

## Notes from the Archive

# MANAGEMENT OF THE RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION AFTER THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE OF 1934

Yogesh Raj

### Introduction

These documents significantly expand our knowledge of the early relief and reconstruction activities following the Great Earthquake of 15 January 1934, also variously known as the Great Indian Earthquake, 1934 Nepal-Bihar Earthquake, Bihar-Nepal Earthquake, or simply Bihar Earthquake.<sup>1</sup> Existing knowledge about the momentous event and its aftermath is primarily based on contemporary and near-contemporary information compiled in the book *Nepalko Mahābhūkampa* (Rana 1991 v.s.).<sup>2</sup> The book has undergone several reprints and a translation in recent years (e.g., Rana 2041 v.s., 2013; Brahmashamsher 2015). There was a renewed interest in the book and other published accounts on this and the other earthquakes.<sup>3</sup> However, the book has a skewed and selective character, not the least because of the author's membership in the ruling clan. It also comes through as an account of the charitable guardianship of the Nepali elite, and matches in the viewpoint with that comes through in the state mouthpiece *Gorkhāpatra*, and the related chapter in the biography of Juddha Shamsheer, the then Rana Prime Minister

<sup>1</sup> For instance, a psychological study on the rumours associated with the 1934 quake calls it the Great Indian Earthquake of 1934 (Prasad 1935); a popular wiki page in English mentions it as the 1934 Nepal-Bihar Earthquake ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1934\\_Nepal%E2%80%93Bihar\\_earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1934_Nepal%E2%80%93Bihar_earthquake)). A more recent paper on the comparative fatality during earthquakes calls it the '1934, Bihar-Nepal Earthquake' (Sapkota, Bollinger and Perrier 2016). Eleonor Marcussen (2011) has used the phrase Bihar Earthquake.

<sup>2</sup> Other contemporary studies on the 1934 earthquake are, for instances, Nasu 1935 and Prasad 1935.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Mahesraj Pant's article on historical seismicity published in 2000 is now often cited for viewing earthquakes as recurrent phenomena in Nepal (Pant 2000; Parajuli 2015). Pant himself has written several pieces for popular media on the 1934 earthquake and others in Nepali history after April 2015. See, for instance, Pant 2072 v.s.a, 2072 v.s.b, 2072 v.s.c.

(Prasad 1975). It has been aptly called a “very limited, deeply flawed” work insufficient “to study the quake as a natural disaster” (Mishra and Aryal 2015: 4). Nevertheless, the book has been featuring as the single source for analysing comparative mortality (Sapkota, Bollinger and Perrier 2016), effective approach to reduce earthquake vulnerability (Marahatta 2012), relief operations (Marcussen 2011), originality of the heritage monuments (Karki 2072 v.s.), or geological shifts (Pandey and Molnar 1988). The documents presented here, in comparison, provide us a rare view of the everyday workings of the state agency responsible for managing the post-quake operations and actions of the ordinary citizens amidst the national catastrophe.

The archival collection, from which the documents are drawn, is a repository created by the Bhukampa Pidotoddharak Sanstha (BPS), or the Earthquake Victims Relief Organization (EVRO), the state-appointed body to manage the early relief and reconstruction activities after the 1934 earthquake. This collection is now housed in the National Archives, Kathmandu, although it is not yet readily accessible to researchers. A hand list for the 23-odd bundles in the collection does not exist. It will be some time before the description of individual cotton-bound bundles become available. At a cursory glance, the documents inside the bundles appear to be thematically arranged for bureaucratic efficiency. Since the bundles were repacked and renumbered during their transfers from the original site in Kumari Chok and Central Revenue Office in Babarmahal to the National Archives in Sinhadarbar, the arrangement is not strictly adhered to. This is evident from the variations found between the hand list prepared by the National History Guide Committee in 1988, and the list maintained by the Archives. The source manual mentions ‘39 packets’ on the earthquake but does not provide the numbers (Amatya 2045 v.s.: 91), the existing list suggests packet numbers 306–310 with four bundles (*ka*, *kha*, *ga*, *gha*) within each ‘packet.’ Further, the fact that the papers of a court case of 2018 v.s. have been found inserted in the packet number 308(*ka*), suggesting a reshuffled packaging on a later date. A preliminary estimate indicates that the collection contains about 10,000 documents. It contains documents in the shape of enumeration (*lagat*), table (*terij*), petition (*bintipatra*), application (*darkhāsta*), letter and/or notice (*purjī*), registers (*kitāp*), and information report (*jāherī*). The collection is perhaps the largest repository on the 1934 earthquake anywhere in the world.

Under the aegis of the Rupture Research Program, researchers at Martin Chautari are now preparing a catalogue of the collection. The aim is two-fold: one, to make prospective researchers more aware of the various kinds of documents available for their perusal; and the other, to integrate some of the more significant texts from the collection into Chautari's own rupture research repository. The former will trigger more productive enquiries into the management of the 1934 earthquake. The latter will help situate the earthquake research in a broader perspective of the rupture research framework being developed at Chautari to understand all sorts of natural and man-made catastrophes (Raj 2069 v.s., 2013). Chautari's repository will contain valuable primary and secondary sources on all kinds of ruptures in a publicly accessible format.

In presenting these select documents, I have attempted to cover all important aspects of the post-disaster response, albeit as samples drawn from different locations: Document 1 is a damage assessment form; Document 2 is an instruction to revise the form as rehabilitation became an issue; Document 3 shows the disaggregate estimates of the inputs for reconstruction; Document 4 is a set of three papers which exhibit the negotiation between the delivering state and the demanding survivors for construction materials; Document 5 presents a way the regime targeted financial aid to the needy population; Document 6 is a view of the timber contractors attempting to benefit from the urgent supplies; Document 7 refers to a problem faced by the issuing authority in recovering the loans from the state employees; Document 8, in contrast, indicates how an individual household in a city core struggles to cope with everyday notions, which had become starkly ambivalent in the post-quake context. The episodes contained in these documents will bring inevitable comparisons to the current post-2015 quake processes.

Each document is presented here with a prefatory note, followed by its facsimile, the Devanagari transliteration of its textual content, and a faithful, if somewhat loose, translation in English. In more than one note, readers will recognize my (and I believe theirs) disappointment over the way the Nepali state is currently handling the post-disaster responses. As expressed elsewhere (Raj and Gautam 2015), I still think that normative assessment of the post-disaster operations is neither fair nor particularly helpful, although being a historian, I have difficulty agreeing with those who are adamant in ignoring the past lessons in framing the operations. The miss by the Nepali state bureaucracy and emergency aid organizations in 2015, specifically in

perusing the information architecture built during 1934, has clearly added more uncertainties and miseries of the quake-affected families.

While transliterating the documents, I have maintained the line breaks, indents and layouts so as to ease verification; ^ ( ) signs indicate crow-feet additions in the original; strikethrough letters have been reproduced as such; for deliberate blank spaces, I have used \*; for textual inconsistency and obvious omissions, I have employed the exclamation; for the texts broken due to damage, I have used the sign ]...[. In translating the Nepali text into English, I have tried not to be notarial, but preferred readability. A degree of accuracy is thereby sacrificed, but I hope, not significantly. Lastly, since this is an early dispatch from the archives, I have reserved manuscriptological remarks, or source criticism for the forthcoming publications.

## **DOCUMENT 1**

### **First Damage Assessment Form**

There were at least five sets of the data forms collected by different state agencies to assess the damages in the aftermath of the earthquake of 25 April 2015. These came in the templates prepared by (a) the Ministry of Home Affairs, (b) District Disaster Management Committee, (c) the Municipality, (d) I/NGOs, and (e) volunteer engineers. These forms were developed hastily and did not disaggregate according to gender, losses, resourcefulness and vulnerability of the affected population. They also contained ambiguous categories such as ‘partially damaged’ structures and provided a scope for subjective bias in red/yellow/green labels. Despite knowing in advance that the resulting information would be the basis for relief distribution and reconstruction, none of the forms allowed easy verification and authentication. While these assessments helped the government to apprehend the overall effect of the earthquake, in the shape of the Post-Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA), they were hardly useful for targeting and allocating relief, or for framing a robust arrangement for reconstruction. The shabby information architecture produced inaccurate data on the damage, and created a large number of fake victims. In fact, the assessment was deemed so imprecise that, after a good eight months, it was thought proper to conduct yet another ‘scientific’ damage assessment to build a more secure basis for reconstruction and rehabilitation programs. The first damage assessment form implemented as early as on Day 3 (i.e., 18 January) after the 1934

Great Earthquake was far richer by comparison. The sample reproduced here was used in Lamatar. A closer study, however, reveals that the forms used in Kathmandu city were more elaborate (viz., also contained the seals of the data gathering officials), while those in Trishuli were less so. Nevertheless, their attention to disaggregated data, not only on the dead, survivors, extent and nature of physical damage, possibility of repair, losses and household level vulnerability must be said as remarkable.

Image 1: Damage Assessment Form, 1934

Handwritten form with fields for location, date, and assessment details. The text is in Nepali script. The form includes fields for 'Location' (स्थान), 'Date' (दिनांक), and 'Assessment' (अवस्था). The assessment section is divided into 'Dead' (मृत), 'Survivors' (उत्तरित), and 'Damage' (नष्ट). The form is filled out with handwritten data.

Handwritten form with fields for location, date, and assessment details. The text is in Nepali script. The form includes fields for 'Location' (स्थान), 'Date' (दिनांक), and 'Assessment' (अवस्था). The assessment section is divided into 'Dead' (मृत), 'Survivors' (उत्तरित), and 'Damage' (नष्ट). The form is filled out with handwritten data.

Handwritten form with fields for location, date, and assessment details. The text is in Nepali script. The form includes fields for 'Location' (स्थान), 'Date' (दिनांक), and 'Assessment' (अवस्था). The assessment section is divided into 'Dead' (मृत), 'Survivors' (उत्तरित), and 'Damage' (नष्ट). The form is filled out with handwritten data.

Devanagari Transliteration

घरधनीको		थीची मरेका				बाकी जहां		जमा घर			
सहीछाप	नाउँ थर् वतन्	मरुवा.		घाईले.		वेपत्ता.		जमा		जमा घर	
		मर्द	जन	मर्द	जन	मर्द	जन	लमा	राज	तला	कची
		ना.	ना.	ना	ना	ना	ना.	ई हा	हात		पक्की
								त.			

तिमध्ये भत्केको		स्व घर भत्केको यसै साल बनाउँन स				बनाऊनै न		घर भत्की षान न			
पाता	नभत्के प	कने				सकने.		पाउँने मध्ये कां			
ल् भ	नी बी					ज्वां		गरी षान नस			
येको	ग्रेकोले							कने			
	जमै भत्का										
	उँनु पर्ने										
		सावी	तला	यो साल	बनाउँनालाई						
		क	घटा	गुजारा	चाहीने अंता						
		बमो	ई	संम च	जी माल् भनेको						
		जीं		लने गरी							

घरले पुरी नोक्सां भये को			सर्कारीया छाप रमा बस्ने	पीर बाधा प ने	कैफीयेत्
जीन्सी	नगदी को		ज्वां	ज्वां	
मुरीग त.	धानी गत्.				

English Translation

House owner's		Buried and dead				Survived family members		House			
Thumb	First name, surname, address	Dead	Wounded	Disappeared	Male	Female	Length cubits	Breadth in gauge	No of storeys	Temporary	Permanent
		Ma le	Ma le	Ma le							

Damaged among them				Whether the house can be rebuilt in a year			Number who are unable to self repair	Number of hungry family members in the damaged house unable to work and earn
Collapsed to the ground	Not fallen but required a complete dismantling	Standing	As it was	By reducing the storeys	As repairable to withstand a year	Claim for required materials for repair		

Loss in the debris			Families living in the state-provided shelter	Those in distressed condition	Remarks
Goods			Number	Number	
By volume	By weight	Cash			

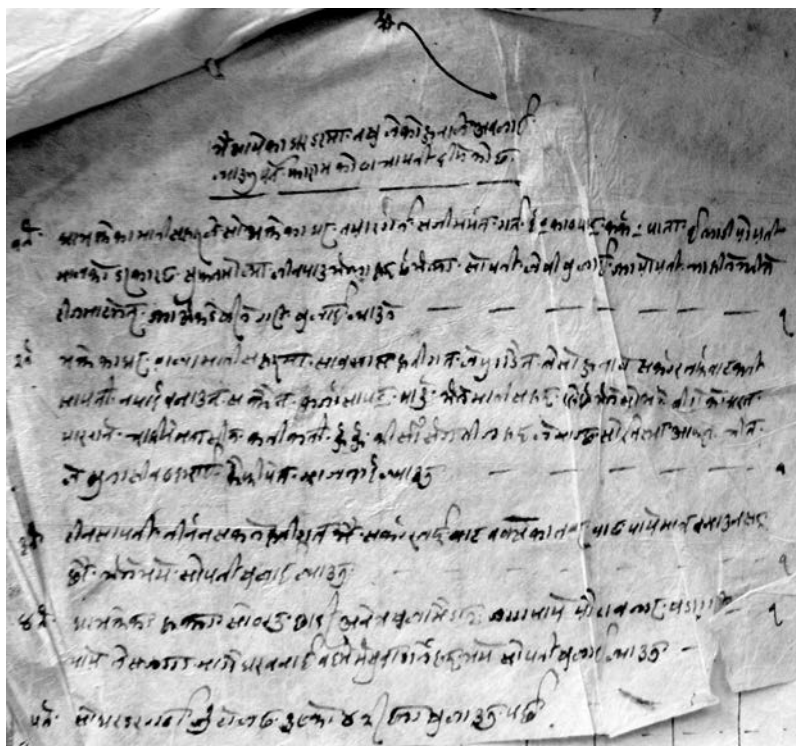
## DOCUMENT 2

### Revision in Details to be Collected

It is both necessary and possible to assess the extent of the damage and of the build back capability of the affected population in the first instance itself, if the disaster management institutions and actors therein do not suffer from amnesia. The issue of refurbish, rehabilitation and reconstruction arrives, rather quickly, after the first days of search and rescue (SAR), early relief (ER) and debris management activities. It hardly requires a great creativity to imagine the need for mobilising resources to enhance the capacity of the affected communities for repair. It may, however, take some time to develop mechanisms to implement such assistance. In the 2015 Great Earthquake, it took about eight months to constitute the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), as the major political parties refreshed the stalled task of promulgating the new constitution, allowed the related Ordinance to lapse and quibbled over the appointment of the executive for the NRA. It is expected that the first reconstruction will happen only after April 2016. It is not yet clear how the state funding will reach the targeted population and whether its full utilization can be ensured. It is clear, however, that the Nepali state is unable to match its financial relief, in the shape of the aid or loan, to the extent of damage or loss any particular household suffered. This is partly because the state does not know the need of a particular household. To compare, the managers of the post-quake activities in the 1934 Great Earthquake realized the need to know the specifics early on. Hence, in the first assessment form (Document 1 above) itself, the information on the extent of needed repair and the capacity to self repair, as expressed by the house owner was included. Yet, the Bhukampa Pidotoddharak Sanstha (BPS), a high-level disaster management authority (comparable to the NRA) asked its surveyors to collect household level data so that the government funding could be tailored to the ability and need of a particular family. As the following document shows, BPS allowed several options to the affected families: it asked the requirement of those families which preferred to pay discounted rates for the construction materials (Clause 1); it sought certified amounts of loan from others which wanted to borrow cash from the government (Clause 2); it wanted to identify those families which relied completely on the state for repair (Clause 3); and it also sought information on those families which wanted to relocate themselves with the help of the

government (Clause 4). The ‘autocratic’ Rana government thought it fit to rationalize their assistance in proportion to the household requirements.

Image 2: Additional Queries, c. 1934



### Devanagari Transliteration

श्री:

भैआयेका घरदरमा, नपुलेको हुनाले अबलाई,  
ल्याउनुपर्ने, फारामको ढाचा पनी दीयेको छ.

१. नं. घर भत्केका मानीसहरूले, सो भत्केका घर, तयार गर्न, सजीमर्मत गर्न, ईट्ट  
काठपाट, कर्क, पाता, ईत्यादी, यो येती

- मालको दरकार छ. सुफत मोल्मा. लीन पाउ भन्याहरू छं भन्या. सो पनी. लेषी  
बुलाई. ज्मा यो येती. चाहीने भनी ते  
रीजमा स्मेत्. ज्मा अंक देषीने गरी. षुलाई ल्याउने ----- १
२. नं. भत्केका घर. वाला मानीसहरूमा. सावगास हवीगत. ले पुगदैन्. तेसो हुनाले  
सर्कारतर्फबाट कर्जा  
सापती. नपाई बनाउन. सक्तैन. कर्जा सापट्. पाउँ. भन्ने मानीसहरू. रहेछं भन्ने  
सो भत्के. बीग्रेको घर त.  
यार गर्न. चाहीने मनासीब. कतीकती. कुं कुं. कीसीसंग नीजहरूले माग्छ. सो  
र तेस्मा आफ्नो. चीत.  
ले मुनासीब ठहराई. कैफीयेत. मा जनाई ल्याउनु ----- १
३. नं. रीनसापती. तीर्न नसकने हवीगत भै. सर्कारतर्फबाट बक्सेका तवरबाट. पाये  
मात्र बनाउन सक  
छौ. भन्ने भये. सो पनी षुलाई ल्याउनु ----- १
४. नं. घर भत्केका हकमा. सो ठाउ. छाडी अनेत्र षुला मैदान. जगा पाये. यौरा  
वनार. षडा गरी  
पाये तेस जगा. मा गै घर बनाई. बस्ने मंसुवा गर्नेहरू भये सो पनी षुलाई  
ल्याउनु ----- १
५. नं. सो घरदर गर्दा जुं टोल छ. उस्को. ४ कीत्ता षुलाउनु. पर्छ ----- १

### English Translation

Śrī

The sample of the form to collect data, which were not included  
in the existing household census, has also been included herein

1. If there are owners of the damaged houses, who want specific quantities of bricks, timber, corrugated sheets, etc. on discounted prices to repair or build back the houses, then bring the details on who want it, which materials are needed, how much and their preliminary costs in a clearly written tabular format ----- 1
2. If there are people among the owners of the damaged houses, who say they cannot muster enough resources to build back themselves, that they can hardly do without the aid of the government, that they want

- loans, then bring the details on the amount, the type, and the manner of their request with your own discriminatory note in the column of the remarks -----1
3. If there are people, who say that they are in such a wretched condition that they cannot pay back any loan, and they can rebuild or repair only with the grant in aid from the government, include that too -----1
  4. Among the cases of people, whose houses have been damaged, if there are some, who wish to leave their localities and build houses in open spaces or fields elsewhere granted to them, clarify that as well -----1
  5. While conducting the household census, specify the four side boundaries-----1

**DOCUMENT 3**

**Disaggregate Estimates of the Inputs to Reconstruction**

There are marked differences in the way the Nepali state used the data collected during the damage assessment surveys in 2015 and 1934. In 2015, sectorial estimates on the damage were quickly churned out to a round figure in the PDNA for the Nepal government to call for the foreign assistance, and not for calibrating the financial aid to suit as finely as possible to the individual household’s needs as it was done by the BPS in 1934. The revision introduced in the damage assessment enabled the BPS to make realistic estimates of the required inputs to reconstruction. This has not yet happened. The BPS found it important that the input estimates remained disaggregated. This could have been motivated by two connected reasons. First, since it knew that not everyone wanted free construction materials, its focus should well be in availing construction materials in the market in the required quantities. Second, the inputs were clearly not intersubstitutable or could be purchased equally easily from the market. The BPS’s mobilization strategies would then clearly depend on the type of the input. Hence, the table in the following document shows that of the total 167 households in an area claiming financial assistance of 46,355 rupees, five would relocate, 91 would take partial loans (50% of the claim amount), 44 would take loans in full (43.3%), one was poor and destitute (3.8%), and one would apply for a grant. The surveyor-in-charge considered more than 83 percent of the claim as legitimate. The distribution of claim amount per household reflects the prevailing wealth distribution. Significantly, 30 households wanted the

required inputs to be made readily available. These households wanted 136,000 bricks, 2,406 structural timbers, and 407 corrugated sheets. The need for the skilled construction worker was also clear: the households required 824 carpenters and 748 masons. Although it is not apparent from the table if these were man-days, such disaggregated data must have made the planning for inputs easier for the BPS and its constituent entities. Compared to the scenario, the reconstruction service centers, said to be established in the quake-affected districts for the reconstruction, in December 2015 have no knowledge about such disaggregated estimates and will have no option other than to wait for the quake affected families to come to their doors for advice.



## Devanagari Transliteration

### तेरीज

जमा घर -----	
आफ्नैतर्फबाट. षर्च लगाई बनाउन सक्ने माल भैछन्	
चाहिने. घर -----	३०
ईट्. -----	१३६०००
तेलीया ईट्. -----	१०००० १००००
पाको ईत -----	१२६०००
-----	
काट् -----	
मुसी गोटा -----	८८०
दलीं गो.टा -----	१३६२
नीडाल गोता. -----	३१
अग्राषको थाम गोता. -----	१३३
-----	
कर्कते पाता -----	४०७
कालीगट् ज्वान् -----	१५७२
सीकर्म -----	८२४
डकर्म -----	७४८
-----	
नगदी. षोला मैदान जाने घर ५ स्मेट्. घर १६७ के -----	४६३५५
आफुसंग रहेका जठाले नपुग् पाउँ भन्ने घर ९१ के -----	२३५०५
जमै सापती पाउँ भन्थे घर ४४ के -----	२००५०
दीन. दुःषीको घर १ के -----	१७५०
बक्स पाउँ भन्ने घर १ के -----	२००
-----	
जाच गर्ने. अफीसर.बाट. योग्य अयोग्ये मनासीब ठहरायाको	३८७०५

मे.क.प. तुलावीकम् रा.णा. -----१

नारा. रत्नबहादुर. जोसी -----१

नारा. रत्नेश्वर.लाल जोसी -----१

## English Translation

### Table

Total number of Households .....	
Those who can bear the costs of rebuilding but seek materials	
Number of households.....	30
Bricks .....	136000
Clay tiles .....	10000 <del>10000</del>
Burnt bricks .....	126000
.....	
Timber .....	
Beams in number .....	880
Rafters in number .....	1362
Cross beams in number .....	31
Pillar of Agraṣa in number .....	133
.....	
Corrugated sheets .....	407
Craftsmen persons .....	1572
Carpenters .....	824
Masons .....	748
.....	
Cash for 167 households, including five which agree to relocate in the riverbanks .....	46355
91 households seeking partial loans .....	23505
44 households seeking loans in full .....	20050
1 household of the poor and the destitute .....	1750
1 household seeking a grant .....	200
.....	
Verified by the survey officer as legitimate	38705
Mc. Ka. Pa. Tulāvīkram Rāṇā .....	1
Nārā. Ratnabahādur Josī .....	1
Nārā. Ratneśvarlāl Josī.....	1

## DOCUMENT 4

**An Enquiry into the Reconstruction Material Requirement**

The following three documents are related to the supply of timber for reconstructing a minor temple in the outskirts of the Kathmandu city. Although more digging in the archive is necessary to develop a complete picture of the procurement and distribution of the rebuilding materials after the 1934 Great Earthquake, the three documents already exhibit contrasting post-quake reconstruction plan that the one formulated by the NRA in 2015. The state agencies under the Rana regime took the responsibility for the supplies of reconstruction materials. For instance, the Offices of the Management of Woodcutting both in the mountains and in the plains would ensure the supplies of timber. The NRA, in contrast, thinks it fit to disburse two lakh rupees in three instalments to the affected households, and hopes that the ‘market’ (the private suppliers and distribution networks) will ensure the fulfilment of the householders’ need for building materials. The guidelines prepared under the aegis of the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation in 2015 also chiefly assume that the market would manage the distribution except for the communities adjacent to the community forestry. Clearly, the role (and I suspect, the responsibility) of the Nepali state in directly assisting the affected families has shrunk in recent decades. This is due perhaps to a combination of factors: it has demonstrably weak capacity to enforce rules for the fair market practices; its key officials collude with influential actors to benefit from the underground market or from bending the existing rules; and the political parties of substance show the double-tongue of paying lip-service to the ‘socialism-oriented’ Nepal and leaving the market mayhem unchecked. This has become evident both in the ways building materials for relief appeared at inflated prices in the *kabāḍī* shops, and the cooking gas shortage has continued despite the unrestricted supplies. This is not to say that the state agencies responsible for the post-disaster recovery acted in more effective manner then. The applicant in the Document 4C below resorted to circumvent the post-disaster mechanism. He sought a recommendation from the Commander-in-Chief for the conventional Building Survey Office effectively to nullify the BPS sanction, citing its inappropriateness. The circumvention attests to the fact that many got the things done in a way not anticipated by the BPS.

Image 4A: Construction Material Requirement, 1934



### Devanagari Transliteration

भूकम्प पिडितोद्धारक संस्थाबाट

श्रीपाहाड काठ कटानी बंदो

बस्त अड्डाके-----

पुर्जी

उप्रांत. पचलीभैरव. थां जाने बाटोको मचली भन्ने ठाउमा श्रीअष्टमात्रीकादेवी को थां भूकंपले भत्केको देवालय बनाउनलाई चाहिने भनि अंदाजले लेपी दी याको १२ हाते. सल्ला दलीं १० नीकासा बक्स्येको हाल. जंचाउदा. सो कीसीको न चाहिने अर्कै कीसीको चाहिने हुंदा जांची चाहिने काठ् दीनु. भन्ये र अधीको नीका साको काठ् दीनु. परेन. भन्ये स्मेत् बेहोराको. काठ्माडौं फसीकेव. बस्ने भैरव बहादुर जोसीले दरपास्त दीयाकोले. लेपेको छ. सो अधी नीकासा भयाको स ला दलीं गोटा १२ बाह्र (!) नीजले ली सक्यो सकेन. लेपी पठाउने कां गर संम्वत् १९९९ साल्. मार्ग गते रोज शुभम् -----

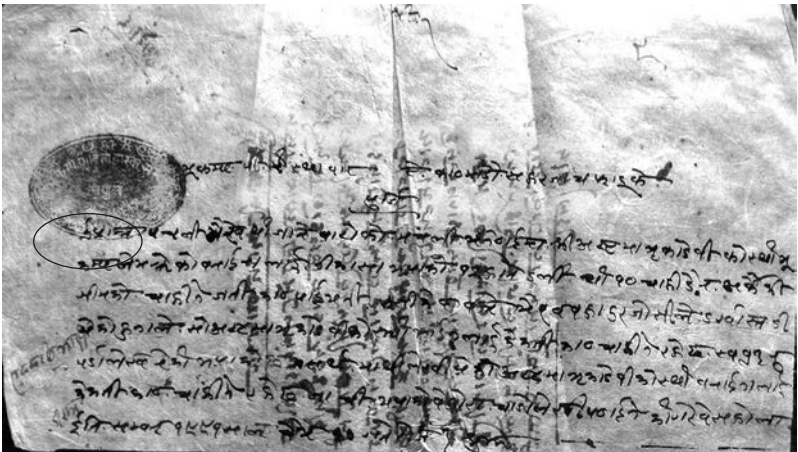
## English Translation

From the Bhūkaṃpa Piḍitoddhāra Saṁsthā to the Offices of the  
Management of the Woodcutting in the Mountains

Chit

Thereafter, in order to reconstruct the quake-damaged temple of Śrīaṣṭamāṭṛkādevī (Eight Mother Goddesses) at the place called Macalī, which is on the way to the Pacalībhairav shrine, 10 units of 12-cubit long beams made of the pine trees were roughly found necessary and sanctioned. But now upon the receipt of the application by Bhairav Bahādur Josī, a resident of Phasikeva in Kathmandu, for granting the required quantity of timber of the variety other than that previously sanctioned, and for not issuing the sanction, this letter has been written to ask you to reply whether he has already received the 12 units (!) of beams of the pine trees. In the year Saṁvat 1991, \* Mārga, \* day. Be auspicious!

**Image 4B: Reconstruction Material Requirement, 1935**



## Devanagari Transliteration

श्री:



भूकम्प पी. संस्थाबाट ऐ. काठमाडौं. सहर जाचफाट्के.  
पुर्जि

ऊप्रान्त. पचलीभैरव थां जाने बाटोको. मचली. भन्ने ठाउँमा.  
श्रीअष्टमात्रकादेवीको स्थां भू  
कम्पले भत्केको बनाउँनालाई. नीकासा भयाको १२ हाते दलीं. थां  
१० चाहीदैन्. अर्कै की  
सीमको. चाहीने जती काठ पाउँ भनी. फसीकेव बस्ने. भैरवबहादुर  
जोसीले. दर्खास्त दी  
येको हुनाले. सो अष्टमात्रकादेवीको स्थां बनाउँनालाई के कती. काठ  
चाहीने रहेछ. स्व बुभ्नु  
पर्दा लेख्ने कां भयाको छ तसर्थ. माथी लेखीयेको अष्टमात्रकादे  
वीको स्थां बनाउँनालाई  
के कती काठ. चाहीने रहेछ. जाची. भयाको बेहोरा. चाडो लेखी.  
पठाउँने कां गरे बेस होला  
ईती सम्बत् १९९१ साल. चैत्र २० गते रोज ३ शुभम् -----

श्री. राम

## English Translation

Śrī



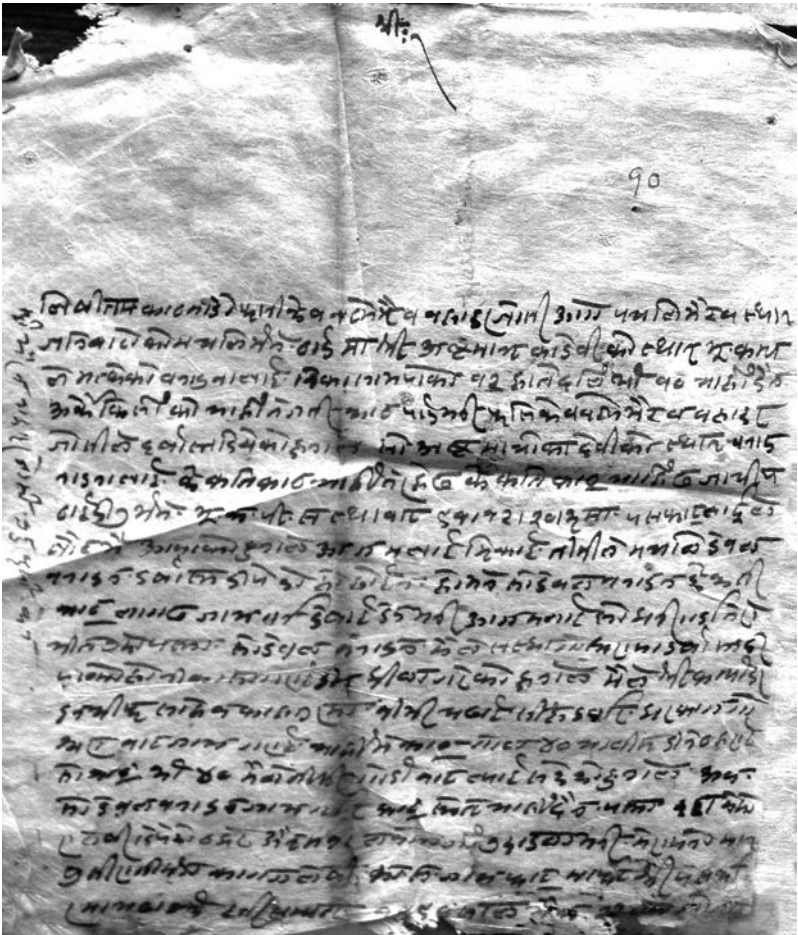
From the Bhūkampa Pī. Samsthā to the Kathmandu City  
Assessment Unit of the Same  
Chit

In response to the application made by Bhairavbahādur Josī, a resident of Phasikeva, who has said that the 10 units of 12-cubit wooden beams and posts, sent by the office, were not suitable for reconstructing the quake-damaged temple of the Śrīaṣṭamātrkādevī at Macalī on the way to the shrine of Pacalībhairav, and has requested for the required quantity of the timber of another species, this chit has been written to

Di. Ram

enquire into the quantity of the timber necessary to rebuild the temple of the Aṣṭamāṭrkādevī. It will be fitting if you could report after assessing the timber requirement for the purpose at the earliest. In the year Samvat 1991, 20 Caitra, Tuesday. Be auspicious!

Image 4C: Reconstruction Material Requirement, 1935



## Devanagari Transliteration

श्रीः

लिपीतम काठमाडौं फसीकेव वस्ने भैव(!)बहादुर जोसी आगे पचलिभैरवस्थान्  
 जाने बाटोको मचलि भंने. ठाउँमा श्रीअष्टमात्रकादेवीको स्थान् भूकम्प  
 ले भत्केको बनाउनालाई. निकास भयाको १२ हाते दलिं थां १० चाहीँदैन्  
 अकैँ किसींको चाहीँने जती काठ पाउँ भनी फसिकेव वस्ने भैरवबहादुर  
 जोसीले दर्षास्त दियेको हुनाले सो अष्टमात्रीकादेवीको स्थान् बनाउ  
 नाउना(!)लाई. के कति काठ चाहीँने रहेछ के कति काठ चाहीँछ (!) जाची प  
 ठाई दीनु भंने. भु.क.पी.सस्थाबाट ९१।९२।२०।३ मा. यस फाट्लाई ले  
 षौट भै आयाको हुनाले आज मलाई भिकाई. तीमीले मचलि देवल  
 बनाउन. दर्षास्त दीयेको हो होइन. हो भने सो देवल बनाउन के कती  
 काठ् लागछ जाच गर्न देषाई देउ भनी आज मलाई सोधनी गर्दा मेरो  
 चीत बुभ्यो यस्मा. सो देवल बनाउन. मैले संस्था गोश्वारामा दर्षास्त दी  
 याको हो नीकासा गराई दीन. धीला गरेको हुनाले मैले श्रीकम्यांडर  
 इन चीफ् साहेबका हजुरमा वीन्ती चढाई सीहदबार्. घरकाज गो  
 श्वराबाट जाच गराई. थासीं भंने काठ् गोटा ४० चालीस् दीने ठहराई  
 सो काठ् थां ४० मैले जीन्सी गोदांबाट ल्याई सकेको हुनाले. अब.  
 सो देवल बनाउन जाच गर्न र काठ् स्मेत चाहीँदैन्. यस्मा भुट्टा बेहो  
 रा लेषी दियेको ठहरे अैन् सवाल बमोजीं बुझाउला भनी. मेरो मनोमान्  
 पुसीराजीसंग कागज लेषी. का.स. जाचफाट्मार्फट श्री ५ सर्का  
 रमा चढाव्यू इती सम्वत् १९९१ साल चैत्र २३ गते ६ रोज शु(भम्)

## English Translation

Śrī

Thus has been written. Since I, Bhraiv(!)bahādur Josī, a resident of Phasīkeva in Kathmandu, have applied for getting the required quantity and quality of timber other than 10 units of the 12 cubit-long beams and posts, which are not now necessary, for rebuilding the quake-ravaged temple of the Aṣṭamātrkādevī at Macalī, on the

Sd. Bhairavbāhādur Josī Kā. Phasī Keva

way to the Pacalibhairav complex, this Office has received a letter for assessing the quantity of the timber required for the reconstruction of the said temple of the Aṣṭamātrkādevī from the Bhu.Ka.Pī. Sasthā on 91.12.20.3, this Office has sent for me and asked to confirm whether I have applied for the reconstruction of the Macalī temple and to assist its enquiry into the needed quantity of timber. This I confirm. I did apply to the Public Civil Office for the purpose, but due to delay in sanctioning the material, I made presentation at the Commander-in-Chief Saheb's office, got the temple measured by the Public Works Office at Sīmhadarbār, and since then, have received 40 units of *thāsim* from the Materials Godown according to the approved estimate. It is not necessary that this office assesses the need or issues the timber as previously sanctioned. Having fully understood that I will be liable, as per the prevailing Orders and Questions, if I have made false details here, I submit this document to the Royal Government through the Kathmandu City Assessment Unit. In the year Samvat 1991, 23 Caitra, Friday. Be auspicious!

## DOCUMENT 5

### Targeting Distribution of the Financial Aid to the Quake Affected Population

The following document provides a parallel example of the financial aid mechanism in the 1934 Great Earthquake. Several points compare well to the aid mechanism devised after the 2015 quake. The financial aid mechanism was in place in Month 4 then. By Month 7, the state had completed the damage assessment and distributed the financial relief package. It had also supplemented the survey with fresh households who had been left out earlier. The striking point is, however, the attempt of the state to match the relief with the need of the households. The 'democratic' Nepali state is so ignorant about the household variation in the need that it thought it fit to distribute resources equally irrespective of the damages. The seemingly equitable gesture is actually an inability of the state apparatus to act with just discrimination. The inability, as noted above, springs partly from its unwillingness to engage with existing social disparity. The 'autocratic' Nepali state, in comparison, was so particular that it sought to ensure that the aid recipient was a female destitute and that the substitute claimant, who applied

for the benefit after the sudden death of the recipient, was the rightful heir and a female destitute herself. The lesson is, of course, not that all-powerful ('high-level') and autonomous state agency under the 'autocratic' regime can quickly deliver relief, but that any state agency should have capacity to identify and discriminate the target of the relief flows rather early and efficiently (Roy 2012). The financial aid for reconstruction began flowing to a limited number of householders in Singati, Dolakha district about ten months after the April Earthquake in 2015. Quake-affected families in the 31 districts spent the scorching heat, torrential monsoon and severe winter in their corrugated roof shelters, waiting for the aid to arrive. The delay was attributed in part to the late formation of the NRA, in part to the donors' insistence on rectifying the number of affected households that increased every time the government announced a new relief package or conducted a fresh assessment survey. The wait was also said to be caused by putting in the place a public-private partnership modality for financial flows and an unfamiliar arrangement of branchless banking in the quake-affected districts. The new control architecture consisting of the resource centers (for assistance) and service centers (for delivery) for reconstruction still lack reach. The credibility of the government seems to have eroded to such an extent that only a tiny percentage of households have so far claimed the first instalment and some have stated that they would not actually spend it on rebuilding until more favourable prospect appear.



## Devanagari Transliteration

श्री

भुकंप पीडीतोद्धारक (!) जाची रूपैत्रा दीने भादगाउँ सहर २ नं फाट्मा. षतियेका  
ले.क.

नरहरिनरसीं राणाले चढायको रिपोट् -----  
उप्रान्त ९० साल माघ २ गतेका भुकंपले भयेका नीराधार डीं दुषीलाई फंदतर्फको  
रूपैत्रा बकस बाडी सो बाडेको फाँट् भुकंप पीडीतोद्धार संस्थामा जाहेर गर्नु भने  
गरी बकसेका ९१।१।८।६ का षड्गनीसाना सनद बमोजीं अधीका तेरीजफारांमा ना  
उँ नभयेको हाल् छुट्को लगत गरी जाच्चा डी दुषी देसीयाको भादगाउँ जाल्छे टोल ब  
स्ने मायादेवी तपोल्नीलाई फंडबाट बकस मोहरू १२५। दीने गरी लगत गरी ७  
दीने म्या

द टासेमा नीजले रूपैत्रा लीन नपाउडै ( ) मरेकोले सोई घर बनाउनालाई म पनि दीं  
दुषी नै हु. सो आमाले पाउने भयेको रूपैत्रा पाउँ भनी नीजको छोरी मसीनुमायाले दर्षा  
स्त दीयेको र सो टोल्का भलादमीहरूसंग बुभ्दा नीज मसीनुमाया मायादेवीकी  
छोरी हो योबाहेक नजीकको नाताको अरु छैन डीं दुषी नै छ भने मुष बयां गरे  
का र ब्रीगदीयेरबाट पनि आमाले पाउने यो पनि डीं दुषी हुदा यसैलाई दीनु भं  
ने प्रमांगी बींतीपत्रमा लागी आयेको स्मेतबाट नीज मसीनुमाया तपोल्नीके  
लगतमा जनाई सो मोहरू १२५।मा पैला पटक मोहरू ७५। दीयेकोले सनड बमो  
जीं जाहेर गरेका छौं जो मर्जी -----

मेक. कुवेरशम्सेर थापा छेत्री -----१

दी. कुलप्रसाद ऊपाध्या -----१

व.सु. नारायणसीं थापामगर -----१

ईति सम्बत् १९९१ साल भाद्र गते रोज शुभम् -----

## English Translation

Śrī

A report submitted by Lt. Col. Naraharinarsīm Rāṇā, deputed in Bhādgāum City Second Division for verifying the earthquake victims and distribution of cash relief -----

Thereafter, as per the Khaḍganīsānā Sanad dated 91.1.8.6 for distributing cash relief to the destitute and needy among the people affected by the earthquake of the 2 Māgh in the year 90, we surveyed the destitute and needy not included in the previous assessment survey, but included in the current survey, and found that Māyādevī Tapolnī, a resident of Nāche Ṭol in Bhādgāum, was listed as a recipient of an aid of Rs. 125, and was notified to report within seven days. However, she died without benefiting from the aid. So her daughter Masīnumāyā applied to claim that she was herself a destitute and would need the money for rebuilding the house. Upon enquiry with the gentlemen in the Ṭol, they made oral testimony that the applicant Masīnumāyā is the daughter and the only closest relative of Māyādevī. The Brigadier has also certified to allow the daughter to receive the benefits allocated for the mother. Hence, we handed over the first instalment of Rs. 75 of the said Rs. 125 in the name of Masīnumāyā Tapolnī, included the transaction in her record, and have made this representation to you. As you order -----

Ma. Col. Kuverśamser Thāpā Chettrī-----1

Di. Kulprasād Ūpādhyā -----1

Va. Su. Nārāyaṇsīm Thāpāmagar-----1

In the year Samvat 1991, \* Bhādra, \* day. Be auspicious -----

## DOCUMENT 6

### Procurement of Timber for Reconstruction

Assembling required quantities of building materials for reconstruction is nearly an impossible task in at least two specific cases. First, when existing supply and distribution networks do not have the capacity to respond to the sudden surge in the post-disaster demands, new networks will emerge to tap the opportunity and alter conventional structures and organization of the market. The new informal networks will be governed less by the interests of the quake affected population, and more by the motives of the short investors. The state, which is already impaired by its own contradictions, by the breaking down of its rules, and by the strenuous relief responsibilities, will be unable to regulate these emergent networks and actors. This will create an effect of an acute shortage in which the materials are available to the intermediaries, but not to the desperate end users. The shortage will, however, die its slow natural death as the risks of withholding will eventually become greater than the revenues from the sale. Second, when the state has heavily regulated the supplies in the past (as was the case around 1934 Earthquake), it may seek to meet the sudden surge in the demand in the post-quake context by expanding its appropriation base and/or by employing coercive means to strengthen its monopoly over supplies. But the state-regulated markets remain unresponsive and thus, the distribution networks will constrain the material flows along the prescribed paths. Consequently, a new set of speculative entrepreneurs will emerge, who, by colluding with the state authorities, will seek contracts to deliver the materials to the needy. But the absence of fully functional chains in the regulated market will cause many of these actors to fail to erect profitable distribution paths. Hence the impression of short supply will dominate the scene even though there are no constraints in the production. However, the shortage will soon become irrelevant in this case as the quake affected population will procure alternative building materials. The following document shows the process of the second kind in which speculative entrepreneurs in Khopasi sought an advance from the state to harness timber from the state-owned forests and distribute it to the affected population in Bhaktapur, claiming a better economy than the conventional state-regulated channels. We do not know if the said contract was awarded. Bhaktapur city lanes remained narrow and did not have shop lines as envisaged here. In April 2015, the city crumbled to yet another earthquake.



→

श्री गुरुदेव को २००० तेइस हजार	३ - ४ - १०१ -
श्री गुरुदेव को १००० तेइस हजार	३ - ४ - १२ -
भात भण्डाल को ४००० पाठ हजार	४ - ५ - १५ -
भात भण्डाल को ४००० पाठ हजार	५ - ५ - ५ -
भात भण्डाल को २००० पाठ हजार	५ - ५ - ५११ -
नीडाल भण्डाल को १००० तेइस हजार	५ - ५ - ११ -
नीडाल ई को ३००० पाठ हजार	५ - ५ - १३११ -
नीडाल ई को १००० पाठ हजार	५ - ५ - ५ -
	५ - ५ - २४ -

पुनः श्री गुरुदेव को थाम नीडाल हरु को बर  
 कार्तिक चतुर्थी भदौ कालीको थाम नीडाल हरु  
 तसगत १६५५ साल को ३१ तेइस ३४५५

## Devanagari Transliteration

श्री:

दर्खास्तपत्र

उप्रांत ९० साल माघ २ गतेका भुकंपले भादगाउँ सहर ज्यादै भतकेको, र सटक  
 फराकिलो ग  
 राउना नीमीत बजारको पाली जम्मै भतकाउन लगाई, बकसेकोले छेदीमा दलान  
 पोलि प  
 सल बनाई, वस्न लाई अग्राषहरु को, थाम साता कीसिंको, नीडालहरु समेत, चाहीने,  
 नली  
 नहुने, काम भयाकोले, जल्दाजल्दी मै, तयार गर्न परी, सो, थाम नीडालहरु नपाई  
 काम, ह  
 र्जा भयाको छ, तेसो हुनाले सो कामलाई, परल दरमा, सरकारतर्फबाट बीक्री गर्ने,  
 दर्लीहरु मु  
 सिसमेत चाहीयेको, काम भयाकोले ठुंपर्क २३००० तेइस हजार कटानी, बंदोबस्त, गरे

काले. दलीनहरुलाई. दुर्षर्कसरह थाम. नीडालहरु माज सजं अग्राष तीन ३ कीसीं को अग्राषको मोल लामपाटका बीक्री परीदभन्दा सवाई घटि. दिने. बंदोबस्त लि कटानी कटानी गरी. दिने. बंदोबस्त गरी पाउँ सो काट् कटानी गर्ने. पूर्व १ नंबर काभ्रे पलांचोक. ईलाका पहेरे बन. र चापोला बनहरुमा ^ (मसिपा तरी पुर्व. कोतयां गाउँ दषीन. धनदेषोला उत्तर भाषोलादो कसे दोबात् पछीं यति ४ कीलाभीत्र) कटानी गर्ने. मनसाय लि दर

कास्त. दीन. आयेको छु सो बन बनगोश्वारातर्फबाट चीताईदार राषी. बंदोबस्त. गरेका

हुनाले सो बनमा बनगोश्वारैबाट षटाई टाचा लगाई. लगायेको मीती मीतीको भरपाई. लिने दिने गरी. कटानी हुवानीसमेत. ठेकेदारैबाट. गर्न पाउने गरी पेस्की. मोहर ३०००। तीन हजार रूपैया पेस्की पाये. चट्पट्. कटानी. गर्ने. बंदोबस्त गरी बाहाली बकसि

गरी पाउँ. सो फाट् तपसिलमा लेषीया बमोजीको. काट्हरु बाहनी पायाको मीतीदे षी सो

ह्र मैन्हा भंनाले यहि ९१ साल र ९२ सालभर. हुने. भयाकाले. सोर मैन्हा म्याद मागे को छु. लेषीयेका मिती.सम्ममा चुकति गरी तपसीलमा लेषीयेको. काट् बुभाउनालाई सरकारतर्फ भादगाउँ बृकेट.मा बुभाउने बन्दोबस्त. गरी पाउँ. सो माथी. लेषीयेको सोर मैन्हाभीत्रमा. कटानी. हुवानी. गरी. भादगाउँ. बृकेटमा बुभाउँदा काट् थान

१०० दा

षील भयामा येस्को लि.येका मोरु ५०। कटा गरी दिने बन्दोबस्त गरी पाउँ. काट् द लिं मुसी. थाम साना ठुला नीडालहरु तपसीलमा षोलस्ता लेषी. दीयामा दलिंहरुकाह कलाई. सुतसल्ला पाउँने दलिंका र दुर्षर्कसरह अग्राषका थाम नीडाललाई लाम पाट्.का बीक्री.भन्दा. सवाई घटाई. दिने. छु बाहलि. गरी पाउँ. धेरै दीनको फुरसद नभये

कोले. घंटाघरको. म्याद समेत. गर्न नपरी भट् बाहलि गरीबकसे. भादगाउँ सहर.का रैतान.को. संघीसरपन पुक्ने गरी. टहल गर्दा हुं. सो व्यहोरा नठहरे अै: सवाल बमोजीं बुभाउला. -----

## तपसिल

असामी	मोटाई ई न् ची	चौडाई ईनची	लमाई फु ट्	काठ् था न १ के द्र	ताफे
दलीन. मुं सल्लाको. ३००० तीन हजार	३	४	९	-	-
दलीं. मुं सल्लाको. ४००० चार हजार.	३	४	१०॥	-	-
दलीं. मुं सल्लाको. २००० दुई हजार.	३	४	१२	-	-
मुसी मुं सल्लाको. १००० येक हजार	३	४	१५	-	-
थाम. अग्राषको. ४००० चार हजार	५	६	६	-	-
थाम अग्राषको. ४००० चार हजार	५	६	६॥	-	-
थाम अग्राषको. २००० दुई हजार.	६	७	७॥	-	-
नीडाल अग्राषको. १००० येक हजार	७	९	१३॥	-	-
नीडाल ऐं को. ३००० तीन हजार.	७	९	९	-	-
नीडाल ऐं को. १००० हजार येक.	९	११	२४	-	-

॥ ॥ ॥ ॥  
 ॥ ॥ ॥ ॥  
 ॥ ॥ ॥ ॥

पूर्व १. नं. का.प.ई. षोपासी बस्ने. हर्षबाहादुर श्रेष्ठ १  
 ऐं ऐं ऐं बस्ने. नारान भक्त श्रेष्ठ १ समेर ज्मा ज्वां २ ले दर  
 कारस्त (!) पत्र लेषी भुकंप पिडीतो.धारक सथा. सींह दर  
 बार. अडामा चढाव्यू. -----

सम्बत १९९१ साल. पौष. ३ गते रोज ३ सुभं -----

(पछाडी)

दा ११।१।१२ मा

दा ११।१।४।४ द नं ३७०

**English Translation**

Śrī

Thereafter, the city of Bhādgāum was severely destroyed by the earthquake of 2 Māgh of the year 90. And, as (your majesty) has ordered to demolish all thatched fronts in the market so as to widen the streets, there is an urgent need to supply several types of beams, cross-beams and pillars of the hardwood (Agrāṣa) necessary for erecting shutter shops on the ground floor. A shortage of beams and cross-beams has caused delays in the rebuilding efforts. For the purpose, the government needs to cut 23,000 forest (Dhūṃṣarka) trees and sell the main beams and beams at the price of its procurement. The beams are to be equivalent to the Dhūṃṣarka. The pillar and cross-beams are to be of three varieties Māj, Sajaṃ and Agrāṣa. I will supply the Agrāṣa members at a quarter less than the rate fixed by the state supply office (Lāmpaṭa). Please sanction me the work. The timber will be gathered from the Area Number 1 Kābhrepalaṃcok (from the Pahare and Cāṣolā forests in the east of the rivulet Masipā, south of the Kotayām village, north of the Dhanade stream, and west of the crossroad Dokase along the Bhāṣolā). I have come to apply for the permission to cut the trees within this area. Since the said forests are managed by the Office of the Public Forests, I also request you to sanction me, the contractor, to cut and transport the timber in return of the receipts approved with the stamps of the Office of the Public Forests. If I receive an advance of 3,000 Mohars or three thousand rupees, I will immediately arrange to cut the trees. I submit this for your approval. I will need 16 months from the date of payment of the advance to supply the quantities mentioned in the following table to the Bhādgāum Brigade. Please also order for a deduction of 50 rupees for the submission of every 100 pieces of timber to the Brigade. The table shows the quantities of beams, cross-beams, and pillars. The timber will be of pine trees for the beams and of the Agrāṣa for the pillars and cross-beams at a quarter less than the government procurement rate. As there will be an insufficient time, allow me the contract without having to

wait for the notice for the public procurement at Ghaṇṭāghar. If awarded, I will have provided my service to the people in the city of Bhādgāum. I will also be responsible as per law if any of the details mentioned above prove to be false.

Appendix

Due Quantity	Thickness in Inches	Width in Inches	Length in Foot	Unit Rate	Remarks (?)
Rafter of Pine Trunk 3000	3	4	9	-	-
Rafter of Pine Trunk 4000	3	4	10½	-	-
Rafter of Pine Trunk 2000	3	4	12	-	-
Beam of Pine Trunk 1000	3	4	15	-	-
Pillar of Agrāṣa 4000	5	6	6	-	-
Pillar of Agrāṣa 4000	5	6	6¾	-	-
Pillar of Agrāṣa 2000	6	7	7½	-	-
Cross Beam of Agrāṣa 1000	7	9	13½	-	-
Cross Beam of do 3000	7	9	9	-	-
Cross Beam of do 1000	9	11	24	-	-

Sd. Harṣa  
Bāhādur  
Śreṣṭha,  
Śopāsī

Harṣabāhādur Śreṣṭha and Nārān Bhakta Śreṣṭha both the residents of Śopāsī in Region East Number 1 in Kā. Pa. Ī. have written this application and submitted to the Bhukampa Piḍitodhārak Sathā in Sīmha Darbār -----  
In the year Samvat 1991, 3 Pausa, Tuesday. Be auspicious -----

(On the reverse)

Reg. on 91.9.9.2

Reg. on 91.9.4.4. Reg. No. 370

## **DOCUMENT 7**

### **Recovery of the Loans**

This fragment refers to the difficulty in recovering the grant of loans extended to the government employees. It was brought to the notice of the BPS that whether it was appropriate to auction the properties of those state employees, who are dead or have been sacked from the service. It was not possible to make deductions from their remuneration in kind or in cash. The by-laws ask to auction only the collaterals deposited by them. The document, issued by the BPS in 1995 v.s. and approved by its head Hemraj Pandit, reprimands the applicants for the delay they have incurred in the returns from the loans and for following the easy route of seeking further sanctions of loans from the office. It says it will hold the officers personally responsible for the default. All such loans extended to the quake-affected households by the BPS was declared on 17 Bhadra 1995 v.s. as ‘unreservedly remitted’ and would be written off (Prasad 1975: 94).



## Devanagari Transliteration

अरु सदर छ येक बाजी हाल जारी  
हुने भयेको नोटीस पनी तीनीहरु  
लाई वा. ऊनीहरुका घरका हक्  
वालालाई दीई भर्पाई लीई आऊनु वा  
हा. पछी जाहेर गर्नु मीती सदर

श्री. प्रदीप्तमांवरप्रसीधगोर्षादछीणबाहु वीद्वच्छीरोमणीनायेबबडागुरुज्यू  
गुरुराज हेमराज.पंडीतज्यू.सी आई.बाट सदर गरेको -----

यो सापटी लीने जागीदारहरु मरी घोसी घाली भयाकोले नीजहरुको पांगी वाली  
बाट कट्टी गर्न नपाई बाकी रहनेहरुको चैत्र मैन्हासंम \_\_\_ नतीरे धीतो लीलां बी  
क्री गरी उपर गर्नु भने संम लेषीयेको ली(लां) ]...[ जारी गर्ने भनी नले  
षीयेकोले नीकासा. पाउं भनी जाहेर गरे(को) ]...[ यस्लाई वीचार  
गर्दा जागीरदारहरुको रुपैत्रा असुल गर्नेबारे ]...[ बमोजीं  
असुल उपर गर्नु भने लेषीयेकै हुदा अैं सवालले जे गर्न ]...[ मा आजसंम  
सुस्ती गरी नीकासाको प्याल नराखी नीकासा पाउं भनी जाहेर गरेको देषीयेको हुनाले  
तुलिं (?) भयेका अैं सवाल सनद बमोजीं गरी उपर गर्नु ऊपर नभयेकोमा तेस अडाका  
हाकीं

तहरीरले ज्वाफदेही हुनुपर्ने छ. भनी कोसालये. मा पठाई दिनु. -----

हाकीं. मीसु. पं. राममणी आदी -----१

दी. रत्न नारायेण प्रधां -----१

ना.सु. चीनियामां. वैद् -----१

ईती सम्बत् १९९५ वैसाष २० गते शुभम् -----

### English Translation

The rest is approved. Hand  
over the notice to them or their  
rightholders with returns, and  
then report the proceedings to us.  
Approved on the date.

An order approved by Gururāj Hemrāj Paṇḍitjyū, C.I., Śrī Pradiptamām(ya)  
vara Prasīdhagorśadachīṇabāhu Vidvacchīromaṇī Nāyebbaḍāguruḷyū -----

Since the government employees, who had received loans, have died or have  
been sacked and their positions are now vacant, no deduction could be made  
from their stipend. If these debtors do not repay the loans within the month  
of Chaitra, it is written that their collaterals should be sold by auction (but)  
it is not written that ]...[ be issued. Thus, considering your application for  
sanctioning the budget, it is clear that you have dillydallied till today despite  
written rules on recovering the loans given to the government employees  
and that you have not made the application on time. Send a communication  
to the Accounts saying do recover the loans as per existing Questions and  
Orders. In case they are not recovered, the Officer and Writer will be made  
responsible for the lapse-----

Officer Head Subbā Pt. Rāmmanī Ādī-----1

Di. Ratna Nārāyeṇ Pradhām-----1

Na. Su. Cīniyāmām. Vaidda-----1

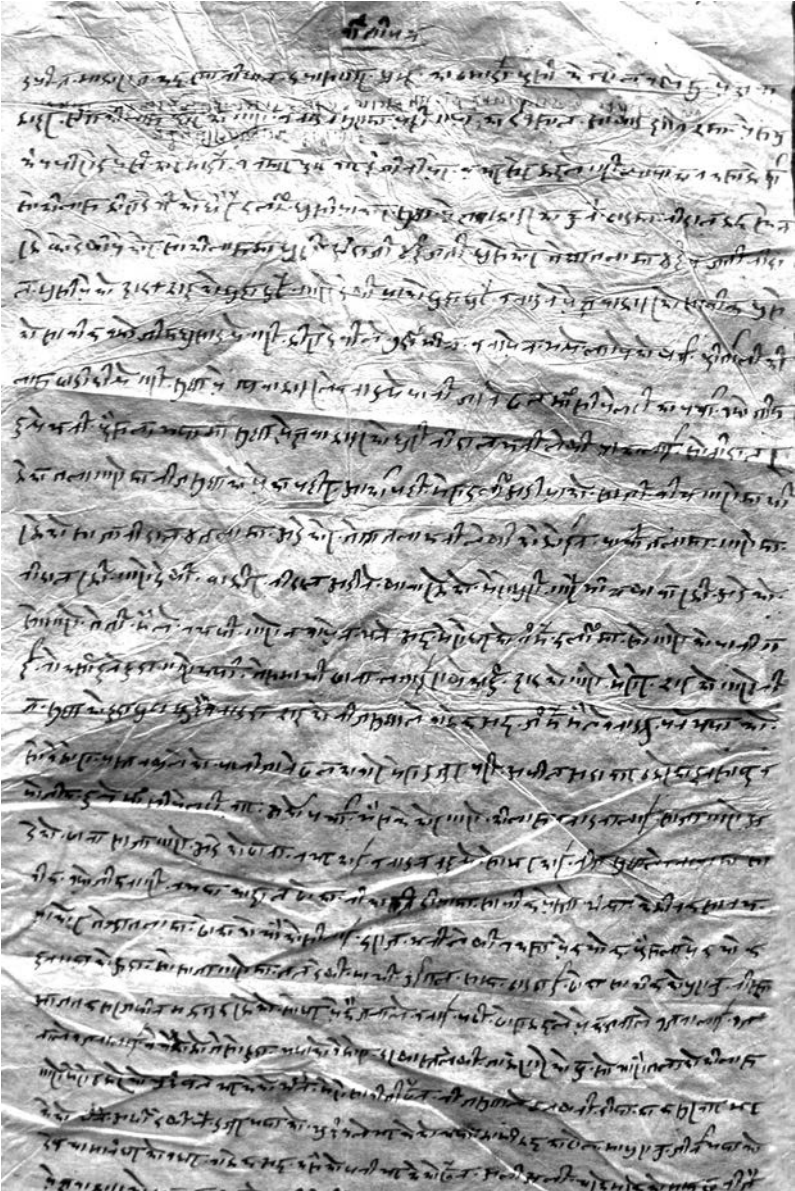
In the Samvat 1995, 20 Baisāṣa. Be auspicious-----

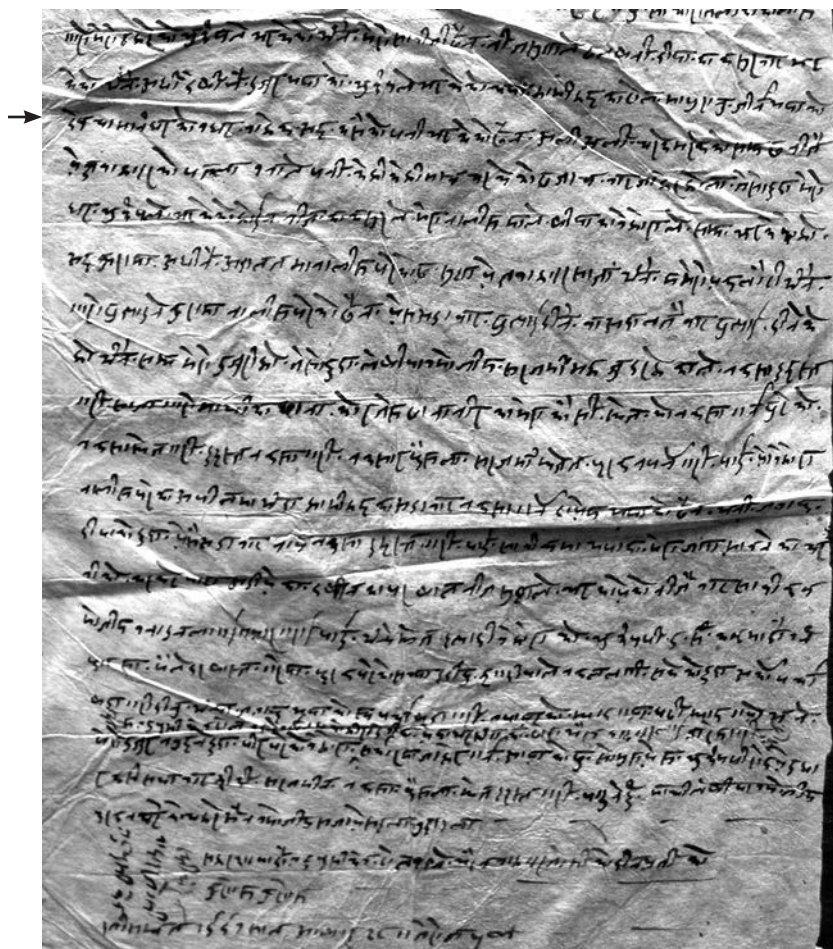
## DOCUMENT 8

### Earthquake Shook the Definitions

The petition offers a rare view about the consequences of the state reconstruction efforts on an individual household and its surroundings. It refers to a situation whereby a resident in the densely populated core in the municipality of Kathmandu found herself entangled in the property disputes with her influential neighbor. The reconstruction followed after the Great Earthquake in 1934, much like the case after 2015 quake, took neat demarcations in defining simple everyday and seemingly objective notions such as ‘house,’ ‘wall,’ ‘roof’ and ‘drains.’ As the following document shows, these notions did not map onto complex realities: what the officers viewed as a single wall turns out to be a composite artifice on which beams of two houses rest in a complicated fashion; what one claimed as a doorway was a cupboard for the other; and, what was claimed to be the outer wall (*kilās*) damaged by the earthquake was a gradual show of deliberate dereliction. The Great Earthquake brought out in the surface such dormant relationships and triggered fresh contentions in the affected society. This is the case in 2015 as it was the case in 1934. A recent Chautari publication has also shown that ambiguities over the commonplace terms such as ‘family’ (*parivār*) and ‘household’ (*ghar*), ‘ownership’ (*svāmitvako*) and ‘use’ (*basne*), ‘single’ (*ekāghar*, *eklauṭī*) and ‘composite’ (*sagol*) households became rife in the aftermath of the earthquake (Raj and Gautam 2015). Clearly, the ambivalence accentuated during the post-quake situation needs to be accommodated by developing malleable characteristics in the administration overseeing the reconstruction. Further, if such accommodation is not made at every scale in the governance of the post-quake activities, contentions will become inevitable and petty dynamics will influence the definitions.

Image 8: Shaky Definitions, 1934





### Devanagari Transliteration

#### वीतीपत्र

उप्रांत. माहाराज. करुणा. नीधान. दयासागर. प्रभू. काठमाडौं. फसीके (!) तोल  
बस्ने सु. येज्ञ बा  
हादुर. संग कीलास घरको वीगारी बनाउने मुद्दामा. येही गयाका ९१ साल साउण  
३ गतेमा येस भु

कंप पीरोदये (!) सं. काठमाडौं. १ नम्बर फाटबाट इंजीनीयेर. वभरसेरहरुले गरी  
 ल्यायाको नकसा हेर्दा  
 सो कीलास हीरादेवीको धेरै दलीं. घुसीयाको र. सुब्बा. येज्ञबाहादुरका कुनै. ठाउमा.  
 नीदालहरुस्मेत  
 रहेको देषीयेको र. सो कीलासमा पुगी. अंदाजी ४ ई जती घुसेको र. तेस्रा तलामा  
 ४ इंच जती नीदा  
 ल. घुसीयेको ३९ + २६को छुट्टाछुट्टै. गारो देषीयाको छुट्टाछुट्टै बनाउने येज्ञबाहादुर  
 को सावीक घुसे  
 को सावीक बमोजीम घुसाउनुये गरी. हीरादेवीले. ७ दीभिन्न. बनायेन. भन्ये. लागे  
 को षर्च. फीर्ता ली की  
 लास छाडी दीन्ये गरी. सुधा येग्यबाहादुरले बनाउनुये पानी जाने ढल मीसीपेलटीका  
 पर्चा. बमोजीम  
 हुन्ये भनी. फैसला भयामा सुधा, येज्ञबाहादुरको धुरी नीदाल भनी. लेषीयाकालाई.  
 सो नीदाल र  
 हेका तला गारोमा नीज सुधाको येकापट्टी र. आर्कापट्टी. मेरा दलीं अडीयाको. साती(?)  
 बीच गारोमाथी  
 रहेको साजा नीदाल ४ तलामा. अडेको र. तेस्रा तला भनी लेषी(या)को होईन.  
 पाँचौ तलामा. गारोमा.  
 नीदाल रही. गारो देषी. बाहिर नीदाल अडीने. षावा रहेको. मेरो धुरी. गारैभीन्न षावा  
 रही. अडेको  
 सो गारो. तेती. मैले. नचपी. गारो नचापेन. भने. अरु. मेरो घरको जंमै. दलींमा. सो  
 गारोको पानी ग  
 ई नोकसां हुने हुदा गारो चपी. तेसमाथी छाना. लगाई राषेका छुं. ३९को गारो. मेरो  
 र. २६को गारो नी  
 ज. सुधाको हुदा छुटाछुट्टै बनाउदा २६को नीज सुधाले बाहेक अरु. जंमै मैले बनाउनु.  
 पर्ने भयाको.  
 सो बेहोरा. पस्ट नषुलेको. पानी जाने ढलका बारे मेरा उजुर. परी. अपील अडाबाट  
 ठहरेका इनसाफ ब  
 मोजीम. हुने मीसीपेलटीबाट. अर्को पर्चा. भैसकेको र गारो. कीलास बनाउनालाई  
 साजा गारो अ  
 डेको. पाता. साजा गारो. अडेको पाता नभत्काई. बनाउन नहुन्ये. सो भतकाई. नीज  
 सुधाले बनायामा सा

वीक. बमोजीम नगरी. नभायाका भ्याल ढोका. नीकालि दीयामा. सावीक येस्तो.  
 भन्त्या. केही नकसा नभ  
 याको र तेसा तलामा. ढोकाको चौकोसीलाई. दराज भनी. लेषी नकसा येक थोक.  
 फैसला येक थोक  
 हुन गयाको हुदा. सो साजा गारोमा. तल देषी. माथी. बुईंगल. सम्म. ठाउठाउँ. ढोका  
 सावीकको पुरानु. नीस्सा  
 आजतक सरजमीन महजुद रहेको. सो घर येकैजनाले बनाई. पछी. छोराहरुले येक.  
 जनाले १ जनालाई. १ ज  
 नाले १ जनालाई. बेचेको हो. तेसो हुदा. भयाको बेहोरा. दरपास्त लेषी. जाहेर गरेको  
 छु. सो चारौ तलाको कीलास  
 गारो मेरो ठहरेको भुकंपले भत्केको भन्ने. मेरो. सावीती छैन. नीज सुधाले ढल पनी.  
 दीया.का कसुरबाट भत्  
 केको. भन्ने. अघीदेषी नै. उजुर भयाको. भूकंपले भत्केको भया. हामीहरुको टोलमा.  
 पुरानु. जीर्न भयाको  
 देवचा मानधरको १ घरबाहेक. अरु. कसैको पनी भत्केको छैन. अली अली चरके  
 मरकेकोसम्म छ नीजै  
 येज्ञवाहादुरको पल्ला १ नाले पनी. केही केही मात्र चरकेको छ जाच. बाट जाहेर  
 होला. तेसो हुदा मेरो  
 घर. भुकंपले. चरकेको होइन. नीज. का कसुरले. मेरा नालिसमा ले. पीयाको बेहोराले.  
 सम्म चरकेको हो.  
 अरु कुरामा. अघी नै. अदालतमा नालीस परेको छ. येज्ञवाहादुर साजां भन्ने. म मेरो  
 यकलौटी भन्ने.  
 गारो घुसाउने कुरामा नालीस परेको छैन. येस अडाबाट. घुसाई दिने. वा अदालतैबाट  
 घुसाई. दिने के  
 हो भन्ने. सम्म मेरो उजुरी हो. तेसो हुदा. लेषीया बमोजीम. सरजमीं महजुद रहेकाले.  
 नकसा दुरुस्त  
 गरी साजा. गारोमाथीका छाना.को र तेस छानानीरका मेरा कौसी. स्मेत.को नकसा  
 गर्नु परेको.  
 नकसा स्मेत गरी. दुरुस्त नकसा गरी. नकसा र फैसला. सरजमीं स्मेत. फरक नपर्ने  
 गरी. पाउँ. यो बेहोरा  
 नालीस परेका अपिलमा भंदा हामीहरुका अडाबाट नकसा गर्ने टायेम भयाको छैन.  
 भनी. जवाफ.

दीयाको हुदा. यसै अडाबाट नाप नकसा दुरुस्त गरी. पाउँ. सावीकमा भयाका. मेरा  
जगामा बनेका घर (भत?)  
नीको. करकट पाटा अडीयेका. दलीनका परपाल नीज सुदाले. भत्कायेको नीजैबाट  
सावीक ब  
मोजीम बनाउन लगाई तयार गराई पाउँ. भन्नेस्मेत इत्यादी बेहोराको. भुकंप पी. उ.  
सं. काठमाडौं १ नं  
फाटमा. मैले दरषास्त. गरेमा. फरक परेको सच्याइ दीछु. भगदीयाले नकल लगी.  
सकेको हुदा अर्को पर्चा  
षडा गरी दीनु. भन्दा. जवाफ भयाको सो पर्चा. षडा गरी. तपा(?) परको. म्याद पट्टा.  
पढी म्याद गयो भने.  
मेरो उजुर नबुझ्ने हुदा. पीर परेको बेहोरा. (का.ई. फसीकेव टोल बस्ने वर्ष ४५  
को हीरादेवी र. येका घरसंगका. छोरा भैरववाहदुरलाई वारेस गरी) सर्कारमा जाहेर  
गर्न. आयाको छु. सो मुदा यस. भुकंप पीरोदयेउधा  
रक संस्था (!) बाट भीकी. सरजमीन. नकसा. फैसला. स्मेत दुरुस्त. गरी. पाउने हुँ.  
माथी लेषीया बमोजीम  
फरक नपरेको थहरे. अैन बमोजीम सजाये सहुला बुभाउला -----

सहर काठमाडौं वटु फसीकेव. टोल बस्ने भैरववाहादुर जोसीको  
दीनप्रतीको  
कुणेश कुणेश -----

इती सम्बत १९९१ साल आषाढ २८ गते रोज शुभम् -----१

## English Translation

### Petition

Thereafter, O Great King, the Source of Compassion and the Ocean of Pity, O Lord! In the law suit on destroying the outer wall of house against Yejña Bāhādur, a resident of Phasīke(va) Tōl in Kathmandu. I found that in the maps produced by the engineers and overseers in the First Division Kathmandu of the Bhukampa Pīrodaye (!) Sam. on 3 Sāun of the year 91, many beams belonging to Hīrādevī penetrated in the wall and the rafters belonging to Subba Yejñabāhādur were resting on the wall at several places,

were embedded on the wall for about four inches, including in the third floor, where there are two walls of thickness 3'9" and 2'6" clearly seen as separate. In the note of the decision that Yeḡñabāhādūr would rebuild the portion of his structures and if Hīrādevī would not construct her part, Yeḡyabāhādūr would build for her in return of the expenses incurred but would leave his claim, and that the drainage would be built as per the notice of the municipality, the rafters mentioned as belonging to Yeḡñabāhādūr are actually sitting on the wall which supports the beams also belonging to me. The common rafter rest on the walls through the four floors, and the pillar supporting the rafter is actually on the fifth floor and not on the third floor as stated. This pillar is located within the wall supporting my roof. If I have not placed the roof over the wall, the water would have sipped in and destroyed all beams in my house. I have therefore covered the wall by a roof. The 3'9" thick wall is mine, and the 2'6" belongs to him. If we build our houses separately, it was not clear whether I would have to build everything save the said wall of 2'6". Hence, I also made complaints about the water drainage, and the Municipality has established the note to act as per decision of the on-going appeal. It will not be possible to reconstruct the outer wall without demolishing the common wall. If he builds on simultaneously, he can place windows and doors, and since there is no map representing the existing state, and since he has already claimed a door frame as being a cupboard and the map varies with the decision. The common wall is so far verily standing from the ground up to the kitchen as it has always been. This house was built by a person, and the heirs of the person had sold their shares to different individuals. What I have stated are all verifiable facts. The outer wall belonging to me was not destroyed during the earthquake, but was fallen also because of the improper water drains due to his negligence and I had already complained about it before. If it could be destroyed by the earthquake, houses in our quarters except the old and weak house belonging to Devacā Mānamdhar were not destroyed, only slightly showing hairlines. An examination would also reveal that Yeḡñabāhādūr's own house of single measure (*ek nāle*) was also little affected. My house was also damaged not by the earthquake, but by his negligence which I have elaborated above. Other issues are already under the consideration of the court. There is no dispute on whether the wall, which Yeḡñabāhādūr claims as his and I as mine, is to be built in situ, but my application is only about whether the office will build it or through the court orders. Thus, since the existing details on the site are as stated above, I

request the office to amend the maps by depicting the roof above the common wall, and my own terrace near by the roof. As the appellate court has said that it would not soon verify the maps, I am asking this office to amend its documents. The portion of my standing house, which is covered with the corrugated sheets, together with the wall on which beams are rested, and is damaged by him, I request the office to make him rebuild the portion. I have made this application to the Bhūkaṃpa Pī. U. Saṃ. Kathmandu First Division. I am ready to make necessary amendments. Since my disputant has already taken its copy and if delayed, the deadline for response may also pass, hence with this urgency, I, Hīrādevī, age 45 and a resident of Kā. Ī. Phasīkeva, and Bhairavbāhadur, my representative, and son residing in the single family, have come to apply to this government. Let this Bhūkaṃpa Pīrodayevdhāraka Saṃsathā conduct the field assessment, call the maps and decide. If I am proven to falsify or provide inaccurate information, I am ready to face punishments as per the law in the country.

Sd Bhairav  
Bāhādur,  
Phasīkeva

Bhairavbāhādur Josī, a resident of Phasīkeva Vaṭu Ṭole in the city of Kathmandu, hereby offers his billions of obeisance.

In the year Samvat 1991, 28 Asār, \*day. Be auspicious!

### Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the contribution of several friends in the Rupture Research Group, who are currently engaged in the social audit of the relief and reconstruction activities in several districts. In particular, Ashmita Khanal, Bhaskar Gautam, Bikrambhakta Deubanjari, Nicky Budhathoki, Pushpa Dahal, Rabindra Dhakal, Rukh Bahadur Gurung, and Shradha Ghale have brought me reasons for a more penetrating historical research on the 1934 earthquake. I am grateful to Deepak Aryal for his assistance in the archival work. I thank both Pratyoush Onta and Ramesh Parajuli for their meticulous comments on the draft.

### References

- Amatya, Saphalya, ed. 2045 v.s. *Raṣṭriya Itihās Nirdeśan Samiti (Nepal). Śrot Pustikā Mālā Saṃ. 1*. Kathmandu: Department of Archaeology.
- Brahmashamsher. 2015. *Nepalko Mahābhūkampa, 1990*. Fourth edition. Kathmandu: nepa~laya.

- Karki, Gauribahadur. 2072 v.s. Kasto Banlā Lāl Vaiṭhak Bhavan? *Kāntipur* (Koseli), 29 Fagun, pp. Gha-na.
- Marahatta, Punya Sagar. 2012. Community-Based Approach to Reduce Earthquake Vulnerability in Kathmandu Valley. *Indonesian Journal of Geography* 44(2): 161–172.
- Marcussen, Eleonor. 2011. Competing Knowledge: Explanations to the Cause of the Bihar Earthquake 1934. Paper presented at the conference on the Transculturality of Historical Disasters: Governance and the Materialisation of Glocalisation, 3–5 March, New Delhi.
- Mishra, Shamik and Deepak Aryal. 2015. 1934 Earthquake Revisited: A View from the Archives. Paper presented at the Annual Kathmandu Conference on Nepal and the Himalaya, 22–24 July, Kathmandu.
- Nasu, Nobuji. 1935. The Great Indian Earthquake of January 15, 1934. *The Bulletin of the Earthquake Research Institute* 13(2): 417–432.
- Pandey, M.R. and Peter Molnar. 1988. The Distribution of Intensity of the Bihar-Nepal Earthquake of 15 January 1934 and Bounds on the Extent of the Rupture Zone. *Journal of Nepal Geological Society* 5(1): 22–44.
- Pant, Mahesraj. 2000. A Historical Seismicity in Nepal. *Adarsa: A Supplement to Purnima* 2: 29–60.
- Pant, Mahesraj. 2072 v.s.a. Nepalko Bhūkampako Nālibeli. *Rājdhānī*, 15 Baisakh, p. 4.
- Pant, Mahesraj. 2072 v.s.b. Vi. Saṁ. 1865 ko Mahābhūkampa. *Rājdhānī*, 24 Baisakh, p. 6.
- Pant, Mahesraj. 2072 v.s.c. Vi. Saṁ. 1990 ko Mahābhūkampa ra Tatkalik Masijivī. *Rājdhānī*, 1 Saun, p. 7.
- Parajuli, Hari Ram. 2015. Estimation of Seismic Intensity at Lalitpur, Nepal. Available at [www.nest.org.np/usmca2015/session/6\\_SN1-6\\_fullPaper\\_HariParajuliSession.pdf](http://www.nest.org.np/usmca2015/session/6_SN1-6_fullPaper_HariParajuliSession.pdf); accessed 15 December 2015.
- Prasad, Ishwari. 1975. *The Life and Times of Maharaja Juddha Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana of Nepal*. New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House.
- Prasad, J. 1935. The Psychology of Rumour: A Study Relating to the Great Indian Earthquake of 1934. *British Journal of Psychology* 26(1): 1–15.
- Raj, Yogesh. 2069 v.s. *Krambhanga ra Sambhār: Nepali Itihāślekhānmā Hastakṣepkā Nayā Sandarbha-bindu*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.
- Raj, Yogesh, ed. 2013. *Ruptures and Repairs in South Asia: Historical Perspectives*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.
- Raj, Yogesh and Bhaskar Gautam. 2015. *Courage in Chaos: Early Rescue and Relief after the April Earthquake*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.
- Rana, Brahma Shumshere Jung Bahadur. 1991 v.s. *Nepalko Mahābhūkampa (1990 sāl)*. Kathmandu: The Author.

- Rana, Brahma Shumshere Jung Bahadur. 2041 v.s. *Nepalko Mahābhūkampa (1990 sāl)*. Third edition. Kathmandu: Sahayogi Press.
- Rana, Brahma Shamsheer Jung Bahadur. 2013. *The Great Earthquake in Nepal (1934 A.D.)*. Translated by Kesar Lall. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Roy, Tirthankar. 2012. *Natural Disasters and Indian History*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Sapkota, Soma Nath, Laurent Bollinger and Frederic Perrier. 2016. Fatality Rates of the Mw~8.2, 1934, Bihar-Nepal Earthquake and Comparison with the April 2015 Gorkha Earthquake. *Earth, Planets and Space* 68: 40, DOI: 10.1186/s40623-016-0416-2. Available at <http://earth-planets-space.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s40623-016-0416-2>; accessed 15 March 2016.

### Biographical Note

Yogesh Raj is a historian who specializes in medieval and modern South Asia. His recent publications include *History as Mindscapes: A Memory of the Peasants' Movement of Nepal* (2010); *Expedition to Nepal Valley: The Journal of Captain Kinloch* (2012); *Sandhya Samrachana: Hindu Newarharuko Mrityuchetana* (2013), *Ruptures and Repairs in South Asia: Historical Perspectives* (2013, editor) and *Courage in Chaos: Early Rescue and Relief after the April Earthquake* (2015, co-author). He is currently the research director (material transformations) at Martin Chautari, Kathmandu. Email: [yogeshwithraj@gmail.com](mailto:yogeshwithraj@gmail.com)