

Finding Bhoto: Invaluable cultural Heritage

After fifteen days of relentless efforts made on digging out the Bhoto sealed and stored in the treasury of the Sikhara-styled temple to Lord Matsyendranath popularly known as Karunamaya after the Bhoto Jatra held at Jawalakhel every year, unfortunately lost under the debris of the temple fallen during the devastating earthquake on April 25, 2015, the team of the priests, attendants to the lord and the officials of the Guthi Sansthan: the state-run trust for running the cultural festivals, found the Bhoto, and publicly displayed it, the RSS news posted on setopati.com stated.

The Sikhara-styled temple in Bungamati came down after the quake shook the ground on April 25, 2015, and all the jewelry boxes including the jewels-studded Bhoto went down under the debris. The team of diggers managed to find all the jewel boxes including the Bhoto after fifteen days of the hard work.

The Bhoto has the unique myth behind it. Every year, one of the officials of the Guthi Sansthan displays the Bhoto from the four corners of the balcony of the chariot at Jawalakhel after a month-long tour of Lord Matsyendranath on a spire like chariot that passes through the narrow lanes and alleys in Patan. The display of the Bhoto was to show the public that the jewel-studded Bhoto is still in the custody of Lord Matsyendranath.

At one of the annual festivals of Lord Matsyendranath held at Jawalakhel, one human and another goblin came also in a human form fought for the Bhoto. The goblin in a human form wore the Bhoto means a vest and was watching the festival on the last day of the tour festival of Lord Matsyendranath to show off his vest to the public. The human claimant was attempting to take off the vest from the goblin.

The law enforcement officials took both of them to the head of the State attending the festival at Jawalakhel. The human claimed that the Bhoto was his. "The goblin was a thief. He stole the Bhoto from me while I was plowing my land", said the farmer. The farmer said that he had taken off the Bhoto and set it on one of the furrows. The goblin had equally vehemently claimed it as his.

The head of the State could not decide whom it belonged to. None of them had hard evidences. So, the head of State decided to keep the Bhoto in the custody of Lord Matsyendranath until they came with evidences. The display of the Bhoto was to show the public that the Bhoto was still with the deity.

Actually, the farmer was the real owner of the unique and the high-value Bhoto. The serpent king graciously presented the farmer with the vest called Bhoto studded with precious diamonds and stones as the reward for healing the eye ailment his queen had suffered from.

The serpent queen had a prolonged-eye ailment. None of the serpent healers could effectively treat the ailment and heal it. None of the serpent healers could make any progress on healing her eye illness. So, the serpent king sent his attendants to the human world to bring a healer.

The attendants to the king of serpents grabbed the farmer while he was plowing his field, and took him to the world of serpents. He needed to heal the eye ailment of the serpent queen that had been desperately suffering from sores on her eye. The farmer picked up some dirty from behind his ear and applied it on the eyes of the queen.

Surprisingly, the sores on the queen's eyes went off. The serpent king was in high spirits to see the human physician healed the eye illness of his queen. Both the king and the queen were very grateful to the human healer.

Lord Matsyendranath was from Kamarupa: the current Assam State in India. A team of the Licchavi king from Bhaktapur, a tantrik priest from Kathmandu, and a porter from Patan brought the lord from Kamarupa to Nepal and solved the crisis of the twelve-year long drought in Nepal. The event must have happened at least fifteen hundred years ago if it were really happened.

Sitting on the cushion of a serpent deity, Gorkhanath: the disciple of Lord Matsyendranath meditated on his guru Matsyendranath causing the prolonged drought making untold misery to the people. Gorkhanath was determined to have the sight of his guru.

The three States such as Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, and Patan had no choice but to bring Lord Matsyendranath. The three city-states cooperated with each and brought the lord to Nepal. Upon arrival of Matsyendranath, Gorkhanath rushed to revere his guru freeing the serpent deity. Instantly, rains made their way to Nepal.

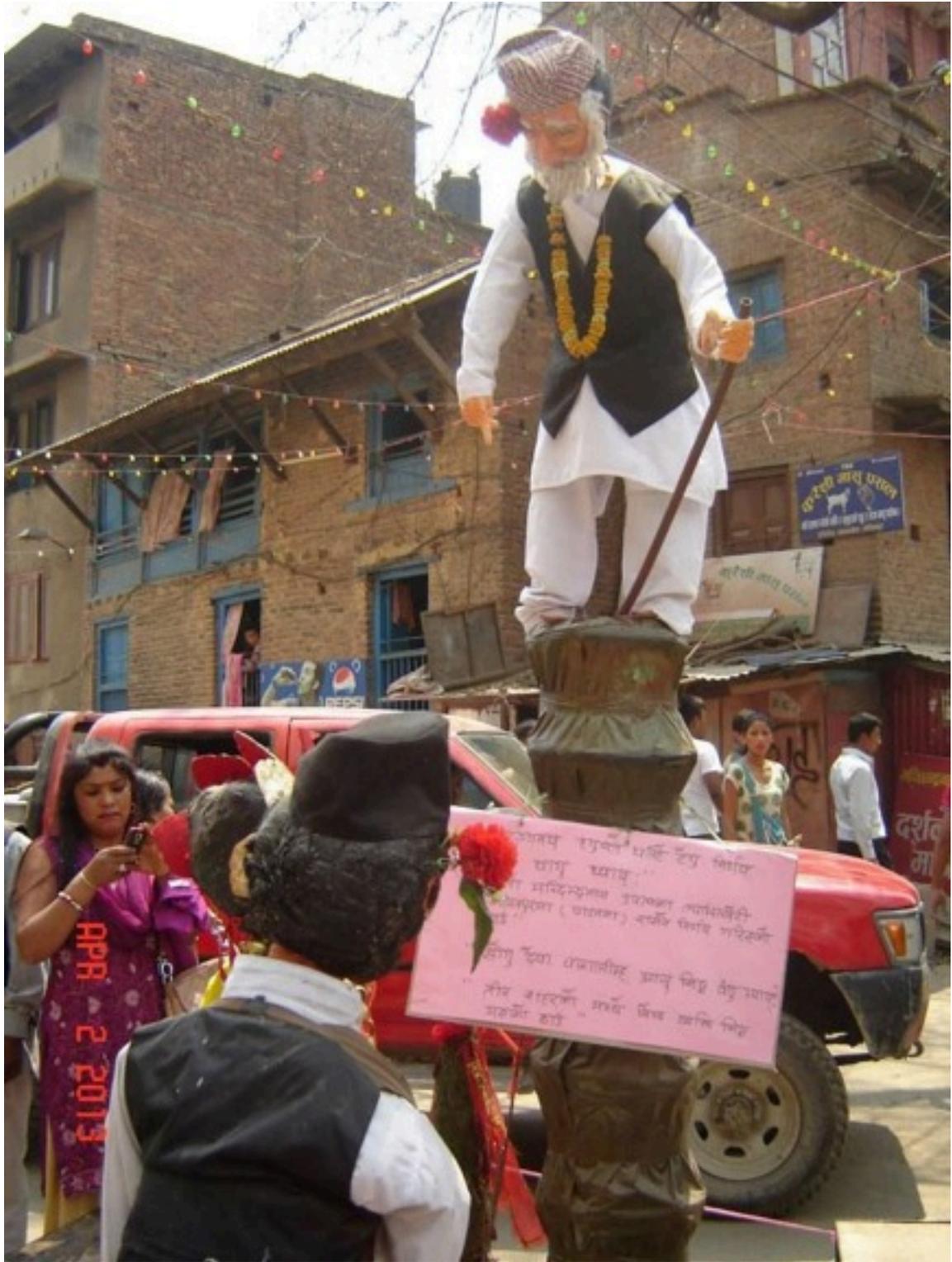
Everybody: the king, the tantrik and the porter claimed that the deity should be in his domain. They had endless arguments for several days. Finally, they agreed on letting one of the senior citizens of Bhaktapur, Katmandu and Patan to decide where Lord Matsyendranath would stay.

With his walking staff, the 110-year old man climbed up the high ground made for him to announce to the public where the lord would stay. The public surrounding the high ground was eager to hear what the old man would say. He said that the deity would stay in Patan. The high ground crumbled bringing the old man down to earth.

The old man was bias to Patan. So, he fell down from the high ground. Apparently, the porter from Patan went to the senior citizen and fed him the mixture of rice and yogurt on the eve of his announcement. The porter cleverly added a pinch of salt to the mixture. Eating the salt of the porter, the old man became obliged to the porter.

For Shaivites, the lord is Matsyendranath. For Buddhists, he is Avaloketasvora. For Vaishnavis, he is Biranchinarayan. He is Karunamaya for all folks. The lord is also named as the rain god.

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The old man was announcing his decision on where Lord Matsyendranath is to stay.



Lord Matsyendranath in the lord's summer temple in Patan