



Newsletter

SONA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER VOL.5

Nov. 14, 2021

SONA

**INTERNATIONAL
CONVENTION
2021**

President's Message

The month of October or the month of Dasain is normally a month of holidays, relaxation and fun with the family. Among the festivals we celebrate, Dashain being the greatest one for Nepalese is always celebrated with the zeal and in joyful ways. It is celebrated almost for 15 days in the month of October: 1st, 7th, 8th, 9th and the 10th days being the most important.

Dashain not only reunites the families and friends but it also gives the working people time to relax and enjoy with family. Dashain festival marks the victory of truth over untruth. With regard to this, Hindu scripture defines the two events as the starting of the celebration of the festival. The first one is when the cruel demon Mahisasur was killed by the Goddess Durga. After this victory, the Dashain festival is believed to be started. Another one is when Ramchandra and Sita returned to Ayodhya after killing the evil Ravan who had kidnapped Sita. The celebration of Dashain has social and religious importance. It is an occasion of peace and goodwill.

But for me and my 14th EC Team: we have, sacrificed the time to work hard on preparing for the International Convention 2021 between the 30 & 31 October. This is to commemorate our very own Birthday way back 31 years ago, with the Convention and an Awards Ceremony for the first time.

The short inauguration should of the event will be started with the Key Note Address by Hon. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai former PM of Nepal and having an architect/planner background too. The closing and awards night will also witness an interaction session with none other than the Pritzker Prize Laureate Ar. Balkrishana Vitthal-

das Doshi. The Technical Sessions coordinated by the Technical Chair Dr. Shittal Babu Acharya has about 8 international speakers in 2 Plenaries and then the Technical Sessions over two days has 19 presenters. It will be fun, I am sure. But the attraction is the Awards evening: students, design competition, professional work. This where SONA wants others to appreciate good work.

However one of the toughest job was planning for the above events We have had to very carefully look at the

·Organization: our own strengths and appropriately using our resources

·Multitasking: trying to do cover up all gaps by juggling with various tasks

·Time Management and Deadlines: squeezing every minute for getting the job, on time; especially towards the D-Day

·Tight Budgets and Sponsors: for a qualitative Convention and seeking Sponsors to make up

·Registration and attendance: the biggest worry when it is hybrid

·Communication: the IT interfacing with online presenters - international and national

·Marketing: Overcoming this with brochures, flyers and a press release

Each one of our team members have been doing especially well, despite the festivals which all want to celebrate that was dismal by the COVID 19 pandemic last year. Nevertheless, with such a beautiful layout I am sure we will all enjoy to celebrate the SONA Day with the International Convention



2021 and the Architectural Excellence Awards. Join us on the 30th & 31st, physically.

Ar. Rajesh Thapa
President
14th Executive Committee
Society Of Nepalese Architects (SONA)

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On 30th and 31st Oct, 2021 Society Of Nepalese Architects (SONA) conducted 'SONA International Convention 2021' on the theme 'The Architectural Response to Global Challenges'.

About 300 national and international participants including Architects, government personals, representatives from different NGO's and INGO's, media persons, Professionals from vari-

ous fields and students participated in the event physically and virtually.

The ceremony was inaugurated by Chief Guest Rt. Hon. Vice President of Nepal Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun by lighting the Diyo. Former Prime Minister of Nepal Architect Planner Hon. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai presented the keynote speech. Invited Speakers from different coun-

tries and organization presented their papers on the given theme track, which than was followed by presentations from selected individual speakers.

The detail proceeding of the convention will be published soon. So we request all the participants to get their copy from SONA Office.

SONA Day 2021

On 31st Oct, SONA celebrated the 'SONA Day 2021' on the occasion of 31st anniversary establishment of Society Of Nepalese Architects (SONA). Director General of Department of Urban Development and Building Construction Er. Navaraj Pyakurel was chief guest for the event.

The anniversary was celebrated with various events like SONA EXCELLENCE AWARD 2021, SONA Design Competition Award, SONA Student Essay Competition Award etc.

The event also featured special remarks from Pritzker Prize Laureate Ar. Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi where

participants had chance to interact with the architecture Legend.

The event was followed by Cake cutting and musical program. And program was finally concluded with dinner party.



SONA president and convention chairman Ar. Rajesh Thapa delivering the welcome speech



Chief Guest Rt. Hon. Vice President of Nepal Mr. Nanda Bahadur Pun inaugurating the ceremony



Former Prime Minister of Nepal Architect Planner Hon. Dr. Baburam Bhattarai presenting the keynote speech



Ar. Uttam Shrestha a former member of the Modular Group in Nigeria and also a former active participant of Society of Consulting Architecture and Engineering Firm (SCAEF), left for heavenly abode on 16 April 2018. He received his Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Roorkee (1970-1972), worked in the Department of Housing Building and Physical planning and was also a life member and Fifth president of Society of Nepalese Architects (SONA).

Mr Shrestha had professional experience spanning over 38 years and commanded much respect in the field of innovative design and physical landscape planning. In his early professional life Mr Shrestha worked with the Department of Housing building and planning for six years during which he was responsible for such prestigious projects like the design of VVIP lounge at Kathmandu International Airport, coronation mandap, Herbarium building complex at Godavari botanical garden, Ram Janaki vivah mandir at Janakpur and also the rehabilitation of Shiva mandir at Varanasi, India.

From September 1978 to July 1981 he contributed to the Architect's Modular Group where he supervised various building projects undertaken by the firm in Nigeria, which included built forms like University of Ilorin, High rise apartments for Nigerian external telecommunications Ltd, Office building for international banks for West Africa Ltd at Lagos etc.

After returning to Nepal, in 1989, he established the firm Architect's Module at Sitapaila, Kathmandu, under which he stood as the managing director as well as the chief architect. With Architect's Module he completed several projects such as Rajshri Gurukul school building at Bhaktapur, Hotel Century at Biratnagar, Lumbini eye institute building complex at Siddharthanagar etc.

The Kumari Ghar, popularly known as the Kumari Bahal, is of town house design. It is the first structure to meet the visitor of Durbar Square as it lies at the Bashantapur Durbar Square. It is above all the sacred home of the living goddess or vestal virgin and it has housed goddess- children since it was built by King Jay Prakash Malla in 1757 A.D. (1813 B.S.) The three-step entrance to the shrine is guarded by two stone lions painted white. The outer doorway has a huge wooden Toran a very impressive display of the temple artistry as do each of the four wooden windows of the first floor and seven windows of the second floor. The four large outer windows of the second level have famous peacock designs filling them. The windows of the third floor are more usual including black-painted triple groupings at the center which slants forward, and round windows in rectangular frames between these groups. Deeply carved Cornices (an ornamental molding around the wall of a room just below the ceiling) stands below the upper two rows of windows. The title roof has a very gradual slant and is supported by small struts of simple divine figures which do not rest on the cornices far below them but attached directly to the wall. A triple spire pinnacle with triple umbrellas on a floral framework of three arches over the spires completes the exterior.

It is the wooden windows of the court, however, which makes the architectural frame of this building. There are four very large two-level window frames mounted on the walls of the courtyard, with three windows opening on the 2nd & 3rd floors of each walls. With magnificent Torans all over the courtyard, giving the perfect example of the beautiful impressive wooden art work. It is in the large window groupings that the living goddess appears to visitors. Her most important appearance being at the time of the 14th day of Bhadra Shukla (Aug-Sep) at Indra Jatra festival. During this festival Kumari is placed on a chariot and taken around Kathmandu city.

The Kumari is a young girl who is believed to be the incarnation of the demon-slaying Hindu goddess Durga. There are about 11 kumaris across Nepal, but the Kumari Devi (or Raj Kumari - royal goddess) in Kathmandu is the most important. The selection process for finding the Kumari Devi resembles that of the Tibetan lamas, who are believed to be reincarnations of their predecessors. She is chosen from girls aged three to five in the Buddhist Shakya clan. Elders meet with hundreds of girls, approving only those with 32 auspicious signs of divinity (mostly to do with natural perfection and symbolically significant features. The girls' horoscopes are also checked to ensure they are compatible with those of the current king. The Kumari's reign comes to an end when her menstruates or slight injury on her body. The girl reverts to mortal fame and seeks for her replacement begins. She is given a modest state pension, and it is believed marrying former Kumari will die young.

In Kumari Ghar 'A' class stones locally known as Daichi bricks are used. Later on, the bricks were polished using varnish which make brick walls more aesthetic. Load bearing layer tied together with horizontal and vertical timber elements. Three Leaf Construction System is used.



Combination of vertical columns and horizontal beams i.e. trabeated system. It consists of square based timber columns. Cornice are formed by carved timber ties. Cornice differentiate the level between three storeys. The wall (Gara) are of 24-18 inches thick which are made up of 'A' class bricks and are later on polished using varnish to give it a smooth finishing. The sculpture is three storied and is in square shaped with a chowk at middle. The chowk consists of open space.

The house of the living goddess has walls that are artistically painted with many different religious crafts. The wall paintings are found only inside the Kumari Ghar, wherein one can find rare and colorful paintings of gods and goddesses belonging to various tantric traditions like Mahaganesh, Mahabhairav, Mahakumari, Vaishnavi, Tulaja Bhawani, Mahavarahi, Mahaindrayani, Mahachamunda, Mahalaxmi, Mahabrahmayani and Manamaheshwori.

The plinth of kumari ghar is made up of coursed as well as un-coursed stones using mud mortar which is in 24 inches higher from ground level. Plinth level is placed all around the walls. Post is of 17-18 inches.

There are a total of 11 Tiki Jhyas or Akhi Jhyas, three Ga Jhyas, two Chakla Jhyas and six Sa Jhyas. The main Ga Jhya directly over the main entrance is gold-plated in the centre and it is believed that no one but the Kumari can only see outside this window. Construction of windows is similar in construction to doors. Both the outer and inner frame is richly carved. It has different design at different places. Moreover, coming to the door there are external (dhuchu) and internal frame (bha). Doors are pinned or nailed by wooden nails. And palaces have torana fixed to upper frame at the main entry. The ground floor has exquisitely carved doors with tympanums worked with equal mastery. Among the three doors, only the middle one is open. The stone steps lead to the main door and has two life-size lions placed on either side as guards to both, the temple and the deity.

Roofing rafters are closely spaced and laid in fan pattern. Struts - Carvings of gods. Top roof main rafters along edges, also fanning rafters. Kumari Ghar consist of Top - Leaves

and creeperstoranas. Middle celestial image. And at bottom there is image of carrier of animals.

Temples built in the pagoda-style are supported by wooden struts, carved with figures of god and goddess. However, the bottom part depicts naked carvings in an erotic scene, since Kumari is also considered as the one who controls the lightning. Therefore, Kumari stays away from the temple due to the erotic carvings which keeps the lightning away.

The KumariChhen (Newari name for KumariGhar) is typically in the shape of a typical vihar dedicated to Buddhism. Though it is commonly called Kumari Baha or Kumari Temple, it is also gets its name in respect to Boddhisatva (i.e. near Buddhas) – RajkiritiManoramMahavihar. Renowned expert, Mary Slusser, however, attributes the temple with the name Rajlakshmikulavihara, where the royal (state or Raj) Kumari resides and has her shrine established.

The Kumarighar of Kathmandu lies south-west of the Hanuman Dhoka Durbar Square compound next to the SikhaMubahal, in front of Trailokyamohan-narayan temple (commonly called Dash-Avatar Mandir) and Gaddi Baithak. The eastern face of KumariGhar has an open façade at the south-eastern corners of which houses the Kathmandu Metropolitan Hanuman Dhoka Conservation Programme Office and Nava Adarsha School. Towards the south of the KumariGhar is Gwachhemuga Galli connecting Freak Street with Singha Satal. The front façade facing north is decorated with ornate woodcrafts of medieval period. Atop this north face on the roof covered with terra cotta tiles is the pinnacle (gajur). This pinnacle is different than common ones found on most some temples as it has one pinnacle slightly bigger than two identical sized pinnacles on either side. From the pinnacle hangs a long gold-plated strip called pata. The building is surrounded both inside and outside by a wider plinth covered with bricks and stones. They now host a resting place for passers-by and a store for wooden logs of the chariot used during the annual Kumari procession in Indra Jatra. This three-storey chariot is placed adjacent to KumariGhar. Another small chariot called the Vimankhat (meant to be carried on shoulders) is placed at the open eastern side under a small enclosure made especially for the chariot.

The ground floor has exquisitely carved doors with tympanums worked with equal mastery. Among the three doors, only the middle one is open. The stone steps leads to the main door and has two life-size lions placed on either sides as guards to both, the temple and the deity. The northern side has 22 exquisitely carved windows in various forms. There are a total of 11 TikiJhyas or AkhiJhyas, three Ga Jhyas, two ChaklaJhyas and six Sa Jhyas. The main Ga Jhya directly over the main entrance is gold-plated in the centre and it is believed that no one but the Kumari can only see outside this window. This KumariJhya was established with tantric rituals on the occasion of Varshabandhan puja (annual worship) in Nepal Sambat 878 Ashwin (i.e. AD 1758) by king Jaya Prakash Malla and queen Dayalakshmi Devi. This window is again elegantly

carved with 39 flying-horses at the bottom. Except the two AakhiJhyals and a set of three Sa Jhyals in the eastern façade, there are no other elaborate windows. The southern façade has simple windows. Lacking ornate woodwork and the western side has no windows as it is attached to SikhaMubaha.

Inside the KumariGhar is an open courtyard (or bahal) in the midst of which is a chaitya (locally called the Chiba Dya). The stone chaitya, as many other chaityas in the Nepal Mandal, is crafted with Pancha Buddhas or Five Buddhas. The bahal also contains the two Chakras one of which is carved with the tantric Kumari Yantra. In a typical Newar residential style, the KumariChhen can be distinguished as Chhidi (the ground floor), Maatan (the first floor), Chwata (the second floor) and the roof. Straight inside the bahal is a long passage wherein five Buddhas namely Vairochan Buddha, Amitabh Buddha, Amogh Siddhi Buddha, Akshyobhya Buddha and RatnaSambhav Buddha are established. Directly over this, at the second floor is another Sa Jhya from where the Living Goddess gives a short glimpse everyday to the devotees. Before stepping down into the bahal, there are two holes on either side of the walls which are worshipped as Nasadya (the god of dance and other arts) and MahankalBhairav especially in annual Varshabandhan. At the top floor is the grand throne of the living goddess. Set in a special room, the golden throne is carved with peacock as the seat (aasan). On the final day of Indra Jatra and in Dashain, devotees worship the Goddess Kumari seated on this throne in this room.

Alongside this magnificence, terra cotta images carved at the plinth of the bahal too bear artistic excellence. However, the story to those carvings has not been worked out.

The KumariGhar is the work of king Jay Prakash Malla in 1757AD. It is typically based on Newari architecture. It was renovated in 1966AD. No modern materials were used while rebuilding the Temple. The Interior portion of the Kumari Ghar is still cracked due to devastating earthquake. But the government hasn't pay attention to this problem which is bad aspect of the government. The government pays 40000 per month for the food, education and other activities of the Kumari. The temple is only painted or rebuilt externally on in Kumari jatra.

19th ARCASIA Asian Congress of Architects opened in Shanghai

Written by Wang Yiming, Lu Yejong, Zhou Minghao

The 19th Asian Congress of Architects (ACA19) opening ceremony was held at the Nine Trees Future Arts Center in Fengxian District, Shanghai at 1:00 pm on November 1 Beijing time. The keynote speeches followed the opening ceremony.

Themed as "Sharing & Regeneration," the ACA19 was co-hosted by the Architects Regional Council Asia (ARCASIA), the Architectural Society of China (ASC) and Tongji University, and co-organized by the Architecture Society of Shanghai China (ASSC), School of Architecture and Urban Planning of Tongji University, Architectural Design and Research Institute of Tongji University (Group) Co. Ltd. and Fengxian District People's Government. Nearly 40,000 people, including speakers, experts, scholars and students within and outside of China attended the congress through a combination of online and offline methods to discuss the challenges and opportunities faced by Asian architecture and cities in the post-pandemic era and explore ways to share and update architectural design concepts among Asian countries and regions.



If you have any suggestions or want to publish any contents please email to us.



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