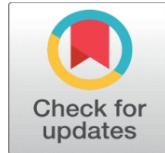


LICCHAVI INSCRIPTIONS: A CULTURAL MONUMENT OF KATHMANDU VALLEY

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ABSTRACT

Numbers of Licchavi inscriptions installed by the Licchavi rulers are found to be established around Kathmandu valley. They are profoundly installed since 5th century CE. Inscriptions are the authentic evidence that have made possible to construct a clear apparition of Licchavi age. They are potential from historical, cultural as well as monumental point of view. Inscriptions are concrete attest of several issues concerned to their reign and a strong indicator to mend the structure of an ancient settlements. They are not only source of defining tangible and intangible inheritances of the age but valuable monument associated with several cultural practices. Despite its historical significance, traditional practices related with this monument emerged through local perception have been an essential part of Nepalese culture through the time. In this context, what are the recent eminence of Licchavi inscriptions? How are they perceived by local communities and expressed through? And how far the inscriptions have been affected by traditional activities? are the questions or problems related to these valuable monuments that have been unanswered. To answers these queries have been attempted in this paper. To reveal the facts, primary and secondary sources have been adopted. Survey of inscriptions of the valley, collection of information through interviews and observation of traditional practices were conducted with the collection of photographs. Related literatures as a secondary source were consulted. The collected facts were analyzed to draw conclusion in a descriptive manner. From these facts, it has been revealed that Licchavi inscriptions as a monumental heritage are in crisis with several threats in lack of proper conservation. As per location they stand and the structural theme they comprise, they have been perceived as purposeful object or deities rather than a historical monument by local communities and are expressed by offering of materials with great belief and devotion. The tradition to some extent has been gradually ruining the inheritances and should be taken into consideration soon.

Keywords: Thulo Dhunga, Narke Chaturdashi, Chitragupta, Yama, Panchamrit Snan

1. INTRODUCTION

Licchavi are the rulers who ruled in Nepal from around 1st century CE to 7th/8th century CE, after the downfall of early Kiranta rulers. This period is known as a golden age in the history of Nepal, since they were the first dynasty to introduce historical record through installation of inscriptions. Licchavi inscriptions are found at cross roads, shrines, pedestal of deities, water conduits, alleys, open areas inside the core cities and outskirts revealing several aspects of their time. Few of these monuments are well preserved, while maximum of them have been abandoned. The availability of several Licchavi inscriptions in situ at various locations of Kathmandu valley replicates the expansion of their ancient settlements. These monuments have been perceived with several value. For the historians, they are impeccable evidences

to structure the past. However, the local communities and people of the valley have a different perception regarding these monuments based upon their shape, the location they lie and the religious symbols engraved on it. Hence, to find out present physical status of Licchavi inscriptions, the perception of local communities and the effect of traditional practices on it are the objectives to reveal in this paper.

Inscriptions are the mirror of past. They provide authentic information on several aspects of history, culture and society besides relying on myths and stories. Practice of installation of inscription is found to be emerged during the end of 2nd century CE. An inscription inscribed on a pedestal of statue of Jaya Varma 185 CE proves to be an earliest evidence discovered in the valley. While the inscription with detail explanation of several aspects of history with associated occurrences are found to be installed from 5th century CE. An inscription discovered at premise of Pashupatinath temple (WHS) dated S 381 is an earliest discovery belonging to 5th CE. A large number of Licchavi inscriptions were established around Kathmandu valley since then. They were the best resources of the rulers and powerful personalities of the time to impart the evidence of their deeds.

Stone inscriptions of Licchavi period comprise a variety of scripts that are popularly known as early Licchavi and later Licchavi script. To be installed on a vertical stone often with the design of religious symbols on the top, on the pedestal of images, on a high pillar known as Garuda inscription or as a free monument are the chief features of Licchavi inscriptions. They are strength to prove an authentic specific revealing several facts. However, the perception of local communities towards these historical monuments is diverse and has highly influenced their expression towards it.

Intangible heritages are often allied with tangible theme or monument out of belief. Licchavi inscriptions as tangible monuments are associated with numerous intangible values. Inscriptions established within the temple premise or the pedestal of images are found to be worshiped. While many of them are associated with legend, stories and traditional belief. Thus, the belief and practices continued by locals have been focused here.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is an explorative based upon qualitative study. As a subject matter it is a historical study. The facts collected for the study is based upon historical monuments through qualitative method. The facts essential has been collected through primary and secondary sources. As a primary source, Licchavi inscriptions around Kathmandu have been surveyed, the present location and status of inscriptions are documented and photographs collected. Local belief, myths, legend, stories associated with these monuments are listed. To find out the perception regarding the monuments interview with local communities, priest of the temples and experts were taken. Likewise, the local practices associated with inscriptions are documented through observation. As a secondary sourcebook related with Licchavi inscriptions as; Licchavikalka Abhilekh (Inscriptions of Licchavi Period) written by Dhanavajra Vajracharya and Nepalko Prachin Abhilekh (Ancient Inscriptions of Nepal) written by Hari Ram Joshi were mainly consulted. Several books, articles and newspapers were reviewed. In consideration to secondary sources, survey of Licchavi inscriptions around Kathmandu valley was conducted in order to find out their present state along with the traditional intangible inheritances associated with them.

This research has been delimited within the area of Kathmandu valley. Admits the numbers of inscriptions, it has been only focused on Licchavi period. Almost sixty Licchavi inscriptions were surveyed and relisted. However, few inscriptions among them have been lost or have changed their location due to urbanization. As a purposive sampling, the inscriptions associated with intangible values are selected. The content discussed in the inscriptions are not analyzed and only focused on physical status of inscriptions and its linkage with intangible values. Finding out the recent status of inscriptions, the facts linked with them have been discussed in detail to draw conclusion. The sources consulted for analysis of facts have been cited in the content and listed in the reference section.

3. MAIN FINDINGS

The element that provides information about Licchavi society and culture are the inscriptions, images and the artifacts. Among them inscriptions are the chief element to provide existing evidence. Many Licchavi inscriptions are located in situ and are preserved by local communities. Few of them have been found to be replaced from original place while some lying as a stone slab, as the scripts being eroded. In this way, inscriptions are scattered around Kathmandu valley in various states. Thus, the value associated with these heritages as a monument or objects along with a concern of local communities have been conferred here.

3.1. PRESENT STATUS OF LICCHAVI INSCRIPTIONS

Among three hundred inscriptions of Kathmandu valley, sixty inscriptions from Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Nala, Banepa, Patan, Bungamati, Balambu, Satungal and Thankot have been surveyed. Amidst them, twenty-five inscriptions are found to be in situ while others are found to be shifted from their original location to the surrounding area or museums during the process of making infrastructures as; road ways, buildings or several issues for their preservation and few of them are misplaced. An inscription of Amshuvarma, of Golmadi of S 516 of Bhaktapur was originally installed at the northern east side of Vishnu temple or at the western side of Golmadi Ga hiti (water conduit), Bhaktapur [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#) It was shifted to present location or at the southern wall of conduit close to staircase before forty years when the stone spout was renovated by the German project. This inscription has been facing a threat of vehicles that moves on the sub road nearby. The drainage channel of road closer to the wall containing inscription as well as vibration of vehicles have created cracks on the wall. An inscription of same date was established at the eastern border of Jhaukhel hiti by Amshuvarma [Shrestha, P. \(BS 2070\)](#). It was shifted to the south western side of the hiti by Department of Archaeology few years before as the road was expanded. An inscription of Shivadeva II in Balambu was located near Indramati rivulet [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#) This rivulet is called Kalo Khola (Black River) these days. It was lost for several years after its publication by Dhanavajra Vajracharya in his book Licchavi Inscriptions. However, it was discovered by locals when the rivulet changed its path. It is installed at the side of the road near the rivulet. It is hit by vehicles several times as it has been installed at the sharp turning of the road. Likewise, an inscription of Dhurbadeva Jishnugupta S 48 of Mo Modu Galli Patan was situated at Ta:Jhya area nearby the sub road that joins Mahapal and Bagalamukhi [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#). It was shifted to the present location or at the southern direction of Vasudevakamalaja temple few years before during the extension of sub road. Likewise, an inscription established by Ganadeva and Bhaumagupta at Satungal of

S. 482 [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#) was shifted from eastern side of the road to the western side at bank of the Satungal pond, as the building of Municipality was established on its original location.

Some inscriptions have chancily been discovered and rescued. An inscription from Velvu of Balambu was discovered in the field nearby around sixty years before [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#). It has been installed in front of Balambu Mahalakshmi temple. Likewise, a fragment of inscription installed by Rudra Chandra Gomi of S.90 was discovered while conducting plantation in Balambu area [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#). There is presence of Bihar (Buddhist monastery) at this location now. The discovered fragment of inscription is retained at an open premise of Bihar without fixing to any source with a high risk of missing. Similar type of risk can be observed with an inscription of Nirapekshya located at Changunarayan temple. He installed statues of his father and mother along with inscription at the right entrance of Changunarayan temple in S 427 [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#). The statues are lost, while the pedestal with inscription is abandoned on an open premise of temple. Among the surveyed inscriptions very few samples as; Amshuvarma's inscriptions of Changunarayan, Nala hiti inscription installed by Shivadeva II and the inscription at Lachi tole Kisipindhi installed by Ganadeva Bhaumagupta are in good condition. However, damages can be observed, yet in better condition in comparison to others. While many of them are ruined with their scripts eroded and slab stones being flaked and cracked. In this way, inscriptions of the valley have been facing several threats of nature, vehicles, daily traditional activities of people and issues related with the construction of infrastructure.

3.2. PERCEPTION OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES FOR LICCHAVI INSCRIPTIONS

A Garuda pillar inscription established by king Manadeva at Changunarayan temple in S 386 [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#) has been fragmented into three parts. [Vajracharya](#) predicts that the Muslim invasion of 1462 CE in Kathmandu valley was responsible for its fragmentation [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#). A large portion of inscription is installed at the left side of Changunarayan temple upon a base of serpent motif. While its original base is in situ in front of temple and an image of Garuda few meters left. The long portion of pillar inscription has been utilized for installation of a disc and a mace, the emblems of lord Vishnu. While a conch and a lotus are installed on separate pillar at right side of the temple. These emblems are venerated as lord Vishnu and worshiped daily. They were installed by Chakrapani Vaidhya of Bhaktapur during the reign of the Rana (19th century CE). Amshuvarma established an inscription at the eastern boundary of Jhaukelhitia Jhaukel Bhaktapur in S 516 [Shrestha, P. \(BS 2070\)](#). King Shivadev II established an inscription at the bank of Indramati rivulet/Kalo Kholain S 129 at Balambu [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#) and Ganadeva Bhaumagupta installed inscription at the bank of Pau pukhu, Satungal in S 482 [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#). These inscriptions are installed near the source of water as; water conduits, rivulet and pond. The top most surface of these inscriptions are ruined with a partial damage in a curved shape, signifying that they were utilized as a tool to sharpen sickle by farmers. Jayadeva II established an inscription at the premise of Na hiti, Chyasal tole Patan in S 137 [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#). A large vertical shaped inscription at the western wall of hiti was used as a manicure stone for the local communities until few years back resulting the ruin of scripts, as people rubbed their body while having a bath in water conduit. However, it has been restricted these days through fencing.

Punya Gomi had established parthivshila (a circular disc also known solar disc) with inscription at the bank of Arya Ghat, Pashupatinathin S 452 [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#). Probably the disc was purposed to offer pinda (rice balls) while performing shraddha karma (ritual conducted in the name of deceased soul) during past. However, the installation of an image of Yama closer to this disc coincidentally during medieval period lead to change the perception of people towards the disc as Chitragupta, a messenger of Yama. Hence, this disc is being worshiped as Chitragupta with great faith.

3.3. LOCAL LEGEND, STORIES, FAITH AND BELIEF ASSOCIATED WITH LICCHAVI INSCRIPTIONS

The fragmentation of Licchavi inscription installed by Manadeva at the premise of Changunarayan temple though defined to be caused by Muslim invasion [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#) yet, believed to be affected by natural calamity. However, locals narrate an interesting story behind the fragmentation of inscriptional pillar. It follows that, Garuda installed in front of lord Chanunarayan temple once boasted that he has been staying at a higher level than lord Vishnu. This annoyed the lord, he threw his disc at Garuda resulting his separation from the pillar and also causing the separation of pillar from the main. When Garuda was about to leave the hill amidst the chaos, locals pleased him for his stay and promised to offer a grand worship annually. He agreed, thus, they reinstalled his image. However, not exactly in front of lord Vishnu but a few meters left to the main pillar as his choice.

Likewise, the parthivshila or circular disc believed to be Chitragupta or a messenger of Yama at Arya Ghat Pashupatinath issued a strongly alleged that worshipping of this disc would save people from untimely death. Thus, a piece of cotton dipped in oil or a burning oil lamp is offered to Chitragupta along with Yama on the fourteenth day of dark fortnight of Kartik or Narke Chaturdasi of Tihar. It is believed that this would please them, and in return people will no longer have to fear facing death throughout the year. A large crowd from the valley at early dawn gather at the bank of Bagmati river with burning oil lamps arranged on a leaf plate as many as the number of family members, and let it flow in the river and then gather in front of disc and the image of Yama to worship them. It is also believed that offering of cotton dipped in oil to them in the name of a person who is on their death bed would ease their suffering and help them to follow the path of heaven. Thus, with a strong faith and devotion people offer these offerings.

There is an inscription at Chapagaun at the side Kantipath high way on the way to Lele. It was installed by king Shivadeva [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#) The inscription is famous as thulo dhunga (huge stone) among locals. It is also venerated as a representation of Unmatta Bhairaba (a fierce form of lord Shiva) and a god of fertility. It is believed that a woman without a child would have a child if this huge stone is hugged. Women from far villages visited to embrace the inscriptional slab during an early dawn with a strong belief of having a baby. The tradition was in practice until twenty-five years earlier, which has much faded these days. However, as a representation of god of fertility is still worshipped by local communities on the day of Shivaratri with a great faith.

3.4. TRADITIONAL PRACTICES LINKED WITH LICCHAVI INSCRIPTIONS

Belief, faith and devotion are generally expressed through traditional practices on an object, image or a monument. A traditional ritual practices, festivals and Jatras are the manifestation of faith and belief plotted out of legends, myths and stories linked to it. Locals of Changunarayan had promised Garuda to offer worship for his stay at hill of Changu as he was about to flee being annoyed with lord Vishnu. According to their promise, people of Changu and the guthiyars (social organization of a clan members or a certain caste) associated with it have been annually expressing their gratitude to Garuda through a grand worship with Havana on the full moon day of Kartik. It is conducted by Tasikhala and Bhadel guthiyars of Changunarayan area. This has been continued since many generations, says the priest of Changunarayan temple. Likewise, annually on the seventh day of light fortnight of Kartik, a Havana is conducted for a veneration of Garuda pillar inscription of Manadeva along with next pillar on which the emblems of lord were installed by Chakrapani Vaidhya. The image of Garuda is also worshiped on the day. It is conducted by the guthi members of Vaidya and local communities of Changunarayan (personal interview, Prakash Bhadel, 2078.10.11) a flag as a symbol of completion of the annual function is hung on the pillar.

It is a chief feature of Licchavi inscription to engrave religious symbols at the top. Maximum number of inscriptions consist of symbol as; conch shell, mace, lotus, disc, bull, fish, wheel, purna kalash (vessel filled with water) etc. Sanga inscription of king Amshuvarma S.32 located near Bikateshwor temple has chakrasor discs on it. These symbols are worshiped by the priest of Bikateshwor temple with offering of milk, curd, vermilion powder and other materials daily. An inscription established by Amshuvarma at Lachi tole Kisipindi outside Bhagawati temple contains an engraving of a bull on it. It is worshipped twice a year during Ghode Jatra and Bhagawati - Bhairab Jatra (festival) during the month of Baishak (April) with several offerings by locals. An inscription of Balambu discovered at Velvu field, now installed in front of Mahalakshmi temple is worshipped daily by the priest of temple after worshipping goddess. There are number of inscriptions with religious symbols that are being worshiped by priests and locals daily. Not only the symbols many inscriptions in the valley are worshipped in a form of deities by locals.

A stone slab inscription installed at Dhoka Tole, Balambu was installed by Gana Dev in S 482 [Joshi, H.R. \(BS 2030\)](#) Thrice a year during Sithi Nakha, Chaitra Dashain and Mahalakshmi Jatra in Kartik (October), the inscription is worshiped with offering of huge amount of rice. During the process of Mahalakshmi Jatra, on the eighth day of light fortnight of Kartik, it gathers the largest crowd around the temple of Mahalakshmi and surroundings. As a part of the Jatra, the second day proceeds with an offering of rice to Lukumahadev (lord Shiva) by Ja: Pakegu guthi and Duwa guthi of Balambu area. Locals and members of guthi after worshipping Mahalakshmi and Ganesh gather to cook huge amount of rice in a big copper utensil which is carried to a pit of Lukumahadev. Lord Shiva, Parvati and Nandi in a form of pithas are installed in the pit. These deities are covered with rice. Finally, rice is also offered to the inscription, as it is believed to be a guard of deities [Shrestha, S. \(BS 2074\)](#) Likewise, an inscription established by Gana Deva on the same date discovered to be lying inside the spring is locally known as hiti Ga inscription, next to a Mahalakshmi temple Balambu [Joshi, H.R. \(BS 2030\)](#) This inscription is annually exposed during Sithi Nakha festival while cleaning the spring [Khanal, S. \(B.S.2073\)](#). Water from this spring is daily offered to goddess Mahalakshmi by the priest.

There is an inscription of Ganadeva Bhaumagupta at Thankot. It is installed at the side of sub road on the way to Adhinath temple from Mahalakshmi temple. Shivalinga has been installed in front of inscription. Shivalinga is worshiped as Lukumahadev by locals, which is also a clan deity of Desari community of Thankot. During Ghodejatra festival clan members from Desari community offer puja to Lukumahadev along with the inscription. During the process of worship, they sacrifice a rooster to Lukumahadev, while the blood as well as head of the rooster is offered to the inscription as they have been perceiving it in a form of lord Bhairava. They even believe that the Bhairava has been guarding their settlement area as akshetrapala.

Sunakothi Bhiringareshwor is one of the ancient temples of the valley. There are two Licchavi inscriptions belonging to Bhimarjundev Vishnugupta of S 65 and Shivadeva of S 121 at the premise of the temple [Vajracharya, D. \(BS 2030\)](#) These inscriptions are smeared with oil during several occasions. It is smeared on full moon day of each month by the members of Sunakothi Bhiringareshwor Conservation Committee. Inscriptions are also smeared oil on the third day of light fortnight of Chaitra by locals. While on the day of Shivaratri all the monuments around Sunakothi Bhiringareshwor temple including the inscriptions are smeared with oil by the priest. The oil to be smeared on these monuments is being provided by Guthi office, Lalitpur since many decades. They believe this process as a pious deed and would make the monuments long last. Thus, large number of people gather to smear oil on it.

3.5. IMPACT OF TRADITIONAL PRACTICES ON LICCHAVI INSCRIPTIONS

Nepalese not only worship image of deities, but also worship nature, animal, as well as plain stone as a symbol of deity. Thus, Nepal is rich in tangible culture along with intangible values linked to it. Their belief and faith are often found to be expressed through visible manifestation along with offering of several materials. Nepalese since the past have a tradition of worshipping deities with offering of water, milk, curd, ghee, honey, sandal paste, vermilion powder, flowers, incense and oil lamps. Many historical evidences recorded about the worship of lord Pashupatinath describe about several guthis established for panchamrit snana (bathing of deities with milk, curd, ghee, honey and sugar) of lord during the reign of king Nripendra Malla, Jayaprakash Malla, Kantavati, the wife of Rana Bahadur Shah. A list of several offerings as; sandal paste, vermilion powder, uncooked rice, ghee lamp etc along with panchamrit snan to be offered to lord Pashupatinath are mentioned by Girbanyuddha Virkram Shah along with the establishment of Guthi (PDT, BS 2077, p.345). This proves the continuation of traditional practice regarding the offerings to deities since medieval period.

An inscription installed by Amshuvarma at Sanga comprising two chakras on it are worshiped by the priest of Bikateshwor temple daily. He offers sandal paste, vermilion powder, milk and curd. A long vertical mark or the damage over the scripts of slab inscription caused due to curd and milk can be seen. Likewise, the chakras engraved on the top are hardly seen being covered with offered materials. An inscription of Kishipindhi belonging to Ganadeva and Bhaumagupta is installed at the southern east side of Ganesh temple. Every day local people visit this temple. The god is worshipped with offering of egg, alcohol along with above mentioned material. After completing the worship of Ganesh, they offer left over offerings of Ganesh to the inscription. They believe this inscription as a guard of lord Ganesh.

Likewise, an inscription shifted from Velvu field of Balambu to Mahalakshmi temple has no visibility of scripts due to a thick layer of materials offered on it.

Lighting of a lamp has great value in almost every culture. It is a symbol of expressing belief and devotion. There are several believes associated with burning oil lamp in Nepalese culture. From birth till death rites in every rites and rituals, lamp is an essential. It is believed to forecast misshaping if a burning lamp lit off. Thus, worship is incomplete without it. Many inscriptions installed around temple premise and close to deities as; Changunarayan Garuda pillar inscription, the in situ part of a pillar, image of Garuda, inscription of Kisipindhi Ganesh temple, inscriptions of Sunakothi Vringareshwor and several Licchavi inscriptions in temple premise are covered with black smoke arose from oil lamps and ghee that are lit close to these monuments daily.

Locals have their traditional technique of preserving monuments with traditional technology. Locals of Sunakothi Vringareshwor since the past are practicing a tradition of smearing oil to inscriptions, deities and monuments around the temple premise. They believe this technique is a great remedy to keep monuments preserved. However, the offering of oil to the monuments have been ruining them through accumulating dust particles on them. The scripts of the inscriptions are hardly readable due to smoke as well as dust collected in between the lines as well as scripts. On the other hand, locals have been enduring to clean the monuments with a sharp object to remove the grease accumulated in the monuments before reapplication of oil. This indeed is damaging inscriptions as well as the surface of monuments. Likewise, an offering of cotton dipped in oil and an oil lamp to the parthivshila disc at Arya Ghat by devotees have gathered a layers of cotton with grease. The scripts engraved around the disc is hardly seen.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Licchavi inscriptions are the concrete evidence to construct the past with authentic proves keeping besides the legendry account. They are found to scattered from core cities to the remote areas of Kathmandu valley. However, these monuments are revealed to be in great crisis these days. During the survey of more than sixty inscriptions of the valley, few are found to be in its original location while many of them have been shifted with their location and few misplaced. The physical status of a very few inscriptions have been identified to be in good condition, while majority of them are abandoned and ruined through its physical structure. They have been discovered to be facing several threats. The threat of nature, movement of vehicle, human activities and unplanned urbanization. Maximum inscriptions have been discovered with the scripts eroded, the stone slab chipped and flaked.

The inscription of Changunarayan installed by Manadeva has been found to beautify as a normal pillar for installation of emblems of lord Vishnu. From this incident, it is revealed that locals perceived simply a pillar to be applied as an object. The inscriptions installed at Jhaukhel, Balambu and Thankot near stone spout, rivulet and pond respectively were recognized to be utilized as a tool for sharpening the sickle. These inscriptions are found to be perceived merely as an elongated vertical stone slab by locals that met them with perfect height to rub their weapons with. Inscription of Na hiti of Chyasal served as a manicure tool for locals to rub their body for a long time resulting to ruin the scripts. Thus, from these facts it is revealed that the inscriptions located around the sources of water were at highly risk due to such issues. A vertical stone slab with an inscription at Balambu Lukumahadev have been found to be venerated as a guard of deities were coincidently installed closed to this monument later on. And a monumental disc with inscription worshiped in

the form of Chitragupta being closer to Yama reveals that sometimes unique structural form of monument induces people to interpret next rather than actually what they are. Thus, the Licchavi inscriptions are found to be perceived by communities as an object for utility as well as an entity to express faith with devotion rather than a historical monument.

Ancient monuments are often found to be damaged or ruined by human activities, animals or natural calamities. The fragmentation of inscription of Changunarayan Garuda pillar with a passage of time being analyzed as an endeavor of divine power and pleading to him by locals with several efforts reflects the faith expressed through devotion and traditional practices. Likewise, a circular disc of parthivshila to be recognized as a Chitragupta by locals for being coincidentally closer to an image of Yama and their expression toward it with faith and fear emotionally associated to life and death along with offerings reveals their strong belief and attachment to these monuments not merely as a monument but as divinities. Probably this tradition might have started during medieval period as an image of Yama belongs to medieval period. It is not a strange comportment of Nepalese to worship a monumental object as a deity with great devotion. The stone slab that are either vertically or horizontally installed are often deliberated and worshiped in a form of Shivalinga or Bhairava. Among several forms of Bhairaba, Unmatta Bhairaba with erected organ is believed to be a representation of god related to fertility. Thus, the tradition of hugging an inscription of Chapagoun by a woman without a child might be a continuation of a traditional practice that would have been fruitful for locals during the past. After all, all these traditional practices could be analyzed as an expression of great faith and devotion emerged out of traditional belief.

Day to day act of offering sandal paste, vermilion powder and offering of panchamrit to inscriptions have caused to spoil these monuments. People these days instead of applying sandal paste are found to use kesari (yellow powder) to deities and monuments. It contains high quantity of chemicals, which is harmful to monuments. On the other hand, curd, blood and egg contains acidic element. Offering of these materials on the monuments are damaging them slowly. Inscriptions of Sangha and Kisipindhi Ganesh temple are the samples that are found to be badly damaged. They comprise damage on the part that consume these stuffs daily. Locals faith, believe is greatly valued, as such belief is the main basis for sustainability of traditional practices, festivals and Jatras of the valley. However, the traditional practice of such offerings and especially direct and indirect offering of oil to the monument is gradually indorsing the monuments to get ruined.

Thus, from the discussed facts above, it can be drawn a conclusion that Licchavi inscriptions are discovered to be in great crisis as being shifted from its original location, being abandoned and opposing several threats due to the lack of concentration of authority for its well preservation. These monuments as per location they are located and their structural form have been perceived by locals with their own interpretation, faith and belief. Such faith and believe is found to be expressed through unique traditional practices. Each of them entail great value. But the way of their expression of the devotion and belief with several offerings have been innocently and gradually ruining these valuable monuments. Hence, a great initiation for the preservation of these historical monuments is to be taken soon for its preservation as well as to handover to future generation.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

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