

# Urban Form and Hierarchy of Open Spaces of Traditional Town, Chapagaon

Sanjaya Maharjan <sup>a</sup>, Jiba Raj Pokherel <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a,b</sup> Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Pulchowk Campus, IOE, TU, Nepal

Corresponding Email: <sup>a</sup> sanjayamaharjan@ioepc.edu.np, <sup>b</sup> jibaraj@gmail.com

## Abstract

Cities are planned with the interplay of mass and space. Mass represents the built structures like palaces, temples, buildings and other social infrastructures whereas the space represents open spaces like streets, community, religious and cultural nodes. These elements of mass and spaces in open, their alignment with each other and orientation define urban form of cities. Open spaces are basic type of land use along with residential, commercial, industrial transportation etc. This research paper discusses the different hierarchy of open spaces that were designed in ancient period in context of traditional town Chapagaon as Malla towns have different hierarchy of open spaces within their town. The research aims to study urban form and different hierarchy of open spaces within the study area, Chapagaon. The research work has been studied under interpretivist/ constructivist paradigm. Different tools regarding qualitative methodology has been applied in the research. Key informants are identified and surveyed using open ended interviews. The study area has been visited multiple time to perceive the traditional form of settlement along with photographic survey. Phenomenological research approach has been used to understand people's perception, perspectives and understanding of current and past situation. Different articles and publications have been studied, along with the inscriptions regarding the monuments of Chapagaon. Thus, the traditional urban form and hierarchy of open spaces of ancient Chapagaon has been discussed in findings.

## Keywords

Urban form, Open Spaces, Stharudranga, Bajrabarahi temple, Bhansar tole

## 1. Introduction

Urban form is characterized by the five elements of cities as defined by Kevin Lynch. The five elements are edges, pathways, nodes, districts and landmarks of the cities. The edges define the boundary of the cities or town. Paths connect diverse elements and environmental conditions of a city, giving a sequence of imagery to the observer. Districts are the medium-to-large sections of the city, conceived of as having two dimensional extents, which the observer mentally enters "inside of," and which are recognizable as having some common, identifying character" [1]. "Nodes are points, the strategic spots in a city into which an observer can enter, and which are the intensive foci to and from which he is travelling" [1]. "Landmarks are another type of point-reference, but in this case the observer does not enter within them, they are external [1]." But in ancient period, different principles were used to settle

the town and such principles define the urban form as defined by Chanakya's Arthashastra. The principles set by Chanakya was base line for the development of cities in early day in eastern part of world. The Vastupurusha mandala widely used in ancient period for planning cities is outcome of Chanakya. Lichchhavi and Malla settlements of Kathmandu Valley are found to follow these planning norms. In 1260 AD, Ananda Malla reconstructed the city of Bhadgaon, current Bhaktapur in form of geometric mandala of Astamatrika [2] and similarly, the open spaces were designed accordingly.

The research paper, here discuss the different hierarchy of urban open spaces that were designed in ancient period in case of traditional town Chapagaon. Malla towns had hierarchies of open spaces during their ruling period which still exists. The spaces like Durbar square with royal chapel, market or community square, residential neighborhood square and private residential square like Nani and Chowks.

These squares are differentiated accordingly with the social cultural activities practices along with the presence of urban elements like temples, bahi, depressed water stone spout, dabali space, well, pati (rest house) etc. These urban elements probably developed in lichchhavi period however, they become the popular element of urban square in Malla period [3].

## 2. Objectives

The traditional settlements of the Kathmandu are planned with well-organized public open spaces where people interact, conduct daily activities and perform cultural and religious activities. But at present these spaces are diminishing. The objective of this research is to study the traditional urban form of Traditional town Chapagaon, that was established during 6<sup>th</sup> century, Lichchhavi period and gradually developed in Malla period. Along with the study of traditional urban form, this research also studies the hierarchy of open space, their distribution, elements of urban form within these spaces and existing situation and problems of the open spaces of Chapagaon.

## 3. Methodology

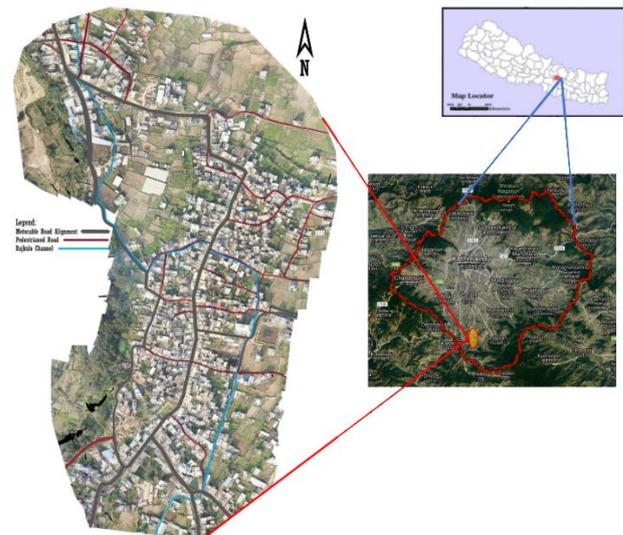
The transformation ongoing in the traditional towns is not only limiting social interaction but also eroding traditional morphology and spatial system. Discussing about the urban form (physical dimension) seems to be positivist paradigm that is primarily based on the observation. However, due to gradual development during the different ruling period and time, the observation don't give actual traditional urban image. Hence different traditional town planning principles, paper related to urban form of traditional urban form of Kathmandu Valley has been reviewed, Key persons and elderly people (aged above 65 years), were interviewed, various publications were studied to induce the output as far as possible. Hence the research has been studied under interpretivist or constructivist paradigm.

As stated paradigm suggests use of qualitative methodology, different tools regarding qualitative methodology has been applied in research work. Key informants are identified and surveyed using open ended interviews. The site has been visited multiple times to perceive the traditional form of settlement along with photographic survey. The

phenomenological research approach has been used to understand people's perception, perspectives and understanding of current and past situation. Different articles and publications from different source have been studied, along with the inscriptions of and regarding the monuments of Chapagaon.

## 4. Overview of Study area, Chapagaon

Chapagaon, (previously known as "Stharudranga" during Lichchhavi period and Champapur during Malla period) presently located in Godawari Municipality, ward 11. It is traditional Lichchhavi town established in 6<sup>th</sup> century and developed considerably during the Malla period. The town is located about 10 km south of Patan Durbar Square and is spread across 68 km<sup>2</sup> [4]. Ancient name of Chapagaon is "Champapur" as it is believed to have been established by clearing a "Chanp" forest. Its name in Nepal bhasa is "wa: dey", "wa:" meaning rice and "dey" meaning country hence "waa:dey" meaning country with very good rice production.



**Figure 1:** Location Map of Chapagaon (Image Source: Drone shot image by Lumanti Support Group)

Chapagaon is also known as the southern gate of Kathmandu valley and had served as a main taxing point for various goods brought from Terai for centuries. Having two settlements Bulu and Pyangaun in neighborhood also adds to its importance. Bulu and Pyangaun however have its own historical and cultural importance.

In different inscriptions, this town has been mentioned as 'Chapagaon', 'Champapur', 'Wa:Dey' and

‘Wawa:’. However, the local Newar residents and Newar people from neighborhood use Wa:Dey in local dialect and in official or administrative language the town is known as Chapagaon. From the local myths and stories about the establishment of this town, it is clear that this place was a forest. The settlement was established by clearing the forest and with time, it has developed as an organized town.

As defined by Carl Purucha (1975), Chapagaon, a linear settlement south of Patan, is laid out along a north-south main road. Approaching the village from the north to the road coming from Thecho, they first pass an open space where four Patis, an open well, two chaityas and an open Bhagwati shrine are located [5].

### 4.1 Historical Background

The Chapagaon refers to Conch Shell (Sankha:akar in Nepali) territory shown in Annex-1. But the territory of Champapur or Wa:dey is limited to main market center and its peripheral area (c.f. Chapagaon ko Shanskritik Sampada) of earlier Chapagaon VDC (i.e. ward number 1,2,3 and 4). At present, the Champapur territory is defined by the ward number 11 of Godawari municipality, where Bajrabarahi Jatra is celebrated since Malla period.. The Chapagaon is well known for the Bajrabarahi Temple without pinnacle on its top. It is one of the four most important Barahi temple within a Valley. Champapur can be considered as a cultural unit and its boundary is surrounded by other cultural unit settlements like Bulu, Pyangaon and Thecho.

Chapagaon is also a modern administrative unit. During Panchayat regime, it was Village Panchyat under Aadarsha Gaun Panchyat of Patan district having 9 wards [6]. And after the restoration of multiparty democracy in 2046 BS, Champapur was defined as Chapagaon VDC ward number 1,2,3 and 4. In 2072 BS. Ashwin, it was declared under the Bajrabarahi municipality and at present the Champapur is in Godawari Municipality ward number 11 as declared by Nepal government in 2073 BS, 27<sup>th</sup> of Falgun.

#### 4.1.1 Lichchhavi Period

As mentioned earlier, Chapagaon was believed to be established in 6<sup>th</sup> century AD during Lichchhavi period due referencing to the Tashwa:Lho (in local dialect), an inscription available in Bhansar Tole of Chapagaon. The inscription is an upright stone at the

time of Shivadev (ruling period 590-604 AD) which mentions about the reduction of tax in fish trade happened in this region. It further mentions about the tax variation in variety of fish trade. The inscription clearly mentions the town as “Sthharudranga”. The dranga represents the developed and organized settlement during Lichchhavi period. Tiwari (1989) also mention the presence of Bhansar Adda in Chapagaon during Lichchhavi era as taxing point on the goods supplied from southern region, Terai to Kathmandu Valley. Hence, it can be concluded that the town was settled before Shivdev inscribed this inscription. The inscription clearly gives an idea that, there was existence of developed settlement and is a trade center, as tax on trade activities were imposed in this region in those times.

There is another inscription at Yaku Tole of Chapagaon, that has been inscribed under the lotus part of Dev-Murti. The inscription mentions only “Kuber-Gupta” and “Anik-Gupta” nothing else. The inscription date is also not there however, the Jalahari script used in the inscription is predicted from the period of Basanta Dev (506-538 AD) [7]. Hence, it can be predicted that, this town was organized settlement before the 4<sup>th</sup> generation of Shivdev. The Dev-Murti form Bananta Dev era is remarkable stone sculpture. It is often considered as Dattatreya or locals considered it as Mahadev whereas the posture of murti (idol) reflect it as of Brahma, the creator, as per the description available in Lichchhavikaalka Abhilekh by Dhanbajra Bajracharya.

After the end of Lichchhavi era and before the establishment of Malla era, in about late 10<sup>th</sup> century i.e. Nepal Sambat 111 (991 AD), Wright (1990: 113) mentions, the two Malla Mukhiya or Chieftans, Raj Malla Dev and Kathayaa Malla established this town and named as “Champapur” [6]. Whereas, Karmacharya (2018), local resident, town priest (engaged in ritual activities in every cultural occasion) and local researcher mentions, the town was ruled by the Rajdev Malla from Bhaktapur in N.S. 711 on the day of falgun sukla astami. When the eldest son of King Manigraraadhipati, Rajdev Malla was born, the astrologer warned, the king should never look upon the face of son so, king brought Rajdev Malla, and Bhashami Mallas, Karmacharya and Desari to Chapagaon [8]. The king established a Palace with a settlement around it at the southernmost end of the valley and this place became the residence of the prince. The people, however, called Chapagaon “wa”,

the place of exile – in Newari, “wawadesha” from the word “wayegu” meaning “to throw”. The successors of the prince who was thus banished by his father were known as Babus. Even today there are people of the Babu caste living in Chapagaon. [5](pg. 102). Because of the planned settlement, from the establishment period, it was inhabited by skilled manpower from all sector of trade necessary for livelihood.

#### 4.1.2 Malla Period

During Malla period there was “Chauki”, a check-post that was confirmed with reference to written document from N.S. 442 (1322 AD) where “Champagulla” has been mentioned [9]. It seems like there was good arrangement for provision of peace and security from that period.

During 1382- 1395 A.D. King Jayasthiti Malla introduced caste division system on the basis of their work as social reform. According to their occupation, different caste people had been resident of this town. There was provision of “Mukhiya or Deshwar”, head man of town, for the improvement and development of town, which latter become “Desar”, currently the dominant/ highest population, in Chapagaon. This also address that, once the Chapagaon was not only a planned settlement but also an independent soial unit.

Throughout the history, this town had been ruled under different administrative unit. In terms of geographical distance, the city was in close proximity to the state of Patan. This town was under state of Kathmandu also at the time when the ruler of Patan is inactive [6]. This town was devastated by the attack of Mukunda Sen, King of Palpa also. In such situation, the Malla rulers contributed from their own for the development of this town. [9]. Amar Malla occupied Chapagaon along with Patan and its neighboring villages. As stated in the joint correspondence of Narasimha, Purandar Singh and Uddhav Singh of 1572 AD, it is clear that Champapur was within the boundary of the Patan state at that time [9]. And Chapagaon was under administrative unit of Patan, however, Shivsimha Malla ruled Patan and Kathmandu independently in 1581 AD.

According to the inscription in the Jhyalpati, Durkhyo Mahavihar, during the regime of Shiv Simha, Shakyamuni Buddha statue has been established in Hemkarna Mahabihar in N.S. 736 (1616 AD) as religion deity of Shakya clan [10]. The inscription of

N.S. 739 mentions Chapagaon as victory kingdom of Siddhi Narsimha Malla. And, the inscription of Bahal from Ikhatole, Chapagaon mentions Siddhi Narsimha Malla established Bajrashan Shakyamuni, Mahankal Maheshwori Shree Chakrasambar Bajrabarahi in Champapur Bihar through local Bajracharya priest in N.S. 774 (1654 AD). Similarly, King Srinivas Malla in N.S. 786 (1666 AD) started a Bajrabarahi Jatra offering worship and gold statue of Bajrabarahi goddess in the temple.

From above it is clear that the Chapagaon is Lichchhavi settlement that developed during Malla period as town with social, cultural and religious significance. The history of Chapagaun being used as a taxing point is also verified because of one of the tole is called ‘Bhansar tole’ which itself means taxing point. All the goods that came from the southern side were taxed here before it was taken to Patan.

Beside the historical and commercial importance of Chapagaon, the town is also an important cultural unit. There are diverse communities living in Chapagaon which is a unique feature in such satellite towns along with many temples, chaityas and bahil. The temple of Bajrabarahi is one among the four Barahis of the Kathmandu valley which establishes its religious importance. In medieval times this used to be a walled city, the wall surrounding the city was known as ‘De Pakha:’ and there were in total 8 gates to enter the town. Among those 8 gates the ruins of 3 of the gates could be found until 30 years ago. The eastern boundary of this traditional town is determined by a ‘Rajkulo’ which is a traditional water system to bring water from the water shed area to the town. This Rajkulo at present is in a depleting state but is still functioning. This Raj kulo used to fill the 9 ponds (8 ponds around the vicinity of traditional town and 1 pond, Pala Pukhu at the edge of settlement near neighboring town thecho). At present due to depleting condition of the Rajkulo some of the ponds have also dried up.

In most of the traditional towns, almost all residents used to be homogeneous cast people. In nearby traditional town, Bulu, Thecho, Lubhu, Sunakothi, Khokana, Maharjan are dominant. But in Chapagaon, different caste people reside in mixed ratio. As mentioned above, Desar are highest in population, following Shrestha, Maharjan, Bajracharya, Shahi, Kapali, Napit etc.

### 4.2 The Urban Form of Chapagaon

As mentioned above, the Chapagaon settlement was established in 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, during Lichchaavi period. During that period the settlement had been mentioned as “Stharudranga” due referencing to the “Tashwa:Lho,” an inscription (at the time of Shivdev) available in Bhansar Tole of Chapagaon, translated by Dhanbajra Bajracharya in Lichchhavi kalin Abhilekh. The “Dranga” represents settlement with temples as a central element of the town [11]. Whereas, in “Stharudranga” there is a tax office as central place. The settlement has been developed around tax office. From these findings indicate that the current chapagaon was established during Lichchaavi period.

As of other Lichchhavi town, “Stharudranga”, current Chapagaon is also located in ridges or high lands of the Valley floor (i.e. southern hill of Lalitpur at an altitude of 1400m to 1700m above the sea level), away from hill source with very low subsurface ground water. This led to the development of pond with deep wells as reservoirs and depressed pit conduit for water supply. At present there are 9 ponds around the vicinity of the town and one depressed water conduit in Bhansar Tole. According to the local resident Krishna Shrestha (aged 70 yrs.), there were two more depressed water conduit, one at Ikhatole, east of Ikha Bhairab temple another at Bhailene Tole, (current taxi station). They were covered during Panchyat regime however, the exact origin date of these water conduit and reason behind covering of them is not known. The one depressed water conduit at Bhansar tole is being restored by Lumanti, Support Group for Shelter, for heritage recovery plan project. Tiwari (1989) mentions very few of these water systems could have river source hence they require construction of ponds as reservoir. The similar urban characteristics can be seen in Chapagaon at present. The location of 9 ponds around the vicinity of town and are recharged by the Rajkulo, eastern boundary of town, managed the requirement of water in settlement in ancient time. However, at present the ponds are not maintained well as they used to be in earlier days, says Rajaram Shrestha, local resident. He further mentions, the water from Bhansar Pukhu was used for drinking purpose during his childhood. The Rajkulo is a traditional water system to bring water from the perennial source to the town. In Chapagaon, the source is Lele khola channeled from Tikabhairab and at present it is in depleting state but is still functioning.

The total area of Chapagaon is 6.79 km<sup>2</sup> of which 80 percent of land is plain area and 20 percent is slope [12]. As it is located in ridges or high land of Valley, the settlement is slope towards northern direction from south and western direction from east simultaneously. Carl Purucha (1975), also mentions, “the village is built on terraced land which slopes slightly from south to north”. It clearly mentions, to the west, the land rises to the Bajrabarahi forest and to the east, it descends to the river. The settlement is covered by agricultural lands, forest and rivers on its periphery. To eastern boundary, the settlement is covered by agricultural land, which seems to tend towards new residential expansion area at present. And to the north-east of this settlement, there is an important forest, Bajrabarahi forest covering an area of 19.05 ha, that houses the most important temple of goddesses Bajrabarahi. Bajrabarahi is the main deity of the town and local people believed that the goddess is guardian deity of town. To the east of this forest “Narkate Khola” flows towards northern direction that originates from Muldol, south-eastern part of the settlement. And to the western boundary of this settlement there is “Pagale Ban” (forest) following lowland agricultural area. There is also a “Tikabhairab khola”, often called “Nakhhu” river on west of the settlement that again flows towards northern direction and mix with holy river Bagmati in Chobar area. According to the Karmacharya (2018), the ancient name of river is “Prabhawati” river. During the “Dwapar era”, the princess Prabhawati, sister of Banaashur, king of Thankot (Sonitpur), came to take holy bath in this river every morning and the river between Chapagaon and Chhampi territory got its name Prabhawati river from that period. He further mentions the Chhampi Ganesh of Chapagaon is taken to this Prabhawati river, after offering Yagya (homage ritual) at the day of Mangsir Chaturdasi every year. And on very next day, Purnima, (on the day of Yamari Purnima) the Chhampi Ganesh is taken back to Chapagaon with chariot procession and jatra by devotees [8]. The southern boundary is covered by agricultural land (Sheraphant area) and to south-eastern part of the town, there is historically and culturally important settlements, Bulu and Pyangaon. Similarly, to the northern boundary, there is agricultural land and to south-western part there is Malla town, Thecho.

The streets have been the main elements to define the urban form of ancient settlement creating the square geometry as explained in Chanakya’s Town planning

principles by Kautilya. Lichchhavi and Malla towns did follow similar principles as Malla town planning used Vastupurusha mandala from the fact that the Ananda Malla used Astamatrika mandala in 1260 AD while restructuring the settlement of Bhadgaon. The exact square geometry is not seen in study of urban form of Chapagaon similar to many other outlying towns of Kathmandu Valley. It does not exhibit any strict urban form at present probably due to long history of different ruling period and gradual development in time frame. It seems like it did try to follow similar town planning principles somehow from the location of natural element, “Bajrabarahi forest” and “Narkate” river on its north- eastern direction and “Prabhawati” river in western side of settlement as Chanakya mentioned there should be water/ water bodies in all sides of settlement and Dams should be built over rivers and Nalas. Dam construction in Tikabhairav, southern part of settlement, to channel the water to Chapagaon settlement from Lele river as Rajkulo is still in function at present but in depleting condition as mentioned earlier. However, the construction period of dam is yet not known while many researchers believe dam construction in Malla period.

The shape of settlement is also in rectangular geometry as suited to land topography, as mentioned in Chanakya’s Town planning principles. The rectangular shape is defined by the streets that surround the settlement in outer periphery. The main street runs across the middle part of town approaching the Bhansar Adda. There are three streets across the north south direction and three streets across the east west direction intersecting each-other creating the grid geometry. The central part of the grid geometry housed a Bhansar office/ Adda and central urban open space for the social and cultural activities or occasion of the settlement. The central space holds prime importance regarding the social, cultural and economic activities of the settlement and was considered the actual Bhansar Tole of then “Stharaudranga” as per the local resident and researcher, Rajaram Shrestha.

After the Lichchhavi period and before the establishment of Malla period, the settlement was bounded by “De-Pakha” (boundary wall) from all side. The Rajdev Malla, from Bhaktapur established the town in NS 111 (991 AD) and named the town “Champapur” [8]. The Palace was established on the eastern side of Bhansar Tole, and constructed the

entry gates to different entry locations of the town. According the Buddhi Bahadur Shrestha, (aged 76 years) local resident of Barkha Tole, the Champapur was surrounded by “De-Pakha” from all sides and there were six “Dwar” or “Dhokha,” entry gates to access entry and exit to town. Among the six gates, he himself had witnessed the remains of 3 gates till B.S. 2045/46 (1963/64 AD). The gates were located nearby the location of ponds, Ikha Pukhu, Barkha Pukhu, Bhansar Pukhu, Nhyakan-Dah Pukhu, Wokha Pukhu and Shiv Pukhu simultaneously, to exact cross section of streets to access entry to the town. Whereas, according to Rajaram Shrestha (aged 44 years), of Bhansar Tole, as told by his great grandfather, there were eight entry gates to the town, the location of six gates were exact as told by the Buddhi Bahadur Shrestha and among the two remaining gates, one is at the entry point to Jhocheen, near Jyoti Bihar and another at the cross-section of street near Champapur Temple. The location of ponds and Dwar/ gates were shown in Annex-4.

As Tiwari (1989) mentions, the analysis of existing towns and outlying settlement shows the position of certain temples such as with Vishnu, Siva and Bhairav images and also the location of cremation grounds confirming with religious text in many cases. In Chapagaon, as mentioned above, there is a Bajrabarahi Temple in north eastern side of settlement constructed in NS 786 (1665 AD) by King Srinivas Malla and later it was renovated by Bishnu Malla in NS 852 (1731 AD). It is one of the most important piths of tantric origin in Valley located in small forest on the plateau east of Chapagaon [5]. Before King Srinivas Malla constructed Temples, there was only some stones and small pond (Wopi in local dialect) which is still present inside the temple, and was worshipped as Bajrabarabi goddesses. In mythological story of Bajrabarahi, the Varaha incarnation of goddesses used to play in that small pond as told by local ancestors. They further mentioned, on the fringe of forest there are eight cremation grounds and one is just in front the temple which has been shifted to about 100m west from the original location (which can be seen outside temple premise). These cremation sites belong to the people of Bulu. However, 3 cremation sites for the people of chapagaon is on the western side of the settlement near the bank of Nakkhu river and one cremation ground on southern side of settlement on its outer periphery belongs to Kushle caste people of Chapagaon as the cremation ritual of Kushle caste

people is different from other.

As temples were the important urban elements of Malla towns, different Hindu temples and Buddhist bahi were also constructed in Malla period in Chapagaon. According to the Basudev Karmachrya (aged 75 years) the Agam Chhen of Bajrabarahi goddesses Bhansar tole was constructed in NS 719 (1598 AD). He mentions, the Agam Chhen was constructed 67 years before King Srinivas Malla constructed Bajrabarahi temple within the forest referring to the inscription available in Jaru at Paucha tole and the hand bell at Agam Cheen where date NS 719 has been mentioned clearly. There is an inscription of establishment of Shakyamuni Buddha in Hemkarna Mahabihar in NS 739 (1618 AD) by Amrit Simha and his family of Bhansar tole. Similarly, in NS 739 (1619) Shivdev and His family established Shakyamuni bhagwan in Chapagaon. Likewise, many temples and bahi were constructed within the date. The Narayan temple at Bhansar tole was constructed in 16th century and renovated in NS 772 (1651 AD) similarly Krishna Mandir was constructed establishing Balgopal statue in it. Ikhava Bahi or Kalyan Mahabihar (Ko-Baha in local dialect) at Ikha tole was established in NS 774 (1653 AD) and in NS 779 (1654 AD) silver tympanum (Toron) was offered to Shakyamuni Dharmadhatu and Mahankal Maheshwori Chakrasambar Bajrabarahi was established in bahi. In NS 789 (1668 AD) the Bhairab temple at Ikha Tole often called Yarkha Bhairab or Ikha Bhairab was constructed at the southern edge of town. According to the inscription available in Narayan temple, in NS 801 (1681 AD), local resident Ramman Bharo and his family constructed Laxmi Narayan temple and established guthi offering 12 ropanies of land for the regular worship and butter lighting in Narayan, Indra and Bung: Dyo (Rato Matshyendranath) temple. Similarly, Ganesh mandir in Ambargal was established in NS 830 (1709 AD) and another mandir (Agam Dyo) at Bhansar tole in NS 832 (1701 AD). During that period, many Hindu temples and Buddhist monuments were constructed within and around the settlement, which resemble the harmony relation between two religion. Both the religions were given equal importance and celebrated.

As mentioned earlier, unlike other outlying settlement, Chapagaon is settled by heterogeneous caste composition of people. The king Rajdev Malla brought Bhashami Mallas, Karmacharyas and Desar from Bhaktapur to Champapur to run the state [8]

during its establishment period. Desar are the majority in number at present also. Apart from these group of people, Shakya, Bajracharya, Chitrakar, Shrestha, Maharjan, Shahi, Kushle and Pode also reside here in chapagaon. The hierarchy of social strata is not seen depending upon the importance of their occupation like high caste people reside closer to the palace however, caste and clan community is there in Chapagaon. Desar people have their own community and so do Shakya and Bajracharya, Chitrakar, Shahi, kushle and Pode. The Shahi, Kushle and Pode people reside by the outer periphery of town. Whereas, Shrestha and Maharjan are mixed and scattered in social composition within settlement. The craft specialization as per Jayasthiti Malla can be seen in social composition of town.

As of the cultural aspect, various festivals and jatra are celebrated in chapagaon. These cultural activities unite the people of chapagaon. The main festival of the Chapagaon fall in month of Chaitra on the day of Chaitra Purnima. On that day the Bajrabarahi jatra is conducted started by Narendra Dev Malla [8]. On that day, chariot procession of Bajrabarahi temple is performed. The jatra is performed for two days. On the first day, the goddesses from Agam Cheen is brought to chariot and taken to Bajrabarahi temple with celebration and musical procession. On the next day, local people and visitor visit temple and worship goddesses. On the day at evening, the goddess is brought to city area from temple and jatra is performed within the settlement. The path of jatra celebration demarcate the old territory of chapagaon settlement. apart from this jatra, other important jatra are Kartik Astami (Marasthi) jatraof Bajrabarahi goddess, Chhampi Ganesh jatra, Tika bhairab jatra Dashain, Khadga Jatra, Lakhe jatra, Krishna Janmastami and Buddha Jayanti are prime festivals of Chapagaon. Kartik Astami (Marasthi) jatra, Chhampi, Ganesh jatra and Khagda Jatra is not conducted at present because of the stolen image of idols.

### 4.3 The Urban Open Space of Chapagaon

A series of polarization nodes distanced by space as well as time results the spread of any town. The idea of any plan put up an ordered framework for these kinds of nodes such that the town will be in order in given time or perceived future time. The functional requirement of city also generates equally but distinct set of movement pattern. The functional need to stop along a route is recognized only for the living and the

gods and as such all squares would lie in these routes. There are to be no nodes, or squares, along the funeral route [3]. To conclude the functional requirement to stop, congregate and move further along a street created square and their underlying concepts. A street could be considered as a self-justifying urban element but the square has been considered only in relation to a street. The Malla towns show a distinct set of squares with a clear hierarchy of social cultural activity. These are the Durbar square or the Central Palace square, the Market square, the Residential Neighborhood square and the Private Residential square [3]. Same case could be identified in case of Chapagaon also.

The main street where all the major socio-cultural functions take place is north to south oriented central street. It links the neighborhood squares and market square in Chapagaon as similar to the other Malla towns. The secondary street connects market square with Palace square and private residential square going further to meet temples along the way and other elements of urban squares like Pati, water spout, ponds etc. Some of these streets continue to the farmlands in the open area. The lesser streets or service street also connect secondary streets with private residential squares. Talking about the funeral route (service street), there are 3 funeral sites in western slope of the settlement near the Nakkhu river as mentioned above. The funeral routes do not pass through the inner core settlement thus avoiding the godly paths. There are no nodes or squares along the funeral route similar to the other Malla towns.

#### 4.3.1 The Private Residential Square (Kalyan Baha or Ko- Baha)

It was established in NS 774 (1653 AD) belongs to the Bajracharya clan. It housed Bajrashan Shakyamuni shrine, Maheshwori Chakrasanbar Bajrabarahi and Mahankal goddesss in bahal. There is one votive chaitya and Shakyamuni dharmadhatu in its courtyard. The objective of this baha was to perform religious function dedicated to Buddhism. In early days, daily rituals from birth to death, religious worships, Deshana (religious teachings) were performed here. At present it performed communal Bratabanda and Ihi to Bajracharya people. Nitya puja is not performed at present because associate priest is not there as their clan had been totally destroyed in past.

#### 4.3.2 The Neighborhood Square: (Yaku Chowk)

It is a square divided by main street located at Yaku Tole that houses extended families. Two streets intersect in this square, one main street and another secondary street that runs to Wakha Tole. The religious edifice, two Narayan temple, two Ganesh temple, Brahma statue of Lichchhavi period, Chaitya, well and Pati (rest house) are present here. Local resident, Krishna Shrestha (aged years) says during early days, people came to oil Narayan temple if any member of the family have difficulty in delivery of child during labor pain. Doing so, the child delivery becomes easy. At now such practices have not been performed or seen as people prefer to hospital services in such scenario.



**Figure 2:** Social, Cultural and Religious edifice of Yaku Chowk (Brahma Murti, Ganesh temple and Pati in left, Ganesh temple and Narayan temple in middle, and Well and Chaitya in Right)

#### 4.3.3 The Neighborhood Square: (Ikha Chowk)

This chowk is located to the southern edge of the traditional town, on the eastern side of Ikha Bhairab temple. The religious edifices Ikha Bhairab temple, Chaitya, Ganesh temple, Wa: Bahi (Ba Bahi) and public water tank is here. It is a large open courtyard beside main street that serve neighboring community. Local residents say, in early days there was a depressed water spout nearby the water tank which was buried during Panchyat regime however, they don't know the reason. At present this chowk or courtyard is used by local people, for sun bathing, crops drying, feast during occasions. Some local vendors sell their goods like pottery products, vegetables, tambakhu (tobacco), sakkhar (molases) etc in this square.



**Figure 3:** Panoromic View of Ikha Square showing Wa: Bahi, Open Space and Chaitya, Ganesh Temple and Ikha Bhairab (from left to right)

### 4.3.4 The Market/Community Square: (Bhansar Chowk)

It is the central space of the traditional town. It is the major social, cultural, religious and economic node of the settlement as the main street and the secondary street to durbar square intersect here. Tax Adda (Bhansa Chhen) is located in this square along with Malla period Chauki (security post), Narayan temple, Krishna temple, Bhui Narayan temple, depressed water conduit, Bhimsen temple dabali square, pati, and the inscription of shivdev. The depressed water spout, pati and chauki were probably for the public purpose as it used to be more crowded space during cultural, religious, social occasion and economic practices. It is the square, where the chariot of goddesses Bajrabarahi is prepared and the jatra started.



**Figure 4:** Panaromic View of Bhansa Square showing Ganesh Temple, Narayan Temple, Krishna Temple, Bhansa Chhen, Dabali, Bhin-Dyo and Bhui Narayan Temple (from left to right)

### 4.3.5 The Palace Square: (Bhansa Chowk)

This square is located to the east of Bhansa chowk, community square. There is highly decorated traditional building. The local people believe that, it used to be the palace of Rajdev Malla from where Rajdev Malla rule this town. It has small courtyard in-front of it. At its periphery, there is Agam Chhen of Bajrabarahi goddesses constructed in NS 719 (1598 AD), currently being restored, Nasa: Dyo and small chiba. The half portion of building has been totally collapsed during earthquake 2015. Due to presence of main deity, this square tried to dominate others squares. The palace building is also vacant at present as maintenance work is being carried out. At present, the square seems like the residential square. The division of property deteriorate the use value of this building and square.

There are also many other private residential squares like Wokha chowk, Baku nani, Jhochhen. These squares are owned by the family clan. There is no such religious edifice within the square. They are used by their own family clan. at present, due to vertical expansion of buildings these square acts like light

well.

Apart from the squares within the settlement, there is an open space outside the settlement which has been used as the funeral site for the Kushle caste people. It is culturally important space as along with the funeral ritual for Kushle caste people, the Tika Bhairav jatra is conducted in this open space also. A ritual of Jal offering is done during this jatra and samay baji is distributed among the visitors in this space. Later the jatra is performed within the settlement. At present the burial space has been specified in northern part of space. In southern part there is a building that houses the ward office for the municipality after local body election. Due to which, the Jal offering corner within the space is not specified at present as it used to be in north western corner in early days.

## 5. Discussion and Findings

Above descriptions clear that, the town was established during Lichchhavi period. The location of settlement on ridges, ecological site Bajrabarahi forest, Narkate river and temple as pith on north-eastern part, Pagale Ban (forest) and Nakkhu river in western part, Bhansar Adda in central location of settlement, division of tole as districts by alignment of roads, presence of ponds on the outer periphery of town resemble the urban character of lichchhavi town. However, many cultural manifestations have occurred during Malla periods like establishment and reconstruction of different Hindu and Buddhist temples, Pati, depressed water spout in major location of town, festivals and jatra along with guthis. The cultural landmarks like Narayan temple, Ikha Bhairab temple and Wa: Bahi were constructed. They build Dey: Pakha (boundary wall) demarcating the town boundaries and established 8 gates to the town. Both the Hindu and Buddhist religion are given equal importance during Malla period and celebrated with great gusto.

At present, Urban form has changed due to organic growth of settlement. After 2015 major earthquake urban settlement is expanding on its periphery. Similarly, the expansion of road (Kantilok Path) within the settlement make people to migrate in peripheral area. However, the traditional town at present can be observed by modern definition of cities by Kevin Lynch.

The use of open spaces are also transforming with modern influence of lifestyle due to global force of urbanization. Economic activities like shops, vending

market, parking etc. occupy open spaces along with recreational and social activities. The influence of modernization can be seen in built structures also. Many traditional buildings have been replaced by modern buildings. The expansion of road will deteriorate the different structural heritages like temples, rest house (Pati), water spout, dabali, ponds, open spaces and traditional buildings along side the roads.

The stolen of godly images have been another prime issue of this traditional town. Due to stolen of godly images and decline of Guthi system many festivals and rituals are not celebrated at present. Main festival, Bajrabarahi goddess jatra is celebrated only once in Chaitra Purnima. In early times, Bajrabarahi goddess jatra is celebrated twice a year. The jatra of goddess during Kartik Astami is not celebrated due to stolen of image and decline of Guthi system. Apart from this, Chhampi Ganesh jatra, Khadgi jatra and different rituals during Dashain festival are not celebrated at present. Hence, Chapagaon is slowly losing its urban character.

## 6. Conclusion

Chapagaon has its historical importance due to its origin and along with its socio-cultural value. The settlement was well planned along with social composition and cultural manifestation. Along with time, several changes happened primarily in its physical aspect due to urbanization. Due to such physical encroachment of spaces, vertical expansion of buildings, stolen of godly images, change in urban life style, economic activities, the social and cultural aspects of this town and open spaces are slowly diminishing. Hence this settlement needs intervention plans and policies for its conservation due historical value along with its social and cultural importance.

The traditional urban form of 6<sup>th</sup> century town established before the period of Shiv Dev should be conserved at its best condition. The traditional Rajkulo should be restored, along with ponds, water spout, and deteriorating temples and patis. These are the urban elements developed during Lichchhavi period that become popular in Malla period and became the essential elements of urban form. Though, Chapagaon is small town as compared to Patan, it exhibit different hierarchy of open space, sectorization of different caste people and various socio cultural activities and rituals. The stolen godly images and

declined guthis must be restored and revived for conservation and continuation of socio-cultural activities to conserve the identity of historical town.

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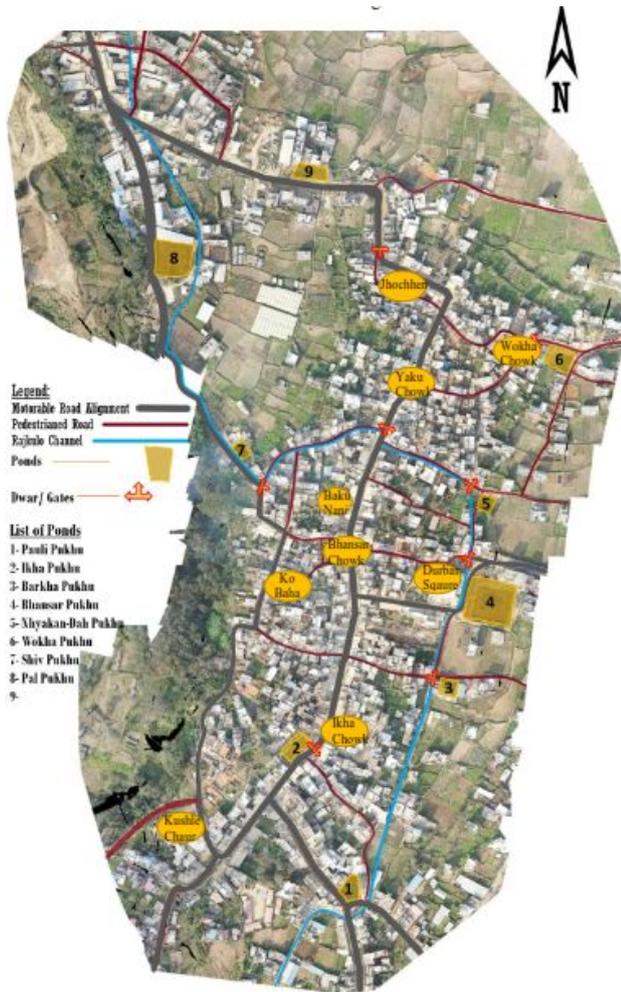
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Annex-4



**Figure 9:** Location of Open Spaces, 9 Ponds and 8 Traditional Gates of Chapagaon (Image Source: Drone shot image by Lumanti Support Image)