

**HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF  
THE ASHOK VINAYAK IN KATHMANDU**

**A Thesis Submitted  
To  
Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology  
(NeHCA)  
Tribhuvan University**

**In the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Masters in Art (MA)**

**Submitted by  
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## Recommendation Letter

This is to certify that Anup Banjara, Student of the Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology has conducted a study on **Historical Significance and Cultural Aspects of the Ashok Vinayak in Kathmandu** under my supervision, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Arts (MA).

10<sup>th</sup> September 2023

.....  
Dr. Tina Manandhar

## Letter of Approval

This dissertation entitled **Historical Significance and Cultural Aspects of the Ashok Vinayak in Kathmandu** prepared and submitted by **Mr. Anup Banjara**, has been evaluated and accepted for partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology by the dissertation evaluation committee comprising of:

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(External Examiner)

Date:

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The thesis on “**Historical Significance and Cultural Aspects of the Ashok Vinayak in Kathmandu**” is written for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology Tribhuvan University.

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## **Abbreviations & Acronyms.**

AD	Anno Domini
ASTA	American Society of Travel Agents
BS	Bikram Samvat
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
DOA	Department of Archaeology
KM	Kilo Meter
KDS	Kathmandu Durbar Square
EU	European Union
HDDS	Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square
ICH	Intangible Cultural Heritage
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
KVWHS	Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Sites
NTB	Nepal Tourism Board
NTY	Nepal Tourism Year
PATA	Pacific Area Travel Association
SAVG	Shree Ashok Vinayak Guthi
TIA	Tribhuvan International Airport
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHC	World Heritage Committee



WHS

World Heritage Site

## Chapter 1

### 1. Introduction

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is located in between the two largest civilization in the world India and China. Nepal presents its richness in the diversity it holds even by being a small country in terms of area among its neighbors. It holds the total area of 1,47,181 KM square and stretches in a shape of elongated rectangle from east to west over 885 kilometer and 90 to 230 kilometer from north to south. The country lies from an altitude of 60 meter above the sea level to 8848.16 meter above the sea level, the highest point in the earth Mount Everest. Situated between the longitude of 80° 15' and 88° 10' east and latitudes of 26° 20' and 30° 10' north, According to the census of World Bank 2020 the total population of Nepal is 29.1 million. Moreover, total of 126 ethnic group shares this place as their home and 123 different languages are spoken in different corners of the country (CBS, 2021).

Nepal is surrounded in the north by the Himalayas and in the south, east and west by India. Although the root of Nepal's culture and religious heritage are closely linked with those of India and Tibet, but it should not be seen as the extension of both, but rather the distinctiveness of Nepalese culture required a great sense of artistic and heritage knowledge to understand its indigenous development which is very unique to Nepal. (Bangdel, 1995, p.21)

In the ancient time, The Kingdom of Nepal has been ruled by different kingdom in the different corner of the country from Lichchhavi to Malla and from Malla to Saha Dynasty in this long period from second century to 20<sup>th</sup> century AD. But In the current day Nepal has been divided into seven provinces, 77 Districts, and 753 Local Bodies, which comprises of six metropolitan cities, 11 sub metropolitan, 267 municipalities and 460 rural municipalities.

Nepal has a blending of different colorful aspects of human society, which can only be found in very few countries. Its ethnic groups, faith healers, beliefs, gods, goddess, demons, myths, folklore, and legends and numerous other spiritual and supernatural elements have been the subject of tremendous interest not only to the outsider but also to the natives equally, its cultural richness is enriched by folk and popular artistic creation of Nepalese people, which are reflected in handicrafts, musical instruments, Thankas, mask and curio items of cultural significance and numerous other objects of arts science centuries. In fact Nepal is a country with full of cultural wonders and varieties. (Amatya, 2014)

Kasthamandap also known as Maru Sattal; literally "Wooden Shelter" is a three-storied public resting shelter that enshrined Gorakshanath, situated in Hanumandhoka Protected monument Zone in the Southwestern corner of Kathmandu Durbar Square. Several myths and stories about the date of the construction of the structure of the Kasthamandap have been resolved with the recent archeological findings. The newly

discovered objects during the rescue excavation in the aftermath of the earthquake have suggested that the Kasthamandap may have been built in the 7th century during the Lichchhavi era. Before this, it was assumed that the Kasthamandap was built in around the 12th century. (DOA, 2019) From the name of Kasthamandap the name of the valley Kathmandu has been derived. (Bajracharya, 1976) The valley is enriched with most of the Nepal's ethnic groups, but the Newars are the indigenous inhabitants. (UNESCO, 2015) It is the political, commercial and cultural center for Nepal which highlights a rich culture, art and tradition, especially that of the Newari Settlement. (UNESCO, 2015)

Kathmandu city is the hub of Kathmandu valley wheel, with Durbar Square and the Royal Palace at its center. From the airport located between the three major cities of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur. Kathmandu has expanded rapidly over the last decade, with new buildings of all shapes, sizes and uses strong along the old trade routes. (Sanday, 1982, p.12)

Kathmandu Durbar Square is one of the attractive cultural heritage sites, which was listed in the UNESCO world heritage monument, listed in 1979 AD. It is in the heart of capital city Kathmandu in basantapur. The durbar square with its old temples and palaces it gives the summary of the religious and cultural life of the people. The royal complex was resident to Nepal's Royal family before the construction of the Narayanhiti Royal Palace. The founding of the royal palace dates back to lichchhavi times. With considerable renovations by Malla rulers and later the Ranas, construction was accomplished progressively over many centuries. There are around 50 temples in the square including the temples of Taleju Bhawani. The durbar square is divided into two courtyards, the outer comprising Kasthamandap, Ashok Vinayak (Maru Ganesh), Kumari Ghar, Shiva-Parvati Temple, Maju Dega, Degu Taleju, Trailokya Mohan etc. and the inner consisting of Hanuman Dhoka and the main Palace. It also houses two museum important ceremonies, including the coronation of the Nepali monarch are held in the Kathmandu Durbar Square. Most parts of the palace premises are open for tourist through the year during office hour. The Hanuman Dhoka Durbar square still occupies a central position in the religious rituals and the state ceremonies of Nepal. (Hutt, 1995)

The Ashok Vinayak Temple, which is also commonly known as the Maru Ganesh or Kathmandu Ganeshthan, is located in a corner adjacent to the Kasthamandap. Its size belies its importance, for the popularity of this shrine in the Kathmandu valley is great. It is one of the four main shrines dedicated to Ganesh. It is common practice to venerate the Ganesh prior to carrying out other worship. Both the Hindus and Buddhist worship the Kathmandu Ganesh throughout the valley. During the monarchy system, the royal family also used to worship the temple, especially by the king, during the coronation ceremonies. (Sanday, 1979)

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Hinduism and Buddhism are the main religions in Nepal. One of the interesting features in Nepal is the co-existence of the two great religions: indeed, a rare example in world history. Both religions have flourished side by side in a harmonious atmosphere even to this day. The exact date of establishment of the Ashok Vinayak Temple is also unknown to the concern authorities and its people. To explore the historical and cultural aspects of the temple is the major reason of this research. The thesis is more directed towards the historical, tangible and intangible heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple. To deal with these issues the following problems are discussed.

### **Research Questions.**

1. What is the Historicity of the Ashok Vinayak Temple?
2. What are the Tangible Heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple?
3. What are the Intangible Heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The basic objective of this study is to inquire about the historicity and cultural aspects of the Ashok Vinayak Temple. In addition, other specific objectives are as follows:

1. To study the historicity of the Ashok Vinayak Temple.
2. To find out the tangible heritage of the Ashok Vinayak Temple.
3. To explore the intangible heritage of the Ashok Vinayak Temple.

## **1.4 Literature Review**

In this section, I have made a review of previous studies on Ashok Vinayak Temple with reference to its history and its culture. Literature review is a very essential part for any research. In this chapter, I have reviewed some of the literature, which has been designed to fulfill our queries and questions partially or fully.

Rao, G. (1914) "Elements of Hindu Iconography" In this book the author has described about the origin, descriptions, and symbols, mythological background, meaning and moral aims of Hindu images. This book also contains the introduction discussing the origin of Hindu image worship.

Banerjea, J.N. (1956) "The Development of Hindu Iconography" In this book the author has described about the Hinduism in religious and social aspects, it helps to understand any people about the and tradition and culture in Hinduism. The author have also described about the various description and identification process of the image, these collected information were very useful in exploring the development cycle of Hindu iconography.

Regmi, D.R. (1960) “Ancient Nepal” In this book the author has described about religion, culture and tradition with the practice pattern during the ancient period. The author has also included about the Temples, arts architecture and different Nepal style Temple that has been very useful for the research.

Snellgrove, D.L. (1961) “Shrines and Temples of Nepal” In this article the author has described about the different shrines from Lichchhavi Period, the article has given more emphasis on the Shiva shrine Pashupati, Vishnu shrine Changu and the Buddhist shrine of swayambhu.

Regmi, D.R. (1965) “Medieval Nepal: Part -One”. This book has described the indepth and delightful medieval history of Nepal. It has given the understanding of the political, social and cultural aspects of the era. The author explores the rise and fall of dynasties, power struggle, religious practices and daily life. It also gives the insight idea of the social and economic condition of Nepal in that period. This book has been very useful in conducting the research.

Regmi, D.R. (1966) “Medieval Nepal: Part- Two”. In this book, the author describes the politics, society and culture of the Medieval Nepal. This book also gives us the insight idea of the three kingdoms of Kathmandu, their power struggle, alliance with each other and conflict with each other as well as the life style and cultural aspects of the people during that period.

Regmi, J.C. (2023) “*Nepalko Dharmik Itihash*” (Religious History of Nepal). This book gives the description of the different religious practice in Nepal during the ancient and medieval period. In this book, the author has described about the Shaiva sect in Nepal and has tried to show the relation between Nepal and other international religious countries. The author has also described about the Vaishnav sect. The author have also described about Buddhism and the worshipping patterns and rituals about different gods, goddess, Surya, Ganesh, Brahma and Chandrama. He has also talked about different fair and festivals of Nepal. This book has been very helpful for conducting research.

Bernier, R.M. (1970) “The Temples of Nepal: An Introductory Survey”. In this book, the author has described about the history, religious background and the basic elements of Nepalese Temple architecture. The author beautifully explores various monuments in Patan, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu and other different monuments with in Nepal, though this book has not described about the Ashok Vinayak Temple, it was very helpful in preparing this research.

Anderson, M.M. (1971) “The Festivals of Nepal” In this book the author has described about all the festivals celebrated in Nepal throughout the year. It has illustrated all the festivals celebrated from the month of Baishak to Chaitra. We can

find about the aspects of different festivals celebrating pattern and practices in Nepal in this book, so will all these information this book has been useful for the research.

Choudhary, P.C.R. (1972) “Temples and Legends of Nepal” In this book the author has described about different temples of Nepal. He has also given his thought on the background of the Nepalese temples and different folk lore related behind these temples with all these information this book was very useful for the research purpose.

Shah, R. (1975) “An Introduction to Nepal” The author has beautifully set the geographic status of Nepal to its History, Religion, Art & Architecture and the cultural process of Nepal. The inclusion of these entire topics makes this book very useful and helpful for the research purpose.

Joshi, S.M. (2032) “*Nepali Murtikalako Bikash Kram*” (The Development of Nepalese Sculptures). In this book, the author has described about the time line of Nepalese sculptures and has described about the development of the timeline. The author has taken different sculptures from third century AD to 18<sup>th</sup> Century AD. This book gives us the details information about the different phases of development in sculptures in Nepal, this book was very useful to know the chronology of Nepali sculptures.

Bajracharya, G.B. (1976) “*Hanumandhoka Rajdurbar*” (Royal Palace of Hanumandhoka). This book has highlighted about the historicity, the antiquity and the construction style of Hanumandhoka Rajdurbar and it has described about the different courtyards within and outside the royal palace complex. Moreover, this book has given the detailed explanation about the temples within the palace and outside the palace. He has also expressed about the significance of festivals and royal ceremonies conducted with in the royal palace. The cultural connection of the royal palace with different temples and fairs & festivals celebrated with in the royal palace are described in a beautiful way. This book has also talked about the Ashok Vinayak Temple (Maru Ganesthan) very briefly only being concerned about the myths and legends behind its name and nothing more. Regarding the details about the Kathmandu Durbar Square area, this book has helped to explore a lot about Kathmandu Durbar Square.

Sanday, J. (1979) “Monuments of the Kathmandu Valley” The author has written about the different monuments with in the Kathmandu valley and he has also described about the history, people, festivals and the development trend of that time in Kathmandu valley. The entire Kathmandu Durbar Square monument has been described by the author in this book has helped to find out the details of the monuments in Kathmandu Durbar Square.

Slusser M.S. (1982) “Nepal Mandala” In this book the author has talked about the origins and evolution of the Nepalese civilization that evolve in the Kathmandu valley

area and its periphery. The inclusion of ancient, medieval and modern era and talking about the religious transformation also makes this book very helpful and handy for the future generations to come. The author has also described about the different gods and demigods in Nepal Mandala. The Art and Architecture for both human and gods and the religious aspects makes this book more valuable. The depth and detailed inclusion of different aspect of Nepal makes this book very useful and resourceful in this research writing process.

Bangdel, L.S. (2039) “*Prachin Nepali Murtikalako Itihash*” (The Historicity of Nepalese Sculptures of Ancient Period). The writer have written about the historicity of religious, cultural and different worshipping pattern and practices for the gods and goddess, Vaishnav sculptures, design and motif of the ancient sculptures and the general idea to determine the date of the sculptures are explained in this book, so this book was very essential for preparing the research.

Paudyal, B. (2057) “*Nepali Murtikala ra Chittrakala*” (Nepalese Sculptures and Paintings). The author has described about timely development of sculptures in Nepal, the author has also described about the different sculptures from different part of the capital and has given her views and ideas on different sculptures kept in different museums in the Kathmandu valley as well. The author has also talked about the different gods and deities, which have helped a lot to prepare this thesis.

Dhakal, P. (2062) “*Mandir rai Mandir ko Desh Nepal*” (Nepal: A country of Temples). In this book the author have described about various temples in the country and has given us the useful information regarding different gods and goddess. The detailed information of this book has been very useful in findingout the various temples in the country.

UNESCO (2006) “*Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square*” This book have described about the HDDS. Mostly the historic and architecture overview is done in this book. Morley it has described about all the temples in the HDDS area and about the different courtyards of the royal palace. It has also described about all the festivals celebrated in the royal palace periphery and in the old town of Kathmandu, being inclusion of different festivals and temples, this book helped a lot in preparing this research work.

UNESCO (2007) “*The Intangible Cultural Heritage of Nepal*” UNESCO has published this book by including an overview of intangible cultural heritages and its scope in the future. This book also includes about the different intangible cultural heritages of Nepal like the oral traditions & folk literature, language, and different religious acts, pattern and practices. This book has helped a lot in this research by explaining about the intangible cultural heritage of Kathmandu Durbar Square and other UNESCO World Heritage sites of Nepal.

Parajuli, S.K. (2075) “Pratima Lakshyan” This book has described about the different sculptures from different Temples and Monasteries from different part of the country. The author has described about the presentation style of the sculptures in different temples and monasteries and the different laws of making sculptures according to different mythological books. The author has also shown us the way to know any sculptures in any temple. This book has clearly given us the ideas and methodologies for detail study of sculptures, which has directly helped me to prepare this project.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This research was performed on the historicity, tangible culture and intangible culture of Ashok Vinayak Temple. In this research, we have tried to study the historicity, explore the intangible culture and find out the tangible heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple. Therefore, this research is helpful for further researcher to find out about the historicity, tangible culture and intangible culture of the Ashok Vinayak Temple. The changes like worshipping pattern change in fairs and festivals celebration, change in the cultural aspects and changes in different aspects of the Ashok Vinayak Temple has been discussed.

### **1.6 Delimitation of the Study**

This research was focused only on The Ashok Vinayak Temple of Kathmandu Durbar Square Area; ward no 20 of Kathmandu Metropolitan City. Other Ganesh temples in the valley were studied as a reference, but the research was focused only on Ashok Vinayak Temple, and the research was based until 2021 only

### **1.7 Methodology**

During the research process, various methods can be adopted to generate knowledge and information about a significant subject. Quantitative, qualitative, and descriptive approaches are among the different methods utilized. In this particular study, the focus was on understanding the rituals performed during worshipping fairs and festivals, and an analytical descriptive method was employed. This involved direct observation and interviewing to gather insights. To enhance the understanding and obtain additional information, secondary sources like books, articles, and websites were consulted. The study aimed to explore the intangible heritage within society or community, which encompassed a variety of fairs, festivals, ritual performances, and myths. To ensure an authentic study, both primary research through personal field visits and secondary research through different books and articles were conducted. Field visits allowed for the collection of directly observable rituals, while other rituals were obtained from secondary sources.

#### **1.7.1 Primary Source**

A primary source refers to an original, firsthand, or direct piece of evidence or information that comes directly from the time or event under study. Primary Source is a source that provides direct or firsthand knowledge about a particular subject,



without any interpretation or analysis by someone else. Primary sources are created by individuals who were either witnesses or participants in the events being documented. The use of primary sources in research is crucial as they offer firsthand information and perspectives, allowing researchers to analyze and interpret historical events or phenomena based on original evidence. They provide a direct connection to the past and can offer a deeper understanding of a specific topic or era. However, it is important to critically evaluate primary sources, considering the perspectives or limitations of the creator can influence potential biases, context, and reliability, as even primary sources.

### **1.7.1.1 Observation**

Observation is a primary source when it is documented or recorded by an individual who directly witnessed or experienced the events being observed. In this context, observation refers to the act of attentively perceiving and recording information about the surrounding environment, people, behavior, or any other aspect relevant to the research or study. Observation as a primary source is valuable because it provides firsthand, unfiltered information about the subject being studied. It allows researchers to gather data directly from the source without relying on interpretation or analysis by others. However, it is important to recognize that observations can be influenced by the observer's perspective, biases, or limitations, and these factors should be taken into account when analyzing and interpreting the primary source data. While conducting this research, mixed observation approached was used, both participant and non-participant observation approaches were applied.

### **1.7.1.2 Interview**

To collect the data regarding the historicity, tangible and intangible heritage of the Ashok Vinayak Temple interview has been conducted between different people like the locals, the current and ex priest of temple and the people who are directly or indirectly involved with the temple and its intangible aspects. The special interview was conducted with the associated people of Ashok Vinayak Temple (Priest and the Guthi Members). Interviews as primary sources are valuable for capturing individual experiences, opinions, and expert knowledge on a particular topic. They provide researchers with unique insights that may not be available through other primary or secondary sources. However, it is essential to approach interviews with methodological rigor, maintain ethical considerations, and analyze the data within the broader context of the research question or objective. While conducting the research qualitative interview method was used to all the participants, open-end question was asked with them, and the participants have expressed the in-depth information.

### **1.7.1.3 Photography**

Photography can be a powerful primary source in research, as it captures visual evidence of people, places, events, and objects in their original context. It allows researchers to access a visual record that provides direct insights into the subject

being studied. Photography as a primary source provides a visual record that adds depth and visual context to research. It allows researchers to explore and analyze aspects that may not be easily conveyed through text or verbal accounts alone. However, it is crucial to critically evaluate and analyze photographs in conjunction with other primary sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject being studied.

### **1.7.2 Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources complement primary sources by providing analysis, interpretation, and context to support or challenge research findings. They help researchers situate their work within the existing scholarly discourse and build upon previous studies. However, it is important to use secondary sources properly and ensure that they are properly cited and credited in the research work. When using secondary sources in Nepalese history, culture, and archaeology research, it is important to evaluate their reliability, credibility, and relevance to the specific research question or topic. Researchers should consider the author's expertise, the publication's reputation, the methodology employed, and any potential biases or limitations of the sources. Additionally, it is essential to properly cite and credit the secondary sources used in the research to maintain academic integrity. Some of the common types of the sources are as follows:

- a) Books
- b) Journal and articles
- c) Theses and Dissertation
- d) Conference Papers
- e) Historical and Archaeological survey reports
- f) Manuscripts and different records

### **1.8 Chapter Scheme**

The chapter scheme of the research titled “The Historicity and Cultural Study of The Ashok Vinayak Temple” has been organized into the following chapters:

- Chapter One: Introduction
- Chapter Two: Introduction of Ashok Vinayak Temple
- Chapter Three: The Historicity of Ashok Vinayak Temple
- Chapter Four: The Tangible Heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple
- Chapter Five: The Intangible Heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple
- Chapter Six: Summary and Conclusion

All these chapters are the main topics of the study area. All the needed sub headings have been added accordingly in each chapter. Along with this all, this research has been included. The letter of recommendation, The Letter of Approval,

Acknowledgement, Table of Content, List of Table, List of Figures, Abbreviations and Sub Topic has also been included as the rule of the research and in the ending the Reference list and other important facts like Interview Questionnaire, Pictures of the Research Area has been presented in a sequential order.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Introduction of Kathmandu Valley**

#### **2.1 Geographical and Historical Background of Kathmandu**

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is situated in the Southeast Asia. Neighboring the two, big countries, which are also known as, dawn of civilization of the ancient time. China in the north and India in the east, west and south, Nepal is centered on the Kathmandu valley with its history of 2000 years of urban civilization (Whelpton, 2005). Being a small tender yam between two giant's neighbors in terms of size, it possesses its own unique and distinct religious and cultural features to the entire world. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, multi religious and a diverse country with full of cultural wonders and verities. The recorded history of Nepal is set as 185 A.D; the discovery of a life size statue of King Jay Verma in 1992, maligoan proves the fact. From the beginning of the Christian era Nepal has been ruled by Lichchhavi rulers from first to ninth century followed by the Malla rulers from 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century and from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Shah has ruled the country. (Amatya, 2014) In this period the proven history of Nepal starts from fifth century i.e. (464AD.) inscription of Mandev in Changunarayan Temple which speaks all after that.

In ancient times by the word, Nepal Mandala only the valley of Kathmandu was meant and the state, which came into existence under the same name, could just include areas measuring hardly a hundred miles on the both side. (Regmi, 1960) The shape of Kathmandu is very irregular and when seen from above it resembles the Khora or sword of Devi. It is known by several names such as Yindesu, Knatipur and Kathmadu or Kathmandu. It is said to be founded by King Gunakama Deva in the Kahgat year 3824 (723 AD.) (Wright, 1990)

Kathmandu is an incredibly diverse, historic city with amazing architecture, exquisite woodcarvings and metal craft, which show cases the skills of the Newar artisans of centuries ago. (NTB, 2021) Surrounded on all sides by inaccessible mountains and forest belt, Nepal is like an oasis of civilization and wonder of wonders is the thick human habitation in it and the evolution of an advance culture accompanying the same. (Regmi, 1960) According to historian Shukra Sagar Shrestha, The name of this city Kathmandu has been derived from the monuments of Nepal valley, it was the western people of Jumla Kingdom who named the Nepal valley as Kathmandu. In the medieval period only the Jumla kingdom and the Nepal valley was flourished with the development of architecture. The Nepal valley was full of wooden architecture and when the people of Jumla explain about Nepal valley and its place full of wooden temples it became Kathkomandu or Kathmandu. Even today in the western Nepal temple is simply called as mandu of mandou. (Shrestha, 2006)

The Kathmandu Valley was effectively closed towards the latter part of the Malla period. The people of Nepal valley came to be known as the 'Newar' during the

fifteenth century, in the reign of King Pratap Malla of Kathmandu. (Acharya, 1972) Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal is found having a unique culture the blend of Hinduism and Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. Majority of the people are spiritual minded who are found in both Kathmandu valley and elsewhere in Nepal. Kathmandu has been important economically, administratively and politically for hundreds of years. With its ancient monuments scattered all around Kathmandu and it is also called as an open cultural museum and it is emerging city where several plans and concepts which have been implemented for its development.

## **2.2 Historicity of Maru Tole**

Maru tole is a small square to the south – west of the royal palace complex at Hanuman Dhoka and covers the area of 1500 square meters. (Coningham et al., 2016, p. 29) Maru tole is also considered as a market place, a venue for religious festivals and in the ancient time maru used to work as a crossroad for the ancient trade route of India and Tibet. (Oldfield, 1881)

Kasthamandap, which is also very popular with the name of Maru Sattal, is the major attraction of the Maru tole. It is one of the finest example of the Nepali architecture to the entire world. The Kasthamandap was first seen used in the manuscript name "Nama Sangiti" in the year 1143 AD. (Thapa, 1968) After the year, 1143 there have been many manuscripts in which Kasthamandap have been included. This is the oldest and largest building built in this form.

During the Lichchhavi period, the Kathmandu valley was divided into two parts naming "Dakshin Koligram" and "Koligram" respectively. After the end of lichchhavi era and during the Malla period, the "Dakshin Koligram" is found saying as "Yangal" and the "Koligram" is found saying as "Yambu", which can be found from the different literatures written and published during the Malla Period. The Kasthamandap falls in the area of Yangal or its ancient name Dakshin Koligram. The fact can be proved by the copper plaque found in the Kasthamandap Temple, in which it is written as "Yegramando" which defines the name being as Mandap of Yangal. A similar mandap was named as Thasmandu in the ancient period, but these days the mandap of Thasmandu is known by the name of "Thayamadu", and a tole is named after it as Thayamadu Tole. (Vajracharya, 1976)

Kasthamandap sits squarely at the crossroads of the ancient trade route that connect India with Tibet and the Principal North- South road of Kathmandu with in few yards of Kasthamandap, and also flanking the ancient crossroad sits two other sattals, Lakshmi Narayan Sattal(17<sup>th</sup> Century) and Singha Sattal. (Gutschow, 2013)

In local tradition, the building is fondly referred to as Maru (Mandu) - Sattal, after the name of the surrounding tole. However, (Vajracharya, 1976) believes that maru is derived from the word mandap. Which can be known from the different literatures

from the Malla Period in which Mandu is used to explain Mandap, It has changed from Mandap to Mandu and from Mandu to Maru.

### **2.3 Culture and Religion in Kathmandu**

The Nepalese culture today, which we have identified today, was germinated and developed in the Kathmandu valley at the beginning of the first century or probably even earlier. However, it was only after the country opened to the outside world with the advent of democracy in 1951 that the world was able to see the richness and magnificent Nepalese culture. No doubt, the different ruling dynasties have tried to give it their name but it has always been a people's culture. Nepalese culture has been nurtured by the people through the ages. No cultural event takes place in Nepal without the people's mass participation. One can see the spectrum of a vibrant cultural rainbow in the multitude of a festivals and rituals that are celebrated almost every other day in some part or the other part of the country. In the capital city Kathmandu, the Newars who make up the indigenous inhabitants of the Kathmandu and are best known for their artistic creativity and skilled craftsmanship, culture has held a paramount position in their everyday lives. (NTB, 2012)

Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society. (Taylor, 1920) Culture and religion are just like different branches of a same tree without the one the other cannot flourish properly. Both culture and religion plays a significant role in forming a group of people into a community and those communities are actively engaged in every step to protect and preserve their culture. In the context of the Kathmandu Valley, the Newar community is committed and dedicated to protecting and preserving their culture. People from all age groups participate in the fairs and festivals of this community, showing a similar kind of enthusiasm and dedication. They are more focused on ensuring the successful completion of any fairs and festivals, with all the rituals being faithfully followed. Most of the fairs and festivals conducted in the Newar community of the Kathmandu Valley have been passed down from one generation to another, and they continue to be celebrated in the same manner.

Due to social and cultural advancement and civilization of our nation, various festivals have been celebrated here on special occasions, since the ancient time which can be proved by the facts / utterance made by the Chinese delegations that came to Nepal about 1300 years ago. It is mentioned in the Chinese tang narrative that the delegations were also impressed by the nature of Nepali people living in cheerfulness after the festival. (Shrestha, 1993) The cultural traditions of the multi ethnic people who settled in this remote Himalayan valley over the past two millennia, referred to as the Newars (UNESCO, 2022) and these Newars are the one who have been protecting and preserving the culture of Kathmandu since the ancient time.

Cultures are bounded entities that are grounded in place, which allows for shared meanings to develop and be passed along. Culture is central to the way we view, experience and engage with all aspects of our lives and the world around us. Thus even our definitions of culture are shaped by the historical, political, social and cultural contexts in which we live. (UNESCO, 2001) defines as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, than encompasses not only art and literature, but also life styles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

The cultural practices of Nepal are essentially of the Hindu and Buddhist derivation of the finding expressions in the numerous rites and rituals, beliefs, social value, festival, art and architecture of the land. These are all historical accretions of different ages of different sources of origin, which make a fantastic spectacle to an out looker. (Sharma, 1983)

Buddhism and Hinduism are followed in Kathmandu with a great belief, and Kathmandu remains one of the most peaceful multi-religious, multi- ethnic, and multi- cultural city in the world. The ethnic unity and religious harmony maintained by the people of the valley against such diversity are truly remarkable and have been acknowledged internationally. In the similar manner people, living the maru tole also widely follows Hinduism and Buddhism. Even following different religion in their daily life, they prefer and maintain a healthy relation with their neighbor who follows the different religion as theirs.

Nepal is famous as a major center of Shaivism, every year thousands of Shiva devotees from abroad (India) come here for pilgrimage. It is difficult to formulate a definite theory as to when shaivism entered Nepal. If we follow the mythological text like Nepal Mahatmya and Himvat Khanda, then the antiquity of this religion in Nepal should be considered older than Satya Yuga. From the characteristics of the statement of these mythological texts, it can be said that Shaivism is very old in Nepal (Regmi, 2030, p.1). In Nepal Hindus are not greatly concerned about different schools of Hinduism. For them religion consist in the worship of special beings at particular times in particular holy places. It takes little sense to label Nepali Hindu as Vaishnavs, Shivas or Shaktas. They worship all of these according to the occasion and ignore none of them. (Hutt, 1995, p. 30)

Hinduism and Buddhism have co-existed continuously for almost 2000 years in an atmosphere of religious harmony. Although the religious and cultural roots of both the Hindu and Buddhist religions are derived from the Indic traditions. Over the centuries, the Nepalese forms of Hinduism and Buddhism have developed their own indigenous character that distinguishes them from the larger Indic context. (Bangdel, 1995)

Buddhism is an equally important religion in Nepal. Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism and Vajrayana Buddhism a combination of Hindu and Buddhist religious

faiths influenced by tantric cults have been followed particularly in Kathmandu valley since medieval times. In the higher Himalayan, the people practice regional Tibetan Buddhism, or Lamastic Buddhism and other forms of nature worship. The Nepali Buddhism probably survived owing to Nepalese physical isolation from the Indian land mass. The revitalization of Hinduism in the later period, and the weakening of the monastic character of Buddhism in the following centuries after its inception had uprooted the religion out of India. (Sharma, 1983)

## **2.4 Art and Architecture of Kathmandu**

Nepal is considered as the country with the best form of art and architecture throughout the world. The majority of traditional buildings in and around the Kathmandu Valley follow a common architectural style: Houses, Monasteries, Public Rest Houses, Royal Palaces and the Temples all of them are constructed in a much similar way and using the same materials with woods, bricks, tiles clay, mortar and stone (Hutt, 1995). The devotional faith of the rulers and the people as well as the creative quality of the artisans established a traditional way of constructing temples in Nepal. An inscription dating back to 625 A.D. of Amsuvarma in Sundhara of Patan refers to the construction of temples with brick and wood. The details of its parts and building material implies to a tier style<sup>1</sup>. The Chinese traveller Wang-Huan-Tsa who visited Nepal in the middle of the 7th century also mentioned the presence of several buildings with multiple roofs in the annals of Tang Dynasty. (Dangol, 2007) These facts prove that, Nepal was very rich in its architecture form from the ancient period.

Generally building proportions and details are quite similar to each other, both internally and externally, particularly when relating the dimensions of building elements such as doors, windows, wall, posts and beams. Furthermore, a true uniformity exist in building materials especially bricks, tiles, clay and timber and the way they are used, which makes it relatively easy to describe in general the basic and common construction details of the traditional buildings of the Kathmandu Valley. (Korn, 1977)

### **2.4.1 Multi Roof Style Temple**

Traditional valley architecture encompasses temples and shrines, monasteries and stupa, the residences of kings and their subjects, community buildings, fountains, votive pillars and a number of other minor features. None can be simply categorized as sacred or secular for all serve both god and men. (Slusser, 1982) In Nepal, any type of temple made out of brick or stone, there any shape size and number of roof is called "Mandir". This term is used for both Hindu and Buddhist religious temples. The other three basic types of temple found in Nepal, independent of the tiered roof are the Stupa, the Shikhara and the dome temple. (Dangol, 2007)

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<sup>1</sup> Vajracharya, D. (2030) Licchavikalaka Abhilekha. Kathmandu: CNAS, TU. p. 339-340.



Like in every culture, there is always a sacred building built for the gods and dieties you worship and respect. The multi roof style temples are named by different scholars. (Slusser, 1982) explains it as being a "Newari Style Temple". (Korn, 1977) simply says it as Temples, because the word temple simply describes or gives the meaning of Gods House, another scholar, (Hutt, 1995) describes them as the "Newar Temple" Because the Newari style has been used distinctively which cannot be found anywhere else. (Tiwari, 2009) says it as Nepali Temple.

The most distinctive features is its frequent use of tiered roofs although many Nepali temples have only one roof , the majority have two or three, even there are temples with four and five tiered as well. The plan is the most commonly square or rectangular. The roofs also generally follow the same pattern but there are also round and octagonal temples as well which are very less common in Kathmandu. Shapes and sizes are more commonly assigned to particular deities. Individual mother goddesses are always found in square temple while group of mother goddess prefer a rectangular one. Krishna is the only deity who can be found in an octagonal temple, where as he can also have temples of other shapes too. Vishnu, Shiva and Ganesh are always worshipped in a square shape temple. (Hutt, 1995)

#### **2.4.2 Palace Complex**

Palaces were first started with the introduction of monarchy system and these are the specially designed houses for the head of the states. Palace buildings were simply grander version of the traditional Newar House. Over the time palaces developed into extensive complexes, incorporating facilities and features absent from their more humble counterpart. (Hutt, 1995) Layaku is the old Newari term for the word "Palace" and refers only to palace buildings. Large squares and temple groups surrounding the palaces are names after the various tols in which they are situated, the bazaar, streets which they adjoin or take name from is important buildings or sections of buildings. For instance in Kathmandu the name Hanuman Dhoka refers not only to the Hanuman gate of the palace but to the palace itself and also to the square formed by two wings of the palace, in the North West section of the durbar square. (Korn, 1977)

The royal palace in each of the three capital cities of the Nepal valley was not only their residential quarter of the ruling monarch but also the seat of the government. The royal palace, which was a compact structure of building, was divided in several sections each with a courtyard around which stood the dwelling apartments. The three royal palaces were built at about the same time. A major part of the palaces came into existence during the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. (Regmi, 1966)

##### **2.4.2.1 Hanuman Dhoka Durbar**

The Hanuman Dhoka Durbar is situated in the center of the town, previously known as the Gunpo Durbar. It got its name Hanuman Dhoka Rajdurbar only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when King Pratap Malla installed a Hanuman image at the front gate. Most of the monuments found in the palace complex are made by the Malla kings and most

renovated by the shah kings and the Ranas. King Mahendra Malla and Pratap Malla are credited for most of the construction work in the palace complex. Only the Mul Chowk stands unaffected by continual alteration. However, the original form of the Sundari Mohan, Nasal and Lohan chowk can still be deciphered. (Korn, 1997) Different courtyards are still popular and are given access to all the visitors, and they are namely:

#### **2.4.2.2 Nasal Chowk**

Nasal chowk is the largest chowk in the entire palace complex. Many buildings made in this chowk are made during the shah's reign but the different buildings made during the mallas period are also preserved here. In the eastern side there is a small temple of god Nasal (Natyashwor). This chowk is named after the same deity. In malla period this chowk was specially used for rehashing and performing different acts and dances during the Malla period. It was also used to meet the king and his people. All the topics related to the palace were discussed in this courtyard. In case of any grief to the royal family, the people used to rush to the square to express their condolence. (Vajracharya, 2033)

#### **2.4.2.3 Mul Chowk**

Mul Chowk is the most important courtyard of the entire palace area, since apart from the most important religious celebration, it is the palace where the coronation of Malla kings used to take place. It is directly associated with the Teleju Temple which is nearby. Previously only priests were allowed to go in this courtyard. (Korn, 1997)

#### **2.4.2.4 Sundari Chowk**

By name, we can know it as the beautiful courtyard built by King Pratap Malla in 1651 AD. It used to act also living quarter for the royals. It is famous for its centrally located golden water sport and a stone sculpture of Kaliyadaman. (Vajracharya, 2033)

#### **2.4.2.5 Mohan Chowk**

Mohan used to act as a central living quarter for the Malla kings and even different meetings and seminars with different Head of nations used to be performed here. Not only meetings and seminar even if there used to be any punishment for the family of the royals this chowk used to be the one. (Vajracharya, 2033) The major attraction of this chowk is the temple of Pancha Mukhi Hanuman temple. This temple stands out from the others because of its circular tiered roofs. It dates from about 1655 and it is closed to visitors only priests are allowed for the ritual performance and cleaning. (Sanday, 1979)

#### **2.4.2.6 Lohan Chowk**

P.N. Shah and his successor were responsible for the erection of the four towers set on the three lower storied of the courtyard style building known as the vilas mandir which is apparently of the earliest date. The four corner towers of the courtyard are generally referred to as:

Vidas Mandir as Lalitpur Tower

Lakshmi Vilas as Bhaktapur Tower

Bangla Mandir as Kritipur Tower

Nautale Durbar as Basantapur Tower

About other still existing chowks of the palace are not much known there are the Trishuli Chowk with the Teleju Temple, the Masan Chowk with the three tiered Nasa Temple the Lamo Chowk, the Dakh Chowk and the Hnutachhen Chowk.

### **2.4.3 The Public Rest House**

Most of the current beautiful Newari architecture was built in the Malla period (13<sup>TH</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century) and they are said to be continuation and development of the architecture style and construction. Technologies from Lichchhivi period (second to eighth century) at that time there is no availability of transportation facility like today. People used to walk for long time to go from one place to another. So, during their long walk, they need to take rest at certain places. Most of the Newars of Kathmandu were a trader and they have to walk spending more than one night outside the settlement. There is no availability of hotel and lodge, where they can eat food and spend the night so, they built and developed public structure like pati\ phalcha sattal and Dharmashala, which can be collectively called as 'The Public Rest House'. (Shresth, 2012)

Pati, a Nepali word originated from Sanskrit word "pattika" also known as phale or phalchain Newari Language, a more specific term for Dharmasala, refers to small rest houses. It is a simple and most fundamental built form of rest houses. Findings have mentioned their existence dating back to lichchhivi period. However, lichchhivipatis do not exist anymore. It is assumed that the appearance of the pati has not changed that much. Most of the remaining pati in Kathmandu valley are built between the ends of 16<sup>th</sup> to the middle of 18<sup>th</sup> century. An inscription describing repairs and reconstruction of the pati were encountered suggesting them to be standing upon the foundation of older structures. Along with the form, the function of the structure does not seem to have changed that much. Pati are found generally facing the street, pound\conduits\hiti, ghat and temples and people still use them for various social gatherings and activities. Meanwhile, gaining pace of modernization and development has put them under huge threat of degradation. (Koirala, 2074)

As mentioned above, the principle function is shelter, a place to rest, work and socialize for the wayfarer to pass the night. "Besides these, it serves the closely interwoven Newari society living in its neighborhood, as a meeting place for games or social and religious gathering. (Korn, 1977)

## **2.5 Art Forms**

### **2.5.1 Paintings**

By their very nature, paintings cannot survive the passage of time as well as buildings or sculptures and there are few examples of paintings in Nepal that date from earlier than the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It is clear that pictorial art in Nepal at first developed side-by-side with sculptures. The earliest example of Nepali painting is a set of small illustrations of Buddhist icons on manuscript covers and leaves that dates from 1028 AD. The earliest manuscripts are on palm leaves, since paper was not generally used until the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. (Hutt, 1995)

Speaking of the Nepalese painting A.K.Coomaraswamy wrote “Nepal possess an important school of painting, which in the same way as the bronzes reflects Indian forms, and has preserved even up to modern times a hieratic style, comparable to that of Pala and Gujerati schools in the eleventh century, the distinction of style as between the Bengali, Nepali illustrated manuscripts is so slight as to be scarcely definable in few words. (Coomaraswamy, 1917, p. 145-146)

### **2.5.2 Stone Art**

The traditions of stone sculpture date back to approximately 2,000 years in Nepal, but the greatest masterpieces date from the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries and the genre declined sharply during the 12<sup>th</sup> century, after which the greatest achievements of Nepali art were in architecture and the casting of bronze. (Hutt, 1995)

A handful of terracotta heads and carved stone fragments dating from third to first centuries CE- have been unearthed at sites in the Terai such as Lumbini, Tilaurakot and Benjarahi but the earliest major stone sculpture yet discovered is the headless torso, usually described as Yakshya, found at Hodigaon and now preserved in the National Museum. This dates from the first to second century AD.

Iconographical representation on stone was made both through the images as well as clearly shaped cut stones. Chips of stones individually of brought together are five or seven or 10 pass for the elephant god, Panchakumari and Dasavidya Goddess respectively.

### **2.5.3 Wood Carving**

Woodcarving in Nepal had attained the highest form of art ever attained in the field. No other country can lay a claim to such a high degree of attainment. (Regmi, 1966) The profusion of carved wood in the old Newar towns of the Kathmandu valley is so great that it almost defies description. Every traditional town houses, every temple and monastery and every place carries example of an enormous variety of carved doors, windows, struts, pillars, torans and so on. Wood was the medium in which the Newar craft man expressed his artistic exuberance to the fullest extent. (Hutt, 1995)

The woodcraft follows the same style as that of stone when we consider the art aspect of carved images. All qualities of art found in the sculptures of early medieval period are found in carving on wood. The strut image in the Mul chowk of the three palaces provides the best examples of woodcarving. The front windows and doorways of Patan palace, which face the courtyard to the west, are beautifully carved and finest example of woodcarving during the medieval period.

The different art forms can be found in Maru Tole as well this different art form describes about the authenticity and ancientness of the place. The wood carving found on the kabindrapur, copper inscription of the Kasthamandap and the different stone sculptures of the Maru hiti are the major highlight of this palace.

## **2.6 Heritage of Maru Tole**

Heritage is a concept, which deals with different culture, society nature and environment. In other word heritage can be termed as a property, which is concerned with an individual, family, group, community, nation and a whole world. The word 'Heritage' is frequently associated with the word 'inheritance' that is something transferred from one generation to another, the role of heritage as a carrier of historical value from the past means that, it is seen as a part of the cultural tradition of the society. (Kunwar, 2017)

Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritages are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. The cultural heritage of the Kathmandu valley are illustrated by seven groups of monuments and buildings, which display the full range of historic and artistic achievements for which the Kathmandu valley is world famous.

Kathmandu is a home for seven different UNESCO World heritage sites. All the sites have been preserved and protected, but in 2003, UNESCO has listed them in indangered list siting them as they are losing their authenticity and are not preserved well but in 2007, it was uplifted from the list. The three Dubar Square of Kathmandu, lalitpur and bhaktapur, the two Buddhist stupas of swyambhu and bouddha and two Hindu temples of pashupatinath and changunarayan are in this list. Even the Maru Tole comes under the area of Kathmandu durbar square and Maru Tole is the home to the biggest rest house of the valley. Kasthamandap and the temple of Ashok Vinayak also come under the Maru Tole. The Kasthamandap represent the tangible heritage of the palace, takes you back to the seventh century and the Ashok Vinayak Temple represent the intangible aspects of the place, and it has kept the fairs, festivals, and social patterns alive for hundreds of years.

## Chapter 3

### History of Ashok Vinayak Temple

#### 3.1 Ganesh Worshipper in Kathmandu Valley

The exact date are still unknown regarding at which date the worship of Ganesh was first introduced in Nepal, there is a legend to the effect that the daughter of the Buddhist King Ashoka first founded a temple in Nepal which was dedicated to Lord Ganesh. Near the current day taudha there is an ancient Nepalese temple dedicated to Ganesh in which there are steals with inscription dating from the eighth century to 10<sup>th</sup> centuries' but the actual date of foundation of the temple is unfortunately unknown. It is safe to say nevertheless that already by the 10<sup>th</sup> century the popularity of Ganesh was gaining ground in Nepal, and that Vinayak "Remover of Obstacles" had been incorporated into the Nepalese pantheon at an early date, drawing worshippers from among the Hindus and Buddhists alike and finding favor with the greatest ones of Nepal. (Gitty, 1971)

The Nepalese image of Ganapati, with the exception of his Heramba form are one headed, and the elephant face has this particularity in Nepal that it is long and narrow and rather flat with the eyes set obliquely. There is often the third eye as well, especially if the image belongs to the Hindu cult, a *Sivatilak* of three horizontal lines. In fact Ganesh may have both the third eye and the tilaka. He possess many arms ranging from two to sixteen and may be represented seated but is more often standing as a rule on the rat. He may wear a curious pleated skirt with ornament hangings. (Levi, 1905)

At Kathmandu, there are two unusual stone statue of Ganesh with a rat under each foot, both images are one handed but one had four arms wheareas the other has sixteen hands both embrace the Shakti with the normal left arm. Ganesh wearing the serpent girdle and serpent brahmanical thread is common to all countries where he is worshipped but Ganesh holding the serpent god over his head like lord Shiva in one of his dancing form as nataraja, with few exceptions is known only to Nepal. In both cases the head of the serpent is grasped in the upper right hand and the tail in the upper left hand. Doubtless the Nepalese were acquainted with the north indian dancing formof shiva holding the Serpents (Nagas) as a canopy over his head and it is therefore not surprising to find the serpent adopted in Nepal for certain representation of Ganesh in dancing attitude as Shivas son he was sometimes given the jeweled head dress of Shiva, the Kirti Mukut as well as the Crescent- moon tilaka. (Gitty, 1971)

Kathmandu valley is a beautiful garden of multi coloured culture and the fountain of harmonious culture. Here in Kathmandu both Hinduism and Buddhism grew up and developed together and the Hindu gods were revered by the Buddhist and the Buddhist gods were revered by the Hindus as well wheare as Lord Ganesh is equally revered by both the Hindus and Buddhist communities in the Kathmandu valley.

There are numerous number of Ganesh idols and temples in the Kathmandu valley in comparison to other gods and goddess. The Newar communities of Kathmandu are regarded as the main worshipper of Lord Ganesh, both Hindu Newar community and Buddhist Newar community have traditionally been worshipping Lord Ganesh with the aim of attaining happiness, prosperity, health and self-Enlighten. (Anonymous, 2015)

In various religious activities of the Newar community of the Kathmandu Valley, there has been a long tradition of worshipping lord Ganesh by adopting the Vedic and tantric methods in this process the Newars use their own language and their own rituals, which makes the lord Ganesh as their own original Deity. And there are different names of toles and alleys named after Shree Ganesh; the process of worshipping lord Ganesh by building temples and idols according to the name of lord Ganesh has been very actively done since the Malla Period. Although the Newar Community, who have a great faith in lord Ganeshes legends, traditions and rituals worship lord Ganesh by adopting it into their own culture, tradition and rituals. (Shakya, 2006)

Vinayak Ganesh influenced the cultural life of the malla era in the Kathmandu valley. Bestower of the auspiciousness, benefits and blessings, the Omkar form Shree Ganesh, Akhilbidhithnath and Siddhipradata, Bishwonayak and Vinayak all became very famous during the malla era and even tilldate among various forms of the vinayaks; the Siddhivinayak is still very popular. Some of the local vinayaks are the symbol of faith for the people living in Kathmandu valley and they are Koinaitva Vinayak, Kamaladi Vinayak, Kamalakshi Vinayak, Thamamandu Vinayak, Inayatya Vinayak, Inagatra Vinayak etc. The names of the local Ganesh are also attached to the names of the streets, tolls and alleys in the Kathmandu Valley. (Anonymous, 2015)

In Bhaktapur the Prajapati's worship Lord Ganesh in the form of *Vishwakarma* and there are 24 various Ganeshs idols installed in different parts of bhaktapur to protect it from evil forces. The 24 Vishwakarma Ganeshs of Bhaktapur are as follows: Marwacho, Itachhen, Herwachhen, Khaupa, Mangalache, Laskudpma, Bolachhen, Lakulachhen, Tamaho, Kwachhen, Yalachhen, Tulachhen, Tibukchhen, Kochhen, Yachhen, Gwavari, Volachhen, Dhalachhen, Tantrapal, Inacho, Kwathando, Gachen, Taulachen and Janla. (Shakya, 2006)

The newar community of the Kathmandu valley worships lord Ganesh in their own culture and treat them according to their instincts and trend. The fact that Lord Ganesh has left a deep impression on the mind of Newar community is proved by great devotion shown by the people. As the prajapatis worship lord ganesa in the form of Vishwakarma, there are even other people from different community and different casts worship lord Gasnesh as their totem. (Shakya, 2006)

The followers of Buddhism recognize Buddhism as modesty, wisdom and enlightenment and they always remember all these three elements from both theoretical and practical approach, which has also helped the Buddhism to influence a large area of the entire world, including Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Afghanistan, Tibet and different countries from Europe and America respectively. Only after the introduction of Mahayan sect under Buddhism, the Hindu gods gained a place of worship in Buddhism. The Buddhist followers accepted Lord Ganesh, Indra, Hanuman, Brahma, Surya, Chandra, Laxmi, Naag, Garuda, Yakshya, Kubar and other various gods in that time and it is going on till date. Under the Mahayan sect of Buddhism in the Vajrayan branch, the seekers have accepted Lord Ganesh as an absolute helper deity for the accomplishment of the desired knowledge and goal. (Anonymous, 2015)

Ganapati Hridayam is a unique text of Nepali Buddhist literature written in Sanskrit language. After seeing the praises of Lord Ganesh in the form of ganapati vandana in this book, only then one can know how important place does Lord Ganesh hold in Buddhism. The seekers of the Bajrayan sect believe that mantras (sacred word or syllable) are perfected by Praising Lord Ganesh bajrayani Buddhists of Nepal and Tibet always have idol of Lord Buddha along with the idol of Lord Ganesh in their houses. Among the Buddhist idols built in Kathmandu valley, there are idols of Lord Buddha and Lord Ganesh found together in different forms and essence in different parts of the Valley. In the ancient Buddhist text called "*Kalpadrumaradanam*", there is an interesting story about Lord Ganesh which also somehow proves that the importance of Lord Ganesh in Buddhism. (Goshwami, 1974)

### **3.2 Vinayak Cult in Kathmandu**

The Kathmandu Valley is surrounded by hills and green patches of leveled land and these places are covered with temples and shrines of gods and goddesses in their various names. Among various kinds of gods, the shrine of Ganesh- Vinayak, another name for the elephant headed god of wisdom and good fortune is very popular and ventured by the people of the valley very much. There are also images of him noticed in different places around the Kathmandu valley. He is the god of learning and success so people always put great regard to him by offering daily worship. He is being one of the highly propitiated gods of good fortune and wisdom. (Satyal, 2002)

Different scholars have given their own view and have selected their four primary vinayaks, these temples hold a deep cultural and religious significance among the people living the Kathmandu valley. Shakyas have selected Surya Vinayak: Bhaktapur, Chandra Vinayak: Chabhil, Jala Vinayak: Chobar and Ashok Vinayak: Kathmandu as the four major Vinayaks of the Kathmandu valley, saying that Karya Vinayak is not worshipped in the group of four vinayaks in Kathmandu as they have Ashok Vinayak. (Shakya, 2006, p.10) In bhasa bamshawali, interestingly only four Ganesh are selected as follows Chandra Vinayak: Chobar, Surya Vinayak: Bhaktapur, Rakta



Vinayak: Devpatan, Sewat Vinayak: Chabhail. (Paudyal, 2020, p.34) Whereas scholar Satyal, have selected Surya Vinayak, Karya Vinayak, Jala Vinayak and Ashok Vinayak, as the four major vinayaks of the kathmandu valley. (Satyal, 2002) where as another scholar Parajuli, has selected all five vinayaks stating them as Ganapati and have talked about their importance in the Kathmandu Valley. (Parajuli, 2075, p.43)

Ashok Vinayaka

Jala Vinayaka

Karya Vinayaka

Surya Vinayaka

Chandra Vinayak

### **3.2.1 Jala Vinayaka**

The temple is located five kilometers southwest from Kathmandu, near Chovar and its famous gorge. The principal image of the shrine is as big rock. It extends outside the temple on the back, only a tiny portion in the front vaguely resembles elephant tusk. The image of this vinayak is different from other images of God Vinayak. The temple and it's architecture is supposed to belong to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.(Satyal, 2002) According to the Buddhist belief, this deity is an eyewitness to the creation of a passage to drain a lake to let human civilization flourish in this valley by the effort of *Manjusri*. This god is said to be existing from the beginning of time, so the god is also worshipped as *Adi- Vinayak*. (Shakya, 2006) The Jala Vinayak temple is a popular destination for performing various ceremonies at various auspicious times.

During the reign of King Shiva Singh and Harihar Singh, the priest of the Chovar renovated and kept the golden pinnacle in the temple in 723 N.S. This proves that the temple was already been established before this time line, which can be proved by the inscription found in Patan, Chobahal. (Bajracharya, 2056) This temple is also seen as the symbol of water and light. (Parajuli, 2075, p.43)

### **3.2.2 Karya Vinayaka**

The temple of Karya vinayaka is situated on the top of a small hillock between Bungamati and Khokana inhabited by Newar communities. The term Karya means a job or profession; hence, this god is remembered for the perfection of all undertakings and responsibilities. Karya Vinayaka is worshipped as a guardian deity and a deliverer of success in plantation of rice. Karya Vinayak is also known as the god of success. (Parajuli, 2075)

The name of this shrine might have been taken from the term karma of the *Kamarupavinayaka*, representing the lustful desire. In this way, the ordinary meaning of the Karya Vinayaka is taken from. In the same way Bungayamha Lokesvara, a

principle Buddhist deity of the rice-cultivating farmers of this valley, the Buddhist god Bungayamha Lokeshvara is also said to have been brought from the same location and was convinced as the son of a Yaksini of the Kamarup-Kamaksa. (Shakya 2006)

### **3.2.3 Surya Vinayaka**

In the southern hill of Bhaktapur, is the very beautiful and very popular temple of Surya Vinayak, believed to be started by the Lichchhavi King Vishnu Dev Varma, The temple is so placed that the first rays of the rising sun strike the golden, masked image of the elephant-headed deity. By so doing, Surya the sun god pays homage to Ganesh and seeks blessings for his day's journey across the heavens. (Doig, 1994) There is interesting folk related to the creation of the forest including the rise of Surya Vinayaka himself. When Hanuman was hurrying up to transfer the hill full of medicinal herb named Sanjibani Buti, a small piece of that hill fell down and thus turns down as the hill of Surya Vinayaka, coincidentally, the hill of Surya Vinayaka is also full of medicinal herbs. This temple is also known as the temple of Knowledge. (Parajuli, 2075)

The locals also believe that if a toddler cannot speak even at the age of two or three, he/she is taken to the shrine of Surya Vinayak. Firstly, they pay homage to the Lord Ganesh. Later, the children taken to the small hut situated on the western side of the temple. The child is kept inside the hut, the door is closed, and the parents call their children from the latticed window. It is believed after all this, due to fear of light and not seeing his parents around, the child starts crying and eventually talking.

### **3.2.4 Chandra Vinayak**

Chandra vinayak is a Sanskrit term meaning a vinayak representing the moon. The shrine of this Ganesh is located in the northwest of Kathmandu valley. The Chandra vinayak is also known as the *Sweta Vinayak*, by the locals meaning a White Ganesh however, both the terms, Chandra and *Sweta* in Sanskrit, represent the purity or *Sattvic* ego, hence he is popular as a physician god, one who cures diseases and external body injuries. This Ganesh is also known as the *Rakta Vinayak*. (Shakya, 2006)

It can be understood that Chandra Vinayak was already established in the Lichchhavi period, which can be proved by the fact that during the reign of King Shiva Dev a chariot feast was organized in the Batshalashwori temple, even Pashupatinath was invited in this chariot fest, and the chariot of Batshalashwori was taken to the temple of Chandra Vinayak. In the presence of Pashupatinath, the crown in the idol of Chandra vinayak and the absence of rat in the normal sculpture proves that Chandra vinayak is from the Lichchhavi Period. (Parajuli, 2075)

### **3.2.5 Ashok Vinayaka**

Ashok Vinayaka is situated in the middle of the Kathmandu valley and in the premises of the Kathmandu Durbar Square (pic: 01). Ashok Vinayak is one of the

principle deities in the four Vinayaka of the Kathmandu. It is believed in the ancient days the temple was surrounded with Ashoka tree and the name Ashok Vinayaka was also taken from the same. (SAVG, 2070)

The current structure of the temple (pic: 03) was built in the period of King Rajendra Bir Bikram Shah in which can be proved by the copper plate inscription in the temple as well as in the Devmala Bamshawali. The shrine was worshipped even before that period but the exact shape and size of the temple is unknown. The local believes that since the beginning of Malla Kingdom the Malla Kings given Ashok Vinayaka status of royal Ganesh. According to local belief, professionals for progress in their expected undertakings and professions worship Ashoka Vinayaka. The elephant-headed god is believed to be a guarantor of the good fortune. He is said to be seated under the Ashoka tree or a pleasure tree, where there is no grief and sorrow, hence called Ashoka meaning a person without grief, pain or agony. This shrine is commonly known as *Maruganedyoya Gajuomaru*. (Thapa, U D)

Ashok Vinayaka is also developed as a son of Hasti-Mukha Ganesh, iconographically represented as the contemplation of his father Hasti-Mukha under the Kalpa Tree. The iconography of the Rupamandana includes his description as the embodiment of the OM, a Hindu principle syllable. (Shakya, 2006, p.13)

It is said by the locals that if they worship other gods first then, there will be problems and indigence, so they always opt to worship the Ashok Vinayaka at first. The temple opens at 4 am in the morning so that the locals can come and worship the Ashoka Vinayaka at first. The locals believe and worship the Ashok Vinayaka in each and every festival and occasion, which comes in their way be it the birth of the new born or the death of a family members. In case, if Ashok Vinayaka should be worshipped in home then a Sukunda (ritual oil lamp) with a Sapta Naag are also worshipped. (SAVG, 2070) Even today, the ritual after the birth of a child, Janku puja is also performed in Ashok Vinayaka Temple, and the rituals after the death of a person in the 12<sup>th</sup> day are performed in this temple.

The Maharjans serve as the main priest of the temple, and there are 162 families associated with the temple. The selections of priest families are done from within these 162 families, and they are rotated on a weekly basis, Starting from Tuesday and ending on Monday. Each family has to wait for approximately three years, one month and two weeks for their turn. All the selection works is carried out by the Shree Ashok Vinayaka Guthi, which is managed by the 11-member core working committee. Additionally, a committee of 10 representative members takes care of all of the festivals celebrated through the year. Furthermore, an additional 30 members are selected for the period of one year to serve as the work force. These 30 members are rotated annually. (Maharjan. T, Personal Communication, 13 September 2021)

### **3.3 Ashok Vinayak Temple: An introduction**

Ganesh is the Hindu god of wisdom and knowledge: he is the reputed eldest son of Siva and Parvati and is represented with an elephant's head an emblem of quality judgment, and is frequently attended by rat. Sometimes riding on one, the conduct of that animal being esteemed by the Hindus as peculiarly marked by wisdom and for sight, he has generally four hands, but sometimes six, of eight or only two. (Moor, 1810) Although Ganesh is always called as, the son of Mahadev and Parvati there is yet a legend in the Shivapurana of his origin that would exclude his reputed father from any share in the honor of his existence.

Ganesh is a Sanskrit term composed of Gana and Isa with two different meanings, that of 'the horde' and its lord, to represent the term of the lord of Ganes. In this rank this term is applied to Hindu divinities of lower category, that of a demi god. (Shakya, 2006)

Ganesha's head symbolizes the Atman or the soul, which is the supreme reality of human existence, while his body signifies Maya or mankind's earthly existence. The elephantine head denotes wisdom and its trunk represents Om, the sound symbol of cosmic reality. In his upper right hand, Ganesha holds a goad, which helps him propel mankind forward on the eternal path and remove obstacles from the way. The noose in Ganesha's upper left hand is a gentle implement to capture all difficulties. The broken tusk that Ganesha holds like a pen in his lower right hand is a symbol of sacrifice, which he broke for writing the Mahabharata, one of Sanskrit's two major texts. The rosary in his other hand suggests that the pursuit of knowledge should be continuous. The laddoo or sweet he holds in his trunk represents the sweetness of the Atman. His fan-like ears convey that he will always hear the prayers of the faithful. The snake that runs round his waist represents energy in all forms, and he is humble enough to ride the lowest of creatures, a mouse. (Das, 2018)

Ganesh, also known as Ganapati, Vinayak, Vighnaharta, Buddhipriya, Pillaiyar and Ekdanta, is one of the most popular and local god in Hindu culture. He is the son of Parvati and Siva. The late Pauranic legends account for his birth and aspect in various ways. According to the most generally accepted version, his head having been cut off, Siva ordered the gods to bring the head of the first living being they should meet with in the northern quarter, and though this proved to be that of a one-tusked elephant, its head was made use of and Vighnesvara restored to life in this fashion, whence is derived another of his names, Ekdanta the one-tusked. (Coomaraswamy, 1928)

Ganesh has only one tusk, and hence is called Ekdanta. The reason of this is as follows Parasurama, who was a favorite disciple of Shiva went to Kailash to visit his master. On arriving at the inner apartment, his entrance was opposed by Ganesh, as his father was asleep. Parasurama nevertheless urged his way and after a long dialogue, the two came to blows. Ganesh had at first the advantage seizing

Parasurama in his tusk, and giving him a twirl that left him sick and senseless. On recovering, Rama threw his axe at Ganesa, who recognizing it as his father's weapon Shiva having given it to Parsurama received it with all humility upon one of his tusks, which it immediately severed, and hence Ganesa has but one tusk. (Wilkins, 1900)

Ganesha is said to be an incarnation of lord Krishna, according to a story mentioned in *Ganapati Khanda* of the *Brahmavaivarta Purana*. *Saniscara* or the Saturn is said to have beheaded him. His recapitulation by placing an elephant's head to the trunk of a baby ganesh was credited to lord Mahavisnu in the story. However, the story differs from that of the other Purans. The story categorically states that the head transplanted on the body of Ganesa belonged to the elephant, *Airavata* or *Gajaraja* instead of *Gajasura*. This purana also mentions his eight names i.e, Vighnesha, Ganesa, Herambha, Gajananda, Lambodara, Ekadanta, Surpakarna and Vinayaka. The list however differs from that of the *Ganesh Purana*. Apart from *Lambodara* and *Gajanand*; other six names are very different from what are listed in other *Purans*. (Shakya, 2006)

In the Varaha Puran: Ganesh is said to have been produced by Siva alone. The immortals and holy sages observing that no difficulty occurred in accomplishing good or evil deeds which they and others commenced, consulted together respecting the means by which obstacles might be opposed to the commission of bad actions, and repaired to siva for counsel, to whom they said: Oh Mahadeva God of gods, three eyed, bearer of the trident, it is thou alone who canst create a being capable of opposing obstacles to the commission of improper acts. Hearing these words Siva looked at Parvati and whilst thinking how he could effect the wishes of the gods, from the splendor of his countenance there sprang into existence a youth shedding radiance around, endowed with the qualities of Siva, and evidently another Rudra, and captivating by his beauty the female inhabitants of heaven. "Uma seeing his beauty was excited with jealousy and in her anger pronounced this curse" thou shalt not offend my sight with the form of a beautiful youth: therefore assume an elephant's head and a large belly, and thus shall all the beauty vanish. Siva then addresses his son saying "the name shall be Ganesa and the son of Siva: thou shalt be chief of the vinayakas and gas; success and disappointment shall spring from thee: and great shall be thine influence amongst the gods, and in sacrifices and all affairs. Therefore shalt thou be worshipped and imoked the first on all occasions, otherwise the object and prayers of him whom omits to do so shall fail. (Wilkins, 1900)

The extent of his popularity has boosted him to be included, in the Hindu pantheon, the panchayat and puja, consisted of the 5 main cults: The Vishnu cult, the Shiva cult, the Shakti cult, the Surya cult and lastly the Ganesh cult which started spreading in the sixth century AD and reached its peak in the ninth century. However, in Nepal it seems to have reached its peak in the medieval period. Together the panchatayatana puja are known to represent the five aspects of god – the five elements of Earth, Air,

Water ,Fire and ether .Ganesh is supposed to represent water, which is why he is associated with creation. (Grewal, 2001)

The Kathmandu valley skyline owes its character to the hundreds of temples with their multiple pyramidal roof tiers. The majority of these extend temples were built in the late malla period (15<sup>th</sup> to18<sup>th</sup> century AD). The oldest surviving tiered temple, positively dated through existing inscription to have been built in (391 AD, is the five tiered Khumbheswor temple in patan. (Tiwari, 1989, p. 5)

Janga Bahadur Kunwar, was once unemployed and a gambler, he lost his money while gambling. Dharmanarayan paid off Janga Bahadur's debts and saved his reputation. Both became close with each other, later when Janga Bahadur was hailed for his deeds and became Prime Minister and Army Chief of the Nation. Janga Bahadur recognized Dharmanarayan's integrity and employed him. Moreover, Junga Bahadur has helped him a lot in doing several religious and socials works. It was also believed that Dharmanarayan was able to lend loan to Junga Bahadur and The Government of Nepal and due to this Dharmanarayan earned the title “*Sahu*” for his commitment and hard work he has done towards the society. (SAVG, 2070)

In Kathmandu, prior to the Rana period, 'sal' or 'coal' sites were used for extracting oil, mainly operated from Salmi. This practice extended to nearby areas like Kirtipur, Bhadgaon, and Banepa. Noteworthy oil extraction locations in Kathmandu included Kotusal-1, Dakshasal-1, Falaichasal-1, Nhusal-1, Talachisal-1, Thahitaisal-1, Pyuthalsal-1, and Vatusal-1. Operators “*Salmi*” received mustard for oil production through ‘Hitichok’ from various sources, including wetlands and government-owned land. Although the origin of this privilege is unclear, it seems to have ended by the conclusion of Prime Minister Janga Bahadur Rana's rule in 1853 AD., later these wetlands and government-owned land “*Serras*” (Large Productive Lands) were held as “*Jagirs*” (Jobs) by the government, granting productive land to employees.

It shows The ‘Hitichok’ station’s approval has been revoked, and Janga Bahadur has associated the eight oil coals with Kathmandu Ganeshtan. Oil is needed for daily worship and lighting lamps during the festivals. Janga Bahadur's family and Dharmanaran placed idols at the Ganesha shrine, with notable offerings such as a Silver Elephant from Junga Badhur’s Mother, Silver Tympanum from Junga Bahadur’s Brother, Silver Ganesha idol from Dharmanaran himself, The Golden Roof from King Surendra Bir Bikram Shah, under Janga Bahadur's suggestion, and Jatra Khat (Carrier for god during different fairs and festivals, made up of woods). A Guthi was established for safeguarding these items and conducting fairs and festivals regularly. Dharmanaran and his children were entrusted with the income from these eight oil coals for maintaining the religious site. Funds from mustard supplies were allocated for this purpose based on his request. (Pangeni, 2068)

As a religious institutions and place of worship, the temples in Nepal have had a very old past. As a structure, that enshrines a god or some other object of veneration. Circumambulation, adoration and worship, it has had a varied growth in different parts of the sub-continent. This was according to the local needs and religious beliefs and subject. (Srinivasan, 1971)

Kathmandu is more important for its Nepalese appearance of the multi-storied temples and towers, which make its skyline unique. Kirkpatrick was one of the first outsiders to note and emphasize the lovely and exotic horizon line of this city, which still impressive today, from a vantage point like the hill of Swayambhunath. (Bernier, 1978) Kathmandu is a home to thousands of temples in every alleys and every crossover junction we can find temple of different Gods and Goddess. In those temples the temple of Lord Ganesh is very common in Kathmandu, this shows how important is Lord Ganesh in every Nepali household.

Ganesh is the first god worshipped only by Hindus. In every religious act of Hindus, there is a hymn in Sanskrit, which describes about worshipping Ganesh in the beginning. “*Sangrame Sankate Chaiva Vighnastasya Najayate*” means Ganesh is worshipped so that there is no hindrance in the beginning of education, marriage, going on a journey and returning in battle and in case of any crisis. (Dhakal, 2062) The Sanskrit word ‘Vinayaka’ means the lord who is originated from a single seed, interpreted as the elephant – faced God Ganesa, who was born without a Nayaka or sire. Vinayaka is also another name of an elephant -headed God Ganesa. The Hindu epics and myths refer to this Vedic term to imply to the group of ‘hauling spirits and wanderers’. In India the text of manavagrihyasutra it provides the name list of a group of 4 vinayaks i.e. *Salakantaka, Kusmandarajaputra, Devajajna* and *Usmita*. The cult of worshipping vinayaka seems to have developed during the smriti period, but in Nepal “*Manavagrihyasutra*” was written by the name of Narada Samhita and again later translated by the name of “*Vidagdhamukhamandanal*” done in the period of King Jayasthiti Malla, 1380 AD. The popularity of the text is very noticeable because of the social transformation reformation of that period. The impact of the text has influenced the pre-existing or new establishments of four principal vinayak concepts in the Kathmandu valley. The manuscript “*Vinayarastavaraja*”, was copied four decades before the reign of King Jayari Malla i.e. march 339 AD, which shows the popularity of the vinayaka tradition since the dawn of the Malla rule in the Kathmandu valley. However, the name of the four vinayakas seems to have originated from the local tradition. (Shakya, 2006)

### **3.4 Historicity of Ashok Vinayak Temple**

Nepal is also known as the playground of Lord Shri Ganesh and the spiritual ground of Ganesh devotees. They worship the Lord Ganesh in every household as the part of the panchayan deities, the first worship of lord Ganesh is done for the benefit of hindrance on Manglik and religious occasions. The Ganesh Puran Yagya is performed

for no hindrance, the lord Ganesh fasting is performing for fulfilling different wishes and different mantra chanting is also done to make Ganesh happy and get benefit from that. The worshipping of Ganesh is Vedic and Tantric form and invoking life in the idol makes the place more special and loved place from the lord Ganesh. Nepal is also known as a soared area for worshipping lord Ganesh due to the outpouring of unlimited faith in lord Ganesh, and the attitude of the people who regard a mountain at Ganesh Himal as the shape of lord Ganesh and worship it. The mature faith devotion, reverence and respect to the current Nepali society, which follows Shri Ganesh whole heartedly through culture, Sadhana and art is the worship of Shri Ganesh has been done since the historic times.(Anonymous, 2015)

Ganesh was a popular deity in the puranical period in India. The puranic period roughly corresponds to the age of gupta rule in ancient India i.e. between the fourth and sixth century. The history of Hinduism according to lapidary records begins in the lichchhivi period between the fifth and eighth century according to the evidence provided by lapidary records in Nepal. The images of Ganesh might have been introduced them subsequently. Ganesh is sometimes noticed as an independent god and sometimes as a sub ordinate god in saivism, saktism and in other religious system. (Shakya, 2006, p.22) The worship of Ganesh is very popular in Hinduism, which is influenced by saivism. Ganesh is a member of the Shiva family. There are few records related to Ganesh in Nepal. There are two such records of the medieval period which record the installation of the Ganesh statue has been mentioned. There are many idols of Ganesh in Nepal valley but very few of them are old. There is an old idol of Ganesh near the west door of Pashupatinath temple, which seems to be of lichchhavi period. It is in the standing form and its trunk and right hand is broken. The idol of Ganesh is also found in the shiva family, in which he is seen in a dancing pose. (Regmi, 2030)

As the son of shiva and parvati, Ganesh is the only other transitional deity that transcends the boundaries of the two groups of deities. As vinayaka and remover of obstacles, he provides the entrance into the realm of the divine. In the Nepalese context, Ganesh can accept blood sacrifice and alcohol; therefore can be called both a “fierce” and “benign” deity. Ganesh is one of the popular deities in Nepal. He is worshipped as *Vignakaraka*, remover of all obstacles. (Bangdel, 1996)

The idols of Ganesh are found in three positions: standing, reclining (seating) and dancing in different parts of the Kathmandu Valley. Duvo, shami leaves and laddoos are the most favourite elements of Ganesh and people always offer these things while worshipping Ganesh. It is believed that during any religious work, Ganesh is worshipped with two duvos and three duvos are offered to Ganesh during the Homes and Yagyas and on his birthday bhadra sukla chaturthi 21 duvos are offered and it is believed that you will be free from sorrow, pain, grief and sufferings. (Dhakal, 2062)



Ganesh is popular as a local divinity. He is also known by the terms of *Ganedyo*, *Jnaidyo* or *Jnayadyo* in Newari language. He is a popular common god in both i.e. Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal. His local names are uniquely blended with the lifestyles of the Newars in the Kathmandu valley. There are several beliefs and hearsays related to Ganesh that convey his popularity as an indispensable god of right conduct, good luck and fortune. His spiritual description as the initiator of auspicious beginnings and destroyer of obstacles made it possible for him to secure the position of the first worshipped, as the source of light in Nepal. (Shakya, 2006)

Lichchhavi era is the golden era of Nepal. The social, cultural, religious and political picture of the Kirat reign before this era is not so clear. Lichchhavi era from (first century to ninth century AD) is a prosperous period in term of language, literature, religion, philosophy, art and politics, which can be proud by the high level inscription of lichchhavi era. One can say that the Nepali society was unfamiliar with Shri Ganesh at the time as there is not much discussion about Ganesh in the lichchhavi inscription, but while the lichchhavi dynasty were ruling in Nepal, Gupta dynasty was ruling in India. Due to geographic proximity and religious and cultural similarities Nepal and India had a harmonious relationship. Although the Guptas were followers of Vaishnavism, they were also devotee of Lord Ganesh. At that time Shri Ganesh Temple and Ganesh idol had a reputation in India and due to the geographical, cultural and religious proximity in Nepal also there must have been the practice of worshipping and constructing Ganesh Temple. Similarly in 867 AD. A hand written literature called "*Sahottartantra*" is found in which there is a word written "Ganadevkula" where "Devkula" refers to the modern day word Temple, This proves that the practice of primacy to the lord Ganesh was given during the Lichchhavi period as the member of the shiva family.( Tandon, 2042)

In many of the Uma maheshwor idol of lichchhavi period, Ganesh, Nandi, Bhringi and Virbhadra are shown as the member of the shiva family. The lord Ganesh idols shown in the uma maheshwar idol plates are shown in dancing posture and asana mudra. The idols of lichchhavi period used to be very simple and crownless the idols used to have garlands in their neck and snake as a sacred thread going around the body and a thread in the belly. The four hands are shown and they are holding Parshu and modak patra in the left hand and Akshyamala and flower in the right hand respectively. Such idols are found scattered in different places of Kathmandu. Many of the facts would have been revealed even if any inscriptions were found in the Ganesh idols scattered in Kathmandu valley. Although records of many idols are not available, it is not difficult to determine their age based on the characteristics of the idols. The most interesting fact is that 'Omkar' was inscribed at the beginning of any inscription during the Lichchhavi period. Additionally, 'Shri Ganesh' was also associated with 'Omkar' in the Upanishads, which indicates that Ganesh worship has been practiced in Nepal since ancient time. (Anonymous, 2015)

### 3.5 Importance of Ashok Vinayak Temple

Ganesh is the son of Shiva and Parvati, and according to different Hindu texts he is the first to be worshipped god. He is also the founder of knowledge and wisdom. Hindus also call Ganesh as *Ganapati*, shivagana includes of Ganesh, Kumar, Nandi, Bhringi, Udarmukh, Badharmukh, Lambhakarna and others. The main deity among all is Ganesh, so he is called as the *Ganapati*. The description of *Ganapati* was first given in *Rigveda* in the Hymn two, Line 23, and Verse one. Ganesh is mentioned in the purans with a fat body, a big belly, and four arms and a tusk, elephant head, holding a conch, chakra, and mace or kumadini flower in his hands, a crescent moon on his forehead and a mouse as a mount. (Sharma, 1999) Lord Ganesh is also regarded as the source of all power. Ganesh is worshipped in our thoughts thinking perception and behavior. All the virtues of powers are beautiful in him. Ganesh's eyes are small which gives us the knowledge that we must have subtle vision. Ganesh has two big ears tells us that we should listen to everything in the world. Ganesh's small mouth gives us the knowledge that we should speak less and speak well.

Ganesh has two teeth, one intact and the other broken. An intact tooth is a symbol of reverence that is, reverence should always be there. A broken tooth is a symbol of wisdom. This means that once the intellect is confused the faith should not be shaken. Ganesh's big head is a symbol of wisdom. Ganesh's big stomach indicates endurance to be digested. His huge belly is a symbol of generosity. The trunk of Ganesh's act as *Om*, which stands for prosperity if it is tilted in the left side and it, stands for freedom from all worldly pleasure and the attainment of Mokshya (Salvation) if it is tilted in the right side. The snake on Ganesh's waist is a symbol of *Vishwa Kundalini*, while the snake's extended head is a symbol of awakened kundalini.

Ganesh's vehicle (mount) is a rat. Rats eat and destroy anything. This is how we can know why Ganesh's vehicle becomes a rat because we have to keep such destructive activities like rats should be kept under control and we have to suppress them no matter how small they are. Therefore, we should always suppress the disorder with the inspiration of Lord Ganesh. Therefore, the form of Ganesh clearly proves that his form is the form of divine qualities. Ganesh is such an idol of faith that if our soul can touch, our worthless life can become very useful and fruitful. Ganesh is such a disruptive destroyer; whose worshipping or paying homage to him alone can destroy all our disorders. While worshipping Ganesh remembering him, seeing him and understanding the meaning of these above-mentioned symbols all our prayers will definitely be successful. (SAVG, 2070)

Belies the size of Ashok Vinayak Temple, it has always played a pivotal role in keeping different cultural and religious activities intact from the ancient time. Almost all of the religious and cultural rituals are taking place right in the premises of the temple from ancient time to till date. Ashok Vinayak has not served only as a local deity it has also played part in various religious and cultural celebrations of the royal

family, from which it has earned reputation of being a Ganesh worshipped by Royals. Ashok vinayak has helped a lot in keeping the religion and culture intact. Ashok Vinayak has also helped local people to be connected with each other's through different fairs and festivals throughout the year. The proper management and active participation of the *Guthiars* and the working committee has always kept the Ashok Vinayak Temple in good shape and in proper and systematic functioning of the work chain with in the priests of the temple.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The Tangible Heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple**

#### **4.1 Tangible Heritage**

The word “Heritage” is frequently associated with the word “Inheritance”, that is something transferred from one generation to another. The role of heritage is as a carrier of historic value from the past means that it is seen as the part of the cultural traditional of the society. (Kunwar, 2017, p.181) Heritage is not only something we want to hand down to the future generations but also something, we want to appreciate and experience fully. In these sense, heritage can be understood as our legacy from the past, the way we live today and what we take on to the future generations. (Masser et al., 1994)

ICOMOS (1999) defines heritage as “A broad concept that includes the natural as well as the cultural environment. It encompasses landscape, historic places, sites and built environments as well as bio diversity, collections, past and continuing cultural practices, knowledge and living experiences. It records and expresses the long process of historical development, forming the essence of diverse national, regional, indigenous and local identities and is an integral part of modern life. It is a dynamic reference point and positive instrument for growth and change. The particular heritage and collective memory of each locality or community is irreplaceable and important foundation for development, both now and in the future.

A mode of cultural production that has recourse to the past as a specific way of interpreting and utilizing by gone times that links individuals with larger collective grounds, Cultural heritage connects memories of histories and provides the sense of belonging. Cultural heritage shows that we come from somewhere and have a story to tell. It provides us with confidence and securities to face the future and when we live in older places, we can identify layers upon layers on historic and traditions each with its own story to tell, of where we came from and what we have achieved such as through the products and services for which the city is known. (Kunwar, 2017)

Heritage is concerned with material and immaterial, i.e. tangible and intangible remnants of the past. Tangible cultural heritage includes all assets that have some physical embodiment of cultural values such as heritage cities, historical towns, buildings, archaeological sites, cultural landscape, cultural objects, collections and museums (UNESCO WHC et al., 2013). If tangible heritage represent communities hardware then the intangible cultural heritage represents the communities’ software. The UNESCO convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage 2003 states that.

Tangible heritage includes buildings and historic places, monuments, artifacts etc., which are, considers worthy of preservation for the future. These include object

significant to the archaeology, architecture, science or technology of a specific culture. Objects are important to the study of human history because they provide a concrete basis for ideas and can validate them. Their preservation demonstrates recognition of the necessity of the past and of the things that tell the story. Preserved objects also validate memories and the actuality of the object as opposed to a reproduction or surrogate, draws people in and gives them a literal way of touching the past. This unfortunately poses a danger as places and things are damaged by the hands of tourists, the light required to display them, and another risk of making an object known and available. (UNESCO, 2016)

Tangible cultures are related to the physical structure of the society. It refers to cultural elements that are physically created or made. Tangible construction of the society, therefore, tangible culture refers to cultural elements that are created or made in physical form. People have developed it while fulfilling their needs. Intangible culture, material object includes mosques, temples, monasteries, viharas, old traditional houses, war machines, weapons, ponds, playground, battlefield etc. such cultures are developed by people along with the development of society and are refined according to the demand of time. (Tuladhar and Vajracharya, 2070) Historically Shatya Mohan Joshi has considered musical instruments to be tangible culture.

## **4.2 Architecture of Ashok Vinayak Temple**

Architecture is a general term used to describe building and other physical structures. It can be simply said as the art and science of designing buildings and non-buildings structures. Architecture is the collection from of construction related to the general people in the form of houses, Palaces (dedicated to the Kings and Queens), Temples, Stupa, Chaitya and Viharas. The history of architecture began when the primitive people started making a safe place in form of caves and dens, according to their skills to safe guard from sun , rain, hot or cold and different scary animals. The first beginning of architecture can be said as started from the primitive period and by the primitive people of the, Neolithic age who made safe place and huts according to their needs, want, desire, and skills. Along with the fulfillment of their needs, gradually people started to build places for their gods and goddess whom they worshipped. (Chhetri and Rayamajhi, 2076)

The vision of a temple in Nepal evokes among the Hindus feelings of reverence, sanctity and spirituality as it symbolize and abode of god and a place of worship. Its origin goes back to the pre-Christian era, and its evolution into a monument of great architectural merit is marked by its conscious efforts on the part of several ruling dynasties from fifth to 18<sup>th</sup> centuries to make an institution of enduring importance in the social, economic and political integration of the country. (Champakalakshmi, 2002)

The setting of Nepali temple today is clearly urban and it is in this urban setting in the crossroads created by streets and the space and square they encompass, that the temple and its form come to life. A study of the urban development pattern of the Kathmandu valley shows that both the temples and its setting derive from more than 2000-year-old history of urbanization. The form of the city itself was mediated principally by temples and their associated rituals. That such should have been the case with lichchhavi towns is understandable given the classical Hindu knowledge and practices in city planning and patterning that they would have brought from their background in their gangetic plains. Surprisingly, what comes out of an analysis of the records of the lichchhavi themselves is that the kirat society that preceded them was also quite urban and the Kathmandu valley was already dotted with small towns of the kirat were also ritually mediated: The devakula temple and its counterpart pith has a strong and deterministic role in defining the form of the town as the street patterns has for the lichchhavi town. (Tiwari, 2013)

The masterful and grand architectural achievements of the Malla period (12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> Century AD), combined with the extensive presence of the monumental heritage from the period, tends to overwhelm the development of earlier periods and obscure the contribution it had assimilated from the preceding phase of architectural progress. (Tiwari, 2013)

The building of temples has been a remarkable passion of both the rulers and the ruled since before the beginning of Nepalese written history. This culture of building continued well into modern times, though it may be said to have come to some sort of an end following the great earthquake of 1934 AD. Residents and visitors alike have marveled at the large number of temple and in particular temples with multiple roofs, which display a masterful combination of great artistry and craftsmanship in wood and brick. (Tiwari, 2013)

Temples are the monuments established for expressing worship and faith. The architecture of the temple is built to house the deities that people worship with religious faith. There are two major types of temples in Kathmandu valley, Nepali style and Shikhara style. Since the art of building Nepali style temple were developed in Nepal, it will be appropriate to call them Nepali style temples. It seems that the practice of Hindus placing the house deity on the mandap to perform worship began in the Vedic period. It is believed that the architecture of Nepali style temples developed from such pavilions or mandap style temples. (Dahal & Kahtiwada, 2058)

Ashok Vinayak temple is situated in the Northeast corner of Kasthamandap, it can be seen as the part of Kasthamandap and that is the reason this temple is called Maru Ganesh. This small temple has the golden roof, which was kept during the renovation by King Surendra Shah in 1847 AD. The present form of the temple was given to the temple only after the renovation in 2013/2014 AD.

The temple is a single-storied structure without a pinnacle. On the southern side, the main face of the temple is located, where the main statue of the temple is worshipped. The eastern and western walls feature large latticed windows, while the northern wall is entirely covered with bricks, which are currently overlaid with golden plating on all sides. The latticed window design consists of crossing bars forming a diamond shape within the window frame. Four gold-plated columns support the temple. The temple covers an area of 36 square feet and stands at a height of 7 feet tall. Inside, the statue of the deity is approximately 3 feet tall and is in seated form. It is adorned with silver jewelry and garlands. Adjacent to the statue on the right side, there is a small sculpture of an elephant. The entire temple is covered in gold plating and surrounded by bars (pic: 03). Before its restoration in 2013/2014, the temple was not covered with bars, and devotees could go inside to worship Ganesh. However, bars were installed after the restoration, and now devotees worship just outside the bars. This change was implemented to protect both the temple and its main idol. At the entrance of the temple, there are two lion sculptures placed on the left and right sides. Worshipping is conducted from this entrance. Inside the temple, there is an idol and a designated area for the priest to sit and perform the rituals. The other assistant to the priest sits just outside the temple within the bars, providing help and assistance to the devotees visiting the temple. They also assist the priest in general cleaning throughout the day. The two columns on the adjacent sides of the doors are adorned with beautiful carvings, and on top of the door, there is a small but exquisite tympanum. A tympanum is a semicircular decorative wall surface above an entrance, door, or window. (Personal Observation)

#### **4.2.1 Tympanum (*Torana*)**

The history and artwork of the tympanum placed over the doors of most multi-roofed style temples and Viharas in the Kathmandu valley, for beautification and elegance, are unique in themselves. One of the distinctive features of these Temples and Viharas is the half-moon-shaped torana. In addition to being present above the doors, toranas are also crafted atop the pillars. Within the Temples and Viharas, the tympanum also serves to identify the main idol of the temple, as the primary deity of the temple is carved at the center of the tympanum. The semi-circular, crescent-shaped arch above the door possesses its own distinct characteristics. A connection between the gods, goddesses, and the devotees is depicted on the tympanum, linking them to the original deity enshrined in the temple's sanctum. (Paudyal, 2057)

Just above the main door of the Ashok Vinayak temple, there is a semicircular tympanum. Tympanum is a semicircular, flat object made of wood or wood plated with metal, placed above the doorways in the temple. It usually leans slightly forward from the temple over the entrance opening or over a window. It is a separate object quite different from the other parts of the doorframe. Its base rest upon the cornice projection of the lintel above the door, and it is usually attached to the wall behind it by a chain or rope. (Dangol, 2007) The torans already mentioned as a connective element between the columns of certain circumambulatory are usually restricted to

placement over temple doorways. A torana is a Semicircular, flat object made of wood, wood plated with metal, or metal alone. It usually leans forward from the temple at a slight angle over the entrance opening .or over a window. (Bernier, 1978)

The torana is always covered with carving or with repousse metal mounted upon a wooden base. Its subject matter is entirely religious and of complex reference even when the forms themselves are simple. The pattern of the torana is stylistically consistent whether it is attached to a Hindu or Buddhist shrine, with the main deity to whom the particular temple is dedicated usually represented at its center. The torana may be set up singly over the main door of a shrine, or its form may be added to all the doors and windows of a shrine and multiplied as part of compound doors, multiple windows, and colonnades. The internal designs of the objects are often very elaborate, although certain patterns recur again and again. General themes are usually those of Indian temple ornament of the medieval period and before, so that literary sources of that period which deal with the subject of architecture are invaluable to the interpretation of Nepalese design. (Bernier, 1979)

As an architectural and decorative element, the torana is highly developed in Nepal. The torana is adaptable to an infinite number of designs and it is just as appropriate as a setting for images of Buddha as for Hindu deities. It often has a number of miniature deities in niches evenly spaced upon the torana background, but it may also be covered by an extremely complex conglomeration of nagas, minor deities, animals, devotees, floral motifs, etc. When carved in wood, as most torans are, the scenes are usually very brightly painted. Unless the figures are of deities, color symbolism is not as important here as on struts. At times, the torana is mounted in a completely perpendicular position. In all cases, it stands as an auspicious object of great veneration, beauty, and elaboration, signifying that the building upon which it is placed is a sanctuary for although non-religious structures may be decorated with various carved entranceways and struts; they never have toranas mounted upon them. (Bernier, 1978)

The following items are engraved in the tympanum found around the different temples of the Kathmandu valley and its periphery.

#### **4.2.1.1 Garuda**

Garuda is half man, half bird, the mount of Lord Vishnu. He is often found kneeling before Vishnu's Shrines. In the Buddhist Pantheon, he may serve as the Vehicle for Amoghsiddhi. He is almost always represented as human, except for large wings, which fold out from his shoulders. Sometimes he is represented with the head of a bird. (Shakya, 2002) Originally depicted as a solar deity, Garuda evolved into a bird-like human hybrid who became the deified mount of Lord Vishnu. Also a chief adversary of nagas, which he devours. In early depictions, Garuda has a parrot's beak. Said to have been born from an egg, the son of Vinata and Kasyapa. Epithets include



Amrtaharana, Garutman and Tarkasya. Attributes: conch, club, lotus and nectar, but may also bear the attributes of Lord Vishnu. (Jordan, 1941)

Garuda is known as the king of birds with a Brahminy kite-like figure. In its theomorphic form, Garuda is depicted as a giant bird with partially open wings; and in an anthropomorphic form, Garuda is shown as a man with wings with some bird like features. In the *Mahabharata*, it is seen that Garuda was seen on the *dwaja-stambhs* or ritual flagpoles. These *dvaja stambhs* are “placed opposite the entrance to the main shrine on axis with the central image are an object of great importance and worship” (Dallapiccola, 2002)

Garuda is addressed as “He who kills nagas or serpents” (*nagantaka, bhujagantaka*), “He who devours serpents” (*pannagasana, nagalana*) His proper name is Garuda, from the root gri, “to swallow.” As the relentless annihilator of serpents, he is possessed of a mystic power against the effect of poison; hence is popular in folklore and daily worship. At Puri, in the Indian province of Orissa, persons suffering from snakebite are taken to the main hall of the Great Temple, where they embrace a Garuda pillar filled with the magic of the celestial bird. (Zimmer, 1946) Garuda in the tympanum is a significant aspect of temple architecture in many Hindu temples, symbolizing divine protection, spiritual significance, and artistic expression.

#### **4.2.1.2 Chhepu**

Chhepu is a fierce beast placed at the top of torana, which is in attitude of biting or holding snake as if attempting to escape. This indicates his strong sense of dedication to his duty. Holding of snakes, wearing its necklace and armbands is to symbolize victory over his archenemies. (Dangol, 2007) Chhepu is one among the three brothers Garuda, Chhepu and Hitimanga. It is said that once the mother of these brothers, requested her husband to give birth of such a son who would be the bravest, most truthful and entitled with all superior marks. Her husbands told her to wait for a certain period. She begin impatience to wait far a long period, looked at the nest whether he was born of not. She found Chhepu in a prematured condition only with formation of head.

It is also told that chhepu disappeared from the world, as he did not want to see the kaliyug, the great Yuga, when the evil would completely triumphant over the good and the world would be destroyed by Vishnu in his incarnation as kalki, the destroyer. Knowing his bravery, truthfulness and entitled with all the superior marks. Manjushree wanted to see him and requested Chhepu to show his full form. Chhepu appeared slowly amidst the cloud. Manjushree, as a veteran artist immediately drew his form by his foot seceretly without the knowledge of Chhepu when Manjushree could finish to draw his head only Chhepu came to know Manjushree’s deception and immediately disappeared. Due to his bravery, truthfulness and all superior marks, he was given the place at the top of tha main entrance of the shrines for the protection from all the dangers. Nagas are the food of Chhepu. (Shakya, 2002)

#### **4.2.1.3 Ganga**

Ganga is a goddess representing holiest river and always stand as a mythical sea monster (Makara). Makara is more of a symbol of a perennial source of life than a mere decorative piece of art. Ganga is the elder daughter of Himavan and Mena, she is the sister of Parvati and the consort of Vishnu and Agni. She is also the second consort of Lord Shiva. Ganga is regarded as a symbol of purity and is frequently depicted with brahma washing the raised foot of Vishnu Trivikrama. According to the different legends and myths, she was a heavenly river brought to earth and caught by Lord Shiva in his hair to soften the shock of her fall in the earth. She rides on a fish or a water monster. (Jordan, 1941)

The association of water with temple rituals and the presence of water bodies near temples and shrines are undeniable and have been widely discussed. Water plays an important role in the daily rituals of the temple such as for bathing the deity, libations (*abhisheka*), for ritual ablutions and for the proverbial 'Washing away sins'. Of all the water bodies in India, the myths of the river Ganga abound, seen as the primordial link between the heavens and the earth and associated with the mythologies of both Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. (Ray et. all, 2023) Ganga is the holiest river. She is the mother who washes away all sins and redeems one for the fetters of life. There are many prayers and Hymns about Mother Ganga, which testify just how much the river has been personified, deified, and made an integral part of Hindu Spritual Life. (Williams, 2003) Due to all these reasons, Ganga is show in the toranas with great importance.

#### **4.2.1.4 Januma**

The Yamuna is a sacred river in the Indian sub continent according, to Hindu Mythology. Yamuna River is also known as Jamuna, which originates from Yamunotri Glacier. (Bisht, 2020) Jamuna is a daughter of the sun god and sister to no less a person than yama, the god of death and righteousness. Jamuna is a sacred river in Hinduism and the main tributary of the Ganges River. (Bhattacharji, 1995) Jamuna is a goddess always representing holiest river and always stands on a tortoise (Kachuwa). (Ray et. all, 2023)

#### **4.2.1.5 Apsara**

An Apsara was a celestial damsel or nymph (*devastri*) found in Indras Heaven, Devlok. Apsara were born at the Churning of the Milky Ocean. Another version, in the *Manu Shastra*, stated that damsels were created along with the seven manus. They were called wives of the gods and daughter of pleasure. The thirteen apsaras were also said to have come from the union of Kasyapa ans Arishta. The Apsara were known as heavenly charmers of heroes and temptresses of sages. (Williams, 2003) Apsara are the angelic female holding garlands in their hands. (Dangol, 2007) Apsaras are also identified as musicians and protective deities of gamblers, bringing good fortune is also another traits of Apsara. They also bring insanity. (Jordan, 1941, p.26) The intricate carving of apsaras in the torana highlights the exceptional artistic skill and

craftsmanship of the sculptors and artisans of ancient times. These carvings on the tympanums are not just decorative elements but also hold spiritual and cultural significance, contributing to the overall spiritual ambiance of the temple complex.

Tympanum of Ashok Vinayak Temple is made up of metal with the god Ganesh at the center and the figure of goddess Kumari at the right side and the figure of Bhairabhi at the left hand side. On the top of the tympanum, there is a figure of Garuda with coiling serpents and flora motifs; at the bottom of this boarder is the makaras in the both side of the tympanum. The Ganesh in the center is depicted in a dancing form with his right leg stretched straight and the left leg bent, resting upon a mouse (pic: 04). If the main deity of the temple is worshipped in *Tantric* form, then the center spot for the main deity in the tympanum will be empty or in most cases carved with a flower or lotus. He has six hands, and in the top right hand, prayer beads are shown, consisting of 50 beads connected to make a prayer garland, symbolizing the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet and representing sound and hearing. The middle right hand is shown in the Varada Mudra, symbolizing the gesture of granting wishes or mercy. The lower right hand is shown holding a radish which symbolizes abundance and lord Ganesh loves radish so it is also given as offering to him and some religious texts also has described as lord Ganesh himself being as a radish. (Personal Observation)

On the left hand side the top left hand of Ganesh is shown holding an axe which symbolizes the retrenchment of all desires, bearers of pain and sufferings also the axe can both strike and repel obstacle, the middle left hand is shown in the *Abhaya Mudra* which symbolizes fearlessness and it is also the gesture of reassurance and safety. The lower left hand is shown holding a Modakpatra with laddus (sweets) and its trunk is stretched towards the bowl and trying to eat it. In addition, on the back of it a thin layer of cloth is shown flowing in the lower left side. (Personal Observation)

#### **4.2.2 Circumambulatory Path**

It is not uncommon for temples of large size in Nepal to have a circumambulatory path around the main shrine at the lower level. This result from the double wall construction in which the wall of the secondary storey exterior projects downwards to the lower level to enclose. (Bernier, 1978) The path made for circumambulation of the deity is called circumambulation path. Since *pradakshina* is considered a method of *shodoshopachar* worship, the construction of circumambulation path in a temple is considered mandatory (Pandey, 1988). The most significant aspect of devotional dynamism in Hinduism is the circumambulation path which proceeds in a clockwise direction around a sacred person, image or object and even around the temple itself. Circumambulation takes the worshipper from the doorway of the temple, showing the image or symbol of the deity around the sanctum in a clockwise direction where further different incarnation forms are also shown in the way. (Michell, 1988)

The circumambulatory path in Ashok Vinayak's temple has been made outside the main temple. Its circumambulatory path has been arranged in such a way through the

bars, which makes a complete round of the temple. It starts from the main door, highlighting the main deity. Going clockwise, you are led to the sides of the temple. There are beautifully carved latticed windows along this path. Continuing, you reach the backside of the temple. On the right, there is a temple wall, while on the left, there is a public rest house managed by the Ashok Vinayak Guthi itself. Moving forward, you exit the temple and turn right, where you will notice numerous bells both outside the temple and within the bars. These bells enhance the delicate appearance of the small yet beautiful temple. On this side as well, you will find a beautifully carved latticed window. Adjacent to it, there is a large butter lamp stand positioned beside the substantial bells, supported by two columns. (Personal Observation)

#### **4.2.3. Roof**

In any temple the roof is one element, which give it a unique appearance not only because of its general form repeated sloping surfaces, but also because of individual ornamental and symbolic elements attached to it. The wood used for the basic skeleton of the roof complex comes from the Sal tree supposed to be better than teak for building purposes (Dangol, 2007). The usual material of roof covering is small side locking flat tiles laid in mud over wood shingles on structural timber rafters, it is usual for the topmost tire to have a metal sheet cover; these roofing sheets are often gilded. (Tiwari, 1989) Metal roof has smooth surface with small ribs that follows the slope of the roof in parallel rows approximately two feet wide apart. These ribs are always in even numbers on each side of roof. These small ribs have the attendant faces at the end. The attendant faces along their roof ribs are generally feminine in appearance, wear elaborated crowns of headdresses, and are not fierce in expression. Another kind of head with mustache is of male, which is sometimes found at the end of corner rib. The roof gliding is a symbol of purity so only genuine gold was used to cover the holiest of temples. (Dangol, 2007)

Another roof element, which is almost universally found in Nepal, both on, gilded and on tile roofs, is a border of bells. Bells 3 or 4 inches in length usually hangs beneath the edge of overhanging roofs all around the temple. They are attached to as small hooks below the roofs and have large metal clapper pendants, which catch every wind and cause the bells to ring in the breeze. These rows of bells all around the roof edge are a most essential element in giving Nepalese temple architecture its delicate appearance, even which when the structure itself is massive and heavy. The roofs of the most elaborately metal-decorated temples often have hanging metal borders called *kikhimala*, meaning “garland of little bells”. They are solid or perforated and they are similar to the cloth hanging banners which are still to be seen on some temples. The metal hangings have motifs of bell elements, deity and various flora motifs. The borders are placed all along the underside of the roofs, about 3 inches from the outer edges, and bells are often eliminated. Demon figures are sometimes seen on the borders as the protectors of the temple. Matsyendranatha of Kathmandu has beautiful *kikhimala* at both roof levels, with perforated design of intertwining of both roof levels, with perforated design of intertwining floral designs. Hundreds of tiny bronze

pendants are attached to the lower edge of kikhimala here, shimmering in the light and breeze. (Dangol, 2007)

The Ashok vinayak Temple has a metal roof with no pinnacle and the space for the pinnacle is left alone. The gold plated roofs of this temple have small images of four attendants on all four sides and the roof is curved in the entire corner to protect the architectural structure of the temple.

### **4.3 Iconography of Ashok Vinayak Temple**

The term icon (ikon, Gr, eikon) means a figure representing a deity, or a saint in painting, mosaic, sculpture etc. which is especially meant for worship or which is in some way or other associated with the rituals connected with the worship of different divinities. The special branch of knowledge or study, which deals with these images, is generally known as iconography. (Banerjea, 1956) The origin of image worship in the Indian subcontinent appears to be very ancient and its causes are not exactly known. Many believe it to be the result of the followers of Gautam Buddha adoring their master and worshipping him in form of images on his apotheosis after death. However, there are indications of the prevalence of image worship among the Hindus long before the time of Gautam Buddha. (Rao G. 1914)

The art of Nepal like that of India is deeply religious. Gods and goddesses and their myths and legends with sacred symbols and imagery form the main theme this art. The Nepalese artist however was not oblivious of nature and the life around, but these were not given prominence, were normally relegated as background decoration, and were of importance as far as they observed the life religious. The Nepalese artist always had a keen sense for the spectacular and accordingly the sacred legends capable of dramatic representation specially caught their imagination. Even for the simpler themes of gods and goddesses, which are by their very nature bound by hieratic conventions and prescriptions they chose unusual twist and angles, which imparted them gripping and arresting appearance. From approximately 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD, Nepal was open to art influences from India. Several Schools of Indian art such as the early central Indian and Mathura, The classical School of Magadha, Saranath and the Vakataka, early Kalachury-Chalukyan and Rashtrakuta School of the Deccan and the late Gupta, Pala and Sena School of art had a very huge impact on the art creation of Nepal. Nepal was mostly at the receiving end of the art influence from India had yet Nepal did not turn into a regional school of Indian art but retained its own uniqueness and individual character. The credit of all this goes to the Nepali artist who never let the Nepalese art looked like borrowed from Indian art schools but it looked more original and organic. (Deva, 1984)

The idols of Lord Ganesh are found in various temples from small size to a full human size and sometimes even bigger than that, but the "*Matshya Puran*" states that the idol installed in every household should be 12 inch tall in size. According to the

“*Bishnudharmattar Puran*”, the sculpture of Ganesh should have a elephant head and four hands. In the right hand of Ganesh there should be *Shul* and *Akshyamala*, and in the left hand of the idol there should be *Parshu* and *Modakpatra* and the left teeth of Lord Ganesh should be made. Ganesh is also associated with music; he is shown as the leader of his dancing troop in Nepalese Sculpture. In his iconographic representation, he is also shown alone with a tiny mouse, his mount (or *Vahana*). Different iconographic forms and features of Ganesh have been described in Hindu mythological literature. (Shakya, 2006) The independent image of Ganesh can be found in three different forms i.e., Standing, Seating and Dancing form. Many sculptures from ancient period to the modern day can be found in these three forms.

#### **4.3.1 Standing Form**

In this form, Ganesh images can be seen in squares, doorways, near a river or well. The most striking south facing stone images are traced from Chikamugal, at the Vansesvara Temple of Indrachowk square, Jore-Ganesh temple of Ombahal; other stone images from Chysal rest house of Patan; Hanumanghat of bhaktapur etc. There are three different representation of the standing form: *Alidhasan* Form, *Pratyalidhasan* Form and *Sambhangasan* Form. All these images express the heroic mood or *Veer Rasa*, they stand in a guarding posture at the door, and they stand in a guarding posture at the doorsteps of the shrine or squares. (Shakya, 2006)

##### **4.3.1.1 Alidhasana Form**

According to the *Taittiriya Samhita* (3.9.22), in this posture the god stands as archer in a defensive pose with the right knee forward and the left retracted. These postures are mostly portrayed in the case of the guardian or protecting gods and goddesses in the Mall art forms of the Kathmandu Valley. The heroic posture is revealed on the golden gate of Bhaktapur Palace. The four-armed form of the god exhibits the guarding pose of Abhaya, with his right hand engaged in clutching his own broken tusk. His other three hands are holding his familiar attributes i.e., the upper right hand holds a rosary, the upper left hand holds an axe and his lower left hand holds a bowl full of sweets. (Shakya, 2006)

##### **4.3.1.2 Pratyalidhasana Form**

It is the reserved form of the *alidhasana*, standing for offence or showing an aggressive Pose. The *pratyalidhasana* reflects the pose of “*Katyayani Durga*” or “*Mahisasura Mardini*”, in which the left leg is advanced and the right is retracted as described. In the statement of Taittiriya Samhita, this pose is rare under the comparison with *alidhasanapada* pose. The four armed stone image of Patan Ilanani, Itachhen tole of bhaktapur, and Gophale tole of Kathmandu reveals this attitude of the *Pratyalidhapadasana* in his standing pose. The Pratyalidhapadasana form of Ganesh is a specimen of protector at the stone tympanum of the Bhairabha temple of Visvanath at bhaktapur. (Shakya, 2006)

#### **4.3.1.3 Samabhanga Form**

This form is also known as the *samapadasthanaka* or the erect pose. The images of two armed crownless from Mahakali, Indrachowk at the foot step of the Vansevara temple, the sthana Inaidyo of the kel tole inhabitants and pharping image of the Panjara Ganesa comes under this category. (Shakya, 2006)

#### **4.3.2 Seated Form**

The seated form of Ganesh is abundantly depicted and is called *Rajalilasana*. In this pose, the elephant-headed god is revealed to be seated at his regal ease, which sometimes resembles the *Sukhasana* pose of Siva. It is a comfortable sitting posture similar to the *Ardhaparyankasana* or the *lalitasana*. Normally his seating can be categorized into two types i.e., *Padmasana* and *Ardhaparyankasana*.

##### **4.3.2.1 Padmasana Form**

The term etymologically means the lotus seat. This form is also known as *Brahmasana* in which, the legs are crossed and the heels are drawn up to touch the upper thigh joints. (Rao, 1964) This seat is a common posture of the diety sitting in meditation, also names as the *Samadhisana* or the yogic seat (pic: 02). This posture is also revealed in the four armed crown less form of inscribed terracotta image at the National Museum of Nepal. It is attests to the tradition of crownless image in the malla period, dated 1632 AD. However, the stone image depicting a *Padmasana* posture is traced to the fifteenth century onwards as shown by the *Manichhendra-Ganapati* image dated NS 558 corresponding to the 1438 AD. (Rao, 1964)

##### **4.3.2.2 Ardhaparyankasana Form**

This is the most popular form of Ganesh seated in *Rajalilasan*, the favorite pose of royals, in the independent category. He is displayed as seated in a half *Padmasana*, in which one foot is suspended downwards. The knee of other leg is raised and one arm rests on it. The body leans slightly backwards and is supported by the other arm (Stutley, 1985). The most of the ancient and early medieval images are installed in this posture categorically of ease once applied to the *kuber* or *vaisravana*. The seat of such *Rajalilasan* is traced to the *Pashupati*, devapattan image of *Macchendra Ganesh*, the *Chinnamasta* temple of *Changunarayan*, wether crowned or crownless form of two-armed Ganesh. (Shakya, 2006)

Except for a few Ganpatis in Nepal, most of the Ganapati idols have their trunks turned from right to left, cresting the appearance that Ganesh wants to have the 'Laddu' from the 'Modak Patra' held in the left hand. In South India, a Ganpati who turns to the right is called *Balamburi Vinayaka*, and the one who turns to the left is called *Idambari Vinayaka*. Howevwe, in context to Nepal, no specific name are given to Ganesh based on the direction of their trunk, whether it is turned from left to right or right to left. (Parajuli, 2075)

### 4.3.3 Dancing Form

One of Ganesh's roles is to entertain his parents, which he does by dancing. Shiva, Ganesh and all the dwarfish *ganas* loves to dance because the act of dancing is spiritually significant in Hinduism. It is related to the perpetual cycle of creation and destruction called samsara that defines the universe and from which humans seeks to escape. Yet when Ganesh dance for his parents, he is in a cosmic aspect.

The dancing forms of Ganesh are shown in the woodwork as well as in the metalwork. In the wood work the dancing Ganesh are carved in the struts and tympanum where as in the metal work the idol of dancing Ganesh are shown in sculptures which have more than four hands and more than one head. On observing the different types of sculptures of dancing forms of Lord Ganesh some dancing idols of Ganesh seems very similar to the dancing style of Lord Shiva (Shiva Tandav), while some other idols seems to be dancing very gracefully and happily. The sculputres made by the Nepali artist seems to very different than the sculptures made by other artist. The shape of arch can be seen in the sculptures made by the Nepali artist. We can see the shape of arch in the leg of Lord Ganesh not only in the dancing form; we can see theshape of arch also in the standing and sitting form of Lord Ganesh as well, which distinct the Nepali sculptures from the other sculptures of dancing Ganesh from Indian and other part of the world. Scholar Tandon, G. (Tandon, 2042) has said as the sculptures with the arch form on the legs of Lord Ganesh can be seen only from the 16<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup> century AD. The dancing sculptures of Lord Ganesh are carved very beautifully and in shapely order in Nepal. Lord Ganesh is shown engrossed in dancing with his left leg balancing the weight of the whole body, the dancing form seems to be a tandav, and in other sculptures, he is depicted as Ganesh dancing very gracefullyand enjoying the dance. (Darnal, 1988)

Dancing images of Ganesh are found in sculptural representation and paintings. In sculptures he appears amongst dance chorus with the Shiva ganas depicted under the friezes of the Uma-Maheshwar panel. The earliest representation in Nepalese sculptures commences from gancanani of patan, dated 1011 AD. (Pal, 1974) However, an undated image found in the premises of Pashupatinath temple estimated to be from ninth century also reveals Ganesh in the same attitude. Additional set of stone images of dancing Ganesh's are also traced in different parts of Bhaktapur dated from the fourteen century and from fifteenth century in Sanga respectively.

The main sculptures of the Ashok Vinayak Temple is made from the black stone (pic: 02), but these days the idol of Shri Ganesh is always covered with red color and the crown made from the silver is kept on the head of the idol. The third eye and the two eyes of lord Ganesh are shown from the silver coating (pic: 07). The sculpture is about three feet tall and is in sitting position (*Padmasana* Form). The garlands made from the silver are always kept on the idol, the garland has been attached on the statue in such way that it can be removed only from one side, and that is done while in offering bath to Lord Ganesh. The garland makes the statue look more attractive and



appealing every time you go on to pay homage to the idol. The four hands of lord Ganesh are shown in the idol, in the upper right hand he holds a Prayer bead, where as in the lower right hand radish is shown. On the top left hand, Ganesh is holding an axe where as in the lower left hand he is holding a *Modakpatra* full of *Laddu* and the trunk is slightly tilted towards the *Modakpatra*. Just above the main sculpture of the deity, there is a small but beautiful silver tympanum, in which there is a *chhepu* in the center and Ganga and Jamuna in the either side. The tympanum supported by column in the adjacent side where there are a floral motifs and figure of goddess Kumari at the right side and the figure of Bhairabhi at the left hand side, which are embossed. Above the tympanum, there is a figure of Sun God, Moon and The Syllable Ohm kept, which are silver embossed. On the either side of the main sculpture there are gold plated metal branches of Ashoka tree made which also some how proves how the temple got its name in the ancient time. Just in front of the idol of Ganesh, there is a Shree Yantra and Kapala kept (pic: 07). Where Shree Yantra indicates wish fulfilling and Kapala is used as a vessel for offering in various rituals and ceremonies. (Personal Observation)

The Ashok Vinayak Guthi also has three other idols of the Ashok Vinayak Ganesh, out of them, one is gold plated (pic: 10), the other one is made from bronze (pic: 09) and the other one is made from Silver (pic: 11). All the three sculptures are of the same shape and size as of the main sculpture of the Ashok Vinayak Temple, the bronze idols is kept every Tuesday. Whereas, gold plated sculpture is kept during different major festivals celebrated in the premises of the Ashok Vinayak Temple, The Silver idol is kept in the Chariot during the festival of Dashain, when the idol is taken to various parts of the city. (SAVG, 2070) Some of the major festivals celebrated in the premises of Ashok Vinayak Temple are as follows:

- |                  |  |                  |
|------------------|--|------------------|
| a) Gai Jatra     | b) Ganesh Chaturthi  | c) Indraajatra   |
| d) Ghodejatra    | e) Seto Machindranath  | f) Nepal Sambath |
| g) Yomhari Punhi | h) Other different festivals celebrated by the Newar community |                  |

The silver idol is kept only during the festival of Dashain and the same silver idol is placed in the chariot that travels to different parts of the city during the eighth, ninth and tenth day of Dashain Festival (pic: 11). All the three idols are designed in a similar sitting position, which is the same as the main idol of the Ashok Vinayak Temple. However, these three idols all have six hands depicted in each of them. The upper right hand hold a Prayer Beads, the middle right hand shows the *Avaya Mudra*, and the lower right hand holds a radish. On the left side, the upper left hand holds an axe; the middle left hand is in *Baradha Mudra*, and the lower left hand holds a *Modakpatra* full of *Laddus* (pic: 9, 10 and 11). (Personal Observation)

#### **4.4 Monuments Present in the Periphery of Ashok Vinayak Temple**

Monuments play a significant role in shaping and reflecting our culture and heritage. They serve as tangible expressions of cultural values, beliefs, principles, conviction and historical significance. The Kathmandu valley is very much renowned for its rich culture and heritage and it is home to numerous ancient temples, monuments, palaces and historical sites. The Kathmandu Durbar Square located in the heart of Kathmandu valley is a complex of palaces, temples, courtyards, idols and statues; Kathmandu Durbar Square is very rich in highlighting its exquisite Newari architecture. This complex holds various monuments, which have very historic and cultural values, out of these monuments we will be discussing about some major monuments, which are present in the periphery of Ashok Vinayak Temple, which are as follows:

##### **4.4.1 Kasthamandap**

Kasthamandap Temple, also known as the Maru Sattal, is a historical wooden temple located in Kathmandu Durbar Square (pic: 48). The name “Kasthamandap” translates to “wooden pavilion,” which accurately describe its structure. The temple is a significant cultural and architectural landmark in the Kathmandu Valley. (Vajracharya, 2033)

Kasthamandap Temple was believed to be constructed during the fifth century. It was primarily built using wood from a single tree and featured intricate wooden carvings and architecture. The temple stood in the center of Kathmandu Durbar Square and served as a social and religious gathering place for locals and visitors. The three-story temple has a pyramidal roof and unique pagoda-style architecture. The interior housed statues of various deities, and the ground floor is a public resting area. The temple held cultural and religious significance and is an important part of the local festivals and ceremonies.

There is a legend regarding the construction of Kasthamandap, which is very popular among the local, which goes as follows. During the reign of King Laxmi Narasimha Malla, in the festival of Seto Machindranath, Lord *Kalpa Brikshya* came to observe the festival. One of the priests recognized Lord *Kalpa Brikshya*, caught him, and asked him to promise to build a public rest house using a single tree. The priest was very stubborn and did not release Lord *Kalpa Brikshya*. Consequently, *Kalpa Brikshya* promised to provide him with the wood of a single tree to construct the rest house, and only then was the lord set free. Later after some days, the lord sends the very huge *Saal* tree and from the woods of the same tree, The Kasthamandap was build. However, many of the historians do not believe in this legend as the date of its construction from archeological sources and the date of King Laxmi Narasimha Malla differs. (Vajracharya, 2033)

#### 4.4.2 Simha Sattal

In the south of the Kasthamandap, there is a building with four lions on the four directions, this three-storyed building is known as Simha Sattal. This building was built by the principle of public rest house like the Kasthamandap (pic: 50). On the first floor of the Simha Sattal, there is a statue of 'Garud Narayan,' which was discovered in 1920 B.S. while excavating the foundation for the new house of Subba Dharma Narayan. He is also believed to be the individual who financed the construction of Simha Sattal. (Pangeni, 2012)

On all four directions of the Simha Sattal through the main internal wall of the building, the columns have been kept in such a way that they support the first and second floor, the column also supports the balcony of the second floor, no exact evidence has been found until date to know when this building was originally built. During the Rana regime in the country, Prime Minister Junga Bahadur Rana granted the authority to the family of Dharma Narayan to collect rent from the shops in Simha Sattal and utilize the proceeds for various annual fairs and festivals of The Ashok Vinayak Temple. In Present day, Guthi Sansthan collects the rent and they provide fund for the different fairs and festivals. (Pangeni, 2012)

According to some legends, this Simha Sattal was built from the left over woods of the Kasthamandap, so even on today's date many Newars call this building by the Name of *Sityai Sattal*, Where *Sityai* means leftover in Newari Language.

#### 4.4.3 Kabindrapur

Near the Ashok Vinayak Temple in the Southeast direction, there is a beautiful three-storyed building known as Kabindrapur (pic: 49). King Pratap Malla built this building in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. In the ground floor of this building, there is a statue of "Natyashwor Shiva", also known as *Nasal Devata* Temple. King Pratap Malla was very interested in singing, dancing and writing poems as well, so he was very proud regarding this and he wants all the pupils of his country know about this, because of all this, he has taken the Title of "Kabindra". This is the reason why the Temple of Nasal Devata is also known as Kabindrapur. (Vajracharya, 2033)

In the ground floor of this temple, there is a beautiful wooden door and when going through the door, on the left and right hand side we can see idols of different gods and goddess an inscription, which discuss about the purpose of King Pratap Malla building this temple. Once there was a play conducted in a palace and King Pratap Malla himself acted as *Narasimha* in that play and in the play, the *Narasimha* was worshipped by making a small alter, later the play was over but there was some vicious sounds coming from different corners of the palace regarding the worshipping alter. It was the God Narasimha himself so, King Pratap Malla promised and made Kabindrapur and installed Narasimha, Nasal Devata, Nandi, Mahakal and other gods in this building, the inscription is in fragmented form so the spot where the construction date has been written cannot be seen. (Vajracharya, 2033)

#### **4.4.4 Maru Hiti**

Maru Hiti is a historic waterspout located in the heart of Kathmandu, Nepal. “Hiti” refers to a traditional Newari waterspout, which was an important source of water for the local community in ancient times. Maru Hiti situated in the Maru area of Kathmandu (pic: 51).

Maru Hiti is also known for its architectural and cultural significance. It is believed to have been constructed during the reign of King Narendra Malla in the 17th century. The waterspout features a stone structure adorned with intricate carvings and sculptures. The water flows through several spouts or outlets, allowing people to collect water for various purposes. In addition to its functional role as a water source, Maru Hiti holds cultural and religious importance. The local community has considered it, and people often gather around it to perform religious rituals and ceremonies. The area around Maru Hiti is also bustling with shops, vendors, and traditional Newari buildings, adding to its charm and cultural ambiance.

Maru Hiti is a popular spot among locals and tourists alike, providing a glimpse into the historical and cultural heritage of Kathmandu. Visitors can witness the traditional waterspout in action and experience the bustling atmosphere of the surrounding area, which offers a mix of traditional and modern elements. (SAVG, 2070)

## **Chapter Five**

### **Intangible Heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple**

#### **5.1 Intangible Heritage**

Heritage simply means being inherited from the ancestors; the commodity should have archaeological and historical values in the given date. It can be simply said as the past used in the present. Heritage simply keeps all our traditions and culture alive in any form possible. Heritage helps us to live in our past even as if we are in today's date. Heritage is taken to include everything that people want to save from clean air to traditional dancing, including material culture and nature. Circumstances or benefits passed down from previous generations, keep the close contact with the concept of inheritance, but opens it beyond immediate ownership to include group heritage and heritage, which may not have a physical form. (Howard, 2003)

Heritage is a powerful word in its own right, for it is at once extraordinarily suggestive and ideologically charged but simultaneously vague enough to be applied to nearly everything across any space and time. (Park, 2014, p.7) Essentially, heritage is the contemporary use of past including both its interpretation and representation. (Smith et al., 2010)

As said earlier we will be discussing only about intangible cultural heritage in this chapter. Intangible Cultural Heritage is that heritage, which can be observed, practiced, represented, display of skills and actions and participation takes place through the process and the progression of any fair and festival. The intangible cultural heritage transmitted from generations to generations is constantly recreated by the community and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history and provides them with a sense of identity and community, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity. (UNESCO, 2014)

McKercher & Du Cross defines intangible heritage as traditional culture, folklore or popular culture that is performed or practiced with close use to place and little technological accompaniment. The Practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills as well as the instruments objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated there with that communities groups and in case, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. (McKercher & Du Cross, 2002)

Since the 1960s, the concept of cultural heritage has dramatically broadened. The Venice charter (1964) made reference to “monuments and sites” and dealt with architectural heritage, which soon expand to cover cluster of buildings, architecture, and industrial and 20<sup>th</sup> century built heritage experts (largely influenced by anthropology) began to discuss the significance of “non-tangible heritage”, which later was termed as “Intangible Cultural Heritage” (ICH) as stipulated in the convention for the safe guarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, which came into

effect on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2006. Intangible Cultural Heritage can be understood as a constantly developing set of practices, expressions, knowledge, skills and the associated artifacts and spaces that form an essential part of cultural heritage, such as the performance of customary dance or poetry. It is often understood as “folk life” i.e. the beliefs, practices, stories, jokes, songs etc. of a people, transmitted orally or by another non-institutional means. Hence Intangible Cultural Heritage is passed down from one generation to the next and changes in response to shifts in environmental and social conditions. Crucially, it provides mankind with a sense of identity and continuity. And although it can be a difficult concept to clearly define, because of its fluid and dynamic nature, it is important to bear in mind that the main repository of this type of heritage is the human mind; and the human body is its primary Instrument. The Intangible Cultural Heritage has been set in five domains and which are as follows:

### **5.1.1 Oral Traditions**

Oral traditions and expressions transmit knowledge, values and the collective memory of a folk group. They may be restricted to one section of a community or profession, or be shared collectively. They include language, proverbs, riddles, nursery rhymes, legends, myth, epic songs and poems, charms, prayers, chants, songs, dramatic performances etc. Language itself is kept alive in these vibrant forms far more effectively than in codified forms such as dictionaries or grammatical texts.

### **5.1.2 Performing Arts (Such as Traditional Music, Dance and Theatre)**

This diverse group encompasses vocal or instrumental music, dance and theatre, including traditional forms such as pantomime, sung verse and certain forms of storytelling. Music is found in every society and constitutes an integral part of other performing art forms and other forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage such as rituals, festivals and oral traditions. The instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural space that are associated with Intangible Cultural Heritage should be protected for the betterment and to pass for other generations to come.

### **5.1.3 Social Practices, Rituals and Festival Events**

This group encompasses habitual activities that structure the lives of people, and that are shared by significant number of people. They reaffirm the identity of a folk group or community, and may be performed in public or private. These practices may be linked to the life cycle of individuals and groups, the agricultural calendar, and vary from simple gatherings to large scale celebrations. Rituals and Festive Events usually take place at specific time of the year in specific places, although access to rituals may be limited.

### **5.1.4 Knowledge practices Concerning Nature and the Universe**

This domain includes knowledge, skills, practices and representations developed through people’s interaction with the natural environment. These forms of Intangible Cultural Heritage are expressed through language, oral traditions, attachment to a

place, memories and spirituality and are manifested in a broad range of values and beliefs, ceremonies, healing and social practices or institutions and social organization.

### **5.1.5 Traditional Craftsmanship**

Traditional Craftsmanship is manifested in many forms; clothing and jewelry; costumes and props required for festivals or performing arts; objects used for storage, transport, and shelter; decorative arts and ritual objects; musical instruments and house hold utensils; toys and tools. (Diwasa and et. all, 2007)

## **5.2 Myths and Legends of Ashok Vinayak Temple**

A legend is a genre of folklore that consists of a narrative featuring human actions, believed or perceived to have taken place in human history. Narratives in this genre may demonstrate human values, and possess certain qualities that give the tale verisimilitude. Legend, for its active and passive participants, may include miracles. Legends may be transformed over time to keep them fresh and vital. Many legends operate within the realm of uncertainty, never being entirely believed by the participants, but also never being resolutely doubted. (Georges & Jones, 1995)

Scholar Lauri H. has defined Myth as, a story of the gods, a religious account of the beginning of the world, the creation, fundamental events, the exemplary deeds of the gods as a result of which the world, nature and culture were created together with all parts thereof and given their order, which still obtains. A myth expresses and confirms society's religious values and norms; it provides a pattern of behavior to be imitated testifies to the efficacy of ritual with its practical ends and establishes the sanctity of cult. (Dundes, 1984) Myths and legends are integral part in the Nepalese society.

These myths and legends are also very popular in Kathmandu Valley and the same goes with the Ashok Vinayak Temples and some of the legends and myths are popular in this temple as well. The legends behind the origin and name of the Ashok Vinayak Temple have different versions. The first version, as suggested by the scholar Shakya, goes as follows: Ganesh is believed to be seated under the Ashoka tree, also known as the pleasure tree, where there is no grief and sorrow. Hence, the god is called Ashok Vinayak, signifying a deity without grief, sorrow, pain, or agony. This temple is named Ashok Vinayak Temple to reflect a place free from grief, pain, agony, and sorrow. It is also believed that people who visit the temple have their wishes fulfilled. (Shakya, 2004)

Hem Raj Shakya has narrated as follows: "Lord Ganesh is considered the representative of the celestial divinities on earth. Therefore, he is said to participate in a thrice-daily meeting with the heavenly bodies during the divine congress in heaven. As a result, the shrine dedicated to him does not bear a finial at the top, in order to create an unobstructed passage for this deity on his way to the heavenly assembly."

According to local legends, the consecration ceremony for this shrine has not yet been performed, which is why there is no pinnacle present in the temple to this day. (Shakya, 1098 N.S.)

According to SAVG souvenir, in the ancient time there used to be a very religious family sitting near the place where the exact temple is situated today, there used to be the Asoka's tree. There was sudden flash of light the man upon being confused, went out the larger form of Lord Ganesh he was more excited and went near the tree and found out that the Ganesh was climbing the tree. Excited and amazed, he returned home. Out of curiosity, he looked back towards the tree and was astonished to see the large form of Ganesh seated there. When he approached the tree again, Lord Ganesh began to climb the tree once more. After witnessing these events, he concluded that only Lord Ganesh could perform such feats. As a result, he began to worship in that very place. (SAVG, 2070)

According to the legend from the priest of the temple, there used to be a very beautiful and attractive golden pinnacle in the temple but it was stolen during the Muslim invasion in Nepal in the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD. After that there was never next pinnacle kept or placed in the temple. (Maharjan. R, Personal Communication, 6 September 2021.)

### **5.3 Rituals and Ritualistic Performance at Ashok Vinayak Temple**

Ritual is a matter of special activities inherently different from daily routine action, closely linked to the sacralities of tradition, and organized religion. Such connection encourages us to regard ritual as somewhat at odds with modernity. Hence, ritual often seems to have more to do with other times and place than with daily life. (Bell, 1997)

Hindu religion is considered to be an ancient religion that is not promulgated by a single person or a single society at one time; however it has been binding time to time with the composition of innumerable religious belief, cults, customs and rituals. The Hindus settlements are not found in a single place; however believe to be origin of Indus civilization. They are mainly settled down in the Indian sub-continent, and a single thing found on every Aryan is faith of Veda is prepared and developed by the scholars of that time and literatures are called as "Brahmanas". However, with the time and rise of philosophical trend of Upanishads and Buddhism, the Vedic rituals got collapsed. Even after surpassed of Buddhism again new trend of epic get raises, widely renowned as the time of Great epic- the Ramayana and the Mahabharata as well as the purans. The ritualistic performance among the Hindus is is not similar even if they are worshipping the same deities at single time. Like, the method of worshipping deities by the people of Newar community is a different than that of Hindus of Hilly region. In addition, some Hindus are vegetarian and some do not mind to eat meat items and even sacrifices those things to the deities. The ritualistics



performance as well as the hymn they sing always carries same meaning. (Poudyal, 2060)

The Hindus have always tried to organize their personal and social life by adopting the method of institutional arrangements, which leads the path of life towards perfection. Ritual is also one of the forms of institutional arrangements. In the life of Hindus religion always plays a paramount importance. In Hindus it is clearly visible that, they adopt rituals in order to purify the life of a person through religion. Because Hindus believes that human can get salvation through religious activities only. The word ritual has been used in many dimensions; Ritual literally means purification, improvement or cleansing. Ritual is the process of conducting life in a pure and proper way, through this we can know that the souls are purified by the rituals. All the traditions from birth to death are essential for Hindus because without rituals the refinement and advancement of life is impossible, various aspects related to life from birth to death are complex human process. According to Dr. Rajabali Pandey “Hindu rituals consist of basic ideas, religious rites, accompanying rules and rituals”. (Baral, 2044)

The value of ritual as a meaning seems to reside in instruments and gestures; it is a paralanguage. The myth, on the other hand manifests itself as a Meta language; it makes full use of discourses, but does so by situating its own significant oppositions at a higher level of complexity than that required by language operating for profane ends. (Strauss, 1977) All rituals are in same way rite of passage: in other words, that they presuppose physical movement, directionality and positioning. Since it is through such movements and positions that participants make statements both about the world and about the ritual it, a further implication is that there may often arise a quality which keeps the ritual going. (Coppet, 1992)

### **5.3.1 Birth Celebration**

The birth of son is always celebrated with joy excitement and happiness as the son not only ensures the continuance of the family line (*Kul*), but is also an economic asset of the family line. The belief of the Newars about the influences of the planets and stars on the birth of a child is not significantly different from the other Hindus who also consult the Hindu law books. On birth, both the child and the mother are affected by the pollution. The rest of the members of the family become impure only when the umbilical cord is cut. Pollution extends not only to the members of the family of birth, but also to all the others agnatic members who worship a common Dewali and who are addressed as “*Fukee*” among themselves. Women after delivery, she is not allowed to eat pulses, salt and black soyabean, but is given enough quantity of jiggery, ghee and meat. The restriction lasts till the birth purification rite. The birth purification rite is known as *Benku* in newars and among the others it is known as *Nawaran* performed in the 11<sup>TH</sup> day of the child birth. In newars community it is performed in the sixth day if it the first child and on the fourth day if the child is second or third or other than the first child. (Nepali, 1965)

This ceremony is performed to give a birthname to a child, according to the lunar horoscope, which is usually not the name by which they are known, typically a priest is invited to perform the ceremony at home, who finds the child's lunar horoscope from the birth details, as the mother is still recovering at home with the child. Until the mother and child are purified, they should not visit the temple. (Evason, 2017) the core process of *Nwaran* is more or less sacred and spiritual. Deities like the *Dip* (The fire God), Kalash (The rivers and sea gods), and Ganesh are worshipped during this process.

The Ashok Vinayak Temple, located within the premises of Hanuman Dhoka Palace, holds a special place in the cultural and religious practices of the formal Royal Family. It serves as a sacred venue for significant Hindu ceremonies such as Anna Prashan (the introduction of solid food to infants), Bratabandha (the initiation ceremony for young boys), and even the events after weddings. The fact that formal Royal Family members continue to choose this temple for these pivotal life events highlights their strong commitment to preserving and honoring their cultural heritage and traditions. The temple's association with Lord Ganesh often referred to as the "Royal Ganesh" from ancient times, further this temple highlights its historical and spiritual significance in Kathmandu's rich cultural events. By maintaining their connection to the Ashok Vinayak Temple within Hanuman Dhoka Palace, the Royal Family has firmly kept the link between their heritage and the enduring customs that define Nepalese culture.

As soon as the child is six months old, s/he is weaned. Then the Anna-Prashan takes place. The name of this ceremony expresses the idea of feeding the child on solid food for the first time. For this occasion, they choose a month, a week, a day and a star, which all combine to give favourable auspiciousness for the child in the future. Later the priest perform the *Samkalpa* (taking vows before performing an auspicious activity) and then, perform the Homa in honour of the nine planets, then a sacrifice to the fire. (Dubois, 1906) Almost all the community has rice-feeding ceremony called *Pasni*, when a baby is about six months, but in some places the *Pasni* of baby girls are done in the fifth and seventh month and the *Pasni* of a baby boy is done in the sixth month. Many guests are invited for this ceremony, and parents will hold a big fest for the entire guests present in the ceremony. (Elias, 2014)

The *Guthiyars* of Ashok Vinayak Guthi always celebrate their fairs and festivals in the premises of Ashok Vinayak Temples, and even they celebrate the birth of child in the premises by bringing the child to the temple on the day of Weaning ceremony. This process goes on and on and even today, the Guthiyars and even other people visit the temple with their new born for good fortune, happiness and auspiciousness. (Personal Observation)

### 5.3.2 Janku Celebration

Janku is a term applied to a particular Newari tradition in which a cultural ceremony is performed when Newari people reach certain ages. Janku is celebration of life, when a man or women from Newar community in Nepal turns to 77 years old. There are five Jankus performed during the lifetime of the person if s/he happens to live up to 106 years old. (Roka, 2019)

The date for celebrating janku is calculated by the priest on the basic of lunar calendar. If it is a couple, the date for Janku is determined by the age of the husband and the couple will celebrate the Janku together irrespective of the wife's age at the time. If it is a single person, then it is according to their birth date. Janku is celebrated by the family members, dressing the man into his finest and the woman looking like a new bride to be. The ritual marks that one has lived his or her life and can rest now. There are five Janku performed during the lifetime of the person when they reach the milestone ages between 77 and 106 years old. (Sujan, 2021)

**First Janku** is performed at the age of 77 years, 7 months, 7 days, where they worship the sun as a god called *BHIMRATHAROHAN*. Grandsons carry the person's chariot into their shoulders or make a round and visit the temples of god and goddess.

The **Second Janku** is at the age of 83 years, 4 months and 4 days where they are worshipped as an aspect of the moon. This is called *CHANDRARATHAROHAN* as it is believed that a person has seen 1000 full moons in their life and their prayers are directed towards the moon.

The **Third Janku** is performed at the age of 88 years, 8 months and 8 days, which is called *DEVARATHAROHAN* where they are worshipped as an aspect of god.

The **Fourth Janku** is at the age of 99 years, 9 months and 9 days, which is called *DIVYARATHAROHAN*.

The **Fifth Janku** is at the age of 105 years, 8 months and 8 days old, called *MAHADIVYARATHAROHAN*. (Deupala, 2020)

Janku being performed at that particular age is because "The particular ages for the ceremonies mark inauspicious times in a person's life, times when even the smallest hurdle might pose a serious threat to one's life. The various rituals are performed in order to please particular deities to help the person overcome those problems", so to avoid unpleasant minimize unpleasant happenings in life, jankus are performed to keep the person safe and for their good health and a long life. After performed all the Janku, The person is regarded as God after these rituals are performed and the relative's even distant ones visit them to receive blessings. All the younger members of the family pay their respect, get blessings and pull them in a chariot as a symbol of sharing their celebration with the world. (Sujan, 2021)

In Ashok Vinayak Temple all its Guthi members whoever celebrate this Janku festival, if they stays near the temple are they will bring the chariot in the temple and go around the temple for good fortune and blessing on the elderly member of the family. But if they stays far they will send the Puja to the temple and receive the blessings.

### **5.3.3 Other Rituals**

As Ashok Vinayak Temple is famous as a sacred and ritualistic place, large numbers of devotees come here for pilgrimage. Usually, devotees came at the temple for worshipping. Meantime, considering a sacred place, devotees always wish to do some ritualistic performance at the temple. With regular worship, other ritualistics performed is also held at this temple like Upanayana (Thread Wering Ceremony), Birthdays and other different worships as well as offerings.

## **5.4 Fairs and Festivals Celebrated at Ashok Vinayak Temple**

The word festival was originally used as an adjective form the late fourteenth century, deriving from Latin English. In Middle English a “festival Dai” was a religious holiday. A Festival is an extraordinary event celebrated by a community and centering on some characteristics aspect or aspects of that community and its religion cultures. It is often marked as local or national holiday or mela. A festival constitutes typical case of localization as well as the high culture low culture interrelationship. (Caves, 2005)

Nepal is known to foreigners as a land of fascinating festivals, and rightly so as the Nepalese celebrate more festivals than there are days in a year. They are celebrated according to the lunar calendar festival and therefore do not occur on the same date from year to year and every full moon day (the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar month) has special significance. The lifestyle of the Nepali people is uniquely interwoven with religious culture and rituals and entertainment is provided by the numerous festivals. They are not merely spectacles but a celebration of the glorious cultural heritage. Festivals unite people of diverse cultural backgrounds and faiths into one nation. Beside gods and goddesses the worshipping during some festivals is in honors of the earth, sun, moon, parents, cows, snakes, dogs, rivers, plants, tools, weapons- practically everything. (Subba & et al., 2006)

Next to religion and folklore, a significant origin is agricultural. Food is such a vital resource that many festivals are associated with harvest time. Religious commemoration and thanksgiving for good harvests are blended in events that take place in autumn. Festivals are often served to fulfill specific communal purposes, especially in regard to commemoration or thanking to gods, goddesses or saints: they are called patronal festivals. They may also provide entertainment, which was particularly important to local communities before the advent of mass produced entertainment. Festivals that focus on cultural or ethnics topics also seek to inform

community members of their traditions; the involvement of elders sharing stories and experience provides a means for unity among families. (Kahar, 2017) Attendants of festivals are often motivated by a desire for escapism, socialization and camaraderie; the practice has been seen as a means of creating geographical connection, belonging and adaptability. (Davies, 2022)

Year after year the Nepalese festivals follow round the old 'religious' lunar calendar in the same sequence. An exception is New Year Day, which always falls in the middle of April, observed throughout Nepal as the first day of the Official Nepalese solar calendar. It should be remembered then, when observing the festival as chronological events that other annual celebrations which occur at this season may in some year falls a few days before and in other years a few days after *Nawabarsa*, the New Year. (Anderson, 1977)

The great diversity of Nepali religious beliefs and the varied cultural traditions of the different states never fail to interest the visitor. This diversity accounts for the large number of festivals in Nepal. Some of these are common to the whole country, while only a sect or community observes others. The major festivals common to all Nepal and celebrated at the premises of Ashok Vinayak Temple are listed as follows:

#### **5.4.1 Gai jatra**

The festival of Gai jatra falls in the month of Bhadra (*Bhadra Krishna Pratipada to Bhadra Krishna Saptami*), which goes on for a week long period. Gai jatra means the procession of sacred cows. The people from the Newar Community call it is as "Saparu". It is celebrated on the day after the Janai Purnima. (Shrestha, 2016) In the very day of Gai jatra the soul of the dead's are honored. This festival is believed to be started by King Pratap Malla in the seventeenth Century, but many of the reknown scholars believe that this festival is older than that. In this period of eight days, they also mimic the current situation of the society in a satiric way to give message to the society. (NTB, 2015)

In the very day of Gai jatra people from the family of dead people, imitate as a cow or they do the parade with the cow along the city within the prescribed route which starts from Bagbazzar going along to Ratnapark, Bhotahiti, Ason, Indrachowk, Hanumandhoka, Kasthamandap, Jaisi dewal, Lagantoll, Jaisi dweal, Maruhiti, Kasthamandap, Damai Toll, Nardevi, Bangemuda and Ason. (Personal Observation)

The Gai jatra or cow procession consists for each family of a live, decorated cow or a young boy decorated as a cow, together with the family priest, a troupe of musicians and a small boy imitating a yogi or a holy man. After the early morning rituals for the dead at home, the parade starts on its way to join hundreds of similar groups in and endless procession past temples, idols, holy places and the narrow streets. House holders and other people who are observing the parade give foods and coins to the member of each possession. They all must pass through the Hanumandhoka and

believed that the old Malla Kings use to keep the census of the annual death toll by counting the group. When the cow processions return to their house hold in the evening the religious ceremonies are again performed and the cloth of the cow costumed boys, which drag along the ground during the pilgrimage are cut into strips and tied about the necks of the family members to protect from misfortune and negative vibes. (Anderson, 1977)

The festival of Gai jatra is celebrated in different ways in all the three ancient kingdoms of Nepal. In Bhaktapur Gai jatra is indeed the second largest festival after the Biska Jatra. It is continuously celebrated for seven nights and eight days. Annually the Gai jatra begins with a mash of people and noticeable *Tahamacha* (Chariot) made of bamboo decorated with flowers and colorful threads and dressed up in clothes with the pictures of a dead person at the center is carried around the old main street of Bhaktapur. *Tahamacha* is decorated according to the gender of the dead ones. The bamboo is wrapped with *Haku Patasi* (Newari Traditional Black Saree with Red Boarder) and with simple cloth for men. The main leader known as Tahamacha of Bhairabh, which is covered by straws and succeeded by Ajima Bhadrakali, guides all these4 chariots from different societies. In the city of Lalitpur Gai jatra is celebrated in different ways then in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. Likewise, in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur they do not do the cow procession or the chariot festival, they gather in front of the royal palace and perform different dances. The people from the dead's family also come in the same place and people offer food and drinks to them.

In the temple of Ashok Vinayak temple and the Ashok Vinayak Guthi, they do perform various ritualistic performances to the Ganesh present in the Ashok Vinayak Guthi Ghar for two days and in the final day, when the Chariot procession goes around the city every *Guthi* member goes around the city with the musical instruments. In these eight days of the Gai jatra the members of the Ashok Vinayak Guthi also worship the Samyak Buddha present in the Ashok Vinayak Guthi Ghar. The same idol of the Samyak Buddha is taken in the Samyak Festival in presence of all Guthi members and with different musical instruments, which takes place every 12 year and in the presence of Head of the Nation. (SAVG, 2070)

#### **5.4.2 Ganesh Chaturthi**

Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated on the fourth day of the bright fortnightof Bhadra (i.e. *Bhadra Shukla Chathurthi*). Ganesh chaturthi is also worshipped to mark the Birthday of Lord Ganesh. Ganesh is worshipped in every house hold that follows Hinduism and Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley. Lord Ganesh is the god of good luck and success and also protects people from misfortune. There is a legend related to the Festival of Ganesh Chaturthi, according to the legends it is said that, Lord Brahma the Great Creator underwent a strict fasting in the name of Lord Ganesh, Lord Ganesh was very pleased and asked him for a boon he wants. Then the Great Creator Brahma asked him, during the process of creation let there be no mishaps and

mistakes, then the Lord Ganesh fulfilled his wish and dispreed, but the Chandrama (The Moon) criticized The Great Creator Brahma, that superior god asked a boon from an elephant headed demi-god. After knowing about the criticism made by the Moon, then the Lord Ganesh Curse the moon, saying that any person who dares to even look upon the Moon would become an addictive thief. Then the moon was forced to hide and without her rays in the dark night everyone was feeling uneasy. So after this incident all the gods and goddess prayed to Lord Ganesh by offering him his favorite food to forgive the Moon, so that the world might again have the moon light. Then Lord Ganesh granted pardon to the Moon but on the very night of Ganesh Chaturthi the curse shall remain effective forever. So in this auspicious day the sight of moon is always avoided. (Anderson, 1977)

On the very day of Ganesh Chaturthi on the premises of Ashok Vinayak temple a *Homa* (Fire Ritual) is performed with the help of a Buddhist priest (pic:14 & 15) . In Vedic Hinduism, a *Homa* is also known as *Havan*, *Havan* is a fire ritual performed on special occasion by a priest, usually for a home. The homeowner keeps different kind of fire in home including cooking food, heat his home, amongst other uses; therefore, an offering is made directly into the fire. A *homa* is sometimes called a “sacrifice ritual” because the fire destroys the offering, but a *homa* is more accurately a “Votive Ritual” (pic: 17). The fire is the agent and the offerings include those that are material and symbolic such as grains, ghee, milk, incense and seeds. (Payne and Witzel, 2016)

During the *Homa* Ceremony at Ashok Vinayak Temple, the Chairperson of Ashok Vinayak Guthi actively participates and remains beside the priest. Simultaneously, at the entrance gate of Kasthamandap, many devotees gather to perform various hymns and praise Lord Ganesh. At the same time, another group is busy preparing *Samay-Baji* within the premises of Ashok Vinayak Temple. *Samay-Baji*, a Newari cuisine, comprises several food items symbolizing good luck, prosperity, health, and longevity. These foods are traditionally served during family reunions and other celebrations. Typical items presented in *Samay-Baji* (pic: 18) include flattened beaten rice (*Baji*), puffed rice (*Samay*), fried black soybeans, fresh ginger rhizomes (*Palu*), marinated broiled meat (*Choyela*), spinach leaves, dried fish fried in oil (*Sanya*), boiled-fried eggs, fresh and dried fruits, lentil patties (*Woh*), various varieties of Newari mari bread, and local white wine (*Aila*).

Hundreds of devotees gather to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi within the premises of Ashok Vinayak Temple. At the end of the day, the ritual dish (*Samay-Baji*) is shared and distributed among the devotees as an auspicious blessed food. After completing all the rituals during the day, in the evening, all members of Ashok Vinayak Guthi gather in the Deva Ghar to organize a feast where everyone enjoys food, drinks, and each moment. (Personal Observation)

### 5.4.3 Indra Jatra

Indra jatra is one of the most important festivals in the Newar community of the Kathmandu Valley, which last for eight days. It is celebrated from the 12<sup>th</sup> day of bright fortnight of Bhadra (*Bhadra Shuklapakshya Duwadasi to Ashwin Krishnapakshya Chaturthi*). This is perhaps one of the most important and certainly the most important and certainly the most spectacular of all the Nepalese festivals, celebrated by both Hindu and Buddhist alike. The inscription of Nepal Sambat 561 from *Taumadi* toll of Bhaktapur mentions about the festival of Indra Jatra, according to which it can be said that the tradition of Indra Jatra existed from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century AD. (Joshi, 2060)

This festival commences with the raising of a 60-foot-long pine tree pole, carefully chosen by a priest. The pole is erected on a platform adjacent to the Indrapur Temple in Hanuman Dhoka Square, where mask dancers display the traditional dances of the Kathmandu Valley. The pole, also referred to as “*Yahsi*,” which etymologically comes from *Yah*, “Beloved”, and *Si*, “Wood”, features the golden image of God Indra, the King of Heaven and Rain, along with his elephant, placed near the pole.

Legend says Lord Indra, Ruler of Heaven, controller of clouds and storm, was fond of the white *Parijat* flowers, which grow abundantly in the Kathmandu Valley, but were not to be found in Heaven. When his mother requested a supply of these blossoms to perform her annual Women's *Tij* fasting rites, Indra, hidden in a cloud of fog and mist, descended to the valley disguised as an ordinary mortal. It seems that the valley people, unaware of his divinity, apprehended Indra in the act of stealing their *Parijat* flowers and, as is still the custom when a thief is caught, surrounded the Lord of Heaven, binding his hands and feet with ropes. They held him prisoner; it is said, in the locality of Maru Hiti in old Kathmandu. Before long Indra's mother came to earth to investigate her son's disappearance and when the valley people learned the identity of their visitor and prisoner, they fell down before them with profuse offering of foods and flowers. The Lord of Heaven and his goddess mother were feted and carried in processions through the streets for a week, while the ruler of Kathmandu held lavish feasts and receptions in their honour. Story has it that Indra's mother, in compensation for her son's release, promised to furnish the valley with the vital fog and dew during the autumn and winter season, moisture which the farmers still refer to as 'milk' for their ripening harvest. She further agreed to lead back to Heaven the souls of all who had died during the year. (Anderson, 1977) This led to immense rejoicing and feasting among the valley's residents and marked the inception of a grand festival.

Along with Indra and Kumari, the god Bhairaba is also honored during the festival. Throughout the cities, many masks of Bhairaba are exhibited everywhere including gold mask exposed to the public only on this annual occasion. Bhairab is god of terror and destroyer. At the certain times of the day local liquors or homemade Rice Wine pours from the mouth of bhairabh, through a bamboo pipe spout for three days to



the local people. Somewhere in the flow, there is a small fish that guarantees prosperity in the next year, for the special one who drinks the local wine along with the fish. On the day of Indra Jatra, various idols of Lord Indra, with arms outstretched, can be seen in different alleys and squares. These idols are strategically placed atop high platforms to offer clear views. Indra's elephant, *Airavata*, also roams around the streets, manned by two individuals disguised as an elephant. They navigate the narrow alleys, playfully interacting with people in their quest for Lord Indra. Throughout the festival's eight-day duration, various forms of classical dances are performed. The major highlights include the Majipa Lakhe Dance, Sawa-Bhakku Dance, and Dus Avatar Dance. Religious activities are also observed in Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square during the Indra Jatra period. (Shrestha, 2013)

During the Indra Jatra festival the work load in the Ashok Vinayak Guthi Ghar, is immense and the work of making the 18 feet tall vantage point in front of Kabindrapur (pic: 24) starts a weeks before the festival starts. On the very first day of the festival, the worshipping of the Lord Indra is done in the "Ashok Vinayak Dev Ghar", and later the same idol of Lord Indra (pic: 21&22) is kept in the vantage point in front of the kabindrapur and throughout the indrajatra festival (pic: 23), many devotees pay homage to the Lord Indra. In the last day of Indra Jatra the *homa* puja is performed and the idol is kept again in the the Ashok Vinayak Dev Ghar hoping for a prosperous and grand Indra Jatra next year. (Personal Observation)

#### **5.4.4 Dashain**

The festival of Dashain in the national festival of Nepal and it is celebrated on the month of *Ashwin* (from *Ashwin Shukla Pratipada* to *Ashwin Shukla Purnima*), which is held throughout the Nepal and is celebrate by all the Hindus. It is celebrated for fertility and the victory of good over evil as represented by the goddess Durga. According to the *Kashikhanda*, the son of RuRu Durga was killed by goddess and from that day she was named as Durga. (Joshi, 2060)

The festivities of these two weeks glorify the ultimate and inevitable triumph of virtue over the forces of Evil, commemorating a great victory of the gods over the wicked demons and devils that harassed mankind in ancient times. The Ramayana story is retold of the righteous king Rama, defined by Hindu Mythology as an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, or again as god himself, who after the epic struggles slaughtered Ravana, the fiendish King of the demon hordes from Lanka, a legendary country believed by many to have been Ceylon. The first nine days of Dashain are called Nawaratri (Nine nights). Tantric rites were formerly conducted in the secrecy of night, but in Nepal the rites are openly observed. Here the infinitely ancient Mother-Cult of Mother Earth and Mother nature takes form in the Divine energy of power of the female, depicted as goddess Durga in all her many forms. All mother goddess who emanated from Durga are known as Devis, each with different aspects and powers,

nine of whom, collectively called Nawa Durgas, are listed in the scriptures but many more are worshipped in Nepal. (Anderson, 1977)

The festival of Dashain is a multi-day celebration in Nepal dedicated to Goddess *Durga*. The first day of the festival is *Ghatasthapana*., this day involves placing a *Kalash* (Water Jug) representing Goddess *Durga* in a sacred area of the home. The *Kalash* is filled with holy water and adorned with designs in cow dung and grains. The room where the *Kalash* is placed, known as “*Dashain Ghar*,” is kept purified and away from women. *Fulpathi*: the seventh day, the *Kalash* from the royal family is established in the old royal palace. It is brought with ceremony and decorated, symbolizing the might of the throne.

*Maha Astami* is the eighth day is dedicated to worshipping *Durga* and *Ram* shrines. It's a day of feasting, including meat items, various foods, and alcohol. *Maha Nawami* or *Kaal Ratri*: On the ninth day, numerous animals like buffaloes, goats, chickens, and ducks are sacrificed at shrines, symbolizing soul cleansing. The Taleju temple is open for pilgrimage, and many offerings are made. This day is known as “*Shyako Tyako*” in the Newar community, involving animal sacrifices and blessings for tools and vehicles. Bijaya Dashami, the final day, also known as “*Tika*,” involves receiving blessings from elders, who put *Tika* and *Jamara* (sacred barley shoots) on one's forehead. Feasting occurs throughout the day, marking the culmination of the festival. Dashain is a significant religious and cultural event in Nepal, marked by various rituals, offerings, and celebrations over several days. Feast is performed in every house during the day of Bijaya Dashami. (Anderson, 1977)

While all the Kathmanduties are, busy in celebrating the festival of Dashain. However, the people related with the Ashok Vinayah Temple are busy in preparing the chariot festival, which, they will perform for the coming four days. The festival in Ashok Vinayak Temple starts From *Ashwin Shukla Ashtami* to *Ashwin Shukla Ekadashi*, in this time period the daily worshipping is held first then the idol of Lord Ganesh is taken to different parts of the City.

*Ashwin Shukla Ashtami* happens to be the first day of the Chariot festival, on this day the idol of Lord Ganesh is kept on the main entrance of the Ashok Vinayak Guthi House (pic: 12), also known as The House of Maru Ganesh a Deity. Throughout the day it is kept in the same place for the public to worship and pay homage (pic: 26). The Guthiyar, Thakali and Nakuli all three parties get directly involved in this worshipping then they are offered with snacks after worshipping which marks the end of the morning season. In the late afternoon, the same idol is kept in the chariot (pic: 25), which goes around in different parts of the Kathmandu Valley. Throughout the chariot procession, any member of the Ashok Vinayak Guthi or any other person can hold the umbrella for the chariot (pic: 38). It is also believed that Dharmanarayan Manandhar has kept some of his land in the Guthi for the same chariot festival. The chariot is carried with the help of a bamboo, which is known as “*Nol*” in the local

language. The chariot is carried with the help of *Nol*, so the Guthi is also named as “*Nocha Guthi*”. In the current day scenario there are 84 families in this *Nocha Guthi* and every family organize the festival every single year. The *Nocha Guthi* members tie the right sides of the *Nol* and the left sides are done by the *Maharjans* of the *Ashok Vinayak Guthi*. (Pangeni, 2068)

When the chariot is carried first in the evening (pic: 31), the chariot first makes three rounds around the *Simha Sattal*(pic: 32), which is situated in the Southeast side of the House of *Maru Ganesh Deity*, then it is taken to ‘*Maru Tahabil Chowk*’ for worshipping. Since it is the home of *Nocha Guthi* and *Dharmanarayan Manandhar* “Who built the House of *Maru Ganesh Deity* and started this festival as well”. Where they used to sacrifice buffalo initially during the festival but later they changed the trend and started sacrificing a goat and even that was changed by offering fruits and sweets from 2001 AD.

When the worshipping is done in the *Tahabil Chowk*, the chariot procession in different part of the town begins (pic: 33&34) starting from the house of *Nakuli*. The different parts of the town from where the chariot pass are *Chikamugal*, *Gwacheymugal*, *Daisha*, *Chilachhen*, *Mubahal*, *Lyakusal*, *Old Bhansar*, *Pako*, *Khicha Pokhu*, *New Road*, *Ranjana Galli*, *Fishikeva*, *Indra Chowk*, *Killagal*, *Maruhiti*, *Marubahil*, *Nardevi*, *Yethkha*, and back to the House of *Maru Ganesh Deity*(pic: 40). It is kept in the main entrance of the House of *Maru Ganesh Deity*, from where the chariot procession has begun. On the second day (*Ashhwin Shukla Nawami*) of the festival, it is believed that the god is in the state of hibernation, so they take it as a rest day. (SAVG, 2070)

***Ashhwin Shukla Dashami***: The third day of the festival, the idol of Lord *Ganesh* is kept in the chariot, and then makes three rounds of the *Simha Sattal* then the procession starts early in the morning. First the chariot procession goes to the *Maru Tahabil*, where the decoration of the chariot is done with different flowers, decorative flags, garlands, fruits and a special garland made of radish, and even the public comes here for paying homage and presenting offerings to Lord *Ganesh*. All the people involved in this chariot procession are offered with *Samya-Baji* and homemade rice wine. After staying for some time the procession again moves to different parts of the valley starting from *Basantapur*, *Khichapokhari*, *Dharahara*, *Bhosika*, *Bhotabahal*, in *bhotabahal* they rest for a while and even some snacks is served to them by the locals, basically *Malpuwa*, *Guava*, selected pickles and local homemade rice wine is served as snacks. (Pangeni, 2068)

Previously, the chariot procession used to proceed to the King's Palace and the Prime Minister's quarters as well. However, the exact date of its inception remains unknown. During the rule of Prime Minister *Juddha Sumsher*, the procession was taken to *Simha Durbar*, and many members of the *Guthi* used to participate on that day. This was because the Prime Minister's family would offer Silver Coins to Lord *Ganesh*, which

the Guthi members were very excited to collect. The coins were thrown from the windows. Additionally, a significant reason for the large participation in this chariot procession was that Simha Durbar was not easily accessible to the public during other occasions and times. The chariot procession at Simha Durbar ended with the conclusion of the Rana regime in the country in 1951 AD. (Pangeni, 2068)

Although the chariot procession used to visit the Royal Palace, the royals did not hold much enthusiasm for this event at the Royal Palace. This tradition began during the reign of King Tribhuvan and continued until the rule of the last monarch, King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev. The royal family used to contribute NPR Three Thousand towards the chariot expenses, a practice observed from King Tribhuvan's era to King Gyanendra's reign. In the year 2008 AD, the palace gate remained closed for an extended period, preventing the chariot procession from reaching the Royal Palace. Interestingly, it is worth noting that this incident coincided with Nepal being declared a Federal Democratic Republic in 2009 AD. Subsequently, the tradition of the chariot procession at the Royal Palace concluded after that event. (SAVG, 2070)

In the evening the chariot procession is taken to Lagan Toll, Brahma Toll, Hyumat, Kohiti, Bhimsenthan and finally Maru Tole (pic: 41) and the idol is kept back in the House of Maru Ganesh Deity for the entire evening and Night. (Personal Observation)

The final day of the Lord Ganesh Chariot procession falls on *Ashwin Shukla Ekadashi*. Early in the morning on this day, the chariot is transported to Maru Tahabil and adorned with a variety of flowers, decorative flags, garlands, fruits, and a radish garland. The procession then commences for the day. Ashok Vinayak Guthi takes the responsibility of providing breakfast and lunch *Samya-Baji* to more than 500 devotees directly and indirectly involved in this chariot procession. The procession's route encompasses various places within Kathmandu, including Chikamugal, Maruhiti, Khyokev, Inatol, Dhokatol, Mugalli, Santagalli, Elkhawal, Pachengalli, Nardevi, Vurankhel, Ratnakali, Kilagal, Vasadyo, Tengal, Chhetrapati, Dhalko, Dhobidhara, and Paknazol (pic: 42). At Paknazol, the group takes a break, and snacks are provided during this interval.

After the rest, the chariot continues its journey through different locations in Kathmandu, such as Khusya Bahal, Kamalachi, Bhotahiti, Bir Hospital, Maha Baudha, Masagalli, Asan, Janabahal, Indrachowk, Chokachen Galli, Makhan, Khichapokhari, Pako, Ohmbahal, Yangal, Lagan, Gofal, Fusingal, Japutun, Kumanani, Maru Bahil, Nachpuch, Maru Dhoka, Chason, Layakusal, Newasal, Falchasal, Jhonche, Jaisidewal, Kohiti, Bhimsenthan, Atko Narayan, Chowasapa, and Khyokev. In all this a group of musicians always performs various musical tunes (pic: 35&36). Upon reaching Atko Narayan, the final offerings and worship take place, marking the same location where the chariot festival began on the first day *Ashwin Shukla Astami* in Maru Tabahil Chowk. Family members of Dharma Narayan and all Guthi members participate in this concluding ceremony. The chariot then completes

three rounds of *Simha Shattal* and proceeds directly to the Maru Ganesh Deity's shrine on the second floor of a house, signifying the conclusion of the annual chariot festival. On the day of *Ashwin Shukla Purnima*, which also marks the final day of Dashain, all Guthi members gather to clean the crematorium at Lakha Tirtha. A week after the chariot festival, the Guthiyars from Daisa Toll, associated with the Manandhars, invite the Guthiyars from Ashok Vinayak Guthi for an evening of *Samya-Baji*. This tradition fosters a bond between the Manandhar and Maharjan communities. (Pangeni, 2068)

#### **5.4.5 Ghode Jatra**

The word '*Paha*' Meaning guest while '*Chare*' meaning a celebration. It is also known as "*Pasachare*" where '*Pasa*' meaning friends. Traditionally on this day homes and courtyards are thoroughly cleaned and decorated to welcome the relatives and acquaintances in the hope that, such a display of goodwill generosity and mutual love will dispel evil thoughts and harmful spirits. Especially it is important to invite married daughters back to parental homes for family feasts that sisters may meet in good fellowship. The following Aunsi, the fifteenth or the last day of the dark lunar fortnight is called Ghoda Jatra, the festival of Horse which in actuality is now an Official Sports Day, having lost most of its traditional significance these events are held in Tundikhel, a great open field. Legend has it that the horse festival was originally held to celebrate victory over demon named '*Tundi*' whoes abode has long been this large '*Khel*' or medows. Throughout this day (*Pahachare*), the meeting of guest, goddess and friends is celebrated. Animals are sacrificed at the grandmother goddess temples, especially those seven goddesses who are sisters. The most prominent is Bhadrakali, the term Bhadra meaning god or well bred, while kali is again the goddess who controls over the black magic. (Anderson, 1977)

In ancient times, there were eight sister goddesses: Bhadrakali, Kankeshwori, Tankeshwori, Mahipi, Ajima, Maitidevi, Bachala Maju, Swa (Swet Kali), and Indriani. It is believed that these eight sisters were even invited during the festival of "*Pahachare*." In the present day, a similar gathering occurs each year, during which Goddess Bhadrakali and her sisters are carried in Khats from their respective temples, with heavy ceremonial umbrellas twirling over their heads. They approach Asan toll along different streets, zigzag and bouncing through the crowds, borne by men from their own temple and neighborhood. Each goddess is accompanied by groups of musicians who push their way into the solid mass of humanity, to form tight circles around their singing and dancing clan's men.

Since ancient times, the Ashok Vinayak Guthi and its members have been involved in the activities of the Kankeshwori Temple. They assist in placing the idol in the chariot, which then travels through various parts of the city. Additionally, Guthi members actively engage in the fair (pic: 43& 44), often accompanied by a group of musicians. As part of their traditions, they also perform animal sacrifices to the Kankeshwori Devi before commencing the chariot festival. (SAVG, 2070)

#### 5.4.6 Seto Machindranath

Seto Machindranath is a deity worshipped by Hindus as the god of rain and Buddhist worship as Awalokiteshwor. The members of the guthi prepare the 30-foot high chariot of Seto Machindranath (Jana Baha Dyah), about 10 days before the arrival of the festival. Nine members will work full time to prepare the chariot on time. This chariot festival lasts for three days, which starts from *Chaitra Sukla Astami* to *Chaitra Sukla Dashami*. (Pant, 2018)

There are numerous legends as to why the festival is being celebrated. For many, the celebration simply marks the end of winter and the beginning of the spring and rainy seasons. Locals at Jana Bahal, the temple where the idol of Seto Machindranath is kept have their own legends and stories. One of the most popular legends has to do with the *Yamaraj* (The God of Death) and his visit to Swyambhunath. According to the legend, Lord Seto Machindranath appeared in a pond near the present-day Ranipokhari, during the reign of King Pratap Malla. Here's how the story goes: having heard a lot about Swyambhunath and its mystical powers Yamaraj came to visit the holy place so he too could go to heaven one day. As he was returning back, the King with the help from his tantric priest captured the God of Death and demanded that he make him immortal in return for his freedom. A mortal god himself, Yamaraj summoned Lord Arya Awalokiteshwor, a manifestation of Bodhisattva to free him from the king.

The lord, white in colour emerged from the water and told the king that neither Yamaraj nor he could grant him immortality. The lord also told him to build a temple where the kalimati and Bagmati River meets. "Anyone who visits the temple will live long life, that's all I can do". The Lord is said to have told King, who had no other option but to free Yamaraj. He also told the king to organize a Chariot festival every year for three days starting from *Chaitra Shukla Ashtami*, so that he could go to the houses of those people who cannot move, because of disability or stay longer in their houses and to bless them. Ever since then, the procession takes place every year from the same place where the lord presented himself to King Pratap Malla. (Pant, 2018)

The festival is said to have been started by King Pratap Malla. On the day of *Chaitra Sukla Astami*, the priests, who are Shakyas, take the image of the chief deity, Padmapani Avalokiteshwor, out for a procession to Jamal beside Ranipokhari where the large wheeled chariot is waiting to receive it (pic: 46). The two leaders from Thane and Kwane lead the Chariot festival. The procession starts with the people of various castes playing their musical instrument and dancing to the tunes. This colorful procession is so exhilarating that any observer is bound to feel energized—the towering chariot making its way down the alleys of the town. The enthusiastic youths pulling the chariot with the rope, the people singing hymns and praying, the lights, and the smell of the incense sticks all create an aura that is magnanimous and full of divine power, difficult to discern. All groups of people unify and come forward in the

procession and pray for their long life and prosperity. (Anonymous, 2012)

The annual White Machhendranath festival involves a chariot pulling ceremony spanning several days. On the first day, the idol of White Machhendranath is transported to Jamal near Ghantaghar on a palanquin by holy priests (pic: 45). The idol is then placed on a large chariot and people pull it through various locations like Ratna Park and Bhotahity, accompanied by traditional music and a platoon of soldiers. The first day's pulling ends with rifle shots in the air, denoting "Yaa Nyakegu." Devotees light lamps around the chariot for their families' well-being, and Kanphata yogis perform a ritual related to body control. The second day sees the chariot pulled to Hanumandhoka near Kalbhairav (pic: 47). A special ceremony involves throwing *chatamari* over devotees from the chariot, symbolizing control over speech. Lighting lamps and offering puja continue. On the third day, the chariot progresses to Lagantole, where it encircles the mother's temple and a significant tree. This day signifies control over the subconscious. After completing the rounds, the idol is carried back to Machhendra bahal on a palanquin, concluding the festival. Delays might occur, but the chariot must return before the full moon. (Bajracharya, 2013)

The whole procession with its starting, finishing and stopping point's enroute interestingly shows the hierarchy of open spaces and the path-space configurations, giving a new socio-cultural meaning to existing religious sites, squares and streets. Everyday the procession pierces through the dense settlement of the city and at the end of the day stops at the Chowks or the Durbar squares that are the points of religious or political importance. These places act as the congregational points where locals come forward to perform religious activities. (Anonymous, 2012)

During the festival of seto machindranath on the second day all the guthiyars take part in the chariot festival by pulling the chariot from Hanuman Dhoka Raj Durbar to Lagan tole. Later in the evening, they worship the Lord *Nathyashwor* and return with some offerings, those who they do not take part in the chariot pulling they participate by wearing traditional attaires and musical band. (SAVG, 2070)

During the festival of Nepal Sambat (न्हदया) and Jyapu Diwas (योमरो पुन्ही) all the guthiyars takes part in different festivals organized in different part of the Kathmandu valley by being in their traditional attire and with their traditional musical band. Other than all these festivals celebrated in the Kathmandu valley, the Shree Ashok Vinayak Guthi is always keen to keep the religious, cultural and social activities alive in the Kathmandu valley. The Ashok Vinayak Guthi also always takes part in various festivals and processions, which are being celebrated every year, by the Kathmandu metropolitan city and their presence is marked by the musical band and traditional attire.

## Chapter Six

### Summary and Conclusion

#### 6.1 Summary

Nepal is a beautiful country located in South Asia, bordered by China in the North and India in East, West and South. It has a rich and complex history which backs Nepal to thousands year. Nepal was ruled by various dynasties and kingdoms who are known for showing their love and care for history culture and monuments. Nepal is known for its stunning natural beauty, rich cultural heritage and friendly people. It is home to many different ethnic groups, each with its own unique customs and traditions. Every part of Nepal has its own culture, tradition, religion and languages. As like, Kathmandu valley is called as the center of culture, tradition and history as well.

This dissertation titled The Historicity and Cultural Study of The Ashok Vinayak Temple, Kathmandu has been presented at the Central Department of Nepali History, Culture and Archeology, Kirtipur for the partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters in Art level under Tribhuvan University, Faculty of Humanities and Sociology. What is the cultural heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple area? What are the aspects related to intangible cultural heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple area? And what is the historicity of the Ashok Vinayak Temple area. This study has addressed the research problem. In order to address the above-mentioned problems, researching and studying about the tangible cultural heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple area, exploring various aspects related to the intangible cultural heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple area and identifying the historicity of Ashok Vinayak Temple. From the point of view of the content, the main area of this study is Ashok Vinayak Temple's antiquity, origin, history, tangible and intangible heritage, religious rituals and worship methods. On the basis of geography, this study has been focused on Ashok Vinayak Temple located in Kathmandu District of Province No. 3. This research work has been completed within the limits of the objectives determined to address the thematic problems of the study. Various steps and processes have been completed from the selection of the subject for the study to the production of the report.

The thesis is organized into six chapters. The first chapter is the thesis introduction part which contains statement of problem, objectives and its justification. It also deals with the methodology adopted for the study, limitation and division of the chapters. The second chapter is related on the essential and important part of the studies. It basically includes an overview assessment of various aspects to direct the thesis in proper direction which contains context study and divided into several sub divisions like the background of Kathmandu Valley, Historicity of the Kathmandu valley and maru tole, Culture & Religion of Kathmandu valley and Maru tole, Art, Architecture & Heritage of Kathmandu valley and Maru tole. The third chapter deals with the



Historicity of Ashok Vinayak Temple which contains the introduction, background, importance and the worshipping pattern and people of Ashok Vinayak Temple and Maru tole, which is one of the important chapters of the thesis. The Fifth chapter deals with the intangible cultural heritages or Social and Cultural Traditions which contains rites and rituals of the people of Maru Tole from their birth to death. This chapter also deals with various feasts and festivals celebrated according the Nepal's Lunar Calendar and the other sub topic of this chapter is about the myths and legends of the Ashok Vinayak Temple regarding its name and its origin. Finally the last or sixth chapter is the conclusion of the thesis.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

Ashok Vinayak Temple is one of the important pilgrimage sites of Kathmandu valley which carries interesting myth and different legends regarding the establishment and etymology of name Ashok Vinayak. The temple premise has many important structures, sculpture, rituals, tradition and culture, which are the identity of this place, and displays the devotion and faith of Hindus and Buddhist on God. Likewise, from the historicity of Hanuman Dhoka Raj Durbar the history of Ashok Vinayak Temple also can be traced as well. Likewise, the settlements of ancient Nepal popularly known as *Koligram* and *Dakshin Koligram*, at that time, their tradition, culture and living style displays the ancient Nepal. It is typically a Newari settlement and has some important monuments of Simha Sattal, Kasthamandap, Kabindrapur and many more, which define the medieval community structure. The festivals and Jatras celebrated here are unique and celebrated with great participation of the local. Every occasion is made special with the enthusiastic participation of locals and division into group for certain activities and work. The fairs and festivals of this temple are very special and unique. However, with the encroachment and modernization, the temple structures, ways of celebration all are changing day by day. Even, the festivals and *Jatras* celebrated here are slowly getting decline with the time. The main thing required for the celebration is fund, which is given by the Guthi, is now not sufficient and even limited. The local are aware about their tradition and culture, hence somehow contributing for the celebration. To save the traditional music, dance, and technique of celebration they have imposed the fine method for those who do not attend the fairs and fesativasl organized by Shree Ashok Vinayak Guthi. The guthiyars and all the guthi members always has certain things that always make it more beautiful, attractive and traditional which could be felt while participating in different fairs and festival. The study on intangible cultural heritage of Ashok Vinayak Temple includes some rituals, festivals, legends and myth as well as the tradition, which the local are continuing from the ancient time making a rich heritage of Kathmandu valley.

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## Appendix One

### Question Schedule for Interview

1. What are the beliefs regarding this temple?
2. What is the connection between the four Vinayaks of the Kathmandu Valley?
3. What are the historical and cultural significance of Ashok Vinayak Temple?
4. What are the myths and legends behind this temple?
5. For why and what reasons Ganesh is worshipped in Kathmandu valley?
6. Are different Ganesh temples of the Kathmandu valley connected to each other?
7. From which months do the festival season starts and when does it end?
8. What are the major festivals celebrated in Ashok Vinayak Temple, how are they performed, and why is it called royal Ganesh?
9. Who heads all these different festivals and fairs when they are performed?
10. What difference do you find between the Newar Buddhist and Hindus while they visit the temple?
11. What is the relationship between the living Ganesh, Bhairabha and Kumari?
12. What kind of people mostly visits this temple?
13. Which concern authority has helped to perform fairs and festivals in the Ashok Vinayak Temple?
14. What are the challenges that you face while performing a fair and festivals? (Participation, migration, economy)
15. What should be done to increase the involvement of youth in these fairs and festivals?
16. What are the ways you have been using to overcome all these challenges?
17. What is the System of “*Guthi*” in Ashok Vinayak Temple?
18. Who makes the rules regarding the operation of “*Guthi*” in Ashok Vinayak Temple?
19. How do the “*Guthi*” benefits from the temple?
20. What should be done to make the “*Guthi*” system more effective and efficient?
21. How many “*Guthi*’s” are involved with this temple?
22. Who selects the priest for this temple?
23. How are the Priest selected in this temple?
24. From which cast are the priest selected in this temple?
25. What are the rules and regulation for priests during their tenure in this temple?
26. Have you felt any changes in the patters of celebrating different fairs and festivals in the past and present day?
27. Which different organizations are involved in the conservation and preservation of the temple?

## Appendix Two

### List of Interviewee

S.No.	Name	Relation with Temple	Age	Sex	Interview Date
1	Subash Dangol	Priest	40	M	02-Sep-2021
2	Rabi Maharjan	Priest	42	M	06-Sep-2021
3	Tirthaman Maharjan	President	56	M	13-Sep-2021
4	JogMan Maharjan	Secretary	54	M	13-Sep-2021
5	DirghaNarayan Maharjan	Priest	47	M	18-Nov-2021
6	Parladh Manandhar	Descendants of DharmaNarayan Manandhar	84	M	01-Dec-2021
7	Bimala Manandhar	Descendants of DharmaNarayan Manandhar	76	F	12-Dec-2021
8	Tari Maya Maharjan	Priest	82	F	15-Mar-2022

## Appendix Three

### Pictures



Pic: 01. Main Temple of Ashok Vinayak Temple taken during the period of 1990s  
*PC: Subash Krishna Dangol*



Pic: 02. Idol of Ashok Vinayak Temple. *PC: Subash Krishna Dangol*



Pic: 03. Main Temple of Ashok Vinayak Temple, after renovation in 2013/14.  
*PC: google.com*



Pic: 04. Tympanum of Ashok Vinayak Temple.



Pic: 05. Bell of the Ashok Vinayak Temple.



Pic: 06. Main Entrance door of Ashok Vinayak Temple.



Pic: 07. Main idol of Ashok Vinayak Temple.



Pic: 08. Mount of Lord Ganesh, Outside the Main Temple of Ashok Vinayak.



Pic: 09. Bronze idol of Ganesh kept every Teusday.

*PC: Milan Ratna Shakya*



Pic: 10. Bronze/ Gold plated idol of Ganesh kept during different festivals.

*PC: Milan Ratna Shakya*





Pic: 11. Silver idol of Ganesh kept during the Festival of Dashain.



Pic: 12. Shree Ashok Vinayak Guthi Ghar.



Pic: 13. Five Vinayaks of Kathmandu Valley.

**Photos from Ganesh Chaturthi.**



Pic: 14. Preast preparing a Mandap.



Pic: 15. Getting ready for Ganesh Chaturthi.



Pic: 16. *Lakh Batti* in the premises of Ashok Vinayak During Ganesh Chaturthi.



Pic: 17. *Homa Ceremony*



Pic: 18. *Samayabajhi* presented during Ganesh Chaturthi festival.



Pic: 19. Taking blessings after the *Homa* Ceremony



Pic: 20. Decorated Ashok Vinayak in Ganesh Chaturthi



Pic: 21. Statue of Lord Indra in Shree Ashok Vinayak Guthi Ghar



Pic: 22. Carrying the idol of Lord Indra.



Pic: 23. Lord Indra in the 18 feet tall Khat.



Pic: 24. Lord Indra and the 18 feet tall vantage point.



## Photos of Dashain



Pic: 25. Chariot getting ready for the Dashain chariot procession



Pic: 26. Ganesha Worshipped before the chariot festival



Pic: 27. Gachika Chitra of Ashok Vinayak Idol in the rear side of Ashok Vinayak Chariot.



Pic: 28. Chariot getting ready.



Pic: 29. Silver idol of Shree Ashok Vinayak being kept in the Chariot.



Pic: 30. Sliver Idol of Ashok Vinayak, Kept in the Chariot.



Pic: 31. The Chariot festival begins.



Pic: 32. The chariot in front of Simha Sattal.



Pic: 33. The chariot going in different parts of the city.



Pic: 34. The chariot going in different parts of the city and being helped for worshipping.



Pic: 35. Playing musical instrument during the chariot procession.



Pic: 36. Group of Musician, performing

PC: Rohit Maharjan



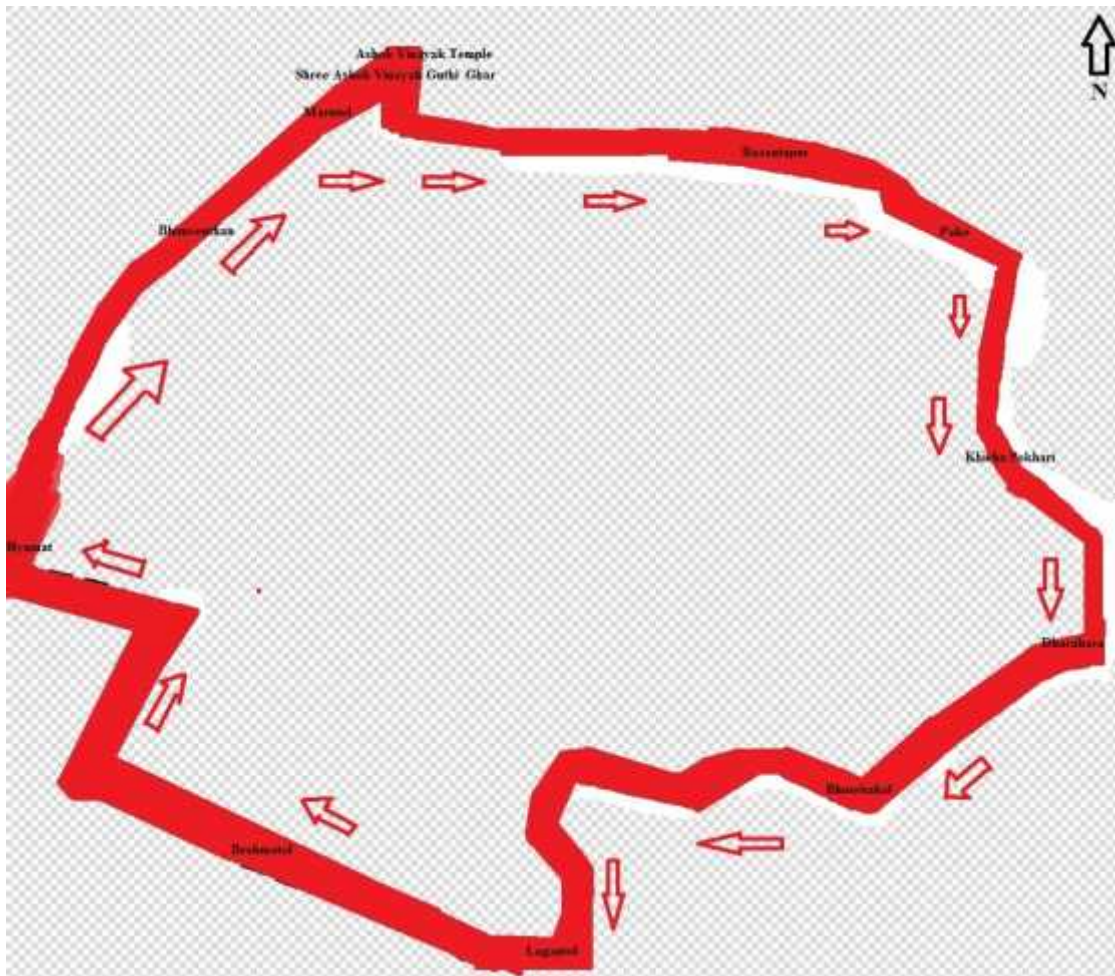
Pic: 37. Chariot going around different parts of the city on day 3. *PC: Rohit Maharjan*



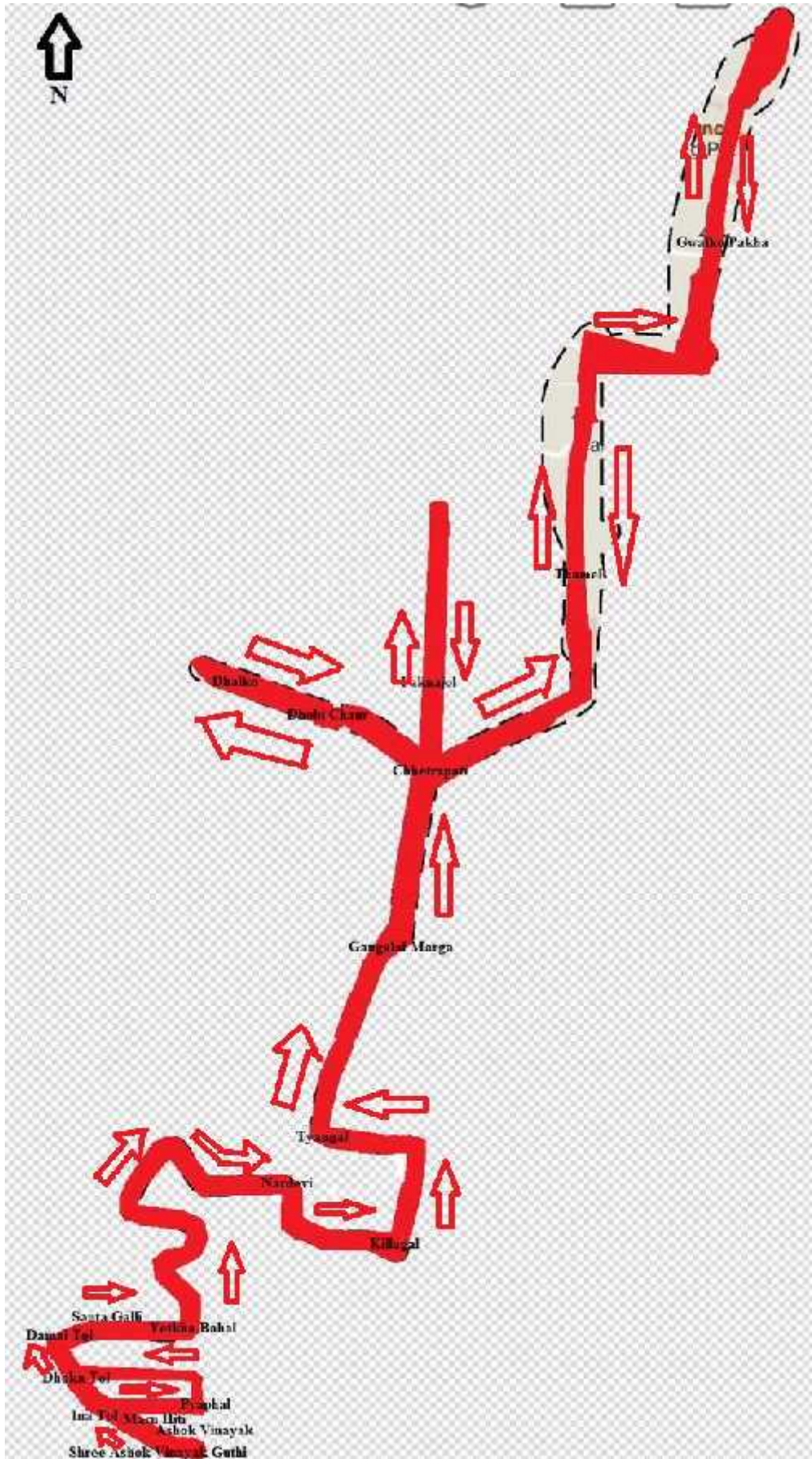
Pic: 38. Umbrella of the Chariot.







Pic: 41. Map of Ashko Vinayak Chariot Festival Route, Day: 3 Vijaya Dashami



Pic: 42. Map of Ashko Vinayak Chariot Festival Route, Day: 4 Ekadashi

## Pictures of Ghode Jatra



*Picture Credit:onlinekhabar.com*

Pic: 43. People from different Gathering in front of Ason.



Pic: 44. Chariot festival during Ghode Jatra.

**Pictures of Seto Machindranath Chariot Festival.**



Pic: 45. Taking the Idol of Seto Machindranath to keep in the chariot. *PC: Rohit Maharjan*



Pic: 46. Carrying it for the Final time before the chariot festival. *PC: Rohit Maharjan*



Pic: 47. Chariot of Seto Machindranath in Hanumandhoka.

*PC: Rohit Maharjan*

**Monuments Present in the periferie of Ashok Vinayak Temple.**



Pic: 48. Kasthamandap.

*This picture was taken before the earthquake.*



Pic: 49. Kabindrapur.



Pic: 50. Simha Sattal.



Pic: 51. Maru Hiti.