Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley

Proceedings of an International Conference
in Lübeck, June 1985

Edited by
Niels Gutschow and Axel Michaels

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(NEPALICA. 4.)
Discussion and planning for the Lübeck Conference on the cultural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley stretches back over a period of some six years. As early as 1979, Robert Levy had proposed a meeting for researchers from various disciplines. During the course of a visit by Niels Gutschow in San Diego in March of 1980, it became clear that it would not be feasible to fund such an undertaking in the United States. It was decided that an attempt should be made to organize a conference of this type – involving the broadest possible international participation – in the Federal Republic of Germany. At the same time, a roster of all researchers working in the Kathmandu Valley was prepared, using a questionnaire to gather the data. The result was published in the *Himalayan Research Bulletin* (Vol. II, No. 3, Fall 1982).

In August of 1983, Bernhard Kölver, Head of the Department of Indology in the Seminar for Oriental Studies at Kiel University, submitted a request to the German Research Council (DFG) for the financial support necessary to carry out the Conference. However, when funding was approved in December of that same year, there appeared to be too little lead time to organize a conference in 1984. For this reason, the Conference was planned for the 27th to 29th of June, 1985. The state of Schleswig-Holstein joined in funding the undertaking, and the city of Lübeck promised to provide the necessary physical facilities.

Keeping in mind the rich urban cultural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley, it was decided that the Conference should take place in surroundings imbued with an atmosphere rich in reminders of the European Middle Ages. Lübeck, an important Hansa League port in the 13th and 14th centuries, appeared to be the ideal ambience, and experiences during the three days of the Conference there fulfilled all expectations. Conference sessions in rooms from the Rococo period (in Rantzau Castle) and the Renaissance (in the Chancellery adjacent to the City Hall) were marked by an exceptional level of intensity. Thirty scholars from various disciplines had gathered together in order to report about the results of their recent research. Many of the participants already knew each other personally, and where that was not the case, the Conference offered ample opportunity to initiate a more intensive scholarly exchange by means of personal contacts. A reception in the Red Room of the Town Hall and a boat excursion on the Wakenitz at the end of the Conference provided a welcome occasion for creating new friendships. The atmosphere was marked by the intense pleasure of being jointly involved in research on the most vibrant urban culture still in existence. This dimension of a common bond allowed the participants in the Conference to merge together into a community of scholars, each of whom was willing and eager to have the others share in the results of his or her work.

**Preface**
The fact that scholars from Nepal were well-represented among the participants was a source of special satisfaction. Santa Bahadur Gurung of the Research Division of Tribhuvan University represented the national university; he presented a summary of previous research activities and expressed the wish for an intensification of his country's cooperation with scholars and scientists from all nations. At the same time, he attempted to illustrate why Nepal must have a vital interest in raising the question as to the usefulness of any particular research. The question of partnership projects between Nepalese researchers and those from other countries was also broached in his remarks, and the hope was expressed that such a mode of cooperation might contribute to mutual learning and understanding. Other prominent representatives of historical research in Nepal—such as Saphalya Amatya of the Department of Archeology and Kamal Prakash Malla and Dhanavajra Vajrācārya of Tribhuvan University—were also in attendance. The linguists Dr. Dahal and Dr. Subba likewise represented Tribhuvan University as observing participants to the Conference. In addition to the scholars who presented papers, discussion participants included Gernot Assum, Atul Agarwala, Corneille Jest, Adalbert Gail, Willibald Haffner, Hermann Kulke, Ulrike Kölver, Gaya Charan Tripathi, Erika Moser and Seyfort Ruegg.

In order to place the Conference—in its commitment to the preservation of the urban cultural heritage of the Kathmandu Valley—within a broader context, it was organized in cooperation with the German UNESCO Commission. An exhibition in the Ethnological Collection of the city of Lübeck underscored this idea: Raimund Becker-Ritterspach, Niels Gutschow and Gert-Matthias Wegner, in cooperation with Helga Rammow, put together a collection of representative objects illustrative of craft culture and urban revitalization, musical life and ritual in the cities of the Kathmandu Valley.

The papers of Bernhard Kölver (On the Evolution of a Complex Ritual), Siegfried Lienhard (see ch. 4), Kamal Prakash Malla (On the Gopālarājavamsāvali), and Anne Vergati (see ch. 3) are not or only in an abridged version included in this volume because they have already been published (or will appear) in more elaborate versions at other places.

Objectives

Let us recall that in the 18th and 19th centuries, but few travellers were granted the rare privilege of journeying into the Valley of Kathmandu or even travelling in Nepal. Only a small number of these were researchers, so that our knowledge of the Kathmandu Valley was limited to the study of descriptions which were generally picturesque in character. The situation changed dramatically when the country began to open its portals toward the middle of this century; nonetheless, another twenty years were to pass before the attention of scholars and scientists was drawn to this apparently still distant and remote land.
many years with his dissertation on the Newar completed in 1964. Around 1970, a number of scholars, such as Bernhard Kölver, Niels Gutschow, Hiroshi Ishii, Siegfried Lienhard and Eduard Sekler, began their research, to be followed only a few years later by Robert Levy, Michael Witzel, and Gérard Toffin. In the mid-1970s, scholars such as Anne Vergati, Adalbert Gail, Reinhard Herdick and Ulrike Müller embarked on research, followed more recently by David Gellner, Linda Iltis and Axel Michaels.

The Lübeck Conference was organized to provide an opportunity – after some 15 years of intensive research activity in the Kathmandu Valley – to arrive at a kind of interim assessment of the state of current knowledge. The thematic focus – questions of ritual (Navadurga in Bhaktapur, Matsyendranatha in Patan, etc.) – made it clear that scholarly attention must be dedicated to this living complex for many more years to come. On the one hand, the vital bond and living nexus is subject to strong pressure toward change as a result of sociocultural alteration and shifts. On the other hand, the great rituals, even in their already reduced contemporary form, are so complex that initial probings and findings cannot constitute more than a tentative attempt at approaching the events under scrutiny.

Precisely in this area, it was the objective of the Conference to clearly underscore the necessity for cooperation between various disciplines and the urgency of further intensive research. We should always bear in mind that it is of central importance to preserve the rich and diverse heritage of a significant urban culture from passing into oblivion. However, it also became clear – in the light of the intensive field that has been carried out – that one task remains more urgent than ever: the need to methodically work through and evaluate the extraordinarily rich collection of manuscripts of the National Archives, which The Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project has been microfilming since 1970. Only when historical sources are tapped will field research enter an important new phase.

Remarks on Transcription

The linguistic difficulties associated with the editing and publication of the revised papers presented at the Conference proved to be considerable; only in part was it possible to arrive at a satisfactory solution to the problems. This was due not just to the fact that participants came from the most diverse fields of inquiry, and thus proceeded on the basis of differing notions of language and terminology; rather, it was in large part attributable to the circumstance that almost all participants were dealing mainly with the Nevāri language, with Nepāl Bhāṣā. It is well-known that Nevāri is a language that has hardly undergone any formal standardization, is heavily influenced by dialectal variation, and contains a large number of loan-words from Nepālī and Sanskrit. For this reason, differing written forms of the same words were unavoidable, especially since a portion of the data was also based on
oral tradition. Several options for solving this problem suggested themselves, each having certain advantages and disadvantages.

In connection with terms from the Great Tradition – i.e., words and names in which the Sanskrit origin is still clearly discernible, or in readily recognizable tatams – we attempted to encourage participants to employ the Sanskrit equivalents instead of the vernacular expressions. This was suggested particularly in regard to the names of deities, but also in part when it came to ritual terms: thus, for example, Matsyendranātha instead of Matsyendranāth, prasāda instead of prasād, etc. To be sure, even in this approach – which appeared to us to be the least problematic, since it was often only a question of writing an inherent a, without thereby establishing the form of pronunciation as well – there were instances in which several authors wished to preserve the contrastive difference with the Great Tradition form. In actual fact, the element of meaning does differ, depending, for example, on whether one chooses (Nev.) ācāju instead of (Skr.) ācārya. For this reason, we did not insist on a standard which might have excessively limited the freedom of the author. Indeed, we did not wish to impose a uniform system of transliteration for Nevārī, because this would have created the false impression of a state of affairs which (still) does not exist, and which perhaps cannot be achieved.

Several contributors preferred a more phonetic manner of spelling, and often followed principles analogous to those established by R.L. Turner for his Nepali Dictionary. Thus, the grapheme v(a) was transliterated – according to the representation of the corresponding phoneme – at times with b, and in part with v or w, frequently with the additional differentiation that v was reserved only for Sanskrit tatams. In a similar manner, many preferred the spelling o for Nev. va, but others adopted the tradition introduced by Austin Hale and they transliterated along strict graphematic lines. In these and similar cases, in which referential, meaning-altering criteria were largely excluded, we have asked authors to give preference to a uniform system. Several contributors were not happy with the fact that, in so doing, we chose to follow the system of Hale and Ishwarananda Shresthacarya. We understood and respected their reasons; on the other hand, however, we recognized the need for this uniformity if we were to be at all able to assemble a meaningful index.

We did not wish to do without such an index, because we hold the view that an index gives additional manifest expression to the way in which many contributions supplement and overlap each other. For this same reason, the caste names and place names were largely rendered in a uniform manner; in this connection, we considered Anglicized spellings meaningful only in a few exceptional instances, namely when it was a question of extremely well-known names, where – in our view – it would have been overdoing philological precision to write „Kāthmāndu“ diacritically instead of rendering it simply and clearly as „Kathmandu“.

A further problem was that of the loan-words from Nepāli, Sanskrit and other languages. A relatively large number of the authors had first learned Nepāli, and
then Nevārī later on as an additional language; thus, it was understandable that some adopted the Turner principles of transliteration in words that had a Nepālī origin. This was also true in the case of Sanskrit tadbhāvas. Even in these instances, however, it was neither necessary nor desirable to impose on everyone a transliteration that was more oriented toward Nevārī. All in all, the result is a liberal and mild form of standardization. More than this could only have been achieved by adherence to dogmatic principles; that would have overtaxed the good will of the authors, and would not do proper justice to the current state of research. In order to facilitate the locating and comparison of identical words spelled in different ways, we have attempted to provide a generous number of cross-references for the greater majority of the variants in the index.

Acknowledgements

The editors would like to express their gratitude to Bernhard Kölver for his deep interest and active support in the realization and organization of the conference. As mentioned above, the conference and the publication of its proceedings was only possible through the generous funds of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Council) and the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, Ministry of Culture. We thank these bodies for their support. Thanks are also due to William Templer for the skillful translation and styling of papers by those authors whose native language is not English.

August 1987

Niels Gutschow
Axel Michaels
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Mary Shepherd Slusser

The Cultural Aspects of Newar Painting

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The art of painting, as is now well known, is an important facet of the splendid panorama of Newar arts. Miniature illuminations on the folios or covers of palmleaf manuscripts are known from at least the eleventh century and a number of painted cloth banners, called paubhás, patás, or in Tibetan usage, thankas, can be dated with some certainty to the thirteenth century (Figs. 1, 2).\(^1\) We know that the art was practiced much earlier in Licchavi Nepal since mural painting is mentioned in a fifth century epigraph\(^2\) and the seventh-century Chinese envoy, Wang Hsüan-t'sê observed wall paintings on the common houses.\(^3\) There seems little doubt that had they survived other types of painting were also known at that time.

![Fig. 1 Scenes from the life of Gautama Buddha, detail of one of a pair of wooden manuscript covers, A.D. 1054, L: 56.2 cm, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramanick Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Photograph courtesy of the Museum.](image)

Newar painting of any kind was devoted to religious themes, serving both didactic functions and as objects of worship for Nepalese nationals and Tibetans. In the past few decades, as these paintings have become known outside Nepal and Tibet, they have taken on a third, non-traditional dimension as art objects. Widely admired and assiduously collected, the paintings typically have been studied in terms of date, style, iconography and other characteristic concerns of the art historian. Nepalese paintings – objects of religion to some, objects of art to others – are also proving to be a prime source of national political and cultural history. In contrast to other art media, such as sculptures in bronze and stone, paintings provided ample space for inscriptions and could be penned not only by the artist but by any literate

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2 Vajraśārya, Dh., V.S. 2030: inscr. 1, 1–8.
3 Lévi, 1905: I, 164.
Fig. 2 Buddha Ratnasambhava and Acolytes, early thirteenth century, opaque water colors on cotton, H: 41 cm, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneeck Collection, Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Photograph courtesy of the Museum.
Fig. 3 Commemoration at Swayambhūnāth of a laksacaitya rite, A.D. 1808, opaque water colors on cotton, H: 110 cm, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, Avery Brundage Collection. Photograph courtesy of the Museum.
person. Thus inscriptions on paintings are more common and more fulsome than the brief ones found on other art media. Inscribed paintings often provide an exact date for the work's completion, and when the name of the current ruler, or rulers, is included may provide or amplify otherwise unknown regnal dates. An inscription may include the donor's – but rarely the painter's – name and titles and so provide important clues to caste and class, the name of the vihāra, matha, neighborhood, or town where the painting was made, the reason for the commission and much more, all matters of considerable interest to the historian of Nepalese art and culture.

The critical dimension that inscriptions add to paintings in terms of history, culture, and a thorough understanding of their content is made clear in the case of two paintings related to the great Indian pandit, Vanaratna, amply published by Pal (in Rosenfield 1966: 110; Pal 1978: 22–23, figs. 7, 8; 1985: 32, 37, 190, 211, 234, 236, color pl., fig. P15) and discussed by a participant in this symposium (Gautam Vajracharya). As further illustration we may turn to a nineteenth century painting on Buddhist themes in the collections of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (Fig. 3).

The painting is arranged in five registers, a large central field sandwiched by smaller ones, two above and two below. The top register consists of various deities below which, in the next register, is depicted Svayambhunāth Stūpa, garlanded and receiving offerings from cloud-borne apsaras. The stūpa is flanked by the ṛkharas, Pratāpapura and Anantapura, each in turn flanked by a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, the Red Matsyendranāth on the left and the White on the right. The principal portion depicts Svayambhū Stūpa again, now smaller and serving as the apex of a garlanded pyramid of miniature caityas whose serried rows are interrupted with a representation of the goddess Uṣṇīṣavijayā, supposed inhabitant of stūpa domes. Surrounding the pyramid, which is in effect a garlanded stūpa, are several animated groups of persons engaged in various rites and among which more little clusters of caityas are much in evidence.

The remaining two registers, separated by the inscription, depict other deities, secular and religious figures, and scenes of worship.

With no inscription the painting, of course, would be of great intrinsic interest. But it is the inscription that elevates it from icon or art object to a cultural document. From the inscription we know that the painting was completed on the first day of the Newar lunar calendar, N.S. 929, Kārtika kṛṣṇa pratipad, corresponding to October 20, 1808. It was commissioned by a family of Tuladhars, a Newar Buddhist caste, then living at Natatol, Kathmandu. They are pictured in the lowest register, devoutly facing the Vajrācārya officiant. The purpose of the work was to commemorate the completion of a Buddhist rite known as laksacaiṭya in which an offering of one hundred thousand caityas is given. By no means imaginary, as is
often presumed, the rite is real enough as we know from contemporary practice in
the Kathmandu Valley. Throughout the Buddhist holy month, pious families
fashion thousands of miniature clay caityas which subsequently are ceremonially
disposed of in the sacred rivers. Indeed, it is likely that the presence of three secular
figures just above the left end of the inscription can only be explained in relation to
the rite. The one with a kodali is surely excavating the sacred clay needed for
modelling the caityas, the other with nol and baskets transports it, while the third,
kneeling with his back to the central stupa pounds it into a workable condition.
Immediately above the three figures — probably a single person represented
synoptically — sits a moustached man arrayed in festive dress. Most likely he is the
principal donor, Jeśta Dhanaonta. Holding a bowl of the prepared clay, he offers it
a blossom as he tenders it to three companions. The man facing him seems to be in
the act of modelling one of the caityas while the lady, perhaps the donor’s wife
Lakṣmidhari of the inscription, appears to exhibit another before adding it to the
completed ones seen at the center of the group.

Similarly, the anomalous position of the two Matsyendranāths with respect to
Svayambhū Stūpa can only be satisfactorily explained because we know where the
painting was made. Valley wide the Red Matsyendranāth is by far the more
important of the two deities and justly deserves the place of honor at the right of the
stupa. The White Matsyendranāth occupies it here because the donor (or painter), a
resident of Kathmandu, the home of this god, deemed the local deity the more
important and so usurped the other’s place. There are other interesting aspects of
the painting which the inscription illuminates but they need not detain us here.

Though it is hard to imagine in the advanced state of Newar studies now, until quite
recently the valuable cultural resource that the inscriptions on the paintings
represent was virtually ignored. At most they were mined for a date or a ruler’s
name that would date the paintings and when the latter was illustrated the
inscription was as often as not cropped away as if it did not constitute a part of the
painting at all. This is understandable since few students of these paintings —
whatever their qualifications might be as art historians — were capable of reading
Nevārī scripts or understanding Nevārī. Now, however, art historians have come to
realize that the inscriptions are a critical aspect of the paintings and in collaboration
with historians and linguists, Nepali and foreign, take pains to translate and include
them in their studies. A notable example is a recently published work respecting the
Los Angeles County Museum of Art Nepālī holdings in which all of the important
inscriptions have been made use of in interpreting the paintings and are presented in
full transliteration in an appendix together with English translation and commenta-
ry.5 As a certain cigarette ad proclaims, we’ve come a long way.

There is, however, much more in these paintings than generally meets the eye or can be obtained from reading their inscriptions. For example, the well-known mandala paintings have long mutely provided clear evidence for the fundamental Nepalese concern with the ordering of cosmic space. Yet it is only recently through the studies of Gutschow, Kölver, and others that we have come to realize that this concern is not confined simply to paint but has been translated into a physical reality that in effect makes of the whole Kathmandu Valley a mandala to walk on. A close study of the paintings reveals still another dimension of this concern. Painters were not only able to diagram precisely the cosmic world but were equally able to reconstruct their known physical world as geographers. Simply put, they were not only painters but cartographers.

My point can be best illustrated by examination of a painting that was consecrated in Yampǐ Vihaṇā (I Bahi), Patan in the summer of A.D. 1565 (Fig. 4 = Colour Plate I). There it remained for some four hundred years where at length, wrinkled, rat-gnawed, damp, and deteriorated, it was last displayed in August 1967 on the occasion of bahidyabhavayegu, the rite of displaying the deities in the vihāras (Fig. 10). Then, like so many other Nepalese paintings it passed into a private collection. In this instance the painting's removal from the religious to the secular domain can scarcely be regretted since restored and protected it survives as a precious document of Nepalese culture, by 1967 an unlikely prospect in tumble-down Yampǐ Vihaṇā. The painting is arranged in two sections, the upper one devoted to the glory of Svayambhi, the lower to the towns and sacred sites – Buddhist and Hindu – that bathe in its refulgence. In both sections the arrangement is by no means haphazard but represents on the one hand an exact site plan of the Svayambhū compound and on the other a correct map of the Kathmandu Valley. Indeed, the painting, no less than the Svayambhū-purāṇa or the Nepāla-māhātmya, serves as a pilgrim's guide to the sacred geography of the Kathmandu Valley. In short, it is a map.

The stūpa compound is demarcated by a trefoil prabhāmandala and by colour – a field of cinnabar red contrasting with the muted grey section below. Standing conspicuously in the center of the glowing field, the stūpa is the focus of a reconsecration ceremony attendant the replacement of the parasol. This fact is assured by the inscription below and evident in the painting's content. Indeed, while the workmen still clamber with impunity over the deconsecrated monument the return of its sacred essence is imminent. It is contained in a large vessel of water.

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6 Slusser, 1982: 1, 346, notes 189, 190.
7 The date is derived from an inscription, transliterated in Slusser, 1985, which reads: „Good fortune. Samvat 685, the tenth day of A [sadha?], Sunday. On this day the reconsecration ceremony of shri Syamgu [or] Svayambhū was completed. On this date at Yampivihāra ... which lies in the northeast corner of Manigla [Patan], in the reign of the three nobles shri shri Jayananarasmhadeva, shri shri Jayapuranandarasmhadeva, and shri shri Jayaudhavasimhadeva, may [something?] be."
suspended from a nol borne by two men about to ascend the eastern stairway (Fig. 5 = Colour Plate II). The triumphal return is accompanied by a monk and by lay persons bearing offerings and witnessed by spectators at the foot of the stairs and in pavilions above. Heralded by musicians, a number of whom together with more monks circumambulate the stūpa, the important event attracts the populace from all parts of the Valley. I have discussed the subject matter and other art historical aspects of the painting in detail elsewhere (Slusser 1985) and therefore propose to limit the present discussion essentially to its cartographic aspects.

Amidst the secular and religious activity surrounding the stūpa on the auspicious occasion of the ceremony, there are disposed a number of shrines and freestanding sculptures, a crowded scene not unlike we know the compound today. Although many of the shrines and sacred images may be unidentifiable stereotypes, the schema is by no means as generalized as it seems. For example, the five mansions (pūra), prominent features of the compound still, are located with remarkable fidelity in the places they occupy with respect to each other and to the stūpa. This is evident in comparing the painting itself with a site plan of Svayambhū (Fig. 4 = Colour Plate I; Fig. 6).

Briefly, Vasupura, the earth mansion, symbolized by a dragon-like creature, is placed just above the three seated monks at the left, that is to say, south of the stūpa, exactly as it should be (Fig. 7, B-3). The mansion of the wind, Vāyupura,
Fig. 7 Key to Figure 4, the numbered sites are those which bear identifying labels corresponding to, 1 Vidyāśvari, 2 Sobhā Bhagavati, 3 Pulchok, 4 Patan, 5 Yaṅgal (Southern Kathmandu), 6 Yambu (Northern Kathmandu), 7 Thāṃ Bahī, 8 Bodhnāth, 9 Deopatan, 10 Kumbheśvara (?), 11 Thecva, 12 Sanagaon, 13 Harasiddhi, 14 Pharping (?), 15 Thimi, 16 Lubhu, 17 Bhaktapur, 18 Sūrya Vināyaka, 19 an unnamed vihāra. Drawing courtesy of Yeorgos Lampathakis.
boulder-filled as we know it still, is placed just above, or given the painter’s approach to perspective, behind Vasupura and in relatively correct relation to it. At the right side of the painting, north-west of the stūpa, we find the remaining mansions, Agnipura, Sāntipura, and Nāgapura, all identifiable by their emblems and each correctly placed in relation to each other and to the stūpa (Fig. 7, A-5/6, B-6, C-5). There are other features that similarly can be identified but they need not detain us here.

It is, however, the lower section of the painting, the map of the rest of the Kathmandu Valley, that is of greatest interest in viewing the Nepali painters as map makers. This part of the painting is beribboned with the Valley’s principal rivers and streams positioned with sufficient fidelity as to be perfectly identifiable. Oriented to Svayambhū, the map’s vertical axis, top to bottom, is west-east; the horizontal axis, left to right, south-north. The rivers, then, are viewed as flowing quite as they do toward the south, i. e., the left side of the map. As a comparison of the painting with a modern map shows, there is no difficulty in determining which is the Bāgmati, the Viṣṇumati, probably the Manohara, or even minor affluents like the Balkhu Kholā or Bhacha Khusi (Fig. 4 = Colour Plate I; Figs. 7, 8).

Further, the painting depicts a host of towns, villages, and sacred places, linked each to each by a web of pathways. Though some are identified by written labels and others by unmistakable symbols, we must depend on location alone for the identification of others. Aside from Svayambhū and its nearby shrines, it is therefore possible to identify with some exactitude more than two dozen specific sites (Figs. 8, 9). This I have done in another paper devoted exclusively to the Yampi Vihāra paubhā so will not repeat myself here. Suffice it to say that this remarkable work, icon and art object though it may be, is also a map, a pictorial pilgrim’s guide to serve the pious as surely as the written word. In a traditional society of limited literacy, the value of such a presentation can hardly be overestimated.

While the Yampi Vihāra painting provides an outstanding example of the Newar skill at map making, it is by no means unique. A careful examination of certain other paintings reveals that they too are confected by minds with a very clear idea of spatial relationships that demand that the sacred geography they depict in paint correspond with physical reality. It is particularly evident in many of the long, horizontal scrolls we are occasionally privileged to see displayed in the monastery courtyards (Fig. 10). Viewed left to right, both iconic and didactic in purpose, some of the scrolls – and murals which employ the same format – are frankly narrative. Others in keeping with the written pilgrim’s guides provide compendia of the sacred sites, embroidered with references to religious events respecting them.

8 See e.g., Macdonald and Stahl, 1979: pl. 1.
Fig. 8 Map of the Kathmandu Valley showing the rivers and sites, numbered 1 to 26, that can be identified in the Yampi Vihāra painting, 1 Pharping, 2 Thecva, 3 Būgamati, 4 Chobar, 5 Kirtipur, 6 Swayambhunāth, 7 Vidyāśvari, 8 Sobhā Bhagavati, 9 Balaju, 10 Patan, 11 West Stūpa, 12 Pulchok, 13 Yangal (Southern Kathmandu), 14 Yambu (Northern Kathmandu), 15 Thā Bahi, 16 Harasiddhi, 17 Sanagaon, 18 Lubhu, 19 Thimi, 20 Deopatan, 21 Guhyeśvari, 22 Bodhnāth, 23 Sūrya Vināyaka, 24 Bhaktapur, 25 Sākhu, 26 Vajrayogini of Sākhu. Drawing courtesy of Yeorgos Lampathakis.
Yaṅgal, a name for the southern part of Kathmandu (Figure 8, no. 13) is identified by a label and the pavilion of Kāśṭhamaṇḍap, and is correctly located at the confluence of the Bagmati and Viśnumatī. Photograph by the author.

A painted scroll displayed in the courtyard of Yampi Viha (I Bahi), Patan in 1966 or 1967. The paubhā illustrated in Figure 4 then hung behind the latticework at the far left where it receives homage from a woman and children. Photograph by the author.
A nineteenth-century scroll belonging to Kvā Bahā, Patan is a case in point (Fig. 11). The principal sacred places and towns of the Kathmandu Valley are graphically illustrated and a few labeled. They occupy a landscape of cloud-capped mountains, rolling hills, and meandering streams enlivened with diverse flora, fauna, and people. Though limited by the long narrow format, the shrines in the Kvā Bahā scroll, no less than in the Yampi Vihāra painting, are so well organized topographically that most can be easily identified. It too is in effect a map.

We know little about the Newar penchant for map making, perhaps because we have not thought about it. It may have a long history and, as Sylvain Lévi (1905: I, 72-74) pondered long ago, may well be indigenous to the Himalayas. Lévi mentions an eighteenth century map of the Kingdom of Nepal which had been acquired by a European who assessed it as „the best map of Hindu origin that I have ever seen.“ Lévi felt that the idea had not been transmitted recently by Catholic missionaries or Muslims and that if it had foreign antecedents at all, they were far more remote. In support of this view he cited a map of Kāmarūpa sent by that country as a gift to China in A.D. 648. Kāmarūpa was a close neighbor of Nepal and certainly no stranger to it.9 Thus it may well be that in Nepal as well, map making is a venerable science culminating in the pictorial pilgrim’s guides such as the Kvā Bahā scroll or the Yampi Vihāra paubhā. If so it is little wonder that they are composed with such cartographic finesse.

9 Slusser, 1982: I, 9, 10, 31, 32, 370, 373.
To students of Nepali culture it is somewhat amusing to think that as the renowned Flemish cartographer, Gerardus Mercator, was preparing to publish in 1568 the sophisticated projection that bears his name, an unknown Newar was completing his own map in a little Patan monastery on the other side of the world in the shadow of the Himalayas. Without latitude, longitude, or even a scale, that map of A.D. 1565, no less than Mercator's sophisticated one, is nonetheless a very accurate representation of spatial phenomena on a plane surface. Further, as Mercator's map did not, the Newar map embraced cosmic, religious, and esthetic aspects that made it at once map, icon, and a dazzling object of art. There is little more that one could ask of its unsung painter.

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Gautam Vajracharya

An Interpretation of Two Similar Nepalese Paintings
In the Light of Nepalese Cultural History

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HERITAGE OF THE KATHMANDU VALLEY
EDITED BY
NIELS GUTSCHOW AND AXEL MICHAELS
PROCEEDINGS OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
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(NEPALICA. 4.)
Among the magnificent artistic treasures the Los Angeles County Museum of Art has received from the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection is an unusual Nepalese painting executed in memory of a Buddhist monk, Vanaratna (Fig. 1 = Colour Plate III).\(^1\) The painting is dated Nepal Samvat 589 corresponding to 1468 A.D. It shows an elegant lady distributing alms to mendicants on a busy street of the Kathmandu Valley. She stands gracefully on a pedestal in a *tribhanga* posture, holding a stem of a stylized lotus and glancing toward the crowd of beggars. She is accompanied by several other well-dressed ladies assisting her in the ceremony of giving alms. When compared with the other figures she stands out prominently because of her large size.

On the left half of the painting the crowded scene of beggars, religious personages, a mother and child, and a royal figure with majestic head-gear are executed with great imaginative delight. In particular, the two beggars in the left-hand corner are animated with their conversation accompanied by expressive gestures. Noteworthy also is the girl feeding a chicken-like bird in the lower middle section of the painting. Essentially, the entire setting seems to be a study of everyday life which can be observed even today on the streets of Kathmandu. Indeed, its aura of genre painting, an unusual tendency for medieval Nepalese art, makes this painting unique yet appealing. The inscription at the top reveals an even more fascinating story which we will be discussing shortly.

An identical scene of alms-giving by ladies occurs in another Nepalese painting of a later date (N.S. 982/1862 A.D.) in the collection of Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras (Fig. 2). Along the top of the Banaras painting, however, there is an additional section representing Kanakamuni Buddha flanked by his disciples. This upper part is missing in the Los Angeles painting, nevertheless at first glance the earlier painting looks so complete that if we were not familiar with the nineteenth century copy it would be almost impossible to know that the painting is only a section of a larger painting.

In 1966 when Pratapaditya Pal was preparing the catalogue *The Art of India and Nepal*, he was aware of both of these paintings. He then aptly remarked that the lower section of the Banaras painting is identical with the Los Angeles painting; but

\(^1\) The research which made this paper possible was funded by a grant from the Asian Cultural Council (previously JDR 3rd Fund), New York. I would like to express my gratitude to the Director, Richard Lanier, and to the trustees of the Council for this grant. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Banaras Kala Bhavan for providing me with photographs of the Los Angeles painting and the Banaras painting respectively and granting permission to publish them.
1. See Colour Plate III.
he could not identify the theme of the painting accurately and was apparently
confused by the dates given in the inscriptions. He wrote: "There are three dates in
the inscription 448, 488, and 489 N.S. the latter corresponding to 1369 A.D. The
theme is in the nature of hosanna to Tārā, who is being welcomed by priests and
attendants Sadhus to the accompaniment of auspicious conch-sounds."

Apparently this brief explanation was written without the benefit of a complete and
proper translation of the inscription. In 1975 when I was conducting research on
Nepalese art in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art I had an
opportunity to have a closer look at the original painting. The inscription, which
had not yet been fully deciphered, aroused my curiosity. With an effort of several
days, I was able to decipher the inscription. First of all I noticed that in both
inscriptions one of the important dates is given not only in numerals but also in a
Sanskrit chronogram. With this disclosure I was in a better position to read the
dates correctly and identify the actual theme of the painting properly. It became
clear at once that Pal's reading of the dates was wrong by one century, the three
dates being 575, 588 and 589. The latter corresponds to A.D. 1468. The inscription
records that in the year N.S. 575 / A.D. 1455 an honorable Buddhist monk,
Vanaratna of the Govicandra monastery, distributed grain to ascetics, monks,
Brahmans and others.

Thirteen years later in N.S. 588 / 1468 A.D. he again performed the alms-giving
ceremony. Five months after this ceremony in N.S. 589 / 1468 A.D. Vanaratna
passed away and became a Buddha. The inscription thus indicates that the theme of
the painting is Vanaratna's alms-giving ceremony, rather than worship of the
Goddess Tārā by the priest and sadhus, as has been suggested. Very likely the figure
of Kanakamuni Buddha illustrated on the upper section of the Banaras painting,
originally also in the Los Angeles painting, represents Vanaratna himself who
achieved Buddhahood as a result of these repeated religious acts of giving alms. The
epigraphical description also gives us a feeling that they were great events to remain
in the memory of people for a long time. This will become more plausible if we read
the Banaras inscription, which includes the entire Los Angeles inscription and yet
presents an additional passage at the end. The ending lines of the Banaras inscription
inform us that the Buddhist priests of the Govicandra monastery venerated the
memory of this monk who used to live in the same monastery and even after four
centuries they had not forgotten the episode of the alms-giving ceremony of
Vanaratna. Furthermore, in order to cherish the memory of his religious activities,
the Buddhist priests, in the year N.S. 982 / 1857 A.D. commissioned a fresh copy of
the original painting. Perhaps even at that time the upper section of the original
painting was already decayed. This could explain why the original painting now in
Los Angeles has survived only in the lower section.

2 John Rosenfield et al., The Art of India and Nepal: The Nasli and Alice HeeramanecK
Although the original is fragmentary, we are, indeed, extremely fortunate to have both these paintings with epigraphical records, as both the inscriptions and the painting are exceptionally important materials for the analytical study of the medieval art and culture of the country. Realizing the significance of the paintings, in 1975, Pratapaditya Pal resumed his study of these valuable artistic works. When I was working on Nepalese art in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Pal, the curator of the Indian and Islamic department of the museum, was writing his three-volume work *The Arts of Nepal*. At his request I provided him with the translation of both of the inscriptions and pointed out the new interpretation which differed considerably from what he had written in the catalogue. Considering these new findings he made modification in the second volume and wrote:

"The inscriptions inform us that in the year N.S. 565 or 566 (A.D. 1445/6) one Vanaratna associated with a Govicandra Mahāvihāra made elaborate ceremonial gifts to fellow Budhists and foreign (presumably Indian) Yogis and Śaiva ascetics. A pious man, he repeated the ceremonies twenty-two years later in N.S. 588 or A.D. 1468, but died the following year at which time the painting was consecrated in his memory by members of his family. Almost four centuries later in the same monastery, for reasons which remain unknown, the old painting was discarded and a fresh copy made, as is stated in the last sentence of the Banaras inscription."³

This time Pal was more accurate in deciphering the dates and identifying the theme of the painting; however, there are still some problems. For the time being our immediate concern is the exact year of Vanaratna's death, at which time the original painting was commissioned in his memory. This date plays an important role in our further study. Pal does agree that Vanaratna died in the month of Mārga N.S. 589; but the problem is converting the Nepal era into a Christian date. The difference between the date of the Nepal era and the Christian date during the month of Mārga is always 879, which we can find out easily by checking the traditional Nepalese calendar. Undoubtedly the exact year of Vanaratna's death is A.D. 1468 rather than the following year as Pal has suggested.

The fascinating story of the two identical paintings does not end here. We have yet to see who Vanaratna was and why he was memorable and important. Recently new materials pertaining to this remarkable person and his religious activities have come to light. *The Blue Annals*, a historical treatise compiled by Gos Lo-tsa-ba, a Tibetan scholar of the fifteenth century, presents an elaborate biography of a Buddhist monk by the name of Vanaratna.⁴ The identification of Vanaratna of the Los Angeles and Banaras painting with this Buddhist monk is incontestable for several strong reasons. Firstly, the inscriptive references to the alms-giving ceremony of

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Vanaratna correlate with the information presented by the annals regarding the monk’s pious activities in Kathmandu. Secondly, Govicandra Mahāvihāra, the Nepalese monastery where Vanaratna used to live, and to which the painting originally belonged, is also mentioned in the annals as the monk’s residence in Nepal. Finally, the date of Vanaratna’s death given in the epigraph is identical with that of the Buddhist monk of the same name. *The Blue Annals* records:

"Vanaratna performed extensive religious works in Tibet, such as translation of each of the above mentioned texts, etc. He again returned to Nepal, as prophesied by his Teacher and his tutelary deity. He devoted himself exclusively to meditation at the hermitage of Govicandra, met the Mahāsiddha Lū-i-pa and others, and was pleased. He constantly supported the beggars of Nepal by giving them food and material gifts, as well as satiated the fortunate ones with different kinds of doctrines. At the age of 85, in the eight month of the year Earth-Male Mouse (Sa-pho-byi-ba-1468 A.D.) he said: "I shall now hold the feast of going to the Tuṣita Heaven," and offered a great feast to all the 'Ju-'Ju of Nepal, and to a crowd of beggars. After that, till the eleventh month, various supernatural phenomena, such as flower showers, earth tremours, rainbows inside his house, etc. were observed. Especially on the 18th day of the 11th month (it was observed) that while the pandita was preaching the Doctrine, streams of white water similar to milk filled the air round his body. Till midnight of the 22nd day he held a Tantric feast with his disciples, holders of (Tantric) vows, and gave out detailed prophecies about profound doctrines and future events. Then having retired to his cell, he sat in the 'diamond' (vajra) posture on his meditative mat, holding his body erect, and manifested the state of going to Heaven. In the evening of the 23rd, when people were conveying (lit. inviting) his remains for cremation at the Ramdo-li burial ground (situated near the hill of the Svayambhuchaitya), the whole of the country of Nepal was enveloped by a great light, the points of the flames of the funeral pyre became entwined with rainbows and rose towards the limitless sky, and numberless great miracles were observed. Even the dull Nepālese were filled with an undifferentiated faith and seemed to share in the highest form of emancipation. This great soul, free from any kind of defiling defects, conformed to the ideal of an ācārya as described in the Precious Tantra class. He also was endowed with all the virtuous qualities (listed in the Tantras) without exception and especially was believed to possess all the marks of a Holy Teacher as described in the Kālacakra-Tantra and those of a bestower of spiritual realization. Therefore he became our highest and only refuge." 

This reference from the Tibetan source helps us to explain the cultural background of the paintings more adequately. In *The Arts of Nepal* Pal has described Vanaratna

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5 Ibid., pp. 803–805.
as a family man. This may be true in a sense, yet it can not be entirely accurate because Vanaratna was a monk. Before we proceed with our discussions, it is important to remember that this was a period of Tantric Buddhism. In this form of Buddhism many practices were considerably different from those in Hinayana Buddhism. In Tantric Buddhism monks were allowed to indulge in secret rites with their female counterparts. This was even mandatory in some tantric ritual ceremonies.

This biography of Vanaratna reveals that he actively took part in the prevailing tantric rituals and devoted himself to promoting them. Indeed, in his time he was a highly respected Buddhist monk. Originally he came from Bengal, travelled to many parts of India and later spent a considerable part of his life in Nepal and Tibet teaching Tantric Buddhist doctrine.

According to The Blue Annals Vanaratna was born as an Indian prince in a city called Sadnagara (Dam-pa in Tibetan) in modern Chittagong district in East Bengal. In his childhood he went to a Buddhist school associated with the Mahācāitya monastery. At the age of twenty he received the monastic ordination from his teachers and became an ascetic. Then he went to Ceylon, where he spent six years. After he returned to the mainland, he also journeyed to the kingdom of Kaliṅga, the eastern region which included what is now the modern state of Orissa. By this time he was already a well-known pandit among the Buddhist scholars of the country which is testified by the warm welcome that he received in Kaliṅga. A great local scholar, Narāditya, even composed verses praising him highly. From there he proceeded towards the Dhāanyakātaka Mahācāitya in the Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh. Then he went to Magadha, an ancient kingdom around Patna and Gaya in south Bihar. Here he spent most of his time practicing meditation in a monastery called Uruvasa. One day when he was meditating, a miraculous stone image of Avalokiteśvara spoke to him, „Go to Tibet. After attending on a king you will be of benefit to many.„

In accordance with this prophecy he travelled to Tibet, spending some time in Nepal on the way. His first visit to Tibet was not very encouraging. On his arrival at Lhasa only a few people came to ask about religion, therefore, he returned to Nepal. After some time, however, he went to Tibet again. From now on Vanaratna spent most of his life in Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan, travelling constantly back and forth in this Himalayan region. In Nepal on his early visit Vanaratna stayed in the famous monastery of Swayambhū; only later he resided in the Govicandra Monastery where he remained for the rest of his life. In this busy life he always found enough time to teach his disciples the doctrines of tantric Buddhism and frequently performed the initiation rituals according to various systems found in the different texts especially the Kālacakra.6

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6 Ibid., pp. 797–803.
Vanaratna's life story also sheds light on the situation of Indian Buddhism which had been declining rapidly since the late eleventh century. The decline was mainly caused by a series of the Muslim invasions in which many famous Buddhist monasteries and universities, particularly in northern India, were burnt to the ground. Many monks who survived the sword of the Muslims fled to the mountains of Nepal and Tibet. In the fifteenth century when Vanaratna was leading an active life in the promotion of Buddhism, Nalanda and other great monasteries of Bihar had been completely devastated by the Muslims. Before the Muslim invasions many Tibetan Buddhists used to visit these monastic universities and many scholars from these universities were invited to Tibet with great respect. It is particularly interesting to note that even after the great suffering and destruction caused by the Muslim invasions, Buddhism in India, including the northern part of the country, was not completely uprooted as many historians have suggested. Vanaratna was one of the later Buddhist monks who was working hard to advance Buddhism and he too finally immigrated to Tibet and Nepal. Hence in Tibet he was called „Pañḍita mha'-ma“ or „The Last Pañḍita.“

Even after his death Vanaratna was highly venerated by his disciples and even elevated to the status of a deity. A famous Tibetan monk, Bsod-nams rgya-mlsho, regarded him as his spiritual father and compared him with various Buddhist gods. The Blue Annals states:

„On many occasions he [the Tibetan monk] met the great pañḍita (Vanaratna), who (appeared to him) in the form of a pañḍita, a yogin, and a god. After the departure of the great pañḍita to Tuśita [Buddhist Heaven], he instructed him in a vision to proceed to the Lake of Tsa-ri (Tsa-ri gyu-mtsho), preached the Doctrine to him, appointed him his chief disciple and gave him the śrīvatsa emblem of (his) heart. “

Furthermore in a eulogy composed by the Tibetan monk, Vanaratna is at one time described as a male counterpart of the goddess Vajravārāhi, and at another time he is regarded as the Buddha Vairocana-Vajra, the counterpart of the goddess Vajratārā, both of whom the monk considered as his spiritual parents. In one verse of the eulogy the Tibetan monk describes the vision that he received during the meditation. In this vivid description the monk presents his spiritual father Vanaratna as a tantric deity, „aflame with Inner Heat [...] properly embraced by a nun and indulging in secret enjoyment. “

All this clearly demonstrates the tendency to raise the deceased Buddhist monk to the rank of a god, and specifically a tantric god usually accompanied by a female deity. Presumably, in his real life, Vanaratna had a female acolyte when he lived in the Nepalese monastery. The Buddhist priests of the monastery, who were

7 Ibid., p. 799.
8 Ibid., p. 815.
9 Ibid., pp. 818-819.
10 Ibid., p. 819.
responsible for commissioning the Banaras painting, introduced themselves as children or *macāta* in Nevārī. Perhaps by this term the members of the priestly family were indicating that they were descendants of the great person. Very likely the prominent lady engaged in alms distribution was Vanaratna's female counterpart who assisted him in the various tantric rituals as well as in the alms-giving ceremonies. The stylized lotus, a paramount attribute of Goddess Tārā, is placed in her left hand in an attempt to identify her with one of the many forms of the goddess. Apparently the representation is also her idealized portrait, an interesting aspect which has a long tradition in the art history of the country, but which did not become very popular in the neighboring art centers of the Indian plains. In addition, as we have remarked before, the representation of the Buddha flanked by his disciples, which is extant only in the Banaras painting, is likely to be a portrayal of Vanaratna's departure to heaven, more specifically Tuṣitā-bhuvan, the Buddhist paradise as expressed in *The Blue Annals*.11

Interesting as this theme and composition are, the depiction of the royal personage with an elaborate crown is perhaps even more important for the study of Nepalese political history as well as its aesthetic tradition. The royal figure stands in the middle of the beggars and mendicants who are patiently waiting for the alms. The monarch appears to be engaged in conversation with the elegant lady, for he glances toward her, raising his hand in a royal gesture. Unfortunately the inscriptions, at least in the section deciphered so far, do not refer to the royal presence in the ceremony. *The Blue Annals*, on the other hand does make allusion to it but very briefly. Just before his departure to Tuṣitā heaven, Vanaratna, as we have shown earlier, offered a great feast not only to a crowd of beggars but also „to all the 'Ju-'Ju of Nepāl.“12 The expression *juju* is a Nevārī word meaning a monarch, which is usually applied to the Malla kings of the Kathmandu Valley. In the year of 1468 when Vanaratna performed this final alms-giving ceremony, the well-known king, Yakṣa Malla, was ruling the entire Kathmandu Valley and a little beyond. Hence, this seems to be Yakṣa Malla's portrait. It is also one of the earliest representations of Nepalese kings in a painting so far discovered.

One more comment on this brief account seems to be necessary. The medieval period of Nepalese history saw the nation divided into almost fifty principalities each quarrelling for supremacy. As a result greater Nepal shrunk into a tiny area. Just as in the local historical sources, so too in the Tibetan literature of this period, the term „Nepal“ was applied only to the small kingdom of the Kathmandu Valley. It is, therefore, unlikely that „all the 'Ju-'Ju of Nepāl“ really means all the contemporary kings of Nepal. Apparently the annals intend to state that all the members of the royal family of the Malla king were invited to the great ceremony.

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11 Ibid., p. 804.
12 Ibid.
Apart from this, the royal presence in this ceremony of distributing alms also reminds us immediately of a similar, perhaps identical, ceremony occasionally performed even at the present time by the Buddhist Newars of the Kathmandu Valley. In Nevāri the ceremony is called *samay* which seems to be derived from Buddhist Sanskrit *samyak* or well-being. In the ceremony the attendance of the reigning monarch is so essential that the distribution of alms begins only after the arrival of the monarch, for the purpose of the celebration is the good harvest and prosperity (*subhiksa*) of the whole nation. Very likely Vanaratna’s alms-giving ceremony was an earlier version of this prevailing custom.

Significant as this cultural background is, the stylistic analysis of these two paintings is perhaps even more valuable. Their comparative study clearly reveals how far the nineteenth century copyist turned away from the fifteenth century original, despite the persistent tendency of Nepalese aesthetic tradition to discourage radical modification. Pal has correctly remarked that the copyist was, however, “expected to make a copy, he was not a blind imitator. Obviously he could not use a new composition, but he did effect changes in the facial features and in the modes of dress, which reflect textile designs and fashions current in his own time.”

In this regard it should also be borne in mind that it was during this period (fifteenth to the nineteenth century) that the tradition of Nepalese painting underwent major changes due to the influences of the Mughal and Rajaput style in particular. In India toward the end of the sixteenth century the Mughal style developed as an outstanding imperial art in the court of the Mughal Emperor, Akbar, and considerably influenced the native Indian pictorial tradition, including the Rajaput style, which was in turn patronized by the Hindu princes of Rajasthan and central India. In Nepal, however, because of the usual time-lag for diffusion, only in the first half of the seventeenth century did the elements of the Mughal and Rajaputa style enter into the repertoire of the native artists. Indeed, it is these distinguishing elements that make the nineteenth century Banaras painting stylistically different from the fifteenth century original despite their similarity in composition.

Perhaps an immediately perceptible stylistic modification that we encounter in the nineteenth century reproduction is the employment of a particular artistic convention of Rajaput paintings in which the faces of the human figures are depicted in profile irrespective of the frontally shown body position. Just like in the early Nepalese painting this convention is totally absent in the Los Angeles painting. There the heads of all figures are shown in three-quarter profile, a highly admired traditional style which can be traced back to the earliest mural painting of the Indian subcontinent. Evidently, in the Nepalese tradition of painting, the continuity of this early feature was interrupted only after the introduction of the Rajaput style, as exemplified by the Banaras painting. This new development, therefore, seems to

be one of the key factors in determining the date of the Nepalese painting, though this is complicated by the fact that for a long period of time both styles continued in parallel fashion.

The essentially secular tradition of the Mughal portrait, arranged in profile, also played an important role in the development of the figural representation in Nepalese paintings of later date. In the Banaras painting, it must be pointed out that the beggars and mendicants are not represented in profile; on the contrary, they are in the same traditional three-quarter view as in the original painting. But the important people, including the ladies and the monarch, are deliberately executed in strong profile. This seems stylistically much closer to the Mughal portraits. The copyist, perhaps after long premeditation decided, even though he was making a copy, to render the important figures in profile simply because they were portraits of historical figures. The artist seems to be aware of the fact that a profile position gives the figure an air of personality and prominence, befitting the memorable historical personages.

Another stylistic difference between these two paintings is noticeable in the delineation of the eye shape, a feature given careful attention by accomplished artists interested in rendering the human face expressive. In the Los Angeles painting, the eyes of all figures are almost semi-circular, the lower eyelid always being virtually straight and elongated. In the tradition of Nepalese painting this type of eye shape known as nyāmikha or „fish like eye“ in Nevārī made its first appearance in the twelfth century manuscript illuminations. It continued several centuries and became very popular around the fifteenth and sixteenth century with slight variation. Again, only after the arrival of the Rajaput style did this feature disappear and was replaced by lotus-shaped wide eyes, a characteristic of the Rajput style. The artist of the Banaras painting must have been quite aware of this stylistic difference; nonetheless, his predilection for this contemporary style was so strong that he did modify the forms even though he was just making a reproduction.

If this modification was premeditated, another difference that we notice in the reproduction does not appear to be intentional. The change was rather a result of a gradual decadence of artistic quality.

A careful study of the Los Angeles painting reveals that the artist constantly concentrated on creating a convincing harmony between the crowds of the beggars and the ladies engaged in distributing gifts. This achievement in effective grouping was one of the hallmarks of Indian and Nepalese artists who were responsible for the Ajanta mural paintings and the early manuscript illuminations respectively. The seventh century Ajanta wall painting depicting the scenes from the Buddhist story Mahājanaka Jātaka presents a superb example of this outstanding quality.14 In this

mural, a handsome rājā with an elegant crown is portrayed in the middle of conversation with his queen and attendants. The figures are skillfully arranged in order the enhance the expressiveness of the scene. One is immediately struck not only by their eloquent gestures and eyes, but also by the facial reflection of their inner feelings as the discussion continues.

Even in a later period an unknown Nepalese painter of the eleventh century illumination of a Gaṇḍavyūha manuscript could grasp the dramatic moment when participants respond to the event in various ways. Again the placement of the figures and facial expressions in the illumination are so clear that without any label one can immediately recognize the representation as a scene from a pāṭhasālā or a traditional Indian school where all the students sit on the ground in a circle, usually surrounding the teacher. Some of them appear seriously involved in the study while others are not much interested in it.

The Los Angeles painting does not seem too far removed from the Gaṇḍavyūha illumination in this regard. The movements of the figures in the latter are certainly smoother and less angular; yet the former painting does possess a harmonious quality in the grouping of the figures. The mendicants standing in front of the tall lady glance toward her extending their begging bowls and bags in such a way that she becomes almost like a center of energy radiating her personality to each individual. Even the royal figure gazes at her, raising his arm in an attempt to draw her attention. Indeed, the artist has shown remarkable accomplishment in giving the painting cohesion and unity by effectively placing the figures face to face and at the same time creating a highly expressive eye contact among the figures. This quality is missing in the nineteenth-century copy. For example, the eyes of the beggars no longer possess much expressiveness. Some of them do not even look towards the lady with expectation. Similarly the royal presence does not enhance the significance of the event; rather the monarch seems to be unaware of what is happening in front of him, as he stares into the distance toward the sky. Thus the copyist lost the whole point. As a result the grouping of the figures became so much less convincing that the composition loses coherence in its entirety.

Finally, a few words may be said about the provenance of the painting and related important custom, highly significant for further research. Both of these paintings, as we have mentioned before, came from the collection of the Govicandra Vihāra, which had not been identified when I started working on this study. Like other Buddhist monasteries of Kathmandu the great vihāra seems to have had a regular annual public display of its valuable art collection. This custom is still alive in the valley and locally it is known as bahi dyah būyegu, meaning „the display of

15 H. Goetz, „Indian Painting in Muslim Period: A Revised Historical Outline,” Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art, Vol 115, No. 1, 1947, fig. 1. Although Goetz believed that the manuscript is from Kulu, the style of the painting itself attests that it is originally from Nepal.
monastic gods. It is interesting to note that the date of the nineteenth century reproduction, the full moon of the month of Śrāvana, is also the exact lunar date for the annual opening of the art exhibition. Evidently, the fresh copy was commissioned for the yearly display of the art collection owned by the Govicandra monastery. In a recent visit to Kathmandu, I have been able to identify the monastery as present day Pintu Bahā, an unpretentious monastic courtyard located in the northern part of Patan. A copperplate inscription attached to the main shrine of Pintu Bahā refers to the monastery as the Govicandra Mahāvihāra. This monastery, I have been informed, still possesses several other paintings in its collection; however, the annual art exhibition has been discontinued since the late sixties.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{16} A preliminary report on these two paintings has been presented at the eleventh annual conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin in 1983. An abstract of that paper has been published in the Himalayan Research Bulletin Vol 3, No. 1, 1983, p. 14. Two years later in 1985 in his recent work \textit{Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection}, Pratapaditya Pal has amended what he had written before but without mentioning either my Wisconsin conference paper or its abstract. If a reader compares this latest version of my study with Pal’s discussion on these paintings in his various publications, it will be clear how this study has developed since 1967.
Anne Vergati

The King as Rain Maker

A New Version of the Legend of the Red Avalokiteśvara in Nepal

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EDITED BY
NIELS GUTSCHOW AND AXEL MICHAELS
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Printed in Germany.
One of the most venerated deities in the valley of Kathmandu is the Red Avalokiteśvara, whose cult is exclusively carried out by Buddhist priests (vajrācārya). However, as opposed to other Buddhists deities of Nepal, such as Dipāṅkara, Vajrapāṇi and Tārā, worship of the Red Avalokiteśvara extends largely beyond the limits of the Nepalese Buddhist community. As distributor of rain, and therefore of prosperity and abundance, in a country whose main wealth is agriculture, he is one of the great gods of the kingdom venerated as much by the Hindus as by Buddhists. The king watches over and takes part in the celebration of the festival of the god – which takes place every year at Patan – so that the good order of the procession should ensure the good government of the country. The chronicles of the kingdom of Patan regularly mention the donations made to the temples of the Red Avalokiteśvara at Patan and at Buṅgamati for the celebration of the festival. In these circumstances it is not surprising that Avalokiteśvara should have become the favoured deity (iśtadevāta) of Śrīnivāsa Malla, king of Patan in the 17th century. It would seem that the role of the rain-maker Avalokiteśvara is exclusively linked to the accomplishment of the festival and of the procession. Avalokiteśvara is a protector of the kingdom but he is not the god who is invoked in case of drought. In such circumstances the Newars, whether they are Buddhists or Hindus, ask a vajrācārya to carry out special ceremonies to bring on the rain. In our own days, in case of drought, the vajrācārya make a pūjā on the mandala of Varuṇa, a deity whose links with the waters is known since the Veda. These are collective rites, often organised by a village, and in which mainly farmers (Jyāpu) take part. I will describe here the illustration of an original version of the legend of Red Avalokiteśvara the text of which is still un-identified. It is a scroll (Colour Plate IV, V), 2.20 metres in length and similar to other Newar paintings (pata or paubha) of the 17th or 18th centuries. S. Lienhard, in his work on Viśvantara, has shown how, with the aid of a stick, were pointed out and commented on the different episodes of a legend represented in such paintings which were exhibited in monastery courtyards (Nev. bāhā, Skt. vihāra) or in Tantric sanctuaires (āgāchē) during the month of Gūlā (July–August), a sacred month for the Newar Buddhists. The scroll is painted with red and green dominant colours. The Indian influence appears in the style of dress and in the conception of landscape. The dress is similar to the style

1 This is only a summary of my paper. A more elaborate version has been published under the title "Le roi faiseur de pluie – une nouvelle version de la légende d’Avalokiteśvara Rouge au Népal" in the Bulletin de l’Ecole Française d’Extrême Orient, tome LXXIV, 1985 (Paris), pp. 287-303.

depicted in the miniatures of Northern India of the same period, but the picture also shows deities wearing jewels in the Nepalese style. Since I have not been able to identify a written text which might correspond to the version of the legend depicted on the scroll, it is worth noting that two other scrolls kept at the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay are in structure and content almost identical to the scroll discussed here.

One scroll bears the date of 1617 A.D. and the other that of 1619 A.D.; they were both painted, probably by the same painter, at the request of Kasiraja Bharo, an inhabitant of Byam Vihara. The first scroll of 1617 is identical to the one which we are describing: it depicts the car procession of Buṇa Lokesvara. The second scroll depicts scenes from a text which is very popular among Buddhist Newars, the Kāraṇḍavyūha, which is dedicated to the merits of Avalokitesvara. The scroll of 1617 reveals that the version of the legend which we are about to describe was widespread in the 17th century.

The Paris scroll dated 1712 A.D. presents a number of difficulties: the interpretation of the scenes is a delicate matter; the inscription, written in old Nevārī, is elliptical both on the syntactic and on the semantic level. It does not enable one to throw light on the scenes which apparently follow the intervention of Avalokiteśvara (the second register). The inscription was transliterated by Thakur Lal Manandhar. I established a translation (published in my article mentioned in fn. 1) after long discussions with Bhadri Vajrācārya. I do not claim to have understood every detail or even all the facts that are mentioned. Each register is divided into two parts by a band of flowers. The band separates episodes from those parts which have a thematic unity. The interpretation of the first register on the left is, however, quite certain: two kings of the land of Magadha, Dharmaketu and Candraketu, accomplish religious rites prescribed for a king. On the right hand side of the first register, these two kings are fighting each other, thereby leading the country to drought and desolation.

The interpretation of the second register is even more difficult. On the left, two monks have come to implore the gods in heaven and to seek the help of the compassionate Avalokiteśvara. Upon their return to earth, they are in discussion with a king who wears the head-dress of the kings of Nepal. On the right, one sees the two monks in the hell of Yama: and one of the two is tied by a serpent. The same monk is to be found in the next scene on a bed in a palace in amorous company. One might suppose that the two kings, Dharmaketu und Candraketu, have put on monastic habits to seek the assistance of the gods or that only Candraketu and the king's guru have been to the paradise of Amitābha. The last scene shows the hill of Svayambhūnātha where water springs forth and where the gods have resumed their place.

The third register shows the unfolding of the procession. One notes that this scroll gives an entirely new version of the legend. The characters are not the same; the circumstances are different; the nāgas only play a minor role. For the reconstruction of the legend I used the description of the festival of Patan and Buṇgamati as
well as notes taken during my field-work in 1978 and 1981. I also made a systematic comparison with the Bombay scroll of 1617. This enabled me to understand better the scenes and the inscriptions on the 1712 scroll because the first is identical to the Paris scroll but its inscription has not been deciphered.

The scroll which we have described is important first of all because of its content: it shows clearly that the king is responsible for the prosperity of the kingdom. But he alone cannot ensure this: he is in a relation of interdependence with a master of ritual because, if he does not accomplish his religious duties, “misfortunes“ and drought will occur. At the same time, the two paintings which describe the legend and the procession of Avalokiteśvara-Buṅgadyah (1617 and 1712) show us the role of ascetics in the cult of Avalokiteśvara. If one judges from the painting in the Bombay Museum, the ascetics were kāṇphaṭas: they have elongated ears pierced by long earrings according to the fashion of nāthas. In passages in the inscription of the painting which we are describing the word nātha is found associated with the name of Lokeśvara. The first inscription which shows the presence of nātha ascetics in the Valley dates from the 14th century: it is to be found inside the kāṣṭhamanḍapa at Kathmandu. However, the influence and religious activity of the nātha only developed widely in the 17th century. It can be suggested that the association of ascetics with the cult of Avalokiteśvara – Buṅga-Dyah must go back to times before the transformation of the legend and of the deity Avalokiteśvara into Matsyendra-nātha. It is very likely that the transformation occurred at the end of the 18th century, when during the reign of Prthvi Nārāyaṇa Śāha (the first king of the new Śāha dynasty and the conqueror of the Valley in 1768) the cult of the nātha took on a new lease of life.

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3 A detailed description and a tentative interpretation of the scenes depicted on the scrolls is given in my article mentioned in no. 1.
Siegfried Lienhard

A Nepalese Painted Scroll Illustrating the Simhālavadāna*
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The famous Buddhist re-birth story of the caravan-leader Simhala has come down to us in several versions. It relates the adventures of Simhala who, together with five hundred companions, is shipwrecked in the vicinity of Tāmрадvīpa. The merchants are very well received by the man-eating witches (*rākṣasis*) living on the island and are not aware of the dangers that threaten them since the witches have disguised themselves as beautiful damsels. However, Simhala comes to know the truth and flees with his fellow merchants when the white horse Baliha undertakes the rescue of the whole company.

The most important versions of the story are the *Valāhassajātaka* in Pāli which, however, does not mention Simhala by name, the *Dharmalabdhaṭṭaka* of the *Mahāvastu*, where the leader of the merchants is called Dharmalabdha, and finally the recensions to be found in the *Divyāvadāna*, the *Kārandaṇḍavyuha* and the *Guṇakārandaṇḍavyuha* respectively. The two last-mentioned texts agree very well with that in the *Divyāvadāna*, but introduce the figure of Avalokiteśvara. It is Avalokiteśvara who informs Simhala of the real nature of their beautiful hostesses, and it is Avalokiteśvara who manifests himself as Balāha. Simhala spends the night together with one of the *rākṣasis* and when his beloved falls asleep, Avalokiteśvara appears in the wick of the night-lamp. The compassionate Bodhisattva warns Simhala and asks him to set out in the southern direction, where the merchant-son will soon see a large prison called the „iron fortress“, where other merchants, who were shipwrecked before, are incarcerated by the beautiful witches to be successively devoured by them. Simhala urges his companions to flee and, after having reached the coast of the island, they encounter the flying white horse Balāha. The horse, a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara, offers to carry them back to Jambudvīpa, but only Simhala, the believer, who alone of the company does not look back at the witches, is saved. All the others fall into the ocean and are immediately devoured by the *rākṣasis*, their former mistresses. Several versions end with this episode, the rescue of Simhala, while other recensions add a second and some even a third part to this entertaining and interesting story. In the second part Simhala’s previous mistress arrives, again disguised as a beautiful damsel, in his home-town Simhanagara. She produces by witchcraft a pretty child which she pretends to be her and Simhala’s son and molests Simhala and his parents. In a final section of the story, which is not given in the older versions, Simhala, who is made king, wages war on the witches and drives them away.

Whereas in the *Valāhassajātaka* the horse Balāha is identified with Gautama Buddha, in the *Kārandaṇḍavyuha* and the *Guṇakārandaṇḍavyuha* the pious Simhala is interpreted as being Śākyamuni in one of his former existences, and the flying horse is considered to be a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara. The story is wide-spread, as is attested by the fact that there are also versions in Tibetan, Chinese, Khotanese,
Japanese, and there is even a Prakrit version contained in the Jaina canon. The versions in the Valahassajataka and the Karandavyuha respectively, as well as the Jaina and the Khotanese versions, tell only part I of the story and the Dhar malabdhajataka also gives the second, while the Divyavadana and the Gunakarandavyuha versions contain the fully elaborated story, that is to say, parts I to III. Most surprisingly, the Divyavadana omits the text part called the raksasisutra which narrates the story of the adventures of the five hundred merchants in Tamaradvipa, an extremely well-known section of the narrative which could easily be supplied by the narrator or reader of this avadana-story.

Like the legend of Prince Visvantara, the Simhalavadana inspired a great number of artists all over the Buddhist world. An early representation is to be found on a stone pillar from Mathura (2nd/3rd century A.D.). It depicts four episodes from our story, while a wall-painting in cave 17 in Ajanta, which has recently been analysed and described by D. Schlingloff, reveals the whole story according to the Mulasarvastivada version given in the Divyavadana. Sculptures or paintings representing one or more scenes from the Simhalavadana are also to be found in Kyzil in East Turkistan, on one of the panels of the famous Nanda-temple in Pagan in Burma as well as on a bas-relief of the Barabudur-temple in Java. As far as China and Japan are concerned, scenes from the Simhala legend appear in numerous illustrations of the Lotus-Sutra. The most impressive and perhaps finest sculpture of the flying horse, ridden by Simhala and his companions, is to be seen in Neak Pean in Angkor.

Another work, a Nepalese painted scroll in the possession of the Berlin Museum of Indian Art, illustrates the Simhala legend in a total of eighty scenes which are accompanied by short explanatory texts in classical Neviri. This painted scroll shows many agreements in arrangement, style and the way of representation with the Berlin Visvantara scroll which I described and edited in my book Die Legende vom Prinzen Visvantara, Berlin 1980. Although the colophon placed under the final picture is badly damaged and the date of the work completely effaced, the numerous correspondences between the Simhala and the Visvantara scrolls suggest clearly that the Simhala painting, too, must have been executed in Bandikapura, that is to say, today’s Banepa to the East of the Valley of Kathmandu, and that its date can tentatively be fixed at some time around 1837 A.D., which is the year given for the Visvantara scroll.

The Berlin Simhala painting is not based on the Divyavadana as is the Ajanta cave-painting, but follows rather closely the version contained in the Gunakaranandavyuh. This late Sanskrit text, composed during the 16th century, is not only a metrical version of the Karandavyuha, which is written in prose, but contains, as I have already mentioned, all three parts of the extended form of the story and, moreover, exalts Simhala as the devoted layman and pious believer. Again and again Simhala admonishes his merchant-companions, and later on, when he has become king, his own subjects, to constantly invoke and to venerate the Three Noble Jewels. Already as a young boy, the Gunakarandavyuh relates,
Simhala was uncommonly beautiful; he was amiable and has mastered all the sciences. He was a well-doer, was generous in giving to the poor, expressed himself skilfully, venerated his elders and teachers, was courageous, thoughtful and wise. Later on, it was he who was made king of the country since no other outstanding man (*mahājana*) in the whole kingdom was as noble-minded, as experienced, compassionate, charitable and clever as he.

The Simhala scroll is 11,44 m long and 31,5 cm high and is divided in two main zones: the painted area which measures 17 cm in height and, below this and only 4 cm high, the text area which, in one to three sentences, explains to the onlooker what is presented in each and every scene. Also the Simhala scroll continues, as does the Viṣvantara scroll, the style of miniature painting developed in Rajasthan and certain local Himalayan schools. The shapes of the faces as well as the general treatment of colour and landscape indicate influences from Rajasthan, especially from the school of Mewar.

Most unfortunately, the Simhala scroll is not as well preserved as the Viṣvantara painting. In many scenes the colours have faded badly and a number of episodes and text passages have been partly damaged. Both the introductory and the final scenes are the same as in the Viṣvantara painting. Scene 1 shows Vajrasattva, the main deity of the Vajrayāna pantheon, scene 2 Avalokiteśvara (in the form of Lokeśvara-Padmapāṇi) and scene 3 Śākyamuni, surrounded by an assembly of gods and monks. The assembly kneels outside, the Lord, however, sits in a palace-like building and listens to the Simhala story, which here is told, not by himself, but by Upoṣadha Devaputra. The last but one picture reveals again Avalokiteśvara, this time in his Newar aspect as the Lord of Būgama, while the concluding picture, which too, is more or less the same as that of the Viṣvantara scroll, shows the Caṇḍeśvarī temple in Banepa where this painting was made. Both the picture and the colophon given below are, however, badly preserved. The story of Simhala himself is rendered in its full length as in the *Divyavādaṇa* and *Gunakāranda-vyūha* versions and extends from scene no. 4 to no. 78.

Newar local tradition shifts the scene of the Simhala legend to the Valley of Kathmandu and Tibet. This popular version makes Simhala an inhabitant of Thābahī in Kathmandu, while the Indian Ocean is replaced by the river Brahmaputra and the island of Tāmradvipa (Sri Lanka) by Tibet.

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* Only the summary of the paper is given here, since my book on *Die Abenteuer des Kaufmanns Simhala: Eine nepalesische Bilderrolle aus der Sammlung des Museums für Indische Kunst Berlin* was published shortly after this Conference (Veröffentlichungen des Museums für Indische Kunst Berlin, vol. 7, Berlin 1985).
Eduard F. Sekler

Urban Design at Patan Darbār Square
A Preliminary Inquiry

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Gedruckt mit Unterstützung der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft und des Kultusministeriums des Landes Schleswig-Holstein
Printed in Germany.
Deservedly, Patan Darbār Square (Lalitpur Mangal Bazar) has been praised by many writers for its outstanding quality as an urban space and for the beauty and richness of its monuments. Here, in a comparatively small area – it measures 160 m in its longest direction – more than 30 important temple- and palace buildings stand side by side. The oldest extant monuments date back to the late 16th century. The area has been placed on the International World Heritage List as a protected monument zone of outstanding value and is the subject of a preservation study\(^1\). A preservation project for the museum building at the north end of the palace complex, though well advanced, is still unfinished.

The following paper is a preliminary progress report about my attempt to study the principles of urban and architectural design felt to have been important in the conception of the monuments and their arrangement. Since research is still incomplete, any conclusions are tentative and are presented purely for discussion. It was a basic assumption of the study that the size of the individual buildings and their relationships to each other were not haphazard. This seemed all the more likely because the general layout of the historic core of Patan shows clear evidence of a town planning scheme that was carefully worked out\(^2\). Though some of the underlying reasons for certain design decisions may never be known, it was hoped that others could be reconstructed through analysis and by reference to historic sources for past design practices in Nepal and India. Obviously an important step in any such investigation would be the determination of the original mensuration systems that were employed.

Unfortunately, as is well known, it is difficult to work back from surviving historic buildings to their original mensuration systems and often the undertaking at best yields results open to doubt\(^3\) – unless direct indications of original measurements survive by a happy coincidence, as was the case, for example, at Zoser’s pyramid complex at Sakkara\(^4\).


\(^3\) E. Fernie, „Historical Metrology and Architectural History,“ *Art History* I, No. 4, December 1978, 383 ff.

Whether the repeated occurrence of a figure close to 458 cm as the width of slightly recessed niches in the courtyard of the Museum\(^5\) – housed in Mani Keśav Nārāyaṇa Cok – is such a happy coincidence, future research will have to verify. The figure could indicate that the original basic unit of measurement was a *hath* that is, a Nepalese cubit of 45,8 cm. Apparently such a cubit of 45,8 cm is known, though more frequently the dimension of the cubit in Nepal is assumed as 45,72 cm,\(^6\) the difference, of course, being less than one millimeter.

The 45,8 cm cubit of the Museum niches seems applicable at other buildings, too, among them the close relative in size to the Museum, the Mul Cok. The latter has a facade of 2798,5 cm compared to the 2785 cm of the Museum, which means that both buildings have facades of close to 61 cubits in length; the sides of their courtyards with 1988 cm and 1978 cm show a comparable similarity: both approximate 43 cubits. Forty-three cubits is also almost exactly the dimension of the facade

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5 The exact dimensions are: 458 cm, 458,5 cm, 456 cm, 460 cm; all measured dimensions, unless indicated otherwise, are taken from M. Fujioka, K. Watanabe, *The Royal Buildings of Nepal*, Tokyo (Nippon Institute of Technology), 1981.

6 R.O.A. Becker-Ritterspach, *Gestaltungsprinzipien in der Newarischen Architektur*, Hamburg 1982, 109, note 2, gives the *bitta* as 22,9 cm; 2 *bitta* equal 1 *hath* or cubit = 45,8 cm.
Fig. 2 Patan Darbār Square, axonometry, looking Northeast (1983).
Fig. 3 The historic core of Patan, plan with indication of the Monument Zone delineated according to the World Heritage List.

Fig. 4 West facade of Mani Keśav Nārāyaṇa Cok (today Museum) from the photogrammetric survey by the Nippon Institute of Technology, Nepal Research Mission (Takayuki Kuromitsu, draftsman), with geometrical analysis by the author.
of Sundari Cok (with 1967 cm it is only 2 cm shorter than 43 cubits); the courtyard dimension of Sundari Cok is 1259,5 cm which corresponds exactly to 27 1/2 cubits.

Twenty-nine cubits of 45,8 cm amounts to 1328 cm which is the length of one side of the square plan of Degutale, the most important building in the square. But 1328 cm can also be read as 20 Royal Cubits of 66,4 cm. The Royal Cubit, which was in use on the Indian subcontinent and also occurred in Islamic mensuration as the great Royal Hašimi Cubit\(^7\), apparently derived from the so-called natural foot of three palms to which one palm was added, giving a four palm foot with a median value of 33,2 cm\(^8\). Two of these units gave the Royal Cubit of 66,4 cm.

Six hundred and sixty-four cm or 10 Royal Cubits is exactly half the width of the Degutale facade, and width dimensions closely related to this occur at least twice elsewhere in the Darbār Square: at the Cār Nārāyaṇa Temple (663 cm)\(^9\) and at the Hari-Śaṅkara Temple (669 cm)\(^10\). One wonders whether such a correspondence can happen by coincidence or whether it is not more plausible to assume that in all cases the dimension of 10 Royal Cubits (664 cm) or its multiple was chosen because it seemed a good basic dimension to give to sacred buildings. Here, as with a number of similar problems, my hope is that eventually a better knowledge of historic architectural treatises from Nepal will clarify matters\(^{11}\).

Architectural design determines not only dimensions but also ratios and proportions. Such treatises from Nepal as are known, and many better known ones from India, are quite explicit about this process and indicate proper ratios between width and height of buildings, for example 1:1; 1:1,25; 1:1,75; 1:2\(^{12}\). Moreover, yantras (geometric diagrams), charged with religious meaning, are provided with which to draw up figures in these ratios\(^{13}\). As in Western medieval architecture, the „quadratura”\(^{14}\), i.e. the manipulation and subdivision of the square, plays a most important role.

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10 Measurement taken by the author in 1982.
12 D.N. Shukla, Vāstu-Śāstra, vol. I., *Hindu Science of Architecture*, Chandigarh, n.d., 205 ff. discusses māna, the proportionate measurement; p. 479 deals with the ratio of height to width and its changes over time, stating „In the early texts ... the total height of the temple ... was twice or else thrice its width.” See also P.K. Acharya, *Indian Architecture according to Mānasāra-Śīlpaśāstra*, London, n.d., 124, and S. Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, Calcutta 1946, vol. I, chapter VII.
Fig. 5 West facade of Sundari Cok from the same source as figure 4, with geometrical analysis by the author.

Fig. 6 Sundari Cok, section through courtyard, looking North, from the same source as figure 4, with geometrical analysis by the author.
It should not come as a surprise, therefore, to find ample evidence of such a system at Patan Darbār Square. A double square indicates the height of Degutale. It also is found in the courtyard elevation of Sundari Cok. The facades of both Keśav Nārāyaṇa Cok and Sundari Cok are enclosed in a rectangle made up of 3 squares, and the lateral recesses flanking the central square compartment of the facade in both cases are also made up of 3 squares. This means the recesses are geometrically similar to the facade rectangle – and similar rectangles are perceptually good forms. They were often recommended in western handbooks of architectural design, even as recently as when the Handbuch der Architektur illustrated their application.

If we turn to the buildings facing the palace, we find the same system of simple ratios, geometrically expressed by multiplying or subdividing the square, with 1:2 and 1:3 occurring most frequently. In many cases, the accuracy with which dimensions established by recent surveying turn out to tally with those resulting from the „quadratura“ superimposed on the measured drawing is amazing.

While for the architectural historian this in itself would be interesting, for the historian of urban design the way buildings relate to each other is equally important. An analysis of the site plan established by surveyors of H.M. Government reveals a number of devices that show a clear concern not only with orientation, hierarchy and religious meaning but also with the achievement of optimal visual effects.

Buildings are carefully aligned in various ways. Their edges may be in the same plane, as is the case with the N-wall of Keśav Nārāyaṇa Cok and the colonnade of the Krṣṇa Mandir, or they may be related to each other through their symmetry axes, as with the Viśvanātha temple, the descent to Māgha Hiti, and the caitya east of the hiti. Other examples of such related or shared symmetry axes are: Degutale and the Narasimha temple, Mul Cok and the large bell, and last not least the doubly aligned Garuḍa pillar in front of Krṣṇa Mandir. It is noteworthy by comparison that Yoga Narendra Malla’s pillar is not aligned with the symmetry axis of any sacred building.

The Krṣṇa Mandir and the Garuḍa pillar can well serve to illustrate not only the question of alignment, but also that of dimensional relationships. The Viśvanātha temple whose north-south axis goes through the Garuḍa pillar is so positioned in relation to the Krṣṇa Mandir that the distance between the colonnades of both temples is equal to the width of the Viśvanātha colonnade. In turn the distance between Krṣṇa Mandir and Keśav Nārāyaṇa Cok is four times the width of the temple’s cella, with one and a half of that width as distance to the Garuḍa pillar. The same width corresponds to the distance between cella and symmetry axis of Keśav Nārāyaṇa Cok, an axis which also indicates an important sight line.

15 R.O.A. Becker-Ritterspach in his paper for this volume also discusses the 1:2 ratio in connection with the Nepalese Degah; he refers to the relation between cella wall and outer wall.
Fig. 7 West facade of Degutale from the same source as figure 4, with geometrical analysis by the author.
The southern group of temples, Cār Nārāyaṇa, Narasimha and Hari Śaṅkara are particularly closely-knit in the dimensions of their spacing. Narasimha stands 2 1/2 times the width of its base distant from Degutale (and its height is twice that width); the distance of its axis from that of Hari-Śaṅkara is 2 1/2 times the width of Hari-Śaṅkara’s cella and, finally, the axis of Narasimha is also related to the axis of Cār Nārāyaṇa: the two axes are separated from each other by a distance equal to 5 1/2 times the width of Cār Nārāyaṇa’s cella. But the axis of Cār Nārāyaṇa is also related to that of Hari-Śaṅkara: the distance between them is 4 1/2 times the basic width of Hari-Śaṅkara. If the hypothesis is correct that this basic width equals 10 Royal Cubits, the axial spacing would be 45 Royal Cubits.

In urban design, what determines the prevailing scale are less the absolute dimensional magnitudes than their effect relative to each other. This is very striking at Patan Darbār Square where the absolute dimensions remain quite small; even the tallest building that acts as a landmark in Patan’s skyline is less than 30 m high which is very little compared to, for example, the tower of Siena’s city hall that reaches more than three times that height. Yet all major buildings on the Darbār Square appear monumental, even overwhelming, because they are experienced with reference to built-up surroundings that – disregarding modern additions – consist of low (average cornice height 7,50 m) densely packed buildings along narrow roads and lanes. By comparison, the Darbār Square appears spacious. It must have appeared even more so before various recent encroachments occurred; this is clearly apparent on the few early representations of the Square.

The spaciousness can be hardly accidental, but seems the result of an early decision to impose on all non-religious buildings a respectful distance from the palace compound, or, vice versa, on locating the palace at a sufficient distance from existing buildings.

Disregarding the modern city-hall, no secular building is closer to Sundari Cok than approximately 44 cubits; at the other end of the palace compound, the secular buildings are almost equidistant to the north and the west of Mani Keśav Nārāyaṇa Cok with 2 x 44 or approximately 88 cubits. Finally, in the market area southeast of the Darbār Square, a building line seems to have been established parallel to the Koṭ Ghar at a distance of approximately 59 cubits = 2/3 of 88 cubits. It seems unlikely that such simple numerical relationships between critical measurements are fortuitous.

Once the necessary open area had been provided, great care was taken to display every individual monument to its greatest advantage by enabling a viewer to have both long-distance and close-up views, and in most cases also framed views. In addition to framing, other devices, such as the alignments, and the linkages of axes described earlier in this paper, were utilized to tie the elements of the urban space together. By having related heights, horizontal lines were carried from one building to the next and all this helped to unify the overall impression. Were it not for the unification through these means and through the underlying ordering principles of number and measure, the total impact might have been too restless, even disturbing,
Fig. 8 Temple design with indication of the underlying geometrical scheme, from a manuscript found in Patan, entitled *Silpasästroddbhtamandiracitra* and copied in 1770/71 A.D. from an older source (courtesy Prof. Dr. Michael Witzel).
owing to the strong contrasts of shapes, textures and colors. As it is, unity and diversity balance each other in a most successful manner.

It is only natural to find such an achievement of urban design originate in Nepal when it did, for most of the monuments date from a period between the late 16th and early 18th centuries, when a great tradition of urban and palace design flourished on the Indian sub-continent. But this tradition would not have led to such splendid realizations in the Kathmandu Valley, had it not been fused here with the traditional Newar predisposition toward the creation of well articulated and modulated public spaces in their settlements.

What this brief and as yet incomplete inquiry has tried to demonstrate is the complex yet firm three-dimensional order to be found in Patan Darbār Square. It is an order that can be expressed arithmetically in ratios, and geometrically, notably by multiplying or subdividing the square that, with its equal sides, stands for the ratio of 1:1. If one considers the actual process of laying out a building on the ground by means of cords stretched between stakes, the prevalence of geometrical diagrams in ritual practices (as with the use of yantras and māndalas), and the evidence of the illustrated treatises, it seems likely that geometry was the preferred method. Compass, right angle and set square, measuring rod, plumb line and cord, after all, were the traditional tools of the master builder. With them it was as easy to lay out squares with their diagonals as to inscribe smaller squares, tilted at 45 degrees, inside the larger ones.

While it is possible to regard a geometric ordering system as a purely practical device, it is improbable that in Newar architecture it was used as such, without symbolic meaning. The strong visual order imposed on the buildings of the Darbār Square in all likelihood was based on an equally powerful and complex belief-system. This order, together with the outstanding artistic craftsmanship of the masters of the past and with the originally impeccable — now, alas, broken — hierarchy of scale, made Patan Darbār Square one of the great historic urban spaces of the world. But today, despite being listed on the World Heritage List, it continues to be subject to encroachment by entirely incongruous tall new buildings, two of which went up as recently as 1985.

Acknowledgement

For valuable advice and assistance the author owes a debt of gratitude to his wife, Mary Patricia, and to Professor Pramod Chandra, Jun Hatano, Todd Stuart, Dr. Epi Wiese, Professor Michael Witzel, and the staff of the Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University. A grant from the Harvard Graduate Society helped to defray research expenses.
Fig. 9 Patan Darbār Square, elevations of temples and the great bell facing the palace in the southern sector of the square, from field measurements by the author and Michael Doyle, with geometrical analysis by the author.
Fig. 10 Patan Darbār Square, site plan provided by H.M. Government Department of Surveying, with indication of suggested numerical and axial relationships by the author.
Fig. 11 Kṛṣṇa Mandir and Garuḍa pillar, with Degutale in the background. (Photo: author).
Fig. 12 Viśvanātha Mandir seen from the fountain stairs of Māgaḥ Hiti.

Fig. 13 Section through Māgaḥ Hiti and Viśvanātha, showing their spatial relationship, from the same source as figure 9.

Fig. 14 Patan Darbār Square, view from the foot of Viśvanātha Mandir toward Mani Keśav Nārāyaṇa Cok and Degutele (1979). (Photo: Michael Doyle).
Raimund O.A. Becker-Ritterspach

Certain Aspects of Design of Nepalese Degah with an Ambulatory Surrounding the Cella

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HERITAGE OF THE KATHMANDU VALLEY
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NIELS GUTSCHOW AND AXEL MICHAELS
PROCEEDINGS OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
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1. Characteristics of the *degah*\(^1\) types under consideration

Among the numerous types of *degahs* found in the Kathmandu Valley and its environs, particular attention will be given here to those examples which may be characterized as follows:

- the layout plan is based on square dimensions
- the *cella* is surrounded by an outer ambulatory and an empty compartment on top of the shrine
- the number of roofs (multi-tiered roofing) corresponds to the number of compartment levels
- the buildings are free-standing\(^2\) (Fig. 1).

A clear distinction will be made between two groups of *degahs* with the given characteristics. The first group of buildings can be identified by a ‘closed ambulatory’ defined by a surrounding brick wall with tripartite gates on all four sides (Fig. 7). The shrines of the second group are surrounded by an open gallery constructed of timber posts (Fig. 7). The above-mentioned features exclude other shrine buildings which meet some, but not all, of the characteristics: the *degah* without ambulatory, the core wings of the *baha*\(^3\) and the free-standing *satah*\(^4\) do not satisfy the complete list of criteria.

2. Examples in the Kathmandu Valley and its environs

The *degahs* under consideration comprise two groups as outlined above. The temples of the first subgroup will be called ‘state temples of the *Pašupati* type’\(^5\). Fifteen examples of them still exist in the region\(^6\). They are dedicated to Lord Śiva

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1 The term ‟*degah*’ is used for the multi-tiered temple known as ‟pagoda’; see W. Korn (1976: 66) and R. Becker-Ritterspach (1982: 274).
2 The term ‟free-standing’ also includes those temples erected on the roof of other buildings (e.g. the temples of Degutale at Kathmandu and Patan).
3 Such as the central shrine sections of Bhichē Bahā and Haka Bahā, both at Patan.
4 Kāśthāmandapa, Kathmandu and Dattātreya Temple in Bhaktapur.
5 See U. Wiesner (1978: 1).
6 They are listed in table 1 of this article.
or his various forms (6), to Viṣṇu and his cult (4), to Mātyendranātha (2), and to Taleju or Degutale (3). These buildings were erected by kings or members of the royal families.

The Paśupati degah at Deopatan must be regarded as the archetype of the above-mentioned group of temples. Its history dates back to the 3rd century. The temple has been rebuilt and restored several times. Hence, its original design is not known to us. The majority of the extant examples were erected in the 16th and 17th century. The last degah of this group, the Tripureśvara Temple at Kathmandu, was built in 1817–18 – about one and a half centuries after the previous new construction of this type.

An aniconic idol of the linga/yoni form is installed in the degahs dedicated to the cults of Śiva and Nārāyaṇa. The second group of degahs does not follow such a

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7 According to information supplied by the temple priest, the Gokarṇeśvara is ascribed to King Jayasthitimalla (1382–95) (see U. Wiesner 1978: 18). The Protective Inventory (Kathmandu Valley 1) prepared by HMG/UNESCO of 1975 notes that it was Gopirana Bharo who constructed the temple in 1582. The great fire of 1851, which destroyed large sections of the temple, probably had some influence on its present-day appearance.

8 An iconic image is installed in the shrine of the Dvarikanātha in Bhaktapur; the image faces east. There are no idols of the caturmukhalinga type in the shrines of Gokarṇeśvara and Tripureśvara.
uniform pattern as in the first instance. In addition, the number of examples still in existence is more numerous. A wide range of deities is venerated in these shrines. Nevertheless, these temples are frequently dedicated to Śiva and Viṣṇu (Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma), and sometimes to tantric deities. They house iconic as well as aniconic deities. The degahs of this subgroup date back to the 17th century⁹, and the period of the 17th and the 18th century is regarded as their heyday. While the large and impressive examples of this group were donated by members of the royal clan, small ones were also built by wealthy citizens.

3. The origin of the temple type with ambulatory and empty compartment in the second storey

The results of research in this field of interest were able to prove that the earliest examples of shrines surrounded by an ambulatory can be identified in the Iran of the Achaemid kings of the 6th to 4th century B.C.¹⁰ There is also proof of this design pattern in the palace plans of the Bactrian kingdom in what is today Afghanistan. Apparently, it was Buddhism which applied the pattern for its own shrine buildings according to new iconic needs (The bāhī type which has survived in the Kathmandu Valley is characterized by a rectangular two-storey cella surrounded by an ambulatory!). Franz¹¹ suggests that it must have occurred later, and that the capital of the Kuśāna Kingdom, Mathurā, played the role of the mediator to the Indian subcontinent.

Later on the type of temple as outlined above was not unknown in the India of the Gupta period¹². The Pārvatī Temple at Nachna-Kuthara, which was built before 500 A.D., is of particular interest in this regard. The cella is surrounded by an ambulatory and shows an empty compartment on the second floor above the sanctum. Reference is also made to the Lād-Khān Temple at Aihole. Although derived from the mandapa type, it follows the main pattern including the existence

⁹ The Viśvanātha Temple at Patan was built as early as 1626/27 by King Siddhinarasimha-malla.
¹⁰ For example the fire temples of Susa and Kuh-i-Khwadja (Sistan) (see H.G. Franz 1984: 133).
Fig. 2 Bhaktapur, Dvārīkanātha Degah, floor plan
of an empty compartment at the second floor. The use and development of the ambulatory principle is obvious in various regions of later Indian dynasties. Reference is made to examples of the Pallava period (Vaikunthaperumal Temple at Kanchipuram, about 730/40). Wiesner points out that there are likewise examples in Bengal: e.g. Radha Mohan Temple at Viṣṇupur, erected between the 16th and 18th century. R.D. Banerji draws our attention to temples with a basic similarity in the state of Kerala built within the same period as mentioned before (temple at Tiruvenchikulam). The examples observed in Bengal and Kerala, however, are contemporary with the Nepalese temples with ambulatory.

4. Characteristics

A brief outline will be presented here to point out the characteristics of investigation. Both the temple with closed ambulatory (Paśupati type) and the temple with open gallery will be given consideration.

**degah** with closed ambulatory

The square layout plan is arranged accordingly to the four compass directions, though some consideration is given to the natural or the existing constructed environment (Fig. 2). All four faces of the layout are designed according to the same pattern. The idol (frequently a caṭurmukhalīṅga) is installed in the focus of the sanctum and defines the four main axes of the inner and outer doors: single doors towards the cela, trifoil gates at the outer wall (Fig. 13). The width of the

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13 The Brahmāyāṇi Temple at Panauti, built in 1717 by Queen Viśvalakṣmi, follows the *mandapa* principle to a large extent.
16 Note Banerji, *The Age of the Imperial Guptas* (1933: 139 et seq.).
17 The Paśupatinātha Temple at Deopatan follows the bank of the Bāgmati River; hence, a minor deviation from the cardinal directions can be observed. The Kumbheśvara and the Matsyendranātha in Patan show a greater deviation in the line with the surrounding courtyard buildings. The palace ensembles at Kathmandu and Patan also define the governing directions for the temples close to them.
18 The gate which is generally used may be embellished in an exceptional manner: for example, it may be covered with gilded metal. The western gate of the Garuḍa Nārāyaṇa Temple at Cāgu is one such example. Later modifications to the Matsyendranātha Temple in Kathmandu led to its present-day appearance with only one gate remaining.
ambulatory (pradaksināpātha) is the same all around. The outer wall is paralleled by the plinth steps. The layout of the empty upper compartment is defined by the cella core itself forming the outer wall above the first roof (Figs. 3,8,9).

Further stacked compartments are basically diminutive copies of the lower one. Structurally, however, they are not part of the core, although the latter bears the load of the diminutive compartments (Fig. 6). The design is complete only when the gajura rests on the focal point of the highest roof.

A comparison of several degahs of this type leads to the conclusion that the length of the cella wall amounts to about half the length of the outer wall (see table 1). It is an interesting fact, however, that those temples designed with one upper compart-
Fig. 4 Bhaktapur, Dvārikanātha Degah, east elevation

ment (e.g. Paśupatinātha, Yakṣēśvara, Garuḍa Nārāyaṇa, Indreśvara Mahādeva/Panauti\textsuperscript{19}, Dvārikanātha, Cār Nārāyaṇa) show a cella/outer wall ratio $\leq 1:2$ (Figs. 8,9). Those buildings which apparently have been constructed with three roofs intentionally follow a ratio $= 1:2$ (e.g. Taleju Temple/Kathmandu, Māsyendranātha/Patan, Tripureśvara).

\textsuperscript{19} It seems highly probable that the temple was initially built with only two roofs. M.S. Slusser is also of the opinion (1979: 215) that the upper roof is ‘disproportionally small’.
Some buildings are designed nearly exactly according to the 1:2 ratio: Cār Nārāyaṇa/Patan, Dvārikānātha/Bhaktapur, Indreśvara Mahādeva/Panauti. The widths of the ambulatory and the outside wall of the Yakṣeśvara Temple at Bhaktapur generally measure 178 cm and 110 cm respectively; this is rather wide. Wiesner\(^{20}\) believes that the outer wall was rebuilt later (without making any reference to the 1:2 ratio). Had the 1:2 ratio been followed, the dimensions of the Indreśvara Mahādeva degah at Panauti would have been met. Nevertheless, the author points out that the cella of the Paśupatinātha Temple and of the Garuda Nārāyaṇa Temple (examples of great antiquity) possess a shrine structure measuring less than half of the outer wall length; this hints at a wide ambulatory (pradaksināpātha).

In certain cases, a calculation of a plinth/groundfloor ratio also points towards possible correlations. The diameter of the lower plinth platform of the Cār Nārāyaṇa Temple at Patan is twice as large as the diameter of the building. In the case of the Dvārikānātha at Bhaktapur, the lower plinth is three times as large as the cella diameter.

We would also like to draw attention to the overall dimensions of the degah of the 'Paśupati type'. The floor area covered at cella level does not vary significantly between various examples. The majority of cases fit in with an average wall length of about 8 m (see table 1). The Cār Nārāyaṇa Temple at Patan is the smallest shrine building (w.l. 6.60 m). The Śiva Temple at Gokarna belongs to the large examples (w.l. 9.40 m).

The elevation of the degah with closed ambulatory is characterized by standardization of design patterns (Figs. 2,3). All four sides of the degah show the same facade arrangement regarding material\(^{21}\), number, location and size of items such as doors, windows and cornices. The number of struts may vary between buildings. The four sides of one temple differ in respect to the iconography of the carved timber elements which are associated with the directions of the universe.

The typical arrangement of the facade design of this degah type has its roots in the two-storey temple of Lord Paśupatinātha at Deopatan. The most impressive element of the elevation is the dominating tripartite gate (pasūkā door) located below the cornice at the ceiling level of the ambulatory (Fig. 13). The gate is flanked by one blind window (bhalu jhyāh) on either side. Above the cornice three windows (gha jhyāh type) are arranged with the larger one in the central axis. The window zone is only complete with four or six carved struts (bilāpu) plus corner

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\(^{21}\) Cf. footnote 18. In 1820, Bhimsen Thāpa donated golden and silver doors at the southern side of the Paśupatinātha, and in 1834, Subbha Kulānanda Jhā donated doors for the other three sides. See U. Wiesner (1978: 14).
struts with griffins and lions/lionesses. In some cases, the space between the struts is filled with lattice work (e.g. Paśupatinātha, Taleju Bhavani). This creates the impression of a balcony-like upper ambulatory. In all cases, these can be considered as later additions. No further reference will be made to them (Fig. 10).

The upper compartment is small in comparison; above the cornice one window (gha jhyāh) has been placed in the axis of symmetry, frequently flanked by one blind window on either side (bhalu jhyāh). Four – or less frequently two – struts (bīlapu) plus corner struts complete the composition of this zone. Further compartments follow the scheme in a reduced approach (one central window – gha jhyāh – and two struts plus corner struts). The wide overhanging roofs contribute to the dominating impression made by the degah type (Fig. 8). Some temples of this group have received a third compartment and a third roof. As mentioned above, it is of some interest that the wall length of the first upper compartment increases in most instances of this subgroup. A special design problem strikes the eye while studying the Indrēśvara Mahādeva Temple at Panauti: the top compartment becomes extremely narrow and low (Fig. 8) in order to follow a design rule still observed by Newar craftsmen of the Kathmandu region: all corners of the stacked roofs must form one straight line22. This design problem becomes even clearer in the case of the Kumbhēśvara degah at Patan, which has got five roofs (Fig. 10). Originally built with two roofs, King Yoganarendramalla (1684–1705) added three more. There is a break of the 'corner-line' between the first and third roof. This 'mistake' could have been avoided only by increasing the size of the first upper compartment.

degah with open gallery

The degah of this type follows a large number of characteristics already described in the previous chapters: location within the urban context, orientation in accord with the compass and environmental factors. It is also the square which guides the layout plan. There are, however, some distinct differences in comparison to the degah of the 'Paśupati type'.

The number of plinth levels varies widely: it may be from one up to nine (e.g. Maju Degah, Kathmandu) (Figs. 6, 7). The reason for the decision on the number of steps once chosen by the builder can only be conjectures23. It has to be kept in mind that

22 During the restoration work on the Dattātreya Temple at Bhaktapur supervised by the author in 1977/78, the carpenters in charge applied this rule, mentioning that it is an old standard.
23 K. Stürzbecher (1980: 92 et seq.) points out that planning in the late Malla period gave emphasis to the significance of construction levels: for example, the shrine level of Nyatapvala Degah was raised by Bhūpatindramalla in 1702 so as to be in line with the surface of the higher Darbar Square.

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secular buildings must not exceed the height of the main deity of the quarter. This could be avoided by high plinth structures and multiple stacking of upper compartments of shrine buildings. This design approach probably was the answer to the town development of the later Malla period, the growing trend toward building high houses and the change of building typology.

In certain cases, it is the plinth construction itself which provides a hint. The stair construction of the Nyatapvala Degah at Bhaktapur is flanked by a hierarchically structured set of levels guarding deities (Fig. 7). The power ascribed to them
increases ten times level by level, starting at the street and ending at *cella* level. It therefore becomes obvious that the main deity placed even higher must be of infinite power.

24 According to D. Wright (1972 repr.: 202), the first Taleju Temple was erected close to the present site in 1501 by King Ratnamalla. The present degah was constructed by King Mahendramalla between 1560 and 1574. Wright records that people have been allowed to build 'high houses' since that time; this can only mean houses with more than two storeys. There is a similar reference in connection with the Degutale Temple in Patan: Wright (1972: 242) informs us that no house was allowed to be higher than the *ratha* (chariot) of Matsyendranātha before King Siddhinarasimha 'built a very high temple' (this is in fact the temple of Degutale at Patan built by King Śivasimhamalla).
The plan at cella level differs considerably from the 'Paśupati type' pattern (Fig. 5). The shrine cubicle is no longer hidden behind a heavy wall perforated by the tripartite gates, but is now clearly visible behind the lofty range of carved timber posts – 12 or 20 – depending on the size of the temple (Fig. 14). The cult image becomes a defining factor in respect to alternative layout patterns of the cella. Shrines of the Śiva cult still follow the pattern of the 'Paśupati type': all four sides with a door in the main axis. They are treated as external doors due to the exposed location at the gallery. Iconic images, on the other hand, preferably call for
a location against the 'rear' wall, with the frequent result that only one gate is placed opposite this in the symmetrical axis. Emphasis may be added by the presence of one main stairway leading to the shrine gate. The other external elements of the degah with one entrance door give no preference to any one of the four sides. The floor area covered by various examples differs to a greater extent than observed in the case of the temples of the 'Paśupati type'. There are monumental buildings such as the Nyatapvala Degah at Bhaktapur or the Maju Degah at Kathmandu on the one hand, and small examples such as the Rām Degah at Bhaktapur (Bhvalachê) on the other (see table 2). It is a striking fact that the ratio between the diameter of the cella and the gallery-level total varies widely: the cella wall length covers about 55–75%. In general, it can be stated that the floor area covered by the cella of this degah type is larger than in the case of the examples of the 'Paśupati'-group.

The outstanding feature of the elevation of this degah group is the arrangement of the gallery zone (Figs. 6,7,14). The gallery is now raised by a pedestal structure bearing the carved posts. The latter support a lintel followed by the cornice. Depending on the number of posts (12 or 20), the gallery zone is divided into either three or five bays at each side. The distance between the posts differs to some extent, and their height shows an even wider range (see table 2). The outer cella wall

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Fig. 8 Panauti, Indrēśvara Mahādeva Degah, view from the west
Fig. 9 Patan, Cār Nārāyaṇa Degah, view from the east
is now treated with greater attention: dātiapā bricks are used and the load-bearing timber elements, such as doors and blind windows, are decorated with fine carvings on their visible surfaces. The design pattern above the cornice basically follows the system of the 'Paśupati type' degah. One striking difference, however, must be pointed out: the increased diameter of the cella, which now allows for much easier construction of upper compartments of reasonable size. There is no contradiction in the fact that some of the three-storey degahs of the 'Paśupati type' already apply this solution. The design problem pointed out in connection with the Kumbheśvara Degah at Patan does not emerge here in connection with the modified ratio. Attention is drawn to the design solution of the Nyatapvala Degah which resembles the ultimate solution of the degah with open gallery.

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25 dātiapā are burnt bricks of conical shape with a specially treated surface of a dense and 'oily' appearance at the exposed side. This brick type, restricted to buildings of religious importance or the houses of wealthy builders, allows for extremely narrow joints and contributes to the durability of the wall.
5. Conclusion

An effort was made to point out some of the most striking differences between the two temple types related to each other. There can be no doubt that the 'Paśupati'-group is one predecessor of the degah with open gallery, although the examples of the first group still in existence in Nepal must be regarded as the successors of earlier structures destroyed by fire, decay and war (see table 1). It should be noted, therefore, that both temple types derive from of the late Malla period. During the reign of the independent kingdoms in the Valley, a remarkable change of architectural design and building requirements took place. The temple types under consideration are not the only examples reflecting this architectural development.

The trend toward building high houses must be regarded as one determining factor in the search for new technical solutions. One step was to construct one more floor. At first glance, the task may appear to be an easy one. We have to keep in mind, however, that building types following strict rules down to the smallest building element do not simply allow for such an enormous change in design. Some building types, such as the bahi and the satah of the mandapa type, undergo limited
adjustments – e.g. the addition of a turret (pul) above the shrine of the bahī or the third floor of sath buildings (Kāsthamaṇḍapa, Kathmandu; Dattātreya Temple, Bhaktapur).

Finally they die out. The two-storey court ensemble applied as royal court and as bahā show a better ability to follow the modified requirements. There are some examples with the later addition of a third floor (e.g. Naudvā Bahā, Patan); others force us to the conclusion that a new building type has gradually developed (e.g. Sundari Cuka and later on the Mani Kesāv Cuka, of the Patan palace). In this connection, the final form of the mathā and the dyahche must be considered as products of architectural evolution.

Keeping these last statements in mind, the juxtaposition of the degah type with closed ambulatory compared to those with open gallery must be seen in a particular light.

It is the striking archaism of the degah of the ’Pasupati type’ which allows us to assume that this degah type also has a long tradition in the Kathmandu Valley, older than the examples still extant and visible. This assumption is supported by the fact that this temple type was originally a two-storey structure (Fig. 9). Within a town characterized by two-storey buildings, these degahs were able to dominate their surroundings.

Certain design patterns, such as the employment of the tripartite door (pasūkā door), reveal a close relationship to early building types like the bahī, the bahā and two-storey court ensembles and the sath of mandapa origin26 (Fig. 12). It is obvious that the temple of the ’Pasupati type’ lost its leading role during the same period as the above-mentioned building types.27

The heyday of the degah with open gallery was the 17th and 18th century. The Viṣvanātha Temple at Patan’s Mangal Bazaar is the earliest example known to the author (Fig. 11). The cella here is relatively small. This temple type was adopted by the cults of Śiva and Viṣṇu, but also met the veneration requirements of other deities. Particular attention must be drawn to the alternative of the cella design with one main gate opposite an iconic cult image. It is the transparency of the surrounding gallery which emphasizes the shrine core.

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26 For example, Kāsthamaṇḍapa, Kathmandu; Dattātreya Temple, Bhaktapur; Indra Sathā, Khāḍpu. Note in particular of M.S. Slusser and G. Vajrācārya, ’Two Mediaval Nepalese Buildings’(1974) (cf. reference below).

27 The principle of the degah with closed ambulatory was revived during the Rānā rule by temple structures showing an Islamic influence (e.g., domed roofs). Even before 1846 there are examples, such as the Bhimmukteśvara Temple (constructed 1843) at Kālimati/Kathmandu. An example of impressive dimensions is the Hem Nārāyaṇa Temple (constructed by Jāṅg Bahādur Rānā in 1874), located at Kāla Mochan Ghāṭ, Kathmandu.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of temple</th>
<th>Constructed</th>
<th>Damage recorded</th>
<th>Roofs plinth length of</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Reconstructed</td>
<td>repaired</td>
<td>no. steps</td>
<td>outside well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Pačapatinātha, Deopatan</td>
<td>1560 R</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>according to the Gopikāラjavesavailla m records are known since the 3rd century. Reference is made to a 7th century inscription</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>betw. 1409-20</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1429 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>betw. 1560-74</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1585 R; r; r.</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>betw. 1641-74</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* 1680-87 1680</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1696 R 1697r</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Yakṣesavara, Bhaktapur</td>
<td>1665 R</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>a) 4.47 m reference is made to records of earthquake; b) 10.13 m in 1670 and 1494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1682 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1672 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1705 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1801 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Lumbesvara, Patan</td>
<td>1592 ?</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>5 1</td>
<td>a) 3.46 m 1672 King Śrīlīvaesavāla built a mon rest. b) 7.60 m two-storey building, King Tognarendra- and 6.00 m gopura (1644-1705) added three more mon rest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1672 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1665-1683</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1833 = 1934 1833</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1696 R 1697r</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Gokarpesvāra, Gokarma</td>
<td>betw. 1382-95?</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>a) 6.06 m the shrine contains no caturvahallīga b) 9.40 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1581 gaJb</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>after 1681 R 1681</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1601 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Indresvara, Mahādeva, Panauti</td>
<td>1294</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>a) 4.52 m b) 6.06 m the third roof had been added later</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1694/70 r</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Tripurāvēra, Kathmandu</td>
<td>1817/18</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>3 5</td>
<td>a) 6.34 m the Tripurāvēra is the last new constr. of this temple type. The shrine contains no caturvahallīga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1836 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Garuḍa Mārāyaṇa, Gāngi</td>
<td>betw. 1382-95?</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>a) 4.83 m first records are available from 1547-60 A.D. according to the Mahādeva Pillar in front of the temple b) 9.22 m 660 A.D. according to the Mahādeva Pillar in front of the temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1585 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>betw. 1680-87 1680</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1680-1702 1680</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1697-1722 1697</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Jagannātha, Kathmandu</td>
<td>1620 R</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>3 3</td>
<td>a) 4.42 m reference is made to a copper plate b) 8.35 m in 1633 and a record of 1694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1664/71</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Gār Mārāyaṇa, Patan</td>
<td>1566</td>
<td>1354 Mon-</td>
<td>2 2</td>
<td>a) -3.30 m b) 6.60 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1595-72r</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Daśākīsīnātha, Bhaktapur</td>
<td>betw. 1620-61</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>a) 3.01 m cūpiṇaśāsta (1696-1722) pro- b) 7.4 m b) 4.67 m the first shrine of this deity was erected possibly in the 7th century. Reference is made of inscriptions of 1562 and 1673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1661-84 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1661-84 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1657 Mon-</td>
<td>1657-1670 1657</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1934 Mon-</td>
<td>1934-1934 1934</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1969r</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Maitreyendranātha, Patan</td>
<td>betw. 1620-61</td>
<td>14.0 Mon-</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>b) 8.00 m the first shrine of this deity was erected possibly in the 7th century. Reference is made of inscriptions of 1562 and 1673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1661-84 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1661-84 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
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<td>1661-84 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
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<td>1934 Mon-</td>
<td>1934-1934 1934</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1969r</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Maitreyendranātha, Kathmandu</td>
<td>1428-80°</td>
<td>1354 Mon-</td>
<td>3 1</td>
<td>b) 7.76 m the temple is altered today with only one trifoil gate left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1660 1660 1660</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1660 1660 1660</td>
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<td>1934 1934 1934</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1969r 1969r 1969r</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Baghvanī, Kathmandu</td>
<td>betw. 1560-74</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>3 12</td>
<td>1936 the first Baghvanī Temple was erected by King Mārāyaṇa close to today's site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1567 1567 1567</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1647-1647 1647</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1647-1647 1647</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1700 1700 1700</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
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<td>1934 1934 1934</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1934 1934 1934</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Deogutale, Kathmandu</td>
<td>1578-1620</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>5 1</td>
<td>there are no tripartite gates left at today's building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1670 R</td>
<td>Mon-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Deogutale, Patan</td>
<td>1578-1620</td>
<td>1349 Mon-</td>
<td>5 1</td>
<td>there are no tripartite gates left at today's building</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1349: during his invasion Shamsud-din-Illyas of Bengal destroyed within one week nearly all shrines and houses in the Kathmandu Valley 10331: on 29th August a heavy earthquake took place in the Kathmandu region with about 125 and 1000 houses damaged at Kathmandu and Bhaktapur respectively 1934: on 15th January a tremendous tremor shook the Kathmandu area with the most serious damage at Bhaktapur where about 70% of all houses were destroyed
When comparing the ratio between the length of the *cella* wall and the total side length, it becomes clear that the proportion increases in the course of additional roof stacking. Another reason apparently was the wish of the builders to pay particular homage to their personal and clan deities. These deities had to be promoted in the most visible way, by raising them on a high platform and by the stacking of roof compartments. The construction of the second Taleju Temple at Kathmandu and the temples of Degutale at Kathmandu and Patan still follow the 'Pašupati' pattern.

While the *degah* with closed ambulatory follows a range of rather strict rules for application and design, it is the *degah* with open gallery which was particularly able to meet the needs of the builders starting in the 17th century. The universality of application is demonstrated by the variety of layout size and building height on the one hand, and by the employment of other layout patterns such as the octogon on the other. It may be emphasized that it is the *degah* of this type which reveals a close relationship with stone and terracotta temples of the *sikhara* type (Fig. 1, see also note 27).
References


Shaphalya Amatya

Nepal’s Strategy on Heritage Conservation

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EDITED BY
NIELS GUTSCHOW AND AXEL MICHAELS
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IN LÜBECK, JUNE 1985
(NEPALICA. 4.)

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Nepal is endowed with an unusually rich cultural heritage. The magnificently
carved temples, the numerous ancient stupas and monasteries are but a few of the
outstanding achievements of our country. They are, however, not only the pride of
Nepal but also a part of the heritage of mankind.

One special feature of this heritage is the tolerance Hinduism and Buddhism
developed over the centuries. It gave birth to an atmosphere of open-mindedness
which was congenial for the development of the arts and culture in the Kingdom.
The art objects are the product of creative minds, and the Nepalese people are
deeply attached to them by their faith and traditions. They live their lives closely
bound up with them, and their culture is a vital and dynamic entity. Its preservation
is, therefore, a matter of primary importance to the Nepalese people.

The building of a monument is invariably accompanied by the necessity for its
preservation. Therefore, conservation is nothing new to Nepalese society. Since the
days of the Licchavis it was and still is a part of their regular religious activities. Our
ancestors not only built monuments, but also left behind a long tradition of
maintaining and preserving them through the system of guthi. Pious Nepalese rulers
and religiously-minded individuals established guthis for performing socio-
religious, socio-cultural and socio-educational activities. The building of a temple or
a stupa or a monastery or a rest house (pāṭi) had always been followed by the
simultaneous establishment of a guthi either in the private or public sector. Our
ancestors were well aware that the building of a monument is not complete in itself
unless it is provided with a proper arrangement for its safety and maintenance.
Therefore, they created an institution or system popularly known as guthi.

To operate this system of guthi for perpetuity, the founders used to donate some
property either in cash or in kind for the regular upkeep of the monuments and for
performing other functions related to them. There are hundreds of inscriptions to
prove that guthis was a very popular institution during the Licchavi period. During
that period, there were two major types of guthis – one run by the family members
or relatives of the donors and the other by the trustees appointed for the purpose.
Such guthis are known as „niji guthis“ or private guthis. These guthis usually had a
very deep and influential connection with public life, religion and culture. Besides,
there are numerous public guthis known as rāj guthis. Such guthis increased in
number during the Malla and the early Šāh periods (i.e. 15th to 19th century A.D.).
At present, the rāj guthis or public guthis are under the management of the Guthi
Samsthān, a semi-governmental organization.

The end of the Rāna administration and the beginning of democracy under the Šāh
rulers in 1951 gave a new impetus to heritage conservation. As we all know, until
1950 Nepal lived in virtual isolation. In 1951 the country was not only opened to
outsiders, but a new democratic political system was also introduced. As in every
traditional society, these events brought changes in social values. Contact with the international world exposed the Nepalese to the modern world. As a result, they gradually began to compromise their old traditional values. This led to the decline of traditional institutions like the guthis. The new generation began to forget the contributions made by their forefathers to social institutions. The Land Reforms Act after 1962 delivered a death blow to this system. Under the guthi system, the donated land used to be leased out to farmers upon an annual payment in kind or cash. They were encouraged under the new legislation not to make the payment on the grounds that the tillers were entitled to a major share of the production. As a result, almost all the private and semi-private guthis found it impossible to function, and in due course of time they began to disappear from the scene. Only those guthis which could raise some revenue and were registered in the Guthi Office were able to function to a limited extent. But we should not forget that these few surviving guthis also changed their priority according to time and circumstances. For example, these surviving private and semi-private guthis did very little work for the conservation of their heritage of monuments. Rather, they indulged in feasts and festivals. Even the Gu̥thi Saṃsthān, which is responsible for running public and semi-public guthis, could not give proper and sufficient attention to protection of their monuments. Firstly, it does not have proper and sufficient manpower for conservation; secondly, whatever revenue it could raise and manpower it could possess, they were used in organizing feasts and festivals of local and national importance. In such a situation, our monuments became, as it were, 'orphans'. In the course of time the number of these orphans increased tremendously. The great earthquake of 1934 took a heavy toll. However, some were rescued and restored. The Governments after the 1950s could not save the thousands of important monuments, private houses and shrines which continue to disappear from the landscape of the Kathmandu Valley. They could only shed crocodile tears over their loss. The extent of decay can be understood from what Dr. P. R. Sharma stated after a general survey. In his words: „the Kathmandu Valley Inventory had enlisted a total of 680 individual monuments in the three towns of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur in 1975, today after only eight years since its publication, many of the monuments it had enlisted have fallen and even disappeared completely.“

In the post-1950 period, the traditional institution called Chê-Bhadel-Aḍḍā, dating back probably to the Malla period, had been responsible for the repair of ancient and public buildings. Even after the establishment of the Department of Archaeology in 1953, repairs of ancient monuments were carried out sporadically by other agencies such as the Valley Reform Committee (Upanyakācal Tatkalin Sudhār Samiti, 2014 B. S.), which came into existence sometime in 1957 at the time of the coronation of the late King Mahendra and the Public Works Department, which was established in 1955. In 1967, an organization known as the Gu̥thi Jirṇodhār Tathā Nirman Samiti (Guthi Conservation and Reconstruction Committee) was established under the chairmanship of the director of the Department of Archaeology. This committee was assigned with the task of repairing ancient monuments and
religious edifices as well as the construction of new structures pertaining to religious rituals. Hundreds of monuments and temples of historical, religious and cultural importance were renovated by this committee, for which necessary funds were provided by the Guṭhi Saṃsthān and the technical know-how by the Department of Archaeology. It was under this committee for the first time in the history of Nepal that the restoration of our cultural heritage was undertaken on a massive scale in accordance with archaeological principles. This committee functioned for about five years and then suddenly – for inexplicable reasons – ceased to exist.

The Guṭhi Saṃsthān was established in 1964 under new legislation. Maintenance, repair, renovation, conservation and preservation of monuments registered with it are its primary functions. It is believed that among the monuments of the Kingdom as a whole more than eighty-five percent belong to this guṭhi. Therefore, the Guṭhi Saṃsthān is directly responsible for safeguarding a vast majority of these monuments. After the Guṭhi Conservation and Reconstruction Committee ceased to function in 1970, there was a hiatus of two years; then, from 1972 on, the Guṭhi Saṃsthān once again resumed its monument restoration activities. Since then every year it has allocated a few hundred thousand rupees for the restoration of monuments.

After 1970, the burden of conservation of monuments fell on the shoulders of the Department of Archaeology. Before 1970, proper attention was not given to the conservation of our cultural heritage in government schemes. Every year a few hundred thousand rupees were allotted to the Department of Archaeology by His Majesty’s Government for renovation activities. This appeared totally meaningless, since thousands of monuments were in need of renovation. The 25 years of democratic Nepal (1950–1975) were unable to bring about any remarkable change in respect to the condition of our ancient and dilapidated monuments.

In the Fifth Five-Year-Plan period beginning in 1975, the Department spent 4.5 million Rs. within the framework of the project for the protection and development of archaeological sites; this includes the protection of monuments and construction of new museums. During the Sixth Five-Year-Plan (1980–1985), the Department of Archaeology carried out conservation activities all over the country more vigorously than ever before. Within this plan period, it has spent about 6 million Rs. under the project heading of the protection and development of archaeological sites. During the current Sixth Plan period, the Department has launched a new project known as the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. Under this new project, the Department has spent about 3.5 million Rs. to date.

A Master Plan for the Conservation of the Cultural Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley was prepared by UNESCO on the request of His Majesty’s Government of Nepal in 1977. For the implementation of this Master Plan, HMG/Nepal has adopted a policy of supplementing 25 % of the total required fund in the form of a matching fund, whereas the remaining 75 % will be borne by the donor agency or country. Since its inception in 1979, International Funds for Monuments, an international funding organization based in the United States, has been contributing
regularly. To date, HMG/Nepal has received about 700,000 Rs. from it in order to conserve, renovate and restore the monuments of Gokarneshvara Mahadeva. This project is still in progress. Austria is one of the major European countries which have been helping us in one of our prestigious renovation projects, the Patalan Darbar Conservation Project since 1983. The total cost of this project is approx. 3 million Rs., including a sum for the reinstallation of the National Bronze Museum. Work on this project is still in progress. The French Government and CNRS/France have been helping the Department of Archaeology financially with the conservation of the monuments in Panauti. Panauti is very rich in mediaeval architecture. This project is also still in progress. Similarly, with the help of the Belgium – Nepal Friendship Association, renovation of one of the two Narayan temples at Banepa has been completed.

During the ongoing Sixth Plan period, the Department has spent about 1.1 million Rs. from its regular budget on the restoration and conservation of monuments. To make the conservation activities more effective from the fiscal year 1984/85, two main conservation programmes of the Department, the Gorkha Darbar Conservation Project and the Svayambhu Hill Stabilization and Development Project have been included within the special priority programmes of HMG/Nepal. A separate budgetary allocation and a working programme for five consecutive years from 1984–90 have been made for them. Approximately 2.5 million Rs. will be spent within this five-year period for the Svayambhu Hill Stabilization and Development Project. Likewise, about 10 million Rs. will be spent on Gorkha Darbar Conservation Project. Similarly, for the conservation and development of the monuments around the Paşupati area, the most sacred shrine in the Kingdom, which also has been included in the special priority programmes and placed under the „Paşupati Area Development Committee“, it is envisaged that within the five years from 1984–90 about 40 million Rs. will be spent.

In addition to the Guθhi Samsthān and the Department of Archaeology, The Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development, the Durgam Kṣetra Vikās Samiti (Remote Area Development Committee) and the Kathmandu Valley Town Development Committee and its three branches in the three major cities in the Valley are also undertaking more-or-less similar activities such as renovation and repair of monuments in the Northern Region as well as in the Kathmandu Valley. The committee has granted funds to carry out the repair and reconstruction of about 136 gumbās or monasteries in the Northern Region from 1968 to 1984. Similarly, under the special programme the Ministry has distributed funds about 6.5 million Rs. to various restoration and renovation projects; of these, some 41 belong to the monuments category for the years 1980–83 in the Kathmandu Valley.

As I have already stated, the democratic governments formed after 1951 were not able to give sufficient attention to heritage conservation because their priorities and liabilities were different. They were faced with problems like providing food, shelter, education, employment and medical facilities to the people. Above all, the country was engaged in building infrastructures such as roads, bridges, schools,
hospitals etc. Out of the total annual budget of HMG/Nepal, the cultural sector receives no more than 0.14 percent on average. For example, in the fiscal year 1983–84 the Ministry of Education and Culture received 9.10 percent of the total national budget and the cultural sector received only 0.16 percent, which is a very paltry sum of money indeed.

Adequate resources, sufficient technical manpower, popular enthusiasm and the proper legal measures are the four most essential requirements for heritage conservation. We lack almost all of them in Nepal. Though there is some consciousness of the need for conservation among the people, the majority are not at all interested in it. Regarding proper legal measures, the Ancient Monument Preservation Act of 1956 is becoming less effective year by year. Therefore, HMG is at present seriously thinking of introducing some major amendments in order to render it more effective and useful. In fact, since 1980 HMG has been giving more attention to heritage conservation which is providing a certain new lease on life to our old, dilapidated and dying monuments, particularly in the Northern Region and the Kathmandu Valley.

For the Northern Region, in addition to the Remote Area Committee, a special committee known as Lāma Tathā Gumbā Vyabasthā Samiti, (Lāma and Gumbā Management Committee) under the Home Ministry was also established in 1979 with the Department of Archaeology as one of its Board Members. One of its main functions is to implement the directives of His Majesty the King issued from time to time relating to monasteries and Lama priests. It also gives necessary instructions for the protection and maintenance of monasteries throughout the country.

Renovation of Muktināth Temple and Narsimha Gumbā were accordingly undertaken during the Sixth Plan period. Simultaneously, a high-level committee on cultural policy was appointed on 16 June 1981 by HMG under the chairmanship of the Deputy-Minister of Education and Culture to recommend policies and programmes on cultural matters including heritage conservation. This committee has already submitted its recommendations to HMG and it is believed that they are going to be implemented beginning from the Seventh Plan period (i.e., 1985–90).

As one of its main policies, it has aimed at the protection of the cultural heritage by creating a new level of awareness among the people. It has also recommended to HMG to organize an effective means for the study, research, publication, protection and promotion of religious and cultural objects and sites. HMG will manage the well-known and nationally and internationally important archaeological sites and pilgrimage centres by improving their environment and providing necessary facilities for both tourists as well as pilgrims. It also maintains ecological balance between our cultural and natural heritages by protecting them properly. Last but not least, it will protect what is called the „Nagar“ style of architecture; this is not only the most ancient as well as indigenous style, but also a very popular feature of Nepalese architectural tradition. The committee has also recommended a separate working programme, for example, for the preparation of a national inventory and a national register of monuments, conservation of such monuments on a priority
basis, provision of the necessary tourist and pilgrimage facilities to such important monuments and sites, establishment of special teams for cleaning and maintaining those important monuments and sites and, last but not least, protection of valuable objects which are a part of ancient monuments and sites, etc.

Legally, it is very difficult to pinpoint the ultimate authority in HMG which is responsible for the repair and maintenance of monuments. As we have already mentioned, the Ancient Monument Preservation Act of 1958 gives responsibility to the Archaeology Department for the protection of monuments and objects of archaeological, historic and artistic interest. In a like manner, the Guṭhi Samsthan Act of 1976 empowers the body to take action for the construction and maintenance of monuments registered under Guṭhi Registration. Similarly, the Town Council Act of 1961 (the Nagar Paṅcāyat Act) has authorized town councils to act in respect to the maintenance, preservation and construction of rest houses, inns, etc., the preservation of our ancient archaeological heritage and the initiation of relevant research. Even the Village Council Act of 1960 (the Gaū-Paṅcāyat Act) has categorically mentioned that all public ponds, bridges, temples, rest houses, etc. situated within the boundary of the Paṅcāyat (council) belong to the Paṅcāyat as its property. In such a situation, one can easily guess how effective these agencies could be for protecting and preserving our cultural heritage. Therefore, it would be more economical, scientific and practical if HMG would attempt to bring all these activities under the direct responsibility of the Ministry of Education and Culture, so that a concerted effort can be made to carry out the important task of maintaining and preserving the cultural heritage of the Kingdom as a whole.

In order to preserve and protect this heritage, many governmental and semi-governmental agencies have launched projects and programmes of their own which have already been discussed. In view of their achievements and performance, we can venture an assessment that given the severe economic and trained manpower constraints, the lack of effective and appropriate legal and administrative policies, a lack of public awareness and, above all, the lack of any coordination among the various concerned governmental and semi-governmental bodies, we are not only wasting the few available resources in this sector, but are also paving the way for its gradual deformation and destruction.

Every year there are some examples of conservation activities initiated by the local people totally at their own expense. The authorities are also distributing funds regularly through the Ministry of Paṅcāyat and Local Development and Durgam Kṣetra Vikās Samiti for conservation activities, but these have their own drawbacks. For example, the local residents are not sufficiently trained or knowledgeable to undertake conservation work in a professional manner. Secondly, in a country like ours there are always doubts about the maximum utilization of funds and resources in a proper manner and, thirdly, it is always easy to deface and destroy the heritage in the name of conservation and repair. Therefore, the authorities concerned – even if they would like to have full public participation in such activities – should take into consideration whether or not the party concerned can undertake this job in a
scientific manner in accordance with archaeological principles. Public awareness and public participation go together; they are two faces of the same coin. What we need today are not only funds and resources but consciousness, enthusiasm and zeal. Conservation does not demand large investments. Rather, it is a matter of appropriate planning and legislation, administrative co-ordination, preventive maintenance, and education of the people. In conservation, education is the clue to success. Nobody but the people themselves can, in the last analysis, be the guardians of our rich, ubiquitous cultural heritage, and prevent vandalism and theft.

The newly established Nepal Heritage Society, the Nepal and Asian Study Center of Tribhuvan University, radio and press and, above all, local political leaders should realize its significance and recognize it as their duty to enlighten the people as to the need for the protection of their cultural heritage. The Bhaktapur Development Project and many other small-scale conservation projects carried out by the Department of Archaeology (for example, the Hanumān Dhokhā Conservation Project, Svayambhū Hill Stabilization Project, Gokarna Mahādev Restoration Project, Panauti Brahmāyaṇī Temple Conservation Project, etc.) have not only protected this heritage but also trained a group of craftsmen in different fields of architectural engineering and created an awareness of conservation in the public at large to some extent. Therefore, conservation should be a regular activity for two reasons: firstly, it protects the heritage and preserves it for posterity, along with maintaining the continuity of traditional craftsmanship; secondly, it fosters consciousness among the people to protect their heritage; this is, in fact, the very foundation of a nation, national integrity and nationality.

There will hardly be any government which does not try to conserve its heritage, and our country is no exception. The government is one of the most essential and effective means for heritage conservation. But it is not the only one. The government remains only a custodian of the people's property or heritage. It is the people themselves who are the real owners and, therefore, it is their profound duty to protect it for their own good and for the betterment of coming generations. Conservation of the cultural heritage provides a sense of individual and national identity and continuity and creates economic benefits by attracting tourists. These are the values we have to inculcate in the minds of our people. Our ultimate success depends on this.
Robert I. Levy

How the Navadurgā Protect Bhaktapur

The effective meanings of a symbolic enactment

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Introduction

The Nine Durgās,¹ the troupe of divinities who each year during the course of a nine month cycle are incarnated in the bodies of members of the marginally clean Gāthā jāt,² are often said by the city's Hindus³ to be Bhaktapur's most important gods. In some contexts this position of importance may be given to Śiva, in some to the full and generative form of the goddess Devi as Bhagavati, in still others to Devi's independent political representation as Taleju. But the Nine Durgās with their vivid representations, with their ability, as we shall see, to tie together so many deeply significant symbolic threads, with their legendary origin in Bhaktapur's own hinterland, with their dramatic sequential visits to Bhaktapur's people—neighborhood by neighborhood in turn, are very much Bhaktapur's own deities. Other Newar cities may share the other important divinities, but the Navadurgā, the Nine Durgās, at least as Bhaktapur knows them, are Bhaktapur's special gods. Bhaktapur's many divinities serve various sorts of purposes both in local doctrine and in the analysis of an outside observer. The purpose of the Nine Durgās is very generally said to be to „protect“ Bhaktapur. They belong, in fact, to a subclass of divinities, the dangerous and frightening Tantric deities, for whom the function of „protection“ is emphasized. This „protection“ is locally explained in the religious or supernatural discourse which is pervasively characteristically of an important segment of Bhaktapur's culture. But there is, in fact, a secular way in which the Nine Durgās do protect Bhaktapur and that is the concern of this essay.

There are various ways to investigate, organize, analyze and present an investigation into a living social system as ancient and complex as a Newar city. Everything depends on the investigator's sense of what the significant problems are. These are

¹ In this article I will for convenience use the names of divinities in their Sanskrit form, rather than using either the Nevārī pronunciation and transcription of that Sanskrit form, or the vernacular Nevārī name of the divinity, which is sometimes a further transformation of the original Sanskrit form. Note that the Bhaktapur dialect of Nevārī differs in pronunciation and orthography from Kathmandu Nevārī, particularly in the syntactical use of /ā/ and /ə/.

² Bhaktapur has about 335 thar units, arranged into about 24 hierarchical levels. The Gāthā are grouped with ten other thars (such as barbers, oil pressors, dyers, iron workers, etc.) in a „marginally clean“ level, of considerable symbolic importance for Bhaktapur. For my use of jāt and thar see Levy (in preparation).

³ About 36,000 of Bhaktapur's 39,000 Newars in 1971 identified themselves (or were identified by the head of their families) as „Hindus.“ Most of the remaining 3000 identified themselves as „Buddhists.“ The „Hindus,“ therefore, constitute the great majority of the city's population.
often related to the investigator's particular academic discipline and, in more subtle ways, to his general intellectual culture. Not only analyses but even descriptions of "facts" made from one problem perspective, may seem curious or inadequate, at first glance at least, when examined by somebody with another problem orientation. Familiar frames of orientation used in approaches to the Newars are history (sometimes with the emphasis on political history, sometimes on cultural history), economy, social structure and organization, spatial organization (an emphasis deriving from architectural and classical urban theory), ethnographic description, Indological concerns and the like. My own interests are in how communities are organized, and how various kinds of community organization affect and are affected by the individuals who live in a particular kind of community. This entails questions of meaning, of emotion, of motive, of conscience, as well as the controversy generating question as to which aspects of the human minds seem to be universal, and which aspects are shaped by particular traditions.4

One of the things that is peculiar about Bhaktapur in a comparative perspective – which differentiates it from certain kinds of communities and allies it with still others – is the density, quantity and enormous use which is made of "religious" symbols and forms such as the Nine Durgäs. Bhaktapur organizes much of its community, intellectual, and emotional life through such symbols. One of the interesting and significant aspects of religious symbols and the activities which are associated with them is that they are distinguished from vital life. They have special forms, special places, special attendants and priests. They are clearly marked as belonging to a special realm of significance, meaning and logic which is sharply different from the ordinary. This I have argued (1984, in preparation) has something to do with the peculiarities in comparative perspective of being a citizen of Bhaktapur. The Nine Durgäs cycle is only one thread, although a very important one, in the elaborate religious life of Bhaktapur.

The Nine Durgäs draw their meaning from various sources and deliver that meaning to Bhaktapur's people in particular ways. The meaning is delivered first during ad hoc visits to various parts of the city to receive and perform sacrifice at the invitation of an individual or group in the fulfillment of a religious vow or in the hope of some religious benefit. These ad hoc performances provide a further background of meaning to the essential and central delivery – the performance in

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4 Some of my particular comparative perspective is based on my earlier studies of community organization and psychological forms in a small, traditional Polynesian island community (Levy 1973). My study of Bhaktapur (Levy, in preparation) is organized in three sections or volumes. The first concerns the history, and social organization of Bhaktapur; the second, its symbolic and religious organization; and the third, the way life in Bhaktapur affects the private life and understanding and the psychological organization of certain of its citizens in various positions in the status system.
each of the city’s village-like subunits, the tvah. It is during this performance, delivered each year in a fixed sequence to each of the tvah, that each of the people of the city encounter in his or her turn the Nine Durgās and it is these individual performances which by “protecting” in turn each of the city’s tvah, cumulatively through the yearly cycle protect the entire city.

Niels Gutschow’s chapter in this volume is concerned with other aspects of the complex cycle. I will in this chapter focus on those aspects of the cycle which provide significance and effectiveness to the tvah performance.

The legend

There are a number of variants of the tale or legend of how the Nine Durgās came to be introduced into Bhaktapur. The variations depend on which particular elements of the ritual cycle – which particular actions, social statuses, significant places in the city related to the Nine Durgā cycle are being “explained.” There are also variations in such features as at which point in the sequence of the story the Rajopādhyāya Brahman takes control. This is not the place to discuss these variants; the themes which are relevant to our focus on the significance of the tvah performance as a message to the audience seem, however, to characterize them all. We may take the following short version as representative:

A long time ago the Nine Durgā troupe inhabited a forest called Jvala (to the northeast of Bhaktapur). They used to catch people who happened to pass by and they killed them and drank their blood. (Some variants place this period in historical time by noting who was the Malla king during this time.) One day a Tantric priest, an Ācāju, whose name was Sunanda was walking through the wood, and was captured by the Nine Durgās who prepared to kill him. This was no ordinary tāntrika, but a man of great knowledge. Sunanda Ācāju told the deities that if they wished to take him as bhog (a living sacrificial offering) they should allow him to worship them first. The members of the troupe agreed. Sunanda Ācāju then had the time to say a powerful mantra which bound the Durgās so that they were unable to move. The Nine Durgās asked him to release them promising that they would not

5 The word is tvah in Bhaktapur Neväri, tva in Kathmandu Neväri, tol in Nepali. The tvah is an important unit of community identity and moral pressure intermediate in many ways between the household and the city. It has many interesting analogies with the classical grāma. Compare Dutt 1925, p. 188; D.R. Regmi, 1965–66, I, p. 514; Gutschow and Kölver, 1975, p. 26; Slusser, 1982, Vol. I, p. 84, and Dh. Vajrācārya (this volume) in relation to the ideas of tvah, grāma, “wards” and “villages.”

6 The king given in my version is „Guna Kāmana Deva.“ The „Wright chronicle“ puts this in the realm of Suvarna Malla who „introduced the dance of the Nava Dūrgā, having heard that they had been seen dancing at night“ (1972 [1877], p. 189).
take him as a sacrifice. But Sunanda, shrinking them in size, put them in his basket and brought them into his house. He kept them in his room in a secure chest and periodically worshiped them.

After a certain period of time (which varies from a short period to two or three generations) a Rājopādhyāya Brahman with Tantric knowledge whose name was Somarā came to the Acāju and told him that he (the Acāju) was unable to worship the Nine Durgās properly, but that he (the Brahman) could, and therefore he took them in their chest to his own house and hid them in a room. Then Somarā played with the Nine Durgās, playing various games of skill with them, and had them do their dances for him. At some point in the story the Nine Durgās had told the Brahman, or sometimes the Acāju before him, that they could only be kept under the tāntrika’s spell if no one else saw them. Somarā had warned his wife that she must never look into this particular room (in some versions he had given her the keys to all the rooms except this one which was not to be unlocked). One day he was absent, in some versions having gone by means of his Tantric powers through the air to Benares to bathe in the Ganges, and his wife (as it is significantly phrased in one version) "being a woman and having a small mind," either opened the door or looked through a hole in the door and saw the Nine Durgā troupe, who in some versions were dancing. As the stories emphasize, Somarā had spent most of his time in that room with the Nine Durgās, and his wife was very curious to know what was going on. In some versions the Nine Durgās killed Somarā’s wife at this point. Because the conditions of their entrapment and control have now been violated, the Nine Durgās escape the tāntrika’s house. The legend now gives various details which are not directly relevant to my present purposes, but at some point they sacrifice and eat a pig which will prevent the Brahman from taking the now polluted gods back into his house, (and which like many details of the extended story serve as quasi-explanations for present ritual practices). Then Somarā returned through the air from Benares and prepared to capture the group of Durgās again, but they told him that they had become impure through drinking the pig’s blood. (In some versions they seize the pig only when he tries to capture them). At this point it is agreed (in some versions it is the Brahman who says this, in some versions the Nine Durgās themselves propose it) that the Nine Durgās will become visible to everybody, through entering the bodies of the Gāthā and will visit every tvah and do their dance drama or pyākhā. Being polluted they cannot live inside of the city, but they will stay in the godhouse that is to be built for them just outside of the city’s ritual boundaries. So Somarā built the godhouse for the Navadurgā and established them there. And thus they came to dance for Bhaktapur.

This group of stories relate the Nine Durgā deities to a particular period of time in the history of Bhaktapur, and to particular places in Bhaktapur’s real space. This quasi-historicity contrasts with the locally and historically transcendent Puranic stories of Devī as Mahiśāsura-mardini which also contribute to the troupe’s meaning. Let us look at some of the themes in the story as I have sketched it. We may start with the emphasis on the distinction of outside and inside. This is in its
major emphasis a distinction between outside and inside the city itself with the ritual boundaries of the city being understood as the significant border. There is another significant inside-outside distinction in relationship to the tāntrika's secret room which contrasts with the house, and the house itself which contrasts in its turn with the surrounding city.\(^7\) The Nine Durgās live outside the city in a forest and they have many of the characteristics of predatory beasts which are reflected in the iconic details of their masks. They are dangerous in that they kill and eat people. It is important to note (we will return to this below) that they kill people not because of an individual’s sins or violation of the dharma, but simply through accidental encounters. They are brought under control not through ordinary moral action, nor the kind of devotion that influences ordinary deities, but by an act of power, the Tantric mantra of a particularly skillful tāntrika. The Nine Durgās are threats to the bodies of those who happen to encounter them and at the best ordinary people hoped to avoid them in the forest. They are not related to people’s souls, to their moral behavior and the manipulation of karma as are the ordinary gods of the inside of the city. They are, rather, related to a class of gods which are usually lumped together in Bhaktapur as the „dangerous gods,“ and which are, like the Nine Durgās, considered to be the proper deities for Tantric worship and for blood sacrifice.

In the legend the Tantric control of the wild divinities of the outside is first used for the private and secret enjoyment of the tāntrikas. This private pleasure is disrupted through the prying of a wife who is pejoratively characterized as curious and small minded, and who in one version is even punished by death. Her violation of an arbitrary rule, „do not look in this room,“ a rule, however, which indicated her husband’s legitimate power to make rules and thus to control her, permitted the escape of the dangerous forces and caused her immediate punishment. But through her meddling an essential transformation takes place. The powerful amoral gods move from the private personal realm of the tāntrika to the public space of the city for the use and good of the city as a whole. This reflects the way that Bhaktapur has turned Tantra into a Brahmanically controlled or at least supervised civic religion, although a religion which continues to represent the exterior events and forces which surround, threaten, and sustain the interior moral and civic life of Bhaktapur. The function of the Brahman’s wife has interesting psychological and mythic resonances. Like Eve, Bluebeard’s wife, and Pandora, she destroys the paradise of

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\(^7\) In Gutschow’s version of the legend in his paper for this volume the Ācāju lives outside of Bhaktapur in Nala, and it is the Rājopādhyāya Brahman who introduces the Nine Durgās into Bhaktapur. In my version the particular location of the Ācāju’s house is not specified, but the context implies that it is in Bhaktapur. Both the outside of the city beyond its ritual boundaries, and the private realms inside a household or inside a corporate group, are in different ways „outside“ the city as a public realm. These two sorts of „outside the city“ space are unified and related symbolically in Bhaktapur in a number of interesting ways.
man's childlike, self-absorbed and selfish pleasures, but in so doing reroutes powerful forces to the service of civilization. We will see all these themes reflected and enacted during the tvaḥ pyākhaḥ, the "dance-drama" performed in each tvaḥ

The relationship of the Nine Durgā to Bhaktapur's pantheon

In Bhaktapur's symbolic realm the divinities of the city's pantheon are of particular importance because they can be represented in concrete material objects. These objects, with their distinctive and significant iconic features and traditional histories and relationships, are made use of in very systematic and elegant ways to mark and represent divisions of space and time of different sorts and to mark these divisions with meanings of deep personal emotional and orientational significance. The Nine Durgās take an important segment of their meaning from their position within the larger pantheon. Some of these relations are derived from the temporal sequences of the annual cycle, and some of them are classificatory relationships to other divinities in the pantheon.

The Nine Durgās are closely associated with the forms and conceptions of the Tantric "Goddess." Although three members of the troupe are male gods, (with a fourth one sometimes conceived as being male) these male gods are each peripheral (in quite different ways) to the main actors in the pyākhaḥ who are the goddesses, at whose center is the maximally dangerous and frightening figure Mahākāli. Aside from the Nine Durgās the Tantric goddess has three major sets of representation in Bhaktapur. She is the protective goddess Bhagavati, the political goddess, Taleju, and the nine "mandalic goddesses" of the city (eight "Mātṛkās" at the eight points of the compass at or near the city boundaries, and a ninth within the city at one of the city's several symbolic centers). The Nine Durgās are intimately associated with all three sets. Bhagavati, conceived as the Devi of the Devī Māhātmya is the focus of Bhaktapur's major autumnal harvest festival, Mohani. In the course of this festival, which as everywhere in India draws its symbolic and dramatic stories and rituals from the battles against the demonic asuras as recounted in the Devi Māhātmya,

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8 Bhagavati is also the name given to the Tantric goddess in her household worship and representations. Thus, like Taleju and the Mandalic Goddesses, she has her location outside of the public urban space, which is the realm of the ensnared Nine Durgās.

9 The term "Mandalic Goddesses" is convenient for designating the entire system of the eight peripheral "mother goddesses" and the central fully powerful Devi form, Tripurasundari, who preside over a division of city space into eight peripheral wedge-shaped divisions, and a central roughly circular one, in a pattern locally conceived of as a protective mandala. This is somewhat different than the conception of the eight "mother goddesses" placed at the boundary as a protection of that boundary against external forces.
there is the systematic worship of the eight boundary goddesses and their central focus. At the climax of the festival the power of Bhagavati which has progressively increased during the course of the festival's eleven days becomes focused on her "sister" Taleju. On the last day of the festival an image of Taleju is carried out of her temple in a procession. At two points during the procession the various deities in the Nine Durgā troupe (including their "own" deity, a representation of Mahālakṣmi) embrace and bow to the Taleju image. This deference is one of the steps which is necessary to the augmentation of their siddhi or supernatural effectiveness. At this point the Nine Durgās are conceived as bringing the power of the goddess into the city, that is beyond the confines of the Taleju temple where the autumn festival had its urban focus.

The relationship of the Nine Durgās to the peripheral Mātrakās is more ambiguous. Although in some scholarly writings the two sets of divinities are given the same name (Navadurgā, Mātrakā, etc.) and although members of both groups derive for the most part from the Devi Māhātmya and share some of the same names, Bhaktapur informants insist that they are two distinct sets of divinities. Among other differences the hierarchical organizations of deities in the Nine Durgā troupe has no correspondence in the arrangement of the Mātrakās. The Nine Durgās are related to the Mātrakās through the connections that tie them both to the imagery and conceptions of the Devi Māhātmya, but while the Mātrakās are static markers of the external boundary of the city which they protect as a whole as well as through their tutelary influence over the mandalic sections, the Nine Durgās with their additional legendary meanings actively enter the city, live and die with the seasons, and exert their major influence over neighborhoods and individuals.

The Tantric Goddess, her derivative female forms, and their male consorts have certain characteristics and functions distinguishing them among the pantheon of Bhaktapur's Hindu divinities which are relevant to this discussion. In the stories of the Devi Māhātmya when the political and moral order of the kinds of gods whom Bhaktapur refers to as "ordinary gods" or, sometimes, "Vedic gods," was disturbed by the asuras, it was the Goddess who arose to restore order. As the Devi Māhātmya puts it, after the final victorious battle "favorable winds began to blow; the sun shone with perfect brilliance, the sacred fire burnt in a tranquil manner; and the strange sounds that had filled the quarters of space also disappeared." (Agrawala 1963, p. 127). The "ordinary gods" were not able to restore this order, only Devi could do it. She operated outside of the gods' order, through power, in contrast to the moral force and social conventions that ordered relations among the ordinary gods. In order to restore the gods' moral order she took on some of the characteristics of the creatures outside of the gods' realm, and threatened to become as dangerous and problematic as they were. In general in Bhaktapur the Tantric Goddess and the other associated Tantric deities deal with and have to be influenced through power rather than through those ordinary social and moral relationships which concern the ordinary gods, and they operate both to represent and to protect against the dangers which are at the exterior boundaries of the social order. They
protect against disease, plagues, earthquakes, invasions. They maintain the perimeters within which the interior moral life of the city, the concern of gods like Viśṇu, Gāṇeśa, and Śiva and their benign female consorts, can proceed. The representations of the Tantric deities have certain concrete aspects which are appropriate to their special roles. They have, for example, in their frightening representations, the appearance of predatory beasts, emphasized in their requirements of blood sacrifice. As such they represent both the danger and the protection against that danger to the fleshly bodies of individuals which have to be protected so that the moral and spiritual person can go about his or her ordinary business, in the same way as the physical city has to be protected so that it can go about its interior social relationships. (Note that the Tantric gods, related to the problems of the maintenance of the physical body rather than to the maintenance of the ethical person, as symbols of a non-social and non-ethical realm can also function as foci of meditation for the purposes of mokṣa, of escape from the social realm). The goddesses serve not only to represent the forces at the periphery of the city, and the body which is the seat (and in some contexts the periphery) of the moral and spiritual self, but they also represent, or can serve to represent, a realm of mind and logic which is peripheral to the ordinary logical conscious mind. The ordinary gods are all related to each other through relatively fixed social relationships. They are friends, antagonists, husbands and wives, children, brothers and sisters. Even the avatāras of Viśṇu are fixed for a normal lifetime as heroic but relatively normal human beings or animals, with a definite social location, and temporal and spatial setting. The Tantric deities on the other hand belong to another kind of logic. They are related to each other through emanations, condensations and other kinds of magical transformations. They belong to a world where things are not fixed in time and space, and can shift from one form to another; a world where their dangerous relations to humans are not controlled through decent behavior but only, if they can be controlled at all, by avoiding encounters or by devices of magical power, such as the tāntrika’s mantra. They inhabit a primitive, magical, dreamlike, sphere of the mind.

The Tantric goddesses thus represent and map one component of mind and experience for the people of Bhaktapur, representing particular aspects of their social space, their social relationships, their relationships to a larger universe. Other aspects of the city’s pantheon, the „ordinary deities“, which are the most salient opposition to the Tantric deities, but also other groupings such as the astral deities, natural stones, and ghosts and spirits – all have their proper set of usages and meanings. The Nine Durgās derive one component of the message they will deliver in the neighborhood performance from their position in the meaning system constituted by the entire pantheon.
The annual cycle

During the course of the year about eighty calendrically determined festivals or ceremonies take place in Bhaktapur. These are of varying importance and duration, some of them lasting several days and including a number of distinct subunits. Within the annual group certain sets of festivals and ceremonies are interrelated around certain themes. They form meaningful cycles of their own within the larger set. The Nine Durgās' annual cycle is intimately related to a larger set closely related to the agricultural cycle, specifically to rice production. Mohani, Bhaktapur's Dasāi, is, as it is elsewhere in South Asia, associated with the rice harvest. During the course of Mohani barley is also planted in each house and in the Taleju temple, and the sprouting of the barley grain whose blade-like leaf also represents a sword of protection for the city, is a central image. The fertility aspect of the warrior goddess of the Devī Māhātmya (XI. 45.) is emphasized in a verse when foretelling an extended period of drought in a future yuga she promises „at that time, O Gods, I shall support the whole world with life sustaining vegetables, born out of my own body, until the rains set in again.“ (Agrawala, 1963, p. 141). Starting with the rice harvest the Nine Durgās' activities in the city continue until the beginning of the following summer. Their last dance has to take place on the Sunday or Thursday before Sithinakkhā which marks the end of the dry season, the day when wells and ponds and roads are cleaned in preparation for the coming rains. This marks the time when the rice seeds are to be planted. Two weeks later just preceding Bhagasti, the power is ritually withdrawn from the Nine Durgās' masks and their possessed Githi incarnations. On Bhagasti the masks are secretly cremated at the Brāhmaṇi pītha. According to Jehanne Teilhet (1978) the ashes are collected and stored in a copper vessel which is placed in a secret spot on the river floor near the pītha. The vessel is left in the river until a month before Mohani, when it is withdrawn and the ashes are then used in the creation of new masks. Teilhet was told that „the Nine Durgās leave their masks and the Gāthās to go into the water, because the water is necessary for the planting of rice.“ Bhagasti is the time when the first rains of the summer monsoon should appear. The Nine Durgās are dormant. Now if the city is lucky the rains will come, the rice fields will be flooded, and the rice seedlings will be replanted into the mud to begin their growth into mature plants. This is a period of risks—the danger of too much or too little water, and of violent storms that may disrupt the planting. It is also a time of illness, particularly the gastrointestinal diseases which are common during the summer. It is said that because of the

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10 The burial practice of putting the cremation remains „in a small earthen pot and throw[ing] them into the water“ in Puranic times, is noted in Pande (1969, p. 261). The idea of the gods going beneath the surface of the earth, each for a season, is recorded for Kathiawar by Stevenson, where Brahmā, Śiva, and Viṣṇu go successively for four month seasons into pāṭāla (1920, p. 59).
absence of the Nine Durgās evil spirits freely enter into the city and are responsible for disease and troubles. (It is important to note for the distinction between the Nine Mandalic Goddesses and the Nine Durgās that the mandalic goddesses are actively in their fixed locations throughout the entire year. Neither they, nor the ordinary moral gods of the city, are sufficient to protect against these spirits. The Mandalic Goddesses have, in fact, other and continuing protective functions.) Some nine weeks after Bhagasti the demons will be driven from the city during the vivid and dramatic festival of Gāthāmugahcăhre at which time the rice transplanting is ideally completed, although it often lasts for some more weeks depending on the weather conditions.

During the period between Bhagasti and Gāthāmugahcăhre is the time when the Gāthā are believed to capture the human skullcaps or calvarias which they use as drinking vessels (pātra). They need three such skullcaps each year, one for their godhouse, one for their dance performance, and one as an extra reserve „in case one of the others break.“ They take these skullcaps from living men by means of mantras. They are significantly never taken from women. Furthermore the men from whom they take them must show auspicious signs, similar to the signs which were said to have characterized people who were taken for human sacrifice in earlier periods. When a man’s skullcap has been removed by the Gāthā’s magic the person dies within six months. This echoes the legendary Nine Durgās’ random murderous activities before they were transformed into servants of the city, the tenuousness of this transformation being an essential part of their meaning. But this phase of the cycle also is related to the question of the relationship between the Gāthās as the Nine Durgās and human sacrifice or murder (depending on the context in which it is considered). These magical human sacrifices may well be an echo of something else. Hamilton in the early 19th century reported information that he had gotten from a Gāthī informant. According to his informant,

„from those who come to worship at the temple, the Got [Gāthā] that represent these deities [the Nine Durgās] accept of spirituous liquors, which they drink out of human skulls until they become elevated, and dance in a furious manner, which is supposed to proceed from inspiration. In the same manner, they drink the blood of animals which are offered as sacrifices. In these temples the priests (Pujaris) are Achars, who at the sacrifices read the forms of prayer (Mantras) proper for the occasion, but retire when the animal is about to be killed by the Got who represents Bhairavi. The shrine, in which the images of the gods are kept, is always shut, and no person is allowed to enter but the priest (Pujari) and the Gots, who personate in masks these deities. Once in twelve years the Raja offers a solemn sacrifice. It consists of two men, of such a rank that they wear a thread; of two buffaloes, two goats, two rams, two cocks, two ducks, and two fishes. The lower animals are first sacrificed in the outer part of the temple, and in the presence of the multitude their blood is drunk by the masked Gots. After this, the human victims are intoxicated, and carried into the shrine, where the mask representing Bhairavi cuts their throats,
and sprinkles their blood on the idols. Their skulls are then formed into cups, which serve the masks for drinking in their horrid rites." (Hamilton 1971, [1819] p. 35 original parentheses)\textsuperscript{11}

Hamilton then goes on to report that other informants denied that such human sacrifices took place. Newars in Bhaktapur do believe that human sacrifices were performed in the past, and may still be performed on certain occasions in remote Newar towns and villages. Whatever Hamilton's story has to do with a possible historical reality (and his other details are quite accurate) they point to the important psychological reality that the Tantric control of the Nine Durgās by no means meant the end of their threat to innocent humans, and that behind the animal sacrifices in the interior of the city is the idea and the associated powerful emotions of human sacrifice. We will return to this below.

Beginning after Bhagasti and coming to a climax during Gāthāmugahcāhre, when effigies representing demons are constructed throughout the city and then carried and chased out of the city to be burnt, there is a period in which obscenity is extensively and publicly used. This period follows upon the disappearance of the Nine Durgās and the obscenity has a bearing on their meaning. The obscenities are called out loudly by male farmers working in the fields and by young men and boys of various social statuses in the public spaces of the city. The remarks are grossly sexual and at any other time of the year they would be considered (for people of middle and upper status at least) extremely bad behavior. It is not done by people standing close to each other, but rather at a distance so that it can be publicly heard, indicating the essential social significance of the behavior. The swearing is done mostly by young men, say from 16 to 40, and only very rarely by a girl or woman, who would be considered to be particularly brazen and uncaring of her status. Like all of Bhaktapur's other ritualized behavior of the special sort which collapses and disturbs ordinary social order and conventions (such as the public role switching that occurs during the summer carnival associated with the Sāpāru festival of the dead, and the forbidden activities represented and licensed in Tantric rituals) there are strict limits to the license exhibited. The obscene remarks are usually addressed by young men to women whom they do not know, but they would be uncomfortable and hesitant to address them to a high status woman or to somebody who was an acquaintance. They would not address these remarks to any girl from their immediate or extended family. They say such things as "Hello you girl over there who is holding my penis in your hand." Or "A penis put into you is going to make you pregnant, and then you will eat a lot of beaten rice (a food that is thought

\textsuperscript{11} Hamilton writes that the sacrifice was supposed to have taken place on the eighth day of Āsvin, which would have been during the Mohani sequence. It is Bhairava not Bhairavi who now performs the animal sacrifices. In Hamilton's list of the Nava Durgas (1971 [1819], p. 35) Bhairavi seems to represent Mahākāli, and Mahākāla seems to represent the contemporary Bhairava. It seems uncertain whether this is an error in his account or whether it is an accurate description either of an earlier historical form or a local variant, for it is uncertain which of the Newar cities in being referred to.
to have special value for pregnancy) and that will give you diarrhea. Sometimes the remarks are directed by young men and boys to other young men and boys and they would say such things as "go lick a vagina" or "your mother's vagina". There are many more such phrases and they are always followed by a conventional phrase pay' hva which forms a kind of refrain and which is derived from the very strong and shocking term pay'gu for the act of intercourse. All this is in the face of Bhaktapur's enormous (in comparative perspective) controls on sexuality and sexual talk outside of its proper familial forms, above all in public arenas and, one might add, in conditions of sobriety. All this comes to a climax when the effigies of the demon are being chased out of the city to cries of pay' hva kum. Clearly not only what in other contexts would be antisocialized sexual expression is at issue here, but at the same time statements which in other context would be extremely aggressive and insulting.

During the remainder of the summer, after Gāthāmugahcārē there is still much illness, and much danger to the crops from improper weather conditions. It is only after the rains have stopped on time, the harvest is under way, the defeat of the Buffalo Demon is reenacted, and the Nine Durgās return to the city that the city is "safe" for another nine months.

The Nine Durgās troupe are, thus, central actors in a mythic annual cycle which has many familiar similarities in the myths and cycles of agriculturally based societies elsewhere in space and time. When they are out of the city nature is left to its own devices. So left, it is hoped, it will produce fertility, the proper amounts and timing of the rains, and the proper conditions for the harvest. In human beings this dangerous but generative nature manifests itself as crude sexuality and aggression. These impulses lie outside of the civic part of the mind (as does the logic that we have noted typifies the relations of the Tantric deities). But when these forces are not under control there are dangers within the city and to the civic person. Demons and disease and social disorder threaten. The disorder is clearly mimed and signified in the period of obscenity. In the autumn when the harvest is ready and the grain can be resubmitted to civic ordering the Goddess is brought to her full strength during Mohani, and the Nine Durgās are reborn into the city. During their nine months in the city, carrying their echoes of the larger cycle of fertility, disorder and danger versus civic order, they become concerned with echoes of the same polarities and dilemmas in the psychic order of the town's citizens.

The Nine Durgās, as I have emphasized, carry with them the threat of death. This is not the threat usually posed by violation of the city's moral law or dharma, which entails an unfortunate rebirth. There is a good deal of doctrine that suggests that being killed by one of the Nine Durgās as an offering to themselves would, in fact, entail in one way or another the "salvation" of the soul. This is what is said to happen to the reputed human sacrifices who are sometimes said to have offered themselves freely as a sacrifice to achieve mokṣa. Similarly sacrificial animals "volunteer" to be sacrificed and achieve salvation. The threat of the Nine Durgās is, as I have also emphasized, to the physical body. We may note also that the threat
emphasized in legend and belief (and, as we will see, in the dance drama) is to men (and boys) and not to women, - Somarâ's wife being a special exception to this rule. Similarly, the animals which are sacrificed to the Nine Durgâs and almost always to other Tantric deities are always males. It is, in fact, precisely at the time of the Mohanī festival when order is restored and the Nine Durgâs are about to reappear that scores of male water buffaloes and goats are sacrificed by having their throats cut in Taleju temple. It is the one time during the year that every household is supposed to make a blood sacrifice of a male animal to the goddess. All of this will enter into the import and effect of the annual deliverance of the Nine Durgâs' message in each local area of the city.

The cast of the local drama

Whatever meanings the troupe as a whole draws from its legend, its membership in the Tantric pantheon, and its position in the annual cycle, the Nine Durgâs accomplish their local performances as a cast of characters. Like the conventional characters in the European commedia dell'arte they indicate their significance by their appearance and their contrasts and relationships. These formal characteristics of the cast of characters represented by the Nine Durgâs troupe are mostly represented in the details of the masks themselves. They provide an additional dimension of meaning, necessary for the understanding of the action, the drama of the local performances.

At this point it is convenient to say something parenthetically about the nine in the „Nine Durgâs." There are seven of the goddesses or „Durgâs“ represented by masks worn in the performances who correspond to the gods' saktis who join the fully powerful Devi in her battles as recounted in the Devi Mâhâtmya, and who are also represented as seven of the eighth boundary guarding pîtha goddesses of Bhaktapur's borders. The eighth of Bhaktapur's boundary goddesses, Mahâlakṣmi, is not derived from the Devi Mâhâtmya, although she has other Puranic representation as one of the „mothers“ (Sharma, 1974, p. 234). She is present not as a member of the performing group, but as the „Nine Durgâs' own god." She is represented at a shrine carried with the troupe where she is generally known because of her decoration with that plant, as the „oleander deity“ or Siphadyah, and she is also represented by an image in the Nine Durgâs' godhouse. At the center of the city’s eight bounding „mothers“ or Mâtrkâs, is a ninth goddess (Tripurasundâri) who is not a Mâtrkâ, nor a god's sakti, but represents the Tantric goddess in her full cosmic and creative form. The „nine" in reference to the Nine Durgâs presumably refers to such a mandalic schema, but it is unclear as to who the ninth Durgâ is. This is a kind of mystery very characteristic of the Tantric aspects of Bhaktapur. These are what I have called „advertised secrets," which testify to the differential control of information (as opposed to true power), an important aspect of Bhaktapur's social
organization. There are various proposals as to who the „ninth Durgā“ might be. Some Gāthā believe that it is represented by their musical instruments which they take to represent Tripurasundari. Others say that the ninth Durgā is Bhairavi, the sakti of Bhairava, but who is not represented in the masks or the drama. Like many Tantric secrets, it is probably not known definitely by anyone now, assuming it was ever clearly known in the past. Everyone assumes that there must be someone who knows the real truth, but it is often the case that no such person exists.

The goddesses represented by masks in the Nine Durgās troupe are Mahākālí, Vaiṣṇavī, Brāhmaṇi, Indrāṇi, Maheśvari, Kumāri, and Vārāhī. The troupe also includes five other masked dancers, Bhairava, Gaṇeśa, Seto Bhairava, „Simā“ and „Dumā,“ and is further supplemented by a mask of Śiva, which is carried, but not worn. The masks are loaded with iconographic details which allow them to be grouped and contrasted in several different ways (see Colour Plate 8). Many of these details and possible categorizations are peripheral to their performance meanings. An example is the rotated third eye which is prominently displayed on the foreheads of Śiva, Mahākālí, Bhairava, Gaṇeśa, Maheśvari (all thus marked as closely related to Śiva) and also, curiously, Vārāhī. (It is of interest that the protagonist of the neighborhood drama, Seto Bhairava, who is conceptually related to Śiva, and is a copy of the mask of Śiva with certain transformations, does not have such a third eye). The neighborhood dance drama divides the thirteen mask-wearing performers into principal performers and a remainder who act as a kind of chorus, and who are restricted to formal geometric dances performed as a group. The major performances all have jeweled bindus at the bases of their noses. The minor performers Vaiṣṇavī, Brāhmaṇi, Indrāṇi and Maheśvari do not. (Vārāhī who does have a jeweled bindu at the base of her nose is not a major performer in the dance drama, but in contrast to the other goddesses which I have just listed she does do an independent dance. Another figure with a bindu at the base of his nose, this one painted as part of his harness, is Gaṇeśa, who although he does not figure in the major drama, also has, like Vārāhī, independent dances.) Within the group of major performers two masks dominate by their larger size, by their intensely saturated dark colours, and by the presence of prominent fangs. One of these is the dark blue Bhairava, the main actor in the ceremonies which are the immediate context of the dance drama, and the other is the dark clotted blood red Mahākālí who is shown with emaciated flesh, deep set eyes, with the mandibles protruding in a cadavarous way through her skin. Mahākālí is the main antagonistic figure of the drama.

Kumārī is clearly a transitional figure and this is consistent with the role she plays. She is the same size and shape as the benign goddesses of the „chorus“ (Maheśvari, Indrāṇi, Brāhmaṇi, and Vaiṣṇavī) and she shares with them the rounded features of a young woman in full sexual attractiveness. Although she is smaller than Mahākālí and full fleshed rather than emaciated she is painted in the same deep clotted blood red as Mahākālí and has fangs which the other benign goddesses do not have. Mahākālí is emaciated and skeletal, Kumārī is not but Kumārī’s mask has the same
exaggerated frontal protuberances (in anatomical terminology the "mental tubercles" of the mandible) as does Mahākāli's jaw which signify and calls attention to the underlying skeleton. It is much easier to see at a glance than it is to put it into words that Kumāri is in a marginal position between the maximally frightening representation of the Tantric goddess and her exaggeratedly beautiful manifestations (see Colour Plate 6).

Two other masks whose features are very closely related to each other are those of Śiva and Seto Bhairava (see Colour Plate 7). Many of their features are identical and do not occur on any other mask. They are represented as young men, with firm full flesh, with identical stylized eyebrows, moustaches, and tiny beards. They differ in that the Śiva mask is of a pastel orange colour resembling the purely decorative colours of the secondary goddesses of the chorus. Seto Bhairava, as his name implies (Seto, "white"), is white and the contrast of his white with the blue black and clotted blood reds of the Bhairava and Mahākāli and Kumāri masks reflects the colour contrasts (male versus female, minimal power versus maximal power) of Tantric symbolism. Seto Bhairava lacks Śiva's third eye icon on his forehead. His other obvious difference from the representation of Śiva on the mask (a kind of representation which is locally sometimes said to represent Śiva in his aspect as a "young bachelor") is that Seto Bhairava has fangs which associate him (even, as we shall see, in a comparatively ineffective manner) with the dangerous aspect of the Tantric gods. The Śiva mask which is small in size compared to the other masks, has no eye holes and is not worn. During processions it is carried attached to the costume of the dancer who incarnates Ganeśa and during the local performances the Śiva mask is hung on the Oleander God's portable shrine. This peripheral reference to Śiva is congruent with Śiva's significant but peripheral relationship to the Tantric component of Bhaktapur's religion. In relation to that component he is very much the corpse which Tantric doctrine says is what remains of him when his sakti is emanated, and transforms herself into the autonomous Tantric goddess, and he is in a precarious position until he can get that goddess under control again. The young Śiva, and the related Śiva as Maheśvara, the loving consort of Umā, is a focus of considerable affection in Bhaktapur and is one of the gods of moral and ethical importance belonging to the interior of the city. Seto Bhairava as a representation and transformation of the young Śiva is the protagonist of the neighborhood drama. He is the person who by his social awkwardness causes the drama to unfold as he stumbles into an encounter with Mahākāli. The trouble he gets into and his efforts to get out of it all again provide the main thread of plot around which the drama develops. Seto Bhairava is the focus for the audience's identification during that part of the drama which has to do with his conflict with Mahākāli. The things that happen to him, happen also vicariously to the audience. The mask's general benignity encourages this identification in the way that, say, the mask of Bhairava strongly discourages it. But Seto Bhairava has another dramatic function in the drama. As Mahākāli is to him, he is to the boys and young men in the audience
during one phase of the proceedings. The fangs in his otherwise benign face serve to remind us of his danger to those who are even weaker than he is.

The remaining two divine actors are two masks which are identical except in the colour of their face (one white, the other a reddish orange) respectively, in Nevārī, Simā and Dūma, also known in popular speech as Siha and Dūha. These are said (and this is extensively understood, and not just "intellectual" knowledge) to be popular names for Simhini and Vyāgrini (variously pronounced). People know that they represent a lion and a tiger, but it is generally not known which is which, nor which mask goes with which name. They are sometimes said to be two goddesses, but sometimes they are thought of as a couple, with the white faced Simā as the male. Sometimes they are said to be messengers of Yamarāj, the ruler of the kingdom of the dead. Their headbands of skulls identify them as dangerous Tantric figures, as do their open mouths and sharp teeth. But their decorative colours and relatively smaller size suggest, as does their action in the dance drama, that they represent a much less serious danger than the maximally frightening masks.

The special characteristics of the audience

We have considered various components of the context which give the ritual performances which we will soon consider important dimensions of significance. These are components of contextual meaning which are known to the audience and which influence the significance of what they see and hear. Besides the audience's knowledge of the legends and traditions and ritual cycle, and the impact on it of the physical and iconographic features of the masks, are there any other special "mental" characteristics of Bhaktapur's local audiences which make the Nine Durgās' drama particularly significant to them in a way that it would not be, for example, to a member of a Tahitian village or of a modern western city? In asking such a question we move from the realm of "cultural anthropology" to that of "psychological anthropology", and to studies based on special and different techniques. I believe there are significant and special local psychological characteristics which I can only deal with in a very brief and sketchy way here, but which however are essential for my thesis as to how the Nine Durgās' local dance drama contributes to the protection of the city. Let us take as an introduction to the problem of the special characteristics of the minds of the audiences of these performances some common themes in discussions in Bhaktapur about blood sacrifice, which as I have emphasized is of great importance in the significant background of the dance drama. When people are asked to talk in a general way about blood sacrifice they usually described its social, religious and familial

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12 One of the bases for the investigation of the more private, psychological significance of life in Bhaktapur is sequences of interviews with some people in Bhaktapur selected from various levels in the status hierarchy. These interviews were tape recorded and then transcribed into Devanāgarī script by local scribes for convenience in analysis.
usages. But when pushed further to talk about their "private" thoughts and feelings about sacrifice, and particularly about the shifts in their thoughts and feelings during the course of their growing up one gets a different kind of information throwing some light on the tensions and transformations between private and public worlds. Adults enjoy animal sacrifices – they are associated with dramatic and interesting festivals, and particularly with large family feasts where the household and members of the extended family are united, where meat and alcoholic spirits are consumed, and where there is much gaiety. But recalling the sacrifices which they were most acquainted with as children, usually the sacrifice of a male goat which in some cases prior to its sacrifice might even have been known to the child as a family pet, several informants talked of having had other kinds of feelings and ideas. As one informant, a member of a shopkeeper family, put it, "at first when we were young we used to feel afraid." (Why?) [I will put my remarks in parentheses.] "Killing is not good. Killing causes something to happen in your mind." (What?) "It is a kind of cruelty. Someone is doing something cruel to the animal and he may do something cruel to me. Every man is also like an animal. A man can kill with a knife. That's why I used to feel troubled. But afterwards I got used to the religion and to all kinds of sacrifice." (He was about 12 years old when he began to "get used to" sacrifice. I asked him what other feelings he had about sacrifice before that time.) "The religious books were about peace and about not killing anything, not harming anything. But they [the adults] break all the customs of religion, or the reality of religion, and they kill the animals, they sacrifice the animals for their own satisfaction only, in order to eat the animal, that is why they sacrifice. I used to say that it is not really for the god, the god never told us to kill anybody. I used to say so at that time." But then he grew up, he came to realize the "religious truth" about sacrifice. Another informant, of a high Chathariya jāt, said that when he was a child he had pity for the goat, "I had pity for the goat, and I felt some sort of uneasiness which came into my mind, what if I were killed and given as sacrifice in that way, what would happen to me. That was the kind of feeling that came to my mind. If I was, you know, given as a sacrifice, you know, with my head turned up like that and a knife blade being put on my throat [he laughs] what would happen? That was the kind of feeling I had, you know, a kind of gooseflesh, you know what that is, I can't express it. I used to have that kind of feeling, but these days I don't." And another man, from the very low Jugi jāt reflecting on sacrifices in his childhood said "we loved the sacrificial animals like our own sons and daughters, because we brought them up and fed them and gave them drink." Such quotations indicate clearly some psychological implications of blood sacrifice among at least some Newars in Bhaktapur which I believe are widely shared, implications which are related both to the Nine Durgās' drama and beyond that to aspects of the social organization of Bhaktapur. When these informants were children, they identified vividly with the sacrificial animal and they saw the adult sacrificers as aggressive, destructive, and immoral, very much the way the Nine Durgās were portrayed in the legend. When they grew older many of these same
informants not only became accustomed to blood sacrifice, but they came to perform it themselves and in some cases enjoyed doing it (as was the case of the first informant) as part of a religious and ceremonial act. There is another, and more subtle, transformation suggested by these interviews, particularly the first. The doctrines associated with sacrifice (the animal assents to the sacrifice by shaking his head, the soul of the sacrificed animal goes to heaven or is assured of an excellent rebirth, the images of the Tantric gods somehow eat and drink the flesh and blood of the animal, the performance of the sacrifice is a virtuous religious act and not a murder of a creature with a soul for the sake of human pleasure in eating otherwise forbidden meat, and so forth) are all at variance with the basic "common sense," the intuitive view of natural reality, of the child. When the adolescent begins to identify with the adult male sacrificer, rather than the sacrificial animal, he will also begin to make what the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard ([1843], 1954) called a "leap into faith," and to commit himself to adult cultural ideologies and religious beliefs for emotional reasons, – to believe in them as an act of committed faith, rather than because they seem self-evidently true. And it is important to note here that in comparative perspective, the effective operation of Bhaktapur's socio-cultural system requires such a commitment through faith to a system of religious symbols to a very much greater degree than either simpler societies on the one hand or modern ones on the other require for their effective operation.

The symbolic enactment

Before turning finally to the local dance drama which is performed systematically throughout the city, we have to consider briefly another setting in which individuals may encounter the Nine Durgās. During much of the period during which the Nine Durgās are active they may be invited by a family, a group of extended family members, or a larger neighborhood group to come and dance for the protection of the area. We can only touch on certain aspects of this which are relevant to our focal concern of the meanings of all this to the spectators. For these invited performances the men responsible for the invitation go to the Nine Durgās' god house and conduct the gods to the place where the ceremony will be held. This is in contrast with the formal systematic sequence when the gods come by themselves. In the course of their being worshiped in the local area, usually the courtyard of a house, a pig is given as an offering (called in this context a mū bāhā). This pig not only represents the pig of the Nine Durgās' legend, it is also explained by another tale which is worth quoting because it illuminates an important aspect of meaning of the Tantric gods in general and the Nine Durgās in particular, – the fact that they represent power, rather than purity, and that this power can absorb and neutralize impurity, and thus help to maintain and restore that segment of social order, the concern of the ordinary gods, which is differentiated by purity. The story
goes that in a past age the people of the earth had been polluting the earth with urination and defecation. Everywhere the world was dirty, and everywhere there were bad smells. The gods consulted with Viṣṇu, and asked him, as he had so often done, to come to the help of the world. The gods did not want to do anything to get rid of the feces themselves for fear of contaminating themselves. Finally Viṣṇu agreed to incarnate himself as a pig and to eat the feces. „But,“ he said to the gods, „if I do this I will become polluted, and it will be difficult for me to again escape from the world.“ The Nine Durgās said to him that they would agree to take the pig as a sacrifice, and thus through the sacrifice of that pig make it possible for it (and the incarnate Viṣṇu) to gain salvation.

The pig is killed by Bhairava who is the only one of the Nine Durgās, who does sacrifice, with the important exception of the killing of a rooster by Mahākāli during the formal neighborhood dance drama. He does this by splitting the skin of the foreleg with his fingernail (in a relatively thin area at the inner part of a joint) and separating the skin until he reaches the thoracic cage. He then forces his hand between two ribs and pulls out the heart and offers it to the Oleander shrine goddess. Now first Bhairava and then all the other gods, including the children attendants of the gods who represent minor demonic skeletal figures take blood from the pig and drink it. The gods now begin to tremble. This is said to be in response to the „energy“ in the blood, and to be a sign of the Gāthā’s possession by the gods, and also to be a kind of intoxication. The image of the goddesses intoxicated with the blood of their asura enemies, sometimes dancing as a result, is salient in the Devī Māhātmya. At some point following this Bhairava gives a mixture of beaten rice and curds, dhakabaji to each god and they eat. He then gives dhakabaji to the onlookers, with a particular emphasis on the children, and among the children especially the boys. It is thought that this particular offering will protect children from disease. Bhairava’s hands are still contaminated with the blood of the pig and the onlookers, men and women, boys and girls, in fact share in this offering. (Brahman boys after initiation, and adult Brahman men are not supposed to accept this offering.) Following the sacrifice the group of Durgās do some formal dances. These dances describe certain geometrical patterns and are said to be mystical diagrams or yantras which protect the locality through supernatural power. Following their dances, the Nine Durgā troupe takes the body of the pig with them and returns to their god house accompanied by the important people of the inviting group. At the god house the Gāthā dancers are said to cook and eat the pig. (It is worth noting that the Gāthā do not eat pig except in their ritual capacity as incarnated deities.) Occasionally for important areal ceremonies the Nine Durgās are offered five kinds of male animals in sacrifice which they kill and make use of in the same way as they do here with the pig.

We may underline here again the emphasis on sacrifice, the conception of sacrifice as food for very predatory kinds of gods, and in this case the sharing of the sacrifice by the onlookers through the contaminated rice and curd distribution. This sharing of the blood sacrifice through actual or symbolic ingestion (symbolic in the case of
the distributed parts of the head of a sacrificial animal by members of a corporate group; actual, in the case of the feasting on the remainder) is part of the procedure and significance of blood sacrifice in Bhaktapur as it is generally in other parts of the world.

The sequential neighborhood dances

Niels Gutschow in his paper for this volume on the spatial implications of the Nine Durgās ritual cycle, has discussed the location of the local dances that the Nine Durgā troupe do in the same sequence every year throughout the course of their cycle. They dance at twenty-one public squares throughout Bhaktapur, and in nineteen villages outside of the city. These villages outside of the city are generally within the boundaries of the old Malla kingdom of Bhaktapur. The pattern traced by the dances both outside and within the city are considered to form protective yantras, in the same way as the pattern of the dance performance in a local area marks out a protective space. Only a few specialists in the city among the Brahmans and among the Gāthā performers are aware of the places and sequences in the larger cycle. All that the vast majority of the spectators to the local performance know is that somehow this local performance weaves their locality into a larger pattern of temporal and spatial relationships during the annual cycle, a pattern centering on the city.

In sketching the local performance, we must focus again on those aspects which are meaningful in the particular and limited sense of this presentation, which is concerned with the message delivered by the performance and the purposes it serves. The position in the annual sequence at which a particular area is visited is always the same, but as Gutschow points out there are a number of considerations which go into the determination of the exact timing within that sequence, and „the people are never sure when the gods will come.“ In contrast to the invited performances, the Nine Durgās enter the area as a kind of invasion beyond the determination of the local people. Gutschow describes the procession and activities on the night prior to the major performance. As Gutschow’s description indicates, in those areas where a pig is chased and sacrificed, there is a playful teasing and tricking of the gods by young men and boys. This teasing introduces a basic theme in the performance.

The next day’s sessions are a mixture of formal dances (conceived as yantras) and worship, interspersed with dance dramas or pyākhā. Following the first formal

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13 My description of the pyākhā is based on observations of segments of it, on descriptions given by local people, and on recent observations by Steven Parish, from the University of California at San Diego, who was working in Bhaktapur at the time this paper was being prepared. My description differs in some few details from Niels Gutschow’s and needs further checking. These details, however, do not change the essential dramatic themes of the pyākhā.
dances in the morning, there is a performance by Simā and Dumā. Dumā is here considered as a woman and Simā as a man, her husband. Dumā has a cup out of which she will drink beer, but at some point Simā steals it. During this sequence the younger boys among the spectators laugh and make mocking noises at Simā and Dumā. Simā now begins to chase the children, occasionally catching one, and holding him for a short time. If he catches the child he may bring the child to the shrine of the Oleander God. If a child is caught people say this is the result of bad planetary influences and his family may worship the Nine Durgās to remove the bad effect. This chase occurs several times during the course of the morning. These Simā-Dumā sequences are considered to be comic, more concerned with younger children, and less serious than the pyākhā of the afternoon.

In the afternoon performance Mahākāli does a formal dance. Seto Bhairava seats himself on a woven straw mat which he will later use to “go fishing.” While Mahākāli is dancing, Seto Bhairava smears himself with white pigment (a cosmetic mixture of oil and white powder which is used otherwise in marriage ceremonies as a cosmetic for the bride). He has been given this as well as ghee, brown sugar, and a white shawl by the responsible local person. Seto Bhairava puts the white pigment on his face and hands and puts on his mask. He then puts the shawl over his head, approaches the place where Mahākāli is dancing, and seats himself with head still covered and slowly moves his head about in a fashion which is interpreted as a kind of mocking or making fun of the dancing Mahākāli. Keeping one’s head covered in this fashion in front of a deity (or in this case a superior deity) is to show disrespect. Mahākāli becomes enraged and shakes her head in a quivering motion indicating her great anger. She suddenly tears the shawl off of Seto Bhairava’s head and holds onto it. Seto Bhairava wants to get his shawl back and the next part of the sequence has to do with his attempt to recover it. First he makes a gesture of respect to Mahākāli, but she ignores it and turns her head away. This not having worked, Seto Bhairava turns to the onlookers and begs for small coins. Some people in the crowd give coins to him. Seto Bhairava now offers the money to Mahākāli, and asks her to take the coins as an offering. (His words now and in later parts of the pyākhā are spoken for him by one of the musicians.) Mahākāli takes the money from him, but does not return the shawl. All this ineffectiveness is amusing to the spectators. Now this part of the drama comes to a climax. Seto Bhairava takes a rooster, which one of the onlookers hands to him, and offers it to Mahākāli. At first she is angry, she keeps her head turned away and will not take it. Then suddenly she grabs the rooster, and with an angry gesture throws the shawl back into Seto Bhairava’s face. Now Mahākāli bites the head off the living rooster and drinks its gushing blood.

The pyākhā comes to an intermission. Now the tvah representatives do pūjās to Kumārī, Bhairava, Mahākāli, Vārāhī, Seto Bhairava, and Simā and Dumā and to the Oleander Goddess, the Siphadyah god. (The background deities of the “chorus“ are not worshiped at this time. Note also that the gods which are worshiped are all frightening forms, with fangs, tusks or sharp teeth.) Now the masks are placed in a specially designated place and only Seto Bhairava remains masked. He takes his mat
which is to serve as a fishing net. This mat is a rectangle about two or three feet long, with seven or eight tiny dried fish placed in openings of the net. He will use this net to „go fishing,“ as his chasing of older boys and young men which is about to occur, is called. The chase by Simā in the morning is also called „going fishing,“ although he does not use a symbolic fishing net. The entire pyākhā with its various scenes is, in fact, often named in reference to these episodes and referred to as the „fishing,“ or nyālākegu pyākhā, suggesting its central significance. Seto Bhairava now does a formal dance. While this goes on the young man and older boys in the crowd begin to mock and taunt Seto Bhairava by clapping their hands together and by making sounds (rhythmically covering and uncovering their mouths with their hands to make a wavering noise). These young men are usually between 14 and 20, and include members of any of the clean castes, even Brahmans. This is considered to be a brave and daring thing to do and people admire them for it. Now Seto Bhairava „goes fishing“, as he chases the boys and young men (see Colour Plate 7). Sometimes during the course of his chase he will stop and be invited into a nearby house, where he is given an offering of food, including meat and alcoholic spirits. The young men will wait outside and continue their mocking when he comes out. If he manages to catch one of them Seto Bhairava will drag him towards the Oleander God shrine, though if he is far away from the shrine he may let him go after dragging him for a while. This is considered bad luck for the boys and young men and sometimes the younger ones cry with fear when they are caught. Seto Bhairava then returns to the shrine, and begins his formal dance, only to be interrupted again by the boys and young men. The sequence of dancing and chasing occurs three times.

Now a new phase of the pyākhā begins. Seto Bhairava's stomach begins to hurt him. He is said to have an upset stomach from eating fish, the boys and young men whom he has been chasing being those fish. He lies down on the mat and begins to rub his stomach. Simā and Dumā (now danced by boys instead of men), come to feel his abdomen „to see where the pain is“. Seto Bhairava wriggles around because this tickles him. He is still, however, in pain and he calls for Kumāri (with one of the musicians again speaking for him). Kumāri, now also danced by a boy, comes with a handful of parched beaten rice and holding it first to Seto Bhairava's head, chest and stomach, throws it to the right and to the left. This is the same procedure by which Tantric physicians try to chase away the spirits which cling to people and cause diseases. This procedure is used in other contexts to drive away evil influences. New brides, for example, entering a household for the first time are similarly „purified“, at the pikhālakhu, the symbolic „supernatural“ boundary of the house. During these scenes in the dance drama, Kumāri (as she is danced by a child, she is now sometimes called Bālakumāri, the „child Kumāri“)14 is considered to be the wife of Seto Bhairava. As Kumāri throws the parched beaten rice to the

right and to the left, she throws it into the faces of Simā and Dumā who have been standing at either side of Seto Bhairava, and they react with grimaces of discomfort. Now Seto Bhairava is cured of his affliction. He gets up and embraces Kumārī, which often causes great laughter. Now Seto Bhairava gives his shawl first to Dumā asking her (through the Gāthā musician who speaks for him) to wash it for him saying, „It is a little dirty, please wash it.“ Dumā throws it down on the ground. Seto Bhairava says, „I should hit you. “ And makes a fighting gesture. He then picks up the shawl and goes through the same sequence, with the other member of the pair, Simā, – and with the same results. Finally he picks up the shawl which Simā has thrown down and now washes it himself in pantomime. He then walks away. The dance drama segment is now finished. All the gods, except Simā and Dumā and Seto Bhairava, do a set of formal dances. This is the only time that the benign and beautiful forms of the goddesses also dance and now Ganeśa also dances with the group for the first time during this day’s proceedings.

Now the true Bhairava, as Bhairava is usually conceived in Bhaktapur, the large blue-black dangerous figure, comes to the fore. As in the informal invited ceremonies which I have described above, Bhairava is offered a pig sacrifice, and is offered and returns beaten rice with his bloodstained hands, as prasāda to be eaten by the onlookers, who are no longer simply audience and spectators but participants in the ritual. Now the dance drama is over and the gods, making music, return to their god house, now accompanied in their procession by people from the locality. The locality has been protected.

The message delivered

There have been many aspects of the Nine Durgās cycle which have not been dealt with here or have only been touched on. We have not discussed the Gāthās, who must learn the performance, understand it in their own way, transmit it from generation to generation, weave it into their own understanding of their own identity and mission, and so forth, – a subject which might well be the basis of an important volume in itself. We have not discussed the Nine Durgās’ own „life cycle,“ the rites of passage that they must pass through each year as they proceed from birth to death. We have not discussed the relation of the dance cycle to the details of city space (the focus of the study of Gutschow and his associates). We have not discussed the details of the iconography of the masks beyond those which differentiate and give meaning to the actors in the local performance. We have not discussed the many details of the local performance itself, particularly those having to do with the formal geometric dances. And these are only samples of the infinite number of „meaningful“ aspects of this central part of Bhaktapur’s symbolic life which have not been considered. But all these aspects which are neglected here are meaningful in a different way than the aspects that I have been emphasizing.
Although the great majority of the spectators to the local pyākhā do not know about such details, they do know certain things that are essential for giving the performance its special ritual force. They know that the local event at a particular local time which they are witnessing belongs to a timeless religious tradition which is in some sense eternal and infinite and that this particular episode is hallowed by its connection to that tradition. They know that the dances, masks, and procedures have necessary invariable and canonical form. All this gives the performance, in spite of its comic style, a deep seriousness because it relates it to the transcendent sacred realm of Hinduism. The forms that spectators do not understand, to a certain degree just because they are not understood, evoke for them this other mysterious world. In ritual, which is the very essence of religious action, the basic forms, symbols, and behavior, must seem unchanged from performance to performance. This helps generate a sense of an encounter with a realm which transcends ordinary space and time. People do not know what the mask makers or the Gāthā do in their preparation and validation of the masks or of the local performance. Much of this preparation consists of mysteries, guarded by the corporate jāt groups and requiring special initiation. All that the spectator has to know is that something is being done properly, that it is generated out of a sacred tradition and passed down from generation to generation of priests, mask makers and dancers through proper initiation, teaching and mantras. The audience sees a performance which has been properly constructed, and which has much of its structure in the form of a sacred ritual.

But within this larger frame is the comic drama and the game-like "fishing" episodes of pursuit of the mocking boys and young men by the gods. The drama and fishing chases have a central theme or motif which is elaborated in various ways. This theme is the violation of hierarchy, shown in concrete representation through a violation of proper respect for a superior. The young boys do this to Simā and Dumā, the older boys to Seto Bhairava, Seto Bhairava does it to Mahākāli. This violation of hierarchy, and the response to that violation illustrated in the drama and fishing pursuit, does not concern ordinary violations of the moral law, the dharma of civic life, no more than the struggle between the gods and the asuras in the Devī Māhātmya concerned ordinary moral violations. Ordinary moral violations, the arena of shame, loss of face, and the generation of bad karma, has its own symbols and myths, its own spacial location, its own religious modes and special divinities. This pyākhā and its context concerns the struggle between the order which makes the moral realm possible and its disruption.

Hierarchy is (in, as Louis Dumont (1982) insisted, its peculiar South Asian form) one of the central principles of order in traditional Hindu societies as it certainly is in minute detail in Bhaktapur. The violation of a hierarchical relationship, therefore, strikes at the central organizing principle of the society. Thus the performance is

15 These remarks on the implications of the ritual aspects of the pyākhā are indebted to Rappaport (1979).
about the struggle between disorder and order, what happens to individuals when order is violated, and finally what has to be done to restore that order. The contextual meanings of the Nine Durgās indicated that although this disorder is dangerous both to the ordinary moral gods and to humans as social beings, it is also a source of fertility, energy and generativeness. Thus the boys and young men who mock the gods are admired for their courage and Seto Bhairava is a positive figure with whom one must empathize as he struggles against the terrifying Mahākāli. Similarly the boys and young men who called out order-threatening obscenities at the proper phase of the annual cycle were also doing something positive, amusing and vital. The children and young men are pursued by the gods that they mock and are sometimes caught without particularly serious consequences, but the real potential consequences for the acts of rebellion which they have mimed are shown graphically in Seto Bhairava’s encounter with Mahākāli. He fails to show respect for the superior deity, who becomes enraged. He tries to restore relationships with her by the kinds of exchanges which are effective with the ordinary, the non-Tantric gods, – gestures of respect, the offering of money or daksinā. But only an offering of blood sacrifice appeases this kind of a deity. The biting off of the head of the rooster and the drinking of its blood signifies, as the entire background for the meaning of the pyākhā which I have presented here makes clear, that it was Seto Bhairava who was to be killed, if it were not for this convenient substitution, which at the same time frees him temporarily from Mahākāli. The sacrifice enables the return of the shawl and some social dignity to Seto Bhairava and atones for his violation of hierarchy.

The Nine Durgās are Tantric deities, and Mahākāli is the Tantric goddess in her most frightening representation. The Tantric deities have a special position in the maintenance of order in a system like that of Bhaktapur, where Tantricism (as is widely the case in the history of South Asia) has been captured by the social order (as the legend of the Nine Durgās attests), rather than representing the institutionalizing of the possibility of an escape from that order. The Tantric deities represent power in contrast to the dharmic moral order represented by the non-Tantric gods, a moral order which constitutes the ordinary social life of the city. Like the traditional Hindu ruler in his ideal relationship to the priest, the Tantric deities are responsible for the protection of the traditional ritual and moral life, although they are beyond morality themselves. They are ambivalently made use of when that moral order is being threatened, either by some internal force or by some external danger. Seto Bhairava’s rebellion threatens the hierarchical basis of urban order and a Tantric deity becomes activated.

The way Mahākāli’s threat is both manifested and avoided is in the blood sacrifice of the rooster. As I have argued, this makes use of a particularly powerful and complex local constellation of meanings. It represents the death of a scapegoat, the sacrificial male animal, thus sparing the intended victim. As all the symbolic components of the dance drama and its background make clear, the message of sacrifice is directed primarily at males. Men are the critical actors in the public social
organization of Hindu communities, and the largest component of the urban symbolic system is devoted to the expression and control of their problems, feelings, and orientations in the performance of their social roles. It is of great interest in consideration of this male prominence in the public life of the city, that that force which is represented as external to the city but vital to it, both as the energy of nature, and as the force which both threatens and, if properly placated and controlled, will protect the city against disruption, is represented primarily by the non-social, dream-like "Mother Goddess" and the images, concepts and emotions associated with that powerful symbol. Sacrifice is not only a symbol of a threat, a potential punishment, but as we have noted it also entails in at least some peoples' personal development, a tremendous pressure for accepting the social order, for identifying with and becoming one of the sacrificers, to escape the fate of being one of the creatures which are sacrificed. And it also entails, as I have argued, the acceptance of the particular ideologies and dogmas of the group which would be problematic and perhaps nonsensical to an innocent eye. Thus, the drama plays with the vital impulses which are socially disruptive, and making use of blood sacrifice, one of the very most powerful symbolic resources for restoring and maintaining individual assent to Bhaktapur's culture and society, restores that order both within the drama, and in the minds of its spectators. Seto Bhairava is not only the ineffectual protagonist who blunders into trouble with Mahākāli, and is only saved through a substitution of a sacrificial animal, but in another phase of the pyākhā, the "going fishing" after which the whole event is significantly named, he is the one who is mocked by his inferiors and becomes in turn the agent of punishment. Similarly the people of Bhaktapur are not only the passive objects of potential destruction in the face of violations of order. They perform sacrifices themselves and share in the blood by feasting on the sacrificial animal, and during the course of the Nine Durgās' performances they eat the blood-stained prasāda. (At the beginning of each annual cycle, during Mohani, they also share in eating the flesh of a male water buffalo killed by the Nine Durgās, and representing the great asura killed by Devi in the Devi Māhātmya.) The people identify, then, not only with the victim, but also with the Tantric deities, both in their wildness on the one hand, and as collaborators in slaughter for the sake of social order on the other, which results in a sense of community that psychoanalytically inclined observers would argue has something to do with a sense of shared guilt.

The last part of the drama may be thought of as a kind of moving downward from the more cosmic scale to a more domestic one, and thus providing another bridge to the audience. Here Seto Bhairava is healed through his wife in a common magical healing procedure known to all people. The grain that she throws in the face of

16 One of the several threats which untouchables and other very low jāts represent to a society like Bhaktapur's, something which they have in common with adolescents and to some degree with women, is precisely that they do not accept or they see through, to some degree, some at least of these problematic cultural dogmas.
Simā and Dumā, have perhaps an added bit of meaning in so far as they are also thought to represent Death's messengers. But in this little episode of healing domesticity, of Seto Bhairava having to turn to his wife for help, the wife, Kumāri, is, herself but an attenuated form of the violent natural force, Mahākāli. (This reflects the position and meaning of wives in Bhaktapur, a thread of significance that we cannot pursue here.) He is cured. Like the Brahman in the legend after the escape of the Nine Durgās through the interference of his wife Seto Bhairava is returned to ordinary civic life. He is safe, but as his inability to get Simā or Dumā to wash his shawl for him reminds the audience, he is without power to alter the conventional order of things.

Bhaktapur has many of the characteristics of archaic cities where much of the social, interpersonal, intellectual and emotional order was generated and integrated through extremely powerful symbolic means, rather than through the use of naked force which only had to be resorted to when the symbolic system did not do its proper work. This order made extensive use of the sacred as immanent in the world before it was banished to the distant heavens of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition.17 The Nine Durgās' performance – delivered to the inhabitants of a particular locality at a particular place in space and on a particular day of the year – is a vivid example of the protection of the city through symbolic manipulations which help bind individuals to the social order and to integrate and represent that order.

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The Navadurgā of Bhaktapur – Spatial Implications of an Urban Ritual

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Introduction: legends – the Gāthā – ritual

Legends and chronicles tell us that1 Ānanda Malla (12th century), King of Bhaktapur, was instructed by the Navadurgā to set up their images in proper places, „to ensure the security and protection of the town both internally and externally“. Since we know that the town of Bhaktapur is much more ancient and Licchavi inscriptions2 attest to the existence of quite a few settlements, it is reasonable to assume that Ānanda Malla restructured the existing villages when he chose Bhaktapur as the capital of his kingdom. The act of placing the eight shrines (with non-iconic representations) of Durgā (Aṣṭamāṭrā) ‘around’ the town could well be compared with the founding of a settlement. Ritual space is thereby reshaped, providing a frame for further development.

Three hundred years later the shrines of the Navadurgā were complemented by the addition of the Navadurgā dance. King Suvarna Malla is said to have introduced this dance in 1513 A.D., „having heard that they had been seen at night.“3 Legends inform us about the origins of the Navadurgā.4 The Nine Goddesses were harassing and killing people on their way between Bhaktapur and Nala. Once an Ācāju (a priest of Jyāpu status with Tantric abilities) was caught by them. Before he was killed, he managed to ask for a favour and pretended he would like to worship them. Utilizing the full force of his abilities, he brought the goddesses under his control. The priest agreed to save their lifes in return on the condition that they would be regularly worshipped as tiny beings in a secret room of his house in Nala, and that would hide them from the eyes of the non-initiated. When the priest died, the gods were left unattended and caused other members of the family to die. Eventually a Brahmin from Bhaktapur came to Nala; trying to help the family, he inquired about the peculiarities of the life of the Ācāju. After having been told that he used to disappear into a secret room, the Brahmin then found the goddesses. He

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3 Wright, op.cit., p. 189
took them to his home in Bhaktapur and faithfully continued to worship them. One of his wives, however, was curious enough to enter the secret room. As a result of this disturbance the initial agreement between the Tantric priest and the gods was violated. The gods thus left the house, assumed their original form and killed the first pig they came across while roaming through the streets. The Brahmin was not powerful enough to force the gods – now polluted by the blood of a pig – back into the secret room of his house. A new agreement, however, was then reached: gods were installed in a temple as the Navadurgā and the members of the Gāthā caste, landless gardeners and daylaborers, were compelled to take care of them.

It is not easy to draw together the historical facts and the basic pattern of the legend. Not a single document is available to tell us more about the background of the Navadurgā ritual, which is so central to the essence of Bhaktapur and which – on a certain level of experience and awareness – constitutes more than just a living tradition. The Navadurgā represent the life of the community, and their birth and death reflects the cycle of time and the critical events of the agricultural calendar. Information provided by the Gāthā themselves tend to be fragmentary and, in many cases, is meant to mislead the questioners. It is their duty to hide the esoteric meaning of the ritual and they are afraid to disclose the secrets involved. On the 8th day of the Dasai festival, the Gāthā have to swear by the blood of a sacrificed ram that they will not reveal anything about the secrets of their community (pāphaykay-gu). Otherwise they would suffer the fate of the ram. Under these circumstances, we are not in a position to say anything about the historical development of the ritual. It seems rather the other way round: a careful survey of the observed ritual events may lead us to an understanding of the pattern of Bhaktapur, its specific religious infrastructure and its pattern of public spaces.

The Navadurgā are represented by masks which exist only for a certain period of time. Again and again they are created anew and cremated with the beginning of the rainy season. Thus, these living gods palpably reflect the circle of life and, in particular, the reproductive character of time. Although the group of masks are collectively called Navadurgā (Nine-Durgā), they represent only seven of the Eight or Nine Mother-Goddesses: Brahmāyaṇi, Maheśvarī, Kaumārī, Vaśnavī (within the context of the New Year festival called Bhadrakīlī, the consort of Bhairava), Vārāhī, Indrāyaṇi and Mahākālī. The seventh of the Eight Mother-Goddesses (Aṣṭamātrikā), Mahālkṣmī is represented by a small, faceless and four-armed idol fashioned from silver sheet. It is attached to the sacred vessel (kalaśa) which is invariably wrapped in red cloth and is worshipped under the name of Siphadyah. The seven Mothers are accompanied by Bhairava and Gaṇeś, who carries a small mask of Śiva. Siha and Dūha, the lioness and tigress, are two further guardian goddesses. Finally, there is Sveta Bhairava, who does not accompany the Navadurgā in processions but performs a special dance when the squares of the quarters are visited.

When the Navadurgā parade through the streets and lanes of the town, the procession is lead by a musician of the butcher caste playing a peculiar type of drum.
(nāykhi) or by a dhimāy drum played by a member of the inviting party. Then the Gāthā follow with their own type of drum (dyahkhi) and two cymbals (dyahṭāḥ). Behind the musicians comes a Gāthā carrying a skull (pātra) representing Guhyesvari and a damaru, and another with the sacred vessel, the Siphadyāḥ, being accompanied by a ceremonial umbrella. Nine gods follow, led by Bhairava, Mahākāli and Vārāhi, the three fierce gods who accept blood sacrifices. Ganesā concludes the procession. Three boys accompany the group, posing a road toll on people who happen to pass by. In addition to these 18 Gāthā performing as gods or musicians, the female head of the community should be mentioned. The Gāthāṇī acts as the head of the household, she presides over the feasts, putting all the offerings into baskets and pots placed in front of her. A few more helpers are needed to carry the baskets and accompany the procession, and to lift Mahākāli in a posture of respect in front of certain temples. Altogether, about 30 Gāthā may be actively involved in the Navadurgā ritual.

All male members of the 45 Gāthā households (as based on a survey in 1974: these households are exclusively located in the upper town, see map 1) participate in the ritual according to rules of rotation. They have to learn all dances in detail, as the roles change freely every year without any link to certain families. The Gāthā group is advised by a Jyāpu priest (an Ācāju) and an astrologer (Jvasi) who decides the dates of performance according to the lunar calendar. The Ācāju performs the essential pūjās at the God of Music (Nāsahdyāḥ) in Jhatāpvāḥ and at the pith of Brahmāyanī. It is also he who teaches the repertoire of the dyahkhi.

Map 1: distribution of Gāthā households (survey 1974)
The white-clad Gāthā on Dattatreya square, carrying a large vessel on their way to Tālākva to receive the first black clay (dyahcā) on the occasion of Ghatāmugah.

The ritual calendar

The Gāthā start their activities on the fourteenth day of the waning moon in the month of Śrāvaṇa (early August) on the occasion of Ghatāmugah festival. The festival marks the end of the season of transplanting rice seedlings. Altogether a total 91 demons, representing the evil spirits which might have entered town during the critical time of transplanting, are carried out of the town to be burned at a proper distance across the river. This is the time when the Gāthā, clad in white dresses, carry a large clay vessel, which is honored by a ceremonial umbrella, to the house of the chief of the potters (Kumāhnāyah) in Tālākva to worship the first fresh clay of the season (map 2). On the same day, a member of the painters caste (Pū)
from Milakva will prepare a small face of Šiva. On the day of Kagaštami he will start
to prepare the first mask of the Navadurgā and eight days remain for the other 12
masks to be formed and painted.

Map 2: Bhaktapur: processional route of the Gāthā on the occasion of Ghātāmugah

Dasāi: the BIRTH of the gods

Dasāi, the great autumn festival, heralds the beginning of the harvest. The festival
commemorates the mythic victory of Durgā over the demon Mahiśāsura, and in
many ways reflects the process and idea of renewal and of origin and birth. In
Bhaktapur, the Navadurgā constitute the basic fabric of the festival: on eight
successive days the places where the Eight Mothers are represented in a non-iconic
form, are visited and worshipped. On the ninth day, the central ninth manifestation
of Durgā, Tripurasundari, is worshipped in the neighbourhood of the palace.
Finally, on the tenth day, Durgā’s victory is reenacted in manifold fashion: blood
sacrifices are performed in abundance. For the Navadurgā, that group of Mother-
Goddesses represented by masks which are considered to be equivalent to gods, the
schedule runs as follows:5

5 In the context of this paper, only a brief summary of the activities on Dasāi has been
provided, since the emphasis here lies on movements in urban space. A full account of
the Navadurgā’s activities is planned, but will require more investigation over the years
to come.
Map 3: activities of the Navadurgā during Dasai. (ghāgala lāhlāygu on aṣṭami, khvāhpāḥ khuya yēkegu on navami, ibi yāgu on trayodāsi, dyāḥ bwaykegu on pūrṇimā and bihi on the following pratipāda).

Eighth day (aṣṭami) of Dasai (map 3)
The Gāthā gather in front of the Nāsaḥdyāḥ of Jhatāpvaḥ (which is their God of Musik) to receive the bangles (ghāgala) for their ankles.

Ninth day (navamī) of Dasai (map 3)
In the late afternoon, a buffalo (named khāme), representing the mythic demon slain by Durgā, is chased towards the shrine of Brahmāyāṇī east of the town. In the early evening, thousands of people will pass through the satah building of Yāchē where the 13 masks of the Navadurgā are displayed. The same night the Gāthā come to „steal“ the masks ceremonially (khvāhpāḥ khuya yēkegu). Carried in baskets, the masks are brought to the shrine of Brahmāyāṇī. There is buffalo is killed (Durgā’s mythic victory reenacted); and in an esoteric ritual, life is transferred back from the water of the river (into which it was released three and a half month previously) into the masks. From now on the masks are no longer mere symbols and the Gāthā are not just actors. the masks are in fact considered to be the gods, and as soon as the Gāthā wear them, they are possessed: they are in the possession of the gods.
Tenth day (Vijayadaśami) of Dasaī (map 4,5)

On the tenth day of the festival the whole population of Bhaktapur, virtually everybody who is able to walk, leaves the town moving towards the easternmost shrine of the Aṣṭamātṛkā to worship the „newly born“ masks, take a tiny piece of meat from the skeleton of the demon-buffalo as an offering (prasād) and return to town by crossing through the river, where a canopy marks the ford. Those male members of the Gāthā caste who had been chosen to perform in the pyākhā for the eight months to come receive the masks ceremonially (khvāhpāh lāhlāygyu). In the twilight of the evening, the Gāthā leave the pith, carrying the masks in their arms. Only starting from the edge of the town do they wear them in front of their faces. The gods and goddesses move slowly towards the Taleju temple (map 4) after stopping at the courtyard of Vanālāykū and in Sukūḍhvākhā. In the Mūcuka, the main courtyard of the palace, the Navadurgā meet Taleju, the tutelary goddess of the former Malla kings, and a white stallion (payāhsalā or Talejusalā).

Around midnight, a Suvāl turns up, followed by two Brahmin, who carry swords wrapped up in cloth. A hidden representation of Taleju is carried by the head priest, a Rājupādhya. The procession (map 5) now turns towards the upper town, following the processional route (pradaksīṇā). It is led by four butcher musicians (Nāy) playing the nāykhibājā and another Nāy, who carries the head of the
**Map 5:** Processional route of the sword procession (payāh) of Taleju, accompanied by the Navadurgā.

*khāme*-buffalo. They are followed by the first Gāthā with damauru and patrā, the Siphadyaḥ and Bhairava, Mahākāli and Vārāhi. Then come the three Gāthā musicians, the Suvāl, the two Brahmin and the Rājupādhyā with Taleju. At the end of the procession the other five Mārṭkā follow; and finally (inevitably) then comes Gaṃeš. The route of the procession makes a shortcut in Tacapāh to return after a short stop at the Dāthumāṭh along the main road back to Taumāḍhi.

Here the payāh-procession splits up. The Navadurgā have to proceed to the Krodha Bhairava at the turn of the main road just above Gaḥhitī to collect sacred flowers (svākakaygu) which have been placed there by the people. The Navadurgā will now have to return towards their ,,home”, their god-house (dyahchē) in Gaḥchē, one of the eastern quarters of the town. Taleju, however, is now taken back to her temple.⁶

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⁶ The map reflects the actual procession as it took place in 1984. That year Taleju was supposed to circumambulate the lower town, but the group carrying the goddess was forced by people of the upper town to circumambulate their quarters first. When the group returned to Taumāḍhi, Taleju was handed over to a Jvasi, who took her counterclockwise around the lower town. The goddess is normally taken from her temple through Bahatahgalli down to Taumāḍhi square following the processional route clockwise around the lower town.
Eleventh day (ekādāśi) of Dasāi (map 6)
Late in the evening, the Navadurgā leave their dyahcē, proceed to Tacapāḥ and make their way to Gvaḥmādhi and Tālākva to distribute the tahsi fruit (which is considered pure – pī) to the Sāymi (oil-presser), who blows the big horn (kā) on the occasion of processions, and to the head of the potters (Kumāḥnāyaḥ), who provides the clay (dyahcā) for the new masks.

Twelfth day (dvādāśi) of Dasāi (map 6)
Just as on the day before, the Navadurgā set out in the evening to distribute two more tahsi fruits to the butcher (Nāy), who plays the drum (nāykhi), to the astrologer (Jvasi/Jośi), who handles the calendar of the Gāthā and fixes the dates of performance, and to the painter (Pū), who makes the masks. The upper town is circumambulated for the purpose of distribution of these tahsi fruits. The processions of the eleventh and twelfth day are thus complimentary and achieve the circumambulation of the entire town within two days. We are familiar with such divisions of processions from Indrajātrā, when Bhairava circumambulates the lower and upper town on successive days. The heterogeneous character of the town thus becomes manifest; on the other hand, unity is demonstrated because all quarters participate in the presence of the Navadurgā.
The thirteenth day (trayodaśī) of Dasāi (map 3)

Once again in the evening, the Navadurgā leave their dyahchē to move straight to Taumādhi. After having paid homage to Taleju, the gods enter the courtyard of a Rājupādhyā south of the Darbār square to perform the so-called ihi yāgu ceremony. This lengthy and elaborate pūjā includes the sacrifice of the first pig of the season, the peculiar offering to the Navadurgā. The name of the ceremony indicates, that the Navadurgā undergo the ritual of marriage. More ceremonies on the following full-moon day (no. 3,4 on map 3) indicate that they undergo all those rites of passage which a woman has to undergo before becoming a full member of society.

Full-moon (pūrṇimā) after Dasāi (map 3)

On the day of full moon, the Navadurgā follow the invitation of four different families with whom a special relationship exists. The forefathers of these families added to the ornaments of the Navadurgā; since that time they have offered a feast to the gods in commemoration. First of all, they come to the Bajrācārya family in Tacapāh, whose grandfather presented a girdle with bells to five goddesses in 1931 A.D..

The first day of the dark moon (pratipadā) (map 3)

The bibi ceremony is enacted to consume the blood of the ceremonial buffalo (khāme) which represented the mythic demon six days back and which was sacrificed on the early morning of the tenth day. The name of the ceremony hints at the poisonous character of the blood as referring to the snake (bi). Obviously the blood (bi) is not eaten; it is only touched symbolically by hand and the mouth is then touched with that hand. On the other hand, the meat of the khāme has been distributed over a period of six days by the Gāthā; for this purpose, they go from house to house. Those tiny pieces of meat are not eaten but rather burned, and the soot originating from that fire is carefully collected and used for the tikā of Lakṣmipūjā two weeks later. Larger pieces of the meat are distributed as shares to all those members of the other castes who fulfill certain duties in the Navadurgā ritual (like the mask-maker, the butcher-musician, the astrologer and the priests). The bibi ceremony is the first one which resembles the visiting of the 21 squares of Bhaktapur. For the first time, to wooden palanquin (khaḥ) into which the Siphadyah is placed after the procession is carried well ahead of time to the destination and placed in the middle of Gaḥchē square. First the group slowly marches towards Tacapāh. After an hour the Navadurgā return to Gaḥchē, march across the long square and stop exactly at the edge of the quarter which divides Gaḥchē from the neighbouring Taulācē, the easternmost quarter of the town.

Now the Navadurgā return to the square of Gaḥchē to perform the inevitable set of dances (pyākha), and finally Bhairava performs his threatening dance for the sacrifice of a pig, which for this occasion is offered by a neighbouring house. The ceremony is concluded with Brahmāyaṇī presenting tahṣi fruits to Ācāju priests.
Map 7: *tvāh muikegu* (the visiting of the quarters). Sequence of visits to 21 quarters

Around midnight, only the *bihi* is brought from the *dyahchē* in a bucket. The gods act as if they would eat the blood. Private invitations to the gods follow the ceremony, and they do not return to their *dyahchē* until early in the morning.

The second day of the dark moon (*dvitiya*)
The second day after full moon (it is the 17th day of the Dasai festival and the day after the killing of the *khāme* buffalo) is the last day of the Dasai activities. The head of the *khāme* is torn into pieces and thrown into the courtyard of the *dyahchē*.

**Tvāh muikegu – visiting the quarters of the town (map 7)**

Two months after Dasai, the Navadurgā resume their ritual activities according to a schedule extending over the following six months. It is an elaborate set of processions which aim, in the broadest sense, at ritual taking possession of space, of a realm sacred to and sanctified by these gods. It is the structure of these processions which may lead to a broader understanding of the relationship between ritual and space.

Altogehter, some 19 villages and 21 public squares in Bhaktapur have to be visited. If we add the two visits to the Mucuka in Bhaktapur and count those cases where the Navadurgā dance at two squares of a village, they perform dances a total of 47
times. The first visit is devoted to the ancient centre of Deopātan called Gvāh, and the second to the Navadurgā temple situated at the banks of Bagmati, south of the Paśupatināth temple. It is as if if the Mother-Goddesses were paying respect to the Lord of Nepal. A few days later, the courtyard of Taleju is visited in Bhaktapur. The visits to the quarters of Bhaktapur, however, commence on what is a very conspicuous and significant date. Within the calendar of the Navadurgā, it is the only date which is not scheduled according to the lunar calendar, but according to the Indian solar calendar, which is sideral (i.e. the zodiac is fixed to the stars, and the calendar thus does not take into account the precession of the equinoxes).

Therefore, for the past two thousand years the dates of the solstices and equinoxes have slowly been shifting: some one and a half days per century. Thus, winter solstice is not celebrated now on the December 22nd, but rather on January 14th. The day before the winter solstice (Pauṣa 30), another tahsi lahlhāygū ceremony is performed in Tvāhca (map 5). The sacred fruit is thrown into the crowd, and whoever gets it will be blessed with a son.

On the festive day of the winter solstice (Māgh Saṃkrānti) the first formal visit to a quarter of Bhaktapur is directed towards Sujamidhi, the square of Taulāchē, which is the eastermost quarter which people first enter after their visit to the shrine of Brahmayani. Not only the Navadurgā make their appearance on this auspicious date. The five Dipākaraabuddha are taken out of their shrines, paraded through the streets and provided a feast (samay) at the western edge of the town. The people, moreover, celebrate the day with sweets and special food.

The first visit to a quarter on the occasion of the winter solstice is followed by 19 similar ones. The last visit is directed towards Ichu, a small square in the area of the Brahmin, which is not considered the centre of a quarter. Ichu is situated half-way between the temple of Bhairava, the Nāyah ('master' of Bhaktapur) and the house of Bhadrakālī, his consort. Following the winter solstice, the eight eastermost quarters of Bhaktapur are visited without paying any special attention to the quarters of Jēlā and Bhvalāchē. While Jēlā, a very unpretentious quarter of Jyāpu and Kumāb, is not visited at all, the gods parade through the main street of Bhvalāchē on the occasion of the visit to Yāchē. A special light ceremony (ārāti) concludes the visit to the eastern part of the town. The ninth visit is dedicated to Taumādhi with the most important square of the lower town and the temple of Bhairava, the second dyahcbē of the Navadurgā (the place where the Brahmin of the

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7 I base my figure for the number of villages and sequence of the visits on the account given in Stührzbecher (1980). Ganesh Man Basukala carried out this survey in 1977 and 1978.

8 A letter from Bill Templer (dated 27th January 1983) clarified to me the basic calendrical meaning of Māgh Saṃkrānti.
**Fig. 2: Ritual Calendar of the Navadurgā**

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**Death**

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<tr>
<td>Bhag Asūtami</td>
<td>Bhag Asūtami</td>
<td>Khopa vayakēgu</td>
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<td>Sīthi Asūtami</td>
<td>Sīthi Asūtami</td>
<td>Sīja nakaygu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bīlā Asūtami</td>
<td>Bīlā Asūtami</td>
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</table>
Fig. 3: Bhaktapur: Navadurgā. Gāneś drinking blood of a buffalo on the occasion of a feast on Dattatreya square (Photo: 22.2.1975).
The legend is said to have kept the gods in Svāla and the Tilmādhav Nārāyaṇa. Within another two weeks’ time, the six quarters of the southwest are visited, always following the winding main road, with the squares of Gaḥhitī and Ṭālākva only a small distance off the road. The westernmost quarters of Tekhācva and Bhārbācva are not honoured with a special visit, but the Navadurgā parade along the main road through these quarters on the occasion of their visit to Mūlākhu, as was the case in the upper town for Bhvalācchē. Once again an ārāti ceremony concludes the sequence of this second set of processions. The day following the visit to Tibukchē (No. 14), the Navdurgā proceed to Darbār square where they are positioned at the western corner of the palace, a place called Bilācchē. Visits to Khaumā and Itācchē in the northeast follow over different approach routes. Having finished these processions the Navadurgā are confined to their dyahchē for the period of the New Year festival (Bisketjātra). The nine days between Caitra 27 and Baiśākh 5 (10th–18th April – once again a period of critical importance in the solar calendar: spring

Fig. 4: Bhaktapur: Navadurgā. The Ghatāni, the female head of the Ghata group presides at a formal feast (dyah bvyaykgw) including an offering of five blood sacrifices (paṇcabali) on the occasion of the coronation of Birendra Bir Bikram Sāh (Photo: 22.2.1975).
equinox) belong to Bhairava and Bhadrakāli, the divine couple of the town. During these days, the divine couple commands the town. Encounters between the gods of this festival and the world of the Navadurgā would be considered inauspicious. After Bisketjatrā, however, the activities are resumed and the remaining three quarters of the northeast are visited within a few days. Whereas the first four quarters are reached along the main road, the Bahatahgalī of Sākvathā, the quarters of Tulāchē and Cvāchē are reached straight from the turn of the main road in Sukūdhvākā through the Pyāmādhī lane.

After having completed this third set of processions, the Navadurgā have to wait for seven weeks before they finally visit Ichu and then dance at the Mahādyahānani, where another set of non-iconic Navadurgā are installed. In order to understand the elaborate and complex schedule of the ritual which the Navadurgā have to perform on the occasion of their visits to the quarters, we will first describe the sequence in the course of five steps, covering a period of time of about 24 hours.

The visit to the quarters – a 24-hour sequence of performance

The procession from the dyahchē to the quarter

On the occasion of a visit to a quarter of the town, the masks of the Navadurgā, which are kept in the secret room (āgā) of the dyahchē on first floor level, are carried down into the courtyard and hung on the pillars of the open ground floor (dalā) surrounding the yard. The masks of Bhairava, Mahākāli and Vārāhi, those three awesome gods who receive blood sacrifices, are facing west. At the same time, the palanquin (khāh) into which the Siphadyah is placed on the arrival of the procession is carried well in advance to the respective destination, the central square of the quarter to be visited. It is the first sign of the procession on that night. The date is fixed according to the lunar calendar and entails the exclusion of certain days of the week. Thus, the people are never sure exactly when the gods might arrive. About an hour later, in the twilight of the evening, the Navadurgā emerge from their dyahchē. First the Gāthā appears with the skull (patrā) representing Guhyēśvarī, and carrying a constantly rattling drum (damaru) in his right hand. He is followed by the carrier of the Siphadyah and the person who transports the ceremonial umbrella beside the Siphadyah. Then come three boys, representing Siha, Dūha and Kaumārī. Kaumārī is invariably represented by a small boy who is not strong enough to carry the mask in the procession. These three boys are in a hurry to rush forward towards the main road in order to herald the coming of the gods and levy a road toll onto those who pass by. Now Bhairava, Mahākāli and Vārāhi appear; they are followed by the other four goddesses (Brahmāyanī, Maheśvarī, Vaiṣṇavi and Indrāyanī). Gaṇeś leaves the dyahchē as the last one, carrying the mask of Śiva from his girdle. Bhairava holds a pointed instrument (vajra?) in his right fist and steps immediately towards northeast to touch the
boundary line between Gaḥchē and the neighbouring quarter of Kvāthādau, with all
the other gods behind him in a line. After a short initial dance, the whole group
turns to proceed downwards to Gaḥchē square and the neighbouring Tacapāh
quarter. The first stop is scheduled in front of the shrine of Salā Ganeś, the guardian
(Bināyaka) of the upper town, who invariably is worshipped at the beginning of any
undertaking. The Siphadyah is placed before the pīṭh, facing west, while Mahākālī
dances on the square in front of Salā Ganeś and is lifted by a Gāthā attendant. A
second stop on Dattātreya square is devoted to the secret shrine of Taleju in the
nearby Vanalāykū courtyard. Mahākālī bows in reverence facing that direction and
is lifted up again twice.
Now the procession follows the main road towards the respective quarter. The
main road serves as a kind of backbone from which the individual places are

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**Fig. 5:** Bhaktapur: Navadurgā. The palanquin (khañh) of Siphadyah with the mask of Śiva
hanging from the eaves – in front of Dahibināyaka dyahcbē in Tibukchē (No. 14). The large
drum (dyahkhī) besides the khañh. (Photo: 13.2.1983).
Fig. 6: Bhaktapur: Navadurgā. Siha performing the nyālākegu in front of the Maheśvari dyahchē on the occasion of the visit to Kvāchē (No. 13) (Photo: 13.2.1983)

reached. Further stops are made at the Nāsahdyah of Inācva, at the dyahchē of Maheśvari (in Inācva as well), at the Jaurubahi, the Gaṇeś dyahchē in Gvaḥmādhi and the Bhīmsen temple in Sukūdhvākhā. At each stop, the Navadurgā perform a short dance before they proceed.

Tvāh muikegu – parading through the streets of the quarters (map 8)
In some cases, the Navadurgā stop as soon as they touch the boundary line of the quarter they are supposed to visit. Then they move through the streets and lanes of the quarter according to a fixed schedule, the processional movement being broken by three to nine stops. Usually it is not more than three times (as in the case of Tālākva, Kvāchē, Lāskudhvākhā, Gaḥchē, Gvaḥmādhi). In Tibukchē, Mūlākhu (nine stops) and Kvāthādau (eight stops), the processions are most elaborate.
At each stop, the Siphadyah is positioned in such a way that the silver emblem of Mahālakṣmī which is affixed to it, faces west. The three musicians take their seat at right angles to this direction and face north. The Gāthāni, the female head of the
community, sits to the left of the musicians with a few baskets and pots to receive the offerings of the people of the respective quarter. In some cases, people offer a small pig or eggs; they may insist that the gods drink the eggs in their presence. There may also be further stops for formal invitations (*dyah bvaykegu*) into the houses along the processional route. Beer and spirits are invariably offered in abundance. The Gāthā get drunk and tired, and whenever possible they will sleep for a few minutes on the spot.

Upon analyzing the map (No. 8) showing the 21 processions, one realizes, that the distribution of routes is an excellent reflection of spatial organization of the town into specific quarters with identifiable boundaries. The earlier identification of funeral routes already gave support to the idea of 24 identifiable quarters, as is also reflected in common views widely held among the towns people. The identification of the routes of the Navadurgā serve the same end; in a certain sense they complement the earlier evidence by representing the „powerful“ Mother-Goddesses who ensure reproduction and fertility for the people of Bhaktapur. The appearance of the Navadurgā in the streets and lanes not only serves to substantiate the actual presence of the gods in town. It is in fact much more: the gods come to each and every quarter as if to prove that they form the component parts of the whole, the town of Bhaktapur with its heterogenous spatial and social structure. Thus, the appearance of the gods confirms and reaffirms the special quality of an urban as opposed to the rural environment. The gods represent the essence of the urban environment, and the people participate in the divine power by being offered the
chance to receive them as guests in their own quarter, if not by worshipping them from their own threshold or in their own house.

Smaller deviations from earlier identified boundaries of quarters are negligible. In Itāchē, for example, the processions turn via Khaumā down towards the temple of Sveta Mātsyendranāth, and the Tulāchē procession turns into Tibukchē before entering into Tulāchē proper. The final procession of Ichu may, as was already mentioned earlier, be understood as a visit to the quarter of the Brahmin. It seems easy to understand why the easternmost quarters of Tekhācva and Bhārbācva are not honoured with specific visits of the Navadurgā. Those quarters represent a rather late urban extension, one which may have occurred around 1700, at a time when the Navadurgā ritual was already in existence and could not easily be changed and extended. It is much more difficult to understand why Bhvalācchē with its important Mahākālī dyāchē, is excluded; to date we have no clues that might help in understanding this exclusion.

The visit of the gods to the streets and lanes of the quarters may take from two to six hours, depending on the number of stopping places and private invitations offered.

Around midnight, the gods reach a square as the centre of the quarter as their destination. There the palanquin (khah) is already waiting, marking the exact place where the subsequent dances have to be performed. The Siphadyah is placed into the khah with Mahālakṣmī facing west. The pātra is placed at the northwestern corner, and the mask of Śiva hangs from the eave of the southwestern corner. The khah at the eastern side of the square and the musicians at the southern side of the square define the space for the subsequent dances.

Except for Bhadrakālī, all the other goddesses now start dancing together with Bhairava. Mahākālī carries a sword in her right hand and the skull (from which she offers beer to Bhairava) in her left hand. Finally, Bhairava dances alone to conclude the first performance; this takes about an hour.

Mibāhā likegu – the chasing of pigs (map 9)
The night following the visit to the streets and lanes of the quarter is devoted to the chasing of pigs for a required sacrifice. The gods have to walk in procession from the respective square towards the edge of the town. There they drop the masks and leave them behind. Now the Gāthā proceed for another 100 to 500 metres, until a gang of youngsters and children determine the exact spot where a baby pig, which is provided by the people of the quarter, is supposed to be handed over to Bhairava. From that point the youngsters run around carrying the squealing pig under their jackets, and passing it quickly from one to another. The gods are obviously being teased and asked to come and fight for the pig. Constant shouts like 'liyo-liyo; bhayo-bhayo' (I have got, have got it) are meant to excite them. This kind of teasing may last for an hour or two, but the Gāthā are tired and the nights in January and February rather cold: they won't listen to the crowd, only waiting now beside a straw fire for the final sign of surrender. The crowd then forms a small circle, and
the pig is released before the feet of Bhairava, who immediately grabs hold of it and carries it back to the spot where the masks have been left behind. Other gods take over and carry the pig to the square with the Siphadyah, where the sacrifice is then performed. Bhairava faces west when the pig is again put in front of him. He grabs it easily, tears the heart out of the squealing creature and throws it towards Mahālakṣmī. The body of the pig is stored away in a basket placed in front of the Gāthānī.

Not all visits to the quarters include a mībāhā likegu ceremony. There are only 11 pigs to be chased beyond the boundaries of the town. The masks are invariably left behind exactly at the edge of town or immediately beyond. The places of abandonment are, in most cases, in correlation with a river or pond, although only in four cases is the Hanumante river crossed over. The circumambulation of the Kāmālpūkhū (No. 3), however, is conspicuous. In one case (Pasikhyah, No. 7 and 14), visits to Gvaḥmādhi and Tibukchē use the same ground for the chase. The visit to Khaumā (No. 16) is quite peculiar and differs from the others. The Navadurgā already leave their dyahchē early in the afternoon, and after a dance in honour and respect of Vatsalā (Darbār square), they enter Khaumā for only four stops and a period of one-and-a-half hours. After the first dance in front of Mahālakṣmī, the gods move towards the shrine of Indrāyaṇi to leave the masks behind. It is early evening and not yet dark. Thus hundreds of youngsters and children accompany the Gāthā through the fields. On this specific occasion the area of the chase is not very

Map 9: mībāhā likegu (the chasing of the pigs)
well defined. The crowd is allowed to move through the fields and pluck mie vegetables to be eaten immediately.

It is not known why the mibahā likegu ceremony is performed in only 11 cases. There are, however, two cases, where legends provide us with the reason. In the case of Gahchē (No. 4), 'six generations' ago the pig which was supposed to be chased and sacrificed, but fell into the nearby Garkvaca well and could therefore no longer be killed by Bhairava. In another case, in Gahhti (No. 12), the pig was able to enter the precinct of a small Mahādeva temple at Chupighāt and could thereby be saved. In both cases, the event was understood as an omen, and the killing of pigs was then halted.

After the sacrifice of the pig, the Navadurgā proceed to their specially assigned shelter (pali), put the masks aside and sleep on the spot until dawn.

pyākhā – the dance performances of the following day
nyālākegu dance of Siha and Dūha
In the morning, Vārāhi commences the dances for the day; around noon Mahākāli dances with her sword, which she finally throws in anger under the palanquin.
At about two in the afternoon, it is the turn of Siha and Dûha, the two guardian goddesses. The mask of Siha is worn by the person who otherwise performs as Vârâhi. For hours, Siha runs up and down the main roads of the respective quarter, being teased by the shouting and screaming children of the neighbourhood. While Dûha is collecting alms, Siha, who will never cross the boundaries of the quarter, tries in fact to catch a child; if she succeeds, it is considered very inauspicious. It seems as if this 'fishing' the children (*nyâlâkegu*) reflects the mythic origin of the Navadurgā. Before the gods had been 'tamed' by the legendary tantric priest, they used to catch and kill people who were passing by by chance. Now the guardian goddesses, who originally might have served Bhairava with human sacrifices, catch children symbolically. With an expression of fear on their faces, the children vividly demonstrate that this *nyâlâkegu* is more than just a mere game of make-believe.

**Sveta Bhairava pyâkhā** (*map 10,11*)

Between four and five in the afternoon, the last ceremony is performed. It is a complicated *pûjā* combined with a dance. Only the main events will be mentioned
in the context of this paper, concentrating on actions with a spatial correlation. Mahākāli begins the dance, and it takes half an hour before Sveta Bhairava (who never accompanies the procession through the town and who appears exclusively in this dance) enters the circle (from the east) and takes his seat on a small bamboo mat beside the palanquin. Robert Levy provides a full account of this dance in his contribution to this volume.

The final phase of the dance is characterized by the presence of Sveta Bhairava. Suddenly he stops in front of the musicians and stretches his arms. People seem to have been waiting for this very moment. They rush forward to be first in offering a coin. Now Sveta Bhairava is guided by a helper through the streets, stretching his arms with the palms turned upward to collect more coins. Finally he returns to the group to receive a small bamboo mat into which a few small fish are interwoven. This again marks the event for which the people have eagerly been waiting. They are whistling and hooting: Sveta Bhairava has to run, accompanied by the roaring laughter of the crowd. Considering the palanquin as the centre of his actions, Sveta Bhairava achieves the same objective as did the Navadurgā the preceding evening. His running about in two, three or four directions serve to define the main
boundaries of the respective quarter. The movements of the Navadurgā, the processions through the quarter tended to be manifold; in many cases, they also involved circumambulation. Svēta Bhairava’s action is clearly centrifugal along the main streets of the quarter. As was the case with the nyāłākērs of Sīha, Svēta Bhairavas running is again transformed into a game with the children. On his way to the boundaries of the quarter, he will eventually stop and turn his head - only to rush forward again, trying to catch hold of the children; but only in rare cases does he succeed.

If we compare these movements of Svēta Bhairava with the boundaries of the quarters (map 10), we find the following evidence:

- two quarters (Bharbācva and Jēla) are not touched at all. These quarters most probably stand for the latest spatial development of the town and could not for some reason be ritually incorporated.
- two quarters (Telhācva and Bhvalācē) are visited by Svēta Bhairava; the latter, however, extends his route from a neighbouring square. For this reason the actions might be similar to those mentioned for Bharbācva. For Bharbācva it is a question of a ‘powerful’ Mahākāla cult, but there are no clues at hand.
- in a few cases it is difficult to understand the evidence: why is the centre of action located on the very boundaries of a quarter (as is the case with the quarters neighbouring the palace: Khaumā and Yalāchē), and why does the Sveta Bhairava transcend boundaries which have been defined as such? There might indeed be underlying historical reasons which we still must discover.

- on the whole, however, we see that the movements of the god remain within the accepted boundaries of the respective quarters. In many cases, the movement is expressly understood as a means to define and confirm the boundary. Coming from both the sides, the Sveta Bhairava will stop exactly at the very point, at an imaginary line. If he misses this line, he will be forced to extend hospitality to his Gāthā fellows, a few pots of beer have to be spent! The fine is not exacted in a case where the Sveta Bhairava is forced to cross the boundary (see the ,extended route' on map 11) in order to follow an invitation for beer.

As was stated earlier, the visit of the Navadurgā (and, in this case, of Sveta Bhairava) to the quarters seem to aim at the confirmation of the existing spatial order on two levels. The quarters are confirmed as units of a whole (the town), and the individual units (the quarters) are reaffirmed in their essence and relationship to the neighbourhood.

The return to the dyaḥchē
Early in the evening after the Bhairavapūjā, the Navadurgā slowly prepare to leave
the quarter for their 'home.' They may be guided by a local music group and young men carrying incense sticks in their hands. The procession is headed as usual by those Gāthā who carry the pātra and Siphadyah, followed by Bhairava, Mahākāli and Vārāhi, who are carrying their swords. The accompanying party tries for the last time to incite Vārāhi or Mahākāli, who may in response rush forward to perform a short dance. Reaching the dyāhchē, the gods again first step forward towards the northern edge of the quarter. Finally Mahākāli and Vārāhi dance in front of the dyāhchē before the whole group enters the house the way they left it about 24 hours before. The Siphadyah enters the dyāhchē first and finally comes Gaṇēś and the musicians, who bring up the rear throughout the returning procession. The Navadurgā immediately enter the first floor of the building, whereas Bhairava remains in the courtyard for a few minutes, distributing a final prasād in return for small gifts.

The DEATH of the gods

Within the half month (15 days) between the Sithinakhaḥaṣṭamī (bright moon of Asādh) and the Bhāgaṣṭamī (dark moon), the Navadurgā prepare their departure from town, an act which culminates in their 'death'.
The occasion of Sithinakhah marks the formal day when rice is sown in the fields. Moreover, it is the day of certain cleaning ceremonies like that of the wells (tii) and taps (hiti). Everything seems to be made ready for the coming rain, the first drops of which are expected after half a month. The people come to the dyahchê of the Navadurgâ to perform blood sacrifices and worship the gods for a last time. A few days before Bhāgaştami, the Navadurgâ leave their dyahchê to pay a final visit to Taleju. There the gods are offered a last feast (sija) before the return to their house. Finally, on the eighth day of the dark moon in Asādh, the Navadurgâ circumambulate the town along the processional route for one last time. On their return, they find the gate of their dyahchê closed. This is the final signal for their death. They now slowly move towards Sujamâdhi, where a ram is sacrificed.

Again the Gâthâ swear not to give away the secrets of the ritual. The Gâthâ leave their ornaments and ceremonial dresses at the edge of town. Their masks covered with white cloth, the Gâthâ proceed slowly towards the shrine of Brahmyanî on the hill across the river, where the masks then are cremated like human bodies. The Ācâju performs the difficult ritual of taking the life force from the masks and transfers it into the river. The ashes of the masks are to be washed away by the first rain which is supposed to fall on that very day, and the fish from the Siphadyah vessel are released into the river.

Conclusion

A characteristic feature and significant of the Navadurgâ ritual is its relation to time and space. The masks which represent the Mother-Goddesses – in addition to their twofold representation as pith/non-iconic and dyahchê/iconic within the urban environment – are, indeed, not eternal. Instead, these gods ‘live’ only for a certain specified period of time; during the rainy season, from the day the first drops are supposed to fall to the beginning of harvest, they do not exist, they are in fact dead. During the period of growth and fertility, the town is stripped of the protection of the gods and, in a sense, is left exposed to evil spirits. These evil spirits have to be burned; finally, the victory over the mythic demon Mahiśasura in the form of the khâme buffalo heralds the event of birth of the gods. Their entrance into, as well as their departure from the town is performed as a ritual act. The Gâthâ wear the masks only when they ‘enter’ the town, stepping across the threshold of an ancient gate, which still clearly defines the outer boundary of urban space. And on the occasion of departure, the masks are put down again at the threshold of the gate before they are taken down to the place of cremation.

If we understand the fact that the Gâthâ who wear the masks do indeed represent the gods for the period from their entering the town until leaving it, then it is worthwhile focussing our attention on the actions immediately following their entry and preceding their departure. After their birth, the gods seek contact with the
other important gods of the town, i.e. Taleju and Bhairava. Depending on the constellation of the planets, the Navadurgā circumambulate the upper or lower town, accompanied by Taleju; she follows the payāh procession covering the circumambulation of the upper or the lower town. The purpose of this circumambulation has been described at length earlier. The integral and also antagonistic sections of the town are reaffirmed and thus tied together.

Before the gods leave the town to die, another circumambulation is performed. Thus the Navadurgā reaffirm the existing structural fabric of the town (with most dyahchē and centres of the quarters along the processional route) and on the other hand they offer proof of their existence to the people.

The activities of the Navadurgā during the Dasai festival are less striking. To sum up the ritual actions: the gods pay homage to those who in some way or the other are connected with the ritual and more specifically and most probably, with its origin and development. It remains remarkable, however, that the offering of the tahsi fruit is performed on two successive days and the chance is taken, once again to circumambulate first the lower and then the upper town.

Between their ritual birth and death, there is a period of life which stretches over some eight and a half months. During this period the gods are present; they reside in town to protect and watch over it. Significantly the gods begin their formal visit to the quarters of the town on a day imbued with symbolic meaning. The winter solstice is obviously to be felt a critical juncture in time. The Navadurgā emerge from their dyahchē to visit the quarters of the town 21 times. The map (No. 8) indicates how the processions move around to define and mark the component spatial elements of the urban whole. Each quarter for a night becomes an independent entity, an urban subsection to which the power of the gods is exclusively devoted. The quarter becomes for a time the hub and universe of the human environment. What the Navadurgā accomplish at night over the course of an elaborate procession, the Sveta Bhairava achieves alone during a few brief minutes of dynamic ritual action on the following day.

Literature

The Navadurgā were first observed by Gutschow in 1970 during the Dasai festival. In 1974 and 1975 research in Bhaktapur was concentrated on a social as well as religious topography. The activities of the Navadurgā were observed at random, and a sequence of their visits to 21 squares of the town was mapped. Basukala mapped the first tvah muikegu, the processions through the quarters of the town in 1975. In 1977 it was possible to observe the Ghatamugh festival. In 1976 and 1980 and 1983, Basukala mapped the processions during Dasai, Gutschow was able to observe the bihi ritual completely in 1976 and 1983. In 1984 Basukala followed the night processions (mibāhā likegu), and Gutschow mapped the nyālākegu of Sveta Bhairava. Final observations (like tahsi labhāygū on Pauṣa 30) and minor corrections of processional routes were carried out in 1985.


Axel Michaels

The Triśūlyātrā in Deopatan and its Legends

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EDITED BY

NIELS GUTSCHOW AND AXEL MICHAELS

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1. Introduction

Every year on the eighth lunar day (tithi) of the dark half of the month of Āśādha - which is also called Bhalabhalāṣṭami due to the heavy amount of rainfall normally expected on this day¹ - a yāṭrā takes place in Deopatan, which like so many of the local processions in the Kathmandu Valley, stands in the shadow of the major, better-known festivals of Nepal. In any event, it is little known beyond the confines of Deopatan,² although - both in terms of the unfolding of its scenario and the various legends surrounding it - this yāṭrā is not inferior to the prominent events in the Nepalese festive calendar.

The festival we are referring to is the Triśūlyāṭrā - so named because children are symbolically impaled on spears (Nep. triśūl)³ and transported upon processional litters (khat) to the city limits of Deopatan; from here, the participants in the procession then shout words of abuse and curses of a highly lewd nature at the inhabitants of Kathmandu. It is my intention in this paper to describe this procession in terms of (a) its legends, (b) its sequence of events and (c) historical interconnections, thus supplementing my studies on a series of festivals in

¹ I am deeply obligated to the below mentioned narrators of the legends who, for personal reasons, prefer to remain unnamed. I am also very grateful to Bill Templer for his translation of this paper. Special thanks are due to David Gellner, Mahes Raj Pant and Albrecht Wezler for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of the paper, to Lakshmi Nath Srestha and Navraj Gurung for their help in the fieldwork. Thanks are also due to Niels Gutschow for comments, drawings of the maps and photographs nos. 1, 2, 5 and 6, taken in July, 1986. (All other photos are by the author, taken in July 1983).

² The (Śaiva) meaning of „three-pronged lance“ (Skr. triśūla) holds only conditionally in respect to this yāṭrā. Cf. below p. 14 and 19.

³ The day on which I observed the Triśūlyāṭrā (July 3rd, 1983) did its name full justice: it was pouring cats and dogs. The upshot of this for me was not simply the obligatory head-cold, but also the fact that it proved practically impossible for me to take notes; on top of this, the quality of my photographs was seriously impaired. A more serious consequence, however, was the fact that due to the heavy rain, apparently only a very small number of residents of Deopatan decided to take part in the yāṭrā, so that it was certainly not a typical one. As a result, a portion of my description of the yāṭrā is somewhat provisional in nature; I have attempted to supplement it by subsequent inquiry, but it lacks, at least in some parts, a proper empirical grounding in observed data.
Deopatan, which I initiated with a description\(^4\) of the Vatsaleśvarīyātrā and which I hope to continue in the near future with a publication on Śivarātri.

2. The legends

Aside from the comments (often amounting to but a few sentences) contained in the chronicles,\(^5\) there are, to the best of my knowledge, no legends preserved in written tradition which deal with the Trīśūlyātrā. Whoever is inclined to regard this as a deficiency, should bear in mind that the late Vamśāvalīs also consist in large measure of legends similar to those of oral tradition, so that it would appear more or less arbitrary whether the legends were put down and recorded in written form

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\(^4\) Michaels 1984.

\(^5\) The textual passages relating to the Trīśūlyātrā in the chronicles are so short that it will suffice to refer to them without specification of page number. Sources and abbreviations are listed in the bibliography.
or not. The written sources can possibly be regarded as having greater authority by dint of the fact that they were put down at an earlier point in time (even if not particularly ancient), namely principally in the course of the 18th and 19th centuries A.D. On the other hand, the oral tradition in Deopatan demonstrates again and again that wherever possible it is in agreement with the later chronicles when it comes to their essential contents and components.

The following rendering of legends is, in this sense, also based on stories which two Karmācārya priests as well as a local tradesman were kind enough to relate and let me recorded on tape. Although all three men are Newar, the legends were narrated in Nepāli. I do not follow the exact text of the oral legends verbatim, but rather only paraphrase the text as spoken, because its colorful and lively style would require too much space for proper inclusion within the framework of this study. Generally, remarks on persons mentioned as well as place names and temple names have been left to the last section of the paper.

2.1 The legend of the arrival of the female deities in Deopatan

(oral tradition)

Once upon a time a king named Narendradeva ruled over Suvarṇanagara. His priest named Bandhudatta possessed tantric knowledge, and was thus able to bring the Devis under his control.

At that time, there lived in Banepa an extremely wealthy potter (Kumāle); it was his wish to bring the female deities Maṅgaleśvari, Jayavāgīśvarī, Vatsaleśvari and Bhuvaneśvari into the temple of Paśupatinātha. However, he was not granted permission for this by king Narendradeva, because it was said that Paśupatinātha was a deity following the commandment of non-injury, while the female deities demanded blood sacrifices.

He then asked Bandhudatta for advice. When the latter received permission for this by king Narendradeva, because it was said that Paśupatinātha was a deity following the commandment of non-injury, while the female deities demanded blood sacrifices.

He then asked Bandhudatta for advice. When the latter received permission from Paśupatinātha to worship the female deities outside of his temple, he went one night

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6 The Devamālā written by Yogi Devinātha on the basis of oral and written sources clearly illustrates such flowing transitions.

7 Not only in this case, we find that an all-too strict and exacting separation of (Sanskrit) philology and ethnology appears to be unsuitable for an analysis of the interrelationship between so-called ,Great' and ,Little' traditions in Nepal.

8 An ancient name for Deopatan frequently used in the chronicles.

9 The Vaṃśāvalīs BhV, DevM, RājbhM, RājV and Hasrat also emphasize that it was the priest Bandhudatta who brought the female deities to Deopatan, although at other points they relate different legends pertaining to those female deities: cf. Hasrat 25, 41, 42; Wright 130, 162, 201.

10 Paśupati ahimsāvādī devatā tara deviharu himsāvādī bhaekole ...
and, while they were all asleep, brought them there using his tantric powers. They remained right where they happened to be located at the crowing of the cock, and it was at that spot that their temples were later erected. Bandhūdatta, who became the priest (ācārya) of Bhuvaṇēśvarī, chose three additional priests for each of their temples.

2.2 Legends on the origin of the Trisūlyāṭrā

2.2.1 The legend about the demon which terrorized Deopatan

**Variant A (oral tradition)**

Once there lived an evil demon (dustā rākṣas) on Mt. Nagarjun. Every day he would come to Suvarṇāpuri to steal small children and then devour them. There was great distress and anxiety in Suvarṇāpuri. Narendradeva was worried about his subjects and asked his guru Bandhūdatta how the demon might be killed. Bandhūdatta asked the king for 30 to 40 strong soldiers. He equipped them with poles and axes, and had them conceal themselves along the road in order to catch the demon. But the demon saw through their trick and hid in Kathmandu. No matter what house in Kathmandu the soldiers searched, they were told that the demon was not there.

Then the king, his guru and the soldiers went in fury to Mt. Nagarjun, overpowered the demon there and killed him with spears (triśūl). The inhabitants of Deopatan were overjoyed because of this, and put on a yātra in which the descendants of the demon are to be frightened off by the use of large spears so that never again will they come to Deopatan. Since that time, the yātra is celebrated once each year.

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11 This episode corresponds to a legend with which it is closely associated in the chronicles, namely with the legend of a potter who — likewise in the course of a single night — had the Anantanārāyana statue set up to the north of the Vatsaleśvarī temple, since he was not allowed to erect the statue inside the temple of Pāṣupatināth and to worship it there (cf. Wright 203, BhV 52, RajV 6, RajBhM 18, Hasrat 57). The Anantanārāyangu statue is composed of large, preassembled clay plates which most certainly could have been set up and put together in the course of a single night.

12 A mountain by this name rises to the west of the Svaṭāmbhūnātha-Śūpā; Supposedly, its caves offered refuge to Buddhist monks (cf. Slusser 1982: 275, 360).

13 Likewise an older name for Deopatan (see fn. 8).
Variant B (K.P. Darśan)\(^{14}\)

The demon (Nev. lākke) used to impale the children stolen in Deopatan. Bandhudatta made the king Narendra, his minister and the soldiers invisible (alap) so that they might lie in wait for the demon. The demon fled to Majipāṭ (Cikā Mugah) in Kāntipur (= Kathmandu) when he discovered his opponents. They searched all the houses with the permission of the king of this city. Finally, they suspected he was hiding in the house of a dyer (Chipā), where the demon had indeed actually succeeded in hiding after having charmed the dyer (by means of a priceless jewel) into concealing him there. King Narendradeva went with his retinue to Nagarjun, abducted 25 children of the demon and then (after having asked the inhabitants of Deopatan for advice) killed them by the sword (khadga) and impaled them on spears (trisūl). He then decreed that nine processional litters should be constructed, on which the families affected should fasten children according to the method by which their own children had been killed by the demon. Then the khaṭs were to be carried twice (sic!) each year in memory of the event. When the dyers saw this, they for their part began with the custom of the lākke dance during the festival of Indrayātrā.

Variant C (Vamsāvalīs)

The chronicles\(^{15}\) do not directly mention the legend about the demon who terrorizes the children of Deopatan, though it is said that either King Amaramalla or the descendants of a certain Muni Ācārya\(^{16}\) had nine different chariots built for the glory of the female deities and Paśupatinātha\(^{17}\); various weapons, such as swords, spears, knives, etc.\(^{18}\) along with the impaled bodies of either a boy or a girl (who had previously been sacrificed) were fastened onto these chariots. It is stated that the yātra led to Īśāneśvara, and has been celebrated since that time on the Dark Eighth of the month of Āśadhā. Amaramalla is said to have donated land and a guthi for this purpose.

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14 Since this variant was published by Kumār Prasād Darśan in a hard-to-locate pamphlet of the Nepal-Japan Friendship and Cultural Association, I have reproduced selected passages from it in the appendix. Here I deal only with the deviations from Variant A.

15 The Vamsāvalīs are largely in agreement, in part verbatim, in the passages pertaining to the Triśūlyātrā. Here too I concentrate only on the special features.

16 Wright 203.

17 BhV, RajBhM, RajV.

18 DevM, BhV and RajBhM: mukal, śrīkbal, trisūl, khadga, bali, chula and pāśa; in RajV chuli in place of chula, pāśa in place of pāśa, Wright, with rice-pastles, iron chains and trīsūla.
The legend about the sacrifice of one’s own son\textsuperscript{19}

\textit{Variant A (oral tradition)}

Bandhudatta Ācāju was the pūjārī of Bhuvaneśvarīmāī. Each day he performed the nityapūjā. One day Devī was once again overjoyed because Bandhudatta was sacrificing to her. She gave him one wish. Bandhudatta asked for the elixir of immortality (amṛta.) The goddess promised to fulfill his wish after the next morning pūjā.

When Bandhudatta returned the next day and performed his services, the goddess requested that that person be sacrificed to her who was at the moment standing right behind him. Then his wish would be fulfilled. Bandhudatta said there was no-one behind him, but then saw his son who had secretly followed him. Then the priest thought: „If I sacrifice my son and receive amṛta in return, then, of course, I can bring him back to life again.“ He said this and sacrificed his own son to Bhuvaneśvarī, who was greatly pleased by this and revealed to him that the drink of amṛta was in Kāmarūpā (Assam).

Another informant varied this episode as follows: After the goddess had demanded her sacrifice, Bandhudatta spied a goat kid behind himself. He cut off its head, sacrificed it to the goddess and threw the remaining carcass of the animal back over his shoulder. When the lifeless body struck the ground, he heard a strange jangling sound. He had hardly turned around when he noticed the corpse of a small boy. To his horror, he recognized by the ankle-rings that this boy was his own son, whom the goddess had secretly transformed into a goat kid.

The priest took the corpse of his son and locked it up in his house behind seven doors with seven locks. Then he told his wife (who was from Kathmandu) that under no circumstances should she open the doors and that he had to go away for seven days.

But his wife was soon very worried, because she was unable to find her son no matter where she looked. After five or six days, Śrī Paśupatinātha appeared to her in a dream. He revealed to her that her husband was dead and told her where she could find the corpse. He added that her husband had sacrificed their son, gone mad and then had fled. In addition, the body was now rotting and it was high time to perform the rites of the dead (kāj-kiriyā).

At this point, his wife quickly summoned her relatives from Kathmandu and told them what she had seen in her dream. The relatives advised her to see whether what she had beheld in her dream was true. Bandhudatta’s wife did this and beheld what was beyond all belief. Everyone rushed over to her, weeping and shouting. The

\textsuperscript{19} For a similar story of Bandhudatta having to sacrifice his son to Mhaipi Ajimā, alias Yogambara, see Locke 1973: 44 and A.K. Vajrācārya V.S. 2024: 34–6.
guthiyārs transported the body to the cremation grounds and carried out there what had to be done.

On the seventh day after his departure, Bandhudatta returned with the amṛta. On the way he met a man in Patan who had just returned from paying homage to Paśupatinātha. He asked him what was new in Deopatan and learned about everything that had transpired. Then Bandhudatta knew that his plan had failed. He told himself that now there was no sense in returning to Deopatan, placed the amṛta on the ground and turned into a stone, still known today by the name of chakubaku (in New Bāņeśvar).

The second informant mentioned above supplemented this episode as follows: A drop of the amṛta fell from the pot onto the (holy) dubo grass. This is why it never withers. Another drop was drunk by the crow, which is why you never see crows dying.

King Narendradeva knew about the truth of what had occurred. He established the Triśūlyātṛā and decreed that the corpse of the son of Bandhudatta be shown to all in the yātrā so as to remind them of Bandhudatta’s sincerity.

**Variant B (BhV, RājbhM, Hasrat)**

The briefest comments on the legend of the priest in search of the amṛta are contained in BhV, RājbhM and in Hasrat. In almost complete agreement, it is stated in this variant quite simply that in the year N.S. 627 a certain Muni²⁰ had disappeared forever while in search of the „elixir of life“ (mrṭasamjīvani).²⁰ In all three chronicles – as well as in part in the RājV – this variant stands without any direct connection to the Triśūlyātṛā. On the basis of parallels in the DevM and the RājV as well as the oral variant A, one is, however, obliged to see such a connection.

**Variant C (DevM)**

In this variant as well, Muni Bandhudatta Ācārya goes in search of the „elixir of life“.²¹ He leaves his body behind in a room and departs (using his tantric powers) in a bodiless form (??) on a six-month search. From Kāntipur comes the rumor that

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²⁰ lit. „that which resuscitates a dead (person or animal)“.
²⁰a Hasrat cites „Mulmi Ācārya“ as the name of the priest and comments on Mulmi: „A name of a Newar caste.“ This probably is an incorrect interpretation of a mere error in reading, transcribing or hearing, although mulmi is indeed a name of a Śreṣṭha clan.
²¹ There it reads: amṛta samjīvani.
²¹a Hasrat only.
²² kothā bhitra (...) ṣarir mātra tyahā chodi...
2.2.2 The legend about the sacrifice of one's own son

**Variant A (oral tradition)**

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When Bandhudatta returned the next day and performed his services, the goddess requested that that person be sacrificed to her who was at the moment standing right behind him. Then his wish would be fulfilled. Bandhudatta said there was no-one behind him, but then saw his son who had secretly followed him.

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**Variant C (DevM)**

In this variant as well, Muni Bandhudatta Ācārya goes in search of the „elixir of life“.

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20 lit. „that which resuscitates a dead (person or animal)“.  
20a Hasrat cites „Mulmi Ācārya“ as the name of the priest and comments on Mulmi: „A name of a Newar caste.“ This probably is an incorrect interpretation of a mere error in reading, transcribing or hearing, although mulmi is indeed a name of a Śresṭha clan.  
21 There it reads: amṛta samjivani.  
21a Hasrat only.
22 kothā bhatra (...) sarīr mātra tyahā chodi...
he has been murdered. When Bandhudatta returns, he learns that the door has been opened and the corpse cremated. This is why they make a corpse out of flowers and also is the reason behind the practice of cursing only the inhabitants of Kathmandu during the yātrā.²³

**Variant D (RājV)**

The RājV begins like variant B, but then goes on as follows: A certain Muni Ācārya not mentioned by name sacrifices his son at the request of Bhuvanesvari,²⁴ locks up the corpse and refuses to let his wife open the room. He journeys to Kāśi to obtain amṛta for his son, and on his way back learns that his wife, due to worry, has opened the room, discovered both his (sic!) and his son’s corpses²⁵ and then arranged for cremation. The Muni decides not to make a balidān and becomes invisible at a spot known down to this very day by the name of Amṛtadhā.

**Variant E (Wright)**

In Wright’s version of the legend about the priest in search of the elixir of life, the priest ‘Muni Āchārya” has – as in variants B and D – suddenly disappeared in order to obtain the potion of immortality:

„His descendants heard of his disappearance while performing the jātrā, and they caused his horoscope to be carried behind the raths in the shape of a dead body. When the Muni hears this upon returning, he puts down the drink of amṛta „and made himself invisible by entering into the horoscope. There are two hillocks at the place where he left the elixir, which are called Kubkudō.”

As one can see, these legends and their variants are of moderate complexity. Nonetheless, they also contain certain interesting aspects. Before I deal with these, it would appear advisable to note which legendary components have been preserved in the present-day celebration of the Triśūlyātrā.

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²³...puspako śarir mṛtak tuḥyāḥ yātrā garnemā Kāntipur vāsihaṛulaī gāli garne rit cāleko cha. arulai gali gardaina.
²⁴ In the text it is called Tribhuvanesvari, a name which neither appears in the other legends on the Bhuvanesvari temple nor is otherwise known in Deopatan.
²⁵... bālaḥ svāmi dubai mṛtak dekhī...
3. The course of the yāṭrā

The *kumhapūjā*

The actual Trisūlyāṭrā on āśādhā krśnāṣṭami precedes a ritual called *kumhapūjā* which takes place on *jeśta suklaśaṣṭhi* (= Nev. *sīthī nakha*). Five children are selected from three *guthis* by the *guthiyārs* on that day, namely:

(a) *Jayavāgīśvarigūṭhi*: two girls, one boy,
(b) *Vatsaleśvarigūṭhi*: one boy,
(c) *Vajragharigūṭhi*: one boy.

The children must belong to water-acceptable castes (*pāni cālne jāt*). They are mainly drawn from Jyāpu families but sometimes also from the Sreṣṭha or Bhaṇḍāri clans. Similar to the selection of a new *kumārī*28, the children must possess certain characteristics in order to be able to be tied to the *khats*. Thus, for example, the girls should be of pre-puberty age; all children should be unmarried and have their second teeth. If especially precious jewels (*gahānā*) of the goddesses concerned are shown to them, they should not show any sign of fear such as children normally show on such occasions. Moreover, all children are locked for one day29 in a completely dark room in the Jayavāgīśvari temple, and again, only those who do not start to cry are considered sufficiently fearless to survive the dangers and pressures of the yāṭrā.

Whether the term *kumhapūjā* (= *kumārī*-) for this ritual selection of children presupposes that only girls are to be considered would appear to be questionable on the basis of the chronicles and the yāṭrā itself: the Vamśāvalis specifically make mention of girls and boys (*chorā-chori*), and in modern celebrational practice in the yāṭrā children are of both sexes, though girls predominate. Moreover, the legends contain no reference to any general veneration of *kumāris*. A more likely interpretation of the term *kumhapūjā* seems to be its derivation from (Nev.) *kumba*, „pure, clean“, which could mean that this ritual is concerned with a preventive purification of the children, since they become (or represent) the children of a demon during the yāṭrā. Corresponding to legend variant 2.2.1/C, nine children are to be selected from the population of Deopatan; however, this number is not always reached in modern practice of the yāṭrā. In 1983, there were five children30, though the previous year there are supposed to have been a total on nine. I will deal later on below with the special significance of the number 9 in Deopatan.31
The chakubakupūjā

Four days prior to the beginning of the Triśūlyātrā there is a so-called (Nev.) chakubakupūjā; this is obviously concerned with the place where Bandhudatta turned into a stone, namely chakubaku in Nayā Bānēśvar. This stone is located in a courtyard a few meters off the road which leads from the Aniko Marg to the Nepal Research Centre opposite the military camps. The pūjā indicated the meaning of chakubaku, since four days prior to the Triśūlyātrā a group under the guidance of the Bhuvaneśvari-pūjārī carries half a load (baku) of pūjā-material on a suspended carrier (nvah) to the stone of Bandhudatta in order to invite him to the yātrā. Four days after the yātrā a full load (chaku) is send to inform him about conclusion of the festival. Significantly, the period thus covered is nine days, possibly again a representation of Deopatan’s „nineness“.

The procession

The actual Triśūlyātrā begins during the course of the day with sacrifices of black male goats at the temples of Jayavāgīśvarī and Bhuvaneśvarī, the Maṅgaleśvarī statue and at the Vajraghar. The Karmācārya-priests of Jayavāgīśvarī and Bhuvaneśvarī carry out the sacrifice. In the course of this bhesbali, intestines of the sacrificed animals are removed, washed inflated and hung over the khatās. As is narrated; they symbolically represent the intestines of the killed children of the demon. During the afternoon, the residents of Deopatan congregate in increasing numbers at the sites mentioned. Most of those participating in the yātrā are Jyāpu. The large numbers of children are even more in evidence than at other Nepalese festivals. There are hardly any women present, which is not surprising, since the yātrā will take a strange and obscene course as it unfolds. The khatās, on which the inflated intestines of the sacrificed animals are hanging, are in the meanwhile prepared for the yātrā by the insertion and fastening of beams on which they are to be transported.

In addition, branches covered with leaves are placed in them. As oral tradition reveals, there should be 108 such branches of the asuro-shrub. It is also reported that a lālmohar from Rāṇa Bahadura Śāha’s time exists which regulates the duties of the forest-keeper (vana pāle) concerning the cutting of these branches.

There are a number of cloths or children’s shirts hanging down between the branches; as is narrated, these are meant to indicate to the demon what has

32 Unfortunately, I had no opportunity to observe this pūjā.
33 For the processional path and place names, see the map in the appendix.
34 Adhatoda vasica according to Turner’s Dictionary.
happened with his children.\textsuperscript{35} On occasion, children for the same reason also carry shirts on a crossstick like a scarecrow out in front of themselves.\textsuperscript{36} 

While all this is taking place, the children who are to be fastened to the khat, as well as the triśūls, are brought without any pomp and circumstance (i.e. without music, a baldachin, etc.) from the temples or the Vajraghar. They are wrapped in white cloths. Since they represent the children of a demon, they are feared by the participants of the yāṭrā. Three children (two girls, one boy) are brought to the khat in front of the Jayavāgīśvarī temple, and one boy each to the khat in front of the Vatsaleśvarī temple and the Maṅgaleśvarī statue. The latter waits initially in the Sarasvatī sattal located next to it for further developments. The children undergo ritual preparations behind a curtain, and are thus shielded from the sight of others. Evidently spears are fastened to their bodies in such a manner as to make it appear they have been impaled. After some time has lapsed, the children — still covered by the cloth — are fastened to a long post sticking out from the khat. Their backs are supported by a corset-like device which keeps them erect. The cloth pieces are finally removed, and one can see that they have been decorated and are wearing small rings of bells on their laces.\textsuperscript{37} 

The procession begins moving in the late afternoon: first the Vajraghar khat, followed by the Maṅgaleśvarī khat. At the Bhuvanesvarī temple, a group joins the procession; it carries a bier with the „corpse“ of Bandhudatta’s son which is prepared out of wheat-stalks (chvāli) and hey (parāl) and covered with a red cloth on which a piece of ivory, 

dubo-grass\textsuperscript{38} as well as leaves and flowers of the mūṃsvā- or mūsvā-plant\textsuperscript{39} have been placed. Given the size of the bier and the stylized

\textsuperscript{35} Cf. legend variant 2.2.1/A.

\textsuperscript{36} Regarding a similar practice (bhotojātrā) during the Matsyendranāthâyātrā cf. Locke 1980: 295.

\textsuperscript{37} Cf. legend variant 2.2.2/A (2nd Narrator).

\textsuperscript{38} Cf. legend variant 2.2.2/A.

\textsuperscript{39} Mentha spicata Linn. according to Toffin – a plant which is also obligatory during Sīṭhinakha; cf. Toffin 1984: 493.
corpse, it is the "corpse" of a child,\textsuperscript{40} which is carried by the Biṣeṭ clan of the Śreṣṭha caste. Three men are nominated from this clan by the Bhanḍāris from the Paśupati temple.

The pūjārī of the Bhuvanēṣvarī temple follows the bier; he rings a handbell very loudly, although in Hindu death rites the bellringer actually must precede the bier on the way to the cremation ground. The rhythm of the bell is "short-short-long" which is supposed to remove the defilement provoked by carrying a dead body through the streets. The "corpse" is carried out of the western entrance of the inner court of the Bhuvanēṣvarī temple, where two oil lamps are left burning until the bier is returned at the end of the yātra.

The two khaṭs and the bier of Bandhudatta's son are carried on the southern East-West road of Deopatan directly to the Jayavāgiṣvarī temple through Ītāṭol; here they join up with the third khaṭ, which in appearance even approximates a (Skr.) trīśūla, since the children are fastened like a trident to the middle post. However, it is also maintained that the trīśūla is represented in the yātra in that three khaṭs take part in it.\textsuperscript{41}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig4.jpg}
\caption{The bier of Bandhudatta being carried back to the inner courtyard of the Bhuvanēṣvarī temple.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig5.jpg}
\caption{The Jayavāgiṣvarī-khaṭ on its way to Siphalcaur.}
\end{figure}

The procession proceeds on through Nabālīṭol and the ancient Western gate of Deopatan to an open place called Siphalcaur in the following order: 1. Maṅgales-vārī-khaṭ, 2. Vajraghar-khaṭ, 3. Bhuvanēṣvarī-murdā, 4. Jayavāgiṣvarī-khaṭ. Again and again, electric power lines have to be lifted up so that the children are not injured. For this purpose, one or more men generally stand next to the children; they hold poles which occasionally prop up the children or support their head should it shake back and forth too violently.

The yātra participants now go on across the Siphalcaur to a plot of land located on the east of the square; a recently-constructed house is located on this plot of land.

\textsuperscript{40} Cf. legend variant 2.2.2/D.

\textsuperscript{41} Cf. below p. 19.
While they make a curve there and begin to turn back, they start to shout loudly, in the direction of Kathmandu. The words they utter at this point are so vulgar and pornographic that we must limit ourselves here to the mere hint that they are aimed principally at the girls of Kathmandu. However, since those shouting are for the most part small children who generally do not understand what they are in fact saying, the entire scene has a certain comical quality which no-one can (or wishes to) disengage himself from.

On the way back, the participants of the yātrā proceed back along the same path they came. However, the Jayavāgīśvarī-khat is carried through Pācātol to the Vajraghar, where the children are taken off. The two other khatas are put down in the square in front of the Vatsaleśvari temple, and the children are likewise removed. The bier with the „corpse“ is carried directly along the Bhasmeśvara-ghāṭ to the Rājarājēśvarī-śmaśān in front of the temple of the same name. It is still followed by the priest of the Bhuvaneśvari temple. At that point, everything lying on the bier – except for an old shroud supposedly belonging to Bandhudatta – is thrown into the river.

Fig. 6: The preparation of the Jayavāgīśvarī-khat in front of the Trisūl-sattal.
In the meanwhile, the children bathe in the Bāgmatī. After this, the children of the Jayāvāgīśvari-kaṭa are brought to the Jayāvāgīśvari temple, and both the others to the Bhuvaneśvari temple. There they become re-vitalized in a secret, tantric ritual. They then lay down to rest and sleep, and until they awake no-one who has taken ritual part in the yātra may eat. As soon as they have gotten up, a ritual meal is prepared; this meal must supposedly consist of some 84 different foods.

After the priest of the Bhuvaneśvari temple has also bathed at the Rājarājesvari-śimaśān, he returns with his helpers, who carry the bier back to his temple, where he is received by the Rājopādhyāya priest of the Daksināmūrti temple and the nāki who both celebrate a lasah-kusah ceremony in order to welcome and purify him. Only after this can the oil lamps mentioned above be extinguished.

Finally, the triisāls are returned to their respective temples (or to the associated dyahchē). The kaṭa are stored at the following places: the Jayāvāgīśvari-kaṭa in a house called Triisūlsattal west of the Jayāvāgīśvari temple, the Mangaleśvari-kaṭa in the Pođesattal west of the Vatsalā temple and the Vajraghar-kaṭa in the house of the same name.

In the closing event, Paśupatinātha is informed by the priests of Bhuvaneśvari and Jayāvāgīśvari about the conclusion of the yātra through their worshipping of him. The next day a meal for the Biṣesṭ who carried the corpse is arranged, and on the fourth day after the yātra the chakubakupūjā is celebrated as mentioned above.

4. Historical aspects

To date it has been almost impossible to write the history of local yātrās given the absence of documents with more-or-less certain datability pertaining to these festivals. Even when it comes to supralocal festivals, however, we find that this is rarely the case.\(^\text{42}\) What is therefore of initial importance is to gather together parallels in respect to the type of the local yātrās, i.e., as regards the deities venerated, those involved as participants, the paths taken by the processions, etc. Only if this material yields more than coincidental similarities can one proceed on to a dating of individual local yātrās in relation to one another on the basis of cultural-historical and religious-historical criteria. The following remarks should be seen in that sense as a contribution to such a collection of materials.

Persons and data

Narendradeva and his guru Bandhudatta – that famous pair in the history of the Nepalese chronicles – are already mentioned in the Gopālārajāvaṃśāvalī\(^\text{43}\) as the


\(^{43}\) Gopālārajāvaṃśāvalī, fol. 23.
initiator of the Vugma-[Buṅgamati-]Lokesvarayātrā. I do not intend to deal here with their role in the cult of Matsyendranātha or in other legendary spheres of activity. It is, however, worth noting that in these legends Bandhudatta is presented as a vajrācārya from Te Bāhā in Kathmandu or from the Triratnavihāra in Patan, while in some variants of the Trisūlyātrā legends he is the pūjāri of Bhuvanesvari in Deopatan, and it is precisely the conflict with the residents of Kāntipur which plays a central role there.

As this example already indicates, Narendradeva and Bandhudatta have long since taken on a legendary dimension and character in the Nepali chronicles and in oral tradition, so that datings – which are derived among other things from their mention in the Gopālārājaśavāvali – are more than questionable in nature when it comes to the Trisūlyātrā. The same quite naturally also holds true in regard to the parallels of connection linking up to Kāmarūpa (or Assam) in the Matsyendranātha legends and their historical basis.

However, it is noteworthy that the Nepali chronicles list Amaramalla as founder of the Trisūlyātrā and the guthi for this yātrā. Now, Amaramalla is one of those kings in Nepalese history who are attested – except for a single exception – only by the chronicles, so that his inclusion in the royal succession of Malla kings remains uncertain. One of his immediate successors (or, if not immediate, interrupted by one other ruler in the chain) is Narendramalla, with whom he was even in part identified, as it would appear on the basis of a Pārthivendra inscription. Given this, Amaramalla apparently was either identified with Narendradeva or Narendramalla resp., or mistakenly confused with them, at least if one follows the chronicle and due to the lack of other sources at the present time, we have in this no choice or alternative. The latter assumption is strengthened by the fact that only in the DevM and in the oral traditions (e.g., in the most recent of available sources) is the priest explicitly referred to as Amaramalla, so that here too consequently a connection to the Narendradeva of the Licchavi period would appear to be less convincing as an assumption.

45 Locke 1980: 290.
48 This assumption is supported by inscriptional evidence; see Rājvamśī V.S. 2021. (I am grateful to Mahēś Rāj Pant for this reference.)
49 Namely its mention in a Gitaśāya-Ms, dated Lakṣman Sāṃvat 422 (= N.S. 663 = 1541 A.D.); cf. Shastri 1915 (Vol. 2): 82.
51 Bhagwanal/Bühler 1985: inscr. 19.
52 See also Pānde/Pant V.S. 2004: 32.
53 Since the compiler of the DevM does not make clear his source for each individual legend, it is uncertain whether his Trisūlyātrā legend is not in fact also based on oral tradition.
As far as the date of the yātrā initiation itself is concerned, almost all chronicles give the year N.S. 627 (= 1507 A.D.). Only Wright posits the origin of the yātrā some 50 years later. Thus, proceeding on the basis of the written and oral sources alone, there is no reason to doubt that the Triśūlyātrā has been celebrated since the first half of the 16th century. Should the assumption – based solely on the evidence of the chronicles – that the Triśūlyātrā actually started to be celebrated during the time of Amaramalla or Narendramalla be confirmed, then the constant struggles and disputes between the fragmented kingdoms of the Mallas after Yakṣamalla could suggest and be reflective of a historical-political conflict such as finds its expressive manifestation in the ritual verbal abuse and cursing of the inhabitants of Kathmandu during the yātrā. To be sure, this is nothing more than conjecture, a hypothesis for whose substantiation other ritual clashes between cities (or parts of cities) in the Kathmandu Valley would have to be included and taken into account. Consider, for example, the heated confrontation between the inhabitants of the northern and southern parts of Kathmandu on the occasion of the Siṭhinakha celebration, or the confrontation between the upper and lower sections of the city during the Bisketātrā in Bhaktapur.

From the point of view of Deopatan, there was indeed no lack of material for a potential conflict precisely with the city of Kāntipur/Kathmandu. Deopatan has for long periods of time been under domination of Kāntipur – not only politically, but religiously as well – due to the dominance of the Paṣupatinātha temple and its priests. In any event, it is significant that – in contradistinction to other yātras in Deopatan – such as the Vatsaleśvari-, Gurudaksiṇā-, Guhyeśvari- or Gaṅgāmāiyātrā, as well as Śivarātri, the Bhaṭṭa priests do not appear during the Triśūlyātrā, nor do they have any ritual function aside from a formal gesture granting permission to hold the festival. In any event, the harmony between the respective rulers and the protective deity Paṣupatinātha – through the dust of whose feet they are repeatedly favored and abetted – a harmony well-attested by certain inscriptions and manuscripts, does not necessarily include the Paṣupatiṇḍetra or Deopatan. This is a matter we intend to explore in greater detail below.

Aside from Narendradeva (alias 'malla?), Amaramalla and Bandhudatta (alias Muni Ācārya), all the other persons mentioned in the legends belong to a social class which even today accounts for the greater majority of procession participants.

54 If the month of Āṣāḍha – as is such frequent practice – is counted twice as a leap-month, the festival is as a rule celebrated in prathamāṣāḍha. However, the chronicles remain silent about this astronomical problem regarding the adaption of the lunar calendar to the solar one.
57 As stated in the epigraphic formula for the legitimation of a ruler; cf. Slusser 1982: 228; Petech 1956: 15.
Both the Kumha (mentioned in legend 2.1) and the Chipa (legend variant 2.2.1/B) are, in terms of social hierarchy, ranked close to the Jyāpu. As is recognized, inclusion of this stratum among the Śaiva- or Baudhāmārgins is—among other reasons, due to the particular deities worshipped—even more difficult than it already is in any case when it comes to many social groups in the Kathmandu Valley. In this respect, one should note that the name of the yātra is not necessarily Śaiva, although it would appear to be so due to the (Skr.) trisūla symbol involved. It is indeed not difficult to discern in the legends that what is important there is not specifically Śiva's trident, but rather just some sort of spear-like weapon or other. The khaṭs are not equipped with tridents on which the children are „impaled,“ but rather have only a one-prong lance—i.e., if you will, only an ekaśūla. Interpretations such as can be heard to the effect that the three khaṭs are a symbolic representation of the trisūla speak for themselves. The Śaiva overlayering of the yātra in its name is certainly quite understandable in view of the gigantic trisūla in the Paśupatinātha temple, readily visible throughout Deopatan, which is said to have been donated by Śaṅkaradeva, and the dominance of this sanctuary expressed (among other things) in this trisūla. However, both in the celebration of the festival as well as in the relevant legends, it is clear that the ritual veneration of the female deities is a far more prominent feature.

**The demon**

The Triśūlyaṭrā is basically a festival for warding off an inimical demon; this demon takes on a certain specific contour only in legend variant 2.2.1/B (because he is called lākhe there), while otherwise he is referred to in non-specific terms as duśta rākṣas. Anderson cites the following as a legend for the lākheyāṭrā during the Indrayāṭrā, which is said to have been initiated by Guṇakāmadeva and has an association with the name lākhe:

„This dance originated long ago, they say, when a man called Manijpat Lakhe was discovered having illicit relations with a Kathmandu girl living in the Chikanmugal area. He was spared punishment when he agreed to perform the Lakhe dance each night of Indra Jatra.“

It is difficult to discern any parallel between the Triśūlyaṭrā and the lākhe dance; however, the demon conceals himself in the house of a dyer in Majipāṭ in legend

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58 Wright 123, Hasrat 40.
60 Anderson 1971: 131.
variant 2.2.1/B, and it is common knowledge that this house — as the narrator of this legend variant quite explicitly adds — is located in Cikā Mugah. 61

In Vézies the demon has the same identical name as the famous Ghaṇṭākarna. 62 This name does not appear either in the chronicles or in legends from oral tradition. The more belief in (and fear of) demons is weakened, 63 the more — quite naturally — the identity of the various demons in oral tradition is likewise blurred and confused. However, the specific character of Ghaṇṭākarna is so pronounced in numerous legends and in the festivals dedicated to him 64 that it would appear rather unlikely not to find some mention of his name in the legends pertaining to the Triśūlyāṭrā as well. If any parallel can be drawn to some demon of the Kathmandu Valley known by name, then probably to the demon Gurumāpā, who also devours children. 65

Generally speaking, references to the demon contained in the legends are too vague for deriving from them some sort of historical content, especially since the phenomenon of demonolatry usually cannot be circumscribed and delimited in terms of historical dimensions. However, the Triśūlyāṭrā is intriguing from the perspective of the history of religions due to the fact that the destruction of the abominable and terrifying demon is not the central point and focus as is usually the case in similar festivals which are dedicated to demons. Moreover, since the demon is not representing during the course of the yāṭrā, but rather is included only via the legends which accompany the festival, one must at the very least consider the possibility that what we are dealing with here is an overlaying, a superimposition via legend onto a basically historical conflict. However, this is only one possible assumption of a more complex problem which I will discuss in greater length in the conclusion below.

The way of procession

It is significant that — except for the Jayavāgīśvari-khat — the way of procession taken by the Triśūlyāṭrā does not follow the main route of access to the

61 Darśān (1980: 25): antamā majipāt (cikā mugal) mā tyo lākhe lukī baseko chippyako gharma ... Anderson's name for the man appears to be doubly doubtful in the light of this source, because (a) Majipāt is the name of a street and (b) lākhe is the general term for a demon.

62 Vézies' conjecture: „Le mystérieux démon a peut-être été un personnage historique ayant dirigé une révolte paysanne ...“ sounds attractive, but has no grounding in historical fact. His observation that the Newar call a portion of the field gathemuga (= Skr./Nep. Ghaṇṭākarna) is correct only in a limited sense, because the literal meaning of gathemuga is glossed as „bundle of straw," the material from which the Ghaṇṭākarna figures are woven during the yāṭrā of the same name. Cf. Gutschow 1982: Fig. 115–117.

63 Demons, as people say (and not only in Deopatan), love dark, uninhabited areas. They were driven away as a result of increasing settlement and electrification.


Paśupatinātha temple through Pācātol, but rather remains on the axis Siphalcaur – Nabaliṭol – Īṭałol – Bhakunṭol – Vatsalaēsvāri. The reason behind this is that a fictive corpse is also transported as part of the procession; as a result, the entire yātra must adhere to the route prescribed for the dead, which is said to have been laid out by Śivadevavarman⁶⁶ and which proceeds along the edge of the historical limits of Deopatan.⁶⁷

Map 1: Way of procession (drawing: N. Gutschow). Three kḥats are carried from the Maṅgaleśvari shrine (1), the Vajraghar (2) and the Jayavāğiśvari temple (3). At the Bhuvaneśvari temple the „corpse“ of Bandhudatta (4) joins the procession to Siphalcaur. On the way back the Jayavāğiśvari-kḥat is carried through Pācātol to the Vajraghar, while the bier of Bandhudatta gets thrown into the Bāgmatī river at the Rājarājeśvari-ghāṭ.

⁶⁶ Wright 126: „Leading to these [the riverbank structures near the Vatsalaēsvāri temple and Bhasmeivaraghāṭ] he made a special street along which the dead bodies might be carried.“

⁶⁷ More ancient holy places such as Vanakāli, Vajreśvarī and Rājarājeśvarī as well were clearly separated (via open areas or forests) from the town of Deopatan in earlier periods.
The peripheral character of the yātrā (in ritual-topographic terms) is likewise not put into question by the use of various symbols associated with the number „nine“. On the contrary, this constitutes a confirmation of the hypothesis that these symbols represent an attempt (in ideological terms) to encompass Deopatan territorially: thus, the nine khatṣ, nine weapons or nine children mentioned in a number of legends must probably be viewed as an attempt to symbolize the „nineness“, as it were, of all of Deopatan, an attribute which is given manifest expression both in its inscriptionally attested Licchavi name68 „Navagrha“ as well as in various comments contained in the chronicles and in local statements to the effect that in Deopatan everything is present in „nines.“69

The Īsāneśvara mentioned in numerous Vamśāvalis is located (according to the words of a priest resident in Deopatan) in front of the large Virāṭesvara70 to the north of the Rājarājeśvari temple, though I was unable to locate it at this spot.71 During the procession nowadays only the mock „corpse“ of the Bandhudatta or of his son is carried there, but not the khatṣ with the children, to which the corresponding textual passages refer. An actual circumambulation (pradaksinā) with the khatṣ only takes place around a site at the eastern end of the Siphalcaur. Judged from the perspective of the way of procession taken by the yātrā, one can conjecture that this is the location of the Īsāneśvara. However, this hypothesis could not be confirmed as a result of questioning of local residents on the matter.

The female deities, their temples and cults

The route of procession of the Trisūlyātrā includes five holy places of five female deities, namely Bhuvaneśvari, Jayavāgīśvari, Vatsaleśvari, Mangaleśvari and Rājarājeśvari. In respect to their original nucleus, all the temples date back to cult sites

69 Cf. Hasrat 40–41, Wright 124–125 (e.g. the nine-storey palace of Sivadeva, nine tols, nine female deities, Navaliṅga, nine Gaṇeṣa, etc.). The present-day name of the area located to the west of the Jayavāgīśvari temple, namely Nabalitol (= Nau- or Naṅalitol) also expresses the „nineness“ of Deopatan. Even today, local residents in Deopatan are able to put together lists of nine wells, city gates, pīthas, dabalis, mathas, etc.; however, these lists differ from each other to such a degree that it is more likely they reflect some need in Deopatan to have everything in nines rather than that they are credible lists as such.
70 This linga, also called Viratsvarūpamahādeva, is mounted at an angle on a well, in which, as legend would have it, one used to be able to behold one’s previous (Hasrat 40) or future (Wright 123) incarnation, and which was sealed up by Sankaradeva for this reason. No connection to the Trisūlyātrā is made in the chronicles regarding this linga, nor is any such connection evident in the yātrā itself.
71 In any event, until the year 1983 an Licchavi ekamukhalinga covered by a rectangular stone slab – known as Cakravartīśvara and apparently recently pilfered as an art object – was located in front of it. Cf. Pal 1974: 85 and fig. 124, Slusser 1982: 224.
from the Licchavi period (as is evident from numerous epigraphic and iconographic details\(^72\)), although the temple structures as they exist today were generally built during the late Malla period.

The cult of these goddesses is such that it can hardly expect to receive approval by the main sanctuary in Deopatan, the Paśupatinātha temple, as represented by the Bhaṭṭa priests. To mention but a few characteristic features of this cult:

Vatsaleśvarī is associated in the chronicles with human sacrifice. And indeed, the Vatsaleśvarīyāṭrā embodies certain manifest hints of this practice right down to the present day. In addition, this yāṭrā contains a ritual clash between the female deity and Paśupatināthā: the latter orders the mūlabhatta to close the temple doors when Vatsalā approaches the temple on her khat after a blood sacrifice and the imbibing of alcohol.\(^73\)

The undocumented Licchavi ruler Vasudeva is said to have put an end to human sacrifices in Deopatan and to have ,,established a secret worship of Jayavāgīśvarī.”\(^74\)

Down to the present day, every twelve years a dance is performed by the Harisiddhi dancers\(^75\) on a special platform (dabu) in front of the temple of Jayavāgīśvarī, a tradition attestable as early as N.S. 800 according to a Tyāsaphu.\(^76\)

The temple contains a Navadurgā believed to date from the Licchavi period.\(^77\) The large painting of Bhairava on the north side of the temple is renovated every twelve years by the Citrakārī Gūṭhī; in the process, the deity is revived and resurrected to a new life with the help of a tantric practitioner, as is stated in the chronicles.\(^78\)

The Rājarājēśvarī temple also contains a Navadurgā (though of more recent art-historical vintage), which is said to have come there (according to an oral tradition as told by a Karmācārya priest) because a rooster began to crow while Bandhudatta was transporting the Navadurgā secretly at night from Bhaktapur to Mt. Nagarjun.\(^79\)

Bhuvaneśvarī is worshipped at her rear (according to an oral tradition of the same Karmācārya) because she was defeated in a struggle with her priest over the continuation of human sacrifice and then fell to the ground. Nītyapūjā is performed for Maṅgaleśvarī – as indeed for all other female deities – by a Karmācārya priest, but there are no known legends regarding her origin.\(^79a\) Ever since a comprehensive renovation was carried out by H.M. King Mahendra in the

\(^73\) Cf. Michaels 1984: 137.
\(^74\) Hasrat 42.
\(^75\) Hasrat 27.
\(^76\) Regmi 1966 (Vol. III, Pt. 2): 9 (Fol. 21); see also Regmi 1966 (Vol. II): 94.
\(^77\) Wright 130; cf. Slusser 1982: 178.
\(^78\) Wright 127; DevM 43.
\(^79\) Cf. legend 2.1.
\(^79a\) Moreover, Maṅgaleśvarī quite often gets confused with Vatsaleśvarī. For a photograph of Maṅgaleśvarī at that place called Vatsaleśvarī, see: Singh 1968: 206.
year V.S. 2016, the statue of this deity has been kept in a lockable quarter (thus safe from theft) to the south opposite the Vatsalesvari temple. Its previous location is uncertain. On the basis of the procession it is possible to assume that it was located nearby or in the Vajraghar, since there is no recognizable plausible reason for a khat to begin its procession from that point. I was, however, unable to obtain any confirmation of this from the residents of Deopatan I questioned. As can be seen from the legends pertaining to the origin of the female deities, they almost always came to Deopatan against their will. Often it was only through the agency of the tantric powers of a priest that they were brought there. According to Padmagiri, all the goddesses belong to the first Navadurgā to come to Nepal, with the exception of Vatsalesvari. However, none of them are mentioned in the otherwise well-known lists of Navadurgās or Aṣṭamātrkās. They apparently achieved very little importance beyond the confines of Deopatan, and their Sanskritized names mask – as is so often the case in the Kathmandu Valley – the original names of local deities.

They are only very loosely associated with Paśupatinātha when it comes to the forms of worship. It is true that Paśupatinātha is mentioned in some chronicles as a god for whose delight the Triśūlyātrā is also celebrated; significantly though, this is generally mentioned in last place. The independence of the female deities, their temples and cults existing in immediate proximity to Paśupatinātha is naturally not as clearly and sharply demarcated as my presentation might indicate. Nonetheless, this independence remains discernible despite all the ritual blendings and superimpositions. A symbolic expression of Paśupatinātha’s attempts to curb the independence of the female deities and to (quite literally) put them on a leash can be found in an episode related by Wright: Śivadevavarman, after worshipping Paśupatinātha, ordered a cloth ribbon-like strip to be stretched from the temple of Paśupatinātha to those of Vatsalesvari, Bhuvanesvari, Jayavigiśvari and Rājarājeśvari. Seen from the perspective of Paśupatinātha, the goddesses (and thus the Triśūlyātrā) are located at the periphery of Deopatan. Legend 2.1 even makes this explicit in the dichotomy of the ahimsavādi Paśupatinātha and the himsavādi deviharu. Topographically speaking, however, the temples of the female deities are in the centre of Deopatan. This switching of centre and periphery is also reflected in socio-demographic structure: up to more than 90% of the residents of Deopatan are Hindu Newar,
who worship both Pañupatinātha and the female deities as well. On certain occasions, however, Pañupatinātha is relegated to the periphery for them; he only remains central from a supralocal perspective, namely on the basis of his function as the protective deity of Nepal as well as on the basis of his traditional association with the royal house and the Bhaṭṭa priests.

5. Conclusion

Analyzing the Triṣūlyātrā and its legends, we can note striking parallels between this yātrā on the one hand and the cults of the Navadurgā and Matsyendranātha on the other. To mention but a few examples:

- The day of the Triṣūlyātrā is the very same day when the annual cycle of the Navadurgā festivities come to an end by burning of their masks. It is the day when the first heavy rainfall is expected (bhalabhalāśṭāmī). Robert Levy and Niels Gutschow have written in their papers about the auspicious and, at the same time, dangerous implications of this very day.

- The ritual of the selection of the children to be fastened on the khaṭs during the Triṣūlyātrā, the so-called kumbhapūja, takes place on Śīthi nakha, the day when the Navadurgās receive their last sacrifice and worship. It is the day of cleaning wells and taps and it is also the day when the rice is sown in the fields.

- No music is to be played in the Navadurgā ritual between Śīthi nakha and Ghanṭākarnacaturdāśi. Significantly, the Triṣūlyātrā is the only festival in Deopatan of which I am aware in which no musical band accompanies the procession.

- The use of extremely vulgar and pornographic words during both rituals is also common.

- Deopatan is the city of „nineness“. Naturally, one thinks in this context again of the Navadurgā. And in fact all goddesses who play a role during the Triṣūlyātrā are among those Navadurgās who, according to some Vamśāvalis, were the first to come to Nepal.

- The parallels between the Triṣūlyātrā and the Matsyendranātha cult are not only obvious through the function of king Narendradeva and his priest Bandhudatta in both legends. There is also the fact that during the Triṣūlyātrā children carry shirts on cross-sticks, a scene which resembles the climax of the Matsyendranātha festival and the displaying of the bhoto, which literally means „shirt“, and which is the moment when the first raindrops should fall.

There are more significant links between these and other Newar festivities in the Valley during the months of Vaiśākha and Āṣāḍha. However, the space allotted here does not allow me to mention them all. These similarities in the festivities, especially the dates framing the Triṣūlyātrā, which also play a prominent role in the Navadurgā ritual, cannot be a mere coincidence. This is all the more true when we
recall that all these rituals or yātrās are very much concerned with the threat of
demons and the means to ward them off on the one hand, and the agricultural cycle,
mainly the evocation of rain, on the other.
Again, the Triśūlyātrā is a festival of demons which takes place during that
vulnerable time when the Navadurgā die and the period begins when they no longer
protect the city anymore so that – in the words of Robert Levy: „demons, diseases
and social disorder can threaten everybody.“
To express it in somewhat different terms: viewed from the local perspective, the
aspect of protection against the demons predominates; from the comparative point
of view, however, matters would appear to be different. The rather simple question
now arises: if the protection is indeed successful, where do the demons go?
Apparently, they will plague the inhabitants of other cities. In a way, it would thus
appear that warding off the demons and, even more so, their expulsion from the
cities also implies some sort of aggression against the neighbouring cities. The ritual
battles between the northern and the southern part of Kathmandu on Śīṭī nakha
demonstrate this, for instance, and the Triśūlyātrā also shows it in the practice when
the inhabitants of Deopatan shout in the direction of Kathmandu.
This leads me to a key point: obviously, the pre-monsoon festivities of the Newars
do not only deal with superhuman powers, such as the evocation of rain, but also
with the benefits of the expected rain, such as distribution of land, irrigation, claims
on the best soil, etc. – in other words: they also deal with human power and, for
example, as Anne Vergati has phrased it: with the king as a rain-maker.
The fact that a Newar ritual of the type described happens to be in Deopatan makes
it a special and interesting case. Deopatan is principally Paśupatikṣetra, i. e. a field
of Brahmanic Smārta ritual activities, which do not always harmonize with the
tantric elements of rituals such as the Triśūlyātrā. Paśupati, for example, does not
accept such elements of certain Newar rituals such as blood sacrifices, alcohol,
etc.
Moreover, there are several elements in the yātrā itself which show a certain
incompatibility between these two ritual levels, especially at Deopatan. By way of
illustrative example:
- The priests of Paśupati, the Bhaṭṭas, do not participate in the yātrā at all.
  However, when the pūjārī of the Bhuvaneśvari temple comes back from the
  Rājarājesvari-smāśān where he had thrown the corpse of Bandhudatta’s son
  into the river, he undergoes purification by the priest of Dakṣināmūrti,
  notably a temple in Deopatan which is under the domain of the Bhaṭṭas and
  Rājopādhyaśyas.
- In some of the legends of the Triśūlyātrā it is Paśupati who revealed to
  Bandhudatta’s wife that their son was dead and, moreover, that this tantric
  priest went mad. To phrase it simply: apparently, it is Paśupati who does not
  want Bandhudatta to be successful in his search for the drink of immortality. It
  is he who spoils the „happy end“ for Bandhudatta as well as for Bhuvaneś-
  vari.
If it is true that the different festivities during the premonsoon season have in common the evocation of rain among other things, then, of course, Deopatan is indeed a special case. In the Padmagiri chronicle, it is for instance stated that in connection with the Matsyendranātha festival all that is required for Bandhuddatta and king Narendrādeva to obtain sufficient rain is to wash Paśupati with water from the Bāgmatī.86 Considering this evidence and the evidence from other yātras as well, the relationship between centre and periphery is for a time visibly reversed. The Triśūlyāṭrā is part of this group along with the Vatsaleśvari-9 and the Vajreśvarīyāṭrā.87 On such occasions, Paśupati remains central only from a supralocal perspective. As can be seen by such yātras as the Triśūlyāṭrā and (even more during the Vatsaleśvari-yāṭrā), different local traditions do not necessarily exist independently from each other, nor are they always masked over or swallowed up by the Greater Tradition, not even in Paśupatiksetra. On the contrary, if scrutinized more closely, we can note that in a ritualistic form these yātras sometimes even preserve and demonstrate their religious and/or historical differences and conflicts.

However, this appears quite different during Śivarātri, when Paśupatinātha becomes the centre not just of Nepalese Hinduism, but for thousands of Indian pilgrims who

Fig. 7: The Jayavāgīśvarī-khat in front of the Vajraghar: children being brought down at the end of the yāṭrā.

87 On this yāṭrā, see Michaels 1984: 116–123.
journey to Deopatan. On this occasion, the local population of Deopatan is submerged in the crowded city confines, and the temples of the female deities acquire that marginality which they indeed have in respect to the ritual centre and focus of Deopatan, namely Paśupatinātha. Expressed in somewhat simple terms, Deopatan is transformed into Paśupatikṣetra on Śivarātri, while during the Triśūlyātṛā it remains Deopatan.

Appendix

Text of Variant 2.2.1 B (Darśan [1980]: 24–26/extract)

kathmāndau upatyaṅkāko swarṇa nagari (devapattana) mā narendra deva nāma garekā rājā rāyā garirahako belā nāgarjunko prakhyāt lākhe din-dinai swarṇa nagarimā ketakeśīharū cori lajāne gardathyo. tī coriekā bāl-baccāharulāi vaneko tarable jhīrmā ropi, kātī āphnā 25 vata chorā chorilāi khwāuṃe gardathyo. swarṇapurī nagari kā vāsindāharā āphnā chorāchoriharū tyasari cori lāndai gaekomā hābākār maccāi raheko thie.

swarṇapurikā nagaravāsīharuṅke manmā hābākar maccāunē duṣṭā lākhe nai ho bhanne būjhi sārā nagaravāsīharū rājā narendra devakā darvārāmā pugi rājā samakṣa abhivādān gardai duṅkhi samācār sunāe. duṣṭā lāṅkelāi kun prakārbāta mārna sakielā, bhanī nagaravāsīharūle nibedan gare. nagaravāsīharuṅko kariṇā nibedanlāi vicār garera rājā gaddhībāta jurūkk uthi rāguru bandhudatta ācārya kabā savārī bhae. tyasbelā vandhudatta ācārya gūphābhītra desīko ārādhanāmā thie.

rājāle āphnā gurūlāi dhyānābāta jagāe. rājālāi āphu cheu dekhi rājgurule abhivādān gardai ekkāsī yasari āunāko kārān sodhe. rājāle nagaravāsikā chorāchori corī bhaeko ra jan samūha āi kariṇamaya abhivādān caḍhāeko yathārtha kurā guru samakṣa caḍhāe.

guru vandhudattale rājālāi dhiṛāj bādhāi binti gardai bhane 'mahārāj! hāmro rājyamā hābākār maccāune nāgarjunkā duṣṭā lākhe sadakā jhai āja pani ketā-keti corī garna āunē cha. tyo duṣṭa lākhe āunte bātomā 40–50 balavān sipāhiharūlāi laṭṭhī ra mugro dii rākhiyōs, ma tī des sevak sipāhiharū ra hajūr sametlāi mantrako jodle alap pāridinechu. tyas duṣṭa lākhe āunāsāth sevakharūle laṭṭhī ra mugrole piṭi-piṭi mārin' bhanī rājgurule rājālāi sallāha die. guruko ājnā sīropar gari guphābāta pharkera mantrilāi bolāi 'he mantril balavān-balavān sevakharūlāi tatkāl tyo duṣṭa lākhe āunte bātoko dāyā bāyā dherā pāri rākhiyos' bhanī ājnā die.

88 Guhyēśvarī, which stands under the ritual protection of the Bhaṭṭa priests, constitutes an exception on Śivarātri.
राजाको अज्ञा मुताविक मन्त्रीले तत्काली 40, 50 जावाँ सिपाहिबारू समेत लिराजा राजगुरु वन्दुडातको अगाडि हाँट बुना पुगे। राजा, मन्त्री राजगुरु समेत एक हुल भए दुष्टा लक्ष्य आउने बालोको दयाल बाया वासि मन्त्रकाको बली कुनाई प्राणिले पानी नाधेख्ने गरी वासे। केही खास पाछि केटि जिनको खार्दो जबाल भक्ति भाग्याले भूगोल नाच्याँ, नाच्याँ गहराको बिचवाता लक्ष्य आगाडि जाना के लाग्ने थियो। गुरुको अज्ञाले तामाम वर दिनको सेवकहरुले लत्तिले रा मुग्रो लक्ष्य माथि प्राहर गर्ना थाले। अनाकां आधुमाथि वालप्राथ जस्तै वसिको प्राहर्को वेदनाले राण्थानिको लक्ष्ये माया मोहिनी पिङ्चिरा मानिसको रुप लिर बहाको देखी वन्दुडाताको अथाया राजा, मन्त्री समेत गै लक्ष्यलाई पाच्याउदै कांटिपुर नगरारिमा पासे। कांटिपुर नगरको माजिपात पुग्दा लक्ष्य अद्र्श्या भयो। यसारी राजा, मन्त्री अध्या समेत लक्ष्यहरु थाई थेकोले कांटिपुरको राजाली स्वर्ण नगरारी ग्वाथेका गाथानाको याथार्था सामाचार सुनाई। त्यस दुष्टा लक्ष्यलाई सामान्या कांटिपुरका नगरावसिका एक एक गहर तलाई लिन्दा पानि कााँतरी थेठ्याले, अन्तमा माजिपात (सिका मुगल) मा त्यो लक्ष्य लुकी बालोको चिप्पाको ग हर्मा सानिका भाएरा गहर दहार्दैली बलाल याथार्था कुरा गुहा पुह गर्ना थाले। त्यस हदाना पाहेला नाइ मानिसको रुपमा अप्नो याथार्था कथाले ग्वर्को मुल मानिसली सुनाई लक्ष्य साराम्य पाए। यो सारांको मारन गर्ना नाभुन सो लक्ष्यलाई सारांको दीकोले लक्ष्य आफ्नो बाहेको आमुल्या रत्ना समेत गहर दहार्दैली उपहार दिइ कबूलिग्न गरैनुक गर्मा लुकी बालोको थेठ्याले। त्यसै काराने राजा नarend्रा देवा, गुरु वन्दुडाताकाल ले कांटिपुर नगरावसि जानाताहरुलाई जुहूथा थाहारी देवा पाठाको यत्रामा स्वरागसिहरुलाई गाठ गर्ना थानाली।

कांटिपुरको माजिपात बास्ने चिप्पाको आस्त्या बोलिले गुरु वन्दुडाताको राजा नarend्रा देवाको बादधुङ्ख्किन्न भएका एकमा घोटे गरी त्यस दुष्टा लक्ष्यहरु वास्तव नागरज्ञु गुप्ता तर्पावा। त्यस गुप्ता भित्रा दुष्टा लक्ष्येका 25 जाना चोरा चोरिहरुलाई कोलाले माच्चिने गरी सिकरिले बालाको धिसार्दै धिसार्दै स्वरागसुपरि गहरामा ल्याई। राजा, मन्त्री रा राजगुरु मिलि स्वरागसुपरि नगरको कहुला चार्मा रक्षी अप्ना जान्ताली राजाले भाने, हे! नगरावसि हो ... भाना एक दुष्टा लक्ष्यहरु चोरा चोरिहरुलाई गरी मार्मे। तिम्को चोराचोरिको मसू लुचि लुचि चानेहरुलाई गरी मार्मे। तिम्को चोराचोरिको मसू लुचि लुचि चानेहरुलाई हामि रा हामो सेवकहरु मिलि गुरुको अज्ञाले तिमहरुलो सामुन्ने ल्याई का चाउ। अब दुष्टाहरुलाई के गरेमा तिमहरुलो चित्तौल्लो बुझाला भाना। भानी सलाहा मगदा सारा जानाताले राजाको जय जयकार गरी साबाले दक्षाली स्वर्णी म्याने। राजाको जस्तो स्थान चाहा। सो बामोजिन गर्ना लागूण्यो। राजाले जानातालो चित्तौल्लो बुझानुला दुष्टा लक्ष्येका ती संतान मध्ये कोहिला खदगाले हानेका राजा। कोहिली त्रिशुले रोपेरा मारे। वैमु रुपाको लक्ष्ये संतानहरुलाई मरिसके पास्ने जानातालो मनु बुझानुनको लागि हेरा नगरावसि। तिम्को चोरा-चोरिको कोहिली दुष्टा लक्ष्यहरु चोरा-चोरिहरुलाई पानी मार्यौ। भानि देखाउनका निम्ने 'माकन'। भानि जुन जुन रिहाले मायेको थियो सोहि रिहाले गरी क्षामाका रक्षी स्वरागसृपरि नागरलाई देख्ने।

सो कुर्कीले लागे दुख्किन्न भएका रूपमा कुराँ नाहाने थाल्यो। अन्तमा ती प्राणिको देभालो प्रार्थनाले गर्नु सिपाहिबाले धुम भएका राजाली अप्ना ती पुराना याथार्था कुरा कालान्तरसमा राङाले गरी आफ्ना स्वरूप जस्तै बालाको पोशक पाभिरन वर्षको दुइ पातक नगरावसिलाई दुख्खिन्न रा
krodhit samācār sunāuna pradarśan garne garī chippā (vartamān ramjīt) jātimā ātmā praveś bhai nṛtya calāune garī dhan sampatti thupyrāī alap bhayo. yas kisimle kathā anusār kāthmāndaumā parāpārvakāl dekhi sañcālit paurāṇik lākhe nṛtya indra jātrāmā pradarśan ĥūdai āeko cha.

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* Textual references to the Trisūlyātra in brackets.


Linda L. Iltis

The Jala Pyākhā: A Classical Newar Dance Drama of Harisiddhi

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Introduction

Jala Pyākhā is performed in the town of Harisiddhi located about one mile south of Patan. The predominantly Buddhist Newars who live there call the town Jala; and the Jalami, or ,,people of Jala“ number about 3,000. Located on a hill top, surrounded by rich farm land, the entire town of Jala is a sacred site, and leather shoes may never be worn inside its gates. There are occasions when the entire population must observe religious precepts as part of the rites of worship for the Jaladyah, or gods of Jala.

At the intersection of the main roads entering through the town's four main gateways stands the temple of the Jaladyah, facing east. Both the center of physical movement and the symbolic and conceptual center of the town's identity, it is one of the few remaining examples of a four-tiered pagoda temple. A large open square extends eastward from the temple, up to a wooden lamp structure about thirty feet away, with four post holes in the corners of the square for erecting a canopy. This is the square where the Jala Pyākhā, or ritual dances of the Jaladyah, are held (Figures 1, 5).

History and Origins

The history and origin of this ritual drama have stimulated great controversies. The identity of the Jaladyah is also a controversial issue. Some of the dance manuals for these dances refer to the town of Jatalagrāma, the earlier name of the shortened form Jaladeśa. The central deity is called Jatala Devi and the dances are likewise called Jatala Pyākhā (cf. Regmi 1966: 860–61; G. Vajrācārya n.d.). But according to the historical chronicles (vamsāvalīs), and to one Newar historian, Āśākāji Vajrācārya, the central deities of the Jaladyah temple are considered to be the Triiakti, or three šaktis of Brahmā (yellow), Viṣṇu (green), and Rudra (white), who arrived in Nepal in 2675 Kaligata Samvat (426 B.C.).

After taking a trinity form they came to Nepal, and visited all the gods of Nepal on a pilgrimage (Svayambhū, Maṅjuśrī Bodhisattva, Guhyēśvarī etc.) and did pūjā. Tired, they thought they would go to the town of Jala deśa, and hide for a night in an empty place there. After going on a pilgrimage to all the gods of Nepal, they decided to stay in Harisiddhi. At that time, king Vikramaditya [of Ujjain] thought he would go there, and he performed the sabayoga for Harisiddhi which he had seen the Tantric Ācāryas do in a dream. After establishing the sādhana kriya dvāra of the
Harisiddhi gods, he founded various dances and pūjāvidhis to please (the gods and the people?). This lineage was subsequently interrupted, and the dances could not be performed.


Although the chronicles refer to the central deity as a trinity of Triśakti, some people maintain that it is Harihara, the combined male/female deity. Others say it is the fierce form of Nilatārā. Nevertheless, most people continue to refer to the central deity as Triśakti Devi, whose form is visible only to the initiated (Regmi 1966: II, 595).

There are many levels of interpretation concerning the identity of Harisiddhi Devi and the Jaladyah. Mary Slusser (1982: 159, 322, 340) mistakenly identifies the gods and goddesses as a Navadurgā ensemble, and places stress on rumors of human sacrifice performed in the past (1982: 338–339, 340, 344, 348). The Jala Pyākhā, however, does not include either the Aṣṭamārkā, or the Navadurgā as characters in their sequence of dances. Slusser’s confusion in part arises from not distinguishing between the many dance forms, or genres of pyākhā. The dance tradition which
performs in Patan, referred to by Slusser as "Harasiddhi dancers" (Slusser 1982: 159), is actually a Gāthu Pyākhā, involving a separate group of performers from the group which is associated directly with the temple of Harisiddhi.

The next historical reference we have for the dances is that King Varadeva, son of Narendradeva (7th c.), reintroduced the dances of Harisiddhi and made a rule that they should be performed first before Matsyendranātha as part of the worship of that Bodhisattva (Wright 1877: 152). During the medieval period, many years later, the kings of Patan and Kathmandu continued to patronize these dances and the temple of Harisiddhi Devi. Hasrat (1970: xlviii) notes that the king Ratnamalla (1482–1520 A.D.) "acquired the throne through the intercession of the Goddess Harisiddhi." Regmi (1966: II, 595) mentions that both Śrīnivāsa Malla and Pratāpa Malla made donations to the temple.

The current temple is said to have been constructed by Pratāpa Malla (ibid.). A copper plate inscription (dated N.S. 847) describes the goddess as: "red colored, yellow colored, holding a khadga, and respected by the gods". Regmi notes several references to the dance drama during the reign of Pratāpa Malla and Śrīnivāsa Malla (Regmi 1966: II, 93–94; 555, 558, 560). The dancers danced on a mūladabuli ("main dance platform") of Jayavgīśvari in Deopatan, or Gvaladeśa, and on a trisulidabuli ("trident dance platform") in Kathmandu near the royal palace, where Nṛpendra-malla witnessed them in NS 800 (1680 A.D.) (Regmi 1966: II, 94). Pratāpa Malla supposedly died while watching the dances "on Caitra sukla 11, N.S. 794" because he made advances to a young girl who was actually the Goddess Harisiddhi herself. And, after she "rebuked him", he "swooned" and never regained consciousness (ibid.: 93–94). These dances also seem to have inspired the founding of other masked dance dramas in the nearby vicinity. In the 16th century, the king Amaramalla of Kathmandu is said to have introduced another pyākhā, the Mahālakṣmī Pyākhā, in the town of Kokhnā, after the Kiśi "Elephant character of the Harisiddhi Pyākhā had created a severe grain shortage" (Wright 1877: 205; Levi 1905: II, 35) (Figure 1). The chroniclers emphasize that: "it is well known that there is no dramatic performance equal to that of Harisiddhi" (Wright 1877: 132).

The medieval kings of Nepal frequently employed Vajrācāryas as scribes and composers of literature and dramas. This is well known in the case of Patan's Śrīnivāsa Malla. Since Harisiddhi is under Patan Buddhist Vajrācārya lineage direction, and because of apparent Buddhist elements in the style and content of the dances themselves, it is likely that the Vajrācārya priests of Patan were historically involved in some way with either the development or spread of Jala Pyākhā dramatic styles.

Both the people of Harisiddhi and Wright’s chronicle say that the drama includes all the gods of Nepal. The range and variety of characters certainly seems to suggest this.

The dramas reenact a variety of stories, some religious, some historical, some Buddhist, and some Hindu. The people of Harisiddhi claim there are stories from Svayambhū Purāṇa, Adbhūta Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, and Svasthānī Purāṇa. One
manuscript\textsuperscript{1} in the National Archives, dated N.S. 847 contains both a portion of the Gomayeju and Navarāja Svasthāni story together with a brief discussion of the Harisiddhi dances and items needed for the dances.\textsuperscript{2} In addition, there are stories about the king Vikramāditya, Kuvera with his yomari (a fig-shaped molasses dumpling), Mañjuśrī and his two wives, Mahādeva and Agni Devatā (Figure 2), Gāneśa and his two wives (Figure 3), and an elephant deity named Kiśi or „Elephant“ (Figure 1). The complete sequence of dances lasts from midnight to

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure3.png}
\caption{Gāneśa and his two wives.}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure4.png}
\caption{Two senior priests of the Jaladyāh membership.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Padmapurāṇa Uttarakhaṇḍa}, including 1) \textit{Svasthāṇi Kathā}, and 2) \textit{Harisiddhi Nṛtyaviṣayaka Sāmăgri Śācī}. Nepal German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP), microfilm reel no. 134/4, dated N.S. 847. There are several other Harisiddhi dance texts in the National Archives as well. They are written in classical Nevārī (pracalita lipi) script, with some portions in raṇjana lipi script.

\textsuperscript{2} For a translation of the \textit{Svasthāṇi Vrata Kathā} including the Gomayeju and Navarāja story see Iltis (1985). The story of Navarāja involves an elephant, or Kiśi, who is possessed by the god Harihara and who selects Navarāja as the new king. The Jala Ḵyākhā also includes a Kiśi, who has two deities painted on it’s ears (possibly Harihara – Śiva and Viṣṇu combined?). However, no one in Harisiddhi suggested that this Kiśi was the same identity as the Kiśi of the Svasthāṇi stories.
about 10:30 pm the following evening, and includes approximately 40 characters in all. The dances are performed twice a year, 3 months apart on the full moon of Mangsr, or Yomaripunhi and full moon of Phãgun, or Holipunhi. The people claim that at one time the dances used to be performed throughout the three month period. Every twelve years, the Jaladyah go on tour to other locations in the valley to perform their dances. The places visited include Gvaladesa (Deopatan) and Kathmandu.

The Performers

The actors in this pyâkhâ are the priests of the Jaladyah temple. In 1983 there were about forty priests. These priests are Jyãpu, or Maharjan (Newar farmer caste). But in this community they constitute almost a caste within a caste. They are accorded higher status, economic support, and religious worship by their fellow villagers (Figures 4). Their positions are inherited for life. The eldest son of a priest inherits the role of his father. He becomes a priest, and plays the role of one of the characters or gods in the drama. Thus in becoming a priest of Jaladyah, one becomes one of the Jaladyah. These men are neither simply priests of the gods or actors portraying the gods; but rather, in assuming their roles, they have become the Jaladyah gods, and are recognised and treated as such by the entire community for the rest of their life (Figure 4).

Performance Structure

Before the main dance sequence begins, the lamps are lit, and the musical piece for the invisible dance of Nasadyah, the god of music and dance, is performed. Suddenly dramatic masks appear out of the darkness, and the first posessed dyah descends from the temple. Jala Pyâkhâ follows a repeating structural pattern for each of the scenes. The deity enters the square from the temple shrine room, which functions as a green room on these occasions. At the same time, a beta or curtain bearer holds the curtain

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3 According to preliminary investigations of the dance manuscripts for Jala Pyâkhâ, the dances are to be performed at least in these two places. Several manuscripts describe a ritual to be performed at Gvala. Axel Michaels also has heard that these dances are performed in the old palace gardens (Bhãndarakhaâla) near Gauṣâla in Deopatan. Reinhard Herdick also has heard of a Jala Pyâkhâ dance performance in Kîrtipur (Herdick, this volume).
between the dancer and the audience. The curtain is a full-size curtain; but since there is only one curtain bearer, he actually wears the curtain over his shoulders, hanging down his back, and stands facing the dancer with the curtain facing the audience (Figure 5).

The curtain is painted with images of three deities. The central main deity or müdyah is blue and three-eyed, holding a skull cup in one hand and making the gesture of offering with the other hand, which also holds a sword. The deity to the left is yellow, and the deity to the right is red.

These three deities seem to represent the Trisakti already mentioned, but the curtain can and does represent many things depending on the context. Its function is similar to the gunungan in the Javanese shaddow puppet theater, which is that of a central axis mundi which marks the cosmological structure, and can be used to represent a tree, a mountain, a rock, fire, or some magical force. It also functions as the central focus of the ritual, representing the god of music, Nāsadyah. The meaning of the curtain changes depending on how it is displayed. In any case the curtain is used for all entrances and exits of the characters, and marks the beginning and end of each main scene.

When a character enters, he stands behind the curtain while a brief vocal and instrumental piece is played and sung by the musicians or the dancer. Following this, the curtain is taken away, and the dyah dances a dance (Figure 6).

The Jala Pyākhā style of dance differs from many of the other classical Newar pyākhā dance styles, and the music is equally unique. There is one turning motion which is similar to other dance traditions, and the beginning of the dance is usually marked by a short accelerating beat sequence.

When the dancer stops and assumes a namaskāra pose, the worshipping begins. The people of Jala fill the area surrounding the dancers and offer white and red scarves, rice, and flowers. This lasts for about five to fifteen minutes. Then the dancer performs a solo song, with expressive gestures (mudrā) and miming, in the "language of the gods." The songs are very slow, with glides and forceful attacks, accompanied only by the rhythmic tā cymbals. Sometimes a chorus may interject choral sections into the song. This miming and gesture sequence can be long or short, and devotees may attempt to worship the dyah during this time.
Figure 6: Mahādeva dances with hops and jumps, as he chases Agni away.

When the dancer completes this sequence, the drum, cymbal and trumpet music resumes, and another dance is performed. This dance may or may not be followed by additional miming sequences, and by additional dances. Finally, the curtain is brought out again, and the character exits with musical accompaniment. Additional characters in a scene may enter together with the other character, or separately with the curtain. According to Rājendra Śreṣṭha, a student of classical Newar dance forms, the choreography used appeared to emphasize a triangular pattern (Shrestha, n.d.). This triangular pattern (reproduced in Figure 9) is diagramed in a recent published edition of Vikramacarita, an early 18th century drama written by King Bhūpatindramallā (Jośi and Śākya 1970: 7).

The first dances of the evening are the dances of the ten directions to establish the dance area. Five pairs of dancers perform a set of dances, each pair by turn dancing to two of the ten cardinal directions, wearing masks colored appropriately for the respective direction. These pre-dances are accompanied by the pañca bājā musical ensemble located on the north side of the square, and yakakhī (or dyakhī) drums

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4 One manuscript, NGMPP microfilm reel no. E 372/2 gives a mantra for the Guardians of the Directions, kṣetrapāla mūlamantra, in connection with a Harasiddhi Tridevatā Stuti.
and chusyā cymbals played on the western side of the square in front of the temple. The music for this portion is entirely different from the other music played for the main dances. Before the main dances begin, the kahā bāja copper trumpets are sounded in the south. Finally, the priests who are not dancing begin to play the music for the main dance sequence, sitting in the western part of the square directly below the temple entrance, and the lamps are lit in the east. The first musical piece is for the invisible dance of Nāsadyah, god of music and dance. The clay masks of the Jaladyah are highly stylized, and each face is unmistakably unique and expressive. The first mask to appear is that of Tāmvadyah Rikheśvara, who carries and twirls a silver yomari in one hand. The association with copper (tāmvada = coppersmith) and the yomari, a symbol of wealth, suggest a possible connection with Kuvera, who appears in local legends in connection with the yomari (Anderson 1971: 215). He may also be the patron deity of pyākha. The Kiśi

Figure 7: Bali Raja with halo-like headress (left) sits in front of the musicians.

5 Unlike the masks of the Navadurgā of Bhaktapur which are destroyed and re-made each year, these masks are not destroyed. The masks are maintained and retouched from one year to the next.

6 The presence of Kuvera as the first masked dance, and his association with riches and wealth, also suggests an importance attached to this character with respect to the performance of pyākha, a word which literally means „seeing a dress-up, or costume disguise.“ In Sanskrit theatre, Vaśravaṇa (Kuvera) is the master of disguise, and in Tamil, South Indian and Śri Lankan classical dramas, he is represented as Vesamuni. One of the Sinhala dance traditions named ves, like pyākha refers to disguise, or dress up (see also Perthold 1930: 27, 64–65, 74–75).
Figure 8: Mañjuśrī’s haughty wife, a goddess of one of the four sacred mountains surrounding the valley.

(Figure 1) is perhaps the largest mask of all the Newar pyākhās. Two men dance inside while one guides from outside. Kiśi is said to reside in the forest near the town of Jala. The headress of the Bali Rāja character is like a giant halo with silver bodhi leaf-shaped decorations attached (Figure 7). Two different styles of eyes are also apparent in the masks; some characters have white outlines around the pupil, while others have black outlines. The identities of some of the characters are obscure. However, one of the dances includes a sword fight between King Vikramāditya and the kings of the five directions. The stylized sword twirl in this dance is reminiscent of sword technique used in other South Asian martial arts traditions.

There are also scenes which include Gaṇeṣa, Mahādeva, Pārvatī, Agni, Lākhe chasing Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sugrīva, and Mañjuśrī and his two wives, who represent two of the four sacred mountains surrounding the Kathmandu Valley. One wife is selfish and haughty (Figure 8), while the other wife is simple and gentle. Mañjuśrī, caught in between, attempts to please both, but always returns to the gentle wife and pats her on the shoulder.
Performer-audience relationships as ritual

Since the performers of Jala Pyākhā are actually the Jaladyah themselves, the relationship between "performers" and "audience" in this context is actually a relationship between gods and devotees. If we view them as just performers, then they remain undistinguished conceptually from other pyākhā performers. The primary distinction is that they do not become the Jaladyah just for a day, a moment, or a few years; they become a Jaladyah for life. Most other performers in other pyākhā, such as the Gā Pyākhā of Patan, or the Mahākāli Pyākhā of Bhaktapur, take on the role of gods only for the duration of one performance or series of performances; and they may perform a different part next time, (i.e., the following year), or never perform again. But with the Jaladyah, initiation for replacement characters may only be held once every twelve years. The role of a Jaladyah performer extends beyond the stage into his everyday life, and is emphasized during these dances. While this kind of performance is called a pyākhā, its mark of distinction is Jala and the identities of the Jaladyah. While the people treat priests with respect on a day-to-day basis, the actual ritual invocation, possession, and subsequent dramatization alters this relationship to one of deity and devotee.

Jala Pyākhā provides us with an example of how a drama can completely merge with and become a ritual. The entire "performance" constitutes the ritual. Each scene in the drama is also a sub-ritual. The curtain (gāchī) is not only a theatrical prop and representation of the god of music, Nāsadyah, it is the Tantric ritual cloth which is held between the devotee and the god. Each of the gods is invoked in this way and descends from the temple. Each of the gods performs a dance accompanied by mantra syllables, or mantra boli, which are blown and sounded on two copper trumpets, pvāgā; the technique of sounding mantras on copper trumpets is used in other Buddhist Tantric ritual music performing traditions. Mantra syllables are also performed on the drums, yakakhi (or dyahkhā), which have rams horns representing the god Nāsadyah (Figure 10), and the dabadaba (or damaru) an hourglass drum. The cymbals, tā, provides the tāla or rhythmic structure of the music and is used for marking dramatic effects.

The songs, cari, which may be related to Buddhist cāryā songs, also utilize ritualized sequences. The dance choreography includes triangular and maṇḍala geometric formations which correspond to the cosmological structures associated with the main deity, Jaladyah, and the greater world view of the Newars. When each dance is finished, the people of Jala move forward, bowing and making offerings of cloth and flowers to the god or dancer. The worshipping continues sporadically, even as the dance and solo gestures and song is being performed. Pressing in from all four sides, the devotees are frequently more concerned with their worship and their opportunity to personally view the god than with the actual quality of the performance. Occasionally, overzealous devotees may even cause the
Figure 9: Dance stage arrangement pictured in Josi and Sakya (1970: 7), similar to the layout for Jala Pyakhâ.
god to stumble as they bow at the dancer's feet. Worshipping of certain gods in the
temple sometimes takes a half hour before the solo song begins and additional
dances are performed. Each god sings his or her own characteristic song in the
language of the gods, with miming and gestures. According to the Jaladyah, the
language of the gods, dyahbhây, is not Sanskrit or any other South Asian language
known to them. They do not know how to speak it fluently, but they each know
their own song and what it means, because this was taught to them by their
predecessors before they inherited their position.
The „language of the gods“ gives rise to many speculations about the plots of the
stories which the gods show and tell in their dances. The devotees discuss alternate
interpretations of each scene as they watch, and the crowd noise intensifies as the
day progresses. The final scene in the pyâkhâ shows three deities iconographically
similar to those on the curtain together with Vikramâditya Râja. These seem to be
the Trišakti deities described in the historical accounts. It is also possible that one
of the deities is the god Harihara who grants the boon of kingship to king
Vikramâditya. This leads directly into the scene of the defeat of Bali Râja. Since one
of these deities is a fierce deity, there is a final blood offering of sheep and ducks.
The fierce deity drinks the blood of each animal. This bali sacrificial offering is
made to the sound of the pañca bâjâ offering music played by a separate group of
musicians. This climax marks the end of the pyâkhâ.

Conclusion

To call this merely a performance is not enough. What is happening is a very serious
ritual which involves not only all the gods of Nepal but all the people of Harisiddhi
as well. Since the membership of the priesthood is so large, nearly everyone is
related in some way to at least one of the performing priests, or to a former priest.
Whether or not one is related to a living priest, each family comes to worship the
Jaladyah, who are the central identity of this sacred community.
Even though the town of Jaladeśa is a small place, it encompasses the entire
worldview of the people through the presence of the Jaladyah. They are all the gods
of Nepal brought to their own doorstep. The Trišakti Devi is what brings the gods
there. But more importantly, the people of Jala are those gods, and they are the
devotees of their own identity, which is described and portrayed in the dances of
the Jaladyah.
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Gérard Toffin

Funeral Priests and Caste System in the Kathmandu Valley

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Introduction

As all scholars concerned with Nepal know, Jayasthiti Malla (1382–1395) is credited by the local chronicles with having promulgated an important reform of the caste system in the Kathmandu Valley and its surroundings. It is less known that, according to the same historiographical sources, the king also reorganized the funeral ceremonies of the Malla kings. Padmagiri’s chronicle asserts that Jayasthiti Malla ordered that all the „36 castes“ of the Nepal Valley, i. e. the whole population of the Kathmandu basin, should attend the funeral procession of the dead king. The representatives of these castes (jāt) were compelled to precede the bier of the ruler. Each caste had to play different sorts of musical instruments (B. J. Hasrat, 1970: 55). The Buddhist chronicle translated by D. Wright (1966: 124) reported the same rule and added that the delegates of all the „four varṇa“, i. e. the entire caste hierarchy, had from that time on the obligation to take part in the procession of the departed king up to the burning ghāts.¹

It is not reported whether these regulations were really effective. In fact, the obligation for „all the 36 castes“ to play a particular musical instrument during the king’s funerals rapidly fell into disuse. One century later, the king of Kathmandu Sūrya Malla (1520–1530) ordered that no one but oil pressers (Māṇandhar) should be entitled to precede the corpse of anyone of the „Newar tribe“, playing on „established instruments of music“ (B. J. Hasrat, 1970: 63) – „Newar tribe“ being an expression which included the members of the Malla royal family, even though the kings would probably have rejected this inclusion. This privilege was granted as a reward for having killed a furious demon called Bālla (Balāsura?), who used to take by violence the corpses of men on their way to the cremation ground.

However it may be that Jayasthiti Malla’s rule was followed for some time. It corresponded to ideas and concepts which were deeply rooted in Malla society. The funeral ceremonies of the Malla kings were undoubtedly a pre-eminent representation of the caste system, which at that time was already the basic organizing principle of Kathmandu Valley society. They were a kind of microcosm of the society, the epitome of the kingdom’s social, political, economic and religious system. As in most South Asian cortèges, the members had to march in rows according to their caste ranks. This ritual enactment was obviously a validation of the existing hierarchical order. The central position of the departed ruler corresponded itself to the paramount influence of the king in the society. Malla Hindu kings were the pillars of the caste system and the functioning core of the country. They promulgated laws and codifications, they maintained social order, and, from a

¹ Cf. also S. Lévi (1905: 237) and A. Höfer (1979: 194).
general point of view, were responsible for the dharma (the order of the world) inside the kingdom. As in most places in India, rulers were also considered to be an avatāra of Viṣṇu² and concentrated in their person some religious representations. The palaces, surrounded by numerous temples, were constructed in the centre of the city, and were viewed (as royal festivals clearly indicate) as the axis of the world. In addition, the royal city appears to have been laid out according to a geometric ordering scheme, inspired by magical cosmograms mandala and yantra, and probably endowed with esoteric significance.

The Malla kingdoms of the medieval period (13th–18th century) were mostly inhabited by Newars, an indigenous, strongly Indianized ethnic group. Kings professed Hinduism, but a large fraction of the population followed Mahāyāna Buddhism. These kingdoms collapsed in the second half of the eighteenth century, and have today totally disappeared as self-governing units. Nowadays, a new dynasty holds the political power and rules over a realm much larger than the microscopic city-states of Kathmandu, Patan, Bhaktapur, Banepa. It is nevertheless possible to find traces of some religious elements of these ancient political units in contemporary Newar settlements. As a matter of fact, Newar towns have preserved most of their identity. Their structure has not changed very much since the Malla period, and they can still be considered as traditional, pre-industrial cities, strongly influenced by ritual. The caste system, which is based on fundamental religious notions, is still the organizing principle of their society. Though the Malla kings have been dethroned, the heads of these Newar localities still incarnate the royal function on a local level according to old Hindu schemes.

This paper focuses on the various obligations which the different segments of Newar society have to fulfill during the funeral ceremonies of local dominant castes—the ones who, as representatives of the king, play a predominant role in the organization of ritual activities. In the light of these religious functions, we shall also reconsider the underlying principles of the Newar caste system and the notion of priest in that society. I shall restrict the scope of my study to the Hindu dominant castes, or those considered as such, on the basis of materials collected principally in the small town of Panauti³.

Socially determined ritual functions

Although all the castes do not participate in the funeral procession, fourteen among them have specific religious duties to perform in the case of the death of a person belonging to a dominant caste.

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² This belief is reported in the Kathmandu Valley from the 14th century onwards (D. R. Regmi, 1965: 484), but it is undoubtedly much more ancient.

1. The Brāhmaṇ (or Barmu, Rājopādhyāyā). They attend the śrāddha, literally: „offering made with faith“ (pyā thaiyegu)⁴ which have to be performed daily along a river during the ten days following the cremation (daś kriyā). The main purpose of these ceremonies is to assemble a new „body“ for the deceased in its ghost form, preta (or pret), a being which does not have any living corpse, any material basis. These rituals are also intended to feed and refresh this ghost who hovers, thirsty and hungry, in vague discontent, near the house of the deceased. The Brāhmaṇ also perform the ritual of purification (du byēkegu) which takes place on the tenth day after cremation, as well as all the śrāddha ceremonies which have to be organized at intervals during the upcoming year of mourning and the ones which regularly commemorate every year the death of such and such person. Moreover, the Brāhmaṇ have to perform the ritual called saptāha in a case of accidental death, to appease the wandering spirit of the departed which otherwise may cause injury to close agnatic relatives living in its former abode. In Jyāpū peasant villages, the Brāhmaṇ are only invited on the first annual anniversary of death (dakīlā) when the year of mourning is over, and on the sora śrāddha which is performed in honor of the ancestors during the first lunar fortnight of the month of Asoj (September–October)⁵.

2. The Karmācārya. These Tantric priests, belonging to the high Hindu castes (Chathariya, Śreṣṭha), help the Brāhmaṇ during most of the śrāddha ceremonies. While the Brāhmaṇ recites Vedic texts and gives instructions for the conduct of the ritual, the Karmācārya mutters magical formulas, mantra, makes mudrā with his hands and prepares the oblations to be offered to the spirit of the deceased. When the Brāhmaṇ is busy elsewhere or when he is sick, the Karmācārya may sometimes officiate alone, even though the ceremony includes a fire sacrifice, homa, one of the rituals of highest value in Hindu religion. In villages, liturgical specialists called Ācāju and belonging to the Jyāpū agriculturist caste, often serve as substitutes for the Karmācārya. These Ācāju, who normally have to be initiated by Karmācārya Tantric priests, direct almost all the funeral ceremonies and act as local priests.

3. The Jośi. Like the Karmācārya, the astrologers Jośi belong to the large group of people called Chathariya and Śreṣṭha. They participate in the ceremony performed on the thirteenth day after the cremation – a śrāddha during which the malevolent ghost spirit of the departed is transformed into an auspicious ancestral spirit, protector of the lineage. It is the equivalent of the Hindu ritual sapindikarana (lit.: „to make the dead sapinda“), the word sapinda designating the group formed by relatives on paternal and maternal lines over seven generations (Ego’s generation included). The Jośi attends the sapindikarana along with a Brāhmaṇ and a Karmācārya. His role is quite unimportant: he only has to light up lamps, pay homage to divinities and assist the Karmācārya who is in charge of the ceremony. In

⁴ pyā in Nevārī designates the ball of cooked rice or flour of some kind which is the most characteristic offering to the departed during śrāddha funeral ceremonies (Skt.: pinda).

the village of Pyângâũ, the Josi is invited (in fact: used to be invited, for this custom has become obsolete) only for the ritual commemorating the first annual anniversary of the death and for the sora śrāddha of Asoj.

4. The Tini (or Tinîcă, Tiniju, Sivâcărya). The members of this caste are concentrated in the eastern part of the Kathmandu Valley. They are supposed formerly to have been Brâhman (cf. infra). Some of them act as servants of gods in temples, but their main function is connected with funerals. As a matter of fact, Tini are first of all funeral priests. They are in charge of the ghâsû (Nep.: ghar śânti), a ritual of purification which concludes the polluting period for the distant relatives and which is held on the twelfth day after the cremation. It takes place on the first floor of the house of the deceased, on the very spot where the corpse had been placed before being carried to the funeral pyre. Generally, they attend this ceremony as assistants of the Brâhman. However, in some cases they may officiate alone. When the two categories of priests are present, the Tini, facing west, pours some paddy, rice, sesame seeds, barley, clarified butter and a particular kind of paddy called sova (or svâvâ?) into the sacred fire, while the Brâhman reads ritual texts. When the homa is at the point of being concluded, the Tini sprinkles sacred water on the chief mourner. Traditionally, the Tini also officiate in all the funeral ceremonies of the Bhâ’s caste (see infra). In a sense, they are the regular family priests (purohita) of this caste.

5. The Jyâpu (or Suvâl, Kîsân, Maharjan). This farmer caste represents one of the largest sections of Newar society. Its members have three particular functions to fulfill during the funerals of high Hindu (and Buddhist) castes. First, an old Jyâpu woman must scatter flattened rice and husk from the house of the deceased to the outskirts of the settlement just ahead the corpse. This ritual is called pu holegu in Nevâri. As a rule, the Jyâpu have also to erect the funeral pyre in the cremation ground (masân) and to burn the corpse. When the cremation is totally completed, they collect some ashes from the pyre and throw them into the river. They also offer some rice to crows, to the spirit of the deceased and to the Kumârî goddess. In some places, a sub-caste of Jyâpu called Gvâ is specifically in charge of these despised functions. Finally, the Jyâpu often have to throw a plate containing rice, flowers, incense and some ashes of the corpse in various tīrtha of the Kathmandu Valley.

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6 The ghâsû sometimes takes place ten days after the cremation, on the very day of the purificatory ceremony. High caste Buddhists perform ghâsû seven days after the cremation (G. S. Nepali, 1965: 138).

7 Among the Jyâpu and pure castes of high status, it is a married daughter of the deceased, generally the eldest one, who performs the pu holegu (or po holegu, vâ holegu) ritual.

8 The Jyâpu themselves sometimes appoint Gvâ (or Gô) to cremate the corpse; cf. G. Toffin (1984: 146–147).
Valley and, in theory at least, even along the Ganges in India. In some settlements (Patan and Kathmandu, for instance), the members of a Jyāpu section have to fulfill a fourth function during the funerals of high-caste individuals: they have to play a distinctive musical instrument (aerophone) called kāhā (or kāhāh, kāhā) at the head of the funeral procession. It is a narrow, slender, straight trumpet, which, due to its length (between 150 and 170 cm), requires an additional support made of wood or bamboo. The instrument is always played in pairs by two performers. To simplify its transport, it is made of several sections which can be fitted inside one another. The sub-caste which plays such a trumpet is called Kāhābujā, or Kāhāpū, or Kārbuja. In Kathmandu, these persons are ranked below other Jyāpu.

6. The Nau (or Nāpit). The barbers Nau shave the hair, the eyebrows and the beard of the close relatives of the deceased ten days after cremation, just before the purification ceremony called du byēkegu. As for the barber’s wife, she has to cut the toenails of the female relatives of the deceased or symbolically touch their feet with her knife (lusi thikegu) as a sign of purification. The same operations are repeated, in theory, fortyfive days, six months and one year after the funeral for the successive śrāddha ceremonies.

7. The Sāymi (or Mānandhar). As quoted in the chronicle mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the oil pressers Sāymi participate in the funerals of high-caste persons as musicians. They play a straight trumpet called pvāgā, a little shorter than the kāhā already described (80 to 90 cm in length), but similar in all other aspects to this latter instrument. Depending on the locality, sometimes oil pressers, sometimes Kāhābujā (and also Khusah or Putuvār, see infra) play this trumpet.

9 G. S. Nepali (1965: 133) stated that two persons are sent to Gokarna with the „Scalp“ of the corpse, two others to Sankhamul with one of the shoulder joints, „one to Tekdwan [Tekhu dobhān] with the other shoulder joint and the sixth person, first to Lakha Tirtha and then to Bhaca-Khusi with the knee-caps“. Those places are all tirtha of the Kathmandu Valley.

10 Concerning the kāhā trumpet, cf. S. and H. Wiehler (1980: 114). It is played not only during funerals, but also on festive occasions or during the most solemn moments of temple ceremonies.

11 The Kāhābujā musicians are often considered as a specific caste, separate from the Jyāpu; see, for instance, T. Riccardi (1975: 204) and H. A. Oldfield (1880: 185). B. H. Hodgson, on the contrary, stated they were a subdivision of Jyāpu agriculturists (quoted by K. P. Chattopadhyay, 1980: 93). According to H. A. Oldfield (1880: 185), the Kāhābujā play on their musical instrument (kāhā) only during funerals.

12 In Pyāngāu, the barber officiates on the ghasū day which is celebrated in that village the thirteenth day after cremation.

8. The Pulu (or Pulpulu, Dipakār)\textsuperscript{14}. The members of this caste, which numbered only 34 households in the entire Kathmandu Valley (personal census, 1978), must bear torches in front of the funeral procession. Their name, Pulu, derivates from \textit{pulpul} which means „light which goes up and down.“ In theory, one torch has to be carried for each married daughter of the house of the departed, and it is the sons-in-law who have to provide it. The Pulu also play small cymbals called \textit{tā} and even sometimes a bell, \textit{ghanṭā}, at the crossing of roads to warn others that a procession is coming. The meeting of two funeral processions at a road crossing is considered one of the most inauspicious events and one of the worst omens. Everything is done to prevent such a thing from happening\textsuperscript{15}. Sometimes, the Putuvār take the Pulu’s place to carry the torches.

9. The Khusah (or Khusal, Tandukār). This caste, which is specialized in processing rice, in stucco-work and in weaving, also has a task to perform during funerals. In some localities (Kirtipur, for instance), its members play the trumpet \textit{kāhā} in the front of the funeral procession, taking the place of the \textit{Jyāpū} and of the Mānandhar oil pressers\textsuperscript{16}.

10. The Bhā (or Kārāmjīt). It is said that the members of this caste originally belonged to the Brāhmaṇ caste. They are frequently called \textit{pretabrāhmaṇ} or \textit{mahabrāhmaṇ}, a widely-known expression in North India. As funeral priests, they participate in the \textit{śrāddha} which are performed daily during the ten days following the cremation. The rituals take place on public land near a river. A Brāhmaṇ and the chief mourner (\textit{mitaymhi}), generally the son of the departed, also attend the ceremonies. On the first day, the Bhā models a small \textit{liṅga} with clay and a little water. This \textit{liṅga} represents Hatakeśvar Mahādev. The following days, the Bhā assists the Brāhmaṇ. It is his duty to wash the rice which is offered to the spirit of the departed and to pour water on the \textit{liṅga}. A clay pot with a hole in the bottom is attached to a tripod of sticks so that the water drips steadily over Hatakeśvar Mahādev. On the tenth day (sometimes on the eleventh day) after the death, a Bhā pays a visit to the family of the deceased and has to accept a dish called \textit{kāṭṭo} specially prepared for him. This dish consists of ten small leaf plates (one for each day of the \textit{kriyā}) containing beaten and flattened rice, honey, clarified butter and sesame seeds. A piece of the skull of the dead person, mashed in thin powder, is said to be mixed with these ingredients. The Bhā has to eat a little of this dish in front of

\textsuperscript{14} It seems that in Bhaktapur the Dipakār funeral torch-bearers are called Cālāṃ; cf. N. Gutschow and B. Kölver (1975: 57). These Cālāṃ are commented on by K. P. Chattopadhyay (1980: 100) with the following words: „Musicians who attend when dead bodies are taken to be buried“.

\textsuperscript{15} According to B. H. Hodgson, the Pulu carry an earthen lamp in a small basket, as well as a bell, at the head of the funeral procession; K. P. Chattopadhyay (1980: 98). D. R. Regmi (1965: 674) says that in Bhaktapur the Pulu are called Maki.

\textsuperscript{16} D. R. Regmi (1965: 674) notes: „In medieval times, they [the Khusah] used to play \textit{kāhā} instrument for the funeral“. 222
the relatives of the deceased. This ritual visit is called in Nevārī cipa tīhigu (or cipa tīkēgū): „to pollute by eating“, or kāṭo nakēgū, „to feed with kāṭo. The Bhā accepts this offering with considerable difficulty, and it is necessary to give him money so that he takes the kāṭo in his house. This ritual is intended to expel the ghost spirit of the deceased from its former abode and to identify it to the Bhā. The daughters of the family bring the Bhā back to his house and make sure that he does not look back behind him, a gesture which could entail fatal consequences. Sometimes on that same day, the Bhā also receives most of the cloths, tools and vessels used by the deceased during his lifetime. 11.

11. *The Putuvār* (or Dvī). This caste of former palanquin bearers has four specific duties to perform during the funerals of high Hindu (and Buddhist) castes. 1) First of all, as said earlier, they often replace the Pulu at the head of the funeral procession carrying torches. 2) In some localities (Lubhu and Sākhu, for instance), they also have to play the kābāh trumpet, taking the place of the Jyāpū and the Mānandhar. 3) After the funeral pyre has been lighted, a Putuvār stands at the entrance of the house of the deceased and purifies the mourners coming back from the cremation ground with a fumigation of cotton and mustard seeds. The relatives must not enter the house until this ritual of purification (and of expulsion of evil spirits) (lā suigu) has been performed. The Putuvār then throws the seeds used during the ceremony at a cross-road located at the boundary line of the settlement. 4) Finally, on the seventh day after the death, a Putuvār has to rebuild the fire-place in the mourning house which had been destroyed on the day of the cremation.

12. *The Nāy* (or Kasāi, Khāḍgi). In some settlements, urban and rural, the Nāy butchers play on the drum nāykhi (a word derived from the name of their caste) and small cymbals (called khaicā in Panauti) during the funeral procession of Jyāpū farmers. It is the sons-in-law of the deceased who invite the butchers and who have to compensate them for their services. Though this does not concern the dominant castes, it must be said that the butchers take the place of the barbers and cut the toenails of the mourning relatives when the caste of the dead person is of a low status. Moreover, the butcher’s wife throws away a basket containing the clothes worn by the deceased at the time of his death and several articles belonging to him during his lifetime at a crossroad (chvāsa). Sometimes, the daughters-in-law are in charge of this. In both cases, these belongings must be thrown away before the funeral procession reaches the cremation ground.

13. *The Kusle* (or Jugi, Kāpāli). The tailors-musicians, who descended from the ascetics of the Kānphaṭa Yogi sect, and who nowadays are reintegrated into the world of castes, must accept a plate of boiled rice, soyabean and pulse prepared by the family of the deceased on the seventh day after the cremation (nheynhuma). In

17 According to some informants, the Bhā should in some cases perform a śrāddha ceremony on the same day of the funeral near the cremation pyre. It is reported that Brāhmans should attend this ritual.
most cases, a small Kusle girl goes and takes this food. Some sweet-balls are added for her. The offering, called jugi bau, is given in the name of the deceased and is intended to ward off the ghost form of the departed. The Jugi must accept the plate, for on that day they represent the spirit of the deceased. This ritual is called cipa tihigu, as the one the Bhã has to perform on the tenth day after death. In the village of Pyângãu, the Kusle receives a piece of cloth taken from the garments of the dead person on the thirteenth day.

14. The Pođe (or Dyahla). Nowadays, this caste of fishermen and sweepers, one of the lowest among the impure castes (ma ju pî), has no specific religious task to fulfill during the funerals of high Hindu castes. However, the Pođe were formerly responsible for the cremation of the corpse. The Pođe also provide small baskets which are used for the food offerings given to the Kusle on the nheynhuma. Moreover, in some cases, the fishermen take the clothing and the bedding of the deceased. In that context, they are strongly associated with particularly impure and dangerous substances.

Two other castes, which have today disappeared or are in the process of extinction, had formerly to perform religious obligations during the time of funerals. First, the Tâti (or Tvâti) had to weave a piece of cloth called pau gã (or pvâgã) which was used to wrap the dead body. Ten days after the cremation, the Pasi (or Pasicã) washed a cloth called nakâpa with which the head of the corpse was covered at the time of the death. It seems that the close agnatic relatives of the deceased also covered their heads with this nakâpa cloth for ten days after the day of the cremation.

The Funerals: A „Fait social total“

A large number of castes (though not all) thus have distinctive religious functions to fulfill during funerals of a person belonging to dominant castes. It is the life-cycle

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19 The Tâti also weave the sacred thread of the Twice-born and the clothes of certain gods. H. A. Oldfield (1880: 186) asserts that members of this caste („Tatti“) weave a cloth in cotton wool to cover the dead and night-caps for infants' heads when their hair is first cut off. B. H. Hodgson adds that the pvâgã (or pau gã) cloth woven by Tati [“Tatee“] is used as clothing by certain servants of Matsyendranâth at the time of performing services, by Newars who adopt Buddhism and by sati widows who immolate themselves on the funeral pyre (quoted by K. P. Chattopadhyay, 1980: 98). In contrast with Oldfield and Regmi, B. H. Hodgson considers the Tâti to be a subsection of Jyãpû agriculturists. Concerning the pau gã cloth during male initiation ceremony (kaytą pûjã), cf. G. Toffin (1984: 134).

20 Cf. D. R. Regmi (1965: 676). For Bhaktapur, N. Gutschow & B. Kölver (1975: 57) give the name of a specific caste: the Phasikha (= Pasi?), or Chyo, whose duty is „to give fire to the pyre“.
ceremony which mobilizes the greatest number of ritual specialists coming from different castes. Among some Jyāpu peasants, e.g. the Svāgumi of Pyāngāu, it is the only life-cycle rite for which it is compulsory to invite a Brāhman priest. As the communal festivals (deś jātrā) celebrated at different times by each Newar town and village, the funerals are strategic events which entail a maximal intensification of social relations and which involve the whole society. To quote a Maussian expression, they are a „fait social total".

Apparentlly (though this needs further research), there are few differences in that matter between Hindu and Buddhist castes. Nearly the same division of religious activities is to be found among both groups. Nevertheless, the Buddhist castes are characterized by less specialization as far as funeral priests are concerned. It also should be noted that Gubhāju priests perform some rituals such as ghasū, that a Brāhman would not perform for his followers without being defiled. In an earlier article (Toffin, 1982), I emphasized that communal festivals are of particular relevance to the Newar society, for they often correspond to a critical moment in the annual calendar: e.g. the passage from one season to another, temporary absence of gods or one deity, etc. The festive rituals' first aim is to dramatize this critical moment and to repair the cosmic order. In other cases, communal festivals can be understood as a return to the primeval mythical time of the origins. They reenact the crucial transition between the chaotic condition of nature and the ordered state of culture. These ritual reenactments of the act of creation and foundation of settlements thus emphasize the cosmogonic renewal of the locality and of society. They entail a rejuvenation of the socio-cosmical order, a moment in danger.

What about funerals? From where do they derive their pivotal place in religious and social life? In all cultures, death is conceived as a particularly dramatic event which threatens the close relatives of the deceased and, in a sense, the society as a whole. The event is particularly dramatic when the deceased happens to be the king himself or a local chief, for, in that case, the cosmic order itself (of which the ruler is the pillar) is temporarily in danger of disintegration. The huge funeral procession that Jayasthiti Malla is asserted to have installed for royal death ceremonies can be viewed as a giant demonstration of the indestructability of hierarchy in the face of the destructive forces of death. Among the Newars, as among most Indianized groups of South Asia, death is also an extremely polluting event. For some reason or another, it deeply defiles the relatives and those who come into contact with the corpse. To remove this pollution and ward off the dangers represented by the spirit of the deceased, numerous religious specialists are required. In my view, a third element also has to be taken into account: Newars, as Gurungs, Tamangs, Thakalis and other Tibeto-Burman ethnic groups of the hills of Nepal, are societies of death. They express their most important ideas about their society through funerals. A

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21 Some groups of families, such as the Nikhu of Patan, employ a Gubhāju priest to perform ghasū and a Brāhman priest for subsequent funeral rituals.
study of death rituals and of the role played in it by their different segments contains most of the conceptions underlying the functioning principles of their social structure.

What is most striking in the organization of these funerals are the extensive functional interrelations which come into play between the castes at that time. Brahman, Karmācārya, Josí, Tiní, Jyāpū, Nau, Putuvār, Bhā, Sāymi, Pulu, Khusah, Nay, Kusle, Pođe, all participate in the death ceremonies and have ritual functions to fulfill. As communal festivals, funerals are based, so to speak, on a deep division of liturgic duties. This is an outstanding feature of Newar caste systems as a whole: these castes are characterized in relation to one another as much by their professional occupations as by their religious obligations. It is even possible to assert that in such a society, the social roles derive from the organization of ritual activities.

On which structural principles is this division of ritual functions based? Like any other local system in Hindu South Asia, the Newar caste organization of the Kathmandu Valley – a very complete system indeed as compared with the Parbatīya’s – is rooted in the dichotomy between pure and impure. The highest castes in the hierarchy are the purest, the lowest castes are the most impure. The status of the intermediary castes is fixed by numerous criteria relating in all cases to this pervading distinction (G. Toffin, 1984: 277–306). The low castes are impure because their profession and religious obligations involve contacts with organic substances which are viewed as highly polluting. Due to their activity for instance, the Nay and the Putuvār (the wifes of the latter are midwives) are occasionally in touch with blood from women during delivery. Likewise, the barbers Nau (and the butchers Nay) are associated with hair and nails, two organic substances which become polluted as soon as they are removed from the human body. In addition, some castes are in contact with the corpse. This is the case of the Gvā agriculturists who must burn the corpse of the deceased, and of the Bhā funeral priests who have to eat a portion of the skull. These close and repeated contacts with impure substances entail a low rank in the hierarchy. And if the fishermen (Pode) have such a despised status, it is most probably because they were formerly public executioners for persons condemned to death. The opposition between the categories of purity and impurity is the cornerstone of the entire Newar society. It encompasses the prohibitions of contact, marriage and commensality, and determines the contrast between the diet of the high priest caste (in theory vegetarian) and the diet of the other castes (meat-eaters and alcohol-drinkers). It can be considered as an all-pervading principle, explaining the hierarchy in its Hindu specificity from a global point of view.

The particular position of the dominant castes in relation to the religious specialists points to another prevalent distinction in Newar society, i.e. between the sacrificer, yajamāna (pronounced jemān in Nevārī) and the Brāhmaṇ priest, in other words, between the patron, the one who organizes the sacrifice, and the one who performs the solemn rituals. Among Hindu Newars as in traditional Hindu society, this
dichotomy is adjusted to the relation between Brāhman and Kṣatriya. The former is the specialist of ritual Vedic texts, the guardian of sacred science, the repository of the knowledge of dharma, the ultimate authority on religious affairs. The latter represents the king, the warriors, the military, and he has a peculiar affinity with all matters pertaining to material goods, and economic or political action. Their relationship is complementary: a priest must have a patron, a patron must have priests. But the first one is superior to the second. It is their common sacrificial activity, performed regularly according to prescription, which sustains the cosmic and social order, and ensures the prosperity of the kingdom.

It should be noted that the yajamāna, i.e. the king, the directing body of the realm, and the dominant castes controlling the local power, are central in the socio-religious system. The yajamāna sacrificer employs different ritual specialists and compensates them. All the other castes revolve around him. The Brāhman’s funeral, for instance, does not have this striking feature of being a microcosm of society, which is expressed during the death ceremonies of dominant castes. The lower castes, on the other hand, employ a limited number of priests, themselves of inferior status, for high rank priests are not supposed to officiate in the ritual ceremonies of these families. Among these two extreme groups, Brāhmans and low castes, certain categories of relatives – the sister’s son in particular – frequently assume a quasi-priestly function.

Priests and funerals

As A. M. Hocart demonstrated in his insightful and seminal essay, the caste system is a sacrificial organization and caste is a sacerdoce. Each caste has a peculiar ritual function to perform, and a caste specialist is a ritual specialist. When a man performs his caste-determined occupation, he is in fact behaving like a priest. This theory very well applies to the Kathmandu Valley. Among the Newars, nearly all the castes have a precise religious content and have some sacred obligations to fulfill for such and such celebration or for the cult of such and such god. These ritual functions are distributed according to a fixed order. They form a global system in which the notion of hierarchy prevails.

Let us first examine the funeral priests who officiate in the śrāddha ceremonies. According to tradition, the Jośi, Karmacarya, Tini and Bhā were originally Brāhman. The Karmacarya are supposed to have been degraded because they did not follow the Brahmanic way of life correctly and because they married Śreṣṭha

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22 This, for instance, seems to be the case of the Putuvār; see G. S. Nepali (1965: 174). Indo-Nepalese (Parbatiyā) also employ the son-in-law or sister’s son to fulfill priestly functions; cf. L. Bennett (1983: 148).
women (G. S. Nepali, 1965: 177). The Joši are thought to be the descendants of Brāhman widows (idem, p. 157) – as Jaisi Bahun among Parbatiyā. Some say that they intermarried with Newar women of low rank. Moreover, I collected a legend among the Tini of Bhaktapur according to which Bhā and Tīni have been degraded from their Brahmanic status because they performed certain inauspicious rituals. The legend indicates that once upon a time a Newar king requested the service of a Brāhman priest (Rājopādhya) from Kānyakubja (= Kānauj), in India, to celebrate the familial ceremonies of the court. When he arrived in the small valley of Chitlang, situated just south of the Kathmandu Valley, this Brāhman priest died. His four sons distributed among themselves the different religious duties to be performed for funerals. The eldest, as chief mourner, accomplished kriyā, the second ate a piece of the skull of the corpse (kāṭṭo), the third performed the ghasū ritual of purification and pacification, and the youngest acted as the family priest (purohita). Among these four sons, only the eldest and the youngest retained their status of Brāhman. The second is the ancestor of the Bhā, and the third of the Tini.

Karmācārya, Joši, Tini and Bhā are thus priests of low rank. They recognize, at least in theory, the superiority of the Brāhman, the highest sacerdotal caste within society. The differentiation between higher and lower priests during funerals is mainly due to the fact that Karmācārya, Joši, Tini and Bhā come into contact during these ceremonies with the inauspicious and dangerous ghost spirit, preta, of the dead person. The Brāhman could not officiate in these rituals without being polluted. When he infringes upon the interdiction, he automatically loses his rank, which rests on the strict observation of purity rules. In fact, as long as the preta has not been changed symbolically into a benevolent ancestor, pitar (or p itr), the Brāhman is set aside, he just reads texts and does not directly interfere within the ritual. The funeral priests of lower status handle the oblations, light the lamps, etc. The Brāhman becomes active in the ceremony only after the sapindikarana, which marks the transformation of the deceased from a disembodied ghost, preta, to an ancestral spirit, pitar.

By participating in the funeral ceremonies of daś kriyā, as well as those of the twelfth and thirteenth day, the Karmācārya, Joši, Tini and Bhā priests not only propitiate the preta, they also incarnate it in some way. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the Bhā, who rank lower among those priests and who are appropriately called Pretabrāhman in that context. It should be recalled that according to the classical Hindu scheme, the priest represents the spirit of the deceased during śrāddha. He even has to eat some of the food offered to the preta, unlike the sacrifice to gods where the divinities are fed directly (C. Malamoud, 1982: 45). When sapindikarana is finished, the Brāhman may represent the protecting ancestor and act as an intermediary, as a vehicle of the offering. This fundamental distinction also explains why the Brāhman does not accept any ritual fee (dakṣiṇā) until the sapindikarana has been performed. During that interval, the gifts are given to inferior priests, such as the kāṭṭo nakegu offering, also
called pret śayā, which the Bhā must accept on the tenth (or eleventh) day after death. Only after the thirteenth day ceremony can the Brāhmaṇ accept gifts (dān). They receive the śayā dān, literally: "the gift of the bed", which consists, as Newars say, of all the articles a man needs for life: bedding, clothing, vessels, hukkā, etc. In theory, the Brāhmaṇ is also given a cow (only if the deceased is a male) to serve as a guide to the spirit of the departed on its way to the next world and to help it to cross the river of flood and filth called Vaitarani which flows between the earth and the abode of Yama (yamaloka)\textsuperscript{24}.

The kāṭṭo nakegu taken by the Bhā on the tenth day, and in which a piece of skull is mixed, deserves a particular discussion. It is a compulsory ritual on which everybody insists. It is obviously not by chance that the Bhā are often nicknamed khappar, "skull". In the Hindu world, necrophagy is usually linked with bad spirits, demons of the rākṣasa or daitya type, which are fond of human flesh and steal it around cremation grounds. This habit is also reported among some ascetics. Aghori, for instance are said to eat putrid flesh of dead bodies by scavenging on the cremation ghāts (J. Parry, 1982: 86). Nevertheless, I think that in the present case the explanation must be sought elsewhere. A parallel with India contains certain indications on that matter. In his book on popular religion of Malwa in central India L. A. Babb (1975: 97) indicates that on the last day of the mourning, local Mahābrāhmaṇ must eat a khir (boiled rice and milk) which has the form of a human body. This funeral priest starts eating it by the feet, and ends with the head. He complains that he will not be able to finish it, but he is encouraged by the relatives who give him some money. Now L. A. Babb adds: "It is said that in eating the khir, the Mahābrāhmaṇ is removing the last traces of the deceased from this world, and is providing him with substance for a body in the next" (idem, p. 97). This belief obviously corresponds to the Newar custom under discussion. In India as in Nepal, the Mahābrāhmaṇ's first task is to absorb the last remains of the corpse and to provide a body for the preta. Moreover, such a ritual is also practiced among Indo-Nepalese: the Brāhmaṇ who had to eat the kāṭṭo\textsuperscript{25} of the Śāha royal family (and, as it seems also, of Rānā) was called kāṭṭo khāna bāhun. After accepting this portion of the corpse, he received numerous gifts and was expelled from the Kathmandu Valley mounted on an elephant\textsuperscript{26}, a crown on his head, as if he was the

\textsuperscript{24} As it is well-known, this custom also exists in India; cf. J. Gonda (1962: 159) and S. Stevenson (1971: 140-141).

\textsuperscript{25} kāṭṭo is a Nepāli word. R. L. Turner (1931: 85) translates it by: "The oblations offered on the 11th day after the death". B. C. Sarma (2019 B. S.: 170), says more precisely: mareko eghārai dinmā mṛtako uddeṣyaśe khusvāine anna ra diūne māl-mattā, transl.: "On the eleventh day after death, according to the will of the departed, to feed and to give goods".

\textsuperscript{26} The elephant (and horse) are royal animals, as the cow is a Brahmanic one.
deceased king himself. This priest was extremely inauspicious and the people used to throw stones in his direction when they saw him walking.

Let us now consider those religious specialists who do not participate in śrāddha ceremonies, but who nevertheless have particular ritual obligations to fulfill during funerals. Some of them, as the barbers, the Putuvār (and partially the Nāy) play the role of purifiers: they remove the impurity caused by death. But most of these specialists (and this seems to be their main function) have to play on musical instruments and act as musicians (see Table 1). This is the case of the Kāhābūjā (= Jyāpū), Sāymi, Pulu, Khusah, Putuvār and Nāy. Among the instruments, the kāhā trumpet is the most frequent. That is not to say that this trumpet is a typical funeral musical instrument, but the tune which is played at the time of the mortuary procession is peculiar both to such an instrument and to funeral. As noted above, the blasts from that trumpet warn others that an inauspicious cortège is coming. The kāhā also seems to drive away the evil spirits from the corpse: the musicians need to play it at each crossroads, such a place being a favorite abode for all these threatening spirits. Musicians are thus in close contact with demons, a fact that can entail their low status.

Table 1 Musical instrument played by different castes during funerals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Musical instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kāhābūjā (= Jyāpū)</td>
<td>kāhā trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāymi</td>
<td>puṅgā (or kāhā) trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulu</td>
<td>ta (or tāh) cymbals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khusah</td>
<td>ghanṭā, bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putuvār</td>
<td>kāhā trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nāy</td>
<td>nāykbī drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cymbals (called khaicā in Panauti)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Like the Bhā, the Kusle, for their part, incarnate the ghost form of the deceased and have the obligation to accept the offerings presented to it. The identification between Kusle and preta is so perfect that the female relatives of the deceased must cry bitterly, as if it were the dead person who was departing for the second time, when the tailor-musician takes the food which is presented to him on the seventh day after death. This ritual specialist obviously plays the role of scapegoat on


28 Among the Indo-Nepalese of high castes, a conch-shell is blown by a Brāhmaṇ on the way to the funeral pyre; cf. V. Bouillier (1979: 139).

29 Cf. G. S. Nepali (1965: 136). According to this author, nowadays the Kusle, as substitutes for the Bhā, accept the kāṭṭo offering (idem: 140). I could not check this assertion.
these occasions. It should be added that the Kusle are also the familial, hereditary priests of Putuvâr, although this caste is ranked above them in the hierarchy. This paradoxical situation has to be attributed to the ascetic tradition Kusle still keep alive in some areas of their social and religious life.

**Conclusion**

There is a pronounced contrast between the Newars and the Indo-Nepalese (Parbatiyâ) as far as the organization of sacerdotal functions is concerned. Among the former, priestly obligations during mortuary rituals are distributed according to caste. Among the latter, they are mainly divided according to kinship ties: the sister’s son and the son-in-law are very often appointed to perform the role of the Brâhmanas. As a matter of fact, it seems that in Newar society the sacerdotal function is quite separate from kinship. On the contrary, among the Indo-Nepalese and in Hindu North India kinship is dominated by caste rules: the social system in its totality, including kin groups, is encompassed by the principle of hierarchy.

Let us return to Newar society itself. The differentiation between superior and inferior priests which has been emphasized in this paper is not restricted to the funerals. It pervades the whole religious life of Newars. Accordingly it is possible to distinguish three major types of priests in that society, each type being related to a particular group of divinities.

The Brâhman, who are at the apex of the caste hierarchy, propitiate the purest gods of Hindu pantheon, the ones corresponding to the ultimate values of dharma. These are Śiva, Viṣṇu, and their vegetarian, gentle, benevolent (śānti) wives: Lâkṣmi, Sarasvâti, Pârvâti. These divinities do not accept blood sacrifices (hi matvā dyah) and alcohol. They are mainly offered vegetables and some products from the cow (such as milk), an epitome of purity in Hinduism.

The Karmâcârya, and in some cases the Jośi and the Tinī, are the servants of divinities who drink the blood of animals (hi tvā dyah) and accept alcohol. These figures are the terrible (ugra) and awesome aspects of the gods of the first category. Among them, one can mention: Bhairava, Durgâ, Bhimsen, the numerous goddesses of Newar pantheon and most of the Âgamic divinities. All these divine figures are principally concerned with the material, concrete interests of human beings. They are much more associated with the general prosperity of the settlement and with the permanence of lineage groups than are the highest gods such as Viṣṇu and Śiva.

The Bhâ, Kusle, etc., have close affinities with evil spirits, bhūt-pret. These beings are driven away at intervals from houses and settlements where they cause disorder and illness. They are offered filthy and particularly inauspicious substances, such as

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polluted clothes, sweepings from the house, husk (as opposed to grain), etc. Most of these inferior ritual specialists are closely linked with cremation grounds, such as the Pođe, whose houses are located near the funeral pyres. The evil spirits share the same abode and certain religious elements with the gods of the second category. This explains why the Karmācārya, the Joši and Tini often come into contact with them, as was manifested during funeral rituals. It is true that some Brāhman, versed in Tantrism, are the servants of blood-thirsty goddesses. But these are the exception. Generally, Brāhman delegate their priestly functions to a Karmācārya or to another category of inferior priests. It is in fact difficult for them to participate directly in Tantric rituals: these ceremonies include animal sacrifices and alcohol offerings which endanger their purity. They need intermediary technical assistants to play this role.

This typology of sacerdotal functions is undoubtedly just a simplification of a very complex set of relationships between men and gods. A more detailed study would serve to correct to some extent the previous picture. We did not, for instance, consider the various healers and exorcists (dyah vaiki pī, baiddye, phū phāh yāy pī) who play an important role, often underestimated, in Newar religion. Moreover, these specialists ordinarily have no specific task to fulfill during mortuary rituals: they are in charge of pacifying the ghost form of the deceased only if this spirit happens to become too dangerous and poses a serious threat to living beings. Our main concern in this paper was simply to stress the strong homology which exists between the structure of the society and the structure of the pantheon. Schematically, the relationship between the vegetarian gods and the meat-eating gods is structurally parallel to the relationship between the Brāhman and inferior priests. Likewise, the evil spirits are in the same relation with the vegetarian gods as low status priests with Brāhman. The two orders, social and religious, are based on common hierarchical structures, the dichotomy between purity and impurity playing a fundamental role in both cases.

References


Reinhard Herdick

Death Ritual in Kīrtipur in Relation to Urban Space
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A death among the Newar is accompanied by numerous prescribed activities. The bereaved survivors from the family and clan (phuki) – as well, to a limited extent, as friends and acquaintances of the deceased – must perform various required obligatory acts in a definite and determined sequence; these duties extend in particular over the first year following death. The ritual acts associated with the dead relate both to the specific instance as well as to regular annual festivals; such festivals are in part celebrated in public collectively by the urban community as a whole. Various specific aspects and details of these ritual acts are carried out differently depending on the particular caste group or urban community involved. What the ritual act – in its function as a means to create order – basically achieves is a form of harmony between the transcendental and real world. That is made especially clear by a statement which can be usefully viewed in this connection: „Without progeny the ancestors remain bereft of those ritual offerings which alone guarantee their survival in the hereafter.“ (Tucci, 1969: 126). Also of importance in this regard is the warding off of any threat proceeding from the deceased.

The present paper focusses on certain specific features of the prescribed ritual act which can provide us with insight into the conceptions held by the Newar regarding their traditional urban form, thus shedding light as well on the traditional urban
culture of the Kathmandu Valley. By way of detailed illustration, it is our intention to present and describe a number of connections between ritual and urban space in its interrelation between city and surrounding countryside as well as certain interconnections between ritual acts and the smallest urban unit, namely the residential dwelling. The examples to be presented relate in the main to the town of Kirtipur and, to the extent that specific detailed questions are involved, to the caste of the Jyāpu. In an attempt to limit the scope of the study, corresponding urban festivals are only dealt with marginally, and the ancestor cult (digudyahpūja, etc.) has been completely excluded.

The complex course of events in the Newar rites of the dead has been treated in detail in G.S. Nepali (1965); Lienhard (1985) provides detailed supplementary material on Buddhist Newar. The article by Toffin which is published simultaneously in this edition deals with the different practices of the different castes at funeral rites. The spatial structures which are the focus of the present paper were first investigated and documented in the Kathmandu Valley by Gutschow (1975) and Kölver (1975/77) using funeral processional routes. These studies were then followed up and expanded by the author's own comparable investigations and the discovery of new spatial systems (1977). This research has been revised here and supplemented by further observations (1983/84).

Preliminary remarks on urban forms

The intended classification of death rites makes it first necessary to present a rough characterization of the particular urban configuration involved; aspects of historical development, urban form, the ideal conception and concrete realization of the underlying concept of the town as in idea will be dealt with briefly.¹

A number of factors acted as a brake on development and serve to cast a false light on the earlier importance of the town: these include the heavy destruction of buildings and decimation of the population associated with the conquest of the town by the Gorkhas (around the middle of the 18th century), along with unfavorable modern planning and development measures such as the building of the area-intensive university campus on Kirtipur's fields and the closing of the main irrigation canal due to the water-main of the city of Patan. It is true, however, that the current situation prevailing in the town is characterized by the presence of traditional forms which have been even better preserved as a result of these historical developments. It is possible to reconstruct the no. of inhabitants before the conquest in approximate terms using written references: it was three to six times the present population figure of 10,000.

¹ Herdick, 1982; this work attempts a detailed treatment of individual aspects and aims at a characterization of the town.
For a time, Kirtipur emerged as the fourth royal city in the Valley, controlling trade with India as the 'Gateway of Nepal' – only beginning with the 16th century did the town stand under the influence of Kathmandu and Patan. The references to the founding of the town (which relate to the period around the year 1000 A.D.) should rather be regarded as referring to the establishment of a new form of social order, since there are numerous indications of a settlement which existed during the Licchavi dynasty (200–700 A.D.): e.g. ritual objects dating from the 3rd and 6th centuries, along with various principles of spatial ordering which must be regarded as of greater antiquity, as well as traditions referring to a nine-storey palace/temple area. In accord with various legends, the present-day town-hill might indeed be viewed as one of the oldest areas of settlement in the Kathmandu Valley.

The densely compact manner of construction of the historical hill-top town is balanced off and compensated by the presence of public open spaces and the abrupt transition of the surrounding countryside. The urban density here is closely bound up with an extremely intensive agricultural utilization of the surrounding fields as well as with collective patterns of living and the many overlying forms of utilization in the domestic and public spheres associated with such patterns of living. The public open spaces are characterized by manifold features ranging from large-size specific buildings and structures all the way down to simple and inconspicuous "signs" which are nonetheless of considerable importance for the local resident (such as ritual stones in the pavement, for example).

For the local resident of Kirtipur, these features represent manifestational components of his/her more immediate and broader social and physical/structural environment. In contrast with the external image it presents, urban space is strictly ordered in the mind of local residents in terms of models in which practically all sacred individual objects, buildings and structures, streets, residential quarters and surrounding fields have been brought into interrelation and systematized in spatial terms. There are two ideal levels underlying these model-based conceptions of order: (a) a specific cosmic world-view, which also encompasses social order and (b) an iconographic complex of symbols based on myth. Single individual elements can be integrated into various different systems and ideas projected onto realities which would appear to be unordered without causing any contradiction.

The regional living space is, in the view of the local resident, divided into several concentrically structured symbolic zones; the most important of these is the contrastive pair (supplementing each other) of urban space and the surrounding fields. Characterized by various features, the "degree of artificiality" increases as one proceeds inward from the periphery; in this way, the town becomes a "sacred" space endowed with particular cosmic qualities (artificiality as an expression of intellect, of non-nature, the pure presence of Brahma; see: Pieper, 1974: 105). In line with cosmic analogies, this contrast can also be viewed as "conscious" (town) vs. "unconscious" (fields), as "male" vs. "female" spheres.

Urban space likewise corresponds to a large number of ordering principles. The most important model can be conceptualized as follows: the ritually delimited
urban space is subject to an ever increasing degree of structuring in terms of a
definite symmetric pattern involving 3 steps or operations (cf. Map 1). The first step
is a division into 2 areas of equal size along a north-south axis: Devarata in the west,
Śivarata in the east. Step two redvides each half into 3 superordinate residential
quarters; these are once more divided into two subordinate quarters in a third
divisional step. The town is thus divided into six or twelve residential zones, and in
such a manner that small subareas of the town reflect the basic pattern of the town
as a whole. In association with the system of streets and town gates, this zonal
model corresponds to a faithful copy of the cosmological concept. The anthropo-
morphic features can be interpreted as the primal androgyny of Śiva or Brahmā.
This theoretical model is related to concrete features of urban reality. The
residential quarters (tvāh or chē), whose limits can be determined quite precisely,
are viewed as a residential dwelling house in the broader sense, i.e., they also
constitute a sacred and spatial-social unit. The use of the term chē makes this
abundantly clear: it can stand for a house, a dwelling community (household
communal unit) and on occasion also for a residential quarter and every type of
temple.
The three principal components of the social structure institutionalized in guṭhi
organizations — phuki clan, area-oriented federations and caste groupings — are also
closely linked with the structural ordering of the quarters. These principal social
components are likewise manifest in the forms of ritual act in the cult of the dead,
even if certain complexes of rites tend to follow purely Hindu patterns. However,
Newar special features and Buddhist influences can be observed, as indicated by the
brief historical retrospect. There was a less pronounced process of Hinduization
here in comparison to other cities in the Valley. The proportion of Śiva Mārgi to
Buddha Mārgi (20% : 80%) lends support to he hypothesis that the Buddhists had
a dominant position prior to the kingship of the Hindu city.
We have already alluded to the fact that key social institutions are related to „static“
symbolic models. A decisive perspective in this connection is the „dynamicization“
of these conceptions of space. This involves both sacred festivals celebrated in the
house as well as large urban festivals of the urban community. What is of particular
interest to us, for example, is the manner in which physical/constructional space is
activated, defined, delimited or experienced as a unit by means of an act of
physically occupying or passing through his space.
These preliminary remarks have attempted to outline and delimit the basic theme of
this study. Further comments will now focus on the following theses:

- Specific sequences of ritual action related to constructed space within
  the rites of the dead elucidate and illustrate patterns of order in the
  total presentation (e.g. using cartographic representations) which
  correspond to ideal conceptions; cosmic models or anthropomorphic
  features and relations are of principal interest to us in this regard.
TVĀH — TOL
STADTQUARTIERE U. IHRE THEORETISCHEN ORDNUNGSMODELLE
(historical wards and their theoretical arrangement)

TEILUNG DER STADT IN
2, 6 U. 12 STADTBEREICHE
(subdivision in 2, 6 and 12 districts)

WEIBLICH/MANNLICH
(female/male)

DEVARATA

SIVARATA

6 HAUPT-QUARTIERE
(6 mainwards)

GACHE

THĀBĀHĀ

KURUSĀ

MĀNATVĀH

KUȚUJHOLĀ

12 QUARTIERE
(12 wards)

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

1 DEUDHOKĀ
2 GACHE
3 SAMALA
4 THĀBĀHĀ
5 SĀGĀLA
6 KURUSĀ
7 ITĀCHĒ
8 TANANĪ
9 MĀNATVĀH
10 TŪJHVĀ
11 KUȚUJHVALĀ
12 BĀHIRĪ GĀŪ

BĀGHA BHAIRAVA
KOMPLEX

TRENnungslinie zwischen
DEVARATA U. SIVARATA
(borderline between Devarata and Sivarata)

KĪRTI PUR
MASSstab 1 : 5 000
8°5′

Map 1: Historical quarters and their arrangement
Map 2: Routes for the funeral procession
Spatial systems or spatial interconnections of ritual acts allow for reconstructions or for inferences in respect to historical or contemporary processes: urban development in terms of construction, spatial-social interconnections, social structure.

Temporal sequencing and the site of the ritual action in major festivals are connected with phases in rice planting; these can be viewed in connection with the renewal of creation and critical phases and junctures in life (as, for example, death).

I. Description of dynamic and static systems

1. Systematic structure by means of ritual routes

The procession of the dead (Sabajātrā or Silā) follows a traditional, precisely specified path from the house of the deceased to the cremation grounds at the river (mašān). The route leads first more-or-less through the area of the town and then on through the surrounding fields. One notes immediately certain prescribed features: in most cases, there is an additional fixed point on the route involving passing through a „gate for the dead,“ a specific town gate, or the path proceeds first uphill, or the route taken is not the shortest path between the points involved.

If one collates all the processional routes for the dead of all houses in the town into a total overall structure, what emerges is a spatial systematization comparable to a river system (cf. Map 2). The bundling together of route branchings and main paths makes clear the presence of spatial units ranging from single dwelling complexes all the way up to larger urban areas. The „watersheds“ – to retain the analogy to a river system – constitute the borders between the spatial units. This functional connection can be seen with particular clarity in the zone at the edge of town where there is a separation between urban area and external sphere, a separation which basically corresponds to the ritual town limits. Peripherally located dwelling units, which in the past were inhabited mainly only by low-caste families, do not participate in the symbolic qualities of urban space in connection with the rites for the dead and must be bypassed.

The following should be noted as a distinguishing feature of processional routes for the dead in contrast to other ritual routes: the paths, in particular the main central path running down the central axis of the town, are not identical with the processional routes of the gods and the faithful (jātrā) and cross the ritual town limits at another point.

Various interpretations are possible for the spatial fixing of a processional path. This linear path between two points takes on a static, practically timeless character by dint of its fixing as a prescribed processional path. It is considered to be the „path of
the fathers" or the "path of the ancestors" proceeding from the house (as place of birth and death) – this places emphasis on the patrilineal form of society, since as a rule the wife takes up residence in the house of her husband, so that there is a distinction between house of birth and death.

Pieper accounts for the importance of fixing of the path in terms of the notion that the route represents the beginning of the journey through bardo to the next incarnation. At another point, emphasis is placed on the major significance of the town gate as a passing through the mouth of Brahmā in the sense of a sacred act. (Pieper, 1974: 106, 173). Such an act takes on a special meaning in connection with the route of the dead. There are analogies to the geometric structure found in certain mandalas, in which the wall (as a ritual boundary) marks off the "sacred city" or the "city of Brahmā" and the gates are directed at everything lying beyond the sphere of our consciousness or which dissolves such consciousness (mandalas – cities are also conceived in terms of them – are considered among other things as cosmic-magic diagrams). Crossing over the symbolic urban threshold can be viewed here as a movement from the "conscious" to the "unconscious" sphere. Similar to when crossing the boundary of the residential quarter, the musicians in the funeral procession change the piece they are playing at the gate and the procession pauses briefly, thus underlining the threshold character of the spot. The river at the cremation grounds represents in approximate terms the boundary zone of the more narrowly delimited living space of town dwellers; at the same time, symbolically it forms the threshold between this world and the world beyond.

A similar system of paths arises in connection with a ritual on the seventh or tenth day after the day of death (dubyêkegu; time different depending on the caste involved). What we are dealing with here is a prescribed ritual route to be taken by the survivors from the house of the deceased to a specific pool (pukhû) or spring (gā), at which point an entire complex of ritual purifications takes place. In contrast to the act described above, the end-point of the route is located between the urban area and the surrounding fields, though likewise once again outside the ritual town limits.

If these paths are projected onto the total urban complex, it is divided into eight clearly delimited spheres: eight spatial units, each of which is associated with another body of water (Map 3). Transversing of the ritual town boundary takes place at the thresholds of ten of the total of 12 conceptualized city gates. Although nowadays these gates and the town wall have largely been destroyed, it is still possible to recognize the symbolic character (as well as systematization) of these "threshold passages" as a result of this linkage with ritual action which continues to survive. Ten gates are included, since on the one hand certain areas of the town occasionally lay claim to two gates, while two gates, on the other hand, remain taboo. The taboo gates are the gate for the dead and the outer gate to the central temple complex (the central gate on the north), a gate which is avoided as a matter of principle in all ritual acts.
SCHEMATISCHE DARSTELLUNG DER
RÄUMLICHEN ORDNUNG BEIM TOTENRITUS
WEGE BEIM DUBYÈKEGU-RITUS
(funeral rites and their arrangements in the districts)
(the routes with the "Dubyèkegu" - rites)

Namen der Teiche
(names of the pools)
1 CAKE PUKHÜ
2 PARI PUKHÜ
3 CAKE PUKHÜ
4 KUSHOLA
5 TAGA WAPI GÁ
6 MABHI PUKHÜ
7 DHOLA PUKHÜ
8 NA PUKHÜ

KIRTI PUR
MASSSTAB 1:5000 REINHART HERDICK 1975
0 100 200 M

Map 3: Dubyèkegu
There are a number of other ritual paths associated with rites for the dead, but these were not investigated completely and in their totality.

During the Newar months Gûla and Yôla (ca. July/August) a pûjā takes place in Kirtipur every morning (on Saturdays in the evening as well): this pûjā is performed by members of the caste of Sâymi (oil pressers). A group of approximately ten men organized by the Sâymiguthi proceeds in processional form blowing long animal horns through the streets. The simple sequence of notes is altered during the second month. The sound of the horns is supposed to be especially suitable for „use“ by the dead in order to reach „heaven.“ Of decisive importance in this connection is a visitation to two main urban deities: Indrâyanî as Mârtkā and Bâgha Bhairava (these two deities appear frequently in association with the cult of the dead; connections are described further on below). On a particular day toward the end of the ritual period (in 1982 this fell on August 29th) the route is expanded: start in the respective residential quarter (tvâh), passage through the gate of the dead and ritual bath at the Bakhu River at the cremation grounds (depa, māsân), then returning accompanied by the „proper“ music and veneration at the shrines mentioned above. Some groups also pay a visit to the principal Buddhist shrine in the town (Cilâcva).

There is another additional prescribed route in connection with the pîtrpûjā (the time-period in which the rite can take place was between Sept. 24th and Oct. 6th in 1983). This involves veneration of the dead to the third generation. A prescribed route from the house of the deceased to the cremation grounds corresponding to the route system for the dead was observed in connection with this festival (the house in question was located in the Dyah-ðhokā section of town). The return route was not identical with the path taken by the dead, since the town gate associated with this quarter of town was also passed through. The Vajrâcārya priest present during the entire ceremony performed a pûjā only on the return route at the Indrâyanî shrine near the town.

There are, however, differing practices in effect in the eastern half of town. It was reported that members of the Jyâpu and Josî castes in the quarters Muanatvâh, Cîthu, Tûjhva and Tanâni head for a site adjacent to a water-channel (dhûgacâ) near a burial field for small children (macagâ) instead of proceeding to a site for cremation. The members of the Vajrâcârya caste („Buddhist priests“) likewise living in the sections of town mentioned are distinguished by having a totally different destination: they proceed to the main Buddhist shrine in the town (Cîlâcva and perform a corresponding pûjā south of the main stûpa; the pûjā-material contained in the vessel (kvalâ) is thrown into a small hole.
2. Inclusion of the Chvāsā religious objects in the rites for the dead

Chvāsā cult objects are venerated during various domestic festivals, e.g. the initiation of small children or young men, the construction of houses, the ritual purification of houses (Gathāmuga), birth and death. Devkota, who has done research in Kirtipur, describes them as Āju-Aji (as representation of a double deity), as spirits or souls of "grandfather and grandmother" with a negative omen, equivalent to a bhīt (Devkota, 1983: 34). On the basis of our own investigations, it would appear that the Chvāsā cult objects are seen only as Ajimā ("grandmother").

Interestingly enough, the highly important town deities Bāgha Bhairava and Cīlācva (Buddha) and a certain Gaṇēśa (in Cithu-tvāḥ) are called Ājudyah. Both in connection with these deities and the Chvāsā, it is conceivable that they originated from some ancestral, clan or tribal deity, possibly in the form of the interrelated pair Āju and Ajimā, or with Ajimā as a subgroup.

In almost all instances the deity is represented by an (aniconic) large stone; the inhabitants of housing complexes which are interconnected spatially or the residents of larger-size urban areas have a relationship with a specific Chvāsā. Our own research indicates that a distinction is made in attribution between birth associated with a "favorably disposed" deity (bhīchvāsā) and death as associated with the representation of an "unfavorably disposed" deity (mabhīchvāsā). Kaladyah and the two types of Chvāsā deities were not sufficiently distinguished one from the other in earlier studies. The elements shared in common between these three deities are not readily evident, since they are worshipped on occasions which are not easily comparable, although in many cases they have the identical cult site; single occurrences or linking-up of two of the three deities also appear.

The placenta and umbilical cord are also placed there after birth (bhīchvāsā). After death, a food plate is put there for the deceased on the day of the major purification ceremony of the survivors; before this, on the day of the procession for the dead, certain ritual objects indicate to the inhabitants of the quarter that there has been a death (mabhīchvāsā). Along with vessels, clothes etc., three sun-baked bricks that have been tied up with tice straw are also placed there. According to Nepali, these are objects which symbolically facilitate the building of a house or (more generally) make possible a life in the hereafter. (Nepali, 1965: 125, 129, 136). Informants, in contrast, report that these three stones symbolize a kitchen. Prior to performance of the ritual act at the Chvāsā, they are spread out in front of the threshold of the house (their three sides representing an oven) in order to symbolically prepare a final meal for the deceased.

Both interpretations are interconnected to a certain extent, since the decisive definition of the static ideal order of the house consists in the ritual act associated with the preparation of food and communal eating (the communal food-sharing unit; Herdick, 1985/2: 268), while the three stones symbolically serve to represent
the three levels of the dwelling. The symbolic structure of the house is also associated with "male" and "female" attributions, which are seen here in analogy to the earth of the bricks and in the straw stalks of the string with which they are bound up.

The location of the Mabhī- and Bhīchvāsā sites can be seen by consulting Map 4 and 5. The lines connecting them reveal a certain order. Both Chvāsā types are located on the southern slope of the town, with one exception in the north in connection with one private dwelling. This southern orientation is apparently associated with birth and death. It should be noted in this regard that southern fields are attributed to the god of death Yama, while, on the other hand, we also find that the south is associated with the functions of life and sun (celestial meridian) in terms of the spatial order of the compass based on polarities. (Lauf, 1976: 164).

The Bhīchvāsā shows both an inner and outer row, while the Mabhīchvāsā can only be found on the outer side. The symbolic qualities of urban space are not disturbed by the Bhīchvāsā. In contrast, the Mabhī objects all lie outside the ritual boundary of the town since they apparently have a certain inimical character. The exception here is the wedge-like notch in the southeast of town connected with the residential quarters of the Nāy (caste of butchers; cf. below).
3. Religious objects in the area of the cremation grounds (depa)

The principal cremation grounds (depa) in Kirtipur are located on the left bank (geographically) of the Bakhu River to the west of the town; these grounds have a number of special features of historical importance. Its arrangement differs from that of more recent cremation sites, which consist basically only of a step-wise series of fortifications at the water's edge and cremation platforms (maśāṅghāt) lying between these structures.

In comparing the location of the depa with that in other towns in the Valley (Gutschow, 1982: 41, 118, 163), one notes that paths leading to the river may be oriented in all directions except that of directly north. Moreover, both banks of the river are, in principle, possible as sites; one of these is then apparently selected specifically, as is indicated by the presence of a number of bridge crossings. Paśupatināth and Varanasi (India), however, are characterized by their left-bank location. Common to all cremation grounds (including Varanasi) is the fact that their location is associated with a northward bend in the river (either flowing from or to the north), unless the river flow is already oriented in this direction; this common orientational feature may appear more or less pronounced in a given cremation site.

The cremation grounds mentioned in Kirtipur are used by almost all of the town's inhabitants (95%). This is in fact the only corresponding such site in the town, if one leaves aside the special status of the caste of the Jogi (a status which they enjoy in all towns) and the question of changes in the situation which have come about in recent decades.

The layout is dominated by two aniconic cult objects (cf. Map 12): Bhairava rock block and the Indrāyaṇī stone. The Bhairava pīgā is the largest such free-standing rock block in the town, and indeed in the region – it measures approx. 3 m in height and width, and is worshipped exclusively within the framework of cremation of the dead. The remaining deities of the Aṣṭamāṭrā (Eight Mothers) are aligned in association – and in an even smaller aniconic form – with the Indrāyaṇī Māṭrā pīgā which is oriented toward the NW. The pīgā group is located at the inner edge of circumambulatory path; in the center there stands a vāglo tree, identified with Viṣṇu.

Of characteristic importance is a small brook which flows into the Bakhu River and divides the entire area in two. Just as Indrāyaṇī and Bhairava are each assigned to one side or half of the grounds, each half also has one ghāṭ for the ritual acts at the river's edge. Āgā Bva is an additional cult site located between Indrāyaṇī and a pāṭī (an arbor-like structure). It is worshipped in connection with the pitṛ purī (cf. p. 12 above; buataye); the sacrificial objects are given to the caste of Pode (sweepers).

Finally, another aniconic cult object is located on the opposite side of the brook: Hadriścandra lō. Coins are sacrificed there after the cremation ceremony. A legend speaks about a king of the name, who gave away all he owned, regarded himself from then on as a servant and collected some sort of tax on the dead.
There are a total of seven cremation sites for the individual members of the various castes and the gods; the form of these sites is a flat, trough-shaped earth depression. All sites are on the same level with the exception of that for the Pođe and the gods. The sites are as follows:

- **khvāhpāh**, the masks of the gods; hill-like elevation, cremation within the framework of the Jala Pyākhā (cf. below).
- all „pure“ castes (80% of the population); located near the Bhairava rock formation.
- Khusaḥ (sedan-chair/litter-carriers); located to the right next to the main cremation site.
- Sāymī (oil-pressers); to the left of the main cremation site.
- Nāy (butchers); outer area to the right.
- Duś, Pū, Dvā (bride-carriers, painters of sacred objects, field watchmen); outer area to the left.
- Pođe (sweepers); down below near the river.

II. Historical and modern orders – preservation and change

1. Historical and social aspects

Exact descriptions of the Hindu rites for the dead can already be found in ancient Hindu ritual texts. In contrast, however, there are only short references (in respect to special gates for the dead) when it comes to the question of the routes for the dead. Early Buddhism is also believed to apparently have had a tradition of such routes for the dead (Kölver, 1977: 52). The practice of observing the rites for the dead – including keeping to prescribed processional paths – is still today a matter of great importance; one might indeed say that it constitutes the only broader area of ritual practice – the only focal point for traditional forms of social organization – which still survives today intact. The importance of the routes becomes particularly evident if they constitute the only passage across corresponding functional areas such as plots of land with ruins or latrine areas and the like. One frequently can note that such paths and locations of cult objects must indeed be of greater antiquity than certain specific town structures which can be historically dated. There is useful evidence contained among the otherwise often scarce material. However, we will not have the opportunity within the framework of this particular study to go into all the complex facts and interrelationships so as to substantiate the presence of specific spatial arrangements and structures.

The system of the paths for the dead functions to exclude one of the 12 quarters from the ritually delimited area of the town; the boundary corresponds to the former town wall (cf. Maps 1 and 2). This indicates that the system of routes predates the introduction of the model of residential town quarters. The routes for the dead also assign a portion of the lowest castes to the „inner“ area of the town. The situation as regards the Pođe should be checked once more to see whether the
Map 6: The arrangement in the districts and their superimposed system – historical dwelling areas compared with zones recording to funeral rites.

left: the routes of the Byêkegu-rite; right: the routes for the funeral procession to the river Bakhu.

--- the borders of the historical residential-quarters (tvāh)

--- border which deviate from those of the residential-quarters

--- the fixed routes during funeral rites

locale remains within the town area after traversing some 350 m of path. However, the assigning of the Nay to the „inner“ area is quite clear; nonetheless, the main jātrā route – adjoining built-up areas are considered to be sacredly privileged territory – bypasses the Nay areas by means of a secondary route, i.e., a direct path was avoided. The areas for the Mabhichvāṣā (cf. above) – classified as „threatening“ – are also pulled inward over the „later“ ritual boundary, but only in the vicinity of the Nay quarters.

If one superimposes a map of the system of the routes for the dead onto one with the boundaries of the residential quarters, the spatial complexes of the connected ramifications and branchings of the paths coincide with the quarter boundaries. To put it more precisely: the paths – aside from a few exceptions – cross the boundaries only at system-determined „required points“ (cf. Map 6). If one supplements this by superimposing the route system associated with the rites of purification
so as to shed light on the situation prevailing in the inner peripheral zones, one finds that this likewise largely coincides. This agreement when routes are conflated is not present in the inner heart of the town due to the differing units of urban residential division there.

The system of paths for the dead is characterized by the presence of a spatial order extending over caste boundaries. This is the case in respect to both the ritually delimited town area and the adaptation of the system to the residential quarter units. Large areas of the Chväsā cult objects similarly extend over various castes. It thus would seem likely to conclude that these systems are more ancient than and predate the institutions of caste order and Hindu kingship; at the least, the process of Hinduization has been less pronounced. An important point to be emphasized in this connection is that the principal town model with its system of division into residential quarters is also confirmed (and/or defined) by the rites for the dead.

The connection between rites for the dead and the spatial ordering of residential quarters is also evident in the more important annual festivals. Thus, for example, in the above-described Sāymī- or Gülapūjā (cf. p. 8), a group that goes on down to the river is organized in every residential quarter. In the Gājātra (Gūlajātra) – held to commemorate the dead and for the purpose of ritual purification – the aspect of residential quarter also plays a role. Thus, the residents of the quarter which had the largest number of deaths over the previous year are the ones who organize the jāṭrā. Moreover, the children hang the masks which they wear in the jāṭrā onto the most important referential deity of the quarter (Gānēśa).

Certain specific forms present in the rites for the dead point to the existence of a previously smaller urban area, namely the upper town extending along the rounded summit of the hill. Not only does the town Mātrkā Indrāyanī play an important role at the cremation grounds; she also stands in the centre of attention in the main festival of the town. However, the jāṭrā route taken by the goddess encompasses only the residential quarters in the upper part of town. Furthermore, the two rows of Bīchväśā cult objects which extend in an outward direction point to an expansion of the town. In addition, Mabhīchväśā and Bhīchväśā as well as Kaladyāḥ are separated in the area of the upper town, while they appear in one and the same location in the lower town and in new residential areas. Another aspect worth noting in this connection is the presence of large, connected quarters of the Nāy and Sāymī in the lower part of town. The Nāy are considered to be „impure,“ a categorization which was also previously applied to the Sāymī as well.

A special area with the upper town takes on structural importance in connection with the pitrpuṭā: the residents of the eastern quarters are assigned a special position (cf. description of the puṭā). We note that it is pretty much precisely those quarters which are involved here that are the ones located around the central Buddhist shrine in the town (Cilācva-stūpa). This area is also where all the bāhā/bahā, larger stūpas, nani courtyards, etc. are located. To a certain extent, it presents the aspect of a Buddhist unit oriented toward the principal sanctuary. However, any attempt to
classify the area in terms of a pre-Hindu framework must remain speculative for the moment, even if the sacred cult area itself is regarded in legend as having been established by Asoka.

It is also worth recalling in this connection that among the Vajrācārya the area of the cremation grounds is „replaced“ by the central stupa in the veneration of the dead, though not in an actual instance of death.

Several social linkages should also be elaborated in connection with the various cremation sites. The principal cremation grounds, which are quite evidently located as close as possible to the Bhairava cult object, are meant for all the „pure“ castes and thus also for higher castes, such as Brahmans. There is an unusual pattern of assignment in the case of several castes which only „accept water from Brahmans“: these are the Gāthu, Kau and Nau (gardeners, blacksmiths and barbers). A certain hierarchy can also be noted in the pattern of caste location to the side of the main square: the further away from this square, the lower the social ranking of the caste. The only exception to this is the cremation site of the masks of the gods; optically it is located on a higher level.

2. Modern situation and change

Between the years 1975–1983 there were a number of changes introduced in layout and form in the area of the cremation grounds. Both existing ghāts (fortified bathing areas) were built during this period. The ghāt located up-stream existed even earlier, but was set back and on the portion of the bank which is now covered over with silt. Thus, all the rites directly connected with the deceased at the river used to take place without the framing structure of steps (cf. below p. 31). A certain process of accommodation to Hindu practices can be observed in this change. A tree was planted at the Indrāyaṇi pigā and a fortified circumambulatory path for veneration was also added. The main pigā underwent a spatial orientation as a result of this measure: 300° NW in the direction of the cremation grounds. A tree formerly located there is reputedly supposed to have burst apart the sacred structure due to its inordinate growth. At the order of a Brahman, a large rock block was supposedly removed from the site and employed for constructional purposes; this block had generally legible Tibetan letters (a gumba is located nearby above the site) on its surface.

The Vajrācārya („Buddhist priests“) introduced a decisive change. The point of departure was most probably the fact the Vajrācārya no longer wished to share the cremation grounds at the Bakhu River with the other „pure“ castes. This led to a dispute between the Vajrācārya and Jyāpu; the latter are the most numerous (65 %) caste in town. A representative (dvāre), at this time a Jyāpu, enjoined the corresponding guthis from performing the requisite services in the case of a Vajrācārya death (the guthis reportedly were even threatened). In response, the Vajrācārya and Śākya changed their cremation grounds site, transferring it from the Bakhu River to the west of town to the Bāgmati River located east of town. The change is said to have already been instituted some 45 years ago. This alteration
then led to a change in the system of paths associated with the procession for the
dead (cf. Herdick 1982: 217; this is an earlier documentation done at a time when
the underlying reasons were still unknown).
Since that time, the services for the dead have been organized inside one's own
caste. In this connection, the following additional aspects have also come to light.
Outsiders were of the opinion that the Vajrācārya were able to do this only on the
basis and by dint of their social status. The Vajrācārya themselves cite as a reason
that the Bāgmatī River has the ritually purest water and that at this particular point
the river has already absorbed the water of the seven other holy rivers of the Valley.
A secondary reason also mentioned was the very „filthy“ condition of the old paths
for the dead.
The new system of paths goes past all the bāhā (former monasteries). An
assignment of specific caste members to „their“ specific bāhā would also appear to
play a role. The main shrine is also circumambulated in clockwise direction
according to the customary form of worship while moving along the routes for the
dead. The symbolically central eastern gate becomes the gate for the dead, thus
located to the opposite of the main gate for the dead on the central western side.
The fact that this change in route is quite recent in origin is also reflected in the
circumstance that his eastern gate is not considered taboo in comparison to the main
gate for the dead in connection with the routes taken during the rite of purification
dubyikegu). In the new system of routes, the quarter of the Pođe (regarded as an
„impure“ caste) is also traversed. The cremation grounds themselves are in keeping
with typical masānghāt structures and layout. The cremation grounds are apparently
also used by non-Newar groups (Gaine, Damāi) living at its periphery. A more
detailed investigation of this aspect must still be undertaken. It is also yet clear
whether the Indrāyaṇī pigā located some distance away, is included in the
ceremonies at the cremation grounds.
Gutschow's studies in other cities demonstrate that a city can have several different
cremation grounds (Gutschow, 1982: 163). To be sure, in Gutschow's material
there are no spatial overlappings between the areas of origin for a given site.
However, a cremation site in Patan is mentioned as not having been set up until the
19th century.
The altered situation in Kirtipur clearly shows the importance of separate cremation
sites and the fact that the „Buddhist priestly caste“ identifies itself nowadays with
Hindu precepts of purity and with the privileges of the higher castes. At the same
time, special features are preserved elsewhere, as, for example, when springs (gā) are
visited instead of ponds in connection with the major rites of purification
dubyikegu), or when the stūpa is visited instead of the cremation grounds during the
pitṛpūjā.
The Brahmans – who came to Kirtipur to live only about 100 years ago – have
gained in influence as a result of this dispute, since they share the cremation
grounds with other castes. Thus, they too were asked for their opinion in a
controversy involving the proper route for the paths for the dead in the area of the
ritual town boundary. The very type of question reflects the degree of importance still attached today to the inclusion of an area in the inner or outer urban sphere. This was taken to such extremes that some people wanted to break open a house wall to install a new door to the inner city area so as not to have to redirect the route for the dead around the town.

Staring with the end of the Rānā period—and with increasing intensity since 1975—new residential houses were built peripherally around the town: heterogenous construction patterns in the western and southern peripheral zone and a connected area of new buildings in the east over the course of recent years. Some 130 house-based family communities live in this new quarter in the east; approx. 85% of these communities consist of local Newar. The quarter is characterized by commerce and trade, including the sale of modern industrial products. Our interest here is focussed solely on developments in respect to the rites for the dead, a detailed aspect which has been examined carefully and at length in a study on new cults in Kirtipur (Herdick 1985/2: 251–282 and cf. Maps 7 and 8).

The situation prevailing in respect to the Mabhī cult objects is as follows: In areas to the west and south, the older region of urban expansion, no new objects were erected; rather, only those which were already in existence were used—these objects were linked to residential areas within the ritual town boundaries. We have already made mention of the representation of Mabhī-, Bhīchvāśā and Kaladyah together in the same place in all new residential areas. It should be pointed out additionally that these deities previously were frequently not represented by means of an object; simply to determine the cult site as such is deemed sufficient.

In the new residential quarter mentioned, three new cult sites for the Mabhīchvāśā were set aside, this in contrast to the practice in the outer areas which had been built up earlier. In a manner similar to what holds in the ritually delimited urban area, connected zones of reference extending over several castes came into being; i.e., residents of a continuous and connected residential zone were oriented to the same cult object. If one also takes into consideration the superordinate referential deities associated with these three areas (Ganēśa, Kṣetrapāla), it seems clear that what we have here is a quarter which developed in the main quite independently from the ritual urban area; i.e., a quarter which has its own cultic structure in a traditional sense, although it has not as yet developed its own forms of organization for ritual services rendered to the dead.

The total overview of the routes for the dead (cf. Map 8) likewise presents us with structurings analogous to that found in connection with the traditional quarters: there is a systematic branching of the paths which serves to define the entire quarter as a unit. In addition, the circuit around the sacred urban area defines the quarter as an external or outlying zone. Of noteworthy significance is the clockwise direction for traversing the circuit; this is all the more interesting due to the fact that the opposite direction was predicted earlier (when there had not as yet been any deaths)—the reason given for this was that the distance was shorter. In response to renewed inquiries regarding the altered direction, the justification given for the change was
Map 7: Chvāsā Ajimā and the designation of family groups which belong to them; (area of new buildings in Nayā Basar).

- Mabhī + Bhīchvāsā (and Kaladyāḥ)

the area of the family groups belonging to the various stones

the whole new area as a unity (belongs to one Gāṇesā)

Map 8: The routes for the funeral procession from the area of new building (Nayā Basar) to the cremation grounds (depa).

- ritual border of the town
- the new area as a unity
- funeral routes
- cremation ground (depa)
the customary venerational circumambulation of cult objects (in this case, the town itself).\(^2\) The rites for the dead scrutinized here make it clear that the cultural influence of the \textit{phuki} clans among the Newar – clans who share the main burden for carrying out these rites – continues to be very strong.

### III. Symbolic dimensions of individual aspects

1. The concept of order underlying the residential dwelling

Here once again the problem is to relate specific acts in the veneration of the dead to constructionally fixed symbolic structures. The dwelling house constitutes the smallest symbolic spatial unit in the town; it is linked with the smallest social unit in the town, namely the household communal unit. There are parallels to the ideal notion of the town, as, for example, in the ritual boundary (external wall), entrance (door) and at the cosmic (or cosmic-anthropomorphic) level of meaning, etc. Apparently certain differences exist when it comes to the identical structural pattern of four storeys present in each house. However, the vertical structure of the house also corresponds to a specific, concentrically structured model of the town, as, for example, in connection with caste-linked precepts of purification. There is an analogy in the stepwise symbolic enhancement of value: in the house proceeding from below to above; in town, moving from the outside toward the center (Herdick, 1985/1: 387). Additional interrelationships with the levels of the house will now be examined below in greater detail (cf. Map 9).

Associating specific ritual acts with individual storey levels reveals a principle of ordering: the house is brought into relation with the various individual stages of the „life process“ of its inhabitants and with the very process of creation. This is a process advancing from below upward, and one which has been repeating itself anew for generations. The following is a rough schematic representation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storey Level</th>
<th>Symbol (in parentheses)</th>
<th>Ritual Act</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor</td>
<td>(chēdi)</td>
<td>placing of corpse on bier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Upper Storey</td>
<td>(mātā)</td>
<td>birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Upper Storey</td>
<td>(cvatā)</td>
<td>symbolic death, process of purification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Upper Storey</td>
<td>(petā)</td>
<td>symbolic entrance into heaven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^2\) It is quite possible that the route followed by the paths for the dead around the town in clockwise direction in accordance with the course of the sun may also have played a role in connection with an „upper town“ which existed earlier. The main throughfare of the funeral procession nowadays lies outside the upper part of town and would thus exhibit the same direction around the town.
We will now comment on a number of interconnections and possibilities of interpretation. The bottom storey where the corpse is laid out on a bier – is associated with the nether-world or with „mother earth.“ This section is therefore not inhabited in a traditional dwelling; as a result of its small windows (at least this was originally the case), it takes on a „dark“ and „earthy“ character. Thus, Nepali speaks about „mother earth“ and the infliction of a wound in connection with the construction of a house (Nepali, 1965: 60–62). Birth takes place on the first floor. The windows customarily are darkened before and during the act of giving birth; in this act, the character of the ground floor is equated with the situation of the still unborn child. The first storey „inhabited by human beings“ can also be viewed as a „bright and conscious“ sphere as contrasted with the realm of what is „dark and unconscious.“ The ground floor itself is associated with the Mothers (Mātrkā) and with the process of becoming and dying.

Something tantamount to a kind of process of purification takes place on the second floor during certain festivals; this process is connected with the basic question regarding the existence of man. One such example: in the annual Māpūjā, one of the dimensions involved is the veneration of Yama and of the „self“ in connection with the immortalization of the ties between members of the family. Another example is the second festival of veneration for the elderly on a specific birthday (jākva) during

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*Map 9: Cycle of repetition, related to house and residents*
which the symbolic death of the person takes place with ceremonies similar to those found in the laying-out of the corpse and its cremation (Jyāpu in Kirtipur). The third (and last) veneration of the elderly is associated with the uppermost storey, the most sacred section of the house containing the cooking and eating area and the house deities. After the elderly have been transported like semi-deities three times through the town along the jātrā route, they are pulled up on the outside of the house to the third storey; according to Nepali, this is equivalent to a symbolic entrance into heaven (Nepali, 1965: 120, 121).

One is struck by the equating in certain ways of the uppermost and lowest storeys in the case of a death. Thus, the ground floor is characterized and marked as a sacred area using a natural red pigment (sicā) only during the laying-out of the corpse on a bier, while this practice of marking in red is done along with every festive act or act of purification on the third floor. Or: the symbolic feeding of the deceased (and/or the soul of the deceased) takes place at ground level outside in the front area (pikhā) and by means of a vessel hung outside on the trough (pākhāja khāye).

This front area associated with a house and extending into the street (pikhā) – usually marked by a cult object embedded in the street (pikhālukhālo) – has an important symbolic relationship with the house, the threshold of the house entrance in particular, and with the household communal unit. The cult object has lotus-like or diagram-like mandala or yoni forms. The former palace and practically every temple has an equivalent point of veneration, which (if at all possible) is located along the main street.

Lienhard calls this cultic area of the house (in keeping with its literal meaning) „that which is hidden outside the house“; he compares it to a Kṣetrapāla and Lukumādyāḥ. He also notes that during many puja visits by inhabitants to outlying sacred places it is the pikhā which is worshipped first (Lienhard, 1985: 8). However, the protective function as Kṣetrapāla plays only a peripheral role. Kṣetrapāla and Lukumādyāḥ, at least in Kirtipur, are cult objects which are linked with the individual residential quarters and with systems of the town as a whole. However, what would appear to be of primary importance is the function as a point/field of contact to the outside toward the symbolic structure of the town: the function of linking house dwellers and the urban deities. Nonetheless, another function seems to be of decisive significance: Marc Barani sees the cult objects as the central symbolic focal point, the „soul“ of the house. When a new house is erected, it is regarded only as a side-building (and not as a dwelling with adequate sacred qualities) unless the pikhā has been marked and has received its initial veneration.3

The acts within the rites for the dead associated with the pikhālukhā are quite

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3 Pointed out to me by Marc Barani, who has focussed in particular in his research on the symbolic and property-rights-related functions of public space as related to individual houses in two quarters in Kirtipur.
diverse; their interpretation must necessarily deal with the complex underlying reasons. The following schematic listing is designed to provide a point of departure for further analysis and to present a possible classification:

**Act**

- The firepot, with whose help the funeral pyre is lit later on, is standing on the *pikhalukha* — Association of the *pikha* with the spiritual principle of fire.

- A line of grains of rice is strewn from thresholds of the house to the *Pikhā-lukha* (cf. above: Lienhard). — A marking of the point or origin of the house and the household communal unit in association with a death (cf. the opposite direction of marking in Lakṣmipūjā described below).

- The bier is placed briefly on top of the *Pikha* before the beginning of the procession (cf. below: putting down of the litter during the *jātra*). — The deceased takes leaves of the house and household communal unit.

- The Daludyāḥ is smashed upon the *Pikhalukha* (an act done by the Jyāpu in Deudhoki in Kirtipur). — The „lamp deity“ (the requisite equipment in every house) is brought into association with the house dwellers; death is indicated by „extinguishing“ of the lamp.

- Placing of various ritual plates of food on the *pikhalukha* (dubyēkegu, Māpu-jā, Pitrpuji, etc.). — Continuation of the communal eating unit; integration between the living and the dead.

The previously noted acts can be better classified on the basis of an additional function of the *pikhalukha*. Its function as a contact point is also manifested when the gods coming from outside, „pay a visit“ to the house and the household communal unit by passing across this connecting point. In Lakṣmipūjā, the route for Lakṣmī is marked by a red line running through the entire house up to the kitchen — and proceeding from the cult object — so as to make her visit there easier. One further example: during most of the processions of the urban deities (*jātra*) the litter (*khat*) with the deity stops on the *pikhalukha* of the house. When this occurs, a woman representing the household communal unit then pays homage to the deity. This privilege is enjoyed only by houses lining the route of the *jātra* though extending the second, and occasionally even to the third row. It often proved possible to observe distances of up to 50 m between the house threshold and the cult object as a result of markings during Lakṣmipūjā; this is undoubtedly a criterion in order to partake of a visit by the gods during the *jātra*.

In summary: this *pikhalukha*, associated with each and every house, constitutes an integrative „contact point“ between the house and its inhabitants and the transcen-
dental world of the dead and the deities. If one also includes the connecting element of public space via the instrumentality of the "sacred route" of the jātrā then it is possible to note an even more extensive integration of urban space, urban inhabitants and urban deities.

Daludyah and Lakṣmipujā also have a number of connections with the ordering of the four levels of the house. The Daludyah is always kept on the top floor (ritually this is the purest level, etc.). When word is received that the cremation of the deceased has been completed, the Daludyah (made of baked clay) is brought down and smashed against the pikhālukhā which is opposite the threshold of the door; this is thus a movement which proceeds from the uppermost level down to the lowest (later on, a new Daludyah is suspended once again on the top floor of the house).

There is an opposite sequence of movements in connection with Lakṣmipujā at the start of the Newar new year. Proceeding from the pikhālukhā, the goddess, as has already been pointed out, follows the earth-colored red line (specially drawn for this purpose) up to the top storey. The floor of the uppermost storey and the pikhālukhā have been marked out with the identical red color. The goddess is supposed to partake in symbolic fashion of the festive meal. The plate is placed later on top of the pikhālukhā. Both action sequences signify a renewal of the symbolic order of the four levels of the house, similar to a repetition of the process of creation.

2. Ordered structures based on the same number

Here too we will deal with several examples (without any claim to being complete and exhaustive) of spatial interrelationships within the cult of the dead which are characterized by the presence of identical numerical relations. More detailed interpretations of the number symbolism involved are a matter for future investigation. Dualistic dimensions based on male/female elements will be explored later on below.

The number 3 appears, where circumambulatory route forms are threetimes executed as an act of veneration of specific (cult) objects. They are all oriented in a clockwise direction, i.e., they have a rotational direction conforming to the course of the sun (with sunrise, zenith, etc., standing for the east, the south, and so on). We were not able to observe any movement running in the opposite direction at the cremation grounds, despite the fact that this is a common assertion. The house (pikhālukhālō) the cremation grounds (depa) and — to a certain extent — urban space as well are linked up and interrelated as a result of the same form of action. The depa is circumambulated three times: 1) by the bier carried by the guthī and by the women; 2) once again by the women in connection with the form of veneration which makes use of water; 3) by the men using the same form of worship employing water (the next of kin are the participants involved here). During the pitṛpūjā the pikhālukhā —
on which a *pūjā*-vessel (*kvalā*) has been placed – is circumambulated three times by a Vajrācārya priest (cf. p. 12). Here too is a connection with water: it is poured out during the circumambulation (water as a timeless symbol of life). During the third and final veneration of the elderly (*jākva*) when they have reached a ripe old age, the individual being celebrated as a kind of semi-deity is carried three times over the processional route (*jātrā*) through the town.

The number 3 is also found in connection with the corpse laid out on the ground floor: the corpse is tied up at three points with a piece of thread (neck, hip and ankle); likewise, there are three bricks tied together, symbolizing a house (see p. 13 above). It is true that the house (with its three levels for living) is also viewed as a human body – indeed, the conclusion of building a new house is compared with the birth of a child – nonetheless, there is as yet no evidence to support a connection with the three points that have been tied together.

The number 5 appears in connection with the house, the cremation grounds and the entire Kathmandu Valley. In most of these cases, the number 5 is associated with the human body. The Dharti Mātā (Earth Mother) is symbolized by the placing of five bricks in laying the foundation for a house. There is some notion that this goddess – here in a lying position (her left hand with crooked arm on her head, her right hand with crooked arm on her hip) – is supporting the house.4 In the second veneration of the aged (*jākva*) the person to be venerated lies flat on the ground and is surrounded by five burning lamps. This act – which symbolizes the event of death – takes place on the second floor; it is repeated on the ground floor during the actual laying-out of the corpse. The lamps are placed at the head of the deceased, and at both of his/her arms and feet. After cremation, a human figure is traced in the ashes of the deceased and then surrounded by five small heaps of rice, positioned similar to the above-mentioned lamps.

Nepali also points to a similar association between the number 5 and the human body. He describes how after cremation the *sanāguthi* visit five different *tirthas* in the Valley, taking with them certain specific unburned parts of the body (scalp, parts of both shoulder joints and the kneecaps; Nepali, 1965: 132, 133). If one takes into account the type of body parts involved as well as the spatial relationship with the corresponding localities, one can readily recognize the intention to transfer the body of the deceased in symbolic fashion to the entire Valley (cf. Map 10).5 Nepali also speaks about five unbaked bricks which form the limit for a ritual fire within the framework of the *ghasu* ceremony which takes place in the home during the

4 Description given by Chivi Bhai Bajracharya, November 1983. He also noted that Darthi Mātā turns every three months with her head facing another one of the four principal directions of the compass (principle of rotation).

5 I have not as yet done my own check on the system related to the Valley. A map of the *tirthas* etc. prepared by Gutschow was used to locate the localities (Gutschow, 1982, p. 22).
Map 10: After cremation 5 small remains of the body are symbolically taken to 5 so called tīrthas. They are coordinated in a pattern resembling the human body. Interpretation: Thus the body of the deceased is brought into relation with the regional environment, the Kathmandu-Valley.

course of the major rite of purification; these bricks are placed at the point where the deceased breathed his last breath (Nepali, 1965: 138).

Of special interest is the connection between the elements earth (foundation-laying for the house and the laying-out of the corpse on the „ground“), fire (in the house and at the cremation grounds), water (visiting of tīrtha) and air (ghasu). Food as the source and substance of all things may also play a role. Linkage is also made to the various major spheres of living; the house as the sphere of the communal family unit, the cremation grounds as the symbolic boundary of the living space of the urban community (cf. introduction) and the Kathmandu Valley as the actual living space of the Newar.

The number 8 appears in Kīrtipur in connection with purification after a death (cf. above: eight ponds in the dubyēkegu – ritual). There are structures in mandalas with eight cemeteries; in a city in South India, we likewise find eight ponds
associated with a rite of purification. Both in Kirtipur and the two examples, there is a similar placement of the town squares in what is basically a ring-like formation around the center in alignment with the eight principal directions of the compass; likewise, there is a similar structuring outside the ritual town boundary. No additional relation, however, can at present be established.

3. The symbolic death of the gods

The symbolic Death of the Gods is the final act of a festival lasting several months; this festival takes place once every 12 years, and is similar in a number of respects to the Navadurga festival in Bhaktapur: it is known as the Jala- or Gāthu Pyākhā. Various mystery plays in dance form (pyākhā) are combined with city processions (jātrā). These plays – in a coherent plot sequence – deal with the three localities of Kirtipur, Pāgā and Nagā. Masked dancers (members of the Gāthu caste) embody 11 deities: Aṣṭamātrkā, Bhairava, Gaṇeśa and two guards; a 12th deity is represented by a stick mask (Kati Mahādyah). In marked contrast with the three larger cities in the Valley, in Kirtipur there is no Aṣṭamātrkā urban system involving eight dyahchē within the town and eight pīgā in the approaches to the town. In Kirtipur, the protective function of town and environs is associated solely with the Mātrkā Indrāyaṇī, though this is manifest at three points: in the center of town (dyahchē), the immediate approaches to the town and at the cremation grounds. The remaining seven Mātrkā – in a subordinate form – are assigned to various squares.

The ten deities all undergo a symbolic death one after the next along the extended southern jātrā route; they each suffer this death twice (cf. Map 11): once in the eastern half of town (Śivarata) and once in the western half (Devarata). Gaṇeśa does not die; he brings the dead deities laid out on their biers back to life. The last one to die is Bhairava: first he dies at the point of veneration (pikhālukhā) of the Bāgha Bhairava pagoda, and then on the corresponding point of the Indrāyaṇī shrine on the inner side of the Deo-ḍhokā (Gate of the Gods). The spot where the „body“ is laid out is located in front of the Darbār Palace (dabu), and then afterward in the Indrāyaṇī shrine outside the nearby Deo-ḍhokā.

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6 Tucci (1972, pp. 44-45) mentions eight peripheral cemeteries in connection with descriptions of mandalas which are dedicated in particular to frightening deities. They lie in the four major and four secondary compass directions. However, they are not viewed as a geographical unit, but rather as the eight aspects of dissolved consciousness. Pieper (1977, pp. 83, 89) mentions the presence of eight ponds for a prescribed ritual bath prior to a particular pilgrimage festival in South India in connection with a description of the city Srirangam. As in Kirtipur, they mark out the inner zone around the city.

7 For an exact description of the sequence of acts of Jala Pyākhā, see Herdick, 1982, pp. 261-265.
Map 11: The symbolic death of the gods
The question now arises as to the difference between the practices in the cult of the human dead versus those in the symbolic death of the gods; in this connection, the house must be contrasted with and juxtaposed to urban space.

The place of death of the gods is the area of public thoroughfares and streets in one or the other half of the town. Symbolic claim is laid to the entire area of town by means of this act. It is significant that the squares involved are located along the ‚holy route‘, namely that of the jātrā. In spatial terms, there is once again a link established between death and the southern direction of the compass, similar to what we encountered in connection with (1) a cult object (Mabhīchvāśa) involved in the rites of death and (2) a goal (southern side of the stūpa) within the pitṛpūjā of the Vajrācārya.

The route for the dead inside the town (to the extent that one indeed wishes to designate the path in this way, since the laying-out of the corpse of the deceased also takes place in part within the confines of the town) is, once again, the southern jātrā route. The most important sacred structures in the town are also located along the route here on the right. This path does not correspond to that of the route of the human dead (main thoroughfare), which runs parallel to it to the south. The gates for the dead also differ in line with these two parallel routes: for the gods, the gate is the Deo-dhokā, the customary Gate of the Gods. The path between the gate for the dead and the cremation grounds is completely different from that involved in the rites for the human dead: the direct paved route is not taken; rather, the path leads back and forth through the fields down to the river and does not follow a set prescribed route. This also serves to make clear that the routes for the gods differ in a double sense from those for humans; as a result of this difference, the ‚holy‘ route of the jātrā within the town is given particular emphasis.

The ‚corpse‘ is first laid-out in front of the palace, a zone which – in terms of a concentric division into zones (as, for example, in connection with the 4 castes) – can be regarded as the innermost, the ritually purest zone. In line with a comparison involving the levels of the house, it corresponds to the uppermost storey (petā) (cf. p. 25). The ‚place of residence‘ of the gods for the entire duration of the festive period was the palace; or, to be more precise, the eastern gate satakva (storage of the masks). If one compares this situation with the laying-out of the deceased in the house, then the divine gate of the dead can be said to correspond to the threshold of the house in the rites for the human dead.

However, the second site for laying-out of the deceased after the gate is a rather different state of affairs. Here there is a certain contrast between external and internal space; this juxtaposition can be interpreted as the ‚conscious‘ over against the ‚unconscious‘ realm if one takes the beginning of the festival into account. The spot for laying-out of the body is near the Mātrkā, a mother goddess whose significance here is obviously associated with her connection with the process of becoming and dying, since the entire festival begins at that point, including the last jātrā. There is maskless dancing before the gate three times at intervals of one week. Not until the first jātrā do the masked gods enter the town through the Deo-dhokā.
This last event can be compared to a process of giving birth, and the period which precedes it can be viewed as a "prenatal or resuscitation period" (cf. festival calendar below, p. 35).

The cremation site for the masks is located at an elevated point on a rock cliff near the river. The ashes are cast in part into the river. Everyone tries to get some of the ashes and take them home, since they are regarded as having positive "magic" powers. Tantrics and natural healers (Baidya) in particular make use of these ashes. A point on the bank which is without fortifications and is located between the two ghāts serves as the spot from which the ashes are thrown. This spot is noteworthy in that it lies between the two realms dedicated to the dead and the living (cf. below).

In conclusion, it would appear on the basis of the interpretation that the town can be viewed as the "residential house of the gods" in connection with this complex of acts.

4. Principles of spatial ordering at the cremation site

The area surrounding the cremation site is divided optically by the brook into two halves. These two halves are also characterized by various functional differences (cf. Map 12).

If one looks in the direction of the river when approaching from town on the route for the dead, one can note the Bhairava-pīgā to the right and the Indrāyani-pīgā on the left. Thus, one half has a male deity and the other half a female deity. This pair

Map 12: Cremation grounds and schematic pattern
Significant ritual acts at the cremation grounds (depa)

Top: The photo shows women of the closer family together with the sanāguthi walking clockwise round the cremation grounds – an act which then is performed by the men in an analogous way. This is an example of several similar ritual acts in which women are the ones who act first.

The huge boulder represents the male God Bhairava. He is worshipped by women before the cremation. After the beginning of cremation men worship an uniconic female cult object (Indrāṇī Māṭrkā).

Bottom: A most dramatic moment during the funeral rite: the beginning of the cremation. Here all men belonging to the closer family are standing in the „male half“ and all close related women are in the „female half“ of the cremation area respectively, e.g. the men are standing next to the funeral pile and the women in the river. While the eldest son lights up the funeral pile at the head of the deceased the woman plunge their head into the water. The attribution of elements is intriguing: fire for men, water for women. (The examples stand for members of the Jyāpu-caste.)
of opposites represents the two most important urban deities. All ritual acts which are connected with the deceased take place on the side of the male deity; this is located down-river to the north. In contrast, acts performed on the side of the female deity are associated with the survivors of the deceased themselves or involve others who died previously or ancestors; this side is situated up-river to the south.

An already mentioned pattern of spatial ordering, in which the four main directions of the compass are laden with specific meanings (cf. p. 13 above and note 8), also has a certain validity here too:

- the West — death (cremation grounds)
- the North — the afterlife (down-stream, to the left of the cremation site)
- the East — birth (the route for the dead comes from this direction; the city and house of birth are located there)
- the South — life (up-stream, to the right of the cremation site)

The exact assignment of direction could have been more-or-less intentional in Kirtipur. The allocation of symbolic meaning, in line with the cross of coordinates, is preserved, quite apart from the directions of the compass: birth – death, life – afterlife; i.e., the cremation site is located only in an ideal case to the west, whereas the ordering principle of „life – up-stream“ and „afterlife – down-stream“ is always valid. The allocation of meaning becomes comprehensible in terms of the description of function assigned to the two halves.

Note the following important acts in terms of their assignment to one half or the other:

The „female“ left side, dedicated to the living and to ancestors
- all mourners who are not next of kin remain on this side — including the musicians
- ritual purification for all survivors after the cremation; close relatives, other relatives, friends, sanaguthi (use of the bathing ghāt located up-stream).
- all men venerate the Indrāyanīpigā at the conclusion
- various ritual acts in the pitrpājā, among others

The „male“ right side, dedicated to the dead
- all circumambulations of the cremation site
- women worship the Bhairavapigā they scatter rice from their hip-cloth onto the pigā an act at the beginning of the rites
- ritual purification in the river before the final circumambulation of the cremation site
- water from the river is taken in cupped hands in order to drip it into the mouth of the deceased as a final gesture of respect
- cremation
- casting of the ashes of the deceased into the river
- all acts at the river at the ghāt lying down-stream
The two dramatic moments on the day of cremation are the crossing of the house threshold with the bier and the instant when the cremation begins. In both instances, the impression is enhanced by the inclusion of music. The following situation prevails at the cremation site amongst the innermost circle of relatives: the men are all in the „male“ half and are standing next to the cremation ground; the women, in contrast, are all on the „female“ side and are positioned standing near the bathing steps in the river. At the moment the (as a rule) oldest son of the deceased places the torch to the funeral pyre near the head of the deceased, the women immerse their heads in the water a number of times, in between calling out the name of the deceased.

The attribution of elements is intriguing: fire for the men, water for the women. These two elements have played a role in themselves as determining factors, e.g. when water was previously dripped into the mouth of the deceased. Vessels with burning cow-dung and water were already placed in front of the threshold of the house door; subsequently, they were brought along during the procession for the ceremonies at the cremation grounds. The symbolism of fire and water is subject to various interpretations. Water is often considered to be a symbol for (eternal) life; it represents divine essence as such. Fire is regarded as a symbol for the spirit and for death. With certain reservations, one might go on to suggest that the situation of the women in the water (located to the south) is associated with an end and a new beginning – similar to the concluding veneration of the mother deity. Bhairava would appear to have more to do with the cremation of the deceased himself; this is already evident from the fact that this Bhairava is not worshipped in any other context.

There are several comparable spatial orderings at the threshold of the house. All the women stand in a row to the right next to the door and pay their respects to the deceased with rice during the corresponding crossing of the threshold with the bier. At the cremation grounds, the right side is regarded as „feminine“ and is dedicated to the „living.“ Before and after this particular moment, we note that objects associated with the deceased have been placed to the left next to the door – a situation similar to that prevailing at the cremation grounds. The bamboo bier stands here, and later on the basket with which the ashes of the deceased are cast into the river is hung on the wall there. The still green bamboo could perhaps be associated with Bhairava, since the vertical bamboo posts used to erect the large swing in the spring symbolize Bhairava.

5. Male-female patterns of order and several aspects related to the festive calendar

The annual recurrent festivals are linked to the phases of rice cultivation. This dimension becomes particularly manifest in connection with the „visit“ paid by the gods to the town on the occasion of Jala Pyākhā. One can note various links between certain phases of the human life cycle and rice cultivation; this is an aspect
which was investigated in greater detail by Gutschow in connection with the similar Navadurgā festival: at the conclusion of sowing (after the cuttings have been planted), the masks of the gods are fashioned; they are animated at the beginning of the harvest, and are burned after the first seedlings appear following the first rain. In simplified terms, the phase of rice growth is associated with pregnancy, harvest is linked with birth and the pre-growth phase with death – comparable to a process of creation which reoccurs annually.

A pājā is performed upon loss (death) of the mother during the brief period when fields lie fallow; in connection with the loss of a father, this pājā is performed four new moons later during the phase of rice growth. Veneration of the ancestors (digudyahpūjā) and pitrāpujā occur in the pre-growth phase (cf. p. 12), which lasts until the end of rice planting. Toward the end of the planting period, the major rites of purification take place – corresponding to the death of the gods: Gathāmuga for the town area and the house, and Gaṅjātrā (cf. p. 12) in respect to the dead. This is followed shortly thereafter by three additional jātrā representing the beginning of the next phase. The opening or introduction is made by the Gaṇeṣajātrā followed by Bhairavajātrā and Kṛṣṇajātrā which indicate new creation and the beginning of growth.

As has already been alluded to, there are fixed and determinate male-female orderings, contrasts and supplements; these appear again and again in multifarious forms: as a static spatial model, for instance, or as a model actualized by ritual acts, or via the expression of a specific dynamics inherent in groups of men or women. The most important spatial static model of the town was mentioned above (see p. 5): it is characterized by the „male“ half of town Śivarata („to the left“ in the east) and the „female“ half Devarata („to the right“ in the west). The residential dwelling likewise has a male (musva) and a female (misa) half of the house based on the presence of a central wall that runs through all storey(dathu āgah); these halves are distinguished as the street side and the side facing the courtyard. This notion of bipartite division goes so far among the Newar that there is even a widespread belief regarding positioning of the fetus during pregnancy: location of the left indicates a girl, on the right a boy (Nepali, 1965: 86). This aspect is also reflected in the central temple complex with the Indrāyanī-dyahche (left, west) and the Bhairava pagoda (right, east). We encountered the division in the cult of the dead in connection with the Chvāsā cult object (Āju Aji, see p. 12 above) as well as in association with the

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8 Gutschow, 1982, p. 10. The moment when the masked gods enter urban space – they dance before this without masks in the approaches to town – coincides in Kirtipur with Gutschow’s point in time for the „animation of the masks“ (Bhaktapur). The last appearances of the gods with dancing and masks in Kirtipur are not fixed and definite, but do not occur during the phases of rice growth. It is unclear whether the masks are made in Kirtipur or in Jala. However, the time-intensive preparations take place in Kirtipur in a special house (Akhāchē).
cremation grounds, where we found the Bhairavapīgā in the right half and the Indrāyānipīgā in the left (see p. 35 above). There are several examples in the rites of the dead indicating how this bipartite division is actualized: it is found, for example, linked to the entire Kathmandu Valley, when the relatives of the deceased pay a visit to the Māthatīrtha in the southwest of the Valley upon the loss of a mother, and to Gokarna in the northeast upon the death of a father (see Map 13). In one case it proved possible (in connection with the bipartite structuring of the house) to observe that a male corpse was laid out on the male side (musu) of the house (cf. also sāynipūjā in the month of Gūla).

In the event there are two related halves, the male half is always sought out first in ritual action during the rites for the dead; only after this is the female half visited. In Jala Pyākhā, the gods first „die“ in the male half and only afterward in the female half, and all acts performed at the cremation grounds conform to a similar

Map 13: With loss of a mother they visit Mātātīrtha, with loss of a father they visit Gokarna within a year’s time. The spatial arrangement of the two cultural sites resembles a common pattern: left and (South-)West = female, right and (North)East = male.
sequential pattern. Another example: during Jala Pyākhā, Bhairava first dies upon the veneration point in front of the Bagha Bhairava pagoda, and only later at the same point before the Indrāyanī shrine (see p. 29; an additional aspect of integration at the pikhālukhālō).

If, in statically symbolic configurations, we find that the male elements were the first ones sought out, we can note that in groups divided up according to sex-specific criteria it is the women who always are the first to act, at least in public spaces: it is the women, for example, who stand at the threshold in front of the house and pay their respects to the deceased; women are the first group to walk (out in front of the bier) in the funeral procession, and at the cremation grounds they are the ones to first perform all those acts which are the same for both sexes. Similar to the situation prevailing in the majority of the major town festivals – where the jātra becomes the integrating factor uniting the male and female halves of the town into one unit – this notion would also appear to play a role in the cult of the dead. This is most clearly manifest in the pattern of worship at the cremation grounds: the women worship the deity Bhairava and the men worship the mother goddess Indrāyanī. As has been shown, the most important town deities represent this antagonistic pair.

One may hypothesize that underlying this notion is a connection with the ancient Idian myth of human origin. The myth speaks of a primeval being that, dissatisfied, wishes for something other than itself. For this reason, its male and female halves separate, and it is their reuniting which creates man. Tucci speaks about the cosmic primeval couple and the death of a "... process of life which constantly renews itself, manifested in cultic terms in the celebration ... of the Holy Wedding of the divine primeval couple, a ritualization of the archetypical longing for restoration of the androgynous synthesis, that absolute perfection of power, in which male and female potency were still connected and non-separate." (Tucci, 1969: 127).

IV. Summary

Our concern here has been to examine the notions which residents have about their town: the idea underlying the urban configuration and its individual elements and the manner in which this idea is made reality.

Its realization is effected by means of ritual action, a process by which space takes on form. Our principal focus here is on interaction with architecture. The constant flux of events is captured in its entirety, and it becomes possible to discern structures consisting of temporal sequences and spatial relations.

This approach was applied to certain aspects of the rites for the dead as an illustrative example, since this complex cult – to date only marginally affected by modern influences – touches on all important conceptions of space. Static and
dynamic systems are described first (such as the inclusion of cult object or ritual paths). This is followed by an examination of the historical and modern changes and interconnections of the order determined by the rites for the dead. In conclusion, symbolic dimensions in respect to various individual aspects are illuminated (residential dwelling, cremation grounds, relation to the cardinal numbers, death of the gods, consideration of the festive calendar, male-female patterns of order). This contribution constitutes an attempt to come to a better and more intimate understanding of urban culture in the Kathmandu Valley.

Notes

The paper is based on observations made in Kirtipur in 1974–75 and 1982, 1983 and 1984. It would not have been possible without Nepalese help and collaboration. I would like to express particular gratitude to Dil Bahadur Maharjan, Hera Nanda Joshi, Chivi Bhai Bajracharya, Suaresh Shakya and Shukra Shrestha. My thanks also to Bill Templer for translating the German original into English.

Bibliography


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Man, Religion and Agriculture in the Kathmandu Valley

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Introduction

Membership of a certain ethnic group or caste and religious conceptions can influence and determine economic behaviour to a large extent. I would like to attempt to clarify the complex relationships between social structures and agriculture, basing my arguments on several examples taken from the Kathmandu Valley—a location which lends itself exceptionally well to such a study. Various ethnic groups can be found here and a very religious population, anchored to its traditions, has developed its own quite specific form of agriculture. An analysis of these interrelationships is not simply of scientific interest. In order to be successful, any agricultural development project, anti-erosion campaign or other type of planned activity must be able to draw on a thorough knowledge of social organization, traditional economic forms, and, last not least, the religious and ethical ideas of the people. The points discussed here are as follows:

1. The various forms of cultivation practised by different ethnic groups
2. Employment structures in agriculture in relation to caste membership
3. Possession and ownership structures in regard to caste and ethnic group
4. The influence of religious and ethical concepts on agriculture.

The various forms of cultivation practised by different ethnic groups

The various ethnic groups in the Kathmandu Valley differ greatly from each other as far as their way of life and economies are concerned. The Newar are first and foremost rice farmers. Their compact, space-saving settlements are situated on the river terraces (tār) and on the mountain ridges which reach down into the valley. The land around the settlements is terraced and irrigated as far as this is necessary or possible, i.e. the fields have been levelled so that they may be flooded and the water retained by dams. Wet rice is cultivated in rotation with wheat and vegetables wherever ecological conditions allow. Vegetable farming is steadily growing in importance. Newar farmers in Nakdeś and Ṭhimi in particular have specialized in this. Scattered settlements surrounded by dry fields (bāri) are characteristic of the agricultural landscape of the Bahun and Chetri. Besides rice, capāti made of maize, millet or wheat are one of their staple foodstuffs. Capāti and other types of bread are made from grains which have been cultivated in dry fields. Thus, there is always bāri-land around the Parbatiyā hamlets, alongside the irrigated allotments. Some of them have inclined terraces; others are completely unterraced (photo 1).
The methods of cultivation of Newar and Parbatiya sometimes vary: the terraced fields belong to Newar, the unterraced ones to a Chetri farmer. Near Sākhu, terraced farming is practised by Tāmāng, some Gurung, Magar and so-called Bhoje under extremely poor conditions. Environmental damage is the result of unsuitable types of farming in this area.

It is a fact that irrigated farming on terraces is both ecologically and economically better for the central area of the Kathmandu Valley. The soil on the fluvial terraces (tār) contains a large amount of clay and so the terraced fields are also quite stable. The basic requirements are fulfilled for irrigated farming with the promise of relatively high yields, especially in the fields which lie below the level of the spring horizon on the slope of the tār. However, one may observe the extension of terraced, wet rice land (khēt) up the slopes into areas which are not really suited to this type of farming. This is a development which is causing plenty of problems, in particular in the mountainous area surrounding the valley and the ridges which stretch down into the basin itself. This development can be seen mainly in the areas settled by the Newar and even more particularly in those of the Bālāmī, a Newar caste who live in the northwest of the mountainous region, i.e. outside the valley. In their settlement area, wet rice land reaches far up the slopes (Johnson et al., 1982). Ecologically speaking, this is a very grave situation. The threat of erosion is increased due to the pressure of the dammed water, the soil lacks the stabilizing effect of clay and the annual cut off the terrace walls only serves to make them even more instable (Kienholz et al., 1982: 46). It is striking that the fields of the Bāhun and Chetri (the immediate neighbours of the Bālāmī) are much better protected and adapted to prevailing ecological conditions. However, they are bārī-fields. One can often recognize Bāhun and Chetri fields from afar by the fact that they are surrounded by plenty of trees, bushes and hedges. The farmers take biological precautions to prevent erosion by planting alders and bamboo on the landslides. However, considerable damage caused by erosion does occur in upland cultivation, in particular in areas where terraces have been laid out on slopes of badly weathered granitic and migmatite material (photo 2). One can observe a distressing number of devastated terraces, landslides and deep gullies on the terraced slopes north of Sākhu. However, it is not the Newar who farm this land. Their fields lie in the
fertile valley region. Nor is it Bahun or Chetri, but Tamang and some Magar, Gurung and a few farmers who are classed as impure Bhoţe by the Newar. They have no other choice but to farm the land under these extremely bad conditions, even though they are often not able to achieve self-sufficiency in this way. Thus, one can distinguish clearly between the forms of cultivation practised by various ethnic groups in the Kathmandu Valley and the surrounding mountains. The Newar have a long tradition of irrigated, terraced farming. Evidence of this is provided by inscriptions dating from the 7th century (Gnoli, 1956: Ins. Nos. L, LII; Indraji and Buhler, 1885: Ins. Nos. 9, 10; Lévi, 1905/l: 303). They are experienced rice farmers, but they continue to employ their methods of cultivation in areas where they are no longer ecologically viable. Bahun and Chetri, who have more experience of upland farming, could probably produce a higher yield, if they would build more terraces and extend irrigation in the Kathmandu Valley area. The methods they use to prevent erosion in their fields and to cultivate fodder trees on their land are often exemplary. The third group, consisting mainly of Tamang, is in a particularly bad economic position. They continue to practise upland farming in extremely poor conditions and usually on land with minimum yield potential. This is justifiable neither from an ecological nor from an economic point of view.

Employment structures in agriculture in relation to caste membership

The societies of both the Newar and the Parbatiyā are organized in a caste system. As a rule, membership of a certain caste determines the occupation of the individual. What effect does this caste hierarchy have on employment structures in agriculture?

With a few exceptions (notably in Kathmandu itself), the inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley are economically dependant upon agriculture, whether or not they are full-time, part-time or supplementary farmers or landlords. Given this fact, one could assume that the majority of the valley population are members of a farming caste. However, the Newar Jyāpu make up only c. 30% of the whole Newar population (Rosser, 1966: 85 f). The Parbatiyā lack entirely a group which could be regarded as a purely farming caste.

The following Table 1 contains a survey of typical combinations of various occupations in relation to the membership of a certain caste found in rural Newar settlements in the Kathmandu Valley.

Jyāpu are often full-time farmers, but on the whole the number of farms affording full-time employment in the Kathmandu Valley is very low. Owing to the fact that the farms are so small, many households are dependant upon a supplementary income. Thus, many Jyāpu and other members of the lower castes look for work as
Table 1: Typical Combinations of Caste and Occupation Found in Rural Newar Settlements in the Kathmandu Valley

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>occupation</th>
<th>caste</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agriculture</td>
<td>Jyāpu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture and seasonal/temporary hired labour (jyāmi)</td>
<td>Jyāpu and lower castes, seldom Syasyah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture and crafts</td>
<td>Kumāh, Rājthāl, Chipā, Pū, Kau and Sāymi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture and small-scale trade</td>
<td>Syasyah and a few of the lower castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture and ritual services (to some extent income from gūthi)</td>
<td>Nau, Bhāh, Nāy, Jyagi, Duī and Dvā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agriculture and a ‘modern’ job requiring low or medium qualifications (partly job-sharing)</td>
<td>impure/middle range castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ritual services and livestock farming</td>
<td>impure castes</td>
</tr>
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<td>leasing of land and ritual services</td>
<td>Hindu priest castes</td>
</tr>
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<td>leasing of land, ritual services and crafts</td>
<td>Buddhist priest castes</td>
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<td>leasing of land and trade</td>
<td>Syasyah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leasing of land and higher qualified ‘modern’ jobs</td>
<td>higher castes</td>
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</tbody>
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farm and building labourers or porters in order to earn some extra money. Traditional occupations specific to certain castes and ritual services are combined with work in either the individual’s own or rented field. The priest castes are an exception in that they lease their land. Their high social status does not permit them to work in the fields. Families who are engaged to a large extent in trading activities, the majority of whom are Syasyah (excluding in this case the small-scale trade), seldom farm their land themselves either. Members of the impure castes hardly ever have any land of their own. They are usually tenants. As a rule, nobody leases his land to untouchables.

It is quite usual to have two jobs, especially for the Newar. For example, in Thimi the population consists mainly of Syasyah and Kumāh (potters) with just a few Jyāpu (Müller, 1981: 26 ff). However, almost all the Syasyah and Kumāh work in agriculture. Alongside a government job or a small shop, many Syasyah have land which they farm themselves, sometimes with the aid of paid labourers. The craftsmen in particular can make up for lulls in the agriculture year by working in the branch specific to their caste. During the planting and harvest seasons the Kumāh practically suspend all pottery production in order to concentrate on work in the fields. It is only whilst the land is lying fallow that clay can be taken from the
fields. The potter's work must also conform to climatic conditions. Firing and
drying is impossible during the rainy season; the clay is not pliable enough during
In the case of the Parbatiyā who, strictly speaking, lack a social middle-class
(Fürer-Haimendorf, 1966: 21f.), we find only a small group of impure castes besides
the high Brahmins and Chetri. Although the status of Brahmins and to certain
extent of Chetri makes it unseemly for them to work in the fields, many Parbatiyā
Brahmins and Chetri in Nepal are indeed farmers who often even plough their fields
themselves. The situation amongst the impure Nepāli-speaking castes is more or less
the same as that of the impure Newar castes.
These examples show that employment structures in Nepal's caste societies are not
wholly determined by membership of a certain caste. In principle, farming is
possible for all castes with only a few exceptions. The idea of working the fields is
not only rejected by some for economic reasons, as for example in the case of
wealthy traders and businessmen, but also for reasons motivated by tradition and
ritual. Land is only grudgingly leased to untouchable castes on account of their
impure status. At the other end of the social scale, Newar priest castes refuse to
work in the fields as this would be considered not in keeping with their pure social
status. Parbatiyā Brahmins, however, do actually work in agriculture in spite of
their position – they are in fact forced to do so for economic reasons.

Possession and ownership structures in regard to caste
and ethnic group

Possession and ownership\(^1\) of land was traditionally the most important source of
wealth, social status, political influence and economic power. For the rapidly
increasing population of the Kathmandu Valley there remains only a relatively small
area still available for agricultural purposes and the topography of the land makes
expansion of this area almost impossible. Of course, there are alternative sources of
income especially in the Kathmandu Valley itself, but possession and ownership of
land is still of the utmost importance for the livelihood of the majority of the
population in the rural settlements there.
In order to understand the Nepalese land tenure system in use today, it is necessary
to take a short look at its historical development. The traditional form of land
tenure in the Kathmandu Valley was the ownership of land by the state. This

\(^1\) The term 'possession' as opposed to 'ownership' or 'rightful belonging' should be taken
to mean the 'actual having'. Possession of land may be equated with the cultivation of
land. The term 'tenancy' implies a distinction between possession and ownership. As the
cultivator of land, the tenant is the possessor; the lessor remains the owner.
state-owned land, known as raikar, embraced the whole nation. The state was the de facto lessor. It was possible to transfer raikar land to private persons. In the main, it was the court favourites, military personnel or Brahmins who received this tax-free land (birta). Besides the birta system (Regmi, 1964) the so-called jāgir, rakam and guthi systems also existed in the Kathmandu Valley. Feudal conditions with all their negative side effects came into being all over the country. After the fall of the Rāñas, Nepalese agricultural policies aimed at unification of the land tenure system on the basis of raikar land. The birta, jāgir and rakam systems were abolished, a limit was set to private property and possession, tenants were protected by the law and rent was fixed (His Majesty’s Government of Nepal, Ministry of Law and Justice, 1965). The land tenancy system in use today is restricted to the raikar and guthi systems in addition to the state and pañcāyat land. However, distinct variations in possession and ownership patterns in the settlements of the Kathmandu Valley could be observed which are directly related to their socio-economic structure.

The possession and ownership structures of the Newar settlements Thimi, Sākhu and Pyāngāū will now be examined in more detail. On the topographic map of the Kathmandu Valley we find Thimi in the centre of the valley, Sākhu in the northeastern corner and Pyāngāū down in the south. Thimi ranks the fourth largest settlement in the Kathmandu Valley with a population of approx. 12,000 inhabitants. There is a large spectrum of castes there besides Kumāh (potters) and Syasyaḥ. A simplified definition of Thimi’s economic structure could classify it as a craftsmans’ and farmers’ village with a small bazaar (Müller, 1981; 1984: 59 f). Sākhu, situated as it is on a former trade route, used to be of great importance in the past as a trading point. Nowadays this settlement of c. 6,000 inhabitants is a trading centre only for the surrounding areas. Almost the whole range of Newar castes can be found in Sākhu (Müller, 1984: 55 ff). The small village Pyāngāū with its 500 inhabitants has an entirely different structure. With the exception of one family, all belong to the Jyāpu caste (Toffin, 1977: 37 ff; Müller, 1984: 54 ff). The inhabitants of Pyāngāū live mainly from agriculture, although many often work as paid labourers as well.

Possession and ownership structures in the Thimi area indicate that no large private estates of the type usual under the birta system existed here. The fact that the allotments have often been divided up between the heirs and that the owners are

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2 Since the monetary system in Nepal was underdeveloped, a frequent practice of the government was to reward its employees in the form of land. This land, termed as jāgir, was taxable (Regmi, 1976: 71 ff). Under the so-called rakam system the inhabitants of a certain village or area were obliged to work for the government. The land which was simultaneously cultivated by these farmers was, in this case, transferred to rakam land (Regmi, 1976: 156 ff). Gūthi land was transferred by the state, too. Unlike birta land, however, it was not made over to private persons, but to religious, charitable or philanthropic institutions (Regmi, 1976: 46 ff).
exclusively Newar from Thimi (i.e. there is no absenteeism) supports this statement. According to information provided by the Pradhān Pañcas in Thimi the number of tenants amongst the total number of farmers lay between 15 % and 20 % in 1977. None of the landlords is, however, a large estate owner. Neither could any live exclusively of the income from the farming-out of land. On the contrary, one often finds landlords who farm part of their land themselves or those who farm all their land and rent more besides. If one draws parallels between possession and ownership structures and the castes of owners and tenants, the following picture will emerge (Fig. 1): All the landlords belong to the higher castes, i.e. Gubhāju, Syasyah and Kumāh, in the wards investigated. The difference between them is that, unlike the Gubhāju, Syasyah and Kumāh farm their land themselves. They make up the largest proportion of the group of owner-cultivators to which a few Sāymī, Chipā, Kau and a single Jugi also belong. Thus, the middle-class of the caste hierarchy clearly correlates with the group of owner-cultivators. There is a fairly large number of farmers who own only a small amount of land. Only very few own no land at all. With a few reservations, it can be said that possession and ownership is comparatively well-balanced. However, the average size of a farm in Thimi is less than 6 ropani (0,3 ha).

Quite a different picture of possession and ownership structures than we have seen in Thimi emerges in Sākhu and, as we shall see later, in Pyāngāū. Selected areas of the Sākhu region were also investigated. Unlike in Thimi and Pyāngāū, the majority of allotments are leased, e.g. in one section of one of the wards examined only a single plot of land was farmed by the owner himself (Fig. 2); in another section there were 10 such plots out of a total of eighty-five. The land tenancy situation in Sākhu is largely characterized by the tenant system. The group of people who own or cultivate land in the areas under investigation was not restricted to Newar, but also included Brahmins, Chetri, Magar and Tāmāṅg. However, the fields in the proximity of the settlement do belong mainly to Newar. The further the fields are away from Sākhu and the higher up the slopes they are situated, the more owners belong to the Magar, Tāmāṅg and, as the Newar term them, Bhote.

It is said that there used to be large tracts of birtā land in the Sākhu region. Relicts of the birtā system can be seen there even today. For instance, the Royal Family owns land there (Fig. 3). Large areas belong to Brahmins and Syasyah from Patan and Kathmandu, e.g. one Brahmin from Patan owns not less than 27 allotments in one of the investigated wards (Fig. 2). Some landlords from Sākhu who have since moved to the towns, are said to have more than 100 ropani of land. Birtāvālas in the Sākhu region were presumably not only of the Brahmin and Chetri upper-class. Some also belonged to the Newar merchant and trader group. The absolute majority of landlords in the areas of the wards investigated are Newar Syasyah. Then come the Parbatiyā Brahmins. Magar and the untouchable castes of Newar and Parbatiyā own no land in these areas. Neither ethnic barriers between landlords

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3 For Figures see coloured maps in pocket.
and tenants, nor the absolute adherence to the social hierarchy (as is the case in Thimi) can be observed. It is a fact, that the majority of landlords belong to the upper-classes but there are repeated examples of cases where the tenant belongs to a traditionally higher caste or group than the landlord. However, tenant and landlord usually come from the same caste. It is customary for Newar to farm-out to Newar and now and again to Tâmâng, Bâhun or Chetri. On the other hand, Chetri and Bâhun have Newar, Chetri, Bâhun, Tâmâng and Magar tenants.

Why are the possession and ownership structures in Sâkhu so different from those in Thimi then? Not only historical and political reasons have played a part in this; Sâkhu’s function as an old trading centre has certainly affected possession and ownership structures. Unlike the inhabitants of Thimi, who may be classified as craftsmen and farmers, those in Sâkhu used to be great traders, moreso in the past than nowadays. At the same time, Sâkhu was and still is, an important producer of agricultural goods for the markets of the Kathmandu Valley. The type of work a craftsman does makes it easy for him to adapt to the seasonal cycles involved in farming. On the other hand, a trader who is engaged in supraregional trade has neither time nor interest in farming his fields himself. Thus, it was a tradition for the wealthy trading class of Sâkhu to lease their land. They were also financially in a position to buy land as a capital investment; the rent provided a sound supplement to their income from trade. Following the Land Reform, which did a great deal to consolidate the position of tenants in the Kathmandu Valley, the income of landlords was dramatically reduced. Landlords, who had been able to live well off revenues from the rent, had a look around for other sources of income. At the same time, Sâkhu’s position as a centre of trade drastically deteriorated, which made things very difficult for the land-owning, trading class. As a result, certain members of the upper-class moved away into the towns. Others wanted to return to farming themselves. However, according to their statements, dispossessing the tenants has proved to be either impossible or coupled with great difficulties, as they are now quite well protected by the law.

The tenant system plays an even less important role in Pyângâû than in Thimi (Fig. 4). Out of a total of sixty-five owners, only nine have leased a part of their land, ten have rented additional land and only one rents all of the land he cultivates. In the investigated area we also find Parbatiyâ-Bâhun who own land. It is interesting to note the difference between the number and size of Jyâpu and Brahmin allotments. On average, the Jyâpu farmer from Pyânggâû has 12 plots, whereas a Bâhun has a mere three. However, the average size of farms does not vary greatly. In the case of the Jyâpu it is 6.1 ropani; in the case of the Bâhun, 5.6 ropani. The division of plots is much more pronounced amongst the Newar. Extremely small allotments are situated in particular in the area around the upland fields north and south of the villages, most of which belong to Newar. The conglomeration of Bâhun and Chetri fields to the south of the ward are distinctly larger, as are the Newar plots located near the small, irrigable valley. One can only speculate as to the reasons for this. The upland fields were probably under cultivation much earlier than the irrigable
land which could only be made fertile after considerable use of technical agricultural measures. Even today, the crops grown on upland fields play a more important role in the diet of the Pyāṅgāū Jyāpu than, for example, amongst the other Newar. It is likely that the ancestors of Pyāṅgāū villagers who settled in the Kathmandu Valley several centuries ago, cleared the flood-free land first for the cultivation of bāri crops. Over the years, this land has then become greatly fragmented due to distribution on inheritance amongst all the sons. It was only later that the valley bed was levelled, drained and the streams channelled into canals. One can assume that the Bāhun settled there later than the Newar; some families have been resident in this area now for only two or three generations. Thus their fields are not as fragmented as those belonging to Newar.

Gūthi land was found in the land surrounding all three communities investigated. The gūthi land I found was always annexed to a temple, e.g. in Sākhu to Bajrajogini or Paśupatinātha. Most common land is located in non-arable areas, e.g. on steep slopes and around water places, or it consists of extremely degraded pasture land and the remains of forests.

To sum up we can say, that in spite of the proximity to each other of the Newar settlements in the Kathmandu Valley and their similar cultural background, considerable differences exist between their possession and ownership structures. Our three examples show that they range from small, independent farms to the feudal tenancy system based on rent collection. Land tenancy conditions in agriculture are closely related to the sociological grouping of the population and the economic structure as a whole. Where there is a pronounced social hierarchy, landlord-tenant relationships exist where one individual is dependent upon another. It is typical for Pyāṅgāū, a village, which with one exception has no caste hierarchy, that the tenancy system is of no importance and possession and ownership structures are well-balanced. In Ōthimi, these patterns reflect differentiation of a greater degree within the caste structure. In Sākhu, large tracts of land belong to the upper-class which consists partly of wealthy Newar Syasyah and partly of Bāhun and Chetri who reside elsewhere. The predominance of the tenancy system can be traced to Sākhu’s distinct function as a trade centre, but is also due to certain historical facts. In a village such as Thimi which is geared to crafts, the tenancy system is not so important; a second business or extra employment, renting of additional land or farming-out part of the land are typical features there.

The influence of religious and ethical concepts on agriculture

Agriculture is still the primary source of sustenance in the Kathmandu Valley. How agriculture determinates the life especially of the Newar may be seen from numerous rituals in which the importance of agriculture is amply reflected. On the other hand, religious and ethical concepts influence the economic behaviour to a large extent. To illustrate this I have included some examples.
One important aspect of the rules of behaviour prescribed by the religion is the maintenance or renewal of ritual purity. This is the reason for the existence of exact rules stipulating how a house should be built and used, whether or not it is to be a shop, workshop or farm. Newar houses (Auer and Gutschow, 1974: 63 ff; Korn, 1976: 18 ff; Scheibler, 1982: 61 ff) always have the appearance of being town-houses even when they are inhabited by farmers. With the exception of impure castes, the Newar always build their houses with several storeys. Exact rules exist to determine how each storey should be used. The purest ritual area is to be found on the top floor (kitchen and prayer room). The stables and barn are situated on the ground floor of the house. Chickens are kept in the living quarters and there are storage areas on the upper floors. This method of constructing and using a house means that there is very little space available for business purposes. The farmers make up for this by using public space. For example, the harvest is dried in the squares and on the paths; straw is stored there, grain winnowed and pulses husked. The street scene changes with each new agricultural season. September sees the red chillies spread out on the ground. By October-November they have given way to rice (photo 3) and in February-March one can see several different kinds of pulses and wheat. In September stacks of maize several metres high are to be found in front of the farmer’s houses (photo 4).

The use of natural dung, especially when it contains human faeces, brings with it certain difficulties in keeping up ritual purity. In the cities dung carriers even constitute a caste of their own (Cyāmkhalaḥ) within the larger group of impure castes (Nepali, 1965: 45). The use of mineral fertilizer, which has been common practice for years now in large areas of the valley, is much more in keeping with Hindu and Buddhist views of purity. This could possibly be one of the reasons why this practice has spread so fast in the Kathmandu Valley.

Visitors to the Kathmandu Valley are often surprised to see Newar farmers using a short-handled hoe (Nev. ku, Nep. kodāli) to turn the soil in their fields. One usually associates the plough, as used in wet rice cultivation, with a highly developed culture. So it is strange that the Newar, who are commonly regarded as
In September, stacks of maize several meters high can be found in front of the farmers’ houses (Pyāṅgāū).

being the propagators of a high standard of culture in the Kathmandu Valley, should not use ploughs for agricultural purposes, although this is common practice amongst other ethnic groups in Nepal even in small, terraced fields. In the Kathmandu Valley, however, it is customary even for Parbatiyā farmers living in the direct vicinity of the Newar not to use a plough either. On the other hand, the Newar sometimes break the taboo themselves. Some Jyāpu from Pyāṅgāū plough using their water buffaloes, but they borrow the ploughs from Parbatiyā farmers. Farmers in Manmaiju, Tokhā and Balambu also use a plough. When asked why,
they stated that it was more economic. Most farmers, however, were of the opinion that the fields which had been turned with the *ku* produced a better yield. Even so, farmers who had the opportunity of renting a small tractor with plough did so immediately. Whether or not ploughing or breaking-up the earth with a hoe improves the yield surely depends on the quality of the soil itself. The Newar tend to put forward purely economic reasons for their preference (particularly, it seems, to foreigners). However, this is not a satisfactory explanation. In some regions, the use of a plough drawn by draught animals could very well constitute a reason for a Newar to be expelled from his caste and from the guthi. It is not the actual ploughing which gives offence, but the use of draught animals which cannot be condoned. Carts drawn by oxen, a common sight in India and the Terai, are never seen in the Kathmandu Valley. If there is no motorized vehicle available, goods are carried exclusively by humans. Even the heavy temple chariots are drawn by people and not by animals. There have been attempts to explain this phenomenon in the past. Chattopadhyay (1923: 528) wrote: „The only conclusion that can be drawn is that this failure to use the cattle-drawn plough for cultivation was originally due to ignorance of the process and subsequently kept out by strong conservatism and probably also some hostility to the people in contact who possessed the necessary knowledge“. Webster (1981) presented a detailed discussion of the ploughing taboo which includes a whole range of ecological, religious and historical explanations. However, it is certain that economic and ecological conditions are determining factors for the ploughing taboo. The heavy soil in the rice fields is extremely difficult to turn using only a simple hooked plough and there are not very many animals (water buffaloes or cattle) in the Kathmandu Valley owing to the limited amount of pasture land available for them. Religious concepts and the involvement of animals in religious ceremonies could well be a reason for the Newar not to use bulls in particular for profane tasks. Traditional ties may have guaranteed the continuity of this convention, but it has survived simply because up to now there have always been sufficient labourers available.

The Newar have many rules and taboos for rice cultivation. There is strict division of labour according to sex. It is the task of the men to turn over the soil, but the clumps of earth are broken up by the women with long-handles, wooden mallets. Only the men are allowed to sow the rice and to remove the seedlings from the seed beds. It is the task of the women to see to the replanting in the fields. According to Newar custom, a person who is carrying rice home should never stop on the way. A short ceremony is held in the house when the first sack of rice is brought in.

The Newar feast dates are determined by the various phases of rice cultivation (Gutschow, 1982: 12). For example, on the 14th day of waning moon in Śrāvan

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4 Śrāvan = mid-July to mid-August.
(ghantākarna), when sowing is formally over a purification ritual takes place. The period of growth begins with the ceremonial burning of the demons and the consecration of the first clay from which the masks of the mother goddesses are modelled. Indrajātrā, a feast dedicated to the rain-bringer, takes place whilst the rice is growing. Indra is thanked for sending the rain, but he is also requested to let the sun shine so that the rice may ripen. One day after the end of Dasāi the harvest season formally starts. With the Lakṣmipūjā on the 14th day of waning moon in Āsvīn the harvest season ends.

Certain types of rice are cultivated especially for ritual purposes (Pini, 1985). The grains of svāvā are burnt in their husks as a part of a fire sacrifice (homā). valāvā, cultivated in dry fields, is necessary for the feast on the eighth day of Dasāi (aṣṭami). aksetā, handpolished rice, is destined exclusively for use at pujā. Rice flakes (ciurā), made by the Dui in Gācā, are not eaten as a part of the daily diet, but are regarded as a kind of holy food which is used for prasād. The sale of these syā baği is regulated by contracts with guṭhi and the temples (Toffin, 1975: 13 ff). Rice is not the only foodstuff to be integrated into religious ritual. Other crops are also used.

The Aṣṭamāṭṝkā cult uses the black soya bean (ḥāku musyā) as a symbol for buffalo meat and the black gram (samay) for mutton (Pini, 1985). On the first day of Dasāi (ghatasthipana) barley and maize seeds are sown in a bowl filled with sand and then covered up. Within ten days, yellow, etiolated seedlings appear which are then worshipped daily. On the tenth day of the feast (daśami) these „yellow flowers“ (jamaro) (photo 5) are distributed during the course of a tikā ceremony. On the ninth day (navami) the Newar Buddhists break up a pumpkin (bhuyu pharsi) and some sugar cane (tu) to symbolise the victory of the goddess Durgā over the buffalo demon Mahiṣāsura.

These examples illustrate the fact that the economic activities (farming) of a society go hand in hand with its social structure. They show to what a large extent agriculture is integrated into the network of relationships between men and gods. It would be wrong to use an understanding of these associations only to keep up existing traditions. On the contrary this knowledge should be applied to the development of new concepts for a type of agriculture which can be adapted to a given situation. It would definitely be wrong to define tradition as an obstacle to development. The inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley are economically very flexible, in spite of and perhaps even because of these seemingly rigid forms of organization and the deep religiosity which determine their everyday life. They produce high agricultural yields using the means available to them and are usually very open to any kind of innovation if it brings higher profits. The use of mineral

5 Āsvīn = mid-September to mid-October.
fertilizers, improved seeds and also of simple threshing-machines and small tractors is in no way inconsistent with the fact that the people are so deeply rooted in their religion and traditions.

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PROCEEDINGS OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
IN LÜBECK, JUNE 1985
(NEPALICA. 4.)
"The custom of the Jyāpu Newars for cultivating their fields in groups, called *bolajyā* has been with them since time immemorial."

Jyāpu informant

### Introduction

All peasant communities have problems over their needs for agricultural labour, in addition to the family unit, particularly with seasonal fluctuations such as harvesting, and manage to organise themselves with varying degrees of efficiency. In markedly hierarchical societies with caste systems such as those in South Asia, specifically India and Nepal, the *jajmani* system has traditionally linked the different castes by providing goods and services to one another sanctioned by religion and the concepts of *dharma* and *karma*. The *jajmani* system is based upon the acceptance of different occupations, and as M. N. Srinivas (1952) has suggested, it functions through what he terms 'vertical' solidarity. Furthermore, as Louis Dumont (1972) has pointed out, the concepts of purity and pollution are closely associated with the hierarchy and differentiation of caste, dividing groups from one another, and affording an almost instant classificatory system and rationale for everyone. The castes co-operate, but as groups with specialised occupations and ranks. The idea of co-operation within a caste, termed 'horizontal' solidarity by Srinivas, without the ritual distinctions of rank has tended to be downplayed, because of the very necessary emphasis upon hierarchy.

However, in this paper I examine a system of mutual help, not based upon hierarchy, but rather upon the idea of working as equals, not just within a caste, but irrespective of caste. The determining concept in this system is that of fraternity, of brotherhood and sisterhood, rather than caste differentials and duties. The system I am referring to is that occurring amongst the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, and is known as (Nev.) *bolajyā*. According to my informants, traditional *bola* which is linked closely to a religious ritual when members of each *bola* party come together at the end of the season to offer sacrifices and have a feast, is practised only by the Newars and not by the Parbatiyas. Another important distinguishing feature of traditional *bola* is that payments for tasks are earned collectively, and equally distributed at the end of the season, and in theory at least, according to custom, can be spent only on certain traditional goods.

There is a more casual form of *bola* in which individual members of the group receive cash payments, (as well as food), run upon a simple short term exchange basis without religious rituals and a special feast, and this is similar to the system known as *parma* amongst Parbatiyas. The question of the so called uniqueness of
the Newar’s traditional bola is apparently quite a contentious one, and needs further study, but in this paper I am largely quoting the beliefs of my Newar informants without additional comparative comment. (It should be noted that as I was interviewing in Nepali – the lingua franca of the Valley – all the direct quotes and designations will be in that language).

I must add that in the Valley, there are two caste systems existing, as it were, side by side; that of the Newars, the original inhabitants, and that of the Parbatiyas, the hill people or Gurkhas, who conquered the Newars in the eighteenth century. The Newars claim that not only is their system unique in Nepal, but that overall it is the most efficient way of organising labour to work on primarily agricultural tasks. Like the jajmani system, bola is also sanctified by religion and although its purpose is primarily economic, it is closely tied into the social system of the Newars.

The fieldwork upon which this paper is based took place between July 1978 and January 1979 in the Newar village of Manmaiju, a settlement of 1,100 inhabitants in the North West sector of the Kathmandu Valley (referred to from now on as the Valley). In March 1986, I returned to Manmaiju for a month to check on my earlier fieldwork and to ask further questions relating to bola. I also visited the Newar agro-town of Tokha 2 1/2 kilometres from Manmaiju, sometimes on my own and on other occasions accompanied by an informant from Manmaiju. It became clear that, apart from a few minor differences, the people of Tokha practised a similar traditional system of bola to that of Manmaiju, indeed the North West section of the Valley, including the Newar settlement of Dharmathali could be said to have a distinctive bola system of its own.

However, despite this possibility, I must reiterate that my detailed research was limited almost entirely to Manmaiju, and Tokha to a lesser extent, so that my conclusions are necessarily restricted. Hiroshi Ishii has also studied bola in the Newar village of ‘Satepa’, where he found far greater changes than I did at Manmaiju for the same period. At ‘Satepa’, Ishii discovered that the number of people practising bola had decreased considerably since 1978 (Ishii, 1980: 174).

Unlike much larger settlements such as Tokha, Manmaiju consists entirely of one caste, that of the Jyāpu. They make up approximately 40 percent of the Newar population of the Valley, and are comparatively low in the social scale, but not Untouchable. Furthermore, it has been generally recognised that the Jyāpu are the most efficient and expert agriculturalists in Nepal, producing the highest yields of rice in the country.

Although Manmaiju is unusual in that only one caste lives there, in all other respects it is a classical Newar settlement. The three-storied houses of brown clay bricks, blending with the landscape, are typically situated on top of a ridge overlooking river valleys on both sides. From a distance, one sees above the rice fields a line of houses half hidden by feathery bamboos, and ancient banyans, atop light grey cliffs of silt glinting with mica schist. The view of the village reflects the topography of the Valley, which consists of a series of plateaux, known as tar, and sharply dissected valleys of low lying land through which streams or rivers flow,
known as dol. It is on the easily flooded and irrigated dol that the wet rice is grown, while the human settlements are built on the dryer, less productive tar.

Manmaiju, like other Newar settlements, is extremely compact, the houses are joined and built opposite one another in streets with open drains. Detached houses are the exception, and these are usually new and built on the outskirts of the village. The main street runs North-South along the top of the tar, while numerous tracks, some very steep, run down from the settlement to the rice fields of the dol.

These closely packed urban settlements of the Newars on top of the high land of the tar are reminiscent of the agro towns of Southern Italy, and they too have their plazas and shrines. Manmaiju is entirely agricultural, and the streets are used in fine weather, even during sunny periods of the monsoon, as places for drying grain, stacking straw, and all the varied minor tasks of repair and sorting. It was within these compact, close knit communities that bola emerged as a viable organisation, and indeed is linked to the peculiar pattern of settlement.

The Jyâpu claim that not only are their agricultural techniques superior to anyone else, especially the Parbatiyas, but that their traditional system or organising labour – bola – is also the best. They believe that is has stood the test of time, and more pertinently is still viable today.

In this paper, I will describe the nature of bola in some detail, and then critically evaluate the system in the light of the Jyâpu’s claims for it. However, except for Toffin’s (1977) brief description and Ishii’s (1980) short account very little has been written about bola in the academic journals, so this is very much a pioneering analysis and my main purpose is to draw attention to it.¹ A definitive, and comparative account awaits more fieldwork in the Valley, and further research.

According to my informants, and my own observations, each male bola party comprises eight to twelve people, and never more than fifteen. These groups are therefore small, intimate, and easily controlled. Males perform their bola labour on two occasions every year, during Sâun (mid-July to mid-August), and Mânsîr (mid-November to mid-December). In 1978 women worked in bola groups mainly during Mânsîr, but by 1986, they were working both in Sâun as well as Mânsîr, although in groups usually not exceeding eight in number. A recent aspect of bola at Manmaiju is that women are supplanting the men in rice weeding.

A bola party is made up only amongst friends and neighbours, that is people who know one another and get on well together. They may be often related, but basically able bodied, reliable working mates are required for a bola group – a lazy person could affect the teamwork, and waste time. The women, for example, work in pairs, as two people are needed for breaking up the large clods along a line of hoed earth. Preferably close neighbours make up a bola party, a person from a distant tol (block), could not be conveniently and quickly given a message, say late at night, or very early in the morning when there may have been a sudden change of

¹ Bola is distinct from guthi, a comparatively well known institution among the Newars.
plan. Indeed, the spatial closeness of each member of a bola party, and their easy communication in a compact settlement is one of the reasons for their efficiency as a group.

There is no one in the village in charge of bola, it is certainly not the responsibility of the Pradhān Pañc or official headman as one might expect. Every bola group runs its own affairs. The debts incurred in labour are worked out between individuals and between teams. For example, if a team has worked for a person in another bola, then it is up to them to pay back the work debt, and make their team’s labour available. These arrangements are flexible, but patterns of reciprocity emerge over a period of time. There are no official sanctions, the arrangements are made on trust, and there is confidence that the force of accepted custom will prevail. The point is that as the system is to everyone’s advantage, everyone makes sure that it will work.

Types of Bola

Apart from the simple type of exchange bola, similar to the Parbatiya parma, there are basically three main kinds of traditional bola at Manmaiju.

(a) **Male**: Hoeing, carrying loads such as dhān and rice straw, weeding.
(b) **Male**: Ploughing only.
(c) **Female**: Breaking up clods, carrying loads of rice straw, manure, or cutting sugarcane, and weeding.

(a) Hoeing, carrying loads such as dhān and rice straw, threshing, weeding

As is common all over Nepal, men and women regularly carry very heavy loads, but amongst the Newars, some of this is organised specifically as a bola task. For example, the men carry dhān (unhusked rice), from the village to the landlord’s house in payment of taxes, or enormous bundles of rice straw from the fields to the settlements. The rice straw is used for fodder and fuel, and these ‘walking haystacks’ are a common sight after the monsoon. (Females also carry rice straw and other loads, with a nāmlo, or headband.) Newar men, unlike other tribes in Nepal, will often carry loads with a carrying pole (nol), as well as the nāmlo.

The men also work in bola groups while cultivating the heavy clay with the short handled hoe or (Nev.) ku. Women do not use the ku, and as ploughing is actually prohibited or tabooed in many Newar settlements, the bola groups of men using the ku form a key part of the agricultural system. The men work in a line while hoeing according to a carefully thought out method to give the most effective effort for each individual field, which differs considerably in shape and size. The ku is driven deep into the heavy clay, and the clod then lifted and placed on one side forming a ridge or furrow. Working alongside one another with the ku is a skilled task,
Fig. 1: Bola groups in action. Men's bola in foreground digging clay soil with Newar short handled hoe or ku, and women's group in background breaking up clods with khatangā.

Fig. 2: Men's bola party weeding rice during monsoon - 1978.
requiring co-operation and practice, for one act of carelessness (as the heavy steel blade is brought down with such force into the soil) could result in someone being maimed for life. Bola parties of men also work in the rice fields weeding during the monsoon, during Sāun [mid-July to mid-August].

(b) Ploughing bola

Although there is a taboo on ploughing amongst the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, certain settlements such as Tokha and Manmaiju in the North West section of the region, do not observe the taboo, and plough regularly. At Manmaiju a bola ploughing team consists of about four pairs of bullocks, that is four ploughs pulled by two bullocks each, and one ploughman to each pair. Each ploughman is paid Rs 10/- per day, as well as the usual contribution of food and jār (1979). At the rest and drink intervals the animals are not forgotten. When each man has had his fill of beer, the drinking cup, now often a small aluminium bowl, is filled and poured into the mouth of the bullock, or actually inserted between the teeth, the saliva being flicked away from the cup after the bullock has had its fill. Ploughing in a team of four is highly skilled work and has to be most carefully orchestrated if there is not to be a snarl up. A bola team in action is one of the agricultural sights of the Valley, and the beautifully synchronised and intricate movements of each pair could only be perfected amongst a group who know one

Fig. 3: Men’s ploughing bola Manmaiju. Note ‘quickstep’ of the ploughmen.
another well. Each ploughman leaps from one side of the furrow to the other while guiding the plough, so that the general effect resembles a stylised form of dance.

(c) Women’s bola

Women usually work in groups of eight, and their main task in the fields is the breaking up of clods after the men have hoed the ground with the ku. To do this the women mainly use a long wooden handled mallet-like instrument known as a khatamugā, with which they pulverise the dry blocks into a friable soil. They also use both a long and short handled metal adze with which they cut up the still wet and sticky clods while standing or in a squatting position with the latter. More recently, because so many men from Manmaiju have found work in Kathmandu or outside the village, women have been weeding the rice and have almost entirely replaced men on this task. Women bola groups also carry manure and rice straw. At Manmaiju, for some reason, sugar cane was cut at night, almost entirely by women, although it was the men who converted the cane into gur or raw brown sugar by means of a special press. While cutting the cane women sing special songs restricted to periods of bola work. They sing not only while working amongst the cane, but also while returning to the village at night along the narrow paths winding amongst the rice fields. They will also sing at other tasks, such as breaking up the clods. One woman will start by singing a line, and then the others will follow. These songs not

Fig. 4: Bola in action. Men ploughing in foreground. Complete bola group of nine women in background breaking up clods with long handled adzes.
only differ from one another, but are sung in sets according to the season. One informant, for example, said to me, „If you played the tape you made of our songs on that particular night of the bola, we would at once know it was a bola song, and at what time of the year it was sung.“ Another reiterated the point of uniqueness, „Our songs are quite different from the Parbatiyas. They can sing a particular song whenever and wherever they like. We do not do this.“

Payment

According to my Jyāpu informants at Manmaiju, before about 1950, there was little cash payment for bola. Instead: „Wherever one worked, one received one pāthi of dhān.“ However, in 1979, the standard payment for bola agricultural work was Rs 5/- per day, and for transporting rice Rs 2.5 for each muri carried. In addition, food and drink is always provided for a bola team engaged in agricultural tasks. Informants stated that generally for only one day’s work, wages were not given, only food and drink, „Ek din ko lägi jyāla dinu pardaina“, still reflecting perhaps the original basic exchange system.

Hoeing, for example, is particularly exhausting work, and a more or less constant supply of jār or rice beer has to be provided so that many of the cultivators are cheerfully inebriated. There are frequent halts for snacks of ciurā or parched rice, but the main meal is taken quite early in the morning sometimes between 8.00 and 9.00 a.m., depending on the time of starting. At Manmaiju for most agricultural tasks, the Jyāpu, like other Nepalese peasants, rise and go to work between 4.00 and 5.00 a.m. without having eaten anything, so that an early meal becomes necessary. The bola party is provided with cooked rice for this meal, as well as vegetables, and also meat on occasions. The food is thus part of the bola deal, and reinforces the concept of reciprocity.

Bola parties of men carrying rice (dhān) to landlords for rent, do this in the very early morning between 5.00 and 9.00 a.m. They do not want to waste the whole day on a secondary non-productive task; they want to earn more money during the rest of the day. However, one informant said, „Those who carried my dhān to the Nara Devi gūthi, got Rs 5 per muri for the dhān carried. Thus, they earned a full day’s salary in that single carry. Very satisfactory for them – but very expensive for me!“

Other early morning work for short periods is not so well paid. A member of a bola group told me, „If you work on agricultural tasks such as hoeing in the early morning, or only for part of the morning, a man will get pānc mohor, (Rs 2.50), and women, pānc sukha only (25 paisa). Those who work their bola session in the morning only, do not receive cooked rice (bhat khāndaina), they are given half a mana of uncooked rice (cāmal) instead. They eat only a snack. “ According to my Jyāpu informants, the members of the bola party accumulate their portions of
uncooked rice and put them all together (samma garera rākcha). The total amount is given to the householder where the annual feast of the bola party is to be held, and the rice beer is made on the spot. (Every Jyāpu house has the large copper pots and other facilities necessary for making rice beer or jār.)

Breakdown of bola during harvesting

Despite the highly organised system of bola for dealing with agricultural tasks which require local co-operation, there is an extraordinary anomaly in that the system breaks down during the key period of the annual rice harvest in October. It is possible that the system may have worked at some stage in the past, but it is clear that it has not for several decades. Thus, during the rice harvest there is no traditional and ritualised bola, but only very simple arrangements for exchange of labour. That is, one group will agree to assist another in return for their labour at the harvest, so that the arrangements are very ad hoc, immediate and casual. During the rice harvest, one obtains extra labour by whatever means one can, even by hiring outsiders, non-Newars such as itinerant Tāmaṅgs, who travel down from the surrounding hills to the Kathmandu Valley in search of such work. Much the same situation applies during the wheat harvest in late April and early May. Most of the Tāmaṅgs working for the Jyāpu came from the Trisuli area, and were employed specifically to cut the rice. I saw on several occasions that the Jyāpu were working the foot powered threshing machines, while the Tāmaṅgs were harvesting, or carrying the rice straw back to the village. The Jyāpu of Manmaiju told me that they paid the Tāmaṅgs Rs 4 per day, and gave them rice and khājā (snacks) as well as some jār to drink. All the itinerant Tāmaṅgs I saw in the Valley appeared extremely poor, wearing the bare minimum of ragged cotton clothing, and were quite desperate for work. They told me that without this extra work in the Valley during the harvests, they would starve. Tāmaṅgs also told me that they were not always given food and drink, but paid Rs 8, sometimes Rs 10 per day with no extras. They live in local brick shelters known as pātī, and sometimes in temporary huts. The Jyāpu consider the Tāmaṅgs to be of a lower caste than themselves, and they are not usually allowed into their houses, especially the upstairs living rooms. We thus have an adequately functioning system, except in the vital times of harvesting where the immediate demand for labour is so urgent and excessive that bola cannot operate in its traditional form. Then the Newars themselves cannot supply sufficient labour and are forced to hire outsiders with whom they otherwise have little contact.

2 However, according to Ulrike Müller (1981), the Tāmaṅgs she interviewed at Thimi in 1977 received as much as Rs 12 per day as well as being supplied with some food.
Social significance of *bola*

Despite the problem of the harvest, *bola* as a form of social organisation is still highly regarded by the Jyāpu. It is woven into the fabric of their religious and social life, with ceremonies, rituals, and feasts solely devoted to it. The *bola* group itself has a hierarchy. For example, every team has a head, who is known as a *thakāli*, and it is his job to organise the arrangements for each day’s work and to give orders. In one sense egalitarian principles are followed in that the position of the *thakāli* is always given to the oldest person in the *bola*, irrespective of caste, so that, in theory at least, everyone has the possibility of being head. Peasants I interviewed at Manmaiju and Tokha insisted that this idea was different in principle from the ritual hierarchy of caste, and related far more to the practicalities of making the *bola* party work amicably and effectively together on agricultural tasks. There was also perhaps a kind of covert anti-elitism in the rule that the oldest person must be the *thakāli*, for quite often he was not the most efficient or the best organiser, he was not necessarily the best leader. However, it was custom which insisted that everyone should have the chance of becoming *thakāli* irrespective of caste or 'merit'. Jyāpu at Manmaiju told me that if the *thakāli* was not really up to managing his *bola* group, others within it would quietly help him out, and preserve the authority of the position. It must be added that the order of seniority of the rest of the group is also governed by age with the youngest being the most junior.

The system demands that the *thakāli* is always treated with respect, and the recognition of his authority is given publicly by the rest of the group. For example, in order of precedence for eating and drinking, the *thakāli* comes first, followed by the next oldest, the No. 2 known as *noku*. The No. 3 is known as *soku*, No. 4 *peku*, and No. 5 *nyaku*. The last or the youngest person is known as *kvakāli*. These honorary ranks are part of the *bola* tradition, although they are also found in *guthis*.

During the rest breaks, the *thakāli* is the first to have a drink of *jār* or rice beer, and until he has done this, the others have to wait. It is once again a matter of custom willingly observed. The *thakāli* sits first in any line, the rule applies even to food served in the field, and the *thakāli* eats first. This order of seniority in drinking and eating, especially of course, at formal feasts, is followed by each member of the *bola*, or rather by the first five designated members. For example, if a chicken has been sacrificed, the head is cut off and given to the *thakāli*, the right wing is given to the *noku*, the left wing to the *soku*, the right leg to the *peku*, and the left leg to the *nyaku*.

**The traditional *bola* feast**

A major reflection of this moral and communal solidarity expressed both in hierarchy and reciprocity is the feast (*bhoj*), held at the end of the year, usually in
December, on the day of the full moon. (In 1978, this was Thursday 14 December.) On the day before the feast all agricultural work stops, not a person is to be seen in the deserted fields with hoe or plough. From dawn onwards, bola parties can be seen walking out of the village on their way to Kathmandu or Patan to buy food and goods for the feast. Of course, the villagers have their own rice and ciurā (parished rice) home grown, but extra meat and vegetables are bought in the bazaars and carried home.

The men are traditionally expected to buy only domestic utensils such as brass plates, brass water jugs, fār containers, and large metal cooking pots costing up to Rs 150. These utensils are brought to the feast and used there, but afterwards they are taken home by their individual purchasers. The money to buy the utensils is obtained from the overall sum gained by the bola party, and then equally distributed. It is considered traditional and socially correct to spend the major portion of one's own share of the bola earnings, and to buy the utensils when everyone else does, on the holiday preceding the festival. Thus, the money earned while working with a bola group is not expected to be spent in ways other than expenses connected with the feast and domestic utensils. To be specific, my Jyāpu informants told me that bola money should not be spent on buying agricultural implements, medicines, bicycles, or repaying hospital expenses, debts, or, more recently, even electricity bills! To do so would be entirely against the whole spirit and tradition of bola, all my informants were agreed. Small amounts of 'pocket' money left over after the expenses of the feast and the purchase of utensils by the men or food and clothes by the women, can of course be spent on whatever one likes. When women buy clothing with the bola money, a particular bolt of cloth is purchased, and their group's skirts are all made up in the same pattern and colour.

The total amount made by a bola party of eight men at Manmaiju was between Rs 2,500 and Rs 3,000, the latter being the absolute limit. The bhoj feasts would cost about Rs 30 per person, that is a total of Rs 240. When I began to check fairly carefully on what actually happened to the amount left over of Rs 2,260, that is Rs 282 each, the answers became evasive, in comparison with those related to the ideal model. One group of men whom I was invited to join for their traditional feast, mentioned the new hats which they were wearing, bought for about Rs 5 each, and new brass oil lamps costing about Rs 50 each. This meant that according to my direct observation and close questioning each man in the bola had Rs 227 left as pocket money, and none of them in this particular group bought anything else such as brass utensils. They also 'confessed' to buying non-traditional items such as artificial manures, or whatever there was a real need for at the time. The brass oil lamps were only a concession to the tradition.

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3 Further research is required to ascertain whether these sums are recirculated mainly within the village as part of the overall bola economy.
Of course, this is not a criticism of the behaviour of the Jyāpu, for in every society there are ideal rules of behaviour, and then there is what people actually do for pragmatic or other reasons. However, in the case of bola, the essential 'moral' point has been retained. That is to say, bola remains a form of social organisation based upon reciprocity and the reinforcement of tradition rather than the motivation of profit in the capitalistic sense. It must also be stressed that until recently all the bola payments were in kind – one pāthi of dhān (unhusked rice) was the unit for whatever work was executed.

The feasting, the first of three meals, started about midday. I had been invited to attend, and was thus able to observe what went on as a participant. This particular bola group of eight men, had made about Rs 2,700. The meal began in an informal way on the second storey of a Jyāpu house at Manmaiju. Some musicians were also present, who were older relatives of the bola members but, in fact, this bola was made up of young men, and the thakāli was only about 26 years. The men had their meal separately from the women who were cooking and serving. They sat cross-legged on the wooden floor of the house on mats as for some reason the floor was damp in places. The food was eaten off large leaves stitched together. This first meal consisted mainly of ciura, some boiled buffalo meat, delicious small curried potatoes, and fermented vegetables of which the Jyāpu are particularly fond. An excellent jār was served in small aluminium bowls, and we were soon all talking rapidly and laughing in an atmosphere which grew increasingly convivial. The musicians played while the jār flowed, and later singing began. The feasting, drinking, music and singing continued all night, although I did not stay right to the end. Bola parties wandered round the village singing their special songs in the darkness. During the feast, my informants stressed the point that the bola 'custom' was peculiar to the Newars, and that the Parbatiyas did not organise their agricultural labour in this way.

The bolapūjā

Gérard Toffin (1982) has described and discussed in some detail the reaffirmation of solidarity which pūjās or jātrās serve in Panauti, a Newar village in the North East outskirts of the Valley, and there is a similar kind of event related to bola at Manmaiju. On the same day as the feast and preceding it, all the bola parties of Manmaiju worship at a local shrine and offer sacrifices.

The shrine used by the bola parties is that of Ganeša, located at the entrance to the village under a large and ancient pipal tree. My field assistant accounted for 37 separate bola groups, which was slightly more than my informants had expected. (Until then, no one knew precisely how many bola parties there were at Manmaiju as they had never been counted before.) Since the Jyāpu of Manmaiju were ostensibly mainly Buddhists using Gubhāju priests instead of Brahmans, they were
sacrificing animals at the shrine of a Hindu god, Gañeśa. This is not the place to discuss the syncretistic complexity of Buddhism in Nepal, but the point is that the Gañeśa shrine was the centre of all the ritual activity for that occasion.

The first *bola* party arrived at the Gañeśa shrine at 9.30 a.m., a group of women dressed in traditional bodices, and new wrap-around skirts of the same colour and pattern, purchased with *bola* earnings. All the women and most of the men were well dressed in their best clothes for the occasion. The women wore gold ornaments, and silver necklaces, with numerous new bangles on their arms. Many of them had decorated their jet black hair, with red poinsettia 'flowers', and woven into their carefully groomed plaits or buns were strips of scarlet cloth.

Some of the *bola* groups of men arrived at the shrine playing musical instruments, drums, flutes, and cymbals, and continued their music at the shrine. The women sang *bola* songs in high pitched unison, and many of them carried the special brass bowls peculiar to the Newars filled with articles to be used at the ceremony such as offerings of food, including eggs. Brass Gañeśa oil lamps with wicks alight were very popular. People also carried small metal boxes containing red and orange tikā paste which they applied to one another's foreheads signifying sisterhood and brotherhood. Every *bola* party had to sacrifice something living at the shrine, and
Fig. 6: Group of men from bola party outside the main shrine at Manmaiju during bola festival, 14 December 1978.

chickens were brought for this purpose, trussed and indignant. Later, the decapitated birds were taken home for the feast.

Some of the male groups sacrificed a young buffalo as well as a chicken. These would cost the group between Rs 250 and Rs 300 but of course the meat also formed part of the feast. The doleful young buffalo were 'lined up' around the shrine awaiting their turn for sacrifice, and on the whole they were treated well, patted and stroked. In some instances a local Kasāi (butcher), had the animals trussed to stop them struggling as he cut their throats with a knife which he sharpened on a stone adjacent to the shrine. The throat was slit before the altar and the animal was dragged close so that the blood spurted right over it. More popular and more dramatic was the beheading of the buffalo with a special Newar sword. The idea was to decapitate the animal with a single stroke, and a bungled execution was considered inauspicious. It was clear that the sacrifices were the key emotional moments in the ritual, and extremely important to the reinforcement of the spectacle as something significant and outside ordinary everyday events. The sword executions were undoubtedly the highlights of the ceremony. As the man raised his sword and hesitated a moment to gauge the exact placing of the stroke, the crowd was hushed, and then there was a jubilant roar as the blade completed its stroke. The noise of the cymbals and drums, the struggles of the animals, the death throes, the spurting blood, gave such pleasure that many of the crowd laughed out loud, exclaimed excitedly, and the general mood was one of jubilation.
As well as the more dramatic sacrifices, there was the equally important but less spectacular ritual at the shrine of placing a tikā or red paste mark on the forehead of other members of the same bola. This act signifies a form of auspicious blessing amongst all Nepalese. In the bolapūja, the tikā ritual reinforces the concept of brotherhood or sisterhood amongst each group, and signifies the mutual respect in which they hold one another.

There is no doubt that the bolapūja is major event for the Jyāpu of Manmaiju providing the stage for a public demonstration of solidarity. It also clearly demonstrates the religious dimension of the bola system and reiterates to the community, in the most dramatically emotional way, that the bola form of social organisation is still very much part of Jyāpu culture and a living force in their community at Manmaiju.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it seems that the Newars of Manmaiju and Tokha have a traditional and highly effective system of organising their labour, which enables special team skills such as ploughing and hoeing in unison to be fully developed. This system is closely integrated into their cultural life, and reinforced by religious rituals of sacrifice and feasts. It is also a custom which creates and relies upon a feeling of trust and reciprocity, strengthening social bonds through work rather than rivalry and individual gain at the expense of other villagers.

Most importantly, it seems that bola is a form of social organisation reflecting egalitarian principles rather than the hierarchical ideas expressed in the jajmani system (a point made explicitly by Gérard Toffin (1977)). Bola is thus dependent upon horizontal rather than vertical bonding. People work together apparently because they want to do so on equal basis, and the bola groups are equal in respect to one another. This is interesting because the concept is plainly seen as being of functional importance in forming an efficient working group without the 'coercion' of hierarchy.

A leader is required for practical purposes, so that at the operational level, the all-embracing notion of hierarchy in the Dumontian sense is preserved. Thus egalitarianism gives way voluntarily to a functioning hierarchy on one plane, and traditional respect is accorded to the thakālī, noku, soku and so on, for this is the wider idiom of the cast hierarchy in which the society as a whole operates. But the leadership of bola is not expressed in the concepts of purity and impurity, but related solely to age irrespective of caste. The Newars have recognised the necessity of leadership in any group, and reinforced the authority of the thakālī with the traditional forms of respect, yet it is understood that the underlying authority comes from the group itself as a set of equals. This understanding is not to be underrated for as H. Franklin (1985) has pointed out, in some societies where
egalitarianism is the prevailing ideology, leadership is either undervalued or has to legitimate itself through authoritarianism and power. The strength and operating efficiency of bola is that the Jyāpu have steered a middle way, in which the concept of hierarchy is preserved on one plane and egalitarianism on another. Yet, it must be reiterated that the concept of egalitarianism, although present, relates to equality within the 'clean' castes such as Jyāpu or Śreṣṭha, and does not include Untouchables. It is also different from the individualism of the Western model.

However, the system, although ideal in many respects, does not function at a key period of the year, that of the annual rice harvest, or at the wheat harvest for that matter. Moreover, even a modified simple exchange arrangement does not work either, it does not prove equal to the demands for labour at harvest time. Even the extremely self-reliant Jyāpu have to employ outsiders such as the Tāmaṅgs to an increasing extent, despite the rise in their population and an apparently surplus labour force for the rest of the year.

It is difficult to say now whether the bola system was ever meant to cope with the rice harvest. My guess is that bola was always modified to some extent by the great demand for labour at harvest time, but that the Newar tradition for self-sufficiency suggests that they would once have coped with the harvest themselves without the employment of outside Parbatiya labour such as the Tāmaṅgs. My Jyāpu informants at Manmaiju thought that they had been using Tāmaṅgs at the rice harvest for several generations, at least as far back as anyone could remember. The point was, they said, that the Tāmaṅgs came looking for work, and in the past many had been so desperate that they would do any task for a small portion of rice.

Despite its apparent decline elsewhere in the Valley, especially at 'Satepa', according to Ishii (1980), it seems that bola still continues amongst the Jyāpu at Manmaiju and the Newars of Tokha. It persists there perhaps because it can be easily dispensed with during the harvest, and yet for other key tasks such as hoeing and ploughing provides an efficient way of organising labour. As bola clearly reinforces social solidarity and reduces friction in working relationships by a kind of pragmatic egalitarianism, it could be a retrograde step if bola gave way to a more divisive or impersonal system without good reason or pressing necessity. Development planners in Nepal should think carefully about the effects of their schemes in this context.

Finally, if this paper has drawn more attention to the nature of bola in Jyāpu economic and social life, and highlighted some of the possible theoretical issues, then it will have served its purpose. More research is needed throughout the Valley, and hopefully this paper will have provided some of the stimulus.
Bibliography

Gopal Singh Nepali

Changes in Rigidity and Flexibility of Caste in the Kathmandu Valley

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This paper proposes to discuss the functioning of caste in the Kathmandu Valley and the changes it is undergoing. The caste system of the Valley is, in fact, the cultural heritage of the Newars; it was, however, modified after 1768 in favour of the Gorkhas, who conquered the Valley, placed their own Brahmans and Kṣatriyas at the top of the local caste-hierarchy and treated the Newars as one single ethnic caste. They regulated inter-caste relations through various laws with severe consequences if anyone violated them. To what extent the cultural and political superiority of the twice-born (which always meant the Brahmin and Kṣatriya groups) was emphasized can be deduced from Brian Hodgson's reference in this connection: according to him, the killing of a cow or seducing a woman of the twice-born constituted the most heinous crimes during his time (1880/II:233).

Nowadays, though Nepal has formally abolished caste as far as the political and economic life of the country is concerned, the values of Hinduism and of the twice-born – the two basic elements in the caste-system – are still given official recognition, albeit only indirectly. The present constitution of the country declares Nepal to be a Hindu state, and through recognition of the institution of rājguru (the institution of state priest), the dominant ritual position of the Parbatiyā-Brahmins receives considerable emphasis. The family priest of the royal family also comes from the ranks of these Parbatiyā-Brahmins. The rājguru is an ipso facto member of the Rājya-sabhā, the council of elders concerned with the continuity of and succession to the throne. The Kṣatriya order, which is closed to the Newars, takes on importance through the stipulation of certain conditions for becoming the king of Nepal: a prerequisite for succession to the throne of Nepal is that the candidate must be a sanātani Hindu of the Kṣatriya caste belonging to the present Śāha dynasty.

The stress placed on Hinduism and on the status of the twice-born (of the Parbatiyā) sets the overall framework for the patterning of the Nepalese society; the caste society of the Kathmandu Valley is a paradigmatic manifestation of this social structure, and has distinctive features of caste not to be found in India. First of all, caste in the Kathmandu Valley cuts across religious boundaries: Hindus and Buddhists both function within a single caste framework. Secondly, it even brings within its fold the Tibeto-Burman ethnic groups by assigning to them caste-status in terms of ritual purity. Seen from the perspective of the politically and numerically dominant Gorkhas, there are three cultural groups which can be placed in a ritually-defined hierarchy. The highest ritual position is occupied by the Parbatiyā-Brahmins and Kṣatriya groups. Next in order come the two Tibeto-Burman groups, who have been more or less absorbed into Hinduism, followed by high-caste Newars and the other Tibeto-Burman groups, who are mostly Buddhists. Finally, there is a group of untouchables which includes both the Newar and Parbatiyā untouchables.
Several criteria are taken into account, singly or in combination, in assigning such relative positions in the broad hierarchy of caste. First, the Buddhists are generally considered ritually inferior to the Hindus; secondly, those who eat cows, pigs and buffalos are ritually inferior to those who do not eat the flesh of such animals. But among those who eat such animals, the buffalo-eater is superior to those who eat pigs and cows, and the pig-eater is superior to those who eat the cow. The use of liquor, ritually or otherwise, is another criterion for evaluating caste. On this basis, all those castes who make ritual use of liquor are bracketed as *matvāli* to differentiate them from the ritually pure castes, the *tāgādbhāri*.

Sexual alliance, though it is a basis for determining ritual purity under certain conditions, is nonetheless tolerated liberally. Thus, though having sex or contracting a morganatic alliance with a woman of untouchable caste forces a person to sink to the level of the caste of the woman, this is not the case if the woman is not untouchable. One can live as a husband with a woman of clean caste without losing one's own caste, though such a wife is not regarded as one who can be admitted to family worship and the kitchen for ritual purposes. Among the Parbatiyās and the Śreṣṭha Newars, the children born of such alliances take the caste status intermediate to that of the father and mother. In a situation where a man has a number of wives from different castes lower than his own, the children are ranked according to the relative caste-status of the women.

Another basis for the distinction between castes is occupation, though in this respect Nepalese society again has its own peculiar features. While certain occupations, such as scavenging, leather-working, iron-working and basket-making are occupations of the low castes, metal-working is not. It remains exclusively the hereditary occupation of the high-caste Buddhist Newars. Farming is an occupation which is practiced by all castes, though the Parbatiyā-Brahmins and the Newars do not touch the plough for religious reasons. It is, however, significant to note that the Chetris (a section of Parbatiyā Kṣatriya groups) take to the plough without any compunction whatsoever.

Thus, by utilizing the above-mentioned criteria, all of the ethnic and caste groups are first divided into two main categories, viz. the *tāgādbhāris* (who can wear the holy thread) and the *matvāli* (who are prohibited from wearing the sacred thread and who use liquor in their religious ceremonies). Except for the Parbatiyā-Brahmins and Kṣatriyas and the Dev-Bhāju priests of the Newars, none of the others is given the status of *tāgādbhāri* because of the ritual use of liquor, buffalo meat, pork or yak meat on their part. Some additional criteria such as paying the bride-price, remarriage of widows and the right of divorce allowed to women, and some domestic rituals relating to birth, initiation, marriage and death, which do not have the sanction of the Parbatiyā-Brahmins, are also taken into account when evaluating relative caste status. These criteria are also used by the individual castes or ethnic groups themselves in evaluating their own relative positions in the overall caste hierarchy of the Valley.
Based on such criteria, the society of the Kathmandu Valley may be said to be structured in terms of the following traditional hierarchy:

I. **Tāgādhāri: Brahmin jāti**
   1. Upādhyāya Brahmin
   2. Kumai Brahmin (Pānde, Pant, Lohani etc.)
   3. Dev Brahmin (Newar Brahmin priest)
   4. Jaisi Brahmin (offsprings of Brahmin widows)

II. **Tāgādhāri: Kṣatriya jāti**
   1. Thakuri (including the royal Śāha clan)
   2. Rānā
   3. Chetri
   4. Khatri (offspring of Brahmin and Kṣatriya fathers and lower caste women)

III. **Matvāli jāti**
   1. Magar
   2. Gurung
   According to P.R. Sharma (Himalayan Review, Vol. IV, 1971, page 43–60) some Chetri of the Karnali Zone are regarded as matvāli.

IV. **Matvāli jāti: Upper Caste Newars**
   1. Bajrācārya and Bārā (priests and goldsmiths)
   2. Chathariya Śreṣṭa
   4. Udās (merchants, artisans)
   5. Jyāpu (farmers and occupational subcastes like potters-Kumāh, brickmakers-Āvāh, carpenters-Sikarmi etc.)

V. **Clean Lower Castes**
   1. Ekthariya parallel castes:
      Gāthā-gardeners, Nau-barbers, Khusāh-gardeners, Pū/Citrakār-painters, Chipā/Raṇjītka-dyers, Sāymi/Mānandhar-oil pressers, Nakarmi/Kaur-blacksmith (Pū and Sāymi are Buddhists).
   2. Rāi and Limbu (former Kirāti, who eat and sacrifice pigs)

VI. **Unclean Castes: Newars**
   1. Dui, Balāmi, Sāgha
   2. Bhā/Kārāmjīt (bier carriers)
   3. Nāy/Kāsāi (butchers and milk vendors)
   4. Jugi/Kusle (musicians and tailors)
VII. *Tibeto-Burman ethnic groups*

VIII. *Untouchable Castes*

1. Kāmi (Parbatiyā blacksmiths)
2. Damāi (Parbatiyā musicians and tailors)
3. Pođe (sweepers, fishermen and basket makers)
4. Cyāme, Cyamākhālak (scavengers)
5. Kulu (drum makers)
6. Sārki (Parbatiyā cobblers)
7. Hālāhulu (sweepers and hunters)

Some of the specific grounds on which the Newars are not accepted by the Parbatiyās as their equal relate to the following factors: their use of liquor and buffalo meat in religious and domestic ceremonies; the mock-marriage of their girls (ihi) to Suvarna Kumāra (a golden emblem of god Nārāyaṇa) the practice of lakha (a kind of brideprice), the practice of divorce and remarriage of widows; and the offering of pinda (balls of cooked barley) in śrāddha ceremonies. Some other cultural practices regarded as impure by orthodox Hinduism, such as the eating of salt, the offering of the pindas before a corpse is cremated and the tabooing of salt-eating when a child is born in the family, are taken into consideration by the Parbatiyās in evaluating the status of the Newar castes. One more significant ground for not accepting the Newars as equal by the Parbatiyās is that the bridegroom does not accompany his marriage procession in the traditional marriage of a Newar. He is not needed for the marriage ceremonies at the bride’s parents’ home. As an innovation among the high castes, nowadays the bridegroom accompanies the marriage procession; but he is not required for any ceremonies at the home of the bride’s parents.

Despite such rigid attitudes adopted by the politically and numerically dominant Parbatiyās towards them, the Newars have stuck by and large to their own cultural way of life. While the other Tibeto-Burman speaking groups who are on a low level of material development, are gradually giving up their cultural practices, so as to appear respectable in the eyes of the Parbatiyās, the Newars continue to follow their own time-honored traditions.

The Newars themselves have an elaborate system of caste hierarchy based on occupational differentiation, as can be seen from the following:

**Newar Caste Hierarchy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hindu Castes</th>
<th>Buddhist Castes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dev Brahmīn</td>
<td>Gubhājū/Bajrācārya, Śākyā, Bārā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chathariya Śreṣṭha</td>
<td>Udās</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pañcchariya Śreṣṭha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jyāpu</td>
<td>Gūla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gāthā, Nau, Khusah, Kau</td>
<td>Pū, Sāymi, Chipā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindu Castes</td>
<td>Buddhist Castes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Unclean Castes</td>
<td>Dui, Balami, Sāgha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bhā</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kasāi</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jugi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Untouchable Castes</td>
<td>Pođe, Kulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cyāme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hālāhulu</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of these castes is endogamous and regards itself as ranking above or below the others on the basis of restrictions on food, marriage, smoking and drinking and the privilege of employing a Brahmin priest.

These Newar castes are further split into numerous subgroups based on their traditional occupations, a distinction which is still operative in many cases: thus, for example, the Bārās, Udās, Śreṣṭhas and Jyāpus still maintain such differentiation of occupations.

There are several factors which serve to maintain the distinctiveness as well as interdependence of the Newar castes. One factor lies in the territorial division of these various Newar castes. Whereas the Parbatiyā-Brahmins and Kṣatriyas segregate themselves and live in their own ‘bastees’ with their households scattered and separated from one another at a considerable distance, the Newars live in compact villages of their own in which there is a social ordering of localities along the lines of caste. This pattern, however, is more manifest in the towns of Bhaktapur, Patan, Kirtipur, and less so in the modern town of Kathmandu where these caste localities are becoming interspersed with non-Newar groups. However, even where such a process of intermingling is taking place, the former caste-linked signs of the localities are still in evidence, especially in matters of association of the local deities with particular castes for purposes of worship and ritual participation.

Another territorial principle of caste is the division of the caste-households into sanaguthi groups. A person has to be the member of the sanaguthi of his territory. In the village of Paṅga, for example, the 442 households of the Jyāpus are divided into three sanaguthi groups, and there is one sanaguthi for each of the Śreṣṭhas (42 households), Kasāi (20 households), Kusle (one household) and Nakarmi (one household). The Chetris (13 households), who are Parbatiyās, and the Nau (barbers) dispose of their dead themselves. The cremation of a Newar involves a series of functions to be performed by the different caste-households on a

* Castes on the same horizontal plane are regarded as of equal social status. Many of these castes will dispute their ranking in the above chart of hierarchy if left to themselves. For example, the Udās claim equal status with the Bārā, and think to be higher than the Paṅchthariya Śreṣṭha.
hereditary basis; these are guided and supervised by a smaller circle of caste elders known as siguthi members. The sanaguthi association is very effective in maintaining caste solidarity. Refusal by the caste members to perform their respective roles in the disposal of the dead renders the members of the bereaved family quite helpless, because the bereaved members are forbidden from touching the corpse. When a person migrates to another region, he either has to continue his membership in the old sanaguthi or obtain membership in the sanaguthi of the locality or region to which he has migrated. Thus, the disposal of the dead is a powerful mechanism serving to prevent the members from deviating from caste norms. The sentiments of sanaguthi solidarity are perpetuated through the collective feasts that follow cremation, as well as through the annual worship involving feasts in honour of the deity around which this institution is built.

Caste distinctions are also perpetuated among the Newars by the provision of separate caste platforms at the cremation grounds in a set pattern, though this varies to some extent from one region to another. For example, in the village of Panga there are separate burning-sites for each caste, viz., the Kusle, Kasai, Kau, Jyapus, Srethas and the untouchable castes. At the temples of Kankeshvari, Indranya and Bhadrakali in Kathmandu (to mention but a few temples associated with the cremation of the dead), there are separate cremation platforms each for Dev-Bhaju Brahmin, Sretha, Jyapu, Kulu, Chipa, Saha and other castes. In many cases, the pattern is as follows: the higher the caste, the nearer the cremation platform to the temple of the deity.

Another fundamental feature involved in the maintenance of caste values relates to the unity of the Newar households based on the patrilineal agnatic principle associated with the cult of the worship of lineage gods. Such lineage association (known as divaliguthi) is closely linked to the loyalty toward some particular god who must be worshipped not only at the time of domestic ceremonies such as birth, initiation, marriage and death, but also twice annually at the field-site of the deity. Every new bride of the family has to undergo the ritual of being admitted to the divali group (lineage group of her husband) and participate in the collective worship of the lineage god as supervised by a body of eight lineage elders. Any defiance of caste rules results in refusal to allow the deviant members to participate in lineage worship: this in turn means social ostracism by the caste guthi (sanaguthi), which ultimately results either in becoming phuki (separated from divali group) leading to the setting up of one’s own divali, or living as an individual household. However, it is difficult for a Newar to live when ostracized by his divali group.

The minute division of role on an hereditary basis to be performed by the caste and by the agnatic members makes the Newars highly dependent on caste and lineage households. Solidarity is further strengthened by the numerous ritual functions to be provided by the members of the wider kinship circle. In particular, the married daughter has to fulfill a number of social roles in relation to her natal family, especially on the occasion of a death in her natal home, when she is obliged to perform the ceremonies of lvacha and nhaynhumâ on the 4th and 7th day of the
cremation of the dead. Thus, the well-knit solidarity of caste, family and kinship helps to preserve each caste as a distinct identity.

These various castes and subcastes, though kept apart as distinct identities, are brought into inter-dependence with one another in a variety of ways to form a wider community. For example, the Newar castes in the town of Kirtipur have the following functions in relation to the local community:

1. Dev Brahmin-Priests to the Śreṣṭhas for which they receive payment in cash and in kind. They also function as priests for the local Nārāyaṇa temple; they hold land for the service to be rendered.

2. Śreṣṭhas – Formerly leaders of the community on a par with the Rājputs in India and still providing community leadership.

3. Gubhāju – Buddhist priests, also acting as priests to Chilācva Dyāh, a local Buddhist deity.

4. Khusah – their function is to blow kahā musical instruments during every festival and jātrā. They are paid annually in paddy. They also provide kahā music to individual households for which they are paid in kind and cash.

5. Mali – They likewise provide kahā music. Once every 12 years they present the year-long gāthu-dance. They also sell flowers, and are paid in cash out of the revenue from land assigned for the purpose. Their duty is to play kahā music at the local temple of Taleju.

6. Nau – They have to work at the Taleju temple for ritual purification on Dasai. They must hold up the looking glass to the Taleju deity, and in return they receive six measures of rice. They also provide traditional functions as barbers to the higher castes.

7. Kau – The village iron-smiths, who supply iron implements. They are paid annually in kind.

8. Raṇjitkār – They dye cloth.

9. Guala – They are cattle herders; and formerly used to supply milk to the king. They have to take the cows to Kathmandu at a place known as Singhasatal during an annual festival, where the Government keeps ready 20 pāthis of boiled rice. After the cows have eaten the food, the left-overs are taken away by them. On the day of Gāthāmugah, the Guala is obliged to worship at a tank which is the site of the ancient cow stable. After worship, he distributes the prasād. The demon Ghaṇṭa-karna is not dragged away until the Guala arrives on the scene.


11. Māṇandhar – oil pressers. There is no ritual function of this caste in Kirtipur, but elsewhere, especially in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur, they are associated in ritual terms with the erection of a long pole (liṅga) known as Indrā dhāja.

12. Poḍe – Their function is to receive foodgrains on the 8th and 10th of the Mārgaśuklapakṣa; when animal sacrifices are made to the goddess Indrāyani; 360 pieces of flesh have to be offered to this caste before anybody can receive a share of the sacrificed animal. They also supply baskets in exchange for paddy.
13. Duī – They blow musical pipes at the temple of Taleju.
14. Kusle – They have to perform animal sacrifice at the Taleju temple. They receive foodgrains from the state annually for the traditional services rendered.
15. Putuvār – Lamp-bearers and Palanquin-carriers of the former kings. They receive an annual payment from the government.
16. Citrukār – Their job is to paint the idols of the local deities. They provide earthen jars painted with the image of god Brahmā at the time of marriage of a Newar.
17. Jyāpu – They are associated with a number of ritual functions at the time of annual festivals of the local deities. It is their job to draw the chariot at the time of festival procession (jātrās). In addition, they must fulfill a series of functions in relation to the domestic life of the Śreṣṭhas.
18. Lavat Khatri – This is a lower-ranking Śreṣṭha subcaste born of misalliance and having functions similar to those of the Śreṣṭhas.
19. Kasāi – They sell milk and provide caste music in marriages and on other ritual occasions, and are also active as sellers of buffalo meat.
20. Gāine – A Nepāli-speaking and singing caste with no ritual function in Newar community.

Thus, it would appear that each caste has certain secular as well as ritual functions in community life. A non-Newar caste is not at all involved in any of the events except as a silent spectator. The Udās, a Buddhist caste, are conspicuous by their absence in Kirtipur.

In the village of Paṅga, it is the occasion of Bisendevijātrā (the local village festival) at which the different local castes provide ritual functions (a detailed description is to be found in Nepali, 1965: 351–53). There are seven castes in the village of Paṅga: these include Śreṣṭhas, Jyāpu, Kasāi, Kusle, Nau (barber), Kau and the Karki clan of Chetri. Excluding the Karkis, who belong to Parbatiyā group and thus are an immigrant caste, all other castes have specific functions during Bisendevijātrā, which takes place on the 8th of the bright half of Mārga (Nov.-Dec.) and involves the worship of not one but two goddesses, viz., Bisendevi and Balkumāri. Such ritual participation by the different castes and by each of the patrilineal groups of these castes is invariably a common feature of all the festivals observed in the Kathmandu Valley. The involvement of these various local castes in the festivals of the local deities is indicative of the strong collective sentiments that bind the Newars together. Apart from these festivals, there are national festivals such as Matsyendra-nāthjātrā, Kumārijātrā, Gājātrā and Indrajātrā; these involve participation from a ritual point of view by all the Newars, though these festivals also function to bolster the community solidarity of the respective specific regions. One can view caste from still another angle: the caste system and the religio-social system of the Newars may be considered as a unified system which is also manifested in the form of the sacred geography of the Valley.
This, however, is not to say that the Gorkhās are completely an alien people. Many of the traditions that the Newar kings used to follow are now being followed by the Sāh rulers. There are numerous occasions when the present King of Nepal is ritually involved in the socio-religious events of the Newars. At the time of Bhairavājātrā, the king has to exchange his sword with the goddess Bhadrakāli. On the day of Dasāi, the king must worship the human goddess Kumārī; she puts tīkā on his forehead and presents him with a sword as well. Similarly, on the first day of the new year, the ritual of erecting the linga in Kathmandu cannot take place unless the king is represented by his sword. The Gorkhā king likewise must be present when the shirt of Matsyendranāth is displayed to the crowd. The late Nevari poet Citradhār related a number of incidents in which the Gorkhāli king is ritually linked to the Newars. According to him, Bāhāhpūjā (worship of the monasteries), Ganeśapūjā and Bhairavapūjā were occasions, on which the Newars used to worship the Parbatīyā king as well. At the time of the Buddhist festival of samyak (held once every 12 years), on occasion when the worship of Svakambhū and the ritual honouring of the bhikṣus and bāra took place, there was also worship of the statue of the Parbatīyā king. These ritual associations between the Parbatīyā king and the Newars are indicative of the legitimacy the Newars provided to the Parbatīyā king as their ruler. This became particularly clear in 1950, when the Rānās installed a boy king on the Nepalese throne after the late king Tribhuvan had taken political asylum in New Delhi. There was no observance of the samyak (which was due then) at that time, though the Rānās put great pressure on those who had to organize this 12-year Buddhist festival. These few examples give ample illustration of the cultural uniqueness of Newar social organisation, in which the intertwining of gods, feasts and festivals, the system of caste, lineage, family and kinship contribute to a distinctive culture in the Kathmandu Valley.

Side by side with a tendency toward rigidity and autonomy of caste, there is also a certain mechanism of flexibility, at present on the increase in various spheres. In the past, the state had the power to upgrade or degrade a caste or an individual. Thus, the Dūi caste was raised to touchable status by king Prthvi Narāyana Sāh in 1769. Another instance of the raising of caste status by royal proclamation, as reported by Oldfield, relates to the upgrading of the Mānandhar caste by Māhārājā Jaṅg Bahādur (Nepali, 1965: 170). The practice current among the Parbatīyās in which a man was tolerated if he contracted morganatic marriage with women of lower caste status, is likewise prevalent among the Newars, though principally among the Śreṣṭhas. In such cases, the wife’s status is raised, but she is not allowed to enter the kitchen for ritual purposes. The children born of such an alliance no doubt take the patronymic title, but are called Lavat, indicating their mixed origin. In course of time, such a group attains the full status of one’s father’s caste through the process of upward mobility. This is illustrated by the Mathema subcaste among the Śreṣṭhas. But in the case of the Bārā, Udās, Jyāpu and the Ekthariya group of castes, the mixed children are admitted to the caste of their mothers with the patronymic title of the father.
Another source of traditional flexibility of caste is seen in the role of Hinduism. Relative acceptance of Hinduism does result over time in the upgrading of the status of a group. This is the process by which Tibeto-Burman groups other than the Newars are gradually becoming clean castes. The treatment meted out to the Thakali ethnic group in Kathmandu society is a case in point. The role of the Brahmin in such matters is a decisive factor. A similar process of Hinduization, in which the Brahmins play a key role, is likewise found amongst the Newars. Nowadays the Maithili-Brahmins and the Parbatiyā-Brahmins provide priestly services in Satyanārayana-pūjā to the rich Māndhars (who are Buddhists) and the Jyāpus.

One more aspect of flexibility in matters of caste among the Newars is manifested in the priestly functions on the part of castes other than the Dev Bhāju Brahmins of the Śivamārgis and the Bajrācāryas of the Buddhāmārgis. The Ācāju and the Jośi among the Sreṣṭhas do have some kind of priestly function since they must conduct bāvana under the supervision of the Dev-Bhāju priests (Nepali, 1965: 157) during the domestic ceremonies of the high-caste Hindu Newars. They also act as temple priests and astrologers. The Khusāh (a low caste) are priests to the Kasāi and to some other low castes. Similarly, the Kusle (a low caste) function as priests for many low-caste Newars.

In addition to such instances, where many of the low castes furnish priestly services, we find numerous temples of Bhagavati, Ganesa and Bhairava, at whose shrines the dyahpālas (temple caretakers) are drawn from the untouchable castes; they not only touch the deity, but also accept the offerings made to them. Thus, the Pode (animal skinner) are the dyahpāla to the elephant-headed god Suryavināyaka, as well as at the temples of goddess Kānkeśvari, Indrāyaṇi and Bhadrakāli. The Kusle have their own role as the dyahpālas at the temples of Svabhagavati, the tiger-headed Bhairava (Bāgh-Bhairava) which presides over the ancient settlement of Kirtipur and at the temples of Bisendevi and Bālkumāri in the village of Paṅga. Ākāś Bhairava is an important god whose dyahpāla is of the Duī caste, which is also associated with its festivals. Although a higher priestly caste such as the Bajrācārya, Ācāju or the Jośi acts as priest during the festivals of these deities, in day-to-day life, however, it is these dyahpālas (from low or untouchable castes) who take care of these deities and their temples.

Recent Changes

The system of caste in the Kathmandu Valley lost its protective isolation from the outside world with the demise of Rānā rule in Nepal and the ushering in of the modern system of government in 1950. Since 1960, the state has taken no cognizance of the violation of caste rules. A series of social legislation measures relating to the abolition of polygamy, recognition of inter-caste marriages, provi-
sion for divorce and remarriage of women (even for the Parbatiyā women) have theoretically altered the traditional situation of caste as far as the intervention by the state is concerned. Now, at least theoretically speaking, anyone can marry a woman of any caste. The material dimension of the functioning of caste has also undergone a radical change. The policy of developing a modern, market oriented economy has opened the country to modernisation; this has resulted in the creation of numerous new occupations which previously did not exist in the Valley and are now open to a person of any caste possessing the requisite qualifications. The Newars, among others, are now employed in higher level positions such as doctors, engineers, professors, airpilots, etc., irrespective of caste distinctions.

Still another factor making for the mobility of caste is the implementation of land reforms. The abolition of freehold lands (birtā), the limitation of ownership of land to 25 bighas per person and the implementation of land policy principally in favour of the peasants have helped many Jyāpu peasants to become relatively prosperous. The skyrocketing market price for urban land has also favorably affected the Newars, who in the majority of cases are the owners of the land in the Valley.

Another important source of change in the Valley is its emergence as a tourist paradise. This has led to the opening of countless hotels, restaurants and lodges, and has provided a new source of economic prosperity to the inhabitants of the Valley. There are now many new avenues of employment with the flourishing of tourism as an industry and with the opening of embassies and offices of international organisations. The commerce-oriented Newars, particularly the Udās, Śreṣṭhas and Māṇandhars, have suddenly found a market for the imported foreign goods in which Kathmandu abounds. The 500-mile open border with India is a boon to these Newar traders and shopkeepers of the Valley, whose foreign goods find easy access to the northern plains of India through the smugglers. Thus, the process of modernisation introduced in the Valley has served to benefit the Newars in particular. This has altered their pattern of socio-economic life. An illustration from the village Paṅga can serve as a concrete example of how Newar life has been affected by the impact of these new forces. When I visited Paṅga in 1957, none of the Newars (except for the Śreṣṭhas) could grow enough grain to last for the whole year. They had to take loans to buy grain to meet the traditional demand during feasts. Most of them used to supplement their agricultural incomes by working in Kathmandu as carpenters, masons, bricklayers, unskilled construction workers, office peons and as palanquin bearers. Even then they hardly had enough to last comfortably for the whole year. Today, almost every house has electricity and power looms. The demand for construction work in Kathmandu has enhanced their incomes enourmously. Governmental assistance for improving agriculture has further enabled them to produce grain in amounts far exceeding what they need for their own annual consumption; as a result, they can sell the surplus in the market. Compared to earlier days, Paṅga now has a fair number of highly educated individuals. There were one or two matriculates in the past. At the time of my research (1983) there were two M.A.'s, one M.Sc., two graduates, one B.Ed., one
B.E., and some 100 persons who had completed high school. Moreover, there were four graduate, four matriculate and approx. 20 pre-matriculate girls. With the exception of Balkrishna, a Śreṣṭha by caste, who has a B.E. and is employed as engineer, all the best of these educated persons were Jyāpu or Maharjans by caste. Another source of prosperity for the Paṅga people is the flourishing carpet industry in the nearby town of Patan. The girls of Paṅga, who previously had no gainful employment, now go to work in Patan as daily wage workers and earn an average Rs. 1000/- a month. In Paṅga itself, there is a growing tendency for the setting up of the carpet-weaving looms financed by the Mānaṅgis (Tibetan refugee businessmen).

Such new prosperity has altered the social balance between castes in the village of Paṅga. The Śreṣṭhas, who used to be the traditional leaders of the village, have almost been replaced by the Jyāpus in the secular functioning of the village. Thus, the Jyāpus are the presidents of both the Paṅcāyats of Bisendevī and Bālkumāri. The Kasāis, who formerly used to sell buffalo meat, have also managed well financially. They are employed mainly as waiters and cooks in hotels. It is also significant to note that almost all the Karkis (a Parbatiyā caste) work in hotels, since they do not have better skills and training. The inescapable conclusion that can be drawn from the example of Paṅga is that the material conditions of the Newars have greatly improved, and that they have the financial means to support their new style of life.

At the same time, however, the interrelationship of caste in matters that are traditional has not changed; rather, new types of relationship of a secular nature have been added to the more traditional ones. In the worship of Bisendevī and Bālkumāri, the interrelationship of caste that existed before is still in evidence: the various castes continue to perform their traditional functions as before.

Changes due to the new economic opportunities that are available in the Valley are more noticeable in the town of Kathmandu. The various castes there are also gravitating to modern occupations, depending on their training and education. This has resulted in a disruption of the earlier link between caste and occupation. The low castes, which previously could never even dream of venturing beyond their traditional mode of work, are now free to chose any modern occupation. The rapid development of education (altered governmental policies) has helped such castes to go on to receive better training and education on a par with their high-caste counterparts. The Mānandhars, for example, occupy a somewhat lower position in the traditional Newar caste hierarchy; in the past, they were oil-pressers, liquor and cooked-meat sellers, dealers in foodgrains and petty shopkeepers. Today, however, they have improved their class position just as the Kayāṣṭhas did in India. They now provide serious competition to the Śreṣṭhas and Udās in all secular walks of life. They have prospered financially, and this has enabled them to acquire a high non-ritual position on a par with the other high-caste Newars.

The Kasāi, the butcher caste of unclean status, have likewise improved their situation in a variety of ways as a result of the modernising process in the Valley. Formerly their livelihood depended on butchery, selling buffalo-meat, providing
their caste music (kasāibājā) in Newar domestic ceremonies and festivals and supplementing this with farming, if possible. Today they are emerging as one of the rich sections of the Newar community. They have taken to a variety of occupations besides continuing to fulfill their traditional hereditary roles and duties in the Newar community. Many now drive taxis which they have been able to buy due to the credit facilities extended to them by the government. They have also started up tea shops and restaurants of their own.

Those Kāsais who go on to receive an education are employed as government employees and in various other modern occupations. Normally, water touched by a Kasai is never accepted for drinking by the castes above him; nowadays, however, milk vending has become a very popular occupation among them. They openly take pride in saying that they are no longer an untouchable caste, since the milk sold by them is mixed with water, which is consumed by all the high castes without any hesitation.

Despite their traditional occupations being regarded as symbolic of their low status, the Kasais have not abandoned the occupations of butcher and the selling of buffalo-meat. Their affluence is no doubt on the increase, as is reflected by their residential localities. The status-raising transformational process the Kasais are currently undergoing is indeed a significant social phenomenon in the Kathmandu Valley.

All of these castes with traditional low status aspire to rise in the social hierarchy; they use their newly acquired wealth for this purpose. On the one hand, they modify their domestic style of living, while trying, on the other, to acquire the services of the ritually higher castes which were denied to them in the past. For example, both the Mānandhars and the Kasai have now succeeded in employing the services of the Parbatiyā-Brahmins and Dev-Brahmins to have the Satya-nārāyanapūjā performed in their homes. Food touched by the low castes is no longer regarded as polluted as far as eating in public is concerned. However, in matters of ritual eating and entering the domestic kitchen, such caste taboos are still followed. Another interesting point with regard to change in occupation is that there is also the tendency among many of these castes to enter modern life through modernising their own traditional occupations. Thus, the Nau have opened barbershops in the three towns as well as in the important settlements in the Valley. Likewise, the carpenter section (Sikārmī) of the Jyāpus have opened furniture shops. They provide carpentry to the modern buildings that are being constructed in the Valley. In those homes where the domestic looms used to be operated in the past, we find now power looms for cloth-making and carpet-making, significantly increasing the incomes of the owners.

Another instance of movement into modern occupations through the modification of the traditional occupation relates to tailoring. The Buddhist priestly class have opened tailoring shops and continue to thrive in this traditional secular occupation. The Kusle, who are caretakers (dyahpāla) of many temples of Bhagavati, priests to the low castes and tailors in their secular professional work, now work in their
tailoring shops. In the village of Paṅga, the Kusle priests of Bisendevi and Bālkumāri temples run their own tailoring shops at the centre of the village where the temples are situated.

However, emergence into modern occupations and the westernizing of life-style does not mean that the traditional occupation and ceremonial roles are altogether abandoned. These castes still provide traditional services as they did before in relation to domestic ceremonies and the observance of festivals of the deities. For example, I found a Kasāi who was providing music in a festival being a clerk in a government office. Kasāi music (kasāibājā) is regarded as being very auspicious along with the music provided by the Jyāpus and the Kusle. Such music is invariably needed during the Newar ceremonies or festivals. However, it was quite strange to note that the Damāi, a Parbatiyā untouchable caste, whose traditional occupation is also tailoring and is a musician-caste, is gradually acquiring a monopoly of playing ,band bāja’ (playing western musical instruments) at the Newar marriage processions. Although it is a very lucrative business, the Kusle and the Kasāi have either not liked it or have been left behind in competition (at least in Paṅga).

Marriage is another area of social life where the rigidity and flexibility of caste are manifested. Though there is not a single instance of inter-caste marriage in Paṅga, there are quite a number of instances from the city of Kathmandu; this is reflective of the situation in this area of social-life. The occasion of the worship of the lineage deity illustrates how inter-caste marriages are treated by the family and the community. An instance is provided by the case of Śreṣṭha police officer who has a Russian wife. His wife is accepted from all points of view by the community for secular purposes. She is, however, barred from ritual participation in religious ceremonies, especially relating to the worship of the lineage deity (divālipūjā) and śrāddha. Another instance of the treatment meted out to a wife from a different caste again involves a Śreṣṭha. His wife is Swedish and treated in a manner similar to the earlier instance. She is denied the ritual rights and privileges allowed to a wife from one's own caste. Still another instance comes from a Malla family. The Malla boy brought a Gurung wife, but the parental family of the young man did not approve of this alliance and did not allow entry of the young man’s Gurung wife into the home. Nonetheless, on one occasion the man came along with his wife and occupied the room in the house where he had been living before marriage. Since then, the Gurung wife has been tolerated, though barred from ritual rights and privileges given to a wife of one's own caste.

To what degree emphasis or non-emphasis on participation in divāli worship makes for the effective control of individuals as well as households can be gauged from the following examples: Mr. P. is a government officer who was trained at the Institute of Economic Development, Bangkok. His divāli group consists of 150 members, but not all of them come to participate in the divāli feast. However, he does not go to worship the divāli at the field-site because of some dispute. For some eight years, now, they have refused to observe this festival at its field-site. As far as the
procedure of the observance is concerned, it is the same old practice, though with
the difference that only two to three members from each household attend it. The
privileged portions of the meat of the sacrificed goat (i.e., the different parts of the
goat's head) are distributed among the eight senior elders in the same manner as
before. In 1978, some four newlywed brides were admitted to his divāli group
(lineage group). The practice followed by Shanti's house provides another instance
of the role of divāli-worship. She was brought up in Bombay where her parents
have been living for the last sixty years. Later, she was married to a school teacher,
also Śrēṣṭha by caste. At the first annual worship of the divāli, subsequent to her
marriage, she was conducted to the place of worship and formally introduced to the
divāli-deity through worship. The material for worship, as usual, was provided by
her parent's household. If this indeed is the case with the highly westernised
Newars, then there is little likelihood for changes among the lower castes as far as
caste traditions are concerned.

These above-mentioned instances serve to indicate that wherever there is education
in the family and the family or individual is not tightly enmeshed in the network of
lineage and other kinship relations such a house-hold or individual enjoys
comparative freedom to deviate from the traditional norms. When dependence on
the divāli group is strong, it is difficult for anyone to defy the caste norms.
However, the effect of the modernising process is to facilitate the loosening of
family organisation, which in turn facilitates the loosening of caste restrictions. It is
difficult at present to say anything in detail about the impact of the modern forces
on the lineage and kinship solidarity of Newars due to the lack of solid research on
the question. However, the multiplicity of ritual feasts and worship demands
enormous time from individuals, and it may be difficult for a modern Newar to find
it. How he will make such adjustment is a matter for the future, but such
adjustment does lead to the weakening of family solidarity. The interdependence of
agnatic kins (divāli group or phuki member group) and other kins and affines is also
manifested through the observance of the giving-away and the receiving of the betel
nuts as a ritual of leave-taking or introducing a person of ceremonial status. This
strictly follows the order of kinship proximity, age and sex seniority at the time of
important domestic ceremonies like ihi, bāra, kayapūjā, marriage and old age
ceremony. Exclusion of a person from and ignoring the seniority principle in
receiving the betel nuts is an indication of the eduction of one's prestige. This is the
time when, as in the ritual feasts, one's kinship bonds are given manifest expression
and emphasis.

It thus remains clear that despite accelerating trends in changes in the occupational
basis of society leading to the transformation of the material style of life, the
Newars show a tendency toward maintenance of their cultural autonomy. The
structure of social relationships both at the cognitive and behavioral level has, by
and large, remained intact in its basic aspects. The cultural and spatial symbols
through which such a structure of society is manifested are still operative in the
Kathmandu Valley. However, it is worth noting that the Newars, who once were
the sole inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, are growing ever smaller in their relative percentage of the population. It is a matter of record that when Prthvi Nārāyaṇa Śāh captured the Valley, there were only about 34 thousand Gorkhāli population, and they belonged mainly to the army. Until 1950, there were severe restrictions on the migration of outside population into the Valley, but with the fall of the Rāṇās after 1950, the Valley was opened up to the people of the various parts of the country. Kathmandu and its job market have acted as a magnet, drawing increasing numbers into the Valley. Since 1952/54, the proportion of the Newars in the total population of the Valley has progressively declined. It was 55 % in 1952/54, 52.1 % in 1961 and to 46.2 % in 1971. As compared to it the Parbatiyā population, whose mother tongue is Nepāli, increased its proportion from 39.3 % in 1952/54 to 41.3 % in 1961 and to 45.7 % in 1971. Within about two decades, the Newars have thus come to be a minority population in the total population of the Valley, the land of their ancestors, and this trend is likely to be accelerated in the near future.

Literature

Hiroshi Ishii

Social Change in a Newar Village
1. Introduction

Newar society is characterized by elaborate social organizations and complex relations on various levels. And in the recent trend of change which Nepal has been experiencing since 1951, these have also undergone considerable and multifarious transformations, with many elements intertwined.

This paper, by means of an analysis of social change in a Newar village, will attempt to show how various aspects and elements are interrelated, what stages of change Newar village society has been passing through and what implications the social change treated here has in respect to theories about the changing nature of the caste system.

The village investigated is situated approximately seven kilometers west of Kathmandu. The author did field research there in 1970-72, 1977-79 and 1984. It has been called by the fictitious name „Satepa“ in previous papers and in this paper as well.

It is not possible to present an overall and detailed picture of social change in this village within the framework of this brief paper. For the sake of clarity, the analysis will focus here on the village feast called de-bhvay and will touch upon other relevant aspects. Before going on to the central theme, however, brief mention will be made of the population and economy of the village.

2. Population and Economy

The main residents of the village consist of eight Newar castes. They are Barmhu, Syesya, Jyāpu, Duī, Kau, Sāymi, Nāy and Jugi, listed here in the order of caste

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1 I lived in the village for about one-and-a-half years from July 1970 to the beginning of 1972. In 1977-79, though the research period extended for more than a year-and-a-half, I carried out my fieldwork in another area as well, and thus spent only forty days in total in this Newar village. In 1984, out of three month's stay in Nepal, a little more than a month was spent in the village.

2 A modified transliteration has been used here for Nevārī and Nepāli words: „i“ and „ū“ are spelled „i“ and „u“ respectively, „b“ for visarga (:) to represent the Nevārī long vowel has been omitted.
ranking. The Table 1 indicates the increase in the number of households of each caste and the total village population from 1970 through 1978 to 1984.

The chief occupation of the villagers is agriculture; paddy and wheat are the main crops. Taking advantage of the closeness of the village to the capital, however, many individuals (mostly males) have begun to engage in non-agricultural jobs as well. For this reason, numerous households depending for their livelihood on both agriculture and other jobs have emerged, as well as some households depending solely on non-agricultural employment.

The numbers of households with various occupational categories for 1970, 1978 and 1984 are given in Table 2. Non-agricultural jobs are not only important, but also on the increase in terms of kind, number and percentage.

3. de-bhvay

De-bhvay, which literally means „village feast“ (de < deś „country, village“), is held once a year during the rainy season when there is less agricultural work. This is not the type of ritual which has the worship of a specific deity as its principal focus; nor does the feast have a fixed date. However, as a part of the process of de-bhvay in this village, the goddess Viṣṇudevi is worshipped with offerings and the sacrifice of a buffalo and/or sheep. Villagers believe that these ceremonies and feast help them get rid of illness and sin.

Generally, one member from every household in the village takes part in de-bhvay. In contrast to various guthis whose membership is fixed, de-bhvay is not a closed organization; even a new resident, if he so wishes, can take part in it and guests from outside can be invited. Moreover, a member of a household consisting only of women – and hence not allowed to participate in the feasts of guthis such as

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3 Nepāli or Sanskritized names for these castes are as follows: Barmhu-Brāhmaṇ, Syesya-Śreṣṭha, Jyāpu-Maharjan, Dui-Putuvār, Sāymi-Mānandhar, Kau-Nakarmi, Nāy-Kasāi, Jugi-Kusle. Among these, Dui, Sāymi and Kau are of the same status. For their occupations, see Ishii: 1978, pp. 507-509.

4 Recent economic changes in this village up to 1978 were treated in Ishii: 1980.

5 The word guthi in this village is used mainly to denote the socio-religious organizations with fixed members (guthiyars) who cooperate in the carrying out of certain rituals or festivals and participate in the common feasts. Villagers are less concerned about another use of this term, meaning „land endowments‘ or „endowed lands‘, though they know the two meanings are interrelated in certain cases (on the two meanings and their interrelation, see Regmi: 1976, pp. 46-48). In this village, there are thirteen types of guthis; in some instances, there are multiple guthis of the same type. Except for one (or buddha-punhi-guthi), all the guthis are intra-caste guthis. Some of the guthis have lands, temples or other property given originally as endowments, but others, such as sanā-guthis, do not. There is no purely philanthropic or social guthi here.
Table 1. Number of the Households and Total Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Castes</th>
<th>Years: 1970</th>
<th>Number of Households 1978</th>
<th>1984</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barmhu</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syesya</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japāpu</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dui</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sāynmi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kau</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nāy</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jugi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Households</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>1121</td>
<td>1371</td>
<td>1550</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Number and Percentage of Households of Different Occupational Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1978</th>
<th>1984</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Agricultural Households</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Percentage)</td>
<td>(27.3 %)</td>
<td>(21.2 %)</td>
<td>(18.4 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households Combining Agriculture and Other Jobs</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(66.0 %)</td>
<td>(72.8 %)</td>
<td>(73.2 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Non-Agricultural Households</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6.7 %)</td>
<td>(6.0 %)</td>
<td>(8.4 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that special kinds of weaving (weaving on electric weaving-machines and the making of dhākā cloth with fine patterns) and poultry raising have gained importance since the mid-1970s. If we add these to the category "Other Jobs," the percentages for the "Households Combining Agriculture and Other Jobs" go up to 74.6 % and 77 % respectively for 1978 and 1984, with a proportional decrease in the number of "Agricultural Households."
sanā-guthi (a funeral guthi)\(^6\) – can take part in de-bhvay. On the other hand, those who choose not to participate in de-bhvay because of financial or other reasons can do so without reproach. Nonetheless, the number of such non-participants is quite small; this reflects the group orientation of the Newars as well as their passion for festivals and feasts.

The date of de-bhvay and the amount of money raised from each participant is discussed and fixed in the gathering of elders of higher castes. In this case once again, there is no rigid rule regarding the membership of the gathering except that elders of important maximal lineages\(^7\) of the Syesyas and the Jyāpus constitute its core.

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6 A sanā-guthi consists of members belonging to the same caste and usually residing not far from each other. Its main purpose is to carry out the funerals of its members. There is the tradition that every member of a caste has his/her own sanā-guthi, though only one man from one household joins the sanā-guthi as its formal member (guthiyir) and takes part in its feast.

7 A maximal lineage here denotes the total of all the families whose heads are recognized as being related to each other patrilineally. This is coterminous with the total of all those who are phuki to each other and those who are recognized as having been phuki (the latter are bhu-bā-phuki or ‘separated phuki’). The word phuki in this village is a term used principally among males who have a close patrilineal relation to each other but live in different households. It is rarely used to denote a group (or groups) but is used to denote relationships among kin. Though villagers often say that phuki means dāju-kiijā (‘brothers’), it is taken for granted that patrilineally related males of other generations can also be referred to by this term. Moreover, in a broad sense, all the members of the residential family of a person who is referred to as phuki can be called phuki as well. Based on this meaning of phuki, it is reasonable to include all the members of the patrilineally related families as members of the maximal lineage defined here. Those who are phuki to each other are said to be the people who ‘carry out all the ritual matters together.’ Especially when they cease to perform the pūjā of digudyāh together, they become bhu-bā-phuki.

The maximal lineages tend to be localized and to be concentrated in respective tvā (Nep. tol or ward). The members of several representative maximal lineages are often called collectively by the names of their tvā. However, individuals of other maximal lineages residing in the same tvā as those representative lineages are not referred to by the same tvā name.

There is a difference of ranking (although only partial) among maximal lineages within a caste; this is manifested in such matters as the organization of the Viṣṇudevi Festival (see Ishii: 1978), in the seating order of de-bhvay, etc. However, this ranking has nothing to do with the concept of purity and pollution. Rather, it seems to be related to the precedence and order of settlement in the village. The ranking is fairly clear between the topmost and the lowermost maximal lineages and among the upper maximal lineages, but blurred among the lower ones.

Among each of the Syesyas and the Jyāpus, there are more than a dozen maximal lineages. They are numbered here as Sy-ML-I, Sy-ML-II ... and Jy-ML-I, Jy-ML-II ... etc. (Sy=Syesya, Jy=Jyāpu, ML=maximal lineage, I, II ...=maximal lineage numbers: the earlier the time of settlement of a maximal lineage, the smaller the number.)
de-bhvay ordinarily takes place in the paved open ground in the precincts of the Viṣṇudevī Temple, which is by far the largest and the most prestigious in the village. When individuals from several castes join in the feast, it is common practice that they are seated in the order of caste ranking and, in part, in the order of importance of maximal lineages and seniority within a caste. Though there is a tendency nowadays not to be very particular about the order of seating within each caste except for that of several elders, there was a time when people were more concerned about this aspect.

It is thus possible to observe various aspects of village social structure — such as caste hierarchy, intra-caste order and village leadership — reflected in de-bhvay. Moreover, since the 1960s there have been considerable changes in social structure related to inter-caste antagonism, intra-caste conflicts or interpersonal quarrels.

4. de-bhvay split

People say that „the village was in harmony“ (gā mile ju) until 1967, and that all the households of every caste took part in de-bhvay. In those days, a ritual called si-kā-bhu (a feast to receive si) or si-bigu (to give si) took place at the end of de-bhvay in which si or eight parts8 of the face of the animal such as a buffalo sacrificed to the goddess were given to eight elders. It was the tradition that only Syesya elders belonging to five Syesya maximal lineages could be seated in the upper seats to receive si, with thakāli (the most senior elder belonging to either Sy-ML-I or Sy-ML-II maximal lineages) at the top and nvaku (the second elder, also from the aforementioned maximal lineages) in the next seat.

In the de-bhvay of 1967, however, Jyāpus headed by the father of the former pradhān-paṅca (chairman of the gāu-paṅcāyat or Village Council) claimed that si should also be given to Jyāpu elders. This claim aroused the opposition of most of the Syesyas and gave rise to a quarrel and dispute. Consequently, no agreement or decision could be made on the matter.

The next year, Jyāpus did not appear in the de-bhvay held on the initiative of the Syesyas and had their own de-bhvay on a different day.

Though the above-mentioned dissatisfaction on the part of Jyāpus with si-kā-bhu was given as the direct reason for the split of the de-bhvay, we still must investigate why it came to the fore and was overtly expressed in that particular year. Here we find the same reasons involved as those behind the withdrawal of various caste specific services in the Viṣṇudevī Festival, as analyzed in Ishii: 1978.

8 These are: right and left eyes, right and left ears, a tongue, right and left cheeks (jowls) and the chin.
To state it briefly, the Jyāpus of Satepa (one of whom had held the seat of pradhān-panica since 1962) had grown indignant by that time because they had been defeated in the 1967 election by the Syesyas, who successfully gave their votes to a Jyāpu candidate of another village (Siba) included in the same Village paṅcāyat. This resulted in various actions on the part of the Jyāpus in Satepa to openly express their antagonism toward the Syesyas.

At the same time, as was stated in the above-cited paper, the economic social and political conditions after 1951, which provided the middle social strata with a better and more independent position as well as increased self-esteem, should be considered as the underlying reasons for the recent defiant attitudes of the Jyāpus.

5. de-bhvay just after the split

Some changes took place in the two de-bhvay factions after the split. No proper si-kā-bhu was held any longer in either of the de-bhvays of the Syesyas and the Jyāpus. si-kā-bhu was regarded as the main cause of the trouble and was modified in such a way that si (the parts of the sacrificed animal) were cut into much smaller pieces and distributed as prasād (foods given back after being offered to and blessed by a deity) to all the participants.

Changes also occured in the performance of religious songs and music such as hari-bhajan (devotional songs to deities accompanied by music) and the blowing of kā (long horn-like pipes). They were performed on most of the important ritual occasions in the village, with Jyāpus as the main players, except for one group of hari-bhajan. However, the Jyāpus stopped their service of kā-blowing completely and stopped playing hari-bhajan at the time of de-bhvay.

Drinking is generally considered to be a practice that can lead to quarrels. In a small number of de-bhvays, people refrained from serving aylā (distilled liquor) or both of aylā and thvā (beer made from rice, maize or millet). Thus, no alcohol was served at all in the Syesya de-bhvay of 1971.

Before the de-bhvay split of 1968, participation in or absence from de-bhvay was not a particularly emotional issue among the people. But after the split, those who were in a marginal or a neutral position were placed in the difficult situation of having to decide which de-bhvay they were to take part in. There was a situation in which all such decisions were judged in the context of opposition. At the same time, people could now utilize participation or non-participation in it as a means for expressing their sympathy for or resentment against particular groups.

In order to present some notion of the characteristics of participation in the de-bhvay just after the split, I will briefly list the relevant points for the year 1970.

9 A Jyāpu (P-J) of Jy-ML-I was elected pradhān-panica in the 1962 and 1964 elections.
All the households of the Syesyas and the Jyāpus took part in the de-bhvay of their own caste. Among each of them, however, there were a few who also joined in the de-bhvay of another caste. The reasons underlying their double attendance vary from case to case. For example, there was a quarrel going on between two households of Sy-ML-X and the rest of the same lineage. It was noted that one person from each of the former took part in the Jyāpu de-bhvay in 1970 and 1971; the reason given for their doing so was that they were receiving support from the pradhān-paṇca (at that time a Jyāpu, C-J, belonging to Jy-ML-I) so that they could effectively counteract other members of their lineage who were on good terms with the leading groups of the Syesyas.

Among the minority castes, though participation in de-bhvay demanded a considerable expenditure, there were individuals who took part in both the Syesya and Jyāpu de-bhvays. A Kau, a Sāymi and several Nāys were the examples. They were people who had to maintain good relations with both of the higher and larger castes because of their occupations (mostly caste-specific ones) which needed many clients and customers.

All the Nāys, including those mentioned above, took part in the Jyāpu de-bhvay. The number of the Nāys who participated only in the Jyāpu de-bhvay exceeded two-thirds of the total number of Nāy households, whereas there were none who participated only in the Syesya de-bhvay. We can thus conclude that the position of the Nāys was more similar to that of the Jyāpus at that time.

There were cases of people among the minority castes who attended only the Syesya de-bhvay; these were a Barmhu, a Jugi and Duīs. As the household priest (purohit) of the Syesyas, the Barmhu (Hindu priest) is much nearer to them than to the Jyāpus, who make use of Gubhājus (Buddhist priests) and request the services of the Barmhu only on a few ritual occasions. The Jugis, regarded as Hindu and represented here by only one household of two women, are more dependent on the Syesyas. The Duīs in the village, though they have occupations similar to those of the Jyāpus and are more inclined to Buddhism, have had a tradition of dependence on the land and support of the Syesyas from the time of their settlement.

In the Syesya de-bhvay of 1970, 84 people took part including Syesyas from every household, two Jyāpus and eighteen persons from seven castes, whereas 133 people participated in the Jyāpu de-bhvay, which included Jyāpus from all the households, seven Syesyas and 26 persons from four castes. Thus, in terms of the number of participants, the Jyāpu de-bhvay was larger than that of the Syesyas; this appears to have given the Jyāpus greater self-confidence, while the Syesyas, who

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10 It was approximately 10 rupees in 1970, but 35 rupees in 1984.
11 They were a Barmhu, eight Duīs, a Kau, a Sāymi, five Nāys, a Jugi and a Damāi (a tailor commuting to this village).
12 These were a Kau, a Sāymi and twenty two Nāys, including five from outside and two Damāis from other villages.
had been in a leading position in the village before, now felt humiliated as a result. Although there were individuals who were on bad terms with their caste fellows and took part in the other caste's de-bhvay, it can still be maintained that the main feature of the de-bhvay at that stage was the opposition between the Syesyas and the Jyâpus. Before long, however, there was to be a certain modification in this situation.

6. Intra-caste splits

Starting around 1972, along with the opposition between the leading segments of the two main castes, cleavages within each caste also grew greater; the opposing faction in each caste now began more and more to approach the leading segment of the other caste. In order to understand the situation, we will turn our attention from de-bhvay to look briefly at several of the guthis and related incidents.

Splits among the Syesyas

During the Viṣṇudevi Festival13 (the most important festival in Satepa) held in December, 1972, there was a quarrel over the operation of the palanquin of the goddess. The quarrel began between two Syesya men belonging to Sy-ML-I (the foremost Syesya maximal lineage) and Sy-ML-X. It soon involved their fathers and other people, including some Jyâpu men of Jy-ML-I (the leading maximal lineage among the Jyâpus) who sided with those of Sy-ML-X. Being drunk, people not only quarrelled verbally but began fighting; as a result, men from both parties were injured.

Another incident added to the antagonism between the main segment of the Syesyas and those members of Sy-ML-X who were close to the Jyâpus. In April, 1973, there was an election of pradhâna. In this election, a Jyâpu C-J of Jy-ML-I, father of the former pradhâna P-J, who had always been in a leading position in his caste, won the race and became pradhâna. Among the Syesyas, this led to an emotional reaction: they felt they had been defeated because people of Sy-ML-X gave their votes to C-J, though the real reason was the failure of the coalition between the Syesyas in Satepa and the Jyâpus in the neighboring village of Siba (a coalition which had been effective in the previous two elections). Thus, after the election, leading Syesyas (including T-R, one of the defeated candidates) told L-S, the most outspoken person of Sy-ML-X (who was close to the

13 Regarding this festival, see Ishii: 1978.
Jyāpus), that they would not allow him to remain in their sanā-guthi or intra-caste funeral organization. In 1972, there were two sanā-guthis within the Syesya caste of Satepa (hereafter called Sy-s.g.-α and Sy-s.g.-β). The members of maximal lineages Sy-ML-I and Sy-ML-X belonged to the same sanā-guthi or Sy-s.g.-α, among which the former was the most numerous as well as influential.

L-S reacted in two ways in response to this exclusion. On the one hand, he talked over the matter with his lineage mates, who eventually agreed to withdraw from Sy-s.g.-α. After that they established a new sanā-guthi of their own to which they invited several other people. On the other hand, he and his lineage mates retaliated by taking a parallel measure of exclusion with regard to the bhindya-guthi.

The bhindya-guthi is a new guthi established in the 1940s to worship Bhindya or Bhimasa, a Hindu deity worshipped here as a god of commerce. It was organized by the donation of land by a man from Sy-ML-X, and included as its members all of the household heads of the same maximal lineage and several other people of the main Syesya lineages, more than half of whom were from Sy-ML-I.

In the new guthis, it is common for the position of the dātā (donor) to be regarded as influential and important. The establishment of this guthi can be interpreted as a deed for the attainment of merit and prestige by the people of Sy-ML-X, who—though relatively well-off—were less influential because they were comparative newcomers and small in number.

Now, people from Sy-ML-X (led by L-S) continued to insist that they would no longer regard individuals other than those from Sy-ML-X as guthiyārs (guthi members) of the bhindya-guthi.

Consequently, guthiyārs not belonging to Sy-ML-X all left the guthi, and those remaining set about its reorganization. This time, the newly recruited members were totally different from the original ones, though identical with those of the newly organized sanā-guthi mentioned above; none from Sy-ML-I was included, and three who separated from Sy-s.g.-α and two who left Sy-s.g.-β were invited into both the bhindya-guthi and sanā-guthi of Sy-ML-X.

The reasons for their separation from their original groups were varied and will not be dealt with here; however, one case relating to the reorganization of the kṛṣṇa-guthi is worth mentioning.

The kṛṣṇa-guthi is also a new guthi established through the donation of land by a Syesya (W-M) of Sy-ML-XI for the celebration of Kṛṣṇa’s festival held around August (kṛṣṇāstami). The members of the guthi were selected in such a way that every important maximal lineage of the Syesyas was represented by at least one person.

Different from other guthis which hold donated lands, no legal measure was taken here to register the land as guthi land; only an oral promise was made by W-M to give a certain amount of produce from the land to the Barmhu in the village and for

14 It was established in the mid-1950s, and originally had 13 Syesyas as guthiyārs.
the feast. However, W-M began to feel that the amount should be reduced; he went ahead and acted on this during the evening of _krśnāstaṁi_, 1971 by not inviting the Barmhu of the village for the _pūjā_ and feast, but rather calling in a brother of the Barmhu, who agreed to the reduced amount offered. However, the Barmhu of the village also showed up at the place of the ritual insisting that he was the priest entitled to do the _pūjā_ and receive crops. Consequently, a quarrel broke out at the place of the feast and it nearly came to blows. The Barmhu stood against his brother and W-M; all the other _guthiyārs_ took the former's side.

As the result of this quarrel, the _guthiyārs_ other than W-M decided to leave the _krśnā-gūthi_ and began to celebrate the _Krśna_ festival separately, this time at their own individual expense.

After the above split, W-M, being on bad terms with many of the leading Syesyas, quit the _sanā-gūthi_ (Sy-s.g.-α) to which he and most of the members of the _krśnā-gūthi_ belonged, approached the people of Sy-ML-X and joined their _sanā-gūthi_. Moreover, he also joined the _bhindya-gūthi_ as a new member and invited in turn the people of the new _bhindya-gūthi_ to the _krśnā-gūthi_. Thus, there were now three newly fashioned or reorganized _gūthis_ whose members overlapped completely.

The cleavage within the Syesyas was made more clear-cut as a result. Nonetheless, the cleavage was in essence between the mainstream Syesyas and those in a marginal position who chose to become members of those three _gūthis_. There was no serious split within the leading faction.

### Splits among the Jyāpus

On the other hand, the fissure among the Jyāpus during this period was characterized by the cleavage inside the leading Jyāpu maximal lineage; the family of the _pradhān-pānca_ and the family of the _thakāli_ of the Jyāpus of the village at that time (who both belonged to Jy-ML-I) got into a series of conflicts, the result of which was that the latter moved closer to the leading Syesyas.

Firstly, they had a falling-out in respect to the extension of the house of the _thakāli_ on village common land; the _pradhān-pānca_ did not agree to this, but the _thakāli_ family pushed on with it using the aid of an influential Syesya (T-R). The problem was ramified by a quarrel over a return of jewelry given as mortgage to a son of the _thakāli_ by another Jyāpu, who sought and received help from the _pradhān-pānca_ to get it back. The conflict was also aggravated by the support which the family of the _thakāli_ and T-R gave to a woman who wanted to take her mortgaged land back from the family of the _pradhān-pānca_.

The mounting antagonism reached its climax in the Viśṇudevi Festival of 1975, in which one of the images of attendant deities to Viśṇudevi was discovered missing. Villagers, especially Syesyas responsible for carrying out the festival, and Jyāpus who were to participate in it with auxiliary activities, became very upset.
In the quest of the perpetrator(s), Syesyas resorted to a dyah-vaikimha (literally "one who let the god come"; a kind of shaman, in this case a woman in her mid-fifties), who in a state of trance said that the pradhān-pañca knew all. When the pradhān-pañca and his son (p-J) were summoned, the latter claimed that it was not a message from a deity but rather from a bhut (evil spirit). On hearing this, a nephew of the possessed woman (from Sy-ML-X, but not from the same household as L-S) became furious and tried to attack P-J. The latter, running away from the place, hurt a Jyāpu young man with whom he had been on bad terms; in retaliation, P-J was beaten to within an inch of his life by young Syesya and Jyāpu men, including the Jyāpu thakāli's grandsons. After about a month, the pradhān-pañca sued more than twenty Syesyas and Jyāpus for hurting P-J; three of these were arrested but soon released.

As for the missing image, it was found abandoned just outside of the village after the festival. Many of the Syesyas (and those Jyāpus who were on the Jyāpu thakāli's side) came to believe that the incident was brought about at the instigation of the pradhān-pañca who had tried to put the Jyāpu thakāli in a difficult situation because it was one of the responsibilities of the Jyāpu thakāli to maintain the Viṣṇudevi Temple and the images of deities in it.

Whether this accusation was justified or not, the Jyāpus on the Jyāpu thakāli's side strengthened their feelings against the Jyāpus siding with the pradhan-pañca, and increased their intimacy with the leading Syesyas. Soon after this incident, there was a split in the Jyāpu sanā-guthis; among the two sanā-guthis, one split into two and one into three. There were various reasons for this, but in one case, the pradhān-pañca's household and that of the Jyāpu thakāli split into different guthis with their respective company, which was one of the outcomes of the growing opposition between the two groups.

Thus, the Jyāpu fissure occurred within its most influential subgroup. As a whole, this period can be characterized as the stage where there was both intra-caste cleavage and inter-caste coalition-building.

7. de-bhvay in the period of the intra-caste cleavage

Let us return to the de-bhvays and consider their participants in the period dealt with in the above section.

(1) During this period, both the Syesyas and the Jyāpus continued to hold their de-bhvays on different dates.

(2) In 1970, we note that all of the Syesya households took part in the de-bhvay of their caste. However, after the reorganization of the bhindya-, krṣṇa- and sanā-guthis, there were a number of individuals (though not all of the members of the reorganized guthis) who did not take part in the Syesya de-bhvay.
(3) Nonetheless, the total number of participants in the Syesya de-bhvay gradually increased because of the participation of more Jyāpus, especially after the quarrel of 1975. Thus, in 1977, 38 Jyāpus took part in the Syesya de-bhvay, bringing the total number of participants in it to 120, whereas 126 persons participated in the de-bhvay of the Jyāpus.

(4) The Jyāpus who took part in the Syesya de-bhvay still continued to participate in that of their own caste, thus making no significant change in number of participants in the Jyāpu de-bhvay of 1970 and 1977. This shows that despite all the quarrels, oppositions and the split between the sanā-guthis inside the Jyāpu caste, there still were hopes that the cleavage could be repaired.

(5) Among the minority castes, the Nāys began to hold their own de-bhvay after the incident of 1975. None other than the Nāys took part in their de-bhvay, but there were a few among its participants who took part in the de-bhvay of the Syesyas. Their de-bhvay continued for three years.

8. Decline of the leading Jyāpus

The above state of affairs went on until 1977, and then the situation changed rather drastically beginning in 1978. In that year, some 149 people, including all the Syesyas, 59 Jyāpus and 23 people of seven other castes joined in the Syesya de-bhvay, whereas only 62 people participated in that of the Jyāpu side. Compared with the participants the preceding year, it was a 24 % increase for the Syesyas and a 51 % drop for the Jyāpus. Moreover, it was unprecedented that there were so many (nearly half of all the Jyāpu households) who did not join in the de-bhvay of their own caste.

There were two factors which led to this change. One was the fact that C-J lost the seat of pradhān-paḍca in the election of 1977. His defeat was principally due to the reform of the election method, which gave authority for final decision to the committee members of the Gāu Pharka Rāṣṭriya Abhiyān (Back-to-the-Village National Campaign)15 and to the reorganization of the paḍcāyat area; as a result of

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15 Gāu Pharka Rāṣṭriya Abhiyān (Back-to-the-Village National Campaign – abbreviated as BVNC) was instituted in 1967 to send government employees in the upper strata to local areas in order to promote the unification of the country and the development of village society. However, in the second amendment to the Constitution and subsequent legislation, the BVNC was given power to control elections on various levels. BVNC committees were organized on the national (central), zonal and district levels through nomination by the King (in the case of the central committee) and by the upper level committees. The member of the BVNC district committees were sent to the village level to supervise the election. Though voting was to be done, there were cases in which the pradhān-paḍca and other members of the village paḍcāyat were nominated by them. This system was abolished by legislation passed since 1979 and by the third amendment to the Constitution in 1980, enacted in the wake of the political upheaval of 1979.
this reform, the population included in one pañcāyat was doubled and the proportion of the voters in each caste of the village among the total voters decreased considerably. As a consequence, a man from a village with which Satepa was newly joined won the race, and no candidates from Satepa or Siba were successful. Secondly, in 1978, C-J's son P-J was arrested and put into jail on the charge of having stolen some images of deities in a village in the Valley. This gave the Syesyas a very advantageous position in respect to C-J's family and the faction led by them. By calling them the family of a "god thief," the Syesyas not only coined an effective catch phrase to attack them but also succeeded in spreading their suspicion that it was indeed this family which had had the image stolen in 1975. Moreover, as the arrest was made shortly before the de-bhvay season, many people thought that there would be no Jyāpu de-bhvay that year, because it had been usual for the family of C-J to take the initiative in the preparation of it. Because of this, many people (including those Jyāpus who had never joined in the Syesya de-bhvay before) now took part in it; and even when it was made clear that there would also be a Jyāpu de-bhvay, a considerable number of Jyāpus stayed away from it.

9. de-bhvay reintegration and the recovery of Syesya influence

The above situation constituted a severe blow to C-J and his family, and they did not take any effective countermeasure. Taking advantage of this opportunity, leading persons among the Syesyas who were always unhappy about the existence of different de-bhvays set about trying to reintegrate them. At their urging, Jyāpu elders (including C-J) and Nay elders agreed to hold a common de-bhvay together with the Syesyas. The reintegrated de-bhvay was first held in 1979 and has continued ever since that time. However, the unity of the de-bhvay was questioned even after that, a matter which will be dealt with briefly before pointing out the characteristics of the reunited de-bhvay.

In 1980, a nation-wide referendum was held on the question of whether Nepal should continue her partyless pañcāyat system or change to a multi-party system. The poll result was in favor of the partyless system, but it was the multi-party camp which took about three-fourths of the total vote in this Village pañcāyat including Satepa. In Satepa itself, however, it was said that the proportion had been about 50:50, principally due to T-R's campaign of persuasion on behalf of the pañcāyat system. The multi-party camp included people such as C-J, L-S, many Jyāpus and some of the Syesyas. It can thus be maintained that some villagers voted according to their factional position. Moreover, since the factional feeling was still strong, such voting behavior as was based on independent judgement also led to factional entanglements.
A man (M-R) of Sy-ML-III, who had owned an electric mill with T-R, voted for the multi-party camp; the result was that he and T-R could no longer cooperate and divided the running of the mill in such a way that each would operate it for one year in turn. Moreover, he and a few Syesyas who voted for the multi-party camp approached C-J and had a talk about holding their own de-bhvay. This move, however, was known to the outside and censured by some outspoken and physically powerful Syesyas such as K-B, a neighbor of both M-R and T-R and former jilla-sadasya (a representative of the Village paṅcāyat to the District Assembly). Since M-R answered that there was no attempt to separate, the de-bhvay was held in a united fashion in that and subsequent years.

Another significant event was the election of the pradhān-panca held in 1982. In this election, the enlarged Village paṅcāyat area reverted to its former size before 1976, leaving Satepa and Siba to form one Village paṅcāyat again. Moreover, there was no interference by the Back-to-the-Village National Campaign in the election, because relevant laws had been amended after the political upheaval of 1979, the same chain of incidents which had prompted the King to decide to hold the referendum.

T-R (of Sy-ML-I) proved successful in this contest for pradhān-panca; this was made a reality by the cooperation of the former pradhān-panca living in Siba, to whom T-R and his followers had given votes in 1967 and 1970. Since T-R occupied the seat of the Syesya thakāli, he established himself as a leader not only in ritual but also in secular terms.

No Jyāpu stood as a candidate in this election. This time, however, C-J (of Jy-ML-I) together with M-R (of Sy-ML-III) and a few other Syesyas prevailed on K-B (of Sy-ML-I) to run for pradhān-panca. The latter, being politically ambitious, did so in spite of T-R’s persuasion. A hostile feeling developed between them as a result and this lasted for some time.

This hostility was expressed in a different context before the de-bhvay of 1984. It happened in connection with the jharkhā-bhvay, in which every farming household of the village holds a feast celebrating the completion of the transplanting of paddy. No collective feast takes place in jharkhā, but the day for the feast is fixed for the whole village by the elders.

On the day before the jharkhā of 1984, K-B blamed T-R that the latter had ordered meat from a Nāy of another village instead of ordering it from village Nāys. A quarrel ensued and T-R said that the charge was groundless.

Four days after this, there was a preliminary meeting for that year’s de-bhvay. In the meeting where T-R, K-B and other main figures gathered, K-B brought up the above-mentioned issue and reproached T-R again. The same argument was repeated and no agreement was reached about the matter concerning de-bhvay. As a

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16 T-R succeeded to the seat of the thakāli of the Syesyas following the death of the former thakāli at the beginning of 1981.
consequence, a feeling prevailed among the people that there would be no *de-bhvay* that year and the matter was left unattended to for some time. More than a month later, nephews of K-B (of the same lineage as the latter) – who were not only eager to hold the *de-bhvay* but desirous that K-B and T-R should come to terms – invited them along with several other active Syesyas and Jyāpus and succeeded in persuading them to agree that they would no longer be bothered by the *jharkha* issue. Then it was decided that *de-bhvay* should be held six days later; it took place on the first of September, 1984 on the all-village level.

The characteristics of the *de-bhvay* of 1984 were as follows:

1. Almost all the households of every caste took part in it. There were some absentees, but their reasons were mainly financial or a basic dislike of feasts.
2. Even after the reintegration, the *de-bhvay* had different characteristics from that before 1967. For example, members of C-J’s household, who had previously played an important part in cooking and serving in the feast, did not come to help but rather only sent one participant.
3. The preparation, cooking and serving was done mainly by Syesyas and Jyāpus close to T-R and K-B, both of whom were active throughout. The collection of money and the calculation of the expense were done by the family of T-R.
4. There was no resumption of music, including the blowing of *kā* and *hari-bhajan*.
5. No formal *si-kā-bhu* took place at the end of the feast.

Thus, though the feast was restored to its former state before 1967 in terms of its participants, it differed in some important points from the „original“ one. Most important among these were the decline in inter-caste cooperation17 and the loosening of the rituals (such as *si-kā-bhu*) which express the traditional social order.

It should also be noted that the *de-bhvay* was reunited by means of the Syesya leadership, coupled with the cooperation of a considerable number of Jyāpus who departed from the Jyāpu mainstream, and that the Syesyas were not solidly united even at this stage.

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17 Though not treated in this paper extensively, the decline of inter-caste cooperation in these years has been remarkable, especially with regard to the services given by Jyāpus at the time of Syesya funerals, festivals carried out by various *guthis* and rites of passage of the Syesyas (for example, see Ishii: 1978, pp. 522–525).
10. Conclusion

Interrelating factors

The basic framework of this society rests on the caste system, with its features of hierarchy, division of labor and separation,\(^{18}\) and intra-caste social relations and organizations, such as the ranking among maximal lineages, various *guthis*, kinship and family.

In addition to this, there exists a politico-administrative sphere represented by the *pañcāyat* system with its associated election system; in the eyes of village level society, this system appears largely as a given and integral part of the established governing mechanism of the state. Since elections are based on a totally different principle from the traditional one as regards the choice of leaders, population percentage and numerical power have increased in importance. The process of rearrangement of the social order was accelerated; concomitant with this, more conflicts appeared. The traditional social criteria, however, still remain relevant, and leadership is based on both the traditional and the newly introduced order as well as on the capacity of the individual.

The socio-economic sphere, encompassing variables such as occupation, income, ownership and inheritance of land and property etc., is highly relevant to the present problem in respect to the determining factors of group strength and individual leadership and the reasons underlying social change as a whole. However, due to the necessarily limited scope of this paper, we must be content with only a brief mention of this aspect, which will be dealt with in detail on another occasion.

The village as a socio-geographical unit (different from the village *pañcāyat*) is not characterized by a significant organizational principle of its own. Rather, it is a kind of stage on which various social, political and other elements play out their roles and interact with each other.

Within this framework, *de-bhavay* appears as one of the rare instances in which village unity is expressed in a visible way. In the recent trend of its split and reintegration, it has been utilized as a symbolic tool by leading castes to show their strength and influence as well as their resentment against others. Because of its voluntary and spontaneous nature as regards participation, it could serve this purpose better than various *guthis* which have a more restricted nature as far as their membership and participation in rituals and feasts is concerned.

It is worth noting that important social ties and processes are often expressed in ritual terms in this society. We already saw that social conflicts often made their appearance within the concrete context of ritual matters, and when problems were associated with such matters as festivals, feasts and ritual organizations, people

showed not only keen interest, but expressed strong emotional responses as well. Although this matter must be elucidated more clearly, it serves as a concrete example of the fact that Newar culture has a highly ritually-oriented character which penetrates deeply into social, behavioral and other spheres.

Phases of change

We will now sketch the main phases of social change in Satepa, paying attention to such aspects as village unity, dominance, inter-caste cooperation and intra-caste cohesion, and will consider their implications for the discussion on the changing nature of the caste system.

Phase O: So called „harmonious“ period

In retrospect, the village is considered to have existed in harmony. The Syesyas were dominant, various castes cooperated with their respective specialized services and there was less cleavage present within each caste (in point of fact, there was only one sanā-gutbi in each of the castes, Syesya and Jyāpu, before the mid-1940s and mid-1960s respectively).

Phase I: Rise of the Jyāpus (from the early 1960s to the late 1960s)

The Jyāpus of Satepa succeeded in making one of their own the pradhān-panca, taking advantage of their numerical strength in a new political milieu.19 Syesya dominance suffered a serious blow.

Phase II: Intensification of the separation and repulsion among castes (from the late 1960s to the early 1970s)

Because of countermeasures by the Syesya against the Jyāpu pradhān-panca, the village unity was weakened, as is reflected in the de-bhvay split. Inter-caste cooperation declined, and more antagonism developed among various castes. At the same time, there was a temporary increase in the feeling of cohesion and solidarity within each caste.

Phase III: Intra-caste cleavage and inter-caste coalitions (from the early 1970s onward)

Factional opposition grew stronger and led to the split and reorganization of some of the gutbis within each of the main castes. Village unity and inter-caste cooperation in the traditional sense were not regained, but more socio-political cooperation could be seen between the factions of different castes.

19 i.e., the political milieu brought about after the fall of the Rānā regime, especially after the introduction of the pañcāyat system which was accompanied by elections.
Phase IV: Jyāpu decline; Recovery of Syesya initiative (starting with the late 1970s)

Owing to an unfortunate incident, the socio-political power of leading Jyāpus decreased and the Syesyas regained their leadership. Village unity in respect to the de-bhvay was again achieved, though not without threats. Intra-caste cleavage and inter-caste coalition-building still continued to exist, and there was no return to traditional inter-caste cooperation.

It is clear that the decline of traditional inter-caste cooperation is an irreversible trend. Village unity and the dominance of a particular caste have often been called into question and there has been a tendency for village castes to split up into smaller factions.

We can find phenomena parallel to the first and the second developments in studies of Indian and Nepalese caste societies such as those by M.N. Srinivas (1972: 114-117), F.G. Bailey (1963), L. Dumont (1970: 217-238) and P. Caplan (1972: 58-96). But the third aspect seems to indicate that the basic trend in this society is different from that encountered in many of the Indian caste societies.

For example, Srinivas (1972: 114) states that the important modern trend of the caste system in India is „the freeing of caste from its traditional, local, and vertical matrix“ (of inter-caste dependence) and „the coming into existence of new opportunities, educational, economic and political, brought about an increase in horizontal solidarity.“ As for the latter point, even O. Lewis (1958: 83-84), who included the analysis of intra-caste factions in his study of a north Indian village, agrees with Srinivas that the modern political system, including universal adult franchise, has strengthened caste (or intra-caste solidarity). Moreover, similar trends are being pointed out by various studies which deal with „caste associations.“

In Satepa, even though there was a period when caste solidarity strengthened, it was quite temporary and soon resulted in intra-caste cleavages.

In her analysis of a multi-caste village of Nepali-speaking people in west Nepal, P. Caplan (1972: 58-96) points out the growth of caste conflict as well as intra-caste factional opposition relating to elections. But there is no suggestion that any tendency towards the widening and strengthening of intra-caste solidarity exists. Thus, there would seem to be parallel aspects in the two quite different Nepalese villages as opposed to the major trend characterizing the Indian caste system.

In attempting to grasp the underlying reasons, it is not surprising that this should be the case, because those factors which led to the formation of caste associations or the strengthening of „horizontal solidarity“ in India are missing to a considerable extent in the Nepalese situation. A political system which supports the partyless

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system, a socio-economic situation which has not given rise to large-scale firms or other institutions, and the geographical limitations on communication and transportation are all relevant factors in this regard.

Moreover, there are important differences among Nepalese caste societies. For example, it appears that the splitting and fusion of groups is more clearly manifest among the Newars. There may be various reasons for this, but one possible explanation is the fact that Newar society has many ritual organizations and ritualized relations. These are often bound up with conflicts because of the strong concern people feel about group structure and the performance of rituals. Since matters concerning their membership or participation are quite clear-cut, once a split takes place, it is manifested in clear and palpable terms.

We should point out here that the situation in Satepa differs from that prevailing among Kathmandu high castes as analyzed by C. Rosser (1966: 68–139), since the conflicts in Satepa did not entail any question of caste status or hierarchy. Paying attention to the problem of status and offering a criticism of E. Leach, Rosser (1966: 138) emphasizes that „mechanisms which exist for accommodating or minimizing status inconsistency have the overall effect of strengthening rather than undermining the caste system as a whole.“ In interpreting this particular point (although there is admittedly considerable difference between Rosser’s material and ours), we must point out that when Rosser asserts there has been a strengthening of the caste system, he does not call attention to the formation of intra-caste factions and the weakening of the jajmāni relation which he has just described in the preceding pages; these developments, in our view, are changes which indeed point in the opposite direction to his conclusion.

The situation prevailing in Satepa is characterized by the decline of some of the important aspects of the caste system, such as the traditional inter-caste relationship and intra-caste solidarity. Moreover, a tendency has emerged in which individuals from different castes, often opposing their caste fellows, get together and cooperate on various occasions. Except for the temporary enhancement of the cohesive feeling within castes noted at the earlier stage, nothing indicates that there has been a strengthening of the caste system. Thus, we must conclude that the caste system – though still socially relevant – is lessening in importance in this society.

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The Development of Early and Medieval Settlements in the Kathmandu Valley

A Review of the Inscriptional Evidence

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Introduction

The climate of the Kathmandu Valley, situated at the base of the chain of the Himalayas, is comparatively pleasant. Snowfall there is a relatively rare occurrence, though it does snow at times on the mountains surrounding the Valley. There is historical evidence corroborating the hypothesis that snowfall was a more frequent phenomenon in the past: thus, the inscription of Jayadeva at Paśupati (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:551) and the Mūlasarvāstivādinavaṇṇa (Bagchi, 1970:178) indicate that during the Licchavi period the mountains surrounding the Kathmandu Valley used to be covered by snow. As noted by an expert on the Kirāti language, the Kathmandu Valley is called senjelumnci, or „snow-covered valley“, in Kirāti (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:562). According to the Gopālarājavamsāvāvali excessive snowfall sometimes claimed almost half of the animal population in the Valley (Vajrācārya/Malla, 1985: fol. 34 a). However, apart from such extreme meteorological phenomena, the climate of the Kathmandu Valley is generally moderate and can be regarded, to a certain extent, as being even ideal for human settlement.

Routes leading from Kathmandu down to the southern plains are, for instance, not particularly difficult to traverse on foot; this is especially true of the route running from the southern and western ends of the Valley. Even the Kuti and Kerung passageways leading to Tibet do not afford any particular difficulty; previously, the Kerung route was more popular than the Kuti route (Vajrācārya / Śreṣṭha, V.S. 2032:90).

Moreover, it remains easy to trace the principal water sources of the Kathmandu Valley since the Licchavi period: in addition to water derived from the rivers, a large number of stone water conduits (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:71, 133, 179, 208, 279, 283, 351, 354, 368, 378, 405, 419, 426, 431, 452, 459, 512, 520) were constructed during that period, as well as numerous wells, canals and sewage facilities (ibid.: 454, 457, 479, 547, 589, 594, 596) and a number of ponds (ibid.: 420, 434).

Thirdly, the soil of the Kathmandu Valley is generally fertile and there is rainfall at most regular intervals. As a result, foodgrain cultivation has proved to be quite satisfactory. The accounts written by the famous traveller Wang Hsüan-ts'ē, for example, indicate that during the Licchavi period foodgrains and fruits were grown in the Valley in sufficient quantities (Beal, 1958:318).

In terms of strategic location, the Kathmandu Valley has often been regarded as relatively secure, though its peace and security have been shattered on a number of occasions by foreign invasions and incursions (M.R. and D.R. Pant, V.S. 2037; Vajrācārya, V.S. 2021 a und V.S. 2022). Nonetheless, the Kathmandu Valley undoubtedly is a more secure place than the vulnerable plains located to the south. The counsel contained in the sermons Divya Upadeśa delivered by King Prithvi
Narayan Shah the Great, unifier of the country, from his death-bed provide ample demonstration of the fact that this valley, even prior to its conquest by King Prithvi Narayan Shah, was regarded as a stronghold (Yogi Naraharināth, V.S. 2016:12). The historical record shows that the Chinese troops which made their way up to Nuvākot were in fact unable to continue on and enter the Kathmandu Valley (Vajrācārya / Nepal, V.S. 2014:56-61). The English troops which marched up to Sindhūli and Makvanpur likewise did not succeed in penetrating into the Valley (M.R. Pant, V.S. 2022). The Kathmandu Valley was, for the most part, a generally unknown and remote place for the people of premedieval India; thus, an inscription describing the visit of Sankarācārya to the Nepal Valley (dated Nepāl Samvat 262 = 1142 A.D.) describes the Valley as a ,,remote“ place (nepālam te gurugirigajairāga-man durgamārgam) (D.R. Regmi 1966: 15)

Kirāṭi Settlements

If we scrutinize the history of settlement in the Valley, it is possible to distinguish four main categories. Settlement during the Kirāti period is the first such category. In view of the absence of authentic historical evidence, no definite conclusions can be drawn on settlement during the Kirāti period but there are a number of indirect references which help to shed a modicum of light on the matter. Thus, we have the evidence of toponymy: the names of places, hills, mountains, rivers etc. as mentioned in inscriptions dating from the Licchavi period were, for example, derived to an appreciable extent from the Kirāti language. In the Cāṅgu Nārāyasana inscription of the Licchavi king Mānadeva, mention is made of the Khakapriṇ and Domāna regions (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:13). Similarly, two other inscriptions dating from the time of Mānadeva mention places such as Dumlān-(grāma or -pradeṣa), Khopriṇ-, Dumpraṇ-, Hmaspriṇana-, Praṇpriṇ- (ibid.: 50-51), as well as Maiśīn-, Jolpriṇ-, Prayīṭṭikha-, etc. (ibid.: 56). Moreover, other inscriptions from the Licchavi period reveal the use of place names such as Theṇco, Saṅgā, Saṅko, Gūḍimaka and Pronnipraṇ (ibid.: 92, 193, 231, 233, 234, 274, 311, 337, 342, 544). The same holds true for names of rivers, hills and mountains, etc. (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2025). It is easy to conjecture that these names are indeed of Kirāti origin. However, it remains difficult to draw any definite conclusion as long as the meaning of these words has not been established by linguistic research, although it is a well-known fact that place names tend in general to be left relatively intact and unchanged. It is important to bear in mind that traditional and external sources likewise show that the first economic and cultural links with areas beyond the Valley may be traced back to the Kirāti period.

One widely-discussed question is the designation of the Valley as „Nepāla“; this is associated with the settlement of the Gopālas. The Gopālaraṇjavamsāvali and similar sources land overwhelming support for the existence of the institution of Kingship
of the Gopāla dynasty (Vajrācārya / Malla, 1985: fol. 17). According to the chronicles, a large number of Gopālas (or shepherds) had settled in the Valley and adjoining areas. Not only was Gopāla called Nepā, but, according to the Gopārāja-vamśavali and other vamśavalis, it was the Gopālas who named their kingdom Nepā (ibid.: fol. 17). The term āla denotes a definite or specific area (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2023:1–2); thus the word nepāla denotes the area or kingdom of Nepal governed by the kings of the Gopāla dynasty. To cite another analogous and indeed famous example, himāla is a compound composed of hima (‘snow’) and āla, thus meaning ‘house of snow.’ There are a great many such places named with the suffix āla.

Notwithstanding the fact that the naming of ‘Nepāla’ probably came about during the Gopāla dynasty, we can subsume this dynasty under the Kiriti period as far as the development of settlements is concerned, since the extended period of Kiriti rule began immediately after the end of the Gopāla and Mahīśapāla dynasties (Vajrācārya / Malla, 1985: fols. 17–18). It was at this time that Nepal was exposed to contacts with the outside world through trade with India.

Licchavi Settlements (cf. Vajrācārya, V.S. 2025 b)

During the period of Kiriti rule in the Kathmandu Valley, Licchavi, Vṛjika, Koli, Śākya and Malla states were established in the Terai and other areas of the plains to the south. One of the principal characteristics of these kingdoms is that they were strongly united and active ‘republics’ (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2026: 13; N.R. Pant, V.S. 2021: pp. ka – ta) similar to those of the sixteen Mahājanapadas (Majumdar, 1955:56). In India, there was as yet no concept of empire-building which might endanger the small republics of the Licchavis, Vṛjikas, Kolis, Śākyas and Mallas in the Terai and the adjoining plain areas of contemporary Nepal. But the very existence of these small republics was threatened by the advent of major empires in India. Incapable of standing up and prevailing against the onslaught of this powerful external force, the Śākyas, Kolis, Vṛjikas and Licchavis entered the Kathmandu Valley and the adjoining areas (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2025 a:99–101); the Mallas, for example, withdrew to the Gaṇḍakī region in western Nepal (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:25–27). This event brought about a vast change in the history and culture of Nepal. Once these recently immigrated Kolis and Licchavis settled down, they were absorbed and integrated into the Valley’s culture and soil (Vajrācārya / Śreṣṭha, V.S. 2036:5).

New settlements – which earlier had been concentrated on the periphery of the Valley – such as Lele, Thāṅkot, the foothills of Viṣṇupāduka and Śivapuri, were also established in the central areas of the Valley during the Kiriti period. The Lalitpur area, for example, appears to have developed at that time. Apart from the development of such earlier settlements, the Kathmandu area – more particularly,
the Višālanagara and Hāḍigāū areas – developed as settlement pockets in the Licchavi period. The former sections of Kathmandu, Yambū and Yamgala, underwent further development under the name of Koligrāma and Daksiniakoligrāmadraṅga; the name ’Koligrāma’ designates the settlement of the Kolīs (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:101–102). Vṛjikas and Licchavis had settled in large numbers at Hāḍigāū and Višālanagara; Višālanagara distinctly reminds us of Vaiśāli, the Licchavi stronghold. A section of Hāḍigāū was once known as ’Vṛjikarthya’; this reflects the pattern of heavy settlement by Vṛjikas and Licchavis in the area (G. Vajrācārya, V.S. 2022), and lends additional support to the assumption that the renowned Licchavi royal palace Kailāsakūta was also located there (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:294–5).

The Licchavi settlements can be subdivided into three circles of rings. The first circle includes the peripheral fringes of the Valley such as Thamturi, Lembatī, Stharu, Šītaṭī, Nupunna, etc. The second circle includes Dhāpāsī, Dharmasthali, Tōkha, Dharampūra, Chapaligū, Tuṣāl, Gokarna, Šthīmi, Sunāguthi, Buṅgamatī, Ādesvāra, etc. The third and innermost circle includes Kāntipūra, Lalītpūra, etc.

The settlements of the Licchavi period have been divided into three categories, e.g. grāma, tala and draṅga (Vajrācārya / Sreṣṭha, V.S. 2036:20–21, 62–63). Quite apart from this administrative perspective, a glance at settlement history suggests that three stages can also be distinguished. Ordinarily all the settlements of the Licchavi period are known as grāma. In the Kirātī period, they are called prin. After the grāmas began to prosper culturally, commercially and in other respects, the status of grāma was upgraded to tala and draṅga. The grāmas used to be granted the appellation of draṅga only after their having flourished as a commercial center (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2028 and V.S. 2030:218–221). Particularly during the time of Amśuvarman, the grāmas were converted into draṅga. By this time, Nepal had established commercial contacts with Tibet and China apart from India, and enjoyed the enviable status of being a trade link between India to the south and China to the north. It was at that time that the number of draṅgas increased significantly. It is open to question whether the peripheral settlements of the Valley such as Thamturi, Hamsagrha, Lembatī, Stharu, Šītaṭī and Nupunna (which constituted the first and outermost ring of settlements) were converted into draṅga (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:87–90), or whether Daksiniakoligrāma, Yūpagrāma, etc. (which constituted the innermost circle of settlements) were changed into draṅga (ibid.: 87–90); the settlements of the second circle are generally not called draṅga. This makes it clear that either the peripheral settlements of the Valley or the concentrated settlements of the innermost circle were those which became commercial centers.

Following the tradition of ancient India, the inhabitants of Nepal were classified into two groups, e.g. paurā and jānapada (urban dwellers and peasants) during the Licchavi period. The inhabitants of Gorkha, for example, have been called jānapada (ibid.: 578–579); inscriptions have designated the inhabitants of central parts of the Valley as paurā (ibid.: 401). Despite the classification of inhabitants in terms of such a rural/urban distinction, no place was categorically defined as a city in the Licchavi
period (exception: Sāmapur; cf. Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:320, 565). There used to be only one pāncāli (pañcāyat) in other grāmas, whereas there were many pāncālis in Yūpagrāma and Dakṣiṇakoligrāma (Vajrācārya / Śreśṭha, V.S. 2036: 64–67). This indicates that settlements in the form of draṅga were treated as cities. Nonetheless, classification of settlements during the Licchavi period – as based on inscriptive evidence – is in terms of the triad grāma, tala and draṅga.

Another significant achievement of the Licchavi period is its level of cultural progress and development. Temples, vihāras, etc. were constructed for people professing various different faiths within a small, densely populated area (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030: Inscr. Nos. 339, 345, 368, 370, 371, 464, 496, 497, 499 und 501). Chariot processions (ibid.: 485, 486, 565), public display of musicals, dancing and dramatic performances were extremely common (ibid.: 282–283). Public inns, resting places and platforms were built (ibid.: 71, 279, 283, 351, 426, 454, 547), and goṣṭhis (corporate bodies) were organized to make adequate arrangements for public health, education and other matters of public importance (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2024 a). Ancient inscriptions reveal the existence of various types of roads: pathways for pedestrians (patha), highways (mahāpatha) and those for elephants (bastimārga) (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:107). Games such as goyuddha (bull-fighting) and malla-yuddha (wrestling) were also organized (ibid.: 283–287, 381, 434, 437).

Medieval Settlements

Due to the paucity of historical material from the medieval period, historians have labelled this era the so-called „dark ages“ (Jñāvalī, V.S. 2019:16–17). In reality, however, this was a period in which Tantrism (in both its Śaiva and Buddhist form) flourished, adding a new chapter to Nepalese history (Vajrācārya, 1977:93). Moreover, Nepalese scholars and scholarship spread to Tibet and even China, and their learning, skill and craftsmanship had an important impact on the culture of these countries (ibid.: 93–94). Large-size sculptures, for example, were cast in large numbers in Nepal at this time. As a result of economic links with Tibet and India, commercial centers flourished not only in the Kathmandu Valley, but in the Gaṅḍaki and Kośī regions as well (ibid.: 94–126).

A transformation gradually came about in respect to the range and type of settlement in the Kathmandu Valley. Ancient settlement types such as grāma and draṅga were transformed into deśa (country) and pur(a) (city). The name Yūpagrāmadraṅga was replaced by Lalitpur (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2022:24), Koligrāma and Dakṣiṇakoligrāmadraṅga were replaced by Kāntipur and Kāsthamaṇḍapa, and Khoprīgrāmadraṅga was changed into Bhaktapur. Tripura of Bhaktapur remained the capital of Nepal for several centuries (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2019:110–115). Manigal became another major city, and Kathmandu – due to its commercial links with Tibet – developed into an even more prosperous and flourishing city (ibid.: 136).
The administration by 12 chieftains' emerged as an institution at this time in Kathmandu.

The transformation of the grāma of the Licchavi period into the medieval pura is a matter of considerable interest. The ancient grāmas took on the name of tol (locality, section) within a pura (town); the city of Lalitpur may be cited as one such example. The places Tegval, Thambu and Gullamtaṅg of Yūpagrāmadarāṅga now became Tyāgal, Thambu and Guṭatole in Lalitpur (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:404), three of 24 such localities (sections) in that city. Each locality was governed by a pradhān (chieftain) (Vajrācārya /Śreṣṭha, V.S. 2036:148, 191); these chieftains played a major role in administration and cultural activities in Lalitpur (ibid.: 190–191). There was a pradhān in each grāma during the Licchavi period (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030: 91, 132, 187–193); at a later date, however, there was a pradhān for each tol.

The settlements surrounding the three main cities were likewise transformed either into desa or pur(a). The seven principal settlements of the Kingdom of Bhaktapur – known as Sātgaoon (‘seven villages’) – were not designated as grāma in the Malla period (N.R. Pant et al., V.S. 2025:855–859). The inscriptions of the corresponding era reveal that Banepa was then known as Banikpuri, Panauti was called Pūrnnavatipur, Thimi was known as Madhyapurī and Bode as Dharmapurideia (Abhilekha-Samgraha 1, V.S. 2018:16; Vajrācārya, V.S. 2022:29 and V.S. 2024 b:130–131). Pratāpa Malla is recorded as having called Bhaktapur ‘Bhaktagrāma’ so as to ridicule the town.

Settlements in the Form of a Fort

Another important finding is that nearly all the principal settlements of the medieval period were gradually transformed into garbs (fort). The prevailing political situation at the time may indeed have prompted such a decision for reasons of security. In point of fact, the settlement type kotṭa (fort) also existed during the Licchavi period (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2030:238), but the practice of giving each settlement the shape of a fort or stronghold developed only during the medieval period. This process was intensified only after the start of invasions by the Tirhute and Khasa tribes. The Gopālārajavamśāvalī has a reference indicating the reshaping of Tripura of Bhaktapur into a ‘fort’ during the reign of Rudra Malla (Vajrācārya /Malla, 1985: fol. 45), a process which was stepped up under the rule of Sthiti Malla (ibid.: fol. 55, 57), and Yakṣa Malla. An inscription dating back to the reign of Yakṣa Malla refers to a code of rules to establish Bhaktapur as a stronghold (Vajrācārya, V.S. 2021 b: 22–26). Trees were planted all around during the reshaping of settlements into a stronghold; moreover, moats were constructed in certain interior areas and dangerous animals (such as snakes) were set free to roam. Another small inner circle was surrounded by walls; inside these walls, large
courtyards (known as deśakvaṭhas) were constructed. Strong gates were built at various points around the city so that when danger arose it would be all but impossible to penetrate into the town. The above-mentioned inscription of Yakṣa Malla gives a brief outline of the fort as well as the 'Kirtipatākā' of Kunu Śarmā (ibid.: 26–28).

Along with the large cities, towns were also transformed into forts at that time: Kirtipur, Thāṅkoṭ and other settlements are examples of this development. An inscription dated Nepāl Saṃvat 873 (= 1753 A.D.) found in Thāṅkoṭ states: ... deśāya garprākāla senāyā ... yāka („walls were erected around the place ...“) (ibid.: 29). This would suggest that Thāṅkoṭ was built as a fort surrounded on all sides by walls and continued to exist later on in this form.

Thus, the mere fact of a large concentration of population in a settlement does not constitute a sufficient prerequisite for qualifying that settlement as a city. In order to have been given the status of a city, the place should have possessed fortifications of strong walls like a fort. Another important characteristic qualifying a medieval settlement as a city is that it has temples for people of different faiths, along with conference halls, platforms for dance and dramatic performances. In addition, it should also have scholars within its environs.

A palm-leaf Amarokośa manuscript from the period of King Sthiti Malla dated Nepāla Saṃvat 506 (= 1386 A.D.) defines the city in the following words:

\[ \text{mūla nāgara dhāya prākār khar rājdhānīka devaḷa maṇḍapa śrotveda yuddīsī ādiṉam pandit loko ṛvavāna maṇḍala juva. thathvaṅga nagaraḷīyam camgva chachīnagaradvāko sākhānagara dhāye (cf. Vajrācārya /Śreṣṭha, V.S. 2031 1–2).} \]

(„A fortified place with temples, platforms and a society of pandits with the knowledge of the Vedas and astronomy is called the main city. The places adjoining the main city are called the branch city.“)

A maṇḍapa (platform) is one of the integral structures within a city. This may be an ordinary type of platform, but can also be along the lines of a conference hall, such as the Kāṣṭhamanḍapa in Kāntipur, built of wood in the ancient architectural style. The Kāṣṭhamanḍapa, a structure of considerable beauty, played an important role in terms of religious and cultural life in the city. Over the course of the years, the city itself began to be called Kāṣṭhamanḍapa after the historic maṇḍapa in its center (Jośi, V.S. 2017: Appendix p. 9). The name 'Kathmandu' thus seems to be the popular and corrupted form deriving from the name Kāṣṭhamanḍapa.

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"...there is for historiography of any kind no more important proposition than [this] ...: the cause of the origin of a thing and its eventual utility, its actual employment and place in a system of purposes, lie worlds apart; whatever exists, having somehow come into being, is again and again reinterpreted to new ends..."

Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*

**Introduction**

Can there be Buddhism without monks? The title of M.R. Allen's article ('Buddhism without monks: the Vajrayana Religion of the Newars of Kathmandu Valley') implies that there can, and that this is an example. Outside South Asia, notably in Japan, Buddhism did indeed develop non-monastic forms (Heinemann, 1912).

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1 I would like to express my gratitude to the Leverhulme Trust Fund which supported two years of fieldwork in Nepal, 1982-4, and to the Boden Fund, Oxford, which supported me for twenty-one months after my return. I am indebted to many people in Nepal for discussions and information, but in particular I must mention Father Locke who has most generously shared his vast knowledge of Newar Buddhism with me over many meetings, and has also made many suggestions which have improved this paper. For details on individual monasteries mentioned his forthcoming book should be consulted. I have also benefited from the comments of R. French, Niels Gutschow, H. Kulke, K.P. Malla, Dhanavajra Vajracarya, Gautamrajra Vajracarya and Anne Vergati. Thanks are also due to Niels Gutschow for the excellent maps. Siegfried Lienhard has kindly given me his advice on the etymologies discussed in notes 4, 10, 24 and 25. Needless to say however I take responsibility for the use or misuse I have made of all suggestions and comments. I would also like to record my debt to, and admiration of, Hemraj Shakya, local Buddhist scholar: in spite of the fact that I have, on occasion, found it necessary to qualify or criticize his conclusions, I have learned a great deal from his many works, which represent an heroic attempt to synthesize traditional and modern scholarship. The following abbreviations are used: Nev.: Nevārī, Nep.: Nepāli, Skt.: Sanskrit. Where none is given the italicized word(s) is (are) Nevārī. Where two words are given the one with a Skt. etymology, or the one which has remained closer to the Sanskrit root (where both are Skt. in origin), is given first. BV= the Buddhist Vamsāvalī, the chronicle of Nepalese history, supplied by the Lalitpur Vajrācārya pandits employed at the British Residency, which Wright had translated and published as 'The History of Nepal' in 1877. In a number of places the translation glosses over or omits vital information. Where it has been necessary to refer to the original manuscript in the Cambridge University Library, No. Add. 1952A, I have cited this as BV.
1984). And in the modern world new types of Buddhism have arisen which require neither monachism nor monasteries and blur the monk-layman divide.\(^2\) However, for traditional South Asia, of which Kathmandu Valley is unquestionably a part, I would maintain against Allen that Buddhism cannot exist without monks, and that the Śākyas and Vajrācāryas of the Kathmandu Valley are monks, albeit married householder monks.

The issue here is not the scientific one of what type of institutions should be recognized in some universal schema as monastic but simply this: should we not start by using the concepts given in the culture to explain the way it functions (even if we then go on to show their limitations)? By this criterion the institutions and traditions of the Śākyas and Vajrācāryas do indeed define them as monks. Every Śākya and Vajrācārya must be a member of a monastic community (\textit{samgha, sam}) based on a monastery (\textit{bahā, bahi}; Skt. \textit{vihāra}).\(^3\) He becomes a member by going through \textit{bare chuyegu} in that monastery, a rite in which he spends four days as a monk (Allen, 1973: 10; Locke, 1975). This gives him membership, that is, the right and duty to participate in the monastery’s recurrent functions, in particular to take turns as guardian (\textit{dyahpāhlā}) of the principal deity (\textit{kvābāju}).\(^4\) Eventually, by

\(^2\) For an interesting neo-Buddhist sect, the Western Buddhist Order, see Subhuti, 1983, and Oliver, 1979, Ch. 6. On the modernist Buddhism that focuses on the meditation centre rather than the monastery, see Gombrich, 1983.

\(^3\) \textit{Bahi} is commonly written thus, and also as \textit{bāhā}. The inconsistency is due, I think to the fact that it is usually pronounced as \textit{bāh}. Both spellings are equally common and so I prefer \textit{bhā} since it more clearly represents how a careful speaker, when pronouncing the \textit{h}, would say it. Similarly, in normal speech, the \textit{h} of \textit{bahi} is elided. On the etymology of the two words see p. 18 and n. 10 below.

\(^4\) Hemraj Shakya writes this term in the following ways on consecutive pages: \textit{kvāpādyo, kvāpāju, kvābādyo, kvāpā́-aju} (Shakya, 1973: 43, 46, 47, 52). Evidently usage is not standardized, but since \textit{kvābāju} is the term I heard used that is what I have written. All these variants derive from the old Nevārī \textit{kvacapāladeva}; this and the variant \textit{kvacapālabaṭṭāraka} occur frequently in inscriptions. It seems to be clear that the term means ‘god who is protector of the \textit{kvāca};’ it is the word \textit{kvaca} that is problematic. It occurs as \textit{kocapāhara bhābra} in the Gopālarāja vamśāvali, and twice in a Sanskritized form as \textit{kosthapāladeva} in an inscription in Kathmandu of 1388 (Rajvamshi, 1965: 54). \textit{Kvātha} in Nevārī means ‘fort’ and possibly deriving from this two important monasteries, one in Kathmandu, one in Lalitpur, are called \textit{Kvā Bahā}. I find it hard to believe however that the principal deity of \textit{all bahā} should be called ‘protector of the fort’. A second possibility is that \textit{kostha/kvātha} (from which the modern Nevārī and Nepali \textit{kothā, ‘room’, derive) was extended in old Nevārī from its meaning of ‘store-house’ or ‘store-room’ (Edgerton, 1953: 195a) to connote ‘main shrine’ or even ‘monastery’. A third possibility, pointed out to me by Prof. Lienhard, is that \textit{kvaca} derives from \textit{kūtāgāra}, since Hodgson (1972, I: 30) reports that the main shrine of a monastery is called a „kūtāgār temple“. Edgerton (1953: 190a) gives \textit{kūtāgaśāla} as the name of „a hall or house near Vaisali where the Buddha often stayed.” I would therefore suggest as a hypothesis that the latter was the original source of the term. Just as \textit{gandhuridyo} became the technical term for the main deity of a \textit{bahi} (see p. 15 and n. 43),
seniority according to time of initiation, he may become one of the five or ten elders (sthavir, ājīva) of the monastery, for which it is necessary to have taken Tantric initiation (dikṣā). He is then responsible, with the other elders, for the regular worship of the monastery's Tantric deities, and will also have various other ceremonial functions. Elders are often invited to receive gifts (pañcādaṇa) on auspicious occasions, particularly at weddings. The idea here (though it usually remains implicit) is that they stand for the whole samgha (who would in many monasteries be too numerous to invite). At the ordination of new members, the five most senior elders must be present and pour the consecrating waters over the new members; for this, and on certain other occasions, the elders bare their right shoulder in monastic fashion. Once I asked a Vajrācārya, a practising priest, if he had ever invited Theravāda monks to his house. He replied: „We ourselves are monks (jimi he bhikṣuta) [i.e. we don’t need to].“

As monks Śākyas and Vajrācāryas have control of monastery deities, since only they may perform the daily worship (nityapūja) in monasteries. The members of other castes occasionally found a small monastery but either they turn it over entirely to Śākyas and/or Vajrācāryas, or they have them come to perform the required daily ritual. A striking partial exception to this, from Kathmandu, proves (or at least illustrates) the rule: at Thaṃ Bahī in Thamel, which is owned, exceptionally for such an ancient and sizeable establishment, by Buddhist Śreṣṭhas

so equally the term kvacapāladeva may have been deliberately derived from (a) a place associated with the Buddha and (b) a similar-sounding (though actually different) root (kuti/kūta) and made into the technical term for the main deity of a bahā. This would not exclude subsequent conflation with the terms for a fort or a storehouse. Proof that the term kūtabhāqa was known in Nepal comes from the opening section of the Vajrāvali, an early twelfth century text, where it is used as a synonym of gandhakuti, the main Buddha-shrine of a monastery (Śata Piṭaka Series, Vol. 239, pp. 6, 7 & 9). Kūtabhāqa is also used, evidently with the same meaning in the Kriya-samgraha (Śata Piṭaka Series, Vol. 236, p. 170).

5 Exceptionally in Kva Bahā there is a secondary group of twenty elders, so that there are thirty in all. This is probably simply to do with the unusually large size of this monastery.

6 One piece of evidence for this is provided by the history of a ritual called svamchām (‘offering flowers’) in Kva Bahā. This is done once a year by all the god-guardians (dyāhpāhlā) of that year in earnest of the fact that in four years’ time their turn will come to organize the monastic association feast. Until 1951 svamchām involved presenting two rice-cakes (catāmarī) and jellied buffalo meat (takhā) to all members of the association. But the association had grown so large that this was changed and since then the thirty elders of Kva Bahā are fed instead.

7 Local tradition takes this back to the (mythical) time of Krakuchanda Buddha (Wright, 1972: 80). Historically the rule that five monks may initiate a new monk in border areas, though ten are required elsewhere, goes back to the oldest stratum of Buddhist scripture, redacted no later than 100 years after the Buddha’s death. See Frauwallner, 1956: 90–1. This historical point was made to me by the young Buddhist writer, Dunda Bahadur Vajracharya. More traditional Newar Buddhists believe, in accordance with their scriptures, that their Buddhist customs are much older than a mere 2500 years.
(the Thamel Pradhâns), a Pañccharia Śreṣṭha is appointed to perform the daily ritual in the Simha Sārtha Bāhu (= Dipāṅkara) shrine; but in order to be able to do this he has to go through bare chuyegu, so that he becomes an honorary Sākyya for the intention of his office.⁸

In this paper it is not my purpose to focus on the monastic identity of Śakyas and Vajrācāryas as such but on the essential adjunct of that identity, the monastery. I shall not treat exhaustively all the details of the monastery as an institution but only introduce as much as is necessary to understand the monastery as a religious monument. For instance, Hemraj Shakya lists 167 monasteries in Lalitpur (Shakya, 1956). How are we to understand this list? What types of monastery are there and what is their history? The material presented relates to Lalitpur (Yala; Nep. Pāṭan) but, I believe, my argument applies broadly to Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and other Newar settlements as well. It should become clear that Newar monasteries, that is, all the institutions which the Newars themselves call bahā or bahi, can be understood as something more than a historical residue.

The monastery and its types

The casual observer can easily tell a Buddhist monastery from a Hindu temple. This is so, even though the principal shrine of the monastery may itself be a free-standing 'pagoda' temple similar in style to a Hindu temple. Monasteries are always set back from the road in a courtyard, so that one has to pass through a door to get to them. Hindu temples by contrast are sited in the street, or at crossroads, at points of maximum exposure. Tantric shrines of both religions, being private affairs, are secluded on the first floor of monasteries, of special god-houses (āgamchem) or in private houses. Their presence can usually be detected from the outside from elements of temple architecture (e.g. a small pagoda roof, puco).

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⁸ The daily ritual of the kvāpādyah/kvābāju is performed by a Vajrācārya from (Kathmandu) Kvā Bahā (information due to Father Locke). A similar exception is provided by the Jyāpū Phū Bare' of the northern of Kathmandu's three sections (Gutschow, 1982: 139, has a map showing the three sub-divisions of the city). In each section there is a different 'Phū Bare', i.e. 'monk who collects the remains', who comes to mark the end of Pañcadān, the festival in which alms (dān) are given to Vajrācāryas and Śakyas. Exceptionally, in the northern section, this 'Phū Bare' is a Maharjan, i.e. a man of the farmer caste. In order to fulfil this office he must go through bare chuyegu ritual (i.e. become an honorary Sākyya), he must marry only a Maharjan girl of pure descent, and he must perform the daily ritual (nitya pūjā) at his own shrine of Lokeśvara. Ratna Kaji and Bijay Ratna Vajracharya list a second farmer Phū Bare from Nārāyaṇ Bahā near Yatkhā Baha, but I was not able to confirm this (Vajracharya R.K. and B.R., 1983: 36).
Architecturally the Newar Buddhist monastery is defined by its possession of the following three elements:

(i) a principal deity (kvābāju/ kvāpādyah). This is nearly always Śākyamuni Buddha with the earth-touching (bhūmisparśa) gesture; occasionally he may be a form of Avalokiteśvara. He faces either east, west or north, and the main entrance to the monastery is opposite his shrine.9

(ii) A caitya in front of the main deity, in the middle of the courtyard.

(iii) Upstairs in an enclosed room on the first floor (āga), a secret, Tantric deity (āgamadevata, āgamdyah), most commonly Cakrasamvara and his consort Vajravārāhi.11

The different types of Buddhist monastery, and their logical relationships one to the other, are represented in table I. A word of caution is required however on the interpretation of the typology. The table does not describe relations between particular institutions but only shows the different species within the genus 'monastery'. It shows, for instance, that lineage monasteries are a kind of branch monastery, and that branch monasteries are a type of bahā. It does not show, and it

9 As Gutschow shows, Lalitpur is laid out in a grid pattern, which determines these alignments, but the orientations of the grid differ from true by a huge 24° (Gutschow, 1981: 266, and 1982: 154). I have discussed some of the issues raised by the town-planning of Malla Nepal, as dealt with by Barré et al., in Gellner, 1984.

10 I.e. the basic, and most ancient, Buddhist cult object. Large caityas such as Svayambhū or the 'Asokan' stupas around Lalitpur are known in Nevārī as thur. (Thrūr seems to be an abbreviation of sthūlado, 'big mound': at BV: 44 a. I Bahi Thrūr is called a sthūlado mahācaitya.) Ordinary caityas are called cibhā or cibhādyah, or sometimes also caitya; in particular, Licchavi caityas are known as āsokacaitiya. Cibhā could be interpreted as 'small bahā' but in fact derives from caityabhatta, which occurs in inscriptions and other formal contexts. In the same way guhbāju (Buddhist priest, Vajrācārya) derives from guru-bhattaraka. Bhattaraka is Skt. 'great lord', 'worshipful person'. Its use, now obsolete, was no doubt coterminous with those categories entitled to the Nevārī honorific auxiliary, bijyāye, viz. gods, kings, members of priestly castes and monks. It is possible that the term bahā, rather than deriving from Skt. vihāra, monastery, also comes from bhattaraka (cf. Gutschow, 1980: 140). I have one piece of evidence which tends to support the latter derivation. The members of Kvā Bahā and other residents of Lalitpur, when they say they are going to Kvā Bahā, never say, as one might expect, Kvā Bahālay vanegu but always kvāptay vanegu. This expression, kvāptay, as the locative of Kvā Bahā, must derive from Kvāta Bhota/Bhata (from kvaca or kvātha - see n.4 - and bhattaraka), the term by which the main deity of Kvā Bahā is frequently addressed in inscriptions there. Indeed a list of Lalitpur monasteries from 1845 calls Kvā Bahā, Kvata Bhata Bahā (Situ, No. 54 [V.S. 2030], p.2). Here then is a particular case in which the principal deity comes to stand for the whole monastery. The derivation bahā from bhattaraka simply requires a more general step of the same kind.

11 In Skt. āgama means 'tradition' and refers specifically to the Śaivite Tantric scriptures. Hence the term āgamadevata, Tantric deity, whence āgamdyah, a Newarization of this, and āgam, a back formation, as the way of saying 'Tantric shrine' in Nevārī. Interestingly the Pali canon Nikāyas are referred to as āgama in Buddhist Sanskrit (Edgerton, 1953: 294 a).
is not in fact the case, that all branch monasteries are branches of bahā: some branches are independent of all other monasteries and some lineage monasteries are owned by members of bahī, i.e. they are branches of a bahī.

The concepts shown in table I have three sources. The genus ‘monastery’ (Skt. vihāra or mahāvihāra) derives from the Buddhist Great Tradition. All the monasteries considered here count as monasteries in this sense (with the possible exception of monasteries-by-extension). From the point of view of religion and ritual no distinctions are recognized between any of them: the same ritual and the same devotion are appropriate in all of them, even though in fact some are huge and popular shrines while others are so small that almost no one knows of their existence. The next level down shows the local concepts which have evolved to describe the different types of monastery (with different functions and identities) that actually exist on the ground. This does not mean that the different types are found only here in Nepal: I shall argue below that the distinctions may actually reflect differences found elsewhere too. Nevertheless from the strictly religious point of view, these types are irrelevant, and so the vocabulary used to describe these types is essentially local. Finally, the rest of table I represents sub-species identified by the researcher, which make up for one important inadequacy in the local terminology, and introduce some elaborations that Newars themselves would recognize but which are not sufficiently significant to be reflected in everyday speech. A checklist of the most important characteristics serving to distinguish the different types of monastery is provided in table II.

The three types of monastery distinguished by local usage\textsuperscript{12} are, then, in order of importance:

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\textsuperscript{12} Thus Shakya (1973: 34) lists the „three types of monastery... 1) sāmānyā vihār – (kaccāvāhā) 2) madhyamaka vihār – (bahī vihār) 3) māhā vihār – (mūvāhā)“ (see also Shakya, 1979: 4). The Sanskrit terms madhyamakavihāra and sāmānyavihāra he has borrowed, it seems, from Aṃśuvaṇman’s famous inscription detailing different offerings to be made at different temples and monasteries (Vajracharya Dh.V., 1973: 320; cf. Riccardi, 1980); Madhyama Vihāra was the name of a particular monastery, sāmānyā vibhāra a category. The correspondance Shakya makes between these two Licchavi terms and the classification of monasteries currently in use must unfortunately be rejected as a piece of ‘scholarly creativity’. Nor is it the case that only main monasteries are called Skt. mahāvihāra, „great monastery”, though that is also implied in Shakya, 1956, which confines the term mahāvihāra to main monasteries. In fact, the inscriptions describing even the smallest lineage monastery often call it a mahāvihāra (cf. Locke, 1980: 478–9). One should add that Newars sometimes refer to small lineage monasteries as bahācā, little bahā, but this is too vague to act as a generic term.
Table 1: A Typology of the Newar Buddhist Monastery with examples from Lalitpur. Nevāri terms are given in capitals. The sources of the distinctions shown are given at the right hand margin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monastery (Skt. vihāra)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanskrit, Great Traditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevāri, Local terms</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BAHĀ</th>
<th>BAHĪ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MŪ BAHĀ (Main Monastery)</td>
<td>KACĀ BAHĀ (Branch Monastery)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Independent Branch Monastery** (in which *bare chuyegu* is performed)
- **Fully Independent Branch Monasteries** (Yamkuri Baha, Hyan Baha, Naha Baha)
- **Lineage Monasteries** founded by Śākyas or Vajrācāryas

- **Lineage Monasteries** founded by lay' castes (e.g. Hauga Baha, Jom Baha, Sānkhadhar Baha)
- **Lineage Monasteries** inherited from members of another lineage monastery (e.g. Ko Baha)
- **Former Main Monasteries** (Cuka Baha, Jyo Baha, Yachu Baha), former bahī (Ubā Baha) or former independent branch monasteries (e.g. Kulim Baha)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Observer's Elaboration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>,Founded' Lineage Monasteries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>,Captured' Lineage Monasteries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Monasteries-by-extension: e.g. Nāg Baha, Nyākhacuk
Table II: Principal characteristics serving to distinguish the different types of monastery discussed. '/'' indicates that the type of monastery shown has the characteristic in question, 'X' that it lacks it.

| Caitya and Main Deity | | | | | | | X | |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|--------|
| Tantric shrine       | /                | /                | X                | /                | /                | /           | X      |
| May have Vajracaryas as members | / | X | X | / | / | / | / | / |
| Ritually established as monastery | / | / | / | / | / | / | X | X |
| Has a system of god-guardians | / | / | / | / | / | / | / | X |
| Number of elders | 10 | 5 | ? | 5 | 5 | X | X | X |
| Has a monastic community (samgha) | / | / | / | / | / | / | X | X |
| Bare chuyegu performed there | / | / | / | / | / | / | X | X |
| Can be focus of devotion by non-members and lay castes | / | / | / | / | / | / | X | X |

a) These have no membership as such, but Vajracaryas may live there just as much as Sakyas.
b) BV does not make it clear whether there was a formal system of elders or not, but seems to imply there was not.
c) There are no seniors (sthavir, aju), but only elders (thakali) as in any guthi.
d) Half of the ceremony takes place in Kva Bahá. See p.
e) This is only done exceptionally, in the case of half-castes.
f) Bare chuyegu has only been performed here in recent times (since 1951).
a) Main monasteries (mū baha). Tradition lists eighteen of these in each of Kathmandu and Lalitpur,\(^\text{13}\) although in Lalitpur they are confusingly known as 'the Fifteen Bahā' (jhimnyāgu bahā).\(^\text{14}\) A few of these are small and have no more than the three elements listed above, but the rest possess other shrines as well, and some are spectacular religious complexes, having been enriched by numerous donations over the years. Some of them have only Vajrācārya members (e.g. Dhum Bahā), others have only Śākya members (e.g. Uku Bahā, Śī Bahā, Guji Bahā) and the rest have both. Nearly two fifths of the members of the main monasteries are Vajrācāryas and the rest are Śakyas.\(^\text{15}\) I shall refer to all monasteries using their Nevāri name, even though this will have a colloquial and non-honorific ring to Nepali ears. Their Sanskrit titles are long and unwieldy, and even locals often do not remember them; several lists which include both names have already been published (Shakya, 1956; Allen, 1973: 8; Gutschow and Shakya, 1980; Locke, 1980: 32; Slusser, 1982, II: map 2; Kathmandu Valley, 1975, contains photos and other information but not the Sanskrit titles).

(b) The bahi. In Lalitpur there are twenty-five bahi and in Kathmandu sixteen. They are distinguished by the fact that they have only Śākya and no Vajrācāryas. (This is how it is explained today; traditionally the members of the Lalitpur bahi called themselves Brahmacarya Bhikṣu, not Śākya.) The bahi are also architecturally distinct, and they have very few members, compared to bahā. Nonetheless some of the bahi possessed much guthi land until recently.

(c) Branch Monasteries (kacā bahā). There are two distinct types of branch monastery:

(c)' Lineage Monasteries. This is the most common, though least conspicuous, type of monastery. In Lalitpur there are over 130 lineage monasteries. They are branch monasteries founded by individual members of (a), (b) or (c)' as an act of religious merit, and endowed with land for their upkeep and the performance of annual ceremonies in the name of the founder. They are modelled on the main monasteries,

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13 According to Dibya Vajra Vajracharya there is a saying that the eighteen monasteries of Kathmandu were founded to house each of the eighteen schools of ancient Buddhism (quoted in Pradhan, 1983: 12). As is explained below, the system of main monasteries in Lalitpur dates in its present form only from the seventeenth century, and the same may well be true of Kathmandu. 'The eighteen schools', on the other hand, is a concept applicable to a period at least 1500 years earlier. But since it was always a conventional number, even in the ancient period, it may indeed be the source of the idea that eighteen was a suitable total for Kathmandu's monasteries.

14 The historical reason for this is explained below, p. 34.

15 According to the figures of Allen (1973: 8) only 15 % are Vajrācāryas. But his table underestimates radically the number of Vajrācāryas in Bu Bahā and Bhimchem Bahā. He is also wrong to say that 25 % of the Vajrācārya-and-Śākya population of Lalitpur belong to the bahi (ibid.: 7): the correct figure is under 10 %. Locke’s survey produced the following figures: Vajrācāryas constitute 38 % of the total Vajrācārya-and-Śākya population in the Valley and nearby areas, though only 34 % in Lalitpur. Members of bahi are 5.7 % overall, and roughly 9 % within Lalitpur.
but are usually much smaller. Many consist of no more than a caitya and a diminutive shrine of the Buddha, the Tantric shrine being merely a locked room in one of the adjacent houses; in a few cases the Tantric shrine has been omitted, and in others it is now abandoned. Often they have been built at the same time as, and as an integral part of, the founder’s home. The monastery and its lands belong to the descendants of the founder, and this may comprise many households if he is genealogically distant. I have called them lineage monasteries because they usually belong to a single lineage. Many of them now belong to a single family however, as lands are lost and members abandon the duties associated with the monastery.

Fig. 1. A lineage monastery in Chây Bahâ, known to locals simply as bahîcâ (‘little bahâ’). It dates back to the seventeenth century (Kathmandu Valley, 1975, II: 146) and belongs to a lineage of Vajrâcâryas who are members of Kâ Bahâ. The shrines in the wall are to Gâneśa and Mahâkâla and they are flanked by a pair of spirits called khyâ and kavam respectively. The kavam, skeleton, is visible on the right of the picture.

Anyone may found a ’lineage’ monastery – it is thought of simply as founding a monastery – be he a member of a main monastery, of a bahî or of an independent branch monastery, be he Vajrâcârya, Sâkya or other caste. The only problem is the expense. The founder’s descendants, so long as they are prepared to keep up the ritual obligations, will constitute the membership. But membership of a lineage monastery is not essential to the identity of Sâkyas and Vajrâcâryas: many do not have one; those who do simply see it as similar to any religious association (guthi) they belong to, that is, as a worthy thing, but one which may depend on one’s means and religiosity. It is quite otherwise with the main monastery, bahî or independent branch monastery where a Sâkya or Vajrâcârya is initiated (takes bare chuyegu). He can renounce his membership of the lineage monastery if he finds its duties onerous or if he quarrels with the rest of the clan, but he must maintain
membership in his main monastery, bahi or independent branch monastery on pain of outcasting. Bare chuyegu is never performed in lineage monasteries, except that sons of a Vajrācārya or Śākya father by a lower-caste mother, who will not be accepted by the father's monastic association, are sometimes given bare chuyegu at a nearby caitya, which is likely to be in the father's lineage monastery if he has one.

(c) Independent Branch Monasteries. For the second and distinct type of branch monastery (kacā bahā) the term 'branch' is in fact something of a misnomer: though known as branches, these monasteries are actually independent and initiate their own members. In their case the term 'branch' simply expresses the fact that they are not included in the set of eighteen main monasteries, and not the fact that they were founded, as a supererogatory act of merit, by individual members of main monasteries. In Lalitpur these independent branches are small and, like bahi, have only five elders (sthavir, āju), not ten as do main monasteries. In Kathmandu however they are both more numerous and have larger associations than in Lalitpur; the refusal to grant them the title 'main monastery' looks in Kathmandu like a Vajrācārya prejudice against exclusively Śākya monasteries.

A glance at table I will show that, although bahi and main monasteries are homogeneous categories, the branch monasteries form a heterogeneous group. The reason for this is that, of the three terms used in Nevāri, mū bahā (main monastery), bahi and kacā bahā (branch monastery), (a), (b) and (c) above, the latter is, to a certain extent, a residual category. That is, a branch monastery is any monastery which is not either a main monastery or a babī. As explained, kacā bahā is used to cover two distinct types of institution, lineage monasteries and independent branch monasteries, (c)' and (c)" above.16 Within these, further sub-types can be distinguished, but the schema is my own elaboration. I have not given Nevāri equivalents of the sub-types, because there are none in common use. The failure of the language to distinguish between lineage monasteries and independent branch monasteries is admittedly a confusion. But the lack of names for the further internal differentiation of lineage monasteries shown in table I is not: they all function alike, and what I have distinguished, in order to help the reader, are merely the different historical routes by which lineage monasteries have reached the present. For example, the membership of one babī evidently died out many years ago, and nowadays, though still called Ubā Bahī, it functions as a lineage monastery belonging to members of Uku Bahā. Similarly three main monasteries, though still treated as such by non-members on certain occasions (e.g. babā pūjā), have become no more than lineage monasteries; evidently their original membership died out, and they were inherited by Śākyas or Vajrācāryas belonging to other main

16 Locke argues that there are actually two different words kacā, Nevāri for branch, and Hindi kacca, 'inauthentic', respectively (Locke, 1980: 16–7). But in my experience Newar Buddhists do not make this distinction and the Hindi meaning is not intended.
monasteries. BV records that King Siddhi Narasimha granted Cuka Bahā to a Vajrācārya from Nyākhācuk who was a member of Kvā Bahā (BV: 129 b–130 a). His descendants still live there today. According to them he was called Kulāpad and received Cuka Bahā for helping the king complete a fire sacrifice in front of the Kṛṣṇa temple in Maṅgal Bazaar.

A final type to be included is the monastery-by-extension. In Nevāri bahā (and in Nepāli, bahāl) has come to mean any courtyard with Buddhist associations. Thus Nāg Bahā is the modern name for a large and well-known courtyard inhabited by members of Kvā Bahā. To locals and especially to the older generation it is known as Ilanhe. This, Nāg Bahā, locals insist, is a name only recently given to it by outsiders because of the holy serpents (nāg) painted on the wall of the two shelters there. Now it has won general acceptance and is the official and more widely known name.

This extension of the title ‘monastery’ to courtyards which are not monasteries by any of the criteria given above is however an ancient practice. Thus an inscription of 1616 (N.S. 736) records a Samek festival held in Nāg Bahā, which is called Vasuvarddhana Mahāvihār. Later generations preferred the name Paśuvarna Mahāvihār, which refers to the statue of a bull there (Skt. paśu, domestic animal, cattle) associated with the festival of Dipankhā. Similarly the large courtyard called in Nevāri Nyākhācuk is given the title Bhāskaravarna Mahāvihār, no doubt because, like Nāg Bahā, its inhabitants are nearly all members of Kvā Bahā, and the founder of Kvā Bahā was called Bhāskara. By the same token Sarasvati Nani is called Vāgīśvar Vihār in inscriptions there, though no-one calls it a bahā today. The temple to Maṅjuśrī might be thought to make it a lineage monastery, but it was evidently never established as such.

One further category, not included in the typology since it is a modern development, is constituted by the monasteries to be found in the bazaar towns of the Nepalese hills where there are concentrations of Newar Buddhists. I have visited myself Suvarṇavarṇamahāvihār (Ārughāt), Mahācaitya Vihār and Ānanda Vihār (Tānsen) and Padmacaitya Vihār (Butwol). Except for the first, which was

17 This is a contraction of Itilanhe, found in inscriptions even as late as twenty-five years ago, deriving from hiti (waterspout) plus lanhe, old Nev. medium or large residential courtyard (= modern Nev. nani) (Tamot, 1980: 52–4).

18 This means ‘five square cuk [courtyard]’, and I was told that it derives from the fact that the courtyard is big enough along its longer sides to have five cuk. These are very small residential courts usually no more than 10 metres square and often much less. In the past they were frequently surrounded by a single house, but with increasing population and pressure on urban land, this is rare nowadays. Usually the original house has been sub-divided, so that three or more families look onto the same cuk. Barré et al., 1981: 171–5, describe and illustrate the process by which cuk are formed and the houses surrounding them subsequently divided (cf. Toffin, 1984: 390).
ounded in 1921 on the initiative of a Newar Mahāyāna monk, the others only recently came to be considered as monasteries, though they are holy sites, with aityas, of 100 years' standing or more. Indeed, by the traditional criteria of the valley they are not monasteries: they lack a Tantric shrine, they have none of the institutional structure of the traditional Newar monastery (elders, god-guardians) and the deities there were established separately, not together as a monastery. They represent in fact something of a syncretism between traditional Newar Buddhism and the new Theravāda movement, since they are used both for bare chu.yegu initiations and for Theravāda meetings; Theravāda monks and nuns often live in them.

![Fig. 2. Ānanda Vihār in Tānsen. It combines elements from both traditional Newar Buddhism and the modern Theravāda, and lacks the institutional framework of a traditional monastery.](image)

19 The inscription actually records the consecration of a caitya and an image of Mañjuśrī, and the building of a wall, by Harkha Dev Shakya of Uku Bahā, Lalitpur. The people of Ārughāṭ remember him as 'Devadatta' and recall that he lived as a monk. This is confirmed by the autobiography of the 'Bauddha Rṣi' Mahāprajñā: Harkha Dev was called 'Devadatta' because he had played that part in a representation of the life of the Buddha (Mahāprajñā, 1983: 21). Harkha Dev, Mahāprajñā himself and Kāṇchā Shakya had just received monastic initiation in Kyerung, Tibet. Harkha Dev went straight to Ārughāṭ while the other two proceeded to Kathmandu (ibid.: 25). Harkha Dev lives today in Svayambhū.
Main monasteries

The main monasteries include the most conspicuous and well-known Buddhist monuments of Lalitpur. A few main monasteries are small, nothing distinguishing them architecturally from the larger branch monasteries. But most of them are large and imposing shrines, made more and more ornate by votive offerings over the years. The larger ones are important landmarks for Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike, which seems to have been the case in the past too: two areas (tvāh) in Lalitpur are called after monasteries which no longer exist, Ko Bahā and Gā Bahā.20 Most of the main monasteries are built around a courtyard 10 or 15 metres square, and in those of them with a large and well-organized membership, this courtyard is wholly given over to religion. Kvā Bahā, Uku Bahā, Ha Bahā, Co Bahā und Guji Bahā are of this type. Others were probably once complete courtyards like this, but nowadays part of the court is owned and lived in by individual members of the monastery. Ten of the eighteen main monasteries fall into this category. In yet others the main shrine of the monastery is a free-standing temple, and there probably never was a complete courtyard of the type found in Kvā Bahā. Bu Bahā with its giant residential courtyard21 is of this sort, and so is Bhiṁcem Bahā. Kipu Bahā in Kirtipur also has a freestanding shrine: it was founded in 151422 by Vajrācāryas from Lalitpur on an ancient Buddhist site: it faces a stūpa attributed, like those in Lalitpur, to Aśoka. It is therefore an exception to the rule that Buddhist monasteries are always found in an enclosed courtyard. The suitability of the site in other ways evidently overruled the convention in this case.

In all the main monasteries, whatever the type of courtyard they occupy, the focus is the principle deity (kvābāju). In front of him there is always an ancient caitya belonging to the monastery: in Kvā Bahā there is room only for one, and this has been enshrined, with a complete and elaborate temple built around it. Elsewhere individual members have established caityas beside the original one, as well as other statues, and a particular cultic form, dedicated to Maṇjuśrī, known as dharmadhitu. In monasteries such as Bu Bahā, where there is plenty of room, there is a veritable forest of caityas and other cult objects in front of the principal deity.23

The principal Tantric deity of the monastery is always on the first floor in a small enclosed room; sometimes this is found directly above the main (non-Tantric) deity, but it can also be to one side, or on the side of the courtyard facing the main deity. This is known as the āgam; the deity is usually known simply as āgamdyah,

20 There is now a bahā called Gā Bahā, but this is a modern reconstruction dating back to 1956, and not the ancient monastery of that name (Father Locke, personal communication).
21 According to Gutschow this measures 64 metres by 34 (Gutschow, 1981: 267). If anything this seems to me to be an underestimate (cf. his map, ibid.: 271).
22 Part of the inscription recording this event is given at D.R. Regmi, II: 102–3.
23 The diagram of Jana Bahā in Kathmandu in Locke, 1980: 140, is a good illustration of this. Most of the caityas there have been established in this century.
god or gods of the āgam (Skt. āgama-devatā). Most adult members of the monastery will be aware of the deity's Sanskrit identity (usually Cakrasamvara and his consort Vajrarāhā), but outsiders (except for Vajrācāryas who are professionally concerned with such things) will not.

All main monasteries have the three necessary elements listed above: (i) principal deity, (ii) caitya and (iii) Tantric shrine on the first floor. In addition most main monasteries have the following features:

(iv) a digi. This is a long antechamber outside the Tantric shrine in which various rituals relating to the Tantric deity are performed. This room usually covers all of one side of the monastery courtyard.

(v) Certain of the larger monasteries also possess a gumpā (Tib. dgon-pa, remote place, monastery). This is a long room on the first floor of the north wing where the principal deity is east-facing, or of the west wing where he is north-facing. It is used for the performance of the monthly fast to Amoghapaśa Lokesvara (the āstamivratā) and the main shrine there is to him. Nowadays this room is known as gumpā, because in Kva Bahā and Uku Bahā it has been done up in the Tibetan style for the use of (Newar) monks of the Tibetan tradition; traditionally it seems to have been called dharmaṅgāra, Skt. religion-room, but except in learned circles this word is now obsolete.

(vi) Those main monasteries with Vajrācārya members always have a shrine to Vajrasattva, in which they alone may serve as guardian (dyāhpāhā). Possession of such a shrine is one of the marks and duties of the association of monastery Vajrācāryas (ācārya guthi, ācā gu). Theologically Vajrasattva is identified with Ādibuddha ('Original Buddha'), the absolute. But the idea of him which most Newars, and most Vajrācāryas, have, though not inconsistent with this, is that he is the archetypal Vajrācārya, the teacher (guru) of all Vajrācāryas. Like the Vajrācārya when he performs rituals for his clients, Vajrasattva sits cross-legged with his feet tucked up on his thighs (Skt. padmásana), and holds the bell (ghanta, gam) in his left hand and the vajra, symbol of Tantric Buddhism in his right hand.

24 As a religious concept this ought to derive from Sanskrit and Prof. Gombrich has suggested to me that dirgha grha would be a plausible candidate. This would parallel the Sinhalese digge, from the same root, which also denotes a long hall in a monastery. However a more likely source is perhaps dvārakostha/"kosthaka which means „a room ... over a gate or entrance (to a private house, religious edifice, or city)“ (Edgerton, 1953: 273–4). This is precisely where the digi of a Newar monastery is most often sited.

25 Tantric Buddhism is known as the vehicle of the vajra and Vajrasattva means 'vajra-being'. The translation of the term is problematic. The symbol was originally an attribute of the Hindu god Indra, and as such is often translated as 'thunderbolt'. However, when the Buddhist scriptures explain it they gloss it as 'hard, unchanging, indestructible etc.' , that is, they intend its other meaning, diamond, which is therefore a better translation (Locke, 1980: 81, n.30). These attributes enable vajra to symbolize the Buddhist absolute, 'Vajrācārya' is probably best understood as 'teacher of the Diamond [Vehicle]', vajra being short for 'Vajrayāna' as it is in such expressions as vajranṛtya (Vajrayānist dance).
In addition to this, the large monasteries may have numerous other shrines, established collectively, as well as the icons offered and consecrated by individuals. At Kvā Bahā there has clearly been a conscious attempt to turn the whole courtyard into a series of shrines, all of which can be visited one after the other as the pious (bhaktajan) make their morning rounds.

The structure of the monastery was explained to me on several occasions as follows. The shrine of the main deity, and the ground floor of the monastery in general, is (the sphere of) the Vehicle of the Disciples (Śrāvakayāna); upstairs in the gumpā where all [clean-caste] devotees are also admitted and fasts to Lokeśvara are performed is (the sphere of) the Great Vehicle (Mahāyāna); and the Tantric shrine, into which access is restricted, is (the sphere of) the Diamond Vehicle (Vajrayāna). The pattern is implicit in the organization of the monastery, the types of ritual performed in each place and the degree of access permitted. Most Buddhists would not be capable of expounding this schema — they leave that to Vajrācāryas — but it is a sound and authoritative representation all the same.

The bahī or 'outer' monasteries

Opposed to the class of bahā is the class of bahī. In both are found the principal deity, caitya and Tantric shrine, the three defining characteristics of the Newar Buddhist monastery. Whereas the main monasteries (mū bahā) often have an extremely large membership, some of whom are wealthy men, the bahī almost invariably have few members and they are all poor.26 Probably less than 10% of the total Vajrācārya-and-Śākya population of Lalitpur belong to bahī (see n. 14).

A folk-etymology sometimes given for bahī and recorded in Wright’s history (Wright, 1972: 237) derives it from Skt. bahis, outside, the point being that the members of the bahī „did not live in cities but in forests.” The Sanskrit form of both bahā and bahī is vihāra as used by Newars today and in all historical records. It is not clear that bahā derives from vihāra as one might at first sight think (see n.9), but whatever the correct etymology, the bahā are the dominant type of monastery, so that bahā appears as the Newarization of vihāra, and bahī appears as a marked form, or sub-type, of bahā. Thus it is perhaps true that bahī developed from the Sanskrit word for ,outside', or from some term such as bahirvihāra, outer monastery. It is unfortunate that no such term is preserved in historical records.27 Perhaps a collection of the inscriptions from all the bahī in the Valley would reveal

26 The bahī with the largest membership is Cikām Bahī in Cyāsa, Lalitpur, which has around 140 members (c. forty families). In most others the membership is much lower than this.

27 Bahiri occurs frequently, but not in conjunction with vihār. Presumably it could derive from Buddhist Skt. bahiri, 'outhouse' (Edgerton, 1953: 399 b).
it. Some western commentators have explained the term *bahi* as 'minor or lesser monastery' (Hodgson, 1972: 53; Oldfield, 1974, II: 282; Gutschow, 1982: 151). While this has no justification in present Nevārī usage, it has some claim to represent the Newār idea of the bahi.

Whether or not the etymology from Skt. 'outside' is correct, it is certainly not, or not principally, physical exteriority which is expressed. Most of the bahi are in fact well within the city 28 and their members do not live, and probably never have lived, in forests, as claimed by the chronicle. By calling them 'outside' or 'outer monasteries', the lower status of the bahi is expressed, that is, from the point of view of the bahā, they represent only the lowest, exoteric teachings of Buddhism. The fact that they have only five elders, whereas the main monasteries have ten, may also have been intended to express their peripheral nature: the monastic code (*vinaya*) of early Buddhism relates how the Buddha permitted five monks to initiate new members in outlying areas, although ten were necessary in the metropolis (Frauwallner, 1956: 90–1). It is tempting to assume that the old tradition of the monastic code was consciously used to translate into a spatial idiom the hierarchical relationship between different institutions and the levels of doctrine they represent.

Whatever the correct analysis of the term bahi may be, the bahā represent, and have for long represented, the culturally and numerically dominant form. When someone establishes a new lineage monastery, it is always called bahā in the vernacular, even when it is founded by the member of a bahi. The bahi form a category which cannot be added to. They are treated in the culture as a leftover, whose time has passed; or, from the viewpoint of the bahi themselves, as the proud reminder of a purer though irrecoverable past.

It is therefore impossible to explain the nature of the bahi without invoking their history. The main reason for this is that Newar Buddhists themselves traditionally explain the differences between bahā and bahi in historical terms; but a further twist is given by the fact that many of these differences have been eroded in the last sixty years. For many young Śākyas there is left only the feeling that the bahi are poorer, more dilapidated and less desirable places to belong to.

Locke records the following local learned view of the bahi:

One informant gave me the following explanation ... [I]n the days when all of these communities were open to any qualified candidate, the bahis were a lower class of vihara where the bhiksu would receive his first training. After

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28 One, Dhapagā Bahi, is even situated at the crossroads which may have been the ancient centre of Lalitpur (Gutschow, 1982: 155 and Gellner, 1984: 121). It is nonetheless true, as Becker-Ritterspach points out (1982: 303), that in contrast to the bahā, the free-standing „fortress-like architectural style“ of the bahi separates them from the surrounding buildings. A further point which militates against the etymology from Skt. 'outside' is the use of bahi to mean 'monastery' in the phrase bahidyah bwayegu, 'displaying the gods of the monastery', a practice which occurs in all monasteries whether bahā or bahi.
completing his training he would become an *upasampradaya* [sic!] bhiksu and join a *baha* where he would study further and receive further training which would eventually entitle him to become a Vajracarya ... It might well be [Locke concludes] that the *bahis* were the last surviving communities of celibate monks (true *brahmacarya bhiksus*) which lost many of their members by 'graduation' to the married Vajrayana communities of the later *bahas*. Finally, they too succumbed to the new trend in order to survive, but maintained their separate identity and traditions (Locke, 1980: 19).  

29 The local view reported by Locke is similar to, if not identical with, that of Hemraj Shakya. According to him, the branch monasteries are for lay people who simply keep the Five Precepts, the *bahī* are for those who have gone beyond this, become monks and are learning and teaching Buddhism, and the main monasteries are for those monks with ordination (*upasampada*) who have put aside book-learning and practise meditation (Shakya, 1979: 4). Shakya reports this as fact though it is highly speculative. It is interesting that the terms he uses for book-learning and meditation, *granthadhūra* and *vipaśyanādhwāra* respectively, relate the *baha:bahi* opposition directly to that between forest monks (who do meditation) and village monks (who preserve book-learning) in Śrī Laṅkā. That is, according to him the *baha* represent the 'higher' pursuit of meditation and the *bahī* the 'lower' one of book-learning. With due respect to Shakya's great learning, there is to my knowledge no evidence for these ascriptions but only the prejudice of the *baha* against the *bahī*, whereas there is historical evidence, which I summarize on p. 46, for precisely the opposite view, viz. that, in the seventeenth century at least, the *bahī* represented the forest monk polarity and the *baha* the village monk one.
There are certainly many characteristics of the bahī differentiating them from bahā which suggest (or rather, as I shall argue, were meant to suggest) that the bahī are survivals from the time of genuine monachism, though it must be added that for most members of the bahī these differences are no longer important. It is nonetheless possible to reconstruct what the traditional bahī-identity was and thereby to understand how the bahī made skilful use of ritual and architecture to assert a 'purer-than-thou' superiority to the bahā-mainstream which so greatly outnumbered them.

Characteristics of bahī not found in bahā

Architecture

(a) Open halls on the ground floor of the bahī and semi-open verandahs on the first floor.
(b) A walkway around the back of the main deity, so that it can be circumambulated.
(c) A flight of steps leading up to the main entrance. This follows from the fact that, unlike bahā, bahī are often situated on higher ground (Becker-Ritterspach, 1982: 310).
(d) The Tantric deity of a bahī is enclosed in a small windowless room on the first floor, sometimes above the main deity, sometimes to one side. This contrasts with bahā in which the Tantric shrine is completely incorporated into the main structure: its position is shown by the fivefold window (paṅcajhyā, pasukājhyā) which is an external symbol of Tantric shrines in both Buddhism and Hinduism.

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30 Korn (1976: 19) lists ten differences between bahā and bahī. Some of these are inaccurate (some bahī do have entrance lions and a torana over the door, e.g. Ī Bahī). Slusser, 1982: 139, seems to follow Korn. Both of them describe a hybrid form, 'bahāl-bahil', a bahā which incorporates a bahī-style verandah on its third floor (Korn, 1976: 34; Slusser, 1982: 139). What they are describing is in fact simply an elaborately styled lineage monastery, and the verandah is actually part of living quarters on three sides of the courtyard. As far as I know, the term bahāl-bahil has no justification in Nevārī usage or custom. Becker-Ritterspach (1982: 318) makes a similar criticism.

31 This feature makes the bahī well-suited to house primary schools. At least four Lalitpur bahī have now been put to this use. One other (Dhapagā Bahī) has donated one wing to be rebuilt as a Theravāda monastery. The open style of bahī, as well as their small membership, has also made them especially vulnerable to theft, so that few of the beautiful images they possessed ten years ago are left. Many of the bahī are in a very poor state of repair.

32 This was a distinguishing feature indicated to me by informants, though they did not attach any particular significance to it. There are in fact one or two minor exceptions to the rule (Kinu Bahī, Ubā Bahī).
Social

(e) In Lalitpur (but not in Kathmandu) the members of bahi take the Sanskrit title Brahmacarya Bhikṣu, ‘celibate monk’ (usually written thus as two words). Nowadays they prefer to call themselves Śākya, and the older title is today found only in inscriptions and in ritual contexts.) This title implies real monachism and expresses a claim to descent from the last ‘real monks’ of Nepal. It is tacitly opposed to Śākyavamśa and Śākyabihikṣu who are, by implication, monks only in virtue of descent from Lord Buddha. The colloquial Nevārī equivalent of Brahmacarya Bhikṣu is Bhikku Bare, monk Bare; it is recognized but is disrespectful, and I did not hear it used spontaneously: the normal way to refer to them in Lalitpur today is simply as bahīpim, those of the bahī.

In the Malla period the members of bahi in Lalitpur seem in most cases to have been called simply bhikṣu, monk. Thus in Cikam Bahi the first inscription to use the title ‘Brahmacarya Bhikṣu’ occurs in 1850 (N.S. 970): all those from the eighteenth century and before refer simply to Bhikṣu So-and-so. However the title ‘Brahmacarya Bhikṣu’ of a member of Guita Bahi does occur already in an inscription of 1516 (Regmi, 1965, III: 104) and in some other documents thereafter.

(f) There are no Vajrācāryas in the bahi (with the partial exception cited below under (h)).

Organization

(g) Unlike the main monasteries, each of which has its own monastic association (samgha), the bahi of Lalitpur were traditionally divided into two samghas, that of the Ten Bahī and that of the Fifteen. The Ten Bahī are Ībā Bahī, Jyābā Bahī, Khvāy Bahī, Khvāy Cidhamgu Bahī, Guita Bahī, Guita Mūl Bahī, Coy Bahī (Cobhar), Thapā Bahī, Ubā Bahī and Ilā Bahī. The Fifteen Bahī are: Ī Bahī, Karunā Cuk (effectively a branch of Ī Bahī), Duntu Bahī, Pintu Bahī, Konti Bahī, Na Bahī, Cikam Bahī, Nhāykaṃ Bahī, Puco Bahī Cve, Puco Bahī Kve, Bumga Bahī, Kipu Bahī, Vāy Bahī, Dhapagā Bahī and Kinu Bahī. All the members of the bahī of each group formed a single monastic association (samgha) with a single set of five

34 E.g. in a tamsuk recording the sale of land in 1666 (Rajvamshi, 1983: 100) and in an Ī Bahī inscription of 1673 (Burleigh, 1976: 39).
35 These are conventional numbers. If additional shrines are also included, e.g. those on the north side of Ī Bahī, the numbers are somewhat greater.
36 For the list of the Ten Bahī I am indebted to Father Locke.
elders and held a single annual feast (samghabhojan, sambhavay), which took place in each bahi of the group by turn. This system broke down among the Ten Bahi about fifty-five years ago. By contrast, although five bahi broke away earlier (the first five listed above), the ten remaining of the group of Fifteen maintained a single monastic association until twelve years ago. Now, except where there are too few members, each bahi constitutes a separate association. What follows is due to informants from Cikam Bahi, one of the latter group. Most of it probably applied pari passu to the group of Ten Bahi, though I was unable to find a sufficiently aged informant to confirm or confute this assumption.

The group of Fifteen Bahi had five seniors (sthavir, āju) and one assistant (upādhyāya – usually pronounced, and often written, upādhyā) who were the six most senior men of the monastic association. Below them in order of seniority came four karnī, made up as follows: one bhalim (feast-preparer), who made the buffalo-meat pieces (chvelā) served at the end of rituals, who used always to come from Nhāykaṁ Bahi; two assistants to the monastery priest who, like him, came from Na Bahi; finally, a tikādhārī, from Puco Bahi Cve, who placed the golden spot (lumbcim; Skt. tilaka) on the forehead of boys taking bare chuyegu. In Cikam Bahi these roles (except the two assistants to the monastery priest) have been preserved, though now of course they are filled by members of Cikam Bahi itself.

(h) Each of the two monastic associations, the Ten Bahi and the Fifteen, has its own hereditary priest (sangubhāju), who is one of their own number. The group of Fifteen is served by a man from Na Bahi (Nep. Naka Bahil), and the group of Ten by a man from Jyāba Bahi. The monastery priest comes at monastic initiation (bare chuyegu), the annual feast and at the festival of Pañcadān; he also came traditionally to read scriptural stories (bākham) at death. At the same time families also have their own hereditary family priest (purohit), a Vajrācārya from a bahā and therefore not a member of the bahi association: he performs life-cycle rites, including śrāddha, ancestor worship, and any other rituals in the home or lineage monastery.

Thus there is or was a clear division of labour, with no parallel in the bahā, between the monastery priest, performing all rituals to do with the bahi and its members’ monastic identity, and the ordinary Vajrācārya, performing all the rites relating to their life as householders. This system of monastery priests still operates in Cikam Bahi, Nhāykaṁ Bahi, Ī Bahi, Bumga Bahi, Vāy Bahi, Kipu Bahi, Puco Bahi and Na

37 Independent branch monasteries and main monasteries which are de facto lineage monasteries also have only five elders. Main monasteries with extant samghas always have ten.

38 E.g. the two members of Duntu Bahi in Ikhāchem form a single samgha with Pintu Bahi next-door, and the single family of Guita Cidham Bahi forms one samgha with the five families of the adjacent Guita Bahi.

39 I owe to Karunakar Vaidya the suggestion that this derives from the Skt. kāryakāraṇī, 'those who do what has to be carried out'.
Bahī itself. Among the Ten Bahi only Ībā Bahī, Khvāy Bahī and Jyābā Bahī maintain the old system. Elsewhere bahī-members have started to call their family priests even for monastic rituals as bahā-members do.

(i) Whenever any member of the monastic association died, the current god-guardian (dyak̩pāhl̩) of each bahī of the association had to come to carry the corpse in the funeral procession. This custom was an onerous one because it meant that whenever a Śākya died belonging, say, to Vāy Bahī in Wāy (Cāpāgāum), seven kilometres south of Lalitpur, the god guardians of all the Lalitpur bahī of the group of Fifteen had to go there immediately.

Fig. 4. Cikam Bahī, viewed from the east. The temples of Taleju and Degutale, which form part of the Lalitpur royal palace, can be seen in the background.

Ritual

(j) When bare chuyegu is performed by the monastery priest, unlike in the ritual performed in the bahā of Lalitpur, there is no fire sacrifice (yajña, jog). 40 And the

40 The omission of a fire sacrifice may simply be due to the fact that the monastery priest is, or was, not considered a proper Vajrācārya, and is therefore not entitled to perform it. However a Vajrācārya pandit to whom I mentioned the fact that in bahī the fire sacrifice is not performed as part of bare chuyegu simply said that it ought to be, and was puzzled by the omission.
whole ritual is performed in the open. On the fourth day, when the boy abandons his robes (cīvar kvakāyegu), the rite is performed before the Tantric deity of the bahī, not in the boy’s home. Moreover it is performed by the monastery priest and not by the boy’s family priest, whereas in most bahā the rite of returning to lay life is wholly in the hands of the latter.

(k) Since most bahī-members live in the immediate vicinity of the bahī or even, if very poor, in the bahī itself, when someone dies the bahī has also to be purified on the seventh day. The fire sacrifice ritual (grhaśuddhi, ghahsū) has therefore to be performed twice, first in front of the main deity of the bahī, and subsequently in the ground floor of their own home. Actually this also occasionally occurs in bahā too in the case of those who live right next to it, but the vast majority of bahā-members, even when living in adjacent courtyards, perform ghahsū only once, in their own homes. In the same way bahī-members throw rice balls (pinda, pyom) and other remains of the ancestor worship ceremony (srāddha) in their bahī, a practice rarely found in the bahā.

Iconography

(1) The Tantric deity of the bahī is always referred to as ajidyah, grandmother-goddess, and is therefore thought of as female; she is identified as Vajrāvārāhī. In bahā by contrast the Tantric deity is always called āgamdyah, and thought of as predominantly male. This however is popular usage: from the doctrinal point of view, since they are both Tantric deities, they are always in the company of their consort, i.e. Vajrāvārāhī is accompanied by Cakrasamvara and vice versa. So far as I know the rituals performed to the Tantric deity of a bahī do not differ from those performed in a bahā, but since they are secret I cannot be sure.

(m) It is popularly believed (though not in fact universally true) that every bahī has a square stone with nine circles on it, called guphā manda (ninefold maṇḍala); folk mythology has it that Āśoka put them there for Buddhists to use as a Gayā-stone (gayālhom), i.e. a place to throw the rice offerings from ancestor worship, instead of taking them to the nearest sacred river (in Lalitpur, the Bāgmāti). It does seem to be the case that every bahī has a Gayā-stone, even if not in the form of a guphā manda.

(n) As Hemraj Shakya was the first to point out, the term gandhurīdyo is used in

41 From Gayā in Bihar, where it is particularly meritorious to perform ancestor worship. In Kathmandu I have heard these places for throwing pinda called kāśilhom, from Kāśi (i.e. Benares), of which the same is true. The ninefold maṇḍala stones are certainly ancient, as people believe; they symbolize the nine planets (navagraha) (cf. the diagram given by Pal and Bhattacharyya, 1969: 39), and offerings are made on them to appease their bad influence.
inscriptions only of the main deity of a bahī, never of a bahā.\textsuperscript{42} The most likely etymology seems to me to be from \textit{gandhakūṭi}, Skt. 'perfumed hut', an ancient honorific originally used to describe the place, wherever it was, that the Buddha happened to be staying. In Theravāda Buddhism \textit{kūṭi} is still the term used for the room in which a monk lives (Bunnag, 1973: 86). Strong (1977) has summarized the evidence and shows that the term came to mean, in India, Tibet and elsewhere, the shrine-room housing a Buddha-image. Particularly evocative in the Nepalese context is the Divyāvadāna story of Samgharaksita descending to the palace of the Nāgas under the ocean and being shown the \textit{gandhakūṭi} of Śākyamuni and the six previous Buddhas. He is then told to sweep the \textit{mandalaka} of the Blessed One, make salutation to the \textit{caitya}, eat and prepare his bed (ibid.: 402). As I have described, the principal deity of a Newar monastery always has a \textit{caitya} before his shrine. There is also a \textit{dhāmāmanda} or \textit{mandala} for sprinkling water and rice during the daily ritual every morning immediately in front of the doorway of the shrine, and this must be what is referred to as \textit{mandalaka}. It looks as if the Divyāvadāna is here describing the duties of a god-guardian (\textit{dyāhpāhlā}).

We know that the term \textit{gandhakūṭi} was known in Nepal because it is used in an inscription from Lalitpur of Amśuvarman’s time (early seventh century) recording repairs to a Buddhist shrine (Vajracharya Dḥ.V., 1973: 385). \textit{Gandhakūṭi} is also used, evidently as the name of a Buddha-shrine, in the \textit{Kriyā-samgraha} and in the \textit{Kriyā-samuccaya} (both texts being much used in Nepal).\textsuperscript{43}

Folk history/mythology

(o) According to local tradition, now largely forgotten, the present incumbents of the bahī are the descendants of the last monks among the Newars. The ninety-year-old senior (\textit{thakāli}) of Cikāṃ Bahī told me:

When the bahā were inhabited by married Śākyabhikṣus who worked for their living, there were still Brahmacarya Bhikṣus, unmarried monks, who did no work, in the bahī. In the bahā they did Tantric rituals, had guthis [i.e. annual ritual obligations] and so on, but in the bahī all they had to do was keep the

\textsuperscript{42} Shakya does not specify that the term only appears in inscriptions and gives a contracted form, \textit{gadbujudyo}, implying thereby that it is still used today (Shakya, 1979: 98). I never heard the word in either form and suspect that it is obsolete.

\textsuperscript{43} For examples of the use of \textit{gandhakūṭi} see \textit{Kriyā-samgraha}, p. 233, and \textit{Kriyā-samuccaya}, p. 24, Vols. 236 and 237 respectively in the Sata Piṭaka Series. Though Slusser points out in another context that \textit{gandhakūṭi} means Buddha-shrine (1982: 164) she tries to derive \textit{gandhuridyo} from Skt. \textit{godhuli}, 'haze', but admits that this makes little sense (idem.: 295, n. 138). She is also mistaken in pointing out an exception to the rule that only bahī-deities are addressed with this term (ibid.): the Lagan Bahā inscription actually refers to Nhāykaṃ Bahī which shares the same Sanskrit name, Kirtipūnya Mahāvihāra (Father Locke, personal communication).
rule of celibacy (brahmacarya pāle yāye). Then one day the king decided that the 1200 ropani of land belonging to Konti Bahi was too much, and he took the land to feed his soldiers. „Since you live by begging,“ he said, „go ahead and beg!“ Eventually they had to marry and find work, although the sixty-four kinds of work had already been given out to the sixty-four castes. So they did as the Sākyavamsa were doing.

This account claims to be history but is really myth, since it is not placed in any period. With economy and conciseness it expresses for the present day the distinctiveness of the bahi while at the same time explaining why they are no longer celibate.

I overheard the same elder explain to the new and inexperienced monastery priest (who had only recently taken over from his deceased father) that their traditions, in
the bahi, were a higher way (yāna) than that of the Vajrācāryas: he should call himself a Bhikṣu-ācārya, not Vajrācārya, as he didn’t need the Vajrācārya’s bell (ghanta) and vajra. (In fact he does make use of the bell and vajra, though he does not perform fire sacrifice.)

Significance of these differences

Nearly all of these differences between the bahi and the bahā can be interpreted as illustrating or meant to illustrate the closer proximity of the former to the genuine monachism of the past. The architecture of the bahi is indeed clearly monastic, and the circumambulatory passage around the main deity goes back to the rock chapels of western India of the last century B.C.E., in which the main cult object was a caitya, not a statue of the Buddha (Lamotte, 1958: 555).44 However architecture is one thing, and social rules and customs are another. Several of the most striking differences between bahā and bahi in fact date only from the reforms of Siddhi Narasimha in the seventeenth century (see below).45 It would seem that the members of the bahi deliberately constructed an archaic identity for themselves by not changing the architecture of their monasteries, and by calling themselves ‘celibate monks’ (though they were married) in opposition to the ‘Śākyay lineage’ (śākyavamśa) monks of the bahā.

Unfortunately most of this is a matter of historical reconstruction. Nowadays very few members of the bahi care, or can afford to care, about the special traditions which they have inherited. Even if only partially understood, they were kept up till recently as tradition. But bahi-members are too few in number for their traditions to survive the shock of the modern world; many are so poor that they find the family rituals required simply to keep up their caste status an increasingly difficult burden.

The tradition has declined to such a point that, for example, most members of Cikam Bahi believe that the term brahmacarya refers to their Brāhmaṇ origin and that only those bahi whose eponymous founder was a Brāmaṇ (Cikam Bahi, I Bahi, Konti Bahi, Pintu Bahi and Duntu Bahi) have a right to the title Brahmacarya Bhikṣu. In this connection I was frequently told the story of Sunayaśri Miśra, the Brāhmaṇ who founded I Bahi and whose pupils, according to them, founded the

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44 Becker-Ritterspach (1982: 305) points out that the bahi lack only cells along the side wings to correspond exactly with Indian monastic models.

45 Features dating from these reforms are (g), the division into two monastic associations, (h) the role of the monastery priest, and (k), the rule about double-performance of ghahṣu. Since the babi lacked Tantric shrines at that time, (1), the female identity of the Tantric deity, is obviously a late feature also.
other bahī listed.46 The historically and semantically correct explanation of 'brahmacarya' was given to me only by the senior elder (above, p. 22).

For the present therefore I think it is fair to say of the distinctive Buddhist traditions of the bahī, as it is not of Newar Buddhism as such, that they are moribund. Differences between bahī and bahā are fast disappearing. What is left is a slight prejudice on the part of those living in bahā that the bahī are somehow inferior and that it is less desirable to marry into bahī families. Partly this is explained by the fact that, since the population of the bahī is small, they inevitably live in areas dominated by other castes.47

Was it so in the past? It seems certain that the bahā have always looked down on the bahī. At the same time of course their members do intermarry, and there is a basic unity of values. The following may serve as an illustration of this. During the Rana period the members of Cikām Bahi became rich and landed, working as doctors (vaidya) in the palaces of the powerful. Much of their money went into religion: three lineage monasteries and numerous guthis were founded, and many donations were made to their bahī. The forms of worship which they chose to sponsor were exactly those which would have been sponsored by members of bahā in a similar situation. Indeed it would be very surprising if the tiny bahī population had managed to maintain real differences in religious values between itself and the rest of the Śākyas and Vajrācāryas, with whom it intermarried. Nevertheless, in spite of the basic unity which existed between them and other Buddhists, the members of Cikām Bahi simultaneously kept up a separate set of traditions relating to the monastic part of their identity. These traditions represented a kind of

46 Cf. Wright, 1972: 115–7. The chronicle mentions only Konti Bahi and Pintu Bahi however. One must remember that these myths occur in different versions depending on who is telling them. Thus the claim that I Bahi and the other monasteries founded by Sunaya Śri Misra were the first to be established in Lalitpur (Joseph, 1971: 121) is no doubt the gloss which I Bahi members themselves put on this legend.

47 Repeated enquiries failed to reveal any way in which this slight inferiority of status is institutionalized in Lalitpur. By contrast, in Itum Bahā, Kathmandu, if a member marries a girl from a bahī she will not be allowed into the Tantric shrine of the monastery; and if she has a son, although otherwise a full member of Itum Bahā, he may not become a senior (thāypā) of the monastery; his son, however, may do so, so that in the third generation the 'offense' of marrying into a bahī is wiped out. Other Kathmandu monasteries, like Lalitpur monasteries, have no such rules, but it does seem to be widely believed by members of Kathmandu bahā that the bahī house „Buddhist mixed classes” (Lienhard, 1984: 113) and were founded later than the bahā. Neither of these beliefs is very widely or strongly asserted in Lalitpur. I would suggest that they simply express the Kathmandu bahā-members’ feeling that the bahī are lower in status, a feeling shared, though to a lesser degree by their Lalitpur colleagues (cf. n.29 above). Such feelings are on a par with the widely held (but erroneous) beliefs reported by other researchers that Dhulikhel Śreṣṭhas (Quigley, 1984: 49) and Pyāṅgāum Maharjans (Toffin, 1984: 110) practise cross-cousin marriage – they are simply a legitimation of other groups’ refusal to grant them equal status.
Buddhist ‘left-wing’, claiming a closer relationship to an earlier, ‘purer’ Buddhism.

As an example of the way this superiority was asserted, here are the words of Dharmaditya Dharmacharyya (1928: 215), Newar Buddhist reformer and nationalist, himself a member of Cikam Bahi, who wrote at a time when these traditions were better preserved:

Those [Buddhists] who settled earlier belonged to the banaprastha bhikshu class and lived in the forests outside the cities [he probably got this from Wright]... The latter have their own Sangha and hold their annual assembly every year on the Falgun or eleventh month of the Indian calendar. Whereas the present Buddhism [of the bahā] represents the latest stages of Buddhism and sacred literature, they [the bahī] claim to follow the pure Mahayana Buddhism.

Thanks to their monastic traditions, which they knew how to justify in this way in terms of a separate history, and how to explain in religious, and not merely mythological, terms, the members of the bahī were in a position (if and when they felt like it) to turn the tables, and assert the superiority of the bahī to the bahā. This they can no longer do.

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Fig. 6. A member of Cikam Bahi, whose father died seven days previously, sits in front of the principal deity of the bahī while his family priest prepares for him to perform the first of two purifying fire sacrifices. The second will take place in the ground floor of his own home.
The history of the bahi and their relation to the bahā according to Wright's History

There are nowadays few significant differences between the bahi and the bahā. The interesting question about the bahi is therefore historical: what can they teach us about the history and Newar Buddhism? They appear as a mere leftover now, but what was their role in the past?

It may be true, as Locke's informant claimed (above, p. 19/20), that the bahi were the lower schools, in which monks were first ordained; when they had progressed sufficiently they moved on to a bahā, where they settled and married. This theory is neat enough, and may describe correctly the period preceding the Malla dynasty (eleventh to thirteenth centuries C.E.). Unfortunately this is precisely the period of Nepalese history for which the records are least satisfactory. Some of the bahā were founded only much later, some were already in existence (e.g. Uku Bahā) and others were probably founded at this time (e.g. Kvā Bahā). Whether or not the bahā and bahi were ever related in this way, and if so, during which historical periods, is impossible to say with any certainty on present evidence.

In the Malla period however it seems that something like the present situation obtained. The chronicle BV calls the inhabitants of the bahi 'nirvānik vānaprastha', which was explained to Wright as meaning that "the inhabitants did not marry," though the manuscript makes it plain that they did. The term vānaprastha seems to be a vrddhi form of vanaprastha, which usually denotes a Hindu forest ascetic, the third of the classic four stages (āśrama) of a Hindu's life. It would however be a natural way to refer to that well-known Buddhist figure, the forest monk (see Carrithers, 1983). BV does indeed seem to use vānaprastha as a synonym for Skt. vanavāsin, 'living in a forest' (Wright, 1972: 185; BV: 108 a), which is precisely the term used for Theravāda forest monks. BV contrasts the nirvānik vānaprastha vihār, i.e. the bahi, with the sāmsārik tāmtrik vihār, i.e. the bahā (BV: 133 b): that is, the bahi were otherworldly and forest-dwelling, the bahā were thisworldly and Tantric. When King Siddhi Narasimha (reigned 1620–61) tried to reform them, the members of the bahi claimed that since they followed the otherworldly forest-dwelling dharma they could not take Tantric initiation (BV: 132 b).

The chronicle begins its account of the reform of the bahi with Ī Bahi. Its members were assigned a Vajrācārya from Dhum Bahā to perform their life-crisis rites, which up till then they had been performing "for each other". Why Ī Bahi was treated differently is not clear – perhaps because its members were believed to be descendants of a Brāhmaṇ. Subsequently they were evidently absorbed into the group of Fifteen Bahi. Siddhi Narasimha then summoned all the other bahi, but only fifteen of them came, those which lay on the left side of the main road called...
“Cāmgālaṃkva“ (=?’below the road leading to Cāngu’) (BV: 132 a). The chronicle continues:

He [Siddhi Narasimha] made the five eldest of the monks into seniors (sthavir) and he made arrangements for the maintenance of their ceremonial association (guthi). He established rules so that the different monasteries were responsible for different tasks in every rite from monastic initiation [i.e. bare chuyegu] through to death. As for the priest (pūjāri), up until then whoever of the elders knew best used to perform the ritual in each monastery separately. Henceforth there was to be a single arrangement for all fifteen monasteries: one monastery had to provide the priest for all the others. Now the monks objected: „We may be following the householder dharma but we are monks of an otherworldly (nirvāṇik) monastery. It is not permitted for a householder master (grhaṣṭha ācārya) who is living in a worldly (sāṃsārik) monastery and following the ‘family’ path (kulāyan) to perform our rites.“ Since it was forbidden in the otherworldly forest-dwelling dharma to take the initiation (abhiṣek diksā) of the Tantric family (kul) dharma, the son of the eldest of them all was given the fivefold initiation (paṃcābhisek) and made a monk-master (bhikṣu ācārya) and he became their priest (pūjāri). The problem arose: what should happen if he became one of the five elders? How then could he go around doing rituals for everyone? The rule was laid down that, since everyone would have accepted one person to do their rituals, if he became an elder, his son should carry them on. With this the monks of the Fifteen Monasteries were in agreement.

After this, consultation was made with the monks of the ten monasteries remaining of the twenty-five, viz. those which lay on the right side of the main road used in Machimdranāth’s chariot festival (called „Cāgalatha“). Arrangements were made, all ten agreed, rites were carried out to make five elders and all other arrangements were set in motion.

Before this, whenever the people of Lalitpur did respectful worship (mān pūjā) of the otherworldly forest-dwelling monks, they did it to many of them at once. Now they began to worship only two, the eldest of the group of monasteries above the main road [i.e. the Ten Bahi] and the eldest of those below [i.e. the Fifteen Bahi]; there was also a guthi for this.

In this way the rules were established both for the worldly Tantric (sāṃsārik tāmtrik) monasteries and for the otherworldly forest-dwelling (nirvāṇik vāṇaprastha) monasteries. Some people called the forest-dwelling monasteries

48 Those who are interested can consult Wright, 1972: 236–7, to see how I have improved on the translation given there. If, as I suggest, we take the road in question as being the east-west highway that divides Lalitpur in two, the lower half lying to the north and the upper half to the south, then with a few exceptions (the Guita Bahi, Nhāykaṃ Bahi, Kinu Bahi and those outside the city itself) it does indeed mark the boundary between the Fifteen Bahi (in the northern half, on the left as one goes towards Cāngu) and the Ten Bahi (in the southern half, on the right as one goes towards Cāngu).
vahi \[ = \text{bahi}\] because they were built outside (vāhīra) in the forest (vanāmtara) and were inhabited by monks (bhikṣu) (BV: 132 a–134 a).

It is clear from the chronicle that Siddhi Narasimha was anxious to make the inhabitants of the bahi conform to Hindu social norms: their death rituals were made to include a purifying fire sacrifice, and this, and other rites, had to be performed by a properly qualified priest. We may compare this, as Locke has done, to the detailed regulations which Siddhi Narasimha's son Śrī Nivās, established for the cult of Matsyendranāth, excluding low castes from the temple area and making arrangements for the feeding of Kānphaṭā Yogis there (Locke, 1980: 308–12 and 339–40). Siddhi Narasimha had already himself established the custom of having two Brāhmaṇs ride on the front of the chariot although the cult of Matsyendranāth was, and is, in other respects entirely in the hands of Buddhist priests (ibid.: 303). Sylvain Lévi saw the reform as „one of the most crucial moments of the crisis [of Buddhism]“ (Lévi, 1905/II: 32). Siddhi Narasimha, he wrote,

began by destroying the appearance of anarchy which safeguarded [the monasteries'] independence; he made them responsible to the crown ... The [main] monasteries of Patan [= Lalitpur], Kirtipur and Chobahal had to accept a hierarchical classification based partly on seniority, partly on mere chance, as if the better to demonstrate royal indifference ... A purification ceremony was made obligatory for those Buddhist Newars who had been to or resided in Tibet; the ceremony was put in the hands of five monastery elders, but the required fee reverted to the king. The monasteries which still observed the rule of celibacy tried to avoid the rules; summoned to hear the royal decree, ten out of twenty-five sent no delegates ... (ibid.: 33–4).

In fact the hierarchy of main monasteries described in the chronicle seems to have no practical relevance today, and the chronicle itself contradicts Lévi's assumption (ibid.: 29) that the members of the twenty-five ,otherworldly' monasteries were still celibate monks. Nor does the text, either in BV or in Wright’s translation, warrants an interference that the Ten Bahi were celibate but the Fifteen were not. Certain elements of Siddhi Narasimha’s reforms do not correspond to the present situation. Í Bahi was treated separately and given a Vajracārya priest. In the other bahi all rituals were to be performed by one of their own number. As we have seen, this is no longer the case: those rituals relating to the monastery and monachism are indeed performed by the bahi-priest, but all rituals of the family including those at death, are performed by a Vajracārya. This present arrangement is one which makes a lot of sense, but, if we accept the chronicle's account, it must have been the result of a later compromise. In BV the bahi are shown defending strongly their „otherworldly forest-dwelling" identity against any encroachment by the „this-worldly Tantric“ monasteries. Nowadays, and certainly as far back as those alive today can remember, Tantric initiation, far from being forbidden to the members of bahi, is positively required in order to become an elder. Nowadays the explanation of the three parts of the monastery – the main deity, the gumpa and the Tantric shrine – as representing Śrāvakayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna respectively (see
above, p. 18), applies equally to the bahī; by contrast the bahī at the time of Siddhi Narasimha must have lacked a Tantric shrine (since they were proud of being forbidden to take Tantric initiation) and they surely would have rejected this schema.

The decline of the bahī was evidently already under way when Siddhi Narasimha made his reforms, since the chronicle tells us that certain bahī were empty, their inhabitants having moved on after taking up the householder dharma. The members of the bahī made a virtue of their being the descendants of the last truly celibate monks, but this was not enough to stop a steady decline in population. Wherever possible members must have transferred to bahā; but precisely because such practice is in theory not allowed it is extremely difficult to trace it or prove it. The lower prestige of the bahī is due to the fact that the traditional Buddhism of the Newars is Tantric: celibate monastic Buddhism (the Śrāvakayāna), with which the bahī are associated and previously associated themselves, is given a place, but only the lowest one. The bahī themselves have been less and less able, and less and less interested, to combat this assessment. Their ideology is in any case now rendered anachronistic by the presence in Nepal of the newly introduced and dynamic Theravāda Buddhist movement.49

Independent branch monasteries and history of the bahā

There is a general rule, which Buddhists sometimes cite, that all Vajrācāryas must be initiated in a main monastery, and all Śākyas either there or in a bahī. But as with most such rules, there are exceptions. These exceptions are called branch monasteries (kacā bahā) in Nevārī, because their members belong neither to main monasteries nor to bahī. In Lalitpur two of them (Hyan Bahā and Ikhāchem Bahā) have Vajrācāryas among their members, the rest are exclusively Śākya. To distinguish this kind of branch monastery from lineage monasteries, I call them independent branch monasteries.

Once again, the reason for these exceptions seems to be historical. When Siddhi Narasimha laid down rules for the bahī he also regulated the system of main monasteries. At the time there were only fifteen main monasteries, which explains why, even today, people say 'the fifteen monasteries', although there are now eighteen: Śī Bahā was established subsequently, and the monasteries of Kirtipur (Kipu Bahā) and Cobhār (Co Bahā) were also brought into the system (Wright, 1972: 235). Three of the fifteen main monasteries were established in Siddhi

49 The only academic study of this movement so far published is by Kloppenberg (1977). See also Gellner (1986).
Narasimha’s reign (Om Bahā, Jyo Bahā, Dhum Bahā). Of the others five (Bhimchem Bahā, Uku Bahā, Cuka Bahā, Su Bahā and Yachu Bahā) had a single elder and the remaining six had one each. These were known as the Sapta Tathāgat (Seven Buddhas) and the chronicle makes it clear that there was a pre-existing order of precedence between them (BV: 129 a, 130 a). In other words, some system of main monasteries was already in existence. However, the presumption that Śākyas and Vajrācāryas ought only to be initiated in main monasteries very likely dates from the time of Siddhi Narasimha’s reforms.

The independent branch monasteries which fall outside the system of main monasteries are of two types in Lalitpur: those monasteries considered to be branches of Kvā Bahā; and fully independent branch monasteries, which are branches of nowhere. There are only three of the latter that I know of in Lalitpur: Naha Bahā, Hyan Bahā and Yamkuri Bahā. Naha Bahā is very small, its membership comprising the menfolk of just two Śākya families. Hyan Bahā is inhabited by Vajrācāryas who explain the fact that they fall outside the system of main monasteries by saying that they are immigrants from Kathmandu, summoned to Lalitpur because of their expertise in rituals which cause rain (nāg sādhan). The third, Yamkuri Bahā, is inhabited entirely by Śākyas. Their anomalous position is explained by the myth that they are descendants of the last kinsmen of the Buddha to leave Kapilavastu. All the other Śākyas had left, but two brothers stayed behind, because they could not agree, one being in favour of coming to Nepal, the other wanting to stay where they were. When finally they did leave and arrive in the Kathmandu Valley, all the monasteries there were filled up, so that they had to found their own. Even today, I was told, the descendants of these two brothers, who make up the two sections (kavah) of Yamkuri Bahā’s monastic association (samghā), still quarrel.

The same process of standardization into a set of main monasteries took place in Kathmandu, although the number of fully independent branch monasteries there is much higher (Locke, 1980: 17) and some are quite important (particularly Tadham Bahā, which is one of the three monasteries responsible for organizing the Kathmandu Samek festival). Locke writes that the reason why the main monasteries

50 Father Locke has pointed out to me that there is an unsolved problem with this account of the chronicle: references to Śrīvatsa Mahāvihāra (the Sanskrit name of Śī Bahā) go back well before Siddhi Narasimha’s reign, as do those to Om Bahā. It is possible that Dhum Bahā also predates his reign.

51 Information on Naha Bahā and Hyan Bahā is due to Father Locke. There is however another tradition which claims that Hyan Bahā was previously sited in Maṅgal Bazaar, and had to be moved, like Ha Bahā, to allow the palace to be enlarged. When it was still there a woman once protected a holy serpent (nāg) which was fleeing from the garuḍa bird, and received in return the boon that her descendants (i.e. the Vajrācāryas of Hyan Bahā) would always be successful in calling on holy serpents to produce rain (Shakya, 1974: 28-31).
are main is that "the Vajracaryas are all members of these bahas. There are no Vajracaryas in kacca bahas or bahis. In the present state of Newar Buddhism with its emphasis on ritual, the Vajracaryas have the dominant position in the community due to their exclusive right to perform the principal rituals. This is clearest in Kathmandu where the eighteen bahas are organised into a tightly-knit organization which controls the performance of ritual and exercises a considerable control over the entire Buddhist community" (Locke, 1980: 23).

As Locke implies, the position of the Vajrâcâryas is less dominant in Lalitpur. And as I have pointed out, there are in fact Vajrâcâryas outside the main monasteries there. However, in spite of this, it seems that the systematization into main monasteries actually went further in Lalitpur than in Kathmandu. Apart from the three small examples cited there are no other fully independant branch monasteries. The only other independant monasteries are considered all to be, in a unique arrangement, branches of Kvâ Bahâ.

Lists of these Kvâ Bahâ branches vary. There is a convention that they are seven in number52 but there are in fact twelve which can, in one way or another, be considered as branches of Kvâ Bahâ, viz. Nû Bahâ, Atha Bahâ, Chây Bahâ, Mû Bahâ, Bahî Nani Bahâ, Mîkhâ Bahâ, Yetâ Bahâ, Aki Bahâ, Ikhâchem Bahâ, Vaidya Bahâ, Michu Bahâ and Kulim Bahâ. Of these, Nû Bahâ belonged historically to the Thaku (Skt. thakkura) Juju (kings) whose descendants still live there53 and Aki Bahâ belongs to Pradhâns now living in Kathmandu. Chây Bahâ, Bahî Nani Bahâ, Mîkhâ Bahâ und Kulim Bahâ are also all lineage monasteries: perhaps Kulim Bahâ is ancient, since it has a Licchavi caitya and a name with old connotations (Kulim, sometimes spelt Kvaliyama, and so presumably from 'Koliya', an ancient tribe some of whom lived in Kathmandu); it is unlikely that the other three ever had their own separate samgha. In any case, if these four monasteries ever had independent associations in the past they have now died out.

The remaining six monasteries have their own separate membership, whose bare chuyegu ceremonies take place partly in Kvâ Bahâ (during which, like boys initiated

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52 Thus R.K. and B.R. Vajracharya (1983: 47–8) list Mû Bahâ, Atha Bahâ, Ikhâchem Bahâ, Yetâ Bahâ and Dârikâ Bahâ (= Vaidya Bahâ), that is five of the six with independent samghas, plus Kulim Bahâ and Nû Bahâ (the missing one is Michu Bahâ). In 1966 Michael Allen collected two lists which included the six with independent samghas plus Kulim Bahâ; one of the lists appended Chây Bahâ, Mîkhâ Bahâ, Aki Bahâ and Bahi Nani as upabahâ (personal communication). It should be clear that all these lists are post hoc conceptualizations of ritual relationships which go on functioning on the motor of tradition, unaffected by the explanations which may be offered for them.

53 Shakya, 1979: 139–44, gives a local myth explaining the Nû Bahâ Thaku Juju's connection to the Lalitpur Samek festival and to Kvâ Bahâ.

54 This small lineage monastery is called Durva Nani in Kathmandu Valley, 1974, II: 148, Dudu Bahâ in the list of Gutschow and Shakya (1980: 173) and Cûkhâ Bahâ in an in situ inscription of 1687 (Shakya and Vaidya, 1970: 145–6). I have recorded the name I was told by locals.
there, they may enter the shrine of the main deity) and partly in their own monastery (where the concluding fire sacrifice is performed). Apart from this however they have no rights in Kvā Bahā: they may not take a turn as guardian (dyahpāhlā) of its main deity, and they may not attend the annual Kvā Bahā feast (samghabhojan, sambhavay).

It is therefore all the more surprising that ten days before the Kvā Bahā feast (on the days of Body Worship, mham pūjā, and Younger Brother Worship, kijā pūjā) there is a special ceremony connecting these independent branch monasteries to Kvā Bahā. In it the twelve Kvā Bahā feast-organizers, plus the twelve who will have to organize it next year, go in a procession, led by the young shrine officiant (bāphacā), that visits on two successive days precisely these twelve monasteries. They visit them in the order given above, and it was clear from discussions with informants that one of the criteria used to decide which monasteries are branches of Kvā Bahā is whether or not they are included in this procession. (The procession

Phasibhū vanegu ('going with the pumpkin plate').

also encircles the two large residential courtyards, Nyākhācuk and Nāg Bahā, and passes through Sarasvati Nani, but none of these – although they are in fact visited daily by the shrine officiant, not merely twice a year – is ever included in the list of Kvä Bahā branches.)

How is this custom to be explained? The feast organizers and the shrine officiant cannot be inviting the members of these branch monasteries to the feast, since they have no right to attend. When I put this conundrum to a pandit, Asha Kaji Vajracharya, he replied that the point is to invite the gods of these monasteries, not their members. The question, why this particular route? is simply ignored in the explanation for the processions given by Vajrācāryas active in Kvä Bahā (and which is therefore authoritative for Kvä Bahā members). This explanation connects the procession to a series of rites performed every year which were instituted, they say, to counteract a plague (mahāmāyā rog) that once afflicted the city. The first procession is „to let the people know it is all right to come out of their homes (after the plague)“ and, on the second, pumpkin is offered to the malevolent spirits (bhūt-pret). The processions are most widely known as phasibhū vanegu, „going with the pumpkin plate“, although strictly this applies only to the second: the first is properly called phasi kāh vanegu, „going to fetch a pumpkin“, or, popularly, as phasi khum vanegu, „going to steal a pumpkin“.

One of these branch monasteries, Michu Bahā, has a well-known myth which also goes some way to explain its relationship to Kvä Bahā. According to it, the members of Michu Bahā, whose shrine is immediately behind Kvä Bahā, are the descendants of the man who carried the deity of Kvä Bahā to Lalitpur. The wooden pole (no) of his basket used to be kept in their Tantric shrine until it disintegrated with age. One of the members of Michu Bahā (neatly expressing an exclusion as a privilege) put it to me that because they had this special relationship with the god of Kvä Bahā they „don't need“ to take turns in his shrine. Perhaps this myth is right to posit an ancient link between Michu Bahā and Kvä Bahā, but it does not explain the position of the other branch monasteries.

My own preferred explanation of these Kvä Bahā branches, which are independent but claim not to be, would connect them to the system of eighteen main monasteries. At the time of Siddhi Narasimha's reform, when the rule was laid down that all Śākyas and Vajrācāryas must belong to a main monastery, it is plausible to assume that the branch monasteries now attached to Kvä Bahā applied to be accepted as members of its association. They were refused permission to be full members, but they were allowed to perform part of their bare chuyegu ceremony in Kvä Bahā, to enter its main shrine on that occasion, and in return they

55 The deity of Kvä Bahā is said by some (particularly informants from Kathmandu) to originate in Cā Bahā (Cārumati Vihār, supposedly founded by Aśoka’s daughter, Cārumati), between Kathmandu and Bodhnāth (Nev. Khasti). The lineage deity of the members of Michu Bahā is also there, which implies that they too come from Cā Bahā.
had to invite five of the seniors of Kvā Bahā (to initiate the boy, and to the feast afterwards). The annual procession to these monasteries (circling to the right, i.e. in a pradaksīna) established a sacred connection between them and Kvā Bahā. It was no doubt set up to avoid bad feelings at the time of the Kvā Bahā feast, from which the new members were excluded. They could nonetheless claim to belong to Kvā Bahā when asked by non-Buddhists, non-locals and in particular by the civil authority. But the fact that none of the members of these monasteries have Svayambhū in Kvā Bahā as their lineage deity (as all full members of Kvā Bahā do) remains as a clear indication that they come from elsewhere. Of course there is no folk memory of this amalgamation, but that is to be expected. When tradition is being constructed, it takes care to cover its tracks: it is either mythologized (as in the case of Michu Bahā) or left unexplained, presented as beginningless ancient custom.

Lineage monasteries

Lineage monasteries are usually small inconspicuous establishments incorporated into the structure of the houses which adjoin them. Vanā Bahā, which belongs to a large lineage of Bu Bahā Vajrācāryas, is unusual in being well-known outside its immediate area. A lineage monastery must not only possess the three defining characteristics of a monastery – caitya, main deity and Tantric shrine – it must also, like any other monastery, be ritually established as a monastery. There are several sites – e.g. Sarasvati Nani, as mentioned above – which could be considered to possess all three but are not monasteries, because not founded as such. The rituals for the foundation are said to be in the Kriyā-samgraha (see Mitra, 1971: 103–6; D.R. Regmi/III: 764–5; Slusser, 1982: 130, fn.9). They involve considerable expense and last a full year; as far as I know they have not been performed in recent times.

Most lineage monasteries founded by 'lay' castes function in a way similar to those of Śākyas and Vajrācāryas, that is as a kind of private lineage guthi. But a partial exception to this is provided by Hauga Bahā and Jom Bahā in Lalitpur, and Yatkhā Bahā and Thāṃ Bahi in Kathmandu. These four monasteries are „owned by“ particular occupational status groups (thar) of the adjoining area: Rājkarnikār (sweet-makers), Śīlpakār (carpenters), Sthāpīt (carpenters), and Pradhān (nobles) respectively. In these cases the monastery provides a focus for, and defines the unity of, a group of lineages, in the same way that main monasteries do for Śākyas and Vajrācāryas, and Hindu temples sometimes do for other groups (e.g. the Jośī Āgam in Solimha for Lalitpur Jośis).

Attitudes to lineage monasteries differ from those towards all other monasteries. Newar Buddhists do not speak of lineage monasteries having an association (samgha, sam), since no one is initiated there. Rather they speak of the monastery
belonging to" the lineage. Others are not encouraged to bring offerings to the shrine and are not invited to participate in, and would not be welcome at, any of the annual rituals (except where it is laid down that daughters given out of the lineage in marriage, their children and husbands must be invited to a given feast). Lineage monasteries are private shrines even when owned by many families.

It is quite otherwise at even the smallest monastery with an initiated association. All those living in the locality are expected to feel, and normally do feel, some identification with it, even if they are not Vajrācāryas or Śākyas. Thus Duntu Bahī in Ikhāchem with only two surviving members, was renovated sixteen years ago with money collected from all the inhabitants of Ikhāchem. Similarly, in 1976 the main deity of Cikām Bahī was plated with gold: twenty-six individuals contributed

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Branch monasteries of Cikām Bahī, Cyāsa, Lalitpur.
gold or money, of whom half were members of Cikam Bahi; of the others, eight were Śākyas, three Āvāles and two Vajrācāyas. These bahī attract the support of non-members even though they are quiet, secluded shrines rarely visited for religious purposes. The large main monasteries by contrast receive a steady stream of offerings every morning; they are therefore a fortiori a focus of Buddhist devotion, and local people, whether members or not, are proud to be associated with them.

The way in which lineage monasteries develop can be briefly illustrated with the example of Cikam Bahi, to which I have already referred (above). The members of Cikam Bahi established four separate lineage monasteries in the years 1868, 1871, 1878 and at some time after that, probably around the turn of the century. Clearly there was a sense of competition between the leading families of the Bahi in those years. Sometimes the founder of a lineage monastery names it after himself (cf. Hodgson, I: 53); sometimes also, though more rarely, an effigy of the founder is kept in the Tantric shrine and „worshipped“ in the course of the main annual ritual. The first three monasteries have in situ inscriptions which describe the founding of the monasteries, list all the members of the donor’s family and give details of land donated for the performance of annual rituals. Two of the donors performed vihār pūjā (bahi pūjā), i.e. visiting and making offerings at all the main monasteries of Lalitpur, in order „to make famous“ the name of their new monastery. Although monasteries are no longer founded, bahā pūjā is still performed, after establishing a caitya, completing repairs on a monastery or on other occasions.

The fourth of the monasteries mentioned above was founded by the eldest son of the man who established the third. Their family tree looks like this:

Table III: Structure of the lineage attached to Bhaiṣajya Bahā, Cikam Bahi. Numbers 1 to 9 represent nine separate households.

All main monasteries with an extant monastic association in Lalitpur have a list of members in order of seniority: duty as „god-guardian“ (dyahpāhlā) passes down the
list, so that eventually everyone takes a turn. In lineage monasteries however duties are based on a genealogical relation to the founder. This system is unavoidable in their case, since membership is not defined by individuals taking bare chuyegu there. Even to talk of ‘membership’ of a lineage monastery is slightly forced: as I have pointed out, Newar Buddhists themselves talk rather of lineage monasteries belonging to them, as lineage property.

In the example given above there are two ways of determining god-guardians.

(i) Rights vested in lineages: The Bhaisajya Bahā lineage is made up of three ‘families’ (kutum, from Skt. kutumba) descended from brothers A, B and C. (It is only through inscriptions that the existence of a fourth brother without offspring is revealed.) Duty passes to each ‘family’ in turn so that household 5 gets a turn every three months, whereas households 4 and 9 take a turn only once every six months, and households 1–3 and 6–8 only once every eighteen months. Similarly in Kul A lineage monastery and shelter (phalca) built in 1871. The caitya dates from the reign of Śri Nīvas Malla (1658–1685) and ‘belongs to’ some Śreṣṭhas living in Maṅgal Bazaar, i.e. it is they who have the right to come and receive offerings during Matayā. The monastery belongs to a lineage whose men-folk are members of Cikam Bahi. The ‘pagoda’ of Cikam Bahi is visible in the background. The monastery is known colloquially as cibhā cuk, and more formally as triratna vihār. The inscription visible to the right of the shrine gives the name ‘Triratnavṛavati-hār’. The inclusion of the word vīra, ‘hero’, was no doubt due to the fact that the three brothers who founded the monastery all had bir (= vīra) as the second element of their name.

56 In Kathmandu however the genealogical system is sometimes used even for main monasteries. Locke describes how ‘turns of service’ are allotted in Jana Bahā on the basis of four sections (kavah) so that some members have several turns a year, while others only one every three years (Locke, 1980: 175). Perhaps, in the case of Jana Bahā, this system prevailed when White Matsyendranāth usurped the place of the main monastery deity as the god for whom turns have to be organized (ibid.: 166–7).

57 Elsewhere the term kavah is more common for such sub-lineages. It may also refer to the sections of a guthi where the members are not related.
Ratna Bahā, family 4 takes half the turns, and families 1–3 one sixth each. This is the old system.

(ii) Households treated equally: in this system each of the nine families takes equal turns, one month each, at Bhaïṣajya Bahā. Likewise, in Kul Ratna Bahā, families 1–4 share duties equally. This is the present system.

In the last twenty years numerous religious associations (guthi) have passed from system (i), rights vested in lineages, to system (ii), which treats each household alike. The reason for this is that the resources which used to support them have suffered drastically from Land Reform (which has much reduced the payment required from tenant farmers) and from the rapaciousness of many guthi-members. Consequently what used to be a jealously guarded right has become an increasingly difficult burden. The inscription describing the establishment of Bhaïṣajya Bahā lists all the rituals to be performed each year and the fields (12 ropani in seven different places) to pay for it. It ends by saying „the remainder shall be enjoyed by the descendants of the founder“ – which meant of course the descendant whose turn it was that year to run the guthi. Now that guthi income has declined members have to make up the shortfall out of their own pocket. Consequently those families who have to take frequent turns (i.e. family 5, and to a lesser extent 4 and 9) press for the system to switch from (i) to (ii), or they threaten to leave the guthi.

The genealogical system which vests rights in lineages is of course less purely Buddhist than the list-system used to determine duties in most main monasteries, because the latter treats members as separate individuals. The necessity of using the lineage system in lineage monasteries means that they are further away from the monastic realm and more in that of „worldly Tantric“ Buddhism, as the chronicle called it. Further, the lineage monastery, since it excludes all but the patrilineage and, by invitation, its affinal relatives, has moved beyond the universalist values which are embodied just as much in the main monasteries as in the bahī.

Since these lineage monasteries function just like a private guthi it would have been natural if some term such as niji bahā (private monastery) had evolved as a name for this type. The fact that some such expression has not gained general acceptance shows the power of the formal and ritual sphere of Newar Buddhism in which the distinctions I have outlined between different types of monastery are not acknowledged. Of course some monasteries are considered more important than others, e.g. for bahā pūjā, but the differences I have described are a matter of local custom and history. From the strictly religious point of view all Newar monasteries that are founded as such are equally vihār and the same rituals are appropriate in all of them.58

58 It seems that Newar Buddhism is not alone in having evolved kin-based ways of passing on monasteries and their property, ways which nonetheless remain, from the point of view of doctrine and ritual, improper or at least unmentioned. Evers (1967) shows that in Śri Lanka, whenever a monastery owns property, its line of ordination comes to resemble a real lineage: the incumbent almost invariably chooses as his principal pupil his nephew (who may be either his brother's or his sister's son, in accordance with the
Conclusion: a theory of architectural development

It should be clear that the bahi, if not always the oldest, are certainly the most archaic Buddhist foundations, and consciously so. Their architecture preserves most purely ancient Buddhist patterns. However I think it is possible to be beyond this and postulate the steps by which bahā architecture has developed away from the ancient model. These are shown in table IV:

Table IV: The historical development of monastery architecture, with the earliest form at the top and the latest at the bottom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Bahi</th>
<th>2. Bahā with courtyard intact, i.e. non-residential, communally owned and used only for religious and/or communal purposes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Bahā where the courtyard has been partly taken over for private residential use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Bahā in which the main deity inhabits a free-standing temple and the courtyard is, and was always intended to be, mostly residential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Bahā (viz. most lineage monasteries) which are designed as an integral part of a residential unit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ultimate development of the bahā form was the lineage monastery constructed as part of a new house. Even this however maintained it as part of a secluded courtyard, and retained the three elements – main deity, caitya and first-floor Tantric shrine – outlined at the beginning of this paper. The architectural development shown in the table did not manifest itself only when new monasteries were founded: quite a few main monasteries now falling into category 3 must have developed piecemeal from category 2. And it seems likely also that some bahi were turned into bahā of type 2. One monastery in Kathmandu, Te Bahā, which we know to be very ancient, and must at one stage have been a classical monastery in bilateral nature of the Sinhala kinship system). As with the Newar Buddhist monastery this is made possible by the incumbent’s ability to refuse to give ordination in the right place to others. On the use of the guthi system of land tenure for this purpose, with some other Nepalese examples, see M.C. Regmi, 1976: 54–5, and also D.R. Regmi, 1965. 1: 708.
style 1, is now a *bahā* of type 4. 59 Perhaps Uku Bahā, which is certainly very old, but now of type 2, was originally of type 1.

The tendency towards type 4 – a free-standing temple as the principal shrine of main monasteries – should be seen as the result of growing Tantric influence. It is perhaps no accident that the two main monasteries of this type in Lalitpur, Bu Bahā and Bhimchem Bahā, are both dominated by Vajrācāryas. Snellgrove writes that the free-standing temple is primarily Hindu in conception (Snellgrove, 1961: 106) but goes on to show how the square pagoda temple symbolizes the *mandala* from which the deity looks out in all four directions, an idea which is as fundamental to Tantric Buddhism as it is to Tantric Hinduism (ibid.: 107–9). Without broaching the complex question of the relation of Tantric Buddhism to Hinduism, suffice it to say that most Newar Buddhists would deny that their free-standing temples are in any way Hindu. Slusser has admirably summarized the architectural evidence that the „Newar-style temple ... is a three-dimensional mandala“ (Slusser, 1982: 145). She too comes to the conclusion that „the incorporated temple of the *vihāra* is modeled after a free-standing temple, and represents an exotic to the quadrangle plan“ (ibid.: 146).

Of course the *bahi* themselves have undergone certain changes as a result of the developments which have affected all religious tendencies in the Kathmandu Valley, but in their case the changes have been more in the nature of small accretions and not a systematic restructuring. Becker-Ritterspach (1982: 305) reckons that the „pagoda‘ (*puco*) over the main shrine of a *bahi* was a late addition to *bahi*-architecture, dating from the seventeenth or eighteenth century. No doubt the same is true of entrance lions and a tympanum over the main doorway where these occur (see , n. 30). The Tantric shrine must also have been introduced in *bahi* only after Siddhi Narasimha’s reforms.

It should be noted how architecture has come a full circle, neatly illustrating the changing values of Nepalese Buddhism. At the beginning in the traditional monastic style, celibate monks lived in the austere and open-plan *bahi* (taking *bahi* here to refer simply to a style of architecture). When they married they moved out of the *bahi* and lived out their householder status outside it, returning only for monastic rituals and obligations. New shrines, especially Tantric deities, were added and the typical *bahi*, ornate and enclosed, emerged. By the last stage of development (type 5 of table IV) the two statuses, householder and monk, have become so fused that houses can be monasteries, and family residential units are built with Buddhist monastic shrines as part of them.

59 Hemraj Shakya writes that this must also be the case with Bhimchem Bahā. But his argument that earthquakes and rebuilding have removed all the evidence that it was once of *bahi* form and is really 1600 years old as tradition asserts, would seem to be a piece of special pleading (Shakya, 1973: 14–15). He himself says *bhimchem* derives from *bhinnachem*, „separated from houses‘ (ibid.: 26). This implies that it was of style 4 from the beginning, and that the myths of origin which explain the name as *viṣṇu-ksetra*, because a statue of Viṣṇu was discovered in the foundations, are *post hoc* fabrications.
The Newar Buddhist tradition is, in a vague and general way, aware of this historical development, and indeed builds it into its rituals. The historical development is understood as a logical one, in which later stages incorporate and transcend earlier ones. Locke has already noted how the *bare chuyegu* and *ācā luyegu* ceremonies represent condensed history in this way:

The whole complexus of these initiation rites presents a summary of the history of Buddhism in India and Nepal and an outline of the social structure of the Newar Buddhist community. The young *vajracarya* is first ordained a *bhiksu* in a rite which dates to the earliest times of Buddhism. He is introduced, however briefly and perfunctorily, to a number of the principle Mahayana texts and to the rites and rituals performed in the ancient Hinayana and Mahayana monasteries of India and Nepal. Finally he is ordained a *Vajracarya* Buddhist priest (Locke, 1975: 18).

However, just because the structure of monastery and ritual recapitulates history and because this is consciously articulated, it would be wrong to take the schema implicit in them as history, except of the most sketchy sort. For example, when the history of Buddhism in the Thakuri period comes to be written, it may turn out that celibate monasticism and Tantric religion existed side by side, perhaps even in the same institution. It will probably turn out that 'earlier' and 'later' forms of Buddhism existed concurrently, as far back as our evidence goes.

The essence of my argument is summarized in three tables, table I, II and IV. It would be a misunderstanding however to put tables I and IV together, and interpret table IV as explaining the historical development of the institutions of today. Firstly and straightforwardly, table I is synchronic and depicts the relations between the concepts used to describe different monastic institutions today, whereas table IV is diachronic and postulates relationships between architectural forms (whose relation to types of institution may have varied over time). Thus, for example, it would be a mistake to conclude on the basis of table IV that the *bahi*-institution we know today was a precursor of the modern *bahā*-institution. Secondly, and more importantly, to ignore the different aims of the two tables would be to miss the subtle way in which the tradition makes use of, and to a certain extent distorts, its own history in order to explain itself.

If we accept the account of BV – and I see no reason to reject it – the members of the *bahi* at the time of Siddhi Narasimha saw the distinction between the *bahā* and the *bahi* as an opposition which we may represent thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><em>bahi</em></th>
<th><em>bahā</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>samsāra (this world)</td>
<td>nirvāṇa (the beyond or other world)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tantric family <em>dharma</em></td>
<td>non-Tantric forest-dwelling <em>dharma</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This opposition was, it seems to me, the local form of a tension present in almost all types of Buddhism, which was institutionalized in Medieval Śrī Lāṅkā as the opposition between village- and forest-monks (Rahula, 1956: 159–60; Carrithers,
1983: 168; cf. n. 29 below). Arguably this tension, between mixing with the world to save the masses and retreating from it to save oneself, can be seen at the very origin of Buddhism, in that moment when the Buddha, on achieving enlightenment, hesitated between going out to teach the world and entering full nirvāṇa immediately.

One of the ways of expressing this opposition was through the architecture of the two types of monastery. The bahī deliberately retained the ancient forms and resisted most of the modifications which even small and relatively impecunious bahā introduced. In so doing they claimed to represent an older and more rigorous standard than that of the bahā. But in fact they too were householders with families at the time of Siddhi Narasimha’s reforms, and we have only the word of their tradition that they had a special connection to the last celibate Buddhist monks. Whereas many bahā are attested in historical records of the Thakuri period, there is virtually no evidence of the bahī. Bahī-architecture is certainly ancient but the bahī-institution has undergone important changes, even in the time since Siddhi Narasimha’s reforms. The modern bahī-institution is almost certainly no older than that of the main monasteries, and may even be a more recent development. To accept that the bahī are older institutions than the bahā would be to fall for the ideological claim deliberately advanced by the former’s architecture, rituals and myths.

Nowadays, as I have pointed out several times, the opposition, bahā:bahī, exists no more: the gradual laicization of Newar Buddhism and the small size of the bahī have meant that what was once a keenly maintained opposition has become merely a difference of custom such as is found between almost any two similar but distinct groups within Newar society. De Jong (1979: 642) sees the whole history of South Asian Buddhism as comprising essentially the gradual lay appropriation of the original religion. The Newars have taken this process a long way, as illustrated by their lineage monasteries. Even here however caution is required in interpreting table IV. The architectural form of modern lineage monasteries is certainly the latest development, and most modern lineage monasteries are relatively late establishments. But can we be sure that such institutions did not exist in the Thakuri period? It may be that the lineage monastery as an institution is inherently likely to change its architectural form in the same way that the ideology of the bahī requires them to be architecturally conservative.

It seems likely therefore that the institutional development implied by table IV (from celibate monachism to Tantric householder monk/priest) was accomplished long before the architectural one. More than that, I have tried to suggest that what part of the Newar Buddhist tradition sees as a simple diachronic progression (or decline) from otherworldly monachism to thisworldly Tantrism, is in fact better represented as a synchronic opposition present in almost all forms of Buddhism (and certainly predating the rise of Tantric ritual and iconography). In my view, then, the bahī and bahā are, at any given period, defined in terms of each other. The claims of each to be earlier than the other are simply part of an age-old debate about
the true teachings of the Buddha. The bahi claim to be an historic leftover but, in the sense of innocently preserving ancient customs in isolation from changes elsewhere, they are certainly not: they have put much effort and ingenuity into establishing their archaic identity, and yet have themselves changed as one generation has succeeded the next.

One lesson of this is, I think, that the institutions of a given period should be explained in terms of each other, in terms of the system which, taken together, they comprise. Only then should history be invoked. Historical evidence is required for the fullest understanding; but it should be an understanding that explains not only origins but also changes, which explains the way in which old institutions have been reinterpreted to new ends and which avoids the local tendency to see history in terms of the survival, accretion or decline of isolated elements. To the epigram from Nietzsche I would only add that each generation reinterprets its inheritance for itself even when it earnestly tries to preserve it, even when it believes it is merely preserving it and even when it does indeed preserve it.

Bibliography


Michael Witzel

The Coronation Rituals of Nepal
With special reference to the coronation of King Birendra (1975)

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1. Introduction*

Nepal, now the only Hindu Kingdom in the world, presents the unique opportunity for a student of Sanskrit literature to witness a number of ancient royal and private rituals that are no longer performed in India or if they are, then only on a smaller scale. One of them is the coronation ritual of Hindu kings, the so-called Rājyābiṣekha, – a word better translated by ‘royal anunction’. Since Vedic times, it has been the custom to install a new king by sprinkling and pouring specially consecrated water and other fluids over his head and body. Actually, the custom can be traced, as has been done by A.M. Hocart, even far beyond the area of Hindu culture: westwards via Byzantium to modern Europe, and eastwards via the Buddhist countries of South-East Asia, like modern Thailand, as far as the island of Fiji with its original Melanesian ritual. How the ritual spread and how it consequently was accepted and transformed by so many people in the course of the 3000 years of its history leads beyond the limits of this article. Here, I will concentrate on the description and a brief, and to some extent preliminary

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* The present paper was first presented in a lecture at Oxford University and at the School of Oriental and African Studies in June 1984 in a shorter version. I take this opportunity to thank both institutions and especially R. Gombrich and R. Burghart for their hospitality.
interpretation of the ritual as it is performed today in Nepal. However, occasionally its earlier forms in Vedic and Purānic literature will be mentioned and compared to indicate the general drift in the development of the rites.

A detailed description and interpretation will have to be undertaken separately. A prerequisite for such a comprehensive study is the availability of more material on the ritual and also interviews with the participating priests. During my tenure as local director of the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) and the Nepal Research Centre at Kathmandu, I briefly talked to the late Rājpurohit who was very weak then and died shortly after this. It still is very difficult to study the text of the modern ritual itself, as it is being kept secret by the priests acting in the rituals. Nevertheless, some manuscript material has come into my hands by accident. The NGMPP has filmed some modern copies (see appendix) of the coronation ceremony which belonged to some Pandits, and therefore, an investigation that is more detailed than one based solely on the newspaper accounts (of The Rising Nepal, Gorkhāpattra) and official publications could be undertaken here.

Interestingly, these rituals hardly ever figure in the manuscript catalogues: Such manuscripts apparently have been kept in royal or priestly possession and have hardly ever been entered into public manuscript libraries. One exception is the former Royal Library of Tanjore which contains a few manuscripts dealing with the Rājyābhiṣeka.1

Also, there seems to be some local variation which will have to be taken into account in a more detailed study. During a short visit to Orissa in 1983, I heard from one of the Rādjurus of the Rāja of Mayurbhanj that the local form of the ritual does not contain the mṛttikasnīna, the “bath” (unction) of the king with various sorts of earth. There seems to exist a MS of this tradition at Heidelberg but I have not yet found time to procure and study it. Also, other coronation ceremonies of India and the neighbouring countries would have to be compared but this cannot be undertaken here in detail.

As a starting point, it will be best to give a short description of the ritual as it is claimed to be typical for late medieval Nepal. (Note that no manuscripts of Malla time coronation rituals seem to have survived. The National Archives do not possess them nor does the former Rājguru family of Bhaktapur hold them. There are, however, a few manuscripts which deal with the daily duties of a king, written in Nevāri, see the catalogue of Nevāri manuscripts in the National Archives, ed. by B.K. Malla).

1 The MSS in the Sarasvati Mahal Library of the former Maratha kingdom of Tanjore were kindly filmed for me by M. Sparreboom in 1985. See Tanjore Catalogue, Vol. XVII, MSS. No.s 14071–76.
2. The Nepalese coronation ritual

To give a brief impression of the Nepalese coronation ritual, it will be useful to present here a literal translation of the Rājyābhiṣekavidhāna of King Dravya Śāha who, according to the editor of this short Sanskrit text of 46 ślokas, composed these rules on the royal coronation in 1561 A.D., that is about the time of the establishment of the Gorkhā kingdom. Unfortunately, not much is known about the history of this text: It is said to form part of the Camatkāramaṇjarī on the Bādavānala-Tantra, being a part of the Uttarakalpa of its Bhimadāṃśṭra-Saṃhitā.²

Introduction

(1) By which (means) one will be continuously successful at the first Royal Unction, all that tell (me), Lord of the gods, and (also that which is good) for the happiness of kings. – Virabhadra said: (2) One should select eight new gurus etc. (= purohita, acārya, astrologer, etc.) for (the sake of) well wishing. If he (the king) should select the old ones (of the last king), the country will be ruined. (3) To take away all faults and to beat off death, the mantra of Mṛtyuñjaya,¹ told in the Vedas, and the one of 100 syllables, (4) one should mumble day by day until the end of one’s body. The pious (king) should hold up for ever the yantra of the ‘not-terrible god’ (Śiva). (5) And always, at the yearly unction (abhiṣeka), he should ritually act with the yantra, for the destruction of enemies in battle and for success of killing, etc. (6) Every year he should perform the Rudrābhiṣeka⁴ with oil, and the incense of Bādavānala must continuously be given in the hall (of the palace: sabhā). (7) For warding off (evil, death) he should always perform the royal ritual (yāga) of jāpakā (mumbling certain mantras), and (also) for the pacification of the (atonement of) pātakas (sins). (8) Then, having performed the ritual work by way of specialisation (various special rites?), (the priest) should finish the abhiṣeka in the manner told by his own Veda school (śākhā). (9) An injunction as to time is not found (in dharma regarding the performance of this ritual) at the time of the king’s death; having performed the besmearing of each of the

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² The present text is to be regarded as officious as it is ascribed to Dravya Śāha, the de facto founder of the Kingdom of Gorkhā. It agrees more or less with the present day rituals. Note the same mistake (karau „hands for *“ feet“) in the mrtikasāna, below § 11. – The Vedic Mṛtyumjaya hymn is found at RV 7.59.12 (tryāmbakam yajāmahe...). This is an addition to the original text of the RV; there is no Padapaṭha for it.

³ The coronation unction (rājyābhiṣeka) has to be repeated yearly, see already AV-Par. 5; for details see M. R. Pant, JNRC I, 1977, p. 93–116.

⁴ Rudrābhiṣeka refers to the still popular rite of the unction of a Śiva-linga, accompanied by verses from VS 16 (or TS. 4.5.1.1 sqq.): namas te rudra manyave...
limbs (of the king)\(^5\) with oil, he should besprinkle them. (10) The unction should take place every year together with (that of) the king’s wife. At the time of the thriving of the year (monsoon) he should carry out the *naratuladana* (weighing of the king against gold), carefully. (11) The king, full of belief and piety (*śraddhā, bhakti*), who performs (all of these rituals) in this way, (will be one) with sons and grandsons, having become a world-conquering king (*cakravartin*).

**Pūrvāṅga days**

(13) In an auspicious month, an auspicious half-month, at an auspicious (position of) the moon, at good moment (*lagna*) having arranged the *bhadraśana* (seat), the *manḍapa* (consecration hut) etc., and the royal throne (*rāja-simhāsana*) etc., he should carry out the *pūjā* of Gaṇādhiśa (Gaṇeśa) and the *sānti* (pacification ceremony). Having honoured Gaṇeśa and the Mātrkās, he should venerate the planets and the ground (*vāstu*). (15) And having honoured the lords of the directions of the sky (*dikpati*), he should select the eight, i. e., the *guru* etc. He should let them perform the (ritual) beginning with the *grahahoma* (offering into the fire for the planets) and ending with *āghāra* (sprinkling of ghee into the fire: as parts of a normal fire ritual: a *homa/pākayajñā*). (16) At night, having put the parasol, the sword, the fan (of yak tail hair) and the *usnīsa* (turban) etc. up to the ornaments etc. (down on the offering ground), he should honour them, together with the *guru* etc. (18) He should put there 1000 pitchers (*kalāśa*) and fill them with (various kinds) of water: a golden pot with (additional) ghee, a silver one filled with milk, a copper one full of curds, an earthen one (only) filled with water. (19) Having thrown in 100 herbs (*osadhi*), etc., gold, gems, seeds, leaves and having honoured them, the king should make his bed just there (sleep there).

**Abhiṣeka day**

(20) (Next morning) at sunrise, having performed the perpetual (daily) rituals, he should, together with the *guru*, standing on the auspicious *bhadrāsana*, give away cow(s) repeatedly.

**Mṛttikasnāna**

(21) And with earth\(^5\) from the top of a mountain (the priest) should then purify (the king’s) head, with earth from an ant-hill his ears, with that of a

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\(^5\) For an interpretation of the various sorts of earth and for a description of how they are used, see below § 11.
Viṣṇu (Keśava) temple, his mouth; (22) with the earth of an Indra place (of worship: a dhvaja?) the neck, with that of an elephant enclosure the heart, with that thrown up by the tooth of an elephant the right arm, (23) and that thrown up by the horn of a bull the left (arm); then with the earth of a lake, the back; with earth of the confluence of rivers the belly; (24) with the earth of the bank of a stream he should purify the two sides of his breast; with the earth of the door of a courtezen the loins, and with that from an elephant stable the thighs, (25) with that from a horse stable the penis (medhra), with that of a cow stable the two shanks/shins, with the earth thrown up by the wheels of a chariot the two hands (read: the “feet!”), (26-27) Having cleansed his body with earth in this way, he should then drink pañcagavya (the 5 products of a cow). Having given some land, a house, etc. to the Brahmin who recited in order to ward off death, he should then give a cow to the guru.

Abhiseka

(28) With a golden pitcher full of ghee the Brahmin (ministers) should besprinkle (the king) from the east, (29) with a silver pitcher full of milk, (and standing) in the south, the Kṣatriyas, then, with a copper pitcher full of curds, the Vaiṣyas from the west, (30) (and), with a clay pitcher, positioned in the north, the Śūdra ministers. Then the Brahmin should sprinkle (the king) with a golden plate having 100 holes, then with the waters of 1001 pitchers, and with waters containing all kind of herbs, with perfumes and with the waters of the mango plate (āmrapattra, read tāmra?), (31) and with the waters containing flowers, with cow’s urine, with waters containing fruits and gold, with waters containing kuśa grass, with water containing pañcagavya and with the five amṛtas (honey etc.), (32) and with water containing 100 herbs; then, with Gaṅgā water, he should sprinkle, (accompanied) by the Vaidic mantra: devasya tvā (= AB: “On the instigation of the god Savitar . . .”) (33) And also with Paurāṇic mantras he should order the abhiseka to be performed. Having performed the pūjā of the elephant, having carefully looked into a mirror, (34–35) and having performed with great beans (?brhanmāśa?) and ghee for a 1000 times the homa (offerings into the fire) for the destruction of enemies.

Crowning

He should, after the successful mantra of Mṛtyuṇjaya, which consists of three syllables, and has been told in the Tantra, wear the usṇīsa, etc. (i.e. the paṭṭa gold sheet, and the mukuṭa). He should place five pitchers north of the fire, etc. (36) He should honour Kārtavirya (Arjuna), Mahākāli, Śarabha (Viṣṇu), the Kuladevātā (family goddess), kulakramāyaṭa of the father, and the god of his own choice (svēṣṭadeva).
Dāna

(37–38) He should carefully satisfy the guru, purohita, the reciter of the 100 syllables, the (royal) physician, astrologer, the one knowing the tones (musician). Having finished the homa and performed the godāna (giving away of a cow), he should finish the ritual (yajña).

Procession

(39) Having taken the sword in his hand and, full of joy, mounted the elephant, he should, joined by the eight, i.e. the purohita etc., the army, make a circumambulation of the town in various ways, with the ‘roaring’ of the Vedas, with dances and dancers, and should enter his palace. (41) Having done, together with the eight, i.e. the purohita etc., at an auspicious moment and with pains, the punyāhavācana (recitation) and having sat down on the auspicious simhasana (throne), (42-43) he should wear the tilaka given by the hand of the Mahāguru etc.; he should honour 1001 Brahmins, and 100 yatis (mendicants), 54 girls; he (should be) someone of devotion. Together with the gurus he should eat and should have the daksinā (gift to the priests) arranged.

Conclusion

(44) Then, he should protect his kingdom in the way taught in the Smṛti. The king who selects, out of error, the (same) gurus, etc. ‘made’ (selected) by his father, – within two months, they would be destroyers resembling water (floods) and rains; loss of sons, destruction of the kingdom will surely occur, – not otherwise!⁶ (46) Therefore, he should select new (priests), the guru, etc., with great care. And he should not always make a (new) selection of the guru etc., in a (new) year.

3. The Vedic origins of the (Nepalese) coronation ritual

If one tries to place this short account within the framework of literary and religious history of India, a few points immediately spring to one’s attention: the text itself mentions Vedic, but also Purānic mantras and a Tantric text, the mṛtyunjaya. This description is, as we will see, correct, and may well serve as a very condensed characterisation of the coronation ritual as performed today and during the Middle Ages.

⁶ The repetition of this rule (cf. verse 2) surprises. The text may have been composed at a time when the influence of the Rājguru and other royal priests was felt to be too strong. A disruption of their position apparently was necessary to insure the continued strength of the royal family vis-à-vis the courtiers. Perhaps the text was composed only during the troublesome time after the death of Prthvi Nārāyaṇa Śāha?
The nucleus of the ritual, i.e. the sprinkling of various sorts of water and other fluids, and the mounting by the king of a low throne covered with tiger skin, is indeed Vedic: it can be found in the elaborate and solemn Rājasūya ritual (treated in detail by A. Weber and, more recently, by J.C. Heesterman) but it also appears in a less elaborate form, variously called sava (TB), rājābhiseka (ĀSS), mrtyusava (BŚS) or punarabhiseka (AB), mahābhiseka (AB), ekarāja- and laghv-abhiseka (KauśS), prathamābhiseka (AVPar.). Some distinction between these various forms has to be made: The punarabhiseka is, as its name indicates, a second (or a consecutive) unction which has its later counterparts in the Purānic rājābhiseka, sāmvatsarābhiseka: this serves to renew, periodically, every year in springtime (in the month of Pauṣa, nowadays ca. Dec. 15 to Jan. 15) the might and force inherent in the king. The mahābhiseka (and the ekarāja-) are intended to help the king gain overlordship over a number of other (petty) kings and make him an emperor (cakravartin): they are, in a way, Rgvedic and Atharvavedic counterparts of the year-long Aṣvamedha ritual of the Yajurvedins, by which a powerful king, an emperor, announced his aspiration to supremacy, like the Gupta monarch Samudragupta or, as the last king to perform this rite, King Sevai Jay Singh of Amber/Jaipur in ca. 1730, – both of them, incidentally, in a revivalistic fashion.

As far as the Vedic period is concerned, one must distinguish several strands of tradition:

(1) The early Rgvedic/Atharvavedic ‘coronation’ ritual, of which only the mantras that are employed in the ritual have been transmitted (in the form of hymns). A discussion can be found in B. Schlerath’s work Das Königstum im Rig- und Atharvaveda.7

Table 1: The ‘classical’ Śrauta ritual: Minor or divergent Vedic forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Śrauta Rājasūya</th>
<th>Rgveda</th>
<th>Yajurveda</th>
<th>Atharvaveda</th>
<th>SV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS 2.6; KS 15 9.4–7; TS 1.8; TB 2.7.15–17; BŚS 22.28; SB 5.2–5.5; etc</td>
<td>AB 7.13–8.23</td>
<td>KS 37.9; TB 2.7.15–17</td>
<td>PS 10; AV 4.8 KauśS 17.1–10</td>
<td>JB 3.152; SVidhB 3.5.1–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>year-long series of rituals with central Soma rite</td>
<td>punarabhiseka</td>
<td>mrtyu-sava</td>
<td>ekarāja-(laghvabhiseka)</td>
<td>(set into a Dārśa-pauṛṇa-māsa type pā-kayajña)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sava:ekāha)</td>
<td>mahābhiseka</td>
<td>ĀpŚS 22.28; BŚS 18.16–19</td>
<td>(for supremacy)</td>
<td>(sava)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Late Vedic Forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rgvidhāna 4.21</th>
<th>BGŚēṣaS (1.34)</th>
<th>AV-Par. 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rājābhiseka, sat-</td>
<td>prathamābhiseka,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abhiseka (pā-kayajña)</td>
<td>putyābhiseka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 AV 4.8 is called „a Rājasūya in nuce“ by Schlerath, p. 157. – This can now be supplemented by evidence from the Paippalāda Samhita. It has not been noticed that PS
(2) The Rājasūya, a solemn (Śrāuta) ritual lasting one year, was developed during the middle Vedic period and codified in various Brāhmaṇa and Śrāutasūtra texts. The ritual generally is believed to have been used for the installation of a king. The centrepiece thereof contains an unction rite which is very similar to the simpler forms referred to above. This simple unction rite is framed by a Soma ritual (an ekāha); the ekāha itself is surrounded by other rituals which form a one-year cycle.

The Rājasūya ritual occurs in two major forms, that of the White and that of the older Black Yajurveda; the differences have been summed up by W. Rau, Staat und Gesellschaft, p. 57; the divergent forms mentioned above, have been added in table 2.

Table 2: Rājasūya ritual

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ritual of the Black Yajurveda</th>
<th>Ritual of White Yajurveda</th>
<th>Ritual of Rgveda (AB)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• proclamation of king by adhvaryu (TB 1.7.4.2)</td>
<td>• proclamation by adhvaryu (SB 5.3.3.11–12)</td>
<td>• inthronisation (AB 8.17.1–4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• second proclamation (TB 1.7.6.7)</td>
<td>• unction of king by brāhmaṇa, a relative (vṛtta), a friend from among the rājanya, and a vasiya (SB 5.4.1.17–5.4.2.2)</td>
<td>• proclamation by rājakartṛ (AB 8.17.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• unction of king by adhvaryu, a rājanya, a vasiya and a janya with</td>
<td>• second proclamation by adhvaryu (SB 5.4.2.4)</td>
<td>• unction of the kind by the priest (AB 8.18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• third proclamation (TB 1.7.8.3–7)</td>
<td>• –</td>
<td>• –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• inthronisation (TB 1.7.10.2)</td>
<td>• inthronisation (SB 5.4.4.1–4)</td>
<td>• inthronisation (AB 8.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• unction by the priest (AB 8.18)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) In addition to the rituals of royal consecration mentioned so far, there are several other Vedic forms of an abhiṣeka for a king:

- prathama-abhiṣeka: the first unction
- punar-abhiṣeka: the unction, repeated yearly

10 is a book of royal rituals; perhaps all the mantras recorded there are related to the abhiṣeka and the installation of a king. Also AV (SS) 13 and PS 18.15–26, the so-called Rohita book, will have to be taken into account. It is usually understood as containing mantras related to the worship of the sun (see Whitney, transl.). However, several mantras point directly to a use in royal ritual; this is in need of further elucidation (but cf. already M. Bloomfield’s transl. of AV, SBE XLII, p. 661, cf. p. 378 sqq.).
The occurrence of a *prathamābhiśeka* next to a *mṛtyusava-abhiśeka* is puzzling. However, the ‘classical’ Rājasūya with its (*prathama-*)abhiśeka clearly shows the traces of a secondary, priestly elaboration, – a typical factor found everywhere in the ‘classical’ Śrauta ritual. Recently, H. Falk has explained the Rājasūya, differently from Heesterman, as a rite intended for the adoption of a son by a king without offspring. The aim is to get the adopted son accepted by the members of the royal clan and by the gentry in general. The Vedic evidence for the rites of royal installation could then be reduced to two forms: (*prathama-*)rājābhiśeka (*KauśS, BŚS, ĀpŚS, mantras in KS, TB) and *punarabhiśeka* (*AB, AV-Par.*). In addition, the special forms are: rājasūya (for the adoption of a crown prince) (note that there is no continuation of this ritual practise in the Paurānic period!) and mahābhiśeka (for establishment of supremacy over other, petty kings).

The late Vedic forms already show a marked tendency to develop into Paurānic ritual. The basic outline of the rites, though transferred now into a grhya-type set-up, still is Vedic but such later details as the ‘crown’ in the form of the *patta* sheet and the *mukūtaka* headdress make their first appearance. (This is not the place to enter in detail into the question of the origin of the crown or diadem in India. The *patta* is, as the various sources in archaeology and sculpture indicate, just a thin square sheet of gold, with (some) insertions at the top, while the medieval *mukūtaka* (var. *makuṭa*) is a multi-tiered, high headdress.) Unfortunately, not much can be said about the time of composition of the BGŚS which mentions these details for the first time. It may very well be, as already its name indicates, a comparatively late addition to the BGS.

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8 Note that this text is found only in AB, and only in its late addition, *Pāñcikā* (!) 8. This part of AB was, in my opinion (cf. author in Festschrift W. Rau: *The case of the shattered head*, forthc.), no longer composed in the Panjab as the earlier parts (AB 1–5) were, but already in the East (Videha, etc.) This is the area in Northern India where the earliest large kingdoms originated, among which Magadha became the first Indian empire shortly after the end of the Vedic period. – Large kingdoms and empires require imperial rituals, and these were conveniently supplied (in AB 7–8) by the priests of the Aitareya school. Note that Aitareyins (Āśvāla, Śākalya) figure prominently already at the court of Janaka of Videha.

4. The history of the coronation rituals during the Middle Ages

If we now take a brief look at the formative period of the medieval and modern coronation rituals, that is, the first few centuries of our era, we find a new type of ritual, laid down and extensively described in a relatively early Purāṇa, the Viṣṇudharma-Purāṇa, 2.18 sqq., and an abbreviated form, taken from VDhPur., in the much later Agni-Purāṇa, 218 sq. Leaving aside, for the time being, a number of introductory rituals meant for appeasement of various gods and hostile forces, the main coronation ritual begins with the ‘bath’ (mṛttikasṇāṇa) of the king with various sorts of earth. Fortunately, there is a date ante quem for this rite: Already Varāhamihira (who wrote in ca. 500 A.D.) mentions it in his Yogayātra, Brhadāyātra, and in the Brhat Samhitā, ch. 59.8 sqq., when describing the bath of an image of a god (cf. below). This unction, that is the ritual besmearing of the king with 15 or 16 kinds of clay collected from various spots is, as even the modern newspapers stressed, of high significance:

The Rising Nepal (K.D. Singh, 20-2-75) describes them, in a modernistic way, as “symbolising the king’s awareness and affinity with the environment”; Gautam Bajra Bajracharya (as well as Han Su-Yin) only speak of purification. The number of the types of earth vary in these accounts from 10–13; Ram Raj Poudyal (Rising Nepal, 16-2-75) adds somewhat vaguely: “The use of dust even from the menial places justifies the responsibility of a ruler in the wider range. This also makes us realise our attachment to the soil . . .”

This apparently important rite, the mṛttikasṇāṇa, which is not found even in the late Vedic BGŚŚ, as well as several other peculiarities of the medieval coronation ritual are vouched for by Varāhamihira. This allows to posit a firm date of many of the subrites of the coronation ceremonies: First of all, Varāhamihira treats a ritual which is very similar to the Rājayābiṣēka, namely the yearly abhiṣēka performed in the month of Pauṣa. This is normally called pauṣābiṣēka, but sometimes erroneously also puspābiṣēka (see Mahes Raj Pant, JNRC I, 93–116). It appears under the name pusyasnāṇa in the Brhat Samhitā (47.1-87) and is very similar to the Rājayābiṣēka as described by the 17th century author Anantadeva (see table 3), in his Rājadharmakaustubha, a handbook on royal rites.
Table 3: Coronation Rituals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Varāhamihira (500 A.D.)</th>
<th>Anantadeva (ca. 1650 A.D.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brhatasamhitā: Pauṣābhiṣeka</td>
<td>Rājadharmakaustubha: Rājyābhiṣeka</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

first day: Šānti out of town, in a forest or a park (47.4–17)

next morning: abhiṣeka
- **Mandala** of earth, gods planets, rudras, mātrkās, lokapālas etc.
worship with ghee/fruit (47.18–33)
- western altar: worship with materials of the circle

- 4 pitchers in the corners of the altar, with threads round necks, filled with herbs, gems, water
- sarvausadha etc collected (47.34–41)
- two bull skins, lion and tiger skins spread on top: bhadrāsana
- king in unwashed (new) linen cloth; punyāha, mantras
- worship by the king; priest bathes him (under a blanket) with ghee from 8/28/108 pitchers
- bath with water (filled with fruits, flowers); mantra (47.55–70) with Indra's abhiṣeka
- king wears cotton dress; worships sword, umbrella, his deity
- puts on new ornament
- southern altar:
  - king sits on hides of bull, car, antelope, deer, lion, tiger
  - homa/omina
  - visarjana, dāna, freeing of prisoners

Varāhamihira's description corresponds, in its first part, to the Šānti (Aindrivinayaka-Šānti) of the Nepalese Rājyaabhiṣeka, and in its second part to the actual abhiṣeka day. The medieval Rājyaabhiṣeka can therefore be regarded as an extension of the simple, annually repeated pusaṭabhiṣeka of late Vedic times. The new framework then is the following one:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Varāhamihira</th>
<th>Medieval and Nepalese ritual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Šānti</td>
<td>Šānti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abhiṣeka</td>
<td>homa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visarjana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ātāhana of mandala gods</td>
<td>Ātāhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pūrvānga of Šānti day</td>
<td>pūrvānga of abhiṣeka day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aindrivinayakaśānti day</td>
<td>abhiṣeka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visarjana</td>
<td>visarjana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The origin of the *pusaı̃snāna* can be detected even in Vedic texts: first of all, the late⁴⁰ AV-Parishiṣṭas have it at AV Par. 5 in a very short form (cf. Anantadeva, p. 375). Yet even a middle Vedic text, AB 8.7. sqq., contains some early forms, i.e. the mahābhiseka, the abhisēka of Indra, and the punarabhiseka. In the last analysis, this kind of unction, a general Vedic abhisēka of kings, is found also in the ‘classical’ Vedic Rājasūya ritual.

Other parts of the medieval Rājyābhiseka can be traced in the various works of Varāhamihira as well:

Bṛhadāyatra 4.19-23 briefly describes a Nakṣatrayāga, which includes a ‘bath’ of the king with various types of earth (1.22): go-śṛṅgāgra-nadi-giri-valmika-taḍāka-mṛtsamāyuktatih toyaih snātvā nrpatihi... “The king having bathed in waters, where earth from the tip of a bull’s horn, from a river, a mountain, an ant-hill, a pond has been added”. This description is very similar to that of the medieval mṛttikasnāna, the ‘bath’ of the king with various types of earth.

A Nakṣatrayāga is included both in Varāhamihira’s and the medieval Rājyābhiseka (Anantadeva, ch. 42). Varāhamihira also describes a grahayajña (Bṛhadāyatra 20.1-20). The mantras used in this worship of the 5 planets agree only in part with those of the grahayajña of the Rājyābhiseka; the AV is important here, and quotations from the (lost) Paiṭhinasi-(Grhya)-Sutra of the Paippaladin are found. – In ch. 21 some details about the fire employed in the grahayajña are mentioned. The mantras agree, in contrary to those of the grahayajña, closely with texts employed in the Rājyābhiseka.

A combination of some of the rites mentioned just now can be detected in the ritual of the consecration of the image of a god, described in detail in Brhatasamhitā, ch. 59 (Calcutta ed., by J.V. Bhattacharya, ch. 60). This chapter is very important as it seems to be the earliest source for a mṛttikasnāna, albeit one of an image of a god and not the ‘bath’ of the king himself. It is, as it were, a mirror image of the later medieval ritual of the royal mṛttikasnāna.

**Coronation and installation of an image**

This observation opens the way for a better understanding of how both image worship and the medieval coronation ritual developed:

A quick comparison with the medieval coronation rituals, or of Varāhamihira’s own description of the closely related *pusaı̃bhiṣeke* of a king, at Brhatasamhitā, ch. 47, indicates that both the installation of a king and the installation of an image follow a nearly congruent pattern: bath (with various types of earth) – cleansing bath with

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⁴⁰ AV-Par. 68.1.31 mentions the Tūśāra, (a bad spelling for Tukhāra [x] = s/kh in North Indian pronunciation); they immigrated into Bactria only in ca. 140 B.C., and later moved on, as Kuśāna, to India.
water from a golden pot – *homa* (fire ritual) – *upavasatha*; – (and on the next day) *pradakṣiṇā* – *bali* – throwing of coins. Especially important are the identical rites accompanying the installation of Viṣṇu on the *pūrvāṅga* day of the coronation and that of the king on the actual coronation day (at the *mṛttika-snāna/aṅgapūjana*, see below). In fact, the relationship is, in the case of the kings of Nepal, Orissa, Kulu, etc., even more justified as they are ‘walking Viṣṇus’ here on Earth. The question, which should be asked then, is: which ritual was the original one, and which one of them influenced the other during the Middle Ages? The answer to the first question is fairly easy to give: While there were no images, no statues and no temples of gods in Vedic times, the *abhiṣeka* type of coronation ritual has been in evidence from the earliest Vedic texts onwards.

The royal ‘besprinkling’ and bath therefore seem to have been the source of the ‘royal bath’ given to a new image of a god. In fact, there are more ritual acts which point in this direction: the formal reception of a guest with an ārghya ceremony has been described by the relevant Vedic texts (in the Gṛhyaśūtras) as to be used when one receives a friend, a teacher, the king. The rite includes such elements as washing the feet of the guest, offering water, drink and food, presents, etc. – all these are well-known elements (upacāra) of *piṭṭha* ritual. How close both rituals are related is already expressed by TU I.11 (Kaṭh ŚīU 11) in the injunction: *atithidevo bhava*, “be one whose god is the guest”, a prescription which occurs in a series of rules of conduct, given by the teacher to the departing student.

The element of honouring of the guest is the central theme of the ārghya, as well as of the Rgvedic sacrifice (where the gods are the guests), and of medieval and modern Hindu *piṭṭha*. The word originally, (cf. Kātyāyana, Vārtt.), meant ‘honouring’, of kings, men, etc. As soon as image worship is in evidence, the elements of royal and guest worship are combined with that of worship of the particular god present in the image. It then receives all the honours and the treatment of a king: living in a palace (the temple), being served by (a host of) attendants, being offered guest worship (ārghya, *piṭṭha*), being entertained with dances, music, etc.

Varāhamihira’s description of the installation of an image mentioned above is one of the earliest dateable (ca. 500 A.D.) accounts of the combination of royal and temple rites. Some of the details in his account of image installation can serve to adumbrate the Rājyābhiṣeka of his time.

This brings up the other question, put earlier: In how far was the Rājyābhiṣeka ritual already developed, how far was its structure fixed by 500 A.D., and in how far was it performed by the royal priests (*purohita*)? The medieval texts (Anantadeva, the Nepalese Paddhatis) always stress that one should perform the *homa* and other rituals according to one’s own Vedic school (*śākhā*). On the other hand, Atharvavedic ritual is mentioned frequently in coronation handbooks. The Atharvavedins (or rather, the Śaunaka texts belonging to the AV) themselves stress that the king should only employ an Atharvavedin, and a *śaunaka-śākhā*ya at that, as his royal priest (*purohita*). This has only rarely been the case in real life; mostly other (Yajurveda) schools have supplied the *purobitas*. The AV Pariśṭas already contain
all the rituals necessary for the daily and yearly life of a king, including the abhisekas (prathama° = ‘coronation’; pusya° = the yearly ‘recharging’ of royal power.’) However, most of the AV-Par. texts are difficult to date; one of them, different from those on the coronation rituals, is indicative of a date post quem of 150 B.C.10 – It is well known that the Gupta emperors (and other kings)11 still performed the great Aśvamedha and other Vedic rituals fit for kings. The question which arises here, but which cannot be answered in detail in this short account of the coronation rites, is: was this due to the famous ‘Gupta revival’ of old ‘Hindu’ (or rather, Vedic) rituals, or were some of these ceremonies continued through the centuries of invasions and changes, from ca. 150 B.C to 300 A.D.? Privately, some Vedic rituals have been performed until today, but royal protection of Vedic ritual apparently was not always in evidence, and patronage certainly was not continuously exercised. It also is not conceivable that the Gupta emperors still went through the full Vedic ritual of Rājasya or Aśvamedha, with all the ritual injunctions and prohibitions accompanying these Śrauta rituals.12 For example, the patron of the sacrifice, i.e. the king, would necessarily have been an āhitagni, i.e. someone who has established the sacred Śrauta fires. Probably, the medieval kings took part only in the most important events. (In fact, all the texts only refer to some rājasūya mantras used in the rājyābhiṣekas.)

In any case, Varāhamihira provides our first dateable evidence for the actual use of the shorter pusya- and rājyābhiṣeka rituals. A later medieval form of the ritual is found in the (already Tantric) Kālikapurāṇa, ch. 86 (cf. M.R. Pant, JNRC I, p. 37). This text clearly mentions that the coronation (and the investiture of the crown prince) should be performed according to the Rājyābhiṣeka ritual; see 86.142 f.:

anena svaṇidhanena nṛpate(r) abhiṣecanam  (142)
yuva-rājyābhiṣekaṇ ca kuryād rājapurohitah  (143)

The text can roughly be dated (ante quem) according to its earliest MS, found in Nepal, which has a date N.S. 202 = 1081/2 A.D. (see: K.R. van Kooij, Worship of the goddess according to the Kālikapurāṇa, Leiden 1972, p. 3, ann. 4; cf. M.R. Pant, JNRC I, p. 205, ann. 27).

As far as Nepal is concerned, there is more medieval evidence from a number of inscriptions and from contemporary chronicles. The earliest one among them is the Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa inscription of 467 A.D., in which King Mānadeva briefly

11 From the other end of the subcontinent comes the evidence found in the commentary of the history book of Śri Lāṅkā, the Mahāvṃṣa which was composed in the 5th century A.D.; the commentary, however, dates only from the 11th century.

12 This would require, first of all, that the yajamāna (i.e. the king) was a twice-born (dvija), a member of one of the three higher varṇas, which frequently was not the case, e.g. with the Mauryas; cf. also the uncertain origin of the Gupta dynasty, etc. Only dvijas can be āhitagnis, that is men who have established the three holy fires of Śrauta ritual. Furthermore, the Vedic ritual imposes too many restrictions on the life style of the yajamāna to be adhered to meticulously by a ruling monarch.
mentions his own coronation. One of the earliest more detailed inscriptions is the Harigaon inscription commemorating the coronation of Aṃśuvarman in 605 A.D. Here, the horse, the elephant used during the ceremonies, and some officials taking part in the coronation are mentioned: Already Aṃśuvarman’s coronation thus conformed to part of Varāhamihira’s description made about 100 years earlier. A number of data and dates can be gleaned, for the period N.S. 267–305, from the Gopālā- and Kaiser-Vamsāvalis. The data have been collected and discussed by M.R. Pant (JNRC I, p. 98 sqq.). During this period, which corresponds to 1146/7–1185 A.D., the ritual is always called pusyābhiseka, while later on, the term paṭṭābhiseka or paṭṭabandhana occurs: According to Gautam Bajra Bajracharya a longer description of the rite is available for King Jayadeva (1256–58), who performed three paṭṭābhisekas: they apparently are the same as the yearly pusyābhiseka (= sāmvatsarābhiseka, punarabhiṣeka). This description, however, is not found in the Kaiser- or Gopālārājavamsālīs. The chronicle mentions pusyābhisekas also for the early Malla kings later than 1185, in fact up to ca. 1320 A.D., i.e. Jayārimalla’s coronation. Unfortunately no materials have yet been found for a Malla era coronation ritual, i.e. the period from ca. 1380–1768/9, neither in the National Archives nor in the private collections of the former Rājgurus of these kings, i.e. with some Rājopādhyāya families of Bhaktapur, Patan and Kathmandu. (Only some daily routines of the king are described in some Nevāri MSS, see above, introd.) The earliest evidence for the ritual, as performed today, therefore consists of Dravya Śāha’s small handbook and of the Paddhatis used by the priests now. There is some indication that the present handbook of the Pāṇḍe family goes back to an earlier one of the Āryan Rājgurus who were in office under the early Śāha Dynasty, until the Rānā regime, i.e. until the middle of the 19th century. An important witness in the development of the coronation ritual is the Paddhati of the Maharashtrian Anantadeva, a resident of Benares working for King Baja Bahādur Cānd of Almora (1638–78). It is called Rājadharmakaustubha and was used by Buddhissāgara Parajuli when he composed his Śubhārājyābhiseka-Vidhāna-Kārikā in 1975, and also when he and some other Pandits corrected the handwritten handbook that was used during the coronation by the royal purohitas of Nepal.

13 See R. Gnoli, Nepalese Inscriptions in Gupta Characters, Rome 1956; Dhanavajra Vairācārya, Licchāvikālāka Abhilekha, Kathmandu, V.S 2030, No. 2.
14 Dh. Bajrācārya, No. 72, p. 301; Gnoli No. 13.
15 The texts have been edited recently, though unfortunately not without mistakes and misprints, by Dh. Vajrācārya and K.P. Malla, as: The Gopālārājavamsāvalī, Nepal Research Centre Publications, No. 9, Wiesbaden (Steiner) 1985.
16 The Rising Nepal 20–275. I could not find this description in the chronicles.
17 Gopālavaṃśaivali, fol. 27.
18 See the list of manuscripts appended to the literature used in this paper.
19 Accidentally, I was witness to this: while working for the NGMPP at the National Archives, I once entered Mr. Parajuli’s office a few months before the coronation of
All these texts resemble each other in many points, but do also have a number of far-reaching divergencies.

5. The Tantric Framework

An important development of the coronation ritual during the Middle Ages was the introduction of a clearly marked framework consisting of a fire ritual (homa) into which many of the rites of the coronation have been placed. As a matter of fact, there are two homa frames: an outer one, the pūrvāṅga rites preceding the actual coronation day, and an inner one, the abhiṣeka day. It is remarkable that even in Dravya Śāha’s handbook of 1561, this framework is not yet in evidence. This might be coincidence, the handbook being so concise; a homa, however, is already mentioned in Varāhamihira’s pūṣyaṇāna.

The development of a homa frame, wrapped around the various types of ritual action is, in itself, nothing revolutionary. But it has made steady progress during the Middle Ages, absorbing the various kinds of pūjā developed for the seemingly unlimited number of gods and their manifestations that had come into existence since the end of the Vedic period, and providing, at the same time, a solemn background for them. The fire ritual (homa) is, given its hoary past and its status in the mind of the priests and the general population, a fitting brahmanical frame for many popular festivals and rites. Even Buddhist pūjā has not escaped this, and since at least ca. 800 A.D. homa has been in evidence in such outlying Buddhist countries as Bali, Japan, Tibet, and of course, in Nepal. The royal abhiṣeka ritual could, of course, not escape this trend, even more so, as it always had been performed by Brahmans (even in Buddhist countries like Cambodia, Thailand, Ceylon, etc.), and as some form of homa had always been performed in the course of a coronation ceremony. It is, however, only now, that the whole procedure actually is set into a complete framework. If we may judge from parallel developments in Hindu and Buddhist ritual, this inclusion of various types of pūjā took place during the

King Birendra, and found him and other Pandits of the Archives busy with correcting a handwritten modern „copy book“ (such as used in schools) which contained, as I noticed from certain of its mantras, the Rājyābhiṣeka rituals. Of course, the Pandits did not want me to look at the text, forgetting that the quite similar Rājadharmaṃkautubha had been published from Baroda some 40 years earlier. – Later I found a number of manuscripts dealing with the royal rituals among the films of the NGMPP (see the list appended below).

20 For the (pre-)Vedic origin of the device of using multiple frames, like the ones of frame stories, see author, 31st CISHAAN, Tokyo-Kyoto 1983, and Festschrift U. Schneider, 1987.

21 See Quaritch-Wales, Siamese State Ceremonies, p. 67 sqq. The Thai ritual which is probably based on Cambodian predecessors, is remarkably archaic. It does not contain, for example, the mṛtikāṇāna. The same was also told to me by a former Rājguru of Mayurbhanj, Orissa, in 1983.
'Purânic' period, or more correctly, during the time of increasing Tantric influence, – in absolute terms, during the second half of the 1st millennium A.D. Tantric homa is characterised by inserting, through meditative production (bhâvana) the ‘conventional’ deity (sâmanyâ), into the ‘everyday’ object of worship. For example, the mentally produced god Agni is infused into the fire, or Viṣṇu is made to enter into his image during the coronation rites. After this, the supernatural (lokottara) god is produced as well and both forms are united in the fire. It will be interesting to see, how much of this can be traced in the medieval coronation ritual. Although the Râjyâbhiśeka ritual clearly is of a rather composite sort, the official reporting always insisted on the term “Vedic rituals”, often a contradiction in se, cf. for example: “His Majesty King Birendra this morning consecrated according to Vedic rituals the pujas to be sent to Sri Pasupati, Sri Gujeswari and other holy shrines . . .” (The Rising Nepal, 15-2-75) – Guhyeswari is, of course, neither a Vedic goddess nor worshipped according to Vedic ritual. The term ‘Veda’ clearly was used as a rubber stamp to indicate ‘old/venerable’. In the present day context, this certainly had not done without purpose: throughout the Middle Ages, the Veda and its transmitters, the Vaidic Brahmins, had striven for the protection of, and themselves had been used by the various dynasties for their legitimation, especially in the case of new kings and dynasties. Though the king could not actively take part in most Vedic ceremonies, he gave grants to Brahmins to enable them to perform rituals in his name for his worldly benefit and for his religious merit. His purohita had to perform certain rites every day, and other rites at special occasions and on festival days throughout the year. This line of policy was followed by the Rânâ prime ministers, and also by King Mahendra, who – as my Brahmin colleagues at the National Archives used to complain – still had performed many yajñas while that had become “rare nowadays” (i.e. in the mid-Seventies). Outwardly that may have been correct. During the first few years of the reign of King Birendra a greater stress indeed seems to have been laid on ‘things Nepalese’ (like the encouragement given to the public performance of folk songs and dances, or a Tribhuvan University study of the language and culture of the Karnali region, etc.). Yet, not only due to political pressure, Sanskrit education was made free in the later Seventies, (including, for example, the cost for boarding at the Sanskrit school which in this way can attract more students). A Veda-Vedânga-Pâthaśalâ has been built and is now running near the Paśupatinâtha temple; the curriculum includes Veda teaching as well as the standard Sanskrit texts. Recently, some programmes were initiated that intend to further the role of Sanskrit and of the traditional ritual: Just now, a course in karmakânda has been started at the University and at some other campuses throughout the kingdom. Actually the tendency towards “Sanskritisation” is not new. It has been emerging from time to time during the past two hundred years of the reign of the Sâha dynasty over a unified Nepal: For example, King Prîthvi Nârâyana Sâha funded a centralised Agnihotra ritual near the ‘national shrine’ of Paśupatinâtha, installing
neither a Western (Kumāl) nor a local (Rājayopādhyāya) Brahmin but a ‘neutral’ Pūrbe to perform the rites (executed daily even now) according to the standard Northern Indian procedures which are almost purely Vedic and not of the local Tantric and mixed Vedic-Tantric variety. — Or, in the Gorandākhyo Malimluca, an anonymous, unedited short Sankrit poem written in 1819, the poet clearly regards Nepal as the standard-bearer of Hinduism in N.India against the British “robbers” (malimluca).22 Since that time, there has been a feeling in the country that the defense of Hinduism had passed into the hands of the king of Nepal. Even nowadays, it is often stressed that Nepal is “the only Hindu monarchy” left in the subcontinent. In this context, an overt emphasis of the Hindu character of the country is quite natural. This is, as always, best done by pointing out the ancient origins of present day customs, rites etc., in short, of the ‘Vedic’ nature of Hindu religion. Once, someone even wrote in The Rising Nepal that a woman, going to visit a temple of some Tantric deity was muttering her “Vedic prayers”, — while it has been forbidden for women to learn the Vedas since millenia.

Similarly, the coronation ritual was always called “Vedic” in official and semi-official news releases, though it in reality is of a very mixed nature: It has its roots in solemn and popular Vedic rites as well as in Purānic pūjā, and has then been overlaid by a Tantric frame that includes many larger or smaller rites of veneration of Tantric gods. Not to be forgotten are the more recent additions like the Nepalese ‘Scottish guard’, the Victorian state carriage, the international public relation events, including a (two minute) film made by a Dutch UNESCO team and the extensive news coverage by some foreign TV stations (BBC, NHK and NTV of Japan) of the more glamourous parts of the ceremonies.

In the sequel, a short analysis of the main rites constituting the Rājayāhşiţeka (and of their meaning) will be attempted. The medieval and recent Rājayāhşiţeka basically consists, as has been mentioned earlier, of two parts:

— the pūrvāṅga or the ‘first limb’, (vulgo for the sānti ritual and its pūrvāṅga day)
— the abhiśeka or ‘unction’, i.e. the ‘besprinkling’ rite proper (having its own pūrvāṅga day preceding the coronation day).

Both resemble each other very much as far as their structure is concerned; this will be evident from the scheme attached (see below, § 9).

6. The Rājayāhşiţeka according to modern sources

A list of events according to the available modern sources is given here for ready reference. Note that the structure of the ritual, as described earlier, does not become very obvious from the various books, newspaper accounts and in the official programme, as shown in table 4 (my additions are in [ ] brackets).

22 See M.R. Pant and B. Kölver, forthc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4: Rājyābhiṣeka Conspectus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coronation of King Mahendra 1956</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sources:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gautam Bajra Bajracharya (Rising Nepal) and Coronation book by A.C. Raj Bhandary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>[introductory rites]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16–2–1975: Vasanta Pañcamī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>[pūrvāṅga days]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two days before coronation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1–5–1956, 9.00h: pūrvāṅga day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dipa-pūjā, Gaṇeśa-pūjā, Kālāś-pūjā, Māṭrak-pūjā, Vāstuvedvā-pūjā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>[abhiṣeka day]</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–5–1956, 9.00h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Priest stayed overnight at Nasalchok snānamāṇḍapa, abhiṣekamāṇḍapa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>worship, maṅgalagāna while king sits on the throne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• abhiṣeka by four castes: 9.30h (&quot;ceremonial ablutions&quot;): satachidra-kalasa-abhiṣeka, strolger's abhiṣeka (= bhadrasana-abhiṣeka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 10.43–11.33h enthronement: main throne on the permanent platform; throne covered with skins; paṭṭa and crown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Abhiṣeka-Maṇḍapa: danas and prasāda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• visit to Gaṇeśa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• procession on elephant to Tundikhel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Darbar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• return of the Royal Palace (Narayan-hiti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the sequel, these rites will be treated in more detail; reference will be made to their earlier forms, the framework they are set in, and to some extent, an interpretation of at least the major ones among them will be attempted. A detailed description and interpretation must be postponed for a monograph on the subject.

7. Introductory rites

The introductory pūrvāṅga rites begin 11 days (or less) before the actual 'coronation' day. In the case of the coronation of King Birendra, they began eight days earlier, on February 14th. Their main function is the pacification and appeasement of various forces and gods. This is matched by a similar set at the very end of the abhiseka rites, though in this case, no actual framework (ot a 'ring' or 'box' type inclusion) of rituals is found in existence here. The reason for this lack probably is the change from man to god that takes place during the coronation: protection from various threatening forces, as intended at the beginning of the ritual, is no longer necessary for a 'walking Viṣṇu' here on Earth.

According to the Paddhati, the king should select the Brahmins who are to take part in the rites 11 days before the actual beginning of the whole set of rituals. At the same time, some of the surrounding additional rites, which do not belong to the coronation ritual proper, are to begin, like that of a mahārūdrābhiseka which is to be performed for 11 days by 11 Brahmins. This is a recitation of the ātārūdrī from the Yajurveda (in Nepal, the Vijasaneyi-Saṃhitā) accompanying the besprinkling of a āiva-līṅga. Other Vedic and post-Vedic 'side shows' are prescribed:

- Caṇḍisaptasatiṣṭuti: (9 Brahmins)
- Navagrahās, navamāṭrākās: 27,000 mantrastrōtra
- Mrtyunjaya: 1100 mantras (2 Brahmins)
- Sāmbasadāśivastotra: 108 times
- Aśokavinayaka: 20 times
- Ganeśasahasraṇāma (1 Brahmin)

Of more importance, also for an understanding of the ritual topography of the Nepalese coronation ceremonies, is the provision to honour by pūjā various goddesses who are assigned to particular locations within the Valley of Kathmandu and beyond. They are characterised by the epithets adhiṣṭhātri "ruler, queen" or virājyamānā "governing, being lord of ..." And they indeed are the Tantric overlords of individual towns of the Valley, and of the country beyond.

(a) Kathmandu Valley:
(not mentioned expressis verbis; and Kathmandu city).
Guhyeśvarī, Sundarī Devī, Dakṣiṇākāli
(b) Patan:
Pūrṇacanḍī, Siddhīlakṣmī, Bhuvaneśvari, Tārā Devī

(c) Principal deities (Mātṛkās) of various important places:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siddhīlakṣmī</td>
<td>of Bhaktapur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulajā Bhavānī</td>
<td>of Kāntipur = North Kathmandu,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of Lalitpur = Patan, and Bhaktapur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhairavī Devī</td>
<td>of Navakoṭ, the temporary capital of King Pṛthvi Nārāyana Śaha before the conquest of the three Malla Kingdoms of the Kathmandu Valley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumdāla Devī</td>
<td>of Viśālnagar, a former capital, to the North-West of Paśupatinātha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagalā Devī</td>
<td>of Lalitpur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ugracanḍī Devī</td>
<td>of Lalitpur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) A few locations outside the Valley:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahākālī</td>
<td>of Palpa, Central Nepal: at the Rudraveni in Laskarapradeśa, characterised as the svakula devī, the family goddess of the Śaha dynasty; she is to receive 2 dināra. (Note the ancient unit of coins!) The worship of this deity agrees with the Rājyābhisekavidhāna of Dravya Śaha, vs. 36.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorakṣakālī</td>
<td>of Gorkhā (Gorakṣa) and Pharpinge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dakṣinakālī</td>
<td>described as the iṣṭadevatā, the personally selected goddess of the king</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to note that both the kuladevatā as well as the iṣṭadevatā still indicate a close connection with Central Nepal, the homeland of the dynasty after ca. 1550 A.D. This relation is further emphasised by the worship of some of the following deities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manahkīmanā Devī</td>
<td>of Gorkhā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guru Gorakṣanātha</td>
<td>of Gorkhā. This is the only male god included here: The famous Gorakṣanātha is something like a patron of Gorkhā and the Gorkhā state.-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Added, as an afterthought, are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhāgavati</td>
<td>of Sallyan, in Central Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asokavināyaka</td>
<td>at Kāśṭhamaṅḍapa: the famous Ganeśa of Maru Ṭol, just North of the Kāśṭhamaṅḍapa building next to the Hanuman Dhoka Palace, which was also visited by the king after the coronation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the locations of these goddesses (and the two gods) are identified on a map of Nepal, they form the following pattern:
It is of interest that, apparently, there are only two ritual centres for the royal family, the old one of Gorkha-Sallyan-Palpa and the new one of Kathmandu and surroundings. Neither the West (the old Malla Kingdom of Jumla) nor the East, conquered towards the end of the 18th century (i.e. the Kiranti area of the Rais, Limbus, Sherpas, Darjeeling, etc.) seem to be of importance in this context.

8. The pūrvāṅga days (aindrīvināyaka-śānti)

As part of the introductory rites, in addition to the recitation by Brahmins of various mantras mentioned above, the King and the Queen had to touch the objects, which were later to be used in the ceremonies. This took place on Febr. 14, at 10 a.m., at the Royal Palace. The preliminaries having commenced in this way, the actual ritual began a week later, with the pūrvāṅga rituals of the aindrīśānti (Friday, 21st of Febr., 10 a.m.), at Mūlchok, the “main” courtyard of the old, Malla time royal palace of Hanuman Dhoka, in Central Kathmandu. This first day of the pūrvāṅga rites of the aindrīvināyakaśānti comprises:

dipa-pūjā

ganēṣa-pūjā

vināyaka/ambikā/indra-pūjā

pūrvakalāśa (varuṇa)-pūjā

grah(maṇḍala)-homa

vāstu-pūjā

abhyātana-homa

---

23 Niels Gutschow pointed out to me that the list reflects the origins and the successive alliances and conquests of the Śāha dynasty.
i.e. the honouring of the ritual lamp, of god Gaṇeśa, remover of all obstacles, of his form Vināyaka, of the mother goddesses, and most important: the worship of Indra, king of the 33 gods, and that of Varuṇa, lord of the Vedic Āditya gods and later on, god of the ocean. After this, the framework of homa fire ritual begins; it includes a vāstu-pūjā, the honouring the deities of the ground where the rite takes place.

The actual Vināyaka and Aindriśanti day comprise:

- a short pūjā of the gods honoured before (dīpa – . . . etc.)
- homa
- kalaśābhiṣeka
- pūrṇahuti
- balis for ksetrapāla, etc.
- abhiṣeka (aindrī)
- ghrūchayā (omina)
- daksinā, prasāda

The 17th century author Anantadeva in his Rajadharmakaustubha and the Nepalese Paddhati differ slightly in the number of days set out for the ritual as well as in the general scheme, though there is a great deal of coincidence in detail, which can be traced back to Paurāṇic injunctions (see table 5).

Table 5: Rājyābhiṣeka according to different sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Nepalese Paddhati (ca. 1775 A.D.?)</th>
<th>Anantadeva’s Prayoga (ca. 1650 A.D.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.2.1975</td>
<td>Japa</td>
<td>Aghamarṣaṇa-Japa (60, 30 or 7 days)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mahārudrabhiṣeka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candraśaptaśati</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Navagraha, Māṭkā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mṛtyuṇjaya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Śambhasadāśiva</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asokavibhāṣaka</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.2.1975</td>
<td>Rājyābhiṣeka rituals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.2.1975</td>
<td>pūrvāṅga day</td>
<td>1: Aindrī, Agniṣṭhāpana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.2.1975</td>
<td>aindrīvināyakaśānti (uttarāṅga)</td>
<td>2: Asīnayāga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>aindrī-abhiṣeka</td>
<td>3: Grahayāga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4: Nakṣatrayāga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5: Nṛṣṭrīyāga (at night)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6: aindrīśanti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.2.1975</td>
<td>actual coronation:</td>
<td>7: abhiṣeka day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.2.1975</td>
<td>pūrvāṅga day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>abhiṣeka („coronation“) uttarāṅga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(on abhiṣeka day itself)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When the structure of the pūrvāṅga (śānti) and the abhiṣeka days is analysed, the ‘ring composition’, or, in other terms, a framework consisting of various frames inserted within other frames, is clearly in evidence: An outermost frame is provided by the worship of the (main) pitcher (kalaśa), into which the god (Viṣṇu) is to be called; it ends only with the sending away of the god(s) (devavisarjana) towards the very end of the ritual.

Kalaśa worship is quite ancient, and certainly older than commonly thought; it is not an innovation of Purānic pūjā ritual; see already Patañjali, Mahābhāṣya, introduction, p. 3–4 (cf. S. Einoo, IIJ 25, p. 12) where a circle of red pots is apparently used in a ritual. Actually the concept seems to be older than Patañjali: already in the Vedic Śrāddha ceremonies the ancestors are thought to be present in the water pitchers on the offering ground that contain drinking water for them, see ĀsvGS 4.7.15–16. (Note also that a man who drinks from the ‘remnants’ of the water in these pots will produce a son.)

Inside this frame, and therefore taking place in the presence of the god, is set the frame of the fire ritual (homa). This comprises a great number of offerings of ghee that are made into the fire. Sometimes they are said to amount to a thousand. These offerings, too, are part of yet another frame structure, arranged, as is evident by the words used, in concentrical circles (maṇḍala): the outer ones constitute the circle of the planets; inside this, the circle of the forces governing the ground (vāstu- maṇḍala), the deities of the offering hut (maṇḍapa-devatā), and, finally, the innermost central part: the main deity (mūladevatā). This is Viṣṇu who is called both into his pitcher (kalaśa) for the period of the ritual, as well as into his image (see below). It is to this deity that a number of offerings, called the “main” ones (pradhāna-homa), are made. They take place after the veneration of Agni, the god of Fire, with the abhyātana-homas.

Again, another frame is added, representing the actual calling of Viṣṇu to the offering ground and then, making him present in his statue that is put on a tray. This frame surrounds the one of the homas as well as that of the kalaśa worship. The insertion of these Viṣṇu rituals during the Pūrvāṅga portion of the main coronation day is of great, if somewhat hidden importance: its echo, or better, its mirror image is found on the main coronation (abhiseka) day: Whatever is now being performed with the statue of Viṣṇu will later be repeated with the king (see table 6).

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24 For kalaśa worship cf. also the Pravargya ritual (ṬĀ 4–5, KaṭhĀ, SB 14.1–3). The pravargya vessel represents the head of Rudra or of the Sun, but it is not regarded as the receptacle of gods.
Table 6: *sthāpana* of Viṣṇu

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>making Viṣṇu present in the statue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kalaiśa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- homa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manḍala’s: graha-mandala (planets)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vāstu-mandala (forces of the offering ground)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manḍapa-devatās (gods of the offering hut)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mūla-devatā: Viṣṇu (main deity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- abhyātana-homa to Agni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- pradhāna-homa to Viṣṇu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deva-visarjana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. The *pūrvāṅga* days: *sthāpana* of Viṣṇu

After arranging various types of *kalaśas* (see below), the priests sit down in the *snānasāla*, the bathing hut, call the *sāmānaya* god and perform the Viṣṇupūjā. This injunction of the Paddhatis alone is apt to give away the ‘secret’ of the two main coronation days: The *sāmānaya* god is the “conventional” deity, worshipped in ‘everyday’ *pūjās*; in Tantric ritual it usually is unified with the *lokottara*, the secret Tantric form of the deity.

How do the priests proceed here? In the bathing hut, they assemble 16 kinds of earth, taken from the top of a mountain, from an ant hill, etc. (see below); then they put down the plate with water that is used in the ritual honouring of a guest (*argha*), and make the *ānikuśa* (hook) *mudrās*, i.e. those hand movements with which a god is attracted during Tantric worship. Then they transform this water into “immortal” (*amṛta*) water. Only then, they start the actual Viṣṇupūjā, by putting down the vessel (*kalaśa*) which is to receive Viṣṇu; they pour water into it, and bring a statue of Viṣṇu on “some kind of plate”. They mentally produce fire to heat the water by which the statue is to be washed, pour the five *amṛtas* (of milk, etc.) and cold water, and finally insert life into the statue with Tantric mantras like *om om hrim, krom; śrīviṣṇoh prāṇah iha prāṇah*. The installation (*sthāpana*) of Viṣṇu is completed in this way. The formal *āvāhana*, the calling of Viṣṇu into his statue, follows:

*om āgaccha bhagavan Viṣṇo mura-nāmārisūdana imām mayā krtām pūjām grhāṇa surasattama*

Then the usual actions (*upacāra*) of *pūjā* are performed: *pādyā, ārghya, ācamana, pañcāmṛta, suddhodaka, yañopavita, ācamaniya, vastra-yuga, ācamana, ābharana, candana, sindura, piśṭaka, yavatilākṣata, puṣpa, mālya.*

Then begins the *āṅga-pūjā*, “the honouring of the limbs”. The various parts of the body of Viṣṇu that are visible in his statue are venerated, beginning with the feet, and followed, in an upward movement, by that of the ankles, knees, etc. All
together, 16 parts of the body of Viṣṇu are worshipped, largely the same as those in the king’s mṛttikasāna on the following day. It is here that the parallelism between both rites becomes most obvious, though the order of the āṅgas is reversed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Viṣṇu</th>
<th>(2) King</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[pājayāmi:]</td>
<td>sarvāṅgāni:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. pāda</td>
<td>16. sarvāṅgāni:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. jānuni</td>
<td>all limbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. gulphau</td>
<td>15. karadvayam/pāda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. urū</td>
<td>14. janghe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. kaṭim</td>
<td>13. jānuni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. gubham</td>
<td>12. urū</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. nabhim</td>
<td>11. kaṭim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. udaram</td>
<td>10. pārīve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. brdayam</td>
<td>9. udaram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. kanṭham</td>
<td>8. prstham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. baḥun</td>
<td>7. vānam bhujam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. mukham</td>
<td>6. daksinam bhujam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. netre</td>
<td>5. brdayam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. laḷaṭam</td>
<td>4. grōam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. sīrah</td>
<td>3. mukham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. sarvāṅgām</td>
<td>2. karau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(top of) head</td>
<td>1. sīrah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all limbs</td>
<td>(16. sarvāṅgāni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart from the strange but obvious mistake of inserting “hands” for “feet” in one of the Paddhatis (and interestingly, in King Dravya Śāha’s handbook!), the two lists are largely parallel. Unfortunately, the Paddhatis do not say what is actually done while worshipping the limbs of Viṣṇu. Most probably, they are smeared with the 16 kinds of earth, as is also done the next day in case of the king, in reverse order. Note, however, that no. 16 (sarvāṅgam “all limbs”) starts the royal mṛttikasāna, just where it left off with Viṣṇu, and it only then continues in reverse order: It begins with the most prominent and respected part of the body, the head (cf. already RV 10.90, the Puruṣa hymn; the feet are the lowliest parts of the body). The reverse order may also have been intended as to start, in case of the king, his investiture of universal power from ‘above’, from the mountains, from Viṣṇu’s heaven.

Once this parallelism is observed, the division of the actual abhiṣeka ceremony into two days receives a deeper significance: On the first day Viṣṇu is made present in the kālāsa and then in the statue (which is bathed with waters, etc.). The god remains present until the next day, the actual abhiṣeka day, for at the end of the first

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25 Similar lists are also found in literature, see R. Hueckstedt, IJ 29, 1986, pp. 301 sqq. and his dissertation, The style of Bāna, New York (University Press of America), 1985, pp. 81 sqq.
(pūrvāṅga) day of the two 'coronation' (rājyabhiseka) days, there is no visarjana, no 'sending away' of the deity. Instead, he and the other gods (e.g. of the mandapa) are kept company by the priests during the night, and the next morning a short pūjā for these gods follows. Immediately afterwards the rituals concerned with the pūrvasimhāsana and the mṛttikasāna, the ritual besmearing of the king, take place, and only after that follow the unction (abhiseka), enthronement, and the actual 'coronation'. However, it is during the mṛttikasāna, the besmearing with earth, that the king, by virtue of the reverse repetition of the aṅgapūjā of Viṣṇu, is gradually transformed into a 'walking Viṣṇu'.

This transformation is further strengthened by other ritual actions, to be described later (abhiseka, etc.). The method of identification with Viṣṇu is recognizable in Varāhamihira's Brhat Samhita, quoted earlier, and this means that already around 500 A.D. both the installation of a statue of a god and the formal installation of the king show the same major traits. In this way, the seemingly automatic superfluous and 'ritualistic' introduction of a pūrvāṅga day for the abhiseka ritual finds a deeper significance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pūrvāṅga day:</th>
<th>calling into kālaśa and figure of Viṣṇu; installation and pūjā of Viṣṇu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>abhiseka day:</td>
<td>coming, installation and honouring of the king = Viṣṇu by besmearing, sprinkling, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>visarjana of Viṣṇu</td>
<td>reign of the king as preserver of the realm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>death of the king (and return of Viṣṇu? viz. to cycle of rebirth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identification process by besmearing, besprinkling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The central abhiseka day is thus framed by the calling and sending away of Viṣṇu, just it was surrounded in the older, classical Vedic ritual by the one-year Rājāsūya sacrifice. However, the end now is open: The reign of the king as Viṣṇu has now begun, and will end only with his demise.

At this juncture, the question will arise how the crown prince (yuvarājyabhiseka), or a few decades ago, the Rāṇā Prime Minister, or theoretically, some usurper can be crowned: in what way and why should the presence of Viṣṇu descend on him? Here, the problem rises between the older (Upaniṣadic) concept of inheriting one's father's vital functions at the time of his death (prāṇa, etc.), and on the other hand, the later Hindu ideas about karma and rebirth. During the pūjā of Viṣṇu on the 27 This is not the place to discuss in detail the royal cremation rituals. It may be mentioned however, that during the cremation of a Nepalese king, a part of his skull is ground and made into a paste that is eaten by a Brahmin. This man receives presents, some of the belongings of the late king and apparently also his bad karma; he then is driven out of the Valley in scape goat fashion. This still took place in 1972, after the death of King Mahendra, but in this case, the Bhaṭṭa Brahmin in question later returned to the Valley.
pūrvaṅga day, even for this eventuality, a mantra is provided: After the angapūjā of Viṣṇu, some more upacāras had followed, namely dhūpa, dipa, naivedya, punarācana, phalanaivedya, ācamaṇīya, karodvartana, tambula, nārikela-phala, upāyanadrayya, nirajana, karpūra-nirajana, pradaksīna, namaskāra, chattra-cāmara-vajanādī-rājopacāra, puspānjali, and prārthanā. It is during one of these, the pradaksīna rite, that a mantra is used which asks for the destruction of all evil accumulated (in this? and) in earlier births:

yāñi kāṇi ca pāpāni janmāntarakṛtāni ca
tāni-tāni prānāścāntu pradaksīṇa-pade pade.

'The evil (deeds) which have been committed in other births, all those shall be destroyed at each step of the circumambulation'.

The one to become king on the next day already here is freed of 'sin'; he is absolutely devoid of bad karma, and thus is fit to receive (a part of) Viṣṇu, to become a 'walking Viṣṇu', a kind of avatāra himself.

Another look at the structure of these two coronation days, will be useful now: When one takes both days as a whole, just like the Aindrīvināyakaśānti and its pūrvaṅga day, the abhiṣeka, mṛttikasnāna etc. appear even more as the innermost frame of the whole ritual, inserted into a number of other frames (see table 7).

Table 7: Comparison of coronation days (śānti and abhiṣeka)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>śānti days</th>
<th>coronation (abhiṣeka) days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pūrvaṅga</td>
<td>pūrvaṅga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dipa, Gaṇeśa</td>
<td>dipa, Gaṇeśa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalaśa</td>
<td>kalaśa (śāmanya)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>homa (śāmanya)</td>
<td>homa (uparāṅga)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uttarāṅgāni</td>
<td>(homa cndt.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kalaśābhiṣeka</td>
<td>mṛttikasnāna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aindrābhiṣeka</td>
<td>śrōhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pūrṇābhi</td>
<td>patā/ mukūtabandhana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dānas</td>
<td>abhiṣekas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daksiṇā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>devavaisarjana</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same applies to the kalaśa- and aindrī-abhiṣeka in the Aindrīvināyakaśānti, only that here, the insertion is labelled as uttarāṅga right away.

Comparatively speaking, two old features of Vedic ritual have been preserved fairly well here: The solemn, śrūta type aindrābhiṣeka known from the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa of the Rgveda and the pusya/ekarājābhiṣeka of the Kauśika-Sūtra of the
Atharvaveda. They are, as will be seen, expanded by elements from the classical Vedic Rājasūya ritual of the Yajurveda.

The so-called pūrvānga rites, or more correctly: the aindrīśānti plus its own pūrvānga day, may, at first sight, seemed to form a ‘useless’ duplication of the actual coronation ritual. One important aspect of this “introductory” ritual, namely the gradual transformation, in the post-Vedic mṛttikasāna, of the king into a ‘walking Viṣṇu’ has just been outlined. However, as the current name pūrvānga already indicates, the pūrva rites are regarded as the rites leading up to, and preceding quite naturally, the actual coronation days. One may also view them as a general preparation of the yajamāna, i.e. the king, for the solemn coronation ritual. There is, however, more to it:

The designation aindrīśānti, aindrīkābhiseka immediately suggests a connection with Indra, the lord of the gods. This, indeed, is the theme of the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa in its discussion of the aindra-mahābhiseka (AB 8.12). Applying this ritual, Indra had become the king of the gods: the rite constitutes the mythical pattern on which the mahābhiseka of kings (AB 8.15 sqq.) is built. However, the aindrī-abhiseka in the Nepalese Paddhati uses mantras from RV and AV for the actual unction (abhiseka), namely RV 9.83.1, RV 10.107.4; AV 7.115 and AV 1.33. Of these, only the first one is also found in AB (1.20.4, 7.9.3), but there is no connection with the abhiseka. Though the Nepalese aindrī-abhiseka is reminiscent of the aindra-mahābhiseka stemming from the Rgvedic school of the Aitareyins, no direct line of development with AB can be established. (Note that the same applies to the Thai form of this subrite: a completely new surrounding has been created, including the building of a replica of the churning of the ocean by the gods and the Asuras).

Yet the ‘double’ abhiseka, the one on the śānti day (aindri-abhiseka) and the one on the abhiseka day itself, are a combination of the mythical Indra abhiseka and the brief, more ‘practical’ royal abhiseka, as it had been performed traditionally already in (Rg)vedic times. In other words, the two abhisekas are a combination of the late, post-Rgvedic aindra-mahābhiseka of the Rgveda school of the Aitareyins (AB) with the more popular Atharvavedic / Yajurvedic abhisekas (Kauś., AV Par., viz. BGSS), which also includes a few mantras from the solemn Śrauta Rājasūya, (itself only a priestly solemnisation of an older, more simple abhiseka rite).

The king, therefore, first receives, by way of preparation, the mythical aindrī-abhiseka and with it the powers of Indra, the lord of gods. Then, on the actual abhiseka day, he also receives the powers inherent in the waters of 17 streams or various kinds of ponds, rivers, oceans etc. (see below), together with the powers of Varuṇa, the lord of the (Āditya) gods. In addition, he had, early on the abhiseka day, also received the powers and the very personality of Viṣṇu during the mṛttikasāna; he had, in fact, become an avatāra of Viṣṇu. It is interesting to note that this combination of divine powers provides the king, from a Vedic point of view, with both the heroic force of Indra and with the universal regulatory and moral power of Varuṇa, – both of whom are kings of the gods. The Purāṇic part of
the ritual adds the power and even (part of) the person of one of the major Hindu
gods, of Viṣṇu, the preserver of this world.
Needless to say, this cumulative combination of powers will serve the king in his
future reign and will guard him against all kinds of unforeseen dangers and
calamities.

10. The abhiṣeka days (Rājyābhiṣeka)

The actual coronation day commences, as has been mentioned above (§ 9), with a
short pūjā. The king now enters the coronation ground prepared for the abhiṣeka
and the coronation, and while he sits on the prācīna-simhāsana, the priests begin an
extremely long series of offerings into the fire, called śarma-varma-gaṇādi-
pradhāna-homa, “the main offerings made into the fire by the Brahmins, Vaiṣyas,
etc.”

They are too long and intricate to be treated here in detail. While these offerings
take place, one of the main features of the medieval coronation ritual, the “bath
with (various types of) earth” (mrītikasnāna), is inserted and performed inside the
Royal Palace of Hanuman Dhoka (see below).

11. The besmearing with earth (mrītikasnāna)

This rite is regarded by the authorities as one of the most important parts of the
coronation ceremony. Various types of earth are smeared on the body of the king in
a certain order (see table 8).
The Nepāli account of Nagendra Sharma in Gorkhāpattra leaves out No. 16, and
substitutes as no. 3: goru-ko simha-ko māto nidhāra-mā “earth from the horn (?)
(śrīga) of a bull on the forehead”; it consequently also leaves out no. 7; in the
English version (The Rising Nepal, 18-2-75) all of this is shortened to: “. . . earth
brought from 13 (!) different elevations, right from the top of a mountain to the
bottom of the sea.”

The symbolic meaning of these actions is quite obvious: On the level of ritual
topography, a relation between the king and the mountains, rivers, lakes, and the
earth of his realm is established. As far as the society is concerned, this is echoed
later on in the ritual by the abhiṣeka executed by the four main castes (varna). Such
indeed is the interpretation of some modern accounts, like that of Nagendra Sharma
in The Rising Nepal. On the religious level, the ritual besmearing of various parts of
the body of the king with 16 kinds of earth would mean that he becomes imbued
with the power of the location from which the earth had been taken. Indeed, the
selection is not a haphazard one: The earth from the top of a mountain is put on the
Table 8: Besmearing with earth (mṛttikasāna)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>earth from</th>
<th>smeared on</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. top of a mountain</td>
<td>the head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. an anthill</td>
<td>the ears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. a Viṣṇu temple</td>
<td>the mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. an Indra pole</td>
<td>the neck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. the king's palace</td>
<td>the heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. thrown up by the tooth</td>
<td>the right arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of an elephant</td>
<td>the left arm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. thrown up by the horn</td>
<td>the beck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of a bull</td>
<td>the belly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. a pond</td>
<td>the ribs/breast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. confluence of rivers</td>
<td>the loins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. two streams</td>
<td>the thighs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. door of acourtesan</td>
<td>the knees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. an elephant stable</td>
<td>the shanks and shins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. a cow stable</td>
<td>the hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. a horse stable</td>
<td>all limbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. thrown up by the wheels</td>
<td>sarvamṛdhbhīḥ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of a chariot</td>
<td>sarvāṅgāṇi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. all sorts of earth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

highest part of a man, his head. He is connected with the strength of a bull and an elephant when earth thrown up by them is put on his arms, and likewise, his thighs, knees, or shanks, receive the strength of elephants, bulls, and horses. His hearing – very important for a monarch who has to listen to accounts of all sorts and to make decisions on that indirect basis only, – are strengthened with the earth of a hill made by white ants. “The earth has ears” is a Vedic proverb, based on the ear-like shape of ant hills: It serves as a proper warning to those who plot against the king; his ‘eyes’ and ‘ears’ will be everywhere. The earth taken from the doorstep of a courtesan, too, has its purpose: it will strengthen potency and procreativity. Some of the actions prescribed are not obvious at first: the earth from an Indra temple viz. his place of worship refer to an Indra pole (as indeed mentioned in the Paddhati). This is an old symbol of the cosmic tree connecting heaven and earth, which only in the Kathmandu Valley is still erected during the Indrajātṛā festival. Strong as such pole, apparently, the king’s neck should become. Other prescriptions are of a more obscure type. Perhaps the earth thrown up by chariot wheels applied
to the hands/feet refers to the ‘setting in motion of the wheel’ of imperial (cakravartin) overlordship. One could also think of a slightly different symbolism: During the preparations for the royal or imperial Āsvamedha sacrifice, the freely moving horse and the chariots of the warriors accompanying him must not be impeded by the forces of any neighbouring king: otherwise they would have to be fought and subdued. In the terms of medieval religion, these ceremonies could mean the identification of the king – who soon will be Viṣṇu incarnate, – with the earth, becoming a sort of cosmic purusa, or his becoming the lord and husband of the Earth, as is typical for Purānic mythology.

12. The composition of the medieval ritual

This is the place, perhaps, to consider the ideas that moved the person who composed the early medieval form and the priest who later on compiled the Nepalese form of the royal abhiṣeka rituals: What did they wish to accomplish, which effects did they want to reach and what did they consider essential for the successful installation and crowning of a king? First of all, it should be pointed out, that the older sources (Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata, the dramas of Bhāsa, etc.) do not mention the mantras used in the ceremony but only describe the ritual to some extent or allude to its various sub-rites and to the materials used. Varāhamihira who wrote in ca. 500 A.D. does mention a few mantras, but leaves, – just as later sources – the actual proceedings, including the mantras which are to be employed, to the local practise of the Vedic School to which the priest performing the Rājyaabhiṣeka belongs. Except for those mantras prescribed in the Purāṇas, the actual choice will therefore have been made by the compiler of the Nepalese ritual. Name, time and place of this person are unknown. Place and time can, however, be narrowed down to some extent. The compiler had, as can easily be established by his selection of Vedic mantras, a good knowledge of the Rgveda, the Vājasaneyi-Samhitā of the White Yajurveda, and of the Śaunaka school of the Atharvaveda. Actually, wherever the mantras prescribed by the Purāṇas leave it open to the priest to use one of the five or more slightly variant versions of Yajurvedic mantras (among the related Śākhās or other Vedic Schools), the Paddhatis always have selected the Mādhyandina version of the Vājasaneyi text. Similarly, the Atharvaveda mantras quoted always follow the Śaunaka and never the Paippalāda version. Both items provide important evidence for the time and the location of the compiler of the Nepalese ritual: The Vājasaneyi texts have long since been prevalent in Northern India, from the Panjab to Bengal and from the Himalayas to the Vindhya and into Gujarat. (Only a few dispersed ‘colonies’ of Vājasaneyins are found in South India, e.g., in Cola-maṇḍala.) Equally, Śaunaka texts have, after ca. 1000
A.D., only been found in North India: with Gujarat as the centre of dispersion, this school had a few offshoots in Maharashtra (ca. 1730 A.D. and later) and at Benares (in the last few centuries).\textsuperscript{28} Unless the Nepalese kings had employed an emigrated Maharashtrian Brahmin who composed their ritual, (as the Cānd dynasty of Almora did), the author of the text must have come from some place in North India: The most likely location is Benares, a town where people from all over India reside. Especially learned Brahmins live there; note that Anantadeva, the compiler of the Cānd ritual also resided there.

As for the time of the composition: The combination of Saunaka and Mādhyandina Vājasaneyi texts points to a time of 1000/1200 A.D. or later. Before and well into this period, it was the Paippalāda school of Atharvaveda and not the texts of the Saunaka Śākhā that had been known in Gujarat (as well as in Bengal during the Pāla/Sena period).\textsuperscript{29} If the present Paddhatis actually are based on an older one of the Rājgurus of the Ārjyal family, who belong to the Pūrbe group of Brahmins, one could expect a general ‘Eastern’, i.e., Northern Indian or Bengali origin of the text: the Pūrbe are a group of more recent (1410 A.D. +) immigrants into the Valley. They assumed the office of purohita only after the conquest of the Kathmandu Valley (1767/68 A.D.) by the Śāha dynasty. The earlier Rājgurus of the Śāha were the Pāṇḍes of the Kumai group. Their substitution by Pūrbe Brahmins coincides with the establishment of an official Agnihotra ritual at Paśupatinātha which even today is performed by a Pūrbe Brahmin. At that time, the Valley had close relations with Benares, which had already been established under the later Malla kings. The composition of the present Paddhati should therefore be assumed to have taken place around 1775 A.D., the date of the accession to the throne of Pratāpa Simha Śāha, the son of Prthvī Nārayaṇa Śāha, or perhaps even later. The Pūrbe purohita concerned would then have used North Indian (Benares) traditions, just as his group did in the case of the official Agnihotra. The compiler of the Rājābhiṣeka ritual is indeed remarkably close to the work of Anantadeva, who wrote at Benares about a century earlier. The actual procedure of composition, however, remains unclear: Anantadeva, too, does not mention all the mantras to be used at the ceremonies. To supply them must have been the duty of the respective Rājguru or purohita. Actually, a process of ‘ritualistic discussion’ – so typical for the religious traditions of the subcontinent – can be noticed as going on even now: Quite accidentally, I witnessed how Buddhisāgara Parijuli was, together with some other Pandits, discussing and correcting the text to be used in the ceremony, with the help of Anantadeva’s Rājadharmakaustubha and the Hoshiarpur edition of the Atharvaveda. A number of

\textsuperscript{28} About the same time, the Bhaktapur king Bhūpatindra Malla had an Atharvāra manuscript transcribed, see author, Vishveshvaranand Indological Journal, Vol. XII, 1974, p. 472 sqq. – A direct transfer of ritual details from Malla ritual, however, is not likely; the Gorkhā kings will have had their own Rājgurus and Rājupurohitis.

\textsuperscript{29} For details, see, for the time being, Supplement VI, 1983, ZDMG 1985, pp. 256 sqq.
notes in the Paddhatis refer to texts like the Nitimayūkha or the ‘old Paddhati’ of the former Rājgurus, to Varāhamihira etc. – Thus a Pūrbe purohita of ca. 1775 A.D., even though he might largely have followed Viramitra’s Nibandha (Viramitrodaya) or Anantadeva’s handbook, must have made a choice, together with his colleagues, the astrologer, the Rājguru, etc., based on similar mimāṃsā-like discussions. At the present state of our knowledge we cannot know exactly what we have before us: The choice of the Pūrbe purohita or the earlier one of a late medieval compiler. A tenuous link with an earlier, (now lost?) handbook of the Gorkhā kings (close to Dravya Śāha’s), can, perhaps be established because of the inclusion of the (Tantric) Mṛtyuṇjaya texts and the main mantra taken from AB, both of which are mentioned in the Abhiṣeka-vidhāna of Dravya Śāha, reported to have been written in 1561 A.D.. The Mṛtyuṇjaya mantras are not mentioned by Anantadeva in his work of ca. 1650 A.D.; (he has, however, the AB quotation, see p. 345).

In any case, the present Paddhati is the product of a long evolution, which had been subject to various influences; it apparently is not based on a fixed medieval text that was transmitted in family tradition or by the line of tradition from teacher to pupil, as common with other Vedic or scientific texts (paramparā).

How then, did the compiler proceed in selecting the mantras meant to fit the actions performed in the medieval ritual, which more or less had been established already by the time of Varāhamihira; cf. also the commentator (p. 306; ca. 11th cent.) of the Ceylonese Mahāvamsa. In general, just as in the classical Vedic ritual, the mantras used and selected from various Vedic texts contain words or sentences which fit more or less exactly the actions performed at the same time that the each mantra is spoken.

The mantras used in the ritual besmearing of the king with 16 kinds of earth, clearly were selected by someone who knew the Rgveda and Śaunaka Atharvaveda well: he found the Atharva-like Rgveda hymn 10.161, which mentions the wish for a long life of 100 years and effects something like a new birth of the person for whom it is spoken, but which in reality is directed against the rājayaksma, a severe illness. This however, he thought fit to be used at a ceremony the aim of which was to purify the king’s body and also to identify it with that of Viṣṇu and the various parts of the earth.30

Such a selection clearly indicates a poor understanding of the Rgveda text, which is, however, not surprising for this late period. Even in the middle or late Vedic period, mantras selected to be recited at certain rituals did not always convey exactly the

30 Such a slightly improper use of Rgvedic hymns is not unusual even in Vedic texts. While it has long been contended that this was proof of a complete misunderstanding of RV hymns even by Brāhmaṇa time authors, it can be said now that these authors focused only on some words in a particular mantra which was to accompany a ritual action; see author, on Gonda’s articles and books dealing with the problem, in: Kratylos, Vol. XXVI, 1981 [1982], pp. 80 sqq.
meaning of the actions performed with them: Some kind of general allusion often was enough. One can but admire the versatility of the compiler of the Rājyābhiṣeke, who searched out, in the vast Vedic corpus of texts, mantras somehow referring to the rituals. The aim of all of this certainly was to give a traditional and 'holy' ring to the actions performed: In the present case, for example, to the besmearing with earth, which clearly is a post-Vedic addition to the older Rājyābhiṣeke. The addition of this rite is due to the general development of Hindu religion in the post-Vedic period: a major factor was that certain kings, i.e. those belonging to śūdra dynasties, could not perform the solemn Vedic ritual of Śrauta sacrifice, as they are excluded from the Veda. Only a member of the three highest varnas is allowed to do so. Other kings, again, may have found the Śrauta ritual too cumbersome and unpractical (see above).

Now, as for the actual procedure followed in Nepal, we do possess good information about the last two coronations, that of King Mahendra and King Birendra. According to all of the handbooks, even the contemporary one of Buddhisagāra written in 1975, the actual besmearing with earth and the ‘bathing’ ceremony should have taken place in the “bathing hall” (snāna-māndapa) erected in the main courtyard of the old palace, the Nasal Chok. However, this ‘private’ rite apparently was not deemed to be appropriate to take place in the midst of a gathering of representatives of some 60 countries, although the snāna-māndapa was shut off from view by curtains. (In fact, already Varāhamihira enjoins the use of blankets). The snāna ceremony therefore was transposed into the palace building itself: An informant later told me that a special bath chamber had been built there and had been furnished with modern sanitary equipment; it was here that the rites took place. Han Su-yin’s usually reliable description of the ceremonies in 1956 shows that this was already done so during king Mahendra’s coronation (p. 357). According to the same informant, a few days after the coronation small heaps of various sorts of earth were still left on the modern bath tub used during the proceedings. It seems that the mṛttikasnāna was carried out as prescribed in the Paddhatis. Han Su-yin refers in some detail to the pūrvāṅga day and ‘bath’ with earth and the actual abhiṣeka, though whatever she saw of the ceremonies and the other information she received have been reshaped for the sake of the novel in which she included it (The Mountain is Young). Note that the mṛttikasnāna took place outside the main courtyard (p. 346 sqq.):

[The pūrvāṅga day]

“At one end of the long courtyard, in a recess, chairs had been placed for the diplomatic envoys. At the other end of the courtyard was a four-sided hut,
twenty feet square, made of green tree boughs; it had thatched roof but no walls.

Inside this enclosure the King and Queen now stood, now sat, Asian fashion, on carpets, while the Buddhist (!) priests 31 chanted prayers and made offerings, anointing the king. Just outside the enclosure was a small brown cow and her calf, as witnesses of the Purification ceremony. . . . Through his dark glasses, while the priests in saffron silk poured flower petals and water upon him, the King stared at the crowd outside, said something to the Queen . . . the singing went on to the music of a small Nepalese orchestra . . . the King [was dressed] in pure white, the Queen in a red sari with silver stars. . . . The King and the Queen now came out of the hut. Outside, in flat woven baskets, in coconut shells, on trays, were grains and fruit and leaves: the produce of the earth, to be blessed by the King . . . the Diplomat's Gallery . . . was at the furthest end of the courtyard, and between it and the hut was a platform upon which stood the State Throne . . .”

[The coronation day]

“Like the Purification Ceremony, the Coronation was in the large central courtyard of the Old Palace. The crowd was thicker than the day before, the diplomats in their stifling gallery, the generals and officials in their chairs, the reporters and their batteries of cameras everywhere, the cow and the calf, the priests, a handful of peasant women chanting . . . There was a blare of trumpets, a military march, a squad of red-coated soldiers, followed by standard bearers with glittering peacock fans encrusted with small mirrors, priests in yellow silk robes. The King and the Queen arrived on an elephant, which knelt at the gate to allow them to dismount; and from there, under the gleaming red and gold umbrellas, with heralds waving the peacocked-tailed fans about them, the royal pair entered the courtyard, to disappear into an inner apartment, where the priests and a few high dignitaries followed them. Meanwhile the courtyard waited in the sun and the music of the two orchestras, the military red-coat band, and the one with horns, drums and clarinets like shawms playing Vedic religious chants (!) from South India.”

“After an hour the King and Queen came out and sat in the thatched enclosure, the same used for the Purification the day before, and the Ceremony then proceeded, incomprehensible to most of the onlookers. Brahman priests and Buddhist (!) priests chanted, round the hut pressed the correspondents and

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31 This is, according to all accounts, wrong. Buddhist (Vajrācārya) priests do not take part in the coronation ceremony, though in 1975 a few Buddhists apparently had been invited as onlookers, among them also a Tibetan monk.
photographers, Megalorama clicked and whirred. And then, at 10.33, at the minute fixed by the astrologers when the sun, the moon, and all the planets propitiated by the priests were in the right conjunction, the Royal High Priest placed upon the King's head the Crown of Nepal, a casque of precious gems, pearls and emeralds, surmounted by a Bird of Paradise... The King and Queen then sat on the nine-headed Snake Throne, erected on a canopied platform next to the thatched enclosure. Under it lay the hides of water buffalo, deer, elephant, lion, and tiger. The Royal Family and Princes came down from the first floor gallery, where they had sat, to kneel and pay homage and to throw coins on the floor in front of the King. One by one the special envoys and the diplomats also came to pay homage, and then the Rana officials and all the representatives of each caste and trade and guild."

13. The unctions (abhiṣeka)

As for the meaning of the unction ceremony, the actual besprinkling (abhiṣeka) of the king is, as we have seen, the central part of the whole 'coronation' ritual. Heesterman (Rājasūya, p. 117) writes only about a birth of the king out of the womb of the year and out of the cosmos, the new-born king being its pillar (p. 120). This fits well the meaning of -sūya itself; yet one must not forget that the Vedic Rājsūya is nothing but the priestly elaboration of the somewhat simpler Vedic rājaḥabhiseka rite. In this, the more original rite referred to in the older Vedic texts, firstly, the king's beard and hair are shaved. Then his head and his arms are anointed with milk and ghee; he sits on a tiger skin and is sprinkled with water containing dūrva grass, etc. Finally, he stands up and stretches up his arms. In this way, he is identified with Indra, the king of the gods, who propped up the sky at the beginning of the world.

The mantras from the Yajurveda that accompany these rites refer to such actions as providing strength through the unction with milk and "ghee"; they call the powers of several gods to reside in the king, and they place the king "on heaven and earth" (represented by the tiger skin), while he is being sprinkled with the "heavenly, 'intermediate' (āntarikṣa) and earthly waters": This seems to represent a new birth of the king out of the wombs of heaven and earth, accompanied, as in childbirth, by the gushing forth of the waters of birth. The symbolism of a new birth is not an isolated fact but is found in many Vedic rites, such as the initiation of a young Veda student (upanayana), the special initiation a sacrificer (dikṣā), etc.

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32 This refers to Lowell Thomas' filming of the coronation of King Mahendra. It would be worthwhile to find out what happened to the film.
Table 9: The unctions (abhiṣeka)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>person</th>
<th>material</th>
<th>recitation of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>golden pot (svarna-kumbha)</td>
<td>Brahmin minister</td>
<td>ghee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>silver pot</td>
<td>Kṣatriya minister</td>
<td>milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>copper pot</td>
<td>Vaśya minister</td>
<td>seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clay pot</td>
<td>Sāmaveda minister (chāndogāmātya, Śūdra)</td>
<td>honey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clay pot</td>
<td>Sāmaveda minister</td>
<td>kūśa-water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>golden pot</td>
<td>purohita</td>
<td>rest of waters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>person</th>
<th>material</th>
<th>recitation of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>golden pot with 100 holes</td>
<td>ācārya (bhadrāsana)</td>
<td>waters (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pot</td>
<td>ācārya</td>
<td>water with all kinds of herbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pot</td>
<td>ācārya</td>
<td>water with all kinds of perfumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pot</td>
<td>ācārya</td>
<td>water with seeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pot</td>
<td>ācārya</td>
<td>water with flowers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pot</td>
<td>ācārya</td>
<td>water with fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pot</td>
<td>ācārya</td>
<td>water with gems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pot</td>
<td>ācārya</td>
<td>water with kūśa grass</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rinsers of yellow pigment of bile of a cow on head and neck of the king

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>person</th>
<th>material</th>
<th>recitation from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pot</td>
<td>Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaśyas</td>
<td>various types of waters from rivers, oceans, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

chanttra, camāra etc., music, stuti – chief ministers hold them, bards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>person</th>
<th>material</th>
<th>recitation from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>golden pot in middle of all kumbhas</td>
<td>astrologer</td>
<td>rest of waters from all pots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>golden kalāsa</td>
<td>ācārya, three times on head of the king for cleansing</td>
<td>water</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

showing the king the ministers, merchants, etc.

33 The Paddhati has a mistake here: instead of “śūdra minister”, it has repeated the word “sāmaveda minister”. Why there should at all be a minister belonging to the Sāmaveda Brahmins, remains unclear. It is true that most Nepali (Kumafl) Brahmins are Yajurvedins; there are, however a few Sāmavedins among them.
One aspect of the ‘divine waters’ cannot be investigated here in detail: Even a brief comparison with the concepts surrounding Iranian kingship indicates that the ‘royal splendour’ (Av. x’aronab-, the Vedic form would be *svarṇas-) is found in the ‘Lake Vourukaša’, to which it reverts under “bad kings”. This ‘lake’ is, in my interpretation, the Milky Way which (according to the earlier Vedic texts) falls down on earth and streams southwards from the Himalayas as the (holy) river Sarasvati, just like in the Epic and Paurānic texts, the Milky Way or (Divyā Gāngā falls from the sky on Śiva’s head and streams forth on the earth as a visible holy river. It is with these waters, which both according to the Iranian as well as the Indian tradition, contain strength, confer children and help in birth, that the king is sprinkled. I suspect, therefore, that the symbolism of the use of waters does not represent a one-to-one relationship, but as so frequently, a multiple one of many ‘layers’. Hence, it is also open to multiple interpretation by the modern reader and a Vedic priest, – not to mention the Paurānic (re)interpretations.

The unctions, that is the sprinkling of waters on the king and the rubbing on his head and forehead of a yellow paste, are divided into two sections. One precedes and one follows the actual ‘coronation’, i.e. the patṭa- and mukuta-bandhana. They form another frame for the “binding of the patṭa“ and the “binding of the crown”, both of which are, according to modern opinion in Nepal (as well as in Thailand, for example), the main rite of the whole ritual. The scheme of actions performed is the one explained in table 9.

14. The mounting of the throne and the abhiṣekā by the four varṇas

The preliminary mṛttikasnāna being over and the king having bathed and dressed in an unused white garment, he now goes to the bhadrāsana throne and mounts it. In the coronation ceremony of King Birendra, the bath had taken place, as mentioned above, in an inner appartment of the Hanuman Dhoka Palace, though the northern platform (with the main Snake Throne) still is called snāna-śālā.

The bhadrāsana throne, different from the snake-hooded throne which is used for the audience later on, is placed in the main abhiṣekā hut, an open, straw-thatched structure with a pagoda-type roof. – When the king mounts the throne the main unction ceremony begins which is, at the same time, the oldest, and most central part.

According to all accounts, even the Vedic ones, the throne should be covered with the skins of various animals symbolising strength. Most prominent are those of a tiger (viz., a lion, a cat), or of a bull (viz., a hyena), and that of an antilope. The prescriptions of the various handbooks vary slightly with regard to these hides. In the medieval Rājyābhiṣekā, the following are mentioned: bull, cat, hyena (taraṅgu), lion, tiger; they are covered with a white cloth.
The modern ceremony follows the same scheme; the contemporary interpretation, however, sometimes varies. *The Rising Nepal* had these:

"... Spread with 5 symbolic skins, that of an ox, a domestic cat, a leopard, a lion, and a tiger, the dabali held aloft the royal throne..." (20-2-75) – “They represent strength, agility, regality, and compassion, and courage respectively.” (H.D. Singh) – “The use of skins of various animals like tiger, deer, cat, and of various flowers and plants during the coronation ceremony means that the fauna and flora are also the king’s subjects and so their interests also need to be safeguarded by him.” (17-2-75)

Or, with a lot of phantasy, Han Su-yin in her novel (p. 326):

"'Yes, gentlemen, the Throne of the King, the great golden Lion Throne, rests upon seven skins, bear and lion, wild boar and tiger, elephant, rhinoceros, and human.' ‘Human?’ Said the correspondents.

'His Majesty is monarch of all he surveys, of all creation. Human skin cannot be omitted', said the madman gravely. ‘It was left out by the last King, and His Majesty’s reign short and unhappy. If King Mahendra omits a human skin’, said the madman threateningly, ‘he will have a tough time’.”

The use of human skin is, of course, unheard of in this context, and the novelist may, in the present case, have been misled by one of the many stories and rumours that abound at Kathmandu at such occasions as the royal coronation.

The ceremony of the mounting of the throne is performed with mantras taken from Rgveda 10.173.4 = AV (Saun. 6.88.1; Paipp. differs), though the AV texts (KauŚ) do not prescribe these stanzas to be used in the coronation ritual: “Fixed is the sky, fixed the earth, fixed all this world of living beings, fixed these mountains, fixed is this king of the people...”

They are followed by some mantras, used for the unction of the king by the four castes; these mantras are found in a host of texts, but probably have been taken from the main text used in the ritual, the Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā: “You are brilliance, you are white-shining, you are immortal, your name is ‘firm place’...; on the instigation of god Savitar, with the arms of the Āsvin, with the hands of Pūsan, I sprinkle you for strength, good luck and fame, with Agni’s glow, with the brilliance of the sun (Sūrya), with Índra’s virility.” (VS 1. 31)

The three other castes continue, again with VS mantras. Surprisingly, the astrologer and the ministers (amātya) then continue the abhiśeka (unction) of the king with mantras taken from the old Vedic Br̥haṇa explanation on the solemn (Śrauta) rājasīya type of coronation, found at AB 8.7:34 “On the instigation of god Savitar, I sprinkle you for might, prosperity, for glory, for the eating of food.”

Han Su-yin’s description again is interesting, though fairly incorrect here. I suspect that her “madman” is, like so many other figures in her novel, based on a real person, and that she picked up some of his lore. This person is a somewhat tragic

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34 This part belongs to the treatment of the king’s repeated abhiśeka (punarabhiśeka).
older man, who constantly walks around Kathmandu, clad, summer and winter, in
a thick military overcoat. He sometimes approaches foreigners with strange tales
and predictions. The last time he saw me in 1985, – he had recognised and greeted
me for many years, – he came and handed me a scrap of paper that explained about
and advertised his taped explanations of how he was the “real king” of Nepal:
“‘The King will be anointed’, the madman declared in a loud voice, ‘with water
from the seven seas, collected and poured over him; and his skin will be touched
with mud from the five sacred mountains’. . . ‘And there will be seven sisters’,
chanted the madman, ‘seven ladies of ill-fame, whores to you, gents, to remind the
King that he is Lord of the meanest as well as the highest’.” (p. 327)
The purohita then continues with water taken from the golden kalaśa and with
mantras which expressively are called rājasūyābhiṣekamantra’s; they have been
taken from VS 10.17:

somasya tvā dyumnenābhiṣiṇicāmy, agner bhrājasā, sūryasya varcasendrasyen-
driyena; ksatrānām ksatrapatir edhyati, didyūn pāhi.
“I sprinkle you with the shining of Soma, with the heat of Agni, with the
brilliance of the sun, with the virility of Indra; thrive as lord of (over)lordship
over the Kṣatriyas, protect the arrows!”

This one and the following mantras clearly can stem only from VS (Mādhy.), as all
other Vedic schools including VS (Kāṇya) differ. The use of this very mantra is one
of the clearest proofs that the present form of the ritual had been intended for an
area where the White Yajurveda in its Mādhyandina version held sway, i.e. the wide
tracts of land between Bengal and the Panjab, from the Himalayas to the Vindhya
(and beyond, to Gujarat and Maharashtra).
The following mantra has been taken from VS 10.18 as well, substituting imam,
“this one” with the name of the king:

om ra[ghuvirendra]-vīra-vikrama-varmanam,35 devā, asapatnyam suvadhvam
mahate ksatrāya, mahate jyaisthaya, mahate jinarijyiyendrasyend+ya
“O gods, [further] [Raghubirendra] Bir Bikram Barmā, who is without
enemies, for great lordship, for great superiority, for a great governing of the
people, for the virility of Indra!”

It is remarkable that, here as elsewhere, the Paddhati writes ra[. . .] for raghuviren-
dra. The real name (lokaprasiddha) of the king is not given, – not only as to make it
possible for the priest to insert the one of the king’s successor at the next coronation,
but because his secret name (cīhna-ko nāma) has to be used, which was given at the
naming ceremony after birth (nāmakarana) and is known only to his parents and
the priest. To write down the secret name and, thus, to make it possible to let it be
known by outsiders, would be quite dangerous: it could invite sorcery; since Vedic
times nāma and rūpa combined constitute the personality.

35 The text supplies varman- as the general caste name of Kṣatriyas and leaves out the
“family” name of the present Śāha dynasty.
This precaution is no longer necessary for the secret name of King Birendra's father, Mahendra, which is inserted in the following mantra. It indeed is the correct one; I learnt it quite independently from one of his close associates. King Mahendra had, in a moment of uncaution, told it to my friend: it was 'Devendra'. The mantra runs:

Ra[ghuśreṇḍra-]vīra-vikrama-varmanah, devendra-vīra-vikrama-varmanah putram, Ipra-("Indra- ) divyēśvari-devyāḥ putram, asyai vīṣa, esa vo 'mi rājā, somo asmākam brahmaṇām rājā.

"[O gods, [further] [Raghubirendra] Bir Bikram Barmā, the son of Devendra Bir Bikram Barmā, the son of Indra Divesvari Devī, of this people; this one, o you (all, you people) is your king! Soma is our, the Brahmins', king."

(Note that the name of King Birendra's mother was Indra Rājya Lakṣmī Devī; her secret name apparently was Indra-divyēśvari; one of the Paddhatis has an obvious mistake, which was corrected in another one).

The mantra used at this instance is the actual proclamation of the king to his people. This was already in use during the Middle Vedic period in slightly divergent forms, mentioning the actual names of the people the king in question was governing (or that of the Rgvedic Bharatas as the people of the first great kingdom of India which in the immediate post-Rgvedic period developed into the Kuru realm). The present formula again is typical only of the White Yajurveda.

That these mantras have been taken over from the classical Vedic ritual into the medieval form of the coronation ritual is not without significance. Even the newspapers published at the time of the coronation of King Birendra did not fail to mention these mantras, though they usually mention very little of the actual texts recited during the ceremonies. The reason is that the mantras are to be kept secret.36

The priests who composed the ritual in the Middle Ages apparently found it necessary to include this mantra by all means. Anantadeva (p. 345) quotes it with almost the same words: rājasīkyagata-rājyābhīseka mantrair abhīśeke ca / te yathā: ‘somasya . . .. brahmaṇām rājeti’ manuṣaḥ . . .

The Purāṇas (VDhpur. 2.21.32, Agnipur. 218.29) unfortunately are too concise in this instance as to assert this observation. However, Anantadeva and the Paddhati again agree in adding some 'Rgvedamantras', taken from the abhīseka rituals treated at AB 8.7.2: imā āpah . . .

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36 The mantras are sacred because of their „supernatural aspect“. As one account in The Rising Nepal put it: whatever is performed here on earth during the coronation ceremony, is duplicated in heaven, by the force of the sounds of the mantras. This belief may reflect the intention of the mrittikasāna during which the king is transformed into a ‘walking Viṣṇu’. In fact, one could hardly hear a mantra during the 4 hours of ritual on the main day of the coronation rituals. (I caught only an instrumental case ending in -ena!). The sound of the mantras was drowned by the maṅgal dhun music, apparently intentionally.
After a few more mantras, inserted by the Paddhati but missing in Anantadeva, which have been taken from either RV or VS, the main mantra of AB, which is said to be the 'siddhānta' of Satyakāma Jābali, is added: 'On investigation of God Savitar, with the arms of the Aśvins, with the hands of Pūṣan, with the glow of Agni, the brilliance of Śūrya, the virility of Indra, I sprinkle you, for strength, good luck, fame, and food. om, bhūr, bhuvah, svar, I sprinkle you'.

The author of the Paddhati clearly aimed at establishing a cumulative effect again, and incorporated in his ritual as many similar mantras as he could locate in the various Vedic texts.

Now follows the actual 'coronation'. The Paddhati reads: 'Now the chief priest (purodbhāh) must bind, accompanied by the recitation of mantras, the (gold) leaf (pāṭṭa), which has (certain) marks, on the forehead of the king and the crown (mukuta) on his head.'

15. The binding of the gold sheet (pāṭṭa) and the 'crown' (mukuta) and the Paurāṇic abhiṣeka

In Western eyes, the actual coronation certainly is the placing by the chief priest of the crown on the head of the king. The medieval and the older texts, however, speak of the pāṭṭa- and the mukuta-bandhana: 'the binding of the (golden) sheet (on the king's forehead) and the binding of the headdress'; for neither the pāṭṭa nor the mukuta were crowns of the sort known to European antiquity and the Christian Middle Ages.

The pāṭṭa, which is to be bound first, consists of a thin sheet of gold. Varahamihira distinguishes five types in ch. 48 of the Brhatsamhitā, the Paṭṭalakṣaṇādhyāya: those for the king, the queen, the crown-prince, the army chief and those for other persons privileged by the king. The modern Paddhati has a small chapter on paṭṭalakṣaṇa as well; this is qualified as found "in the old Paddhati" (pracīnapaddhatau):

\[
\text{pañcadaśāṅgula-dirgham, sārdhasaptāṅgulāyām, madhye pādana-caturāṅgulaṁ, prānte kamalapuspatrayākāram, śrīvatsākāram govrṣamūrtyākāram, va-rābaṇgajaśīrṣākāram, gaṇeṇamūrtyākāram // iti // śrī 5 mahārājīnidevyāḥ: kamalatrayuspākāram //}
\]

Both Varahamihira's and the present version resemble each other, though the modern forms are one digit shorter and about four digits less high than those of Varahamihira. The one used in the coronation of King Birendra seemed to be almost without marks and looked rectangular in shape. The actual emerald-stuck
and feathered crown used nowadays seems to be a more recent development. In miniatures and paintings the early Śāha kings of Gorkhā and even some of those reigning at Kathmandu did not wear a crown but a turban, to which some kind of crown or diadem was attached; later on, this can be seen to have had feathers as well.

In fact, the medieval texts and the modern Paddhati only mention the mukuta. Varāhamihira (Bṛhatśaṁhitā, ch. 43.25; 57.47) describes those of kings and gods: they are embellished with gems and diamonds. Apparently, there were various differing forms: jāta-makuta (sic), kiriṭa-makuta, karaṇḍa-makuta, etc. The jāta form is the one where a person’s hair is bound together at the centre of the head, as found the metal crown representing medieval Vajrācārya hairdresses. The binding of the crown is accompanied by a mantra, apparently again taken from VS 34.52 (but also identical with RVKh 4.68 = ed. Scheftelowitz, p. 117; cf. von Schroeder, Tübingen Katha HSS, p. 36), and accompanied by RV 10.128.9; it differs from AVŚ 1.35.1 considerably, and looks more like PS 1.83.1:

"The golden one which the well willing ones bound for Dākṣāyaṇa Śatānika, (lit. ‘having 100 forms of array’), that one I bind for me (!) in order to live 100 years, . . ."

To the Western observer, this seems to be the culmination of the ritual, and, accordingly, it was accompanied by the (equally modern) National Anthem, at 8.33 a.m., at the exact moment determined by the astrologers. (Note that the same custom again has been introduced in the Thai Rājyābhiṣekā). The Hindu compiler of this ritual, however, while looking for a proper mantra to accompany the actual crowning, had recourse to a very old myth: The Dākṣāyaṇaś are a race of princes that had performed the Dākṣāyaṇa New- and Full moon rite, and therefore prospered down to the time of the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa (see SB 2.4.4.6; AB 3.40). – The king who already has been identified with Viṣṇu (or with Rāma!), now receives the outward signs and insignia of a king, – and of Viṣṇu: the golden diadem sheet and the mukuta, which during the last centuries in Nepal has evolved to the staggering crown studded with emeralds, pearls, other precious stones, and with long feathers of paradise birds attached to it. The older form of a mukuta (v.l.: frequently makuṭa) can be seen in medieval sculptures. The Paddhati now adds a short honouring (puspāṇjali) of the rājadanda, the royal sceptre, with a post-Vedic ‘mantra’:

srṣṭam tvā vidhīnā pūrvam svayambhuvam anuṣṭ/ḍadāhum namāmi tvām, rāja-danda, rājye śāntim vivarddhaya . . . yaśo dehi, sukham dehi, jayado bhava me sadā . . .

"I have placed you earlier, according to rule, (you), the self-existent. I honour you, o sceptre of the King. Produce peace in this kingdom; give fame, give happiness; be always one who gives me (!) victory!"

The acārya then carries out the concludingunctions (abhiṣekās): The mantras again, have mostly been taken from VS, but a few are from the AV; this section is well described already in the Purāṇas and even with the same mantras (see table 10).
## Table 10: mantras of concludingunctions (abhiṣeka)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>abhiṣeka</th>
<th>mantra</th>
<th>text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. from the pot with 100 holes</td>
<td>dyauḥ śāntih . . .</td>
<td>VS 36.17 (not = AV 19.9.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tāc cakūh</td>
<td>VS 36.24 (RV, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>svasti na indraḥ</td>
<td>VS 25.19 (RV, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>visvāni deva</td>
<td>VS 30.3. (RV, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. from the pot with all herbs and water</td>
<td>ya oṣadhiḥ(^1)</td>
<td>VS 12.75 (RV, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. from the pot with all perfumes and water</td>
<td>rathe iṣṭhan</td>
<td>VS 29.43–45 (RV, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. from the pot with seeds and water</td>
<td>ā brahmaḥ</td>
<td>VS 22.22 (TS, KS, MS, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. from the pot with flowers and water</td>
<td>puspamatiḥ prasūmatiḥ(^2)</td>
<td>AVŚ 8.7.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. from the pot with fruit</td>
<td>(same mantra)(^3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. from the pot with water and gems</td>
<td>long hymn of 17 stanzas:</td>
<td>VS 17.33–49(^4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. from the pot with kuśa grass and water</td>
<td>ye deva divyadā . . .(^5)</td>
<td>only = AVŚ 10.9.12; 11.6.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) This mantra is interesting in so far as it has a deviating form in MS, KS and another in TS. The text therefore has been taken from VS (cf. below).

\(^2\) This mantra is also found at VS 12.77, but with the variant puspavatīḥ . . ., as also in RV and KS; TS differs in having prasūvatīḥ, and PS 16.14.6 is similar. The text must therefore come from AV (Śaun.) in this one and in the following case.

\(^3\) In fact, the mantra is qualified by Anantadeva as coming from the AV (p. 345) while reading puspavatīḥ (!)

\(^4\) RV 10.103 and AVŚ 19.13.2 sqq. have the same verses, but their hymns are shorter, while TS, MS, KS, PS 7.4.2 differ. The hymn is of Atharvan character and, directed to Indra as to ensure victory in battle.

\(^5\) The mantra is of great interest as the account of the Purāṇas differs here: VDhP. 2.18.17, cf. AgPur 218.25, prescribes: ye devah pūrassadeti which is found at TS 1.8.7.2 as ye devah pūrassado... (cf. KS, MS etc.).

This indicates a clear difference between, on one hand, the texts used by the Purāṇas which follow the South Indian\(^37\) Taittiriya or other Vedic schools, and on the other hand, the Nepalese Paddhati which agrees with the North Indian Vajasaneyi school. Note that even Anantadeva follows the Southern tradition: pūrassada iti, p. 345. The other texts have: pūrassado agni- = KS 15.2 (rājasūya): in a series of gods/ESWN-directions; = MS 2.2.3: 65.4; 4.3.4: 43.16; = ApŚS 18.9.11 (Trājasūya) at the Indrātūrya rite; also in an independent iṣṭi ritual. Unfortunately, Varāhamihira (BrŚamh. 47.40 sqq., 50 sqq.) is very concise here, so that it is not possible to decide on his Veda school. He does not mention the texts, but only the

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\(^37\) Therefore, R. Inden's contention that the Paurānic Rājyābhiṣeka was intentionally composed for the Kashmiri emperors of the 8th century clearly is wrong. In Kashmir, it always has been the Katha school of the Black Yajurveda, and never the Taittiriya school, that was studied and has supplied the priests. There is no evidence at all that the Kashmir Rājguru was a Southerner. Cf. also, author, The Veda in Kashmir, forthc. – Note that the Paurānic ritual is, to a great extent, identical with that already described by Varāhamihira at ca. 500 A.D.
rites to be followed at this instance: sarvagandha etc., — which nevertheless is welcome, as it results in a firm date ad quem for the insertion of these abhisekas into the coronation ceremony.

The yellow-coloured ointment used at the unction indicates both gold and immortality, gold being the colour of honey, the ambrosia of the gods. The mantra used here is: gandhadvāram . . . It has been taken from RVKh. 2.6.9 (ed. Scheftelowitz p. 73) but it is also found at TA 10.1.10, in a snāna rite, no. 110 in J. Varenne's edition and translation: "The earth which one recognises by its smell, the unconquerable goddess . . . I call." The mantra occurs in TA next to other ones calling gods like Indra; cf. also MNU 4.8; MGS, BDhS, PārDhS, etc. This is the Śrisūkta, the object of which is to provide wealth and good luck: Śrī herself is called hiranyavarna and harini at the very beginning, in the first two words of this sūkta.

Now follows the abhiseka by the three higher varṇas (Brahmins, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas) with water taken from many rivers, ponds, the 'four oceans' "as far as obtainable" (yathālābham), and accompanied by mantras belonging to the respective sākhās. This reminds of the Vedic injunction, still followed in Thailand, to use 17 kinds of water.

In contrast to the three higher castes, however, the Śudras and anulomas, significantly must sprinkle water without recitation. They have, since Vedic times, been excluded from learning and reciting the holy texts of the Veda. The modern accounts stress the participation of all groups of the population (still called "all castes" in the various descriptions of the coronation, despite the official abolition of caste in the early Sixties).

Just as during the honouring of Viṣṇu on the preceding day, the royal emblems and insignia are used now: the ministers hold them, while the bards should praise, music (maṅgal dhun) should be played, and the astrologer sprinkles the king 180 times with Paurāṇic mantras which accompany a long series of abhisekas, made with the help of kuśa grass and water taken from the golden pot placed in the middle of the other vessels. These mantras are recited by the astrologer; they begin with (cf. the treatment in Losch, Rājadharma):

"The[se] gods shall besprinkle you: Brahma-Viṣṇu-Maheśvara, Vasudeva, the lord of the world (jagannātha), and the 'plougher' (Saṅkarṣaṇa = Halāyudha)".

They continue with a long list of other gods, Rṣis, moonhouses (17–21), other goddesses, planets (27–28), Manu and his descendants (28–), the 10 Rudras (38); Mārutas; Ādityas (43–50); Apsaras (57), (63); Daityas (65); Gaṇabhūtas (80); Skandagraha (82); Daśāniṣ etc. (83); snakes (85), (91); weapons of the gods (95); abstract concepts like dharma, tapas (96); authors like Vedavyāsa, Vālmiki (99), Kātyāyana, Jaimini etc., (104); rājānas (109); plants (110); types of earth (113); the various earths and 'continents'.

Here, the stereotype mantra "they shall sprinkle you", is changed to: "they shall order you" (116/119), which underlines, just as the confused character of the list,
the composite character of this part of the ritual. The string of names and beings goes on: with the peoples of the continents (118); with their mountains, starting with Himavant (120); – then suddenly: the Vedas (123); Itihāsa and other sciences (124; see below); from 128 onwards, a host of gods, Śāstras, metres, etc. are jumbled together in a hotchpotch fashion and are expressively mentioned as “who/which have been named and have not been named” (131); they are called upon to give victory to the king. The abhiṣeka again continues with the use of “all kinds of waters” (133–135); followed by tīrthas (140), mountains and āśramas, and more tīrthas (144); and, again, various gods and rṣis (147), tīrthas and other holy places (-160); the main rivers of India follow (-178): These rivers and streams, mātrkās, full of their own waters are called upon to sprinkle the king, while he is called upon to live long and be “wise in dharma”.

The list clearly is a poorly organised enumeration of all gods, spirits, various places of the sky and of the earth, – in short it is the whole spiritual and material universe, which is called upon to sprinkle the king.

It is interesting to note that these 180 (or 182) mantras already occur in the Purāṇas, but that Varāhāmihira only quoted 15 of them in ca. 500 A.D. (BrSaṃh. 47. 45–70). The growth of the list in the following centuries is obvious. Its contents generally agree, up to this point, in Varāhāmihira, in the Purāṇas, in Anantadeva and in the Nepalese Paddhati; the actual words of the verses, however, often do not. – The long list of rivers and tīrthas, again, is not yet found in Varāhāmihira.

A few items in these mantras are of interest: Verse 123 begins with the Vedas and its allied sciences, as known already to Brhadāraṇyakopaniṣad and Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, but it continues:

aṅgāni vedāś catvāro māṁsānīvistarāḥ dharmaśāstrām purāṇaṁ ca vidyā hy etāś caturdaśa sāṁkhyaṁ yogāḥ pañcarātro vedāḥ paśupatām tathā.

The mentioning of the Pañcarātra and Pāśupata systems provides some indication of the comparatively late insertion of this verse (if not of the origin of the whole chapter). Furthermore, the long list of rivers is interesting, in so far as it shows the extent of geographical knowledge of the compiler. Also, the selection made here, i.e., especially of rivers from one part or the other of the subcontinent, may point to the origin of this section.

These rivers are:

Gaṅgā (160) – Sarasvatī and the Panjāb rivers (162) – Kośī, Kauśikī, Yamunā, other Uttar Pradesh and North Indian rivers up to Assam (164) – rivers flowing down from the Vindhya, those in Vidarbha etc. (166) – rivers of Orissa (170) – Godāvari and other Maharashtra rivers (171) -the South (177) is not too well represented: Vanavāsīnī, Tuṅgabhadrā, Kāverī (172); Varadā, Tamraparṇā, etc.: mostly those on the South West coast.

This selection indicates a familiarity with and a bias towards the Northern rivers and those of the Tuḷuva area, in Karnāṭaka, the latter being the home of the Brahmins that officiate at the Paśupatinātha temple.
16. Concluding rites

After the main coronation rites have been concluded, a number of minor rites wind up the coronation ceremony; they are, however, of not so minor importance in terms of their political and social implications: The king has to give various gifts (dāna) to the priests who have taken part in the ritual: Usually cows, gold etc. but also the materials used in the ceremonies. A formal audience follows which affirms the loyalty of his subjects.

Important is the looking down of the king into melted butter (the so-called ghṛtacchāyā), or, in medieval times, into a mirror. This small rite has many precursors in the Śrauta rituals, for example those in a similar rite belonging to the Soma sacrifice. In fact, this is a method to detect the future of the sacrificer, an omen. On the other hand, the custom has found its counterpart even in Buddhist homa, with a new interpretation, however. In Vedic ritual, the priest can detect the outcome of the ritual or the future of the patron of the sacrifice from the behaviour of the fire (which way and how the flames move, which colour they have, etc.). In the present case, as well as in the Soma sacrifice, he can determine, by the king’s looking into melted butter or into a mirror, how the future will turn out to be.

The ritual now draws to a close with the sending away of the gods and of the main god (Viṣṇu): the deva(gaṇa)visarjana. The mantras used, first mention the group of deities, i.e., those who have assembled round the offering ground, and then the main deity, Viṣṇu, who has got a special mantra. The wish is added that the god may return when called upon. The procedure is typical of the elaborate ritual framework mentioned earlier: It is here that the major part of the ritual concludes; the frame that was initiated with the invocation of Viṣṇu is closed now.

The sending away (visarjana) of the god is traditional, and ultimately goes back to the early (pre-)Rgvedic form of a ‘guest honouring’ offered to the gods who are first feasted and then sent off again. The retention of this feature at this instance, however, presents a logical complication: If Viṣṇu has been called, honoured, and the king has been identified with him, what could be the intention of sending the god (thus also the king?) away (to his heavenly home)? One can answer, of course, from within the framework provided by the avatāra concept: Viṣṇu once again has decended and has only in part entered into the king who now, just like his Orissa or Kulu counterparts, has become a ‘walking Viṣṇu’. This idea agrees with the general and popular Vedāntic idea that the (neutral) Brahma only partially emanates to form the (male) god Brahmā (and other gods). In fact, we here encounter just another frame within a frame within a frame: The king is a part of Viṣṇu, who himself is but an emanation of the unchangeable brahman.

A final pacification (śānti) is added: Water from the Isāna-kalāśa is sprinkled over the king, with mantras stressing general appeasement. The concluding actions are situated already outside the actual ritual framework of homa and abhisēka: The king presents the offering hut (maṇḍapa) with all its valuable contents to the priests. He then touches a white horse and an elephant, mounts him, and makes a
sunwise (pradakṣiṇa) procession around his town, which is followed by a general audience at his palace. At the last coronation, that of King Birendra, this was somewhat cut down to a short procession from the old royal palace of Hanuman Dhoka, where the coronation had taken place, to a special dais on the large parade ground, the Tundikhel. The original idea of a ritual circumambulation of the sacred space of Kathmandu has thus been abandoned, apparently for security reasons. If one compares the procession route followed by King Mahendra in 1956, through the narrow and usually busiest parts of the town (like Asan Tōl, Indrachok), the procession this time merely skirted the town in the East and a circumambulation around part of the parade ground had substituted that of the town. It is obvious, however, that the idea of an actual pradakṣiṇa along the old procession path encircling Kathmandu had already been given up at the time of King Mahendra’s coronation in 1956, although the king went around the other capitals of the old Malla kingdoms, Bhaktapur and Patan, as well, in separate processions on the following days, and in this way, being a mahārāja-adhīrāja, confirmed his overlordship over the various parts of his realm.

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Gert-Matthias Wegner

Navadāphā of Bhaktapur
Repertoire and Performance of the Ten Drums

1987
VGH Wissenschaftsverlag · Sankt Augustin
Introduction

Newar music combines artistic achievements with a definite social and ritual function, establishing and reinforcing a basic harmony in the town as well as between the two overlapping worlds, the world of men and the realm of the gods. There is no art music as such which is meant to be performed on stage for a paying audience of connoisseurs. In fact, the whole town serves as a stage, and – with the strict exception of the womenfolk – almost everybody seems to be a musician or a dancer.

Nowadays (survey period: fall 1983 to spring 1984) there are still approximately 200 music and dance groups which perform regularly in Bhaktapur:

6 navadāphā, 63 dāphā, 36 dbalcā, 13 bhajan, 1 kvakhbība, 23 dhimaybājā, 3 dbāhbājā, 9 nāykhbība, 9 Jugī groups, 2 kābājā, 3 gūlābājā (Sāymi), 3 gūlābājā (Bajrācārya/Sākya), 5 gāne, ca. 30 dance groups, 1 navadurgā.

Among these groups, only the non-Newar Gāine and the Jugī (Kusle) may be called professional musicians. The Gāine can be heard during Mvahani (Bhaktapur’s Dasai) when they accompany themselves on their characteristic bow instrument, the sārangī, and sing their Dasai songs in Nevāri. This takes place late at night. They wander one by one through the streets, their songs penetrating into the dreams of the sleeping town. However, most of the Gāine families have exchanged their traditional profession for the tourist business, their favourite selling item being fancy sārangīs.

The Jugī still pursue their double profession as tailors and musicians (thus corresponding to the Damāi) and observe their complex duties related to funeral rites and certain shrines. As we shall see later, they play a major part in the navadāphā performances with their mahālī oboes and bāécā flutes. Their principal income, however, is derived from their activities during the marriage season, when they lead the processions in flashy costumes with trumpets, clarinets, trombones, and drums, presenting a rather chaotic version of the latest Bombay film hit.

Musical life in Bhaktapur is far from being intact. In fact, all of traditional music is in a process of rapid decline. Fifteen years ago the Guṭhi Samsthaṃ Act stripped the performing communities of their land donations; up until that time, these donations provided the Kulu (drum maker) with a yearly amount of rice for maintenance of the instruments, which also covered all expenses for lamp-oil, wicks, maintenance of the dāphāchē (drum house), etc. and furnished a regular payment to the Jugī musicians. The results of this land reform have been fatal for the musical heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. Instrument makers are leaving their traditional profession.
Map: The map shows the locations of the six navadāphā groups, each player's home, and procession routes to the shrines of the respective Nāsahdyāh worshipped during apprenticeship. The musicians usually live in a cluster surrounding their place of performance. Only the players of Taleju Navadāphā are spread over the whole town. The reason for this is that their forefathers once served the king at his palace.

The interest of the young generation has been focussed on guitars and Hindi films. Unless the Newar community realizes the value of its own musical heritage and takes the necessary steps to keep it alive, it will exist only as a memory within a decade.

Navadāphā – general

The most outstanding victims of this process of change are the six remaining navadāphā groups of Bhaktapur. 
Navadāphā is a dāphā group with an additional ensemble of nine drums, the navabājā. Comparable ensembles exist in Patan (gūlābājā), Thimi and Bhaktapur (both gūlābājā of the Sāymi), but they differ considerably in respect to instruments as well as repertoire.
Hari Govinda Ranjitkar – Bhaktapur’s master drummer and guru of navabājā.
Navadāphā groups were founded by royal patrons as a regular offering to the major gods of the town. The groups had the duty to perform monthly on the day of cauthi or punhi and during festivals, sitting on a platform or on a porch next to the respective pīth. The donation included the set of instruments as well as a plot of land which was to be cultivated by tenants. The yearly yield of rice covered all expenses for maintenance and performance. In some cases, foundation documents are still preserved in a number of group members’ houses, who are considered sponsors. Unfortunately, these sponsors are reluctant to show the papers to others, especially to their own group members. There may be some basis to the general rumour that – even before the land reform – foundation land had the tendency to disappear into nowhere. Each group has a nayah, a leader who organizes the group’s activities. This job rotates every year. Each group member is – or has been – an active musician.

The names of the six navadāphā groups and their locations are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vakhupati Nārāyana Navadāphā</td>
<td>Sujamādhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dattātreya Navadāphā</td>
<td>Dattātreya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yāchē Navadāphā</td>
<td>Yāchē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhairavnāth Navadāphā</td>
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<td>Taleju</td>
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One more navabājā group, Gvachē Navabājā, which previously played for the Navadurgā, broke up a few years ago. Only the half decayed instruments remain. In 1984/85 the situation was the same with Bhadrakāli Navadāphā, of which only the dāphā group continues to perform. This group lost the last plot of land four years ago when its land became a part of the Small Industrial Area (SIA) set up by the West German Bhaktapur Development Project. Compensation never reached the group. The Jugi remained without any payment and boycotted all further performances.

Dattātreya Navadāphā has stopped performing throughout the year due to internal quarrels. Nevertheless, they managed to play twice during Bisket 1985. The main drummers of Taleju and Bhairavnāth Navadāphā are very old men who do not remember all the compositions correctly.

The only group which took the trouble of grooming young singers and drummers was Yāchē Navadāphā with its two excellent drumming teachers Hari Govinda Raṇjitkār (navabājā drums) and Ganesh Bahadur Sijakhva (lālākhi). A navadāphā pīrānepūjā was performed in March 1984, when twelve young boys were initiated at the shrine of Tāthu Nāsahdyah, Lord of Music and Dance.

It is not an easy task at all to learn the four-hour repertoire of navadāphā drumming by heart and to retain all the compositions ready to be performed.
above: Hari Govinda ready to play the dhāh during a performance arranged for film shooting on 28/2/85

below: Hari Govinda teaching dhāh to a student – scene from the film „Navabāja von Bhaktapur“.
Usually the repertoire of lalakhī and navabājā is shared between several drummers. A further problem for every drummer apprentice is a large number of pūjās which have to be performed at his expense. In the case of the dāphā-drum lalakhī, every new composition requires a khipuvūpūjā. For a detailed account of a drummer's apprenticeship see my book „The Dhimaybājā of Bhaktapur – Studies in Newar Drumming I“ (Wiesbaden 1986).

Instruments

Like every dāphā group, the navadāphā are equipped with one or two lālākhī drums, two pairs of tāh and several pairs of jhyālicā cymbals. Two pvānā trumpets are also required, as the breath of one single player may not suffice to keep up with the drumming sequences. The nine drums of navabājā are, in the succession of their performance:

1) dhāḥ – as a navabājā-drum always decorated with huge horns of a fighting ram; also used in dhāḥbājā processions
2) kvatāḥ – also a Buddhist procession drum (gūlābājā)
3) dhāḥcā – also called tatalikhis because of the popular piece tatali
4) dhimaycā – a small dhimay played like dhalak
5) nāykhīcā – a typical drum of the Nāy (butchers)
6) pachimā and
7) dhalak – both drums adopted from India (pakhāvāj and dholak), in Bhaktapur popular with dance accompaniment and devotional group singing (dhalcā)
8) kvakhīcā – rarely used for accompaniment of songs and leaf flutes
9) nagarā – a powerful symbol of royal splendor in the old days

All the navadāphā instruments are kept in the so-called dāphāchē (drum houses); these are also used for teaching and feasts and have to be maintained by the group. There is a system for keeping drums which every musician knows and observes. Most of the Newar drums have two hides. The one producing higher pitch is called nāsah (after Nāsahdyah, Lord of Music and Dance), the other one with lower pitch is called haimā (after Haimādyah, the Lord’s terrifying aspect). According to the rules, the haimā hide must point downwards, or must face the closest wall. This is done in order to create or maintain a pleasant room climate. Drums are considered powerful objects which may influence their surroundings. Each drum is played with different combinantions of cymbals, namely tāh, jhyālicā, sichyāh, bhuchyāh, and a brass disc called kaēpā or kaēpī.

Each of the drums is played together with a set of characteristic instruments to achieve the desired timbre:
above: Hari Govinda playing *pachimā*
below: Hari Govinda playing *dhimaycā* – same occasion as before
In the case of dhimaycā and näykhīcā, the great majority of pieces are played with mahālī accompaniment, the concluding part with pvaṇā. Ideally, four Jugi mahālī players are required to establish a proper balance with the percussion group. Since the land reform disposed of the land which was the basis for paying the Jugi musicians, every navadāphā performance begins with the same anxious question: Are our illpaid Jugi coming or not? Usually they do not come, and the performance has to be cancelled.

Performance and Repertoire

A complete navadāphā performance is called svachā, which means that the navabājā drums will be played three times. The musicians squat down in a square, everybody facing the lamp-stand in the center. During the dāphā-section, two rows of singers face each other, leaving space for the lālākhī drummers on one side and the pvaṇā players on the other. The navabājā drums lie in the middle next to the lamp-stand. During the navabājā sections, the main drummer sits next to the lālākhī players, who assist him with cymbals. The four Jugi musicians, sitting behind, are always excluded from the square.

Schedule of a complete navadāphā performance (svachā)

1) 3 x tāh with namaskār
2) dyahlhāygu for lālākhī
3) 2 or 4 dāphā songs with lālākhī accompaniment
4) first round of navabājā
5) 2 or 4 dāphā songs
6) second round of navabājā
The performance begins with a beating of the tāh cymbals; this takes place three times. Each time all musicians present do namaskār to Nāsahdyah, Lord of Music and Dance, manifesting himself as the pure and ear-piercing sound of the tāh. After these tree beats all the musicians do namaskār to each other. They do not say namaskār, but rather the ritual expression bhāgya. This greeting is repeated after the concluding ārati.

This is followed by a solo piece for lālākhī, called dyāhlhāyγu, which is an invocation of Nāsahdyah and all the other gods. Each set of nine navabājā compositions is preceded by two or four dāphā songs with lālākhī accompaniment. These songs are sung from sight from two song books with hand-written text, which are positioned lying on the floor in front of the two lead singers. Depending on weekday and moon phases, at least the first song should praise the god of the day.
Hari Govinda suggesting an entry to the accompanying players of *mahāli* oboes (Jugi) and *bhuchyāh* cymbals.

The gods and their days – according to Yāchē Navadāphā:

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<td>Tuesday:</td>
<td>Ganeśa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday:</td>
<td>Karuṇamāya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday:</td>
<td>any song according to season (Bārahmāś)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday:</td>
<td>Aṣṭamātrakā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhairava may receive a song any day.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the song books, the name of the *lālākhi* composition is mentioned which fit with the song. Along with two versions of *dyahlhāygu*, Yāchē Navadāphā know eight compositions for *lālākhi*, i.e. astrā, ektā, cvakh, kharjati, partāl, thatā
lagasikha, and cali. All of them are rather long and complex pieces which often have to be adjusted a little on the spot to fit with the song. Most of them seem to be derived from a practice of improvisation which nowadays has become crystallized at the cost of creativity. A closer study (in preparation) of these lālākhi pieces will reveal their antiquity as well as their multiple origin. Most of the lālākhi pieces are associated with certain gods who are given praise through the songs. The gods and their respective lālākhi pieces are:

| astrā:       | Bhairava; any god (after the first song) |
| ektā:       | Ganeśa, Nārāyaṇa, Nāsahdyah               |
| cvakh:      | Nāsahdyah, Aṣṭamātrakā                   |
| kharjati:   | Ganeśa, Barāi, Nāsahdyah                 |
| partāl:     | ḍhātu songs sung from Holipunhi upto Bisket |
| cali:       | Mahādeva                                   |

The navabājā section begins with a dyahlhāygu for dhāḥ. The second (kvatāḥ) and the third drum (dhāḥcā) start with similar invocations. During the second round, the navabājā drummer plays different pieces. During the final round he touches every drum only for a few seconds, hurriedly exchanging instruments. His role is the of a virtuoso soloist. All other musicians assist in his performance. He directs them with suggestive body movements or shouted signals, such as caha, ha, caca, which indicate a new beginning or a change of rhythm. However, the attitude of the solo drummer is governed by modesty and devotion, and he never attempts to show off with his skill. What makes these navadāphā performances memorable events is the common effort of all the participants. With the exception of a few neighbours and children, there are no onlookers and there is no applause.

After the final round of navabājā, one more song follows, during which the lamp-stand in the center is prepared for ārati with wicks and lamp-oil. During ārati, all the lamps are lit and all the instruments play together. Sometimes the musicians move around the lamp-stand singing in praise of Nārāyaṇa. This is usually the end of the music. A smaller lamp-stand is lit, fixed on a plate and framed by the two tāh cymbals. Thus, the flame is shown to everybody and greeted with namaskār.

For the past four years, Yāchē and Vakhupati Nārāyaṇa Navadāphā have added a brief kirtan (,,Rām Rām Jay Rām Jay Jay Rām") at this point as a tail-piece which they adopted from the ,,modern“ bhajan of the Śresthas. This piece is extremely popular among the bhajan groups all over North India. Here the lālākhi player tries to imitate the kaharvā tāla, the most popular rhythm from India.

A detailed study of the complete navabājā compositions with a critical edition of all the pieces is being prepared by the author. In the case of the navabājā repertoire, the term ,,composition“ seems to be justified. These pieces are clearly much more homogenous than those of the lālākhi; quite often they reach a level of organisation which reflects the astonishing intellectual
standard of those masters who conceived them. After considerable practice, each of these pieces reveals its 'personality' to the artist. It almost becomes a living entity with a definite character which is invoked during every performance.

Three short compositions may serve as examples, namely *dyahlhâygu* (invocation of a god), *cvah* (tail) and *gu*. These compositions are played on the *dhâh* drum with accompaniment of *sichyâh* and *bhuchyâh* cymbals as well as *pvañâ* trumpets. The drummer calls *caha, ha* and *caca* to indicate the entry to the other instrumentalists.

The pieces are transcribed here (see appendix) in two different ways:

a) in a rather abstract Western musical notation which conveys the anatomy of the music.

b) in a notation based on traditional South Asian methods of memorizing drumming syllables, which conveys the sound of the music as conceived and reproduced by a Newar drummer's mind.

During *dyahlhâygu*, an irregular rhythm emanates from those characteristic accellerando successions common in the music of the Far East, but not to be found in the drumming repertoire of North India.

*Cvah* introduces a circular pattern which rotates several times and concludes with a standard ending phrase called *isâra*, which is taken from *dyahlhâygu*.

*Gu* is divided into three parts, the third part being a repetition of the first one, which is organized in a fourteen beat cycle (3/2/2/3/2/2). The *caca* section opens with a straight metre into which the last two lines of the preceding *caha*-part are integrated (see third system of the syllable notation). This abrupt change of metres is rather common throughout the entire *navadâphâ* repertoire. *Gu* appears to be a brilliant composition structured with a degree of refinement which is almost intellectual in nature.

Except for a few variants (*bvuttah*), all the *navadâphâ* groups of Bhaktapur play the same pieces, including approx. sixty drumming compositions, a repertoire which amounts in total to some 4–5 hours. A number of pieces exist in several versions. They can be played on different drums with different performance techniques. Their drumming syllables vary according to the language of each drum. As everywhere in South Asia, drumming syllables serve as a medium for teaching and rehearsing.

The *dhamâk* piece, for example, can be played on such different instruments as *dhimaycâ*, *nâykhičâ*, *pachimâ*, *dhalak*, and *nagarâ*. The following two lines from *dhamâk* may demonstrate here the varieties of sounds produced by one and the same rhythm on different drums.
Many compositions include a few lines which are borrowed from procession music, like *dhirnaybija* or *dhahbaja*, or from the *Sipira* (*Gajijitra*) festival dances. Those lines given above are derived from *khyapyakhā*, the dance of the evil spirit that paralyzes its victims.

Almost every Bhaktapurian has had several encounters with a *khya*: it approaches at night when you are about to fall asleep. A humming sensation makes your ears ring. An immediate paralysis enters your body, climbing from toe to neck. When in terror you try to cry for help, not a single sound leaves your lips. Your dear wife may slumber peacefully at your side without even noticing your alarming condition.

Fortunately, these attacks are temporary, and since it is a common experience which one can verify by questioning friends and neighbours, you may sigh with relief: this was the *khya*. Projecting heightened and extreme feelings into images which can be dealt with is the Newar way of remaining sane.

Hairy creatures with white faces and long tongues dangling over their chest, rolling over each other through the streets like acrobats – these are the *khya* as enacted during the *Sapāra* festival. Their rhythms, like those of so many other dances, resound throughout the year in every performance of *navadāphā*.

With its multitude of drums and numerous reminiscenses of dances, ritual and procession music, and with the songs played in instrumental versions on *mahālī* and *baēcā*, the *navadāphā* repertoire reflects the full gamut of the musical life of Bhaktapur.
DYAHŁHÄYGU

CVA

484
GU

GU da capo

GU da capo til FINE
at double tempo

"CAHA"

| ghe nā ka ji ga ji ga tā ghe o tu o ghe o |
| ghe nā ka ji ga ji ga ghe o o tā o dra kha |
| ghe nā ka tā o ghe o ti tā o ghe o tā o |
| ghe dra kha ghe o tā o tā ghe o tu o ghe o |
| gah ja ka tu o ghe o tā o o o o o o o |
| gah ja ka tu o ghe o tā o ghe o tu o ghe o |
| gah ja ka tu o ghe o tā o o o o o o o |
| tā o tā ghe o tā o tā ghe o tun o tā o |
| ghe dra kha ghe o tā o tā ghe o tun o tā o |

| tā ghe o | FINE |
| da capo |
à tempo

"CACA"

ghi ta o ghi ta kai ghe o ghe ta tа ghe tа kа ghe o
tа o tа nа tа o tа nа tа o tа nа tа o o o
gа gа gа gа gа gа
tа e ghe tа tа o tun tа ghe dra ghe tа tа o tun tа
tа ghe kha ghe
tа ghe o
tun ti tu nu tun ti tu tа
gа gа gа
ti ta ti tа tа tu nu tа o o o tа o tа o
gа gа
da capo

subito at double tempo GU al FINE
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Plate I: A consecration ceremony following repairs to Swayambhū stūpa, A.D. 1565, opaque water colours on cotton, H: 101 cm, collection A. Peter Burleigh. Photograph by the author.
(see Mary S. Slusser: The Cultural Aspects of Newar Painting)
Plate II: Detail of the Yampi Vihāra painting showing two men ascending the stairs to Svayambhū bearing between them its sacred essence in a vessel of water. They are accompanied by a monk and lay persons and observed by spectators. Photograph by the author.

(see Mary S. Slusser: The Cultural Aspects of Newar Painting)
Plate III: Painting in memory of Vanaratna, dated 1468 A.D. Opaque watercolours on cloth, H. 69, 4 cm, W. 99, 7 cm, collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection.
(see Gautam Vajracharya: An Interpretation of two Similar Nepalese Paintings)
Plate IV: Swayambhūnāth hill with representative divinities of the local pantheon. Painted scroll (paubhā) of 2,20 m length, dated 1712 A.D., private collection.
(see Anne Vergati: The King as Rain Maker)
Plate V: Details of a painted scroll (paubhā) illustrating the legend of the Red Avalokiteśvara: the top row shows the king and the priests worshiping Amoghapāśa in the ritual commonly known as astamīvrata, the second row shows the celestial chariot (vāhana) on the way to Amitābha’s heaven. Length 2,20 m, dated 1712 A.D., private collection. (see Anne Vergati: The King as Rain Maker)
(see Robert Levy: How the Navajus Project Bahrkaptur)

Plate VI: Mask of Kumari, H. 42 cm, W. 24 cm.
(see Robert Levy: How the Navadurgā Protect Bhaktapur)
(see Robert Levy: How the Navadurgā Protect Bhaktapur)