

CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE OF KATHMANDU VALLEY: A CASE OF TRADITIONAL GUTHI SYSTEM

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Abstract

The Guthi system appears to have placed a high priority on maintaining religious, cultural, and social services in addition to planning and carrying out rituals, festivals, chariot worship, and the promotion and protection of monasteries and temples. The Guthi system has served for several centuries as the backbone of Nepalese culture and community. The land was donated to carry out religious and charity endeavors, erect temples, plan religious ceremonies, and uphold cultural practices. This article emphasizes the need for an indigenous system, traditional design, local materials, local knowledge, local skills, and traditional practices rather than modern technology in the conservation and management of cultural heritage. The article's conclusion underlines the necessity for policymakers to acknowledge the importance and contribution of informal indigenous systems to achieve sustainable heritage protection and management. This paper aims to examine the preservation and management of cultural assets in the traditional Guthi system of the Kathmandu Valley using a qualitative approach to historical research. The cross-cutting issues that the organization involved has with the preservation and management of cultural assets in the Kathmandu Valley will be alleviated by the creation of such a strategy.

Keywords: Conservation and management, Cultural heritage, Traditional Guthi system.

1. Introduction

Heritage was produced by Nepalese predecessors for a variety of reasons, which led to its current form. There were several religious trusts founded during the period for their good management and protection (these are the public and socio-religious institutions called *Guthi*¹); nonetheless, there were no written regulations. We were unable to find any documented laws, regulations, or legislation regarding the preservation and management of specific landmarks or cultural resources, but since they have all been declining due to good conservation and management, we can be grateful that we still have these historical treasures today (S. Amatya, 1983; Amatya, 1988, 2007, 2011a; Bajracharya, 1978, 1996; Bajracharya & Shrestha, 2022; Tandon, 1995, 2020).

Throughout a long and varied period of history, Nepal's cultural heritage has survived in large part because of the good care and repair practices organized or supervised by its supporters. Such maintenance procedures and precise repairs made to these monuments are documented in numerous inscriptions (N.R. Banerjee, 1970; Scott, 2019; Shrestha, 2008a, 2016a, 2016b; D. N. Yogi, 1956; N. N. Yogi, 1956). The traditional Guthi system in the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal, is a unique and sustainable way of protecting tangible and intangible cultural heritage through an indigenous practice of heritage conservation (N. R. Banerjee, 1970; Banerjee, 1977; Chapagain, 2008; March, 2015). Even though there is no proof, we do know that Emperor Ashok went to Lumbini, the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, in the 20th year of his coronation in 250 BC. He also increased the size of the crumbling stupa of *Kanakmuni* Buddha and engraved an inscription (Inscription of *Ashokan Pillar* at

¹ Guthi refers to a type of trust established by any philanthropist by relinquishing his or her title to any movable or immovable property or any other income-producing property or fund for the operation of any shrine (matha) or festival, worship or feast of any god, goddess or for the construction, running or maintenance of any temple, shrine (devasthal), rest house (dharmashala), shelter (pati), in any other place of worship, or for any other purpose GoN. (1976a). The Guthi Corporation Act 2033(October 1976), 1-33. www.lawcommission.gov.np.

Niglihawa) on it. This is proof that historical preservation continues well beyond the Lichhavi era. According to the history of Nepal, the traditional conservation and management system has been studied in different periods (A. Amatya, 1983; Amatya, 1988, 1994, 1999, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Besana, 2019; Dangol, 2010; Lekakis et al., 2018; Sarveswar & Shakya, 2021; Shakya & Drechsler, 2019).

According to D. N. Yogi (1956), the *Bhashavamshawali*, *Bhamsavali*, *Rajvognmala Bamsavali*, and the *Gopalraj Bhamsavali* are some of the chronicles that include the oldest descriptions of the history of the valley. The *Gopal*, *Mahispal*, and *Kirat* were said to have ruled the valley in that passage. The Lichhavi period is considered to be the beginning of Nepal's recorded history by individuals who have lived there since the fifth century (Bajracharya, D. & Malla, 1985; D. N. Yogi, 1956; N. N. Yogi, 1956). While several of the monuments and pieces of art mentioned in the inscription are no longer standing, they may have been created during the Lichhavi era. Even yet, sculptures and the *Shivalingas* (Trinity of Hindustan) are still dispersed throughout this region. Nonetheless, a few of them are still standing today without bearing any inscriptions (Tandon, 1995, 2020). The main objective of this study is to examine how cultural resources are preserved and managed through the traditional *guthi* system of the Kathmandu Valley.

2. Methodology and Methods

A theoretically informed, well-articulated approach to the collection of data is known as a methodology (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). Multi-method qualitative research focuses on a subject-centered, interpretative approach (Denzin, 2009). This study is based on historical research that involved the review of articles and data gained from the different informants like; *guthiyar*², tourists, pilgrims, priests, senior citizens, local organizations, politicians, historians, and culturists in addition to the Department of Archeology (DOA), Guthi Corporation, heritage preservation organizations, architects, academic institutions, locals, and *guthi* communities.

3.

4. Literature Review

Even though there isn't any other proof, the inscription demonstrates that heritage management and preservation go back to 250 B.C. in Nepal. In contemporary Nepalese society, this custom is still being carried down via a variety of avenues. Until the Lichhavi period in history, we could not find any evidence of Nepal's heritage management and protection system after the inscription described above. If we take a broad picture according to the political history of Nepal, it would be easier to understand how the country is developing. The following is based entirely on academic writings that have been published and from which it is possible to trace, directly or indirectly, the evolution of heritage conservation and management systems (S. Amatya, 1983; Amatya, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Bajracharya, 1996; March, 2015; Nepali, 1959; Shrestha, 2008b, 2016a; Toffin, 2005, 2007).

According to Tiwari (2002), a Newar Society's social and religious responsibilities are carried out through one or more *guthi*, a corporate entity. The life cycles of clan groups, as well as social, religious, and cultural facets of society, are all tied to the functions of *guthi*. He asserts that the institution responsible for ensuring financial stability is the *guthi*. Tiwari further added, "*The institutionalization of management, operation, and maintenance of religious, social, and cultural*

² Guthiyar means a person who is entitled to enjoy the surplus income (sheskasar) of the *guthi* or operates the *guthi* and is the endower of a *Chhut guthi* or personal *guthi* or the heir to the endower, and the Mahanta and priest (pujari) deputed in the yearly basis to a position of such a *guthi* Guthi Corporation Act, (1976b). , Puch, N. G. S. (2008). *Nepalama Guthiko Mahattow ra Upadeyata*. .

artifacts and activities in urban areas appears already well developed as the Licchhavi inscriptions appear in the scene at Patan or other places in the valley. This was done by the system of gosthi which was a corporate body financed to perpetuity' through land grants or other 'fixed deposits. Such bodies were created both by the government and private citizens to see to it that the operation and maintenance of the artifacts and activities were set up as a community service by them so that they did not suffer in the future either for lack of funds or after their death. The institution of the gosthi had built financial and institutional sustainability of such surety that they have survived to this day as the guthi" (Tiwari, 2002, 2013).

According to Pant and Pant (2002), a significant aspect of the Newar community is the widespread participation of every town resident in *guthis* or community associations. Joining these associations is considered a crucial element of Newar community life. *Guthi* are organizations set up to keep an eye on communal social and religious events including burial rites, musical performances, ancestral worship, and daily routines for temple maintenance and care. Ancestor worship and burial ceremonies are arranged based on caste and part-lineal groups, notwithstanding the territorial nature of the *guthi* linked with temple rituals, socioreligious, and festivals. The continuance of the tradition and each member's customary role in society are guaranteed by membership in certain of these *guthi*, which are mandated by law (Pant & Pant, 2002). Following are the major conservation and management of works of cultural heritage through the traditional *guthi* in different eras:

4.1 Heritage Conservation of the Licchhavi Era

Since the Kirat or Licchhavi era, the Newars have been a part of the *guthi* system, a social structure. Manadev, a monarch of the Licchhavi people, started the *guthi* system by donating his property. Since the *guthi* approach was woven into the social fabric of the communities, it was highly successful and sustainable (Hutt, 1994, 2010, 2016; Hutt & Gellner, 1995; Toffin, 1996a, 1996b).

A local council of monks and priests known as the Panchali served as the representatives of the communities during the Licchhavi period when the term "heritage conservation and management system" was first used. Inscriptions from this period generally refer to *guthi* by the Sanskrit word *gosthi*. In most cases, both common people and members of the royal family founded these *gosthi*. In addition to creating monuments, people have a long history of maintaining them through the use of *guthi* (local trusts). *Guthis* were established by religious people and pious kings in Nepal to carry out socio-religious, socio-cultural, and socio-educational activities. The *guthi* system has traditionally funded the construction and maintenance of temples, stupas, monasteries, and *patis* (rest houses), whether public or private (Amatya, 2007; Nepali, 1965; Tandon, 2020). There were *gosthis*, whose members were known as *gausthikas* or *gosthikas*, for managing the numerous tasks of religious organizations. Each *gosthika* was given responsibility for one particular task to increase efficiency in the fulfillment of their tasks. The *Lele* inscription, which dates from 526, provides a fair description of the several *gosthikas* (Jha, 1970; Sarveswar & Shakya, 2021; Shrestha & Banskota, 2021; Shrestha et al., 2020; Shrestha, 2016a; Studies, 1970; Toffin, 1996b).

Inscriptions from the Licchhavi period during the reign of King Manadev have been discovered in Deupatan (now referred to as Pashupatinath regions). One of these inscriptions mentions that Ratnasangha had built the god Ratneshwor and had established a *guthi* by making offerings to the same god in the amounts of 500 bhumi³ in Dulang gram, 600 bhumi in Khopring gram, 100 bhumi in

³ The ancient Hindu system of land ownership served as the basis for the land measurement system in Nepal during the Licchhavi period. During the early years of the Licchhavi dynasty, a transitional period, this system underwent a transformation. However, the intricacies of the

Bumprang gram, and so on (Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1978, 1996). An inscription from the Basantadev era, discovered in the area of present-day Sitapaila, recalls Jayasundari's establishment of a guthi and donation of land for the maintenance of damaged or destroyed taps and spouts. Although the date cannot be read, it must be between Samvat 430 and 439, since Basantadev's inscription was found between Samvat 428 and 454 (Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1978, 1996; Bajracharya, 1999; Vajracharya, 1998). These inscriptions show that there was a structure for establishing a trust or other institution with the resources to carry out conservation and management activities and that the royals, their families, and commoners also contributed money or donations, especially in the form of land, to this trust or organization. Similarly, a Samvat 455 Chaitra Sukla Dashami inscription discovered at Bhasmeshwor in Pashupati mentions that Dhruvasangha, a Bartta (a person receiving government compensation) and Pratihara (Dware, a gatekeeper of the royal palace), had donated land controlled by the Gosthi of his people in southern Yupagrama for the welfare of himself and his parents for the regular worship of self-constructed Bhadrashw (Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1978, 1996; Vajracharya, 1998). According to an inscription at Pashupati in Samvat 462, the rice field was given by Abhiri Gomini for the fulfillment of God's regular events, which she had organized, as well as for the samskara (repair or maintenance) of the damaged sections (Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1978). which also shows that there was a system for taking care of significant social or religious creations made by individuals or groups in society. In any case, these creations would be cared for through the donation of land, which would serve as a regular source of income that would allow the designated individuals to take care of maintenance and regular events. The clay statues of the goddess Matrika erected on the banks of the confluence of the Bagmati and Manimati rivers had deteriorated and their hands and legs had been broken as a result of various natural phenomena, according to an inscription of the Lichchavi period by Shankhamul Sikubahi of Samvat 495 (Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1978, 1996; Bajracharya, 1976; Tandon, 1995, 2020; Vajracharya, 1998).

In the same way, this inscription demonstrated that it is a long-standing custom among the native people to recreate the same picture or building using diverse materials. The inscription demonstrates that even though the figures are close or identical, it was constructed of stone rather than clay. The Amshuvarma inscription from Changunarayan also states that Amshuvarma completely rebuilt a new one based on the old sample or the existing images when he renovated the old golden cover (Kavach) of Changunarayan and the image of Garuda due to its deterioration (Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1978, 1996; Bajracharya, 1976). It also shows that this was an indigenous tradition of conservation and that it is possible to recreate the same object with the same design, or to construct an entirely new object with the same design but in a different material, with the same design but in a different size. The previous inscription also warns us that the material may change during restoration or conservation. The fact that the inhabitants of that culture accept the updated representations of the deities they frequently or continuously worship is a testament to the aesthetic value of that society. Consequently, these inscriptions make it abundantly clear that regardless of whether an image is made of the same material or not, or whether it is larger or smaller in scale, it must still adhere to the same design and form and be accepted by the community while maintaining its aesthetic value. When someone renovates or conserves an image or structure, it is one of the traditions of Nepalese society dating back to the early days.

land measurement system of the Licchavi era are not widely known Regmi, M. C. (1988). *Land Tenure and Taxation in Nepal* (Vol. Vol.-II). , Sharma, P. R. (1978). *The Land System of Licchavis in Nepal*. CNAS, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu Nepal.

The inscription of Amshuvarma from Patan Sundhara, Samvat 34, mentions that Amshuvarma renovated the temple of Mating (gram), which was severely deteriorated by rats entering through the broken brick holes, there were no windows or doors left in it, and the wooden parts were also completely rotten, is one of the significant inscriptions related to the preservation of cultural heritage. He gave the temple to the Panchalika of Matingrama to take care of it and make it last for a very long time (Bajracharya, 1978, 1996). The temple had fallen into disrepair due to long neglect; the wooden parts had fallen into disrepair even though the bricks were broken, allowing rats or geese to easily enter and cause further disrepair; for this reason, the windows, doors, and other wooden parts were all removed and replaced with new materials. The images were replaced with a stone instead of clay and the same material was replaced but a newer construction instead of an old repaired one but in the same design, proved that if the parts are completely deteriorated or rotten and cannot be preserved, they could be replaced with completely new ones of the acceptable material which would have a longer life span. It is accepted in our cultural tradition of preservation which has persisted as the management of the cultural heritage of our society in Nepal (Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1978, 1996; Bajracharya, 1976; SHRESTHA, 2016c).

One of the inscriptions from Nabahil in Patan mentions Amshuvarma as having repaired several historic temples, palaces, and other buildings to preserve the heritage of previous kings, albeit the year is not visible. The inscription also states that after renovating the Shankarnarayan temple at Mirmeliti, he handed over the management of the structure to the local people (Amatya, 1999, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1996; Shrestha, 2008b, 2016a). This inscription gives information about the duties of the local communities or individuals for the preservation and management of the heritage. However, the monuments were once renovated by the state or the kings themselves, but for the ongoing process, all duties were delegated to the local population or communities, so that they could feel their responsibility as their social property, which would be a long-term process of conservation and management. Sustainable preservation and maintenance of history would result if the community felt ownership and responsibility. Another Amshuvarma Samvat 39 inscription from Deupatan talks about the management of many temples, including Shurabhogeshwor, Laditamaheshwor, and Dakshineshwor, as well as other topics. According to the inscription, the Panchalika of Adhashala was given the responsibility of preserving and maintaining these temples (Amatya, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1996; Puch, 2008).

The mandala should be cleaned, maintained, or repaired, and if required, as many Brahmins and Pashupat should be fed, according to Samvat 83, Lalitpur Gairidhara of Narendradev's inscription. The Lichchhavi ruler Narendradev's inscription also shows that the responsibility of repairing and daily cleaning of the temple was given to the local users' guthi with using the income of the land donated for the entire purpose and also made a point of involving the local community or the local people who would be the best continuator or maker of prolonging the life of the heritage. However, Amshuvarma's policy dictated that he usually initiated to hand over the responsibility to the local community or the local people. This makes the community more responsible and gives them a sense of ownership of the whole story. Similar to how the management, repair, and maintenance of the Shrishivadeveshwor Mahadev temple was given to the Acharyas of the Vamsha Pashupat sect, who were required to use all the income from the donated land, and how the regular worship arrangements (naimittik puja) of the Puttinarayan temple were given to the local Shitatidraanga residents, who were required to use all the resources from the donated land (Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 1978, 1996; Shrestha, 2016a). (Bajracharya, 2053, pp. 530-533).

From the historical review the Lichchhavi ruler donated the *guthi* for the preservation and management of the cultural heritage, but they were fully aware of the sustainability of this management and keeping alive the identity of their ancestors. According to the inscription described above, Amshuvarama used community involvement as one of his policies to maintain conservation and management. As a result, duties were transferred to local users or local communities, who were given full rights to use the donated land and any income from it for the conservation and management of the entire temple/monument (heritage), thereby committing themselves to prolonging the life of the temple and maintaining it through successive generations. Throughout the Lichchhavi dynasties, the same way of thinking persisted. Most of the inscriptions depict and explain similar facts, which is why some of the oldest monuments are still standing today. This is part of our society's legacy of heritage management and protection. Eventually, employing the traditional *guthi* system, the Lichchhavi rulers developed a methodical approach to the proper level of conservation and management. In addition during the Lichchhavi period, Lichchhavi's created the systematic approach and Institutionalization.

4.2 Heritage Conservation of the Medieval Era

The Medieval/Malla era (12th-18th centuries) was a golden age for Nepalese culture and architecture. The Malla kings, who ruled over three separate kingdoms in the Kathmandu Valley, were great patrons of the arts and built many temples, palaces, and other public structures. They also established many institutions and practices to conserve and manage their cultural heritage. One of the most important institutions for cultural heritage management in the Malla period was the *guthi*. Guthis were community-based organizations that were responsible for the maintenance and care of temples, shrines, and other religious and cultural sites. They also provided support for artists, musicians, and other cultural practitioners (Amatya, 1988, 1999, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Cominelli & Greffe, 2012; Conference, 2009; Conference & Educational, 2010; Nations, 2013; Tandon, 1995, 2020).

Another important institution was the Chhen-Bhadel, a government agency that was responsible for the conservation and repair of public buildings and infrastructure. The Chhen-Bhadel also oversaw the construction of new buildings and ensured that they were built under traditional architectural styles. The Malla kings also issued several edicts and decrees related to cultural heritage conservation. For example, King Ratna Malla of Kantipur issued an edict in 1484 prohibiting the destruction or alteration of ancient temples and monuments. He also established a special fund for the maintenance and repair of these sites. In addition to these formal institutions and practices, the Malla kings also promoted cultural heritage conservation through their patronage and example. They built many new temples and palaces, and they also restored and repaired existing structures. They also supported the production of religious and cultural artifacts, such as sculptures, paintings, and manuscripts (Amatya, 1988, 1999, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Cominelli & Greffe, 2012; Conference, 2009; Conference & Educational, 2010; Nations, 2013; Puch, 2008; Tandon, 1995, 2020).

The Malla kings' efforts to conserve and manage their cultural heritage were largely successful. As a result, the Kathmandu Valley is today home to one of the largest and most well-preserved collections of ancient temples and monuments in the world (Bajracharya, 1999; Cominelli & Greffe, 2012; Convention et al., 2019; Lesh, 2020; McKercher & Du Cros, 2012; Pradhan & Shrestha, 2020; Puch, 2008; Scovazzi, 2019; Vecco, 2010).

Much of the system, particularly concerning heritage conservation and management, was also a continuation of the Lichchhavi period of the Middle Ages. According to an inscription from Valtol Lalitpur in 1172 (Nepal Sambat-NS 292), the sage *Jayachandra* built a tutedhara, also known as a

jaladroni, and a rest house, also known as a *pati*, to continue the tradition of heritage conservation and management from the Lichchhavi period. Jayachandra provided money to build the roof of this rest house and some land for the *gosthi* road cleaning project (Bajracharya, 2011). It provides a glimpse into the system of conservation and management of medieval monuments. Another inscription of 1233 from Motitar Lalitpur describes the renovation of *Jaladroni*, which was done at Sutigala as a result of a difficulty with the water supply that supplied the entire Jaladroni (Bajracharya, 2011). Due to individual aesthetic and/or socio-cultural values, there was a system in place at the time for the construction or renovation of any type of monument, or religious or socio-cultural structure in the community. Typically, royalty or members of their families, government officials, wealthy members of society, and members of the religious community renovate or preserve these cultural assets and donate land for their sustainable management. Mahapatra Meghpal Varma repaired the Chaityaranga Devata at *Mahapinthbahal*, north of *Maningala*, in 1357, while Kshantishri renovated a Buddhist vihara that had collapsed in the earthquake of 1279, after receiving permission from Sarvasangha (Bajracharya, 1999; Bajracharya, 2011).

Knowing that this Chaitya of the true law - the Lord of enlightenment, the embodiment of the unity of wisdom and skillful means - had been damaged by natural disasters, Venerable Sakybhiksu Maitricandra developed the mind of enlightenment and as a result, completed the renovation of the glorious Svayambhu Mahacaitya by correctly erecting its central beam (*Yasti*) under Vajrayana tradition. Because of the similarities in style between this inscription in Ranjana script and the inscription at Icangu erected by Bijaykamadeva in 1200, it appears that this inscription was erected before the conquest of Shams ud-din in 1350 (Shakya, 1098; Shakya, 1978; Shakya, 2004; Shakya & Drechsler, 2019). One of the Swayambhu inscriptions also outlines methods for monument maintenance and repair, but the writing has gotten so bad that it is only half complete and the letters are unreadable. Therefore, it is unclear to which monument the inscription relates.

Similarly, the inscription discovered at Kumbheswor Lalitpur, which was built there in 1392, mentions that the Kumbheswor Mahadev was worshipped in a hut-like building (In Newari architecture, any structure made of local materials like mud and bamboo) rather than in a large temple of Kumbheswor. Jayabhim of Padgesinko, a man of good deeds, built the Shiva temple there to fulfill his promise. Jayabhim had previously promised to do so to protect his wife when she was unconscious and suffering from a deadly fever, but he was unable to do so. Instead, Jayabhim built the temple and a compound wall around it (Bajracharya & Malla, 1985; Bajracharya, 2011).

The description of this inscription also explains the custom of building and/or renovating temples and many other monuments and buildings in medieval civilization. The monument could be rebuilt to the best of one's ability. There was no doubt about the size of the monument at the time of the renovation, although it may have been rebuilt in a different style or design. However, they were often larger versions of the same design or style, as can still be seen in many temples in Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, and Lalitpur. These temples were built at different times and with different levels of walls, some of which had circumambulatory areas. Therefore, the inscription also states that Jayabhim built a new design or style of the Kumbheswor temple on a larger scale in 1392, which was of the same size and design as it is now. According to the information in the inscription, *Jayabhim* was an ordinary person who was a devotee of *Mahadeva*, possibly not a member of the royal family or someone who was highly respected at the time; this shows that ordinary people could carry out this kind of renovation or conservation and management of heritage at the time. In addition, the inscription of 1403 from *Thambutol* Lalitpur indicates that local people rebuilt the temple (*Dakshinvihara Thambu Shribramhapuristhan*) and asked them to give the remaining part of this *guthi* to *Agnishala*. It

demonstrates the role of the local community in the management and conservation of heritage (Bajracharya, 2011).

Similarly, in 1408, a *Brahmin* named *Jasanavasu Pandita* built a door with a golden image and placed it in the Changunarayan temple using his funds. It shows that during the medieval period, the common people were also aware of the need to preserve and maintain cultural assets. It also shows how much better the tradition was at that time, allowing anyone to donate any kind of property, including money and land. The most common and long-lasting method was the gift of land, which is still used today (although much less frequently). In this way, both the people and the local community contribute to the preservation and maintenance of this cultural heritage. According to the Kumbheswor Lalitpur inscription of 1410, the Mesa Hiti was repaired by the goldsmith *Jasaraja Bramha* and his wife *Mayalaxmi Bhari* and *Jatana*, residents of Shrimaningala Uttarabihara Shriyokha. Because of their aesthetic and socio-cultural qualities, the goldsmiths also involved the general public in their contribution to the restoration of this spring (Amatya, 1999, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Bajracharya, 2011; Bajracharya, 2010).

The inscription found in the Patan *Yampisthur* Chaitya of 1633 mentions *Krishna Ram Bharo*, a resident of *Konimha Gharkhachhen*, renovated and consecrated the chaitya near Shriyampistupa during the reign of *Shivasimha Malla* in Lalitpur and the *Lakshachhaitya Dharmma* group renovated and consecrated the chaitya of *Bhattaraka* for which the land was donated by the king at their request in 1621 as mentioned in the inscription found at *Katujanani* chaitya, *Tyagaltol* Patan (Bajracharya, 1999). This inscription demonstrates the relationship between the king and the people during the Middle Ages. When the people requested land to renovate a crumbling stupa, the king readily granted their request, and they were successful in doing so. They also never *disobeyed* the law or the king for any activities. Therefore, at that time, the monarch, the state, and the local people all gave their full support to the protection and maintenance of cultural assets (Bajracharya, 1999).

The *guthi* system was adopted by the Malla kings and society in the medieval period, as most of the inscriptions refer to it, though it seems to have been a little more developed than in the Lichchhavi period (though the rulership of the kingship changed, the society may have remained the same). The bricks of the *Dopat arena (Dopat Lachhi)* were laid in 1651 by a *guthi* named *Dharma guthi Samuha*, according to an inscription unearthed at Patan *Dupatol Ganesh Deval* (Bajracharya, 1999). In 1666 two members of *Yokhachhen Yutavihari's* community worked to renovate the *Tribodhisatva Chaityabhattarka* at Patan *Ikhachentol Ithabhil* (Bajracharya, 1999). This shows that during this period, individuals could donate property as *guthi* or carry out renovations for social welfare under their aesthetic standards if they could gain the approval of the general public or society. Similarly, the inscription of Patan Tangalbahal Chibahal in front of *Minnath*, dated 1673, mentions that the Dharmadhatu Chaityabahal was renovated and paved with bricks to make the Lokeshwor at *Shritanigla Bahal* happy, as well as the renovation of the *Hvawan Dabali* (Hvawna courtyard or square) (Bajracharya, 1999). When the Pharping kingdom fell under the rule of Srinivas Malla in Lalitpur, Chautara Bhagirath Bhaiya repaired all the gates and expertly paved them with stone. Srinivas also restored the Dhungedhara at Shikharanarayana and placed a stone gate there. He established a system whereby the group(s) responsible for maintaining the canal (*Kulo*), roads, and gates would do so annually or at least once a year. In addition; Srinivas established and enforced various regulations for the maintenance of paths and roads. However, the work of preserving such heritage was primarily carried out by royalty, members of the royal family, people who held government positions, or people who were related to royalty and those who held government positions (Bajracharya, 1999).

At that time, either the community, the state, or the monarch set the rules, and both the people and the community observed them. The donor, whomever s/he may have been, announced a set of guidelines

for the management of the monument that had been constructed or given at the time as a component of the system's regular revenue-generating sources. For instance, the majority of contributors provided land for the sustainability of conservation and management; nevertheless, some donors also gave money or specific goods. A three-door pati (rest house) was built and donated by *Mahalaxmi Bharo*, the wife of *Bishwombhar Bharo*, according to the inscription on the *Badegaon Dhokasidol* pati placed in 1681 for maintenance and repairs (Bajracharya, 1999).

Lalitpur's ruler *Rajyaprakash Malla* constructed a *guthi* by offering land for a Shikharnarayan temple. The edifice he erected for the god *Shikharnarayan*, known as *Naraharipur*, is referenced in an inscription that was erected at Pharping in 1751 and was funded by the *guthi* (Bajracharya, 1999; Vajracharya, 1998). The Bishwajit Malla inscription at Chobhar Ganeshsthan, placed in NS 880, mentions the traditional use of timber by the *Guthi* to build the fort from the Chobhar hill forest; it was not permitted to cut and take any timber or plants from this forest. The fact that no one was allowed to cut or take any plants or wood from the Chobhar Hill Forest indicates that it was off-limits to the general public. However, because the repair and upkeep of the fort was such a sensitive matter and a traditional requirement of the nation or society at the time, as well as a form of property and security, only plants necessary for this repair could be taken or cut, and this had to be done entirely through *guthi*.

From the study of the medieval period community involvement in cultural protection and management, as well as individual support for the renovation of the temple. These are some of the inscriptions that provide examples of how heritage has been preserved and managed continuously since the beginning of Nepalese history. At that time, there was only one system in place, and it was the only one that thoroughly managed and preserved cultural resources. In Nepalese society, particularly among the Newar people, it is evident that the *Guthi* system has persisted since the Lichchhavi period. However, in the *guthi* system, it would be either private or public and could carry out such conservation and management without any reluctance on its part or any hindrance from anyone in the community. This system was broken and several new systems evolved over different periods.

4.3 Heritage Conservation of the Modern Era

Although political history is usually divided into the post-1952 modern period, for the development of cultural heritage conservation and management in Nepalese history, the modern period is studied as the period immediately following the unification of Nepal by Shah King Prithvi Narayan Shah. The Shah, Rana, and contemporary periods form the three segments of the modern period.

There were no official state or government-established institutions or organizations before the Shah era. Rana Bahadur Shah, the founder of the Shah dynasty, built Chhenbhadel Adda in 1798 for the government's preservation and maintenance of cultural assets (Shrestha, 2010). However the *Chhenbhadel adda* informally existed in Nepalese society since the Malla period, but it was established formally by the government through legislation (Amatya, 1988, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Chapagain, 2008; B. Karki & S. Singh, 2011; B. R. Karki & S. Singh, 2011; Sansthan, 2015, 2019; Subedi, 2022).

Guthi Bandovasta Adda was established by Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana to take over the position of *Guthi Janch Kachahari*, who had maintained a record of the *Guthi* land during his reign. The *Guthi Corporation* was established in 1976 as a result of the *Guthi Corporation Act 1976*, which recognized the *Guthi* system and its continued existence since time immemorial. The Corporation, which has operated following the Act, has amalgamated the

systems and the Guthi land (Amatya, 1988, 2007, 2011a, 2011b; Besana, 2019; Chapagain, 2008; Dangol, 2010; Greer, 1994; March, 2015; Nations, 2013; Puch, 2008; Studies & Studies, 2007; Tandon, 1995, 2020; Toffin, 2007; Vaidya, 2015).

The *Chhenbhadel Adda*, however, has been a part of Nepalese society unofficially since the Malla era, but the government legally formalized it through legislation (Amatya, 2007). The government created the *Adda* (Office), which was later given power over all obligations and was subject to all of the government's laws and regulations. Due to the establishment of this office, the *guthi* system has gradually retreated from its obligations, allowing the *Adda* to seize their property as well. People who have been involved with the *guthi* system for a long time believed that the government would do everything possible to preserve the entire heritage and extend its life. Therefore, throughout time, either through *guthi* or by any other individual procedure, the community or the *guthi* also left their history of conservation and management system. The *Chhenbhadel Adda* survived the whole Rana period up to 1952 when the Department of Archaeology was founded. Only extremely simple *guthi* systems are still in use among Newar villages in the Kathmandu valley, even though the *Adda* was still in use at the time. This is because different Newar tribes kept their traditions in their distinctive ways (Amatya, 2007).

The *Chhenbhadel Adda* was abolished when the DOA was established and all responsibilities were transferred to the Department. This means that the Department is now legally responsible for the management and protection of Nepal's cultural heritage. The Ancient Monument Preservation Act (AMPA), which was passed in 1956, four years after the department was established, is designed to protect peace and order. According to this act, the government has granted the DOA sole control over all management and conservation tasks involving Nepal's ancient monuments and archaeological sites, for which the Ancient Monument Preservation Regulation (AMPR) 1991, Ancient Monument Conservation Procedure 2007, and other numerous laws were also put into effect. The Guthi Corporation Act was passed and put into effect in 1976, and the Guthi Corporation was founded. Through this Corporation, which was created specifically to be in charge of managing all *guthis* and *guthi* land, the Government subsequently eliminated the *guthi* system (Council, 2012; Maharjan, 2014, 2020; Maharjan, 2018; Shrestha, 2008a; Shrestha, 2007).

However, the precious cultural, historical, archaeological, and many other monuments or heritages have been preserved continuously in the traditional way or system. The new approach to preservation or conservation was developed in the late 20th century, which is called "Cultural Heritage Conservation and Management", which has been implemented since the 1970s with an emphasis on the "sustainability" principle. It aims to conserve, use, and develop the heritage and to sustain its values and significance by giving the heritage a compatible use (Unver, 2006). Several legislations are also promulgated in this regard as per the situation and context; but there are some common international conventions and/or recommendations for safeguarding and managing these heritages in the world, which are very commonly most important for the world community. Those are known as the World Heritage and there are separate legislations or guidelines entirely for these heritages; which may be safeguarded either in a traditional system or through the World Heritage Convention. However, the World Heritage Convention is the most significant international legislation for the conservation and management of this kind of heritage.

5. Analysis, Result, and Discussion

According to the aforementioned study, the Kathmandu Valley has consistently been protected, conserved, and managed by the communities as well as other stakeholders since ancient times when

our forefathers had developed a *guthi* system and demonstrated the way for its conservation and management. One of the strongest social structures in the community or communities since the *Lichchhavi* period was the traditional *guthi* system, which endured during the Malla, Rana, and Shah periods. According to the above-mentioned inscriptions, the *guthi* were in complete charge of the management and maintenance of cultural assets at that time. All of these groups, however, were formally disbanded and integrated into the Guthi Corporation, which was established by the state, when the Guthi Corporation Act was approved in 1976. These well-established social structures have slowly vanished and stopped functioning. Even though some of the core *guthi* systems are not recognized by state legislation, they have been maintained in a variety of ways among the *Newar* communities of the Kathmandu Valley and are still in use today owing to social perseverance and cultural tenacity. The current trend of the conservation and management of cultural heritage is more focused and based on the prevailing acts but that's acts didn't flow the traditional knowledge, and techniques like *guthi* completely. The conventional method more focuses on ancient methods, and local techniques rather than the current way of conservation that's why conservation and management of cultural heritage are not complete only flow the prevailing policies.

6. Concluding Remarks

Most of the traditional festivals observed in the Kathmandu valley are still performed by the traditional *guthi*, according to literature analysis and discussions among the various *guthi* members, although the traditional *guthi* are currently facing many difficulties. Anyone who pays attention to Nepal's history will see that traditional community-based heritage conservation and government heritage conservation continue to clash. The Nepalese system for preserving cultural artifacts has a history dating back to the third century, although the earliest dated and written records date from the fifth century. It would seem that we should be aware of this in advance because, if the traditional *guthi* system were to be destroyed, there would be no chance for our way of life, the preservation of our intangible and tangible cultural heritage, and the continuity of our original identity (living history), customs, and culture of Nepal. Currently, there are several international and national laws governing management and conservation, although they overlap. According to the researcher, there is a significant gap in the craftsmanship, technology, and local participation in heritage protection. As a result, it is now necessary to assess present policies and choose which should be founded on indigenous and antiquated technology (*guthi* system).

Chronology of ruling dynasties in Kathmandu Valley and Nepal (Gellner, 1996).

Dynasty/Political System of Nepal	Duration (English Period)
Lichhavi period	5 th to 9 th century A.D.
Thakuri period	879 to 1200 A.D.
Early Malla period	1200 to 1382 A.D.
Later Malla period	1382 to 1768 A.D.
Early Shah period	1769 to 1846 A.D.
Rana period	1846 to 1951 A.D.
Later Shah period	1952 to 2006 A.D. & onwards

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