Society of Nepalese Architects
Policy Committee Activity

Urban Planning & Building Bye-Laws

A Case of
Towns in History of
Kathmandu Valley
Planning … Bye-Law…?

- Prior organization of land use, infrastructure and structure to guarantee optimal
  - Economic Outcomes
  - Social Stability and Harmony Outcomes
  - Aesthetic and Cultural Outcomes
  - Environmental/Ecological Outcomes
  - One, some, all and in that order of objectivity?

- Bye-Laws
  - Seek APPROPRIATE SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR/ACTION in the town (from private citizen, private corporative and public bodies) so that they
    - Conform to a order, cause sought outcomes and not hamper these.
Were they planned?

• We find land use and networks enduring over centuries!
  – Regulated to obtain outcomes
    • Process: Social behavior, public rituals and festivals
    • Product: land use, public goods and network
  – Regularity in plan and pattern of streets?
    • Urbanism is not ‘an orthogonal state of mind’?
  – Intentionality of arrangement, not a coincidence
    • Repeated outcomes, processes and social institutions
    • Socially organized space with stability and harmony
    • Quality of urban public life
Some Peculiarities

• What is interesting about traditional Towns of Kathmandu Valley?
  • Climb up to it: location on high ground
  • Pond at almost the highest level and the Gah-hiti
  • The cross-road markers

while we know the Lichchhavi came from Ganga plains: Vaisali

• River banks civilization and Hindu/Buddhist Knowledge System
• Classical flatland pattern: Towns as Images
• Well system
The Kirat Settlement

- Dense/Bounded settlements on high ground: Preservation of economic base/agricultural land
- Integration of ecology, society and economy
  - Balanced Ecological, Social and Economic Gains
  - Dyochhe, pith and norms of social behavior
- Pith located at ecologically sensitive spot such as Water holes, Springs, Land humps, Clump of trees
  - Divine presence = ecological variance
  - Preservation
- Festivals – sharing resources and recognizing the urban/rural continuum.
The Kirat Settlement

- Compact, bounded, culturally/ritually mediated relation between society, economy and ecology across space and generations – Pi-gan Festivals
Numinous Stones: Family of Siva
Terms: Topography & Land Use

- Cho
- Gung
- Pringga
- Bru
- Dula
- Gvala
- Tala

DULA now 'dol'

PRINGGA now 'pi', 'ping', etc.

Gvala: settlement extent in dula

TALA now also 'tala'
JAISIDEVAL: Memories of Tegvala
Terms: Topography & Urban Planning

- Thu
- Da-Thu (for the god in settlement)
- Tha-Thu (for the ruler)
- Kwo-Thu (for the citizen)
- Pi-Thu (for the god in nature)
To go on, this is what we find...

- **Kirat’s Settlements - Praxis**
  - Eco-sensitivity and topographic harmony
  - Bounded settlements

- **Lichchhavi’s City building to an Image - Idealism**
  - Following the Arthasashtra of Kautilya
  - Mirroring the Cosmos
  - Universe as earth, heavens and time (desh rupa, uvaya rupa, kala rupa!)
  - Geometry/Mathematics > astrology, religion and cosmology

- **Malla’s Town: Kirat Praxis + Lichchhavi Idealism**
  - Hierarchical Public Spaces
  - Toles – Social neighborhoods/Economic neighborhoods
  - Social Harmony and Aesthetics
Yam

- Kathmandu
- Before the Lichchavi
- Laid out Daxinkoli-grama
Lichchhavi Town

- Capital, BishalNagar, built by expanding Kirata town of Andi-pringga (Hadigaon)
- The Godly town at Deupatan settled
- Kathmandu: DaxinaKoliGram settled
  - Riverbank settlement
  - Standard Vedic Town Patterns
  - Ritual Protection: Cosmic Image
  - Stone Water Conduits
  - Larger Towns: wider resource base
Lichchhavi Pattern

- Daxinakoligram
- Dandaka pattern
  - Ikhapokhari Jalasayanarayan?
  - Onde Narayan
  - Ikha Narayan
  - Chikanmugal N
    - Makhan N
Nughah: Memories of Transition
Lichchhavi Pattern

Daxinakoligram
Dandaka pattern
- Ikhapokhari
- Ikha Narayan
- Makhan N
- Chikanmugal N
- Jaisidewal
- Onde N
- GREENS AND STREETS AND SITES
The Lichchhavi Town Planning

- CAPITAL: PRASTARA Plan
  - Ritual Protection: Formal Cosmic Image
  - Physical Protection: Moats
    - Sukha Parikha, Kachchham, Parikha
  - Palace in the Center
  - Larger Town, wider resource base, extended Festival – Satyanarayan festival to Bansbari
- Andipringga
- Bishalnagar
- Maneswora
- Andigrama
- Nara
- Hadigaun
Urban Management

- **Guthi**: a community-based management
  - Private wealth as “Public Endowment”
  - Community ownership and operation of land
  - Maintenance of services

- **Ritual Mediation of Urban actions**
  - Festivals trigger agenda of public urban action

- **Recognition of water supply as key urban infrastructure**

- **Festive routes as Main Streets**

- **Harmony in architecture**
  - Building bye-laws through Vastusastra?
  - Practical neighborliness?
Malla Towns

- Development through a Mix of
  - Kirat ecological prototype +
  - Lichchhavi’s urban planning principles
- Eco-sensitive ritual bounding and structure
  - Bounded urban development, Dune and Pine
  - Ritual/Social mediation of Wider urban-rural continuum (resource base)
  - Tole sectorization, homogeneous neighborhoods
  - Change mediation through rituals
MALLA TOWN
-an extension of KIRATA system
+Informal Cosmic Image
RURAL INDEPENDENCE URBAN INTERDEPENDENCE

PERIMETER GODDESSES: YANTRA - ECOLOGY - ECONOMY BOUNDED GROWTH

FESTIVALS: PLAYING OUT INTERDEPENDENCIES

CYCLES: EVERY YEAR / FOUR YEARS / 12 YEARS

PROTECTING SOURCE / ENERGY / WATER / MATS

HARMONY OF PEOPLE SECULARIZATION
THE HETEROGENOUS TOWN

SEGREGATION (NETWORK)

MELTING POT (BREW?)

RAINBOW (SCHEME?)

MOSAIC (HETEROGENEOUS CULTURE/ SUBGROUP)

HOMES

INDIVIDUAL 100-0

TOLERANCE 50-50

TOWN 0-100 COMMUNAL
Setting up motives and evolving ethical behavior: ritually mediated plan

Cities planned and patterned after a perceived image of cosmos – a mental construct

Use mediated by rituals

Accommodating growth but remaining complete and balanced at all times as a mental construct

Plan in the mind of the user

Exploiting human ethics, individual faithfulness and emotionally guided inner discipline
Bye-Laws

• Ritual: sustained implementation of an idea through a process that is built around the fondest faiths of the urban society (process seeking pre-defined actions in a pre-defined sequence in an exacting way and followed without question)
Ritual Planning

- Image of Cosmos
- Form understood by all who used it
- Orientation to God and cosmic laws
- Assurance of welfare and peace of the living
- Gods’ ‘need’ as public good
- Ritual activity, movements characterize organization of streets, squares and other spaces
Well, that’s it

- We had the town planned and its implementation ritually mediated through generations
- So well enduring were these that they made a world heritage in 20th century!

... but then, ???