

RESEARCH NOTE

WORK INDEX OF NYĀṬAPOLA TEMPLE

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The five-storeyed temple, locally known as Nyāṭapola, is an impressive and famous temple of Nepal, standing in the northern side of Taumārhi square in Bhaktapur. This is the only temple that is named after the dimension of architecture rather than from the name of the deity residing inside. The temple was erected within a short period of less than five months by King Bhupatindra Malla in 1701/1702 A.D. In the present context of work-schedule, planning and programming, it is very difficult to believe that the temple was erected within that short period of time. But it was the fact. The incidents are recorded day by day.

If we look at the calendar of construction it gives us an interesting picture of the spirit of the people and speed of the work accomplished within such a short period of time. The speed of work done in religious faith can never be accomplished in modern-day society run by materialistic considerations.

We find all these interesting details while going into the manuscript. From the start of digging the foundation to the completion of roofing, it took merely eighty-eight days. The excavation work for foundation lasted for seven days. Then was commenced construction of six plinths. That was accomplished in thirty-one days, and immediately after that started the erection of the superstructure. That was also completed within thirty-four days, after which roofing work was started from top to the lowest roof. In sixteen days all the five roofs were completed paving them with mini-tiles (*jhiṅgāṭī*). Then they had to wait for an auspicious day for erecting the icons in the sanctum sanctorum and fix the pinnacle on the top of the temple. For this, they did wait for 38 days. In the meantime the auspicious fire-sacrifice (*Siddhāgni Kotyāhuti Yajña*) was going on.

Presented here are six pages (three folios) of the facsimile copies of the manuscript which recorded major events from beginning to the end, as summary of records in advance, incorporated in the manuscript containing 264 folios. There are fifty major records in the summary six-page facsimile.

The manuscript is preserved in the National Archives of Nepal. It is readily available for the readers in micro-film as well, which can be read in the office or could be purchased in photocopy paying certain rupees per page.

The name of the manuscript is recorded as *Siddhāgni Kotyāhuti Devala Pratiṣṭhā*. The name itself kept the enthusiasts on the subject of ancient architecture behind the curtain from knowing it. The accession number of the manuscript is cat. I. 1115 NGMPP micro number A 249/5. The manuscript is

written in the Newar script in yellow Nepalese paper coated with *harital* (orpiment). The size is 17.2 x 46.5 cm. Each page has nine lines. The manuscript has 264 folios, and the rest are missing Dr Janak Lal Vaidya thinks. Some folios are ink-stained and some are damaged by rats. All the rest of the folios are in good condition . The calligraphy is magnificent.

Out of these six facsimile pages, Dr.Janak Lal Vaidya has published three folios (1, 2 and 4) without any transliteration and translation in *Abhilekh* No.8 published by the National Archives of Nepal. It is, however, necessary at least to give a full picture of the detailed records in those six important pages.

There are still interesting information contained in the following folios of the manuscript which were published by Dr.Janak Lal Vaidya in his articles published in *Abhilekh*, No. 8 and No. 14 and *Kheluitā* No. 11 in English, Nepali and Newar respectively .

Translation of facsimile copy

Salute! To the god Ganeśa. This is the work index of the construction of Nyātapola Temple (Five-storeyed Temple) and the performance of *Siddhāgni Kotyāhuti* fire sacrifice (done) by Bhupatindra Malla. (The king of Bhaktapur) [Then starts the entry]

1. On Thursday, the third day of clear fortnight in the month of *kārttika* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the people (the ones who fell the tree) were sent to fell the trees in the jungle.
2. (After 25 days) On Monday, the twelfth of clear fortnight in the month of *Mārga* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, this day the wood work (carpentry) started.
3. (After 31 days) On Thursdsy, the twelfth/thirteen of dark fortnight in the month of *Pausa* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the excavation work for foundation started.
4. (After 7 days) On Thursday, the fifth of clear fortnight in the month of *Māgha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the foundation stone was laid (construction of the foundation started).
5. (After 31 days) On Sunday, the sixth of dark fortnight in the month of *Phaguna* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, this day the main entrance (to the sanctum sanctorum) was erected.
6. (After 5 days) On Friday, the eleventh of dark fortnight in the month of *Phalgunā* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, this day the amoral spinal beam (*nināla*) was laid.
7. (After 11 days) On Thursday, the seventh of bright fortnight in the month of *Caitra* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the windows (were) erected in lowest (first) storey.
8. (After 11days) On Saturday, the third of dark fortnight in the month of *Caitra* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the windows (were) erected in second storey.

9. (After three days) On Tuesday, the seventh of dark fortnight in the month of *Caitra* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the windows were erected in the third storey.
10. (After four days) On Saturday, the eleventh of dark fortnight of *Caitra* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the windows (were) erected in the fourth storey.
11. (After two days) On Monday the thirteenth of dark fortnight in the month of *Caitra* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the windows (were) erected in the last (fifth) storey.
12. (After 3 days) On Thursday, the fifteenth of dark fortnight (no moon day) in the month of *Caitra* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the *pīṭhapūjā* performed (to appease the *pīthagana*) in order to erect the top of the temple.
13. (After 14 days) On Thursday, the third of clear fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the top of the temple offered (erected).
14. (After 7 days) On Thursday, the seventh of clear fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the topmost roof was covered with minitiles.
15. (After 2 days) On Saturday, the ninth of clear fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the roofing is completed on the fourth storey.
16. (After 2 days) On Monday, the eleventh of clear fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the roofing is completed on the third (middle) roof.
17. (After 4 days) On Friday, the first of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the roofing is constructed on the second roof.
18. (Next day) On Saturday, the second of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the ceremony of offering of areca nuts is performed.
19. (Next day) On Sunday, the third of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the *pūjā* (worship) was sent to *Pīṭhas, Jawodaka, Shivasakti* and *Kalaśa*.
20. (Next day) On Monday, the fourth of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the worship and propitious ritual is performed in *Pīṭhas* (Pithārchana).
21. (Next day) On Tuesday, the fifth of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the act of *purāścaraṇa* is performed.
22. (After 2 days) On Thursday, the seventh of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the arrangement for *maṇḍapa* is done.

23. (Next day) On Friday, the eighth of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the roofing is done on the fifth (top most) roof. Or the roofing work is completed in the temple.
24. (Next day) On Saturday, the ninth of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the excavation work is done for making fire altar (*kuṇḍa*).
25. (After 2 days) On Monday, the eleventh of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the foundation stone is laid to erect the fire altar.
26. (After 2 days) On Wednesday, the thirteenth of dark fortnight in the month of *Vaiśākha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the tympanum is offered (fixed) at the main entrance.
27. (After 3 days) On Saturday, the first of clear fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, *Ankurārcanā* ceremony is performed.
28. (After 5 days) On Thursday, the sixth of dark fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, different (many-fold) rituals-consecration, propitious, worships, offerings, are performed like Punyahawāchala, Rritwijāvama, Mandapa pūjā, sun-worship, door worship, Guru-worship, and offering of roof hanging (paṭa) and so on.
29. (Next day) On Friday, the seventh of clear fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, different acts are done like Rājapūjā, Thandīla Uddhāra, Kālikāropana and Jalajaga.
30. (Next day) On Saturday, the eighth of clear fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, Javodaka (barley seeds) are offered to alter. Pādaprakshyālana, sheep-sacrifice, Vighnaharana, Panchagavya-sādhanā, Tripūjā, Sodhanyāsa, Jnākhadgaśadhana, arghapātrasādhanā, shivahastapūjā, shivashaktibhramana, kalaśarchanā, thandilamarcanā and chetri avahana.
31. (Next day) On Sunday, the ninth of clear fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the fire in was lit alter for fire-sacrifice, Thāpūjā is performed along with jāgarāṇa (night spent without sleep) or observed sleepless night (next day)
32. (After 4 days) On Thursday, the thirteenth of clear fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, Thāpūjā and jāgarāṇa (sleepless night) were also performed.
33. (After 7 days) On Thursday, the sixth of dark fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, again Thāpūjā and jāgarāṇa were performed.
34. (After 4 days) On Monday, the tenth of dark fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, this day bathing the icon is done with (again) thāpūjā and jāgarāṇa.
35. (Next day) On Thursday, the tenth/eleventh of dark fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, ten sacraments (dasa karma) of the icons are performed.
36. (Next day) On Wednesday, the eleventh of dark fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the god is given a bath and purified.
37. (Next day) On Thursday the twelfth of dark fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the sacraments to infuse life to the icon are performed. Thāpūjā and jāgarāṇa are also observed.
38. (Next day) On Friday, the thirteenth of dark fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the purification of sanctum sanctorum and pedestal (as well) are performed.
39. (Next day) On Saturday, the fourteenth of dark fortnight in the month of *Jyestha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the god (icon) is taken to the temple and the ritual flag is consecrated and fluttered.
40. (After 2 days) On Monday, the first of clear fortnight in the month of *Aśadha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the icon (in the sanctum sanctorum) and pinnacle (on top of the temple) are installed. The three mini-temples and *koṭilinga* are (also) adorned with pinnacles. *Digpūjā*, *Thāpūjā* and *jāgarāṇa* are performed and observed.
41. (After 3 days) On Thursday, the fourth of clear fortnight in the month of *Aśadha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the pinnacle was offered and *pūjā* performed in the fourth mini - temple and worshipped (the god inside).
42. (After 7 days) On Thursday, the twelfth of clear fortnight in the month of *Aśadha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, *Thāpūjā* is performed and *jāgarāṇa* observed.
43. (After 6 days) On Wednesday, the third of dark fortnight in the month of *Aśadha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, a partridge is sacrificed.
44. (Next day) On Thursday, the fourth of dark fortnight in the month of *Aśadha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the bell was offered and *jāgarāṇa* observed (eighth time).
45. (After 6 days) On Wednesday, the tenth of dark fortnight in the month of *Aśadha* of Nepal era 822, the *Kotipolduyā* (कोटिपोल दुया), *Caurāsi Paicālduyā* (चौरासी पैचालदुया) *Thāpūjā* and *jāgarāṇa* are performed (ninth time).
46. (Next day) On Thursday, the eleventh of dark fortnight in the month of *Aśadha* of Nepal Saṃvat 822, the repentance sacrifice was performed

(repentance because of innumerable lives of unseen and seen animals that might have been killed knowingly or unknowingly during the construction period).

47. On Friday, the twelfth of dark fortnight in the month of *Āṣadha* of Nepal Samvat 822, the bathing is done. (पूर्णाभृतस्नान).
48. (After 3 days) On Monday, the no moon day of dark fortnight in the month of *Aṣadha* of Nepal Samvat 822, the *Caturthī* (No activities are mentioned afterwards).
49. (After 2 days) On Wednesday, the second day of clear fortnight in the month of *Srāvāna* of Nepal Samvat 822, offerings to Inayadon (*Sūryavināyaka*) were sent. The king seemed to have gone to *Sūryavināyaka* for final thanks-giving *pūjā*.
50. (after 142 days) On Sunday, the twelfth of dark fortnight in the month of *Pauṣa* of Nepal Samvat 823, the ashes (collected from the sacrifice altar) were floated away (in the river Hanumante on the south of the city) (after exactly one lunar year from the day of digging for the foundation of the temple) on the first clear fortnight in the month of *Āṣadha* of Nepal Samvat 823.

From the start of the sixth page onwards, the scribe records the new subject and gives the details of the number of firewood oblations made by, first the king, then by others to the fire sacrifice. The king offered seventeen bundle of firewood and others, different number of bundles, some did less than the king and some more than him.

The total number of the firewood bundles offered to the sacrifice is 1102 and an equal number of bundles made of bamboo (*pā*) reed (*tī*) and (I) were also offered.

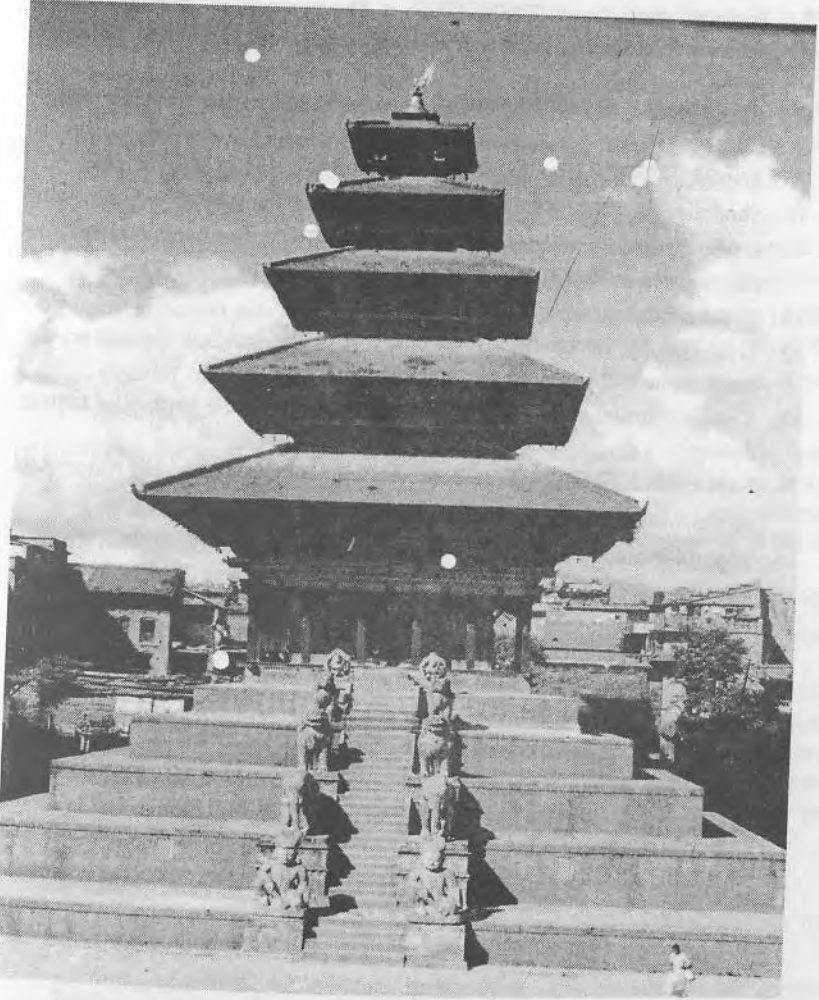
Some words in Newar and Sanskrit which are used in this article have not been found in English. Therefore they can not be translated into English. Their exact meaning is not possible to find them in the English dictionary. It has been tried to translate nearer to its meaning. The words as they were used are reproduced here in Devanagari. Therefore, the author invites the comment on the exact translation of these words.

Glossary

1. *Pūṇavabhṛtasnān* (पूर्णावभृतस्नान) = A ritual bath with clothes on the body after all ceremony performed
2. *Pīṭhapūjā* (पीठपूजा) = Worship done in different shrines of mother goddesses known as *Pīṭha* (a sacred Tantric shrine dedicated to the Mother Goddesses)

3. *Javodaka* (जवोदक) = worship by oat-grains instead of rice-grains (or sprinkling of oat-grains before five sacrifices start on the ground).
4. *Kalikāropana* (कालीकारोपण) = The plantation of the black seeds.
5. *Bhetavali* (भेतवली) = offering to the Goblins (?)
6. *Bighniharaṇa* (विधिहरण) = Eradication of suspected problems.
7. *Pancagavyasanghana* (पंचगव्यसंघन) = The preparation of *Pañchagavya* (mixing five objects composed of milk, ghee, curds, urine and dung of a cow.)
8. *Arghpātrasādhana* (अर्घपात्रसाधन) = consecration of sacred water vessel (?)
9. *Tripūjā* (त्रिपूजा) = worship of three lamp (*dipa*), *Kalaśa* and *Gaṇeśa*.
10. *Shodhānyāsa* (षोढान्यास) = worship of sixteen Sanyasis (worship with sixteen articles; sixteen worships) ? (षोढसन्यास) ? But in manuscript it is only written as *षोढान्यास*
11. *Gyānkhaḍgasaghana* (ज्ञानखड्गसघन) = ?
12. *Śivahaṣṭapūjā* (शिवहस्तपूजा) = Worship of the hand of the carvers on metal stone and wood
13. *Śivaśaktibhramna* (शिवशक्तिभ्रमन) = pilgrimage to the shrines of tantric deities
14. *Kalaśarcana* (कलशार्चन) = consecration of *Kalaśa* = or water pot representing *Varuṇa*, the Vedic god
15. *Thandīlārcana* (थण्डीलार्चन) = oblation at the ground designated for fire sacrifice
16. *Kśatrī āvāhana* (क्षत्री आवाहन) = invitation to *Chetrapālas* = the guardian deities of sin/eight directives
17. *Pādaprīkśalana* (पादप्रीक्षालन) = washing the feet of Brats.
18. *Kalesankāyā* (कलेशंकाया) = worship to minimize the suspected obstacles
19. *Purascaraṇa yāñā* (पुरश्चरण याज्ञा) = The act of ritual tantric consecration (repeating certain mantras)
20. *Ankurārcana* (अंकुरार्चन) = Worship of sprouting plant from oats to purify the sacrificial ground.
21. *Punyahavācala* (पूण्याहवाचल) = Sprinkling of sacred water after homa (sacrifice)
22. *Ṛitvijāvama* (ऋत्विजावर्ण) = Appointment of the Brahmin who recites the Mantras
23. *Rajapūjā* (रजपूजा) = Commencement of worship – (start of worship)
24. *Deva Sodhalapā* (देव सोधलपा) = (purification of the icon)
25. *Caurāsi duyā* (चउरासी दुया) = sacrifice of a partridge.

- 26. Kotipola duyā (कोतिपोल दुया) = Ten million bundles (of fire wood) offered.
- 27. Caurāsī Pecāla duyā (चउरासी पेचाल दुया) = reed vessels full of cereal grains put in the fire sacrifice.
- 28. Thāpūjā (थापुजा) = A kind of tantric worship.



Nyāṭapola, Bhaktapur

[The image shows three front folios of a manuscript. Each folio contains dense text in Devanagari script, organized into columns. The text appears to be a detailed record or work index related to the construction of the Nyāṭapola temple. The manuscript is aged and shows some wear and tear, particularly along the edges and between the pages.]

Three front folios of the manuscript describing the daily records of the construction of Nyāṭapola