

**A Study of the Relationship between the Architecture
and Iconography with Special Reference to
Tripureswara Mahadev Temple**

**A Thesis Submitted to the
Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and
Archaeology for the fulfillment of Master Degree**

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2015**

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Recommendation for Evaluation

This is to certify that Ms. Swosti Rajbhandari Kayastha has written this dissertation '**A study of the relationship between the architecture and iconography with special reference to Tripureswara Mahadev Temple**' under my supervision. I recommend this to be evaluated by the Department.

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Acknowledgement

The compilation of this thesis has been in the most trying and difficult times for all Nepalese, post the trauma, loss, fear and stress, of the earthquake of 7.8 Richter scale that hit central Nepal, with its epicenter in Barpak, Gorkha district on 25th April 2015. This natural disaster shook the very core of Nepali soil, putting to risk most our heritage clustered around central Nepal and core Kathmandu, with the three kingdoms of the Malla period: Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur which weaves the history of Nepal, 5th century AD onwards.

Like most other architectural heritage, the subject of my thesis, the Tripureswara Mahadeva temple also fell victim of the natural disaster of 25th of April 2015. The topmost tier of its roof fell apart and the temple remained closed without its daily rituals being performed in the sanctum. The rituals inside the temple resumed only after three months

This thesis is a result of my many curiosities on visiting Hindu temples, the many questions that have cropped up in my mind regarding the numerous iconographic depictions on the extremely decorated exteriors of these temples and their relation to the main deity of the temple. Therefore, my first words of gratitude goes to Professor Dr. Ms. Beena Poudyal, Nepalese History Culture and Archeology (NeHCA) TU, Kirtipur, for allowing me this opportunity to express and find clues to my curiosities, her encouragement and acceptance of this very creative topic of my thesis and her unceasing support during the two years of my study at TU and the time of preparing this thesis. My special thanks also go to Professor Dr. Mr. Dilli Oli, for his support, feedbacks and encouragement during the compilation of this thesis.

To, Professor Dr. Mr. Dhan Bahadur Kunwar, NeHCA, TU, Kirtipur, I am ever so grateful for his patience and encouragement since the time I joined TU as a novice in Nepali History, Culture & Archaeology.

I can never adequately thank, from the bottom of my heart, Lecturer Mr. Pashupati Nayupane, NeHCA, TU, Kirtipur for instilling in me the faith that I

could always perform better, for his constant support and patience with all my queries, rationale or irrational.

I am forever indebted to Professor Dr. Mr. Mukunda Raj Aryal, without whose support the choice of Tripureswara Mahadev Temple as the main subject of this dissertation would never have been selected. He has been extremely generous to me with endless hours of discussion, guidance, support and patience, despite the difficult times when he was unwell and traumatized by the earthquake of 25th of April 2015. His knowledge and interest in Nepalese History and Culture has always left me mesmerized and I am very thankful for being able to sit endless hours learning from him.

To Dr. Dina Bangdel, Associate Professor, Director, Art History Program, VCU Qatar, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude, for being my inspiration. Her support and guidance and many hours of discussion (spared from her busy schedule while in Nepal) has helped me identify many core elements of this dissertation, which would otherwise not have been realized. I am also very grateful to her for providing me with many books no longer available in the market, from her personal collection. (TU library was not issuing books, post the earthquake).

To, Gopal Kalapremi Shrestha for being a friend and guidance since the time I have known him and spending endless hours studying the temple iconography.

To my parents, Gopal and Sarala Kayastha who have inspired me to follow my dreams and have always supported my every venture. To every member of the Kayastha family, for their constant encouragement and belief in me.

My deepest acknowledgement, I confer to Jai Rajbhandari, without whose support my study at TU would never have happened. His constant support, emotionally, mentally, spiritually and physically have been the guiding force in my life. To Julin and Jayesh for their patience and understanding, the relevance of my study.

Abstract

This thesis is the study of the relation between the main deity and the iconography of various deities placed around the courtyard and on the exterior of the temples facade with special reference to the Tripureswara Mahadev Temple, Tripureswara, Kathmandu. This research revealed the, Ashta Bhairava, Ashta Matrika, Navagraha, Dikplalas, Naag and Naagin to be the prominent deities placed on the temple façade or around the temple complex in specific directions. The presence of all these associated or secondary deities in the temple of Lord Siva, is like an assembly being presided by him and attended by all the other gods and goddesses showing due respect to him as one among the most powerful Hindu-trinity. This study analyses the symbolic meaning and purpose of the placement of these iconographic representations and the function they serve, as a part of the visual aesthetics of temple architecture.

The findings of my research, suggests a multi-layered protection of the sacred space where humans come to immerse themselves in devotion and worship, keeping aside all worldly matters and tensions. The presence of the Astamatrika, Astabhairava, Dikpala, Navagraha are all symbolic representations performing the acts of protection in the ways they are ascribed to by the religious texts. The very placement of these multiple layers of protection shows the sacred value of these temples as abodes of spiritual, physical and emotional refuge for protection, peace, devotion and veneration.

The findings suggest protection as a core element of Hinduism. Protection can be from various calamities, natural and manmade. Hindus universally, make numerous rituals to appease the deities for protection from negative forces, thus, temples or abode of the gods and goddesses are constructed with these multi-layered protections by guardian deities in hierarchal order. The temples are therefore the most sanctified, sacred and pure spaces used primarily for religious purposes and their courtyards also serve as venues for social activities.

Besides the guardian deities, this temple, the subject of this thesis, also has the deities of the *Panchayatan* cult placed in smaller shrines in between the four cardinal directions on the second plinth of the temple. These shrines are built in the multi-tiered style of temple architecture, just like the main temple but have two tiered roofs, unlike the three tiered roof of the main temple. The presence of the deities of the Panchayatan cult: Visnu, Surya, Devi and Ganesh show the prevalence of religious syncretism and practice of Tantrism during the Shah era of Nepalese history.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Nepal is a tiny nation occupying only 0.03% of the world's physical land space. Situated in the middle of Asia, she takes up .3% of the total land space of Asia. Her immediate neighbours to the north is China, 75 times bigger than Nepal and to the three sides on the east, west and south is India, 22 times larger than Nepal (Malla, K.P., 1977:1). Nepal has since ages been a Hindu State, it was only after democracy in 2007AD that Nepal was declared a secular state. Nepal is famously known as the land of the Pashupatinath, the Swayambhunath and the birth place of Shakyamuni Buddha. The earliest authentic evidence of the Kathmandu Valley is sought from the Garud Dwaja Pillar Inscription, installed by King Manadeva in 464 AD, at Changunarayan Temple complex. From various sources of ancient history, we know that the Lichchhavi's came from the Vrji tribal Confederation, with Vaishali being their capital. The Vrji were one amongst the sixteen *Mahajanapadas* or sixteen great nations (*Solasa Mahajanapadas*), spread across the Indo-Gangetic plains, which existed before the time of Buddha, as mentioned in the Buddhist and other texts. These sixteen states were highly developed states, well administered with flourishing art, architecture, literature, culture and religion (Jha, 1970).

The chronicles mention the Lichchhavi's to have established themselves in the Nepal Valley after displacing the Kiratas. They not only established their rule, but also their language, art, literature and religion. They ruled the Nepala Mandala till about the 9th Century. The kings of this period were very religious minded they installed many images of deities and made handsome endowments for the maintenance of maintaince, worship and rituals. The art of this period is known for its quintessential quality. Although they were strongly influenced by the Gupta art, the handling, expression and interpretations are distinctly Nepali. Some of the most beautiful images of Hindu deities can be found from this period and thus has been justly referred to as Golden epoch in the history of Nepalese sculpture. The Malla dynasty, which followed the Lichchhavis around the 12th

century AD developed religious activities to a very high degree, with the growing popularity of Vajrayana and Tantrayana cults. Sculptural art of this period witnesses a new dimension by producing gods and goddesses with multiple heads and arms, heavy ornamentation and sharp tilt of the body (Bangdel, 1982:7). The magnificent multi tiered temples we see today are mostly the creations of the Malla period, followed by the Shah Dynasty, who gave a continuity to the art and architecture of the Malla period. They built many temples, renovated the old, installed images of deities. In this way the Shahs Kings guaranteed their continued functioning. "Most of the buildings of the Shah period vividly reflect a dependence on the Newar or Malla architecture, and temples and fountains of traditional design built till the late nineteenth century cannot be distinguished from those of the Mallas (Slusser, 1998: 78).

Since the history of civilization, man had based his habitat around the sources of water. The ancient civilizations of the world are proofs of the development of civilizations by the banks of the rivers. In the same way the Kathmandu Valley, earlier known as the Nepala Mandala also has its base in the Bagmati and Vishnumati rivers, often referred to as the Vagmati civilization. The Bagmati has its source at Bagdwar at Shivapuri, North of the Kathmandu Valley and leaves the valley at Katwal Daha, a few kilometers south of Chobhar. On this long route, it meets six other rivers Manohara, Icchumati, Punyamati, Bhadramati, Bishnumati, Rudaramati making very sacred confluences. According to Hinduism such confluences are very important sites where deities reside, making them auspicious sites for the construction of temples and religious activities (Kramrish 1976). Along this course of the Bagmati are situated temples, ghats, akhadas, religious images and pilgrimage sites. The Tripureswara Mahadev Temple, the subject of this thesis is one amongst the many temples situated along the route of the river built by Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari in 1818 AD.

For the study of Nepali history, culture, religion, art, architecture and geography, we can take the aid of various types of sources. Archaeological, geography, religious texts, legends, traveller's accounts etc give us information for our study. These sources relate their stories in their own ways, however as a researcher, we

should analyze and combine all our available resources and come to a conclusion.

The centre of activity of Nepal has always been the Kathmandu valley, which is currently the capital city. Occupying almost two hundred square miles it lies at an average altitude of forty-four hundred feet among the steep southern hills of the Himalayan foothills. The Kathmandu valley is a deep, slightly elliptical free-form bowl, punctuated with compact villages, scattered farmhouses and temples. 'As our official car squeezed through the crowded lanes of the medieval capital, Kathmandu, we could only marvel at the storied temples and diverse people. From our quarters we gazed out at the distant and mysterious shrines on a green hillock. The white and gilt-spired mass of the shrine repeated the shape of the more distant Himalayan Peaks' (Slusser, 1998: xv, 3). The valley is transverse by sacred rivers, the Vagmati and the Vishnumati, which play an important role in the religious, social and secular life of a Nepali.

The Hindu religious scriptures mention that the Installation of a Shivalinga, leads to the salvation of the soul of a deceased. Being advised on the same by priests and scholars, Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari, enshrined a Shivalings in the temple of Tripuresawara Mahadev at the banks of Bagmati river for the salvation of the soul of her deceased husband King Rana Bahadur Shah in 1818 AD (Regmi, 1974: 211).

This temple is built in the traditional, multi-tiered style of temple architecture. Centrally located in a large courtyard, this three tired temple, with a square plan sits on five tall stone plinths. The sanctum which houses a huge Sivalinga, is made of bricks with large, three paneled wooden doors in all four directions. However this temple does not have the torana or tympanum usually seen in most temple doorways of this style. Supporting the large overhanging roofs are wooden struts, with various Hindu deities carved in high relief. The lowermost roof is tiled with terracotta tiles, whereas the top two roofs are made of gilded copper sheets. Sitting on the topmost roof are five gilded gajuras, the central one larger than the other four of the same size. This is a representation of five deities placed together or the *Panchayatan* cult, with a central presiding deity. The main

entrance of this temple faces the south towards the Bagmati River. On the corners of second plinth, stands smaller temples also made in the traditional temple style dedicated to the Panchayatana deities. Surrounding the main temple are the images of the dasa dikpalas, Vishnu, Sri Chandeswara, Nandi, Sri Bhringi, Sri Birbhadra, Ganesh. The purpose of this research is to understand the philosophy and reason for the placement of various associated deities around a temple that houses a Sivalinga.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1. Insufficient study of the architectural construction of Tripureswara Mahadev temple, Vastu-shastras and scientific methods it has followed.
2. The significance and value of the Ashta Matrika and Aastha Bhairavas placed on the givakhva and bhailkhva of the doors.
3. Insufficient study about the relationship between the deity of the main shrine and the associated deities around the temple.
4. Insufficient study about the significance of placing the Dasa Dikpalas around the temple complex.

1.3 Justification of Study

The grandeur and the multitude of decorations on Hindu temples of Nepal had always caught my fascination. Everytime I visited a temple, I am always awed by the numerous gods and goddesses placed around the temple premises, although the temple is dedicated to a particular deity. Furthermore, after completing the study of Nepalese temple architecture and iconography as a part of the MA degree, I was keen to understand the practical aspect of the placement of these deities in a temple complex. I studied various temples and spoke with the priests, however my curiosity was not appeased and built up which has led to further research and the compilation of this thesis.

1.4 Limitation

This research will only encompass the study of the Tripureswara Mahadev temple, its history, architecture and the deities around its complex and its

premises. The study is limited to the architecture of this temple and the relationship of the surrounding deities with the deity of the main shrine. The study of the intangible aspect of the temple is not included as a part of this study.

1.5 Objective of Study

1. To study and understand the religious significance of the sacredness of the Bagmati River.
2. To understand the significance of placing the Ashta Matrika and Ashta Bhairava images on the temple sanctum.
3. To understand the relationship between the main deities and the associated deities in the temple courtyard.
4. To find the significance for the placement of Dasa Dikpalas in the temple courtyard.

For a country like Nepal, which is steeped in religion, culture, art and tradition, temple constructions are a very sacred activity since the ancient times. Although this tradition has been given continuity by all the dynasties ruling this nation, we can notice changes in the course of development of temple architecture and iconography. This study will contribute to the understanding of temple construction, the placement of associated deities around temple complexes and the philosophy involved in them. It will also help future students, researchers to make a further study in the topics related to iconography, architecture and cultural studies. This research will also provide information to scholars about the various pilgrimage and religious sites along the Vagmati River.

1.6 Review of Literature

1. T.A. Gopinath Rao 1916, **Elements of Hindu Iconography, Madras:** The Law Printing House.

This book provides comprehensive information of the origin and iconography of the large pantheon of Hindu deities. It is compiled taking information about the iconographic details from indigenous Sanskrit texts like the Vedas, Puranas, Agamas providing a detailed pictographical representation of the images of the numerous deities of Hinduism. It also narrates the mythical stories underlying

the symbolism and meaning of the images providing the reader full information about all the deities mentioned in the book.

2. Toni Hagen, Nepal 1961, **The Kingdom in the Himalayas**, Switzerland: Kummerly & Frey. Geographical Publishers.

This book is the first Geological study of Nepal. It gives a detailed description about the geography, topography, physical feature, vegetation, racial and ethnic diversity, climate as well as a brief history of Nepal. However in reference to the history, he has mentioned the date of the Lichhavi period to be 350-630 AD. He also made a study of the problems of economic development of Nepal, stressing on the difficult terrain that restricts the construction of paths, bridges, roads etc. He divides Nepal into seven natural topographical units, clearly distinguished from each other: the Terai, Shiwalik range, Mahabharat Lekh, Nepal midlands, Himalayas, Inner Himalayas, and Tibetan Marginal Mountains. This topographical variation led to the cultural diversity of Nepal. The striking chain of mountains to the north and the Shiwalik ranges to the south forms a natural barrier or defense wall isolating the kingdom from outsider influence.

3. P Pal & D. P. Bhattachary 1969, **The Astral Divinities of Nepal**, Varanasi: Prithivi Prakashan.

This book provides information about the astral divinities of Nepal, locally referred to as the *Navagrahas* which include the nine planets, twelve sun gods, twenty seven or sometimes mentioned to as twenty six constellations and twelve signs of the zodiac. Some of these deities have their origin in the Vedic era with hymns dedicated to them, these information have provided value to this thesis in elaborating the chapter on the astral deities.

4. Stella Kramrisch 1976, **The Hindu Temple**, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.

This book provides information about the different types of temple architecture, the various stages of construction, the placement of deities in and around the temple as well as the position and proportions of the images of Gods from the

foundation to its final rooted in Vedic tradition. The author elaborates the chapters on the various part of the Hindu temple from versus of the Vedas enhancing its authenticity. These informations have added to the raise the value of the material content of this thesis.

5. N. R. Banerjee 1980, **Nepalese Architecture**, New Delhi: Agam Kala Publication.

This book provides information about the geographical setting and brief history of Nepal right from the Lichhavi to the early Shah period. It also provides invaluable information about the materials as well as the architectural ensemble of Nepal showcasing the variety of architectural styles all linked by similarity of construction material and style. The detailed chronological development of Nepali temple architecture taking reference from a number of inscriptions, available in this book has helped in the development of this thesis.

6. L. S. Bangdel 1982, **The early Sculptures of Nepal**, Uttar Pradesh: Vikas Publishing House.

This book provides information about the development of religion in Nepal and a detailed description about the early sculptures of Nepal. Through this book, I have a better understanding of the significance of the Sakta cult and that most of the early stone sculptures of the Valley were representations of this cult. This information has been very useful in this thesis and for the understanding of the development of religion in Nepal.

7. J.N Banerjea 1985, **The Development of Hindu Iconography**, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

This book has been most valuable in the study of the iconography of Hindu deities with a chronological development in art and religion from the pre-Vedic period to the much later periods. It provides information about the evolution of various deities through the pre-Vedic, Vedic, Pauranic and Epic periods. The iconographic description have been made on the basis of various Pauranic literatures, with special reference to *Vishnudharmottar*, which is considered to

be the source of reference for iconography of Hindu Deities. This thesis has taken references from this book for the iconographic description of the Dikpalas and information about the Panchayatan cult, however I did not find enough information about the iconography of the Astamatrikas and Astabhairavas in relation to this thesis.

8. MLB Blom 1989, **Depicted Deities**, Netherlands: Groninger Oriental Studies. This book gives a detailed description of the iconography of 150 deities, based on the sketch books of numerous artists of Nepal, and referred to as model books by the author as well as for this thesis. The iconographic descriptions of the deities are also compared between different model books of different artists. The role of the priest in making the initial drawings of deities as well as architecture, the role of the artists and the rituals involved in making these drawings are mentioned in this book. Information about the *ayudas*, *vahanas* and other attributes of Astamatrikas, Bhairavas, as well as their relation to the temple and with each other has also been elaborated, which has aided in the compilation of this thesis.
9. J. C. Regmi 1994, **Shah Kalin Kala Ra Vastuikala**, Kathmandu: Sajha Publication.

This book mentions about the development of temple architecture during the Shah period. It gives us detailed information about the Tripureswara Mahadev Temple, its history significance, feature and religious importance. The invaluable contribution of the Shah dynasty not only in the unification of Nepal but also in the continuation of art and architecture, a legacy from the Lichhavi and the Malla period together with detail historicity of the temples built during the Shah period is illustrated in this book.

10. Dhanvajra Vajracharya 1996, **Lichhavi kalin Abhilekh** (Nepali), Kathmandu: CNAS.

This book gives us information of Lichhavi history in all aspects. It is a translation of numerous stone inscriptions installed by the Lichhavi Kings and

influential people of that era from Lichhavi script to Devnagiri. Through this book one gets a thorough knowledge of the social, political, economic, religious, administrative system of the Lichhavi period with dates as inscribed on the inscriptions.

11. Rishikesh Shaha 1997, **Ancient and Medieval Nepal**, New Delhi: Mahonar Publishers and Distributors.

This book gives a detailed description about the geography of Nepal in its introductory chapters taken as reference for the compilation of this thesis. The political, social, religious as well as the art and architecture of ancient and medieval Nepal have been very briefly mentioned yet has important data that has been very resourceful for this thesis.

12. Mary S. Slusser 1998, **Nepal Mandala**, UK: Princeton University Press.

This book gives information about the geographical setting of Kathmandu Valley along with a history of the development of art, architecture and religion of the Lichhavi, Malla and Shah Dynasty. The architecture of the Shah period, the subject of this thesis, vividly reflect the influence of Newar architecture. The temples, fountains and other structures of traditional design, even those built as late as the nineteenth century too cannot be distinguished from those of the Malla Period. Amongst the many other books I read, this book provided me information about the many aspects covered in my thesis: Astamatrikas, Bhairavas, Navagrahas, Dikpalas et cetera, and their significance in the temples. I have been able to understand the relation of these deities with each other and to the temple as well through this book.

13. Basanta Bidari 2007, **Lumbini, A Haven of Sacred Refuge**, Kathmandu: Self published.

This book gives an account of the very ancient history of Nepal, before that of the Lichhavi Dynasty. This book is a compilation of the author's 22 years of uninterrupted study as an archaeologist in Lumbini and takes information from various ancient Buddhist literatures including the travel accounts of Chinese

pilgrims and published archaeological reports. I have taken reference of the Ashokan Pillar as an authentic resource for my study from this book.

14. Diwas Dhakal 2007, **Nepalese Culture, Society and Tourism**, Kathmandu: Self Published.

This book provides information of the aqua culture of Kathmandu with special significance to river **Bagmati** and the Multi-tiered temple architecture of Nepal. A detailed description of the subject of this thesis, the Tripureswara Mahadev Temple has been mentioned together with the history, numerous religious activities conducted and celebrated here. In terms of the aqua culture he mentions about the various activities of man's life related to water and the significance and value of the Bagmati River as well as the various ghats and monuments located along it.

15. D. R. Regmi 2007, **Ancient Nepal**, New Delhi: Rupa & Co.

Considered as one of the most authentic books for the study of Nepalese History, this book provides a chronological order of the various dynasties that ruled Nepal. Besides the political history with mention of the genealogy of the various dynasties, a detail description of the religion, art, architecture, society, culture are also provided. These informations have been very useful for the chapters involving the development of Nepali art, religion and architecture of this thesis.

16. D. R. Regmi 2007, **Medieval Nepal**, New Delhi: Rupa & Co.

This book provides information about the political, social, economical, religious, art, architecture, language, literature and general condition of Nepal during the medieval period. The information about the development of art, religion, architecture of Nepal as well as a comparative study between that of India has also been made which was very useful for this thesis. The main gist of this book is that the development of festivals, rituals, fairs, education, art, architecture, trade and the society were the prime achievements of the Malla period and was given continuity by the Shah dynasty. And what we see and experience today are all the developments of all these eras.

17. D. N. Shukla 2008, **Vastu-Shastra**, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd.

This book gives detailed information about the development of architecture, iconography of Hindu temples. It gives information about the prerequisites of architecture, the role of the architect, the various stages of construction of a Hindu Temples. It further provides the description of various deities, their ayudas, vahanas, color, rupa, proportion according to the Samarangana Sutradhara written by King Bhoja between 1018-1060 AD.

18. Niels Gutschow 2011, **Architecture of the Newars**, Chicago: Serindia Publications.

This book is a complete compilation of the development of architecture of the Newars, focusing on the Kathmandu valley with a description of different types of temples, monasteries, bahas, bahis, as well as those constructions related with water. It also makes a comparative study of the views of different scholars about Nepalese architecture. This book also has detailed drawings of the subject of this thesis and other information about the temple. The drawings of the Tripureswara Mahadeva temple, used in this thesis has been taken from this book. Although this book is a detailed study of temple architecture, it did not provide me with the information about the relationship between the architecture and iconography of the temple.

19. Sudarshan Raj Tiwari 2013, **Temples of the Nepal Valley**, Kathmandu: Himal Books.

This book has related the study of art, architecture of Nepal with the political historical development and mentions a continuous development of Nepali temple Architecture spanning over 1500 years. He stresses on the fact that the multiple-tiered temple architecture to be the indigenous style of Nepal, having developed as a result of the specific geographical location and topography, that isolated it from influences of north and south, thus existing in a bubble of its own and developing its unique culture. In terms of the uniqueness of Nepalese Temple architecture he mentions the masterful artistry, skilled craftsmanship, stylized brick and wood, large over-hanging multiple tiered roofs supported by

struts to be indigeneous of Nepal. The mentionable contribution of this book is the development of architecture from the Kirata period, not otherwise mentioned in other books. Although this book gives detailed information about the antiquity, development, features as well as the uniqueness of the multi-tiered temple of Nepal, the subject of my thesis, i.e. the relationship between the iconography and architecture of a temple is not mentioned in this book.

1.7 Methodology

This research is primarily based on field visit, to observe the architecture and iconography in the premises of the temple. However secondary sources like library research is equally important to clarify many doubts and to better understand the meaning and relationship between many elements of the temple and its premise. The present study has thus utilized both primary as well as the secondary sources to gather information. In the course of the study, direct observation, field visit, conversation with local community, the family of the priests, the priest themselves, temple cleaners, attendants and library research was adopted in order to obtain authentic details for the study. Consultation with subject experts has also been an important part of the methodology. The methods adopted were as follows:

1) Primary sources

- i) Direct observation
- ii) Interview and conversation with related people

2) Secondary sources

- i) Library research
- ii) Consultation with experts of History and Culture
- iii) Photographs
- iv) Publications, articles and other reading materials available in print and online

All the data has been analyzed to fulfill the objective of this research. The personal experience, field observation, information from interviews and conversation as well as the library research and reading materials has been used as data for this research.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION IN NEPAL

2.1 Introduction

In Hinduism, God is *nirakar* (formless), *nirguna* (without attributes) and *nirvikalpa* (beyond time, has no beginning, no end). God is considered to be a super powerful force that controls all living and non-living things (Gupte, 1972). The worship of nature is considered to be the most primitive form of religion. These natural elements were revered for their power, which was beyond the control of man. In the course of time they were given anthropomorphic forms to ease man's understanding of the superpower. To translate this super powerful idea of God, man gave God attributes, to suggest his power and a form to be imagined. Therefore, every pictorial representation has symbolic meanings. Since it was imagined, that the power of God was undisruptive, various symbols or *ayudas* and *asana* were assigned to him that suggested his power like the *trishula*, bow & arrow, *chakra* etc. In the initial days polytheism was practiced in the primitive form, which slowly developed to ethical monotheism. The study of religion is important because it has helped shape civilizations' law and moral codes, social structure, art and music, etc. A brief study of the development of religion in the Indian sub-continent is as stated below:

2.2 Religion during the pre-Vedic period

In concern with the antiquity of image worship of the Indian-subcontinent, the discoveries of many objects, seals with representations of human and animal figurines and pictographs on them, numerous terracotta figurines and fragments of stone sculpture during the archaeological excavations of the Indus Valley civilization (2300-1500 BCE) after the site was discovered by Sir John Marshall in 1920-21 took the history to dates much beyond the Vedic period (Bangdel, 1982). The presence of a three headed, horned figure in yogic asana surrounded by animals such as rhinoceros, bull, elephant and tiger, with crude representations of humans is described by Sir John Marshall as the 'Siva-Pasupati' seal. Another seal shows a human figure seated in the centre with a

snake hood spread above the head, flanked by kneeling figures in respectful attitude. These two seals and many others distinctly remind us of the pose of deities and attendants of cult deities in later periods. On the basis of the above seals, R.P. Chandra observes 'the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjodaro have brought to light ample evidences to show that the worship of humans and superhumans in yogic postures, both seated and standing, prevailed in the Indus valley during the Chalcolothic period' (Banerjee, 1985:40).

2.3 Religion during the Vedic and post-Vedic period

The Vedic period that succeeded the Indus Valley era has the names of various deities mentioned in the Vedic texts, such as Brahma, Rudra, Indra, Narayan, Surya, Agni etc. However, in terms of anthropomorphic representation, various scholars have expressed contradictory views. Scholars like Max Mullar opined 'The religion of the Vedas knew no idols' and H. H Wilson remarked 'the worship of the Vedas is for the most part domestic worship, consisting of prayers and oblations offered, in their own house, not in temples, by individuals for individual good and addressed to unreal presence, not to visible types. In another words, the religion of the Vedas was not idolatry' and Macdonell suggests that image-worship was not known to the early Vedic period (Banerjee, 1985:43). However, scholars like S.V. Venkateswara and Bollensen disagree with the above scholars and express strongly on the existence of images of deities in the Vedic period, utilizing the anthropomorphic descriptions of many of the Vedic divinities as contained in the hymns of the Rig-Veda in support of their theory. Brindavan Ch. Bhattacharya in his book Indian Images, Part I, also expounds with the view of S.V. Venkateswara and Bollensen. In this connection the interesting remark of Bloomfield requires to be noted: "the mind of the Vedic poet is the rationalistic mind of the ruminating philosopher, rather than the artistic mind which reproduces the finished product. It is engaged too much in reasoning about the constantly altering the wavering shapes of gods, so that these remain to the end of Vedic time too uncertain to outline, too fluid in substance for the modeling hand of the artist. As a matter of fact there is no record of Vedic icons or Vedic temples. In all these senses there is no Vedic Pantheon". R.P. Chandra expresses that the Vedic gods had not been invested

with the forms in which they appear in the Epics and the Puranas' (Banerjee, 1985:56-57). After a critical consideration of all these arguments, Banerjee confidently observes that, even with reference to some symbols or sensible representations found in the Vedic texts, this does not mean that they were the images proper of the respective divinities (Banerjee, 1985:61). The Vedic texts give anthropomorphic material descriptions providing valuable coherent pictures, considered as progenitors of later iconography (Shukla, 2008: 72). In the course of time, Vedic deities gradually lost their prominence and more powerful divinities like Siva and Visnu and a host of goddesses began to emerge as equivalent and sometimes greater forces.

2.4 Development of religion in Nepal

Even though we have no idea about what role the beliefs of the earliest aboriginals of Nepal played on religion, we have glimpses of the prevalence of Visnu and Siva cults from the earliest inscriptions available to us of the Lichhavi period. The deities mentioned in the inscriptions are Visnu, Tribikramvisnu, Bhagwati, Sivalinga, Pashupati, Bhringeswara, Jalasayana Visnu, Chhatra Candeswara, Buddha, and other inscriptions mention numerous viharas, the prominent ones being Gunvihara, Rajvihara, Khajurika vihara, Manavihar, Madhyamvihara. The Brahmanical deities: Siva, Visnu, Mahisasurmardini were worshipped in all their manifestations as very popular deities whereas Indra was worshipped as the Sun-god. Ganesa had not yet obtained the honour of individual worship; he was only a part of the *ganas* in the family of Siva (Regmi, 2007: 275-280).

The Medieval period saw the dominance of a new form of worship known as Vajrayana. It is basically a cult of Buddhism which had absorbed the influence of the Brahmanical rituals. In philosophy it followed the Mahayana, but was closely affected by Brahmanical mysticism and devotionalism. Religion was now brought to suit the convenience of the domestic life, to its world of superstition and ritual performances. The philosophical aspect of the Buddhist faith was eclipsed and adopted a form which could appeal to the mass, just as the Brahmanical faith. The religion of this period cultivated the cult of Tantra and this period saw the

varied manifestations of the numerous tantric deities in iconography. The colourful parts of Newari religious and social life with all its rituals, rites, festivals, ceremonies and celebrations spanning all around the year, began during the medieval period. The social life of the valley is still largely governed by magic and superstition following a tantric mode of worship and philosophy of life. Vishnu and Siva were the foremost deities worshipped by the mass, as well as their consorts: Lakshmi, Uma, Surya followed by a long list of other deities the many manifestations of Kali, the eight mother god or Astamatrikas, Mahavidhya, Bhairavas, Sarasvati, Ganesa, Kaumara etc (Regmi, 2007:541-550).

The worship of Saptamatrika appears to be one of the most ancient and popular cults in Nepal. The discovery of a number of ancient sculptures of the Mother-Goddess: the image of Haugal Bahal in Patan being one of the earliest image of the Valley dating 2nd-3rd AD, image of Mother Goddess in the temple of Bhagwati at Kotaltol, Hadigoan dating 2nd-3rd AD, the three matrika images of Kaumari, Balhku, Vaisnavi, and Barahi dating 2nd-3rd AD and the six mother Goddess at Bagalamukhi Temple dating 2nd-3rd AD, give ample hint of the popularity of Shaktism in the pre-Lichchhavi era. These idols are however undated and based on their stylistic presentation, have been given the above dates by scholars (Bangdel, 1982:23). This cult continued and reached a level of unparalleled significance in the Malla period with an addition of tantrism. However, looking at the religious practices of the Lichhavis, with *yajna* sacrifices and the mention of *yajnika* (Vedic priest) an active Vedic tradition can be observed. The Lichhavi inscriptions mention various deities, namely Surya, Visnu, Pasupati, Indra, Narayan, et cetera. All the same, whatever religious practices prevailed in Nepal, they were always added with the indigenous folk belief and faith (Bangdel, 1982:23).

The worship of deities can be in both the iconic as well as the non-iconic forms. The non-iconographic manifestations reveal their importance as immovable chthonic power places. Gods and goddesses were earlier worshipped in these forms. Hinduism believes their deities to be *nirguna* or without qualities, *nirakar* or omnipresent and *nirvikalpa* or without attributes. However the concept of giving a form was conceived much later when devotees needed a representation

for veneration. Idols are only a medium of devotion. Although the first iconographic representation of deities can be seen from the Indus Valley Civilization in the 2500-1500 BC, the discontinuation of this period and because the script of this period remains undeciphered, historians credit the 3rd century or the Mauryan period for the development of iconography in the Indian sub-continent. After this period a continuous development can be observed followed by the Sunga, Kushan, Gupta with Gandhar and Mathura schools of art developing in the Indian Sub-continent (Shukla, 2008). There is an obscurity of the beginning of iconography in Nepal.

Divinities in the Kathmandu Valley are omnipresent, investing not only beautiful images in stone and bronze, but also a variety of symbols and objects, including trees, bodies of water, natural stones and crevices. Similarly gods, goddesses, symbols, icon are worshipped in various places- at homes, villages, towns, at crossroads, by the wayside, at riverbanks or pond sides, in secluded forests, open fields, caves or on hilltops. At these locations the various forms of deities are venerated simply as unprotected images or symbols, in a mandala for temporary invocation, in hypaethral shrines or in very elaborately decorated enclosed shrines. (Slusser, 1998: 128). Kramrisch (1976) observed non-iconographic deities to be worshipped in the context of lifecycle and household rituals. They are venerated for wellbeing, to overcome sickness and at times of crisis. The character of the deities is usually benign and protective; however, they also have the potential to unleash terrifying powers. To overcome these terrifying powers, the deities need to be pacified with blood sacrifices. It is this ambiguity that has to be maneuvered. Daily or seasonal offerings are mandatory to reconfirm the protective powers. Blood or animal sacrifices are offered to acknowledge critical transition: the deity absorbs blood and offers power in return-power to overcome insecurities in the wake of critical situations. (Gustchow, 2011:61)

Art is the expression of the innate feelings of man, which has given rise to what we now refer to as paintings, sculpture and architecture. Since prehistoric times people have expressed themselves through different mediums and forms of art. The Hindu concept of the gods being *nirguna*, *nirbikalpa* and *nirakar*, or super powerful, led the artist to create anthropomorphic forms of Gods with various

attributes to suggest this superpower in the form of *aayudas*, symbols, *vahanas*. God was made with numerous hands and heads as a pictorial representation of great strength and wisdom (Gupte, 1972).

According to Bangdel, the style modeling and iconographic features of the early sculptures are found to be similar to that of the Mathura-Kushana art of India, this leads us to summarize that there was direct contact between the Valley and the Gangetic plains of north India where the Mathura-Kushana empire flourished, further more the trade, cultural contacts and exchange of artist could have contributed to this influence (Bangdel, 1982).

Another reason for the development of religious art is the royal patronage. Kings built palaces, temples, community buildings, gateways et cetera. However, this act of building for religious purpose was not limited to the royal families alone, we have evidences of temples, water conduits, and religious structures being established by the common people from the Lichhavi period.

Just as grammar evolved after the development of language, in the same way architecture evolved after the development of art, to house the images of various divinities. The development of art can be seen from the pre-Vedic, Vedic, Epic, Pauranic and finally the historical period beginning with the Mauryan era and in the case of Nepal the latest excavations at Kapilvastu and Lumbini are yet to reveal art and architecture of the period of Shakyamuni Buddha.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEMPLE ARCHITECTURE OF NEPAL

3.1 Introduction

Architecture is the science of construction and building. It is one of the hallmarks of civilization, which must have begun with the rise of civilization. Our dharma shastra mention that before Brahma created the world, he created *Vastu*. The essence of the Sanskrit word *vastu* is planning. Thus, creation and planning are like twin sisters which must go hand in hand, planning being the elder one. Planning must precede any creation, otherwise it is not creation. Planning and creation required the combined work of the trinity or triad:

- i. The architect- planner
- ii. The patron king
- iii. The substratum, the earth

Upon creating the universe, Brahma created a patron king as King Prthu, the first king of the world, Viswakarma was the first architect, whose task was to make beautiful plans, whose lores on architecture can be seen in texts like Viswakarma-Vastushastra or Shilpa-shastra, Puranas, Brihatsamihita and Vastu texts like the SamaranganaSutradhara and Aparajitapraccha and the substratum, the earth (Shukla, 2008:34).

According to Shukla (2008), all our dharma shastra are related to any one of the gods of the Hindu trinity, however the Vastu-shastra is the only shastra that is uniquely transmitted by all the three deities of the Hindu trinity. Brahma, the source of this science revealed it to Vishwakarma, Siva is also known to have imparted the knowledge of the 64 *kalas* to Garga. His form as Dakshinamurti is worshipped by students of science and art. Vishnu in the form of *Matsya avatar* is known to have revealed this knowledge to Manu, who in turn passed it to the world through eighteen preceptors. The eighteen preceptors according to the Matsyapurana are: Brigu, Atri, Vashistha, Maya, Narada, Nagnajit, Visalaksa,

Purandhar or Sakra, Brahma, Kumara, Nandisa, Saunaka, Garga, Vasudeva, Aniruddha, Brihaspati (Shukla 2008).

3.2 Architecture during the pre-Vedic period

In reference to the development of architecture of the Indian Sub-continent, that of the Indus Valley Civilization is considered to be the oldest, where the earliest traces of civilization in the Indian subcontinent are to be found in places along, or close, to the Indus river presently located in what is Pakistan and northwest India today, on the fertile flood plain of the Indus River and its vicinity. According to John Marshal, archaeologist and Director of the then East India Company, excavations revealed temples built on elevated grounds, with small chambers and thick walls suggesting them to be multi storied. A spacious courtyard and chambers on all four sides also suggest temple architecture (Shukla, 2008:52). The architecture mentioned in the Vedas refer to the pre Vedic period according to scholars like Mashall, Chanda C. Ghosh and the invading Aryans were not influenced by these architecture because they destroyed town, cities, and forts. The people of the Indus Valley Civilization were traders and town dwellers whereas the Vedic Aryans were of the country, nomadic in character; they slowly settled to pastoral life and had houses that were rudimentary structures of reed and bamboo with thatched roofs (Shukla, 2008: 53).

3.3 Architecture during the Vedic and post-Vedic period

Thus foundation of the architecture of the Indian sub-Continent lies in the Vedic Aryans from where it developed. 'The insufficiency of architectural remains of the pre historic times can be explained to them being secular in nature, thus were not durable to give us a continuous history of architecture from the period of after the Indus Valley Civilization' (Sukla, 2008:54). Just as people live and die, in the same way buildings are built, they get destroyed in time and are forgotten because they were secular in nature, however we see continuity in Art of the Indian subcontinent, because art originated from religion. From the time of Emperor Ashoka, religion was the motivation power behind the making of any form of art, if it wasn't for religious impetus the art of the Indian subcontinent would not have developed so far. Thus, the Ashokan period is considered as the

milestone in the development of art, architecture, religion, social system and administrative policies. Hinduism, Buddhism as well as Jainism played an instrumental role in the evolution and development of art and architecture.

Although we do not have any evidences of Vedic architecture, various references from the Vedic texts give us hints to the type of architecture of that period. Architecture in the Indian Sub Continent is intimately associated with religion, thus its ritualistic origin and evolution can be considered as the canons of its establishment. Many hymns of the Rig-Veda invoke the *Vastospati*, the deity presiding over building sites. Mention of words like '*taksaka*', ie carpenter, give us proof of the presence of wooden architecture, and wood being the chief material of construction. Terms like *sthuna*, *stambhaya*, *yupa* refer to pillars.

The Later Vedic texts describe the *yupa* pillar to have the shaft of a human figure, girdles with decorations of foliages and the capital to have the figure of the worshipped god. Later on the capitals were replaced with the *vahanas* of deities. The Atharva Veda is more informative on the subject of residential houses.

The Pali canons, the texts written in Pali script during the period of Emperor Ashoka, also give abundant information about the architecture of that period. The two important texts Mahavagga and Kullavagga mentions cities like Mathura, Kosambi, Ayodhya, Varanasi and Mithila etc with detached buildings. In a certain chapter of the text, the blessed one is stated to have said 'I allow you, O Bikkhus, abodes of five kinds- Viharas, Ardhayoga, Prasada, Harma and Guha", this is the earliest classification of religious buildings much elaborated in Samaranganasutradhara. Kautilya's Arthashastra: Although the date of this invaluable text is a debatable issue Shukla (2008) believes this book to have been written before the 1st century BC. This book gives a scientific definition of Vastu as well as mentions houses, pleasure gardens, bridges, embankments this book gives the first datable reference of civil architecture. Although Pauranic traditions are of a very early period, Puranas were written much later, composed in Sanskrit and also in regional languages. We can find a lot of information on *Vastu* (architecture), *Silpa* (sculpture and iconography) as well as *Chitra* (painting) from the Puranas, chiefly the Garuda Purana and the Agni Purana.

They provide a valuable contribution to Hindu architecture dealing with canons of 'Nagaradi-Astu' canons of town planning, 'Prasada-laksana-Kathanam' or canons of temple planning, as well as iconography and sculpture (Shulka, 2008).

Some important ancient books on Vastu-shastra, on which are based the evolution and development of Hindu Science of Architecture are as follows:

1. Visvakarma vastushastra
2. Aparajitapraccha
3. Manasara
4. Mayamata
5. Shilparatna
6. Samaranganasutradhara

According to Shukla (2008) historical beginning of Architecture of the Indian subcontinent can be traced to the pre-Mauryan period (400BC) these being of wooden origins.

3.4 Development of Temple Architecture of Nepal

To probe the background of Nepalese Temple Architecture is to attempt to penetrate the greatest complexity of Nepalese life, to separate the inseparable religious and sub cults which have welded themselves together into a finished product. (Bernier, 1978:8). Since ancient times, the resplendent topography and pleasant climatic conditions of Nepal has attracted large groups of people from travelers, traders, pilgrims, refugees and migrants. The bordering nations of Nepal, India to the south and China to the North, both have gone through tumultuous political and religious histories in the past causing waves of migration as political and religious refugees into Nepal. However, these upheavals did not have a devastating effect in Nepal and the country always enjoyed a harmony amongst its dwellers. Furthermore, Nepalese, since ancient times are known to be very hospitable, adjusting to outsiders and assimilating them easily into their own culture. These migrants brought with them their tradition, religion, costumes, food habits, art, architecture, language, encouraging a cross contact of culture. Therefore, Nepal became a melting point of influences from Tibet and India. Thus, there is no 'purity' of religious division to be found

here, no jealous guarding of one's own faith against the influences of a neighbor's creed and little sense of separateness against devotees (Bernier, 1978:8). However, the Nepalese artists assimilated the incoming style and features, evolving a unique style, which Nepal can boast as its own creation. This unique style utilized local resources, thus, brick and wood became the prime material for architecture.

Delving into the religious history of Nepal, the construction of temples and installation of deities has usually been from the part of royalties, aristocrats, traders and common donors. The priests never became all powerful figures on Nepalese society, unlike India and Tibet. The role of the priests was to perform the daily rituals, festivals and traditions of the temple as well as guard against impurity within the sanctum. Hinduism supports the identification or location of a sacred spot for the construction of a temple. These sacred spots are called *tirthas*, or in a wider realm, a *kshetra*, these locations can be near rivers, lakes, mountains, rocks and crevices, where the transcendental or the divine reveals itself. '*Tirthas* are places where this world meets the other world and the aim of the pilgrim is to participate in that special quality to gain merit and finally be liberated' (Kramrish, 1976).

Many of the architectural features in the Kathmandu Valley-their construction and preservation are the result of the Hindu-Buddhist quest for religious merit. Thus, the building, not only temples but also roads, public shelters, water sources are undertaken by kings and commoners not only because they are needed but for the religious returns it ensures. The Gods are thus pleased and the donor accumulates merits for himself and also for his family, involving the past, present and future generations. Collectively such meritorious deeds or acts are known as 'glory' or '*kirti*'. Therefore, architecture of the valley can by all means be termed as religious. Even for those constructions besides temples, the same rituals and sanctions are incorporated as a temple in the presence of a priest (Slusser, 1998:129).

The dwellings of Gods and Goddesses in Nepal are quite unlike those of other counties, which house both the deities as well as the religious congregation

assembled to worship. Nepalese worship is fundamentally an individual concept. The temples therefore need to make no provision for the congregation. With some exceptions the worshipper does not enter the temples at all. He hands over his offerings to the priest or his intermediary from whom he receives the *prasada* or the material blessings from god. Where possible the veneration is completed by the circumambulation or the *pradakshina*- literally meaning 'to move to the right' in Sanskrit (Slusser, 1998: 128). Despite its grandeur, massiveness and decoration, the main sanctum of the temples are very small, seldom accommodating more than 5-6 people and very simple in the interior. However they are centrally located in spacious courtyards, enclosed with *sattals* and *patis* or colonnaded resting places. The courtyard houses smaller shrines of deities associated to the main shrine and is used for various ritual as well as social activities.

The unique design of Nepalese temples, with the golden glow of the gilded roofs, reflecting onto the red bricks and the wooden structures, from a distance looks like an ethereal chariot, balancing itself in the skyline. In the absence of the structural and stylistic development of these temples, we are at once introduced to these fully developed, highly decorated multi-tiered temples (Tiwari, 2013). With abundance of land to dedicate to temple complexes, the early artist centralized the main sanctum in large courtyards. Overhanging roofs in multi tiers, diminishing in size to look like the lofty mountains, the abode of deities was added to the main sanctum. These roofs were supported by multi floored brick structures. The artists of this period gave full vent to their creativity and artistic expression, as these grand structures focus much on the aesthetics. In terms of the utility, besides the sanctum of the ground floor, the above stories serve only to add to the aesthetics and have no utilitarian value. 'The simple structural composition is cloaked by a grand artistic display of carvings and décor, in wood and terracotta, with motifs that add mystery and symbolic grandeur' (Tiwari, 2013:1).

Since religion forms a prime component in spreading culture, the architecture of the religious buildings help in the understanding of culture. Religious buildings become credible sources of reference for the understanding and study of religion

and culture because the makers of these buildings constructed structures that reflected the philosophy and symbolism of the rituals and religion and did not compromise on the strength because such structures were to survive not only for their generations but for those of the future and long periods of time. Thus, these buildings were also timely maintained for longevity. The Nepali temple represents such a tradition with a continuous development spanning 1500 years. (Tiwari, 2013:4)

Tiwari in his book 'Temples of the Nepal Valley' compares the multi-tiered temples as chariots of gods, lifting off the earth and holding a delicate equilibrium in the sky (Tiwari, 2013:1). He further mentions the skill and artistry of Nepali artisans in both structure as well as in decorations of wood, terracotta tiles and bricks. The structure and stylization of these temples according to him are truly indigenous, and not influences or offshoots of its powerful neighbors, north and south, although they are all based on shared religious background, ancient symbolism and ritual principles. The presence of *dyochhen*, *tamralepan*, technique of stone polish, stone water conduits, *pokhari* and absence of porticos all led to the belief that the multi tiered temples developed in Nepal. He also has given reference of the Chinese travelers who expressed awe in seeing the Kailashkuta Bhawan of Amshuvarma and inferred that the architecture of Nepal was unlike his own. This shows that Nepali architecture was very different from that of its northern borders, therefore, could not have been shaped by other influences. Unlike the thoughts of Percy Brown who states that the 'Pagoda' motif is a feature of the art of the far east and that Nepali builders took after this pattern. (Tiwari, 2013:5).

Moreover, because of its rugged topography and geographical location, Kathmandu Valley seems to have existed in a bubble of its own, undisturbed by invaders and empire expanders. It, thus, thrived as a cultural and political power centre amidst rich agricultural forest resources. It is surprising that historians, archaeologists and other cultural specialists have not adopted the thesis that the Valley's historical evolution has been unique in its removal from the sphere of adjacent regions. (Tiwari, 2013:6)

The grand and picturesque architecture of the multi-tiered temples we see today, often referred to as the masterful creations of the medieval or Malla period, owe much of its grandeur to a thousand year long history of high culture, including art and architecture. As stated by Tiwari, the period of the Kirata and Verma that preceded the Lichhavi period, often referred to as the Golden period of Nepali Art, were also equally active in the development of religious art and architecture. The temples of the Malla period, particularly the *degah* and the *deochhe*, are in a way a summary of this active history and tradition of development. (Tiwari, 2013:79) The Shah Kings, who overtook the Mallas, gave continuity to the existent style.

The installation of the Victory pillar by King Manadeva in 464AD on the hill of Changu, represents the earliest landmark of architecture to be found in Nepal. Similarly the shrines of Bisankhunarayan, Sesanarayan, Ichangunarayan and Changunarayan, as well as a fifth shrine of Budaninalkantha in the far north demonstrates the appropriation of magical places that must have been worshipped since the pre-historic times. In later times the grouping of deities in four, such as Ganesha, Varahi, yogini became popular as well as installing temples of them in different directions. These temples housed deities in both their iconographic as well as non-iconographic forms.

In reference to Nepali architecture, the first archaeological evidence of architecture is the Gaud Dhwoj pillar inscription, installed by King Manadev, the first historical King of Nepal, in 464 AD at the premises of the Changunarayan Temple. The pillar often referred to as the 'victory pillar' was installed in memory of his victory in subduing the samantas of the east and extending his empire to the west. This inscription is considered very valuable as it gives an account of the social, religious, political, as well as, economic condition of the Lichhavi period. The installation of this historic pillar on top of the Dolasikhar Hills has led many scholars to assume this site to be very important, probably as a religious site with temple structures. During this period the trend of issuing orders by the kings from the palaces was very common, thus being mentioned in the stone inscriptions. Inscriptions of King Manadev were issued from Managriha, those of Amshuvarma were issued from Kailashkuta Bhawana and

those of Narendradeva were issued from Bhadradiwasa Bhawana. However we have no archaeological evidence of any of these palaces, even in terms of location and style, with the exception of the Kailashkuta Bhawan, habited by King Narendra dev in his earlier days of reign. The Tang Annals, or the accounts of Huien-Tsang who passed by Nepal on his way to India, gives a description of this palace as being more than 200ft in height and more than 400 ft in diameter. In the centre of the palace was unique tower in seven storeys covered with copper tiles. He had not seen the like of it anywhere else before. (Banerjee, 1980:83), (Regmi, 2007: 239), (Tiwari, 2013:5).

In terms of temple architecture, the first reference can be seen from the inscription that was retrieved from a wayside near Sundhara at Patan near a deochhen temple of goddess Mahalakshmi. Although this inscription does not give any description of the design of the temple, it records the restoration of the temple of Matin devakula by Mahasamanta Amshuvarma in 610 AD. It mentions the repair of all wooden components, doors, windows, panels, frames which was destroyed by mice and mongoose who attacked the temple through the crevices in the layers of brick that had fallen (Tiwari, 2013: 81) (Banerjee, 1980). The word martin is a degeneration of '*matrinam*' or mother-goddess. We may thus summerise that the deochhen and the martin *devakula* are the same. This was further substantiated by the fact that the area was called Matilam kshetra as lates as 1497 AD. It is also noted that the existant *deochhen* is a rectangular two-storeyed brick and timber temple and related well with the inscriptional description of the 'brick and wood' Matin *devakula*. This temple has a continuous tradition of a group of people of the Kirat descent performing annual religious activities, questioning the antiquity of the temple (Tiwari, 2013: 81).

The veil of ornaments termed as *alamkara* in Sanskrit as seen in the multi-tiered temples are much more than mere external display. Philip Rawson defines ornaments as 'a functional aspect of art, embedded in it, not a gratuitous extra' (Bernier, 1978: 45) goes very well with Nepali multi-tiered temples.

The multiple plinths that give the temple the grandeur, doors with extended lintels and thresholds, the struts or *tudals*, the tympanium or *torana*, the large

number of embellishments and deities placed on the outer walls of the sanctum, the overhanging large multiple-tiered roofs, the multiple gajuras, and the finial or pinnacle all add to the aesthetic of the temple for the layman, but have symbolic and functional meanings for the scholar.

The numerous temples we see today have their roots in the Malla period. The Kings of the Shah Dynasty gave continuation of this majestic style without any compromise on the form, material and adornments. The palaces at Gorkha, Nuwakot, Taleju temple at Kathmandu, the Nyatapola temple of Bhaktapur, the Indreswara temple of Panauti and the subject of this thesis, the Tripureswara Mahadeva temple are some of the best examples of temple architecture of this style. These resplendent and magnificent structures of the multi-tiered temples that have caught the fancy of the entire world have great universal significance and value as World Heritage Sites today.

CHAPTER 4

SIGNIFICANCE OF RIVERINE CULTURE IN HINDU RELIGION, FOCUSING ON THE CULTURAL MONUMENT ALONG THE THAPATHALI-TEKU BANKS OF RIVER BAGMATI.

4.1 Riverine culture and its significance in Kathmandu Valley

The culture of Kathmandu has known to be riverine, with agriculture as the main occupation since ancient days. Numerous rivers, originating from the Mahabharata range, flow through the valley irrigating the fertile fields and giving plentiful produces to offer to the gods and consumption of the citizens. Inside the Valley proper, the main Lichhivi settlements were established at the junctions of Bagmati and Vishnumati (Slusser, 1998). The lush green forests and fields have been the resting places and food provider for all those who dwell in it, both man and animals. Annual, seasonal and bi-seasonal produces can all be cultivated in its fertile land. The civilization of Kathmandu often referred to as the Bagmati civilization, feeds from the Bagmati River, which originates from Bagdwar at the foothills of the Shivapuri hills. The Himvat khanda of Skanda Purana describes the importance and religious merits of Bagmati to be more than that of the Ganges; '*Gangatopiyabadhika*' meaning Bagmati is greater than the Ganges, if not more by a grain of barley (Dhakal 2000).

It provides a focus to the rituals, social customs of the inhabitants of Kathmandu Valley which are enacted daily at temples, images, shrines, and at the banks and *ghats* along the river. Although most of the major religious rituals and festivals in the Kathmandu valley are closely related to the Vagmati and its tributaries, it is their role as *ghats* in the funeral rites, that is the most significant. Some of the significant ghats of the valley are Gokerneswara *ghat* at Gokarna, Arya *ghat* at Pashupati Kshetra, Shankhamul *ghat* at Patan, Kalmochan *ghat*, Pachali *ghat*, Teku Dobhan *ghat* at Kathmandu and Hanuman *ghat* at Bhaktapur. Rivers are considered as bridges between heaven and earth, and therefore, rituals for our ancestors or *pitri pujas* like *shraddha*, *tarpan* and *daana* conducted at river banks ensures that the offerings reach the departed souls (Dhakal, 2000).

The Bagmati and Vishnumati are considered to be the holiest rivers in Kathmandu Valley, flowing through the lush green hills, surrounding the valley, they form a center for religious, social and cultural activities of the people of Kathmandu. The Nepal Mahatmaya states Bagmati to be the purest river and one can attain spiritual and physical enlightenment by bathing in it.

Providing water to the thirsty is considered as an act of piety according to the Hindu dharma shastras. Therefore, water sources like *dhunge dharas*, canals, *jaladroni*, wells and ponds have been constructed since the times of our ancestors, not only by Kings but also by the common people. Despite the changes in culture, society and economy, these acts of installing water sources have been given continuity till today. Thus, giving cultural and religious importance to water, Hindus build temples and other religious institutions at the river banks and near water resources. All the rivers of Nepal end up meeting the Ganga, which is one of the 20 largest rivers of the world. The Vagmati and other rivers of Nepal are believed to be the source of the holy river Ganga which flows from the Himalayas through India, and thus all Nepalese rivers have sanctity of their own and temples are built on their banks. (Bernier, 1978:14). The oldest water spout of Kathmandu is located at Mangahiti , north-eastern side of Patan Durbar Square, dated 570 AD. This tradition has been given continuity till today since the 6th century. This tradition is not confined to the valley alone, but can be seen from Ilam in the East to Baglung in the West (Amatya, 2003).

A study conducted by Kathmandu Valley Town Development project in 1982 AD disclosed that 95% of all stone spouts were situated in the Kathmandu valley itself. Most of them were built between the 13th-18th century CE during the reign of the Malla Kings. Out of the total 500 estimated spouts, 118 are situated in Kathmandu, 40 in Lalitpur, 103 in Bhaktapur and 48 in Thimi. These stone spouts were fed from water from the Raj-kulo or through wells. While looking at these ancient water sources, one can notice numerous images of deities installed around them, signifying their use not only as a source for drinking water but also serving the purpose of religious, social and cultural activities. They are also a witness to the skills of the artisans of the time. The system of installing water spouts and other water related structures have a history since the Lichhavi

period, following the traditional style of Nepali architecture, hence, stylistically they have not changed much. Water being an important part not only of daily life, but also that of social, cultural and religious life, a special festival has been celebrated since a long time for the maintenance and cleaning of these water structures. The day of *Kumar Sasthi*, locally known as *Sitinakha* in the month of *Jestha* is culturally dedicated for this purpose. The local clubs and *Guthis* take the responsibility of these tasks (Amatya, 2003).

Water is considered to be the elixir for life, for both Hindu and Buddhists, fulfilling all rituals from birth to death, happiness and sadness, religious as well cultural. The river Bagmati is not only considered to be the mother of the Kathmandu Valley civilization, popularly known as the Bagmati Civilization, but along its path, one can witness its meeting with six other major rivers and other minor rivers making them very sacred and holy sites. The Hindus believe that that there are 64 holy places along the Bagmati river, the major ones being Sundari mai, Gokerneswara Mahadev, Pashupatinath temple, Guheswari temple, Sankhamul Ghat, Kalamochan ghat, Pachali Ghat and then leaving the valley at Chobhar. All these places have numerous temples and other religious institutions (Dhakal, 2000). Situated at the confluences are twelve sacred holy places in the Kathmandu Mandala. Some of them being:

1. Gokarna at the confluence of Chandra Baga and Vagmati, also called Brahma Tirtha,
2. Guheswari at the confluence of Marayadani and Vagmati river, also known as Shanti
3. Tirtha, Sankhamul at the confluence of Manamati and Vagmati also known as
4. Shankar Tirtha, Dhantali at the confluence of Manjari and Vagmati and
5. Kushinkhya at the confluence of Bimalavati and Keshavati River. (Amatya, 2006:26).

The recent encroachment by different ethnic communities, castes and outsiders has been confining the riverine culture. Kathmandu Valley saw the first building built in the pillar system, constructed in the year 1962 AD at Kamalpokhari. This

change in construction style led to excessive use of the sand, which has adverse effects on the cultural settlements as they force change in river courses (Vaidhya, 2003: 40).

4.2 Origin of Bagmati and its course in Kathmandu Valley

The Nepal Mahatmaya mentions the origin of Vagmati through the utterance of Lord Shiva. Seven chapters of this book mentions about the story of Narasmiha the fourth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, who killed demon King Hiranyakashayapu to relieve his son, Pralahad. After the tedious battle, Narasimha went to rest in the Himalayas and was followed by Pralahad to pay devotion to his lord. Seeing all this Lord Shiva was so pleased, he laughed aloud causing a river to originate from his saliva. Thus rightly named Bagmati. The Bagmati originates at Bagdwar, 10km north of Kathmandu. The Pasupati purana states that the Bagamati fulfills the wishes of those who take a bath in it as well as leads them to *Sivalok*. It is a *sewaniya* river or for the service of humankind (Dhakal, 2000).

The Bagmati flows through the Sundarimai gorge to Gokarna. The forest of Gokarna is the auspicious site where Ravan received blessings from lord Shiva. The Gokarneswara ghat at Gokarna is thronged by people on the day of *Kuse Aushi* to pay homage to the deceased souls of the ancestors. *Shraddhas*, *tarpan* and *pinda daana* are performed for the salvation of the souls of loved ones. By such acts of devotion, both the doer or devotee as well as the deceased soul gain merit for salvation.

The Bagmati then flows through the Pashupati from Surya Ghat, Arya Ghat, Rajrajeswori Ghat, Ram Ghat. The *ghats* are considered most auspicious and sacred sites of cremation for any Hindu. There are numerous *brahmanalas* constructed at the *ghats* to place the deceased body after bathing it for the final rites and rituals. The deceased body is placed on the *brahmanalas* with its feet immersed in the river, *ardhajala*. The main intention of this ritual is to grant *vaikunthalok* or an easy passage to heaven for the soul of the deceased. At the side of the *brahmanalas* are circular elevations also known as *bhakari* for the final cremation. River water is poured into the mouth of the deceased prior to cremation and after the cremation the ashes are washes into the river. The river

carries the departed soul downstream, past all the holy places to the most sacred of all rivers, the Ganges and the holy city of Banaras, and finally to heaven. The relatives of the deceased bathe at the *ghat* after the funeral rites to purify themselves before they return home.

The confluence with the Manamati is called the Sankhamul Ghat at Patan, five km south of Kathmandu. Here, the Bagmati meets the Manamati and Ganga to make a Triveni, which is considered to be a very sacred spot. According to the Swayambhu Purana, the water of the Sankhamul *ghat* is very potent and can cure different types of skin diseases. A twenty-day long festival is celebrated at Sankhamul *ghat* commencing on the day of Basanta panchami and ending on the last day of *Swasthani vrath katha*. Just as the people of Kathmandu cremate their deceased and loved ones at Pashupati Arya ghat, the people of Patan perform the last rites and cremation of their deceased at the Sankhamul ghat. Here too we can see many bhakaris and brahamanals for these rituals.

The Bagmati, then, flows through the Bagmati bridge, the demarcation of Kathmandu and Patan, towards Thapathali where it meets the Icchumati or Tukuche khola, making the very famous Kalmochan Ghat. This *ghat* became a centre of religious activities during the Rana as well as the Shah period. Numerous temples, smaller shrines, *akhadas*, gardens, *ghats* have been built along the bank. The confluence of the Bagmati and Vishnumati, two Kms west of Bagmati bridge is the Pachali ghat or Teku Dovan. This confluence is considered most sacred as the meeting point of two largest river civilizations of Kathmandu. The confluence forms a mound with 28 religious monuments which are witness of the development of temple architecture from the Malla period, Shah period and Rana period. Along the *ghat* we can see various temples of Siva, Visnu, Sakti *peetha*, and hundreds of Siva *lings* installed. Furthermore, the temple here can also be considered as unique examples of Shikhara, multi-tiered as well as a mixture of both styles of temple architecture. This site is important also because of its connection to Rishi-Panchami, in which women take the *Teej-Brata* or fasting for the longevity and well being of their husbands. This falls during the month of August-September. Thousands of Brahmin and Chhetri women folks at Teku to take a dip in the Bagmati River 365 times, with other forms of ritual

cleansing. They then queue-up to pay homage to a 15 cm high Siva *linga* at a small shrine of Rishiswar, hidden in the National Transport Corporation compound. This site is visited just once in a year and is otherwise neglected throughout the year.

The Bagmati leaves the valley through the Chobhar Gorge to Katwal daha. The Chobhar gorge is also famously known as the outlet of the legendary lake that the Kathmandu valley was once immersed in. The Vishnu Purana mentions that Lord Krishna came during the Satya Yuga, to make this valley habitable for the Gopals or the cowherds. Buddhist texts state Manjushree to have come from China to make the valley habitable for humankind (Dhakal, 2000). At this gorge is situated the temple of JalaVinayaka, one of the four spiritual guardians of the valley. The other three being, Ashok Vinayaka at Maru, Kathmandu, Karya Vinayaka at Khokana and Surya Vinayaka at Suryavinayaka, south of Bhakatapur. There are also numerous Sivalingas installed at the temple premises and *bhakarīs* along the riverbanks for different religious and social activities.

4.3 Dobhans and trivenis in Nepal

The places where two rivers meet is called Dovan and where three meet are called triveni. They are considered holy and scared sites as places where the Gods play (Kramrisch, 1980). Some of the *trivenis* and *dobhans* in Nepal are at the confluence of Narayani, Sona & Panchandi at Nawalparasi district, Kamala, Tawa and Kakaru rivers at Udayapur district, Koshi, Koka at Barahakshetra and Roshi, Punyamati and Rudrayani at Panauti.

In the Kathmandu Valley, the Bagmati River links significant cultural and religious sites from its source in the north-east foot hills to its exit in the south-east corner. The Teku Thapala Research Group Report of 1994 AD, identified six historical and cultural sites along the Bagmati River. Along this course of the river the six identified sites are:

1. The cave shrines of Sundarijal, close to the source of the Bagmati also including a settlement in that area.
2. The temple complex of Gokarna, several kilometers downstream, from where the Bagmati enters the valley proper.

3. The Pashupati Kshetra, whose present structures date from between the 4th to the 16th century CE. This is one of the most holy pilgrimage sites for all Hindus. Oral history dates it back to being one of the earliest settlements in the Kathmandu Valley.
4. Continuing downstream the Bagmati meanders westwards to become the boundary between the cities of Kathmandu and Lalitpur. Along these banks are a cluster of temples and the Sankhamul ghats.
5. Further downstream on the north bank between Teku and Thapathali lies about two km of ghats and attendant temples.
6. Where the river leaves the Valley at the cleft of the Chobhar Gorge, the Chobhar Ganesa complex stands as one of the four special guardian Ganesa temples of the Kathmandu Valley.

4.4 Kalamochan ghat and Tripureswara Mahadev Temple

The term Kalamochan signifies the popular belief that anyone who takes a bath at this confluence will not suffer for their sins after death (Dhakal, 2000:40). Here we can witness various types of architecture built during the time of the Shah Dynasty as well as the Rana Prime Ministers. The Hem Narayan Temple, built in the *Gumbaj* style of architecture, *mathas*, *akhadas* and *ghats* can all be seen here. Following the path of the river, a few meters away, is the Bagmati ghat, where the famous temple of Tripureswara Mahadev, the subject of this thesis is located.

In the 19th century, the Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana constructed the *akhadas* or shelter, with the intention of providing asylum to the *sanyasis* or ascetic. PM Jung Bahadur Rana was himself a religious minded person. Nepal being a very important pilgrimage as well as a worship site for Hindus, the construction of these *akhadas* welcomed many *sadhus*, *santas* and *sanyasis* to reside here. The Government of Nepal, under *Guthi Sansthan* has been providing free shelter and food for the *sadhus* and *sanyasis* residing as well as visiting here. At the Kalmochan Ghat are situated four *Akhadas* for the different sects of Hinduism, Udasi, Vairagi, Sanyasi and Gorakhnath *Akhadas*.

For the promotion and development of Hinduism, Swami Shankaracharya had propounded the concept of *Santa parampara*. Under this tradition, religious minded people forgo their materialistic lives for the propagation of Hinduism and live an ascetic life as sages, *sadhus*, and saints. The followers of Saint Shankaracharya are known under the name of Dasnami Sanyasis, Giri, Puri, Parvat, Sagar, Bharati, Saraswati, tirtha, Ashram, Baan, Arandya.

These *akhadas* were constructed as a representation of the four *dhamas* or major pilgrimage sites for Hinduism. They are Badrinath, Ayodhya, Rameswara and Tirupati Balaji. The *akhadas* at Kalmochan ghat are built according to the Neo-Classical style of architecture. The materials used for the construction are brick, mud mortar, wood for doors, windows, rafters and pralines. Besides daily rituals and lighting of the lamps, *aarati* in the evenings, these *akhadas* become a hub for *sadhus* and *santas* during the festival of Sivaratri. At this time, shelter and food are provided to the *sadhus* visiting from various parts of Nepal and India. This institution is financially supported by the *Guthi Sansthan*.

Vairagi Akhada was established by PM Jung B Rana in 1817 BS in the memory of Swami Sri Ramananda Acharya. Since that time the *sadhu*, *santhas* of the Vairagya cult have been residing here. This *akhada* is associated with Vaishnavism. Srinath akhada was established in the 19th century CE by PM Jung Bhaadur Rana in the name of his deceased ancestors.

CHAPTER 5

STUDY OF TRIPURESVARA MAHADEV TEMPLE, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ART AND ARCHITECTURE

5.1 Introduction of the Temple

The Hindu religious scriptures mention that the installation of a Sivalinga, leads to the salvation of the soul of a deceased. Being advised on the same by priests and scholars, Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari, enshrined a Sivalinga in the temple of Tripuresawara Mahadev temple, at the banks of Bagmati River for the salvation of the soul of her deceased husband King Rana Bahadur Shah 1818 AD (Regmi, 1974). This temple is located at Tripureshwara, Kathmandu municipality, ward number 11 (figure 1, 3)). It is one of the largest temple complexes situated on the banks of the Bagmati River. This site was chosen because it is a sacred site at the confluence of two rivers, the Bagmati and Ichhumati (Tukucha), popularly known as the Kalamochan Ghat. This area is, thus, named Tripureswara after this temple.

JC Regmi (1974) in his book *Shah Kalin Kala Vastukala* gives an account of the construction of the temple quoting Sanskrit texts from the book 'Triratna Saundarya Gatha' compiled by Pandit Sundarananda Baada who was a scholar from Mahaboudha, Patan during that time. This text mentions the temple to have been built by Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari for the salvation of her deceased husband as well as for her own well-being. On the death of her husband king Rana Bahadur Shah, the widowed queen Lalit Tripura Sunari asked for advice from various scholars and pundits well versed in the knowledge of the Vedas. She also sought advice on about how her deceased husband can achieve salvation. They advised her that installation of a Sivalinga was among the highest forms of veneration and devotion. Thus, taking the permission of her grandson, Rajendra Bikram, she established a Sivalinga, naming it Tripuresvara, after which the neighborhood is got its name (figure10-11).

The responsibility of the construction was given to Chief Minister Bhimsena Thapa. The laying of the foundation stone or the *Shiladivasana Vidhi* was

conducted on *Asadh Shukla Pakshya, Nawami*, Monday 1874 BS. Ten months later on *Baishakha Krishnapakshaya Tritiya*, Thursday 1875, the Sivalinga was consecrated or the ceremony of *prana pratistha* of the idol was completed. All this is inscribed on a stone pillar with a gilded bull capital on the west side of the temple.

It is a three-tiered temple with gilded metal roofing on all three floors (however, presently only two tiers of the roof are of metal while the lowermost is tiled with terracotta tiles). The Kalmochan ghat is situated about 100 m south of the temple at the Vagmati river. Here, the queen established a huge statue of Hanuman on a stone pillar because Hanuman is known as a protector against natural calamities.

The Devamala Bamsawali mentions this temple to have been built in the traditional Nepali style of temple architecture, standing on five tall stone plinths. The stone pillar on the western side of the temple has a capital of a gilded metal bull (figure 15). This pillar bears the geneology of the Shah Kings from Prithivi Narayan Shah, through Rajndra Bikram Shah. As well as a detailed account of all the deities established in this temple complex. Ashta bashu were also established with *Devraja* Indra as the main Dikpala, together with golden roof and pinnacle on top of the temple. Two bells and a *trishula* were offered. The queen established a *guthi* providing all the basic needs for the temple like *kucho*, *nanglo*, and *theki*, offered to Tripuresawara Mahadev Temple. Special prayers were made to end disastrous natural calamities and a *yajna* or devotional worship in the presence of a sacred fire was offered and the deities of *akash*, *patal*, *ashta dikpala*, *yajna*, *gandharva*, *danava*, *devas* of *prithivi*, *vayu*, *akash*, *teja*, *agni* or the *pancha tatva* or *five elements* of ether, earth, water, wind, fire and sky. After which everyone was fed a meal and amidst extolments for the king and the well being of the universe the ritual ended. Prime Minister Sri Bhimsen Thapa was present for this installation and all other rituals.

Pandit Ranganath established a *mandal* with nine *kundas* and decorated them beautifully with banners and flowers, completing the ritual of removing the accusations through highly learned scholars and pundits. The gods were very pleased. Various scholars coming from far and wide were honored. They were

offered a variety of donations. A mood of happiness and entertainment was set through music and good food, pleasing everyone present. On *Mangsir Krishna Pakshya*, this temple was consecrated.

5.2 Features of the temple

5.2.1 The Main shrine

5.2.1.1 Sanctum

Centrally located in a large courtyard, the main sanctum stands on top of five tall plinths and houses a large Sivalinga. The sanctum has three paneled door on all four sides flanked by two small blind windows on either side. A flight of stairs lead to the entrance door on the south. The sanctum is three storied. The top two storey has three windows on each side, the central one larger than the ones on the side. The sanctum which is undecorated from the interior houses a big Sivalanga in the center. The sanctum is double walled, allowing a passage for *pradakshina* or circumambulation. Meal or *bhoga* for the deity is also prepared in this passage (figure 12).

5.2.1.2 Plinth

Plinths are raised platforms on which the main sanctum or *garbhagriha* stands. These structures help to protect the temples from water seepage from the ground below and also add to the grandeur and majestic look of the temples (Banerjee 1980). This temple is built in the traditional, multi tiered style of temple architecture, which consists of a square cella, or *garbhagriha*, here standing on five plinths. This temple has three storeys, the *garbhagriha* on the ground floor being the most important as it houses the main deity; the other two are blind being non-functional and are built with intricately and delicately carved wooden architectural features and decorations. On the corners of the second plinth are smaller two-tiered shrines dedicated to Ganesa, Visnu, Maheshmardini and Surya, representing the *Panchyatan* cult (figure 5).

5.2.1.2.1 Panchayatan cult

The Visnudharmattor Purana tells us that the gods were worshipped in their visible forms not images in the *satya yuga*, in the *treta* and *dvapara yuga* worship was done both to their visible form as well as to their images. In the *treta yuga*, they were worshipped in the house and in the *dvapara yuga* in the forest; in the *kali yuga* the practice of building houses of gods, i.e. temples began.

*Satyayuge devanam pratyaksapujanam-tretadvaparayoh pratyaksapuja
pratimasuca-tatrapitretayuga grhe dvapare caranya-kalau ca
devayatonanirmitirnagaresu samarabdha, bhumidanam vidhayaiva
devayatanapratishtha karya, devalayayogyabhumi.* (Banerjee, 1985:229)

The *Smritis* of the pre and early post Christian eras like the *Dharmashastras*, *Manu Smriti* and *Yajnavalkya Smriti* did not advocate the cause of any cult in particular. However, in the early centuries of the Christian era, there was a wide prevalence of sectarianism in India, which was gradually dividing people into multiple numbers of sects and various sub-sects, that was heterodox from the Brahmanical point of view (Banerjee, 1985: 17). Thus, developed number of people following different sects, a liberal attitude towards religious faith, evolving a kind of worship called the Panchayatan, in which the principle deities of the five approved Brahmanical Hindu cults were the object of veneration. It is not possible to fix a definite period when this custom came into vogue, however archaeological evidences show such syncretism to have existed from as early as the Kushana-Gupta period (Banerjee, 1985: 541-553). Monier Williams (1887) in the nineteenth century described the Panchayatan puja as 'Five stones or symbols believed to be permeated by the essence of the five chief deities are 1) the black stone: Vishnu, (2) the white stone: Shiva, (3) the red stone: Ganesa, (4) the small piece of metallic ore: the wife of Shiva, (5) the piece of crystal representing the Sun. All five symbols are placed on an open metal dish called *Panchayatan* and are arranged in different methods according to the preference given to any one of the five deities at the time of worship. Most temples following the *Panchayatan* cult can be recognized by the five gajuras placed on the temple roof with a central gajura depicting the prime deity of the temple, like the

Pashupatinath temple at Deopatan. However this temple is unique as it has a central shrine housing the principle deity, surrounded by four smaller shrines on the four corners of the second plinth consisting of figures of the four other deities of the *Panchayan* cult. The interesting feature of these Panchayatan temples in this complex is the placement of iconic symbols next to the gajura of the temple. The temple of Ganesa has the parasu, Mahisasurmardini has the trisula, Visnu has the chakra and the Surya has the flower. Multi-tiered temples, like this one are distinctive architectural forms using a successful blending of two building materials of brick and wood. For thousands of years, Nepalese architects and craftsmen have adopted and nurtured this style, which remains a static one with no changes except in size and proportion (figure 32-28).

5.2.1.3 Doors and windows

The doorframe consists of interior door frame (ducha) and exterior doorframe (bah), which are joined together by wooden nails (chukuls). The exterior doorframes are for decorative purpose, besides providing support to the façade, whereas the inner doorframes are for structural purposes. Outer doorframes can be further divided into five parts (figure 7).

1. Gvâgakhvâ: is the curvilinear wing of the doorframe extending from halfway up to the height of the doorframe. This feature has the images of the Astamatrika deities in this temple: Maheswari and Kaumari, on the east: Indrayani and Varahi, on the north: Vaisnavi and Brahmini and to the west: Mahalkshmi and Chamunda..
2. Debikvâ: is the inner part of the Gvaghkva. Usually, the images of Chandra and Surya are depicted on either sides.
3. Bhailkhvâ: is above the sill of the door, at the bottom of the doorframe. They often take on the terrifying forms of Mahankala who guards the temple of Shiva. In this temple, the Astabhairavs : Asitanga, Ruru, Canda, Krodha, Unmatta-Bhairava, Kapala, Bisana, Samhara are depicted as *dwarपालs* or guardian demi-gods holding their cognizance weapons and symbols.

4. Lapu: is the horizontal panel that extends beyond the doorframe to the corner of the façade. They usually have images of guardian or protector deities or auspicious symbols of the *astamangalas*.
5. Purâtvâ: is the uppermost part of the projecting lintel of the doorframe. They bear the load of the massive entablature above and bear bands decorative motifs of floral, geometric, animal or combined patterns. (Dongol, 2011:102).

The base of all four doorframes has a stone lion, placed in the centre, as if to provide psychological support to bear the load of this massive temple. However, this temple does not have the *torana* or tympanium usually seen on the doors of most temples of this style. Two small miniature blind windows flank the door on either side.

5.2.1.3.1 Astamatrikas:

The Mother Goddess, Matrika is a symbol of fertility, protectors from evil, the Shakti of her consort and also has a fierce aspect as a destroyer. The worship of the Mother-Goddess has been termed as Shaktism, relating it to tantrism. Shaktism is widely spread in Nepal, which is obvious in the large number of depiction in stone, wood, metal, in manuscripts and sketchbooks. Shaktism embrace numerous deities, peaceful ones like Lakshmi, consort of Visnu, Uma, consort of Mahesh, Sarasvati, consort of Brahma as well as the fearsome deities like Durga, and all her individual and collective manifestations, like Kali, Chamunda, Bhagvati, the astamatrkas, Navadurgas and the Dasamahavidhyas.

The number and names of Matrikas vary in different context. There are usually seven, to sixteen matrikas as mentioned in various ritual literatures of the Hindus, with Gauri in the beginning of the list (Gauryadi-sodasa- Matrika). The Markandeyapurana lays down in one verse that the Saktis of Brahma, Siva, Karttikeya, Visnu and Indra came out of the bodies of their respective gods, to help in the fight against the Asuras (Banerjee, 1985:503-504).

In the context of Nepal the fundamental role of Mother-Goddesses is as a guardian and a protector of the Nepal Mandala, a task specifically developing on

the Matrikas, collective manifestation of Durga. Charged with the guardianship of encompassing space, the Matrikas have usurped the traditional dikpala role of such venerable gods as Agni, Indra and others. The Goplaraj Bamsawali gives reference to the installation of the matrikas in the shape of a sword around the Kathmandu Valley for the protection of the city. A certain kind of ritual, *disi puja* is one of the most common types of worship accorded to them. Each Goddess is assigned a special direction, four cardinal and four intermediate points of the compass. In this way they guard a temple, a town, a mandala or even the whole Kathmandu Valley (Slusser, 1998: 344). The dwelling places of these goddesses are mentioned only in a few texts like the *Dhaynasamgraha IV*. Brahmayani is placed in the east, Varahi in the west and Chamunda in the north are indicated by Sanskrit words for directions: *purva*, *paschim*, *uttar*. The other five are assigned directions according to the guardians or Lokpalas of those directions: Agni for southeast (Mahesvari), Yama for south (Kaumari), Nairitti for the southwest (Vashnavi), Vayu for the northwest (Indrayani) and Isana for the northeast (Mahalakshmi) (Blom, 1989: 48).

The Astamatrkas in this temple are depicted in relief on wooden panels flanking either sides of the door called *Gvâgakhvâ*, on the higher side, they are the most famous collective manifestations of Goddess Durga. They form a part of the *Gvâgakhvâ* of the door lintel. In terms of iconography they are closely related to their male counterparts, the Astabhairavas by their *ayudas* or implements held in the hands and their *vahana* or vehicle. Their worship has been known from the 11th century AD, mentioned in the *Agnipurana*. The earlier religious texts like the *Visnudharmottar* and *Amsumadbhedagama* describes only seven of them: Brahmi, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Chamunda, and Indayani and a later addition of Mahalakshmi. The *Agnipurana* has some variations to the names. In recent manuscripts of Nepalese iconography, the group of mother goddesses consists of eight, having their own vehicles: Brahmi sits on a goose, Mahesvari on a bull, Kaumari on a peacock, Vaisnavi on the divine bird Garuda, Varahi on a buffalo, Chamunda on a corpse, and Indrani on an elephant) (Blom, 1989: 48).

In the Nepalese context, the female characters of these goddesses are emphasized by their full body: full and upraised breast and their numerous ornaments. In this temple the Matrikas are depicted in the attitude of Durga piercing the buffalo demon, closely relating them to the Navadurgas. Although they are known to have multiple arms (from 2 to 16), those in this temple have only four arms, the two upper arms holding implements that help in their recognition and the lower right hand holds the trisula stabbing the demon, the left holding the hair of the demon. Two small flags attached to either side of the heads is a decorative feature that is indigenous to Nepal, thus, they are never mentioned in traditional texts, but can be seen very often in the depiction of all Matrkas except Chamunda.

A traditional description of the Astamatrikas, with their ayudas, colours, placement and directions according to Rao (1916), Blom (1989) and also mentioned in the Rupamandan are as follows (figure 40-47):

Deity:	Mahalakshmi
Direction:	west
Side of the door	right
Vahana	lion
Ayudas	top arm: Right- khadga or sword, left- khetaka or shield
Lower hands :	right- trisula percing the demon, left –kapalpatra or skull cup
Description	wears a crown on the head and various ornaments on the neck, arms and wrist, is naked on the top and wears a long printed skirt below her waist.

Deity:	Chamunda
Direction	west
Side of the door	left
Vahana	corpse
Ayudas	top arm: Right- khadga or sword, left- khetaka or shield

Lower hands : right- trisula percing the demon, left –kapalpatra or skull cup

Description wears a crown on the head and devoid of ornaments except a floral banamala, is naked on the top and wears a long skirt below her waist.

Deity: Vaisnavi

Direction North

Side of the door right

Vahana Garuda

Ayudas top arm: Right- chakra or disc, left- gada

Lower hands : right- trisula percing the demon, left –holds the demon by the hair

Description wears a crown on the head and various ornaments on the neck, arms and wrist, is naked on the top and wears a long pleated skirt below her waist.

Deity: Brahmani

Direction North

Side of the door left

Vahana Goose

Ayudas top arm: Right- japamala or rosary or disc, left- pustaka or book

Lower hands : right- trisula percing the demon, left –holds the demon by the hair

Description wears a crown on the head and various ornaments on the neck, arms and wrist, is naked on the top and wears a long pleated skirt below her waist.

Deity: Indrani

Direction east

Side of the door right

Vahana elephant

Ayudas top arm: Right- parasu or axe, left- pasa or rope

Lower hands : right- trisula percing the demon, left –holds the demon by the hair

Description wears a crown on the head and various ornaments on the neck, arms and wrist, is naked on the top and wears a long pleated skirt below her waist.

Deity: Varahi

Direction east

Side of the door left

Vahana buffalo

Ayudas top arm: Right- khadga or sword, left- khetaka or shield

Lower hands : right- trisula percing the demon, left –holds the demon by the hair

Description wears a crown on the head of a boar and various ornaments on the neck, arms and wrist, is naked on the top and wears a long pleated skirt below her waist.

Deity: Mahesvari

Direction south

Side of the door right

Vahana bull

Ayudas akshaya mala and damaru

Lower hands : right- trisula percing the demon, left –holds the demon by the hair

Description wears a crown on the head and various ornaments on the neck, arms and wrist, is naked on the top and wears a long pleated skirt below her waist.

Deity: Kaumari

Direction south

Side of the door left

Vahana Pecoock

Ayudas	top arm: Right- unclear, left- pasa or rope
Lower hands :	right- trisula percing the demon, left –holds the demon by the hair
Description	wears a crown on the head and various ornaments on the neck, arms and wrist, is naked on the top and wears a long printed and pleated skirt below her waist.

5.3.1.3.2 Asta Bhairava

Bhairava according to the Siva Purana is the puranic-rupa of Siva, who as a destroyer, in his agora or ugra rupa and in the cosmic role of erasing ignorance and evil, assumes many terrifying forms under many different names: Aghora, Raudra-Pasupati, Vairabhadra, Virupaksha, Kankala and Bhairava (Banerjee, 1985:465). The single fierce aspect or samharamurti, which has achieved a position of outstanding prominence in religion, art and culture is the Siva as Bhairava or Hathudyo, as he is known to the Newars. He is called so because he protects the universe and because he is also terrific. He is also known as the Kalabhairava for controlling kala, the god of death who trembles before him. He is Amardaka because he kills bad persons, and Papabhaksaka because he swallows the sins of his devotees. Bhairava is the lord of the sacred city of Kasi (Shukla, 2003:274).

Amongst the numerous *samahara* or destructive iconography of Siva, Bhairavas are the most popular. Although the worship of Bhairva goes back to ancient times, its iconography is the development of recent times (Poudyal, 2060 BS). In Nepal he is a god, placated with blood and alcohol, to pacify his ferocious character and is worshipped by both Hindus as well as Buddhists. His vehicle as Bhairava is no longer Siva's favourite Nandi, but the hedious dog. Since ages ago, motifs and symbols of animals are observed as sacred by the liturgical and iconographical norms. These animals are allocated to deities as symbols of cognition. Their behavior, outlook and nature are taken into account to accord these beasts as vehicles for different deities (Shakya, 2008: 144). He lurks around homes, fields, cremation ghats, in holes on the roadways and also on the

wheels of chariots. In Nepal, Bhairavas are worshipped in both the iconic and the aniconic forms.

The Agamic texts, mentions as many as sixty-four Bhairavas, divided into eight groups of eight each with the leaders of each group being Asitanga, Ruru, Canda, Krodha, Unmatta-Bhairava, Kapala, Bisana, Samhara. These Bhairavas are the consorts or guardians of the sixty-four Yoginis mentioned in the tantric texts (Banerjee, 1985:466). In Nepal, the eight manifestations of Bhairava, popularly known as the Astabhairavas, play an important part in the cult worship of Bhairava. They are known as the guardian of the eight directions and especially as the companion of the eight mother goddesses (Blom, 1989:22).

These Bhairavas, are placed on the lintels of the thresholds of temple doors because of their close association with the Mother Goddesses (Matrikas) in most temples, especially Shaiva temples like the temple discussed here, the Tripuresvara Mahadeva (figure 40-47). The Vishnudharmottar describes Bhairava to have a flabby belly, round yellow eyes, side tusk and wide nostrils, wearing a garland of skulls. He is seen adorned with snake, dark complexion, wearing an elephant hide as a garment, and carrying various ayudas. He is made in the 21 tala measurement of iconometry (Shukla, 2003:274), as opposed to gods made between ten to fourteen talas.

Leader:	Asitanga
Group:	Asitanga, Visalaksa, Marttanda, Modakapriya, Svachchanda, Vighna-santusta, Khechara, Sacaracara
Ayudas:	trishula, talwar, damaru, paas
Color:	Golden
Direction:	East
Leader:	Ruru
Group:	Ruru, Krodhadamastra, Jatadhara, Vishvarupa, Virupaksha, Nanarupadhara, Vajrahasta, Mahakaya
Ayudas:	akshayamala, ankusa, beena and pustaka
Colour:	white
Direction:	South-east

Leader:	Chanda
Group:	Chanda, Pralayantak, Bhumi-kampa, Nilakantha, Visnu, Kulapalaka, Mundapala, Kamapala
Ayudas:	agni, gadha, kunda, sula
Colour:	blue
Direction:	South
Leader:	Krodha
Group:	Krodha, Pingalakshena, Abhrarupa, Dharapala, Kutila, Mantranayaka, Rudra, Pitamaha
Ayudas:	talwar, dhal, axe, long sword
Colour:	grey
Direction:	South-west
Leader:	Unmatta
Group:	Unmatta, Vatukanayaka, Sankara, Bhuta-vetala, Trinetra, Tripurantaka, Varada
Ayudas:	Kunda, dhala (shield), Paridha, bhindipala
Colour:	white
Direction:	West
Leader:	Kapala
Group:	Kapala, Sasibhusana, Hasticarmambaradhara, Yogisa, Brahmaraksasa, Sarvajna, Sarvadesa, Sarva-bhutahrdisthita
Ayudas:	Kunda, dhala (shield), parigha, bhindipala
Colour:	golden, yellow
Direction:	North-west
Leader:	Bhisana
Group:	Bhisana, Bhayahara, Sarvajna, Kalagni, Maharudra, Daksina, Mukhara, Asthira
Ayudas:	Kunda, dhala (shield), paridha, bhindipala
Colour:	red
Direction:	North

Leader:	Samhara
Group:	Samhara, Atiraktanga, Kalagni, Priyankara, Ghorananda, Visalaksa, Yogisa, Daksa-samsthita
Ayudas:	kunda, dhala, paridha, bhindipala
Colour:	like lightning
Direction:	North-east (Poudyal, 2060) (Ladrech, 2005).

The Astabhairavas in this temple also have ferocious look, wearing a crown on their heads. They wear an ornamental necklace, snake around their neck, till their belly and a long *mundamala* or a garland of severed heads. Their ears are decorated with heavy *kundala*. They have eight arms, holding different *ayudas* and suggesting different *mudras*. They stand in *alidha asana* or in an easy pose with one leg bent at the knee, with heavy *kalli* on the legs on lotus pedestals. Some of them rest their legs on other objects like the *apasmara purush*, coiled snake, *garuda* and a bull. They are placed flanking each door of the four cardinal directions on the right and left *bhailkhvâ* of the door. They hold various *ayudas* like the *khadga*, *damaru*, *ghanta*, *dhala*, *khatvanga tambu*, *chakra*, *kapalapatra*, *pasa*. The lower two hands demonstrate the *bindu mudra*.

5.2.1.4 Cornice

Above the door frames and at the base of the struts are the cornices on every floor of the temple. They mark the division of the different tiers of the temple. They have both structural and ornamental significance. The projecting animal heads of the cornice are the extensions of the inner beams which form the ceiling of the temple from the inside. These represent the protectors or servants of the deity housed in the main shrine. In this temple, they are depicted by multi-coloured animal heads in colours of white, blue, green, yellow and red. The animal heads are that of birds, animals and mythical creatures which according to Dongol are the *ganas* of Siva. The brick and wooden parts of the cornice extend beyond the walls of the temples, where they cross each other with upturned edges, resembling the upturned corners of the roofs. The underside of the brick extension has a carved human forearm of wood as if supporting the

brick. Lotus leaves, flowers, frills otherwise decorate these elements (Dongol, 2011:81).

5.2.1.5 Struts

Supporting the large overhanging roofs are wooden struts, with various Hindu deities carved in high relief. The shadow cast by these large over-hanging eaves that support the large glistening roofs, produce a most pleasing aesthetic effect. The struts transfer the load of the roofs to the vertical load-bearing walls. They project upwards and outwards from the base of the cornice ledge to meet the overhanging roofs. The struts are firmly braced against the walls of the temple core. The side struts are larger and wider than the central struts which depict different deities. These side struts usually have images of Sarvhas, which are mythological male characters. These characters are an amalgam of different man, bird and beast, to provide psychological support to the heavy roof corners of the temples. The lowermost roof is supported by 28 carved struts displaying chief characters of the different deities mentioned in the Mahabharata Epic (figure 48-49). The 20 struts of the second roof represent episodes in the life of Kriṣṇa, while the 12 struts of the third roof show the Matrikas in various postures (Darnal, 1994).

5.2.1.6 Roofs

The sloping, multi-tiered roofs in receding tiers are the most distinctive and typical feature of traditional Nepalese temple architecture. They are supported by a wooden skeleton of radiating or fanning rafters over which are placed wooden boards to form the base for either the terracotta tiles or metal sheets of the roof tops. Amongst the three sloping roofs, the lowermost roof is tiled with terracotta tiles, whereas the top two roofs are made of gilded copper sheets. Each sloped roof has heavy rafters that fan out downwards from the core to meet the horizontal beam. All the three sloping roofs have upturned curves on all the four corners with metal birds perched on them. These elements allows the viewers eye to be re-directed upwards, creating an illusion that the roofs are much lighter than their actually are (Dongol, 2011:53). All the three roofs have wind

bells, which dance and chime to the tunes and melody of the wind providing a spiritual environment for the devotees entering the temple complex.

5.2.1.7 Pinnacle

The gajura or the pinnacle is the topmost and symbolically the most significant part of any temple. Sitting on the topmost roof are five gilded gajuras, the central one larger than the other four of the same size symbolizing the presence of Panchayatan deities in the temple. The gajuras are placed over a timber post or Galahtha supported by horizontal beam or galahsi which is fixed to the brick wall. The pinnacle has four parts, the jewel, kalasa, lotus and the bell or ghanta. The jewel is the finial or pointed culmination of the pinnacle, the kalasha is a holy water pot, the symbolic creative element of life, lotus symbolizing purity and the bell which forms the major part of the gajura is the outermost part and symbolizes the vibration of the cosmic creative forces (Dongol, 2011:46). A chhatra or umbrella is mounted over the pinnacle, symbolizing protection. The placing of the chhatra is considered as an indication of supreme veneration since the Buddha era (Longhurst, 1979:2). The gajura is always gilded, and besides covering the top of the temple from water seepage it also has a symbolic meaning of constantly purifying the temple with gold water or *sun pani*: gold being a purifying agent in Hinduism, from the various external factors that disturb its sanctity.

5.2.2 The Courtyard

Temple architecture includes not only the architecture of the shrine but also includes all the subsidiary and associated structures like the smaller shrines, water conduits, independent statues, pillars, pati, sattal, gardens, ghat and courtyard. The Tripureswara Mahadev Temple, the subject of this thesis, is situated in a large courtyard, enclosed by sattals or pillared colonnade on all four sides having entrances in each side, however, only the southern and eastern entrances were in use. The courtyard is a traditional feature of domestic Newari architecture. These courtyards function as public spaces for both religious as well as secular activities including activities of daily life. The courtyard here is paved with traditional bricks laid in different patterns in a large open space. It is

used for different religious activities during festivals to serve as communal space to bind the community. The courtyard of this temple is unique because it contains an ensemble of 18 structures. This is the only temple of the valley that is protected by independent shrines of the Dasadikpalas, or protector deities since the Vedic period. On the southern side is the inscribed stone pillar supporting a life-size gilt statue of the founding Queen, Lalit Tripura Sundari. On the western side is another inscribed stone pillar supporting a gilt bull, the vehicle of Siva.

5.2.2.1 Sattal

Post earthquake of April 2015 AD the sattals on the east side has been totally destroyed making the temple easily accessible from the damaged eastern side. Originally the sattals were built as resting places for travelers and accommodation for families undertaking religious responsibilities of the temple, as well as, short term accommodation for pilgrims; the homeless and the transient families. Between 1913 and 1973 CE certain portion of the sattal was used as an orphanage. This space is also used to store religious paraphernalia for ceremonies and feasts, as well as, shared agricultural implements (TTRG, 1994:19). Presently they are used for religious and social ceremonies, and the sattal in the northern side is used as the residence of the acting priest figure 6).

5.2.2.2 Dasadikpala

The Dikpalas are the regents of the space, and consist of four, eight and ten well-known gods of Hinduism. Indra is the lord of the purva (east), Yama of the dakshina (south), Varuna of the paschim (west) and Kubera or Soma of the uttar (north). Agni, Nairitti, Vayu and Isana in the intermediate directions, whereas Brahma in the urdah (zenith) and Ananta in the adhas (nether world). Apart from the Main images, and indispensable to all Hindu temples are the images of the Astadikplalas, the guardians of the eight points of space, each in their correct location. (Kramrisch, 1976: 304). Although the later Puranas mention these deities, some of them were already known in the Vedic period, as individual gods. Besides Kubera and Isana, who were later additions, the other six are Vedic deities. The Puranas and Epic literatures abound in descriptions of these guardian deities. The iconographic representation of these deities are somewhat

uniform as part of this group, since they have maintained the same individual features of their independent forms through their vehicles and ayudas (Blom 1989:30). The number, names and the associations of these Dikpalas or Lokpalas are not always consistent, varying in the vedic, pauranic and epic ages. Surya, Chandra, Vayu, Agni, Yama, Varuna, Indra, Kubera, the eight great Devas of the early epic literature, are grouped in some later texts as the guardians of the four chief and four intermediate directions, or simply Lokpalas. The Manusmriti mentions 'a king embodies in his self all the eight Lokpalas, Soma (Chandra), Agni, Akra (Surya), Anila (Vayu), Indra, Vittapati (Kubera), Apapati (Varuna) and Yama' (Banerjee, 1985: 520). This temple has all the ten dikpalas placed in the assigned directions (figure 22-31).

The Nepalese Dhyana collections (are a collection of texts that contain shlokas of the description of deities, taken from various religious texts like the Purana) have never omitted the Dikpalas, though their descriptions are very brief. In many cases, more than one up to six or seven descriptions are given for a single deity. They give description of the complete series of 10 Dikpalas. The Dhyana collections and the Dhyanasamuccaya describes all Dikpalas with four hands, the first two carrying the kadya (skull cup) and the water drop bindu (waterdrop) by which they show their tantric influence (Blom 1989).

Indra: The Vedic deity Indra has been mentioned in the Vedas, Upanisadas, Mahabharata and various Puranas. He has been mentioned alone in 25 suttas of the Rig Veda and in combination with other deities in fifty other suttas. The Rig Veda describes the battle between Indra and demon Brittasur. Indra is popularly known as the god of fertility, power in war and long life, whereas Brittasur is known as the demon of famine, drought and untimely death. Books of iconography describe Indra to be omnipresent, with physical features of wide chest and long hands holding the lotus and the *vajra*, majestically riding the elephant, Airawata. Devotees of Indra in the material world offer pots of soma for the fulfillment of their tasks (Poudyal 2014: 15).

A description of the Lokpalas can start with Indra, who was the most prominent of all the deities of the Vedic period and was thus given the more modest

position, as the guardian of the east, or the direction of the rising sun. Although Indra has really no cult of his own, he is worshipped as a Dikpala, and his images are placed in the eastern part of the temples. He is described with the elephant mount, white in colour with four tusks, holding the thunderbolt in his hand. His cognizance is the third eye, placed horizontally on his forehead, as mentioned in the Brihatsamihita. The Vishnudharmottar provides a more elaborate description of the four armed Sakra (Indra), with his third eye and the four tusk elephant mount but also mentions his four-armed consort Saci seated on his lap. The vajra has remained as one of his constant emblems. According to the Dhyana collections, Indra the guardian of the east, is mounted on an elephant (gajastha), saffron colored holding his characteristic implement, Vajra or the thunderbolt and holding an akshayamala or rosary in the two lower hands, while the two other hands carry the same implements as other Dikpalas (Blom, 1989:30). Indra, in this temple is located in the East. He is seated on an elephant which is mounted on a lotus pedestal. He wears an elaborate crown with a decorated halo behind his head and wears a floral garland. He holds his cognizance symbol, the vajra or thunderbolt with his right hand and the left hand is placed on his lap.

Agni: Agni was generated in the Vedic period by rubbing two pieces of wood vigorously. As he was being conceived, the Vedic bards describe Agni as having two heads, four horns, three feet and seven arms (Rao 1916). The Vedas describe Agni as possessing the in-between place between heaven and earth (Poudyal 2000). According to Dandhekar, Agni is the mediator between the Aryans and the non-aryans (Dandhekar 1979). The Vishnudharmottara gives us an elaborate and characteristic description of the God, in which he is bearded, four-armed, four-tusked, three eyed, riding a chariot with smoke standard drawn by four parrots and driven by wind, having his consort Svaha on his left lap, holding flames, trident and rosary in his hands. The Mahabharata describes him as having seven red tongues (saptajihva), with smoke for his standard and head-gear, holding a flaming spear, riding on a chariot drawn by seven red horses, the winds being the wheels of his chariot; the god has seven faces, a huge mouth, red neck, tawny eyes, bright gleaming hair and golden steed; these descriptions of Agni are

collected by Hopkins from the various sections of the Great Epic. The Agamas characterizes the god as having four arms, three eyes, red jatas, with the front hands showing varada and abhaya posed, the back ones holding sruc and sakti (Banerjee, 1985:524). The Dhyana collections mention Agni as the second Dikpala, situated in the north-east. He is red in color and his mount is the *chagastha* (goat). His lower two hands hold a small spear and the sruc or sacrificial ladle, while the other two hands hold the same implements as the other Dikpalas (Blom, 1989:30).

Yama: the guardian of the south, is described in the Brhatsamhita simply as 'having a staff in his hand and riding on a buffalo. The Visnudharmottara gives us an elaborate description of the four-armed god seated on a buffalo with his consort Dhumrorna on his left lap, his right hands holding a staff and a sword and the left ones a trident with flames and a rosary, a face with flames issuing from it being shown on the top of the staff (it might thus stand for khatvanga); Citragupta dressed as a northerner (*udaicyavesa*) holding a pen and a leaf in his hands on his right and the fierce looking Kala (Time, the destroyer) holding a noose in his hand on his left are his characteristic attendants (Banerjee, 1985:525). The Dhyana collections mentions him as the God of death, in the south, he is dark colored (*krsna*) and mounted on a buffalo (*mahisastha*). His lower hands hold the *pasa* (noose) and the *danda* (staff), while his other two hands hold the same implements as the other Dikpalas (Blom, 1989:30). Yama, the lord of the south, is depicted in this temple as a crowned figure seated on the buffalo. In this temple he holds a staff with a severed head in his right hand and a noose or *pasa* in his left hand. He wears a similar garland as the other Dikpalas. The whole composition is mounted on a lotus pedestal.

Nirrti: the lord of the south-west, is a Vedic deity like Yama, Agni and Indra, and is conceived there as a god of evil. Sculptures showing Nirrti are extremely rare. This dikpala is riding on the shoulders of a man who seems to be carrying him forward, and he holds a staff in his right hand (Banerjee, 1985:526). The Dhyana collections describe Nairitti in the south-western direction. It is dark blue or dark (*nila*) in colour and stands on a corpse (*pretastha*). In his upper two hands he holds the *khadga* (sword) and the *khetaks* (shield), while his other two hands

hold the same implements as the other Dikpalas (Blom, 1989:30). Nairitta is the diety of the southwestern direction. In this temple he is a crowned, figure with fierce expression, seated on a corpse, with a sword raised in his right hand while his left hand is in abhaya mudra. He also wears a similar garland as that of other Dikpalas. The whole composition is mounted on a lotus pedestal.

Varuna: the lord of the western quarter holds a pasa and rides a swan. He is elaborately described in the Visnudharmottara where he is called 'the lord of waters' (yadasampati). According to it, the slightly pot-bellied god rides a chariot drawn by seven swans, is four-armed (his two right hands holding a lotus and a noose and the left ones, a conch shell and a jewel-box); his consort Garuri should sit on his left lap, and Ganga and Yamuna on their respective mounts should be shown on his right and left. Varuna and his consort Gauri are respectively identified with Pradyumna (Kamadeva) and Rati, the seven swans drawing his chariot stand for the seven seas of salt, milk, clarified butter, curdled milk, rice-gruel, sugarcane juice and wine (Banerjee, 1985:526). The Dhyana collections do not give a description of Varuna as mentioned in the Dhyanasamgraha I, which describes Varuna as mounted on a jar or crocodile, instead of his usual vehicle the Makara. He is white in color (sveta) and hold in his two hands the sankhara (conch) and the pasa (noose), while his other two hands hold the same implements as the other Dikpalas (Blom, 1989:30).

Vayu: the lord of the north-west in the Vedic list of Dikpalas, is described as the father of Bhima, the second Pandava, and of Hanuman, the monkey-god, respectively in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. The Visnudharmottara describes him as two-armed, his two hands holding the two ends of the scarf worn by him, his garment inflated by wind (vayyapurita vastra emphasizing his swift motion), his mouth open and his hair disheveled. The Rupamandana describes the god ruling over the north-western quarter as four-armed. His four hands show a varamudra, a banner, a flag and a water-vessel. He rides on an antelope and his colour is green. In early medieval temples of prominent cult gods, Vayu is shown as riding on a stag and holding a flag in his hand which occupies his allotted corner in the outer side of the structure (Banerjee, 1985:528). The Dhyana collections do not mention him, however he is

mentioned in the Dhyanasamgraha I as mounted on a flying deer (mrgavimanam arudha). He carries the gada (club) and the musala (pestle), his body is like the wind in the three worlds (trailokyapranarupala). Although his color is not mentioned here, he is often described as grey in color (dhumra) (Blom, 1989:30). Vayu is the lord of the Northwestern direction.

In this temple he is depicted as a crowned figure, with a halo behind his head. He holds an ankusha with his right hand and a flag with his left hand and wears a similar garland as the other Dikpalas. Although religious texts mention him to be seated on a deer, here he is seated on a bull-like animal. The whole composition is mounted on a lotus pedestal.

Kubera: the lord of the northern quarter. The Rupamandana described in the first line of one couplet that the god is four armed, the hands holding a club, a *nighi*, ie citrus and a water vessel; the last line of this verse is corrupt, for in it he is described as both an *gajarudhah* (elephant rider) and *naravahanah* (riding on a man) (Banerjee, 1985:528). Kuber figures of the early and late mediaeval periods of India usually carved on the outer faces of Vaisnava or Saiva shrines as Dikpala retains the pot-bellied feature and holds either a bag or sack (evidently of treasure), or is shown as squeezing the neck of a mongoose vomiting jewels. They are generally seated on lotus in *ardhaparyanka*, the dangling leg resting upon either two jars (indicating the *midhis*, *sankha* and *padma*) or eight jars, one of which is upturned, representing the *astanidhis*: *padma*, *mahapadma*, *makara*, *kacchapa*, *mukunda*, *nila*, *nanda* and *sankha* according to the list of Markandeyapurana (Banerjee, 1985:339). Two-armed bejeweled Kubera, slightly, pot-bellied, is shown seated in the *ardhaparyanka* pose on a cushioned seat beneath which are two jars (of treasure, perhaps symbolising the *sankha* and *padmanidhis*) on one of which his right leg is placed; he holds a cup in his right hand and a pouch in his left and is shown attended on either side by a bearded male, and a female. The Dhyana collections describes Kubera as the yellow (*pita*) coloured guardian of the north. He is mounted on a horse and carries *parijata* (coral tree) and a *gada* (club) (Blom 1989). Kubera in this temple is placed in the north, he is crowned on the head and wearing an elaborate floral garland, mounted on a bull, he holds a *gadha* (staff) with his right hand and left

hand is placed on his knee. The whole composition is mounted on a lotus pedestal.

Isana: the lord of the north-eastern quarter is as his name indicates a particular aspect of Siva. The texts endow him generally with such iconographic features as *jatamukuta*, *sveta yajnopavita* (white sacred thread), three eyes, a *sula* and *kapala* on his right and left hands, a bull mount, a tiger-skin garments, etc. All these are the characteristic traits of Siva. The Visnudharmottara description of this Dikpala is, however, very interesting (Banerjee, 1985:529). The Dhyana collections describe Isana as the protector of the northeast, standing on a bull showing his association with Siva. He is *sveta* or white in colour and carries the *trisula* (trident), the outstanding weapon of Siva and carries the rosary in his other hand. A crowned Isaan sits in the northeastern side of this temple. He holds the *trisula*, showing his relation to Siva in his right hand and his left hand rests on this lap. He wears an elaborate floral garland, like that of Indra. He is shown as seated on a bull and is mounted on a lotus pedestal.

Adha: is the guardian of the nether world, he is *harita* (green) in colour and stands on a *kurmastha* (tortoise) and carries the *chakra* (disc) and the *gada* (club), both weapons of lord Visnu, with whom he is associated. He is sometimes also referred to as Ananta, the serpent seat of Vishnu, the vehicle of this serpent is also the tortoise. Ananta is the lord of the *adha* or the nether world.

In this temple he is depicted as a crowned figure protected by a seven-hooded serpent. He displays the abhaya mudra with his right hand and holds a serpent with his left; he also wears the similar garland as that of the other Dikpalas. He is seated on a makara or crocodile, which is his vahana and the whole composition is mounted on a lotus pedestal.

Urdhava: the last Dikpala is the guardian of the zenith, identified with the God Brahma, from whom he got his vehicle, the *hamsa* (goose). He is depicted *pita* (yellow) in colour and holds the *kamandalu* (waterpot) and the *pustaka* (book). In the description of Adha and Urdhva the skull cup has been replaced by the more neutral cup or simple *patra* (Blom, 1989:32).

In this temple Brahma, the lord of the urdhava direction is seated on his vehicle the goose, he is depicted as a three headed crowned and bearded figure, with four hands holding the akshayamala and spear with his left hand and the pustaka and a water pot in his right. He is surrounded by four other figures, two on the right and two on the left. The whole composition is mounted on a lotus pedestal.

Nepalese Art show very few depiction of the Dikpalas, they were most prominent in Nepalese manuscripts, where they were described mainly for meditative purposes. The Dasa Dikpalas occupy a minor role in paintings and even less in wood and stone carvings. Their traditional role as guardians of the directions was taken over by the famous mother goddesses and to a lesser degree by the Bhairavas and even sometimes by the navagrahas or nine planets. Colours, vahanas and implements play a big role in the recognition of these deities. Small wooden carvings of the Dikpalas are found on the Charnarayan temple and in the Visvesvara temple in Patan, in the tudals in Changunarayan temple and most prominently in the temple courtyard of the Tripuresvara Mahadeva temple at Tripuresvar.

5.2.2.3 Navagrahas

Navagrahas: are the heavenly constellations that include the stars, planets and other astral deities that have always stimulated man's imagination and had a great influence on him. The appeal of these heavenly bodies must first have been to the imagination and then later to the intellect. In Nepal, as well as in India, the sun, moon and several other groups have been worshipped since Vedic times. The astral divinities recurring continuously in literature and art are the group of nine planets (navagrahas), twelve sun gods (adityas), the twenty-seven or twenty-eight constillations (nakshatra) and twelve signs of the zodiac (rasis). The Navagrahas are equated to the Matrikas and Navadurgas, as the male personifications. In Nepali dogma, each Matrika has a different association: for example Chamunda with Sayurn, Indrani with Venus and Vaishnavi with Surya, the sun. Each also presides a specific day of the lunar calendar. In Hindu-Buddhist thoughts, the astral bodies are convinced as exercising a direct

influence on human affairs. Navagrahs are thus worshipped with special rites in times of danger. (Slusser 1998:344).

Surya and Chandra or Soma, were important Vedic deities, and the Rig-Veda has a number of hymns dedicated to them. They are found as independent deities as well as members of a mandala. There is only one temple dedicated solely to the sun god, it is however of no distinct architecture. Surya and Chandra are often placed outside temples near the entrance, facing the east or can be seen at water conduits (Pal, 1969:4). Surya is known to have been worshipped since the Vedic period and there are reference of the deity in the Lichhavi inscriptions as well as in the transitional period and the early Malla periods. Chandra, the personification of the moon, has an almost identical icon in the Kathmandu Valley, except that his chariot is pulled by the seven geese, unlike the seven horses that pull Surya's chariot. Curiously, in Nepal there are no stone sculptures of Chandra, but numerous mandala paintings and Surya who has many stone sculptures has no mandala paintings. The best representation of such a group can be seen in the fourteenth century jaladroni at Bhaktapur, Tilmadhava temple. The aniconic form, as simple discs, or disc and crescent, Surya and Chandra are included in many sculpture, paintings and engraved on stones paved in front of the temple in the courtyard (Slusser 1998 :265). In this temple too the Navagrahas are in the aniconic form of nine circles placed in three rows of concentric circles (figure 16).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This temple was built by Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari in the year 1818 CE, for the salvation of the soul of her deceased husband Rana Bahadur Shah as well as her own well being. It is an outstanding example of temple architecture, iconography and a living example of religious syncretism with the main sanctum dedicated to Siva, a deity of the pure Brahmanical faith and the establishment of separate temples promoting the Panchayatan cult, the development of later times as well as the cult of Trantism.

The unique and outstanding architecture of this temple, following all the canons of Hindu Vastushastra of temple construction, is not only a religious and social institution, but makes a strong political statement as well. A resplendent gilt, life size statue of the queen, the chief patron of the temple is placed on a pillar on the south side of the temple, such evidences of a queen's statue singly placed on a pedestal is not seen of before, thus making a political statement about the power of the queen, not only in terms of political and social organization, but also raising herself to the level of a deity, as her name suggests. Tripurasundari is a tantric goddess grouped with the Mahavidhyas. In Nepal she is a powerful deity with a shrine specially dedicated to her. The city of Bhaktapur is protected by the Ashtamatrikas or the protector goddesses, in open shrines or *peethas* in four cardinal and four intermediate directions forming a protective circle around the city. In the center of the city is the shrine of the Tripurasundari, which according to Levi (1991) in his book *Mesocosm* is the presiding and preeminent deity of the Mandala of protecting deities.

A Hindu temple is a monument, whose outer surface consists of sculptures and adornments. The main garbhagriha is a small and dark cubicle chamber housing the main deity. These carvings cease at the door; there they confront the devotee for the last time as he approaches the main sanctum before meeting the priest to perform the rituals. Thus, when going to the temple with speech, body and mind centered on the divinity whose presence is installed, the devotee becomes a part of the architecture.

This three-tiered temple, built on a square plan, standing on five plinths, in the multi-tiered style of temple architecture housed a large Sivaling installed by the parton. The inner walls of this temple are bare. Three paneled doors are placed on all four directions, with the main entrance facing south. On the lintels of the doors are images of the Astamatrikas. They are placed on either side of the doors as they are the regent of the space and protectors of the eight directions of Hindu Vastushastra: Brahmi, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi, Chamunda, and Indayani and a later addition of Mahalakshmi.

Below them, on the extensions of the threshold or the *bhailahkva* are images of the Astabhairava, Asitanga, Ruru, Canda, Krodha, Unmatta-Bhairava, Kapala, Bisana, Samhara. These fearful deities, mostly performing the heroic act of slaying the demon, are placed here as consorts of the Astamatrika, as well as, the protectors of the eight directions of Hindu Vastushastra.

Besides these two groups of protector deities, this sacred space is further protected by serpents, with the naag and naagin, flanking either sides of the entrance as well as circling the entire base of the temple. These sculptures on the outside walls are stationed around the body of the temple body; as an exposition of its meaning as well as its ornaments. Thus, the ultimate meaning of the temple is brought near to the devotee; at every turn he sees the figures, free standing or against walls forming the basis of an ascent towards one high and central deity housed in the sanctum. They are part of the temple, not only ritually and iconographically but also in their position in space (Kramrisch, 1976:301).

Such types of surrounding divinities are repeated in many variations of posture and movement around the temple. The uniqueness of this temple is the placement of the Dasdikpalas, or the ten protector deities of the ten directions of Hindu Vastushastra. Popularly known as Lokpalas, only eight of them are revered as guardians of the eight points of space, they are placed around the temple as protectors of the sacred space. Although this is a concept only of the Pauranic period, they are the most ancient protectors of the different directions, with some of them like Indra and Agniya, being of the Vedic period. The Dikpalas of this temple form ten in number, Indra is the lord of the purva (east), Yama of

the dakshina (south), Varuna of the paschim (west) and Kubera or Soma of the uttar (north) . Agni, Nairitti, Vayu and Isana in the intermediate directions, whereas Brahma in the urdah (zenith) and Ananta in the adhas (nether world), which is an exemplar feature of this temple, not found in other temples. They are placed in the correct directions around the temple in the courtyard, with Brahma in the eastern and Sesanaaga in the western direction.

The Navagrahas are the heavenly constellations, found in the courtyard, they are also revered for protection. Navagrahas are equated to the Matrikas and Navadurgas, as the male personifications. However, in recent times the Astamatrikas have replaced other deities and are now worshipped as main protector deities (Slusser, 1998:344).

In philosophical terms, the assemblage of these numerous deities seems like a gathering of Gods and Goddesses for a meeting called by Lord Siva, one amongst the main deities of the Hindu Trinity. In scientific terms it seems like the requirement of the elements of the male, represented by the Bhairavas, the female, represented by the Matrikas and nature, represented by the Navagrahas necessary for the act of protection. From the religious point of view, these deities are protector deities forming a multi-layered protection, defending the temple according to their strength ascribed by the religious texts.

We go to a temple to seek protection and blessings from the concerned deities. Protection from natural calamities, evil forces, negativity, bad company and uncomfortable situations. Such protections are aimed for our entire well being, physical, mental as well as spiritual. We make offerings of various kinds according to the nature of the deity, we also perform rituals to appease the deity and ward off negative forces. Temples are therefore such sacred, holy and pure spaces, where man comes to take refuge during his weak and difficult times. Such spaces are thus protected by numerous groups of deities in different layers according to their strength. This allows the space to be pure and spiritual. Rituals and pujas are held periodically to consecrate them, as well as, retain their holiness and scarcity. Rightly said by Stella Kramrisch, temples are built on banks of rivers, lakes, seashores, at the confluence of rivers, hilltops, mountain

slopes, in forests, groves and gardens, in villages, towns and cities, it is terrestrial and at the same time extra-terrestrial: a meeting and marriage of heaven and earth, where the whole world is present in terms of measure and is accessible to man (Kramrisch, 1976:2-7).

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APPENDIX

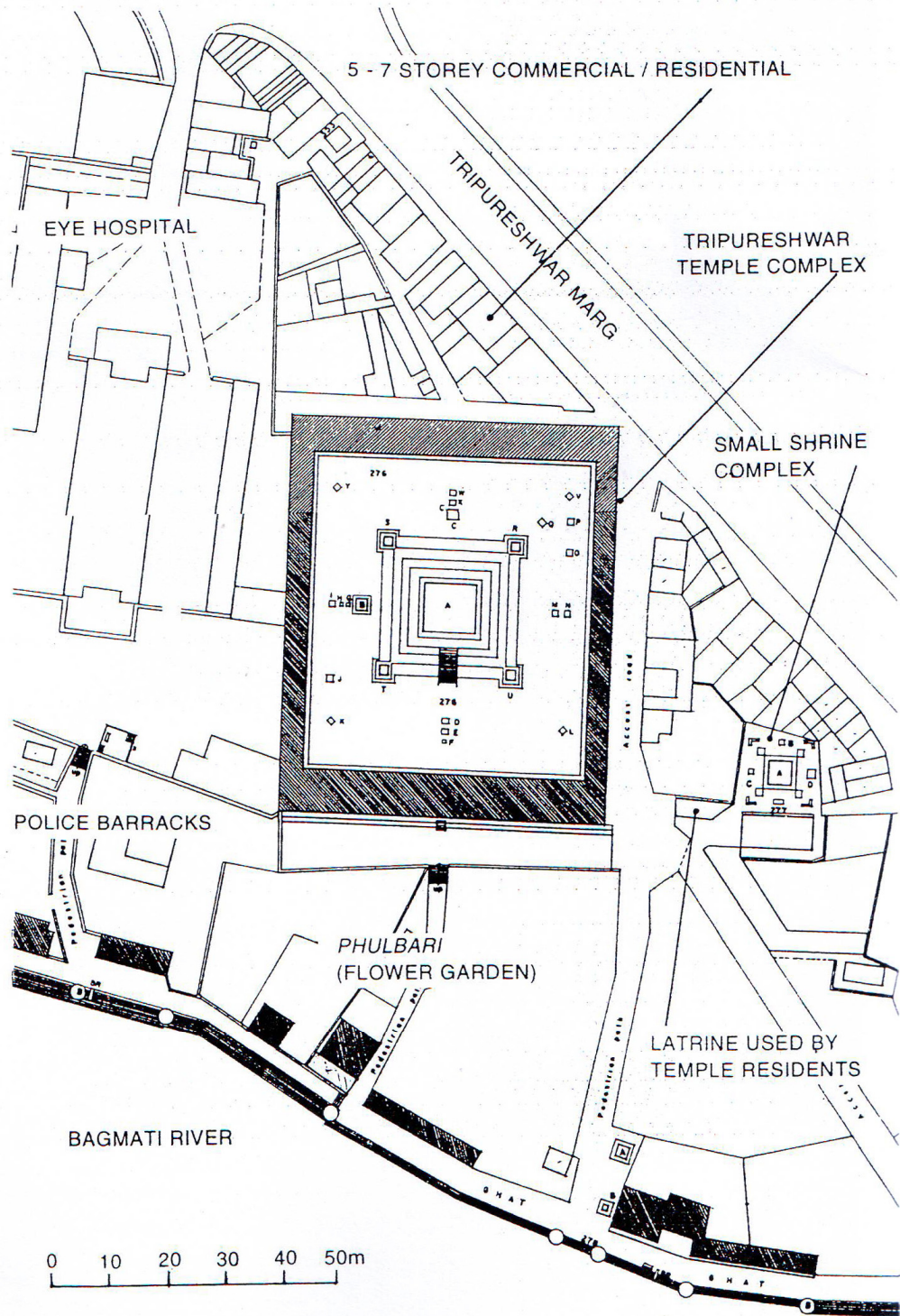


Figure 1: Temple and its surroundings at Tripureswara

Drawing courtesy: TTRG Report 1994

Temple premises layout

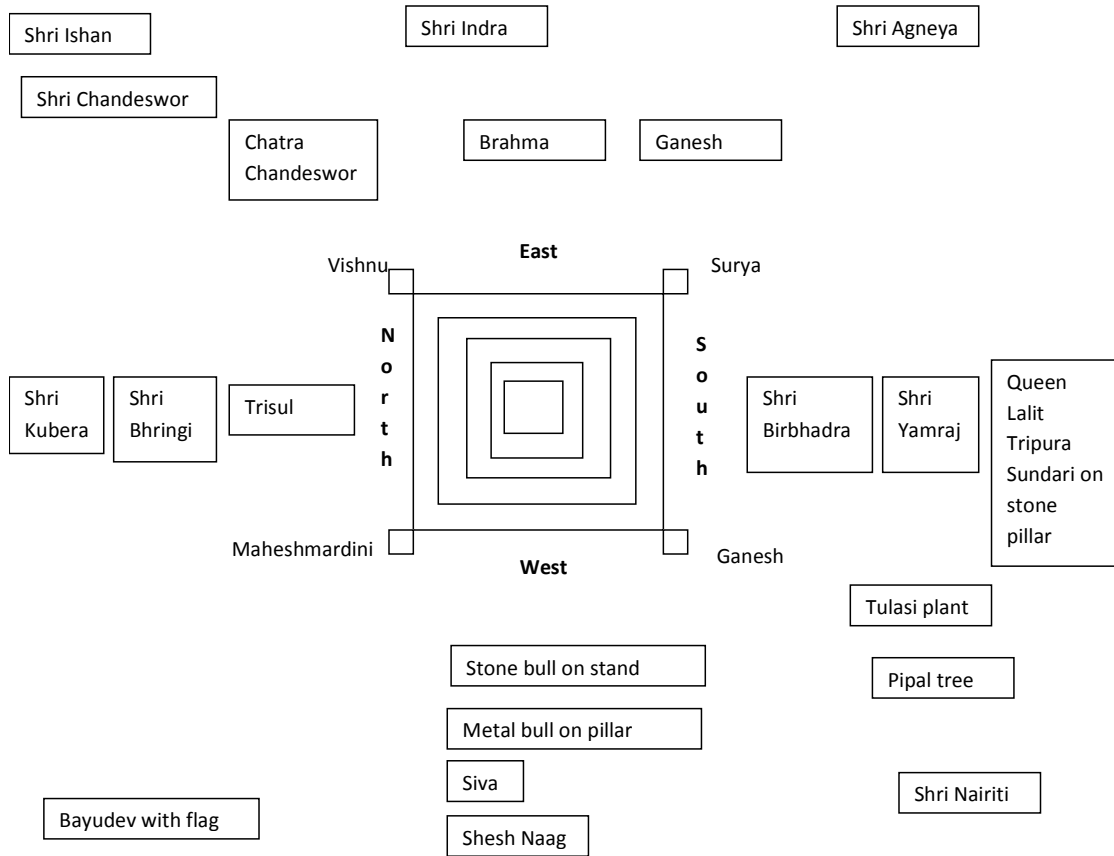


Figure 2: Ground Plan of Temple Complex of Tripureshwara Mahadeva

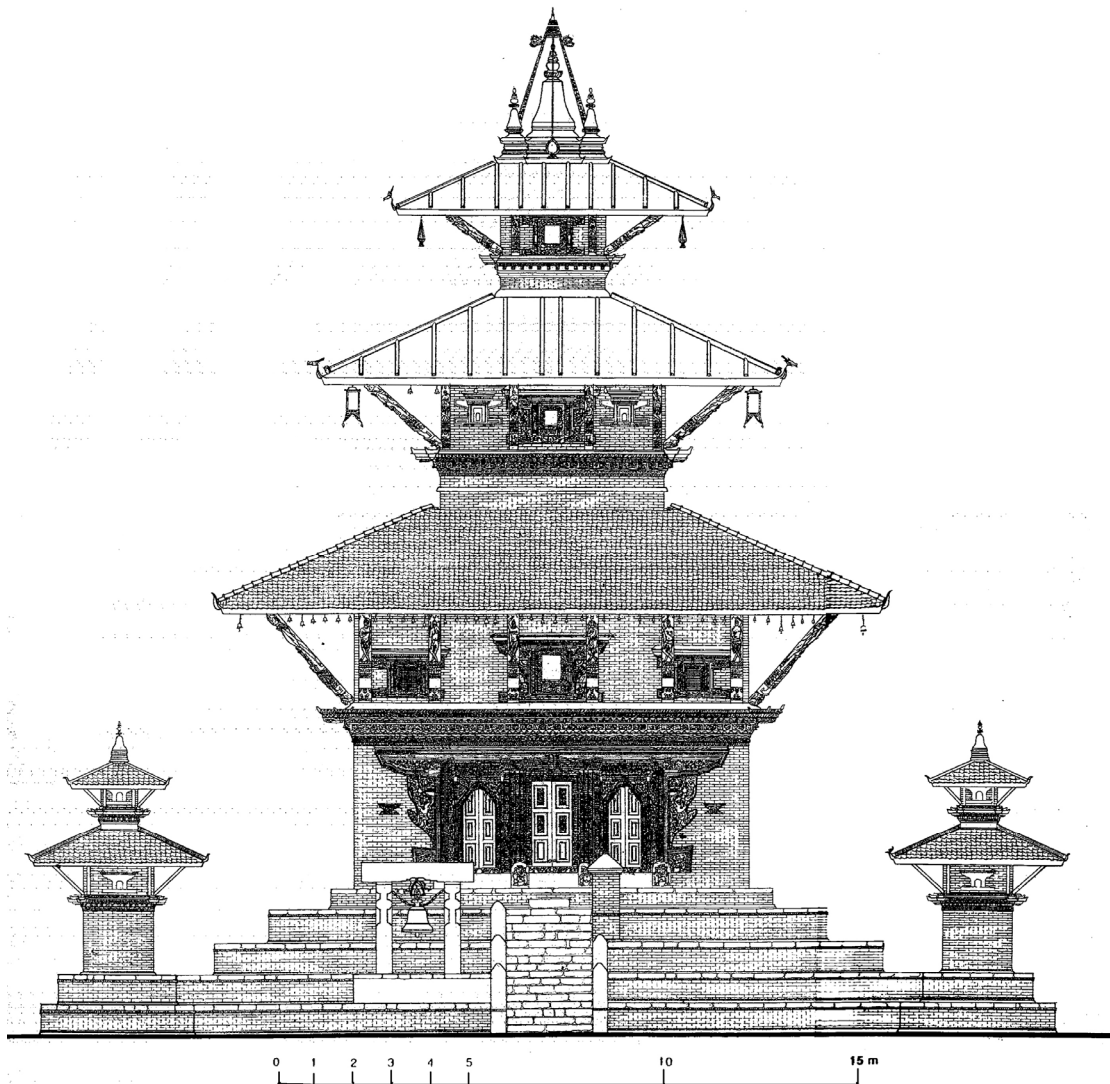


Figure 3: South elevation of Tripureswara Mahadeva Temple

Drawing courtesy: TTRG Report 1994

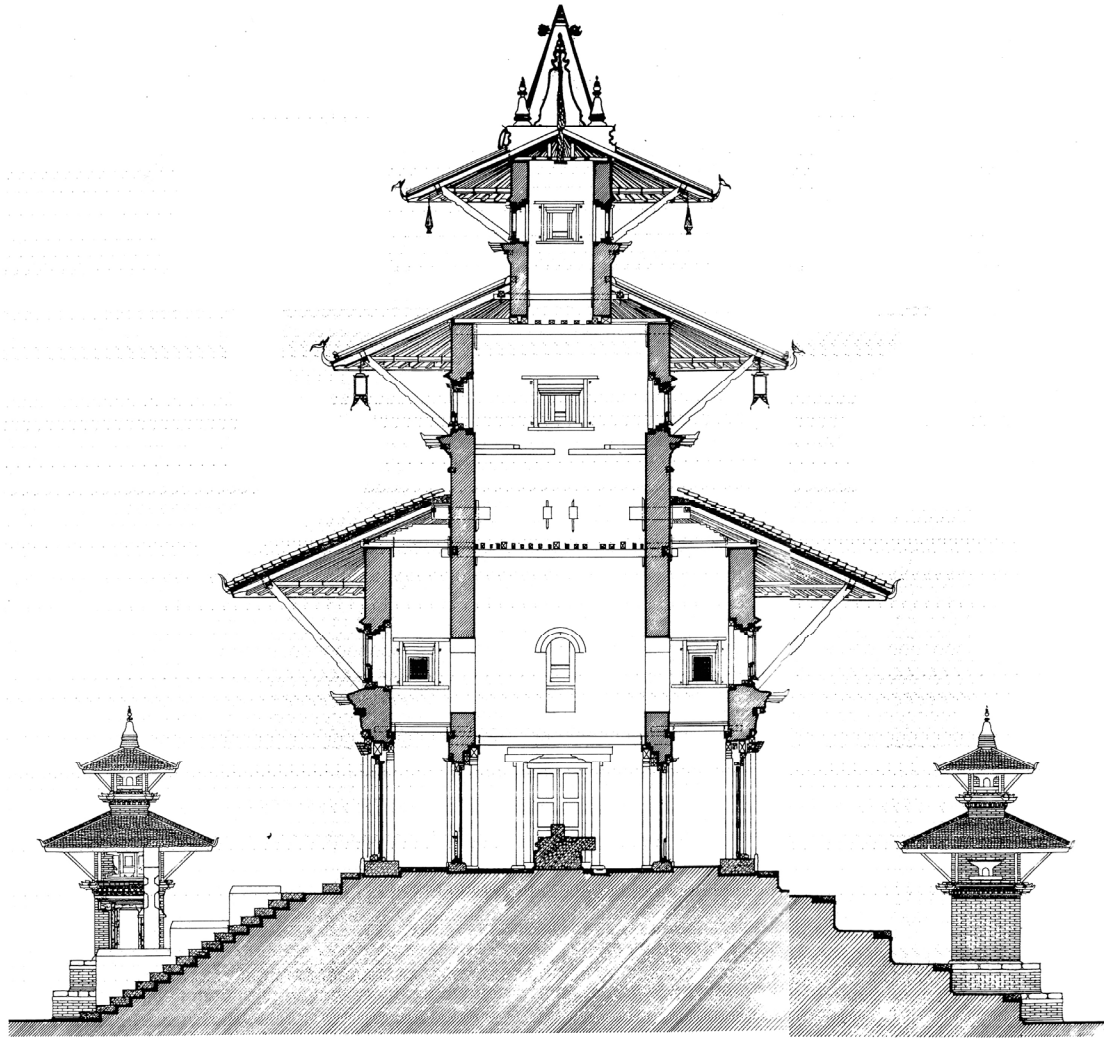


Fig. 38. North-South Section; Tripureswar Temple.

Figure 4: North- South elevation of Tripureswara Mahadeva Temple

Drawing courtesy: TTRG Report 1994

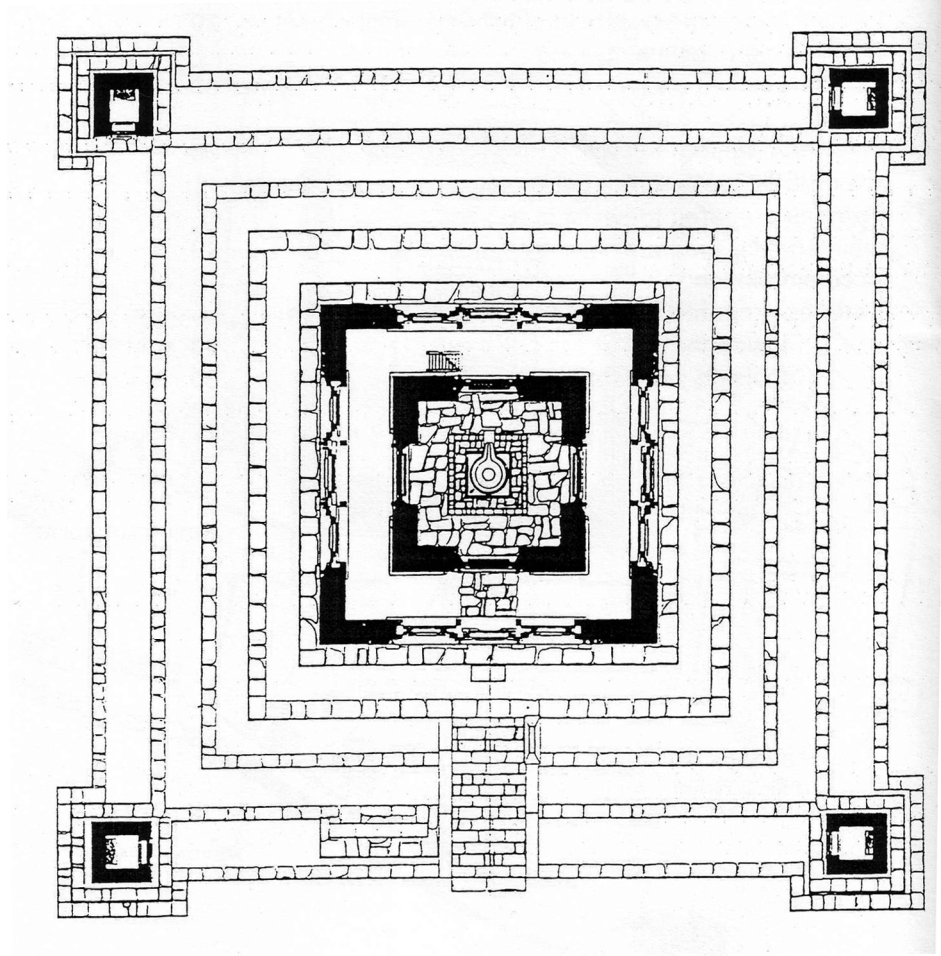


Figure 5: Ground plan of Tripureswara Mahadeva Temple

Drawing courtesy: TTRG Report 1994

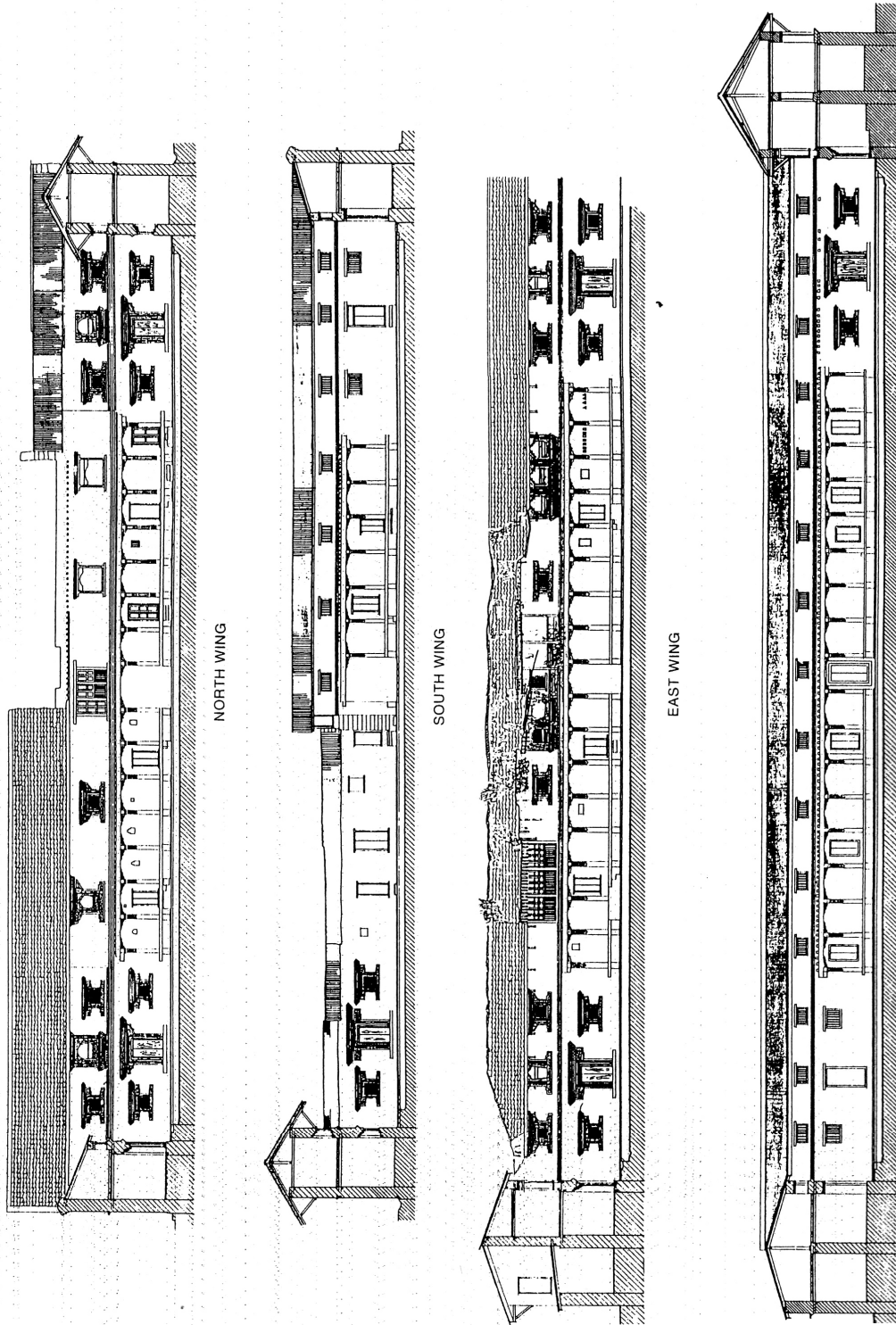


Figure 6: Elevation of Sattals

Drawing courtesy: TTRG Report 1994

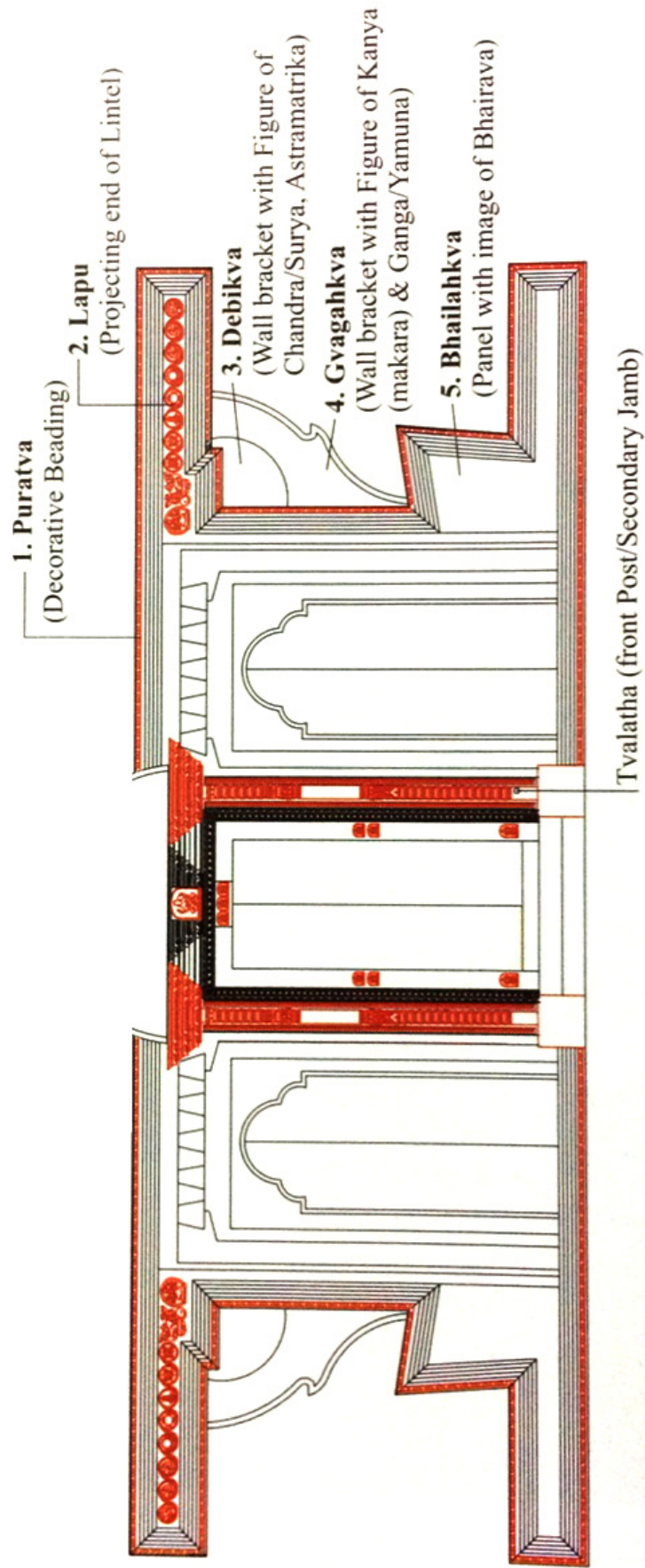


Figure 7: Parts of a door
Drawing Courtesy: Elements of nepalese Architecture, Dongol.

Pictures of the Tripureswara Mahadev Temple



Figure 8: The Tripureswara Mahadeva Temple at Tripureswara, Kathmandu.



Figure 9: Statue of the patron Queen Lalit
Tripura Sundari



Figure 10: The inside of the main sanctum with the Sivalings installed in the center



Figure 11: The inside of the main sanctum with the Sivalings installed in the center



Figure 12: preparation of the bhoga for the diety by the temple attendant



Figure 13: Image of Queen Lalit Tripura Sundari, made by Sunder Dev Vaidya in 2046 BS, placed at the temple



Figure 14: Trishula, another emblem of Siva offered to the temple placed on the northern side



Figure 15: The vehicle of Siva, two bulls placed on pedestals on the western side of the temple.

Idols placed around the courtyard



Figure 16: Symbolic prototype of Navagrahas, placed in the southern side of the courtyard.



Figure 17: Face of Bhairava at the entrance of the temple on the plinth.



Figure 18: Chattrachandeshwara (Cattrachandeshwara is missing)



Figure 19: Ganesha



Figure 20: Vishnu



Figure 21: Shiva

Dikpalas placed in the courtyard



Figure 22: Agni



Figure 23: Indra



Figure 24: Isaan



Figure 25: Varun



Figure 26: Vayudev



Figure 27: Nairitt



Figure 28: Yamaraj



Figure 29: Kubera



Figure 30: Sesanaaga



Figure 31: Brahma

The Panchayatan Cult



Figure 32: Temple of Maheshasurmardini



Figure 33: Maheshasurmardini



Figure 34: Temple of Ganesa



Figure 35: Ganesa



Figure 36: Temple of Surya



Figure 37: Surya



Figure 38: Temple of Vishnu



Figure 39: Vishnu

Ashtamatrikas and Ashtabhairavas on the door panels



Figure 40: South door of the main shrine



Figure 41: South door of the main shrine



Figure 42: West door of the main shrine



Figure 43: West door of the main shrine



Figure 44: North door of the main shrine



Figure 45: West door of the main shrine



Figure 46: East door of the main shrine



Figure 47: East door of the main shrine

Struts of the temple



Figure 48



Figure 49

Corner struts of the temple



Figure 50



Figure 51: Hamuman installed outside the temple complex