this nunnery was originally belongs to part of the Coyebaha-bahi, which was later on occupiaed by non-Newār community, from them the founder of present nunnery purchased. This monastery to belongs to Kargyupā sect of Tibetan tradition. As of now only one nun is staying there.

3.7 Bālkumāri Pith

Pith literally means power centre, locally known as *Pigandyo*, also known as *saktipith*, the power places. In every Newār settlement, several power centres are established in different parts of the settlement. One of such power centre is the *pith*, the power centre are considered to be seat of mother goddess emanated as principal protective deity of the respective settlement. In Cobahā, it is Bālkumāri, one amongst the eight devine mothers along with her associates are made represented by anaconic stone images in the placed called Ikhā. Although the pith itself is not a Buddhist monument, but it is somehow directly related to annual festival of the Lokesvar of Cobahā that is why an attempt is throw some light on it. This *pith* located behind the Cobahā monastery complex is merely a local version of *pith* situated at the western bank of Nakhu, where the Karunāmaya

invoked Kalashes are kept on the platform after crossing the Nakhu in course of fetching the deity at Nakhu river. The Bālkumāri pith consists of anaconic images of Bālkumāri along with all her associates flanked with two stone lions. Next to the group of anaconic images, there stands an image of Ganesh facing towards North, next to the Ganesh, there is an image of Visvakarma, the Vedic god of architecture facing east. The idol of Ganesh depicted in elephant head on human torso while Visvakarmā is in an anthropomorphic form with several hands. There stand two anaconic images representing Kali or Durga, in the centre of courtyard. During the time of annual festival of Lokeshvara, there are series of rituals that takes place here in this *pith* and also in the pith down the Nekhu. Ganesh and Bhairav are invoked from Ikhā on night of Saptami and subsequently yet another puja is offered with sacrifice of a goat after completion of ten sacramental rituals of Karunamanay on Navami in due course of *balipujā*.

3.8 Coyebahā Bahi

On the way to the newly established nunnery on the north-west side of the Kvedabū, there is a small lane leading towards the south, there approaches a small courtyard surrounded with residential houses with a *Tulsi* in one side, which is very recent addition. The courtyard holds a signpost which reads as 'Coyebaha-Bahi', which means bahi (Buddhist monastery) situation on the upper elevation, but no architectural remains are found that indicates the courtyard to be a Buddhist monastery. No doubt the signpost itself speaks about its lost identity as the Buddhist monument, moreover, there are some living traditions which attest the courtyard to be the Buddhist monastery complex. Traditionally bahis are established in the outer edge of the settlement, which is true in case of Coyebaha-bahi as it was located at the western edge of the settlement. Until now most of the traditional rituals and/or jātrās such as *Ihi*, *Vratibandh* or *Barechuikegu* and *Dipankar-jātrā*, *Cibahāseekegu* etc. are circumambulate within this courtyard which is live example of the courtyard was once a Buddhist monastery. The local elderly people recall that they have heard from their forefathers that the monolithic Licchavi caitya located in front of eastern gate of Cobahā was originally from this bahi. They further add that the caitya was left abandoned nearby which was later installed in the present location.

Similarly the idol of Sākyāmuni Buddha which is now installed on wall at right side of the eastern entrance of the Cobahā was also believed to be originally from the this bahi. From these facts the Coyebahā-bahi seems was existed during the Licchavi period.

John Locke has also included this bahi in his memiography entitled *Buddhist Monastery of Nepal*, accordingly he mentions that the bahi merely not more than a memory. He further writes the Sangha has almost died out except for one old man, who used to recites hymns at the site of the bahi during the sacred month of *Gunlā*. It was believed that this was a main bahi and initiations used to be performed here.¹⁰⁹ Regarding the Sangha member of this bahi, some informants told to this researcher that the two surviving members of this bahi are now staying in somewhere near temple of Kvenā Ganesh. This research has made several attempt to meet the bahi member of this bahi but no luck, but local still them call as bahi-bare, means Sakyas from the bahi. Several informants mentioned that the monolithic Licchavi caitya located in front of the eastern doorway of Cobahā monastery was originally from this bahi which was later on relocated to present location. No respondent are able to give any clues about the vanishing state of bahi and/or occupancy of courtyard by non-Newār communities. Some of elderly people from Cobahā narrated what they heard from their anscestors when they were young told that during the Rana regime one of the collector deputed to Cobahā occupaied the bahi complex. It was told that about eight decade ago the monolithic caitya was shifted to present location. One of the respondents mentioned that the local people once tried to restore the monolithic caitya back to the bahi courtyard but the occupants resisted against it.

3.9 Secular Architectural Monuments

Settlement pattern along with secular monuments within the settlement revails different aspect of cultural components or cultural treats of the people residing there. Same is true in the case of heritage of Cobahā. Settlement pattern and composition of neighborhood with different components such as gate ways of settlement, road-network

¹⁰⁹ John K Locke, op. cit. (f.n.7), p.197.

most commonly separate routes for *bhinjyā* (auspicious processions) and *mabhinjyā* (inauspicious) *phalcās*, water-bodies are significant in terms of material and non-materials cultural treats of people residing over there. In the preceding paragraphs attempts are made to look into secular monuments of Cobahā in relation to cultural heritage from Buddhist perspective.

3.9.1 Neighbor-hood (Tols)

Like all other typical Newār settlements, Cobahā is also divided into several neighbourhoods. Each of these tol bears cultural significances on their own as these tols themselves are units of cultural landscape of Cobahā. The major landmarks of cultural landscape of Cobahā consist of Nani where annual ritual-bath takes place, there stands a Nhavan-dabū, a platform meant for ritual ritual-bath Cobahādyo. Coye-dabū, the place where annual *debhoye* is organised, Kvyaye-dabu, where Maharjans play daphā during the month of *Gunlā* and Karkik-sevā, Gvānani, where Maharjans assembly for their annual Guthi gathering, Cibahā, there the so-called Bandhudatta caitya is located and Ikhā, the Bālkumāri pith, where several ritual pujās are undertaken in course of annual festival of Cobahādyo. The entirety of these neighborhoods forms a complete and meaningful cultural landscape of Cobahā. Cobahā is a temple centric settlement, developed in the peripheral of the temple of Karunāmaya, the immediate peripheral of the Cobahā is surrounded by Sākyas, who are closely associated with the daily rituals of Karunāmaya followed by the Dhangus, yet another caste group associated with annual ritual of Karunāmaya, then comes Maharjans and Gvās, the lay Buddhist who are also somehow linked with Karunāmaya in one way or other.

The mapping of settlement shows that the peripherals of Cobahādyo like Nani and Coyedabū is primarily resided by Sakya and Dhangus. Maharjans are concentrated in Dathu, Kvyayedabū and Gvānani. Although Gvānani is named after Nanda-Gvālā, this Nani is almost resided by Maharjans, as there is only a single Gvā family exist in Cobahā at present.

3.9.2 Gateways

As Dhanvajra argues most of the hillock in Kathmandu valley including Cobahā were developed as fort in ancient time,¹¹⁰ which is primarily fortified with walls with few gates in the strategic locations. In case of Cobahā, this is evident from the strategic gates located in different parts of settlement. In the past there used to have four main entrances, the first one in the northern side, which leads to Sulakshana tirth. This is the main entrance from which the annual procession of Cobahādyo from Nakhu is entered on *Caitra-sukla Astami*, (8th waxing moon of March). The next located towards the south which leads to Kvenā Ganesh, there is no gate as such, but this is considered as one of the important entrance of the Cobahā from rituals perspective. Due to its pathway leading to Kvenā have been badly effect by stone mining in the heydays of Himal Cement its' usability is now completely ceased. The third entrance is located in the south-west of Cobahā, which leads to Jancva, Itugal and/Panga. The locals believe that in the remote past the *Rathjātrā* of Cobahādyo was held from this gate to Deopātan and Ason. The fourth entrance located at the northern end of Koyedabū is the one which is used to take funeral procession of residents of Koyedabū. Besides these four major gateways, there are three circles of routes one being immediate outside of the Cobahā core settlement, another being half way down the hillock and their third circle is around the foothill of the Cobahā which are traditionally used for *Bautayegu/Baujāhvalegu* or *Balipujā*, a peculiar kind of ritual to ward off the evil spirits from the settlement during the annual festival of Cobahā and so on. Separate routes and entrances are prescribed for this purpose. This is how traditional gateways are linked with cultural life of resident of Cobahā.

3.9.3 Dwelling houses

Dwelling houses are the major components of any settlement. Cobahā , being a Newār settlement, most of the dwelling house in Cobahā are built in rows leaning one another forming a open square (Nani) or courtyard. Most of houses are of four storied including ground-floor and attic with tiled or thatched roofs, but these days most of the tile and

¹¹⁰ Dhanvajra Bajracharya, op cit., p.19.

thatched roofs are replaced with either galvenised corogated sheets or RCC slabs. Unlike houses of other settlements in the valley, the houses here are made of primarily stone walls joined by mud. However structure and design ressembles with traditional Newār houses of the Kathmandu valley. Extensive use of stone instead of brick is due to its' high elevation, where no suitable clay available for making bricks, and moreover Cobahā hillock being made of good quality lime stone, which is easily and widely available, the use of stone is more frequented. In a way, optimum use of locally available material is best way of cost saving as well. But newly built houses are made of brick joined with cement and roofs are made of RCC slabs.

Although the historicity of settlement dates back to Licchavi period, the secular architecture, more specifically dwelling houses here are not older than two centuries, it might be because of most stone walled-houses joined with mud are more prone to destruction over the time, which leads demolition and reconstruction takes places over certain time span.

3.9.5 Rest houses (*Phalcā*)

Phalcas, known as *Pati* in Nepali are public rest houses one can come across in every Newār settlements. These public houses are built in and around religious sites, in the entry points of the settlement and public squares (*lachi*), in the centre of the settlements. The *phalcas* are erected for different purposes, some of them are more linked with religious purposes where are others are for secular purposes. *Phalcas* are an insperable component of any Newār settlement, like in other Newār settlements, in Cobahā as well there used to have eleven *phalcas* in the past built in different locations significant to their cultural life. However, only nine are surviving as of now. Three of them are being used for playing *dāphā-bhajan* during month of *Gunlā* and Kartik, others are being used for secular purposes such as resting the elderly people, over night shelter for strangers, children to play and so on. Besides that, the *phalca* opposite to *Nhavan-dabū* is used to keep ritual implements during the great ritual-bath of Cobahādyo.

Out of nine surviving *phalchās*, five of them are reconstructed in RCC structure where as the other three are still exist in traditional style and one *phalcha* is in dilapidated state. Here are the list of surviving *phalcā* as of now: 1) Opposite the northern gate of Cobahā monastery, 2) In front of Nhawan-dabū, 3) Cibahā, 4) Opposite the southern entrance of Cobahā monastery, 5) Dathu, 6) Dabūcā, 7) Half way up hill from Cobahā gate, 8) Cobahā gate, 9) Manda-phālca near *Ikhā* and 10) Jankva, the last two do not exist now.

3.9.6 Water Bodies

Water bodies, no matter in whatsoever form, are the life line of any human civilization. Cobahā being elevated some 800 meters above the Bāgmāti basin has very limited sources of water on the up hill. However, from the dawn human settlement of Cobahā as legends goes, the life of people from Cobahā were closely linked with two major sacred river system which are located on the foothill of Cobahā, namely Sulakshan-tirth, the conflux of Cārumāti and Bāgmāti and Jaya-tirth, the conflux of Nakhu and Bāgmāti. In the past for every ritual of Cobahādyo, *Pānjus* used to fetch water in Nakhu, but as the Bāgmāti became merely a sewerage, *Pānjus* started using water from a *bungā*, natural spring half-way up hill from Cobahā gate. There were more than 10 natural springs around the Cobahā, out of them only four are perfectly functioning, where as rest of others are dried out and some of are already buried. At present there are three water tanks which are filled with piped water supply system. Since the piped water supply system installed, the importance of *bungās* are supershaded and become defunct. Out of four surviving *bungās* two of *bungās* one called *Dathugā* and other *Koyegā* are directly linked with rituals of Karunāmāya. Both of these two *bungās* are considered as sacred tirths among the five, where the five-day long fasting observant take bath, one in each day. The *dathugā* located half way uphill from the Cobahā gate is even important from ritualistic point of view, as water for all rituals of Cobahādyo which includes daily and annual rituals *snān*, distribution of *jal*, holy water to devotees, cooking food for diety and officiating *Pānju* himself, and cleaning all the worship implements and kitchenware are washed with water collected from this *bungā* only.

CHAPTER IV

NON-MATERIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

4.1 Introduction

Cobahā being predominantly a Newār settlement, it has rich living cultural heritage that has been inherited from remote past generations. Newār community of Cobahā celebrate almost all the festivals that average Newārs of Kathmandu valley celebrate throughout the year. These common festivals are deliberately not included within the scope of present study. Moreover present study specifically focuses on Cobahā specific festivals directly or indirectly connected with Cobahādyo in particular and other Buddhist rituals and practices in general, which includes great ritual-bath, fetching the Karunāmaya at Nakhu, life cycle rituals of Cobahādyo followed by *bahāyā*, the chait festival of Lokeshvara, *Gunlā* dharma and Dipankar-*jātrā* and Kartik-*sevā*. The proceeding paragraphs will elaborate on each of these rituals and practices.

4.1.1 Historicity of Cobahādyo Jātrā

Jātrā word is derived from Yātrā, which denotes religious tour or travel or visiting the religious places, or circumambulation of temples or shrines, which is a kind of pilgrimage. Such yātrā/jātrā or tour may be of devotees, laities, even the deities are taken on to chariot or palanquin for yatra/tour or circumambulation of different shrines around the locality, or to visit religious sites, etc. The antiquity of jātrā or rathjātrā in Kathmandu valley could be stretch back to Licchavi period. This is evident from the historical documents and Licchavi inscriptions which mention jātrās like Kailash yātrā in Siva Deva's inscription dated of 520 from Khopāsi¹¹¹ Varāhā jātrā in Narendradeva's inscription of 7th century from Anantalingesvara,¹¹² Pasupati jātrās in Sivadva II's inscription of late 7th century

¹¹¹ Dhanvajra Vajracharya, op. cit., p.275.

¹¹² Ibid., p.486.

from Balambu¹¹³ and Mandapiyātrā in an inscription from Naxal believed to be Jayadeva II.¹¹⁴ Several function based gosthis such as Pradipagosthi, Dhupagosthi, Dhvajāgosthi, Bādiytragosthi mentioned in Sivadeva and Amsuvarma's joint inscription of Lele¹¹⁵ probably linked with some kind of jātrā prevailed in that locality in those days. Similar function-based guthi arrangement are found in Cobahā as well which are linked to annual festival of Cobahādyo. This indicates that the jātrās held during Licchavi period were not much different from the jātrā being held at present in different parts of Kathmandu valley. In other words, the jātrās that prevail in Kathmandu at present are continuation of such jātrās prevailed in ancient time. This is more evident from the annual rath-jātra of Bungadyo, one of the oldest surviving jātrā of Kathmandu valley, which is being continued since last 13 centuries.

Historicity of *Rathajātrā* of Cobahādyo could be traced back to Ancient period on the basis of different chronicles. The Rajbhogmālā, which was composed some time in ... century mention that during the reign of Varadeva, chariot of *Svetarupa Lokesvar* (Janabahādyo) and Ānandādi Lokesvar (Cobahādyo) brought to Ason on *Caitra-sukla Astami* and remain there for three days together with the chariot of Janabahādyo of Jamal.¹¹⁶ This statement indicates prevalence of chariot of Cobahādyo that was taken to Ason, which was later on discontinued. But the chariot Janabahādyo is still travel through Ason as part of its annual festival. Similarly another chronicles mention existence of the *rathajātrā* of Cobahādyo prior to *rathajātrā* of Bungama Lokesvar.

Wright has also mentioned same story regarding the existence of chariot festival which used to take all the way to Deopātan and back to Cobahā, which was discontinued due to the chariot of Cobahādyo was sub-merged in the Dānagā river on its way back to Cobahā since then the chariot festival of Cobahādyo was discontinued.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Ibid., p.531.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.565.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p.284.

¹¹⁶ DOA, "Rajbhogmala", *Ancient Nepal*, 9 (1969), p.3.

¹¹⁷ Daneil Wright, op cit. p.150.

Similarly another chronicles which believed to be composed in early 20th century tells same story but slight differently, it was before Shankar Deva's regime, the chariot festival of Lokesvars of Cobahā on its way back to Cobahā from Deopātan came to halt in the Balkhu river. This version of story further adds sequence of Shankar Deva establishing a city called Purnāvati and introducing chariot festival of Ādināth (Cobahādyo) and Sweta-Lokesvar (Janabahādyo) to bring in Ason and keep both the chariots for three days.¹¹⁸ Yet another chronicles has mentioned that the image of Ādināth was stolen and/or looted by Kukus of Tibetans out of chariot while the chariot was stocked in Dāngāl on its way back to Cobahā from Deopātan.¹¹⁹

Bikramjit Hasrat quoting later chronicle mention that in the year 3548 of the Kali era (447 AD) chariot festival of Cobahā was stopped due to an accident occurred in Dāngāl stream. The above mention *Kaligat* year coincide the time prior to Mandeva's regime¹²⁰ this depicts that the chariot festival of Cobahādyo stretches back to pre-Manadava period. *Gopālarājavamsāvali* mentions that King Shrī Narendradeva Varsh 35, and Ācārya Bandhudatta deo introduced *jātrā* (festival) of Shrī Bungma-Lokesvar.¹²¹ In the year Matsyandranath chariot festival was introduced, the annual chariot festival of Cobahādyo which used to take to Deopātan from Cobahā was interrupted due to the wheels of chariot submerged in the Dāngā river.¹²²

All above statements from different sources unanimously accepted that there was a chariot festival of Cobahādyo even before introduction of chariot festival of Bungma lokesvar introduced jointly by Narendradeva and Bandhudatta. However, interpretation of discontinuation of *Rathajātrā* of seems to slightly different according to the sources. The Sangha members of Cobahā reaffirm prevalence of the chariot festival of Cobahādyo and they further state that they have seen the fragments of wheel of the chariot and pieces of the ropes that was used for pulling the chariot in the upper floor of the temple of

¹¹⁸ DOA, "Nepal Deshko Itihansa" *Ancient Nepal*, no, 16, (1971), p.2.

¹¹⁹ Varnavajra Bajracharya, op. cit.p.13

¹²⁰ Vikram Jit Hasrat, op. cit., p.45.

¹²¹ Dhanvajra Vajracarya and Kamal P Malla, *The Gopālarājavamsāvali* (Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1985), p.126.

¹²² Bal Chandra Sharma, op. cit., p.13.

Cobahādyo. If this is to be true, the antiquity of Cobahādyo and chariot festival is firmly established. This researcher had made a request if there is possibility of taking photographs of the remaining of the rope and/or wheel fragments, one of the Sangha member said that because of the hoards of utensils piled up there is no way to enter into the storage.

These are all stories of bygone days, coming back to present, the annual festival of Cobahādyo takes place in the month of *Caitra* (March/April), the actual festival lasts for little longer than a week, for nearly nine days, but series of preparatory rituals takes place well before hand which will be elaborate under different headings.

4.2 Great ritual bath (*Nhavan Luyegu*)

4.2.1 Introduction

There is a tradition of giving ritual bath to deities in a regularly basis daily, monthly or annually in both Hindu and Buddhist tradition. *Nhavan* in Newāri is literal translation of Sanskrit word *Snān* which denotes purification rituals or ceremony of bathing or anointing an idol of any god or goddess. The shorter version of *Snān* commonly practiced in Newār community in liturgical or secular sphere is known as *Khvāsilegu*, means simply washing or cleansing face. When it use in liturgical sense, an idol is simply sprinkled with water which termed as *Dyokhvāsikegu*, means cleansing the face of deity. It is a shorter version of giving bath to the deity as a part of daily ritual (*Nityakarma*), which is performed very first thing in the morning by a priest. *Dyokhvāsikegu* ritual is equally performed by laities in the morning in their private attars at home or in the temples.

Nhawan denotes more than simply a *snān*, it means a ritual ritual bath performed annually as a ceremony of anointing an idol of god and goddesses. There is tradition of giving ritual bath to the deities which is kind of purification or anointment of idol, throughout the Kathmandu valley. The most prominent ones are the great ritual bath of four Karunāmayas of Kathmandu valley, which is celebrate with pomp.

The ritual bath of Cobahādyo takes place on *Caitra-sukla Pratipadā*, (1st waxing moon of March). But preparation for this takes place well before hand from *Sri-pancami*, (5th waxing moon of January).

Those who are to involve in this ritual such as the an officiating *Pānju*, the officiating Gurju, Dhangus of Cobahā and Nekus from Thasi have to follow rigorous disciplinary rules, kind of Buddhist precepts which includes abstaining tamasic food (meat products, garlic as well as fried/roasted as well as unnaturally prepared or processed foodies), refrain from sexual indulgence, not to be touched by anyone else, from four days ahead for the one who is going involve for the first time, otherwise from day before the ritual bath and continued till end of the annual festival ie. Navami. During this period of time they are supposed to take only one meal a day, ie before noon, in the afternoon either they consume fruits or beaten rice with milk but no salted curries of any kind. The process is called as *Nuchiegu*, which takes place in Agam in the presence of *Thāpāju*. This is rigorous observation a kind of precepts to maintain purity of body, mind and speech.

The actual ritual bath of Cobahādyo takes place at exact time prescribed by the Joshi on the morning of *Caitra-sulka Pratipadā*, which is performed inside the sanctum with holy water mixed with milk, honey, ghee. curd, etc. The ritual bath that perform in *Nhavan Dabū* in the evening is ceremonial ritual bath for public viewing. However, this is part of ritual to let laities to realize the importance cleansing body, mind and speech. The ceremonial ritual bath that takes place in the evening is not necessarily performed in the auspicious time prescribed as of one that takes in the morning. The auspicious time prescribed for morning is applicable time for the ritual of fetching the Karunāmaya at Nakhu on *Caitra-sukla Astami*.

4.2.2 Preparatory Rituals for Great Ritual Bath

Cāpujā

Cāpujā is the very first preparatory ritual of annual festival of Cobahādyo, which means worship of the clay from which ritual vessels are to be made. This puja takes place on the day of *Shrīpancami*, (5th waxing moon of January). On this day, Dhangus and officiating Gurju go to Chyāsāl in Patan where the *Kumhā* (potter) who are supposed to make ritual vessels for annual festival of Cobahādyo live. As they reach to Kumhā's house, the Gurju first worships hands of *Kumhā* symbolizing him as Visvakarma, the god of art and architecture, which is called *Hastapujā*. Then Kumhā worship his workshop along with potter's wheel and a lump of clay from which ritual vessels are to be made. After completion of worship, the Kumha offers *samayabaji*, mixture of *syābaji* (puffed beaten rice), *paubaji* (beaten rice), *choyelā* (roated buffelw meat), *hākumusyā* (black soybean), *woh* (lintel pinecake), *wāunchā* (cooked green vegetable), *thon* (rice bear) or *ailā* etc. Dhangus take *syābaji* and green garlic with them and Kumhā prepares rest of all other items on his own. The significance of this ritual is sanctification of the potter himself, his workshop and the lump of clay. Only Vajrachārya initiated Kumhās are eligible to make such ritual vessels. He is supposed to produce more than 80 earthen vessels altogether along with *Inphinidyo* or *Āgindyo*, which is kind *cibahādyo* or a caitya. These vessels are locally called as *Kulinchā*.

Once Kumhā has produced required numbers of clay potteries, Dhangus take these these potteries to the Citrakārs who is to paint different figurine such as image of Ganesh, *astamangal*, floral motifs, and other divinities on it. After completion of painting on the earthen pots, these potteries are brought to Cobahā on *Caitra-sukla Saptami* (7th waxing moon of March) by Dhangus and keep inside the Āgancheli, where the ritual takes place. Or sometimes Citrakār come to Cobahā to paint the earthen vessels.

Due to shortage of suitable clay nearby coupled with the designated Kumha's sons seem to be not interested in taking over their family business, he offered required numbers of ritual vessels made of copper on his behalf, so the tradition of producing ritual earthen

potteries for festival of Cobahādyo come to an end. Although cāpujā continued for few years even after he has stopped producing earthen potteries, but eventually ritual of cāpujā was discontinued few years ago. Dhirajmān, one of Dhangu in rota recalls his experience while visiting Cyāsal for cāpujā on Sripanchami. In that particular year, none of family members of designated Kumhā were turned up for this ritual as a result they had to get back without performing cāpujā, since then this ritual is discontinued.

Pipujā (Pithpujā)

Week after the *Cāpujā*, yet another ritual worship is held as *Pipujā* or Pithpujā. This puja is organized in Bālkumāri pith located at the bank of Nakhu. Pith denotes a power place, where some kind of invisible and/or supernatural power believed to be reside and one of eight devine mother is worshipped as principal deity along with other associate divinities together with Ganesh and Bhairav. This *Pipujā* is one of the preparatory rituals of annual festival of Cobahādyo which takes within a week from *Capujā* in the night. There is a rigorous process in this puja followed māmśahutiyaajna, flesh sacrifice on fire. In this puja two officiating Gurjus, along with *Thāpāju* and Dhangu are involved, no outsiders are enterained in this puja. This is puja is meant to propitiate all the divinities reside in this particular *pith* or power point. This *pipujā* signifies formally beginning of annual festival of Cobahādyo, in the past the resident of Cobahā has to follow strict rules of dos and don'ts from this day until end of annual festival, but these days things are not as such.

Balipujā

Bali literally means an offering of a portion of daily meal to all creatures.¹²³ Similarly Monier-Williams defines bali as any offering or propitiatory obligation, especially an offering of portions of food, such as grain, rice, etc. to certain gods, semi-devine beings, households devinities, spirits, men, birds, other animals and all creatures including even

¹²³ Vaman Shivaram Apte, The Practical Sanskrit English Dictionary, (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas Publishers, 4th Revised/englarged ed, (1965),p. 695

lifeless objects¹²⁴. Similarly Gellner defined bali in Buddhist liturgical context as "offering made to ghosts or other spirits who might cause problems for ritual"¹²⁵. Bali or Balipujā is locally known as *baupujā*, or *bautayegu* or *baubiyegu* ritual is widely used by Newārs of Kathmandu valley. There are various types of Balipujā being practiced depending on rituals associated with. Ratna Kāji has mentioned some 20 different types of Balipujā practices amongst Newārs of Kathmandu valley, some of the major ones are: Sirābau offered to Chvāsa or Kshetrapāl, Bhujābau, Chapābau, Yacinbau, Chahāyeke, Caturpātbau, Lahbau, Gupābau, Pretabau, Deshbau etc.,¹²⁶ in vernacular Newāri term, the word *Desh* denotes village or city. Balipujā is conducted for different purposes, the most common purposes of such Balipujās are to ward off evil spirits from a person or a house or certain locality, to pacify demons, ghosts, goblins who might cause obstacles to the rituals, to propitiate demigods, fierce, and protective deities for protection of a house, neighborhood, village or city. Such Balis are also offered to the guardian deities of all directions (*Kshetrapāla*) who are asked to bind the hindrances which come from all directions and keep them captive until the ritual is over.¹²⁷

Here in Cobahā, in course of annual festival of Cobahādyo, within ten days of time span, two Balipujās are offered, one being in the beginning and other being in the end, to ward off or pacify evil spirits, ghosts, goblins, etc. or propitiate semi-demons and protective deities residing around the Cobahā so that the annual ritual/festival of Cobahādyo be complete without any obstacles. The first Balipujā is conducted on the night of *Pāhāncarhe* (14th waning moon of March), the second Balipujā takes place in the morning of *Caitra-sukla Navami*, (9th waxing moon of March). According to local elderly people, the first round of Balipujā is to inform about forthcoming annual festival to other being or evil spirits, and the later one is to bind or captivate them while the Lokesvar is being ritually entered in his seat. Both the Balipujā rituals are conducted by officiating

¹²⁴ John K Locke, op cit. pp.78-79.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p.149.

¹²⁶ Ratnakaji Bajracharya, *Balipujaya Yatharthata*, (Yen, Bajracharya Prakashan, 1993), pp.10-22.

¹²⁷ John K Locke, op. cit. (f.n.6), p.79.

Gurju of Cobahādyo and bali is served by Dhangus. The proceeding paragraphs will elaborate more on these Balipujās.

Balipujā on *Pāhāncarhe*

The first Balipujā takes place in the late evening of the *Pāhāncarhe*, two days before the great ritual bath of Karunāmaya. The officiating Gurju first conduct ritual pujā then two Dhangus carry the Bali (serving bowl, full of all ingredients) and another Dhangu serve *bali* at different places and cross-roads around the Cobahā. The bali offering team is accompanied by *Nākhin* and *Kahānbājā*. The main purpose of this Balipujā is pacify the evil spirits so that they won't cause any hurdles in the great ritual-bath of Karunāmaya. But local elderly people belief that it is to inform about forthcoming ritual events of Cobahādyo to other beings. In fact from this day the annual ritual of Cobahādyo is considered formally began. The returnees who are involved in *balipujā* are welcomed back inside the Cobahā courtyard by performing a *balipiyegu* ritual, known as *cokābajipiyegu* means offering of husk mixed beaten rice and *ikā pokā* kinds of seeds by two *nakins*, the senior most wives of *Thāpāju*. This is a simple form of ritual performed to ward off evil spirits.

In the evening of 14th day of waning-moon, The officiating Gurju of Cobahādyo announces the auspicious time of Ritual Bath that takes place the next morning. The auspicious time is calculated on the basis of lunar calendar which is determined by a Joshi (Astrologer) from Patan in writing on a piece of paper which is called *deepau*. The officiating Gurju while sitting in a designated place nearby the temple of Kshitigarbha announces the auspicious time of ritual bath next morning. A large number of people gather to hear the announcement including musical groups such as *nāykhin*, *kahānbājā*, *dhimey*, and *dāphā*.

Since this balipujā is considered as formally beginning of the annual festival in case of anyone from core area of Cobahā dead after this balipujā, the death purification (*Ghasū*) ritual is performed on following day of the final rites. One of respondent told that the last such incident took place here in Cobahā some 6-7 years ago. It was three days after the

first balipujā someone from the core area was died, the death purification rites was performed following day. This tradition has shown the strong linkage in between Cobahādyo and resident of Cobahā by collaborating ritual of Cobahādyo and death rituals mundane residents of Cobahā.

Nuchiegu: Day before the great ritual bath, those who are supposed to involve directly in the rituals such as officiating Gurjus, Thapajus, Nekus, Dhangus and *Nakins* are go through a sanctification rituals called *Nuchiegu*. It is a kind of observation of precepts as a part of purification and/or sanctification of one's body and mind by following rigorous rules of Dos and Don't's. Those who are to involve in annual rituals of Cobahādyo have under go this rituals. If the person is going to involve for the first time, he/she has to start *nuchiegu* four days before the ritual bath ceremony, otherwise day before the ritual bath. The *nuchiegu* procedure take place in Āgam in the presence of Thāpāju, in due course they will have feast together with Thāpāju, as they come out of Agam after the feast, their *nuchiegu* starts, from on ward they have observe all prescribed abstainments such as take only *sātvika* food stuff, means abstain from consuming impure food such as garlic, onion, all kind of un-naturally produced/processes food stuff, meat products, alcohol, take only one meal a day, boiled rice but definitely not fried curries, they have to cook their meal on their own, not to wear shoes and impure cloths, not to involve in sexual indulgent. All these rules apply until they perform yet another ritual called *nuphyaegu*, which takes place on Navami. In case of *Nakin*, the senior most woman is going to serve as *Nakin* for the first time, she has to start *Nuchiegu* ritual six days before *Nhawan*, the ritual bath. She is expected to take only one meal a day after dusk, (starts come to visible on the sky).

4.2.3 Procedures of Great Ritual Bath

On the morning of *Caitra-sukla Pratipada*, actual ritual bath of Cobahādyo takes place at the exact time prescribed by the astrologer, which is performed by *Pānju*-in duty in the presence of Gurju. After that the Gurju performs a tantrik pujā for transforming the spirit of deity from idol to the *brahmakon*, it is customary to perform this ritual before the idol is lifted from its' seat for any purpose. For the ritual bath in the evening, two Dhangus bring four *ghadās* (vessel) of water from the *Dathugā* in silver vessels. They should not to be

touched by anyone on their way while carrying ritual water. They keep water filled vessels near the entrance of sanctum, and the *Pānju* takes these vessels inside the sanctum.

In the late afternoon, four Nekus (Nemkula) arrive with *kalah*, a baskets full of worship materials all the way from Thasi on bare foot. On their way they are not supposed to be touched by anyone else. As they reach half way uphill they take bath in the *Dathuga* before they proceed further. They are received/welcome by representatives of the Cobahādyo Guthi. As they entered inside the Cobahā courtyard, again they wash their hands and take *nasalā* (sprinkle few drops of water into the mouth). Then, they enter inside the sanctum and perform puḷā, transfer the spirit of deity into the *brahmakon* placed nearby. After that they take off all the jewelries except one set of neckles. They take off all the garments except a pair of inner garment. All the jewelries and garments are properly recorded, then verified and eventually handed over to the Thāpājus for safe keeping. Finally the idol of Cobahādyo is removed from its' seat and take it out to *Nhavan-dabū*, in a palanquin. The idol is then erected on the lotus padestel built in the centre of *Nhavan-dabū*. They take off remaining neckleses and inner garment except a *jama*, the skirt. The Dangus bring water vessels to *Nhavan-dabū* and place at four corners and these vessels are mixed with milk, curd, ghee, honey, etc. The officiating Gurju performs puḷā followed by *laksha* dance, a kind of tantric form of dance, while cirmambulating the diety. Finally, as Gurju instructs two Nekhus from two and a *pānju* from other side simultaneously pour ritual water onto the idol of the Cobahādyo. The crowd gathered there cheers with excitements. The ritual water is sprinkled towards the spectaculars all around.

After ritual bath, the idol is taken back to the temple and ritually entered inside the courtyard by performing simple *balipiyagu* ritual by the two *nakins*.

4.3 Fetching and Procession of *Cobahādyo*

The fetching of Cobahādyo is better known as *Dyolāyegu* or *Nekhuchikegu* amongs Newārs of surrounding area. This event is one of the major events of annual festival of

Cobahādyo takes place in the morning of Astami. But there are series of rituals to be performed on the evening of Saptami, the day before Astami.

4.3.1 Choyelābhū

On the *Caitra-shukla Saptami*, the residents of Cobahā, particularly Newār community celebrate *choyelābhū*, the pre-festive celebration as to get ready for the next day. On this particular day, people cleanse their houses, sanctify house along with attars and temples etc. This is celebrated in a family level, normally no guests are invited. All the family members have *choyelābhū*, (a kind of feast) together which consists of beaten rice, fire-roasted meat, and other delicacies. Similarly on this day, thāpājus of *Cobahādyo* Guthi celebrate *choyelābhū* in the Āgam. Besides that there are series of rituals to be performed which are as followed:

Invoking of Deities: In the evening of saptami, a ritual is performed to invoke Ganesh and other deities from the Bālkumāri pith. In the beginning, Ganesh is invoked in a vessel in which an image of Ganesh is painted. Dr Sakya has termed it as Ināy Kalash. It is the most essential kind of Kalash during consecration of Vastu-pratisthā, including the rites and rituals of the Buddhist *Dasakarmapratisthāvidhāna*, the rituals of initiations.¹²⁸ After invocation of Ganesh in the Ināy-Kalash, it is taken to the officiating Dhangu's house, having a simple puḷā over there, the Ināy-Kalash is brought to the Cobahā and kept inside the *Āgancheli*, where the sacramental ritual takes place in late evening. Similarly *Agindyo*, made of clay is brought from the Dhangu's house and other four deities are summoned in four *Kisalins*, small earthen bowls filled with rice and a betelnut, which symbolizes different divinities are kept inside the *Āgancheli* where 64 ritual vessels representing different Buddhist divinities including five transcendental Buddhas, 16 Loksvas, five Tārās, four dikpālas and so on. However the number of ritual vessels invoked during the sacramental ritual seems to be varied as some scholars mention installation of 53 ritual vessels representing different divinities. The Ganesh invoked Ināy-Kalash and *Agindyo* are ritually welcomed by two *nakins*. After deities are invoked vessels are placed

¹²⁸ Milan Ratna Sakya, op. cit. p.49.

accordingly, the idol of Cobahādyo is brought to the *Āgancheli* from the sanctum which is called *dyokhuyegu*, means stealing the idol from sanctum and erected on the designated pedestal inside *Āgancheli*. Then the officiating Gurju perform puḷā followed by ten sacramental rituals which includes *Garvadhān*, *Punsavan*, *Simantonayan*, *Jātakarma* and *Dristidān*, *Nāmākarna*, *Upanayana*, *Chudākarma*, *Vratadeshan*, *Vratamochan* and *Pānigrahan*. Different musical groups from Cobahā such as *kāhān*, *nayekhin* along with *dhimey* and *dāphā* are present throughout the process; they play their respective musical instruments from time to time as required. Gurju, Thāpājus and Dhangus are involved in this process. The entire process lasts for about 3 to 4 hours. In due course Mahākāl is given an oil massage and offered with *samayabaji* as a propitiatory ritual. In the late evening the Thāpājus have a feast in the *Āgam*.

4.3.2 Fetching Lokesvar at Nakhu

Literally *dyolāygu* means fetching the deity (Karunāmaya Lokesvar) at the Jayatirth, the confluence where Nakhu meets Bāgmati river. This annual ritual of fetching deity is a symbolic repetition of Karunāmaya who was believed to be found abandoned in the Nakhu river as legends narrate. There are different versions of stories regarding Karunāmaya coming to Nakhu river. According to a legenda, the Karunāmaya of Cobahā was originally from Thasi, in the Eastern side of Patan city. There was series hailstorm followed by epidemic for several years. The Karunāmaya was accused for calamities and the anger ridden people from Thasi thown the Karunamanay in the nearby river which eventually reached to Nakhu. One of the cow which belongs to a Gvalā of Cobahā released milk at a particular spot every day. Out of curiosity the Gvalā dig out the spot, where an image of Karunāmaya was emerged from there. With help of villagers, he managed to take the deity to Cobahā and installed inside the temple, which was vacated due to the deity from the temple locally known as *Mhasukhvādyo* means yellow faced deity, was stolen/taken away by Tibetans while the chariot of the deity was submerged in Dānagā river on its way back from Kathmandu in course of chariot festival. If the origin Cobahādyo was of yellow faced as claimed by some of the Thapāju, they original deity of Cobahā seems to be the male consort of Basundharādevi.

Another version of story narrates that as Gvālā returned along with villages to take the to Cobahā in procession, the deity had already disappeared from there, All the people asked him where had he saw the deity in response, the Gvālā points the exact place with a long bamboo stick. A tantric Guru summons the diety into the Kalash and took him up all the way to Cobahā in procession. The ritual of fetching and procession is a symbolic repitation of this event, which takes place on *Caitra-sukla Astami* every year.

There is a tradition of transferring spirit of deities into a ritual vessel such as *kalash* or *brahmhakon*. This ritual is performed particularly before an image of deity is removed from it's seat for specific purposes. Similarly, when spirit of deity is to be transferred to somewhere else, the respective deity is invoked into a Kalash in a form of flower, mostly *daphosvān*. It is same for Bungadyo, who is summoned in *brahmakon* before his idol is taken out for ritual bath, and similarly he is also invoked in a *kalash* from Katuwāldaha every year. Likewise, the spirit of Aryavalokitesvar of Janabahā is also transferred into *brahmakon* before he is taken out for ritual bath. In every tantric Budhist ritual the Kalash is extensively used as sacred tantric implement symbolizing spiritual nucleus, however philosophically it represents the existence of cradle which is primordial source of life on this earth.¹²⁹ In case of annual rituals of Cobahādyo, *kalash* is extensively used in all sorts of Pujās along with transferring spirit or invoking deity. In same manner pair of *kalash* are used in the ritual of fetching Karunamaya.

In the morning of Asami, the officiating *Gurju*, *Pānju*s in duty, *Thāpāju*, Dhangu in duty and Gvā along with musical groups gather at other side of the Nakhu. On the auspicious time prescribed by Joshi (astrologer), the Gvālā pin points the specific symbolic place where the Gvālā had seen the deity lying. One of the *pānju* pour water mixed with different objects along with *daphosvān* from one of Kalash on to the river, and another *pānju* fetch the floating *daphoswān* into the Kalash, this is regarded as *dyolayegu* means fetching the deity, which is the symbolic repitation of the Cobahādyo being fetched as mentioned in legends. The crowd gathered there cheer with joy for having deity fetched

¹²⁹ Ibid.

into the Kalash. The officiating Gurju perform initial puḷā in a shrine nearby. After initial puḷā the entire team proceed towards Cobahā. The two *Pānjus* carry two Kalashes with their both hands, they are led by the Gurju, one of Dhangu carry large umbrella, they are safe guarded by large number of volunteers so that they are not touched by anyone from the crowd. Musical bands such as *nayekhin*, *kāhānbājā* and *dāphā* are present there to play their respective musical instruments in between as required. On this occasion people used to take bath in the river, but these days people hardly touch water from the river but still there are people who wash their face at least. Hence the locals call this festive as *nekhui khvāsilegu*, means taking bath or washing face in the Nakhu river for attending in the gala event.

As the procession led by Gurju reach on the western bank of Bāgmati through crossing the river, all associates are ritually welcomed by offering of puḷā, from there rolls white clothes (not yet used) laid down on their way for them to walk on which is called *vasālāyegu*. As they reach to the platform near pith in Nakhu, the Kalashes are kept on the platform, *Gurju* and both the *Pānjus* sit in front of Kalash and *Gurju* perform a puḷā. Lot of people come to lit oil-lamps. People from surrounding villages along with far distance come to witness this liturgical gala event and and pay homage to the Lokesvar. The Kalashes are remain there until late afternoon.

Jyāvalayā: In the afternoon on behalf of Cobahādyo Guthi a feast is organized to all the involved in the rituals particularly Thāpājus, Dhangu, members of musical groups. This is called the *Jyāvalayā* which is served after ritual offerings made to gods and demigods. Special arrangements are made for serving this feast. Members of Bālkumāri *Sanāguthi* of Maharjans are assigned to serve the food (*Jyāvalayā-bhoye*), where as the Dhangu are supposed to prepared *thon* for this purpose. After completion of serving feast to all concerned, the procession of deity invoked Kalash begin from here to Cobahā. People from Cobahā and surrounding villages participate in this event as devotees and/or spectators. The procession move all the way through *vasālāyegu*, led by musical teams such as *Nayekhin*, *Kahān* and *Dhimey* and followed by huge crowd of devotees all the way.

As the procession reach in front of main entrance of Cobahā monastery, the deity invoked Kalashs are ritually entered/welcome by the two Nakin, (senior most wives of Thāpāju) at the *pikhālakhu* of the Cobahādyo. This ritual is similar to Newār tradition of welcoming/entering new bride into the Groom's house, which includes *phanluigu*, *balinpiegu* and *tāchān sālegu*. During this occasion *tipvā* (bundle of dried bamboo sticks) is kindled. The *pikhālakhu* is sanctified/purified with *banchilegu*, a coat of red-clay painting, pair of *tvādevās* (traditional oil lamps) are kindled on either sides and a kalash is properly placed. The welcoming ritual consists *phanluigu* as a part of sanctification/consacration in which a measuring jar containing several materials such as rice, *tāye* (puffed paddy), *jākisvān* (a kind of flower), *yomari*, *caumari* (kinds of dough made of rice flour) etc. poured on to the *Pānju* and Gurju. While entering the deity summoned Kalashs, one of the Nakin pour water out of *tānph*, traditional water vessel with spout/dispenser, while the other Nakin pulls in both the *Pānjus* holding traditional key. After the Kalashs are ritually entered the contents of the Kalash ie. deity invoked *dāphosvan* along water is brought all the way from Nakh is poured into the *brahmakon* kept in side the sanctum. After initial *pujā*, a rigorous ritual along with sacramental rituals take place in the late evening which continues until next morning.

4.4 Ten Sacramental Ritals (*Das Sanskārakarma*)

4.4.1 Introduction:

Sanskārakarma denotes rites and rituals performed at the significant stages of life cycle or changes in status of a person which is also known as rites of passage in anthropological term. Rajbali Pandey defines Sanskāra as religious purificatory rites and ceremonies for sanctifying the body, mind and intellect of an individual, so that he may become a full fledged member of the community.¹³⁰ There are series of rituals performed in different stages of life. The number of such rituals are differs depending on religious tradition of the family. In Hindu tradition there are 11, 13 and 18 Sansakāras mentioned on

¹³⁰ Rajbali Pandey, *Hindu Sanskaras : Socio-Religious Study of the Hindu Sacraments*, (Delhi: Motilal Manarsidad Pulishers Pvt. Ltd, 2002 reprint), p.16.

the basis of different texts, where as in Buddhist tradition there are 10 basic *sanskārakarmas* being practiced by Newārs in Kathmandu valley generally performed by family priest, which does not includes *Jyājanko*. Such rituals are divided into two categories, one being rituals performed during life time and other being rituals performed after death. Most common Buddhist life time rituals are *Garvadhārna*, *Punsavan*, *Simāntonayan*, *Jātkarma*, *Nāmākaran*, *Annaprāsan*, *Chudākarma*, *Vratādeshan*, *Vratamochan* and *Pānigrahan*.¹³¹ These rituals are very significant from socio-religious perspective. Each of these rituals are considered as part of socialization process endorsed by religion, as to be recognized as member of society. For example, a newly born baby is given name as a member of the family, subsequently other rites such as *barechhuikegu* in Sakya/Bajracharya and *kayetapujā* in Jyāpu community are performed to get recognized the person as an eligible member of their respective Guthi to perform and/or involve in ritualistic activities of Guthis.

Like for human being, idols of deities are also performed with all the sacramental rituals that are performed to human being. Such sacramental rituals are performed to make an image of deity made of any material is considered as deified and become an object of veneration. In most cases such sacramental rituals are performed during the time of installation of the image in the temple, but every year on the day of anniversary of the establishment of the deity, an annual consacretion ritual is held. There is a tradition of performing annual sacramental rituals of the images of Buddhist deities including four Karunāmayas of Kathmandu valley popularly known as *daskarma* or *das-sanskārkarma* which normally performed after annual ritual bath.

The ten sacramental rituals are performed to Cobahādyo as part of annual reconsecration of the idol of Karunāmaya, the Ānandādi Lokeshvar. The sacramental rituals of Cobahādyo takes place twice, firstly in the night of Saptami performed in the *Āgancheli*. Before sacramental rituals begin in the night of Saptami, the officiating Gurju perform a rigorous process of *pujā*, then sacramental rituals take places which includes:

¹³¹ Naresh Man Bajracharya, *Vajrayāna Nepal*. (Kathmandu: Tri-Ratna Prakashan, 2069 BS), pp.74-77.

Garvadhārna, Punsavan, Simāntonayan, Jātkarma, Nāmākaran, Phalprāsan, Annaprāsan, Upānayan, Chudākarma, Vratādeshan, Vratamochan, Pānigrahan, Jyajanko. The second round of sacramental rituals takes place in the morning of Navami. The earlier few rituals takes place before dawn in the *Āgancheli*, which includes *Garvadhārna, Punsavan, Simāntonayan, Jātkarma,* and *Dristidān* and remaining rituals are performed in the Cobahā courtyard on the sacramental platform in front of temple of Cobahādyo. However the ritual of night of Astami and morning of Navami are more rigorous with fire sacrifice. Number of rituals accounts more than ten, however ten major rituals are clubbed as Das-sanskarkarma, means ten sacramental rites which are as follows¹³²:

- i) ***Jātakarma:*** This is the birth ritual which symbolizes birth of the Lokesvar. As part of ritual *Sichāpālubaji*, a mixture of ginger, *imu*, (a kind of dried grass seed, normally consumed by neo-natal mother) and *cāku* (molasses) is distributed like during the birth ritual of Newār community. The Gurju recites the mantra for cutting the navel cord and offers *pancāmrita*. Then the Gurju performs *Mikhākankegu* ritual, means *giving of sight*. Finally the cloth covering the image of deity is removed which signifies the birth of deity. After this ritual, the image of deity is brought out from *Āgancheli* and erected on the platform near temple of Cobahādyo and rest of other rituals take place here only.
- ii) ***Nāmākarna:*** This is a naming ritual in which the Gurju give name to the deity reciting a mantra while touching the chest of image with his vajra and follows a simple pujā. In case of human being this ritual takes place on 5th or 10th days of the birth.
- iii) ***Phalaprāsana:*** This is a ritual symbolises feeding fruits to the deity. As a part of ritual different kinds of fruits are offered to deity followed by simple pujā.

¹³² John K Locke, op. cit. (f.n.7) pp.210-216.

- iv) ***Annaprāsana***: Literally mean cereal feeding ritual in which the deity is offered cooked rice while the officiating Gurju recites a mantra while one of Neku feed rice to the deity. In case of human being, this ritual takes place in 5th month if the baby is boy and 7th month in case of baby girl.
- v) ***Upanayana***: This is initiation rituals performed which is equivalent to Bare Chuikegu ritual of Sākyas. In fact ritual is meditation of tantric yoga followed by recitation of gatha. The deity is asked to practice this yoga and preach it for the sake of all living being.
- vi) ***Chudākarma***: This is hair cutting or head shaving ritual which normally takes at the age of 11, 13 or 15 only for boys in the case of human being. But in case of deity, a mantra is recited by Gurju while one of Neku touches Cobahādyo's head with a golden razor. A swastika is drawn on the head of deity with saffron powder and is given a saffron tika and then put crown on his head.
- vii) ***Vratadeshana***: This initiation is equivalent to renouncing the home with vow for practicing the Dharma. A special mantra is recited by Gurju while the Nekus give loin cloth to the deity and followed a simply pujā.
- viii) ***Vratamochana***: This is a ritual revoking the vow to call come back from monkhood. Here the deity is considered ceasing the monkhood. In case of Sakya Bajracharya this rituals takes place four days after the ordination. Here the ritual is concluded with a simple pujā.
- ix) ***Pānigrahana***: *Pānigrahan* literally means accepting hand (of opposite sex) which in another word marriage ritual, Ihi in Newāri. Here the deity is treated as girl being performed Ihi. The deity is ornated with all his ornaments, given a Bya (a kind of fruit), wrapped his forehead with painted paper. In Buddhist perspective this rite is considered as to unite the girl unite with a personified Bodicitta represented by Bel fruit. In case of Newār girl this ritual takes place in between 5- 7 years of age.

- x) ***Pratisthāvidhi***: This ritual is not a sacramental ritual per se rather it is ritual of consecration of the image of Lokesvar to give a status of venerable or qualified for worship. In this ritual, the deity is given ordination of different initiations like to Sakya/Vajracharyas. In this rites eight different Abhishekas (initiation) is given to the idol of Lokesvar. In fact this ritual is performed to all the idols made stone, metal, wood or clay to make them venerable object with deification. The eight initiation performed to diety are as follows: i) Mukutābhisheka, ii) Vajrābhisheka, iii) Ghantābhishek, iv) Namābhisheka, v) Ācāryābhisheka, vi) Guhyabhisheka, vii) Prajnābhisheka and viii) Caturthābhisheka.

The officiating Gurju perform as an ordinating Guru and his helper performs as Upādhyāya and the Nekus work as helpers, who perform almost all corporeal activities as per instruction of officiating Gurju. In case of Cobahādyo, they are only the people eligible to touch the image of Lokesvar throughout the entire annual ritualistic processes.

As stated earlier althouth it says ten sacramental rituals, in practice there are more than ten rituals performed to Cobahādyo which includes *Burājanko* as well. The *Burājanko* is a ritual performed generally three times to the elderly people at different ages. The first one is called as *Bhimrathārohan* performed on the auspicious time as prescribed by Jyotish or Joshi at the age of 77 years 7 months, 7 days, 7 hours, 7 minutes 7 seconds and 7 palas. Similarly second *Burājanko* takes place either at the age of 84 years or on the day the person sees 1000th moon in his/her life time and third *Janko* takes place at the age of 90 years. Beside these commonly practices three *Burājanko* there are two more Jankos 4th and 5th *Jankos* rarely practiced in Kathmandu valley which takes place after 90 to 100 years of age. But in the case of Cobahādyo, only one *Burājanko* is performed, according to one of the officiating Gurju Tirth Bajracharya, the Bahaya, means chariot festival of Cobahādyo at end of sacramental rituals is in fact the *janko* in which the image of Cobahādyo is carried on a palanquine and circumambulate the Cobahā courtyard for three rounds.

4.4.3 *Bahāyā* (Chariot Procession)

In the morning of Navami, after completion of ten sacramental rituals the image of deity is ascended on to the palanquin, which is called as Bahāya, means chariot festival in the courtyard. Four Nekus carry the palanquin and circumambulate the Shikhar temple at the centre of courtyard, led by two *Nakins*, the one holds traditional key while other releases water from *tānfa*, water vessel all the way in course of circumambulation. The palanquin is rested for a while at three corners within the courtyard which marks the celebration is dedicated to three cities namely Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur. After three rounds of circumambulation, the deity is again placed the ritual platform, from now onwards devotees are allowed to offer puja along with different objects. Many of devotees offer jeweleries, vest or *putulan*, *kasāgā*, *khādā*, etc.

4.4.4 *Bālkumāri Pujā* and *Balipujā*

After completion of the sacramental rituals followed by Bahāya, the idol is kept on the ritual platform for sometime while devotees worship, make offering and pay homage. Before idol of Cobahādyo is ritually enter inside the sanctum yet another special puja is offered along with sacrifice of a male goat to Bālkumāri at Ikhā, the puja is served by *Cakresvar*, the senior Thāpāju of the bahā . After this puja, *samayabaji* is distributed to all the involved in puja.

Second round of *Balipujā*

The second round of Balipujā takes place in the morning of Navami. The bali serving bowl known as *baupā* is being prepared near the ritual platform in the courtyard which contains mixture of boiled rice, *syabaji* (puffed beaten rice), lung, intestine and tiny pieces of raw meat chopped from different parts of sacrificed goat, other spices and different kinds of green plants and leaves, five thāpāju perform *dhalchāhāykegu* ritual by offering five different types of liquids such milk, rice beer (*thon*), unbrewed red beer (*karthon*) and *aelā* (liquor) and water in the *baupā* (serving bowl) while the officiating Gurju recites mantra. Finally the *baupā* is toppled with an image of Bhairav draw in a piece of paper. In

the bali process, two Dhangus carry the serving bowl and another Dhandu offer bali from the *baupā* in different places and cross roads (*dopā*), power places around the Cobahā. *nayekhin* and *Kāhānbājā* led their way and few other people follow them while they circumambulate offering bali around outer circle of the core area of Cobahā village. While bali team is busy in offering bali around the outer circle of Cobahā, back in Cobahā courtyard, the Cobahādyo is ritually entered inside the sanctum and installed in its' seat. According to local belief the deity should be entered inside the cella while the evil spirits like ghost, gablings, etc. are enjoying their share of food/bali being served so that they won't cause any hurdle while the deity is being entered inside the temple. This is kind of propitiation of the evil spirit not to make troublesome to the residents of the village and protect the village itself from all kinds of evil spirits.

Nuphyayegu: Once the idol of Karunāmaya in entered into the central sanctum and placed accordingly on its' seat, all the people who went through *Nuchiegu* ritual on the very first day of annual festival, ie. day before Nhavan . This ritual takes place in the Āgam of Cobahādyo with simple puḷā of Āgamdyo, followed by feast together with five senior Thāpājus, this set them free from all the refrainments they have been under going for last several days.

4.4.5 Bhujyā

Bhujyā word is composed with two words *Bhujā* means food + *Ya* means festival, so *Bhujya* means festival of offering food or fest to the deity. After Cobahādyo is formally entered inside the sanctum, in the afternoon, people from Cobahā and surrounding area celebrate *bhujiyā*. This is to mark the successfully completion of the annual rituals of Cobahādyo. Musical groups such as *dhimay*, *dāphā* and so on come playing their respective musical instruments and perform puḷā to the deity. After puḷā they would have feast there.

Tisha vicā vayegu literally means taking care of jeweleries of Karunāmaya. People, who have offered jeweleries to Karunāmaya come with puḷā implements along with the cleaned/repaired jeweleries which were handed over by Cobahādyo guthi after *nhavan* for

cleaning and/or repairing as required. They re-offer the jeweleries in a midst of pujā and eventually have feast in the Cobahā monastery premises. If people wish to offer new jeweleries they do so on this day, preceded with a pujā. All the offerings made to deities go officiating *pānju* except jeweleries and utensils. So offerings made especially jeweleries have to be registered or reported personally to *Thāpājus*, the de-facto authorities of the Cobahādyo. All the arrangements of annual festival of Cobahādyo is managed by Cobahādyo Guthi led by *Thāpājus* of Sakya Sangha of Cobahā and expenses are covered by Karunāmaya Guthi. However, the officiating rota-member of Sakya Guthi prepares all necessary worship implements in a rotation basis. At the end the day, ie.in the evening of Navami, a *sīkābhū*, a kind of special feast is organized amongst Thāpājus, in which eight different portions of head of the sacrificed goat is distributed according to seniority basis among Thāpājus.

The day of Navami is considered as grand female of the annual festival of Cobahādyo and celebrated with great pomp. On this occasion, people of Cobahā, more specifically Newārs invite their relatives specially married off daughter and sisters along with their families and friends for feast and served them with all the delicacies they have prepared. On this occasion they prepare special meat item called *tahkhā*, a jelly type cooked meat kept over night to make it frozen.

Involvement of traditional musical bands:

In every Newār festival no matter big or small, religious or social, there involve traditional musical groups of different kind. Some musical groups are of religious and/or ritualistic in nature such as *nāykhin*, *kāhān* and *mvahāli* whereas others are of social and entertaining nature like *dhimay*, *gunlābājan*, *dāphā* although these musical groups also participate in almost all religious events but these are not mandatory, like *nāykhin*, *kāhān* or *mvahāli*, *kāhān* and *nāykhin* most important religious and/or ritualistic music systems, both are mandatory in most of religious functions or festivals of any deities, all over Kathmandu valley. Both these traditional music are played in funeral processions as well. The *kāhānbājā* is also called as *Indrabājā*, means the music loved by Indra, the king of the god. On the other hand *dhimey*, *gunlābājan* and *dāphā* are more of social and entertaining

nature and generally played during the all kinds of festival to add-in liveliness to the festive, but definitely not played in funeral procession. But there are some exceptional incidences particularly, in case of death of senior most Guru of respective musical group, the band member play their respective music during his funeral procession, but it is very rare.

Nāykhin: It comprises of a small cylindrical drum coupled with pair of cymbal made of bronze. The drum is moulded with animal hide at the both ends, the left end is beaten by a small stick and right end is beaten by fingers. *Nāykhin* name derived from combination of two words *Naye*, caste group who plays this music system + *Khin*, a kind of drum, so *Nāykhin* denotes drum played by *Naye* community. This is very significant music system in Newār rituals as it is played in all auspicious occasions and funeral rituals. Here in Cobahā also, this music system is mandatorily played in all rituals of Cobahādyo.

Kāhān: It is long blowing musical instrument made of copper in cylindrical form tempering one side bigger at the end and small mouth piece at other end from where people blow to make sound. It is coupled with a long stick which supports the long horn like instrument criss-crossing in the middle part of the cylindrical instrument. *Kāhānbājā* is normally placed in pair of two or four, no single *kahān* is ever played. Here in Cobahā *kahānbājā* used to play during all the major events of annual festival of Cobahādho, such as *balipujā*, fetching and procession of Karunāmaya from Nakhu, sacramental rituals on Saptami and Navami, etc. Six members of Maharjan *sanaguthi* of Cobahā are assigned to play this music system in a rotation basis for 12 consecutive years. But during the last annual festival ie. in 2014, the *kahān* group did not turn up as there was some problem in rotation as some of the rota-members did not turn up for training.

Dhimay: It is large cylindrical drum both sides moulded with animal hide. The right side is called *nāsan*, which is played by beating with curled bamboo stick and the left side is beaten by fingers and/or palm. It is coupled with *bhusyā*, big cymbal made of bronze. This music system is played normally in pair of two but more numbers are desirable. This music is specially played in any religious ritual, this vibrant musical system give more liveliness to the festive, in most cases there are some specially trained dancer to perform

while music is being played. In Cobahā, this music system is played in almost all the major rituals of Cobahādyo which includes, fetching the Karunāmaya in the morning and procession in the same evening and Bahāya in the morning of Navami.

Dāphā: This is a traditional music system something like orchestra which consists of different types of instruments. The foremost instrument of this music system is Khin, a cylindrical drum moulded with animal hide in both the ends, which are applied with *Khau* a kind of paste applied in varied scale. This instrument is played with both hands. The another instrument played with Khin are pair of bowl like cymbal called Tāh, and more than three pair of small cymbals called Bau made of bronze. Besides these instruments, there are number of pipes called "Bānsuri" made of seasm wood, with several holes in it. It is played by blowing in group of 10 to 12, but number may vary. *Dāphā*, a kind of orchestra plays two different types of music system, i) singing devotional religious songs with several vocalists, and ii) entertaining type of music played in combination with *Bansuri*.

Throughout the annual ritual of Cobahādyo, involvement of *dāphākhala* (group) is crucial as the *dāphā* music is considered as added value of any *jātrā* which brings liveliness in festive. In the evening of Saptami, when *Gurju* announces the auspicious time determined and provided by the Joshi of Patan for fetching Karunāmaya next morning in Nakhu. That evening *dāphākhala* come along with their musical instruments and play *dāphā* music in between. They remain in the Bahā courtyard throughout the ritual that last for nearly more than three hours. Similarly, on the Astami, they keep themselves busy throughout the day from morning to evening. In the morning they attend the *dyolāyegu* ceremony near the Nakhu river, in the afternoon they attend the Jawalaya ceremony at Nakhu, where the deity invoked Kalashs are kept. They will have feast over there which is called *Jyāvalyābhoe*, and finally they participate in the procession of Karunāmaya. On the Navami, again they gather in the Cobahā monastery complex, they play music and sing songs in between while the chariot of deity is being circumambulated within the courtyard. In the afternoon, entire *dāphākhala* team come along with *pujā* to celebrate

bhujyā followed by a feast. The cost of *bhujyā* feast is covered by equal contributions made by members of *dāphākhala*.

Gunlābājan : This musical system gets its name from the sacred month of *Gunlā*, in which this particular set of instruments are played. This music system consists of several number of *dhā*, a cylindrical drum moulded with animal hide in both the ends, the right side of the *dhā* is played by beating with fingers where as the left side is beaten by a stick. It is coupled with *bhusyā*, a pair of cymbal made of bronze. Normally *gunlābājan* is played in large numbers of drum-sets coupled with cymbals. In some cases a special kind of blowing instruments such as *Neku*, a kind of blowing instrument made of buffelo horn or brass band or bansuri, played together with *dhā* and *bhusyā*. Here in Cobahā *gunlābājan* is played during annual festival of Cobahādyo, Dipankar-jātra and throughout the month of *Gunlā* especially in the mornings as part of circumambulation of Cobahā monastery and shrines around the Cobahā settlement.

4.4.6 Post Festival Rituals

Although the annual festival of Cobahādyo comes to end on Navami, there are still series post festival rituals to be accomplished on behalf of Cobahādyo guthi which are as follows:

Dhusaya - is the ritual that performed on Dashami, the 4th day from Saptami. On this day all the ritual vessels which symbolizes the different deities involved on Saptami for sacramental ritual are formally revoked from their respective places. The ritual indicates the annual festival of Chobahādyo is now over.

Debhoye: After successful completion of the annual festival of Lokesvar, on a convenient day, mostly on the first Saturday after annual festival, The *debhoye* literally means feast serve to all the residents of Cobahā, which is organized by Cobahādyo guthi in collaboration with different communities of Cobahā such as Dhangus, Maharjans, Bahibares, Gvā, etc. Each of these communities are designated with some responsibilities like Dhangus are to make *karthon*, a kind of bear for the festival, Bahibares, the Sākyas

from another Sangha are supposed to contribute ginger and soybean, Maharjans from Koyetol are assigned to serve the feast. Once the date for *debhoye* is fixed, public notice is issued by playing *naykhi*, which is known as *nāykhinchoyekegu*. This is a traditional public notification system even the Malla Kings of Kathmandu valley used to practice, which is still practiced in different settlements of Kathmandu valley specially for informing about religious events.

On the given day, people gather in Coyedabū, Maharjans from Koye serve the feast. After initial *pujā* in *Āgam* by *Thāpāju*, feast is served to all present there, for those who were not present in the feast, their share is distributed door to door. Although the feast is called as *bhoye*, it is merely a *samayabaji* in fact, which consists of puffed beaten rice, few pieces of *choyelā*, fire roasted meat, *woh* (black lintel pancake), small pieces of ginger, green garlic mixed with salt and red chilli paste and soybean. Of course *karthon* and *aelā* are inseparable items of the feast. The main purpose of this feast seems to be celebration of successful completion of annual ritual of Cobahādyo, hence on behalf of Cobahādyo guthi, this is a kind of appreciating all the villagers for their contribution to make the gala event a great success.

Mhayebhoye – Similarly *mhayebhoye*, yet another feast is served exclusively for *mhayes* means, the tenants of the Cobahādyo guthi land, organized by Cobahādyo Guthi. This feast is to acknowledge the contributions of tenant for annual festival by providing revenue in the form of grain (rice or whatever they are required to contribute). In this feast also *samayabaji* is served like in *debhoye*. But these days because of most of guthi land have transferred into tenants name, *mhayebhoye* is now discontinued since last 10 years as the earlier tenants are now became the owner of land.

Kvenāpujā: After completion of annual festival of Cobahādyo, the Cobahādyo guthi which consists of ten *Thāpāju*s organize of *kvenāpujā* on the convenient day for all concerned, mostly on Saturdays. This is a special *pujā* organize in honor of Kvenā - Ganesh for appreciating him for making the annual festival of Cobahādyo without any hurdle, postulating his role as removal of all potential obstacles. Before they leave for Koyena-Ganesh, first the senior *Thāpāju* worship in the *Āgam*, then they proceed for

Koyena, there in Koyena a rigorous puḷā is performed by officiating *Gurju*, a goat was sacrificed to the Ganesh. In this process, the two officiating Gurjus, ten Thāpājus and officiating *pānju* involved. An officiating Dhangu give accompany them by carrying the worship implements and to help them in clean-up the sacrificed goat and cook it form them. But since last few years, the sacrifice of goat has been discontinued. After puḷā they will have feast over there in Kvenā. On this occasion, yet another ritual take place here in temple of Cobahādyo. One of Dhangu ascend on the roof of the temple and from there he pour a vessel full of water through the roof and throws down offerings like *yomaris*, steamed rice dough, chopped pieces of fruits and flowers from the roof. People gathering in the courtyard hasten to catch the offering thinking that it is auspicious to hold whatever is being offered from the roof, which bring them good luck. This rituals is kind of consecration of the temple itself, symbolizing formally the annual festival is over. Here comes to end of entire rituals of annual festival of that particular year.

4.4.7 Role of different caste groups in annual rituals of Cobahādyo

Newār society of Cobahā, like in other Newār settlements, is a conglomeration of different caste groups residing within the core area of Cobahā. Each of the caste groups within the core area are some how linked with Cobahādyo one way or other, as they are expected to perform some specific role/function in course of annual festival of Cobahādyo. The preceding paragraphs will look into role of the different caste groups in the annual festival of Cobahādyo.

Bajrācārya: Bajrāyacārya is the priest of almost all the Buddhist communities of Cobahā. However, the officiating Bajracharya, or tantric *Gurju* for entire ritual of Cobahādyo is now being carried out by two Bajracharya Gurjus from Patan Natol, one serving as main priest (Mul-Purohit) and another one serves as an assistant (Upādhyāya). They also so serve as officiating priest of member of Sakya Sangha.

Sākyas: Sākyas are the second largest Newār community residing in core area of Cobahā. The historicity of Sākyas of Cobahā could be date back to establishment of Buddhist monasteries in Cobahā. In other words their presence could be date back to Licchavi

period. The Sakya Sangha of Cobahā, is the de-facto authority of Cobahādyo Guthi, which consists of 49 Sangh members above 16 years (the below 16s are not included here as they are not eligible to serve as Pānju) which are basically extension of the five clan members. It is believed that out of five clans, four of them are come from different bahās namely Janabahā, Pimbahā, Kvabahā and Tangabahā of Kathmandu and Patan in order to operationalise the monastery system of Cobahā. The Sakya Sangh associated with Cobahā is taking care of all the rituals related to Cobahādyo. Further elaboration on Sākyas of Cobahā are made under a separate headings: 4.7.3 Sakya Sangh and 4.7... Sanaguthi of Sākyas.

Besides the Sākyas from Cobahā, Sākyas from different parts of Patan namely Nagabahā, Ukubahā and Sibahā are somehow linked with Cobahādyo. The Sākyas of Nagabahā and Ukubahā are the regular strotra recitor who come for recitation of strotra once a month on day of Astami. The Sākyas of Sibahā are involved in procession of Karunāmaya from Nakhu to Cobahā. They are the ones who hold the ritual stick (danda) of Karunāmaya and Bell, throughout the procession from Nakhu to Cobahā they ring a big bell.

Nemkuls: Involvement of Nemkuls or Neku or Nekhu of Thasi (Siddhipur) seems to be quite significant in the rituals of Karunāmaya. In the Newār caste hierarchy Nemkulas falls under Chathari Shresthas, who are normally categorise as the Hindu Newārs. In some other texts, they are labelled as Nikkhu Ksatri, who does paints images of gods and painting for various festivals but they are not common painters¹³³. Every year four Nemkuls out of 50 ritually initiated members of their *Āganchen* are assigned in a rotation basis to perform their liturgical role in annual festival of Cobahādyo. They seem to originally from Lunkhusi Patan as their *Āgamchhen* is still there.

Nekus are basically involved in corporeal rituals that needs physically touch the image of Cobahādyo. In fact they are the only eligible folks to touch the idol of deity. The main

¹³³ T. Riccardi, "An account of Nepal from Virvinod of Shyamaldas" *Kailash*, II, no. 3, (1975), p. 203.

rituals that Nekus involve are i) taking off jeweleries and garment from the idol of before remove idol from its' seat, ii) take idol of deity to bathing platform on palanquine, iii) place the idol onto the bathing platform, iv) give a ritual bath by pour holy water onto image of deity, v) take the image of deity back to temple after the ritual bath. vi) carry on *Lapunchyāyegu* mean mending/repairing and repainting the image of Lokesvar from *Caitra-sukla Dvitiya* to *Saptami*, vii) involve in sacramental ritual in the evening of *Saptami*, viii) involve in sacramental ritual in the night of *Astami* which continues till next morning, ix) after completion of all rites of life cycle, they ascend image of deity on a palanquine and circumambulate within the Bahā and finally x) enter the image of deity inside the sanctum and placed on its' seat.

After completion of all their functions here in Cobahā, they go to their *Aganchen* in Lunkhusi and perform their concluding ritual of the year which is called *Nuphyayegu*. This ends all their refrainments that they have been under going since last ten days as part of *Nuchiegu* rituals, that is observing precepts (abstaining impure foodies, one meal a day, not to involve in sexual indulgent, not to wear leather products, etc.) from day before the ritual bath as other officiating Gurju or Dhangu, or *pānju* who involve in annual ritual of Cobahādyo. The rota-in Nekhus have to be formally initiated from their respective Tantric priest.

Due to lack of historical documents stating their involvement in the annual rituals, it is still obscure how the Nekus from Thasi came to involved in the ritual of Cobahādyo, however their involvement in such ritual is not limited to Cobahādyo, Nekhus from Patan involve in annual rituals of Bungama Lokesvar, whose role similar to Nemkuls of Thasi in relation to Cobahā. Nekhus of Thasi argues that their involvement in annual rituals of Cobahādyo dates back to time immemorial as some legends mention that the existing Cobahādyo was originally from Thasi, due to some calamities in Thasi, the anger ridden people of Thasi accused to the Lokesvar and throw it out in a stream, which eventually reached to Nakhu. As legend narrates people from Cobahā fetched him and installed in the temple of Cobahā, but the deity asked them to bring Nemkuls from Thasi for his annual ritual, this how Nemkuls came to involved in annual ritual of Cobahādyo.

When this research asked them about the difficulties part throughout the ritual, they affirmed, it not matter of difficulties, rather for them it is privilege to be involved in such a pious ritual of the deity. Although they are labeled as orthodox Hindus, like orthodox Newār Buddhists Bajrāchāryas and Sākyas they do not consume chicken and chicken egg, rather they use duck and duck egg instead. As they speltout most difficult part for them is to keep themselves untouched from rest of people for so many days. After completion of their assignment here in Cobahā they have perform a Pujā in our *Āgamchen* in Lunkhusi to mark successful completion of their designated job and to end precepts of refrainments that they have been observing since last few weeks, this ritual is called as *Nuphyāyegu*, means ending of precepts.

Dhangu (Dangol): Dhangus have a special role to play in annual ritual of Karunāmaya. They belong to Maharjan caste group of Newārs. However, they are especially initiated in Cobahā monastery by the officiating Gurju of Cobahādyo, which is called as Dhangu *Luyegu*, means initiation of Dhangu, which make them eligible to involve in rituals of Cobahādyo. However, their matrimonial relations are preferably with Maharjans, in case purity of matrimonial relationship is questioned their off springs are considered not eligible for Dhangu initiation. There are four clans under which several families are in roster for officiating role of Dhangu in annual rituals of Cobahādyo, of them two clans from Nani and two clans from Coyedabū. Every year one of Dhangu members serve as officiating Dhangu, who perform all necessary work more specifically laborious physical manual works in course of annual festival of Cobahādyo.

The Dhangus are expected to perform following fuctions: Involve as porter to carry worship implements in various ritualistic pujās such as Capujā in Sripanchami which used to take place in Patan and Pipujā in the following week which takes place in Pigandyo in Nakhu, Kvenā pujā of Thāpājus sometime after completion of annual festival of Cobahā dho. However, *Cāpujā* has been discontinued since last few years. In the past they have bring rituals earthen jars produced by porters all the way from Patan to Cobahā, since the designated Kumhā had donated ritual vessels made of copper, instead of producing earthenwares, Dhangus are set free from carrying heavy load all the way from Patan. On

the day of ritual bath, they have to bring four vessels of holy water from Dathuga for ritual bath of Cobahādyo. The next job in their share is offer *balipujās* in the evening of *Pahancharhe* and morning of Navami. Again in day of Astami they are one to carry the ritual umbrella of diety in Nakhu in course of fetching the deity, then from Nakhu to all the way to Cobahā. Similarly they prepare *karthon* for various occasions, like *pipujā*, *gyāvalayā*, *debhoye* etc. Lastly, but not the least on the day of *Kvenā pujā*, the officiating Dhangu involve in final consacretion of temple of Cobahādyo by pouring holy water from the roof the temple along with different offerings. From the above mentioned different activities, involvement of Dhangus throughout the Cobahādyo annual ritual is crucial, as they are the ones who perform laborious physical work. In response to their role traditionally assigned Dhangus in Cobahā express mixed feelings, some of the Dhangus take it as previledge to be involved in ritual of deity whereas on the flip side some Dhangus suspect that whether their off spring carry on this job as they did, which needs to be seriously reviewed for preserving the tradition.

Gvālā: Popularly known as Gopāli or simply Gopāls are from historical accounts of Nepal portrayed as the first ruling dynasty of Nepal valley. Gopālis links their origin with Yaduvansi who hailed from Mathurā along with Krishna in *Dvāparyuga*. Their involvement in Buddhist ritual more specifically with Karunāmaya of Cobahā is quite interesting which need further research. Here in Cobahā, involvement of Gvālā in annual ritual of Cobahādyo seems to be quite significant, the Gvālā is supposed to pin point the exact place for fetching the Karunāmaya in the Nakhu river. This is symbolic repitation of the Gvālā indicating the exact place where he first saw the Karunāmaya laying abandoned in the Nakhu river, which was then fetched and taken in procession and housed in the temple up in the Cobahā monastery.

In the morning of Astami, the officiating Gurju, two officiating *pānjus*, Dhangus, and Gvālā along with other villages go to Nakhu. After initial *pujā*, on the given auspicious time, the Gvālā pin-points the exact place with a long bamboo stick fixed with a Nāga made of cloth/Nepali paper on the tip. Once Gvālā pin-points the location, one of the officiating *pānju* pour water mixed *pancamrit*, *dāphosvan* (Jasmine flower), *pālā*

(mercury) with other worship implements from a *Kalash* onto the river, immediately another *pānju* fetch the floating *dāphosvān* into the another vessel, this ritual is known as *dyolāyegu*, means fetching the deity. This is how a Gvālā is involved in the process.

Although there is only one Gopāli or Gvā family surviving now, we can assume that at some stage there must be significant number Gvālās lived in Cobahā as there exist a Gvānani means courtyard of Gvā. Interestingly the Gvānani is almost inhabited by Maharjans, there is only single family of Gvālā in Cobahā since last three generations having only one son in each succeeding generations. The oldest surviving Gvā has got only a son and a grandson as of now. The locals are of opinion that the Cobahādyo is protecting them from their extinction.

Generally Gopālis are considered to be the descendent of Yaduvansi, the follower of Lord Krishna. But on the contrary, the Gopālis of Kathmandu valley especially Gopālis of Thankot and Cobahā seem to somehow be linked with Lokeshvar cult. In Thankot, Gopālis used to have Karunāmaya Guthi, its main purpose was to worship Karunāmaya of Bungmati on every *sanlhu*, the first day of Solar calendar. Newār Buddhists of Kathmandu valley believe that on every *sanlhu*, the Lokeshvar changes his emanation to new form, so there is tradition worshipping 12 Lokeshvar, one for each month. Hence, in most of Newār settlement *Sanlhu* Guthis are formed voluntarily to conduct monthly worship of Karunāmaya, on every *sanhu* of the month, they collected worship implements from all the villagers and perform worship of Karunāmaya, they will have feast among the members of *Sanlhu* Guthi. Existence of *Sanhu* Guthi among Gopālis of Thankot also indicates their inclination towards the Lokeshvar.

Maharjan: Maharjans are better known as Jyāpus, one of the indigenous people of Kathmandu valley. They account nearly half (45%) of total Newār population of Kathmandu valley. They are considered as backbone of Newār culture and their role in almost all the annual festivals of Kathmandu valley is crucial. They serve as temple priest in several temples as well involve in playing different kinds of musical instruments, such as *dhimay*, *dhā/gunlābājā*, *kāhānbājā*, *dāphā*, etc.

Jyāpus which includes Dhangus as well out numbers all other caste of Newārs in Cobahā. However, this researcher has deliberately segregated Dhangus and Maharjans and dealt accordingly on the basis of their involvement in the rituals of Cobahādyo. Basically Dhangus are more intensively associated with rituals of Cobahādyo where as Maharjan's involvement is more of voluntary nature. Maharjans denotes here the Jyāpu community residing in Cobahā excluding Dhangus. Their (Maharjans') involvements in annual rituals of Cobahādyo are basically, playing musical instruments like *kāhānbaja*, *dhimay*, *dāphā*, etc. Besides that in the times of *gyāvalbhoye* and *debhoye*, the designated Maharjan families serve feast to all the folks present there.

Kumhā: Kumhā is better known as Prajapati in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur where as in Patan they are better known as Avāle. By whatever name called, they are popularly known as potter, one who produces earthen pots. Involvement of Kumhā's in annual ritual of Cobahādyo was crucial in the past, they are the one to produce ritual potteries for Cobahādyo. The Kumhās of Patan (some says Cyāsal, some says Thāpāhiti) are designated for producing all the earthen-wares along with an image of *Agindyo*, for annual ritual of Cobahādyo. The Kumhās who are designated to produce these ritual earthen-wares must be ritually ordained of Mahākāl (a kind of initiations) by Vajrāchārya *Gurju*. The ritual earthen vessels making process begins with a ritual called *cāpujā* means workship of clay in which the hands of Kumhā, along with a lump of clay and other implements are worshipped by officiating *Gurju* on the day of Sri Panchmi. But these days, this ritual is discontinued as the designated Kumhā has donated required number of ritual vessels made of copper. So as of now the involvement of Kumhā is no more exists. From the conservation with concerned guthiyārs associated with Cobahādyo, there seems to be two Kumhās involved, one represents Yāka Kumhā who produce ritual vessels for ritual bath and another Kumhā called Kālucā Kumhā is supposed to produce ritual vessels for annual sacramental ritual. Since both of them have offered copper vessels, their traditional role or involvement has been ceased.

Citrakārs: Chitrakārs are traditional painters who paint mostly ritual paintings for all purpose. They have significant role of painting of the rituals earthen vessels. Once the

Kumhā prepared the earthen vessels, Dhangus take these earthen-wares to them, for painting images different divinities, *asta-mangal* (eight auspicious symbols), *nāgas* and floural motifs. Since the designated Kumhā has donated copper vessels, need for painting the earthen-wares are ceased so their involvement of annual ritual is now limited to call on basis as required.

Nāyas: Role of Nayes in the annual festival of Cobahādyo is crucial as they are the ones who plays *nāyakhin*, which is one of the most important and mandatory ritual instrument to be played during all the rituals of Cobahādyo. Besides playing *nāyakhinbājā*, they are also expected to perform slughering the animal in the pujās that needs animal sacrifice, such as Balipujā in the morning of Navami and on the day of Kvenā pujā of Cobahādyo Guthi. As of now there are two families of Nayas residing in Cobahā.

Besides above mentioned caste groups in the past Kushles and Damāi were also involved in the ritual of Cobahādyo, however now a days both of these caste completed vanished from the scene. In the past Kushles were to play *mvahāli* and Damais were to play *damāhā* in due course of daily *Nityapujā* as well as annual festival.

4.5 Gunlā Dharma

Gunlā – the ninth month of Nepal Samvat is considered as the sacred month of Buddhist community of Kathmandu as Rāmdan for Muslim and the Lent for Christians. Throughout the entire month people of Kathmandu valley visit different Buddhist sites, most remarkably huge crowds of people visit Svayambhu early in the morning along with playing *gunlābājan*, the music system specially played in this sacred month. Similarly in most of Newear settlements, *dāphābhajan* is played in their neighborhood every morning in which devotional songs are sang. Women as well as girl observe fasting on different days of this sacred month, people take resolutions such as refrainment of consuming meat products or alchohol or smoking, gambling, etc.. Moreover, some important Buddhist festivals such as Panchdān and Matyā also falls in this month. *Rājbhogmālā*, a later chronicles mention that Mandeva introduced month long Buddhist festival (Boudh *Jātrā*)

for Buddhist community from *Shrāvan-sukla Pratipadā*, similarly on *Shrāvan-krishna Triyodashi* he introduced *Annadan* or *Brihidān* (*Panchdān*?).¹³⁴

Like in other Newār settlements, entire month of *Gunlā* is celebrated with greater reverence in Cobahā. People visit temple of Cobahādyo throughout the months. Besides that some people take fasting where as other people take resolution refraining non-veg foodies and alcohol throughout the month. Two of *dhāphākhala* plays devotional songs one in *phalcā* in Dabū tol and other group plays in the phalcha in the north wing of Cobahā monastery complex. Besides that a Dipankar Jātrā and Panchadan is celebrated with pomp. The proceeding paragraphs will deal in more details on Dipankar-*jātrā* and Panchdan celebrated in Cobahā.

4.5.1 Dipankar Jātrā

Depankar Buddha is highly revered by Buddhists in Kathmandu valley. He is considered as first Buddha amongst the 24 Buddhas precedeing to Sākyāmuni Buddha. According to Buddhist text at time of Dipankar Buddha, Sākyāmuni in his one of previous life as an ascetic named Sumedha who made vow to become Buddha before Dipankar. Dipankar foreclaimed that he would be a Buddha in future, this is how Dipankar Buddha is liked with Sākyāmuni. Yet another Buddhist texts narrates the story of Dipankar Buddha accepting *dān* offered by old lady from Guntābahi even before *dān* offered by King Sarvananda which was related to introduction *Pancadān* tradition in Kathmandu valley.

Bhādra-krishna Dvitiya of month *Gunlā*, (2nd waning moon of August) an image of Dipankar also known as *Samyakadyo* is taken out for procession around the Cobahā. The image of Dipankar in standing posture is larger than human life size. The head and hands of image are made of gilded copper which is fixed in hollow turso made of bamboo basket covered with red glittering clothes, so that people can carry from inside and move around easily from one place to another. The Dipankar process is accompanied by a small

¹³⁴ DOA, "Rajbhogmala", *Ancient Nepal*, no 8, (1969), p. 9.

chariot in which image of Sākyāmuni is housed. The procession of Dipankar starts from the *pikhālakhu* of Cobahā monastery in the north, and proceed from there to Nani, Cibahā, Ikhā, Dathu, Koyedabū, Kowe, Coyebahā Bahi, then back to Cobahā monastery complex. Throughout the journey, *gunlābājan* led the procession and *dhimey* and *dāphā* and *bhajan* follow the process. In between, the devotees offer puḷā to Dipankar and Sākyāmuni.

4.5.2 Pancadān

Literally pancadān means donation of five different items which includes rice, paddy, wheat, salt, legume, etc. besides edible products other appliances such as needle, thread, rope, bag, pen or French calk, water vessels are also donated to the Sakya and Bajrācāryas of Bahā Bahi. Like in other Newār settlements, here in Cobahā as well pancadān in celebrated on of the month of *Gunlā*. There are two different dates for observing pancadān in Kathmandu valley, The Buddhist of Patan observe pancadān on Sukla-astami of *Gunlā*. where are rest of Buddhist in the valley, that is Kathmandu and Bhaktapur observe on Krishna-trayodasi. Here in Cobahā, it is observe on Sukla-astami as Patans do as Cobahā is still under the continuity of 15 Mahāvihār of Patan.

4.6 Kartik Sevā

In Vajrayana Buddhist tradition of Kathmandu valley, there is practice of visiting various sacred religious places as pilgrimage such as temples, tirths (sacred river banks), piths (power places), sacred mountains and caves, which is called as sevā or tirth sevā,¹³⁵ it is kind expressing reverence or devotion towards the god.¹³⁶ In course of such sevās, people worship caityas, images of Buddha or Bodhisattvas, take a ritual bath in the river, observe fasting (*dhalandanegu*) and lit oil/butter lamps. Kartik sevā is one of such sevā which falls around October-November, starting from *Katinpunhi*, the fullmoon of October and concludes in *Sakimanāpunhi*, the fullmon of November. A large number people from Kathmandu, Patan and surrounding villages visit temple of Ānandādi Lokesvar early in

¹³⁵ Dhanvajra Vajracharya, op cit., p.107.

¹³⁶ David Gellner, op. cit., p.130.

the morning. Such visits are inspired by accumulation of merits (*punya*) by worship, recitation of stotra, singing devotional songs, lighting butter lamps or simply worship pay homage to Lokesvar.

Cobahādyo is considered as the healer of chronic diseases like leprosy, so people from all around visit temple of Ānandādi Lokesvar wishing good health for oneself and their dear and nears. It is believed that one who takes bath in the Sulakshan-tirth, located northern foothill of Cobahā early in the morning subsequently visit the temple and pays homage to the deity will get rid of all sort of diseases including leprosy. But these days due pollution, people do not take bath in Sulakshan tirth, but still visit temple in the mornings. People in groups come along with singing devotional songs of Lokesvara throughout their journey to and from Cobahā. There are some popular devotional songs dedicated to the Lokesvar, One of such popular song was composed during Jayaprakāsh Malla by person being suffered by leprosy praises the Lokesvar residing in the top of Kacchapālgiri, wishing blissful life from the compassionate . At the end of Kartik sevā, people come in group along with food items, worship the Cobahādyo and have feast together. This marks the concluding of the month long Kartik sevā.

4.6.1 Māye-absan

Māye-absan denotes a month long fasting observation prevailed in Kathmandu valley. The tradition of Mayabsan exists in several Vihārs in Kathmandu valley, such as Hiranyavarna Mahāvihār in Patan, Amrāvatināma Mahāvihār in Bungamati and Kacchapālagiri Mahāvihār in Cobahā. In the earlier two Vihārs, the observation last for a month where as in Cobahā it is observed for only five days. In Hiranyavarna Mahāvihār, the observation takes place in the sacred month of *Gunlā* and where as in Bungamati it takes place in the month of Kartik for the entire month. But in Cobahā, it is observed only for fives from *Kartik-sukla Ekādasi* to *Sakimanā Puni* and on the sixth day the observation is concluded.

Vrata in Buddhist context simply considered as Uposadha vrata or Astami vrata which is practiced by visioning Avalokitesvar in general and Amoghpsa Lokesvara or

Sahastrabhuj Lokesvar in particular. In Kathmandu valley practicing of means of visioning Amoghpaśa Lokesvar is most common so the Uposadha or Astami Vrata is also known as Amoghpaśa Lokesvar. Astami vrata is termed as a *bhadra-caryā*, a kind of precepts observed in memorizing the virtues of the Lokesvars, which is considered as one of the fundamental vow of the Mahayani Buddhist philosophy.¹³⁷ Although the concept of Avalokitesvar and Uposadh vrata seems to be introduced by *Gunakārandavyuhasutra*, one of Mahayani sutra, the earliest copy of this sutra so far found was of 3rd century elucidate importance and procedure of Astami vrata as of Upagupta explaining to the Emperor Asoka.¹³⁸ Referring to *Angutarnikāya*, one of the Pāli canonical text, source argues that even Sākyāmuni Buddha had propagated practice of *Arya-astāngika Upodhadhvrata* for wellbeing of sentient beings.¹³⁹ The Tibetan sources ascribes the practice of Lokesvara vrata to the Afghani princess called Laxmi, also known as Gelongma Palmo, a well knowledgeable fully ordained Buddhist nun who overcome dreadly diseases like leprosy through the practice of *vrata* by the means of a vision of Avalokitesvar. It was believed that from her the lineage of extra-ordinary *vrata* of Avalokitesvar began.¹⁴⁰ The other source mentions that she had a dream of Indrabothi who advised her to propitiate Avalokitesvar through Posadha vrata in order to appease the nagas which had caused her diseases, accordingly she observed the fast and meditates for a week continuously before an image of Lokesvar, eventually she was restored back to her former physical beauty.¹⁴¹

The practice of Uposadha vrata in Nepal could be traced back to at latest 12th century or likely to be practiced much earlier which is evident from the report of Dharmasvāmin as quoted by Will Tuladhar-Douglas.¹⁴² Basically Astami vrata or Uposhadha vrata is

¹³⁷ Yagyamanpati Bajracharya, "Astamivrata: chhagu nhapangu bhadra charya," *Samyaka wāpau*, (2070 BS), p.3.

¹³⁸ Min Bahadur Sakya, Guna Karanada Vyuhā Sutra. (Lalitpur: Nagarjuna Institute of Exact Methods, 1997), p.8.

¹³⁹ a) Yagyamanpati Bajracharya, op. cit.

b) Ranjan Bajrācārya, "Dharmik, Sanskritic ra Byabaharik Dristile Adhunic Samajlai Sammunata Banaudain Lane Karyama Astamivratako Upadeyeta" , *Palesvan*, 16, no. 23 (2005), p.65.

¹⁴⁰ Wangchen Rinpoche, The Nyungne Methods of Thousand-Armed Chenrezig. New York: Snow Lion Foundation. (2009), pp.1-2.

¹⁴¹ Will Tuladhar-Douglas, op.cit., p.159.

¹⁴² Ibid.

eventually the vrata of Lokesvar, who is the one of most popular Buddhist pantheon of Newār Buddhist community of Kathmandu valley from the early medieval period. Newār Buddhist observing fasting of Amoghpaśa vrata generally on sukla-Astamis, 8th waxing moon in a regular basis which is called as Uposadha Vrata or Astamai Vrata.

Māye-absan is very significant to Newār Buddhist laities. This is considered as wish fulfilling higher level of religious practice prevailed amongst Newārs of Kathmandu valley. Tradition of this wish fulfilling vrata is linked with a legendery queen named Pingala, who hailed from Madwar, in western part of India as her husband betrayed after getting married to second wife. Coming here while she was propitiating the Guhyasvari, one night she had a dream of a deity advising her to undertake month-long observance upon that her husband will submissive to her. As advised by deity in her dream, she went through the vrata, eventually her husband turn up to fetch her.¹⁴³ This how women who was slighted by their husbands are come to observe this five day vrata hoping that their husband will turn up to fetch her at the concluding ritual in which women vrata observants hand over *Tahsi* along with other worshipped implements to their husbands, in case the husband did not turn up to fetch her their relationship is considered to be broken.

This vrata is observed mostly by married women, girls and rarely by men both from Newār community and non-Newār communities. Vrata observation begin from Karkik-sukla Ekādashi, 11th waxing moon November, on this day the observant come to Cobahā with necessary worship implements, get enlisted with the bahā authority, accordingly the bahā authority allocate her/him place to stay. The observant are divided into three categories, accordingly the space is allocated. The first category of observants are Newārs who wish go through concluding *Uposadhvrata* led by officiating Gurju of the Cobahādyo, the second category of observants are other Newār who wish to conclude the vrata by taking simply *Lapālan*, they simply conclude their vrata on their own and the third category observant are the non-Newārs, they conclude their vrata led by their family priests. During these five days they take bath in five different places in and around

¹⁴³ Lok R Sakya, *Hiranyavarna Mahavihara*.(Lalitpur: Hiranyavarna Mahavihara Sudhar Samiti, 2013), pp.91-92.

Cobahā. On the first day they take bath in Bāgmati river at Kvenā, on the second day at Jayatirth in Nakhu, on the third day in Koyegā, the spring in the middle of wood, on the fourth day in Dathugā halfway uphill from Cobahā-gate, on fifth day they take bath in spring near Jankva and finally on the last day they take bath inside the Cobahā courtyard with water brought from Dathugā.

Every day, after they have ritual bath, they offer pujā to Cobahādyo, then they are provided with glass of ritual water as palan by officiating pānju, this is all they can drink throughout their observation period, however, they cannot take water from other sources except the holy water provided by Pānju. In the evenings they offer oil-lamp to the Cobahādyo and other deities in and around Cobahā. In the morning of fifth day, they sit on the plinth around the courtyard and distribute flower as *prasād* to devotee and/or temple visitor.

On the last day, ie day after *Sakimanā Punhi* (fullmoon day of November) , the concluding ceremony starts from early in the morning. All the non-Newār Vratis, they sit together with their respective family priests and go through rigorous pujā followed by fire sacrifice and conclude their Vrata. On the other side those who took *lahpālan* perform merely simple pujā to Cobahādyo and conclude the five day long vrata. The first category of observant, who wished to go through *Uposadhavrata*, sit in row in the eastern side of the Shikhar temple in the Cobahā courtyard. One of the observant serve as *jajamān* of the procedure preferably observant from Cobahā if available and the officiating Gurju of Cobahādyo led the entire process of *dhalandanegu* along with fire sacrifice. The entire process lasts for more than three hours. Finally, *dhalandanegu* process is concluded by handing over the *tahsi* along with all other offering made to the Uposadhavrata mandala to their husbands if observants are married otherwise either to son if the observant is widow or to father if the observant is unmarried. In case any of the married observant's husband did not turn up to take over the *tahsi* from his wife, their relationship is considered as broken and in such case the either woman's father come to take over the Tahsi from his daughter otherwise the officiating Gurju may takes over the *tahsi* from her. Once the handing over process is over, both the husband and wife reciprocally offer tika,

garland and *sagun* each other, this brings them immense joy and rapture. The handing over of *tahsi* along with other offerings resembles the *Mhapujā* ritual of Newār community. Finally they pop in *Āgam* to offer *pujā* to *Āgamdyo* from there, they proceed to their respective spots where their family members have arranged to offer them *sagun* along with feast to all the relatives present there.

As observed by locals there have been remarkable change in trend of *vrata* observation over the time. The numbers of observant are increased in comparison to three decades ago. According to locals in the past there used be not more than 8 to 10 observants, but these days it exceeds 25 to 40, in some years there was hardly any space left vacant around the plinth on the 5th day of *vrata* at the time distributing flower to bypassers. Non-Newār observants are gradually increasing over the time. The number of observant from 2014 shows landslide increase in non-Newār which accounts 15 where as Newār observant are 10. Some times men do take this *vrata*, in 2014, there was a man from *Khatrichāp* observed this *vrata*. Stating possible reason for lesser number of Newār observants, local residents argues that it might be due to economic factor as Newār observant has to organize a grandier feast to all their related as a part of concluding ritual.

Four days after the *vrata* all the *vrata* observant have to come back to *Cobahā* for *Pyanhuvicā* (consolation on 4th day) on this day, all the observants come and worship the *Cobahādyo* and *Āgamdyo* to mark the end of their refrainments. The Newār observants come along with food items with varieties of delicacies and have feast with five senior *Thāpājus* in the *Āgam*. This is to mark the end of their refrainments, from now they are free from the refrainments that they have been observing for last ten days. In case of non-Newār observants they are not expected to have feast with *Thāpājus* in the *Āgam*, instead they offer "*Sidā*" which contains rice, lintel and some money to supplement the the feast. Although they have concluded the refrainments, they are still bonded with some dos and don'ts for the entire year. They are not supposed eat "*cipa*" means shared bite with any one, not to bow down to any one, not to worship any other deities, except the *Cobahādyo*. Next year, they are expected to come back as *daru*, for a night on the last day of *vrata*

observance, they joint the vrata observants of that year for an over night, next morning they perform simple puja to Cobahādyo and *Āgamdyo* and they finally complete year long abstainments.

4.7 Guthi System

4.7.1 Guthis related to Cobahādyo and rituals

Guthi word is derived from Sanskrit word Gosthi which means assembly or gathering, or association. In the context of Newār settlement Guthis which is derived from Gosthi denotes social and religious association organized with a specific mission and/or fuction. Like in all other Newār settlements there are two type of Guthis existence in Cobahā one being the Raj Guthi, which are registered in Guthis Sansthan and Social Guthi or Philanthropic organization such as Sanāguthi and Seeguthis of Newār communities. In case of Cobahā the first category comprises of religious Guthis related to Cobahādyo which are responsible for taking care of religious and cultural activites related to Cobahādyo. The second category of Guthis are chariatable organizations such as See Guthi and Sanaguthi of Newār community whose main objectives are to perform funeral procession and cremation in the death of any household members of their Guthi.

Several of Licchavi inscription mention about different types of guthis by different names. Moreover the inscription of Lele dated samvat 526 jointly released by Siva Deva and Amshuvarma mentions some 12 different functional guthis such as Pradiptagosthi, Dhupagosthi, Vaditragosthi, Arcagosthi, Dhvajagosthi and so on.¹⁴⁴ In Cobahā there are around 8-9 such fuctional guthis arranged to undertake different types of functions related to daily and annual rituals of Coabahādyo which are registered in Guthi Sansthan, which are as follows: Akshetaguthi, Dipamālā Guthi, Temple reparing Guthi, Neku Guthi, Chatra Guthi, Āgam Guthi, Mahābali Guthi, etc.¹⁴⁵ Manyof these functional guthis are similar with the guthis existed in Licchavi period from their functional perspectives. Their roles and remunerations are clearly mentioned in the documents preserved in National Archive

¹⁴⁴ Dhanvajra Vajracharya, op. cit., p.284

¹⁴⁵ Jagadish C Regmi and Pashupati K Dvivedi, op. cit., pp.22-24

and Guthi Sansthān.¹⁴⁶ The preceeding paragraphs will deal separately on different guthis exist in Cobahā.

- i) **Nityapujā Guthi:** In order to perform daily ritual worship of Cobahādyo a guthi called Nityapujā was arranged. Six plots of land measuring 15 ropanis of land was allocated for this guthi. From the revenue of this allocated land all the necessary worship implements for daily rituals which includes: rice for worship, rice for cooking meal for deity, inscent sticks, vermillion powder, compher, ghee, oil, chaku etc. But at present due to several reasons, only three ropani of land is remain in the guthi's name. Some of the guthi land was occupaid by Himal Cement (4½ ropani), while others are transferred ownership to tenants name (7½ ropanis).¹⁴⁷ So there is short of resources to meet all the required worship implements, but the officiating pānju is complementing the deficits. One of Manandhar laity from Maru tol of Kathmandu is generously donating five pathis of rice per month for preparation of Bhuja for Lokesvar.
- ii) **Akshatā Guthi,** This Guthi is arranged to provide *akshatā*, (rice used for worship) for daily pujā of Karunāmaya Cobahādyo. Three ropani of land is allocated for this Guthi, but at present, the tenants have already transfered the ownership of land in their names.¹⁴⁸ However, the Guthi Sansthan is providing with required amount of *akshatā* for worship of Cobahādyo.
- iii) **Naivedya Guthi** is arranged to provide offerings implements such as sweet and ediable items for daily rituals of Cobahādyo. For this purpose, a plot of land measuring 4¼ ropanis was allocated for this guthi.¹⁴⁹ Since the allocated land has been transferred to tenant's name, Guthi Sansthan as been covering cost for required offering implements.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid

¹⁴⁷ Vajraraj Sakya, op.cit., p.57.

¹⁴⁸ ibid.

¹⁴⁹ ibid

- iv) **Dipamālā Guthi:** is arrange to lit oil lamps in course of daily ārati for the diety and to lit 108 oil lamps during annual festival of Cobahādyo. This guthi was allocated with 2½ ropanis of land, of which one ropani of land has been swaped away by BĀgamati river and the remainng 1½ ropani has been transferred in tenant's name, Guthi Sansthān is providing some money for this purpose which is not sufficient to cover the cost incurred.¹⁵⁰
- v) **Āgam Guthi:** is arranged to take care of *Āgamdyo*, the tutlery deity of Lokesvara, which is housed in the *Āgam*, eastern part of south wing of the temple of Cobahādyo. The senior most *Thāpāju* also called *Cakresvar* is responsible for daily ritual (*Nitya-pujā*) of the *Āgamadyo*. The annual *Āgampujā* is held on 10th waxing moon of Paush, which called as *Dishipujā*, in which two officiating priests (*Gurju*), the officiating pānju, five senior Thāpājus, two Kumāri (vergin girls) are involved in the Dishipujā. After rigourous pujā they will have feast in the Āgam. Two plots of land measuring 1½ ropani is allocated for conducting the ritual pujās. Since ¾ ropani of land has been occupaied by Himal cement and the remaining land does not yield revenue there is a short of resources for the *Āgampujā*. But at present, they made new arrangements, under which, they collect certain amount from monthly officiating Pānjus, from this money they are covering the expenses of Dishipujā.
- vi) **Neku Guthi:** Neku Guthis composed of Nekus of Thasi. They are primarily responsible and eligible to take image of Cobahādyo from sanctum to *Nhavan-dabū* on the day of *Mahā-snān* and back to temple, mending and painting of image and carry on sacramental riuals under the guidance of officiating Gurju. Out of the 50 eligible members of Neku Guthi of Thasi, four of them are selected in a rotation basis to serve annual ritual of Karunāmaya of Cobahā. According to Nhucche Bahadur Nemkul, a plot of land measuring six ropani of land in Balambu area is allocated for this Guthi, out of this nearly two ropanis of land has been taken over for construction of Tribhuvan high-way and remain four ropani of land has been

¹⁵⁰ ibid

plotted for selling by the tenants however the Nemkulas filed writ against tenants who are attempting to sale the guthi land, so the case is now under consideration in the court. On the flip side Guthis Sansthan has recorded only 4.4 ropani of land¹⁵¹, this might be the updated record after land is held by Government of Nepal for construction of highway.

vii) **Dhangu Guthi:** is also mentioned as "*Chatrasamaune-guthi*" means umbrella holding guthi in the official document of Guthi Sansthan. This Guthi comprises of Dhangus from four clans of Cobahā. Their main responsibilities are to work as porter ie. Carrying goods/equipments/worship implements, and food items during all the rituals of the Cobahādyo, to carry umbrella during the festival of the deity, after completion of annual festival to pour water from the roof of the temple as a annual consacretion and to undertake repairing of the temple at least once a year. They serve their duty in a rotation basis among the members of four clans. Only ritually initiated Dhangus which in known as *Dhanguluigu* ordinate by officiating Gurju of Cobahādyo within the Cobahā vihāra complex are eligible member of this Guthi. They receive two mury and five pathi of paddy, three pathis of wheat, and some cash as (Khanki). Nearly 2¼ ropani of land is allocated to this guthi. However from the record of 2021 BS, the amount of land accounts 13 *ānā*, out of this land, a plot of land has been already sold by some of the Dhangus, so is there some conflict arose among Dhangus.¹⁵²

viii) **Deval banaune guthi (Maintenance of Temple - Guthi):** The name of guthi itself speaks the nature of this guthi. Seven ropanis of land comprising of three plots are allocated for this guthi. Since keen laity donars have involved in renovation of the building around the Cobahā monastery complex, the surplus resource are then used in other rituals where are running with deficit resources. There is tradition of undertaking repairing work of temple of Cobahādyo once in a year generally in the month of Jestha, around April. A *kshemāpujā*, forgiveness worship is performed as

¹⁵¹ ibdi

¹⁵² ibid

to ascend on the roof of the temple, vegetations are removed and tiles are mended and/or replaced as required.

- ix) **Jātrā Guthi.** *Jātrā* Guthi is main responsible body to undertake all the rituals in course of annual festival of Cobahādyo which includes, *capujā* (no discontinued), *pipujā*, *balipujā*, *nhavan*, *dyolāegu*, *dasakarmavidhi*, *bahāya* and finally *Kvenā-pujā*. There are several fuctional guthis and caste groups involve in the annual festival of Cobahādyo. The guthi is to coordinate and mobilise all these fuctional guthis and caste groups involved. At the end of annual festival the *Jātrā Guthi* organize series of feast such as *debhoye* for resident of Cobahā, *mhayebhoye* for tenants and finally *Kvenā-pujā*, a pujā dedicated to Kvenā -Ganesh to mark the successfully completion of the annual festival of Cobahādyo.

From the records of Guthi Sansthan clearly show that there were 52 ropanis of land endowment in the name of Karunāmaya Guthi which was deducted to 25 ropanis in 1996 due to some of land is took over by Himal Cement, others are ownership transferred to tenants name, some plots are sold by tenants and some plots of land was swept away by Bāgmāti river. The Cobahādyo guthi officials are not in the position to say exactly how much land remained as of now. The revenues from the lands of which ownership are legally transferred to tenant's name in accordance with the land reform policy are now ceased, but the deficit revenues have been partially suplemented by Guthi Sansthān, but in back dated rates, which is not sufficient to cover ever increasing inflation.

Besides above mentioned Guthi Sansthān registered Raj Guthi category of guthis, there are two Sanāguthis in Cobahā, which falls under charitable social guthis, one belongs to Sākyas and other belongs to Maharjan. In the past there used to have only one Sanāguthi which is combined of Sakyas and Maharjans, which was splitted due some misunderstanding between two caste groups some seven decades ago.

4.7.2 Sākya Sangha (Guthi)

Sangha literally means association. In the Buddhist tradition, Sangha is very significant. Sangha is one of the Ratna, gem of the Buddhist tradition, the other two are the Buddha, the teacher or Sākyaṃuni and Dharma, his teaching. The existence of Buddhist Sangha dates back to life time of Buddha, it is the association of monks and/or upāsakas, the laities. All the members of association are bonded with rules and regulations of the Sangha. In Vajrayāna tradition of Kathmandu valley, all the Bajrāchāryas and Sākyas are associated with one of the Sangha, underwhich their all the liturgical and social life is bonded. The historicity of Sangha in Kathmandu valley dates back to Licchavi period, which is evident from an inscription found in Cābahil in which "*Sanghasya bhaktatrtha*" means to provide meal for Sangha. Dhanvajra argues that this inscription is earlier than Manadeva's inscription of Cāngu.¹⁵³

There seems two Sakya Sanghas exist in Cobahā in the past. One being the Sangha affiliated to Cobahā, which is still exist and other Sangha was affiliated with Coyebahā Bahi, which is no more exists, but the Sākyas associated with this bahi is still known as *bahibare*, means Sākyas of Bahi. It came to know that only two surviving Sākyas (uncle and nephew) associated with Coyebahā Bahi have already left Cobahā and now staying somewhere near Kvenā.

However, the Sākyas who came from different places of Patan in last one or two centuries due to several reasons formed yet another Sangh just to facilitate initiation of Sakya (*barechuikegu*) purpose. There are 26 sangha members consisting of age above 16. They have erected a small shrine near the socalled Bandhudutta caitya which houses an image of Amitābh, and the vihār is named as Amitābh Tathāgata Mahāvihār, although this Sangh does not have vihār per se. They initiate their eligible off springs in front of shrine of Amitābh but they do not have vihār with proper Āgam.

¹⁵³ Dhanvajra Vajracharya, op. cit., pp.2-3.

There are 49 sangha members associated with Cobahā, who are initiated and eligible to take in charge of *pānju* in a rotation basis. Although unmarried daughters above 16 years are also treated as member of the sangha, but they are not eligible to serve as *pānju*, nor they are allowed to go through esoteric rituals. However they got their share of sangha feast as sangha members. Any male member who has gone through the initiation and complete 15 years are eligible to enlist in the roster to serve as *pānju*. But any one who has not been initiated despite his age (above 16) is not eligible for serving as *pānju*. Rotation of officiating *pānju* is based on *kava*, the clan, which is five in numbers. The number of clan member varies depending on the number of male descendents, lesser the number, higher the frequency of officiating rota and vice versa.

Any one who is going to serve as *pānju* for the first time has follow certain rules as precepts which is called as *nuchinegu*, which includes abstaining from consuming impure food stuffs including meat products, spices such as garlic, onion, consuming alcohol, etc. and involve in sexual indulgent etc. four days before the commencement of service. From next time one has to take *nuchinegu* only from day before service starts. Throughout the service period they are supposed to take one meal of boiled rice without any curries that is before noon, and in the evening he can take only beaten rice with milk or curd.

Sangha assembly and Sangha feast - There are several feasts held annually. One of them is the feast called *dyopābhoye*, this feast is basically served to the Guthi members who participated in the night duty in the bahā. There is a system of guarding the Bahā during the night. Beside the officiating *pānju* there are certain members who come to guard the bahā in the night, they sleep at the *phalcā* next to the Nāsandyo, Those who did not turned up to discharge his duty are levied with certain fine, at the end of the year, with the amount accumulated fine a feast is held amongst all the duty bearers of the year. This is called *dyopābhoye*.

Nityakarma (pujā) - Daily rituals of Cobahādyo

An eligible Sakya member of Cobahā who serves as officiating temple priest takes care of Cobahādyo for a month in a rotation basis. The main responsibilities of an

officiating pānju are basically to take care of deity throughout the month which includes safe-guarding of deity, perform series of daily puḷā, and so on from dawn to dusk, which is as follows:

Morning: The morning ritual of Karunāmaya is called *Nhinkan*, corrupted form of *Nityakarma*, means daily ritual. Normally Pānju gets up around 3:00 in the morning, purify himself by taking bath with water drawn from Dathugā. All the water used for rituals must be drawn from here only. Then he broom the central sanctum and make the deity awoken by ringing the bell inside the sanctum. Subsequently he removes the blanket supposing the deity got awakened. a lotus made of diamond is taken out from the bed which was kept on the bed yester- evening. Then pānju pays homage to the deity by bowing down and touching his feet. Next, he performs *snān* (literally bathing, but here it means washing face) with water. In between several strotra, rhymes are recited. After initial ritual (*nhikan*), then pānju apply *pancāmrita* to the image of Karunāmaya. The pānju prepare sandal-wood paste while he recite *Nāmasangiti* and fill *sinhamū* (container of tika) with sandal-wood paste to distribute to the temple visitors (devotees) which is applied on their forehead as *tikā*. Next, the *pānju* perform *samāh* (make up), shows ritual mirror. In between pānju recite yet another couple of *Tutahs*, namely *javatutah*, *khavatutah* followed recitation of *Devamanusya*. People come to witness the deity being shown mirror early in the morning. Here comes end of early morning rituals. By this time devotees come for worship to deity. The *pānju* also perform *snān* of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva in front of the Lokesvara, he recite same strotras while he perform *snān* of Bodhisattva. Likewise, he also worship Dharmadatumandal, Surya, and cheepu as well. Then he gets back to sanctum after taking a bath in front of the temple.

Another ritual comes the preparation of meal for Lokesvar. The Lokesvar is served with two meals in the morning. First one is mearly *neebaji*, means pure beaten rice with some dry fruits, salt, ginger and some sweets, this something like breakfast before *pānju* prepare meal for the Lokesvar and himself. After serving the *neebaji*, *pānju* proceed for cooking rice. In order to prepare meal for himself and Lokesvar the needs to change is cloth (*jāmā* and *kasāgā*) before he leave the sanctum. He is not supposed to be touched by

anyone even by his family members. Just in case he is touched by anyone including dogs he has to hasten to take a bath and resume his on going activity. The kitchen is located behind Cobahādyo temple which is called *nisancā*. All he get helping hand in his service is bring by his wife. Every time when pānju goes out of the temple for whatever reason, he pretends to take permission from Lokesvar in words, "May I go out for preparing food for your almighty?" before he change is proper cloth, , once he changed his cloth then he is not supposed to touch the image of Lokesvar until he take yet another bath.

The meal consists of rice cooked in milk and ghee mixed. The rice is served on a silver dish in a pyramidic shape, a piece of *cāku* is surmounted on the top of mound of rice. Two plates full of rice, one for Lokesvar and another for Tara are kept in front of the Lokesvar and Tara, then pānju ring a bell to pretend to inform deities that the meal is ready for them. All the implements used are made of silver. Then pānju takes his share of meal. After he had his meal, he can have some rest at his home or in *nishancā*, where he cooks meal. But he has to take yet another bath before he inters inside the temple.

Evening: In the evening he performs evening service called *Sanyā*. After taking a bath he enters inside the sanctum, broom inside the sanctum. Then he circumambulates the temple of Cobahāyo with lighted insane while riging a bell, in between he halt at four corners of the courtyard for a while. Next ritual he performs in the evening is paying Arati to Karunāmaya and Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva. After entering inside the sanctum, he recites two tutahs *Javatutah* and *khavatutah*, that he recited in the morning. Then he recites yet another text called *Devamanusya*. After that we make the deity asleep. For that he pretends making bed and holding blanket to deity and finally pays homage which is called as *dhandikegu*, means making asleep. In due course the pānju has to cover the deity with a blanket embrouded with Sun, Moon and Vajra along with *Astamangal*, the eight auspicious symbols on it. There is hanging bed made of silver, the *pānju* keep a silver lotus flower (engraved with a diamond on it) on the mattress along with seven particles of rice (*jāki*) then the blanket while he spells out "Please have a good sleep". Then he washes all the implements for next morning. At the end out of the two shares of meal, one share male he distribute to the devotees who come to witness the evening ritual and another

share of meal he passes on to his family member for their consumption. Locals believe that by consuming the rice offered to deity as Prasād heals several stomach problems.

Once deity is made asleep around 7:30 to 8:30, ringing bells in the courtyard (bahā) is strictly forbidden. After completing day long rituals eventually *pānju* goes to bed which is located inside the sanctum on the right side of the image of Karunāmaya. The bed is not big enough to stretch one's leg. The bed seems to be deliberately made smaller so that the *pānju* does not have sound sleep, that keeps him vigilant throughout the night.

Hand-over process: As one completes month long officiating duty of *pānju*, there is rigorous process of handing over to the new comer. The process takes place in the presence of five *thapaus* as witness and to verify all the jewelries of Lokesvar are in order. If some thing is missing the officiating *pānju* has to compensate the missing item. After jewelries and other implements are properly varied the out-going *pānju* hand-over the key to in-coming *pānju* then out-going *pānju* is officially free from his responsibilities. The incoming *pānju* as he enter to the sanctum in order to charge of the duty first bow down to deity's feet, similarly the outgoing *pānju* too bid farewell before he exit from the sanctum after completion of his duty bow down by touching the feet of the deity. As incoming *pānju* commence his service with offering of two *kisalins* filled with rice, a beetle nut and a coin on it. Similarly the going *pānju* too offer similar two *kisalins*. The outgoing *pānju* will have feast together with five *Thāpāju* in the *Āgam*, after initial puja of *Āgamdyo*, to mark the end of month long service as well as end of all the abstainments he has been observing throughout his tenure, this ritual is called as *nuphenegu*. After *nuphenegu* process is over, he is completely free from all the abstainments.

Experience of being a Pānju (Suren Sakya): As I entered inside the central sanctum for the first time as officiating *pānju*, I feel bit akward or odd. I could not sleep well, I feel bit scary. Initial few days, it felt uncomfortable, but later on I became use to with it. The most difficult part as an officiating *pānju* is the strict rules such as walking on barefoot even in winter, use only one or two set of cloth throughout month, not to use soap for washing and bath, not to be touched by any one throughout month are the some of the

most difficult part rigorous rules, otherwise rest is fine, but I feel privileged to have opportunity to serve the deity.

Remuneration of officiating *Pānju*: Whatever income occurred from the offerings made by daily temple visitors and/or devotees goes to officiating *pānju*. *Pānjus* seem to be happy with whatever they got from offering made by devotees enough for whatever service they have rendered for a month. One of the informants *pānju* says "in the past, in my case when I served as *pānju* 15 years ago, the income was nominal, but now a days, more and more devotees visit temple, so is increased amount of cumulative offerings, which is for me more than enough. The good things is we render our service for a month leaving behind all our routine work and family life, instead whatever amount we got from the offering made by devotees is just enough. In a way, this will sustain the tradition, otherwise, it won't sustain longer.

But there is some practical problem for pay rolled employees, for them spending entire month in the temple as *pānju* is not practical. But in that case, if anyone who is not in the position to discharge one's duty, can send someone in lieu on his behalf to serve as *pānju* most probably his relatives or anyone from the same Guthi.

4.7.3 Sanā-guthi of Sākyas

In the past there was only one combined sanā-guthis of Sākyas and Maharjans. Due to internal conflicts in between Sakya and Maharjan, it was splitted and formed separate sanā-guthis of Sakyas and Maharjans around seven decades ago. The sanā-guthis of Sākyas consists 44 members each presenting an individual household/family of the Sākyas irrespective to their affiliation with either of vihārs . Which includes all the Sakya Sangha members of the Cobahā, the Kacchapālagiri Mahāvihār and the Sākyas affiliated with newly formed Amitābh Tathāgata Mahāvihār.

The Sakya Sanā-guthi assemble three times a year, the major one being on Yomari Punhi, fullmoon day in December, sit for three days, then next one in *Shrīpancami* and third one is in *Laxmipujā* (14th waning moon of October). The main guthi assembly ie.

during Yomari punhi held for three days, the first day a male buffelo is sacrificed to the Bālkumāri in Ikhā and celebrate as *choyelabhū*, the second day rigourous puja of the guthi deity is held by Ājus, the senior guthi members, all the guthi members have a grand feast called as *Mubhū*, and the third day concludes the assembly by handing over the rotation of guthi server. In the past they used to held assembly in the nani, but these days they hold their assembly in Cobahā monastery complex. The rotation of guthi server handed over to the last entered/registered guthi member. The two other assemblies are one day assemblies which are observed in *Laxmi-pujā* and *Shrīpancami*, these are to mark the installation and dismantle of the temporary wooden/bamboo briedge over the Nakhu river to cross over during the winter season. On day of *Laxmi-puja* they used held puja before they start installing the *tān*, (temporary bridge) and on Srīpanchami they held yet another puja before dismantle the *tān*. After each puja they have feast all together. Although they have stopping erecting the *tān*, since last few decades, they still continue the ritual puja which symbolize the installation and disamantlement of the bridge and held guthi assembly in those days.

4.7.4 Sanā-guthis of Jyāpus

Sanā-guthis of Jyāpus which is also known as Balkumari Sanā-guthis came into existence as a separate entity some seven decades ago once the combined sanā-guthis of both Sākyas and Jyāpus was splitted. There are about 130 members representing each household by male household head. Like the sanā-guthis of Sakya, the sanā-guthis of Jyāpus too organize their annual assembly during Yomaripunhi, the fullmoon of December for three days, the first day being *choyelabhū*, the second day celebrates as *mūbhū* and the third day as the concluding day. Although they used to held assembly for three days, but now a days they have reduced to two days as to save time and money considering the guthiyār's engagement in their livelihood. The assembly is organized in the Gvānani, for this purpose a *bala*, a temporary shade was constructed made of straw, which was dismantled aftermath. But these days only a small section where the deities are placed is held with a curtain just to protect the guthi-deity from public viewing. On the *Yomaripunhi*, a rigourous puja is held to Bālkumāri in Ikhā followed by sacrifice of a male

baffalo, the senior-most *Aju* perform puḷā to Bālkumāri and guthi-deity. After completion of puḷā the *Mūbhū*, the mean course of the feast is served to all the guthiyārs, which is facilitated by two *guthiyārs*-in-rotā. The two *guthiyārs*-in-rotas are designated to carry on all the rituals of guthi for entire year, they are selected in a rotation basis, the two last registered members are selected for the rotation of that particular year.

Besides the organizing feast during annual guthi assembly, one of main responsibility of the *guthiyārs* -in-rotā is to inform the guthiyars for funeral procession in case of death of any family members of *guthiyār*. All the guthiyārs or their eligible representatives are expected to present in the funeral procession, failure in so are subject to fine the amount as per the guthi regulations, which is normally levied from Rs. 5.00 to 10.00 depending on the time of the day. If some one is found deliberately turned out from appearing, then the fine will be equivalent to wage of the day. Amongst the *guthiyārs*, certain members are assigned to undertake funeral procedures, normally eight people are assigned during the normal day time, if funeral takes place in the late evenings 16 people are assigned to carry out the funeral procedures. Every time assignees change in a rotation basis. Besides the 8 or 16 assignees, one among the five *thakāli* and one of *guthiyārs*-in-rotā have to stay throughout the cremation.

On the various occasions the Sanā-guthis of Jyāpus and Sākyas jointly organize *lanjyayegu*, means cleaning/clearing up road campaigns, twice a year. Firstly on the day of *Caitra-sukla Suptami*, a day before fetching the Karunāmaya in Nakhu and second one in month of Kartik, just before Kartik sevā begin. On the first occasion they clean/clear up the road from Nakhu to Cobahā and on the second occasion they clean up from Cobahā-gate to Cobahā monastery complete.

Besides two *balipujās* organized in course of annual festival of Cobahādyo, there is a tradition of performing yet another three *balipujās* in Silacharhe, Pāhāncarhe and Gathānmuga respectively which takes place in Bālkumāri pith in Ikhā. The officiating *guthiyārs* of Jyāpu sanā-guthis serves as *jajamān*, the convenor, and the *Thāpāju* of Cobahā serves as officiating priest for this purpose. Such *balipujā* is performed to ward off all the evil spirits from the village or settlement.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Kathmandu valley is no doubt the sacred place for Buddhist from the dawn of valley civilization. The pious people of valley are keeping millinium old Buddhist tradition alive. The surrounding mountains which are closely linked with preceeding Buddhas are considered as sacred sites and local folks still visit these mountains with pious motive. Similarly two major river systems namely Bāgmati and Vishnumani along twelve confluxes where several tributeries meet are considered as holy sites, of them Sulkshana tirth and Jayatirth are located in the foothill of Cobahā.

Cobahā is no doubt an ancient Buddhist site, which is evident from the five of monolithic caityas stylistically dated to 5th to 7th century found in Cobahā. It is like that Coyebaha-bahi must be a Licchavi establishment. If so Amsuvarma, as *Devamālāvansāvali* potrayed as founder temple Ānandādi lokesvar is probably true. An undeciphored Licchavi inscription found within half kilometer from Cobahā also so backs up the that area was habitated during the Licchavi period. The caves in the foothill of Cobahā was a centre of high level of Buddhist retreat which is evident from prominent Buddhist teachers such as Padmasambhava, Vajrāchārya Bhāro (Mahākarunā), Rwa Lotsavā association with this site.

Cobahā is rich Buddhist cultural heritage. The most prominent historical cultural monument is the Indradeva Sanskārīta Kacchapālagiri Mahāvihār, one of the prominent Buddhist monument of early medieval period. The vihār consists of several architectural monuments including two magnificent Buddhist monuments one being the three tire Newari style temple of Ānandādi Lokesvar and other being a Shikhar style temple of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva made of all stone in octagonal base. Similarly other architectural monuments are five monolithic Licchavi caityas and one memorital caitya which was believed to be build by Bandhudatta. Beside these monuments, there was yet another vihār locally known as Coyebaha-bahi, of which no physical remains are traced so far except

memory and name. A further intensive study on this bahi could bring important historical facts which may revail lost history of Cobahā.

Almost all the tangible cultural heritage of Cobahā which includes the Cobahā monastery itself, temple of Anadadi Lokesvar and temple Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva, monolithic Licchavi caityas and opens shrines are in pity condition, which needs urgent attention of concerned authorities. Moreover, surrounding building of main vihār complex along Agamchen wing seemed o be immediate attention.

People of Cobahā being liety Buddhist, have a strong affinity with the Cobahādyo, they consider him as a protector, called as *Hyaukhvā-ājū*. Hence they celebrate annual festival of Cobahādyo with great pomp which includes, Great ritual bath, Fetching the Karunāmaya followed by procession, Sacramental rituals, *Bahāyā*, *Bhujya*, Two rounds of *balipujā* are the major events of the annual festival, but there are several preparatory and post festival rituals that takes place in the three months span. Yet another important Buddhist practice is the *Māye-absan*, the vrata observation, which is very popular amongst the Buddhist of Kathmandu valley. All these tradition are the living cultural heritage not merely the heritage of Cobahā itself, rather it is heritage of entire Buddhist community of Kathmandu valley and eventually the cultural heritage of Nepal. So their preservation and promotion as Buddhist cultural heritage is crucial for all concern.

In this backdrop, Nepal being a signatory of International Conventions such as i) Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and ii) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, it is responsibilities of Government of Nepal to take care of all historical and cultural monuments of Cobahā in a national level and Kirtipur Munispality being local government functionary is also equally responsible for taking care of historical monuments, tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Cobahā.

Appendix I

List of People met and interviewed

S. No.	Name and Age	Address	Remarks
1)	Indra Bahadur Sakya	Cobahā	Thāpāju
2)	Suren Sakya	Cobahā	Pānju
3)	Rajesh Sakya	Cobahā	Pānju
4)	Surendra Sakya	Cobahā	Associated with
5)	Nāti Maharjan	Cobahā	Dāphākhala
6)	Dhiraj Mān Dangol	Cobahā	Dhangu
7)	Bābu Kāji Maharjan	Cobahā	
8)	Jesthamāyā Sākya	Cobahā	Nakin
9)	Māhilā Gurju	Nahtol, Patan	Official priest
10)	Tirth Bajracharya	Natole, Patan	Officiating Gurju
11)	Rajkumar Nemkul	Thasi	
12)	Ravindra Nemkul	Thasi	
13)	Nhucche Bahadur Nemkul	Pulchowk, Patan	
14)	Ratna Bahadur Maharjan (85)	Cobahā	
15)	Hira Bahadur Maharjan (69)	Cobahā	
16)	Mahila Dangol (46)	Cobahā	Dhangu
17)	Manoj Sakya	Okubahal, Patna	Strota recitor
18)	Padmaraj Sakya	Sibahā, Patan	
19)	Sabina Dangol (22)	Cobahā	Vrati (2071)
20)	Sabina's Mother	Cobahā	Vrati (2067)
21)	Sangita Maharjan	Kirtipur	Vrati (2071)
22)	Shreedevi Maharjan	Thaiba	Vrati (2071)
23)	Vishnu Maharjan	Thechow	Vrati (2071)
24)	Manju Basnet	Bhatkepati	Vrati (2071)
25)	Dipak Khatri (Male)	Chhap	Vrati (2071)
26)	Bimala Maharjan	Thasi	Observant (2070)
27)	Jujubhai Sakya (73)	Cobahā	Svakuju
28)	Sarose Sakya	Cobahā	Sangha member

Appendix II

Cultural Calendar of events:

S. No.	Day	Description of Ritual
1.	<i>Srīpancami</i>	<i>Cāpujā</i>
2.	<i>Pithpujā</i>	Within a week days from <i>Srīpancami</i>
3.	<i>Pāhāncarhe</i> (14 th waning moon of March)	<i>Balipujā</i>
4.	<i>Caitra-sukla Pratipadā</i> (1 st waxing moon of March)	<i>Nhavan</i> (ritual bath) in the morning according to time specified by Astrologer, Ritual bath for public viewing
5.	<i>Caitra-sukla Dvitiya - Shasti</i> (2 nd -6 th waxing moon of March)	Mending and/r Repairing the image of Lokeswor
6.	<i>Caitra-sukla Saptami</i> (7 th waxing moon of March)	<i>Dyosalegu</i> (Ganesh, Bhairav and Balkumari) Kalash thāpanā and first round of sacramental rituals
7.	<i>Caitra-krishna Astami</i> (8 th waxing moon of March)	<i>Nekhu chikegu</i> or <i>Dyolāyegu</i> (fetching Karunāmaya) Jyāvalyā in the mid-day Procession of Kalash in the evening
8.		Sacramental rituals continues till next morning
9.	<i>Caitra-krishna Navami</i> (9 th waxing moon of March)	Ten sacrament ritual early morning <i>Balipujā</i> around 10:00 – 11:00 Entry of the deity into sanctum while <i>Balipujā</i> is being offered <i>Bhujiyā</i> in the afternoon
10.	These three events take place some time after annual festival, mostly on Saturdays	<i>Debhoye</i>
11.		<i>Mhaye bhoye</i>
12.		<i>Kvena pujā</i>
13.	<i>Shrāvan-sukla dvitiya</i> (2 nd waxing moon of August)	<i>Dipankar Jātrā</i>
14.	<i>Kartik</i> whole month	<i>Kartika Sevā</i>
15.	<i>Kartik-sukla ekādashi to</i> <i>Punhi</i> (11 th to 15 waxing moon of October)	<i>Māye-absan</i> , Fasting
16.	<i>Mansir-krishna Pratipadā</i> (1 st waning moon of November)	Concluding of <i>Māye-absan</i> (Fasting)
17.	<i>Mansir-krishna Caturthi</i> (4 th waning moon of November)	<i>Pyanhu-vicā</i>

Appendix III

Mayeabsan Observants (Attendants of Five-day Fasting)

Kartik 2071

Newars:

- 1) Sunita Dangol, Cobahā
- 2) Shreedevi Maharjan, Thaiba
- 3) Sundari Shrestha, Dakshinakali
- 4) Tuladevi Awale, Nakhu
- 5) Sangita Maharjam, Kirtipur
- 6) Vishnu Maharjan, Thechow

Those who took *Lanpān*

- 1) Anar Kansakar, Vijeshwori
- 2) Meena Maharja, Swayambhu
- 3) Sheela Dangol, Chamati
- 4) Heera Shova Dangol, Swayambhu

Non-Newars

- 1) Urmila Thapa Magar, Cobahā
- 2) Meera Tamang, Cobahā
- 3) Bhavani Karti, Bhaktapur
- 4) Manju Basnet, Bhatkepati
- 5) Sirjana Pant, Cālnakhel
- 6) Mati Tamang, Nakhu
- 7) Narayani Thapa, Sainbu
- 8) Sanu Thapa,
- 9) Urmila Thapa Kshetri, Basnetgaon
- 10) Nani Mainya Thapa, Sainbu
- 11) Shanta Thapa, Sainbu
- 12) Dipaka Khatri, Khatri Chapa (male)
- 13) Pavitra K C, Sitāpailā
- 14) Anita Ghimire Sitāpailā
- 15) Ambika Basnet, Jāwalakhel

Appendix IV

Materials required for Observation of Fasting

Materials of daily worship:

Pujā Sinha
Mhasu Sinha
Abeer
Dhun, Dhupayen
Compher
Itāh
Powder of Astasugandha
Shrikhanda

Materials needed for Yajna:

Astadasi
Jatanaikya
Gva bhe x 2
Jva Gve x 4

Fruits:

Tahsi x 3
Pāsi x 3 (any fruit)
Banana x 3
Sugarcane
Amwo
Radish
Byā
Saki
Sweet

Golden implements:

Dristi x 3
Panch-Ratna x 3
Lunpaleha, Wohpaleha x 3 each
Silver ring x 2
Gold powder for Lokesvar ideol x 1

Copper implements:

Lichoki Bātā x 1
Bisala pā x 1
Jagan kholāx 1

Kumha Jwala:

Anpa Kalash x 1
Shreelasi x 2
Nagakulin x 1
Yaksh Yakshni x 2
Kachi Milā x 4
Kachi pacha x 4

Pojvalan:

Wa daki picha x 1
Latapicha x 1

Things to be prepared from Home:

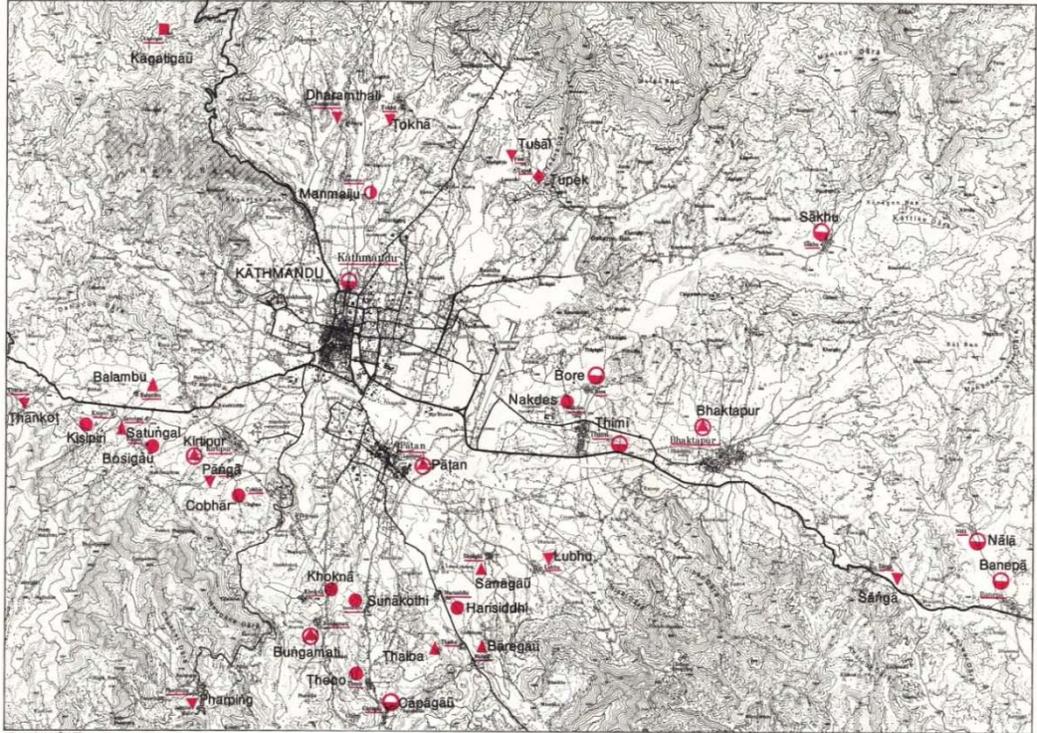
Pasukā Roll x 1
Gvayeka x 21
White cloth x 1 meter
Tāye, Ākhyo, Potāya, Ghee, Kasti,
Sākha, Cow-milk
Dāpho-svān kachā, Mango-leave, Pān-
leave, Brahma-leave, Peepal leave, Itāh,
Jajankā, Sintā, Svansin, Flower, Flower-
Garland,
Rice x 2 mānā
Baji x 2 mānā
Dakshina Rs 35/=

Things to be prepared by the Kaji (Coordinator)

18 Bibah which includes: 1) Hākuhāmo,
2) Hāmva, 3) Hāmva, 4) Moo, 5) Kegū,
6) Maye, 7) Ikā, 8) Pahkā, 9) Kola, 10)
Tanchow, 11) Tāye, 12) Svānwā, 13)
Māchow, 14) Ākhyo, 15) Hākumusyā,
16) Puwā, 17) Joge Aushadhi, 18)
Panchapakawān mari, 19) Tāye

PHOTOGRAPHS

Fig.1 Die Newar-Siedlungen im Kāthmāṇḍu-Tal: Verteilung der Kasten The Newar Settlements in the Kāthmāṇḍu Valley: Distribution of Castes



Map of Kathmandu valley



Arial photograph of Cobahā



Kacchapālagiri – tortoise shaped hillock



Indradeva Sanskarit Kacchapālgiri Mahavihār, Cobahā



Temple of Cobahādyo



Temple of Cobahādyo showing moulded repoussé wall section



Main doorway of Cobahādyo



Pasakājhya and Bimānjhya of temple



Tympanum of temple



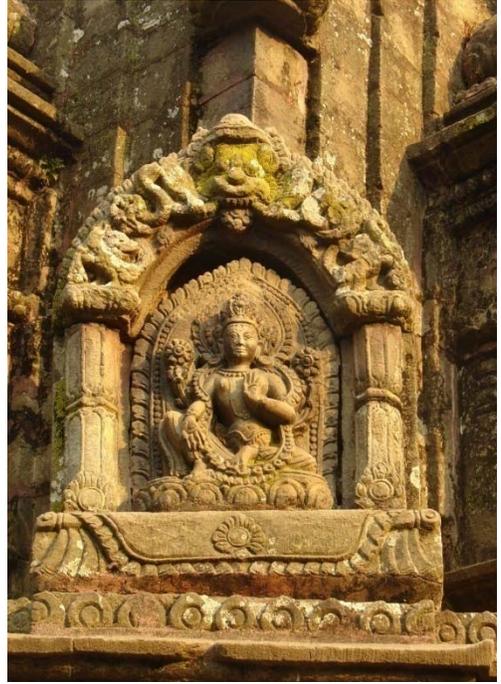
Temple of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva



Section of Temple of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva



Transcendental Buddhas in trantika



Taras in the Temple of Kshitigarbha Bodhisattva



Inside the sanctum



Image of Kshitigarbha on the upper door jam



Dharmadhātumandal at the centre of Cobahā



Surrounding satah of Cobahā



Nhavan dabū



Monolithic Licchavi caityas



Socalled Bandhudatta caitya (Smarana caitya)



Four monolithic Licchavi caitya around the Smarana caitya



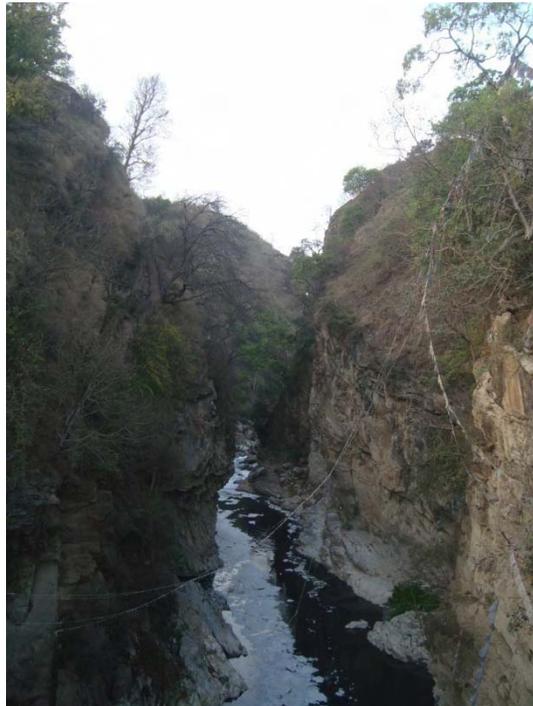
Dilapidated Cvebahā-bahi



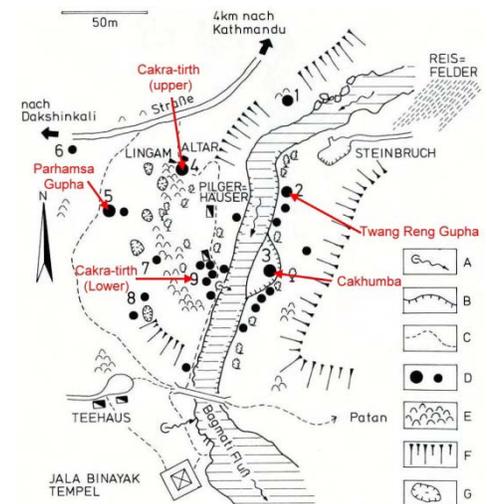
Temple of Jala-Vināyaka (Kvenā Ganesh)



Sanctum of Kvenā Ganesh



Cobahā Gorge



Cobahā cave system



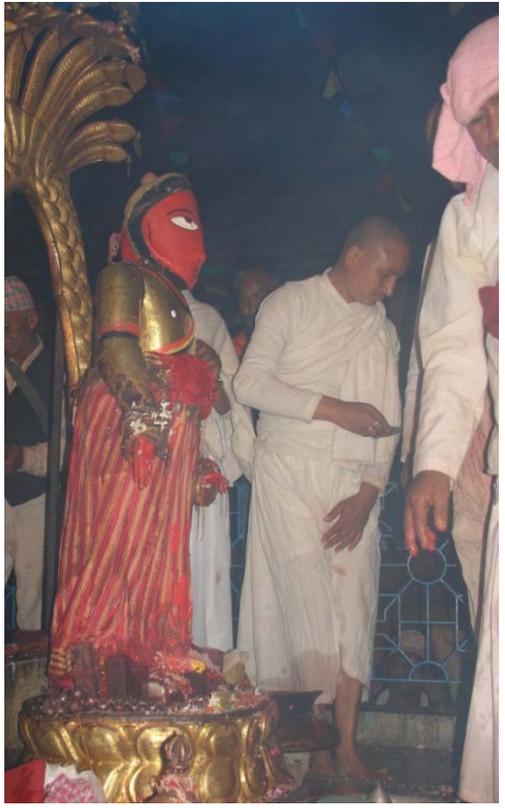
Dhangus bringing water for Nhavan



Arrival of Nekus from Thasi



Spirit of deity being transformed into Brahmkon



Karunāmaya getting ready for Nhavan



Fetching Karunāmaya in Nakhu



Crossing Nakhu river



Karunāmaya in procession



Traditional Dāphā music in procession



Kahānbājā in the procession



Welcoming the deity invoked Kalash in Cobahā



Phanluegu as part of welcoming ritual



Rituals vessels inside the *Āgamcheli*



Karunāmaya in *Āgamcheli* for sanctification



Sacramental rituals on progress





Bāhāyā – encircling the palanquin of Cobahādyo within the bahā



Baupā ready for offering Balipujā



Balipujā on progress during the annual festival of Cobahādyo



Karunāmaya in his seat



Māyeabsan observants from taking bath in sacred tirths



Mayeabsan observants serving puja of Cobahādyo



Māyeabsan observants distributing *Prasād*



Māyeabsan observants in Dhalandanegu ritual



Māyeabsan observants handing over Tahsi



Māyeabsan observant exchanging Sagun with husband



All in cheerful mood



Dipankar Jātrā



A fragment of caitya being worshipped as Siva-Linga

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