

Reclaiming and Restoring Newar Urbanism From 2015 Gorkha Earthquake



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The 2015 Gorkha Earthquake causes a Heritage Emergency

- **2015 Gorkha Earthquake and the Heritage Emergency**
 - **Monuments collapsed and damaged**
 - **Traditional Houses collapsed and damaged**
 - **Inner Heritage Spaces, streets and squares, in ruins and under debris and shores**
 - **Khyos and Piths disrupted by emergency shelters and debris dumps**

Recovering the Monuments should be easy!



N-AVI-karan – natural material, earthquake resistance !

Being careless can be costly, though.



The Public Pati at the *pith* of Mahalaxmi!

Restoring the Traditional Houses...



More complex – concern for earthquake safety, changing life style, development needs, expectations of future, poverty, etc.

- More than our Monuments and Houses, the earthquake has devastated our Urbanism
 - Society and Culture
 - Town and its memories

Our towns space is populated by spirited stones and power places, Digudyos, Dyochhen and Piths; monuments, temples and trees; springs and canals; etc.

Cumulated over centuries from the Kirat, the Lichchhavi or the Malla days ...

Of Khopringga, Makhopringga, Makhopringgadula and possibly Chupringga

Of Tripura, Thanthu and Yuthu (nimum)

Of Valavala Kha Dhara, Dhahvahiti and Nagpokhari

Of Vakupati

Of the Navadurgas

Of Astamatrika piths, dyochhes and pauwas

Of Vandimagalasthana, Sivagalasthana and Chanigalasthana

Of Thane-ya, Dathu-ya and Kwone-ya

Of Vairab and Bhadrakali, Bisket

etc.

Newar urbanism exhibits a complex weave of contemporary life of the citizen with 'inherited life' of the gods and the ancestors in its streets and squares of settlements.

The Jatra performances that combine and highlight some such myths and memories make a big stage of the town.

Three organizing systems: society, land and space, festive activities

Restoring the Public Space thus gets still more complex ...



The stone sentinel of Jenla ...

Restoring the Public Space gets still more complex ...



Nateswor temple that shares the space, Jenla ...

Restoring the intangibles in Public Space is important ...



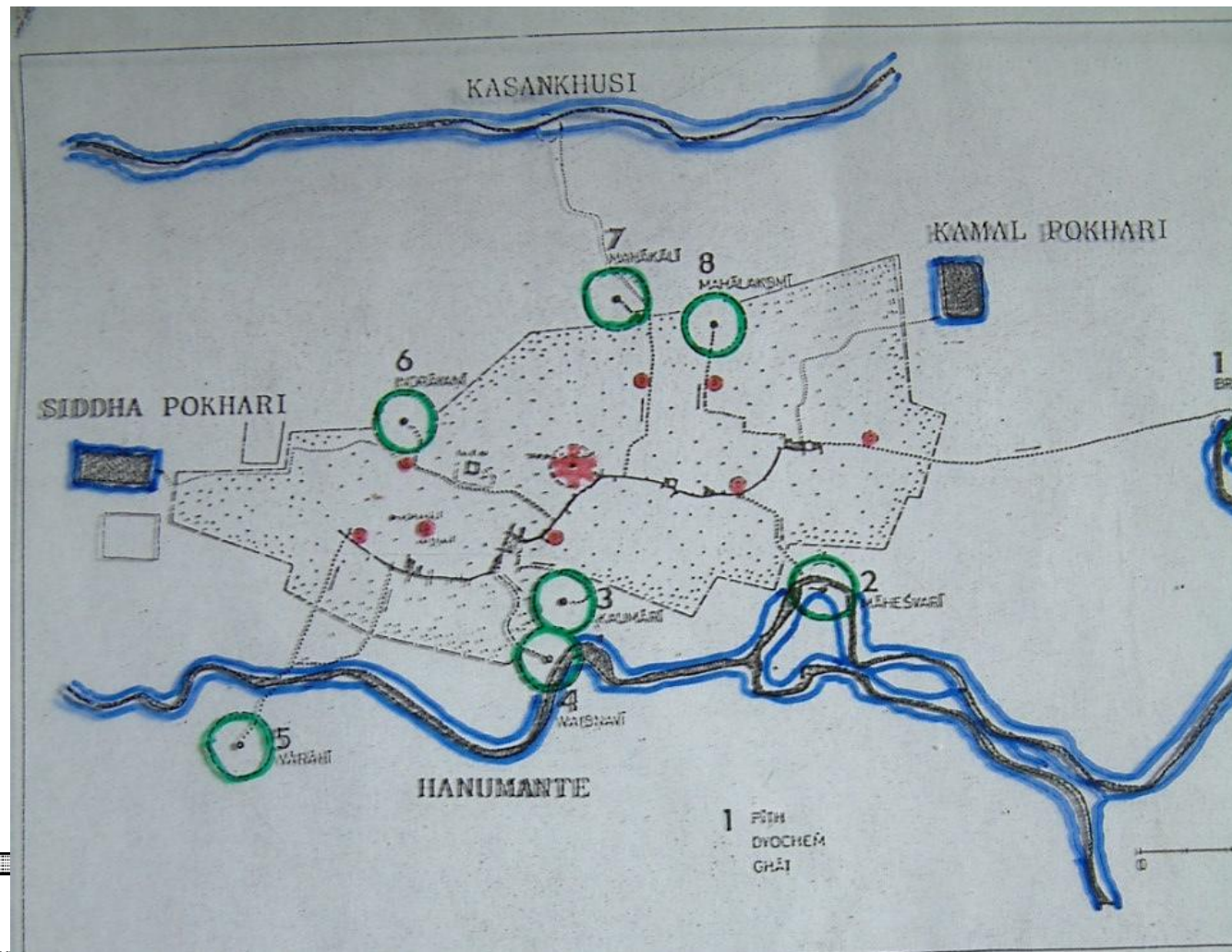
Chhumah Ganesh, memory of a tree, a rat and a cat ...

**Saving the memory of the place is important for us,
for that is how people make out the place ...**

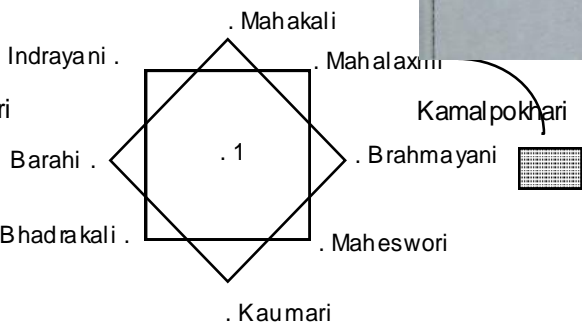


Songah Lhon, the Bhairavs and the Navadurga memory ...





Kasan Khusi



Hanumante Khola

1 T ripu rasun dari

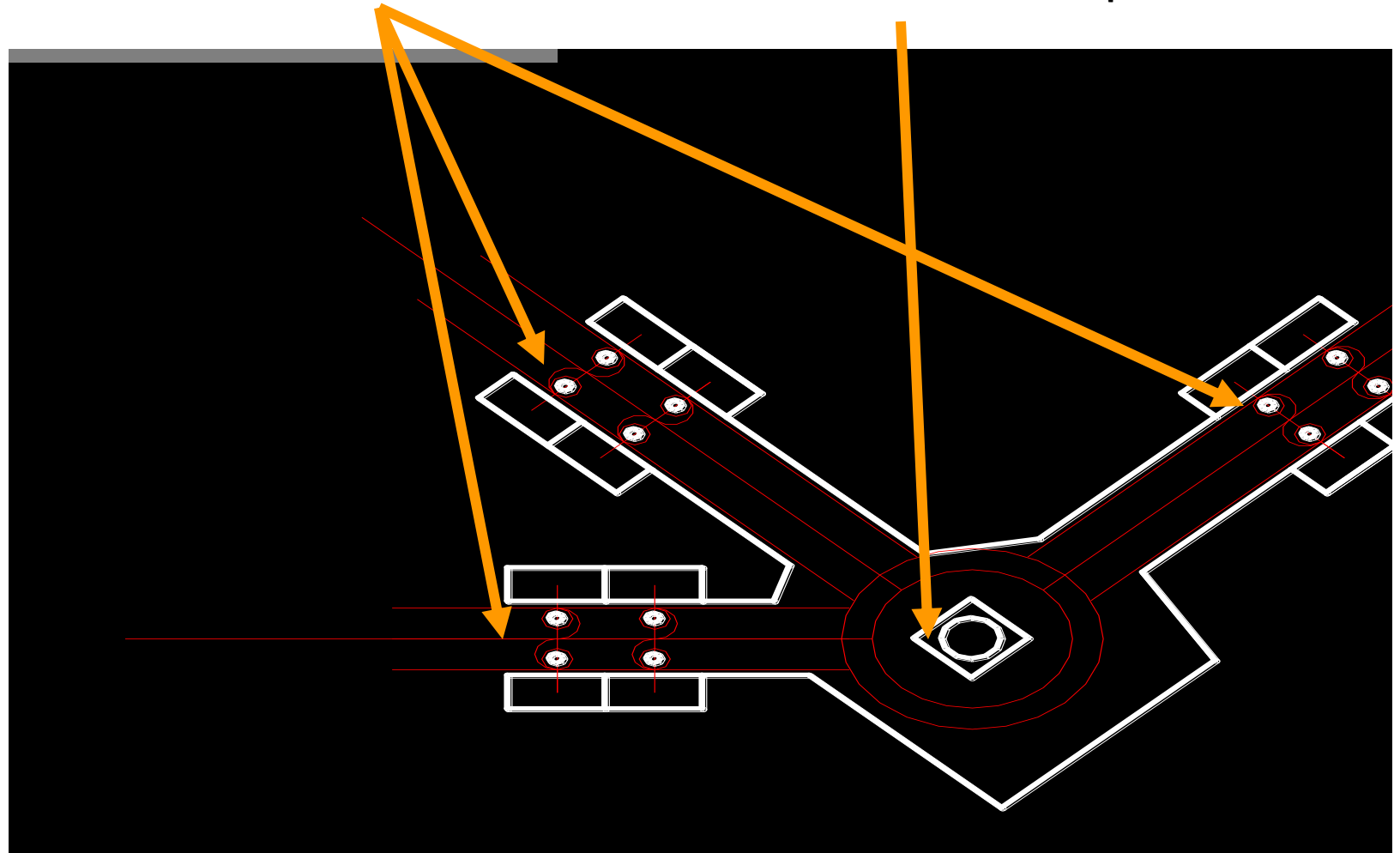
Maheśwari Dyochehen, pauwa etc. share spaces nearby



Stones on the Street: Homogenizing Movements

Streetside Houses with
Individual Pikhhalakhu Stones

Cross Road Space with Its Power
Stones or Temple



STREETS

- SPACES formed by narrowing and widening of the arteries (*lachhi*) and interspersed with platforms (dabali) and resting pavilions (pati), numinous stones, shrines, *chaitya* and temples
- Offer restorative potions of
 - sun and shadows,
 - calm and breeze,
 - sights and sounds,
 - neutral 'voids' and spirited spots and etc.
- catering to physiological, psychological and spiritual recuperation, rest and rejuvenation.

SQUARES - Orders and Cultural Groups

- Mono-cultural Space
 - First Order
 - Family and Clan space, the courtyard (Bhochi/Thapin)
 - The Pikhalkhu (point of departure), the first street (of similar thoughts)
 - Second Order
 - Well, Pati and the second crossing, the chhwasa
 - The Neighborhood square, the Ganesh, the third crossing



SQUARES - Order and Cultural Groups

- **Multi-cultural Space**
 - **First Order**
 - The crossing of the four dissimilar thoughts, the temple, the conduit pit, the dabali and the plaza
 - **Second Order**
 - The Market square and the High Street
 - **Third Order**
 - The Durbar square, the convergence of (24?) streams of thoughts, sectioned large space

Khopringga brum



Soorjemadhi – Kho, Bhad, Vakupati



Brahmayani on way from *pith* to pauwa



Activities and Festivals in Cultural Organization

– Festivals (jatra) in urban life

- actively bringing together individuals, families and community groups, of an area, a neighborhood, a node, a courtyard and a house
- Using network of gods and goddesses, small and big, to socialize and remain socialized.
- Network of Guthis
 - Number of Guthis come together to get a string of things and rituals done so that the festival as a whole is celebrated
 - Guthi, small or large, entrusted with one activity in a cycle, built out of one family or clan and so are 'mono-clan and mono-activity driven'.
- Festival totals as a multi-clan and multi-activity chain



Pachare at Hanuman Dhoka

Pic. Alok Tuladhar

After the Earthquake Under the Debris



Removing the Debris?





Kho?

**What can the stone do
but watch silently and
hope understanding from us?**



**Why and How do we go
about Reclaiming Newar
Urbanism?**

Changes and Challenges

- Globalization and perception of development
- Vehicles and Vehicle delivered urban services expunging pedestrians, ancestors and gods
- The dying Guthis and their land resources
- Community management of neighborhood affairs lost
- Road widening and the obliteration of underpasses, wayside elements, memory matters.

Rebuilding Monuments and Public Spaces

- Offers opportunity of revitalizing our towns using culture and
- Can produce wider urban impacts
- Economic benefits through creating new jobs
- Enhanced physical and environmental benefits – enhanced aesthetics and healthy living conditions
- Social benefits like safer public places and community behavior
- Improving image of city and its attractiveness
- Culture, creative industry and tourism promoting localism and identity

5 Steps to Save Continuity of Cultural Urbanism

- Saving the route – street, services and Building foot-print
 - Revising the bye-laws?
- Saving the stone on the street, in its nook and corners
- Saving the story – saving the diversity and the complexity
- Saving the ‘dramatis personae’
- Saving the stage – public space and public land

Saving the intangibles





Enthusiasm and Participation of 'the social elite'

Rebuilding Culture is best done collectively

Culture – *the ways of living as individuals and ways of living together* in dialogical co-existence with nature , society and economy.

Culture builds values that drive collective action – a character most lacking in economic and environmental domain - *the post-earthquake heritage reconstruction process has brought local communities together .*