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Contents

	<u>Page</u>
1. Nepal, Newar And The Newari Language. ...	1
2. Nepal And The 1857 Indian Mutiny. ...	16
3. Jajarkot. ...	17
4. Land Taxation In Garhwal. ...	18
5. Fiscal Privileges Of Rajputs And Thakurs, 1863. ...	19
6. Law On Occupations, 1952. ...	20
7. Ancient Lalitpur. ...	22

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Regmi Research (Private) Ltd,  
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## Nepal, Newar And The Newari Language

By

Baburam Acharya

("Nepal, Newar Ra Newari Bhasha." Navakunja (Nepali, Monthly), Year 5, No. 1, Jestha 2026 (June 1969)).

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Page 3

Four centuries ago, a poet created the legend that Nepal owes its name to a sage called Ne. At another place, he gave the name of the sage as Nemi. H. Sylvain Levi has expressed the view that the term Nepal was derived from "Nepa" or valley.<sup>2</sup> But such a construction is contrary to the rules of Sanskrit grammar,

Dr. Thomas Young, supported by Sir George Grierson,<sup>3</sup> holds that the terms Nepal and Newar have a common origin. On the contrary, according to Prof. Turner, either one of these terms is derived from the other. (Page 4). This, again, is contrary to the rules of philology. The view put forward by Young and Grierson appears to be correct. The original term from which both Nepal and Newar emerged might have been "Nyarba", which belongs to the Murmi or Tamang dialect.<sup>4</sup>

The first reference to the term Nepal is found in the Arthashastra of Kautilya,<sup>5</sup> a minister of the Mauryan Emperor Chandra Gupta. (321-297 B.C.). Kautilya mentions blankets called "Bhingise", which used to be exported from Nepal to Pataliputra (modern Patna). The Magadhi language spoken in Bihar at that time did not contain the sound "ra", which was always spoken as "la". In his inscriptions, Emperor Ashok describes himself as a "Laja" instead of "Raja". This shows that "Newar" was pronounced "Nepal" in Pataliputra. Kautilya clearly used this term to refer to a country.

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<sup>1</sup>Vide Pashupati Puran.

<sup>2</sup>Is Nepal, Vol. II, P. 66-67.

<sup>3</sup>Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III, Part I, P. 213.

<sup>4</sup>Vansittart, in "Gurkhas", writes, "A Nerba is the progeny born of intercourse between a Murmi and a Newar. The Nerba has the highest social standing among the Atharajat and ranks nearly equal to the Barathamang." (P. 142).

<sup>5</sup>Arthashastra, 2-11-30.

Contd...

No such ancient reference is available to the term Newar. The term was first used by Europeans who visited Nepal in the 18th century. It seems that the term was originally "Nepar", which later corrupted to "Nabar" and then to "Newar". The term "Nyarba" has, however, retained the sound "ba" even now. (Page 5). It appears to have borrowed the Tibetan suffix "Pa".<sup>6</sup>

Kathmandu Valley appears to have been the original homes of the Nepars. Anand Bhikshu, a disciple of the Buddha, had visited this place as a refugee when Kapilavastu was devastated during the last days of the Buddha. (563-483 B.C.). The Jain saint Bhadrabahu too had come here when a famine occurred during the reign of Chandra Gupta Maurya.<sup>8</sup> After the death of Ashok, Buddhist Chaityas and Bahals were constructed in Kathmandu Valley. Lichchhavi Kings constructed temples here. Kathmandu Valley, moreover, was the capital of the Lichchhavi, Baish and Malla Kings. It is for this reason that Kathmandu Valley is sometimes called Nepal, although the term Nepal is more widely used to denote all territories ruled from Kathmandu.

The geographical area denoted by the term Nepal during the time of the Newars is not clear. Until the time of the Buddha, Vriji and Malla republics existed in the areas south of Nepal. It may therefore be maintained that the (Page 6) Nepars too comprised a republic at that time. King Ajatashatru (491-459) of the Sisunag dynasty annexed these two republics to his empire. It was then natural that monarchy should have emerged among the Nepars as well. Grierson has given much praise to a Vamshavali compiled around the end of the 14th century.<sup>9</sup> This work, called Gopal Vamshavali is in the Government Library. It contains a list of 32 Kirat Kings who ruled before the Lichchhavi Kingdom was founded. These Kings appear to be Nepars. In the Sanskrit language, the inhabitants of regions situated to the south-east of India are called Kirats. The Nepars of Nepal too lived in these south-eastern regions.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>In the Tibetan language, the suffix "Pa" is used to denote residence. An inhabitant of Syar is thus Syarpa, and of Dhuk, Dhukpa.

<sup>7</sup>Le Nepal, Vol. III, P. 188.

<sup>8</sup>Le Nepal, Vol. II, P. 65.

<sup>9</sup>Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III, Part I, P. 214.

<sup>10</sup>There exists considerable difference in the meanings of the Sanskrit term Kirat and the term as it is used in our language. In the 15th century, the Sen Kings of Makwanpur described areas occupied by Magars as "Magarat." In the 16th century, the Sen Kings conquered the hill regions east of the Dudhkoshi river as well as the Tarai regions of Saptari and Morang. The hill regions east of the Dudhkoshi were inhabited by Kirats, who were contemporaneously called "Kiruwa" by the Bajis of the Tarai. The Sen Kings, on the analogy of "Magarat", gave the name of Kirat to regions inhabited by "Kiruwa". The term Kirat thus denoted a region and not an ethnic community. In other words, Kirats inhabiting the Kirat regions alone are not Kirats. This has given rise to the confusion that the ancient Kirat Kings of Nepal actually belonged to the Kirat ethnic community. (See Wright: History of Nepal, P. 10)

It is strange that the Mahabharat, which started being compiled after the 2nd century A.D., contains no reference to Nepal.<sup>11</sup> This work dates back to the last year of the rule of the Kirat Kings of Nepal. The Mahabharat, although it does not contain any direct reference to Nepal, mentions at one place that Bhimsen visited Videha and vanquished seven Kirat Chieftains in the area near the Aindra mountain.<sup>12</sup> It is not clear whether this story is correct, but we can use it to understand the contemporary situation. Videha at that time comprised the present Darbhanga, Mahottari and Saptari. Sindhuli-Gadhi is the only mountain near this area. It lies on the main route from central Nepal to Videha. Petty Kirat principalities appear to have existed in this area at that time. The Kingdom of Nepal and that of the Tharus in the Tarai must have been two of them. The other five may have been those of Thamis, Khambus, etc in the hill regions. Thus this story proves that there existed petty Kirat principalities east and west of Nepal at that time. During the 1st century A.D., the Lichchhavis displaced the Nepars and founded the first Arya kingdom. By the 4th century A.D., these petty principalities appear to have been incorporated into the Kingdom of Nepal.

No clear reference to the boundaries of Nepal during the Lichchhavi period is available. According to the Prayag inscription (circa 350 A.D.) of the Gupta Emperor Samudra Gupta, Nepal denoted the region situated between Kamrup (Assam) and Kartipur (Kumaun).<sup>13</sup> The Tista river forms a natural boundary between Kamrup and Nepal, although this is a matter of speculation. The Changu inscription of the Lichchhavi King Manadev of Nepal (464-491 A.D.) describes how he crossed the Gandaki river and conquered Mallapuri.<sup>14</sup> The Malla Kingdom of Parbat on the banks of the Kali river had not been founded at that time. It thus appears that this Mallapuri was situated in the Karnali basin. Yuan Chwang, the famous Chinese traveller, who visited Nepal during the first half of the 7th century, states that Nepal covered an area of 4,000 li<sup>15</sup> or 1,333 square miles. This shows that Nepal at that time extended at least from the Tista river to Sakhika-Lekh, that is, from Ilam to Pyuthan. King Jayapida of Kashmir invaded Nepal at the beginning of the 9th century.<sup>16</sup> He was resisted by King Varmadev of Nepal on the banks of a big river beyond the Gandaki. This big river may be the Bheri or the Karnali. But Nepal's decline had set in after the end

<sup>11</sup> There is a reference in the Karnadigvijaya Parva, but this is clearly a later addition.

<sup>12</sup> Sabhaparva, 31-15.

<sup>13</sup> Fleet, Gupta Inscriptions, P. 8.

<sup>14</sup> Le Nepal, Vol. III, P. 14.

<sup>15</sup> Bill, Buddhist Records Of The Western World, Vol. II, P. 80.

<sup>16</sup> Rajatarangini, Chapter 4, 530-545.



of the Lichchhavi regime and the founding of the Baish regime in 880. During the 5 centuries of this regime, Tibet gradually encroached on its ~~northern~~ frontiers and it appears that Nepal had already lost the ~~hill~~ regions east of the Singhlila. The Malla Kingdom in the west had already become independent. The Karnat Kings of Simraungarh had founded a new kingdom in the eastern Tarai south of Nepal. The Tarai area of Butaul had already been subjugated by the Malla Kings. Nepal thus comprised only the hill regions from the Singhlila to the Sakhika-lekh.

For one century before its collapse, the Baish regime suffered from internal conflict and external aggression. In 1380 A.D., the last Baish King, Arjun Dev or Arjun Malla, was deposed by his ministers and replaced by a Rajput called Sthiti Malla. During a period of 200 years, the Kingdom of Nepal split into nearly 30 fragments, including Kathmandu, Gorkha, Lamjung, Tanahu and Makwanpur. Even then, the Kings of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Dolakha, which were situated north of the Mahabharat mountain between the Trishuli and Tamakosi rivers, used to describe their territory as Nepal. This is the reason why the Nepal Mahatmya describes this region as Nepal. Later the Kings of Dolakha began to call themselves Dolakhadhipa (lord of Dolakha) and not Nepaladhipati (lord of Nepal).<sup>17</sup> The eastern boundary of Nepal thus contracted to the Sunkoshi river. Only the Malla Kings of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur called themselves Kings of Nepal until the end. The kings of Gorkha, Palpa, Makwanpur and other principalities regarded their territories as situated outside of Nepal.

In 1769 A.D. King Prithvi Narayan Shah of Gorkha founded the present Kingdom of Nepal. Since then, the territories comprising Nepal continued to expand. By 1792 A.D., the entire territory from the Tistah river in the east to the Alaknanda river in the west began to be called Nepal. By 1805 A.D., the boundaries of Nepal had reached the Sutlej river in the west. In English maps published in 1811, Sikkim, Kumaun, Garhwal and Simla too have been placed inside Nepal. In 1816, the boundaries of Nepal again contracted to the Mechi river and the Singhlila range in the east and the Mahakali river in the west. Nepal now denotes the territory situated within these boundaries. The inhabitants of this territory are called Nepalis and the Khaskura or Parbatiya language, which is the national language, is called Nepali.

Nepal owes its name to the Nepar community. But with the passage of time, all connection between the two has been severed. The Nepali language has no connection with the language spoken by the Nepars. The term Newar might have been derived from Nepar, but the modern Newars have only linguistic affinities with the Nepars. In other words, the Newari language has evolved from the language spoken by the Nepars. But there is no evidence

<sup>17</sup> See coin of Jayendra Singh Dev in Nepal Museum.

that the modern Newars are the descendants of the Nepars. The general belief that they may be due to the fact that all those who speak the Newari language are regarded as Newars, and that no other definition is available. This leads us to a discussion of the Newari language.

Philologists have expressed the view that the Newari language, like the Yakthumba, Khambu, Sunuwar, Thami, Murmi and other dialects spoken in the hill regions of Nepal, belongs to the Tibeto-Burman family.<sup>18</sup> These dialects have no relationship whatsoever with Sanskrit, Hindi, Nepali and other Aryan languages of India. Of course many words of the Indian Aryan and Tibetan languages have infiltrated into the Newari language in the same manner as Arabic, Persian and English words have infiltrated into the Nepali language. But Newari verbs and numerals have no relationship with the Aryan languages. The rules of grammar and syntax too are different. According to Grierson, these are offshoots of the Tibetan language. But the fact is that there is as much difference between the Tibetan and Newari languages as with the Yakthumba and other dialects.

These non-Aryan dialects of the Himalayan regions may be divided into two categories, pronominal and non-pronominal, according to whether or not pronouns are put together with nouns and verbs. Thus in the Yakthumba dialect of the Tamor-Khola area, the sentence "a man had two sons" is written as follows:-

Lochchha Yami Thik-le Nechchhi Ku-sa Biyi-Chhi.

In this sentence;

<u>Lochchha</u>	means	Some.
<u>Yami</u>	,,	Man,
<u>Thik-le</u>	,,,	In one.
<u>Nechchhi</u>	,,	Two.
<u>Ku-sa</u>	,,	His sons.
<u>Biyi-chhi</u>	,,	They were.

Thus the pronouns "Ku" and "Chhi" are joined with a noun and a verb respectively.

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<sup>18</sup> Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III, Part II.

In the Khambu dialect, the same sentence is read as follows:-

Tik-Pu Min-Po Sak-Pu Yu-Chu Mo.

In this sentence:

Nik-Pu	means	One
Min-Po	„	Man's.
Sak-Pu	„	two
Yu-Chu	„	his sons
Mo	„	were

Here the pronoun "Yu" is joined only with the noun.

In the Newari language, this sentence is read as follows:-

Chhahma Manuya Nihma Kaya Du.

Here pronouns are not joined to nouns or verbs. But the word "Hma" has been added to the numeral (Chha) to denote an animate object. The verb "du" is used also in the present tense.

The dialects spoken by Magars, who follow the Hindu religion, by Gurungs, Murmis and Syarpas, who follow Buddhism, and by Newars, who follow both religions, are all non-pronominal. The dialects of Yakthumbas, Khambus, Dhimals, Thamias, Hayus, Chapangs and other communities who follow neither religion are pronominal. The Sunuwaras started adopting the Hindu religion after 1829 A.D. At that time, (Brian) Hodgson found their dialect to be pronominal. But 50 years later, Grierson found that it was non-pronominal. This change during such a short period appears to have been the result of intercourse with Brahmans who were religious teachers and spoke the non-pronominal Nepali language. The Tibetan language too is non-pronominal. It is speculated that the Gurung, Murmi and Syarpa dialects have become non-pronominal as a result of intercourse with Tibetan teachers. The Munda dialects of the Santhals and other communities inhabiting the hill regions of Bihar are pronominal. Philologists have included these languages in the Tibeto-Burman family. The Sataars inhabiting the eastern Tarai also speak a dialect similar to that spoken by the Santhals. Hence it may be appropriate to designate all the pronominal dialects currently in use in Nepal as Tibeto-

<sup>19</sup> Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III, Part I, P. 199.

Burman. As stated above, the community speaking Tibeto-Burman dialects is called Kirats in the Sanskrit language.<sup>20</sup> The dialects spoken by Magar and other communities were also included in the Kirat group, since they are pronominal. The opinion has therefore been expressed that the Nepari dialect too belonged to the Kirat group.

While no specimens of the Nepari dialect are available, there can be no doubt that the non-Sanskrit words found in the stone inscriptions in the Sanskrit language left by Lichchhavi Kings in Nepal (Kathmandu) Valley are Nepari. They are all proper nouns. Here are some examples of such non-Sanskrit words.

The unpublished stone inscription left by Ratna Sangha at Deopatan contain these words:

Dulang                      Khepung                      Hyaspring                      Dungprang                      Khenam.

All these are names of villages.

The word "Khripung", which is the name of a village, appears in the stone inscription of Shiva Deva found at Tulachhe Tole in Bhaktapur. This inscription has already been published.

The stone inscription located at Taujhya Tole in Lalitpur, which dates back to the period of Jishnu Gupta, contains the names of these villages: Thagwoo, Gangul, Asinko, Khadpring and Kankulang. This inscription too has been published.

The words "Katung" and "Phirang", which too are names of villages<sup>5</sup> are mentioned in the stone inscription (still unpublished) of Shiva Deva at Satungal. This stone inscription also contain the non-Sanskrit words "Kattarak" and "Kudhuthre" which refer to taxes.

The words "Bhatta", "Map-Choka" and "Pitalja", which too refer to taxes, occur in the stone inscription of Lalitpur dating back to the period of Narendra Dev.

The proper nouns appearing in the above-mentioned stone inscriptions, which were installed nearly 500 years after the destruction of the kingdom of the Nepari community, are harsh-sounding<sup>5</sup> They might have been move so at the time when the Nepari Kingdom was in existence. Even now, words in the pronominal dialects sound very harsh. As a matter of fact, it is characteristic of every pronominal word to sound harsh. The more the

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<sup>20</sup> Northey and Morris: The Gurkhas, P. 66.

dialect ceases to be pronominal, the less harsh-sounding it becomes. Thanks to the impact of the Aryan languages of India, Newari as they are spoken now-a-days is more sweet-sounding than even the Nepali language. This proves that the Newari language was once pronominal, though it is now non-pronominal, and that it was spoken by the Kirat community. Physiognomy is the primary criterion for identifying the race to which any particular community belongs. The Aryans have generally a white or wheatish complexion, are tall, and heavily bearded, have a long and sharp nose, a wide forehead and big eyes. But the Aryans who came from the east gradually lost such physiognomic features as they began coming under the influence of the local climate and environs and started establishing matrimonial relations with non-Aryans. The complexion of the non-Aryans of the south-eastern regions vary according to the countries inhabited by them. The complexion of the non-Aryan Kirats inhabiting the Himalayan regions is of a Mongolian type. That is to say, they have a flat nose, with prominent cheek-bones their face is flat, and their eyes are small. They do not have much hair on their face. In the case of Kirats inhabiting Nepal, however, these features are fully found among some of them and partially among some others. The second criterion is language or dialect. Those who speak the languages of the Aryan group are identified as Aryans, while those who speak the Kirat dialect belong to the Kirat community. There are, however, instances in which communities belonging to one race have forgotten their own languages and adopted those spoken by other races. One example is the Tharu community of the Tarai region. The Tharus have a Mongolian complexion but they speak the Aryan language of India. While the Indian Aryans are divided into different castes such as Brahman and Kshatriya, the Tharus are not so divided. As such, the Tharus are regarded as a Kirat community, even though they speak Aryan dialects.

Communities among the Kirats are distinguished by the dialects spoken by them. But there is no restriction whatsoever in consensual or marital relations among members of any community speaking a particular dialect. All members of the Magar community are equal. The Gurungs are said to be divided into Charjat and Sorhajat. But this division is not of any significance. The Murmis are divided into 12 different sub-communities and 18 different castes. But this division is of recent origin. The same is true of the Sunuwars, who are said to be divided into 10 sub-communities and 12 different castes. The other Kirat communities such as the Thami, the Hayu, the Chepang, the Baramu and the Dhimal, have the same equality as the Magars. The Yakthumbas and the Khambus speak different dialects. Though belonging to two different communities, they share the same kitchen and establish matrimonial relations among themselves.

But the Newars, though their mother-tongue is Kirati, practise casteism and untouchability like the Aryans of India. Their physiognomy contains Aryan features. Hence it is definite that the Newars do not belong to the Kirat community. In order to show how this Aryan community moved into the heartland of Nepal, ceased speaking its own language, adopted the Newari language, and thus came to be known as Newars, it is necessary to go back into a certain period in the history of Nepal.

During the second century A.D., missionaries sent by Ashok visited the heartland of Nepal and started converting Nepars to Buddhism. As it was difficult for old persons from the warm regions of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to stand the cold climate of Nepal, young Buddhist monks and nuns were sent to Nepal. These monks and nuns propagated Buddhism and gradually mixed themselves with the Nepars, thus infusing Aryan blood among them. This process continued for a long time. The Newars then came to be known as Newars, who were cultured and civilized. They made considerable progress in the fields of agriculture, sculpture, etc. But having lost their fighting spirit as a result of their conversion to Buddhism, the Newars were ultimately conquered by the Lichchhavis from Bihar. The Lichchhavis, who had entered into Nepal during the middle of the first century, ousted the Newars from seats of power, and drove them off from one Newar settlement after another. The Lichchhavis ruled Nepal Valley for 800 years. The Newars fled and lived among the neighboring Murmis. The Newars, who thus mixed themselves with the Murmis, came to be known as "Nyarwa." Those Newars who continued to stay in Nepal Valley were known as Paharis. But they had to live a miserable life. The number of such Newars still surviving is very small. It is likely that there will be no Pahari Newar in the next 200 years. They follow Buddhism. But being poor, they cannot invite Gubhaju priests to perform their religious rites. They speak the Newari language. Grierson is wrong in saying that the dialect spoken by them is distinct from the Newari language. He would not have committed such a mistake at all had he got a specimen of the Newari dialect as spoken in Dolakha.

The Lichchhavis were described by the Brahmans of Uttar Pradesh as degraded Kshatriyas.<sup>21</sup> The Lichchhavis, on the other hand, regarded themselves as sacred as the water of the Ganges.<sup>22</sup> As they were adherents of Hinduism, they brought with them people belonging to such diverse castes as Brahmans, Baniyas, farmers, sculptors, Dums and Dusads. Groups of people continued to migrate into Nepal Valley from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh during subsequent periods of time. As they migrated in small groups, instead of in large ones, they forgot their own dialects and adopted the Newari language.

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<sup>21</sup>Manusmriti, Chapter 10 Stanza 22.

<sup>22</sup>Stone-inscription of Jaya Dev II, located at Pashupati. Indian Antiquary, Vol. IX.

In the beginning of the ninth century, there was a flood of Buddhist migration from Bihar, in the wake of which the entire Lichchhavis became Buddhists and formed themselves into a distinct community. The potters, washermen, artisans and others belonging to the Tharu community who had migrated to Nepal from Bihar were also assimilated into the Lichchhavi community.

Dums and Dusads began to be called Podes and Chyames respectively.

At the end of the ninth century, Bainsas from Uttar Pradesh entered Kathmandu Valley, defeated the Lichchhavis and established a new Kingdom of their own. The new Bains rulers removed Lichchhavis from all political posts, and made them peasants (Jyapus).<sup>23</sup> Having thus been rendered weak the Lichchhavis later began to be contemptuously called as Lachhis (the distorted form of "Lichchhavi"), which means "coward". Lichchhavis were also called Baji (Briji). The Bainsas therefore contemptuously refer to them as Bajiya, meaning a wretched fellow.

The Bainsas described themselves as Kshatriyas and claimed their origin to the Sun-God. Till the last, the Bains Kings steadfastly adhered to the Hindu religion because they were under the influence of the Karnats of the Karnat state established by Nanya Dev in Simraungadh at the end of the 11th century. According to legend, the Newars had originally come to Nepal from Simraungadh along with Nanya Dev. But this is not true. During the 200 years of the Karnat Kingdom, Nepal was being ruled by Bains Kings. Sometimes there was conflict and sometimes conciliation between the Bains and Karnat Kingdoms, who had common borders. At the time they were on good terms, they exchanged customs and usages, and, moreover, leading officers of the Karnat state permanently migrated into Nepal. Among these officials were Mahajus and Kasajus. Mahajus were ministers who belonged to the royal Karnat family, and the Kasajus who came from the Kayastha community were chief accounting officers.

During the 500 years of Bains rule, Buddhism was being propagated in Tibet in full swing. The Tibetan Lamas entered into Nepal and started converting Gurungs, Sherpas and Murmis to Buddhism. By the end of the twelfth century, Buddhist monks from Bihar where Buddhism was surviving till then also arrived in Nepal and converted a section of the Mongolian community known as Baramu. The Bains Kings gave shelter to Buddhists from both Bihar and Tibet. A number of Buddhist Viharas (Bahals) were established.

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<sup>23</sup> Lichchhavi stone inscriptions are located at Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Handigaun are concentrated in settlements inhabited by Jyapus.

in Lalitpur and Kathmandu. All but 3 or 4 Bahals that we now see in these two cities were built by Bains Kings. The Bahals then represented the culture of Nepal. The Buddhist monks or Bandas who lived in Bahals were philosophers and physicians. The Bahals served as schools, since lectures on Buddhism were delivered there, and also as health centers, as the Buddhists or Bandas treated people there. Pictures of gods were painted and their images engraved. Hence every Bahal served as a workshop of art as well. Monks and nuns who desired to lead a worldly life came out of Bahals and became Upasak or Udas. They engaged themselves in trade and handicrafts. However, even inside Bahals, vice used to be rampant. Monks and nuns living together in Bahals indulged in immoral practices, which, however, were not treated as a crime.

The inhabitants of Bahals refused to bear any arms to fight against their enemies. Instead, they relied on Tantras and prayers. This proved to be the cause of their ultimate ruin. In 1349, Pathan invaders from Bengal razed all Bahals to the ground. The Bains Kings did not maintain armed troops. This is the reason why these foreign invaders also destroyed the palaces of Bains King as well as temples built by them, before returning from Nepal. The (Bains) Kings thereafter started repairing temples. Buddhists, among whom there were still several artisans, repaired all the Pagodas and Bahals within 20 or 25 years. But by then the faith of people in Tantras and other rituals had declined, so that the decline of Bahals started.

Sthiti Malla, the founder of the later Malla dynasty married the daughter of a Bains feudal lord, and lived in his father-in-law's house for a long time. Later, he became King of Nepal. He regarded himself as a Kshatriya, and claimed to be the descendant of the Sun-God. The Brahmins accompanying him were probably Sarbariyas. Sthiti Malla retained the Bains ministers or courtiers because they had assisted him to ascend the throne. His successor, Jyotirmalla, divided his subjects into different castes and allotted occupations to them accordingly. In the course of such division, he proclaimed the community to which he belonged as Kshatriyas and the priests and teachers accompanying him as Brahmans. By this time, the entire Bainsas had adopted the Newari dialect and made themselves known as "Newas". Nonetheless, they added the word "Singh" (meaning lion) after their name as a sign that they still regarded themselves as Kshatriyas. Jyotirmalla, however, did not include them in the Kshatriya community. He put them in the category of Vaishya. The Bainsas reluctantly accepted this class division as applied to them. One of the group of priests from among the Bainsas was called Acharya (Achaju) and the other as Joshi. Jyotirmalla included these Bainsas not in the Brahman but in the Vaishya group.



Jyotirmalla and his successors started the practice of inviting the sons and daughters of Rajputs from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and establishing matrimonial ties with them. Only the off-springs of the married wives of Jyotirmalla began to be called "Malla", while those of his concubines were called "Singh". Even sons-in-law who lived with their fathers-in-law were given the surname of Singh. Gradually, the sons and daughters of Rajputs became courtiers (Bhardars). A new class of these courtiers came into being as a result of the fact that they established matrimonial relations exclusively with members of their community and did not have commensal relations with other communities. Consequently, they enjoyed a status higher than that of the Bainsas. Those Bainsas who failed to get the privilege of becoming courtiers took to commerce. Such Bainsas began to be known as Shrestha. The Achajus and Joshis who performed the functions of priests at the royal palace, were included in the upper class. The other Achajus and Joshis joined the lower caste. This caste division continued well until the end of the Malla rule. The Bainsas belonging to the Bhardar class of the four Kingdoms of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur and Dolakha had more than 40 surnames. But the Bhardars of Gorkha had 6 different surnames, including Pande and Pantha. They therefore called themselves as Chhathari, while contemptuously calling Bainsas of the lower castes as Panchthar. This practice continues even today.

Maithili Brahmins and Baniyas (also known as Thokade) also arrived in Nepal during the rule of the later Malla Kings. They too had adopted the Newari language. However, they refused to call themselves Newars.

After the destruction of Viharas by Pathans, people had got disenchanted with the monks or Bandas dwelling there. Householders ceased going to Viharas to become monks or nuns. When few Buddhist monks and nuns or Bandas, and the illegitimate children born of nuns who indulged in immoral practices were left in Viharas, King Jyotirmalla made them live a family life, since then the practice of initiating sons and daughters instead of disciples as monks or nuns started. Just at this time, a new class of Gurubhaju or Gubhaju originated from among the Bandas, who were Buddhists. This class of people worked as priests for Bandas, Udasas and Jyapus. Bandas continued to be Pujaris (priests).

Along with Bainsas and Jyapus, Bhotiyas, Gurungs, Sherpas and Murmis too used to come to these Buddhist Viharas in order to be initiated as monks or nuns. Hence one finds Mongolian features among the descendants of Gubhajas. Bandas and Udasas simply on this ground, certain foreign scholars have made the assertion that the entire Newar community is of Mongolian origin. This is a false view.

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Even though Gubhajas and Bandas had opted for family life, the Bahals in which they lived continued to be public property. The rent that was charged from strangers who stayed in Bahals was also known as "Bahal". However, during the past 100 years, Gubhajas and Bandas appropriated Bahals for themselves and started using them as private property. Only Pagodas (Chaityas) remain as public property. Even then, Bahals continue as religious centers. It is compulsory for Gubhajas or Bandas to perform the sacred-thread investiture ceremony of every member of their families in Bahals. Religious lectures are no longer delivered, nor is any medical or artistic work carried on there. But they have deep faith in their religion. Wealthy traders offer donations for religious purposes more liberally than Hindus.

The condition of Lichchhavis or Jyapus who once claimed that they had extended their fame as far as the ocean<sup>24</sup> deteriorated during the Malla period. Jyotirmalla included them in the Shudra caste. He placed gardeners, such low-grade artisans as painters, boatmen, black-smiths, in a class inferior to that of Jyapus. This caste system is prevalent even today.

With the end of the Malla rule, Prithvi Narayan Shah and his successors followed the policy of not recruiting Newars in the army. Consequently, many Chhathari Bainsas became unemployed. However, they did not suffer any losses because they were taken into the civil service. Moreover, many of them took to commerce in Kathmandu, the capital of the country. Shresthas and Bainsas, who were engaged in trade in Kathmandu, got an unprecedented opportunity to amass wealth. But after 1740 A.D. Indian Marwaris and Baniyas too were granted permission to start commercial activities on a permanent basis in Kathmandu. They eventually gained control of trade in goods imported from India. The Bandas and Udasas were able to trade only with Tibet. They lost control of this trade too when the movement of goods between Lhasa and Kathmandu stopped as a result of the opening of the Chumbi route after 1883 A.D. This is why Shresthas and Udasas have never been able to stand as competitors of Marwaris and Baniyas, but have become their agents in a way. Even then, Shresthas and Udasas are more prosperous than the Chhathari Bainsas.

The Jyapus engaged in farming are living in poverty because they had been highly exploited. The fact that the administration during the Shah rule as well as during the Rana regime was military-oriented. On the other hand, was responsible for their plight, artisans were able to bring about gradual improvement in their condition. They got substantial work in the wake of construction of new houses in Kathmandu according to British models. The construction of such houses was started after the arrival of the first British Resident in Kathmandu in 1816. The then rulers admired British sculpture and paintings, while despising those of Nepali artists. As a result, art could not make any progress in Nepal.

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<sup>24</sup>Quotation from the stone inscription of Narendra Deva dating back to 645 A.D., which is located at Lalitpur.

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The dialects spoken by the Mongolian communities do not have a capacity to spread. Magars, Gurungs and other communities migrating from their native areas to any other region forget their dialects after one or two generations. The most recent example is that of the Gurungs of Rumjatar. Not more than 200 years have passed since they migrated to Rumjatar from Lamjung and Kaski. But within such a short period they have forgotten their original dialect. This is true of the Newars too. Nepal Valley, Banepa, Satgaun and Dolakha are the original homes of the Newars. The main language spoken in these areas is Newari. The Malla Kings had propagated the Newari language and renamed it as "Nepal Bhasha", with a view to making it the national language. However, the Parbatiya dialect spread to Kathmandu, and King Pratap Malla used it in the stone inscription of 1612 A.D. at Ranipokhari. During the 17th century, some Newars in Nepal Valley migrated to Gorkha. They have now totally forgotten the Newari language and adopted the Parbatiya dialect as their mother tongue. Those Newars who had been driven off from their original homes between 1712 and 1848 migrated to Pokhara, Dhankuta and some other major towns. They too have already forgotten the Newari language or are in the process of doing so. This has been the case with those Newars who had subsequently migrated elsewhere voluntarily. also

Notwithstanding this, the Kings of Bhaktapur had dramas written in the Newari language, and thus preserved the ancient arts of dancing and music. The oldest form of the Parbatiya dialect can be found in these dramas. As such, we can bring about renaissance in the field of art and culture in Nepal in case we can revive the old Newari language. By creating a new (Newari) literature by profusely using new words in the Aryan language we shall only be rendering a blow to the Newari language. Nepali scholars would therefore do well to compile all available old words from the Newari language, and its rules of grammar and mold the Newari language accordingly. In case we can do so, we may be able to preserve our national treasure.

Of the 7 million Nepalis who have the mixed blood of Aryans and the Mongols, 300,000 are Newars. Among them, 200,000 Newars live in their original homes. One common characteristic among these Newars is civic consciousness, and consequently they have developed a strong consciousness of unity. Newars always prefer to live together, not separately. This is evident from the fact that whether in urban or in rural areas, their houses are joined together. However, one bad thing common to the Newars is that they do not show any interest in travelling beyond their areas. Very few Newars who go to the Tarai or the hill regions for taking up trade or government service move outside their office or markets. They do not show any interest in undertaking trips to remote villages in order to know the condition of people belonging to other communities. This defect in their behavior is now gradually changing.

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The Chhathari Bainsas, who occupy a prominent status among the Newars, suffer from superiority complex. They practise discrimination commensal and matrimonial relations with others. They hold strong caste prejudices. Chhathari Bainsas engaged in government service have a tendency to behave dishonestly whenever they feel any pressure from the government or from their superior officers. They also indulge in usury and even in gambling, and have a penchant for high living. Yet they are not so wealthy as Panchthari Shresthas most of whom are engaged in trade. Panchthari Shresthas are honest in their dealings. In order to gain the trust of their customers, they behave with them very honestly. Buddhist Newars are even more honest. Among the Udasas who are artisans, there are very few dishonest persons. But one shortcoming from which they suffer is that they do not finish work in time, but deliberately delay it. The Jyapus who are engaged in farming are also honest, simple, industrious and patient. Jyapu women are honest and chaste. No Jyapu woman except those who have lost their chastity while working as maid servants in the houses of others has been found to have indulged in adultery. They are as hard-working as their husbands.

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Nepal And The 1857 Indian Mutiny

Proclamations Of The Government Of Nepal\*

1. Any Nawab, Raja, Babu, officer, soldier or ryot fighting against the British Government or indulging in assault and plunder shall be immediately arrested and handed over to the British Government if he sets foot on Nepali territory. In case he offers resistance while being arrested, he shall be killed. A treaty has been signed between the British Government and the Nepal Government providing for the extradition of murderers on a reciprocal basis. There will be no departure from the provisions of the treaty signed between two governments. Only a person whose death is near will indulge in hostility against the British Government and set foot on Nepali territory. Dated Ashadh Sudil, 1915 (July 1858).
  
2. Any person who conducts correspondence or maintains friendly relations with Nawabs, Rajas, Babus, soldiers, ryots and other rebels who are hostile to the British shall be heavily fined. In case any person who joins the rebels in fighting against the British Government and indulging in assault and plunder, his property shall be auctioned and he shall be imprisoned. Any person who enters into the territory of the British Government and commits murder shall be hanged. There will not be slightest deviation from this order. Let all persons, from Subbas to ryots, understand this and protect their lands and property by engaging themselves in trade, agriculture and other pursuits. Dated Ashadh Sudi 1, 1915 (July 1858).

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\* Ragmi Research collections, Vol. 29, 247-249 Pp.

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Jajarkot

Jajarkot was the first principality to become a vassal of Kathmandu.

On Magh 25, 1825, Prithvi Narayan Shah wrote to King Gajendra Shah of Jajarkot:<sup>1</sup>

Throughout your Kingdom, your ancestral authority as well as your right to award capital punishment, or shaving, deprive or restore caste, impose the Chumawan, Godhuwa and Dharmadhikari levies, grant or confiscate Birta lands and appropriate the proceeds of Panchakhat and other judicial fines, escheats, fines on adulterers (Chak-Chakui), fees for stamping weights and measures, are confirmed to you. Whenever there is a succession to our throne, you shall pay a Salami of Rs 701. Whenever there is a succession to your throne, collect customary dues from your subjects.

On Marga Badi 14, 1890, the payment due from Raja of Jajarkot was reduced by Rs 3,000 yearly when he pleaded: (1) the size of his family had increased, (2) lands had been damaged by floods and landslides (3) the peasantry had been greatly impoverished and were unable to pay anything.

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<sup>1</sup>Naraharinath Yogi, Itihas Prakash Ma Sandhi-Patra Sangraha.  
(A Collection of Treaties In Light on History). P. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Regmi Research Collections, Vol. 1, P. 542.

### Land Taxation In Garhwal

The Kingdom of Garhwal, which had been reduced to feudatory status in 1849, was finally annexed in Ashadh, 1861.

In 1866, large-scale emigration of ryots was reported from the Tarai areas of Garhwal. The government realized that such emigration had resulted from the oppression perpetrated by its administrative officials. (40/13). It therefore reminded them that Garhwal was a newly-annexed territory and therefore no injustice should be practised there (40/12). With the object of checking overtaxation, new land tax assessment schedules were introduced in Baisakh, 1866. (40/4).

According to these schedules, agricultural lands in the Tarai areas between the Ganga and Jamuna rivers were divided into 3 categories, Junar, Tapad and Wakhal. Junar meant lands already under cultivation. Tax assessment on such lands were fixed at 50% of each crop. On Tapad lands, which meant newly-reclaimed lands of superior quality, the rate amounted to 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % of each crop during the first year and 50% thereafter. On Wakhal lands which meant newly-reclaimed lands of inferior quality, the rate amounted to 25% during the first year, 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ % during the second year, and 50% during the third and subsequent years. On unirrigated lands, as well as on lands growing cotton, the tax assessment was made in cash at the rates of 12 annas and 6 annas for the first and third grades. Such lands, if they belonged to Tapad grade, were not treated as a separate category for purposes of tax assessment. (40/4).

Simultaneously, efforts were made to bring new lands under cultivation. Contracts were issued for this purpose, under which certain individuals were granted authority to attract settlers from India and make land allotments on seven-year leases. The contractors were required to collect a stipulated amount on each mouja so reclaimed, which was gradually increased every year during the 7-year lease period. (40/10). Officials were appointed for the purpose of directing and supervising such reclamation and resettlement. (40/18).

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Fiscal Privileges Of Rajputs And Thakurs,  
1863<sup>1</sup>

From King Surendra Bikram Shah,

To all the Rajputs and Thakurs residing in our country.

Prime Minister Jung Bahadur, acknowledging the help rendered in 1911 in the war with Tibet and in 1914 in the battle of Lucknow, has uplifted the status of Khas and made them equal to Chhatris. He has permitted Magars and the Gurungs to be promoted up to the rank of Colonel, and now they are enlisted in the regular army. Other classes of subjects (Prajans) too have been enlisted as soldiers, and companies have been formed of them. He has promulgated a law which prohibits the enslavement of Newars who were traditionally enslaved. Limbus and Kiratis have also been recruited in the army and a company has been formed of them. Their enslavement has been prohibited. Thakuris, Rajputs and other castes have been exempted from payments which they had been making until 1919 of Serma 1 levies in lieu of compulsory labor (Jhara, Khara, Beth, Begari, Hulak), Walak<sup>2</sup> and levies payable to Zamindars and local administrators (Amali) from the year 1920 up to 4 annas, 8 annas, 12 annas and 1 rupee respectively. You are directed to present yourself whenever required by us and to carry out the tasks assigned to you.

Dated Kartik Badi 6, 1920 (November 1863)e

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<sup>1</sup>Sandhipatra Sangraha, P. 611e

<sup>2</sup>i.e. a tax on homesteads.



Law On Occupations, 1952<sup>1</sup>Section 1

No particular occupation has been assigned to any particular caste. All the four classes and thirty-six castes are free to earn their livelihood by adopting any trade or occupation except such as is prohibited by the Government, unless it cause the loss of their caste. No one shall be prohibited to share kitchen or touch water on the ground that he has adopted a particular trade or occupation.

Section 2

No person shall harness a branded bull or a cow. No man or woman belonging to any class or caste shall lose his or her caste or shall be liable to any sort of punishment if he or she does or does not harness any other male or female animal, and plow the field on any day including any festival and the last day of the dark fortnight, out of religious considerations.

Section 3

A person belonging to any of the castes which does not contaminate water, including the Brahman, may during emergencies, carry on his back any person belonging to any of the castes that contaminates water; and persons other than Brahmans may do so at any time with their own consent. Kasahis, however, may carry in the Doli, Myana, Chaupala (palanquins) and even on the back, a person belonging to any caste irrespective of whether it contaminates water or not and also whether it is inferior to his caste, in any condition whatsoever. A person so carrying palanquins shall not be held to have committed any offense.

Section 4

If a person arrests and penalizes anyone for doing anything permitted under the law or hinders anyone from doing anything permitted hereunder, he shall be liable to a fine ranging from Rs 1 to Rs 10, at the discretion of the Hakim. If such person has exacted some fine also, he shall be made to return it.

Section 5

A complainant who fails to prove his allegation shall be liable to a fine ranging from 50 pice to Rs 25 according to the nature of the case.

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<sup>1</sup>Government of Nepal, "Muluki Ain" (On Occupations And Employment). In Muluki Ain (Legal Code) (Part III) (1952 ed.) Pp. 12-13. This law was effective until April 12, 1963.

Section 6

A person who has done something prohibited under this law shall be liable to a fine ranging from Rs 1 to Rs 50 at the discretion of the Hakim.

Section 7

Any complaint alleging that a person has pursued an occupation prohibited by the Government other than those which, besides being prohibited by the Government, is being run as a state monopoly or the manufacture or war materials, or that he has harnessed a branded bull or cow, shall be entertained only within 3 months of the actual commission of the offense. A complaint filed after the expiry of this time-limit shall not be entertained.

Section 8

Persons of any caste may work as "Kalshyanli" (maid carrying a vessel with holy water) and "Madyauli" (bride's maid) during marriage or other occasions, these being auspicious and of festive occasions. As for carrying "Doli" "Myana" and "Tamdans" (litters and palanquins), all castes may do so, this being a work to be done on payment of wages. Everybody shall therefore act accordingly.

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### Ancient Lalitpur<sup>1</sup>

Patan is an ancient town. It has been referred to by different names, such as Yupagram, Manigar, Manigal, Manigla, Mangla (probably corrupt forms of Mana-Griha)<sup>5</sup> Lalitapattan, Lalitapuri, Lalitpur, Lalitpat ("tta" soft), Lalitabruma, Lalitabruma (long "a" at the end), Lalitakrama, Lalitakrama (long "a" at the end), Patan and Yala.

The name "Patan" emerged towards the concluding period of the reign of the later Mallas. It was not generally in popular use, nor in the Newari and Sanskrit languages. The term is used in a letter written by King Rajya Prakash Malla to Kaji Kalu Pande of Gorkha in the Nepali language (which was then called Khas-Kura).

In an inscription of King Shiva Simha Malla of Kathmandu of 1595, we find Patan referred to as Lalitapattan (soft "t" sounds). Later the hard "t" sounds became common. That was how the name of Pattan was derived.

The term "Lalitpur"<sup>5</sup> appears to have been used even prior to 1379. During the reign of Jaya Sthiti Malla, "Lalitpur" became "Lalitapuri"<sup>5</sup> The word "Lalit" denotes aesthetic qualities and beauty. Lalitpur therefore denotes a beautiful town.

The town is still known as Patan and Lalitpur. The names: Lalitabruma and Lalitakrama (with the "a" at the end both long and short in both cases) remained in vogue until the 18th century<sup>5</sup>

Until about half a century ago, the Judicial Court of Patan was known as Manglabhatta. A stone water spout north of the Patan royal palace is called "Mangahiti" and the adjacent settlement is called Mangal Bazaar. These terms are associated with "Manigla."

The Malla Kings of Patan during the later Malla period styled themselves "Manigladhipati." In the inscription found at Bhimsenthana, Lalitpur, dated Marga Shukla Shasthi, 1737 Vikrama (November, 1680), we find the words "Manigladhipati Maharajadhiraj Shrinivasa Malla." Inscribed on a bell at Kwabahal, Lalitpur, we find a corrupt form of "Manigladhipati", viz., "Manigaradhipati Harisimha Deva."

King Ranjit Malla of Bhaktapur ruled over Patan also once or twice. In a copper inscription of his time, we find the local Judicial Officer being referred to as "Manglabhatta", while he styled himself "Manigladhipati." This copper inscription is dated circa 1818 Vikrama. (1761).

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<sup>1</sup> Ila Raj Shrestha, "Prachin Lalitpur (Yupagram)." (Ancient Lalitpur (Yupagram)<sup>5</sup> Gorkhapatra, Magh 16, 2022 (January 29, 1966).

Variations of this term are: Manigal, Manigla, Maniglaka, Manigar, Manigla, Manigal, Manigwal, Mangal and Manga.

Originally, the term Manigla was used to describe the royal palace of Patan. Later, along with the suffix "Ica", it was used to describe the town. This view is confirmed by a book entitled "Bodnicharyavata a Panjika", written in circa 1134 Vikrama (1087), which is dated the Nepal year 198. An inscription of Shankar Deva refers to "Ramya" (charming) Lalitpur, also known as Maniglaka. It is thus clear that "Maniglaka" referred to the Kingdom of Patan. This was the reason why all the later Malla Kings ruling over Patan styled themselves as "Manigladhipati."

According to Bafu Ram Acharya, the terms "Manirgal" and "Manigar" are derived from the Sanskrit "Managriha".

It is clear that the place where the great Lichchhavi King Mana Deva (520-561 Vikrama - 463-504 A.D.) built a royal palace called Managriha later came to be known as Manigla. The term "Managriha" is used to refer to the royal palace in the inscription at Thankot of Basanta Deva, grandson of Mana Deva, which is dated 561 Vikrama (504). Thankot was at that time called Jayapallika.

Many royal orders issued by the Lichchhavi Kings after Mana Deva from Managriha are available. The term is still used in an inscription of the Lichchhavi King Bhimarjuna Deva (circa 697 Vikrama - 640 A.D.) and the Abhira Chief Bishnu Gupta at Sunaguthi. Inscriptions of the Lichchhavi Kings Gana Deva, and Shiva Deva also use the term "Managriha". The use of this term covers a period of 136 years.

All this shows that at this time Managriha was the royal palace. It is difficult to say precisely how during the subsequent period of 345 years, from 698 to 1043 Vikrama (641 to 986) the term corrupted as Manirgala and Manigla.

From a study of Newari philology, it is evident that Manirgala and Manigla in time became Mangala and Manga.

However, the Newari language also uses another term for Patan town - Yala, as is clear from the inscription of King Yoga Narendra Malla, Bhupendra Malla and Bhupatindra Malla at Mulchok in Patan. Ranjit Malla, King of Bhaktapur, (1787 Vikrama (1730) refers to Patan a Yala (with the first "a" nocalized), after the Bhaktapur fashion. From the 14th century of the Vikrama era to date, Patan has been called Yala in popular usage. There is no doubt that Yala was derived from the term Yupagrama.

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The term Yupagrama occurs for the first time in the inscription of Dhruva Sangh at Bhadreswar in the Pasupatinath temple area, which is dated circa 589 Vikrama (532), then in the inscription of Ratna Sangha at Natveswar in Deopatan, and then in one of the Lichchhavi King Narendra Deva at the Golden Window Palace, which is dated circa 701 Vikrama (644).

Yupagrama was probably situated in the western part of Manigal (Managriha). Orders issued in the name of the people of Yupagrama were maintained at Managriha. Yupagrama in course of time corrupted as Yagla and then as Yala. It is only Yala from among the numerous terms denoting Patan as mentioned above that is used in popular parlance.

"Yupa" is a Kirati term the meaning of which is not clear. In Sanskrit the term means "a sacrificial post", such as those found at the Kot and near the Ranipokhari at Kathmandu, but whether this meaning has any relevance to the term when used to describe the town of Patan is a matter for further research. The Lichchhavis added the term "Gram" to Kirati place names, such as Yupagrama (Lalitpur), Lembatigram (Lela), Khopringgram (Bhaktapur), Koligram (Kathmandu) and Thambugram (Thaibo). The term Yala is thus derived from the Kirati "Yupa".

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