LOSS OF EPISTEMIC DIVERSITY
ACADEMIC HISTORIOGRAPHY IN POST-1950 NEPAL

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Introduction

This article analyses the grammar of academic history produced at three key institutions (loosely defined) beyond the university system in the post-1950 Nepal. A grammar of history reveals how certain forms of text generate a sense of the past at certain times and places, and why. The sense of the past is fundamental to both understanding the meaning in the pattern of the past events and explaining why those events happened in that pattern. Such a sense of the past is produced when certain statements are structured with specific rules of evidence. All true, false and fictive statements may at times sound (or, read) as if they accurately report the past events. In this way, while one aspect of the sense of the past originates from the empirical verifiability of the statements which purport to be historical, the other aspect originates from the organisation of the text. It means that the reality effect is generated as the text relates certain statements of evidence to the statements of claims in specific ways, else it will not be.

A close attention *on* texts, and on textual devices employed in them to generate the reality effect, will distinguish this study from the positivist strand of historiography literature which is concerned more with the contexts of historical knowledge production. That literature examines three sorts of contexts: the social parameters and processes of production of historical texts (Thapar 2013; Inden, Walters and Ali 2000), the knowledge about contemporary society encoded in the texts (all historians use dated texts as sources for eliciting contemporary information); and the ways the texts themselves collate pre-existing materials to historicize the previous periods (Evans 2010). The contextualist approach is different from yet another, more literary strand which focuses on the 'texts' of historical narratives. A dominant approach to historiography called meta-historical analysis aims to deconstruct textual forms in terms of their intents and elements. But it suffers from the problem of identity of history and fiction, and from the over-emphasis on literary devices such as rhetoric and metaphor (White 1987, 1997;

Ankersmit 1994; Raj 2012). To contrast, this article takes hermeneutics of historiography as the problematic and sticks to the analysis of the rules of evidence in the historical texts. The objective of focussing on such a specific textual device is to point out to the possibility of writing history differently than the orientation of the standard academic historiography at the moment would allow for.

There is a reason for examining historical texts produced in the non-university settings in Nepal. With the benefit of hindsight, it may be said that the university system in Nepal expanded since the early 1960s. The shift from a central national mono-university model to a multi-university model catering to regional and disciplinary demands is one aspect of that growth. The proliferation of multiple institutions each separately taking care of various levels, distribution of public funds, course accreditation procedures, professional practice and competence standards from a single degree-awarding, all-governing institution for the country's entire higher education sector is another. By the 1990s, the university system in Nepal had managed to become the sole destination of all public and private, formal and informal school students (Shrestha 1993; Bhatta 2007). The system grew gradually to incorporate a variety of institutions, processes and practices of education in the period. The development can be seen as the state monopolisation of public academic activities. The monopoly remains, however, incomplete and ineffective. Somewhere along this monopolising tendency of the university system, the academic history writing landscape in Nepal lost its diversity in the ways historical texts generated knowledge of the past. As this article demonstrates, the diversity in that landscape could still be traced at the margins of the burgeoning university system and beyond. By the end of the 20th century, such margins had further receded.

A few qualifications are in order at the outset. First, since the landscape of the beyond is undertaken here vis-a-vis certain academic practices within, the use of the term 'outside' does not automatically disallow one to care for the university system. Second, this investigation is limited to those sites which claim to produce academic historical knowledge and not to other places which interpret the past in different forms. For instance, various products of the ritual complexes and drama theatres have not been assessed here despite acknowledging that they do generate equally powerful and valid histories. Third, the institutions or institutionalized works of individuals considered here are marked by certain practices which are reproduced by

specific normative principles (Smith 2006) and not by their durability (although the cases span at least a generation) or legal status (two of the cases were registered as non-government organisations, NGOs). This stance towards institutions helps in debugging the commonplace myth that academic knowledge can originate only in formal academia such as universities and other similar academic institutions, and in appreciating the significant role played by the non-formal sites in shaping the dynamics of historical knowledge production in Nepal (Raj and Onta 2014).

The objective of investigating the various rules of evidence employed in the specific texts produced at the non-university landscape is as much to demonstrate the significance of the hermeneutical approach to historiography as to prompt studies on why Nepali historiography lost its epistemic diversity in the particular period. The section to follow will differentiate the specific stance of this paper from contextual studies on the one hand, and a class of textualist studies on the other. The underlying aim of the new approach is to argue that the rule of evidence is a key device that transforms a text into history. In the third section, the discussion on the distinct locations of three historical knowledge producing institutions/individuals, namely Nayaraj Panta (1970–2059 v.s.) and Samshodhan-Mandal, the school Nayaraj founded; M.C. Regmi (1986–2060 v.s.) and his Regmi Research (Pvt.) Ltd.; and Tirthalal Na:gha:bhani (1987–2058 v.s.), will reveal different motivation for their historical engagement. Consequently, they adopted particular textual forms and, as the fourth section will show, distinct rules of evidence. Notwithstanding such epistemic diversity in the contemporary history writing landscape, the academic historians in Nepal within the burgeoning university system followed exclusively the Anglo-American grammar of history. In their writings, they embraced Regmi's rule of evidence while discredited other equally feasible grammars. As the non-university sites receded, the Nepali historiography lost its epistemic diversity. The concluding section speculates the reason for this loss of diversity by linking it to the wider informality-formality shift which countries like Nepal were witnessing in their polity, economy and knowledge production in the latter half of the 20th century.

Hermeneutics of Historiography

The present textual enquiry into historiography on the whole significantly differs from contextual studies. Consider that, for example, Romila Thapar's interest in examining the ancient Indian historical texts is kindled by her

desire to know "how that [Indian] society viewed its past and why" (2013: 8). She wants to investigate the 'character' of a society that is pointed out by the kind of history it writes or fails to write. She approaches the Indian historiography tradition for understanding the society which took historical (re)production as a serious business, and not so much for learning how history was written in the ancient past or how people in ancient India employed certain strategies to render texts into history. Her interest is therefore primarily social, and only secondarily, historiographical. Hence, while she is keen on thinking about the emergence of specific genres in order to record the 'tradition,' she is more fascinated by the specific times at which such needs became imperative. She is more excited by the status accorded to the keepers of the tradition in those times, by the roles of audience in keeping specific historical texts alive and current, by the social context of the making and unmaking of a historical tradition, and by the 'manipulation' various social groups employ for altering or appropriating such a tradition (Thapar 2013: 5).

A call for the textual orientation should not be confused, however, as a plea for a return to the insular textual criticism, which to my reading, actually never existed. Surely, textual criticism has been tended by several strands of the Indological scholarship. As Inden, Walters and Ali (2000) aptly portray, the dominant 'textualist' scholarship within Indology has held a monological view of the text. It assumes an essence of the text that is distinct from its substance and is located either in the psyche of the 'author' (simple as an individual or complex as a community) or in the objectively verifiable linguistic and supra-linguistic structures. The first (aestheticist) strand aims to recover the features of the authors; the second (structuralist) wants to discover the features of the contemporary contexts. Common to both strands, according to these authors, is a belief that the text is a system of signs, it is a monologue of the psyche of either its 'author' or of the objective conditions in which it was generated and received.

Clearly, something can be gained if one dissolves the dichotomy between author and context, and proposes the text to be a product of the dialogue between the two. Texts can now be seen as dialogical in two senses: they are in dialogue with others (dialectical) and for winning an argument (eristical). Thus texts become political artefacts through which their authors develop relationship with themselves and with others. Some texts articulate these relations, others 'classic'/'foundational' ones transform them. Borrowing from deconstructionist approaches, Inden (2000) even proposes to read a

text with a family of similar texts ('supplements') preceding and following it. Keys to use and understand a text therefore lie in the 'scale of texts,' i.e., how each text is located among and interpreted by its other supplements.

What gains may be made by this dialogical approach to texts? First, unlike conventional scholarships, one can begin to see the producers and users of the texts as possessing historical consciousness. Inden is, for instance, prepared to concede that Medieval Hindu historians represent humans as co-agents rather than instruments of gods. This is a view opposed to others who, like Dipesh Chakrabarty, lament that the 'Hindu' historiography was never *secular* (2002: 56). Evaluating the historical narratives of the Theravada Buddhists, Inden is even prepared to state that "some medieval Indians and Sinhalese were more historically-minded than have been many modern thinkers in the West" (2000: 20). Second, the approach can help to take texts as transient practices of human ordering of the world. Texts encode the efforts to reorder the world. Now, historical accounts are always underdetermined by evidence. Hence, there is a possibility of multiple narratives based on the same set of evidences. But the emphasis should not lead to demonstrate (like post-colonialist scholars do) the existence of the fragments of reality or to decipher (like post-modern approaches propound) the infinite play of signifiers alone. Instead, the emphasis should lead to link the textual practice to the temporal and social formations. Such link could result in seeing the texts either as inscriptions of the rearrangements of the past or as prescriptions for marching towards certain ideals. The dialogical approach to the texts can help scholars to locate the texts in history as well as through them to discover the history these texts reordered (Inden 2000: 3–28).

The approach developed in this article, however, differs from both monological and dialogical readings of texts in that its interest lies primarily in learning to imitate writing of the historical texts, and only secondarily in understanding the 'authors' or in linking the forms of the texts to the external formations. Hence, Inden (and Schnellenbach 1995 before, and Slaje 2008 after him) takes Kalhana, an early medieval Kashmiri historian, to have all three 'foundations' of modern academic history, namely, sense of anachronism, rules of evidence and causality. They held Kalhana as an example to make claims about historicality in the Indian texts. My interest, in contrast, is in Kalhana's grammatical devices that allowed him to exhibit a variety in which these elements are played out in his texts. Specifically, I am

not much interested in pragmatic devices, such as Hayden White's tropes, by which one could investigate the textual construction of the past. For, certain limitations of taking rhetoric as a key element in such construction are obvious: many non-narrative historical texts exist in South Asia, while causality and explanation are only two among many ways people in the subcontinent derive the sense of the past. Such diversity in the forms of available historical texts in South Asia requires us to formulate new ways of classifying the available array of narrative and non-narrative historical texts (a task I attempted in Raj 2012), but also expects from us a careful examination of the linguistic strategies that makes a text, history. As a preliminary step towards the latter enterprise, this article investigates the ways in which rules of evidence vary in the set of historical texts, produced simultaneously at the non-university landscape during the post-1950s Nepal. The objective is as much to demonstrate the significance of the hermeneutical approach for the debates on historiography as to prompt studies on why the Nepali academic historiography gradually lost its epistemic diversity as the university system began encompassing the non-formal sites of historical knowledge production described here.

A hermeneutical approach to historical texts taken in this article can influence the writing of history in at least three ways. Firstly, it will reveal the textual devices for generating a sense of the past. It will help answer the questions related to the sorts of linguistic tools which create such a sense: Is the use of the grammatical 'past' construction of sentences in isolation or in a series sufficient for making a text historical? Can an explicit chronology or temporal adverbs appended in sentences create such effect? Do the techniques of historicising the past, for instance, consist in analogizing the present with other times, or say, recreating the past in the image of the present to legitimize contemporary practices? Or, will providing rhetorical prologues that vouch for the objective reality of the described events do (Spiegel 1997)? A close attention to the text may allow us to discriminate, in short, history from the past.

The second advantage is that the approach may help us distinguish history from other modes of representing the past. Some traditions in the Indian subcontinent, for instance, have conceived history as a discursive site where statements like 'this has happened' occur (Guha 2002: 60). In the nineteenth-century Europe, history was seen predominantly as narrative emplotments (White 1973). These literary approaches to historiography

accept all narratives of the past as history. Consequently, the past becomes fiction in these traditions and like fiction, a rarefied world constructed out of words. Representations and interpretations become battling grounds for historians. Yet the narrativist emphasis has abandoned a crucial requirement of history that it has publicly verifiable correspondence with social events. The present approach, therefore, will take us beyond the problem of representation or interpretation in history and allow us to examine how textual elements correspond to social events. It will help us think whether it is by empiricism (i.e., the claim that events described can be verified by text-independent methods), or by the argument of reflection (i.e., the claim that the text is organized to reflect reality) that a historical text maps onto social reality. Similarly, the approach will help decipher the textual features that make us reason on the plausibility of the description. In short, the hermeneutical approach will reveal how statements in historical text are structured so as to have the reality effect.

The most important advantage of the approach is that it will enable us to investigate the rules of evidence employed in certain texts. Historical texts consistently obey specific rules of evidence in order to qualify as verifiable statements about the affairs in the past. These rules of evidence include benchmarking the expected quality and number of evidence as well as a typology of evidential structure of narrative. A close attention to the rules of evidence will provide us tools to discriminate whether verbatim extracts from the previous, more authoritative writers qualify them as evidence or the signs of source criticism are enough. Alternately, it will help us question whether the strategy of explicit but casual references to independently verifiable contemporary events significantly enhances the credibility of fictitious events. In brief, then, the approach will facilitate the enquiry into the grammar of historical texts produced outside academia insofar as they reveal the possibility of writing credible history differently than it is practiced within.

Diverse Historiography Locations

I will take three Nepali men/institutions to show that they embody three different world views. Nayaraj Panta (1970–2059 v.s.) was born into a Brahman family somewhat related to the Shah royal household as priests and precepts. His maternal grandfather, Pandit Bhuvannath Pande, brought many tales of intrigues and massacres in the palace to the child Nayaraj and awakened in him a lifelong

curiosity about the meanings of human actions and follies. The immediacy and richness of these accounts contrasted well with the skeletal narratives available in English books Nayaraj would later read and hold as the source of poverty in Nepali historical imagination.[1] During his college years in Banaras, Nayaraj came to the view that Nepali scholars would start trusting their own traditions if they could unshackle their minds colonized by the modern education. In Kathmandu, he founded a school Samshodhan-Mandal Pathashala to experiment on the *Gurukul*-style pedagogy and curricula, consisting of (a) rote learning of key Sanskrit texts, (b) mastery of mathematical astronomy and (c) ability to decipher and interpret Nepali historical materials.[2] Many of the Samshodhan-Mandal scholars went on to become reputable historians in their right, and while most of their revisions of basic chronology and axis of historical events have stood the test of time, their statist interpretive framework has attracted criticisms (N. Panta 2059 v.s., 2061 v.s., 2069 v.s., 2069[2043] v.s.; Raj and Onta 2014).

Although distantly related to Nayaraj, Mahesh Chandra Regmi (1986–2060 v.s.) found himself engaged in historical research through translation services he first provided as a job-seeking person to an American scholar then residing in Nepal. In 1957, Regmi began a private research center to bring out periodicals that compiled the translations of Nepali press, official gazette and historical documents in various government offices. In 1960, he received support from the University of California to undertake a historical study on Nepal's agriculture and revenue system. His contributions to economic history of Nepal have been widely recognized, including with a Ramon Magsaysay award (Gaenszle 1992, Onta 2003). His theses on the extractive character of the Nepali state formation in the early 19th century is enshrined as the *doxa* of Nepali academic scholarships, oft-repeated but never really scrutinized for their empirical basis.

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[1] I have reverted to the Nepali form of addressing an individual by his/her first name, but in case of Mahesh Chandra Regmi, who has been referred to by his surname Regmi in the existing studies on Nepali historiography, law and economics in English, I have retained the convention.

[2] Nayaraj Panta was awarded with the Doctor of Letters (D.Litt) Honoris Causa by the Tribhuvan University for his "activities to preserve the Gurukul tradition." A key exponent of the Samshodhan-Mandal and Nayaraj's son Maheshraj Panta, however, questions whether the term accurately describes the non-religious environment and study routine at the school (Panta 2060 v.s.: page not mentioned; Paudel 2060 v.s.: 23).

Our third protagonist is Tirthalal Na:gha:bhani (1987–2058 v.s.) who was born into an aristocratic family of the Kathmandu Malla court treasurers. Tirthalal's childhood was not an easy one, both materially and emotionally. He matriculated from a public school, entered into the government administrative service as a *Lekhandās-Sipāhī* in 2005 v.s. and retired from the service as a *Nāyab Subbā* in 2047 v.s. Tirthalal's association with pioneer Nepalbhasha revivalists such as Chittadhar Hriday and Prembahadur Kansakar led him to read poems and stories in the public meetings, to publish a handwritten (and later printed) magazine *Jhī*, and to run a printing press at his family residence in Na:gha:, an inner quarter of the city of Kathmandu. He also painted in the Paubha tradition, compiled catalogues of the photo-albums of both local places and events, prepared almanacs and practiced Tantras. However, his mainstay was researches on medieval Nepali history and culture. Tirthalal's historical and cultural enterprise was characterized by an extensive field research, in-depth archival work and conversational style of writing. His contribution to Nepali history ranged from chronology and epigraphy to cultural and anthropological history of the Kathmandu Valley. He was known for his uncompromising views on the characteristics of the Newar society and culture, and for his critique of the dominant revivalist activism of various Newar organizations of his day. His writings on these have been generally ignored (Maharjan and Raj 2013).

The brief biographical outlines show that intellectual pursuits of these three individuals/institutions were distinctly motivated. Nayaraj wanted to restore the glorious achievements of the Hindu traditional exact sciences which he thought remain unblemished by the colonial appropriation. Regmi sought to usher Nepali historiography into a contemporary kind of political economic scholarship. Tirthalal wished to relive the medieval Newar ideals of the public intellectual, who privately engaged in esoteric practices but publicly remained a thorough cosmopolitan citizen.

The practice in historiography by these three individuals/institutions can also be somewhat understood in terms of their location in specific traditions of writing history. Regmi, for instance, conversed often exclusively with the scholars in the US and Europe. Some of these scholars were interested to comprehend the social and political dynamics of Nepal, as they saw her emerging from the mythical Gorkhali land onto the stage of modern world history. Although Regmi dedicated his 1971 book, *A Study in Nepali Economic History, 1768–1846*, "[T]o my fellow countrymen, who have suffered much,"

his history was intended primarily for the non-Nepali scholars. It was published in the series Bibliotheica Himalayica and was edited by a country representative of an UN body, was in English and with inputs from several foreign scholars then living in Nepal. Merrill R. Goodall (d. 2002), a Johns Hopkins PhD scholar and a consultant to the Nepal Government, presented the book as "the first systematic appraisal of the economic and social consequences of Nepal's territorial unification by the Gorkhali rulers" (Regmi 1971: foreword). Goodall was thanked for "helpful suggestions" (Regmi 1971: x). Leo E. Rose, a University of California at Berkeley professor, was acknowledged for his "support and encouragement" (Regmi 1971: x). A long-term Jesuit resident Ludwig Stiller, another visiting political philosopher Ernest Gellner and the third, a linguist, Boyd Michailovsky, all were credited for "having critically studied the manuscript and given detailed comments, criticism and suggestions" (Regmi 1971: x). In short, the intended audience of the book mainly consisted of the American and Europeans, who were either in Nepal as diplomats, missionaries, consultants and aid workers or, after their previous sojourn in the country, were now keen on reading her past in the light of rapidly changing global strategic interests of the late 1960s (Selby 2008). Regmi was familiar with the works of Nepali scholars, as is evident by his numerous translations of their works in the *Regmi Research Series* he edited and published around the same period.[3] Yet, his acknowledgement lists a single Nepali name, Harka Gurung, and that was for the maps and not for any scholarly conversation.

It has been argued that the Regmi's non-Nepali *habitus* was obvious given the pioneering nature of his interventions. Hence, Onta wrote, "As he pioneered the field of economic history in Nepal, there is no reason to look for native intellectual sources that preceded Regmi (both scholars and works) and may have influenced his work" (2003: 49). To the extent of its underlying assumption about the absolute lack of political economic awareness in the Nepali historical writings, this view may be said as simplistic. But it can

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[3] See, for example, Regmi's translations of Baburam Acharya's essay 'Nepal, Newar and the Newari Language' in *Regmi Research Series (RRS)*, Year 2, No. 1 (1970), pp. 1–15; of the excerpts from a book by Nayaraj Panta and others 'Teachings of the King Prithvinarayan Shah' in *RRS*, Year 3, No. 10 (1971), pp. 237–240; of Surya Bikram Gyawali's essay 'Nanyadeva' in *RRS*, Year 3, No. 10 (1971), pp. 221–223; and of Chittaranjan Nepali's essay 'Nepal-Tibet Relations' in *RRS*, Year 6, No. 6 (1974), pp. 108–114.

certainly be imagined as how Regmi himself saw the field before him. In the preface of the book, Regmi therefore chooses to keep a distance from "[the] etymological interpretation of their source materials, and their meticulous care with which they pinpoint errors, and inaccuracies in date, name, place and personal relationships" (1971: vii). This is the way some scholars fond of interpretative histories still grossly portray the principles of source criticism prioritized by the then increasingly influential historiography of the Samshodhan-Mandal. Regmi views these works as, quoting John Madge, "a dysgenic selection of immaterial and the futile" and quoting R.G. Collingwood, "scissors and paste" effort (1971: vii). He sought a "modern conception of history" (1971: vii), which, judging from John Madge's own trajectory, was essentially an extreme leftwing social history with the elite sensibilities.[4] In other words, Regmi can be located firmly in the Anglo-American historiography of the 1960s, although judging by his citations, he was taking Madge's volume as an introduction to modern sociological method.

Nayaraj Panta viewed himself as applying the critical methodology established in medieval Sanskrit astronomy to all of his knowledge pursuits. He was particularly influenced by the style of medieval astronomer Bhaskar (1171–1242 v.s.) and sought to meet Bhaskar's exacting standards in almanac preparation and historical criticism. Hence, Nayaraj wrote

> Trusting the learned Bhaskar's words that one should study only by examining the matter carefully, I tried understanding Varaha[mihir], but my labour was in vain. Then I found Lakshmipati's footprints to some distance, but they soon disappeared and my aim to examine the sky by the spherical method remained unfulfilled. Many years were spent in merely memorising books. Then by abandoning bias and becoming focussed, I decided to penetrate the texts by testing them against the pure discriminatory self judgement. I also decided to study history of my country by borrowing the tradition established by the learned Bhaskar.[5] (Panta 2069[2043] v.s.: 81)

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[4] This was Cyril Bibbly's comment on the ideas of John Madge and his circle of friends. See 'Reminiscences of a Happy Life,' Miscellaneous Personal Papers Box 8 (1985), Papers of Cyril Bibbly, Cambridge University, Department of Library and Manuscripts. Madge's contributions in sociological methodology were well acknowledged by those interested in the 1960s (Anonymous 1969: 1).

[5] My translation. The Nepali text runs as follows:

विद्वान् भास्करका कुराकन सुनी राम्रो परीक्षा गरी
पढ्दा मात्र रहेछ वास्तव भलो भन्ने कुरामा परी ।

Nayaraj adopted Bhaskar's methodological scruples, and also the latter's pitch and tone in his writing. Hence, Nayaraj was greatly fascinated by the latter's maxim of calling a perceptible non-sense as a non-sense.[6]

While some may consider Nayaraj's efforts as aiming to revive the 'ancient' vedic learning system, his case is more complex. Nayaraj's own account of his schooling shows that he was imbued with the early 20th century romance of the urban Indian middle class in Banaras and Pune with their classical heritage. The learning environment in Banaras was of course framed by the British India officials' wariness to modernize what they thought as the original advancement in the Sanskrit learning (Panta 2069[2043] v.s.: 28–34). His formal teacher in astronomy at the Queen's College was Padmakar Dvivedi, the youngest of the three sons of the renowned Pandit collaborator to the Company indologists, Sudhakar Dvivedi (1855–1910). Padmakar had himself first strayed into English education to enter into the colonial bureaucracy like his elder brothers, but then learnt Sanskrit to become a Jyautish academic solely at the behest of his mother, who feared an abrupt end to the Dvivedi

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सोहीमाफिक पढ्न उद्यम गरें, बेकार भो उद्यम,

लागें विज्ञ वराहको पछि, त्यता साफल्य क्यै पाइनँ ॥

श्रीलक्ष्मीपतिका त्यता अलिकता भेट्टाइए पाइला,

थोरे दूर पुगेर नै हुन गए त्यै पाइला बेपता ।

जाँच्ने खेचरलाई गोलविधिले धोको त्यसै नै रह्यो,

खाली पुस्तकको रटाइतिरमै त्यो काल बित्तै गयो ॥

राम्रो जाँगर साथ ली स्थिर भई छोडेर पूर्वाग्रह

जाँची शुद्ध विवेकले गहिरिई गर्ने स्वयं निर्णय ।

विद्वान् भास्करको प्रथाकन लिई राम्रो बसाली तह

पढ्ने पूर्वकथा स्वदेशितरका मैले गरें निश्चय ॥

[6] Panta's favourite stanza from Bhaskara's *Siddhāntaśiromaṇi Bhuvanakośādhyāya*, was this:

दृष्टं कन्दुकपृष्ठजालवदिलागोले फलं जल्पितं

लल्लेनास्य शतांशकोऽपि न भवेद्यस्मात् फलं वास्तवम् ।

तत्प्रत्यक्षविरुद्धमूढमतिमिदं नैवास्तु वा वस्तु वा

हे प्रौढा गणका विचारयत तन्मध्यस्थबुद्ध्या भृशम् ॥

(The surface area of a sphere is called Pristhaphala. Lalla has employed his imagination to calculate the Pristhaphala of the earth. That is incorrect. The actual surface area is not even one-hundredth of Lalla's number. O mature astronomers! Call this perceptible non-sense as a non-sense. Else call it correct, o mature astronomers, and be impartial in discriminating the matter) (Panta 2069[2043] v.s.: 70; my translation).

family's reputation on the classical learning. From Padmakar, Nayaraj learned the significance of comparative method which the latter would employ to assess the Hindu and Greek mathematics and astronomy.[7]

Nayaraj was, however, more impressed by the strict Gurukul-style teachings of an obscure Pandit Genalal Chaudhary, who probably taught in the nearby Harischandra College and gave private tuitions to the flamboyant pupils of the Queen's. Nayaraj was also influenced by the reputation of Pandit Bapudev Shastri (1821–1900), who was most successful among the professors in Banaras to have earned veneration from both the colonial Sahebs and native pandits. Nayaraj developed a life-long passion for early medieval Sanskrit literature from Genalal and aspired for Bapudev's ability to master objects of his study. In short, Nayaraj was conversant with the trends in contemporary Indian politics and popular culture, but he sought a medievalist critique for purifying modern development. Thus, Nayaraj's son has portrayed him as someone "with a modernity that was unperturbed from the West" (Panta 2065 v.s.: 3).[8]

One example of Nayaraj's critical medievalism is his use of metrical forms for writing history. This exercise in poetic history is no doubt Nayaraj's favourite distraction from his more regular essayistic genre. Nevertheless, it serves to illustrate his historiographical location. Consider, for example, a poem titled 'From Kot Massacre to Jang Bahadur'

जेठो छोरो यही हो, अधिकृति यसकै होस् भनी भूप खोज्थे,
कान्छीको प्रेमवर्षा सरस वचनले ती सधैं मुग्ध हुन्थे ।
छोरा रानी नमिल्दा कचपच घरमा नित्य भै नै रहन्थ्यो,
राजा राजेन्द्रलाई स्वगृहकलहले नित्य सन्ताप दिन्थ्यो ॥१॥ (Panta 2070 v.s.: 81)

(The king sought to award his eldest son the throne due to him. The king was also mesmerized by the sweet loving talk of his youngest wife. The dissonance between the son and the queen was regular. King Rajendra was tormented by the everyday quarrels in his home.)

Nayaraj backed the composition of the stanza with several references. He utilized a Nepali *Vaṃśāvalī*, Henry Lawrence's biography by Uttam Kunwar,

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[7] Padmakar Dvivedi introduced and edited Narayan Pandit's two-part primer on Mathematics *Gaṇitakaumudi* (Dvivedi 1936, 1942).

[8] The actual phrase used was "पश्चिमबाट अनाक्रान्त आधुनिकताबाट सम्पन्न ।"

Henry A. Oldfield's *Sketches from Nipal* (1880), and Jang Bahadur's biography (1983 v.s.) by Jaganmohan Varma in writing the verse.

Similarly, Nayaraj composed another poem called 'The Kot Massacre' as follows:

गोली हानी कसैले गगनकन दियो रातमा स्वर्गवास,

यो सुन्दा राजपत्नीहृदय हुन गयो क्रोधको खास वास ।

राजाका पक्षपातीहरूतिर उनको भित्र शङ्का उदायो,

ज्यादै नै क्रोध चढ्दा मति पनि उनको चित्तदेखिन् हरायो ॥ (Panta 2070 v.s.: 83)

(Someone shot the bullet and sent Gagana[simha] to the heaven. Anger froze the queen's heart when she heard the news. She suspected the hands of the king's followers in the incident. She lost all sense of judgement due to searing anger within her.)

Five references adorn this canto (Image 1).

कोतपर्व[२]

गोली हानी कसैले गगनकनं दियो रातमा स्वर्गवास,

यो सुन्दा राजपत्नीहृदय हुन गयो क्रोधको खास वास ।

राजाका पक्षपातीहरूतिर उनको भित्र शङ्का उदायो,

ज्यादै नै क्रोध चढ्दा मति पनि उनको चित्तदेखिन् हरायो ॥९॥

२. *प्राचीन नेपाल* २५ संख्या १६-१७ पृ. ।
ओल्डफील्ड १ भाग ३५६-३६९ पृ. ।
पद्मजङ्ग ६६-८४ पृ. ।
जगन्मोहन ८८-११३ पृ. ।
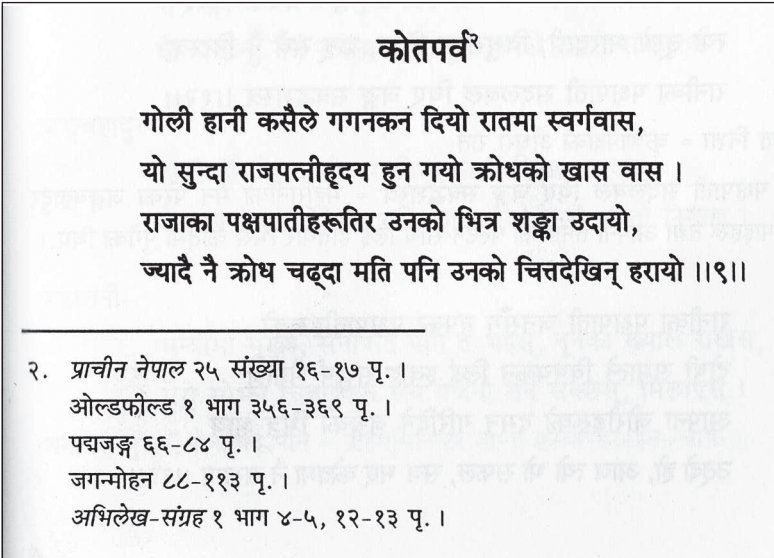*अभिलेख-संग्रह* १ भाग ४-५, १२-१३ पृ. ।

Image 1: Panta's Canto on Gagansimha.

The early medieval history of Kashmir by Kalhana (fl. 1147–48) served as the template for Nayaraj's metrical form of history. Like Kalhana, Nayaraj wrote

historical verse employing the highest degree of source criticism and empiricism. Hence one may find strange stylistic parallels between Kalhana and Nayaraj, separated as they were by eight centuries of historical awareness. Compare Kalhana's verse about a malicious queen in his magnum opus, *Rājtaraṅgiṇi*.

> Thus on the 12th day of the Bright half in the 4049th of this-worldly year, that unchaste woman killed her own grandson.
>
> Similarly, on the 5th day of the Bright half in the 4051st of this worldly-year, the same woman killed her own second grandson Tribhuvan with sorcery. After some time, the cruel queen put the third grandson Bhimagupta on the death awaiting throne.
>
> Around same time, the elderly minister Phalgun died. The queen Didda had hidden her character and cruelty either fearing the minister or due to self pride. After the minister passed away, the queen revealed her true self. She began committing hundreds of crime and lifting her veil, roamed like a drunken elephant.
>
> Sadly, some women belong to the high families but fall like the rivers from the high mountains.[9] (*Rājataraṅgiṇi*, Stanzas 311–316)

Unlike M.C. Regmi and Nayaraj Panta, Tirthalal was filled with a sense of inheritance both as a practicing Tantric householder and a custodian of the family archive that housed collections of at least 12 generations. He did not find himself doing history because he wanted to or he had any formal training in the craft. He began historical research with the zeal of defending an

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[9] My translation. Kalhana's original runs as follows:

वर्ष एकान्नपञ्चाशे नीतः पक्षे सिते क्षयम् । स मार्गशीर्षद्वादश्याममार्गव्यग्रया तया ॥ ३११॥
पौत्रस्त्रिभुवनो नाम मार्गशीर्षे सितेऽहनि । पञ्चमेऽप्येकपञ्चाशे वर्षे तद्वत्तया हतः ॥ ३१२॥
अथ मृत्युपथे राज्यनाम्नि स्वैरं निवेशितः । क्रूरयां चरमः पौत्रो भीमगुप्ताभिधस्तया ॥ ३१३॥
तस्मिन्नवसरे वृद्धः फल्गुणोऽपि व्यपद्यत । निगूढक्रौर्यदौःशील्या दिद्दा यद्गौरवादभूत् ॥ ३१४॥
वभूव साऽथ सुस्पष्टदुष्टचेष्टाशतोत्कटा । भ्रष्टवक्त्रपटा मत्तदन्तिर्मूर्तिरिवोत्कंटा ॥ ३१५ ॥
महाभिजनजातानामपि हा घिड्निसर्गतः । सरितामिव नारीणां वृत्तिर्निम्नानुसारिणी ॥ ३१६ ॥

Jogesh Chunder Dutt's translation goes as this:
In the K.E. 49 in the month of Agrahàyana on the twelfth bright lunar day, she killed the child. In the K.E. 51 in the month of Agrahàyana, on the fifth bright lunar day, she killed her other grandson named Tribhuvan. The last surviving grandson Bhimagupta, was murdered. In the meantime the minister Phalguna was murdered. It was through him that her atrocities were partly concealed from the public. She now appeared to her subjects in her hideous character. The character of a woman, though born of high family, is low even as a river which rises from the mountain but runs downwards. (Dutt 1879: 163–164)

indigenous tradition from what he saw as whiggish tendencies in Nepali historiography.

> I am not an historian. I am not familiar with historical matters. This is not my subject. I do not have therefore any passion for the craft. Neither do I have any interest in it. But when our learned investigator Associate Professor Chunda Vajracharya accused King Manadeva I of wrongdoings as regard to [the identity of] Changunarayan and Hariharavahan Lokesvar, I began turning pages of the Lichhavi and other inscriptions to respond to her. Then I wondered about the beginning of the Nepal Samvat and the use of the Nepalbhasha.[10]

Tirthalal had some awareness of current historiography as he counselled PhD students and collectors from the US and the UK, who arrived at his residence to make sense of the 'authentic' Shaiva and Bauddha traditions in the Valley. The students sought his audience to decipher certain knotty empirical data, much before they would be engaged in its systematic theoretical analysis. Tirthalal would sense the significance of his possession but not much beyond that as the conversation would flow mostly in Hindi, Nepali and Newari in what can be characterized as the informant-scholar relationship.

As Tirthalal began publishing the results of his field and textual enquiries, he aspired to reproduce the Classical Newari historiography once popular in the medieval Kathmandu Valley. The *Chāta* historiography, mostly preserved in the manuscripts, was the dominant form of history writing from 14–19th century, and because of its distinct linguistics and stylistics, represented to Tirthalal the indigenous way of organising and interpreting the past (Raj 2012). While Tirthalal consistently wrote long essayistic pieces for public consumption, he cherished a dream project of completing a *Chāta* history of his own family lineage deity (New. *Āgaṃ*). In this history, Tirthalal himself appeared as a character among others.

Thus he wrote:

> 9. Tirthlalal Na:gha:bhani observed initiation rites (*dikṣyā*) on the 9th day of the Bright half in the month of Baishakh in 1066 n.s., 2002 v.s. Others [who did the same on the occasion] were Bhupendraraj, his wife Chorimaiya and Shyamraj.

> 9. (sic) On the full moon of Pus in 1095 n.s., 2032 v.s., during the annual consecration of the gold pinnacle, Rambahadur's servant breached the secrecy

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[10] Na:gha:bhani Collections: Tirthalal Manuscripts. 'Mhapuja,' Folio a. 1108 n.s. (2045 v.s.). Tirthalal Na:gha:bhani Library and Museum, Na:gha:, Kathmandu.

of the *Āgaṃ* during the former's own turn. A quarrel ensued because Rambahadur did not perform the repentance (*śāntisvasti*) ritual.

10. On the 4th day of the Bright half in the month of Chait in 1095 n.s., 2032 v.s. Chait 21, Saturday, someone broke the padlock in the entrance of the Mahadya: courtyard. The thief could not be apprehended. It was Kimat Bahadur's turn to look after the *Āgaṃ* house.[11]

This history is similar in both content and style to the medieval Classical Newari *Chāta*s. Compare, for example, with some of the published *Chāta* samples.

On the 10th day of the Dark half in the month of Chait in 702 n.s., both the silver and gold masks of Bhairava were stolen. They were found in the dark pit near Ramnaga pond. (Kayastha 2058 v.s.: 5)

On the anniversary of the Guthi in NS 802, during the turns of Visvesvar and Rayaju, first, a stray dog ate the curd kept in a container (*dhaki*). While managing the impurity, another dog entered and touched the plate of worship. Upon cleaning them, it rained surprisingly heavy and the day turned very cold. Then the dog ate two ritual implements (*neura*). Afterwards two dogs ate a crow. That was a big mishap (*mahautpata*). (Regmi 1966: 73)

And

In NS 602, Yakshamalla died.

On 10 Br(ight half of) Asoj, NS 775, Sri 2 Jagatprakas Malla's initiation.

On 10 Br(ight half of) Asoj, NS 796, Sri Sri Jitamitra Malla's initiation.

On 10 Br(ight half of) Asoj, NS 808, Sri Bhupatindra's initiation.

On 6 Bright half of Kartik, NS 796 is the birthday of Sri Sri Jaya Bhupatindra Malla. (Regmi 1966: 54)

Diverse Rules of Evidence

Regmi's Anglo-American historical sensitivity and his interests in political economy contrasted well with Tirthalal's medieval Newari *Chāta* framework which prioritized culture and identity. Nayaraj's early medieval Sanskrit inspirations derived from Bhaskar's critical methodology and reacting to the colonial appropriation of the Hindu mind seems distant from both. The key

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[11] Na:gha:bhani Collections: Tirthalal Manuscripts. 'Agan-dyo.' Notebook Ms. Folio c. 1117 n.s. (2054 v.s.). Tirthalal Na:gha:bhani Library and Museum, Na:gha:, Kathmandu.

point is that the field of historical scholarship beyond academia in Nepal was unfolding in the post-1950s as these three kinds of historiography responded to one another. The different historiography locations, represented by Regmi, Nayaraj and Tirthalal in this article, were not the only ones that were coexisting in post-1950s. They are, however, sufficient to indicate the diversity in historiography as the freshly implanted university education system began to take root in Nepali social landscape.

Coming from the three different historiographical conventions, Regmi, Nayaraj and Tirthalal employed distinct rules of evidence. Rules of evidence in historiography refer to the permissible ways in which evidence is structured in relation to the argumentation in any history. These rules are shared both by historians and readers, and form the basis of what both count as the acceptable ways of knowing the past. Rules of evidence form the groundwork upon which historical rationality is built in a shared convention (or a culture) of historiography. In short, they are epistemic blocks. From a textualist perspective, the evidence-argument structure may manifest, for example, in the manner in which quotes are selected, reproduced and situated in a text, citations are embedded, and descriptive statements are related to interpretative statements. A scrutiny of evidence-argument structure may also involve examining the practice about accuracy and adequacy of evidence, and the accepted logic of argumentation for interpreting evidence. A quick analysis of the rules of evidence employed by Regmi, Nayaraj and Tirthalal in their historical texts will demonstrate the epistemic diversity in the history writing landscape beyond formal university system in Nepal. This is important because it will go some distance towards showing, when compared with the rules of evidence employed in today's academic historiography, how there was a loss in this diversity as the university system strengthened in the country.

In deciphering the rules of evidence employed by Regmi, consider an image of his text from his 1971 book on the economic history of Nepal (see Image 2). Note that Regmi's main text comprises only of general abstract of his arguments such as, "mines were exploited primarily with the objective of maximizing production rather than revenue," and "[a]round 1803, the government even assumed monopoly in the procurement of such metals... and imposed a ban on their export" (Regmi 1971: 68).[12] References to these statements are given in footnotes 81 and 83 on the same page.

[12] These are marked in Image 2 by vertical lines in the margins.

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herbs and drugs, cotton, salt, yaks' tails, musk, sheep and goats.[76] A contract for the collection of this tax fetched Rs 15,001 in 1805,[77] Rs 17001 in 1816[78] and 18001 in 1818.[79]

Mines And Minting

Copper, iron and lead mines in different parts of the country, particularly Baglung and other areas in the western hill region, traditionally yielded considerable revenue through exports. Kirkpatrick reported that revenue from copper mines had once amounted to between Rs 300,000 and Rs 400,000.[80] But the increased local consumption of copper for the minting of coins and the manufacture of munitions reduced the quantity available for export. Consequently, copper mines were exploited primarily with the objective of maximizing production rather than revenue.[81] In 1793, revenue from copper mines had declined to between Rs 80,000 and 100,000.[82] Around 1803, the government even assumed a monopoly in the procurement of such metals as copper and lead and imposed a ban on their export.[83] As a result of such policies, mines were of relatively minor significance as a source of monetary revenue, particularly after the beginning of the nineteenth century.

According to Kirkpatrick, traders who imported silver from Tibet for commercial purposes were under obligation to take it to the Mint and have it converted into coins. The Mint charged a 4% fee on such coinage, in addition to an 8% profit by mixing alloy with the silver.[84] Fees were similarly charged on the conversion of copper into coins,[85] but there is no evidence that any alloy was mixed.

[76] *Order Regarding Imposition Of Nirkhi Tax,* Bhadra Badi 9, 1862 (August 1805). (19/227).

[77] *Ijara Grant To Mahendra Singh Newar For Collection Of Nirkhi Tax,* Bhadra Badi 9, 1862 (August 1805). (19/229).

[78] *Ijara Grant To Hanumant Singh For Collection Of Nirkhi Tax,* Bhadra Badi 5, 873 (August 1816). (36/302).

[79] *Ijara Grant To Kulanand Jha For Collection Of Nirkhi Tax,* Bhadra Badi 2, 875 (August 1818). (42/352) 1875.

[80] Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.,* p. 212.

[81] Cf. *Gajendra Thapa Granted Authority To Exploit Mineral Deposits In Bhumli-chok (Gorkha),* Ashadh Sudi 1, 1861 (June 1804). (2/87); *Ijara Grant To Jasraj For Operation Of Mines,* Chaitra Badi 4, 1863 (March 1807). (5/145).

[82] Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.,* p. 212.

[83] *Order Regarding Collection Of Fees On Land Transactions And Other Matters,* Ashadh Badi 9, 1860 (June 1803). (5/404); *Regulations In The Name Of Kapardar Dhan Singh Ojha,* Baisakh Badi 5, 1860 (April 1803). (5/368). Section 15.

[84] Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.,* p. 212.

[85] *Order Regarding Fees For Minting Coins,* Shrawan Badi 6, 1848 (July 1791). (5/69).

Image 2: Regmi's style of footnoting.

[81] Cf. *Gajendra Thapa Granted Authority To Exploit Mineral Deposits In Bhumlichok (Gorkha)*, Ashadh Sudi 1, 1861 (June 1804). (2/87); *Ijara Grant To Jasraj For Operation Of Mines*, Chaitra Badi 4, 1863 (March 1807). (5/145). ...

[83] *Order Regarding Collection Of Fees On Land Transactions And Other Matters*, Ashadh Badi 9, 1860 (June 1803). (5/404); *Regulations In The Name Of Kapardar Dhan Singh Ojha*, Baisakh Badi 5, 1860 (April 1803). (5/368). Section 15. (Regmi 1971: 66)
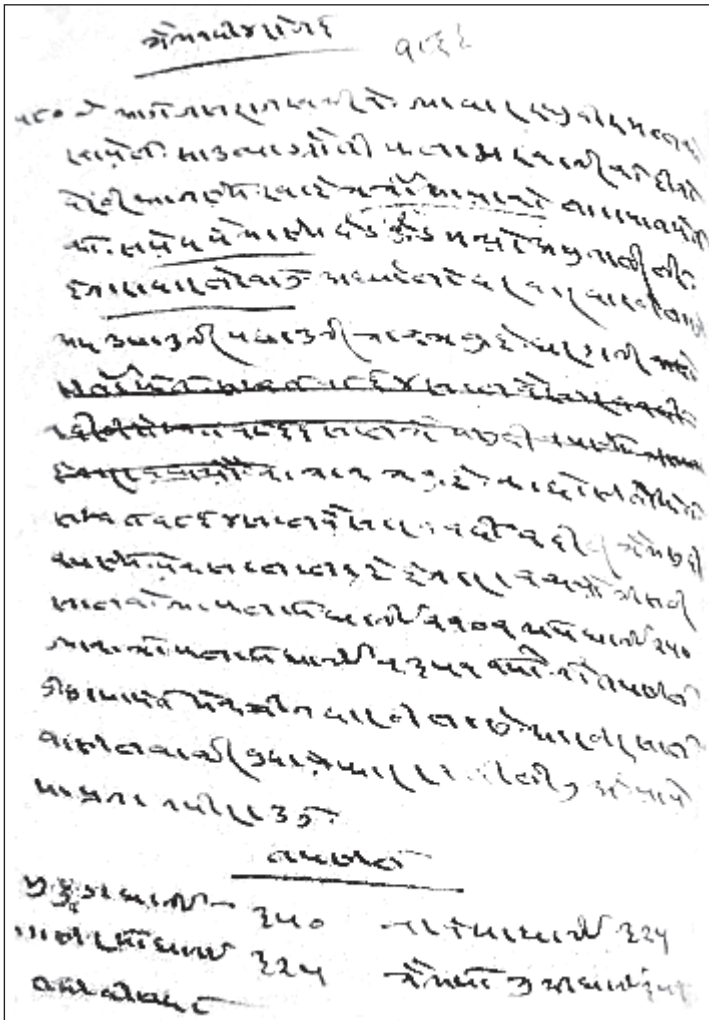
Image 3: Regmi's first source on the state monopoly.

Anyone familiar with the official Shah and Rana correspondence knows that the source documents probably did not have titles and were inserted by Regmi himself. The citations end with a set of numbers separated by an oblique: the first refers to the numbered bound volume in Regmi Research Collections (RRC), now preserved in the Tribhuvan University Central Library, while the second refers to the page number in the bound volume. Regmi here follows the standard practice of today's academic publishing. He does not fully quote the unpublished documents. Crucially, he demands a certain degree of trust from the readers. While theoretically it is possible for more discerning readers to trace the cited RRC volume and to assess Regmi's textual fidelity, not every inquisitive reader will have an ability, resource or occasion to go to the Central Library and check the documents. Indeed, Regmi's general abstractions have been quoted ad nauseam in the last four decades without anyone, to my knowledge, taking the trouble of scrutinising the RRC originals. A little exercise in this direction is revealing as to how this particular rule of evidence, i.e., of footnote citations, has actually promoted historians' authority while sadly sacrificing an opportunity of critically assessing the documentary evidence.

The fifth RRC volume, which Regmi utilized to comment on the extractive nature of the early Shah kingdom of Nepal here, does have copies of the two documents on the subject he cited in the footnotes. On page 145, the said evidence on the *ijārā* grant to Jasraj is as follows (see Image 3):

चैत्रवदी ४ रोज ६ १८६३[13]

1. ५८० नं आगे जसराज खत्रीके, ज्मादार रघुवीर मल्लके,

2. खायेली साउल्या ग्रौती फलाम खानीका हीजो

3. देखी आजसंम खाई चर्ची आयाको लगापात येती

4. का सये रुपैयासंम दंडकुंड मर्‍यो अपुताली ली

5. ईजारादारले खानु अर्घ्यालो दरबार दाखीला गरी

6. अरू उघाउनी पछ्याउनी चाकचकुईघरगनी (?) [...

7. ... संवत १८६४ साल वैसाखवदी

8. १ देखी संवत १८६६ साल चैत्र सुदी १५ संम ...

9. ईजारा बक्स्यौं][14] का चाकचकुईकाछोसीतास्मेत (?)

[13] The year is marked in a different handwriting.
[14] These three lines are struck out.

10. सम्वत १८६४ साल वैसाखवदी १ देखी चैथ सुदी

11. १५ संम येक साललाई ईजारा बक्स्यौं त्रीसठी

12. सालको ज्मा फलाम धार्नी ११०१ थप धार्नी २५०

13. ज्मा काचो फलाम धार्नी १३५१ बमोजीं तपसील

14. डीठा मार्फत मेकचीनदारले ला(?)... आखीर साल

15. वासील बाकी बुदा फारख दी लीनु अंन्याये

16. सासना नपीराउनु

17. तपसील

18. मुहुडा धार्नी ३५० श्रावंमा धार्नी ३२५

19. मगसीरमा धार्नी ३२५ चैत्रमा चुपी धार्नी ३५१

20. इति मीती सदर । (RRC 5: 145)

A cursory reading of the Jasraj's contract shows at once that one needs to be a little more imaginative to arrive at Regmi's abstract from the cited evidence. First, the said contract (*ijārā*) is for a year only. The requirement to renew the contract every year can be interpreted as the experimental nature of the act by the state, and not possibly as representing its monopolistic character. Second, the contract was granted to two people and not only to Jasraj. Third, the intent of the grant seems to aim at assuring regularity in the iron production and not maximising it. Fourth, the contractors were given certain judicial privileges of dealing with amounts up to 100 rupees but, in the same breath, were forbidden from using coercion (*aṇunyāye sāsanā napīrāunu*) to extract the output.

Similarly, Regmi cited Kapardari Regulations to justify his claim that the government monopolized both production and trade of the metals. The said regulations of 1860 v.s. on pages 368–372 of the fifth RRC volume (cited by Regmi as footnote number 83) describe a set of duties assigned to Dhanasingh for the maintenance of the royal household, not, as one would presume from Regmi's use, to enforce the state monopoly. The Kapardari works include regular upkeep and repair of the royal ornaments, armoury and buildings. The key clauses in the regulations are related to appointments of the skilled workers (clause 1), resolution of their disputes (clause 11), and keeping the records of repair and expenses (clause 14). Clause 15, which seems to be about the said monopoly, reads as follows (see Image 4):

Image 4: Regmi's second source on the state monopoly.

1. १५ सवाल - हाम्रा मुलुकभरीमा जस जसका अमल

2. मा जती सीसा खानी छ दैदस्तुर काछ्रीमा आउन्या

3. सीसा कपरद्वारमार्फत दरबारमा दाषील गर्नु

4. बेपार हार्न्या सीसा दरबारमा नसोधी नबेच्नु

5. कपरद्वारले पनी फलाना ठाउबाट (?) येती सीसा

6. आयो भनी काजीहरूसीत भदै गर्नु । (RRC 5: 372)

The clause stipulates a requirement for the operators of the lead mines in the country to submit the tax (*daidastur*) and not the total output itself to the state treasury through the Kapardar. Moreover, it states that the metal allocated for sale was not to be sold without the permission of the Darbar, and the Kapardar was to brief the balance accounts regularly to the ministers. It is not easy to take this stipulation as the monopoly. Regmi's both general abstracts can be then questioned for their empirical content.

To contrast, Samshodhan-Mandal scholars laid a great deal of emphasis on the critical appraisal of the primary sources. In fact, the Mandal school was founded to establish an impeccable historiography in Nepal. Understandably, it stressed on freeing conventional historical writings from factual and interpretive errors by applying source criticism to the available evidence. Consider, for instance, one of the early pamphlets in a series called Attention Paper (*Sāvadhān-patra*). The Paper Number 11, published in 2020 v.s., uses a terse language to disqualify two influential contemporary Nepali historians (see Image 5). The abstract of the Paper on the cover reads:

> The Itihas-Samshodhan had criticized, with supporting evidence, the careless writings of Shri Bal Chandra Sharmaji, who cannot distinguish even the well-known pair of wife and daughter in history. Now Shri Suryavikram Gyawali-jyu has begun writing nonsensical history of Nepal to mask, as an advocate, Sharma-jyu's blemishes and to gain favors from him. (Vajracharya, Panta and Paudel 2020 v.s.: cover; my translation)

The issue here is chronology and not, as in Regmi's case, the nature of the Nepali state. The evidence, in Samshodhan-Mandal writings, occupies a prominent position on the page. In fact, their historical writings are primarily analyses of the evidence about, in this case, the regnal years of kings of Patan. For Mandal scholars, history is a critical appraisal of evidence. They use footnotes for giving variant readings of the evidence.

सावधान–पत्र

(११ संख्या)

[झवालीविषयक ८ संख्या]
[झवालीविषयक १३ पूर्णसंख्या]

इतिहासप्रसिद्ध स्वास्नी छोरीको समेत भेद छुट्याउन नसक्ने श्रीशल-
चन्द्र शर्मांजीले जथाभावी लेख्नुभएको कुरालाई
इतिहास–संशोधनले सप्रमाण खण्डन गरेको थियो ।
शर्मांज्यूको वकील भई शर्मांज्यूको दोष ढाक-
छोप गर्न श्रीसूर्यविक्रम झवालीज्यू अनर्थ
इतिहास लेखी शर्मांज्यूलाई रिझाउन र नेपालको
इतिहास भ्रष्ट पार्ने लाग्नुभएको छ ।

प्रकाशक—   रचयिता—
संशोधन-मण्डल   गौतमवज्र वज्राचार्य
महाबौद्ध, काठमाडौं, नेपाल   महेशराज पन्त
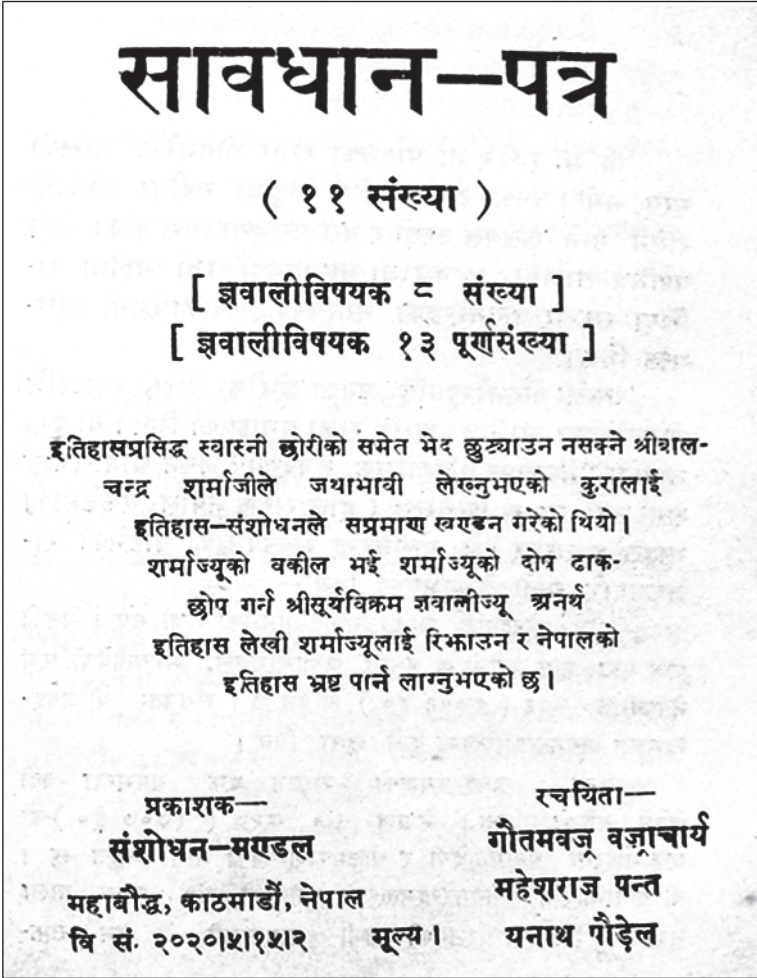वि. सं. २०२१।४।१५।२   मूल्य।   यनाथ गौडेल

Image 5: *Sāvdhān-patra*, Number 11.

The Mandal's method of source criticism has grown only more complicated as it rose to occupy a prominent position in Nepal's historiography landscape. An example would suffice: Consider a page in Mandal's journal *Pūrṇimā* (Image 6).[15] One could at once see that Mandal scholars employ

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[15] For a history of the journal *Pūrṇimā* by one of its current editors, see Pant 1996.

८. भीमल गिरि गोसाइँ (मूलमा- **भीमल गिरी गुसाथि**)लाई तिर्नुपरेकोले यो खेत बेच्नुपरेको हो भनी यहाँ लेखिएको छ ।

यस ताम्रपत्रभन्दा फण्डै २५ वर्षपुरानो ताम्रपत्रमा भीमल गिरिको चर्चा आएको कुरा यस प्रसङ्गमा गर्नुपर्छ । कुरा के हो भने भक्तपुरका विश्वेश्वरनाथको प्रीतिको लागि ज्ञाननाथी भीमल गिरिले ठाउँठाउँबाट आएका दशनामीहरूलाई वास दिन भनी भक्तपुर तचपाल (मूलमा- **तवचपाल**)को सडक (मूलमा- **लाछि**)मा दत्तात्रेय (मूलमा- **दत्तदेव**)को मन्दिरभन्दा **वायव्य** (उत्तरपश्चिम)मा रहेको घर र त्यहाँ आए जति दशनामीहरूको भोजनको खर्च खेतको आयस्ताबाट चलाउन भनी ५२ रोपनी खेत शाके १६४८, वि.सं. १७८३, कलिगताब्द ४८२७, ने.सं. ८४६ आषाढशुक्लद्वादशीको दिन गूठी राखी व्यवस्था गरेको ताम्रपत्रबाट **बुझिन्छ** ।[४]

जयप्रकाश मल्लले गोसाइँहरूसँग सापटी लिने गरेको कुरा उनका अरू पत्रहरूबाट पनि थाहा **हुन्छ** ।[५]

९. यी मल्ल राजाहरूले गोसाइँहरूलाई जग्गा बेच्ने गरेको कुराका उदाहरणको लागि श्रीनिवास मल्लले कमलनयन पुरी र सुन्दर पुरीलाई ने.सं. ७९१ (वि.सं. १७२८) श्रावणकृष्णचतुर्दशीको दिन ४४ रोपनी खेत १७६० टङ्कामा,[६] भास्कर मल्ल उर्फ महीन्द्र सिंहले उद्योत भारतीलाई ने.सं. ८४० (वि.सं. १७७७) आषाढकृष्णतृतीयाको दिन ३२ रोपनी र ११ कर्ष खेत, २ कर्ष डिहि र २ कर्ष घडेरी ९०० टङ्कामा[७] तथा ने.सं. ८४१ (वि.सं. १७७७) माघकृष्णपञ्चमीको दिन साढे ४० रोपनी खेत, २ कर्ष डिहि र २ कर्ष घडेरी १००१ टङ्कामा[८] बेचेकोलाई देखाउन सकिन्छ ।

खुद जयप्रकाश मल्लले ने.सं. ८६३ (वि.सं. १७९९) मार्गकृष्णत्रयोदशीको दिन सुमेरु गिरि गोसाइँलाई ६० रोपनी जग्गा ८४३ टङ्कामा,[९] ने.सं. ८७० (वि.सं. १८०७) शुद्धचैत्रद्वादशी[१०]को दिन महन्त कमल वन

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[४] यो दानसम्बन्धी २ वटा ताम्रपत्र प्रकाशमा आएका छन् । ती दुवै राजा रणजित् मल्लको छाप लगाई जारी गरिएका हुन् । एकाध शब्दको वास्ता नगर्ने हो भने दुवै उही बेहोराका छन् । तर एउटामा दाताको हैसियतले ज्ञाननाथी भीमल गिरि छन् त अर्कोमा चाहिँ ज्ञाननाथी दयाल गिरि छन् (महेशराज पन्त २०३७) ।[①]

[५] शङ्करमान राजवंशी २०२४:१२ मा छापिएका अधिल्ला २ पत्र ।

[६] महेशराज पन्त २०५७ क:२६ सङ्ख्या = १८ ।

[७] उही २०६५:३३०, ३३१ ।

[८] उही:३३०,३३१–३३२ ।

[९] उही छापिन बाँकी:१ सङ्ख्या ।

[१०] यहाँ पक्ष लेखिएको छैन ।

[①] मूलको […] दशनाम सन्यासी ◦ वव दकोस्ता ◦ ज्ञान प्र १ जाके◦ ◦ के अस्ता १ मास ◦ कलसुल दवगुलि ◦ चि ◦ ब्यते बिय ◦ (मूलका १०–११ पङ्ति = २५)को उल्था मैले […] दशनामी सन्यासी आए जति सबैलाई १ पाठ चामल, दाल १ छयक मास, केराउको दाल, दही, नून यति दिने (उही:२६) भनी मैले गरेकोमा मूलमा दही बुझाउने शब्द नहुँदा नहुँदै पनि मूलको **दवगुलिको** अर्थ मैले दही लेखेको रहेछ । यस वाक्यको वास्तव अर्थ यो हो- दशनामी सन्यासी आए जति सबैलाई मान्छेपीछे १ पाठ चामल, दाल १ छयक मास, केराउ पुगे जति (शब्दार्थ गर्दा- भए जति), नून यति दिने ।

[●] अर्को ताम्रपत्रमा पल १ आके (उही:२५ मा ३९ सङ्ख्याको टिप्पणी) ।

Image 6: *Pūrṇimā* 34(1): 380.

what may be termed as multi-layer source criticism. The main text is divided into sections (Skt. *Kaṇḍikā*). Each section is a hard look on a specific set of evidence. Various pragmatic devices in the text forces readers immediately to wrestle against previously cited proofs. Sentences end in clauses such as "[as] is understandable from the copper plate," "[so] is known from the dispatches," and "for example-" (more evidence follows). The avalanche of concerns regarding the evidence does not spare the readers any occasion for reflection or interpretation. Mandal's rule of evidence is then primarily about sustained engagement with the fidelity of evidence and often solely that. For instance, the two copperplates cited in footnote 4 in Image 6 refer to grants to the Masters of the Shaiva Monastries, the Giris. But note a qualification there: "if one ignores a word or two, the copperplates have the same content," which is followed by a self-critical sub-footnote 1: "I happened to insert the word *dahī* in the translation, even when there was only *davaguli* in the original" [in the first copperplate]. This correction is appended by another sub-sub-footnote 1, which gives variant readings in the second copper plate. It seems that Mandal scholars believe their critical engagement with evidence will prepare their readers to make correct interpretations, if not induce into them straightway a proper historical sense. Historical knowledge as it appears in the pages of *Pūrṇimā* is not discursive. While it may be argued that Mandal's historical narrative contains the discourse of nationalism and empiricism, they are never present at rhetorical level, and given their life-long dedication to the practice of source criticism, probably will never be so.

Samshodhan-Mandal scholars have occupied themselves by the tasks of deciphering and verifying evidence, while Regmi simply made references to evidence, as is common today in the most academic writings. Regmi put forward interpretations although, as shown above, sometimes in a broad brush and inaccurate manner. Mandal historians prioritized evidence analysis over overt interpretation of history, claiming that most historians writing on Nepal hastily jumped over to conclusions which should have been arrived at only after a thorough scrutiny of evidence. They portrayed other historians as incapable of the basic empirical judgement and as spirited promoters of rash ethno-centricism. Most university-based historians have ignored the Mandal scholars yet continued to reap the fruits of their labor; a few have made much of the ideological underpinnings of their revisions (Skt. *saṃśodhan*) [e.g., Malla 2061 v.s.].

मानेश्वरी व तलेजु विस्कॉपिं द्यःमखु

—तीर्थलाल नःघःभनी
(राजभण्डारी)

मानेश्वरी द्यः धयाह्या छह्या हे, तलेजु द्यः छह्या हे मखु । "मानेश्वरी" धाःसां "तलेजु" धाःसां छह्या हे ख: । निगूं छह्या ख: । लिगू नां नं छह्या सिगु हे ख: । थीथी द्याःया नां थीथी मखु । उकें मानेश्वरी व तलेजु विस्कॉपिं द्यःमखु । छाय धाःसा मानेश्वरी यात हे लिपा वना तलेजु धा.वंगु ख: ।

थ्व हे मानेश्वरी व तलेजुया खँ कया पुरातत्व विभाग पिदंगु 'प्र.चीन नेपाल' ल्या ८२ या पत्रिकाय् "श्री तलेजु भवानी" धयागु च्वयु पित बिय धुंगु दु । ग्रन्थलि "श्री तलेजु भवानीया इतिह.स" धयागु सफ्ग्र नं न्हच्वब्यूय् धुंगु दु । उकें थन हाकनं लिसा कयाः च्वने माःथें मताया । अयसां खँया ऊवले छुं लिसा कया ह्रघब्वया च्वना ।

थनिइ क्खिबुस.त्या दं तूच्व: वि. सं ३९६ इ. सं. ३२९ पाखे याह्या लिच्छवि जुजु वृषदेव (विश्वदेव) जु "राजदेवी" धकाः नां छुना छह्या स्वःष्टदेवता स्वंगु जुल । भाषा वंशावली न्हापांगुम्या ७५ पती थथेच्वया: तःगु दु ।

"राजा विश्वदेवस्य भोगवर्ष ४८ (६१) यो राजाले पनि बहुतें नीति गतिले प्रजाप्रतिपाल गरी सुखभोग गरिरह्या । यिन राजाले दरबार ६

तला बिहार गरी बनाइ ठुलो बगैंचा वनाया । स्यहिं स्थान आपना आगम स्वेष्ठ देवता कुन नेय गरी श्री देबीका नाम "राजदेवी" भनी प्रख्यात गरी प्रतिवर्ष श्राफुले मान्दाभया ।"

थ्व भाषा वंशावलीया धापू कथं वृषदेव (विश्व-देव) जुं थ: स्वेष्ठ देवता "राजदेवी" स्वंगु पकां खत । थ्व खँयात वृषदेवया छुई लिच्छवी जुजु मानदेव न्हापांह्या थ:गु कुलयाह्या देबीयात लु्यांगु मूर्ति तया "मानेश्वरी" "धकाः नां छुना हुंगुलि गाकं तिःब: बिल । भाषा वंशा-वलि न्हापांगुम्या ७७ पती थथे च्वयाः तःगु दु ।

"मानदेव (f) वहार नाम गरी दरबारमें थ्राप्तें कुलमा श्रेष्ठ देबताकन "मानेश्वरी" भनी प्रतिष्ठा ग्न्या ।"

थ्व हे वंशावली ७५ पती थथे च्वयाः तःगु दु ।

"मानदेव राजा.ले राजकुलमा रह्याका परमेश्वरी कन भक्तिभाव गरी इश्वरीकन शाश्त्रोक्त अनुसार वर्णन गरी गीत स्तोत्र बनाई श्रघिदेख विरा-(जमान) भयाका देबीकन संसारका सार भयाका भनी श्रापना नामले मानेश्वरी प्रख्यात गरी फेरि सुवर्णका मूर्ति बनाई प्रतिष्ठा कर्म ग्न्या ।"

(५)

Image 7: Tirthalal's printed essay.

The difference between Regmi and Panta can be sharpened by considering a third position occupied by Tirthalal Na:gha:bhani. A typical work by Tirthalal has a title that conveys his topic or key argument: 'Buddha's disenchantment upon seeing a sick' (Na:gha:bhani 1107 n.s.), 'How old is the tradition of Mhapuja?' (Na:gha:bhani 1108 n.s.), 'The god Bunga: was not brought from Kamaru' (Na:gha:bhani 1111 n.s.), 'When did the Yosin festival in Bhaktapur begin?' (Na:gha:bhani 1119 n.s.), and 'Manesvari and Taleju are not different

deities' (Na:gha:bhani 1112 n.s.). Most of his writings do not have footnotes. Relevant quotes, running often over a page, punctuate his main text. References are cited before the referred elements and in the long hand. Tirthalal perceived footnotes and bibliography as mere distractions. He thought that both in-text and footnote citations are often cleverly employed by *parfesar*s (i.e., professors) to win an argument without allowing their opponents and readers to crosscheck the relevant evidence. Indeed, in resource-scarce societies like Nepal, Tirthalal saw that authors are privileged over readers by having unequal and often exclusive access to the sources of knowledge. He thus argued that historians must reveal all their evidence right in the middle of their text and not conceal under any stylistic pretensions (Image 7).

Tirthalal's insistence on embedding evidence right into the very fabric of historical text can be seen in two of his life-long history projects. The first is a family genealogy he was still preparing at the time of his death. To appreciate his endeavor, it is necessary to state that the conventional genealogy in pictorial form, true to its Indic origins, appears as an upright tree. In a more recent tabular form, it appears inverted. In Tirthalal's rendering that spans 9.75 meters long and one meter wide on Nepali handmade paper, an inverted tree was indeed an end product. But each branch of the tree has on its side a supporting evidence often copied ad verbatim from the primary sources. No explanation is provided for, no reference is cited. Tirthalal was familiar with Nepali genealogical narratives (*vaṃśāvalī*s), but he modelled his work after medieval non-narrative tree with a crucial difference: evidence is embedded right into the tree structure. Indeed, the evidence occupies a more prominent place than the tree itself (see Image 8).[16]

The second is Tirthalal's history of his family deity complex (New. *Āgaṃ-cheṃ*). The history, again modelled after medieval Newari *Chāta*s, is a series of bare particulars of events, what I have defined as 'cases' elsewhere (Raj 2012). The selection and arrangement of the cases were designed to communicate historical sense to its readers even in the absence of a narrative. Thus we have 'cases' such as the following on a single page in Tirthalal's history (Image 9):

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[16] Na:gha:bhani Collections: Tirthalal Manuscripts. 'Na:gha:bhani Genealogy.' Chart Ms. Not dated. Tirthalal Na:gha:bhani Library and Museum, Na:gha:, Kathmandu.
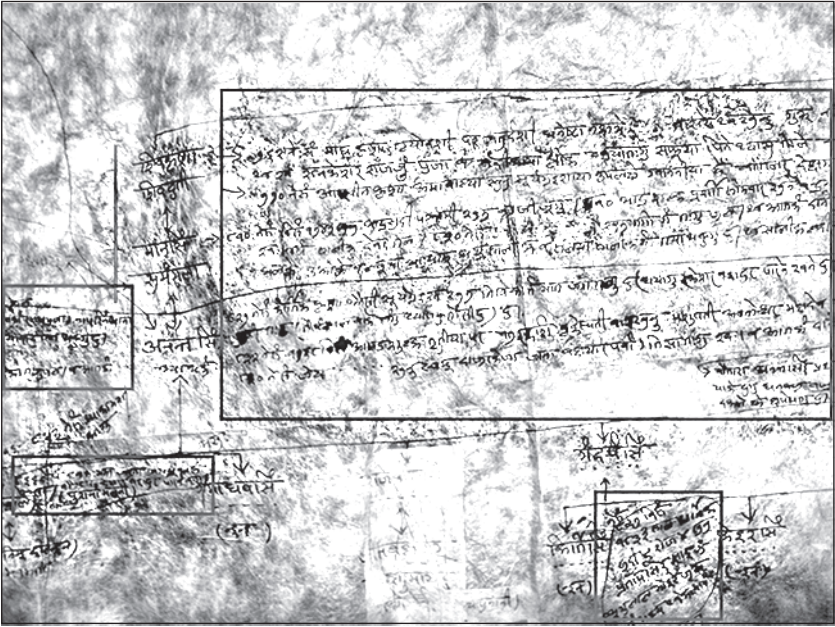
Image 8: Tirthalal's genealogical chart.

The 13th touching 14th of the Dark half in the month of Magh in 762 n.s., Dhanista constellation. Shiva Yog. On this day, Shivakrishna Bhandel, a disciple of Namju Bhaju, instituted Sri 3 Tutelary deity in Na:gha: Gvathanani, Kathmandu.

(Date not mentioned) Anuju donated two *ropani*s of land in Kovisa for performing the rituals during the Shivaratri festivals.

On the solar eclipse, the New Moon in the month of Asoj, 770 n.s., Shri Krishnaju donated the first floor of the western House adjacent to the $\bar{A}gam$, and the three-storied house in the courtyard to the $\bar{A}gam$ deity.

In 810 n.s. (blank space to be filled up later), Mansingh-ju offered the big bell in the $\bar{A}gam$.[17]

In other words, Tirthalal experimented writing a form of history, which for him, consists in non-narration and in serialising bare particulars of the past

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[17] Na:gha:bhani Collections: Tirthalal Manuscripts. '$\bar{A}gam$-dyo.' Notebook Ms. Folio c. 1117 n.s. (2054 v.s.). Tirthalal Na:gha:bhani Library and Museum, Na:gha:, Kathmandu.

१. नेपाल श्राब्त ७११ माघ कृष्ण त्रयोदशी पर चतुर्दशी भनेष्टा नहाने शिवयोगे थ्व गुरु तीनु भजुया प्रीष्ठ शिवकृष्ण गणेष न श्री दृष्ट देवतायां प्रतिष्ठा यागु जुल । न्हाछ ज्ञाथनिी । यै ।

२. आगमे शिलाचार्या था पूजा जतुर्ह त्वा थकुगु जुल । थुकेया वसान (आयका) को निश नापया हुँ २ पो त्वा थरुगु छुल ।

३. नेपाल श्राब्त ७३० आश्विन मासे कृष्णपक्षे अमावास्या तियो शुर्याषुणग पर्व मद्द उजायनिी आगौंया तिकू न्दीगु यीताहैं या श्ताँनिौया हैं श्वाँ आर्ग देवतायात श्रीश्रीकृष्णजु दु तयु जुल्य ।

४. नेपाल श्राब्त ८७० भाद्र पदमांशे शुद्धपक्षे पून्ही पूर्व चद्र ग्रह्य नहोत्रे चैत्रगौप शोभनाए नन्दयुद्धया पर्व लाका नकरले ज्ञायनिी न्वैरु मानौरीजुं पचु शिवकृष्णी ह्रैतगु हैं मगाना यीता हैंया च्युर्म कयुनं देवया जिग्नेगाणु श्वाँ हैंश्वा २ जुव १ कु ११ पाताल शुल २ कु ९ दुगागु जुल । आर्ग देवयाता ।

५. नेपाल श्राब्त ८७०
आगमे नग्वगु जी ज्ञानार्सेजुं छाग्यु जुल ।

६. नेपाल श्राब्त ८७०
आगमे थायु व जग्नं (मेश) नां न्दनागु श्रावित्ह देकातए जुल । शिजयागु दालोचाना । मा म हैंहु क २ भौ कां दे दी ।

७. ने श्रं ८७० (विश्रं १७४७) भाद्रपद पञ्चमी श्वानी नक्षन हस्मोत्वार श्रुनु मत्नीसैंद नौताश (प्रधानमखो) जूणु दिन जुल ।

८. ने श्रं ८०१ (विश्रं १७४४) भाद्रपद शुक्ल एकादशी उच्चाब्गह कुन्हार श्रुनु जुजुया श्रेजा श्रवागु वौघ विग्या नौताश तन्हौ नारायण जोशी मानौसैंद गाता नं ज्वना कुन ।

Image 9: Tirthalal's history of Āgaṃ-cheṃ.

events. Devoid of a narrative structure, and in the absence of rhetorical, interpretive or explanatory elements, this history lacked an explicit argument structure. Yet Tirthalal was confident that his readers would read these cases as evidence even without him formulating what they were evidence of. He intuitively understood that a specific order of the cases was sufficient to create an effect of reality in the mind of his readers. He knew that a particular selection of the cases itself would be perceived as an historical argument and that the historian should not burden his text with interpretation. Tirthalal's awareness of this strange relationship between evidence and argument was distinctly rooted in the medieval *Chāta* tradition, which he strove to revive by practicing. His attempt was, however, eccentric as the academic history both within formal university system and beyond rapidly disowned the local Newari historiography and adopted 'modern' Anglo-American rules of evidence.[18]

Conclusion

It is clear that academic history landscape in the post-1950 Nepal consisted of diverse forms of history that exhibited distinct relations between evidence and argument. Regmi's treatment of evidence is akin to the way academicians, both within and outside university system structure their historical narrative then as well as today. Accordingly, Regmi preferred to state his arguments, while evidence is left hidden under obscure citations. I have shown that Regmi's abstraction is often inaccurate relative to the content in the source documents. Panta's historiography is a mix of early medieval rigor found in Bhaskar's mathematical treatise and the early 20th century Indian adaptation of the colonial indological project. Panta therefore wrote history in verse, and his Samshodhan-Mandal disciples emphasized on the 'purification' of the source materials as a prerequisite of scientific historical method. The purification consisted in assaying evidence in terms of both consistency and coherence of its internal elements and its relations with member texts of the same family, or to the 'scale of texts.' The requirement means that Mandal

[18] This form of history seems to have died with Tirthalal. I have been able to trace perhaps its last occurrence elsewhere till 2016 v.s., as Chandraman Joshi of Thimi who, as a custodian of the most famous medieval *Chāta*, continued to add cases in his family book (Panta 2066 v.s.: 223). There is some evidence that Nayaraj Panta also practiced the *Chāta* historiography in the 1940s (see, M. Panta 2069 v.s.: 431–435).

historical texts remained critical analyses of evidence in which arguments were left implicit or postponed forever. Tirthalal, to contrast, modelled his history after medieval Newari *Chāta*s because he took his epistemic inheritance rather seriously. In many of his published works, Tirthalal put himself diametrically opposite to Regmi's (and ours) formal academic rigor insofar as the presentation of evidence in the text is concerned. Thus he derided the use of footnotes, in-text citations and the abstract of references. He experimented with *Chāta* because it provided him a possibility to reproduce what he perceived as a true historical sensibility and sometimes, to counter the hegemony of formal academic style of the university professors.

At stake in this analysis of evidence-argument relationship in academic historical texts is what I call epistemic diversity. Note that epistemological diversity refers to the existence of various theories about what knowledge is, how it is acquired and under which conditions knowing something becomes possible. Epistemic diversity may be said to exist if there is a variety of forms in which special knowledge (such as history) is reproduced. The Nepali landscape of history writing beyond university system in the post-1950 period can be said to be epistemically diverse one. That diversity was manifested in the variety of ways evidence was embedded in the historical texts of three individuals/institutions engaged in historical knowledge production. Regmi employed evidence as embellishments that promised to justify the argument/conclusion he developed in the main text. Mandal scholars took evidence as resources whose rigorous criticism would lead to a true and 'scientific' knowledge about the past. Tirthalal used evidence or cases as essential, and often the only, constituents of history. Metaphorically, Regmi used evidence as a feather in the cap, Panta as a feather under a lens, and Tirthalal as a feather in an arrow. Only in Tirthalal's text is the force of historical argument entirely guided by the evidence. The argument emerges there even when narrative structure is absent.

It is necessary to qualify the characterisations of the three individuals/ institutions as pure types as presented above. The three employed all three manners of use of evidence with varying degrees of consistency. Regmi was the most disciplined among the three while Tirthalal was the least consistent. Consequently, Regmi's works have been the most palatable knowledge for

the ultimate guardians of academic discipline, the university professors, who for the obvious reasons, chose to ignore both Panta and Tirthalal.[19]

Historical texts produced beyond academia in the period 1950s–1980s displayed more diverse epistemic regimes than in the texts today. Some speculation on the loss of the epistemic diversity can be made in order to prompt further enquiries into the issue. This was coincidently the same period of early expansion of the state-established Tribhuvan University in particular and the formal university system in general in Nepal. The epistemic diversity in historiography, demonstrated in this article, was gradually lost as the university system began establishing its monopoly over knowledge production. The system began dictating, for instance, what is valid form and function of historical narrative by putting narrativist historiography at the core of its history curriculum and pedagogy. Administratively, the university began regulating the system of certification and equivalence to reproduce its monopoly.

Put another way, it may be said that the loss in epistemic diversity occurred as the formal sphere of knowledge production and circulation grew stronger in Nepali academic landscape. Perhaps that was a part of a wider informality to formality shift the resource-scarce countries like Nepal were undergoing in the period. As poor societies around the world fought their poverty off to unshackle themselves from the hegemony of the few, they became poorer in the choices they had for future. Political actions were regularized as periodic elections and protests were staged with heavily stylized repertoires. Economic behaviors were normalized as transactions in the market and non-confirmatory exchanges were categorized as 'informal' (Agarwala 2013; Guha-Khasnobis, Kanbur and Ostrom 2007). Similarly, school and university education were standardized as 'formal,' while the rest was gradually brought into the margins of the formal system as 'informal education' (Baker 2011). Consequently, informal economic transactions were driven into underground. Informal political exchanges were marked as undemocratic and remnants of a feudal order. The public space, which formerly allowed all sorts of socio-cultural behavior, now increasingly became a battleground for collective rent- and privilege-seeking activities. In the period,

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[19] This can be said by taking note of the continuing trend of citing Regmi for any subject on Nepal's economic history and by very few citations Tirthalal's works managed to get from the university-based researchers (Maharjan and Raj 2013).

moves toward openness and pluralism paradoxically resulted in legitimating only a particular form of political economy that was both formal and universal. The loss in epistemic diversity was perhaps a manifestation of a deeper world historical phenomenon, which saw the rise of formality in much of the poor world in the second-half of the 20th century. But to state that with confidence, one needs to undertake a more ambitious empirical research than the scope of the present essay allows for.

Broadly speaking, this article is a preliminary enquiry into the social arrangements for the production of special knowledge. Similar enquiry may involve issues related to the involved institutions and individuals. Further, one may also investigate social rules for defining specialism and special knowledge, the distribution and reception of such knowledge and the ways people relate it to other forms of knowledge resources. Such investigations acquire an additional dimension in the context of resource-scarce societies. Conventionally, the restricted scope and access to special knowledge in such societies tend to be interpreted as a monopoly of the few over the society's capital and resources. Such a reading often results in prioritising distribution challenges over production issues. Consequently, policy recommendations focus on increasing public investments to the formal institutions of knowledge dissemination such as universities. Broadening the distribution base may, however, never help develop new formal institutions, while general neglect is causing decay in the pre-existing production sites of special knowledge. The discourse of monopoly is thus not particularly helpful if one aims to discover ways to rejuvenate knowledge generating activities in such a resource-scarce landscape. For, even if new knowledge is produced at all, new formal institutions will have limited resource and ability to claim to monopoly over such knowledge. Either plagiarism will prevail or various forms of valid knowledge will compete for authority and legitimacy.

Acknowledging the existence of a range of diverse knowledge forms is the first step towards a more realistic portrayal of the resource-scarce landscape of special knowledge production. The questions about the social arrangements of special knowledge production will then be mainly about the dynamics within such diversity. In particular, interesting lines of enquiries will open up about how only certain sites and particular forms of knowledge are considered as authentic and valid, and how other competing sites and forms are taken as fake and folk, while still others move to and fro in these

domains. Formality-informality will then appear as a spectrum and not a dichotomy. The wide existence of valid knowledge forms will afford producers of special knowledge a range of choices. As Clifford Geertz (2000) said, the celebration of diversity – in this case an epistemic one – is not much of use if that does not contribute to increasing the range of feasible options for that society to change itself.

Acknowledgement

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