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## **Wood Carving in fourteen Mathas Of Bhaktapur**

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### **Abstract**

The house represents the residence of the common people whereas the palace denotes the residence of a king or an emperor. Similarly, Sannyasi (ascetic) lives in monasteries. All such dwellings have wooden windows attached to it. Windows are essential elements in a building. The ancient civilization of the Kathmandu Valley have the tradition of making various forms of windows and carving them into the form of art. The fourteen Mathas of Bhaktapur can be taken as an example to illustrate the historical artistic windows. Such windows are Gaahjhya, Sanjhya, Mhaykhajhya, Sujajhya, Bimanjhya, Tikijhya etc. The monasteries of Bhaktapur built in the Middle Ages have many artistic windows, which has been bringing in light to the medieval civilization developed in the Nepal Valley. These art and architecture have attracted many domestic and international tourists. Therefore, it is important to protect and publicize these heritages.

**Key words:** ascetic, Bimanjhya, Gaahjhya, Mhaykhajhya, Matha, Sujajhya, Sanjhya, Tikijhya

### **Introduction**

The abode built for the Sannyasi (ascetics) is 'Matha', which denotes the Hindu monastery. Ascetics is a branch of Shaivist sect. 'Matha' is an ideal model of Nepalese art and architecture that developed during the medieval period. Just as Buddhist monks live in monasteries, ascetics also lived in 'Matha'. People who have entered the life of a Sannyasi, as well as the disciples who have come with them to acquire knowledge stay in the 'Matha'. Each 'Matha' has a chief abbot called as Mathadhish or Pirmahant. If the chief abbot dies, his body stays inside. There is a tradition of burying the body in the same monastery with a structure built on it. The buried corpse has a Shivalinga (statue of Lord Shiva) installed on it. Due to this reason, no outsiders worship the Shivalinga of the monastery. Such monasteries, big or small, all belong to the Hindu community. Inside the monastery, there are mahants who are in charge of worshipping and providing security to the temple. Moreover, they arrange accommodation for the guest Sannyasi. Bhaktapur district is famous for such monasteries. There are only fourteen monasteries in the city. These monasteries are Pujari Matha, Taja Matha, Dathu Matha, Sithu Matha, Chikanf Matha, Godavari Matha, Bardali Matha, Pulanchota Matha, Taumadhi Jangam Matha, Sukuldhoka Matha, Talakwa Matha, Kutu Matha, Kwathandau Matha and Jangam Matha respectively. Among them, Jangam



Matha is the only Matha where ascetics of Jangam caste reside whereas the Giri and Puri ascetics inhabit all other monasteries. The concerned Sannyasi run the monasteries. According to local Jangams, their ancestors were priests of the Vishwanath temple in India. To develop Shaivism in the country, Yakshamalla, the medieval popular king of Nepalmandal brought them Nepal from Kashi. That is why the Jangams of Bhaktapur claim to be Brahmins. Even now, Jangam Sanyasis worship Gokhureshwar Mahadev in Dhulikhel, Dhaneshwar in Banepa, Bhaleshwar and Indreshwar in Panauti, Doleshwar in Sipadol, Anantalingeshwar in Gundu, Bageshwar in Bageshwori and Kileshwar Mahadev in Changu. The above-mentioned monasteries of Bhaktapur city are very famous from the perspective of religion as well as architecture. Its construction is a remarkable example of traditional Nepali architecture, built in an artistic and attractive style. The wooden windows, doors, Tundals (struts) and pillars attached to it are artistic. This article discusses about the artistic wooden windows connected to those monasteries.

#### a) **Taja Matha**

The Dattatraya temple of Tachpal area in Bhaktapur is located in the middle of a large courtyard. There are various monasteries on the right and left side of the courtyard. There are three monasteries in front of the temple, at its southern side. Among them, the first is Taja Matha. Its front is facing towards the north. An inscription that dates 830 Nepal Sambat mentions this monastery, stating about the erected statue of God Bishweshwor. This means that the monastery was built before the date mentioned in the archives (Rajbanshi, 2020: 72). The name clarifies that this monastery was taller than the other monasteries. The word Taja in Newar language means tall. Since the monastery and its base were taller comparatively, it got its name as Taja Matha. According to the locals, its height became similar to other monasteries during its renovations. Built in the traditional architectural style of the Kathmandu Valley, the monastery has three floors, which looks very attractive because of the artistic wooden windows attached to it. It has three Tikijhya (traditional eye window) on the first floor and Panchmukhi Gaahjhya (five-faced traditional windows) on the third floor. There is a big court inside the monastery. The other building of this monastery that faces north has two three-faced windows. Among them, one is Sanjhya at the first floor and the other is Gaahjhya at the second floor. In terms of wood carving, this monastery is remarkable. The artists represented their artistry through the masterpieces of wood art in this monastery. Thus, it carries a great significance.

#### b) **Dathu Matha**

Another monastery is the Dathu Matha, located within the courtyard of the famous Dattatraya temple. The name originates from Newar language. The word "Dathu" refers to the special space between any two objects. Dathu Matha, which is connected with Taja Matha

has another Sithu Matha towards its west. As this is located between two monasteries, its name is Dathu Matha. The wood carving here is superior. It has three floors. There is a Toran (pylon) above the entrance of the monastery.



Three Mathas: Taja Matha - left, Dathu Matha - middle & Sithu Matha - right  
(Source: Author)

There is a window 'Panchamukhi Paasukajhya' on the first floor just above the pylon. It also has two other artistic Tikijhya, one on the right and the other on the left. The special feature of Dathu Matha is the five-faced Pasukajhya, because no other monastery in Bhaktapur has such window. On the second floor is a five-faced window, named as Bimanjhya. Inside the monastery, the buildings around the courtyard have only ordinary windows. However, all the windows of this monastery have pylons installed.

### c) Sithu Matha

Another monastery in the courtyard of the Dattatraya temple is Sithu Matha. It originates from the Newar language. The word 'Sithya' denotes on the edge of something. Sithu Matha, Dathu Matha and Taja Matha connect to each other. The monastery got its name as Sithu Matha because it is located towards the end. In fact, the word "Sithu" is the corrupted form of "Sithya". The monastery has three floors. Its front faces towards the north direction. The first floor facing north has three Tikijhya, and Vimanjhya in the second floor. The shape of that window resembles Sanjhya. Similarly, in the second floor, a large window is located at the middle and two small Tikijhya on its right and left side. The west face has ordinary windows.

#### d) Pujari Matha

The largest monastery in Bhaktapur is the Pujari Matha, which has many artistic windows. It is located at the southeast corner behind the Dattatraya temple. It is unknown, when and who had constructed this monastery. However, there is a belief that the medieval king Vishwamalla had added new floor in the Dattatraya temple, and made a monastery to worship the temple. Moreover, he had set Guthi as trust to meet the financial burden (Munankarmi, 2025: 27). Even though, there are eight monasteries in Tachpal tol, the name of the specific monastery built by the king is unknown. Even so, the priests of the Dattatraya temple are still living in the same monastery. On the other hand, since the Dattatraya temple is associated with this monastery, there is an assumption that Vishwamalla built Pujari Matha by himself.

Other copperplates related to the local monasteries in the Tachpal Tol have also come to light. The copperplate that dated 846 Nepal Sambat during the reign of King Ranjit Malla of the medieval Bhaktapur kingdom, mentions that Gyannathi Bhimal Giri and Dayalgiri had set aside 52 ropanis of land for building and operating the monastery meant for the Shivalingas, namely Bishweshwar and Vishwanath (Panta, 2032: 23-25). The copperplate further states to provide regular meals to the monks through the income of that land. Furthermore, it adds the responsibility on two monks to take care of the monastery. Since the copperplate does not mention the name of the monastery, we cannot be sure that it is Pujari Matha.



Front facade of Pujari Matha with different windows  
(Source: Author)

Pujari Matha is the oldest among the fourteen Maths of Bhaktapur. This monastery is very famous in terms of architecture as well as wood carving. The walls have varieties of



attractive windows attached to it. Therefore, it sets an excellent example of medieval wood carving. There is a belief that Mahant Loknath Giri expanded the monastery by buying seven houses from the local people. The built structure is according to the medieval architecture of Kathmandu Valley. The main entrance of the monastery faces towards north. There are small windows to the right and left of the main entrance. Right above the door are five-faced Bimanjhya and various types of Tikijhya (eye window). The eastern facade of the monastery also has a variety of windows. The Mhyakhajhya (peacock windows), Gaahjhya and Tikijhya (eye window) here have enhanced the beauty of this monastery. Similarly, on the west face, there are Sujajhya (sun window) and Tikijhya. There are three courtyards inside the monastery named as Muchuka, Tunchuka and Hitichuka. Upon entering through the main entrance, Muchuka falls on the left. The houses around the courtyard have different types of wooden windows like Gaahjhya, Sanjhya, Panchamukhijhya (five-faced window), Chhapajhya (one-faced window), and Tikijhya. The ground floor of all houses surrounding the courtyard are open, called as dalan (timber frame), and the first floor above them has windows named as Sanjhya, which are three-faced and five-faced. Along with that, there are other Tikijhya. The second and third floors are fitted with Gaahjhya and other ordinary windows. Tun Chuka lies towards the left side of Mu Chuka. There is a deep well at the centre of this courtyard. In Newari language, “Tun” refers to the well. In this sense, this courtyard got its name Tun Chuka. This courtyard holds an image of Sivalinga, also known as Pretalinga. According to local personality Dwarika Banepali, that image was established upon the dead body of abbot (Banepali, 2070). Therefore, local people do not worship the image. Hitichuka is located at the southern border of the Matha and goes past the Mu Chuka. It is the biggest courtyard among the three. A tap stands at the centre of the courtyard, called as Hiti in Newari language. This courtyard got its name as Hiti Chuka due to the tap. There are also beautiful wooden windows of Sanjhya, Tikijhya and pillars. At present, this monastery is operating as a museum displaying wood craft.

#### e) **Chikampha Matha**

Chikampha Matha is located in the northeast corner behind the Dattatraya temple. At present, the Government of Nepal operates the monastery, under Department of Archeology as a Bronze Museum. The name of the monastery is in Newar language. The word 'chikan' refers to the mustard oil and the word 'fah' refers to the house belt. The slippery bricks of equal size on all sides refer to 'Chikanapa' (oil bricks) in Newar language. We can assume that during the construction of the monastery, its belt was made of 'Chikanapa'. That is why the name of the monastery became Chikampha Matha. At present, there are only ordinary bricks at the belt of the monastery. Due to many renovations done at this monastery, instead of oily bricks, the belt has just the ordinary bricks. The monastery has three floors. The front is facing towards the south with five Tikijhya installed on its first floor. On the second floor, there is an artistic five-faced window, Bimanjhya. Towards its right and left are single faced

windows of Tikijhya. Inside the main entrance is a courtyard with houses around it. The ground floors around the courtyard are open, called as dalan (timber frame). The first floor has Tikijhya and the second floor has Bimanjhya, Gaahjhya, and Chhapajhya on it. Among them, the single-faced windows are small and simple. At the northern side of the dalan is a Shivalinga, placed right above the buried corpse. In fact, this monastery is remarkable for its wooden windows.

#### f) Godavari Matha

To the northern side of the Dattatraya temple is Godavari Matha, located between the Chikanpha Matha and Bardali Matha. Due to the lack of historical sources, it is not possible to say for sure how Godavari got its name. Godavari is also the name of a famous pilgrimage site, located at the corner of Lalitpur district in Kathmandu valley. Besides, Godavari is a famous river flowing in South India. In this context, the assumption is that this monastery allowed only monks from the Godavari pilgrimage to stay, due to which this Matha got its name as Godavari Matha.



Chikanpha Matha - Right and Godawari Matha - left

(Source: Author)

The monastery has three floors. It also has artistic wooden windows. The south face of this monastery has three Tikijhya on the first floor and a Bimanjhya on the second floor. Similarly, the ground floor of the monastery is open, called as dalan. The first and second floors have verandas with eye windows.

### g) Bardali Matha

Another monastery aligned with the eastern border of Godavari Matha is the Bardali Matha. This is a south-facing monastery. The west side of the Matha is open because of the road. On the second floor of the monastery, there are Bardali (verandas) with five bays on the south wall and nine bays on the west wall. That is why the Matha got its name as Bardali Matha. However, there are no other windows on the west side. Two single-faced windows are located on the first floor at the front side of the monastery. The appearance of these windows is comparatively ordinary than other monasteries. Inside the monastery, there are artistic windows. On the second floor, we can see three-faced artistic Sanjhya. The assumption is that the front windows changed in the process of renovating the monastery.



Pulanchwata Matha - left & Bardali Matha - right

(Source: Author)

### h) Pulanchwata Matha

Pulanchwata Matha is also one of the monasteries with artistic windows in Tachpal Tol, located on the western side of Bardali Matha. This three storeyed building has its front façade facing towards the south. The east, west and south part of the building lies along the road, therefore all these three faces are open. The name of the monastery comes from the Newar language, where 'Pulaan' means old and 'chwata' means the first floor of the residence. Therefore, "Pulanchwata" refers to the first floor of the monastery. The architecture of this monastery is slightly different from other monasteries. All the monasteries have only one level roof at the top. However, there are two roofs in Pulanchwata Matha. The

main roof is similar to the roofs of other monasteries. The secondary roof covers the additional structure attached the ground floor of the main building at west and south direction. Therefore, this Matha has windows just from the first floor. The front face of the first floor has different types of windows like Pasukajhya, Gaahjhya, and Tikijhya. Similarly, the second floor has three-faced Sanjhya, with Chhapajhya on its either sides.

#### **h) Kutu Matha**

Kutu Matha of Thathula area of Bhaktapur Kwathandau toll is another important historical heritage, which has artistic wooden windows. The wooden windows attached to all the facades of this monastery displays extensive artwork. It has three floors with its front façade facing towards east. All the front windows of the first floor are Tikijhya. The second floor has three-faced Gaahjhya at the centre with single-faced Chhapajhya at its right and left. Similarly, the inner courtyard has different types of windows on all its four walls. The windows include Gaahjhya, Sanjhya, Chhapajhya and Tikijhya. Therefore, this monastery is also remarkable in terms of artistic wooden windows. There is a source to prove the historicity of this monastery. The inscription of 888 Nepal Sambat of the medieval king of Bhaktapur kingdom, Ranjit Malla mentions about the established image of Shivalinga within the monastery (Rajbanshi, 2020: 46). The image is on the ground floor towards the west side of the courtyard. This clarifies that Kutu Matha existed since the Middle Ages.

#### **j) Kwathandau Matha**

There is another monastery in Kwathandau Tol, called as Kwathandau Matha. The monastery has three floors. This north-facing monastery has only three faces, east, west and south. Its area is smaller than other monasteries and its appearance is simple. In the inner courtyard, the ground floor around it is open. However, a Shivalinga is placed above the buried corpse, towards the east. There are various types of windows on each facade of the courtyard. Those are Chhapajhya, Swapajhya, Tikijhya and veranda windows. These are also of simple design.

#### **k) Jangam Matha**

Jangam Matha in the local Taumadhi tol is one of the famous monasteries of Bhaktapur. Sannyasi named Jangam inhabits this place; therefore, this Matha is Jangam Matha. King Vishwamalla of the medieval Bhaktapur kingdom built it in 692 Nepal Sambat (Regmi, 1966: 28-30). According to Rammani Jangam, who is an ascetic of the same monastery there is also the idols of Birbhadreswar, Siddheshwar, Bishweshwar, Nilakashteshwar, Pashupati, Shmasaneshwar, Kotilingeshwar, Umamaheshwar and Kshetrapal (Jangam, 2055: 79). This three-storied monastery occupies a large area of land than others. This east-facing monastery has three different courtyards, which holds many



wooden windows. Beside one window at the front, most of the windows do not look so remarkable in terms of artwork. The artistic window is Pasukajhya, located at the front towards the east direction. Compared to other windows here, the oldest is about 800 years old. Besides, all the other windows are simple. Even this monastery has one Sanjhya and other Tikijhya. From an artistic point of view, those windows are also of simple style. Even though this monastery belong to Medieval Age, it is surprising to see this monastery having only ordinary windows. In this context, the assumption is that there were alterations in the windows during the renovation of the buildings.

#### l) **Sahayak Jangam Matha**

There is another small monastery nearby, about 100 meters to the north from the Jangam Matha, considered as an auxiliary monastery of Jangam Matha. During the death of the relative of any ascetic living in the main monastery, he has to shift to this auxiliary monastery. Including the ground floor, this auxiliary monastery has two floors. There is three-faced artistic Sanjhya at the centre of the first floor with Chhapajhya towards its right and left.

#### m) **Sukuldhoka Matha**

Sukuldhoka Matha located at the central area of Bhaktapur city is also very famous. The name of the monastery came from a local area, Sukuldhoka Tol. This north-facing monastery consists of three floors. The east, north and south facades of the courtyard have different artistic windows attached in a suitable format. However, most of windows look new which might have been changed during the renovation of the monastery. Nevertheless, the windows seem very attractive. The main attraction of the monastery is its front part. All the inner faces of the ground floor have dalan (timber frame). There are artistic and attractive Tikijhya in the first floor and five-faced Panchmukhi Gaahjhya in the second floor.

#### n) **Talakwa Matha**

The name of this monastery, Talakwa Matha came from the local Tol. Apart from that, it is famous as Ikhalachhe Matha, which has also come from the local Ikhache Tol. During the process of renovation, this west-facing monastery has become slightly modern. This monastery currently houses the Ward No. 12 office of Bhaktapur Municipality. However, all the houses situated inside the courtyard are in deteriorating condition. The main entrance has falecha (public rest house) on its either sides. Attached next to it are two simple designed Tikijhya. The first floor has a five-faced Panchamukhijhya and two other Tikijhya on its right and left. All these windows are simple in design. The second floor has a balcony and a single window. However, there are some historical windows inside the courtyard. The ground floor of the monastery at the northern side is open. Above that, there is a one-faced

window on the first floor and two other Tikijhya on its either sides. Similarly, the second floor has a three-faced window installed on it, which are also in dilapidated condition.

In this way, all the monasteries of Bhaktapur have artistic wooden windows. Windows of most of the monasteries are excellent from an artistic point of view. The remarkable progress made by the Bhaktapur state in the field of wood carving, during the Middle Ages is visible through the monastery architecture. Like other buildings here, the wood carving decorates the monasteries. The concept of Matha in Nepal purely relates to Shaivism. The then Malla rulers had also contributed to spread Shaivism. They built the monasteries at different times. In order to raise the necessary expenses for its operation, land was set aside and the group called guthi (social organizations) would operate it. As a result, the monasteries here became stronger religiously, culturally and economically. A vivid example of this is King Vishwamalla. He considered the Jangams of Shaivism as his spiritual tutor, gave them the title of “Rawal”, and placed a Jangam Guthi in Taumadhi Tol near the palace (Jangam, 2055: 78).

### **The Features of wooden windows**

As previously mentioned, Mathas are more popular because of its fine wooden art. Numerous artefacts carved on the windows relate to all the monasteries. These artefacts have not only enhanced the beauty of the windows, but also enhanced the glory of each of the monasteries. The paper further discusses some of the major windows related to these monasteries and their features.

#### **a) Gaahjhya**



Gaahjhya placed at the Muchuka of Pujari Matha

(Source: Author)

Gaahjhya is one of the best specimens of wooden arts, decorated in the wall of different Mathas. The name Gaahjhya has come into practice from Newari language. The word Gah means ditch and Jhya denotes window (Kolver & Ishworanand, 1987: 28). Three openings of the window lie horizontally and the upper portion of each window is oval shaped. Gaahjhya slants toward the right and left edges. Besides this, Gaahjhya is a deeply seated roofed window, which stays in slanted position at its front (Shepherd, 1982: 132). In the slanting portion, two decorated struts hold the burden of roof and set up the frame for the window. The windows' inner frame is square as well as rectangular shaped and some windows have an arched panel. The principle pier attached to the window has different designs engraved in it. The lower part has different patterns of thirty-five headed lion, dog's teeth, round flower and designed with frills. In this part, three small flying Garuda are also engraved and decorated with latticework in diagonal and rectangular pattern.

#### b) Sanjhya



Sanjhya of Kutu Matha

(Source: Author)

Sanjhya is also an excellent emblem of the wooden art developed in Kathmandu Valley during medieval period. There are two types of Sanjhya, one with three openings and other with five openings. However, Sanjhya refers to every historical window with three openings (Joshi, 2046: 32). Another name for the window with five opening is Panchamukha Jhya. Both types of windows have decorated latticework in diagonal and rectangular pattern. The center of the window has a small-carved image of God in Aasan Mudra (pose). The upper part has cusped arches. Similarly, the secondary lintel and base extends throughout the

length. The apron plank has a rod pattern with forty small birds carved just below. Additionally, there is an image of flying Garuda at the lower part.

### c) **Bimanjhya**

Bimanjhya is located in the wall of different Mathas. The name of window comes from the Newari language. The word Biman means the chariot or vehicle of God and Goddess, and Jhya indicates the window. In other sense, it refers to window with balconies. Bimanjhya has horizontally placed five openings. Its upper part has cusped arches, decorated with flower leaves, trees, lotus leaves and rope (kipah) patterns.



Bimanjhya of Chikanpha Matha

(Source: Author)

Both the right and left side frames have small pillars with Kalasa design. The lower part has latticework in diagonal and rectangular pattern. The window has arts of flying fairy, snake and flying Garuda. The lower part of the surrounding frame (puratva) has sixty-four lion heads, dog's teeth patterns and frills.

**d) Mhaykhajhya (peacock window)**

Mhaykhajhya of Pujari Matha

(Source: Author)

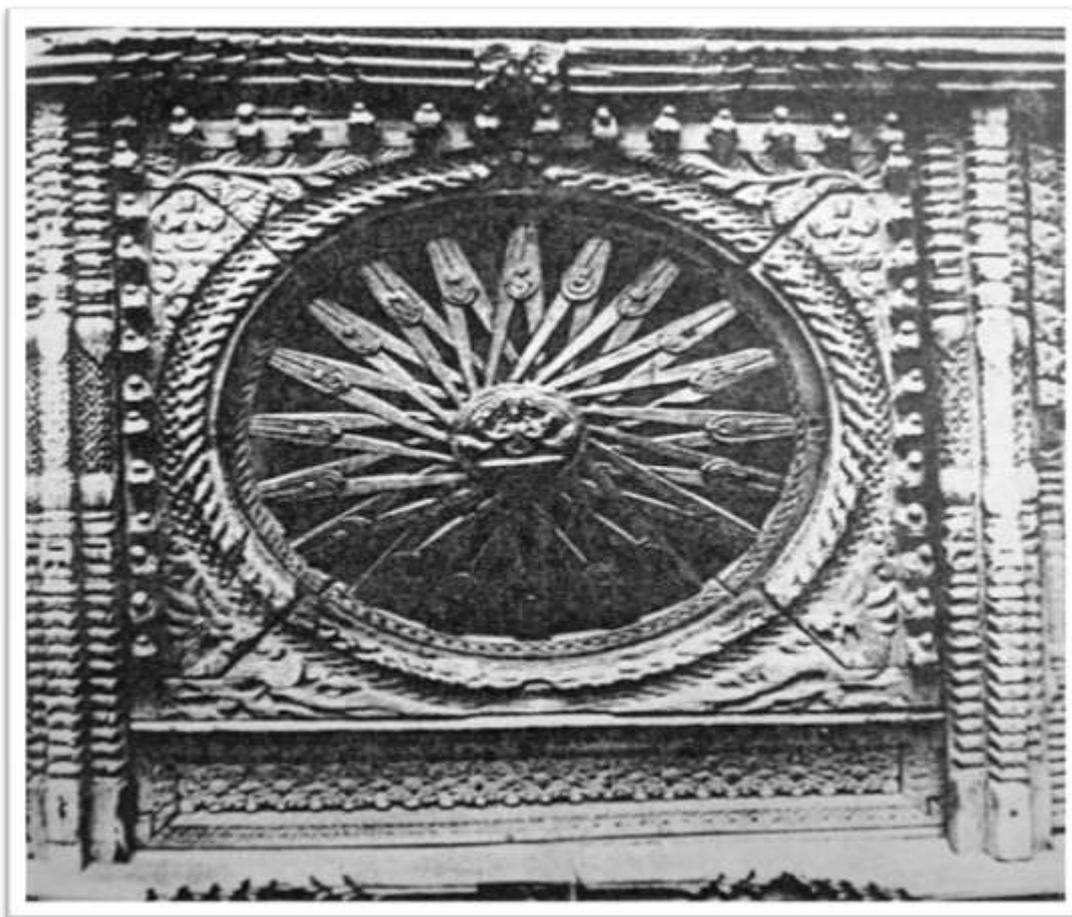
The Pujari Matha is also popular as the peacock window house. There are numerous windows embellished in the Matha, among them peacock windows are more popular. The Matha has three types of such windows. The first type has a peacock carved at the centre that is round shaped and has its feather spread. The shape of the inner frame of the window is square with small birds carved in rows. The right and left edges of the frame have two flying fairies. The upper side has many heads of skeleton and the lower side of the frame has three carved images. Among them, the image of Bhairav gets the centered focus with devotees towards right and left edges.

The second type of the window has a single standing peacock carved at the centre laid within triple encirclements. Its latticework is in diagonal pattern. Flowers and leaves decorate the whole windows.

The third type of window is like a small Tikijhya, square in shape with nine small peacocks. The inner side, lintel and outer frames of this window has decorated pateerns such as chin pattern, flower pattern, river water pattern, jasmine leaves and dog's teeth pattern. The frame of all these peacock windows have various designs and these windows are on the eastern wall.

**e) Sujajhya (Surya Jhya)**

Surya Jhya is one of the well-known window, and it is a specimen of woodcraft of the medieval period that lies in the western wall of the Matha. The name is Surya Jhya because the center of this window has an image of sun with Usha and Pratusha.

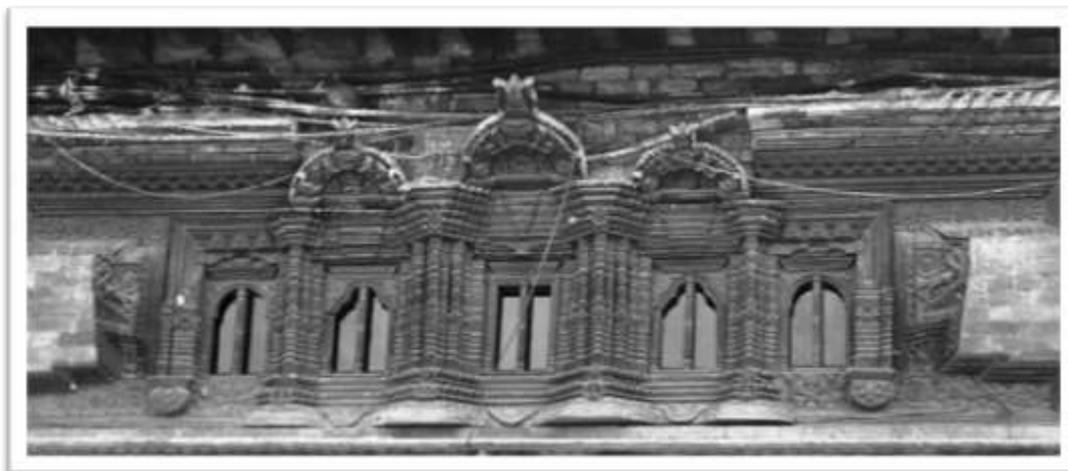


Suryajhya of Taja Matha

(Source: Google)

The name came from the Newari language that denotes sun and window, respectively. The middle part of this window is round shaped and has latticework and sunray patterns. At the upper side, there is an image of five-headed serpent. The inner frame is square in shape, which has an image of thirty-eight small birds at its upper side. Additionally, it has many heads of skeleton.

**f) Pasukajhya**



Pasukajhya of Dathu Matha  
(Source: Author)

In the Newar community, pasuka refers to a type of ceremonial thread used for special worship of gods and goddesses. People make pasuka by weaving raw yarn of five different colors. After worshipping God, the devotees accept it as a gift from the deity and wear it as a garland. Windows carrying such symbols refer to Pasukajhya. Such window would have a row of three or five small openings. It is small; however, it has panels attached. Pasukajhya has artistic patterns. Usually, the first floor has such windows, for instance in the historical temples, Dyochan (houses of god and goddess), Agamghar, Vihar, palaces and houses. The upper square of the window has carvings of skeleton's heads, teeth, buffalo's eyes, hog plum seeds, flowers, etc. The right and left wings of the window have carvings of the sun, moon, flowers, waves, and animal figures. At the bottom of these wings are statues of Hindu and Buddhist deities according to their respective religions (Joshi, 2046: 47). The best example of this window is Dathu Matha and Jangam Matha.

**g) Tikijhya**

Tikijhya placed at the courtyard of Chikanpha Matha

(Source: Author)

Tikijhya is a kind of window, which has numerous rectangular shaped small holes, instead of a large opening. Various types of Tikijhya include square, rectangular, round, oval, and cusped arch, which has been set up at different parts of the Matha. Decorations of its outer frame include lion heads pattern, dog's teeth pattern, row of birds and flower pattern. The middle parts have latticework, which have diagonal, rectangular, deistic, and Macika pattern, along with patterns of snake with fangs. Both the left and the right edges of the inner frame have small pillars with Kalasa design. Moreover, lower parts of the windows have carved flowers and smaller images of god and goddess.

**Conclusion**

The highest development of art and architecture occurred in the medieval Nepal Valley. Mathas of Bhaktapur city is a vivid example. The Matha denotes Hindu monastery, which particularly serves as a residence for the ascetics. By looking at these monasteries, we can experience the Newar civilization of that time. Matha is an ideal model of Nepalese art and architecture that developed in the medieval period. In fact, the art and architecture is the mirror of the society that represents the features and characteristics of the contemporary society. The monasteries have their own characteristics in terms of architecture. On the other hand, numerous models of woodcarving installed provide a good knowledge of the medieval civilization of Newar society. Among the fourteen monasteries mentioned above, Pujari



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Matha is the best in terms of wood carving. The edifice of the Pujari Matha is artful and its courtyards as well as woodcarvings are amazing. However, other monasteries also have beautiful wooden windows. There is no doubt in saying that Nepalese society and its art and architecture have religious impact, since the beginning. The Mathas clearly illustrates it. Their construction practices carry spiritual significance. All the monasteries have Shivalingas erected right above the buried corpse. Besides that, the windows have various type of deities and art carved on it. The foreigners who visit the Mathas have heartily appreciated it. Their appreciation shows its importance in the field of Nepalese art and architecture. However, the condition of some monasteries now a day has deteriorated. We need to place special emphasis on its maintenance and renovation to prevent the destruction of such historical heritages.

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