

Ethics, Arts and Culture in Literature : Religious History of Adhinath Temple Chovar, Kirtipur

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Artistic beauty of Adhinath temple and cultural ethics of the religious groups inspires Chovar people to continue the rituals like performing jatras and doing the puja/path and other activities. Cultural activities reflect their religious history as a part of literature is this article's claim that is proved through religious activities and social/cultural believes in application of cultural norms and values as socio-cultural theories. Objective of this study is to expose the ethics in cultural arts of religious people excavating through Cultural Studies as a methodological tool and technique to dig out in the hole of research that helps to carry out the expected result. Artistic structures of temple's front face, back side, walls, pillars and tudals are reflections of then rituals and emotional activities and cultural performances are popular among the cultural communities. This article highlights that the religious history of Adhinath temple begins from Anandadi Lokeshwor and continues with artistic ethics as a matter for literature.

[Keywords : Anandadi Lokeshwor, Tudals, Subernagiri, Kachhapal, Asthabaitaak, Bodhisatta , Deadly souls, Heavenly spirits]

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Adhinath temple firstly known as 'Anandadi Lokeshwor' has a long history from Pre-historical Period (Adimkal) and myth making from Lichhavikal and Malla periods. Indra Bahadur Shakya, retired but not tired first class officer of the examination controller office TU who is now playing a key role for the reconstruction and renovation works of Adhinath temple as a chairman of Adhinath temple speaks about its religious histories and rituals he participated and observed. He says, "Adhinath temple is said to be known as Anandadi Lokeshwor and now the name is mis-pronounced as Adhinath" (Interview with Shakya). It is believed that there are three Lokeshwors in Kathmandu Valley and one in Banepa i.e. Anandadhari Lokeshwor of Chovar-Kirtipur, Padampani Lokeshwor of Indra Chowk-Kathmandu, Minnath Jatadhari Lokeshwor of Patan-Lalitpur and Shristikanta Lokeshwor of Banepa.

Anandadi Lokeshwor temple's foundation is said to be built in 6th century in stone structure. According to the stone carved records and myth making Chovar daanda was then known as Subernagiri Kachhapal Parbat (Turtle shaped mountain of golden rocks). It is said that the Anandadi Lokeshwor temple was built on the Kachhapal Parbat in the time of Amshuvarma. According to the kimbadanti stone made statues of Devi, Devta and their activities are interlinked with rituals performed in Kirtipur. According to Nani Chhori Maharjan ".....rituals were/are really connected with the life, arts and death related activities of the people that started from Siddhinarshing Malla by forming the Guthi institutions in the name of temple" (Interview with Nani Chhori). The fund collected in the Guthi institutions was used for the rituals and government based national budget was used for the infrastructure development and innovative works.



Source : Snapshot taken by the researcher.

Puja-path and other daily activities of the temple are done by the priest and special religious groups worship on the statues of Lokeshwor, Tara, Buddha and Dipankar. Kirtipur locals donate copper, silver and bronze plates in the name of demised parents and family members and attach them on the walls of temple and nearby bihar.



Source : snapshots taken by the researcher.

It is believed that the deadly souls are turned back to the heavenly spirits through the rituals and donation to the temple. Sambhu Maharjan says, “.....they also donate the kitchen utensils, swords, iron caps, carpet making sticks, iron, copper and bronze made pots etc. and they attach them in the walls of this temple as saviors of external forces and demon attacks to the statues and other properties” (Interview with Sambhu Maharjan). Temple was built in Lichhavi and Malla periods, portraits and statues were built and established then but the stone structured Asthabaitaak statue of Bodhisatta that seems tall three stories structured with gazur on the top was built earlier than the Lokeshwor statue.

Indra Bahadur Shakya says that “..... in Shah Bamsha and Rana’s time the rituals were in crisis and Kirtipur was always in danger of them. King Pirthivi Narayan Shah attacked Kirtipur and cut the noses of Kirtipur people that is always the black day for Kirtipur Newars” (Interview with Shakya). Reflection of the bitter experiences is exposed in Lakhe dance, jatra and other rituals performed in Kirtipur Municipality. In addition to the artistic beauty of statues in the temple there is a colorful big rounding instrument named as Maane that is much valued to the Buddhist gurus and Lamas. It is believed that the people will get freed from pain after rounding around the Maane.



Source : Snapshots taken by the researcher.

In the back side of the temple there are four tall and three thatched stone structured statues of Buddha. Buddhist religious group believe that worshipping there enables them to forget the individual pain and they can enjoy and live the life in heavenly pleasure.

Such inclusive involvement of Hindu, Buddhists and other religious groups within a temple premises show religious freedom and the broader views of keeping all the people in brotherhood relationship.



Source: Photo taken by the researcher.

Nearly in distance of about one hundred meters there is a separate temple built now in the 20th century establishing the Saraswoti, Balkumari, Bhimsen and Ganesh statues in front of the Amitab's Bihar whereas the Shakyas from out of the Kathmandu Valley come to worship there, sit in the Bihar and work as a priest.

Shakyas from Kathmandu and Lalitpur, especially from Kirtipur worship and work as a priest in the main temple and Shakyas from other places in the temple in front of the Bihar, offer holy water as 'jala' and other religious groups from Patan, Ashan and Kirtipur sing hymns, show Lakhe dance, perform jatras and expose the rituals supporting the cultural performances honouring rivers, mountains, ponds etc.

In relation to the importance of those religious and cultural places and socio-cultural practices of the Chovar-Kirtipur in his book Prayagman Pradhan writes, "They took the mountains, rivers, ponds, spring-well, Himalayas, thundering, storming and all the natural and environmental things as gods and goddesses' power and so they worship there with different kinds of puja-path" (Kirtipurko, 6). Even in the modern time those natural resources are taken as divine power. Among all the gods and goddesses Kirtipur people have a great trust on Anandhari Lokeshwor's power and so in every rituals, jatra, puja-path and hymns programs they sing the hymns and religious songs of cultural groups in Nepal Bhasa honoring Adhinath.

Religious groups use different kinds of dresses and other performances in ghatu dance, pulukisi dance, holi dance, jatra and lakhe dance on the basis of objectives, causes and consequences whether the coverage is joyful subject or the melancholy. Dance represents the alternative sphere of satisfying and joy as Adrienne Mclean writes :

In the dance performances, the dancing bodies of the characters are not only the object of the gaze but as a subject who participates and presents chosen aspect of their self to gaze willingly and consciously. Dancing bodies simultaneously produce and are produced by their own dancing that not only reflects the way how the things are put but also have the potential to effect change (Dying Swans and Madmen, 15).

Different kinds of costuming, musical instruments, music, performances and other visual activities are continued to organize in religious and cultural functions of the Chovar locals.

Socio-cultural activities in Adhinath temple run through Guthi. Guthi system is in practice where as the local people collect some funds, take help from local authority, agencies and government. They spend the fund in renovation of the temples, worshipping the gods and goddesses, doing the daily puga-path in the temples and

showing the jattras. Lots of land is in control of Adhinath Guthi and people run the religious, social and socio-cultural functions upon its help and supervision. In the ritual activities like puja-path and Jatra religious groups are in different dances and dresses according to the mythical reflections that symbolize the views and sights connection as Mars Fishwick writes, "..... the mind trains the eye" (Seven Pillars of Popular Culture, 14). Means to say in this quote is that wearing different kinds of dresses wins the attraction of the dance and the performance observers. In this regard Dipa Maharjan Quotes Gopal Singh, "A network of Guthi institutions binds the people together at the three different levels of caste, patrilineal grouping and territory" (Pangaya, 26). The Chovar people have different Guthi networks and socio-cultural activities run through them from the time of Amshu Varma, Lichhavi and Malla Kings.

The Guthi network continued strongly, in this regards writes Deepa Maharjan, "Amshu Varmaya's avilekhayas are Baditraya-Guthi, Archaguthi, Goyudyaguthi, Brahmanguthi and they were formed for different socio-cultural activities" (26). Defining the Cultural Studies, Stuart Hall in *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power* writes, "Cultural Studies is an approach to studying culture that lies at the intersection between the Social Sciences, most notably sociology and the humanities. As a non-disciplinary study, Cultural Study draws ideas from diverse fields and academic traditions" (63). Stuart Hall's principle in Cultural Studies is important for decoding cultural oppression whereas American pop culture represents experience of power. Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, England came strongly in 1963 with the views to study all the social and socio-cultural activities. Merriam-Webster, America's most-trusted online dictionary 2002 writes, "Semiotics is the study of signs and cultural studies that approaches all cultures" (54). Hemingway focuses on the function of language and meaning produced differently in linearity and syntactic relations. Therefore, Cultural Study studies about multiple aspects of the society and socio-cultural activities.

Talking about Chovar-Kirtipur's arts, culture, literature and the cultural history, it was populated since the rule of Gopal Bamsi. Early residential of Kirtipur were Shrestha, Maharjan, Shakya, Nakarmi, Dulal, Kapali and they have some similarities and some differences in cultural arts, performances, activities etc. Kirtipur people have close attachment with the people living in Patan and Gaushala. Some

of them were in attraction of Chanakya philosophy and Buddhism, too. Majority of the people from then society in Kirtipur follow Hinduism as Prayagman Pradhan writes :

Kirtipur's history is older than PashupatiNath's history. Talking about PashupatiNath, cow farmers (gopal) of Kirtipur used to say that there was a cow named Bahuni with them which used to go there regularly and put on milk there. People eagerly wanted to know that why the cow goes there regularly. After a long they found that there was a place of religious value and named as Pashupati and built the PashupatiNath temple. There is a residential area in Kirtipur named Sagal whereas Sa means cow and Gal or Ga means the place to keep the cows. King Dhana Bajra started people keeping in the community in Sagal. There is a water collection centre named 'Gopal Pokhari' where King Dhana Bajra used to teach and convince people. Cow farmers used to sit together and discuss about different things there (Kirtipurko, 2).

Talking about Kirtipur's religious and socio-cultural history, in addition to Newars there are residential from Dulal, Kapali, Nakarmi communities, too who perform the cultural activities together with them. About Adinath temple and the place around it, and so Kirti Study and Research Mandal writes :

.....Adhinath temple is an important place whereas Chovar-Kirtipur people show the mela/ jatras from Katipurnima in the month of Kartik upto Sakimila purnima. In Chaitra Dashain they bring the Lokeshwor Statu from Nakhu with various musical instruments keeping over the long clothes and show the jatras after they make the Statue entered to the temple. It is one among the four Lokeshwors (Machhendranath) that is also known as Anandadi Lokeshwor. Baha is kept in the upper part of the Lokeshwor. In Newari it is said Cha: and the place where the god Lokeshwor is placed is called Baha. Therefore, this place is called Cha Baha but now days it is mis-named and called to be Chobhar (Kirtipurko, 80)

Anandadhari Lokeshwor's puja-karma rituals continue worshipping with fruits, rice, bitten rice and breads/selroti and have to do the excuse ritual process if mistaken in worshipping. Bali-puja continues in Ganesh, Bhimsen and Balkumari temples compulsorily in every Dashain.

Main temple of Anandadhari Lokeshwor is renovated after the earthquake disaster of 2072 in investment of thirty millions sixty lakhs donation by Nepal Government through 'Puratatto Bibhag' Historical and Cultural Departments and remaining works through the donation and help of the local people. It is believed that people will get relief from all kinds of diseases after worshipping there and drinking the holy water there.

Special kinds of rituals begin in the temple from Kartik Purnima and continue upto Sakamma, nearly for a month. "Religious groups come from Ukuwal Patan and Golden temple Patan formed as Kuwal, Buwal, Siwal and Sabuwal from Mahaboudha. They have to come and continue the rituals compulsorily for a month" (Interview with Indraman). It is compulsory to continue the rituals from Shakyas being a priest to worship in the Anandadhari Lokeshwor but the other religious activities are done by other ritual groups of Bajracharya, Maharjan, Chitrakar, Joshi who search for the good time for rituals and Darji and Kashai for playing the musical instruments like Funge Sanai, Namekular and other instruments compulsorily with the ghee needed for rituals. They perform Lakhe dance, jatra and other performances.



Source : Photos taken by the researcher.

King of Patan Siddhinarshing Malla and Yogendra Malla had a great initiation in collecting the historical things, controlling the loss and utilizing the resources and they supported and helped strongly to the people of Kirtipur from Lalitpur as Chovar was in Patan area's administrative control. According to Indra Bahadur Shakya "..... in ancient arts time it is much written, recorded and well known from Manjushree's time who cut the Subarna mountain known as Kachhapal parbat for the water outlet in Chovar that lies in south of Kirtipur Municipality and made the Kathmandu Valley likely to

live“ (Interview with Indra Bahadur). He says that the statue of god in the Anandadi Lokeshwor temple was of gold for the first time and Malla and Lichhavi rulers used to make the rath-yatra from Anandadi Lokeshwor Chovar to Indrachowk Kathmandu and Lagankhel Lalitpur in the name of making a meeting between gods and goddesses. There was a big flow of Tibetians in Kathmandu in that time whereas they loot that golden statue from Balkhu Kathmandu and put on Kerung Tibbet, locked with seven big keys. Tibbet was so big, highly populated and powerful than Nepal and Nepali people couldn't take revenge with them.

Though the statue was looted and locked in Kerung the goddess dissatisfied and disguised as a girl, escaped from there, entered Nepal and was wandering as a mad girl. Religious groups of Patan saw it and took it to Patan, built the temple in Siddhipur and settled the statue there but the goddess dissatisfied and a very dangerous disease like plague was there, Patan people got angry and “..... throw the statue in Nakhu river that was found by Gopal Bamshi gwalas in between the Nakhu river and Bagmati river and brought it in the Anandadhari Lokeshwor temple in the day of Chaitra Asthami with ritual activities and musical instruments and so even today religious people go to the place in every Chaitra Asthami with all the ritual process to bring the goddess“ (Indra Bahadur). It is also believed and said in Kimbadanti that all the gold industry of Chovar went to Tibbet with Anandadhari Lokeshwor statue and goddesses. “Papantirtha gufa of Manjushree Park is too much long and it is too much difficult but it is said that religious people can come out from the stone structured temple of Adhinath, Bhadrakali and even from Pashupatinath rarely“ (Interview with Shakya). It is said that in Lichhavi Period a man entered in the gufa from near to the Manjushree Park and after a long time there was a sound of a man crying near stone structured statue, in front of the Anandadi Lokeshor and the people searched for him. When the people meet him, he was unconscious and almost dying as they took him out.

There are lots of holes like roads to come out but it is not clear that which way goes where and the hard structure of the mountain seems really surprising. Historically, Chovar is known as Subarnagiri Mountain whereas people found and took out gold, silver, bronze etc. whose natural holes are known as gufas as there is a palace of Snake's King Karkata in Taudaha who gave the golden photo to the gwala of Patan. The history shows that people started

living in Kathmandu Valley from Kirtipur-Chovar-Taudaha and it has a long history in arts and culture.

Adhinath Temple is a big and tall seven story building from the backside counting upto the stone carved places, too and that has three roofs supported by woods and wooden and metal structured tudals carved with artistic instruments representing erotic activities of goddesses in different places of the temple designed in different shapes from the front. The roofs of the temple are covered with metals, bronze and copper plates. Statues of gods and goddesses are designed and covered in many places with highly valuable copper, silver and bronze plates. Wooden carved writings and written documents in metal are much important records. Gajurs in the temple is center of attraction for the tourists and religious people.

Adhinath Temple and Jalapadevi Temple in Chovar Height are other important religious-cultural temples for Kirtipur Newars and other religious groups whereas the people come for worshipping from different places of Kirtipur and Sanepa, Lalitpur. Every morning, people go there and worship the gods and goddesses placing the flowers and offering/sounding Namaste/Bhagawan sharanam ringing the gongs. Religious fanatics, in addition to their daily ritual activities, especially in the month of Kartik keep on fasting, worship the gods and goddesses, sing the hymns and pray in different ways. They believe that they can fulfill their dreams and desires by worshipping there. There are lots of scenes and written documents in the temple and around the temple premises for the researchers in addition to the oral histories.



Source : Adhinath Temple. Source : Snapshots taken by the researcher.

Adhinath Temple is made up of oily bricks that have three roofs supported by woods carved with artistic instruments representing erotic activities of goddesses in different places of the temple designed in different shapes. Well carved wooden doors and windows represent the traditional arts and bring the study subjects to the students/researchers of religious-cultural studies. The study of arts and literature helps to analyze cultural history. Wooden carved writing and written documents in stone and metal are much important for historical records. In top of both the temples there are Gajurs and bronze and copper structured toran lowered down from the main temple. Gajurs in the temple are center of attraction for all.

Conclusion of the study is that Anandadi Lokeshwor's art and local people's ethical activities in cultural activities bring multiple subjects for literary studies. In struggle for existence of their cultural identity, society forces the authority to accept the rules in the steps to change. The social system, cultural values, and ethical activities preserved and protected by the Chovar people, and state policy for the development of certain community determines the national status. Talking about Chovar's religious and socio-cultural history there are lots of things to research and so Arts and Literature knowledge helps to study the society and socio-cultural changes change that occur there. Socio-cultural/Cultural study is a part of Humanities and Social Sciences. Among different theoretical aspects, specifically this research concerned with social and socio-cultural perspective.

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