



# 照明探偵団通信

vol. 127 Shomei Tanteidan Tsu-shin

## Lighting Survey: Nepal

2023.11.12 - 2023.11.14 Mayumi Banno Xianyu Liu (Flower)

Kathmandu Valley, a World Heritage Site encompassing Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur; how is the city faring now after the devastating earthquake of 2015? During Tihar, Nepal's festival of lights, we visited the capital city of Kathmandu and the adjacent ancient city of Bhaktapur.



A view of Himalayan mountains in Sunrise, day 2 of the Nepalese New Year

### ■Introduction

How are Nepal's cities faring after the 2015 earthquake? During Tihar, Nepal's festival of lights, we visited the capital city of Kathmandu and the adjacent ancient city of Bhaktapur to explore the reconstruction and the lighting environment during the festival. From the plane overlooking the whole of Nepal, shocked by the twinkling lights of the stars. Nepal is a country with a high national happiness index, but it is also very poor. But when I saw this from the plane, I was surprised, I thought Nepal would have no lights, or very little lights. Later, I heard local people say that because it is the New Year, every family will prepare the colored lights, decoration, and create a lively atmosphere. (Flower)

region. In this country sandwiched between India and China, the two cultures seem to blend together. For example, a typical dish called Momo looks like a dumpling, but inside are minced meat with Indian spices. These are dipped in a sauce similar to an Indian curry and eaten. The two major religions are also Hinduism and Buddhism, and temples and monasteries dot the city. Many of them were destroyed or damaged in the great earthquake of 2015, but as of 2023, most of them seemed to have been repaired. What impressed us the most on this trip was the panoramic view of the Himalayan Federation, which turns orange with the sunrise, and the kindness of the Nepalese people. (Mayumi)



A Mother and a child lighting candles dedicated to God



Children playing in the temple grounds

### ■Kathmandu

Kathmandu is located at an altitude of about 1,400 meters. In mid-November, when we visited, the days were hot and sunny, but the nights were cooler than 10 degrees Celsius. The city was filled with the hustle and bustle of the Hindu festival of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and happiness, to pray for wealth and health, and the New Year who live in this



Typical Mandala Arts decorated with color powder, Marigold flower, and candle in front of shops

Walking in the city, surrounded by dense crowds, it is full of festive atmosphere of excess. Buildings are all connected by strings of lights and strips. The color of the lamp string is not changed by the color of the light source, but the use of a monochromatic warm light source, the transparent surface is colored, so that the light in the entire environment is not too fancy, which I think is quite poetic. To do the best within its ability is also an expression of the state of mind of the people living there.

(Flower)

#### ■ Kathmandu Durbar Square

Durbar Square, the royal palace square of the former kingdom of Kathmandu, is located in each of the three major cities in the Kathmandu Valley: Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur. Here in Kathmandu, the square was crowded with stalls, but at night the lighting was not bright enough and people were selling and buying things in the dim light. The Jagannath Temple, the Kumari Pavilion, and many other architectural structures lined the streets. Each of them is decorated with intricate and complex carvings and is very beautiful. It is a pity that they are roughly illuminated at night by dazzling daylight floodlights.

#### ■ Kathmandu city overview from distance

The night view of Kathmandu from Chandragiri Hill by cable car. The hill is at an altitude of 2,500 meters. The city of Kathmandu is suffocating from the exhaust fumes of cars and motorcycles, but here the air is clean and the hustle and bustle of the city seems to be unbelievably quiet. The tallest building in Nepal is 58m. Surrounded by the Himalayas, the Kathmandu Basin is littered with lowrise buildings as far as the eye can see. The city is said to be a festival of lights, and the blue-white lights of the houses decorated with LED lights twinkled faintly here and there. A layer of polluted air over the city diffusely reflected the city lights and covered the city like a glowing cloud.

(Mayumi)



Facade decorated by local residents for Tihar



Seto (White) Bhairab' s horrible face lit up by candles



Very creative way to illuminate street with LED strip



Street with Blue LED strips



Darbar Square, Kathumandu. Storefronts are brightly lit, but the square is gloomily dim



Maju Dega, a Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva with annoying floodlights shining to the plaza



Cable car with Himarayan Mountains in the background



Looking down on the city of Kathmandu. A layer of air pollution covers the city

### ■Mandala Art

In contrast to the warmly colored architecture built of brick and wood, Nepal's cities are filled with colors. Orange-yellow marigold collars, five-color prayer flags (tarmo) hanging in all directions, and mandalas painted with primary-colored powder. Mandalas with unique designs in houses and storefronts, and candles and oil lamps lit to invite the goddess Lakshmi inside each house. We saw a wide variety of mandalas during our survey.

### ■Boudhanath (Budda Stupa)

Boudhanath is a Tibetan Buddhist holy site where Buddha's bones are said to be enshrined. The golden stupa with Buddha's eye of wisdom painted on its chalk exterior base is a very unique building itself. Although it was not possible to enter the pagoda, many people were walking in a clockwise direction with chanting coming from somewhere in the circular plaza around the pagoda. Once inside the outer wall, devout Buddhists were praying earnestly for a long time in what is known as the five-stooped prostration, in which they crawl on the ground. What surprised me here was that I had seen floodlights made by European manufacturers, whereas I had seen only flimsy and glare fixtures elsewhere. When the area became dusky, the 4000K floodlights made the huge white stupa float fantastically.

Eight years after the 2015 earthquake, many buildings have been repaired, but the light environment still seems to have much to improve. In a city where the concept of lighting design may not even exist, people still celebrate the Festival of Lights to the best of their way. It was deeply moving to see the lights scattered all over the city, not in a sophisticated way, but with the people's hearts and minds. I hope that one day, like the architecture of this country, the light environment will develop in its own unique way.

This was a two-day whirlwind survey, but it went very smoothly which was largely due to the kindness and generosity of the people we met in Nepal. We would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude and hope to visit a wonderful country again.

(Mayumi)



People selling colorful flowers



Colorful flowers on an altar



Mandala made by colored rice



Mandala in front of Buddhist temple



Budda Stupa with full of Tibetan prayer's flags



Budda Stupa lit up by flood lights

# こどもワークショップ

古民家で体験！いつもとちがうあかり in 千葉県大多喜町  
2023.11.25-26 瀬川佐知子+東悟子+河野真実

こどもワークショップでは暗さ体験として、囲炉裏を囲む会を複数回開催してきましたが、古民家で一夜を明かすという企画をずっと温めておりました。電気をできるだけ使わず、小さなあかりだけで夜を過ごすといつもと違うものがみえてくるのではないかと。そんなことを期待した5感をフル回転させる、そんなワークショップを行いました。



築119年の古民家 中野屋さんと参加者のみなさん

今年のこどもワークショップは千葉県大多喜町の古民家を借り「暗い中で小さなあかりの大切さを考えよう！」というテーマで行いました。

コロナ禍で開催できなかつたり、開催しても子どもたちと語り合う時間が設けられない年が続きましたが、今年は一泊のプログラムで、子どもたちとじっくりとあかりを感じる会にしました。5歳～小学生2年生の6人のこども達が集まってくれ、元気いっぱい楽しく過ごしました。

中野屋というこの古民家は、茅葺屋根で囲炉裏もあります。夜はなるべく現代のあかりに頼らず過ごそうと、まず行灯をつくりました。硬めのトレーシングペーパーに子どもたちはそれぞれ絵を描いたり、カラーセロハンを貼ったりして作成しました。室内はろうそくが使用できなかったため、LEDキャンドルで代用。その行灯を持って、古民家の周りを散歩にいきました。

この辺りの田畑に囲まれた道は街灯が一切なく、だんだんと暗くなる中、子どもたちは自分がつくった行灯で歩くという体験をしました。途中、大きな銀杏の木を面出団長が懐中電灯で照らすと子どもたちは興味津々で我先にと懐中電灯でいろいろなものを照らしていきました。

散歩後は既存の照明を消し、行灯のみを配置した古民家で過ごしました。まずは自分の行灯を近くに置き、庭先でバーベキュー。ただ、暗すぎて肉の焼き加減が分からないため、ここでは懐中電灯の力を借りることとなりました。あいにく曇り空だったため、星は見ることはできませんでしたが、暗間の中でも子どもたちの食欲は頼もしいものでした。懐中電灯を消すとパチパチと炭の炎が赤く光っており、子どもたちもどこかいつもと違う空間に楽しそうでした。

バーベキュー後の花火で、行灯の1つをLEDから本物のキャンドルに替えてみました。周りのトレーシングペーパーのせいかもしれませんが、以外と違和感がなく、大人も驚きました。本物のキャンドルの方が少し明るめでしたが、LEDが



行灯づくりはペンとセロハンで自由にデザインしました

身近になって10数年。色味等も改良されてきているのだなと感じました。

花火の後は囲炉裏を囲んで面出団長からあかりのお話です。残念ながら囲炉裏は炭火しか使えず、燃える薪の火は見られなかったのですが、行灯と炭の火で包まれる空間は自然と子どもたちの眠気を誘っていたようです。目が暗闇に慣れてしまったため、お話の途中で団長が見せてくれた現代の光源がとてもまぶしく感じました。子どもたちもこのまぶしさを「不快」に感じたようでした。お話の後、朝からお友達と過ごし興奮状態だったこども達もこの暗さの中、静かに眠りにつきました。

次の日、早朝に前日歩いた道をもう一度歩いてみました。明るくなった状態で見る景色は全然違うものだったようで、朝から子どもたちはかけっこをしながら進んでいました。

最後に炬燵を囲みこの2日間感じたことを話しました。「暗い中で過ごすのはどうだった？」という問いに「怖かった」「全然平気だった」など様々な言葉が出てきました。

夜間も光が飽和状態になっている現代に生きる子どもたちが、身近にある小さなあかりに気づき、それを大切にすることを少しでもこのワークショップで感じてくれていたらうれしいと思っています。(瀬川佐知子)



自作の行灯を持って、夕暮れ時のお散歩へ



囲炉裏を囲んで、面出団長によるあかりのお話



ワークショップの終わりに2日間で感じたことを話し合いました

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