

# WATER & CULTURE



Shaphalya Amatya

JALSAOT VIKAS SANSTHA (JVS), NEPAL

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## Preface

Almost a year ago, at the end of the month of Ashadh, Mr. Surya Nath Upadhya (present chief of CIAA) called at my place and told me to meet him once. I proposed him to meet at a ceremony organized by French Embassy on 14th July to mark its national day. I met him on the scheduled date but we were unable to talk business. He invited me at his office, Babarmahal at 5 PM the next day. That day, I along with my wife Madhuri went to visit him on our evening stroll. He was waiting for us. Then we three headed towards Jalasrot Vikas Sanstha (JVS) at Anamnagar. There we met Mr. Bhuvaneshwar Pd. Daibagya, Dr. Upendra Gautam, Dr. Vijaya Shrestha and Mr. Pradeep Mathema. Mr. Surya Nath Upadhya requested me in front of them to act as a resource person for “Water and Culture”. Before this, I had never come across an issue like “Water and Culture” in my life. Realizing the issue at hand may be interesting and challenging. I accepted the offer. They suggested me to do some immediate homework to present a country status paper in “South Asia Regional Consultative Meeting on Water and Culture” which was to be held on 4-5 August 2002 in Dhaka. I consulted with them on it for sometime. It was the first time I got any formal introduction in this subject. I worked hard for a week and prepared a four-page paper on water and culture in the context of Nepal. I recited it in the assembly of friends of JVS and all of them appreciated it.

Dr. Vijaya Shrestha and I took part in the conference on 4-5 August 2002, in Dhaka. I presented the country status paper. Those two days' conference really encouraged me to study and research in this matter. Back home from Dhaka, I spent some months in the through study and research concerning with water and culture. After that I got an opportunity to participate on behalf of JVS in “The Second South Asian Water Forum” on 24-16 Dec. 2002, in Islamabad, Pakistan. As a result, I am able to present this book.

This book is primarily based on the book by Mr. JB Dishanayak titled “Water in Culture: The Sri Lankan Heritage”. *This book hasn't been able to cover all the aspects of importance and place of water in Nepalese culture.* Perhaps, it's really hard nut to crack to encompass all the facts in a small book. I hope it is the first book on water and culture in Nepal.

I am heavily indebted to my friends Mr. Surya Nath Upadhya, Mr. Ishwar Raj Onta, Mr. Buhbaneshwar Pd. Daibagya, Dr. Vijaya Shrestha and Mr. Pradeep Mathema who encouraged me to write this book. I would like to thank Nepal Drinking Water Corporation and its Managing Director Mr. Kausal Nath Bhattarai who helped me to publish this book. Finally sincere thanks go to my wife Madhuri Amatya who encouraged

and helped me to write this book, computer operator Mr. Surendra Maharjan and my helpers Mr. Shyam Sundar Rajbamshi, Mr. Jayaram Shrestha and photo grapher Mr. Kiran Shrestha.

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## **Preface to the Second Edition (English Version)**

My book on Water and Culture was first published in Asar 2060 (2003) by the courtesy of Nepal Drinking Water Corporation. It was the first and ever published book in Nepali language on water and culture. Appreciating the usefulness of this book to both native and foreign readers, Jalasrot Vikas Sanstha (JVS), Nepal/Nepal Water Partnership (NWP) decided to publish its revised version in English as its second edition. I am very grateful to JVS for its help and financial assistance for the publication of this edition.

The importance and role of water in Nepalese culture has no limitation. My attempt is just to encourage Nepalese scholars and researchers to do more work and research in this direction. One or two books can not cover the whole aspects of relationships between Nepalese culture and water. Water has different meanings, values, importances and uses to people living in seventy-five districts of our country from Mechi to Mahakali. My book is just a one step forward in this direction.

I thank and appreciate very much Mr. Ganesh B Ghimire for helping me to translate this book. My gratitude also goes to my wife Madhuri Amatya who always tolerated my impatience and carelessness. I am sure this book will also help to impart some knowledge on Nepalese culture in general to our foreign readers.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank all my associates in JVS.

# Chapter 1: Water and Culture

Water is life. Culture is essence of life. Just as life is impossible without water, without culture human equals animal. Water and culture or human life is inextricably linked as water and fish. Human life depends upon five elements viz. earth, water, light, air and space. Thus, since the origin of humankind, water and human life or culture has interrelation.

It has been stated in *Brihad – Aranyaka Upanisad* that during the creation of the earth it only had water. Later, biosphere was created. Water is divine and humane. Water is fauna and birds. Water is flora too. In fact, they were all created from water in water. (Sthul Roop)

As Nepal is primarily an agrarian society, Nepalese culture is based on water (*jal pradhan*). Nepal is full of himalayas, glaciers and snow fed rivers. These mountains and glaciers are source of majority of our rivers. Even if, Nepal has numerous important river basins, including small and large, there are mainly eight of them. They are Mahakali, Babai, Gandaki, Kamala, Kankai, Karnali, Rapti (west), Bagmati and Koshi. Within Nepal there are numerous glaciers, lakes, ponds, wells, waterfalls, hot springs and other forms of wetlands. Even though, there is very little fraction of fresh water available in earth crust, luckily we can use most of our water as freshwater. Thus, these sources are our invaluable resources.

Nepal has around 6000 rivers and streams. They start from three different regions. Koshi, Gandaki, Karnali and Mahakali emanate from Himalayas; Mechi, Kankai, Kamala, Bagmati, Rapti (West) and Babai originate from Mahabharat Range. Third and last, seasonal streams in terai start at Sivalik Range.

All the rivers of Nepal finally mix with the Ganges. The Ganges is one the largest twenty rivers of the world. It has religious, social, cultural and economic importance for Nepal and Nepalese. Even though, rivers in Nepal have respective names but collectively we call them Gangaji. In Nepal, river is synonym to the Ganges.

In Nepal, water is regarded as life giving and purifying object. Providing water to thirsty person is believed as act of piousness. Therefore, our religion and society regards construction of water source and water supply infrastructure as the biggest contribution to humanity. As a result, since ancient time people have been constructing water related infrastructure like ponds, wells, waterspouts etc. and they are still being constructed. For us water has relation with the Creation and universal knowledge (*bramhagyaan*). It is

also pure and life supporting fluid for us. It is divine in itself and spatially and temporarily it has sheltered god and goddess. This is why we often find most of the religious sanctity, temples and holy places by the side of river, lake, pond etc.

In traditional belief water was regarded as life and people still believe in it. That is why our treatise not only describes greatness of water besides it also depicts creation of white elephant (Airawat Haathi) to immortal *kalash* from the ocean. Ocean is not just regarded as *Ratnodadhi*, our religious scriptures depicts it is a dwelling place of Lord Vishnu and his soul mate Goddess Laxmi. Inspired by these beliefs we have institutionalized water regulations. Besides rivers and streams, we started keeping every water sources pristine for homage. Hindus, based on these beliefs institutionalized holy dip (gangasnan) as part of their religion. Similarly, religious festivals and fete by the side of river source, ponds and lakes rejuvenating life through holy bath, *donation* and meditation were institutionalized.

In Nepali society whether it be Hindus or Buddhist, without setting up water filled *kalash* no homage or *yagya* can start. Without setting up *kalash* no one commences new work. Even, on someone arrival and departure *kalash* is set up on the either side of entrance for their safe travel.

Mundane affair of Nepali people starts by using water. Everyone goes to nearby water source (river, stream, pond, tap, well etc) soon they wake up for bathe and purify oneself. People don't even take their morning tea without bathing or freshening up. It is essential to bath prior performing religious rituals and worshipping. Votaries and priests bath every day. In Nepalese society human has inextricable relation with water for religious, spiritual, cultural and heavenly tie. Thus, we regard every source of water as pure, sacred and sanctity. Those who defile water are regarded as sinister and wicked.

Even though, our country regards all water holy yet our society has created caste-based discrimination and social malpractices. In our country people has been divided into two strata – touchable (*paani chalne*) and untouchable (*paani nachalne*) on the basis of water use. Though due to awareness and education, people in urban are giving up such practices whereas in rural community the practice is still alive.

It has already been stated that we consider all the rivers and streams as emblem of the Ganges. We find numerous ancient stories in religious scriptures that narrate the saga on how goddess Ganga was brought from heaven to the Earth. We believe that Ganga was created through Shiva's *jata* (hair lock), Vishu's foot, Bramha's *kamandalo* (water pitcher), who is pure, sacred, able free people from sin and diseases, divine, motherly and

provide fertility for fecund product. "Agni" states that place gets sacred where the river flows. To bath in river means the experience heavenly feel.

Place, where two rivers confluences, has more religious importance. Likewise, place where three rivers confluence is called *tribeni*. Such places have more religious importance. Tribeni is related to Brahma's maxim (*dheutak*) "Omkar" and it is regarded as Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati. Our religion, culture and tradition bestow all confluences as a holy place. It is believed that one gets salvation, acquires desired wishes, stays away from diseases and accomplishes assignments if they take holy dip, donates and performs religious activities in such places. Nepal's famous *tribenies* are confluence of Narayani, Sona and Panchanadi situated in Nawalparasi District, Udaypur's Kamala, Tawa and Kakaru confluence and Koshi and Koka confluence in Baraha Region.

We regard river as bridging medium between the Earth and the Heaven. Thus, we believe offering homage for dead spirits in rivers ensures they obtain its result soon. Especially river confluences are regarded holy sites as these places are often regarded as the gateway to heaven. In Nepalese society every rivers and streams has their own religious and cultural importance. On the top, Bagmati and Vishnumati flowing in the Kathmandu Valley are regarded as the holiest of all by Nepalese society. In '*Nepal Mahatmaya*' Bagmati has been depicted as the holiest river – one gets fruit of *Bajpey* and *Ashwamegh Yagya* if one takes dip in their stretch. Likewise, in '*Pashupati Puran*' it has been said that one gets spiritual, physical and divine power and gets rid of drudgery just by taking bath in Bagmati River. Similarly, Vishnumati has been described as being emanating from the feet of Lord Vishnu is purest of pure. Likewise, '*Nepal Mahatmaya*' states that one is granted for Vishnu Lok after taking holy dip in Vishnumati.

Nepalese worship river as mother or Mother Ganga. As mother nourishes her offspring with her milk, river helps in crop germination by irrigating the land which supports life system. Thus water from Ganga is regarded as elixir and fluid of immortality. Water from Ganga is as pure as mother's milk. In Nepalese context, river has immense religious, spiritual and cultural importance which shall be described in succeeding chapters.

Migrants from Northern India, Lichhavi, Shakya, Malla, Brijji etc, settled in the banks of Bagmati and Vishnumati (Dhobi Khola and Rudramati) and institutionalized water culture in the ancient time. This has been corroborated through excavations found near Satyanarayan Temple in Haadigaon, Kathmandu during mid 1980s. During excavation it was discovered that ponds were alike to one constructed in Northern India by Sakas. These ponds build during in 0 BC used baked brick. From the site of relic, piece of stone spouts with dated evidence was excavated. With the finding of stone spout relic dated

751AD, it was evidently explored that Lichhavis were involved in construction of ponds and stone spouts since very early. Yet, water spout, Mangahiti, build during 570AD situated in northeast to Patan Durbar Square is oldest of all.

Likewise starting from 6th century till 19th century, hundreds of stone spouts were built in Kathmandu and all over Nepal. We can observe architectural representation of Kathmandu's stone spout from Ilam in the east to Baglung in the west. Yet through out Nepal, we observe respective styles of stone spouts in use. In western Nepal stone spouts are called *Mungra*. Until modern piped water was used for water distribution, people relied upon these water sources. Construction of stone spout for serving people was regarded as work of sanctity. Not just the elite kings but ordinary citizens were also keen on erecting stone spouts, *jaldronis*, wells and ponds especially in religious places and main roads for humanity, religious benefits and memorials. Such practices started from Lichhavi period and were prevalent even during Malla and Shah Period.

As stated above, for our society there is no other greatest bequeath than *jaldaan* (offering water). Even if one cannot engross *punya*, offering water to thirsty person or creature will acquire pinnacle of religion. Thus since time immemorial our ancestors has been erecting water spouts, ponds, wells for good deeds. In *Vishnu Darhma Sutra*, it is mentioned that those who construct wells for denizens his/her half the sin is released. And, those who construct ponds will be privileged with happiness and get to dwell in Varunlok (heaven) after death.

Study conducted in 1982 by Kathmandu Valley Development Project stated that 95% of total stone spouts are situated in the valley itself. Most of these structures were built in 13th to 18th century during the regime of Malla Kings. Out of total 500 estimated spouts, 118 are situated in Kathmandu, 40 are in Lalitpur, 103 in Bhaktapur and 48 in Thimi. These stone spouts were fed with water from Rajkhulo or channeled through water source or through well.

Stone spouts in Nepal were not just built for drinking purpose. Those sources symbolize perennially flowing holy rivers. Everyone cannot access river for bathing purpose. Especially females cannot always go to the river. Thus, these females usually go to nearest spouts to bathe and worship, they even fetch water from these sources for daily needs. Most of stone spouts reveal religious fraternity among diverse culture. Just as there are presence of statues of god and goddess in the river bank, there is depiction of Hindu and Budhhist idols in the spouts. People equally worship both the places with equal devotion. Therefore, these stone spouts holds distinct niche in Nepalese art, culture, tradition and religion.

Other water related structures also includes well, water hole and *jaldroni*. Most of these structures are built for water supply. Some of the wells have religious and cultural value but their number is very less. No matter what the water related structures are built, they are all regarded as the symbol of good deeds. Whether it is a grass cutter in abject poverty whose livelihood depends upon the grass, he collects, or forlorn widow who make pennies by selling cotton thread, we can exemplify many instances where they all avidly work for public services, memorials, wells and spouts, no matter how little they save.

Even if there are very little evidences relating to water and its implication in religion, culture and tradition in our history yet, we have been practicing the concept of water management since centuries in accordance to our traditions. We have plethora of examples on water management practices. For instance our culture and tradition debar us from polluting water sources. Our society and culture has influenced us with the notion that water very basic necessity for every living being including animals and plants.

Water uses has influenced Nepali culture with spiritual inputs, affluence and entertainment, has a vital role in transforming our living with full of life and enticing us to live. We can observe this during religious functions and festival. Our rivers, streams, lakes, ponds etc. has become inspiration to our festival, religious function, and culture and tradition. Nepal's biggest festival – *Dashain* or Durga Puja – is celebrated as Navaratri. During Navaratri, there is tradition of taking holy bath in holy places for nine days. Likewise we celebrate every first day of month in lunar calendar as *Sankranti*, sacred day. We have a tradition of taking holy dip and offering donation to needy. Baisak Sankranti, Shrawan Sankranti and Manghe Sankranti are regarded much of importance. In Manghe Sankranti, there is huge religious fair in the confluence of Kamala River and Gwang River in Sindhuli; in the confluence of Roshi River and Punyamati in Kavre; in the confluence of Kali Gandaki River and Madi River in Chitwan; in the confluence of Baagi Khola, Gochho Khoal and Badra Khola in Argakhachhi; in the confluence of Karnali and Dojam in Humla; in the Navi Khola in Dailekha and other holy places.

Similar to Sankranti, full moon day (*Purnima*) also has equal importance in Nepalese society. In the full moon day in Jestha, people take bath in Indreswor Mela in Indrawati; in Bhadra Purnima people take bath in Pashupati Aryaghat or other important rivers in Nepal, in Magha Purnima people take bath in Sali River in Saakhu on the culmination day of *Swasthani Brata Katha* and in Fagu Purnima, it a day of water and colors. Not just the Sankranti and Purnima of every month but even in *Ekadashi*, *Aaushi* (new moon) and *Asthami* people visit to different holy place for bath and other religious activities. Besides, people also visit during other religious days to river, stream and pond for bath and perform religious activities.

Religious festivals are also performed by the side of lakes, stone spouts and ponds all over Nepal besides rivers and river confluences. In Janai Purnima there is big gathering (mela) in Gosainkunda, Rasuwa District. Thousands of people flock to this place to take holy bath. In Kartik Purnima, there is mela in Satyawati Lake in Papla, where people take bath and perform other rituals and ask blessings from the God. In Chaitra Sukla Purnima devotees come to *Baaisdhara Mela* for bath, after getting purified they go to Swayambhu and Jamacho. In the northern hill and mid hill regions, there are plenty of ponds and hot springs. Likewise, there are many lakes and ponds in the southern inner terai and terai. These lakes and ponds have respective religious and cultural importance. Sita, famous character from epic "Ramayana", is believed to be born in Dhanusha, eastern terai of Nepal. King Janak's capital city, Danusha, is also believed to be in the same place. Sita was believed to take bath in Argaja (Sita Pokhari) which is situated in this region. Lord Ram was made to take bath before marrying Sita in the same lake. Similarly, Lord Buddha was born by the side of Lake Lumbini Batika in Rupendehi District. After Buddha was born Mother Maya Devi and child Buddha took bath in "*Puskarani Lake*", which is regarded as a holy place by Buddhist.

Nepalese society has been giving due care for the management, conservation and protection of water, essential for human life from birth to death. Though, we do not have Lichhavi and Malla *ghat* or river bank infrastructure yet the structure around river area, stone spouts, wells etc. are still based on traditional Nepalese architecture and hence they have not changed much. Nepal has a tradition to maintain and clean water related structures. Every year in Jestha's *Kumar Sasthi* wells, ponds, stone spouts are maintained and cleaned up. Guthis or local clubs or religious bodies do these jobs by collecting donations. Few decades back, there was greater people's participation in such religious and social functions but presently meager participation is felt.

Bagmati's Teku to Thapathali area, Pashuptai's Aryaghat and Rajrajeshwori area, Chitwan's Devghat, Palpa's Ruru area and Sunsari's Baraha area are some of the famous ghat areas in Nepal. Influence of the rivers and other water bodies do not just limit to religious and spiritual aspect, it also extends into local life, literature and art. From Mechi in the east to Mahakali in the west, from the Himalayas in the north to Terai in the south, since ages we had been rejoicing on our folk songs and folk dances which extol and describe holy rivers like Koshi, Karnali and Bagmati.

Most of places in Nepal are identified by the name of rivers, brooks, stone spouts, well and hot springs in those areas. Nepalese people regard the water filled pot and kalash as auspicious sign and even regard it as god and goddess. We have our own way of asking water during famine. Especially in Kathmandu, it has been explained that a *silapatra* (inscription) found in Tadha Bahal mentions a *guthi*, established by Gudachandra Shakya

in 1675AD, asks for the blessing for drought-free year with Swayambhu every year. This *Silapatra* mentions that every year in *Asad Sulka Ditiya* the Guthi arrange prayers and worship for this reason. In the eastern Nepal, Rais and Kiratis regards Srawan month as dark month. Besides, people often do not celebrate, sing or dance, because they fear of drought or excessive rain which can destroy their cultivation. In case of no rain in Asad Shrawan in any year, there is tradition of praying to *Siddha Sikari Devi* for rain. Likewise, everybody from the village, old aged and youngster, collectively go to the river banks and chat “Halalau, Halalau” to ask for the rain. Even if, it does not rain then elder people confidentially agrees consents to meet in the mid-night where they get naked and chat “Halalau Halalau”. It is believed that *Jal Devata* (God of water), residing in the cave, can not tolerate such view and immediately gives rain. In the mid western and far western regions in Nepal, Tharu communities perform Siguru dance (nonstop naked dance) during persistent drought. Likewise, in some places in western Nepal during the drought, women often plough the field naked to amuse Indra. In some place in western region, it is also believed it would rain if the village or district head is bitten. There is also a tradition of performing wedding between frogs in most of districts in Nepal. Likewise, Tharu people believe by taking group bath being naked in the river and brooks will cause rainfall. In the eastern terai region in Nepal, it is believed that that offering water to Lord Shiva by chanting “bol-bam, bol-bam” would cause timely rainfall. Every year during Jestha and Asad, there are huge number people who travel distant chanting “bol-bam, bol-bam” mostly in terai region but the trend is increasing in the Kathmandu Valley itself.

One of main responsibilities of the king is to provide water and cause rainfall on time. There are plethoras of folk tales exemplifying how the king’s sacrificed and lived in troublesome life to cause rainfall. During Rana rule there was a tradition of shooting canons from the hills in Kathmandu Valley. It was believed that by doing so would cause rainfall. Only not we pray Indra, Shiva, Parvati (Ganga), Varun, Lokeshwor, Machhindranath and other god-goddesses but also Tachak Naag, fish and frogs for timely rain, good harvest, peace and prosperity in the country, year free of drought and famine.

Due to augmenting population growth and industrialization, rivers, lakes and ponds in mid-hill especially in Kathmandu Valley, inner terai and terai regions are getting polluted. Besides, stone spouts in Kathmandu Valley are either vanished or its source is getting drying as a result of urban sprawl. This has not only affected our age long culture and tradition practices besides it has also endangered such traditions. In Kathmandu Valley, people often do not take bath in the river systems unless extremely compulsory. So is the salutation of holy ponds in Janakpur. Thus, these holy places – river, confluences, lakes, ponds, spouts and wells, which are linked with our religion and tradition, should be conserved and kept away from pollution. Otherwise, our culture

which has inextricable link with water resources and structures won't take much to extinct. If for once, we loose our relation to these heritages and structures then it they might just be used for commercial purpose as we loose it's religious, spiritual and natural glory.

Presently, the world's environment is at stake. Among them, short of fresh water source in one. According to study conducted by UN, it forecasts at present rate of fresh water demand by the year 2050 world's 2.7 billion people would face water shortage. World's population is growing but not the supply of fresh water. World's 97% of water is Saline Ocean and 2% of it as an ice. Remaining 1% of it is used for human uses – drinking, irrigation and industrial use. It is predicated that cause of next world war would be on the dispute of water.

Thus, like other developed and developing nations, we should adopt different policies and programs for water usages and management. In fact, Government of Nepal had declared long term water policy in the year 2002. But these policies have hardly been adopted in any projects or programs. Few months earlier, in the drought hit region in Beijing, Government of People's Republic of China has conducted a program to transfer water to affected population. The policy would discourage licensing any industries requiring huge quantity of water. These industries comprise fiber, tannery, rubber, paper and chemical industries. Likewise other industries which consume high amount of water, e.g. distillery, plastic, pharmaceuticals etc are required to control its water consumption. The policy encourages other industries, like information technology, transportation, petro-chemical, tools, beverages and readymade cloths, which consumes little or no water. These approaches can be adopted in our country.

Nepal is one of the richest countries in water resources in South Asia. It is not important to highlight the significance of these resources. Thus, our culture, based in water, would promise prosperous future onlyif we are succeed in raising awareness among people, maintaining traditional water sources and structures regularly, elevating religious and spiritual glory, and conversing and managing sources of water.

## Chapter 2: River and Nepalese Culture

The earth is a common home for all terrestrial creatures, aquatic beings and plants. And it is only possible because of water, which has very close relationship with our culture. It is very difficult not only to keep account but also it's a subject of grave study and research. The main sources of water are snow peaks, glaciers and snow lakes on the earth (crust). There are many perineal rivers in our country originated from snow peaks which has covered most part of our country i.e. Mahakali river in west and Mechi river in east. This is the reason why all this snow peaks are regarded as a dwelling ground of Lord Shiva or custodian of all living creatures and worshiped. And the Himalayas are also regarded as maternal home of the daughter of Himalaya Parbat, Parvati (Lord Shiva's wife). So that, these all snow peaks, rivers, snow lakes, ponds etc are prominence religious and sacred places for us.

A Nepali whether Hindu or Buddhist believes that water is always sacred, living, and elixir for life. River is the main source of water. Wherever it may be regardless of its shape and size we worship it as Ganga. According to a legend Bhagirath had mediated to give salvation to his generations (thousand sons of Sagar king) from the curse of Kapil sage and he brought Ganges in the earth from heaven. While bringing the river, there was a chance of earth getting drown. So to obviate this danger, Shiva had blocked the current of Ganga with his *Jata* (disheveled hair) and then only Ganga came in the earth in form of different tributaries. Among the different tributaries Bhagirath had brought main tributary and gave salvation to his dead ancestors.

According to *Rigveda* there was no water in the earth for human settlement. It illustrated that Bhritashur (enemy of God Indra) had blocked the Ganga in heaven. After defeating Bhritashur on battle, God sent the Ganga in the earth without delaying. There is other legend related with Hindus' God Vishnu and Bramha. According to this legend when God Vishnu tried to cover the heaven with his third step by fraudulent to king Bali (philanthropist) at the same time small hole appeared by the step of Vishnu. So, Gangaes fell down over the Meru peaks of the earth. Then Ganga divided in two parts flowing in the four continent of the earth. Likewise next story illustrated that Bramha had kept Ganga inside his "Kamandalu". Once Bramha offered the Gangaes on the foot of Vishnu and she spread all over the heaven. In this way, Gangaes is originated from the *Jata* of Shiva, the foot of Vishnu, *Kamandalu* (water pitcher) of Bramha. So, it is always sacred, pure, able to remedy of sin, cure the diseases, divine power and providing maternal care to the all creatures. Therefore she remains adorable and superior. "*Agni puran*" says that way of river are always pure and clean. Bathing in the river is the way to get the sense of heaven. A blind man gets the knowledge from her. A criminal get off rid from the sin by

touching and drinking her. Our soul gets relieve by mixing on the river after death. Thus all the rivers of Nepal - Mechi or Mahakali and Karnali or Koshi - are religious and sacred places for Nepali people.

Koshi is a major river of eastern Nepal. Varaha region is the largest religious place of this region is located at the confluence of Koshi and Koka rivers. The Rai communities of this region believed that they remain unclean until the worshipping of Varaha in the full moon day of Kartik. The tribeni of Kamala River, Taba khola and Kakaru khola is located at Udaypur District at the eastern part of Nepal. Every year people celebrate fair in this place which is a biggest fair in Eastern Nepal. In Maghe Sankranti, many religious minded people (pilgrims) visit here from India. They used to bath in river and sacrifice goats, pigeons and this is famous with the name of Maini fair. Likewise there is tradition to sacrifice of *Panchabali* (sacrifice of buffalo, goat, cock, duck and egg) at the Sapsu Khola in Khotang district especially by Kirat people. It is wonderful tradition to sacrifice animal on the bank of rivers. Likewise another tribeni formed by Dudhakoshi, Thotne Khola and Raba Khola at Rabhuva also one of the famous sacred place in the eastern part of Nepal. Tribeni is junction of three rivers which is related with *Omkar*. According to ancient saying three parts of Om Aa, Au and Ma represent to the holiest river. These all three parts of Om are symbol of *Pradhumna, Aniruddha and Sankashran* of God Vishnu. It is said that there are of eighty eight junction of pilgrimage in Bagmati River. The literal meaning of pilgrimage is a place to cross river so that religious function like bathing, charity, or generosity etc held in the pilgrimage and it is quite popular in our society.

Kamala Maisthan, which is the confluence of Kamala River and *Gwang Khola* is another famous religious site at the central part of Nepal. The significance of Kamala Mai had explained in *Brihad Vishnu Puran of Mithila Mahatmya*. It is another holy place of Nepal where many pilgrims visit and sacrifice thousands of goats, pigeons, on the Maghe Sakranti. The traditions of sacrificing are original and separate identification of Nepal. The pilgrims going to the fair used to be sleeplessness by the whole night in course of reciting holy verses. Panauti of Kavrepalanchwok is the confluence of Bihabar Khola and Punyamati River. This is famous for a fair (whole month of year) which is celebrated every twelve years. Similarly Kumbha fair is held in terms of every six years respectively. Thousands of pilgrims visit, bath and worship here on this occasion.

The confluence of Trishuli and Tadi River is known as Devghat in the Nuwakot District. The temple of Jalpa Devi is located here. The pilgrims visit and worship here on the full moon day of Chaitra and it is known as a fair of Devighat. The cremation ceremony of Late Great King Prithivinarayan Shah (founder of Nepal) was held in Devighat. Likewise Devghat is another most important holy place which lies at the junction of Kaligandaki and Trishuli Ganga at Chitwan District where great fairs held in every Makar Sankranti.

'*Shankhamul*' the triple-braid of Soltu or Solukhola, Mahadev (Pandukeshar) and Hattipaila Khola lies in Makawanpur District where the fair is held in Janai Purnima in each three years on the field of near to Indrawati Temple.

Similarly Modibeni a holy place, the tribeni of Shree Krishna Gandaki, Kaligandaki and Modi River is in the southern part of Kushma, head quaters of Parbat district held great fair on the occasion of Shivaratri. The beautiful temple and sculpture of Nrisimha is erected here.

The region of Kaligandaki River at Mustang District regarded as a holy and sacred place where plenty of Saligram (Black smooth stone) found. Kaligandaki River was originated from the neck of God Vishnu as perspiration and thus it is black in color. So it is named as Kaligandaki. *Varaha Puran* and *Sacunda Puran* explained about Kaligandaki River in details. It is said that Gandaki is the most superior to other rivers. It is originated from Muktinath (lap of Himalayas) and reached in Harihar region (Sonapur of India). There are many famous *ghats* (crematorium place) in this river like Jyamirghat, Purtighat, Budhighat, Ridighat, Gaighat, Ranighat, Ramdighat, Hungighat, Keladighat, Debghat, Maryanghat, Shivaghat etc. Likewise Kagbeni, Madhubeni, Satibeni, Rudrabeni, Tribeni, junctions also related with this river. Adhyajagat Guru Shankaracharya wrote in his Gandaki stotra (scripture) "Ganga was made with the holy water flowed from the leg of God Vishnu". There is no question on the purity and significance of Kaligandaki, where Saligram (symbol of God Vishnu) itself bathes in this river. He added that Gandaki equals to Kuruchhetra in solar-lunar eclipse, Prayag Raj in Magha month, Gayaji in death rites and Kashi chhetra of dying period as eternity. '*Chhetranam Mukti chhetrancha Shrestha Girishu Shailarat. Nadishu Gandaki Shrestha Trayo me Prampriya:*' Or Mukti Chhetra is superior among the holy places as well as Himalaya among the mountains. Like wise Gandaki is the holiest of all the rivers. These three are favorites of god Barah.

Gandaki Region is the prime holy place among Nepal's several sacred places. Seven immense rivers are famous with the name of Saptagandaki in this region. The significance and origin of Saptagandaki is described in *Himabatkhanda Puran* that Saptagandaki and Saptakoshi are originated from the perspiration of the Goddess Parvati (Lord Shiva's wife). Seven river branches of Gandaki originated from Devi Parvati's perspiration has been defined in *Himabatkhanda Puran* – Trishuli as Dharmdhara, Budhigandaki as Yshodhara, Daraudi as Vishwadhara, Marshyangdi as Sitaprabha, Madi as Ratnadhara, Seti as Shubharnabha and Kaligandaki as Krishnabhakhya. Likewise seven streams of Saptagandaki are regarded as seven mother and named Trishuli Dharmadhara as Maheshwari, Budhigandaki as Kaumari, Seti Shubharnabha as Kalika

and Kaligandaki Krishnabhakhya as Ganga where Shubharnabha and Ganga renames for Chamunda and Mahalaxmi (Goddess of wealth) respectively.

Kakabeni, Myagdibeni, Modibeni, Setibeni and Rudrabeni are five most significant confluences of Kaligandaki in Gandaki region where Shaligrams are found. They have been playing vital role in preservation and propagating religious, cultural dignity and tradition of this region. The confluence of Kaligandaki and Kakakhola, famous as Kakabeni, is situated in the north to Jomsom of Mustang District. Water from one hundred eight salvation spouts of Muktinath mixes with Kaligandaki. Hindus believe that Kakbeni is related place to *Kakabhushundi* described in Shree Ramacharitmanas. Pilgrims going to Muktinath first conduct *Shraddha* (ceremony in honour of and for the benefit of the deceased ancestors) at Kakabeni and then continue their journey. Kagbeni, junction of Kaligandaki and Krishna Gandaki is a famous holy place of Nepal. It is believed that deceased attains heaven by conducting Shraddha in this river in their honor.

The confluence of Myagdi and Kaligandaki is famously known as Myagdibeni. The confluence of Modi River and Kaligandaki is also known as Modibeni. In every Ekadasi, Maghesankranti, Shree Panchami, Fagu Purnima and Shiva Ratri festival is celebrated here. The confluence of the Seti Khola and Kaligandaki is famously known as Setibeni. During Baisakh, Kartik and Maghesankranti a big festival is celebrated. The confluence of Badigand (Rudra Ganaga) slightly north to Ridi, and Kaligandaki is famously known as Rudrabeni. Festival is celebrated here during Janaipurnima, Haribodhani Ekadashi and Maghesankranti.

Muktichhetra, Ruruchhetra, Hariharchhetra, Trivenichhetra and Harichhetra are significant holy sites in Gandaki region. Triveni is situated at the southern part of Barghat and Arunkhola in Mahendra Highway. The confluence of Saptagandaki (Narayani), Sona and Panchanadi is a holy place known as Triveni where fair is held in new moon day of Magh. It is considered that the fair at Triveni is greatest of all in this region.

Beni, the head quarters of Myagdi District, is situated at the junction of Kaligandaki and Mangala rivers. It is also called Prayag or Pula where Pulasya Rishi (sage) had mediated. There is great rock fossil on the confluence of Kaligandaki and Rahughat Khola with Shaligram and it is worshiped as Galeshwar Mahadeva. Many people believed that Sage Jadabharat had also mediated in this place and rock fossil of Jadabharat found in the eastern part of Galeshwar temple where great fair held in every Balachaturdasi.

The temple of Jangeshwar Mahadeva and Laxmi Narayan erected on the bank of Krishnagandaki in Baglung Bazar. Many pilgrims come here and participate in the fair of Ekadashi of Kartik. Simalar fairs are held at Dhorpatan and Uttar Ganga during Janai

Purnima. The name of Jyamirghat is considered as the place where Sage Jyamir mediated in the ancient time. A great fair is held here in Maghesankranti.

The famous holy place of western Nepal is Ridi (Ruru) area. It is located at the bank of Kaligandaki River. Palpali King Mukunda Sen had erected the statue of Rishikesh Narayan found in Kaligandaki River at the period of bathing accidentally. Many people gathered there to celebrate the fair during the Kartik Ekadashi and Maghe Sankranti is popular as "Ridi Mela". The confluence of Krishnagandaki and Badigaun Khola is known as a Rudrabeni and it is another sacred and holy place of Gulmi district. It is said that one will get rid from enemy if one prays Ram in both Janaipurnima and Makar Shankranti. Chutrabeshi of Arghakhanchi district is located at the junction of Bagi Khola, Ghocho Khola and Bhadre Khola. So it is also called Tribenipur. A fair is held here on Shivaratri, Makar Sankranti, Fagupurnima and Bijaya Dashami.

Banaganga is another famous river of Kapilvastu District. It flows from a hole, in the southern part of Nartanachal, which was crushed by Rawan with his arrow (baan) felling a rocky hill. So it is called "Banaganga". Likewise another legend explains that Ram created a river by his arrow so the river thus named Banganga. Ramghat, Laxmanghat, are the holy places located at the bank of Banaganga. It is widely believed that by bathing and worshiping in Ram Ghat in Banganga clear away droughts.

Kharpunath, confluence of Karnali River and Dobhan Khola, is one of the famous religious sites in Humla District. A fair is held there during the Makar Shankranti and Shivaratri. Similarly, confluence of Tila and Jawa is famously known by the name of Dansangu, in Tibrikot District. Tibrikot also used as a crematorium place and it is known as *Tribeni Masanghat*. There is a famous temple of Lord Shiva. The people worship the Lord Shiva and pray for rainfall incase of droughts during the rainy season. *Panchakoshi* or *Panchatirtha* is another famous holy place of Dailekh district of Nepal. It lies in the confluence of Navi Khola, Chhamgad Khola and Dovan Khola. According to folklore the part of the bodies of Satidevi (Goddess) were demised here i.e. head at Shristhan, navel at Navisthan, foot at Podukasthan, body at Kotila and body dust in Dhuleshwar. Likewise it is saying that the flame of Shristhan, Navisthan and Podukasthan were originated respectively from the head, navel and foot of Narayan (God). Shristhan lies at the confluence of Navikhola and Chhamgad. There is temple of Jawalpa Devi at Shristhan with a flame. The flame has been burning since very ancient time. Fair is held here in Shivaratri. And people believe that the deceased one gets to heaven by cremating the dead body here. There is another burning flame at Navisthan, which lies in the bank of Navi Khola. The fair is held here in every full moon day of Magh. There is an ancient statue and temple with burning flame at Padushtan which lies at the bank of Padukhola. Kotila is another temple of Kotila, it is the temple of Mahadeva. People pray here for

rainfall if there is drought in the rainy season. It is situated at the confluence of Lohore Khola and Parajul Khola. The great fair held here in the Shree Panchami.

One of the famous sacred places of Nepal, Tapoban lies in Darchula District in western Nepal. It is famous for the hot water spout and a fair is held here in the day of Maha Shivaratri. Joljibi is another holy place of Nepal. It lies at the confluence of Mahakali River and Gauri River. The five days long marathon fair is held during the end of Kartik Month.

Most of these rivers have their own religious and cultural significance in the Nepalese society. According to *Nepal Mahatmya*, "*Bagmati Sharita Shrestha Yatrakutra Bagahyote Tatra Tatra Phalam Biddhawdaj Payashwmedhayo.*" It means Bagmati is the best among the rivers and if one bathes here, they get the result of Bajpeya and Ashwa Megha Yagya. And it is also said that "*Mreendra Shikhanam Gatwa Peetwa Bai Bagmati Jalam, Dukhayanti man Pshupati nate syum pashwo Debja*" or those who drink this sacred water of Bagmati and observe Pashupati never rebirth as an animal.

According to *Pashupati Puran*, Bagmati was originated from the word of Lord Shiva. Likewise seventh chapter of Nepal Mahatmya also explains about the creation of Bagmati River. According to it "Hiranya Kashipu (Demon) was killed by God Hari disguising himself as a lion. He later went to the Himalayas being tired. Pralahad also went to Himalaya reciting the name of God Nreesimha (Hari) looking for the God. As the god was found to be sitted as a lion Mreendra, this Himalaya named Mreendra Himal. Pralad meditated with hardship to have a glimpse of the god. Lord Mahadev gave a big laugh with pleasure thus a river was originated. Shiva told Pralad as this river has originated from his words it shall be called Bagmati.

The place from where the Bagmati originates is called Bagdwar. By bathing here on Mesh Sankranti or Baishak Sankranti, the birthday of Bagmati, one attains salvation. Similarly *Pashupati Puran* explains bathing in sacred Bagmati would pave the way to attain spiritual, physical and religious supremacy. Same puran also includes this supreme river graces with manorath (religion, wealth, kaam and salvation). So this river is Sewaniya (service, bath, donation etc) as well.

Gokarneswor, situated at the bank of Bagmati originating from Bagdwar, has important significance. *Pashupati Puran* and *Saraswati Bratakatha* depicts Rawana, son of Brisap Rishi, was granted blessings in this place. On the father's day (Kuseawansi) pople flock to Bramatirtha and Uttargaya of the Kathmandu Valley, a sacred place, to conduct sradha rituals. Not only the devotees attain virtuousness but deceased one also gets salvation from pindadaan. Bagmati approaches Aryaghat. The one who worships Lord Shiva by

sprinkling water from this river is emancipated from worldly suffering. Especially in the Shivaratri, Rishipanchami, Ekadasi, Purnima and the day of eclipse, there is a tradition to take bath in this river.

The burial places located at the banks of river have its own significance. Most of the Nepalese are cremated in this place. There is a tradition to place the dead body immersed partially in the water (*ardhajal*) after the body bathed. The stone of this ardhajal has shadow of Naga. The main intention of this ritual is to grant Vishnulok or Baikuntha (heaven) to the deceased one. Every Nepali who comes across the dead body blesses it to attain the heaven. There are many such burial places in the Kathmandu Valley. Some of the important ghats are Gokarneshwor, Ram Ghat, Arya Ghat, Rajrajeshwori Ghat, Shankhamul Ghat, Kalmochan Ghat, Panchali Ghat, Hanuman Ghat, Teku Dovan Ghat in Bagmati and Tankeswor Ghat, Ram Ghat, and Kankeshwari Ghat in Vishnumati. The dead body is cremated in these banks and remnant is flown in the river. But now days due to scarcity of water it is hard to flow the remnants (*asti*) in the river. Due to lack of water in the river, besides the ones that has very little water are extremely polluted, imposes hardship to conduct crematory rituals, fair and festivals. Now days, there is a provision of tap water in most of the *ghats* to perform such rituals.

Aaryaghat (Burial place) on the bank of Bagmati River near to Pashupatinath is the greatest sacred burial place not only for Kathmanduites but for all Nepali. One, during last stage of his/her live, is believed to attain heaven if they observe Pashupatinath partially dipped in Ardhajal along the Bagmati. People believed that they will get off rid from all kinds of sufferings by drinking water of Aaryagat before dying (final stage). If crematorim is conducted in Pashupati Argaghat or Basmeshwor Ghat the deceased gets salvation. Bagmati River, Manohara and Ganga make tribeni at Shankhamul. According to Nepali society's belief tribeni is regarded as great sacred place. Thus, Bagmati becomes more sacred after reaching Shankhamul, Patan. According to Hindus and Buddhist taditions water in Sankhamul Bagmati has more potent to heal diseases. Likewise according to *Swayambhu Puran* "A man tried to kill a monkey that tried to save him. For this sin man had to suffer from leprosy. This man came and bath at Sankhamul Bagmati and thus he got emancipated from his disease and sin. Similarly according to *Skanda Puran* "Chandra was cursed by his Guru Agastye to loose mental and physical powers for having child after having sexual affair with guru's wife but he was emancipated from the curse after bathing in Sankhamul Bagmati. Religious and cultural fairs and festivals are celebrated in this stretch all year round. The Buddhists of Kathmandu celebrate Gula festival in the ninth month of Newar calendar. They erect miniature of chityas from the mixture of sand and rice and they flow them in the confluence in the last day of fair. Twenty days fair is also held here during Basanta

Panchami to welcome coming autumn season; Bagmati is worship as a god on the first day of this festival. On the final day of *Swasthani Bratakatha*, devotees end the festival by cleansing themselves in the river. People of Patan regard Sankhamul as sacred as Aryaghat.

Teku Thapathali has the largest memorial monuments on the bank of Bagmati River. Shah Kings and Rana Rulers of Nepal have tried to make place similar to Ganga Ji Ghat in Banaras, India. Teku Dovan, confluence of Bagmati and Vishnumati or Chintamani Tirtha (sacred place) is the important sacred place for Hindus and Buddhist in this region. Temples of Hindu and shrines of Buddhist can be observed coexisting in this landscape. This area is the largest "Ghat" (burial place) for the people residing on the southern Kathmandu. There is Panchanari Ghat near to the Teku Dovan and fair is held during Panchali Bhairab Jatra here few days before of Dashain. Similarly, Rajtirtha Kunda (pond) which smells like black salt (birenoon/hydrogen sulphide odor) is located just opposite to Panchali Ghat It is believed that disease is cured by bathing in Rajtirtha Kunda. Likewise Kalmochan Ghat has its own significance. The mourning ceremony of Royal family held here until all the rituals are completed.

According to Buddhist tradition, Manjushree had cut the edge of the Kathmandu Valley using *Pragya Kadga* to drain water from *Kali Daha* which was contained by the surrounding hillocks. By seeing it Kakuchhanda Buddha went up to Shivapuri Hill and pierced the boulder with his thumb creating a water source and it became popular as Bagmati River. Kakuchhanda Buddha cut the hair of his disciples to change them as a monk, and river popularly known by the name Keshawati originated from the place where the hair remnants were thrown.

Keshabati (Vishnumati) is also an important river like as Bagmati River for the Nepalese society. *Pashupati Puran* presents "Very clean water originated from the foot of God Vishnu thus it has great significance with the name of Vishnumati in the earth". People who observe and bathe in the Vishnumati River will get Vishnulok (heaven). "*Nadi Vishnu Padim Pashya Phenomidhavlam Shubham. Yatra Snanena Manujo Vishnulokm Prapashyati*" (Nepal Mahatmya) which means look at the clean and tranquil Vishnumati were ones is awarded with Vishnulok (heaven) if one takes bath. Tankeshwor ghat, Tankeshwor Mahadeva, Bijeshwori, Shova Bhagwati and Karbir Mashan and Indrayeni ghat are the burial places and temples situated at the bank of Vishnumati River. These ghats or (burial place) are used for crematory rituals by the people of northern Kathmandu. But Vishnumati is also polluting day by day and is in very pitiable condition like Bagmati River so Shree Jyapu Mahaguthi "nepa" an organisation launching some programs to conserve it.

According to Hindu tradition, there are one hundred sacred places along the Bagmati River i.e. Gokarna, Guheshwari, Pashupti, Hanumanta, Panchayan, Shankhamul, Kalmochan etc. Likewise according to Boudha tradition there are four large rivers in Nepal. They are Bagmati, Keshavati, Manirohini and Prabhavati. And there are twelve most sacred places inside the Nepal Mandal (Kathmandu Valley). All these holy places are at the confluence of some large rivers. Like "Gokarna" it is also called Bramha Tirtha and the confluence of Chandra Bhaga and Bagmati River. Guheshwari is in the confluence of Maradayini and Bagmati rivers known as Shanti Tirtha. Shankhamul is the confluence of Manimati and Bagmati River also called Shankar Tirtha, Dhantali is the confluence of Manjari and Bagmati River, Khusinkhya (Manorath Tirtha) is confluence of Bimalavati and Keshavati River. Similarly, the confluence of Kushumvati and Keshavati is regarded Bilas (Nirmal Tirtha), Kangakhusi (Nidhan Tirtha) called for confluence of Papanashini and Keshavati, confluence of Bagmati and Vishnumati Rivers is also known as Jay Tirtha, Nakku etc. are the famous sacred places on the bank of rivers.

Bagmati and Vishnumati Rivers had greatly contributed to develop the culture and civilization of Kathmandu Valley. Most of the world's civilizations have been flourished on the bank of river and it had contributed to environmental, economic, social, cultural and religious landscape. So, river is worshiped as a sacred God and Goddess in most of the Asian countries including Nepal. River can be used for domestic purposes and to irrigate lands and another hand it also can be used for hydroelectricity generation and for industrial purposes.

Bagmati, Vishnumati and their branch rivers along with tributaries are the life line of Kathmanduites. Most of the sacred places, temples, and crematoriums lie along with riverbanks. The water of these rivers is considered pure and sinless in our society. The relationship between rivers and people lasts from birth to death. In most of the Asian countries as well as in our country river is regarded as sanctified and Goddess.

Bagmati, Vishnumati and their tributaries are the lifelines of Kathmanduits. Most of the sacred and religious places of Nepal are located on the bank of river. Water is always regarded as symbol of holiness in our society. Our whole life is based on the river. We perform ceremony in admiration of and for the benefit of the deceased ancestors in the river. Thus, river is not only source of sacred and pure water but also the bridge to connect our life with another life.

In Nepalese culture, river bears very important role. Till few year back, people during their last stage would want to get salvation from these places enjoying clean environment under the sentinel of god and goddess. At present due to the rapid population growth,

rivers are being polluted day by day. There is very little interest to visit the sacred places on the bank of river; but most of the religious activities including cremation ceremony (in honor of and for the benefit of the ancestors) are been performed on the bank of river. We believe that those offerings will get to our ancestors in the heaven with the help of river. In this regard, it is believed that river links the earth and the heaven.

*"Mata Ganga Samantirtha Pita Puskar Meva Cha, Guru Kedar Samantirtha Mata Ganga Puna: pun"* (Chanakya Niti). It means we worship (take) river as a mother and water of river resembles milk of our mother. As a whole it nurtures, supports all the human being to sustain their life. She is on this earth to care us. We can feel her and see her; like a mother she accepts our wastages. She is impartial, liberal, lawful, cordial and natural mother for us. Thus, *Pashupati Puran* (hindu legend) present that *"Sarbatirthabati"* (with all holy places) providing *Manorath* (heart felt wish or interest regarding religion, wealth, emancipation, duty etc) to all and she is most respected for those who believed in the Shivalok (heaven).

But since the decade of 60s, river is polluting day by day due to effects of urbanization, rapid population growth and industrialization in the river side. Now it is a matter of shame to call Bagmati and Vishnumati the rivers. These are no more rivers but open sewage. If the pollution on the river isn't controlled timely then Kathmandu Valley, a place enriched with natural and cultural, will not be a residing place for people to live.

## Chapter 3: Ponds, Lakes and Kunda in Nepali Culture

In ancient time Kathmandu Valley was popularly recognized as *Nepal-mandal*. It has been scientifically proven that this valley was a big lake in prehistoric time. Tales based on both Buddhism and Hinduism narrates on how people started living here which was once dwelling ground for snakes Basuki, Kakortak etc. According to *Swambhu Puran*, in ancient days at the center of this *Kali Daha* Bipasi Buddhu germinated lotus flower from which Swayambhu came out. To pay homage for Swayambhu, Manjushree came all the way from China and resided in Nagarkot. With the intention to drain out the water of this Kali Daha for human settlement, snakes (nags) were also driven out while Manjushree strike the hills with his *Pragya Khagda*. But when Manjushree saw ousting *Karkotak Nag*, he thought it would not cascade good omen to the valley so he created an aesthetical pond for Karkotak Nag and requested him to stay there. Since then *Taudaha* which is situated on the way to Dashinkali is believed to be a dwelling ground for Karkotak. *Pashupati Puran* and many *Vamsawalis* (chronicles) state that after Lord Narayan incarnated as Krishna, he came to Nepal Valley to reside in Dahachowk. He handed over his son Pradhuman with *Sudersan Chakra* (disc) to assassinate Kachapasur who had been blocking the Kali Daha. After his assassination, blocked Chabar Hill was channeled for the flow of Bagmati and hence the started settlement. *Himabatkhand* explains this pond as follows –

Jyto rupe mayi chetra meta dadhado vabhisyati||  
Nagaha eti khyata niruda Bagmati jalam||  
Bagmatya chha nadibhute banjaane chha mandale||

means while I am guised as light this place would be reputedly known as *Nagdaha*. Bagmati's water would be blocked. Later when Bagmati is channeled out this place would form Nepal Mandal forest. Thus as Kathmandu Valley was formed after the drying of lake, Nepali culture regards lakes with utmost importance.

If there is no rain in the Kathmandu Valley, people go to Taudaha to worship Karkotak Nag to pledge for water. According to one of the folklores – once a king in the Kathmandu Valley indulged into incest and as a punishment god cursed this place with drought. But as this king was Tantrik himself, he called all the Nagrajas and obligated them to precipitate. Except Taudaha's Karkotak Nag, all other nags followed king's decree. When king realized that Karkotak had disobeyed him, furious king with his *tantra* compelled nagraj to obey him. After realizing infinite power of the king, Karkotak apologized and presented a picture of his own painted with his own blood and assured if it didn't rain in future then worshipping the picture would certainly cause rain. Since then it is assumed that tradition of worshipping picture of nagraj in Nag Panchami started in valley.

According to other folk tale, once Nepal Valley was the ruled by Danasur Danava. He had stolen the treasures of Indra, King of Heaven, and concealed them in his state. With the assistance of Karkotak, Indra got his treasure back as he flooded the Bagmati which washed treasure concealed by Danasur. But Karkotak took a fourth of treasure to his palace inside Taudaha as reward for helping Indra getting back his treasure. Thus, it is believed that there is plethora of property inside Taudaha. Thus, one who bathes in Taudaha in Mesh Sangranti or Baisak Sangranti is believed to be blessed with prosperity.

Among the important *dahas* (lake or pond) in Kathmandu Valley, Daha chowk and Matatirtha Daha are also of importance. Dahachowk's Indra Daha also has relation with Indrajatra. According to folklore, Indra, king of the heaven, very much liked *Parijaat* flower. Indra's mother needed Parijaat flower for fasting. As per mother's order Indra manifested as human and descended in Nepal Valley to steel flower. He was caught while he was about to steel the flower and people tied him with rope and placed in the crossroads. Mother of Indra in search for his son came to Nepal Valley and for the release for her son she swore to send dew and mist in the winter season to mature wheat and rice, and show the way to heaven to dead spirits. She managed dew and mist for winter season. But the souls who followed her to get to heaven went astray while reaching Dahachowk. Indra fell into the daha while people couldn't find their way out. Therefore, during Indrajatra in the day of Bhadra Sukla Chaturdasi masked people, who have family member dead in that year, follow symbolic Indra's mother. Tradition of going round the town, and taking bath in Indradaha praying the dead soul to find way to heavenly body is still in practice. This festival is widely known as *Dangi Jane*. Presently, this Daha is in form of small pond. There is a tale that Indra took bath in there.

Matatirha has also its own tale. In ancient time one herdsman was deeply broken by his mother's death. On the mother's day he was remembering his mother sitting besides the pond in nearby forest. While he was staring at the pond remembering his mother, he saw the face of her mother in the pond and he also offered some food for her mother. Mother accepted the offered food. Since then, the pond was famously named as Matatirtha. Once a girl dipped into the pond after seeing her mother's face in it but she vanished inside the pond. Since then mother's face could not be seen in the pond. But it is often believed that mother's soul gets offering presented in the mother's day. On the same day there is huge crowd of people to perform *sharadh* in remembrance of deceased mother.

According to folklore, once a merchant's son was shattered by his mother's dead. He called Lord Vishnu and said he would like to die if he doesn't get to see his mother's face. After hearing his pledge Lord Vishnu manifested into Brahman and took the boy to Matatirtha on the mother's day. While taking bath in the pond the boy saw his mother

then he told Brahman that he wanted to take his mother home. Vishnu in guise of Brahman replied that it would not be possible at all. But assured the boy that she would be her mother his next life. Brahman said that his mother soul would rest in peace as he had taken holy dip and also offered presents to his mother. Thereafter, the boy felt very happy and with mother's blessing he even became the king. Just as the belief that rivers connect the earth with the heaven similarly ponds and lakes bridges the earth and the heaven which is proved by Indradaha and Matatirtha. It is believed that by taking bath in Matatirtha in *Chaitrakirshna Amaabaisya* one gets released from all the curses and becomes prosperous.

Manichud Danda near Sakhu town, situated in Kathmandu District, there is Manichud Daha. Kathmanduits, especially Buddhists, regards this pond very holy. In the ancient time, an ascetic king Manichud was performing *Tapasya* residing in a cave near the pond. One day raja knew that people residing in the peripheral villages are suffering from plague but to prevent from the disease he had an idea – to dip the *mani* or crystal stone from his forehead to the pond and by using the water people would recover from the disease. He also knew that if he took *mani* from his forehead he would die instantly. But for the betterment of populace he didn't bother about his own life so he dipped the *mani* in the pond and the water healed everyone. After taking the *mani* from his forehead he died but he was transformed into *shila*. This shila still exists there. One who comes and takes bath in *Falgunkrishna Saptami*, *Chaitrapurnima* and *Sangrantis* gets relieved by all fears, it is also believed that he gets the blessing as of performing *Ashwamegh*.

Trend of constructing ponds in the Kathmandu Valley dated back to 5th and 6th BC. From the excavation at Satyanarayan Temple, near Hadigaon, it is inferred that there used to be a pond in ancient time. Art of constructing ponds introduced by Shakas and Parthians in the time before Christ was given continuity by Lichhavi, Malla and early Shah Periods. As a result, numerous ponds were constructed in the valley. Ancient towns inside the valley like. Thankot, Satungal, Thimi, Bode, Nagdesh, Kritipur, Farping, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Lele, Tokha have big ponds in their vicinity. These ponds are source of water for people living in these places. The water is used for drinking, washing, bathing, irrigation and other purposes. In constructing the pond, water is stored from Kunda or water source or even from the wells. Some of the ponds were constructed by diverting water from wetlands.

Prior establishment of stone-spouts, ponds were the main source of water after river. Even after stone spouts particularly produced drinking water in large quantity, lakes were still in use for washing and feeding animals and birds, irrigation and other religious as

well as social activities. After the use of hand pumps, the usages of lakes became drastically low. According to one study, there are approximately one hundred ancient lakes in the valley. But as their usage has receded, their importance has receded as well. As a result, their maintenance and renovation couldn't take place and gradually they have started to fall. Yet some of them having religious and cultural importance however could exist anyhow.

It has already been stated that construction of lakes in the Kathmandu Valley started during the era of Licchavi and before. The evidences got till date indicates that inscription found in Ansuverma's Tistung Taukhel in 37 Sambat (614AD) mentioned the word '*Dakshinene Khatak*' or lake or pond at south which implies construction of lakes or ponds had already began. During Licchavi era lots of phrases were in use pertaining to construction of lakes e.g. Paniya Gosti, Pranali Gosti, Matsyakar, "Lingaval Adhikarana etc. These things are especially known from the inscription of Raja Shiva Dev of Sambat 121 (754AD).

During the Malla era, there had been establishment of numerous lakes as well. According to Gopal Raj Vamsabali (Chronical), Shiva Dev constructed many stone spouts, lakes, dams and canals in 1114 BS. Likewise, in 1136BS, Prince Mahendra Dev constructed lake named Madan Srovar and to construct that pond he collected one *Damma* (coin) from each citizen. Largest pond constructed during Malla era in Kathmandu is Ranipokhari. It has dimension of 180mX140m. The pond known as *Nhupukhu* or new pond of Malla era took five years for construction. Religious importance of this pond is revealed by Shiva temple at the centre of the pond and statues surrounding the pond. Thus the inscription of Malla era calls the area of pond as "*Parameshor Parmeshwari Brahmabhumi*".

Pratap Malla built Kathmandu's popular Rani Pokhari in remembrance of his deceased son Chakrabartendra Malla as a condolence for grieving Queen Bhuvan Laxmi. Water of this lake was made sacred by mixing water brought from different holy places in the state, building the Shiva Temple in the later and surrounding the pond with different deities, construction of this pond was completed in 1670AD. One can understand the religious importance of this pond simply by deservng the evidences inscribed at the bottom of the statue of Madhav Narayan, situated at northern corner. "*Ganga Shona Saraswati Cha Yamuna, Godavari, Gandaki Kaveri kil Kausiki cha Saritam patyadi punyodakai. Ya samyak paripurita Tribhuvane khyata suyogyotsabai ramya sewa Munindradev Manujaisamsa (se) vyate sarbda*". This means pond which contain water (Jal) from Ganga, Shona Sararwati, Yamuna, Godavari, Gandaki, Kaveri, Kausiki and Ocean. These lakes are renowned in all three lok (spiritual world) for conducting good *yagya*. Munis or saints, deities and people dance under it.

From historical perspective Naag Pokhari of Naxal should be another main pond after Rani Pokhari. This pond was constructed by Shree Paanch Rana Bahadur's wife SuvarnaPrabha in 1730 Sake Sambat. The next important pond is Gahana pokhari in Handigaon. The pond, constructed in sixteenth century, celebrates festival of hunting jewellery every *Chaitra Punima*. According to widely accepted folklore Bhatbhateni lost her ornaments while going to wash her clothes. Therefore this festival of hunting jewellery is held every year to remember this incident.

Besides kings and royal families, there are numerous examples that even the normal citizens have established different ponds in the Valley. For instance Bhaktapur's Bhaju Pokhari, Thimi's pokhari constructed by Goma Singh Bharo in 1657AD, Bhuddhist monk who erected pond in 1639AD in Chapagaon, Dhan Singh Maheswari who established pond at Bakutole in Banepa in 1771AD. Likewise Pakanajol's walled pond was built by Karpardar Bhotu Pandey etc.

Many ponds of Kathmandu District are vanishing. Only few years back the famous Naag Pokhari near Dharahara was vanished as new houses were constructed. Some of the ponds that have vanished in the recent years are Milupokhari, Sinduwaalpokhari, Kaitahitimanipokhari, Ekhapokhari etc. Kaitahitimanipokhari is believed to be situated at KMC Ward No. 14 Kalimati. Ekhapokhari of Nyokha is replaced by Kanya Mandir School and similarly, Police Head Quarter Office has been established above Sinduwaal Pokhari in Naxal.

But also pond of Boudha and Kutuvahil Pokhari of Chabahil are some the important ponds that are still remaining today. Among the kundas, most famous one is on Raaj ghat on the other side of Kalopul, Bagmati which taste and smell like a Black Salt. Bathing in this kunda heals skin disease and makes healthier. So every day crowd of people flock there all day to to bath here. Establishment of different god and goddess on all the sides of the kunda makes this place more important.

The source of water or kunda situated at Pharping Shikharnaryaan is known as Basuki kunda. This is one of the main and most important source of water in Kathmandu Valley. Just above this kunda there is an ancient temple of Shikhar Narayan or Shesnarayan. Ponds were made from the water of kunda by supplying water from *dungeydhara* (stone spout). Mahadev, Surya etc and many idols of god goddess are established around the pond and kunda. There is an interesting story about the formation of this kunda. At the times when there was no any pure water nearby for the daily worshipping of Shikhar Narayan, a handicapped Brahmin boy was priest there. His mother brought him daily to do pooja by carrying him. For fetch sacred water she had to walk through the jungle to

Hadu Khola, where Indrenipith is situated in days. The widow Brahmani suffered from such intolerable pains used to cry while performing routined pooja of Shikhar Narayan. One day she cried loudly .She cried over the irony that devotees of Narayan, who dwells in *Chher Sagar*, had to suffer for meager water. Lord Narayan also felt pity over her grievances. So he immediately created the *daha* by destroying the base of Shikareshwore mountain thereby making a continuous source of water. Bharamni was very happy to get what she had ask form But her happiness changed into sadness after sometime because she could not cross the large daha and continuous water flow of Shikharini river to get back to her home. Stunned Bharamni again started to cry. By the grace of god she saw a pair of large Naag near the kunda. So she got afraid first however she started praying to them. Snakes helped the Bhramani and the child Brahmin to cross it. After that it has been a custom and it is still in practice that in every two years in Baishak Shankranti a pair of large pine tree are cut, made in the shape of snakes and place in that daha. It is believed that bathing at this kunda in chaitra sukla duwadashi and sankranti will destroy all the sins and reside in heaven. The kunda near Gopaleshwore Mahadevasthan of pharphing is known as Gomati Tirtha. It is believed that when small children suffering from diseases are bathed in this kunda with their clothes will get recovered from malnutrition and other diseases.

Gwala Daha (Cow Shepard Lake), Katuwal Daha of Patan District, Naag Daha situated in Dhapakhel and Bojho Pond of Imadole are very important ponds or lakes. Every year in Naagpanchami, there is crowd of people in Naag Daha of Dhapakhel to see the fair and dive into the water with a wish that people died by snake bite may attain the heaven. The family of dead people bath in “Naapukhu” or “Deypukhu” of Bungmati VDC of Patan though it is mixed with dirty water from sewage because they don't become pure if they won't bath over it. According to a legend, while Rishi Gautam was meditating, a devil, disguised as a cow, intended to disturb his meditation. Rishi killed that cow. He bathed to emancipate from the sin of cow-murder. Since then the kunda is known as Godavari Kunda. This is one of the 64 holy places of Kathmandu. In every twelve years, there is a month long fair in Godavari Kunda. People from distance places come to observe the fair and take bath in the kunda. Buddhists view it as an image of Basundhara. At the eastern side of Lele, there is Saraswati Kunda. A big fair is held there in Basanta Panchami. It is believed that bathing at this kunda on that day will increase the knowledge. It is also believed that bathing in this kunda on the full moon day will destroy all the sin, get knowledge and become lucky.

Among the ancient city of valley, there are still many remnants of culture and civilization of Medieval Period in Bhktapur. Being an agriculture based town most of the people realize the importance of water. Ponds were already made here during Lichhivi period. Local people believe that Khacha Pokhari and ChyamaSingh Pond were constructed

during Lichivi period. According to the historical evidences, Madan Sarovar was made by Prince Mahendra Dev in 119 NS (1136 BS) is the most ancient pond of this district. Similarly another ancient pond called “Naka Pokhari” was made by one of the Bhardars (royal officials) in 389 NS (1226BS)

It is said that there are all together forty two big and small ponds in Bhaktapur. “Siddha Pokhari” is the oldest and historical or religiously important pond of this place. It was constructed during the reign of King Jagatjyoti Malla in 1630BS. After that King Jitmitra Malla in year 1677 BS, Prime Minister Bhimsen Thapa in 1825 BS, and after that Rana Prime Minister Ranodip Singh renovated the pond. This pond is also a holy place in Bhaktapur District. There is still a custom that during Indra Jatra they celebrate fair and bring Indrayani Devi and place her in the western side of the pond and worship her, performing religious rules (Trantik Bidhi). Jagatjyoti Malla made this pond and established an inscription regarding the maintenance of it and stated in it that those who do not fulfill this rule would be committing great sin. This pond is surrounded by walls on all the four sides and there are four doors in the each side. Which is also called “*Indra Daha*” and “*Tapukhu*” (*Tawapukhu*) by local people. People of Bhaktapur use this pond for religious and cultural festivals. An especial fair is held in this pond during Dashain. There is an interesting legend on naming of this pond as Siddha Pokhari. In one of the big pond outside Bhaktapur, one wicked snake used to attract the people by luring them with gold and silver and killed them inside the pond. So to stop this cruel act of the wicked snake, one of the Tantrik from Thimi told his wife about it and went there. He said that he would transform himself as a snake. He also said that if she saw blood in the pond water then she should think that he had killed the snake. But after coming out from pond water as snake he would become man only if she sprinkled those rice pieces which he have given her by doing magic. So after convincing all this to his wife he went inside the pond. Blood was continuously flowing out from the surface of the pond. His wife forgot all the things that his husband has told and ran away due to the fear of the snake. Seeing this Tantrik become sad and stayed there. It is heard that after that people of Thimi still do not go near that pond with a fear that Thantrik snake will take the revenge. According to another story at one time one Thantrik from Bhaktapur had a very beautiful wife from Thimi. That Thantrik could change himself in any form according to his wish. One night his wife wish to see his changed form. So he asked his wife throw that rice to him after he changed his form so that he could return to his original form. His wife obeyed it. But when her husband changed into huge dangerous snake that his wife forgot all the things and with a fear she ran away from home. Running after his wife for sometime, it became morning when he reached Sidha Pokhari so he thought that it would be better if he stay on the pond instead of running after his wife so he stayed in the pond as 'naagraj'. It is heard that after that day if any people from Thimi comes to bath at that pond than Nagraj will pull them inside that pond. Also that pond was known as Siddha Pokhari.

At the time of famine it is a custom that local people come to Siddha pokhari to worship Bashuki snake for rain. Besides, Gobaju (Vajracharya Priest) also holds tantrik worshipping praying for rain. During the famine in BS2018, Gobajus performed Nagsadhana in Pati (the rest house), east to Sidhhapokhari. There are about four dozen big and small ponds in Bhaktapur among these, among them Bhajuya pukhy or Bhaja pokhari has been renovated recently. This pond is known as Bhajukasa Pukhu because it was constructed by Bhagiram or Bhajukasa. He was a Bharadar of King Jitmitra Malla of Bhaktapur. The area of this pond is 460 ft x 376 ft. The important ponds inside Bhaktapur Municipal City are Chayamsingh Pukhu, Tekha Pukhu, Na Pukhu, Bolachhe Pukhu, Kwathandu Pokhari, Khacha Pokhari (Inacho) Kamal Binayak Pokhari which has an area of 300ft X 125ft, Salaha Ganesh Pokhari etc. Among the ponds of Bhaktapur Kamal Binayak Pokhari Siddhapokhari and Garud pokhari are important from religion point of view

Another important pond of Bhaktapur district is Mahadev Pokhari. This pond has its own importance. This pond is also the originated of Hanumantey Khola. Shivalinga of this pond as Kumbheshwore is worshipped by healers and wizards. All these sources of water like lake, pond, well, spring etc have their own importance in Nepali culture and life. Some have religious or cultural importances while other has natural or aesthetic importance. Far away from Bhaktapur city in the middle of land of Jitpur, there are four five water sources can be found. Among them the central one is large in size. This is called as *Dhanya Kunda* or *Shabunga*. There is a legend that once when there was draught King Narandra Dev and Acharya Bandhukatta meditated God Machindra Nath. The God blessed by ordering them get seeds of seven kinds of grains from the Dhanya Kunda That the seeds of the seasonal grains become available in the premises of the Kunda even today

Garudha Kunda of Bhaktapur municipality is small in size but it is considered that religiously very important. This Kunda is sixteen feet long and eight feet wide and surrounded by wall. Water is thought to be flowing from the naval of the statute of God Garudh Narayan.

There are many ponds, lakes, kundas, etc in Nepal we cannot account them easily. Even though these sources of water and our culture have been interrelated and how they have influenced our culture all these things are presented here briefly.

There is a big kunda at the height of about 1220 feet above sea level, in Kalinchowk of Dolakha districts in Western region of Nepal. This pond is worshipped as Kalinchok Mai.

This place, which is religiously important, has released Tamakoshi River from the north side and Sunakoshi from the south. Fair is held there every year in the kunda. There are many legends about the Kunda considered as Kalinchok Bhagvati. Legend states that Dolakha's Kalinchok Bagwati assassinated a demon that was causing nuisance to the people. People celebrated bringing the Bhagwati in their town. To symbolize this event, every year in *Balachaturdashi* people merrily carry the goddess to Kalinchowk temple in Kikimpa Khat. They again bring back decorating her. During purnima day, the goddess is brought back to temple again. Then yagya is started in Narayansthan. According to tradition, after a Lakhe step over the *yagya kund* a person is made to swim in the pond. After he completed three laps, half head of a Buffalo is awarded to him.

A pond named Paanch Pokhari is situated that 13000 feet in the north to Dolakha and Ramechhap border. The water from pond cascade five hundred yards below. Besides, Jatapokhari, Bhalepokhari, Baulapokhari, Bhutpokhari, and Kalpokhari are significant ponds. Among them, Jatapokhari has unprecedented aesthetic view. People believe childless parents are granted with the child if they worship this pond, situated at 4500 meter above sea level. Likewise, pregnant woman are debarred from visiting Jatapokhari. Situated in the lap of Himalaya, devotees believe it having image of real Gaurishankar (Mahadev Parvati Couple). A big fair is held during Shrawan Sukla Purnima.

There are many historically and religiously important water ponds in Dhanusa District. There are more than 150 ponds just in Janakpur. There is a saying that Janakpur is a city of ponds. Including big and small, 75 ponds are in existence but most of them are polluted and in poor condition. Besides some big ponds, most of the small ponds have been filled up and houses have been built on these places. Ganga Sagar, Dhanu Sagar and Aargaja are the main and famous ponds in Janakpur. The origin of Ganga Sagar in "Janakpur Mahima" has been described as - there was a king named Nimi. He had no son. He died craving for a son and that led to death. Yagyabalka, Bishwamitra and other saints jointly decided to churn Nimi's death body, which led to origin of a boy from there. They named the boy Mithi. Ganga, Jamuna and some other rivers had come there to observe the wheeling function (Mathan). Since then, Ganga Sagar was originated with the water of the rivers the rivers of Ganga and Jamauna present at the Mathan time. Ghats (crematorium and bath taking places) have been made around the pond. They were beautifully constructed. There is a belief that one takes bath in the Sagar his/her sin will be washed away. That is why, almost all pilgrimages visit Janakpur take bath in this pond. There is a crematorium to burn the death body in the southern part of Ganga Sagar. It is called Manikarnika Ghat where death bodies are brought for the final disposal from several and far away places also. Every year, on the *Jestha Sukla Dashami* a fair is held around the Ganga Sagar. It is believed that there was Shiva Dhanu (bow) in the Dhanu

Sagar. Aargaja pond lies on the western side of Janaki Temple. There is a legend that daughter of King Janak used to take bath in the pond keeping a curtain there. There is another legend that also tells- Ramachandra had bath in the same holy water before his marriage. People believe that the holy water of the pond cure various kinds of skin diseases. Besides this pond there are great many ponds named as- Murali, Bhagarva, Janak, Dhruba, Janaki, Amrit etc. Especially there is great religious faith behind the Janak Pond or Sarovar. Even the sin of murdering parents and cows is enmacipated by taking bath of that pond water. But these days the condition of the pond is highly polluted and poor too. This pond has been used for fishing and irrigation for near by lands. Several districts in Terai- like Dhanusa and Janakpur are dominated with Maithili culture. In almost every festivals and religious functions these ponds are used in Terai. Specially on the *Kartik Shukla Shasthi*, people go to the bank of these ponds and rivers and have the look (Darshan) of the sun rising by offering various fruits, flowers and pots (mato ko ghada) and elephants made of earth. On the second day early morning before sun rise, people use to gather on the same place and offer the holy water of the ponds to the sun with a great hope of well being. This is known as “*Chatha Parba*” one of the great festival in Terai Region.

In the Mahotari District, there are several ponds, which have historical and religious importance and values. They are Mahodari, Barunsar, and Bhargabsar. There are two ponds in both sides-front and back of Jaleshwar Mahadev temple in Jaleshwar. The front one is known as Barunsar and the back one is called as Chireswar. Pilgrimages take bath in these ponds with great faith and devotion and offer the holy water of the ponds to the Mahadev. On the auspicious occasion of Ram Nawami, Vibahapanchami and Parikrama, people from distance pour down here in great numbers. The people who take fasting on the occasion of Chhatha Parba also take bath in these ponds. Many years ago, Rishi Bhargav came there and did meditation in the place. So this pond is called Bhargavsar after his name. It is just from people to people hearing from long time. On Janai Purnima, Brahmans take bathe in this pond and put on their sacred thread (Janai). The Dudhmati Talau (small pond) is also taken as holy pond. This is expanded about in one and half bigha land with pure and clear water. This pond is formed with the ever-flowing small spring near by it. Here is a legend that tells- once this pond was Dudh Kunda filled with milk. Many years ago, one Brahman was backing home by that milky pond from performing someone's death rituals (shraddha). He saw milk in the pond. He was tempted with the milk and he used the milk of the pond to cook rice pudding for himself. Then he threw the rest pudding, which he couldn't finish, in the same pond. Since then, because of the Brahman's mistake the milk pond changed into water pond. Especially, on the day of Ekadashi, Maghe sankranti, Shreepanchami and in the month of Baisakh, devotees gather in the pond with the great religious faith and devotion. A great fair is held during Shreepanchami in the pond.

Nadhi Pond or Nadhimain Pond and Ghodadaudi Pond of Sarlahi District are also significant and mentionable. Nadhi pond has carries their own values and importance. Nadhi Pond has covered 53 bighas land. There is a belief in people that this is the pond, in the Mahabharata, during forest life of Pandava, Nahakul and Sahadev had taken water from “*Yakshya Daha*” with the order of their elder brother Yudhisthir.

There are thirty-six ponds including big and small in Simaraun VDC of Bara District. The biggest one Jharokhar Pond is expanded in 52 bighas land. It is also known as Devtal. Ishara Pond, which has covered 8 bighas land, Kankali Pond, Ranibash Pond, Rajbada Pond are among main ponds of Bara District. They have carried their own values and importance. Simraungarh was the capital place in the regime of Karnataka Rulers. They had made these ponds between 11<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. These days in the absence of protection and take caring, the condition of the ponds is going down. The local people throw their household wasteges in the pond and some of the parts, edges of the pond have seen over captured. Halkkhoriya Lake of Bara district, which has covered the land of about 15, hector, has carried historical as well as archaeological values and importance. People say that this was the main playing place of Makawanpur Royal Family. Kankali Pond is the biggest one of the district. That lies near the historical Simaraungarh ruins in Kalaiya.

On the high hills, top of Sindhupallchok District's small water lakes, ponds which are made by snow melting, have been found in large numbers. Among them Bhairabi Kunda in about 14000ft high is the biggest and famous one. The Pancha Pokhari is the collection of five small ponds. Every year, on full moon of Shrawan, a great fair is held there. By the side of Araniko Highway, in a short distance from Chautara, fourteen stone spouts of hot water are flowing continuously. The water is captured from the hot spring nearby. The people who are suffering from skin diseases, even from long distance come there in the months of Kartik, Magh and Jestha.

Pancha Kanya Pond of Sindhuli District is situated in the middle of the jungle. The temple of Pancha Kanya Devi is at the side of the pond. People believe that they can get help from the Devi in need, by taking bath in the pond.

Among lakes and ponds of Kavre District, Taro khaseko pond of Mul danda, Timal Narayan Pond, Deu Pond of Chaurodumkharka and Mahadev Pond of Nagarkot are significant.

There are many small ponds in the high lands of Rasuwa district. Among them Kalo Seto Daha (black and white Lake) which is situated at the head point of Chilime Khola, Dudh

Kunda, Jageshwar Kunda, Bhairab Kunda, Saraswati Kunda, Surya Kunda, Ganesh Kunda etc are main ones. Gosain Kunda, situated at 4380meter above sea level, is one of the major and famous pilgrimages of Nepal. According to our mythology, Lord Shankar drank the Kalkut Bish (the dangerous poison) and he was badly hurt and in great unbearable pain. So he went to the northern part of Himalaya. He dipped his Trishul (a trident) in the ground. Cool water spring released and a pond (Kunda) appeared there. Then, God Shiva lied down into the cool water to get relief from the burning of the poison. Every year on *Dashahara* and *Shrawan Purnima*, lots of people from different places visit there to take bath in the holy pond and celebrate fair. This pond is accepted as a pure and holy by both Hindus and Buddhists. People believe that they get holiness and righteousness by taking bath in the Kunda. It is mentioned in the history of Nepal that the kings of Kathmandu used to go to Gosai Kunda to take bath in the first year or in the second year after ascending the throne. Yakshya Malla, Parthibendra Malla,

Mahipatendra Malla, Bhaskar Malla had visited this kunda. After the victory on Nuwakot, Prithivi Narayan Shah had taken bath in this holy kunda in 1801BS. This kunda has great relation with Kathmandu valley cultural life. After the Sugauli Treaty, Badakaji Amar Singh Thapa had visited this kunda and died in the same place. The place, where a great nationalist who lived there during his dying days, isn't just important with religious and natural aspect but it also holds glory of nationhood. Tamag and Shrepa healers regard Shrawan Purnima as Guru Purnima. Thus, these healers visit Gosaikunda to transfer their knowledge during Shrawan Purnima.

Parvati Kunda situated at Galanga VDC in Rasuwa district is ten thousand feet above sea level. There is a story about the existence of this Kunda. Shiva and Parvati after their marriage used to roam around in this place. At that time Parvati become thirsty so Shiva made a water pond (kund). Parvati drank water from that kunda and slept nearer to it so it was named as Parvati Kunda. It is believed that bathing in that kunda will remove all the diseases and worshipping it will fulfill all our wishes. This is always a big fair during *Mahashivaratri*, *Balachaturdashi* and *Janaipurnima*. Presently, this Kunda is at neglected stage.

There are many hot water springs in Rasuwa District. Among them hot water spring of Chilime Village, situated at twelve thousand feet above sea level is very famous. These springs are connected to tap and two separate ponds for male and female are also made. There is a great fair in the month of Kartik. Similarly, Timure and Syafru villages also have small hot water ponds. According to *Mine and Geology Department* of Nepal, Vurung hot water in the bank of Kaligandaki at Jomsom, Luma hot spring is in Jumla, Shrivar, Seena and Warpata in Darchula, Tapoban in Bajang etc are sources of the important hot water spring of our country. People come to these hot water source and

ponds for bathing. It is believed that bathing in these ponds cures rheumatism and skin diseases. There is tradition to bath at source of hot water. People from the district and other neighboring district come to observe the fair.

Kalo Seto pond, Bridang kunda, Ganesh kunda, Ganga Jamuna kunda etc are some of the important pond of Dhading District. From the Gangajamuna kunda, two springs named Ganga and Jamuna are released. There is a great fair at Haribodhani Ekadashi. This Ganga Jamuna spring, which is released from the four thousand meter high mountain, makes the surrounding environs aesthetic. According to the ancient stories, in *Satya Yug*, one mediator called Manu used to mediate there. Due to his prayer, Lord Shiva became happier. So it is believed that Ganga present in his hair is flowing as Ganga Jamuna spring, it is also depicted that after going to Ganga Jamuna, which is famous for natural beauty help to fulfill all the dreams and get emancipated from the sins committed. (?) At the base of Ganesh Himalaya, there are Ganesh pond and Bhairav pond. There is big fair celebrated at these two kundas during Dahsain and Janaipurnima. It is believed that in ancient time seer Shrigi used to stay near Ganesh kunda. There is a hot water source in the bank of Ankhu River at Jharlang Village. A fair is held during the month of Chaitra when people come to bath in this pond and people of different castes - Tamang, Gurung, Brahman, Chhetri etc from the vicinity gathers here.

Banjari, Gardaul, Ghariharya, Bhelaha, Ramnagari, Mahuvan etc of Parsa District have many ponds. Among these Banjari pond is the biggest. Royal national park of Chitwan District also has many ponds. Jaralin pond is situated at the confluence of Bhatuwal River and Tistung River in Tistung VDC of Makwanpur District. It is the holy place in this region. A fair is celebrated at two ponds, Balachaturdashi and Shivaratri. It is believed that bathing at these ponds makes Lord Shiva happy.

Singema is the biggest lake of Taplejung district in eastern region. This lake is situated in Olangchungola Village and it is very important from religious point of view. Hundreds of peoples visit this place every year. Limbu people call this lake as '*Manas Orak*'. Villages like Olangchun, Nalbu, Papung and Talbu of this district have many ponds like Baguwa pond, Sodhu pond, Bhoot pond etc. But there is not much information available about these ponds.

Timbu pond, at the border of Panchthar and Taplejung districts is known as Gosaikunda of eastern region. This pond is situated at four thousand three hundred meter above sea level. About eight hundred meters long and one hundred meters wide in size, on the fifteenth day of Shrawan a fair is celebrated here. Besides devotees from the surrounding districts and from places as far as Asam, Sikkim, Darjiling, Meghalaya, Manipur and Dehradun of India also come there to observe the fair. There are also many springs in this

district like Fungfung spring, Dhwangdhwange etc. Water of Ila khola spring comes down and get mix with Tamor river.

Mai pond of Illam district is very famous. It has nine kunda (pond) which is also called as Naukuna. Fifty to sixty people can take a bath in single kunda at a time. Every year, a night before *Haribodhani Ekadashi*, fair is held in the premise of the pond. Devotees from Phanchthar, Illam, and Jhapa as well as from Drajeeling, India come to visit the fair. They bath in Mai pond and worship the nearby Sivalaya Temple. It is believed that bathing on the particular day in the pond, will overcome laziness and different diseases as well as brings prosperity.

Among all the ponds of Shankhuwashaba District Shaba Pokhari (Pond) is very famous and considered the holiest. There is an island almost round in shape in the middle of this pond. It is believed that Rishi Vyas meditated sitting on this very island. This pond, which is situated at the height of 14,500 feet from the sea level, is a very important religious site of this district. This pond has covered the area of about one square kilometer. It is believed that only a view of this pond can fulfill all the desires. A big festival is celebrated on Jainaipurnima day. Devotees from Shankhuwashaba, Tehrathum, Dhankuta, Taplejung and different districts of Terai come to visit the pond and participate in the fair. Moreover, there is a crowd of newly married couples arriving, in the pleasant season of Falgun, Chaitra and Baishak months. Some of the important ponds of this district are Gosha Pond, Rate Pond, Banduke Pond, Kalo Pond, Jumleha Pond, Gufa Pond, Lam Pond, Panch Pokhari, Suke Pond, and Jaljala Pond etc. One can find many hot water springs in various locations of this district.

There are also lakes, ponds and water falls in the Tehrathum District. Among these Chichiling Pond, Teen Pond, Shidhamarga Pond, Lam Pond, etc are of importatance. There is Dudh Kunda in the Solukhumbu District having the utmost religious significance. There are many Kunda in nearby area of this pond, among these Goke and Salpa ponds are major. Every year there is a fair organized in these ponds.

Salpa pond is the biggest pond of Bhojpur District, which is situated at the borderline of Solukhumbu and Bhojpur Distrcet. People from Bhojpur as well as neighboring district visit this pond to take bath in *Baisakh Purnima and Rishitarpani Purnima*, so it is also regarded as one of the major holy places of this district. Other important ponds of this district are Kaal pond, which is situated at height of 15,000 ft, Panchakanya Pond and Hansa Pond. Although Vabishya Bakta pond (future forecasting pond) of this district is small in size, it is believed that it forecast disaster by turning in to red. There is Naag Fall at the peak of Durga Village. It is believed that the shape of the living Naag (snake) can

be seen at this water falls. So it is called Naag Fall (water falls). There is a fair held once in every year.

There is a huge and beautiful pond in Baraha VDC of Khotang District which is famous as a name of Baraha Pond. The great fair is held here in Thulo Ekadashi or Kartik Shukla Ekadashi and also at Maghesankranti and Balachaturdashi. Devotees from the districts like Khotang, Udaypur, Okhaldhunga, Bhojpur, etc gather to participate in the fair. Firstly people take bath at Baraha Pond and worship to Barahi (Goddess), Baraheshwar Mahadev and Bijuwa Bijuwi in this fair. After that they spend the night by singing and reciting legends. The Baraha pond covers the area of eight hundred meter length and five hundred meter breadth. It is surprising that the level of the water in this pond does not alter in the winter or monsoon season. There are many red fishes in this pond but no frogs. It is still believed that the fish named 'Devdut' (God messenger) should not be fished or eaten. Sacrifice is offered to Barahashwar Mahadev. To make wishes fulfill, keep the friends happy and for the family well-being couple of pigeons are worshiped and released over the pond.

The biggest fair of this district is Ravuwa Mela. Fair is held in the confluence of Dudhkoshi River and Thotnekhola of Okhaldhunga and nearby Rawakkhola, during Maghe Sankranti. At Nirmali VDC of this district, there is a huge stone below which there is a big source of water flowing, the brook is known as Sapsudhap. Among this source of water, there are different stone sculptures established. It is the holy place of Kirat people and fair is held during Janaipurnima. It is a custom that people fulfill their wishes by offering Panchavali in Sapsukhola.

Jor Pokhari, which is situated at the boarder of Subhang Bharpa and Ektin VDC of Panchthar District, is a very important holy place from historical and religious point of view. Due to the presence of both Siddha Pokhari and Devi Pokhari, it is called as Jor Pokhari. There are many legends about this pond. Every year devotees come in fair at the day of Chandi Purnima and Balachaturdashi to bath at the pond and disperse *Satabiz* (seven kinds of grains) over there. It is believed that doing this will fulfill all the wishes, those who have not children will be having children and become rich and wealthy. The local people said that there was heavy rain in the year 2057BS after worshipping this pond when there was drought. But the condition of pond is declining day by day due to its negligence.

Limbu Pokhari, which is situated in the boarder of Panchthar and Taplejung Districts, is about fourteen thousand feet above sea level. Hindus and Buddhists come to worship this pond remembering it as God Vishnu. It is believed that drinking water from this pond will remove all the sickness of the sick people. So, every year thousand of devotees come

for (carrying) the water here. As it is situated at a greater height, peoples can come here only from the month of Jestha to Bhadra. This pond has more religious important for Kirati people. Water from this pond is famous as the name of '*Ingvarak*' and in the year 1995BS '*Mahaguru Flgunananda*' took this water when he went to meet (Darshan garna) '*Faktalung*'. It is believed that after worshipping this pond, those who don't have children will be having it and poorer people become rich. At present this pond is famous among youth and couples in love. They come here to pray for the success of their love.

Anarmani, Garamani and Charpane of Jhapa District have five ponds called Biratpokhari, Sodo Pokhari, Modo Pokhari, Telkani Pokhari and Baradashi Pokhari in the inner side of tea estate of Charpane VDC. Birat Pokhari covers the area of thirteen bigha and fourteen katta, Sodo Pokhari covers the area of two bigha and four katta, Modo Pokhari three bigha and six katta and Charpane Pokhari covers the area of about three bigha. Local people bath and worship in this pond at different festivals as it is historically and religiously important site. Presently, United Development Program is being implemented with the support from foreign aid. Historically, pond in its last stage called '*Jamuna Khadi*' is situated at Surunga VDC and covers the area of about sixteen bigha. It has been known that local people are now trying to preserve this pond as it has been loosing it's identity due to deforestation and soil erosion.

Burju Tal, covering the area of two hundred bigha, is situated at ten kilometer west to Biratnagar in Chimadi VDC of Sunsari District. This pond is rich in biological diversity which is now in very poor state so it has been preserved by an organization named Pro-public. There is a legend about this pond that in *Dwapar Yug* as the Pandavs were roaming around there, they became thirsty and drank water of the nearby pond. But after sometimes they all fainted because of poisonous water. That's why local people are still afraid of drinking water from this pond.

Udaypur district's most significant Rawtaha Lake is situated at the top of the hill. It lies besides Bhagvati's temple. There is celebration of Maghe Shankranti festival every year. Patari Lake in Siraha District under Laxmipur VDC is of historical importance. It is believed that King Hari Singh Dev had palace at Patari. There is also a presence of small pond. Every year, there is a big festival in (first day of Baisakh) which last for next fifteen days. Apart from all over Nepal, Indians also attend the festival. After taking holy dip in first day of Baisakh in this pond, people head to Salesh temple and Salesh Fulbari in Siraha in second day of Baisakh. If Patari which situated in this district bears religious importance then Kamal pond that lies in Fulbari VDC has natural importance.

In the various districts of western Development Region, there are many lakes and ponds. Foksundo Lake situated at approximately 12000ft in Dolpo District, Tilicho Lake situated

in the borders of Manag and Mustang, Kalchhu or Kaltaal situated at 12000ft in Gorkha's Larke Bhot, Dudh Pokhari in Gorkha, Baraha Pokhari in Lamjung, including Fewa Lake, Kamal Lake, Rupa Lake, Begnas Lake, Dipang Lake, Khaste Lake, Gunde, Newreni and Maudi etc. seven lakes in Kaski, Khairbarah in Parbat, Chhabdibarah Kunda in Tanahu, Satyabati in Palpa, Raniraha in Syanjha are regarded significant. There is holy place called 'Chhokhopaani' in Kaski's Siklesh. At the top of Ghaprangtol situated at the right side of 'Thadokhola', people have diverted holy water to village to join stone spouts for water source. Devotees take bath in these spouts in Maghe Shankranti.

Person who has anyone dead in his family come to take bath at Siklesh in Maghe Shankranti. Traditional healer performs '*Dhau*' and worship god. In Gurung community, it is believed that traditional healer who hasn't traveled to Siklesh are not perfect healers. In Kaski District, there is a hot spring also known as Kharpaani at the confluence of Seti and Sardi in the Gurung Village called Chaur. This spring has excessive amount of salt (noon). Thus it is called Kharpaani. There is festival in Maghe Shankranti. Especially pregnant woman having abnormalities comes to bathe in this place. It is believed that abnormalities would get healed if a person takes bath, consumes chicken meat and Jhinuwa rice and sleeps covering oneself with blanket until sweat.

There is one pond, at the top of Panchase Hill. This pond is famously known as Panchase Pond situated in the middle of the forest. This Pond always has clear water. There is festival during Balachaturdasi. During that day people who can't make to Kathmandu's Pashupati's Mrigasthali and Kailash go to Panchase for the rituals in remembrances of their dead peers.

There are many ponds known as Dudh Pokhari in Nepal. Dudh Pokhari situated in the borders of Manang and Kaski lies at the lap of Lamjung Himal at 4300ft. There is big festival during Janai Purnima. For Gurungs, this is an important place. Gurungs have a tradition and culture of taking bath in this lake. Especially, youngster aspires to visit this place at least once. But due to landslides, this lake is endangered.

People from far-off attend the festival in both big and small Dudh Pokhari situated in Gorkha District. Naratkunda is also regarded religiously important place. There is fair celebration during Janai Purnima. Water in Bhulbhule khar, Gorkha District is not only hot but completely smells black salt (hydrogen sulphide).

Raginash and Bhumlichowk in eastern Lamjung are famously known as Yulung. Forest in Yulung hill has one beautiful lake. It is called as Yulung pond when leaves fall on the surface of this lake, birds pick them out. Thus, people believe that there are no leaves on the surface of the lake. There is a festival in the lake during the Chaitra Sukla Purnima.

Besides, there are also two Dewals (temple) made up of stones. These Dewals are regarded as God and goddess and worshipped as Devi.

Chhabdibarah and Dhorbarahi of Tanahu District bear religious importance. People, from all over Tanahu, flock to Chhabdibarah to offer sacrifices. Magar Pujaris throw away goat, duck, and pigeons to nearby pond after sacrificed. Rajbaam fish in this lake eat away all the sacrifices of animals and birds. It is believed that wishes get fulfilled when one prays to Barahi. Particularly, Baam fish in Chhabdibarahi is regarded as Barahi. If the fish dies last rituals are performed as of human. Chhabdibarahi and Dhorbarahi are regarded as sisters. In *Gandaki Mahatmya*, Chabdi Kunda (Pond) is regarded as lake in which Matsyagandha, mother of Vyas or Matsyodari Kunda was originated. Likewise *Gandaki Mahatmya* mentions that by worshiping to fish here escape one from sin. There is also small Barahi temple towards east of lake. The most significant feature of the lake is that almost in every half hour water erupts out making some sound and it dries. According to local folklore, it is sound of ripples caused by God jumping over it. As it was situated inside ancient Dhor State area, it is known as Dhorbarahi. Except water source and pond in Dhorbarahi, temple has also been established.

Waterfall 'Sahasra Dhara' and lakes in Parbat District are also of importance. Sahasra Dhara in Parbat District is nature's unique gift. Standing above from the bank of Kaligandaki whose ever enjoys continuously cascading waterfall. Beside, these waterfalls bear equal religious importance. *Padmapuran* mentions that those who take bath for three consecutive days spending out night get released from their sins. Similarly, in *Shree Swasthani Brat Katha* also mentions Parvati, daughter of Himalaya first took bath in Sahasra Dhara before going to Tapasya (meditation) in den situated in Pang aspiring to have Mahadev as her husband.

Damodar Himal is situated in north-east to Kakbeni and south to Lo-magthan Mt. Damodar is 6401 meter above sea level. In its lap, there is one pond and popularly known as Damodar Pond. Hot spring in Mustang and Damodar Pond are important holy place. As there is presence of Saligram (black smooth fossil stone) around the pond, devotees from far-off come for bathe. Damodar Pond consists of three ponds. It is believed that source of Kaligandaki is Damodar Pond. As Muktinath is equally significant to both Hindus and Buddhist, Damodar Pond is regarded as holy site by the followers of both the religion. Hindus relate this place with Lord Vishnu and Buddhists with Guru Padam Shambhav. It is believed that Guru Padam Shambhav had visited this place sometime in past. Buddhist regards the water of this pond, an elixir and distinctive those as Prasad among people back home. Thousands of devotees visit there to take bath in the kunda. While going there, their spirit will be free. There are beautiful spring and many Kundas of hot water in Tateypani of Mustang District. This place and the kundas over here are

very famous as people come with a view that bathing in this kunda will vanish all their diseases and make them free of sin they have committed.

In Dolpa District among the biggest Taals (ponds), Foksundo, Jagdulla, and among the smallest Tals, Sundaha, Chamakunidaha etc are very famous. The local people also called Foksundo Tal as Rigmo Tal. This pond is a meeting point of Foksundokhola and Sagarkhola and it is situated at the height of about twelve thousand feet. Sundaha is situated at the boarder of Dolpa and Baglung Districts. Although this daha (lake) is small, it is religiously significant. Fair is held in the full moon day of Shrawan and Ashwin months every year. Chamakuidaha had a relation with Vyas Rishi (sage). At the fair of Shrawan Purnima pilgrimage come here to bath. This lake is situated at the height of about sixteen thousand feet.

There is a kunda (pond) of hot water in Tatopani at the bank of Myagdi River in Pulachaur VDC, Myagdi District. This kunda is at the height of about two thousand seven hundred and forty three meter from the sea level. About hundred youngsters can bath at this kunda at once. Fifty to sixty thousand people go there to bath every year. There is a custom to sacrifice birds like pigeon, cock etc at the kunda. The kunda smells of hot Gandhak at a temperature about 42°C and there is big fair during Fagu Purnima. There is a belief that bathing at this kunda will heal the skin diseases and other diseases. People come to bath. To recover from the disease, people also drink half a glass of water from the kunda.

Rudra pond of Baglung is at the tip of the mountain. There is a temple of Shiva. There is fair during Maghe Sankranti. Another important pond of this district is Jalpakghar pond where local Magar people worship it as Baraha Devata. It is a custom to sacrifice sheeps, goats and offer flags while passing from this place.

It has been heard from very ancient times that in ancient time Shringa Rishi (sage) used to bath at the pond of the tapowan of Resunga in Gulmi. There is fair during Shrawan Sankranti and Thulo Ekadashi at Kartik. There is a story that burning dead body here makes once spirit reach the heaven.

The famous Satyavati Tal of Palpa is important from religious, historical and natural point of view. It is always cold here as this pond is situated at very great height. There is fair at the day of Kartik sukla purnima. The local people believed that those who are dumb start to speak after taking bath at this kunda. There is still a tradition to bath at this pond in full moon day for the children if the women can't give birth to child. The Rambhapani of Palpa has religious and historical importance. There is a saying about this pond: God 'Shree Ramchandra' after doing Yagya at Ayodhya wished to bath at Gandaki.

So he had to stay there when he went to Gandaki with Sitaji. At that period there was very little amount of water so Sitaji got very worry, seeing this God Shree Ramchandra buried the arrow in this mountain and water have come from the wish of Rama or Sita. So this place is called Rambha Pani and its source is called Ramadevi.

Pushkarini is situated at Lumbini Vatika of Rupandehi. It is believed that after the birth of Buddha, Mayadevi oneself and also make first bath to child Buddha. Although this pond is small but it is holy from religious aspect, cultural and every point of view. There are many big ponds in Kapilvastu District and among this Sisawa pond, Bajha pond, Sagara pond, Niglisagar pond and Bijiva pond etc are very famous. Niglisagar pond is also called as Jagdishpur pond. And it has the area of 157 hector. Among all the artificial pond of Nepal, this is the biggest pond. At present this pond has been preserved with the help of World Bank.

Rukum District of far western development region is known as of "*Bahunna Pokhari Tripanna Kuwa*"(of fifty two ponds and fifty three wells) district. The biggest and important lake of this district is Syarpu Daha. Other than this, there is also Kamal pokhari (kamal daha) nearby Rukumkot of this district. It has been heard that before this pokhari there was a village named 'Gairi'. One evening when Shivaji (God) came to that village no one but an old woman gave shelter to him. So Shivaji got furious with the villagers. Next morning he then asked the old woman to stay in her hut until he reaches the top of the mountain and poured down his 'kamandalu' (water pitcher). The water from the kamandalu drowned the whole village except the old woman. At the northern side of the lake there is a temple of Shiva and Baraha. There is fair during the Teej. This Kamal Daha has covered the area of about two square kilometer. It is believed that bathing in this lake will remove all the skin diseases that one has committed in his whole life. It is also believed that bathing here will cure the leprosy disease. There will be fair here at Maghesankranti. The other important ponds of this district are: Samya pond, Guptadaha, Pupaldaha Sundaha etc. It is said that including smaller and bigger, there are more than 52 ponds in this district.

Inside the cave of Jaljaladhuri in Rolpa District, there are three temples like Bajyu, Baraha and Kailey. The water in this cave comes on its own but the flow of water isn't seen anywhere. Bajyu and Baraha is the main God (Kul Devata) of Magar people. So every year there is fair here on the full moon of Jestha month and Janai Purnima. People sacrifice thousand of sheep and goats to Baraha God. There is also three kundas namely Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwar over here.

Kupinde or Kubhinde lake of Salyan District is situated between the mountains. This lake is spread at a length of two kilometer and breadth of one kilometer. This lake is

surrounded by forest. There is also a Baraha temple where there is a fair at Margha Sukla Purnima and Baisakh Sukla Purnima. In this fair people sacrifice thousand of hens and sheeps. Those people who don't have children come here to worship with a wish to get the children. It is believed that after worshipping here their wishes gets fulfilled. The other important lakes of this district are Sukhidaha and Patiyadaha. There are many folklores about Patiyadaha like the color of the water in this lake changes time to time and it also shows the shape of different Gods and animals.

Waterfalls of 'Puranadhara', religiously important Bahrakuney pond where is Baraha temple, Charingedaha, Kichanidaha, Bhotedaha, Jarvera pond, Jyaniredaha, and Tapta kunda are some of the main and important ponds of Dangdeukhuri. Every year at Maghe Sankranti there is fair at Bahrakuney pond and Tapta kunda. Thousands of peoples from different districts of Nepal and also from India come to see this fair.

Jadya Daha is biggest lake situated at the high Himalayan area in Humla District. But around Kharpunath, there are hot water sources like Agnikunda, Dudhkunda, and Raktakunda that are religiously very significant.

There are many lakes and kundas in Mugu District. Among them Rara Lake (Mahendra Tal) is the biggest and important lake. There will be a big fair here at the first day of Shrawan month. The other important lakes of this district are Rinmokshya lake, Chayanath lake etc. Rinmokshya lake is situated at a height of about fifteen thousand feet and it is a mix of three lakes like Dharma kunda, which is also a main lake, Papa kunda and Annapurneshwar kunda. It is believed that worshipping this kunda makes farming good. Similarly bathing and worshipping in Dharma kunda makes ones free from all the credit and peoples also take bath in this kunda to get emancipation from all the wrong deeds. There is big fair in these lakes at full moon of Shrawan month. It is believed that couple bathing and praying in Dharma kunda will be blessed with son. Chayanath Lake is the holy place of both Hindus and Buddhists. There are many springs and hot water source at Mugu District.

The famous lakes of Tibrikot district are Giridaha, Shankhadaha, Vistadaha, Jogbenidaha, Dahakothidaha, Lamodaha, Dhaoulidaha etc. Among these lakes many have religious importance. Mostly people from different areas comes here to bath and worship at Shrawan Purnima. There are also sculptures of Gods placed in some lakes. Dhamis, Jhankries (healer) comes to this place in Shrawan Purnima with thinking that they will receive the power of God. The Thakuri Daha of this district is situated at high altitude and it is so named as it is near the temple of Swami Kartik Thakur. There is fair from Magh Sukla Ekadashi to Purnima. All the Dhmis come here in the full moon.

The important lakes of Surkhet District are Simrakhani Daha, Japura Daha and Baraha Daha. There are many water sources releasing from different parts of hilly areas of this district.

There are many ponds, waterfalls and sources of hot water in Bajang District. The important lake of this district is Surmasarovar. It is so called because it is similar to the shape of the eye. This lake is situated at a height of about fourteen thousand one hundred feet and from this lake two river called Sunigand and Bahuligand are released. There was a story that Mahadev had sixteen Queens. Among them the youngest queen (Surma) couldn't stay with other queens (Sauta) so she disguised herself as Tharu and went towards the northern side and sited nearby lake. So this lake is also named as Surmasarovar. This lake is also the biggest holy place of this district. Devotees come here from Shrawan Ekadashi and return after participating in fair at Janai Purnima every year. After reaching Surmasarovar pilgrims take bath and worship Surmadevi.

There are twelve ponds in Ramaroshan VDC of Achham District. The beautiful ponds of this place are Lami pond and Batulaa pond. There is a temple of Baijanath Shivaji and there is fair held at every Shivaratri. People also come to this place to bury the ashes of their parents.

Bhelchada waterfall is the biggest falls of Doti District, whose main source is Khaptad Lake. Although Khaptad Lake is small in size, it is very significant from religious point of view.

There is a small pond and cave in Patal Bhuvaneshwari of Baitadi District. Nobody have skill to know the depth of the pond and the widespread of the cave. It is a custom to bath at this holy pond at every first day of the month and during Shivaratri. People around this place come here to do rituals as Brataband and put Janai (sacred Thread).

There are some ponds in Kanchanpur District without religious importance. The Jokhar pond near Devari at Dhangadi Municipality of Kailali District is the biggest pond of this district. This pond has covered the area of about eighteen hector. There will be crowd of devotees to take bath at this pond in the first day of Magh, Shivaratri and other festivals.

Likewise there are hundreds of ponds, lakes and kunds in Nepal. So in order to protect and preserve them, they are given cultural and religious importance by linking them with stories of many God and Goddess and Rishis. All these source of water is worshipped as a holy pilgrim place as water has a great importance in our life and society. This source of water have a power to fulfill the everlasting thing of life like curing diseases, become

wealthy, getting children, free from all the sins, free from diseases etc. It is also true that without these sources of water there would have been no life in earth.

While talking about ponds (Tal Talaiya), kundas etc of Nepal we should not forget wet land, which is a source of clean and pure water. When the issue is of water, all the country attribute it to rivers and they give more importance to them. Besides, our environment and vegetation, wetland (Simsar area) is also of importance. There are about two hundred and forty two wetlands in Nepal - Marshy and boggy patches (land impressed from river), ponds, water reservoir and the area where there is water all the month is known as wetland area. Without preserving them we can't preserve the water. Among the twenty- seven pure water, wetland in the world, twenty are located in our country. This wetland area is also the dwelling place of territorial, aquatic, birds, trees and herbs. Out of 60 indigenous people 21, mostly residing in the Terai, occupies 17% depends on wetlands for their living. Koshi Tappu, Ghodaghodi Taal, She-fokshundo Taal, Rara Taal, Beeshajari Taal, Jagadish Taal are some of important wetlands of our country. Nepal has also signed International Ramsar Convention to preserve some of the wetlands. Yet there lacks effort to conserve them. Water hyacinth has imposed threats to many of these wetlands. If timely effort is not paid then no doubt the country will loose the glory. Not only these wetlands are sources of living, these are also important for social, religious and cultural lives. Thus, for their religion and culture, these wetlands and water resources plays important role. This is still a subject of investigation.

## Chapter 4: STONE SPOUT, SPRING AND WELL IN THE NEPALI CULTURE

The people of different origins, ancestors and communities from North India who had entered into the Nepal valley in the centuries Before Christ, brought the architectures along with various aspects of Nepali culture which made the lifestyle of the valley prosperous and increased its beauty. Stone spout is one of the incomparable and unique examples among them. These are constructed in different shapes, types and for different purposes in many places of the world. Stone spouts are found in most of the ancient cities of Europe and Japan. But the stone spouts of Nepal have its own originality and characteristics.

Different monuments of Lichchhavi period prove that the stone spouts were there from the beginning of the history of the Nepal valley. The oldest stone spout among seen and still working is *Mangahiti* of old Patan. This stone spout was constructed by Bharbhi, the grandson of Lichchhavi King Mandev in 570 AD (6th century). Though few changes have occurred according to time, no changes in the original structure are seen as this spout has become a part of Patan's lifestyle. Stone spout constructed by Bharbhi, is also mentioned in the Handigaon inscription dated 550AD. A *dund* (drain) of a stone spout found in an excavation in Handigaon few years ago dated 751 AD, which was constructed by Priya Burman can also, be taken. The architectural tradition of constructing stone spout in Nepal dates back to fifteen hundred years long from 6th century of Christ to construction period of gold spout below Dharohar in 1828AD or 19th century of Christ. Hundreds of stone spouts have been found constructed in about fifteen hundred years in Kathmandu valley alone. These are also found constructed outside the valley where the Lichchhavi and the Malla Kings have spread their regimes, like Ilam in the east to Palpa and Baglung in the west.

We should not forget that traditionally people of different districts or places in the Nepal Kingdom made different types of artistic or normal stone spout, tutedhara, well, pond etc. for their use. Like in western Nepal, Khas Kings made many *naulo* (small pond to collect water) and stone spouts or *mungra* for the benefits of the citizens in 12th to 14th century of Christ. It was taken as big and important responsibility for the state to provide the citizen with drinking water. For this *naulo* and stone spouts were constructed in villages and main roads. These types of water system architectures are still found in western Nepal. Among these *naulos*, *naulo* of Chipur, which is 10 km west of Dadeldhura, *naulo* of Ajaymer are famous. *Naulo* of Chipur is important from architectural perspective. It is believed to be constructed by the minister Hati Bhat of Naag Malla King (1384-1411 AD). Local people are still using the water from Ajaymer *naulo*. *Naulos* are found in districts like Baitadi, Achham, Dailekh, and Bajhang of western Nepal.

*Mungra* or stone spouts are mainly found in important religious places and old roads. These *mungras* were constructed to facilitate the villagers and travelers with water. The tradition of systemizing the water sources by artistically carved stones is also found

in Jumla, Dailekh etc. districts of mid-western Nepal. Even though these stone structures do not look beautiful in art perspective, they hold their own importance. Hotwater stone spout of Sunar village in Jumla has its own characteristics. The carved designs in the spout are related to the Buddhist religion. The labour to construct the hotwater pond in Sunar village was very hard. The hotwater is collected in three ponds. The bottom of two ponds is of clay while stones cover the bottom of the main pond. Wednesday and Thursday has a system of only women using the pond. The stones used in the spout when observed closely were not made especially for the spout but were brought from certain memorials.

Twelve carved stones are kept on the back wall of the water source in Sinja. These carved stones are arranged in layers with other stones. Two small birds like holes are made in the mouth of water flow. This is the first architecture of complete water system constructed in the times of Malla Kings of Jumla. Western Mallas had the knowledge to construct water pond and stone spouts. According to the history, the canal in Jumla was the contribution of the Malla Kings. Siju River to Sinju (summer capital of ancient Malla Kings) constructed like the Jumla canal is also thought to be the work of the Malla Kings.

Stone spouts outside the valley are found in the religious and pilgrimage sites. Like 108 stone spouts in the Mukti region of Muktinath in west and 14 flowing from Tatopani in east Sindhupalchowk. Mukti region is a religious place for both Hindu and Buddhist. Once reaching there, people bath in the pure water to gain religion while in Tatopani to gain merit and to cure the skin diseases. Big fairs are held in Jestha and Magh in Tatopani. Though the uses of stone spouts are seen outside the valley in inner terai and hilly parts of the Nepal kingdom, the ones inside the valley have different, special and original place in the Nepali architecture and culture.

Stone spouts inside the Kathmandu valley are important cultural heritage of Nepal and they have their own religious, social importance and norms. Stone spouts were called “*pranali*” in Lichchhavi period. This is known from the inscription of the times of Shivdev and Amshuverma of Lele in 603 AD. According to the inscription providing of the drinking water permanently to the citizens by making spouts in different places were difficult hence religious people from Lichchhavi period kept jaldroni in places. Jaldroni are not only inside the valley but also in main roads. Jaldroni near Tebahal Sankata temple kept in probable period between Amshuverma and Narendradev (7th century of Christ) of Lichchhavi period is still working. The construction art, architecture and structure of stone spouts are seen to have changed and developed after Lichchhavi period. Many beautiful stone spouts have been made in the interim period of Nepal. Among them gold spout of Patan in 980 AD, stone spout constructed by King Rudradev in Sankhu Bajrayogini temple in 1168 AD, stone spout of Patan Tundikhel constructed by King Amritdev during 1174-1178 AD and Chakwahiti (Tangal, Patan) in the period of King Bijay Kamdev in the 11th century etc. can be taken.

Lichchhavi period “*pranali*” was called “*yiti*” or “*iti*” or *hiti* in the Malla period. Inscription in gold spout of Sthiti Malla’s Deu Patan Jai Bageshwori in 508 Nepal era

(1387 AD) has it called “iti”. Development of stone spout reached its peak in the Malla period. Largest number of stone spouts was made in this period. The three Malla kings in the process of decorating their kingdom made gold and stone spouts not only inside their palaces but also in different parts of the cities. In this process, stone spouts in Mohankali chowk inside Hanumandhoka palace, “Tusa hiti” of famous Sundari chowk in Patan and Thantu Durbar hiti of Bhaktapur are famous. Aalo hiti of Patan constructed in 1415 AD, Kontihiti of Kumbheshwor at the start of Malla period and Chyasal hiti of around that period are still in use.

These spouts are called stone spouts, deep spout and in local language as Loh hiti, Ga:hitit or hiti in the Shah period. Habitants of the valley also called stone spouts as “Gahiti” or deep spout because most of the stone spouts are lower than the ground or road level. Twenty to fifty or more steps down the road should be taken to reach some of the stone spouts. Common spout is known as *Lohiti* in the local language. The tradition of constructing stone spouts in this period especially towards the end of 18th century is in use in some forms or types similar to stone spouts of Lazimpat, Bhatbhateni, Sphal, Chabhil, Battisputali, Sinamangal, Koteshwor etc. But the largest, artistic and important among them is gold spout constructed by Queen Lalitripura Sundari in 1828 AD located in Dharhara This is the best model of architecture of the Shah period.

While studying the stone spouts of Nepal, about 95% of the spouts are found inside the Kathmandu valley. Among them 118 in Kathmandu metropolitan, 103 in Bhaktapur municipality and 40 are in Lalitpur sub-metropolitan. Beside them, many stone spouts are found in different cities and villages inside the valley. Like 48 ancient stone spouts were found in Madhyapur Thimi in the study conducted about 4 years ago. But only 20 of them were in use. Of the 61 stone spouts in Thimi only 12 were in use according to the report received this year. It is said that stone spouts in Thimi have less polluted water in comparison to other stone spouts inside the Kathmandu valley. According to the same report, there are 225 in Kathmandu, 77 in Bhaktapur, 53 in Patan and 12 stone spouts in Kirtipur. Survey conducted by Archaeology Department of HMG state that there are 3 stone spouts, 5 jaldroni, 2 wells and 3 ponds in Bungmati VDC of Lalitpur district. Likewise 9 stone spouts, 2 ponds, 5 jaldroni in Luvu VDC in Lalitpur district and 18 stone spouts and 2 jaldroni in Sanga VDC in Kavrepalanchowk district outside the valley. It was found that most of them had dried and were not in use.

These days stone spouts are called Makar (crocodile) spout because most of them have a crocodile carved in them. Common stone *dund* is placed in some places. Other different designs are also carved in these Makar spouts. These types of spouts are kept from 1-22 or still to 108 in a row. There are 22 spouts in Baishdhara in Balaju and 108 in Muktinath. Crocodile is taken as a vehicle of Ganga; hence it is kept as a symbol of Ganga in stone spouts. In some places, water flow from the mouth of cow, goat, elephant, tiger shape designed stone spouts. Statues of different gods and goddesses are found in four walls and statue of Bhagirath along with a shell is placed below in most of the stone spouts. Seventy-eight statues, the most in stone spouts is in Tusahiti in Sundarichowk of Patan palace. There are some gold spouts inside the valley constructed by making metal

from gold. Like gold spouts in Kathmandu, Patan, Mohankalichowk in Hanumandhoka, inside Bhaktapur palace and Tusahiti in Patan.

Rivers are taken as the most virtuous and sacred in the Nepali society. But everybody cannot always go to the rivers, which are mostly farther away. It is not always easy and possible for the women of the houses to go to the rivers to bath, perform religious rituals and bring water for the household uses. So the religious kings and peoples do the construction of the stone spouts to supply water in the town and villages. Water is taken as a form of religion among the Nepalese. It is believed that to provide water to a thirsty person is a big virtue even if one cannot do good deeds or donate. We have a norm from ages to earn *punya* and keep fame. For this fame, Nepalese constructed temple, well, stone spout, cremation sites along the river, rest house etc. There is a deep effect to keep fame anyhow in our society. How a poor grasscutter inspired a great Nepali poet, Bhanubhakta, to keep fame and why he wrote epic “Ramayana” in simple Nepali language for the common citizens to understand it acknowledges us the tradition to keep fame. He has written about it in a poem:

*Bhara janma ghaas tira mann di dhan kamayo.  
Naam kehi rahos pachhi bhanera kuwa khanayo.  
Ghaasi daridri ghar ko tara budhhi yesto.  
Yo Bhanubhakta dani bhaikana aaj yasto.  
Mera inar na ta satal paati kehi chhana.  
Je dhan ra chij haru chann ghar bitra nai chann.  
Tes ghaasi le kasari aaj diyechha arti.  
Dikkar ho makan basnu narakhi kirti.*

(Earned wealth by cutting grass lifelong. Dug a well for his name to remain. What thinking though is a grasscutter of poor home. Though rich this Bhanubhakta is like this. Neither well nor rest house. Whatever wealth there is, is inside the home. The grasscutter has given a moral. It is contempt to live without fame.) As an example to show that Nepalese were really keen to keep a fame, Pulandhara made by spinning cotton by a widow in Baisakh Krishna Ekadashi in Bhaktapur, Byasi tole in 763 Nepal Era (1643 AD) can be taken. Likewise construction of many spouts, rest houses etc. in our society in the name of the dead ones are found. Monument (make it inscription) in Tripurasundari spout in Bhaktapur Tulanchhe tole in 588 Nepal Era (1468 AD) state that King Yakshya Malla made floors, firehouse, well, kitchen, tute spout etc. for those who read “Sadadarshan” to bring peace to the dead souls.

People come to the stone spout to wash their face, bath and worship the gods and goddesses, offer water etc. In most of the stone spouts, water is cold in summer and warm in winter. Stone spouts were the main sources of water in Kathmandu valley and some outside districts some fifty sixty years ago. Facility of tap water started in Kathmandu valley and some outside districts after the First World War. Hence use of the stone spout became less. The facility of tap water reached the doorsteps of the houses in Kathmandu valley and other cities of the country after 2007 BS and with time people forgot the stone spout. Dozens of stone spouts have disappeared from all the three cities of the valley in

these 50 years. According to the survey report in 1982 AD by Kathmandu Urban Development Department, only 118 stone spouts were there inside Kathmandu Municipality while after about 16 years in 1998 AD the study done by Kathmandu Municipality showed that there are only 103 stone spouts. In this way, 15 stone spouts vanished from Kathmandu Municipality in about 16 years.

Study about the stone spouts in the Patan city was done in 1992 AD with the aid from German government according to which 40 were found. Stone spouts are less in Patan in comparison to Kathmandu and Bhaktapur due to which more or less of them have disappeared. I still remember that there was a stone spout till 2015-2016 on the left side while going from Kathmandu on the road to Hotel Himalaya from Kupondole. A handicraft shop and a house have been made on the spot where the stone spout was filled up. The people of Patan do more use of the stone spout. But the stone spout of Patan is getting extinct day by day. The water brought through royal canal from Tikabhairabh some 15 km away filled in ponds in different places. There was a swamp in the southern part from Jawlakhel of Patan to Kanibahal. The stored below the land through those royal canals, ponds and swamps gave adequate water to stone spouts and wells. But due to urbanization, encroachment of the swamp region and taking water to the fields by destroying the royal canal dried the water resources. The attack is so much that a sub-metropolitan and a school building have been erected over the four ponds in Pulchowk. Waste Management Office over the pond near Lagankhel bus stop, Sports Office over Prayag pond, Trading Office over the pond in Na:tole has also been made. The water of Lotus pond in Lagankhel was dried to grow potatoes by the Army Barrack. If the royal canal is maintained and the taking over of the swamp is stopped, water will be supplied to the stone spouts and wells as well as our cultural heritage will be protected. There is not more than 65-70 of the 103 stone spouts that are running and in ruins in Bhaktapur.

Among the stone spouts of the three cities, some of them carry important history, culture and tradition. Some spouts are taken as the source of power. Some are related to particular god, goddesses and festivals. Like the water of Bhindhyohiti located in Bhimsensthan is used in the temple for all the rituals and to maintain the statue in every 12 years. Water of Maruhiti Kathmandu is used to worship Santeneshwor Mahadev. It is also used in the worshipping of Maru Ganesh and special services are also received during different fairs and festivals. Like pilgrims receive services from Bhindhyohiti of Bhaktapur Dattatraya chowk in Shivratri as well as pilgrims in nine spouts festival in full moon day bath in the spout. There is a custom to worship Taleju of Bhaktapur by the water of golden spout from inside the Thantu palace. There is a tradition of bathing Krishna temple, Bhimsen temple and other god goddesses of other temples with the water from Manghiti of Patan and to bring back the character of Hiranyakashyapu killed by Nrisingh during Kartik dance. Likewise, water from Tanghiti is used for worshipping Minnath and during the season of Machhindranath Jatra if the water is not available in other water spouts then Machhindranath is bathed here. It is believed that people without parent bath in Kumbheshwor's Misahiti of Patan or ponds adjacent to it during in Gokarna Aunshi and Matatirtha Aunshi for virtues.

Narayanhiti before the southern gate of the Royal Palace have its own special place in the history of Nepal. The name of the Royal Palace is after this spout. There is a story in the establishment of this spout: King Bikramaditya constructed four statues of Narayan and a spout in his palace. After sometime, water stopped flowing from that spout during the reign of his son Bikramshree. King Bikramshree prayed to the four Narayans from whose wish his father had constructed that spout. The four Narayans ordered the king to take the advice from astrologers. The astrologers advised the king to sacrifice a royal member having thirty-two features. After some days, the king told his son Bhupkeshari to come to the spout four days later at midnight and to cut a man covered with a cloth in a single strike. King Bikramshree in the fourth day stood there covered with a cloth and Bhupkeshari as his father's wish cut him in a single strike. Then Bhupkeshari saw that blood was flowing instead of water from the spout. It is said that the spout turned its face as not to see the murder of a father. The face of the spout is still turned to this day. After the prince returned to the palace, water started flowing again. The next morning the prince found that he had killed his father mistakenly and hence gave the throne to his mother and went to Sankhu Bajrayogini for penance. To get free from the murder of a father he constructed Khas stupa or Boudhanath.

There is also a story of the famous Alko hiti in Patan constructed in the 15th century. Once, a female serpent had a sore eye so the male serpent took her to a famous charmer Tuhudev Bajracharya. The charmer treated her eye and the serpent being happy asked the charmer for a wish. Tuhudev wished for the well being of the human kinds. The serpent gave him five small stone pieces and told him to keep it without anyone seeing it and hence his wish would be fulfilled. Tuhudev kept the stones in a clay *salichan* (plate) and put it in a treasure house, locked it and kept the key without giving it to his wife. The wife got curious and when one day Tuhudev forgot to take the key, she went in to see what precious things were there. But when she found the five stones and nothing else, she threw the stones out of the window angrily. Tuhudev remembering the key rushed back to the treasure house and looked for the stones. When he didn't find them, he searched outside. Water was about to break in the place where the stones had landed. With his powers, he created five stone spouts, which became famous as Alko hiti.

This Alko hiti inside the valley in Patan E:khachhen tole is amongst the most beautiful ones. Water is still coming from this spout which is facilitating the local citizens. This spout according to the inscription there was constructed in 1415 AD. There are ancient chaityas and statues of Hindu and Buddhist gods on the walls of the spout. Fairs take place in this spout on Baisakh Sankranti, day of sithi and Ashwin Purnima. Many people of Patan come here to bath and worship the gods to get virtue.

Spouts are constructed inside the city for the people and near temple, stupas and other religious, cultural and social purposes while outside the city in main roads and pilgrimages. Naudhara of Godavari, spouts of Matatirtha, Machhenarayansthan, Baishdhara of Balaju fall on the second category. Stone spouts are kept from Sankhu Bajrayogini to Devsthan for the facility of the pilgrims. Some stone spouts are established in washermen's areas because they wash clothes from the water of these spouts.

People are still using the stone spouts of Lichchhavi period in Bhaktapur like Tulutulu hiti in Suryamadhi tole, Golmadhi, Khauma or Dhawaa hiti behind Shree Indrayani pith in Khauma tole and dozens of spouts of Malla period. King Yakshya Malla of Bhaktapur had constructed many stone spouts, which can be known from the monuments. Like the monument of Tripurasundari spout in Tulachhen tole in 588 Nepal Era (1467 AD), stone spout of Narayan in Gaalhiti in 597 Nepal Era (1476 AD) etc. There is a big contribution of King Jitmitra Malla to systemise the royal canal of Bhaktapur. He in 798 Nepal Era (1677 AD) to supply continuous water from the customary stone spouts to the people of Bhaktapur, collected small water spouts coming from Mahadev hill about two miles in north-east to convert it into Mahadev river. The river was stopped to make a pond from where a canal was made to enter the Thantu palace to a gold spout. Water was flowed to other stone spouts of Bhaktapur from the same royal canal. He made guthi and rules to maintain the royal canal in 803 Nepal Era (1682 AD) (1749 BS). Most of the stone spouts in Bhaktapur like Khauma, Naasmanaa, gold spout in Bhairavsthan and royal palace are run from this royal canal. After his death, his son King Bhupatindra Malla maintained the royal canal to let more water come into the palace and its surroundings to construct more stone spouts. This is known by the monuments of stone spout in front of 55 windows in 811 Nepal Era (1690 AD) and Bhairav chowk (Sadashir chowk) in 837 Nepal Era (1716 AD).

People of Bhaktapur go to bath playing music in nine different stone spouts facing east in *janai purnima* every year. According to the tradition, first they bath in stone spout of Ganeshtan in Suryavinayak, worship Ganesh and then bath in other eight stone spouts. The festival ends by bathing in the stone spout behind Bhimsen temple in Tachpal tole. The other stone spouts are along Bhimsen temple on the steep road to Suryavinayak, three spouts near Mission Hospital, Kumhale tole, Naasmanaa bazaar, Taumadhi Pubahal Dhaubadel, Bulubulu hiti of Tibukachhen bazaar and Tulachhen near Tripurasundari pith. There is a belief that if bathed in these spouts, the quality of the objects consumed increase to digestion and illness like diarrhea, dysentery, typhoid cannot touch one. The worshipping of the north bound gods on the spouts after bathing in the east faced nine different stone spouts get entry in the god's gate for the dead souls. The wondering souls get this chance only once a year after Purnima or full moon day when the gate of Yama opens. Most of these spouts are in ruins and the water has dried so the people bring water themselves for the bath.

According to the Chronicles of Padmagiri, the last Malla king Jayprakash Malla of Kathmandu constructed a pond and Baishdhara. Here a fair takes place in Chaitra purnima. Shivatwa gained by bathing in Gosainkunda and Muktinath is gained by bathing here in that particular day. There is Harati Ajima of Lichchhavi period and beautiful statues of Budhanilkantha, which has increased the religious fame. This place is a center of entertainment and religion to the people of the valley. Pilgrims worship Swayambhu then reach Jamacho on the top of Nagarjun hill where they pay homage in the chaitya and bath in the twenty-two spouts to end the fair. Pilgrims then gather around and stay vigil by dancing and singing. The next morning they bath and worship the Narayan. But the establishment of Coca-Cola factory, Industrial Region and Apollo Hospital is endangering the spouts.

These stone spouts are not supplying the water to the locals but also contributing in accomplishing their religious, social and cultural activities. They present an example of the religious solidarity, social system and customs of the valley people. Many stone spouts prioritise Buddhist traditions and chaityas while many others Hindu traditions. But the astonishing and delighting fact is that most of the stone spouts have both religious representatives. Like eight ancient Lichchhavi chaityas, one Shivlinga and a statue of Vishnu is found in Tanghiti of Patan, mixture of both Buddhist chaitya and statues of Hindu gods in Alko hiti in Patan. This kind of mixture of both Hindu and Buddhist traditional mixtures is seen less in Bhaktapur than in Kathmandu and Patan.

Snakes are kept as the representative of water or the protector of water in the stone spouts. Snakes wrap the whole spout region of some spouts while on others snakes is kept on the *dund*. Buddha (Amoghsiddhi) or Amoghpas Lokeshwor is kept in some stone spouts while Bodhisatwa Lokeshwors are established in others. There is a 9th century Bodhisatwa Awalokeshwor along with two female statues kneeling in Alko hiti and Gahiti of Patan. There are statues of Shakti Tara of Bodhisatwa Awalokeshwor in stone spouts near police station of Swayambhu and the main road of Panauti. Tara of stone spout in Swayambhu is standing while the Tara of Panauti is sitting in Lalitasan. Stone spouts are also decorated by other animals living in water like crocodile, fish, frog, turtle etc. Two fishes are kept on the right and left side of the center spout of gold spout in Patan while frog, turtle, crocodile, snake and other aquatic animals are shown in Thantu stone spout of Bhaktapur. Stone spouts have a big contribution in the development of sculpture in Nepal. Like the statue of Shivsurya in Alko hiti and Hari-Hari-Haribaahan Lokeshwor with his consort or Sashakti in Chakwa Lohhiti of Patan is taken as matchless pieces in the sculpture history. Statue of Bhagirath with a shell is kept below most of the stone spouts. But an ancient stone spout in Kohiti of Kathmandu has a pair of Yakshya.

To protect the stone spouts, our ancestors inside the valley, established temple, vihar near the spout, well, pond etc. and added the festivals, fairs to keep the water-related structures clean. Like water near Maruganesh in Maruhiti of Kathmandu and Santaneshwor Mahadev are used in worshipping and cleaning while Kohiti in Kohiti tole is related to the festival of Pachali Bhairav.

In Nepali society, not only river, pond, stone spout etc. but also spring, well and *jaldroni* or stone water container are helping in supplying water and other social, cultural and religious activities. Spring and well is used in whole of Nepal kingdom. Spring is used mostly in hills and inner plains while well is found in the valley, inner plain and terai. To dig a well, jaldroni and spring in human abode and main roads are taken as religious, social and benevolent act. People like to drink water of spring and well. That is why, wells are found in chowks inside the valley. Wells are found in most of the Buddhist Bihar in Kathmandu valley while springs are found outside the valley in the external turns of the three cities and in the hills. According to a report, there are thirty-five wells in ward no.13 of Bhaktapur district of which twenty are still in use. All twelve wells are in use in ward no. 2. No study has been conducted as how many wells springs

are there in Kathmandu valley. One hundred and ten wells are still in use in Thimi municipality. An excavation done few years ago in Pashupati Bhandarkhal and discovery of a terracotta ring well there has shown that wells were used in ancient times. The water of well is used to drink, bath, worship and wash clothes. Wells are found in the places where there are no stone spouts. “*Jyapu:Tun:*” or *Barabarshe Inar* (well) have a religious and social importance among the wells in Kathmandu. These have greater importance in famines. A famous charmer Jaaman Guvaju made a pond into a well with a penance in Brahmatole Musumbahal in ward 12 of Kathmandu Municipality in 775 Nepal Era (1654 AD). That is why it was called “Japa Tun” which later became “Jyapu Tun:” It is said that King Pratap Malla and Jaaman Guvaju covered this well.

There is a tradition of cleaning and renovating the water structures, be that a well or a stone spout like all other cultural heritages in every sixth lunar day of the bright half of Jestha inside the Kathmandu valley. But the *Barabarshe Inar* well is cleaned in every 12 years or in the time of the famine with the royal command of the King. It is believed that rain will fall if the well is opened and worshipped. To open the well, related Bajracharyas complete the rituals of purifying and worshipping for seven days. The jyapus who bring water from inside the well are also purified and the old kalash on the base of the well is replaced by a purashcharan new one. A sword as a representative of the king is kept in a nearest manphalcha from the start to the end of cleaning of the well. A pot of water is sent to the palace. People spray water as a form of medicine. Most of the people take the water to use it as a medicine. It is believed that drinking the water will cure all the stomach diseases. The cleaning of the *Barabarshe Inar* or 12 years well gets over from the famine. The cleaning of the well was taken place in 2060BS. Other wells are cleaned and renovated every year of Jestha in “*Kumar sasthi*” or *Sithi:Nakha*. After the worshipping and cleaning, the water of the well is not used for four days. In the first morning, cleaning is done and worshipping takes place in the evening. On the second and third day, the well is not even looked by the people. On the fourth day after worshipping the well is brought in use again.

There were *Tutedharas* also known as *jaldroni* in most places of the valley. These tutedharas were near stone spout, well and in main roads. These were constructed to quench the thirst of the travelers. Some famous tutedharas inside the valley are of Taumadhi tole of 17th-18th century Bhaktapur and of Sunaguthi village. Tutedhara is called Jharu, Jaldroni and Shivrioni in common language. There are evidences of the use of tutedhara from Lichchhavi period. The most ancient found is of ancient king Narendra Dev in 78 Sambat (655 AD) along with a inscription. According to the monument, Vishnudev made tutedhara with arghatta and well for the Brahmins and others to bath in order to gain merit. Tutuedharas are also found in some Buddhist bihars like in front of Jetbarna Mahabihar in Bhaktapur, along with main door of Kwa:balah Hiranyabarna Mahabihar in Patan, inside Itumbahal chowk in Kathmandu and south of Te:balah Sankata temple which was constructed by Lichchhavi period monk Priyapal Shakya which is probably the most ancient jaldroni ever found according to the marked script.

Spring is still prevailing inside the valley. Spring is formed by first finding a water source. These springs are seen below small hills and sometime in plains too.

Among these springs, those still in use are the two springs in north of Swayambhu hill and south-east. Springs inside the valley are disappearing due to population growth, destruction of forest and unmanaged construction.

In conclusion, the excessive attack of the stone spout from all directions not only in Kathmandu valley but the whole kingdom have led to stoppage of water and forming a pond due to blockade of the exit. We are forgetting these ancient sources of water structures like stone spout, well and spring with the facility of the tap water. Lack of maintenance and cleaning has led to the drying and burying of these spouts, wells and springs. In this way our ancient cultural heritages have converted into parti lands where the citizens, government and other non-governmental organizations have started making houses. Many stone spouts have been or being preserved and renovated with the aid from Bhaktapur Development Organization in 70s and 80s in Bhaktapur, UDLE and GTZ in 90s in Patan and Kathmandu Municipality and UNESCO in Kathmandu. But still many sources of stone spouts are drying. The biggest example can be taken of the famous golden spout (Sundhara) of Kathmandu. There are no estimations as how many stone spouts, wells and springs were made in Kathmandu valley and Nepal kingdom from Lichchhavi to Shah periods in about 1500 to 2000 years. The dunds from the ruined stone spouts collected by the Archaeology Department and kept in Patan garden, Bhaktapur Museum and National Museum are hundreds in number. It is impossible to resurrect all the stone spouts of the kingdom. Bhotahiti, Thahiti etc. of Kathmandu is known from names only but there are no stone spouts. Similarly tomorrow Kohiti, Maruhiti etc. may also disappear. Tindhara of (Jamal) is disappearing. Ancient Yanghiti of Yangal tole has to be searched. If we do not preserve and reuse the hundreds of spouts, wells and springs inside the three cities of the valley and other cities and villages, they may become history. As well as our social traditions, fairs, festivals and rituals related with these spouts, wells and springs may disappear.

## Chapter 5: WATER RELATED STRUCTURES

When the people knew that water is life saving element, different structures were constructed to use and conserve the water. Water related structures in Nepal are constructed not only for daily use and needs but also to keep the religious, moral and cultural awareness alive.

In the context of Nepal, there are still many ancient ponds related to *Ramayana* period in Janakpur. Excavations in ancient Kapilvastu (Tilaurakot) and Lumbini have shown the use of terra cotta ring wells. Ancient ponds are still found in Kapilvastu district and the surrounding areas like Niglisagar, Pushkarini of Lumbini, ponds of Sargahawa, Bikuli etc. Pond, well, stone spout and *jaldroni* proves that Lichchhavis constructed maximum numbers in the Kathmandu valley. It is hard to estimate as how many ponds were constructed in the Lichchhavi and Malla periods. Famous ponds in the valley are Siddha Pokhari, Bhaju Pokhari, Kamalvinayak, Mahadev pond of Bhaktapur; Rani Pokhari, Kamal Pokhari, Naag Pokhari of Naxal in Kathmandu and Lagankhel, Jawlakhel, Quabaha, Pinbaha pond etc. of Patan.

Construction of the pond started in the Kathmandu valley in the first century before Christ which is known by the excavations done near Satyanarayan temple in ancient town of Lichchhavis at Handigaon in 1984-1989. The excavated pond resembles the parts of the ancient ponds constructed by the Sakas in North India dated zero century. This ancient pond was used till 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century then were neglected eventually which led to its burial. This pond made by burnt brick walls is among the oldest and ancient structure of Kathmandu valley. The parts of this pond are important for the study of the water culture in Kathmandu valley. Construction of the ponds was not for agriculture in the valley where the rivers and rainfall is good but for the religious and cultural activities. According to Hindu tradition, one should be purified to enter inside a temple hence these ponds are constructed near religious places or temples are constructed near natural water sources. Archaeological artifacts found during the excavation of the pond show the contribution of Saka-Parthiyans. Found near it, the pieces of Makara or crocodile dragon of Gandhar style of the 1<sup>st</sup> century clears the relation with Saka- Parthiyans.

While discussing about the water related structures, it is appropriate to start from rivers and streams as the oldest source of water. We find the starting of civilization in the banks of rivers and streams. It is difficult to say what type of structures was there in the rivers in Lichchhavi and Malla periods. But one thing is true that temple or chaitya, Vihar or ancient royal palaces are constructed in Lichchhavi and Malla period traditions. The present banks and rest houses erected in Bagmati and Vishnumati rivers were built in

Shah Period yet it is likely that some of them were build in Lichchhavi and Malla period traditions. The banks are paved with stones and five to fifteen steps are made to reach to the river. There are cremation sites and round stone structure known as *Bhakari* along with chain for bathing safely during floods. Hut, rest houses are also made for the people who come for religious, social and cultural activities, patients waiting for death and mourners. Statues of gods and temples are made on the banks to worship after bathing. Shah Kings and Ranas made many temples, rest houses and huts from Teku to Thapathali of Bagmati in Kathmandu just like that of the banks of Banaras. This region may be the longest and with many temples, rest houses and huts in the Nepal Kingdom.

The most important banks for the Buddhists in Kathmandu valley are Karbir Masan (Karna Dip) and Teku Dovan (Chintamani Tirtha). All the religious activities are done in these banks in southeast of Shova Bhagwati in between Vishnumati and Bhacha khushi. Stone steps are made from the banks to the river and open huts are made for the pilgrims. There are many crematoriums in Teku Dovan. Many chaityas are also established in the surrounding. Three *Sattals* or rest houses are constructed in the north for the patients and mourners. Apart from Buddhist chaityas, there are many Hindu statues like Jalsayan Narayan, Ganesh, Surya, Bhairabh, Mahadev, Harihar etc. This presents the example of Nepali religious solidarity.

As far as I am concerned, for the question of which being the first among pond and well, pond should be the ancient structure because ponds are formed naturally. Like Taudaha, Mahadev pond etc. Most of the ponds, pools, lakes in the Nepal Kingdom are natural. But many human constructed ponds are also found like Rani Pokhari, Naag Pokhari, Siddha Pokhari, Dhanusa ponds etc. When observed closely, these human constructed pond structures also have pavement in all the four sides and have three-four stone steps. But the steps in a pond are in all four sides while in rivers it is kept only in one bank. Temples are also found near the ponds but not in all. Some ponds having religious and cultural importance have huts, rest houses like in Siddha Pokhari or pond of Bhaktapur, pool of Matatirtha, Godavari and Janakpur pond etc. Stone or clay walls protect most of the ponds in Nepal. Outlet regulation is made to keep the water flowing. The source of water of the stone spouts in Kathmandu valley is brought through canal or royal canal from these ponds. Like for some stone spouts of Kathmandu from Balaju pond, for Bhaktapur from Mahadev pond and for Patan from Lagankhel pond. The royal canal of Patan starts from Naldu river of Lele to Lagankhel. Royal canal of Bhaktapur reaches from Mahadev pond to Bhaktapur palace.

Canals cannot be forgotten while discussing about the water related structures. Canals were constructed in Kathmandu valley from Lichchhavi period from where water was taken to differefnt ponds. Canals were again made from those ponds to take water to

three cities and the stone spouts. This is evidenced by Manghiti in Patan Mangalbazaar constructed in 570 AD which is still in use.

There are many evidences that constructing canals to ponds and stone spouts brings water, which is also used, in agriculture in Kathmandu valley. Canal was called “*Tilmak*” in Lichchhavi period. Historians say this word not being of Sanskrit, the construction and use of canals was before Lichchhavi period. So “*Tilmak*” or construction and use of canals was from the start of the civilization in Nepal valley. The inscription of Shivdev and Amshuverma in Tokha 597 AD (Era 519) has “*Tilmak Sangamastatastmev Tilmak*” states the presence of canal at that time. In this inscription, Tilmak is taken as the boundary of a land. Other inscriptions of Lichchhavi period also state Tilmak. Like the inscription of Dhruvdev of Chhinamasta and Jishnugupta 624 AD (Era 48) states that King Amshuverma made a canal to facilitate the citizens of Lalitpur. Without maintenance, the canal was damaged. The canal was reconstructed by notifying Dhruvdev and Jishnugupta by the feudal Chandraverma Gomi. It is stated that the locals of Thambu, Gangshul and Mulbatika should look after the canals. That canal was constructed by the King Amshuverma for the welfare of three villages in Patan. King Dhruvdev and Jishnugupta repaired the canal and ordered a punishment to anyone who cut the water away.

Although the use of canal is mentioned in Lichchhavi period inscriptions, its' construction method is first known by the inscription of Dhruvdev and Jishnudev found at Minnarayan (Kathmandu, Jaisideval). According to that inscription, erected in 624-625 AD, the main feudal Shree Jivdev made canal to facilitate the people of Geetapanchalik with the permission from King Dhruvdev and Jishnugupta. A source was provided to repair the canal.

An inscription was kept for the arrangement of pond, canal etc. by King Shivadev in 697 AD in Bhringareshwor. A sentence “*Aparimit Jalasayo Deshtaya*” in the inscription hints of a big pond in Bhringareshwor. “*Pranali*” is also mentioned here. Management rules in relation to canal are in it. All the citizens including Brahmins of Bhringareshwor Panchali can use the canal, maintain and culprits be punished is written in the inscription. An inscription in Minnath, Patan dated Sambat 148 or 724 AD of about the time of King Jaidev second records Lichchhavi rulers made canals for the farmers. A system to distribute water equally without quarrel is stated here. Hence construction and maintenance of Tilmak, Lakhmak, canal was done in Lichchhavi period. Different names were given in different places like “*Got Tilmak*” in the inscription of Narendradev in Yagbahal in Era 103 or 679AD, “*Chisimanda*” in the inscription of Lagantole of Kathmandu and “*Mekandidul*” in the inscription of Pashupati Bajraghar.

It is natural that construction and maintenance was more in Malla period. Canals were also made in interim period before Malla period. Canals are not mentioned that much in the inscriptions of these two periods but progress and development of Nepal was seen due to good production in agriculture. Canals are needed for good production hence it is not necessary to discuss its relation with agriculture production.

Canals were also used extensively in Malla period. According to Gopal Chronicle dated Nepal Era 500 (1437 BS), King Jayasthiti Malla repaired the closed spout of Thithaniyam area, source of 12 spouts, canals to flow the water again. It is believed that King Mani Mukunda Sen constructed Argeli canal in Palpa to grow rice and worship the god of Kaligandaki, Hrishikesh Narayan. In the hilly region of our country, there is a community of “Agri” people whose main work is to dig and repair the canals.

Some snake ponds are also made in the three cities of the valley. In Kathmandu, it is in Hanumandhoka and Naxal and inside ancient palaces in Patan and Bhaktapur. In the middle of these ponds, there is a wooden pole with gilded head of a snake. These ponds are constructed as beauties rather than religious perspectives. Snakes surround the four walls of the Nag Pokhari of Bhaktapur. These are constructed as water garden. Presence of some forms of snakes are found in the water structures in Nepal be that a stone spout or a pond or a well.

A contribution of pond architecture in the kingdom is the construction of big or small Narayan statues sleeping on the water. There are three ponds like this in Kathmandu at Budhanilkantha, Balaju and Hanumandhoka. There is a big statue of Narayan and a pond in Dhakasi, west of Machhyanarayansthan in Kirtipur. Similar two or three statues are found in Bhaktapur. About seven feet long statue of Narayan is found outside the valley in Bidari VDC below the hill of Palanchowk Bhagwati. Near the statue is a fierce and deep pond. This statue may be a part of that large pond. Some parts of the pond have dried so the statue is seen outside. That place taking about half ropani area has about 30 feet high black stone with a deep and fierce pond located naturally. A step is provided to go up the stone, as it is difficult to reach the top.

The tradition of making *Jalasyana* or Narayan sleeping in water or pond was seen from Lichchhavi to Malla period. Statue of *Jalasyana* Narayan is also found in Kanchanpur in Far Western. That statue resembles with the statue of Budhanilkantha, Kathmandu. It is thought to be made by a king of Katyur dynasty of 10 or 11<sup>th</sup> century. It was discovered in a pond of Tumadi River on 29<sup>th</sup> Sawan, 2048. It is now kept in a different place by making a temple. If the original structure and importance of the statue is to be returned, the natural pond should be renovated and the statue is reestablished. These statues are constructed by imagining god Narayan looking at the sky sleeping in

*Chhir* Oceanon the bed of Shesh Nag or king of the serpents. These ponds fall under the water garden architecture.

Hence it cannot be said that there are no water gardens in Nepal. Ponds and Twenty-two spouts of Balaju, ponds and nine spouts of Godavari, ponds and spouts of Matatirtha, Nag Pokhari or snake ponds and Bhandarkhal gardens of ancient palaces are a type of water garden. But many things have to be searched in this subject.

We can also take well, spring, *tutedhara* as water related structures. Archaeological excavations have proved that there were terra cotta ring wells in Kapilvastu district and Kathmandu valley. But common wells are constructed roundly. In the context of well, “*Jyapu Tun*” or *Barabarshe Inar* (well) of Musumbahal, Brahmatole Kathmandu is considered to be the oldest in the Kathmandu valley. This well is quite wide and still has water in it. Well is made up of old brick. Stone snakes surround the circumference of the well. An ancient stone spout is kept on the upper edge. That stone spout may be from nearby locality which dried up and hence was used in the well. The new form being given to the Barabarshe Inar (well) is not good from any perspective. This kind of new construction work does not increase the beauty and pride. There is another well in Musumbahal, which the locals are still using. Most of the wells are round but in some part of hills, four edged wells are also found. Most of the wells made up of bricks but the upper part from the ground level are sometimes made up of stones. Some wells of the valley are decorated artistically. Statues of Vishnu are carved on the upper line of the well of Bhulakha tole in Patan. Another line has a pair of snake and designs are carved on the outer side.

Springs are mostly below small hills or mounds. A small wall or an edge is made with a roof to keep the water clean. A small yard is made ahead of the spring where people fill water, bath, wash clothes etc. Two springs located below Swayambhu hill is a good example of the spring architecture in Kathmandu valley. Water is found in all the twelve months in these springs. The construction of both is the same. The entrance of the north spring is from north. The spring is south of the wall. Four or five inches high brick wall is made to prevent dirty water from entering the spring. Water can be taken easily with hands from the spring. Walls cover the four sides of the spring. Upper part is open and right above the spring is a small chaitya. The entrance of the southeast spring is in south. The spring is north of the wall. Right above the spring is a small stone chaitya.

There is a ghost spring in the south of Airenithan and Nareshwor Mahadev of Butwal in Rupandehi district. It being made in a single night by a ghost is called the ghost spring. There is no structure above this spring. It is open and not even surrounded by a wall. The spring is below the land surface. Cut stones are arranged on all the four inner

sides of the spring. The shape of the stone is about 7.9 inch and 12.7 inch. These kinds of springs in the same districts are Saina Maina, Shankarnagar, Ranibari (Motipur), and Dinker. The water is salty but is used in drinking.

Some use of the *tutedhara* is seen in Nepal Kingdom. These are kept near wells in the main roads to facilitate the travellers. Carving strong stones makes these spouts. This spout is constructed by digging one and half to two feet deep hole and putting about four to five feet long and one and half to two feet wide carved stone. A small hole is made on the front main part and a *tuti* is kept in it. So it is called *tuterdhara*. It is also called “*Shiladroni*” and *jaldroni*. Main part of some spouts is carved. In the middle of the *tutedhara* of Taumadhi tole in Bhaktapur of 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century is a snake king of whose right and left side is two flying women with filled vessel. Right below the snake king is *tutedhara*. Below it is Bhagirath with a shell and crocodiles on both sides. This is among the most beautiful ones in kingdom. These *tutedhara* is also called “*Jharu*” in local language was used from Lichchhavi period. These are seen in temples, monasteries, streets, yards etc. The spouts are kept leaned on a wall. One to three *tutis* are kept in *tutedhara*. *Tutedhara* in the main door of Hiranya Varna Mahabihar in Patan is beautiful from the art perspective. Water does not come in this spout but there is a small *stupa* on its top. Below it is spout and then standing statue of Awalokiteshwor in Anjali mood.

Among the water related structures in Nepal, stone spout is the most important in the perspective of art and architecture. The stone spouts of Kathmandu valley have amazed the world. Stone spouts are constructed on the road level and some having fifteen to twenty steps. Famous gold spout of Patan is on the road level while Manghiti have twenty-seven steps to get down. Most of the stone spouts are square shaped while oval, cross and *chir butta* shapes are also found. The water of the spout is taken to fields, ponds or rivers through drains. The depth and number of spouts depend on the water source. There is a small yard in the center of most of the spout, which is paved by bricks or stones. But most of the spouts have stone steps. The surrounding walls are mostly of bricks.

Famous golden spout of Sundhara tole is one of the Lichchhavi period spouts. There are three spouts in Sundhara, which have gold plated crocodile spouts on the southern wall and spouts facing north. Statues of Bhagirath are below all the spouts. A pair of stone lions is kept on the two sides of the entrance steps. But gold spout has more importance than these three stone spouts in the perspective of sculpture. The wall of the spout is decorated by arts. There are two poles with Hanuman and Nrisingh on the right and left of the spout. Hanuman is carrying Sumeru hill on his one hand while Nrisingh is killing Hiranyakashyapu. Niche above the spout has Narayan, Saraswoti, Amoghsiddhi etc. A pair of fish is behind the spout. Water comes from the mouth of a cow and a statue

of Amoghsiddhi Buddha is on the upper niche of the spout. The head of cow coming out of the mouth of the crocodile and water is coming out of the cow's mouth. There is a frog and Shivalinga above the crocodile. Therefore the locals also call this spout "*Byachan Hiti*" or frog spout. The gold spout of Patan is among the beautiful ones. This spout also shows the religious solidarity.

Manghiti of Patan has its own characteristics. This spout of Lichchhavi period is in the north of Keshavanarayan chowk in Patan palace (Patan Museum). The main path of this spout is towards west. The yard is reached by getting down about twenty-one steps facing east. Two open rest houses are in the entrance. This spout is made in three layers. There are three stone spouts in the eastern wall. The main spout in the center has a cock's head and the other two have crocodile. There is a statue of Bhagirath below the spout and Laxminarayan above the main spout. On the north wall of the yard is one *jaldroni*, which has dried. Outside of the spout region in the east is one Boudha chaitya.

There are no bigger stone spouts in the kingdom than the golden spout or Sundhara of Kathmandu. This spout made in 19<sup>th</sup> century is reached by getting about twenty-five steps down from the road level. Three layers of platform designed in brick shape is constructed in the surrounding of the spout more than one hundred people can stand in each platform. There are three gold spouts facing west on the bottom yard. There is a spout in each of the east and west walls. The three crocodile spouts facing north are gold plated. The *tuti* on the east and west walls are lost.

The main spout have open mouthed crocodile from where a head of a calf emerges and of whose top is a half body of a peacock with a head. Behind the ear of crocodile, the tail of the peacock is also seen. In this way, the spout is presented artistically combining crocodile, calf and a peacock. Above the main spout is a statue of Garudnarayan, which is kept in a small temple. There is Ganesh on the top of the eastern spout and a sun on the western spout. Statue of Bhagirath with a shell is below the spout. There is a Mahankal on the top of the eastern spout and a goddess with four hands on the western spout.

The area of Sundhara is two ropanis and four annas. Its' water is taken through drain to Bagmati from Bagdurbar and Tripureshwor. The source of water was dried when seventy big iron sheets were driven below the land to build a building of *Karmachari Sanchay Kosh* in Tundikhel in 2044BS. This spout is neglected which served as a pride of the Nepalese architectural history. It should be revived with its' past glory.

Stones are used in almost all the stone spouts. But designed bricks are also used in some stone spouts. Like the stone spout of Bhimsenthan, Kathmandu whose walls are

made up of designed bricks. This stone is beautiful though small and have to get down fifteen steps from the road level. This spout is constructed in three layers. Stones pave all the platforms. But the walls are of bricks. There are statues of snakes and *garud* (a legendary bird and vehicle of Lord Vishnu). On the both sides of the tip of gold spout there is a pair of snakes and underneath is the statue of Barun. This stone spout was buried when the outlet was closed and a pond was formed. It was renovated in 2058 BS with the help from Kathmandu Municipality, Ward Committee and UNESCO. Small water comes from this spout.

Stone spout in Kohiti tole, Kathmandu is called “Kohiti”. This is also of Lichchhavi period. Ten to twelve steps should be taken to reach this stone spout. This is quite narrow with about four annas of land. There is only one platform. The eastern part is somewhat wider. The main spout is on the eastern wall from where water is still coming. But the small spout on western side has dried. Above this western faced spout is Shiv-Parvati, Uma-Maheshwor, Surya, Ganesh and four Shivlingas. There is an ancient chaitya on southwest of the spout. On the north of the spout is a dried *jaldroni*. Above the *jaldroni* is Shiv-Parvati and small statue of Awalokeshwor. Other characteristic of this spout is the two statues of Yaksha carrying something on the shoulder rather than the statue of Bhagirath are kept below the Jaldroni.

Stone spouts are very rich in the perspective of art among the water-related structures. Like *Alkohiti* of Patan is square shape. The yard of the spout is reached by taking Three four steps down from the ground level. The entrance of the spout is from south. Three crocodile spouts are in the north wall of the spout. Statues of Buddha and Laxminarayan are on the left side of the spout. Along is the statue of Astabhuja Ardhanarishwor and Amoghsiddhi it is surrounded by ten incarnations of Vishnu. Above the middle spout is a circle of Buddhist religion. Most of the stone spouts have small statues but Alkohiti and Naagbahal of Patan have full height of sleeping and Buddha in *Avaya* posture respectively. These statues are kept on the entrance steps which reminds the people who come there for bathing and to take water about its religious importance and purity. Lichchhavi period chaityas are on the north of the yard and in the surroundings. Near is a peak type small temple inside which is a Shivlinga and Narayan in another small temple. Apart from the three stone spouts in north, there is a stone spout each on the walls of east and west. Water is coming from all the spouts. In the surrounding of Alkohiti are statues of Uma-Maheshwor, Saptaswa-Surya, Manjushree, Vishnu and other Buddhist statues. It has already been said that water related structures are not only to supply water for daily use but also to keep the religious solidarity alive. We find the Hindu and Buddhist religion is almost at balance on the stone spouts of Kathmandu valley. Like above the stone spout in Bhimsenthan, Kathmandu is a statue of Laxminarayan and Amoghsiddhi Buddha on top of it. Likewise in Kumbheshwor

Mahadev temple in the western spout “Kontihiti” is Shivalinga and the eastern “Misahiti” is Boudha chaitya.

*Naulo and mungras* of western Nepal should also be stated while discussing the water related structures. *Naulo* of Chipur is important in sculpture perspective. It is two floored. Travellers stay in upper floor. A small pond is inside the *naulo* and five stone steps should be descended to reach the water level. Stone spouts are on both sides of *naulo*. Complete construction of *naulo* is done by limestone. There are open verandahs on the face of *naulo*. On the poles of verandah are pictures of vessel and warriors are carved.

Most of the *naulos* are one floored. Water pond is inside one floored *naulo* of Ajaymer. Open verandahs are on both the sides of *naulo*. There is stone step to reach the pond and lotus is carved on the ceiling above the *naulo*. Black-brown stones are used to construct this *naulo* and the roof is covered by slate. *Naulo* of Dailekh district was constructed by King Prithvi Malla in Era 1276. This *naulo* is constructed in pagoda style. It is fifteen feet high and ten by ten feet round. The roof is of pagoda style and in the four ends there are small steeple and big stone steeple on the centre. *Naulo* is made by putting iron joints in the stones. There are twelve steps to go down but only three of them are seen. This *naulo* is neglected now.

From Vedic time, famous Varun is known as god of water. Fish, sheep and crocodile are his vehicles. The head of crocodile is kept in the spout in belief that the spout will not dry. So in western Nepal, it is called *Magar Aahu*, *Mugrahu* and *Mungro* or *Mungra*. Statue of Varun on the right and Varuni on the left is kept in *Mungra*. Common designs are carved in most of the *mungras* and below it some flower designs and *aamlak* designs are carved. Crocodile is kept on the front part of *mungra*. Traditionally there are two or three or more spouts in these *mungras*. *Mungra* of Ajaymer is beautiful in art perspective.

The hot water ponds of Sanar village in Jumla were constructed laboriously. Hot water is collected in three ponds. The bottom of two ponds is of clay while the main pond has paved stones. Women can use the hot water in Wednesday and Thursday. The hot water stone spout of Sanar village, Jumla has its own characteristics. Poles erected near stone spout has lotus and other flowers carved on it. Pole on the right side has chaitya and flowers, which represent *Triratna* or Buddha, Dharma and Sangha of Buddha religion. Other pole has a horse-riding soldier carrying a spear carved on it. This kind of horse riding soldier or warriors carved “Brave Stones” are found everywhere in Jumla district. It is possible that these stones were carved in the respect of the soldiers killed in war or

brave warriors. Nothing can be said about the carved pictures on the pole with the spout. It looks like elephant or Ganesh.

In conclusion there are many water-related structures. But only few ponds, well, spring and stone spout important in art and craft perspective is described here.

## Chapter 6: OUR FESTIVAL, FAIR, CUSTOM AND WATER

It is not necessary to discuss the importance of water use, as Nepal is an agriculture-based country. Our country is situated on the lap of Himalaya or snowy mountains and is decorated by Himalayan rivers and lakes. These Himalayas, Himalayan rivers and lakes are not only our sacred and holy sites but also the source and inspiration of our culture, festival, fair, custom etc.

Not only in Kathmandu valley but also in most parts of the kingdom, the first day of the first month, Baisakh, which falls in the middle of April, is celebrated as festival or fair. *Bisket Jatra* takes place in Bhaktapur that day. It is believed that bathing in the Triveni of Bagdwar, Vishnunavi, and Sapantirtha at Tokha in that particular day destroys different diseases. People who have lost mother go to bath in Matatirtha pond in Matatirtha Aunsi on the last day of the dark fortnight of April. It is believed that gods will be happy and imperishable merit will be gained if sugar water mixed syrup is gifted on the day of *Achhay Tiritiya* in *Baisakh Shukla Tiritiya*. Diseases are said to be cured if that syrup is taken. Merit will be gained if one bathes in rivers in the birthday of Shree Gangaji in *Baisakh Shukla Saptami*. New Year festival is called *Bishu* or *Bishou* in the far-western region of Nepal. Nettle water is splashed to one another in this day so that diseases do not harm. Even contest between sister-in-law and brother-in-law to splash nettle water takes place. This festival is taken as courtesy and intimacy increasing between sister-in-law and brother-in-law. A month long festival of Banimela or Baneshwor Mahadev takes place in Joshipur VDC of Kailali during Baisakh from Aunshi Tithi. The Brahmin priests bath and does the ritual of *rudri and hom* while the pilgrim bath in Putharaiya river and offer water to Shivalinga. It is believed that wish of children is fulfilled if women bath in Pattari pond in Maheshpattari VDC of Siraha district.

Jestha, the second in lunar calendar, is known as 'rain starting month'. There is a tradition of cleaning well, pond, stone spout in *Kumar Sasthi* or birthday of Kumar Kartikay also known as Sithi Nakha in Jestha in the bright lunar fortnight of May when it is considered that the water is at the lowest level. Snake gods of the well and pond goes out for *Devali* or yearly feast and worship in that day so it is suitable for cleaning. After the cleaning, one small piece of mica is kept in it. Basundhara, the god of richness, is worshipped when making pond, well or stone spout and is usually completed on this day in Kathmandu valley. The day of Jestha Shukla Dashami Dashahara is called *Ganga Dashahara*. That day pilgrims bath in different sites known as *Hatyamochan* bath. Fair takes place in Panauti in Shukla Paksha Purnima. People bath in Indrawati River and worship Indreshwor Mahadev. On the first Tuesday of Jestha, fair is held on the steps (footprints) of Siddha Baba on the mid-road from Surkhet to Dailekh. Fairs are held for

good rain and crops that would bring joy in the villages. It is believed that rain falls when the step (footprints) of Siddha Baba is worshipped.

According to our tradition and astronomy, if the sky is clear and moon shines in the nights of Krishna Asthami and Ashar Shukla Purnima, then there will be scarcity of rain that year. Likewise if lightning takes place in Swati Nachhatra or rains in Ashar then there will be good crops.

The Buddhist Newars of the valley celebrate the “Gunla” festival in Bhadra, the fifteen days before full moon of August or early September. Buddhist women make small chaityas, statues of Buddha and other gods on the bank of river. On the last day of Gunla festival, those things are collected and a procession of family and friends head to river. Those things are kept on the riverbank and circled three times which is then put in water. This type of festival is done in Teku Dovan, Shovabhagwati and Shankamul Dovan of Kathmandu.

Shrawan Shukla Panchami falls during the monsoon rain on the fifth of the brightening lunar fortnight late in July or early August is known as Naag Panchami. On that day, snake god is worshipped, as it is known as protector and symbol of water. Snake is the god of rain and water. It is believed that rain falls if the snake god is made happy. A fair takes place in the snake pond in Dhapakhel, Patan. A custom of asking for water takes place in the famous ancient pond of Taudaha.

During Janaipurnima, on the full day of August in the month of Bhadra, Brahmin-Chhetri with sacred thread goes to rivers early in the morning to bath and change the thread. Fair starts from early morning in the courtyard of Patan Kumbheshwor Mahadev temple. Linga of Kumbheshwor Mahadev is taken to a small pond there the night before. All the pilgrims worship that Mahadev. Boys splash water to the Shivalinga and the pilgrims. The importance of Kumbheshwor pond of Shrawan Purnima is said in “*Nepal-Mahatmaya*” as: *tatpuskarinya: salile ya: karotya bagahanam. Shrawane purna masyan wai so api swarganam bapnu yat*” or those who bath in that pond in Shrawan Purnima, gets heaven. A big fair takes place in Pashupati that day. People bath in Aryaghat, worship Pashupati and make donations to the Brahmins and the poor. On Janaipurnima, people from Bhaktapur bath and worship in these nine spouts.

The biggest fair in the whole of Nepal kingdom in Janai Purnima takes place in Gosainkunda, about twenty-five miles of Kathmandu in about 16000 feet high. Thousands of pilgrims come here to attend the festival. According to folklore story, *Kalkut* poison ousted from ocean churning threatened to destroy the universe so Lord Shiva drank it. But the heat of poison became unbearable to god. While he was walking

hither and thither, he reached Gosainkunda. It is believed that there he dug the earth with his *trishul* or trident to take out water and prepared a holy pond and entered in it to calm the heat.

Another story is one devotee dropped a copper vessel in Gosainkunda. This vessel was found in a pond of Patan Kumbheshwor. After that people had a belief that there was an internal path (underground way) from Gosainkunda to Kumbheshwor pond. The water of Kumbheshwor pond being cold in all twelve months has further intensified this belief. That is why people who cannot go to Gosainkunda go to Kumbheshwor pond. According to Nepal-Mahatmaya *‘tatpuskarinya: salile ya: karotya bagahanam. Shrawane purna masyan wai so api swarganam bapnuyat’* or those who bath in that pond in Shrawan Purnima, also gets heaven.

People bathe in Gokarna Bagmati in Gokarna Aunsi of Bhadra (the last day of the dark fortnight in August or early September) and worship Gokarneshwor Mahadev. Mostly people who have lost their father go there. There is a story about it. A prostitute’s son Dantur was teased by his friends by asking who his father was. So Dantur told a hermit about his misfortune. The hermit told Dantur to bath at Gokarna in Bagmati and give offerings to his dead father. Dantur did as the hermit said. But all the dead souls asked for the right of the offering saying they were his fathers. Dantur was confused but a Brahmin showed him the soul of his father. Dantur with joy started to bath and give offerings every year. This meritorious act made him a king one-day. Etc.

Women of Brahmin-Chhetri celebrate Teej every year in August or early September. This festival is celebrated three days in Bhadra. Different sweets, fruits and foods are eaten on the first day. The next day, fasting takes place and in the third day of Rishi Panchami, the foot of the husband is washed and after drinking the water the fasting is completed. Bathing in the early morning of Rishi Panchami and worshipping Shiva ends this festival. Those women who cannot go to the rivers complete these rituals at home.

Many festivals are celebrated in Ashwin. Nepal being agriculture based country; festivals are celebrated after bringing the new crop of rice home. Indra Jatra starts after establishing Indradhoj in Baman Dwadashi. Indra is worshipped for good rain and crops, as he is the god of rain and cloud. This fair is celebrated to make Indra happy. In the same occasion, the chariot of Kumari is pulled. The citizen of Kathmandu valley believes that this country is of Kumari. Along with Kumari, chariot of Ganesh and Bhairabh is also taken. It is right to describe more about Indra Jatra. Like the fair of Kandy is celebrated greatly for good rain and prosperity of the country in Srilanka. The tooth-relic of Lord Buddha is kept on a decorated elephant and led to a procession with royal respect. In Indra Jatra too, the king asks Indra for rain and cloud for the country, people

and his own welfare. The worshipping takes place for eight days with dancing, music, eating delicacies and meeting in “*Indradhojthan*”. The chariot of the protector of the country, Kumari, is rounded through the city. After completing the farming, the farmers celebrate festival to thank Indra for his blessing on good rain and good forage for cattle.

On this occasion for the salvation of the dead souls, people follow the mother of Indra, “Dangi” and bath in Indra pond also known as Siddha pond of Bhaktapur and then worship Indrayani.

Sixteen days of ancestor worship starts from Krishna Paksha of Ashwin, which falls in September or October every year. In these sixteen days people pay offerings to the dead souls, which equal doing it in Gaya of India, a holy place for the Hindus. This offering is done on the riverbanks or at homes but the offering of manes has to be dismissed in water.

The biggest and national festival of Nepal is *Dashain* or Durga worshipping. This festival also called *Navaratri* is celebrated for nine days from the bright lunar fortnight ending on the day of full moon in late September or early October. First day is Ghatasthapana where sand from the river is brought home and *jamara* is sowed. The *Kalash* or pitcher full of water is established as a symbol of Tulaja Bhawani. Complete kalash is a symbol of Annapurna, Shree Laxmi or Basundhara for the Buddhists. Water filled kalash has a big importance in the Nepali culture. This is a sign of ambrosia, immortality, ocean and oceanic gem and with the flowers are happiness, wealth and complete life. The big world is complete kalash and the water in it is life-juice. This is also one auspicious sign among the *Asta mangal* or (*eight auspicious symbols*). Any god can be invited and seated in the kalash. There is a tradition of early rising, bathing and worshipping Durga in *Navaratri*. The glory of a filled kalash with pure water is described like this: “*Kalashya mukhe Vishnu: kanthe Rudra: samashrit: Muletatra sthitwo Brahma matree ganasmrita:*” or Vishnu in mouth, Rudra or Shiva in throat, Brahma in shoulder and Matrika or power in mid-stomach of the kalash.

There is a tradition of bathing and worshipping gods or goddesses daily in different holy sites throughout *Navaratri* in Kathmandu valley. In the first day of *Navaratri*, worshipping of Chamunda Bhagwati in Patan Shankhamul, Luti Ajima or Indrayani in Shovabhagwati in the second day, Gokarneshwor Mahadev in Gokarna in the third day, Manmajju in Panchali in the fifth day, Batsala Devi in Tokha in the sixth day, Navadurga or Ajima in the seventh day, Kankeshwori in the eighth day after bathing in Teku dovan and Guheshwori Bhagwati in the ninth day after bathing in Taleju and Vishnumati dovan.

Likewise, Bhaktapur has different custom. Brahmayani Devi is worshipped in the first day after bathing in Brahmayani bank, Maheshwori in the second day, Kumari in Phasikhel in the third day, Baishnavi (Bhadrakali) in Chupingghat in the fourth day, Barahi Devi in Mangal tirtha in the fifth day, Indrayani Devi in Siddhi pond in the sixth day, Mahakali in Khasyang Khusung river in the seventh day, Tripurasundari in Kamalvinayak Kamal pond in the eighth day and Durga Bhawani after bathing in Hanuman bank in the ninth day.

The last day of Bijaya Dashami is celebrated by desiring a long and successful life and accepting tika, jamara and blessing of water known as *Abhishek*.

Chhat festival is celebrated in Kartik Shukla Sasti in the terai region of Nepal after Tihar in Kartik. Mostly the women worship Sun in this festival. Different fruits and sweets along with pot and elephant of clay is offered to the sun on the banks of rivers and ponds. Hymns are sung and flowers offered during rising and setting of the sun. The sun is worshipped and bathing takes place the next morning. All the processes of this festival are completed on the river or pond banks. Fruits, sweets, flowers and light are flown in the river on a leaf plate in the name of the sun god. By doing this it is believed that a childless couple would have a child and bring fulfillment to the family. Four Narayans are worshipped and bathing in different holy sites is done in the whole month of Kartik. There is a big fair in Kamala River in the Nepal-India border in Kartik purnima. People bath to be pure and let the god settle in one's body. Fair takes place in Palpa in western Nepal in the night of Kartik purnima in the temple of Satyawoti on the bank of Satyawati Lake. People bath in the midnight and flow light in the lake. Sacrifices are offered at night. Pilgrims ask for blessings in loud voices sitting on the banks of the lake. This scene is very entertaining. Loud voices ask for the blessings of Satyawoti, as Satyawoti is hard hearing. Some ask for the co-wife to die, some ask for mother-in-law to die, some to win a lawsuit and so on.

There is a tradition of taking an image of Guheshwori kalash around the city in Guheshwori festival held in Mangsir. According to *Swasthani*, the vagina of Satyadevi fell in Guheshwori. Therefore a holy site was formed there. Actually there is a small water hole which is always filled by water. The kalash of Guheshwori always cover that hole. Water and kalash is taken as holy and good omen.

Balachaturdashi fair in Mangsir takes place especially in the bank of river having a temple of Mahadev. Those who have lost a family member come to holy Bagmati in the evening, bath and then worship Pashupati. Then they sow satbiz (seven types of grains and fruits) in *Shleshmantak* forest and Pashupati region in the remembrance of the gods

and the dead ones. People not only from Kathmandu valley but also from the whole kingdom come to this fair.

In our religion and culture, not only people bath to be pure but gods and goddesses are also bathed time to time. Gods and goddesses of monastery, temple etc. are compulsorily bathed during the daily worshipping. If bathing is not possible, some drops of water are sprinkled. White Machhindranath of Kathmandu, Kel tole is bathed in Shukla Asthami of Poush. Water as well as *panchamrit* (milk, honey, curd, ghee and sugar) is used in the bathing. Machhindranath is taken as rain or water god and the nurturer of the people. Kumari is also brought to show the bathing or "*Nhwa*" of white Machhindranath. The courtyard and the houses of Machhindra Bahal are filled with people in that day. First, cultural musical instruments are played. Then two Bajracharya priests take out the clothes of the god. The clothes are taken out with rules in a series. First the outer clothes of *Tas* or brocade, then ornaments and finally the inner clothes are taken off. Lokeshwor with complete white body is naked upto the waist while the lower part is painted red. The priests wash the head of the god with water from two big pots. People get excited with that scene. The footprint of the Tara consort of Lokeshwor is also washed. Then the water used to bath the god is sprinkled to the people. The people who get that water becomes delighted and take that water home to sprinkle other members of the family. This holy bathing is done in the cold month of Poush. Strange thing is that it mostly rains in this day. According to an ancient myth, when Machhindranath was being bathed by his aunt, the clouds covered the sun to make the god even colder with evil intentions.

Three kalash filled with holy water is brought to Hanumandhoka in Poush Shukla Purnima which is also called *Mila Punhi*. The kalash is carved with silver Narayan, which is the symbol of Changunarayan. The pilgrims are coveted to be sprinkled by the water. Kumari is also brought to Hanumandhoka to see that fair. Changunarayan in the form of kalash is worshipped in Taleju chowk in Hanumandhoka and then cooled in Vishnumati. The kalash is then returned to Changu.

Magh is known as the holy month. Pilgrims bath in holy rivers and worship Mahadev or Lord Shiva. Fasting of *Shree Swasthani* is done in this month. Bathing is done in holy rivers in Maghe Sakranti and ghee, *chaku*, or molasses, yam, *laddu* of sesamum are eaten. There are fairs in holy sites in the whole Nepal kingdom. Big fairs are in Shankhamul Patan, Devghat of Bharatpur and Ruru region of Ridi. There are crowds of people fasting on the bank of Sali River in Sankhu. They bath three times a day eat one meal, worship and listen to the story. Pilgrims hope to acquit sins and carry a pot with holes and walk chanting Har Har Mahadev. Maibeni fair takes place in the meeting place of Mahamai and Jogmai in Ilam district. People who come to bath make this fair delightful and successful. Pilgrims worship Shiva by bathing in the meeting point of two Mai. Pilgrims

sacrifice five animals. Kankai fair in Kankai River of Jhapa also take place in Maghe Sakranti. Pilgrims not only from Nepal but also from India come in this fair. They bath in Kankai River early in the morning and worship the recently established gods and goddesses. Similarly fairs of Balachaturdashi, Makar Sakranti, Shivratri and Ramnawami takes place in Satasidham in Jhapa. Big crowds are seen there in Makar Sakranti. Pilgrims come to temple, bath in natural waterfall thirty minutes away from the temple and then worship Mahadev. It is believed that this frees one from the diseases, have children and increases wealth. Godavari River near Dhangadi of Far-western Kailali district has a fair in Maghe Sakranti. Pilgrims bath in the Godavari river in the morning, offer water in the Shiva temple and take water and food offered to god to homes.

With the end of Magh, the fasting of *Shree Swasthani* also ends. Crowds of people come to bath in the holy water. Mahadev is worshipped after being pure. Bathing fair is celebrated in Pashupati every Purnima of the year. As it being special bathing fair, thousands of pilgrims flock to see this fair. *Panchamrit* or cows' milk, curd, honey, sugar and ghee wash Lord Pashupatinath five times each after a bath from water. Then the god is applied with sandalwood and decorated by new dress, flower garlands and ornaments. Pilgrims take the *panchamrit* used to bath the god. Big fair in Susta VDC, Triveni in Nawalparasi district takes place in Krishna Amawashya in Magh. Triveni is the meeting point of Narayani, Sona and Pancha Rivers where Saint Balmiki came to bath and worship god. Fair takes place in Krishna Amawashya being the death anniversary of Balmiki. Those who bath in Triveni are believed to get abode with Vishnu. Pilgrims both from Nepal and India come to this fair.

Small Kichak pond of historical place Kichakbadh in Jhapa district has its own fame. Arjun took out water from the ground by hitting his arrow into it to purify Draupadi who was mishandled by Kichak. Hence the name of the pond became Kichak pond. Fair takes place from Magh Shukla Purnima to three days. Pilgrims come from far away places and also from India. They bathe early in the morning and worship in Draupadi temple.

Fair takes place in all the Shiva temples of the kingdom in the national festival of Shivaratri in the month of Falgun. Pilgrims worship Shiva after bathing in the rivers, ponds etc. Biggest fair is in Pashupatinath of Kathmandu. Pilgrims bath early in the morning in the Aryaghat, worship Pashupatinath and sit in a fast. Many ascetics, hermits and pilgrims not only from Nepal but also from India come to this fair and bath in the holy Bagmati.

Fair of fifteen days takes place in Mahashivaratri in Chhang Hangdi VDC of Syangja district. According to myth, the last organ of Satyadevi fell here. That is why both Shiva and Parvati are worshipped here. This place is a naturally made cave. Water drips from

the top all the time the whole twelve months. That water flows from cow's mouth shaped spout. Pilgrims bath in that spout before worshipping. Fair takes place in that same day in the meeting point of *Gokulegand* and Chaulani Rivers of the far-western Darchula district. This fair starts one day earlier of Shivaratri and continues till tomorrow. Pilgrims from many districts of far western and India come to the fair bath and worship Gokuleshwor Mahadev.

Holi festival is celebrated in Falgun after driving in a pole from Astami to Purnima for eight days. This festival is celebrated happily in Kathmandu valley and in the terai. Red powder and colours are played in Fagu Purnima. There are many stories about holi: god Krishna playing colours with Gopini to Holika being burned while trying to burn Pralhad, the devotee of Lord Vishnu. Nowadays this festival has changed and has become notorious for the use of dirty water and misuse of the colours. But crowd of youths drenched in coloured water, playing music and wandering around the city is seen.

Fair takes place in the Baisha Dhara of Kathmandu, Balaju in Chaitra. Pilgrims worship Swayambhu and Jamacho and then come to the Baisha Dhara and bath.

There is a tradition of bathing in the holy rivers and ponds chanting Vedic texts in our culture. These Vedic chants are different according to the months. There are many festivals and fairs related to the rivers and ponds of all the districts in the Nepali culture. All the religious communities of Nepal Kingdom consider water as the purifying source of both mind and body. Water is the source to keep the relation with the ancestors from birth to death. Water acts as a bridge between this world and the next world in our culture and religion. There is a big religious importance of water in Buddhist tradition too. Water is taken as an important object for purifying mind and soul, receiving *Buddhatwa* and *nirvana*. Water plays a big role in Buddhist universe, time and world wheel, Buddhist sculpture and Buddhist rituals, festivals and everyday worshipping complete parts of the stone spout is compared with Universal Ocean and the chaitya established inside it is compared with Meru hill in Buddhist tradition.

There is a tradition of inviting any gods of our religion in filled vessels or complete kalash. Tulaja Bhawani, the main goddess of our national festival Dashain is worshipped as a kalash. Kalash is taken as eight auspicious sign in both Buddhist and Hindu religion. Water filled pitcher or kalash is kept on both left and right side of the main door while going for a nice act or going abroad. Only by establishing a kalash, the Hindus worship their ancestors. Holy water of the kalash is used after taking the water, which is given the names of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswoti Rivers. The completion of the process is done by emptying the kalash.

According to our ritual, water should be sprinkled when entering holy sites or starting a worshipping and hands should be washed before eating, worshipping or touching a holy object. One should bath in river or stone spout, well etc. and then enter home after returning from a funeral. If this is not possible, hands, feet and face should be washed before entering the house. This is a common practice of Nepali people. People on the deathbed are offered water of the holy sites and the animals to be sacrificed are sprinkled with water. Water plays a big role in any auspicious works in the Nepali culture. Bathing is compulsory in any individuals' birth to death, *nuharan to antyesti*, *bartaman of boys to bel biwah of girls*, or marriage. Water plays a major role especially in the Bahun-Chhetri community in *kanyadan*, *anmanaune* of bride and groom and washing of the feet. Father-in-law and mother-in-law do this holy act by pouring water on the hands of daughter and son-in-law while the Brahmin chant prayers keeping water as the witness. It is interesting to describe an astonishing custom of the Maithali Brahmins of the terai. According to the Maithali tradition, after living a life of the celibate upto twenty-five years, the female cannot withstand the eternal heat of the male at the first contact. So the groom is not allowed to have salt and take a bath for three days before the first contact. In the fourth day, the groom takes a bath to become pure, completes the act of *chaturthi* and enters into a common couple domain. So there are many important things of water in the Nepali culture, our festival, fair, rituals etc. whose explaining is very difficult. Actually water is related with all our cultural and religious activities.

## Chaper 07: FOLK CULTURE AND WATER

Identification of any society is done by its folk culture. The folk culture of that society which is full of literature, music, painting, dances etc. is called richly cultured society. Nepal is a multi racial, multi linguistic, multi (folk) cultured country. Being agriculture based society; the importance and role of the water don't have to be discussed in our folk culture. This country full of rivers, ponds and stone spouts are influencing and inspiring our folk song, folk music and folk literature from ages. This is clearly explained by the folk songs sung by the people of different community and race living in different districts of the kingdom of Nepal. Famous song "Rajamati" of Kathmandu valley have described stone spout as- "upper spout Thahiti, lower spout Kohiti, middle spout Maruhiti, while going to Maruhiti to fill water, Rajamati fell down colliding with a big stone."

In most parts of Nepal, there is a custom of singing songs during rice plantation. This song is sung planting rice and playing in water and mud slime. People of the valley while celebrating different festivals and fairs like Indra Jantra, Gai Jatra, Teej, Matatirtha fair, Baisdharma Mela, Krishna Asthami etc. sing folk songs, folk music and folk hymns. Among the two main rivers of Kathmandu, Vishnumati is stated in one folk song as- "a fish was born to recognize Vishnumati, but an untouchable Poda caught it in his net." "Shilu Mye" is among the most famous folk song of Kathmandu valley. This song is about a tragic separation of a couple while going to Gosainkunda fair.

Fair is held in the temple of Halesi Mahadev of Sagarmatha zone in Mangsir and Chaitra. Fair takes place on the bank of Ravauna Dudhkoshi in Maghe Sakranti and in Likhu River of Siruwa in sun and moon eclipse. There is a majority of Rais in Halesi, Gurung and Rai in Ravauna (Khotang), Sunar, Tamang and Sherpas in Siruwa and folk songs are sung in these fairs. Water, river and spout are described in those folk songs. "Water of spout does dharara, well's kuiranchha, my outside soul speaks, inside soul cries." "Booki Flowers bloom unhappy like me, will cross Arun will cross Barun will cross Dudhkoshi, I sat on mother's lap, don't know where I'll die." "Drinking water in Tir Tire spout fell in love in Gauri's chautara." "Rain fell Salghari whistled, joking with you your husband became angry" etc.

There is a custom of singing a song and asking for rain in Janakpur during drought. Like "O Indra god make rainfall quick because drought is occurring on earth. Meadows around the field and pits have all dried." Similarly, hilly area of this zone has also a custom of singing, asking for rain. "Mahadev give us rain, this is not enough do give a little more, the clod of ash is so hard, it is difficult for Mahadev to give rain, the clod of earth has

dried, where is Mahadev hiding” etc. Tamangs of this zone relate about the river that they have spent their life with in their folk songs.

*Ghari Sainla Ghari Maila ban kera ko ghari*

*Hamro ghar ta yaha hoina tama Koshi paari*

(Comb Sainla Comb Maila, Comb of Forest banana, our home is not here, it is across Tamakoshi.) The people of this region who don't get enough to eat and wear though they work hard express their grief like this- *Barhabishe jaaula rakshi kini khaula, Hai bawula mai ladi deula, biyaad khane, pakha khane kehi chhaina ghar bitra, umer bhaigo, budho bhaigo, Tamakoshi mai marijaula.* (I'll go to Barhabishe, buy alcohol to drink, will fall on sand, dug *biyad*, dug a steep field, nothing inside house, age has gone, became old, will die in Tamakoshi.)

There is a big glory and importance of Koshi River in Mechi zone. Koshi should be understood as Saptakoshi here. Koshi is described like this in sangini songs sang in this region- *Koshi ko kinarai ma ke phoola phoolyo, sunkewara phoolai phoolyo hai magmag baas, Koshi kinarai ma kya phoolai phoolyo, Dudhkewara phoolai phool hai magmag baas* (what flower bloomed on the bank of Koshi, Dudhkebara flower bloomed with sweet scent) etc. Varaha region of Koshi zone is worshipped as the family god by Kirats. People in the fair of Varaha region prides in folk songs and folk dances. They collect different aspects of Arun, Barun and Saptakoshi and sing like *Arun paari titre baan, daam paisa gann garib ko mann* (Titre forest across Arun, count money, the soul of poor) etc.

There is a majority of Bhojpuri language and culture in Narayani zone. Their song of transplantation is also very pleasant. They use water in their songs like- “a thirsty traveler ask for water to a girl taking water from a well, the girl doesn't know the clan of man and doesn't have the introduction, so she cannot give him water” etc.

The fishermen of Gandaki zone spend their life playing with water. The fishermen who row a boat and catch fish in the river sing like this- “Played net in Kaligandaki placed big *dharuwa* in Daraudi, Mijar sahab never eat without fish in which he put ginger.”

Dhaulagiri zone has Magar majority. Their folk song is also called ruwani song. They use the biggest river of that region in their song as- *Urli aayo Kali Ganga cheu cheu paryo bhulka Sailo, dherai chhan hai satru, bairi nasuni deu ulka sahilo* (Kali Ganga came surging like boiling water Sailo, there are many enemies don't listen to the rumor Sailo.)

Ruru region and Kaligandaki heavily influence folk song of Lumbini zone like *Udo ra bagne Kali Ganga Majhai paryo bulka Saila, Naira sune maya jaal saturai ko ulka saila. Sayan marin Kali Ganga Ridhi samman gaira saila, ekai taal ma khelaunani macha pani*

*bhayera saila. Kali Ganga nira tira jogi basyo dyana saila, kale dela arti budhi kale dela gyan saila. Kali ra Ganga wari pari Saligram jari Saila, tai koni pirthi yei lamlani yesai gari saila* (Kali Ganga flowing down boiling remained in middle Saila, don't listen to love rumors of Saturai Saila. Kali Ganga reached Ridi sleeping, will play together in same lake being fish and water.) "A hermit sat on the bank Saila, who will give moral, who will give idea who will give knowledge Saila. Kali and Ganga on either side black quartzes fell Saila, anyway lets love here Saila."

Rukumeli of Rapti zone describe Rukum lake and Bheri Ganga in their folk song as- *Mathi paryo Rukum daha tala Bheri Ganga, dada baat Rukum herda mann hunchha changa* (Rukum lake is up down is Bheri Ganga, soul become like a kite while looking Rukum from the hill top.)

Hair is washed with dirty water of ditches in the forest and used to drink in Kailali Kanchanpur of Seti zone. A song is sung saying how to drink that dirty water. *Jhan jhan gaduwa jamuna jal paani, kaise peu kai peu.*

The girls of Bheri zone sing looking at the rice plant and small waves of Karnali and Bheri- *Jeu dhaan japaka bhaigo dana-darnali le, Ajakaal chalko tira hanchin bheri karnali le. Thulo bheri saanio bheri bhet bhayo rimnai ma, gaye jala yo parani surya phool tipnai ma* (Rice plant is thick with Darnali seed, Bheri Karnali goes towards wave. Big Bheri and small Bheri met at a junction, this youth can go trying to pick a sunflower.) *Ek baini Jumla poila ek baini gailaru, bhet bhaye maya jaala baschha bhet mabhaye baru. Sunaiko rikaapi maathi kaakari ko chira mayai ma parani janchha chal paayou ki hira.* (One sister eloped to Jumla another to Gailaru, love will blossom if met, nice not to meet. Pieces of cucumber on gold plate, life goes in love, now you know diamond.)

Tharus of Mahakali zone sing Sawani song- *Rimjhim barase re sawani badarise, Khetwame naacherae bahar ho, naache Manawa hamar* (rain falls drizzly dance merrily on the field, we celebrate by dancing.)

Water is presented not only in our folk songs but also in folk dances. This is clearly seen in the rice dance of Limbus, Horiya dance of Tharus and Deuda dance of western Nepal.

Buddhist people of Nepal believe that there are ponds inside the ancient stupas of Swayambhu and Boudhanath. Swayambhu Mahachaitya is the stupa on lotus flower in the middle of Snake Lake and Boudhanath is the stupa over milk pond.

Water is mentioned and described a lot in our folk literatures and stories. Folk story has a big place and role in folk literature. In folk stories, the tradition, belief, rituals etc. of that

society is presented. There is a story of farmer and Indra related to water and rain. A farmer was digging a field to sow maize in summer season. The field was in layers from top to bottom being a hilly region. There was no rainfall for months. Rain god Indra was looking at that farmer working so hard from the sky. Indra was curious to find what was happening. So he came to earth in a man's disguise. Indra asked the farmer why he was digging when there was not a drop of rain. The farmer told Indra that it would rain that night. Indra asked him how it could rain without a single cloud in the sky. Farmer said that he had heard a frog croak and saw a firefly yesterday so it would rain this night. Indra asked how the farmer knew about this. The farmer replied that when frog croaks, the firefly comes out of hiding and when firefly come out rain god have to shower rain. Indra told the farmer that he was wasting his time, as it would not rain that night. To make his words true, Indra went to the frog and told it not to croak. Then he went to the firefly and told it not to come out. Indra went to the sky and waited for the sunset. The farmer was firm in his belief so he dug all the fields and sowed maize seeds. After having his evening meal, the farmer again came to the field with spade and lantern. He wanted to cut terrace to take water to the lower terraces. While the farmer was moving up and down with his lantern, Indra looking from the sky thought that firefly was flying so he showered rain. Good rainfall gave good crop and the farmer became happy etc.

There is a story of famous Gway Baje of Patan relating the power of water. His real name was Gajapati. He was called Gway Baje of Gaya Baje because there was only him and his mother in his family. He was a Brahmin so he went to bath in Mrityunjay bank of Shankhamul daily. One morning while going for the bath, big rain fell when he was near Kumbheshwor. He found a Pode's house for shelter but Pode being untouchable, he didn't go in. Inside the house, the son of Pode was troubling his mother. The mother angrily struck the son with a knife, which killed him instantly. Seeing that, the mother began to cry. When the Pode came home, he saw what had happened and told his wife not to cry. Then he took his dead son to another room and brought him to life again. Gaya Baje was looking at this. He was astonished as how the Pode made the dead alive and wanted to learn that mystery. That Pode was a famous enchanter and many people came to him for advises. From that day, Gaya Baje also started to come there but he didn't entered inside. He did this for many days. One day the Pode came outside and asked why he was being spied. Gaya Baje requested him to teach him the mystery to bring the dead to life. Pode told him how a poor Pode could give anything to a higher caste Brahmin. But Gaya Baje was firm in his request. So the Pode told him to bring a bundle of Bel leaf (Aegle marmelos) after four days. Pode then took him to Mrityunjay bank and bathed him. He told him to stay in water for a while. He then sat on the crematorium. Wrote charms on the leaves and dropped them in the river. He told Gaya Baje to pick them up one by one and swallow. Gaya Baje did as told and accomplished the mystery. But Gaya Baje was not satisfied. He knew the mystery but couldn't reach salvation. Pode told him

to go to Bundi Ganesh and worship there every morning to get salvation. Gaya Baje did as the Poda said and one-day Bundi Ganesh asked what he wanted. Bundi Ganesh after hearing told him to go to Balkumari at night of *pisach chaturdashi* and take enchanting black *tika* made by the witches. When the witches were bowing after worshipping Balkumari, Gaya Baje took the plate having *tika* and ran. The witches followed him to catch, but Gaya Baje entered his house and his mother closed the door bolting with iron chain. The witches couldn't enter the house and waited outside. The next morning, the witches requested for little *tika* with Gaya Baje, which he gave, and the witches returned. Gaya Baje put on the *tika* to get salvation and became a big enchanter.

There is a majority of Pun Magars in Parbat and Myagdi districts of western Nepal. Water, waterfall, lake, *padhera* etc. are mentioned a lot in their folk stories like "Temple of *Padhera* in Banwari village", "Story of Sasar spout", "Story of virgin with golden hair", "Story of family god" etc. Like- on the north of Lespar village in Parbat district is a big steep from where a river emerges. Many spouts are formed from that water source so it is called Sasar spout. People of Lespar and surrounding villages worship Baraha and Siddha in Janai Purnima every year in Sasar spout. The story goes like this.

Long time ago, milk used to flow from the source of Sasar spout. One day a hermit came there. At that time, there was a rainfall for seven days and seven nights. Due to fog and rain that hermit stayed in a cave near the source of Sasar spout. On the seventh day, the hermit brought the milk from Sasar spout in his gourd and cooked rice in it. As soon as the hermit ate that rice, water started to flow instead of milk and the hermit also vanished. The hermit after pouring the milk had hung the gourd on the top of the pole. Later the village people seeing the gourd believed that there was a god. One day a conjuror told the villagers that there was Baraha and Siddha and if worshipped there would be good crops and fulfillment of wish.

From that day, the elders of that village decided to worship in Janai Purnima. Later a custom started to worship in Tuesday, Panchami and Purnima. But the main is in Janai Purnima. A baby sheep and goat is worshipped to ask for a wish, which is only done in Janai Purnima. Fulfillment of wish is believed by many. That is why, a hermit of not only Lespar but also surroundings being vanished come to worship Baraha. There is a big cave to stay for those who come to worship Baraha. All the people who go there for worshipping are accommodated in that cave. This kind of story is heard in all the districts of Nepal.

Folk belief is also a part of folk culture. It is believed that leprosy is cured if bathed in Sapantirtha of Tokha. According to a story, there once was a king. One day he asked his three daughters with whom they wanted to marry. Two elder daughters wanted to marry

with the rich princes of nearby country. But the youngest one remained silent. The king jokingly said that she would marry with a poor leper living outside the village. Hearing this, the youngest princess was firm on marrying with that leper. After that she daily went outside the village and took food for him and sometimes even bathed the leper. Seeing this, the king though not happy married the princess with him. The princess then started to live with him asking for alms. One night the princess had a dream that if her husband had bathed in the nearby river in New Year's Day, the leprosy would be cured. So the princess bathed her husband in New Year's Day in that river. The leprosy was cured and her husband became young and handsome while she herself became more beautiful. Then they lived happily etc.

There are many folk beliefs like this in our society. According to *Skandapurana*, there is a belief that children will be rewarded if bathed in Mangaltirtha, Mangalbhairabh, Mangaleshwor Mahadev and worshipping of Shree Surya Vinayak. There is a small pond called Garuddaha, east of Ga:Chhen tole in Bhaktapur. It is believed that diseases will not attack if bathed in the water of that pond. This kind of folk belief is already mentioned above.

There are many proverbs and *gaon khane kathas* related to water in Nepalese literature. Like “water don't have any color, man don't have any caste”, “bubbles of water, fraud of many days”, “drink water filtering, appoint master understanding”, “drink water of source, bring daughter of good family”, “offer water, don't show the source”, “water doesn't thicken by heating, evil cannot be ones by advising”, “hiccups come not drinking water, gets depressed drinking water”, “one cannot swim without playing in water”, “hostility with crocodile sitting in water”, “sweet water of *saruwa*, upright neck of *karuwa*”, “neither crooked nor naked for water”, “rain in Asoj, value in grain”, “monsoon should be remembered in winter”, “saying har har, falling rain”, etc. Water and water related things are used in *gaon khane katha* like “white *furoila* dropping from sky or hail; queen of sky dropped in earth, sat when saw the sun or dew; mother gives, daughter eats or putting water; seven colors glittering or rainbow; can run but not walk or river; can go but not come back or river; I am coming to take you, why did you come, leave my path, will go to bring you or rain falling while going to take water; laughing also, crying also or sun rain; cannot hit nor pull or water etc.

Water, river, stream, waterfall, pond, lake, etc are the sources of inspiration for the poet, artist, painter and writer. Water has affected the Nepali literature and art in the same way as it has effected the human life. Like the famous European poets of this century, St. John Perse/Derek Walcott, Nepali poet Purna Vaidya has composed epic called “Water is Water” making water as a medium. In that epic, the poet has expressed that one drop of water has added heaven, earth and ocean together. He writes why humans can't dedicate

themselves like water for the benefit of this world. Humans don't have the pureness of water. Water doesn't ask anyone's caste, religion and flows for world brotherhood. It makes the earth soft and fertile by itself getting finished. Water doesn't have any caste neither color etc.

The poets and lyricists in modern Nepali songs and music also use feelings of water. Like national poet, Madhav Ghimire, in one of his song- *Phool ko thunga bagai lagyo Ganga ko paani le, Kahile bheta hola he rajai jindagani ma* (a flower is blown by the water of Ganga, when we will meet in this life.) Lyricist and poet Ratna Samsheer Thapa write- *Yo kholako saglo paani khaideu khaideu laagchha, mohani laaune kanchhi lai lai jaau lai jaau laagchha* (like to drink this clear water of river, like to take charming kanchhi.) Hem Hamal in one of his composition – *Balajuko baise dhara ma kati mitho paan, Narayanhiti sunko darbaarma rajarani* (sweet water of 22 spouts in Balaju, king and queen in the gold palace Narayanhiti).

There are many rituals and social norms related with water that has been from traditions in Nepali society. In our society, not only individual cleanliness but also the yards and house cleaning are also given importance. Any people get up in the morning and wash hands and face to worship and eat. Religious people go to nearby river and stream to bath. Brahmins have to bath daily for their duty. Women get early in the morning, sweep, clean pitcher etc. water filling vessels in the spout, well etc., fill water and wash hands and face. In our society, clean water is brought for worshipping, cooking and drinking. Stale water is not used in these works. One has to be more cautious while bringing pure water for worshipping. Pure water is brought in clean vessel without anyone touching it. Women during menstruation don't go to bring water for four days. On the fifth day, they bath early in the morning and do the usual works. After returning home seeing a sick person, one washes face before speaking to anyone. During drought, men go to street and ask Mahadev for water while the women pour water from window and balcony to wet them. The ways of asking water in different community of different districts in Nepal is already mentioned above. If one sees filled vessel or pitcher while going outside the house, it is taken as auspicious. If empty vessel is seen then it is taken as inauspicious. That is why if anyone is going outside or abroad, then two filled vessels are kept on either side of the main door for him/her to return back safely. The people go out to coronate with the water from the vessel. Bathing is compulsory from birth to death and after death in our society for duty, rituals, worshipping, fasting, marriage, *bel* marriage, *gufa*, *kanyadan*, rights in honor of deceased ancestor etc.

Many gods and goddesses related with water are worshipped in our society. Shree Pashupatinath Mahadev is the main god of our nation. We worship not only Parvati, Ganga Jamuna, Indra, Barun, Machhindranath, Awalokiteshwor etc. but also animals

related to water. We call Shree Laxmi as Jaladhija so worship Jalvinayak, Jaleswor Mahadev, Jalasayan Vishnu etc. We have already mentioned about the worshipping of animals living in water like snake, frog, fish, tortoise etc. Actually water is related with the Nepali society physically, mentally, religiously, culturally and even in rebirth. The family in earth should fulfill the need of water to Nepalese in this birth and also another birth, even in heaven. That is why water is very important element to our life, creation and salvation.

## Chapter 8: ROYAL INSTITUTION AND WATER

Nepal is a monarchical country from the beginning of the history. The king of Nepal is considered as the institution for development of the state, progress, peace and welfare from the ancient time. The main duties and responsibility of the king is to keep the account of timely precipitation, cultivation and in case of drought he should have vision to mitigate it. There are many stories prevalent from the Lichchhavi period about the relation of the king and water in the history of Nepal. One famous story is the life given by the king Bikramshree to get the water back in the dried stone spout made by his father Bikramaditya. That spout is now famous as Narayanhiti. According to the chronicles of Padmagiri, gods being angry with the king Gunakama Dev who was adulterer, cruel and heartless made drought in Nepal for seven years. One day, when the king was trying adultery with a beautiful woman, she said to him- you became king with the good deeds that you did in your previous life. Why are you doing bad things in this life? You can do good things being a king. The king hearing this, came to his sense and to get atonement went to Swayambhu and prayed with his master Shantashree (Shantikar Acharya). He asked his master Shantashree the way to relieve the country from drought. Master Shantashree told the king that he had bathed in all the ponds but Taudaha. So the Karkotak Naag being angry, rain had not fallen. So you should invite the entire snake kings and worship them in Swayambhu Shantipur. The king did as his master told. The entire snake kings came but Karkotak snake king having goiter didn't come of shyness. So the king went to Taudaha and invited Karkotak. With the pressures from his queens Karkotak went to Swayambhu Shantipur. Then the king finished the process of *Mahamegh Sadhan Yagya* and rain fell. Master Shantashree asked all the snake kings how to tackle with this kind of situation in the future. The snake kings told the master to make a snake picture from little amounts of blood taken from all the snake kings. All the snake kings then went promising to come back in the worshipping of *Mahamegh Mandal Sadhan*. That picture is still inside Shantipur. It is believed that rainfalls if that picture is kept on the sun during the time of drought.

During the time of Lichchhavi king Narendra Dev, Gorakhnath became angry and no rain fell for twelve years leading to a drought. The king consulted with his astrologers. They told the king that Gorakhnath had kept all the snakes under his *piraka* and had sat down for penance. Unless his master Machhindranath who was in Kamrup (Assam) came and advised him, nothing was possible. The king with his master Bandhudatta Acharya went to Kamrup and brought Machhindranath and his pupils Purnachandi and Minnath with great difficulty. When Gorakhnath found about the arrival of his master, he got up to welcome him. As soon as he got up, all the snake kings came out from under the *pirka*,

which resulted in rainfall. From then onwards, the king made a tradition of chariot pilgrimage of Machhindranath every year.

When the king Narendra Dev had gone to Kamrup to bring Machhindranath, Machhindranath told the king to offer water of Bagmati on the head of Pashupatinath in Nepal who is the lord of all the gods for the whole of Baisakh month to get plenty of rainfall. Thus the tradition of offering water in Pashupati in the month of Baisakh of every year was started which remains till today.

One of the main duties of the kings of Nepal is to manage the chariot festival of Machhindranath. In Malla period, chariot festival of the main god of Patan, Red Machhindranath was managed and completed by the king. Awalokiteshwor or Red Machhindranath is worshipped by both the Hindus and Buddhists community of Nepal. Red Machhindranath is taken as the god of rainfall, crop, fertility of the field. He was taken as the biggest god as Nepal is agriculture-based country. So the Malla kings themselves took part in the festival and they were considered good rulers or administrators. That is why the king still attends the *Bhoto Jatra* in Jawlakhel to audience Machhindranath and Minnath. The main aim of Bhoto Jatra is to ask for rain for cultivation. This tradition of the king coming to worship Shree Lokeshwor Machhindranath with citizens shows the relation of the king, rain and rain god. There is a belief that demon, god, snake and farmers are all happy in his state so rain fall in time to get good crops.

There was a big drought in 1715 BS in the period of a famous king Pratap Malla of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. There was panic among the citizens. Everyone was anxious to get the rainfall. If the picture and book written by the blood of the snake kings kept inside Swayambhu Shantipur were brought out in the sun then it would rain. So the king ordered Bajracharya Pandits to go inside Shantipur and bring those picture and book. But they couldn't do so. For the welfare and protection of the citizens, the king himself went inside. On the inscription of Shantipur is described how the king entered inside Shantipur. According to which, the king stepped on the snakes, calmed the demons, crossed the saints in council having twenty-seven rooms in Shantipur, gem, canopy of ruby, pillar in eighth rooms and on the ninth room, he saw the beautiful picture and the book. This step taken for the benefit of his citizens, with the kindness of god when the picture and book was brought outside to the sun, black clouds from all the sides came and rain fell. This whole incident is made in a big picture and is safe with Devharsha Bajracharya of Suratshree Mahabihar in Kantipur.

In 823 NS ( 1703BS) Ashar Purnima, King Bhaskar Malla having *Anabrishti* in the country made rainfall by worshipping Mahamegh Mandal and snake *sadhan* by Boudha

Acharyas in Swayambhu Shantipur. If there is drought, there is a custom of worshipping Mahamegh Mandal and snake *sadhan* by Boudha Acharyas inside Shantipur.

Nepal being the only Hindu country of the world, the coronation of the king is observed according to the scriptural method and Hindu tradition. From ancient time, the coronation is being done by sprinkling pure water and bathing. Different type of water is filled in 1000 vessels in the days before. Also ghee in gold pot, milk in silver pot, curd in copper pot and water in clay pot is kept. Earth of hill's peak, ant's comb, elephant's step, ox's horn, lake, *dovan or triveni*, bank of river, main door of the prostitute, stable of horse, cow's shed etc. should be applied on the body and bathed. On the day of coronation, ghee of gold pot by Brahmin from east, milk of silver pot by Chhetri from south, curd of copper plate by Vaisya from west and water of clay pot by Shudra minister from north is sprinkled. Then the coronation is done by sprinkling water from gold plate having 100 holes. Water from 1001 pots, herbal, perfume and leaf of mango is used. Water having flowers, urine of cow, gold and flowers, *kush, panchagabya*, honey, 100 herbs and water of Ganga or Bagmati is used with vedic chants. In this way, the coronation of the king is related with the king, state and water from ancient time.

The custom of worshipping in different places from the state asking for rain if it didn't come in time is still seen in the valley like offering water and worshipping Pashupatinath, snake worshipping in Taudaha, and Basuki Nag in Patan, worshipping and cleaning of Barbarshe Inaar (well) in Lagantole, *purasharan* in Swayambhu Shantipur, worshipping of Phulchoki Mai, special worshipping of Swayambhu and Boudhanath by Lamas and bathing of Patra god of Gorakhnath in Gosainkunda in the day of Guru Purnima. Patra god of Gorakhnath in Pashupati Mrigasthali was bathed in Gosainkunda in Guru Purnima for rain in 2061BS. All the expense was covered by HMG.

## Chapter 9: TRADITIONAL WATER SOURCE SYSTEM AND ITS USES

History is witness to the responsibility taken by the king or the state for the management of clean drinking water for the Nepali citizens from centuries. This country grown under the monarchical system has the responsibility of the king in supporting, protection and security of its citizen. The king for good rain, good crop and happiness in the society worship different gods, celebrate fairs and festivals related with rain, water and production. Indra Jatra, White and Red Machhindranath (Bhoto festival), Laxmi worshipping etc. are all celebrated for good rain and crop. The main duty of the king is to supervise the worshipping of water gods Indra, Ganga, Shiva, Machhindranath etc. in correct time and in correct way for good rain fall, prevention of scarcity of water and drought. Operation of bathing Machhindranath, Pashupatinath, Bhoto Jatra, Indra Jatra etc. to make rainfall in time is among the main duties of the king. The following tales still remain in our society- the sacrifice of his life by King Bikramshree to get water in the stone spout constructed by his ancestors, King Gunakam Dev doing snake *sadhan* in Swayambhu Shantipur during drought, King Narendra Dev bringing Machhindranath from Kamrup (Assam) when Gorakhnath became angry, King Pratap Malla entering inside Swayambhu Shantipur during drought for snake *sadhan*, King Bhaskar Malla performing Mahameghmandal in Swayambhu Shantipur, Nagpur etc. and snake *sadhan* during drought.

The state and the government from the beginning of the history have constructed different types of structures in the country for the management of water. There are many examples of the construction of pond, well and stone spouts from Lichchhavi period. It has been already mentioned above that the construction of pond in Kathmandu valley started in first century BC which has been proved by the excavation near Satyanarayan temple of Handigaon. There are no villages or cities inside Kathmandu valley, which don't have ponds. Like there are 42 ponds in Bhaktapur Municipality. There are many wells made in every yard, abode and villages. Wells are compulsorily seen in cities having Boudha Bihar in Kathmandu valley. The oldest well known and still in use is Barabarshe Inar "Jyaputun" in Musumbahal of Kathmandu Brahmatole. This was repaired and reconstructed just recently. There is a custom of cleaning this well every twelve years. The local people believe that water of this well can cure stomach diseases. In this way, this Barabarshe Inar proves that well is conserved by the society and the government.

Many stone spouts are made as a source of drinking water in Kathmandu valley and some hilly districts of Nepal. Stone spouts were constructed from Lichchhavi period and most

of them are still giving water, for example, Manghiti of Patan and Kohiti of Kathmandu etc. Constructing, repairing and cleaning of stone spout, well, pond etc. is taken as an act of religious merit in Nepal. Nepalese believe that there is no big religion than to offer water to a thirsty man. That is why different religious people, organizations and guthis are willing to offer water to the pilgrims in big festivals and fairs not only in Kathmandu but also in whole of Nepal.

There are certain rules and order made by our society to manage and associate the importance and use of water. Washing cloth, dirty dishes and passing excreta are restricted near well and same applies in the premise of the stone spout. But there are few people who follow these rules. That is why our well, stone spout, pond, river etc. are getting polluted. It is believed that protector of water, snake god make anyone sick if they pollute the source of water, pass excreta and even spit. To keep the faith in religion, different gods are established in water sources like stone spout, pond, well etc. to conserve them. Especially in Kathmandu, there is no stone spout without statues of gods erected on them.

Nepali society has always given importance to clean and pure water. Water vessel should be cleaned before the water is filled. First little water is thrown before filling because it is thought that dirty things, insects might be in the water of stone spout, well etc. Water brought for worshipping, ritual works, auspicious works and for drinking is not used if it is crossed or touched by polluted hands or objects.

Water is also used as medicine. Water is sprinkled after the completion of worshipping. Nepalese call for gods by putting *kalash* in any religious works like worshipping, oblation or while celebrating fairs and festivals. Without the water coronation of *kalash* or *abhisekh* in the end, the worshipping is not considered as completed. Mass of people flock to fetch water of Barabarshe Inar “Jyaputun” after it is cleaned. Water having *bire* salt taste of the pond across Black bridge of Bagmati Rajghat, hot water ponds of various places in Nepal, hot water pond in five hours climb from Rasuwa Syaphrubesi is used as medicine for bone joint, nerve pain, skin related diseases. Goiter is believed to be cured if bathed in Kichakbadh (Jhapa). Many examples have been mentioned above.

In our society, the role and importance of water is not only cultural and religious but also social. Any donation is done by keeping barley, sesamum, *kush* and water and saying vedic chants. Daughter in the Nepali family is married by keeping water as witness in *kanyadan*. Water is an important element for us not only to survive but also for social, religious and cultural aspects.

Water has been always prioritized by Nepali society. The king and the state have been always anxious to supply clean drinking water to the citizens. Well, stone spout, pond etc are our traditional water sources. Their construction, cleaning, repairing etc. have the norms of both religious and social work. Water donation is the biggest meritorious work in our social norm. There are certain restrictions in the society as from where to bring water, where to bath and wash cloth, do religious and ritual works. Like the river is used for bathing, washing cloth, do religious works in the bank, take water of river through canal for irrigating fields while pond is used for bathing, washing cloth, get cattle to drink, irrigate field and for fish farming. Well and stone spout is used for drinking water and household work, wash cloth and bath. A drain is made in well and stone spout so as not to let the dirty water to get collected. Bank region and stone steps are made to reach the water for religious works in rivers.

It is already mentioned above that well, stone spout, pond including monuments are repaired and cleaned in Kumar Sasti or the day of Sithinakha. Water is not taken out from those structures after cleaning and worshipping at for four days. But this rule is not followed in stone spout it and rivers are flowing continuously and is clear and pure. The water of well, pond etc. remaining constant gets dirty easily. Thus they should be cleaned for the sake of public health. This tradition of cleaning the water related structures have kept these structures till today.

Many things are still not known as how the ponds were managed in ancient times. Some ponds especially those constructed by king or members of royal family for example Garud pond of Bhaktapur have a guthi (trust) to manage it. Some ponds like Kamalvinayak of Bhaktapur have a watcher. Some small ponds are constructed by locals, use them and maintain them from time to time.

Those locals who are using them do most of the maintenance of these structures. These works are also done by social guthi, club, organization, ward committee. Some religious people spend their own money to do these maintenances. Related municipalities of Kathmandu valley are also starting to look after stone spout, pond, well etc. German government in Bhaktapur and Patan and UNESCO in Kathmandu are helping HMG and municipalities to maintain these structures. Related districts and IUCN are conserving big ponds and wetlands. IUCN is operating the conservation and sustainable use of wetland. Works are going on in Koshi Tappu and Ghoda Ghodi Lake.

We should not forget about "*Pani Ghatta*" which is traditionally being used by water. These are still used in most of the hilly regions of Nepal to make flour from grains. Electricity is produced in some districts, with the use of modern instruments in *pani ghatta*.

Uses of water cannot be fully described. This is a lifesaver as well as different edible stuffs are produced. Not only fish and other life but also different foods and plants, moss, minerals used in medicine are found in water. Petroleum products are also taken from many seas and oceans. Water is used as a means of transportation from bng time. Water is also a source of entertainment and sport. Swimming, boating, surfing, rowing, fishing and other entertaining sports are famous worldwide.

It is not necessary to discuss about the need of water in irrigation apart from drinking water. Water was collected in a pond and taken to stone spout through canal and the flowing water was taken to fields for irrigation in Kathmandu valley from the time of Lichchhavi period. Rainwater is collected in hilly regions, which is then used in fields by making canal. River is cut to make canal in the valleys and districts of terai for irrigation. The responsibility of constructing and managing canal and irrigation is taken by the local people (users), Village Development Committee (VDC) and local government. There is a good tradition in Nepal of the contribution of community especially in water source management and forest conservation. Nepali society has accepted that water is the property of community and should be used properly by the community. King Ram Shah of Gorkha of the 17<sup>th</sup> century made an order to resolve the quarrel related to water source inside the community. Nepali farmers understanding the need and importance of water source from centuries have developed their own irrigation system and increased the production. The development of irrigation is due to it being in public's hand and responsibility. Due to this tradition, canals were being made in different places inside Nepal. Jyapu community in Kathmandu valley are expert in this knowledge while in the hills, the experts are called "Agri". Traditional materials like stone, tree bark and mud were used before while concrete, *gyabin* wire and iron rods are used these days.

The construction, management and operation of the canal and irrigation in Nepal are the responsibility of community and user's group. Canal is called the irrigation system managed by farmers. This system is very famous in Nepal and it is active too. HMG do not interfere and decide in the water source system and irrigation done by the community. So a tradition was developed a long time ago for the community to manage water source system. Water source management by the community is self-dependant and self-operated. In traditional irrigation system, the field near the canal system is irrigated, and then the lower fields are respectively irrigated. The turn to get the water is arranged by the community. All the users get the amount of water respective of their field size. The keys kept in different places distribute water. If the canals are constructed by community labor then they also do the maintenance. If the government constructs it, then certain fees have to be paid and the government does the maintenance. The individuals who want more

water have to give more labor and money. This management of the water by the community or users is a good example of Nepali tradition in the world.

Thus the maintenance of the water sources and structures in traditional way in traditional society like ours should be continued. All the water related works in Kathmandu valley are done by the farmer community or local Jyapu community. Therefore they should be well informed about the value, importance, need and service. This should be done in other parts of country where the water related structures are maintained and used by the community (like "Agri" in hill areas). They should be given the complete responsibility and necessary knowledge. Source of water is forest, greenery and wetland regions. If they are not protected then the water gets dried. Therefore government and public should be reminded for their protection; clean drinking water is getting lesser day by day. In this situation, we should protect traditional water sources, repair them and bring it to use as much as possible. We should take water as valuable gift from god and use it to make our life and future merry. Otherwise we should not forget that earth might vanish one day in lack of water just like some civilizations have vanished in the history. So we should understand the management of water source that have been coming from traditions in the Nepali society to use, protect and manage the valuable heritage like water. Otherwise, we cannot deny our Himalayan country Nepal changing into desert in lack of water.

## Chapter 10: Conclusion

Many discussions have been made about the relation of water in our life and culture. The future of the human species is safe in this earth only if they get clean water for drinking and consuming. This is because without water not only humans but even animals, birds, insects and plants cannot survive. In today's age, the distribution of clean drinking water is not only a big crisis but a situation of drought is reaching. In this terrible situation, every individual should use water as priceless and economically.

Everyone should understand the value and importance of water. Economy, social and cultural life and condition of any country depends in water. The history is the witness to many advanced and developed cities and civilizations disappeared due to the shortage of water. Many don't know the value and importance of water in undeveloped countries like ours. Sources of water is drying and becoming less by the deforestation, making settlements in wetlands and making industries near water sources. Wetlands are getting buried due to deforestation, growth of water grass and other plants, not preventing landslides. Water of the river is getting lesser and that too polluted due to the establishment of factories, industries and uncontrolled urbanization.

If we look at the future of Kathmandu valley and state it in a single word, then it has no future. Two main rivers, Bagmati and Vishnumati of the valley, apart from the few months of rainy season, flow as a sewage for eight to ten months. This condition of the rivers is being responsible for the loss of the social, religious and cultural norms and values of the valley people. If the citizens and the government do not revive these rivers, then the civilization of the Kathmandu valley may also vanish.

If there is no water then we will not survive, neither will our culture. So to protect our lives and cultures, we should protect and conserve our water resources. For this we should first protect our forests and balance the ecology. This stops the water resources from drying up and dangerous natural calamities like the landslides. The knowledge of value and importance of water in our society should be given to the children from the early age. They should be taught how to use water economically.

World famous stone spouts of Kathmandu valley are drying up and disappearing. Rotary Club of Patan did a praising job of trying to revive the stone spouts of that city. This should be continued and other cities and VDCs of the valley should also follow. Water related structures like pond, well, waterfall, springs, hot water ponds etc. should be protected from pollution. The sources of these should be looked after to let it not dry.

They should be cleaned and repaired from time to time. Water of stone spouts, hot water pond and waterfalls should be used as an alternative power and should be properly tap.

How can today's society take advantages from our ancestors' use and management of the water in traditional ways? What and how were the technologies of our ancestors to construct the water related structures? We should maintain, use and evaluate the structures that our ancestors left for us. There is a need to prepare a comprehensive index of the studies, researches and the knowledge in the ancient monuments and books of the water and culture, traditional use of water and technologies of constructing water structures. To do this, HMG should establish Nepal Council of Water and Culture in non-governmental sector, which is today's need and demand.

In the end, water should be used as the *amrit* taken out from ocean churning and not as free contribution of the nature. If this is not done then one day, we may have to live our life severely. And then after.....?

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