The earthquakes of April and May, 2015 (with a magnitude of respectively 7.8 and 7.3) caused some 9,000 deaths and widespread damage in the Kathmandu Valley. This includes the seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites located in the Valley, viz.

- the Buddhist Stupas of Swayambhu and Baudha, the former serving the Newar Buddhist community, the latter serving Tibetan Buddhist communities
- the Hindu temples of Pashupatinath and Changu Narayana, dedicated respectively to Shiva and Vishnu
- the royal squares of the Valley’s three historical capitals, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur.

and the vast majority (reportedly 90%) of other heritage sites of the Valley such as

- the Vajrayogini temple above the devastated village of Sankhu
- the so-called Bhimsen Tower of Kathmandu

Some important terms:

- traditional Indic conception of renovation (jirnodhara) in terms of replacement (which may be ritualized as rebirth) rather than repair, versus the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites, agreed upon in Venice 1964.
- the stupa’s central element is a wooden post, called life tree (Tibetan: srog shing; Sanskrit: yaṣṭī), traversing the stupa
- the Newars are the original inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, who speak a Tibeto-Burmese language, even while Indic in their cultural and religious practices

Suggested Reading:


