The Nepalese Caitya
1500 Years of Buddhist Votive Architecture in the Kathmandu Valley

Niels Gutschow
I have been acquainted with the activities of Niels Gutschow for almost twenty years now, and greatly admire the energetic field work which forms the basis for all his publications. This volume is no exception. It contains hundreds of beautifully executed measured drawings and finely printed photographs of never, or hardly ever studied monuments in the Kathmandu Valley. The attention to smaller features, usually overlooked in larger architectural complexes, is particularly striking. Though the Kathmandu Valley is well known to scholars and interested visitors, few have taken such pains to document the architectural heritage.

The volume is, however, much more than a mere compilation of architectural evidence. The text reveals a profound understanding of the cultural context of the caityas, their forms and sculptural decoration. The comprehensive, yet approachable treatment of the Mahayana Buddhist background of the monuments details the religious meaning of the caityas, without in any way shrouding them in fashionable esoteric mystery. The chapter on ritual is of particular interest, since it gives an ethnographic dimension to the study, with its detailed observations of daily life and urban festivals. Further chapters present a typological classification of the caityas illustrated with carefully chosen drawings and photographs. The historical progression of forms is well argued.

There is no doubt that this publication will be the definitive study on the subject for many years to come. The generous assortment of drawings and photographs will surely be invaluable for architects, archaeologists, art historians and historians of religions. Since so many of the smaller and more obscure caityas are now being threatened by modern development, the appearance of this work is timely.« (George Michell)

Niels Gutschow started his long journey into Asia as a Buddhist monk in Burma in 1962. He studied architecture in Darmstadt, Germany, and wrote his dissertation about Japanese castle towns. Since 1971 he worked in Nepal and India as a conservation architect and as a researcher, inquiring into the relationship of urban space and ritual. In Germany he works as an expert in war-time and postwar architecture and planning.
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1500 Years of Buddhist Votive Architecture in the Kathmandu Valley

with drawings by Bijay Basukala and an essay by David Gellner

Edition Axel Menges
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Chronology of the study

In the autumn of 1985, as part of the German Research Council's (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) Focus Programme on Nepal an inventory of objects on Swayambhunāth Hill began to be made. The work started with a plane table survey of the Swayambhūcāitya at a scale of 1:20 by Surendra Josi and the surveyor Rem Ratna Bajrācārya and his team. In the spring of 1966 Rem Ratna Bajrācārya and Gyanendra Josi produced a general site plan of the entire area around the Swayambhūcāitya at a scale of 1:100. Along with an inventory of the hill, the mapping of the votive caiyās in the immediate vicinity of the Swayambhūcāitya commenced, and this was supplemented by further measurements of Liechhavicāityas taken by Ada Gansach-Wilson and Bijay Basukāla (Tebhāh A. B. Sighabhāhā B; Dhvākabhāhā and Swayambhunāth/Sāhyāgubhāhā).

A second focus of the work began in the summer of 1986 with the making of a site plan of Kathesimbhūcāitya (which is regarded as a replica of the Swayambhūcāitya) and all of Sighabhāhā at a scale of 1:100. Aspects of the meaning of the caiyā unfolded in repeated discussions with Bernhard Kolver that were devoted to the history of the Swayambhūcāitya, and bore both on the continuity and the changes in the structures composing it. At the same time, however, the basis was created for extending the area of research to encompass a chronology and typology of the votive caiyās of the entire Kathmandu Valley.

A third focus came about in the spring of 1988 as the result of a detailed survey of the Mahābuddha temple in Patan and the caiyās installed within it. Ian Goodfellow supplemented this work in May of the same year by measuring a caiyā in Cāyāmā whose motifs are highly reminiscent of those on the Mahābuddha temple.

Site inspections of Thankot, Balābū, Pāgā and Kirtipur in April 1990 and of Sanagaon, Lu-bhā, Sunakothi and Chapagaon in February 1991 provided basic additions to the evolving chronology. Subsequently, Āsa Rām Tvayna prepared measured drawings of the two "monumental" caiyās in Lu-bhū and Sanagaon. Difficult questions relating to iconography were regularly discussed with Hemraj Śākya, though credible identifications could not always be made in the case of rare representations of Bodhisattvas.

Finally, in 1993, the Ramyakūtagaracāitya was documented by Bijay Basukāla from examples at Lagābāhā and Cvasapābāhā, both in Kathmandu. In the same year, Robert Powell contributed a presentation of two of the most prominent caiyās from Patan (the Vāhāhī Liechhavicāitya and the Cikābahi Śikharakutacāitya) at a scale of 1:1, with renderings in watercolour.

Finally, the Mahācāitya at Bodhnāth, the largest in the entire valley of Kathmandu, was being documented. Nutan Sarmā was a pleasant and reliable companion during the site inspections over a period of seven years between 1988 and 1994. He prepared the rubbings and transcriptions of a few inscriptions, and it was on their basis alone that these selected items could be edited and translated by Magesh Rāj Pant in 1990 and subsequently discussed with Axel Michaels. It was Nutan Sarmā, moreover, who identified the inscribed names of the Sodasa Bodhisattvas and Śodasaśayadevis on the caiyās of Yetalihi and Michubāhā (both in Patan) in 1993. He read a few hundred inscriptions in order to find the dates these caiyās were established or repaired. It is on the basis of this rich material that the chronology presented was made possible.

In January 1994 Hemraj Śākya offered his valuable help in reading the inscriptions in rājapura script on the Ramyakutagaracāitya at Lagābāhā and the Bodhavicāitya at Cvasapābāhā, both in Kathmandu.

Stanislaw Klimek joined the photographic survey in August 1991. Earlier photographs were made presentable through his patient darkroom work. In August 1996 Jarošlav Pomec contributed a few photographs of Liechhavicāityas in Kathmandu and Patan. At that time Helmut Fluhacher was already finalising the layout of the book.

The manuscript developed over a period of four years, between 1991 and 1995. With patience and perseverance Philip Pierce managed the almost insurmountable task of editing or translating my texts into English. Erich Theophile engaged in discussions about architectural and tectonic orders which added considerably to a diversity of presentation.

Finally, David Gefflner, the eminent scholar of Newar religion, added a chapter about Buddhism in the context of the essentially urban culture of the Kathmandu Valley. The architectural objects presented are thereby set within a wider cultural context.

Working methods

All architectural plans were produced at scales the size of which corresponded to the objects themselves. Thus drawings resulted at scales of 1:50 (Kathesimbhūcāitya, Dharmadevacāitya), 1:20 (the Mahābuddha temple, Swayambhūcāitya), 1:10 (Kathmandu: Netā), 1:5 (all Śikharakutacāityas), 1:2 (most Liechhavicāityas) and finally even 1:1 (niche details of the Liechhavicāityas and niches displaying deer and Wheel of the Law motifs).

The final drawings are based on sketches made on site. Idealized line drawings were preferred over scrupulously accurate representations of an object. Often details are barely visible
or can only be felt or sensed with one's fingertips. Severed details were reconstructed in the drawings on the basis of an assessment of the whole edifice.

The comparison of drawings of the Licchavacaitya at Yágubhāha (Patan) by Bijay Basukāla (left) and Ian Goodfellow (right) may serve to demonstrate the freedom a line drawing has to play with as a two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional body.

### The present state of research

Up to the present there has been no detailed account made of Buddhist architecture in the valley of Kathmandu. A discussion has been carried on intermittently concerning the architectural features of monastery buildings (*bhāhāhāh*) (Pruscha 1975: 1 32/33; Korn 1976: 19; Becker-Ritterspach 1982: 301–319; Slusser 1982: 136–141; Gellner 1987: 385–386), while Korn's measured drawings of Chusyabāhā in Kathmandu have continued to be reprinted (Becker-Ritterspach 1982: 83–84; Slusser 1982: fig. 10).


Pradapaditya Pal (1974: 23–31 Dhvakkabhāhā and 53–125) produced a comprehensive and eminently competent appreciation of early Licchavi sculpture associated with Caturvyuhacaityas. Slusser and Pal kept their focus tied to the ancient Licchavi era. This led Pal to the harsh judgement that “the moulding of the figures in the Malla period is decidedly coarse and mannered, completely lacking the vitality of earlier sculptures” (1974: 112). The first measured drawing of an early 19th-century Nepalese *caitya* was published in 1987 (Gutschow, Kolver, Shresthacarya 1987: 118) in an attempt to present the inherent Newar terms of that miniature architecture.

Franz-Karl Ehnhard, in an approach he termed “literary archaeology” (1989, 1993), has commented upon Tibetan sources which document renovations of the Svyambhūcaitya, and Bernhard Kolver (1992) has edited, translated and extensively commented on manuscripts that document renovations of the shrine in 1712 and 1754–57. Heino Kottkamp (1993), in his dissertation titled *Der Stūpa als Repräsentation des Heilsweges: Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung architektonischer Symbolik*, has made sources available which broaden the scope of analysis, though the dissertation is not based on field studies, the presented documentation being borrowed from secondary sources. One final work worth mentioning is Adrian Snodgrass’s useful account of the *Symbolism of the Stūpa*, richly illustrated with analytical and comparative drawings.

### Terms for *caityas*

The following chapters of the book have typological concerns. At the same time, however, this orientation includes a chronological sequencing, which begins with the earliest type of construction from the 6th to 8th centuries, the Licchavacaitya, and ends with the Bodhicaitya, a type first introduced in the early 18th century and revived around 1940.

By necessity, therefore, terms are used that either have a chronological reference (such as “Licchavacaitya”) or refer descriptively to the composition of the small structure. For the most part, I make use of terms that are employed by Newar Buddhist scholars. One such prominent scholar, Hemraj Sākya, identified various types of *caityas* on a joint walking tour on August 18, 1988. He bases his opinion on Amrātānanda, the informant of Brian Houghton Hodgson, Hodgson was the representative of the East India Company to the court of Nepal from 1821 to 1843 and proposed with the aid of his informant a theory of Buddhist schools. In doing so, he wandered down a blind alley, as David Gellner has recently described in accurate terms. Following Hodgson’s wishes, Amrātānanda systematized the various elements of Buddhist doctrine in his own preconceived manner. It may be that we owe the fact that terms were created for the various *caitya* types to wish to have all possible phenomena categorized into one system. As these terms are not fraught with any doctrinal content, and merely describe the composition (i.e., the vertical ordering of the types), even if in a somewhat roundabout manner, the use of a few of them appeared to me quite sensible.

The only common term in conversational Newār nowadays is cībhā (cībhāh), which very probably represents a corruption of caityabahāra or caiticāhāra. It denotes, however, all types of buildings without distinction and without reference to their specific iconographic programmes.

The term *caitya* (Skt.) appears to be so flexible in the Newār context that preference is given to it over the synonym *stūpa*. To be sure, the term *stūpa* has been accepted into use in many places, but it is not common in Nepal. Even Svyayambhūnāth is never called a *stūpa* but always a Mahācaitya, the “great caitya.” It is only the four earthen mounds located along the axes of the street network in Patan that are not called *caitya* but *thulādvā*. *Dvā* (New.) signifies an earthen mound, while *thu* was possibly borrowed from Pali.

The terms Caturvyuhacaitya, Sikkharukacaitya, Padmāvalicaitya, Jvalāvalicaitya, Jalabarparisumerucaitya and Sumerucaitya have been taken from Hemraj Sākya and Amrātānanda. The term Sumetricaitya for the *caitya* that was common only after 1854 almost invented itself.
Terms like Astakonacaitiya, for the octagonal variation of the Sikharakutacaitiya, have not been adopted. Individual morphological features, such as the lotus blossom that unfolds with a "thousand leaves" (padmāvati), are what is found in – in this case – the chapter dealing with the base form of the Padmāvalacaitiya, the cumbersome Sanskrit terminology, such as Astakonopapadhāvatcaitiya ("caitya with an octagon on a lotus flower"), being avoided. It is fully clear, therefore, that terms like Sikharakutacaitiya or Sumucacaitiya do not fall under some semantic reading suggested by the concepts sikhara or sumera, but merely represent an agreed code.

Inscriptions, which became increasingly frequent from the end of the 17th century onwards, never refer to the structural form of the caitya but always to the teaching (Vajradhātucaitya, Vajradhātucaityabhāttāraka, Dharmadhātucaitya, Citacātānacaitiya) or to the transcendental Buddha himself, in which latter case the caitya is called Vajradhātuatithagata, Caityabha-gā. Pañcajinalaya or Pañcabuddha-caityabhāhāra. Reference to Mahājāri as Dhar-madhātuvāgīsvara, "the lord of speech in the world of the Teaching", also occurs.

Remarks on transcription

For terms from the Great Tradition – that is, words and names in which the Sanskrit origin is still clearly discernible, as well as readily recognizable tatsamas – the Sanskrit equivalents are employed instead of vernacular expressions. This is particularly true in the case of names of deities and ritual terms – for example, Ganesa instead of Ganes, or home instead of hom.

Concerning the Newāri language, or Nepāl Bhasa, it is a well-known fact that it has hardly undergone any formal standardization. It is, moreover, heavily influenced by dialectal variation, and contains a large number of loanwords from Nepālī and Sanskrit. The transcription system used here largely follows the one used for the Newāri-English dictionary in Newar Towns and Buildings, published in 1987 by Gutschow, Köver and Shresthacarya. In that dictionary it is stated that "there are too many factors that make for variants. Some are grounded in the language itself, and its dialects. Others stem from various techniques for reducing the language to writing, no matter whether Devanāgarī or Roman script, whether old or new".

For example, with respect to the high vowels, the e/eya- and the u/ova-series, alternation within the series was already a characteristic of Classical Newāri manuscripts and persists to the present day. For most of the names of neighbourhoods and monasteries ve was preferred to o – for example, Vabhā instead of Ombhā, or Alkhahī instead of Alkhahī. Then there are the effects of the loss of certain consonants in word-final position, with compensatory lengthening ensuing – a process which, apparently, some words repeatedly underwent. This makes for variants like cākah and cika, both renderings of Skt. cakra. In the case of variants like Tabbhāhā/Tabhāhā, the variant without the compensatory lengthening was chosen. Nasal vowels are transcribed with a circumflex, thus resulting in yahsi rather than yahin. The transcription of Nepālī place names follows principles analogous to those established by R. L. Turner for his Nepali Dictionary. Accordingly, the grapheme vi(a) was transliterated – depending on the corresponding phoneme – at times as b, and at times as v – for example, Bisnumati instead of Visnumati.

Anglicized spellings were considered 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 carrying philological precision to extremes to write “Kāthmāndū” with diacritics instead of rendering it simply and clearly as “Kathmandu”.

Acknowledgements

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Niels Gutschow
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* The Dharmakosa, written in NS 986 (1846 AD) by Aṃrita Sākya and copied by Jvarāta Vajrācārya, National Archives, Kathmandu, pani jkā 155, visaya santhya 73 (Baudhādharmā). Thirty-two descriptive terms for caityas are listed on pages 28B and 29A alone.
The early study of Newar Buddhism

Foreword by David N. Gellner

Most of those who practice, study or read about Buddhism in the West today know little or nothing about the Buddhism of the Newar people of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal. The many tourists who visit the Valley, including the many Westerners who come for spiritual reasons, are usually unaware that there are Buddhist Newars. They assume that all Nepalese are Hindu, and that Buddhism in Nepal is exclusively the domain of people of Tibetan culture. Thus from a Western point of view, Newar Buddhism is an unimportant backwater (for Asians by contrast, including Japanese, this is less true, since the modern state of Nepal boasts the Buddha’s birthplace as one of its holy sites).

It was not always thus. At the beginning of the 19th century, Hodgson sent Sanskrit manuscripts back from Nepal to Europe which enabled Burnouf to initiate the modern Orientalist study of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Hodgson, though no Sanskritist himself, was, thanks to his twenty-six years in Nepal (1820-1841) and the collaboration of his Buddhist pāruṇa Amṛtānanda, an authority on Newar Buddhism. Unwisely as it turned out, Hodgson attempted to maintain that Sanskrit Buddhist texts originating in Nepal were as ancient as the Pali texts coming mainly from Sri Lanka, a controversy in which he was roundly beaten (Hodgson 1972: 121-3). With this defeat, Hodgson’s awareness that Newar Buddhism was an authentic and indeed the only survival of north Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism was lost. Newar Buddhism came to be seen as a source of manuscripts, and nothing more; it was dismissed as a degenerate leftover, too Hinduized to teach us anything about Buddhist history or about how Mahāyāna Buddhism works. Later British visitors to Nepal tended to recycle Hodgson’s conclusions without adding materially to them, with the exception of the important Buddhist chronicle published by Daniel Wright in an unreliable English translation. Isolator as Buddhist scholars in the West paid attention to the specifics of Newar Buddhism, Hodgson’s attempt to reconstruct Buddhist philosophical schools of the past was often mistakenly taken to be a description of contemporary Newar Buddhism (Gellner 1989).

To some extent Newar Buddhism suffered from a general trend in the description of Buddhism. European and North American observers in the 19th century, whether they encountered Buddhism in Japan, Tibet, South-East Asia, Sri Lanka or Nepal, almost always dismissed what they saw as a sad degeneration from a glorious past. Their own model of religion, whatever their formal attachments, was usually that of rationalistic Protestantism: almost inevitably they saw living Buddhism as ritualistic, superstitious and priest-ridden, because they imagined that in its origin Buddhism must have been, as they firmly believed Christianity also to have been, a simple, moral and spiritual movement of equals.

Basic features of Newar Buddhism: social organization

There were other factors which were specific to the Newar case, which made it even more certain that Nepalese Buddhism would be described unproblematically. Newar Buddhism is a minority among Hindus, for this reason, and because they have always lived side by side with Hindus, they share many cults with them, either offering a distinctive Buddhist rationale for the same practice, or offering a parallel Buddhist version of a Hindu rite. Newar Buddhists have no institution of permanent celibacy. Rather there is a priestly caste of two sections, the higher, the Vajracāryas, comprising about one-third of the caste, and the lower, the Sakyas, the other two-thirds. They form a single caste in that intermarriage and intermingling is freely permitted between them, though in practice (and in the city of Kathmandu it is almost a rule) Vajracāryas have a preference for marrying Vajracāryas. Only Vajracāryas may be domestic priests (paruhina) for other Newars, a role which they must pass through a special initiation (hrdayabhiseka, New. dhāl ḫayag). Sakyas and Vajracāryas men are all members of monasteries (either asthi or haṭi), and as such there is no difference between them. They all are supposed to take their turn as guardian of the principal shrine for a week, two weeks or a month, depending on the system adopted. They all have a right to become one of the five, ten or (in K_FROM_NEPAL) thirty elder brothers, in order of seniority from the time of their initiation. The initiation into the monastery is usually referred to as tiṣyakāma ("tonsure") or, more honorifically, as prajñāpāda ("the observance of the eye of knowledge"). This latter term indicates that it is the ritual of becoming a monk, the appending of the term vrata - observance, vow or fast - indicates that this assumption of monkhood is only temporary.

In short, instead of a permanently celibate order of monks, Newar Buddhism has a caste of part-time monk-priests who observe the vows of celibacy for four days as a boy, when initiated into their monastery. They assume these vows periodically in later life, either during special rituals or when taking their turn to carry out the duties and assume the rights of the god-guardian in their monastery. The existence of married monks or Buddhist priests is not, for the members of the Newar tradition itself, as problematic as Westerners usually find it. The vast majority of Buddhist priests in Japan today are married and the position is in most cases hereditary. In Tibet many sects have had married priests; the leader of the Sākyapa sect...
must marry and have an heir: only the Geluk-pa sect laid overwhelming emphasis on the importance of celibate monasticism. What, however, has been something of a problem for Newar Buddhists, if only as expressed in myths, is the fact that the option of permanent institutionalized celibacy within their tradition has been lost, gradually declining over several centuries and finally dying out in the 15th century AD. (It should be noted, however, that Newar Buddhists could always become monks within the Tibetan traditions: there is inscriptive evidence from 1686 that a Bhaktapur Newar, having become a monk in Tibet, returned home to establish a Newar Buddhist monastery in memory of his dead father.)

Thus, unlike the Theravāda countries of South-East Asia, Newar Buddhism did not contain massive monasteries benefiting from royal support and extensive landholdings which could support textual scholarship. Nor, unlike Tibet, did these monasteries actually become the state. Newar priests were first and foremost ritualists, very occasionally serving the king, but mainly serving the ordinary laity. It would be a grave mistake, however, to assume therefore that they did not preserve a textual tradition — the evidence of unceasing effort in reproducing manuscripts is in libraries all over the world — even though they did not produce learned schools of philosophical disputation as in Tibet. It would also be a mistake to assume that they never practised meditation or were lacking in spiritual commitment. There is plenty of evidence of both.

The Newars' Buddhism is both Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna. This means that the ideal of the arhat, for which one must become a monk, has been supplemented and superseded by the ideals of the bodhisattva and the siddha.

Doctrinally the bodhisattva is defined as one who has set out on the path of complete Buddhahood in order to save all beings, i.e. bring them to nirvāṇa. A bodhisattva is one who has advanced so far that his (or her) future Buddhahood can be predicted. In practice the term covers two rather different things. On the one hand, to be a bodhisattva is the aim of all serious Mahāyāna Buddhists; on the other, it refers to numerous divine beings, the most prominent being Karunāmaya (Avalokiteśvara) and Mahājuni, who may be petitioned by the laity. The bodhisattva ideal stresses the need to convert, help and save other beings, which takes many rebirths to achieve.

Vajrayāna Buddhism posits yet another holy ideal, that of the siddha or Tantric saint who overcomes ordinary dualities and attains enlightenment here and now, thereby attaining great spiritual power. Both ideals — that of the bodhisattva and that of the siddha — are part of the legitimization of a Buddhist priesthood, both among the Newars and in Tibet. As would-be bodhisattvas Vajrayāna priests wish to help others; practices associated with the siddha ideal give them the power to do so. In neither the Mahāyāna nor the Vajrayāna is it necessary to be a celibate monk; indeed as a siddha one is supposed to have transcended such limiting rules, and breaking the rules, even if only in a ritualized and occasional fashion, is supposed to facilitate the process.

Celibate monkhood always remained part of the ideology of Newar Buddhism, for all that was encompassed by these other models of spirituality. The popularity of Tibetan Buddhist teachers in the 19th and early 20th centuries was often based on their celibate practice; and a successful appeal to this model was made by the Theravāda movement in the 1930s, so that Theravāda Buddhism is now a powerful, influential and dynamic part of the Newar Buddhist scene. These other forms of Buddhism have capitalized on a dissatisfaction among Newars about their traditional Buddhist teachers, the Vajrayānas. One should note, however, that this dissatisfaction has more to do with their level of learning and application than with their form of practice as such.

Basic features of Newar Buddhism

Traditional Newar Buddhism is a highly complex religion. It can be analysed, in its own terms, as consisting of three levels:

(i) the Śrāvakayāna or monastic level (Newar Buddhists today identify this with the Theravāda Buddhism);
(ii) the Mahāyāna or Bodhisattva level, to which is ascribed most of Buddhist householder practice;
(iii) the Vajrayāna, Tantric or esoteric level.

These three levels form an ascending hierarchy, but there is also a sense in which they all co-exist, higher levels being merely alternative and more powerful ways of expressing the truths of the lower levels, for all that they may appear to invert them. Those who have access to the highest level, i.e. Vajrayāna priests and high-caste men and women who have taken Tantric Initiation (dikṣā), continue to practise — and would not dream of abandoning — the rituals and devotions appropriate to the lower levels.

The Newar Buddhist pantheon can also be subdivided according to this schema, though typically the same figure appears in different forms at different levels. The Buddha himself appears as Sākyamuni, "the sage of the Sākya clan", in the principal shrine of the majority of Newar Buddhist monasteries. As such, he belongs clearly to the Śrāvakayāna. The holy stūpa Swayambhū is, on some interpretations, his Mahāyānisti form. How then does he appear in the Vajrayāna? In analysing iconography it is in fact frequently necessary to recognize two levels
of the Vajrayāna, an esoteric Vajrayāna and an esoteric Vajrayāna. The versions of the Budhā known as the Five Buddhas or the Five Tathāgatas, whether two-armed or many-armed, and recognizable by their crown and varying hand gestures (mudrā), count as esoteric Vajrayāna. The Budhā takes esoteric Vajrayānāṅg form as the various fierce, many-armed Tantric gods (e.g. Cakrasamvara, Hevajra and others) shown in full coitus with their female consorts. Such icons are never displayed openly, except today in tourist shops, a fact which dismays Newar Buddhists of the older generation. They are supposed to be kept secret inside in Tantric shrines (āgā) open only to those with Tantric Initiation.

As public monuments, caityas display only the esoteric saints and divinities of the Newar pantheon. But this leaves considerable scope for variation, as is amply documented below. Bodhisattvas appear frequently: the two most prominent, as noted already, are Karunāmāya/ Avalokitesvara, Bodhisattva of compassion, and Mañjuśrī, Bodhisattva of wisdom; both have numerous alternative forms. There are other Bodhisattvas, the best-known being perhaps Maitri/Maitreya, the Bodhisattva of love, who is expected to appear at the end of this world era. The female Bodhisattva Tārā (“Saviouress”) is also very important. Among Newars the goddess-cum-text-cum-supreme-virtue Prajñāpāramitā (“Perfection of Wisdom”) is seen as one of her forms. Different versions of Tārā sometimes appear on caityas, as will be seen, in the guise of the Five Buddhas’ consorts.

It is the Five Buddhas or Five Tathāgatas who are the most widespread and basic form of divine iconography found on caityas. Their cardinal associations and their vehicles or mounts are widely known among Newar Buddhists:

| Amoghāsiddhi (“Unfailing Success”) | north | Garuda |
| Amitābha (“Boundless Light”) | west | peacock |
| Ratnasambhāvā (“Jewel-Born”) | south | horse |
| Aksobhya (“Fearless”) | east | elephant |
| Vairocana (“Enlivener”/”The Sun”) | centre | lion |

Unlike Sākyamuni and the supposedly historical Buddhas of the other world eras, the Five Buddhas do not appear as human beings. They are, in a sense, cosmic principles. All aspects of the universe can be classified in a pentadic fashion, under the heading of one or other of the Five Buddhas. The fifth Buddha, Vairocana, is often thought to reside in the centre of the caitya; sometimes, as at Svaṃabhū, he is represented at the south-east corner.

A presumed later development, equally important in Newar Buddhism, is the emergence of a sixth Buddha, Vajrasattva (“Adamantine Being”), who is thought of as a kind of summation of the other five. He also appears as Vajradhara, bearing instead of a vajra and bell, two vajras crossed at his heart. The vajra is the “thunderbolt” or diamond which is the key symbol of the Vajrayāna. Vajrasattva is considered to be the particular divinity of Vajrācārya priests. Where there is a separate chapel to him, as at Kvābhāhā, Patan, his care is in the hands of the Vajrācārya members of the monastery and Sākyas are excluded.

Sometimes Vajrasattva is referred to as the Ādibuddha or “original Buddha”, meaning that he is the ground out of which other Buddhas emerged. Often the great stūpa Svaṃabhū is called Ādibuddha, because it was the first sacred site in the Kathmandu Valley according to the Buddhist version of the Valley’s origin. (At the same time, as a stūpa or caitya, Svaṃabhū may be identified with Vajrasattva.) Sometimes even the Buddha Dipankara, who predicted the future Sākyamuni’s rebirth as a Buddha in one of his earlier lives, is also called Ādibuddha, meaning “first Buddha of this world age”.

The different members of the pantheon clearly have very different degrees of importance for ordinary Newar Buddhists. They all know the story of Sākyamuni’s royal birth, his marriage and life of luxury, his renunciation and eventual attainment of enlightenment. The Bodhisattva Karunāmāya (Avalokitesvara) also has a very real presence for them, since his annual festival is the biggest specifically Buddhist occasion of the year. According to the local myth, he was brought to Nepal from Assam in order to bring a twelve-year drought to an end, and he still ensures the annual rains on which the rice harvest depends. At the other extreme there are other members of the pantheon – Bodhisattvas such as Ratnapāni, for example – who are little more than names, invoked at the prescribed point in complex rituals directed by Vajrācārya priests, but otherwise of no concern to the laity. Unlike the Five Buddhas, the great Bodhisattvas are sometimes thought to appear in human garb in order to save or instruct, but like the Five Buddhas they are also viewed as permanent divine principles rather than as historical personages with individual spiritual biographies.

Although the Five Buddhas do not have very distinct characters for the laity, they are symbols for them of the supreme holiness of caityas. It is known that some caityas have relics of Buddhas or saints inside and that all caityas have objects of great spiritual value, especially holy texts, placed within them at the time of their construction. Thus, while I have no evidence that the Newar laity believe caityas to symbolize the axis mundi, it is, I believe, true that they see them as encapsulating the whole path of Buddhism as they understand it (though most have not stopped to think about it in these terms). What is certainly true is that Newar Buddhists believe caityas to be supremely worthy of worship, whether one wishes to make merit for oneself or on behalf of a deceased parent, for example.

It is not really possible to systematize these beliefs and say: Newar Buddhists believe that the world began in such-and-such a way. Questions of origin do not play as large a role in Ne-
war Buddhism as they do in Judeo-Christian religions. Those familiar with the catechismal and doctrine-centred versions of late Christianity may be surprised to find that there are in fact very few formal teachings, no councils to settle difficult interpretative points, and no single authoritative ecclesiastical hierarchy. In this Buddhism in Nepal resembles Hinduism and most other forms of Buddhism. There is no one scripture and no institution in charge of imposing doctrinal uniformity. Doctrine there is, but interest in it is voluntary. Those who do take an interest in it are usually tolerant of alternative views. What all Newars share is a ritual framework, a set of calendrical festivals and life-cycle rituals, a mythic framework derived largely from the local text, the Svayambhūpurāṇa, and a common set of values (Gellner 1982).

The modern study of Newar Buddhism

It was Sylvain Lévi, in his great historical work, Le Népal, who initiated the modern study of Newar Buddhism. He was fully aware of the historical significance of the survival of Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley – indeed it was this which led him to visit Nepal in 1898. His view of Nepal’s significance is expressed in his much-quoted aphorism, “Nepal is India in the making” (Lévi 1905: I 28). His search for an understanding of India’s cultural history and his interest in Buddhism eventually took him even further afield to Bali in 1928. However, even Lévi was not above making some contemptuous remarks about the knowledge of Sanskrit of the Buddhist practitioners he observed while in Nepal (Lévi 1905: II 26–7).

It was left to scholars of recent times to rescue Newar Buddhism from obscurity. Among historians, David Snellgrove, Mary Slusser, Siegfried Lienhard, John Locke, Bernhard Kolver and Henříč Sákya deserve special mention. Among anthropologists, Michael Allen and Stephen Greenwoald wrote important early articles, and in Allen’s case, a book on the important Hindu-Buddhist cult of the Kumārī. Since that time, Tristram Riley-Smith, David N. Gellner, Todd T. Lewis, Bruce M. Owens and Gregory Sharkey have all completed Ph. D.’s on Newar Buddhism. Architects, Niels Gutschow foremost among them, have also contributed greatly to our understanding of the spatial dynamics of Newar Buddhist ritual. Many local scholars and priests, such as Asha Kaji Vajracharya, Bhadri Ratna Vajracharya, Ratna Kaji Vajracharya, Karunakar Vaidya and many others, have made a considerable contribution to our recent knowledge of the subject. Although Newar society and culture are so complex that much remains to be learnt – and in particular the potential of documentary sources for rewriting the social and cultural history of the last five hundred years has hardly begun to be exploited – we have undoubtedly already learned a great deal about the daily practice and social lives of Buddhist Newars.

Much of this study has been inspired by Lévi’s notion that in the Kathmandu Valley the coexistence of Hinduism and Buddhism among the Newars allows us to understand something of the way these two religions coexisted in the late first millennium in north India: Newar Buddhism as a window onto an otherwise lost but crucial part of history of both India and Buddhism. It would, however, be a serious mistake to deduce from this that Newar society or Newar Buddhism has existed unchanged for eight hundred years. We know that much of what we now have as the form of the three royal cities of the Valley was created in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Many of the cults which constitute “traditional Newar religion” emerged also in the same period.

Niels Gutschow’s meticulous study of caityas allows us to go even further than this. One might have thought that before the modern period Buddhist artisans (the majority of whom are Sākyas and therefore fully reverent towards the scriptures) would not have innovated without textual precedent, that the effectiveness of religious art would depend on following textual precepts and established forms exactly. One might have thought that innovations had only been introduced in response to the demands of the tourist market, and then only in relatively small ways. However, Gutschow here shows, by adopting a long-term perspective, that this assumption is entirely mistaken. Major stylistic changes were undertaken in the representation of the most sacred object of Newar Buddhism, the caitya, at many different times. Newar Buddhism, far from being decadent or preserved in aspic, was a dynamic and innovative force for most of its history.

How far are ordinary Newar Buddhists aware of the different styles of caitya which are here documented with such wonderful precision? Of course they know about the major types, without necessarily caring very much or being able to name them. The ordinary Newar Buddhist is, as Macdonald and Vergati Stahl remark, “no de Mallman”, i.e. no expert on the minutiae of iconography. They live quite comfortably and almost unaware of this world of Tantric symbols. Religious symbolism is not, at least not yet, as politized as it is in Sri Lanka or India. It is still powerful enough, however, as shown by the controversy over the willingness of some Vajraçaryā priests to establish a caitya in 1978 for a wealthy Khadgi patron, the Khadgis being a low caste of Butchers and Milk-Sellers normally served only by priests from the Tandukār (Khusah) caste (the so-called Nay Gubhāju). Regardless of the issues of caste this particular case brought to the fore, the act of establishing a caitya is still viewed as an act of supreme merit-making within Newar Buddhism, a model of the good lay life, and many have been established in recent years.
Introduction

The Kathmandu Valley. Nepal Mandala: definition of time and space

Every complex Buddhist ritual incorporates a vow (sankalpa), in the course of which the Bajrácarya priest recites on behalf of the parishioner, in Sanskrit, the following text that is called “And now the great gift” (adya mahādāna):

“OM, now in the period of the Attained One, the Lion of the Sākyas (the Buddha), in the auspicious time, the world system called Sahā, in the Manu-age called Sunborn, in the Kali world era that comes after Satya, Tretā and Dvāpara world eras, in its first section, in the northern Pañcāla country of the Bharata continent, in the Himālayas, in the region of Vāsuki (the holy serpent), in the Power-Place (pitā) called Upachandoha, in the holy land of South Asia, in the home of Karkotaka, king of serpents, in the great lake called “dwelling of the holy serpents”; in the place of the caitya Sri Svyamabhū, which is presided over by Sri Guhyesvari Prājñāpāramitā, in the land presided over by Sri Mañjuśrī, in the land (or mandala) of Nepal, which has the form of the mandala of Sri Sāmbara, which is the same as the land of Sudurjaya, adorned with the Eight Passionless Ones. (namely) Manilīgēvara, Gokarnesvara, Kilesvara, (or Adisvara), flowing with the four great rivers. (namely) Nidhanatirtha (7), Prahhavati, adorned with the twelve holy Bathing-places PrajāRatnā, Kumbhesvara, Gartesvara (or Gopalesvara), Phanikesvara, Gandhesvara and Vikramesvara (8), Manirōhini, on the north bank of the Prabhavati, here, within the Height (or Sipucva), on the south bank of the Vajrayogini, with the Eight Mothers, the Eight Bhairavas, and the troupe of the Ten Wrathful Ones (datakrudha): on the south bank of the Bāmgu, on the east bank of the Kesavati, on the west bank of the Manirōhini, on the north bank of the Prabhavati, here, within Nepal Mandala, in the city of Lalitapattana, in the kingdom of Arayavalokitesvara.”

The above text describes the sacred topography within which Newar Buddhists live: the Kathmandu Valley, where over a period of almost fifteen hundred years some 1,800 caityas were established to demonstrate and propagate the Teachings of the Buddha.

The text twice calls the Valley a mandala, a term which in this context pertains to a geographic entity – not circular in shape, as the term itself suggests, but clearly defined by the ridges of the surrounding mountains and the edge of a prehistoric lake, or rather a marshy space that is

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World Age</th>
<th>Mortal Buddhas</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Myth of creation</th>
<th>Occasion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satya Yoga</td>
<td>Vipasyt Buddha</td>
<td>Jāmācva (Nāgarjuna)</td>
<td>1 sowed a lotus seed in the prehistoric lake named Kālāhradu on</td>
<td>Lhautipālu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Age</td>
<td>Sikhī Buddha</td>
<td>Dhiācva (Compadevi)</td>
<td>2 an earthquake announces that the seed brought forth a lotus-flower on</td>
<td>Katipūmu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tretā Yoga</td>
<td>Vīrakarāḥ Buddha</td>
<td>Pīrva</td>
<td>3 his meditation causes an earthquake, he predicts the coming of Mahāyāna</td>
<td>Mesh Samākṛanti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mahāyāna Bodhesvara</td>
<td>Dhiācva or Mahāmuniāp</td>
<td>plowed his wife Varada on Pīrva and built a lotus on Dhiācva</td>
<td>Mes Samākṛanti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>cut through the mountain at Kot-UL with his sound to drain the valley (alternative: Chutūle gorge) persuaded Karkotaka nagarjuna to remain in the valley on Dāsakotā on hill Padma and installed a cousin on top on the town of Mahāpsuānas</td>
<td>Sri Pālicam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krakuchanda Buddha</td>
<td>Sipucva</td>
<td>4 caused the Bāmgu to rise by the power of his voice, exalted water to inundate his disciples on river Kesavati next the hill of the disciples (8), Kūkula nagarjuna caused the water to rise again, naga is overpowered by Samākhākāra at Kesavati; all 12 nagās are galloping at the 12 waters</td>
<td>Mes Samākṛanti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dvāpara Yoga</td>
<td>Kusakambaṇa Buddha</td>
<td>Dharmarīṣṭa from Benares needed advice, met Mahāyāna in Nepal at svayambhū, stayed at Thantibhai (Vikramaditya Mahāvihāra)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Śākya Buddha</td>
<td>Sākya Buddha</td>
<td>visited Svayambhū; coming from Benares returned to Gaya and persuaded Prabhanda- diva to go to Nepal and become a Vajra-Acyāra. As Ācaryas he covered the svayambhū light and created a caitya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kali Yoga</td>
<td>Śākya danti Buddha</td>
<td>(Nidhanatirtha)</td>
<td>lectured to the 12 nagās to ensure rain and fertility, Samākhākāra performed nagarañjara, painted a nagarañjara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We know that a *mandala* can be more than a painted representation of the universe, more than a support of a concrete ritual or of an act of spiritual concentration, and even more than a diagram in architectural form like a *caitya*. In any case, a *mandala* has to be considered a particular area that is separated from its surroundings. Once consecrated, this area provides protection from malevolent forces. The *adhyā mahādīna* recitation that is quoted above in David Gellner’s translation (1992: 191) of a version originating in Patan, places the performing priest and his parishioner into the centre of Nepal Mandala: the realm or territory that is defined by the Four Mountains and protected by, or, as the recitation says, “adorned with”, the Eight Passionless Ones, the Aṣṭavātārāgas. The microcosm of the city of Patan, or Lalitapattana, is protected by Eight Mothers (Aṣṭa-mātrikā, Eight Bhairavas, pairs of guardians like Simhini (the lioness) and Vyāghrini (the tigress), and Ganesa and Kumāra (the two sons of Siva), the Great Black One (Mahākāla), and even Hārīti, a Buddhist goddess of fertility and the protectress from smallpox, and Hanuman, the companion and doughty supporter of Rāma.

Nepal Mandala is named as a part of India (Bharata), and characterized as the realm of the holy serpents, who dwell at the twelve *tīrthas*, the holy sites along the Bāgmati and Kesavati (or Bishnumati).

A specific Buddhist context is defined with the evocation “in the period of the Tathāgata, the Attained One”. The Valley is said to be equivalent to the diagrammatic version of the Samvaramandala (dedicated to the most important Buddhist esoteric deity), thus conveying the notion that it is embodied with the spiritual qualities of that *mandala*. The Valley is the “place” of Svayambhūnāth, the archetype of Nepalese *caityas*, the “land” that is “difficult to conquer” (Sudrajava), presided over by the Bodhisattva Manjusri, who in the era of Tretāyuga came from China to drain the Valley and build a town – the mythic recording of the beginning of human settlement.

David Gellner links the recitation with the *Svayambhupurāṇa*, a Sanskrit text that narrates the origin myth of Nepal Mandala, and in doing so refers to the same set of rivers, mountains and deities. The earliest known text is dated 1557, suggesting that a creative cultural renaissance occurred at the end of the 15th or beginning of the 16th century. Such an assumption coincides with observations concerning the *caityas* of the Valley. Lattie is known about the 14th or 15th century, the earliest time the renovations of those *caityas* that have been labelled “monumental” in the following chapters are stated to have been carried out. A hundred years had to pass after the extensive renovation of Svayambhūnāth in the summer of 1565 before a tradition to establish votive *caityas* was revived in the middle of the 17th century. More than twelve hundred *caityas* were to be erected during the three hundred years to come.

**A guide to terms and structural elements relating to a *caitya***

Substructure (New. *phah*, Skt. *vedika*)

Platform is the name given to the square 10- to 20-centimetre-high flat step below the proper *caitya* structure. This lowermost base seems to have been introduced in the 17th century to define the site of the rather fragile votive object. In the first half of the 19th century the platform became an almost indispensable feature below the *stūhrakāha* type of *caitya*, and is usually crowned by the *padmāvali* element.

The plinth serves as the base, usually quadrangular in shape, of the main elements of a *caitya*, represented by the dome, the base storey or circles of lotus petals (*padmāvali*), and is called by Nepalese scholars *vedikā* or *phah*. Circular plinths occur at Svayambhūnāth, Pulahā, Sēgucāitya, Tukābāhā/Kathmandu, Sibāhā/Patan, Cabahil and a few structures in Chapagaon and Balābā. Only the plinths of the ones mentioned bear reliefs that orient the circle towards
the cardinal directions. The plinth never constitutes a clear-cut support below the proper cai-
yā structure. More often it is a multi-stepped structure that serves simply to push the dome as
the primary object to a more prominent height. This may result in tiered substructures that
have to be climbed before the Tathāgatas can be worshipped and the dome lustrated. In con-
trast to the dimensions defined above for a platform, the steps of the plinth are 40 to 50 centi-
metres high. In cases where two steps occur, the lower one is of a simpler form, with a quar-
ter-round profile as a base. The upper step is more elaborate, with a quarter-round base
profile and a half-round profile in the upper third. Both, the quarter-round and the half-round, may
be joined by stringcourses of leaves (kahsimvah or palehah) or a jewel pattern (raināvali). The
upper terrace quite often assumes the shape of a throne, with lions or monkeys guarding the
corners. When it does, iconographical elements, such as the four Bodhisattvas, the Catur-
mahārājas or the recognition symbols of the Tathāgatas, occupy its centre. Inscriptions are
added, accompanied by donor figures depicted in relief in the gesture of adoration.

The plinths of monumental caityas as well as those of the 19th century are invariably
square. Caityas from the 17th and 18th centuries may have a plinth of vimsatikona shape, the
twenty-angled form that is widely identified as the basic design of a mandala.

Vimsatikona base

Not much is known about the plinth structure of Licchavicaityas, as only very few have sur-
vived in situ. Some extant caityas in Cabahil exhibit vimsatikona bases with twenty angles.
combined with rockery. Without exception later caityas have above the plinth level a base of
vimsatikona shape, followed by a quarter-round suggestive of a serpent body (nāgavah) and
several levels of moulding ending in pointed corners (kula). These mouldings occur in a repeti-
tive manner as a support for the upper structure, which usually begins below with a lotus
throne (padmasana) or a series of vimsatikona bases as the main feature of a caitya base or
base storey, or as the julañdra of a Jalaharyuparismucerucaitya.

Base storey

The term “storey” is introduced to permit the votive object to be thought of in terms of a mul-
ti-tiered “building” and to avoid nondescriptive terminology like “level A”. The term
stresses the verticality of the structure and allows the covering mouldings to be identified as
“roofs”, while the niches “house” the Tathāgatas or Bodhisattvas.

The base storey occurs in two variations. Licchavicaityas are characterized by a moulded in-
dentation, while bases of later types of caityas are divided in the upper third by a half-round
profile, which is also called a “torus profile” or “profiled fillet”. Only very few caityas of the
Licchavi era (Tadhabhā/Kathmandu) and the 18th century (Naudvabhā/Patan) are known
with base storeys preserved in their pure architectonic form, the surface of the “walls” being
structured only by a negative element (indentation), or a positive one that added definition to
the horizontality. as against the overall tendency to taper that applies to
both the upper and the lower register display ornamental stringcourses and provide space for
iconographical elements. Whereas the base storeys of Licchavicaityas are square, acquiring a
vimsatikona shape only by virtue of horizontally, and often also vertically, extended niches, the base storeys of Sikharakūta-caityas invariably have twenty angles with niches that project
as far as the moulded support allows. The base storey is covered by what was early on called a
“roof” with moulded “eaves”. The specific design of the pointed corners (kula) has weathered
away on Licchavicaityas, but since the 17th century it has been one of the most characteristic
elements of Nepalese architecture.

On Licchavicaityas, and even on the prototype of Sikharakūta-caitya at Cikābhā, which
dates to 1657, these pointed corner motifs were supported by a quarter-round. On later caity-
as, the corners came to be double-pointed, upwards as well as downwards. On Sik-
harakūta-caityas, another storey of squat proportions but of the same general order follows. Oth-
ner types of caityas introduced various elements in its place.

The lotus throne (Skt. padmasana)

Only a few Licchavicaityas (Sibhā, Tabhā – both in Patan) have a mediating element of
symbolic rockery with pointed corners between the block-like upper storey and the drum
moulding of the primary trio. In most cases this function is served by the Face of Glory (kiri-
mukha), which crowns niche frames that extend into the drum moulding, thus serving as
something of a connecting link between the two levels.

The lotus as a base or throne for the primary trio first occurs on the caitya of Subhāhāti. It
should be considered as important evidence of a transitional phase, being repeated solely on
the caitya at Bhichēbhā and the one at Guitābaha ciddhā (the latter still poses problems of
dating).

The prototypes of the Sikharakūta-caityas like those at Saugah Square, Cvāb and Cikābhā
in Patan (the last two date to 1656 and 1657) display a lotus flower either opened only up-
wards or both upwards and downwards. A few caityas that are labelled as “monumental”, all
probably pre-17th-century, including those at Nāgabhā and Dupāt in Patan, were already
making use of both directions, with the petals of the lotus pointing either upwards or down-
wards. Monumental caityas of the 17th century, such as those at Pinān in Sanagaon or at Gu-
jābhā in Patan, made use of the double circle of lotus petals, which on these structures even
seem to be the dominant feature.

After the 17th century the lotus throne below the primary trio came to represent the rule.
The padmāvati type of caitya elaborated the basic theme further, and newly introduced caitya
types of the 19th century never dispensed with the lotus throne, which in a way represents the
most characteristic element of the Nepalese caitya. The lotus below the primary trio recalls
the myth of Creation and the lotus with its self-existent light (svayambha) which Śāntikārā-
carya, the legendary founder of Nepalese Buddhism, covered with a caitya at the commence-
ment of the world era of Kāliyuga.

The hidden level of the Nine Gems (Skt. navaratna)

Either the level below or – in cases where the dome represents a structural element of its
own – above the drum receives the offering of Nine Gems. To accommodate these, nine holes
are prepared, while four additional ones in the cardinal directions add to the orientation of
the scheme in the form of a mandala incorporating the four Tathāgatas. The nine holes, set
into the circular element, represent the archetype of spatial orientation. The cardinal direc-
tions and the centre together with the intermediate directions are defined on the basis of an
axial order. One need merely recall the “order of nine fields” in China in order to associate
the diagram prepared for the Nine Gems with the universal meaning of spatial ordering.
In this specific case, the Nine Gems represent the nine planets. The practice among the
Buddhists of the Kathmandu Valley is to replace the emerald representing Mercury by an-
other set of precious things, the pañcakarana or Five Gems (ruby, pearl, sapphire, topaz and sil-
ver), which also stand for pañcabhiṣa, the five elements, namely earth, air, fire, water and
ether. There was obviously a need to incorporate as many cosmic associations as possible into
the caitya structure in order to make it a lasting and meaningful symbolic structure.
The offerings of nine or five gems is not by any means confined to the building of a caitya. It
represents, in fact, a general and still valid offering required before starting any construction.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gem</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>Newāri</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Planet</th>
<th>Sanskrit</th>
<th>English</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mānīkya</td>
<td>mānika</td>
<td>ruby</td>
<td>Sūrya</td>
<td>sun</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>muktā</td>
<td>(moti)</td>
<td>pearl</td>
<td>Candra</td>
<td>moon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pravāla</td>
<td>bhipu</td>
<td>coral</td>
<td>Mangala</td>
<td>Mars</td>
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<tr>
<td>marakata</td>
<td>(pañcakarana)</td>
<td>emerald</td>
<td>Budha</td>
<td>Mercury</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>puṣparāga</td>
<td>puḥkarāja</td>
<td>topaz</td>
<td>Brhaspati</td>
<td>Jupiter</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>vajra</td>
<td>hira</td>
<td>diamond</td>
<td>Sukra</td>
<td>Venus</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>nila</td>
<td>nila</td>
<td>sapphire</td>
<td>Sani</td>
<td>Saturn</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>vaidurya</td>
<td>vaidurya</td>
<td>lapislazuli</td>
<td>Rahu</td>
<td>ascending node</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>gomeda</td>
<td>gomeda</td>
<td>sardonyx</td>
<td>Ketu</td>
<td>descending node</td>
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The primary trio

The term “primary trio” was first introduced by Mary Slusser in her Nepal Mandala: A Cul-
tural Study of the Kathmandu Valley (1982) in order to separate the caitya proper with its drum,
dome and finial from the tiered plinth structure and all other elements that newly evolved
over the past three centuries.

The drum

On Liechavacaityas, the drum invariably constituted an integral part of the dome, and in
many cases these two elements of the primary trio together with the upper storey were mono-
lithic. The most conspicuous characteristic of the Liechavi drum is the quarter-round, an
encircling profile with a horizontal recession on the lower side. The notching below the
quarter-round in a way repeats the horizontal structuring of the entire architectural object by
means of moulded indentations. Only in rare cases is the quarter-rounded bordered by dentils,
which on 17th-century caityas only appear along the border of the roof cornice of the base sto-
rey. On the drum profiles of caityas of the 17th and following centuries, the quarter-round with its aquatic associations was replaced by a (in some cases pointed) half-round – in the
language of classical architecture a “torus”, and in Nepal generally termed nāgavah, literally
the “snake round”. While on other levels of the structure the nāgavah may project outwards
in the north as a serpent’s head and tail, this is never the case on the drum level. Below the
half-round there follows a moulded indentation according to the Liechavi formula. The lower
part of the profile ends with the flourish of an S-curve, partly concave and partly convex,
much along the lines of what in classical architecture is termed a “cyma”. The surface of the
cyma may bear lotus petals, even in those cases where a lotus flower supports the drum
profile.

On monumental caityas, as well as on Sumerucaityas with their primary trio of miniature di-
ensions, the drum profile is punctuated by the Tathāgatas and their Saktis, either in a
plaque-like fashion or as elements of niches located around the drum.

In quite a few cases the half-round profile is bordered by decorative motifs, as a string-
course borne by the dome.

Prototypes from the Liechavi era (for example, Cāṭya H. Cābahil) set the standards for
such decorative courses on the dome – standards still being followed today. Difficult to iden-
tify, these motifs are either strings of jewels (ratnāvali), lotus leaves (padmāvali) or seeds (pu).

The dome (New. gvaḥ, Skt. anda)

Terms generally used for the dome in Nepal are the Sanskrit word anda or the Newāri word
gvaḥ, which latter simply advert to the roundness of the object. A comparative study of the
domes of Liechavacaityas will reveal a remarkable variety already in the initial stage of Nepa-
lese caitya architecture. The different ratio of vault rising to base line produces domes that are
either squat or vertically accentuated, bulgy or slightly inverted. Only in rare cases does the
curvature of a dome trace out an arc of a true circle. Domes of the 17th and 18th centuries dis-

8. 9. Navarūtra: nine holes in the drum (above, frag-
ment at Mahābhairava, Kathmandu) or the roof of the
base storey (below, fragment in Navorātra) receive the
offering of “nine gems”, four additional holes mark the
cardinal directions, thus giving the arrangement the
form of a māndala.
10. Neck (New. pula) or cube (Skt. hramuk) of a 19th-
century caitya at Mālakha/Bhairaptu with the Adam-
lime View of the Buddha.
11. Kathmandu: finial of the Sumerucaitya at Kand-
deulka, built ca. 1870, displaying the symbols of the
Tathāgatas in the form of flags (pata) which cover the
thirteen tiers of the umbrella: lotus (west), vīsvarūpa
(north), vajra (east) and jewel (south).
12. Patan: finial of a Jvalavalicaitya in Bhelachā, built
in 1863. From the protruding central pillar garlands of
lotuses cascade down onto the amalaka circle.
The shields bear the symbols of the four Tathāgatas.
play a curvature bulgy in nature, while those of the 19th century attain a more block-like shape. Finally, the dome of the Tibetan-style Bodhicaitya appears to be more inverted than anything before it.

The surface of the dome is kept undecorated, but even here the careful observer will find exceptions, such as the dome of the caiyi at Motibāhā with its lotus petals, and the one at Tadhācukā in Hakha with its four Faces of Glory in low relief (both in Patan).

The cube (New. gala, Skt. harmikā)

A cube serves as the base of the finial. In Sanskrit it is called harmika, and in Newāri, in an anthropomorphism, gala (“neck”). As the Sanskrit term refers to a “pavilion”, the prototypic form of the harmika “was a square laid out around a Bodhi tree or a Parasol and bounded by a fence or an hypaethral pavilion” (Snodgras 1985: 246). In Nepal, the harmikā remained a simple cube throughout the entire range of caiyi types, and was covered by a roof moulding, called bhūgi, that basically serves to secure the central pole that emerges from the dome. The square element originally defined a sacred space around the archetypal axis mundi or World Tree at the apex of the caiyi dome, repeating a “spatial symbolism of cosmic structuring at a higher level”, as Adrian Snodgras has written (1985: 249).

The specific Nepalese contribution to the ornamentation of the cube is represented by the Buddha’s face, painted onto or carved into the four faces of the cube. The painted form is renewed every year on the lull-moon day in October (Katipunhi), the day on which the mythic lotus emerged from the legendary lake Nāghrada.

The eyes are depicted in what is called the Adamantine View (vajraṛṣṭī). Between the eyes, “there is the curl of hair that grows between the brows, the īrṇā, turning to the right” (Kölver 1992: 129). This curl of hair is the mahapravaraśakṣaṇa that signifies nobility and illumination – one of 32 such special marks of the Buddha. It can be found in its original location only on paintings. On caiyi, however, the curl of hair took the shape of a round mark or protuberance on the forehead. Below this round mark there is a curl, which Bernhard Kölver has identified as the “ray of light” that according to the Lālaṁvistara emanates from the īrṇā, it being called Effecting the Destruction of Mara’s Entire Circle. Caiyi of the 19th century went on to add the outlines of lips to complete the face. In such a configuration, the curl ends up taking the place of the nose, and the face assumes a more anthropomorphic quality than ever before.

The shields (New. halāpau or halāpati)

Shields, called in Newāri halāpau, are not found on Licchavicaityas, nor in fact was the element, placed above the cube’s roof cornice, known of until the early 17th century. Shields cannot be seen on the painting that documents the consecration of the Svayambhū Mahācaitya in 1565 (Slusser 1987: Plate 1), and they are not part of the finial dated to 1644 on top of the Licchavicaitya of Vābāhā in Patan either. They do occur, however, on all Sikharakūtaicaityas that date to the second half of the 17th century.

Shields generally cover the lower two to four tiers of the 13-tiered cakrāvalī spire. They are of a roundish and, more often than not, pointed shape. Only on the Svayambhū Mahācaitya are the shields of a more geometric form, displaying fluttering pennants and flanked by a pair of Tibetan-style banners (dhvaja).

In almost all cases, the shields incorporate the recognition symbols (paścakula) of the Tathāgatas. In one case only (at Tadhācukā in Hakha in Patan) do the shields serve as niches, housing a modified group of Tathāgatas. On the shields of the Mahācaitya (dating to 1918), Tathāgatas, Bodhisattvas and Nāthas are depicted in an innovative way that Bernhard Kölver (1992: 131) has called “bewildering”. In trying to conjecture their purpose, he convincingly proposed taking them “as a derivation from the crown or helmet such as Vajrācāryas use as a visible symbol of their identity with the Buddha”. The shields thus add to the anthropomorphic reading of the caiyi.

The tiers or steps

The number of tiers varies between seven and thirteen, though five tiers are found once, in an 11th-century drawing (Bechert/Gombrich 1984: 62). The extant finials of Licchavicaityas provide evidence for seven tiers (Dipanani, Kathmandu) or seven steps (Tulanani in Patan). Nine tiers are only found on the Pulāsēgucāitya on Svayambhunāth Hill – probably a 19th-century replica of an earlier caiyi. These nine tiers likely represent only a part of the whole, as traces of destruction can be seen. Eleven tiers are found on the 17th-century finial of the Licchavicaitya at Vābāhā in Patan and on the monumental caiyi at Mahābuddha in Kathmandu. By recalling that finials represent the most vulnerable part of caiyi, and used to be replaced regularly down through the centuries, we can understand why only a few examples survive with less than thirteen tiers, the number which obviously came to be the norm from the middle of the 17th century onwards.
Seven tiers:
Liçhavīcaitya at Tulunāmi (Patan). 7th century

Nine tiers:
Pulāśigucāitya ("old" Svayambunāth). 19th century

Eleven tiers:
Liçhavīcaitya at Vābālsa (Patan) with mid-17th century final

Thirteen tiers:
Cāitya on octagonal plinth at Miyāka (Bhaktapur). 19th century
13-16. Four types of mandals with seven (7th century), nine (9th century), eleven (11th century), and thirteen (13th century) tiers.

17. Esoteric interpretations of the final of Svarabhūmī, from an undated copy of a manuscript (thuyapad, 39 x 21cm) that documents the renewal of the central pole in Nepal Sambat 937 (1517 AD). Transcription by Bernhard Kölwer, who reads the top line as "The inner Wheel (iṣṭā) is the Puriñation of Impiety, the inner Perfect Enlightenment", while on the level of the māyādhanā (māyādhanā) the expression asphānakaviśuddha corresponds to "The Puriñation (which is) the Meditation." Twelve of the thirteen tiers of the spire correspond to twelve of the sixteen vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet (the Bodhisattva's World 68/57/2). The thirteenth tier corresponds to the Diamond World (vajrabhūmi).

防腐性薩埵 乎陀貌迦薩埵
anuttarasamyaksaṃvodhi [du]mi

camdram māli
bhaga vi x
dha

āsphānakaviśuddha

vajrabhūm[ī]

a adhimukti bhūmi · papi[tr]a ratnapāramitā
a samantaprabhā bhūmi · pāra vajrakarmapāramitā
[au] dharmamegha bhūmi · upasmasāna · jñānapāramitā · paracittajñāna
[o] sāth[ū]mati bhūmi · śmasāna · valapāramitā · saṃvṛtijñāna
[ai] acaḥ bhūmi · upamelāpaka · pranidhipāramitā · anvaya- 

ādha[na]

u abhimukhi bhūmi · upacchandoha · praṣṇāpāramitā · 
anutpādañjñāna
u sudurjaya bhūmi · chand(o)ha dhyāna · pāramitā · 

ādha[na]

kṣayajñāna

i arcīmati bhūmi · upakṣetra · vīryapāramitā · mārga- 

ādha[na]

i prabhākari bhūmi · kṣetra · kṣāntipāramitā · nirodha- 

ādha[na]

i vimalā bhūmi · upapīṭha · sīlapāramitā · samudaya- 

ādha[na]

a pramudita bhūmi · pīṭha · dānapāramitā · duḥkha- 

ādha[na]

Henraj Sākyā of Patan (personal communication, 1 Feb. 1991) designates a cātya with five tiers as a Śrāvakabhūmicaitya, in reference to a lay person who had to wait till the advent of another Buddha for his emancipation. A cātya with seven tiers, then, is a Pratye- 

kabhūmicaitya, commemorating one who lives in seclusion and obtains emancipation for himself only.

A cātya with eleven tiers is called Mahāyānabhūmicaitya, a name alluding to the doctrine of Mahāyāna, which introduced the Bodhisattva who postpones voluntarily his own salvation in order to help other beings to gain theirs. Finally, a cātya with thirteen tiers is called Vajravānabhūmicaitya, in reference to the Vajrayāna doctrine, in the context of which the thir- 

teenth tier is identified as the ultimate stage of spiritual development, the vajrabhūmi. Diamond World or jñānavatī/World of Knowledge.

The ascending series of tiers no doubt reflects a historical development, as it culminates in vajrabhūmi, the world related to the school of Buddhism to which the urban culture of the Newars adheres. Bernhard Kolwer (1992: 134) has noted how the tiers "lent themselves to explications", in that the tiered element of the cātya mirrors the general organization of Bud- 

dhist teaching: "In proceeding step by step one can hope to master perfection, which at the beginning seems so remote as to be almost out of reach."
Manuscripts that document the replacement of the central pole of the Mahâcaitya (Kölver 1992: 141) mention separate and distinct interpretations for each of the thirteen tiers, including the Bodhisattva’s Worlds (bhûmi), the Stages of Perfection (pûramitâ), the Kinds of Knowledge (jñâna) and Sacred Sites to offer worship. Moreover, twelve of the sixteen vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet are related to the tiers of the finial or levels of the central pole. Not only does such a relation between language and constructed form associate the ideated world with elements of the physical one but, as Bernhard Kölver (1992: 137) has written, the letters also stand “for a concise representation of the Buddha’s teachings, and again relate the stupa to the Buddha’s life on earth”.

Obviously the tiers of the finial were represented from earliest times by steps. The archetypal finial of the caitya at Tulunani in Patan embodies this fact. Evidence from monumental caityas like the ones at Bodhnâth, Cabahâl or Guita is more difficult to evaluate, as the present shape of the caityas is the outcome of several stages of renewal over the past three centuries.

The äbhâ (New.) or anulaka (Skt.) ring of myrobalan above the tiers

Niches of Licchavicaityas that are architecturally framed make use of the äbhâh motif for the first time as a column capital. On later caityas the motif appears inevitably as an element crowning nine, eleven or thirteen tiers. A second locus of appearance is on Sikharakûtaucaityas below the roof covering of the base storey. In all cases, the äbhâh motif is a crowning element, symbolizing the sun at the top of a cosmic pillar or the “radiating sectors of the Sun’s rays”, as Adrian Snodgrass (1985: 251) has written. A particular kind of myrobalan, anulaka, in ancient myths grows on the Primordial Tree, in the branches of which the sun rests.

The central pole (New. yahst, Skt. yastī)

Only a few of the monumental caityas, namely those at Swayambhûnâth, Bodhnâth, Pimbâhâ, Daubâhâ and Guita (Patan), Yetkhabâhâ and Sighabhâhâ (Kathmandu), and Cîlâcâbhâhâ (Kirtipur), retain a wooden pole in the centre, the renewal of which is bound up with a complex ritual that reflects the cycle of cosmic time. On all other caityas, the central pole forms an integral part of the finial, which invariably is inserted into the dome. The pole protrudes beyond the round and the crowning ring of äbhâh motifs.

On the earliest extant non-Licchavi finial from Vâbhâh, the protruding pole is not divided into sections. A roofing profile similar to that above the cube sets apart the crest jewel from the pole. Caityas dating to the 17th and 18th centuries have protruding poles with two sections, similar to the ones documented for Swayambhûnâth, while 19th-century caityas appear to have as many as three such sections. In a rare variation, a caitya at Dyahnani in Bhaktapur depicts Vairocana, Prajñâpâramitâ, a bell and a flame on the four faces of the pole.

In the context of a cosmic symbolism (Irwin 1979, 1980), the central pole of the caitya represents the World Axis, which separates heaven and earth. Thus the central pole represents the World Tree and recalls the event of Creation. Certainly the renewal of the central pole of one of the monumental caityas mentioned above represented an act of re-creation with far-reaching symbolic associations. By establishing an analogy to the Saivite linga, Bernhard Kölver (1992: 126) has added Tantric associations to these interpretational possibilities.

Only for Swayambhûnâth do we know, from documents, that the central pole was placed onto a foundation that stands for the Five Elements referred to earlier as auspicious symbols for any given foundation. The upper end of the central pole is also of great importance.

The crest jewel (Skt. usnisacûdamani)

Above the uppermost profiled course, the tip of the central pole bears the crest jewel. The latter is shaped as a half-round protuberance, but may be almost spherical. On a 19th-century caitya at Kandacuka in Kathmandu, the crest jewel is replaced by the symbols of the sun and moon, which otherwise only occur on Tibetan types of caityas.

The usnas is a protuberance of the head that is emblematic of the Buddha’s more than mortal knowledge and consciousness. Relocated to the top of the central pole, the crest jewel creates another equation with the Buddha himself. On top of the central pole of Swayambhûnâth, the crest jewel in the form of a rock crystal is embedded into the trunk of the tree.

Inscriptions

Some remarks concerning the motives for building a caitya

Inscription 1: Jalaharyuparismetumucaitya at Yâkulibhâh, built in 1667
Inscription 2: Padmavalicaitya at Bûbhâ, Patan, built in 1723
Inscription 3: Jalaharyuparismetumucaitya on Swayambhûnâth Hill, built ca. 1840
Inscription 4: Sumerucaitya on Swayambhûnâth Hill, built 1920
Almost every second caiya bears one or more inscriptions. These are engraved into the plinth, with the substructure of the caiya as a panel, or into an individually shaped stone. The elaborately shaped panel is either fixed into the plinth or placed in front of it to form a free-standing element. Only in rare cases is the inscription found elsewhere: on the Jalaharyuparisumerucaitya of Yākulīḥāṅga, for example, built in 1667, the uppermost part of the pedestal (āsāra) below the Taṭhāgatas who form the prominent shaft bears the inscription, one line on each side. Likewise, the inscription of the Caturvyuhacaittya of Lābhaḥāṅga, constructed around 1600, is found on the small socle below the uppermost part, which is placed on top of the shaft with the standing figures. The inscription continues to below the upper end of the shaft. Only two inscriptions are known to exist on Licchavicaityas, both of them from the easternmost quarter of Patan: Tyāgahā Square and Utambāhā. In both cases, the inscription is found on the wall portions beside the niches. Two other ancient inscriptions survive on the plinth below the caiyas of Subhāhāṅga (742) and Guṭhāhāṅga (924), both again in the eastern quarter of Patan. The latter inscription tells of the renewal of the courtyard pavement and bears no relationship to the caiya above it. The one at Subhāhāṅga, however, seems to testify to the existence of the caiya, as the plinth forms an integral part of the entire structure. The 7th-century Caturvyūhacaittya of Dvārakābāhāṅga in Kathmandu bears a small inscription on the socle.

After these early inscriptions there follows a period of some five hundred years with very little epigraphic evidence. The large caiyas in Patan and Kathmandu that might have been built during this time have no contemporary inscriptions. Extant inscriptions relate to later renovations (jirnadhāra), mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries.

A new phase in the inscriptional evidence starts with the appearance of a variety of Sikhākutacaityas (Kvāti: 1656, Kvāpāchēnāni: 1669, Saugāhi: 1686, Khāpičečuka: 1697 – all in Patan) and the relocation of Licchavicaityas, two instances of which are testified as having occurred in 1619 (Tadhācukha) and 1667 (Hakha). At the same time, inscribed Caturvyūhacaittyas (Jyābābāhi: 1680) and the first dated Jalhaṛyuparisumerucaitya (Yākulīḥāṅga: 1687) and Sikhākutacaittya with oclagonal base (behind Haugabhāṅga: 1687?) are found. Various types of caiyas from the following 18th and 19th centuries bear inscriptions which more or less follow an accepted formula.

The inscriptions begin with an expression of obeisance (om namah) to the caiya, the realm (dīha) of the teaching of the Buddha (dharma), for which the caiya in a way stands. But it can also be the realm of the diamond (vajradhātu) or the Five Buddhas (Pañcabuddhas). Another possibility is to address the reigning king (svasti = hail!) with a long segmented eulogy, perhaps mentioning him even as a poet (kavīnda) and brave swordsman, and adding epithets like Naranārāyaṇa.

The date of the construction or consecration (sthāpana) of the caiya is given according to the lunar calendar, and the year according to Nepāl Samvat. It is only since the 19th century that Bikram Samvat has become an alternative to the latter. Moreover, the day of the week is mentioned, and quite often the name of the asterism with which the moon is in conjunction (the yuga), along with the sign of the zodiac.

In most cases the inscription calls the caiya a Vajradhātucaittya, that is, a caiya of the diamond realm, referring directly to the essence of Vajrayāna. The caiya is also personified and referred to as Vajradhātutathāgata. In the case, the caiya stands for the Buddha of the diamond world. Such personification assumes a variety of forms, such as Vajradhātucaittyabhāṭṭaraka, “the revered caiya of the diamond world” (Kathmandu: Lagābāhāṅga, cited by Locke 1985: 479). The term occurs in further variations, among them Vajradhātucaittyabhāṭṭarā and Vajradhātucaittyabhāṭṭhā. In the case of a caiya in Nuvākot built in 1683, the term cīvāvitra proves that both components of the term are open to further variation. Instead of caiya, even caiutra or cīvātra may occur. John Locke maintains that from these corruptions the term employed in ordinary Newāri, namely cībhaṅha or simply cībhaṅha (var. cībhaṅha), developed.

Personification is further evident in terms like Caityabhāgavān, where the epithet “holy” is applied to a man-made structure thought to represent the Buddha. Though reference to the “diamond world” dominates, it may be replaced by the “world of the teaching” of the Buddha that expresses universal truth (Dharmadhatucaitya). Such denominations do not reflect an ab-
The inscriptions of caityas are of utmost importance for determining the motives harboured by the donors (dānapati) of such votive buildings. The most general one is the “observance of the teaching of the Buddha”, the dharma. Quite often a particular desire of the donor or donors is referred to. In some cases, this even led to the corruption of Sanskrit terms: The inscription of a Sumerucatiya in Saugah (Patan), built in 1913 by a family of carpenters, mentions mano-vācha, a unique compound formed from manus (Skt. “mind”) and vāchā (“desire”), to express the wish of the donor (see Gellner 1987; 564). Usually the construction of a caitya provides merit (puṇya), which assures a better life or mode of existence in the future. An accumulation of merit, gained through any religious observance, is a major factor in the spiritual effort of a Buddhist lay person, which should serve the enlightenment of all beings. The text of the inscription of the Jalaharyuparnisumerucatiya of Svayambhunāth Hill, which is reproduced in full below, illustrates how the attained merit is transferred to various groups of beings. First of all, the wish is expressed that all beings of the world (saṃsāra) should be saved (uddhāra). In particular, the members of the donor’s family should reside in Sukhāvatī, the western paradise, which is reigned over by Amitābha. This paradise represents the buddha-field, where all beings cleave to the truth of the Teaching until their final entry into nirvāna. Finally, the donor asks to obtain happiness (sukhā), wealth (saṃpatti) in this world and a good gati, that is, a better form of existence in the future. Gati literally means “movement”. It is that force which leads to the next mode of existence. The three good or higher modes of existence are those of humans, gods and asuras. The deceased grandfather, his two wives, the donor’s father and mother as well as two brothers are all mentioned by name: for them entry into Sukhāvatī is sought.

The previously mentioned inscription from Saugah in Patan expresses the wish of those who had the caitya built to obtain the blessings (sudrśri, lit. “good eyes”) of the venerable Caitabhaagavān.

Other inscriptions do not mention such diversified kinds of merit. In most cases it is said that the caitya was built “in the name” of a deceased person. Thus Dānamāyā Stāipita constructed the Sumerucatiya on Svayambhunāth Hill “in the name of her husband Nāyaka Jagnvāra” in 1920. The merit attained by the erecting of a caitya is meant to liberate (durgatirnoca-na) the deceased and also other departed souls (New. bhochi styā, lit. “all the dead”) of the family from an evil form of existence. The inscription of the caitya of Yākuḷāhā simply mentions the construction of the caitya in the name of a departed brother.

To sum up: A caitya is invariably set up in memory of one or more deceased family members. The karmic merit which the donor or donors gain by this not only ensures happiness in this life and a better life in the following mode of existence (gati): Mahāyāna teaches that accumulated merit should serve the enlightenment of all beings. Inscriptions thus contain the wish that all beings should be saved. In this way a caitya bears witness to a family’s pious act.

The building of a caitya has also ritual consequences, the rules of which are mentioned in the inscription. In the case of the Padmāvalicaiya of Būbāhā, for example, it is laid down that on the occasion of Katipunhi, the anniversary day of the Svayambhucaiya on the full moon in October, wick lamps (divā) must be lighted, and eight days later the anniversary (busādha) of the caitya be marked by, among other things, a sacred fire (homa), to which a Bajrācarya priest offers 32 different items. Moreover, six persons must be fed. A committee of six persons (including one from Ukuḷāhā and one from Yāpībahi) is formed to make sure that the ritual obligations mentioned are fulfilled, though such a complex ritual is no longer performed. In yet another case, the inscription of the Sumerucatiya of Svayambhunāth Hill, a curse concludes the inscription, threatening that anyone who dares to remove the caitya once in place “will be born as a worm in excrement for sixty thousand years”. Such curses are found in numerous dānapatras of the Indian subcontinent. Similar threats are found in the early inscriptions on the toranas of Stūpa No. 1 in Sānci. These state that “he who dismantles [the stūpa] or causes [it] to be dismantled shall go to the (same terrible) state as those who commit the five sins that have immediate retribution” (Schopen 1987: 127, my additions in square brackets). Gregory Schopen recalls that four of the five sins relate to murder, and therefore suggests not only that the caitya represents the Teachings of the Buddha but also “that the stūpa was cognitively classified as a living person of rank”.

Besides such important information about the religious background to the building of a caitya, inscriptions contain a treasure of terms for localities, towns and monasteries. Kathmandu, for example, is called Kāntipura, Kāsthmāndap or Suvarnaprāṇālīmahānagarā, and the valley of Kathmandu is termed Nepalamandala.

The consecration of a caitya in some cases includes a reference to the laying of the foundation (padasthāpana) as an act separate from the rite of installing the nine sacred jewels below the upper trio of the caitya (ratnayāsa) to activate the life forces. In other cases the performance of the dasakarma is mentioned in a general way as part of the consecration of the caitya.

The paucity of the inscriptions presented here makes comment on the auspicious occasions for the consecration of a caitya difficult. From general observations of anniversary rites it may be said, however, that the 13th and 14th days of the bright fortnight of Kārttika as well as the following full moon (Katipunhi) are regarded as auspicious. Anniversary rites do occur on many other auspicious days, though, especially if the tīthi (the day of the lunar calendar) falls on a Wednesday.

Of the approximately four to five hundred inscriptions which are found on caityas or in relation to caityas, only four are presented here, all in their entirety and with a complete translation. These selected inscriptions come from four successive centuries (1667, 1723, ca. 1840 and 1921), spanning a period of 253 years. Except the caitya from Yākuḷāhā, the inscriptions are from caityas which are documented with measured drawings and extensive explanations. These examples, however, were chosen for their specific architectural form and not for their inscriptions. The material presented here, therefore, does not represent a balanced selection made for the wide range of information provided by it. For such a selection more inscriptions would have to be studied, and that would have gone far beyond the scope of this book, which is basically concerned with architectural form.

The four inscriptions were rubbed and transcribed by Nutan Sarmā in 1967 and 1968 as well as 1990 (Būbāhā) and translated by Mahes Raj Pant in November 1990. I am deeply indebted to Mahes for several discussions in November 1990 and March 1991 which created the basis for a better understanding of the specific contents of the inscriptions.
Hail! In the victorious reign of the twice venerable Jaya Pratap Malladeva, the supreme king of great kings, the lord of supreme kings, the great poet, in Nepal. Samvat 787, in the month of Kārttika, in the bright fortnight, on the 11th day, [when the moon was in conjunction with] the asterism Scorpion, in Sohana yoga, on Wednesday, [when the sun was in Scorpio of the zodiac] and the moon was in the zodiacal sign of Libra – on that day this Vajradhātu Tathāgata was consecrated.

This Tathāgata has been built by the donor Tulādhara Visvarāma Bhārō, [a resident] of the house of Thaukula [in] Yākulivihāra [in] Nāta tola of Kāntipur, [accompanied by] the following [lit. these]: [his] brother's son Narasimha, [his] brother Gangārama, [his] brother's son Manoharasimha, his brothers Mānasimha, Tyakanasimha, Dharmasimha.

Auspiciousness (subha).

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Inscription on the pedestal (āsana) of the Tathāgatas of the Jalaharyuparisumerucaitya at Yākulivihāra, near Nara Devi, Kathmandu, built in 1667 A. D.

1 svāstī mahārajaśirāja- rājarajendrakavindaśri 2 jayapratāpamalladevasya vijayarāya // samvat 787 kartikamāsē kṛṣṇapakśe trayodasyātithau svāti
2 nakṣetra sohanayoge buddhavārasare vicchārāgatiuc savitri āryarāgati candramāsi // thvā kundhu thvā vajradhātu tathāgata sthāpanā yānā juro // dānapati
3 kāntipuramahānagare nataśorā yākulivihāra thaukulachēya torāhara visvarāma bhāro bhratāpura narasimha bhaṭṭya gamgārāma bhratāpura manoharasmha tasya bhār
4 mānasimha tyakanasimha dharmasimha māmagalā thvate pramukhana bhārata mādhavāsimha divamgata pautra prāka juyūva oṣyā nāmā na thvai prati tathāgata dayākā juro // subham //

Om. Obeisance to you. the Five Buddhas. 

Om namo ... // sarvsvayāpi ... vā ... ... ... rupasa
2 ... pāyah pāmacabuddhāyā te namah // ... ... samvata 843 kirtika kṛṣṇa āsta- 
3 myān tithau āstamatra 1 indrayogye ya ... ... āna ... budhavārasare bichaka- 
4 rāsi gata savitari / kanyerakati candramāsi tasmi dine śri 3 dharmadhatucaitya-
5 sthāpanā yānā dina juro // dānapati bubahāra vāsā ... ... sa śri gunasirīju
6 śri dhanasimju 1 pitamahī pu śrī ... kāmā ... madana thavamvāsi śrī visv-
7 munju 1 putra pariśadevajau 2 chaya tāvasa[dhik]jau 1 tha syamhasta nāmnā divaganta
8 vanasa sriacaitvāsāpanā yānā dina dīva juro thvā kundhu ānā śrī āstamatra
9 puna bhoya śri cakrasvāri mha 1 bubahārayā vajrācāryau srdharmaddeva upādhyā-
10 hā mhaṃ 1 akobahārayā guruvāhāra mhaṃ 1 śri bubahārayā tharapāju śripuru-
11 sa 2 śri valālareya tharapāju mha 1 thuli śvasā]ana yāna bhaṭṭa bhokajana-
12 dakemārā puna katinpināhīsīn kunhu pra ... gheradīvā choyakemār
13 thvā samiti kunhu ma ... thayamcīt chāyāmārā thvate yā ... ... celaka buto
14 vā 3 thulīyā busāraṇa vāsāṃ patitīte hanemārā thuliīyā cintīyā yā-
15 ka sridhanāju sriatnājotijau śri [musya]simhaju nākhācyukayā śri padma-
16 psajju okubahārayā śri ratnasirīju yampibhāhirīyā [bhiksū]
17 śri vajrapāśu 1 thvati ... yāta cintā yāyamāla subha.

Om. Obeisance ... The all-pervading ...

Obeisance to you, the Five Buddhas. 

In Nepal] Samvata 843, on the 8th day of the waning moon of [the month of] Kārttika, [when the moon was in conjunction with] the asterism Hasta, in Aindra yoga ... on Wednesday, [when the sun was in the zodiacal sign of Scorpio] and the moon was in the zodiacal sign of Virgo – on that day the thrice venerable Dharmadhūtacaitya was consecrated.

That day the caitya was consecrated by the donor, the venerable Gunasriju, [a resident of] Bubhāra, [and] Dhanasimhaju in the name of all the following [lit. these] deceased persons: [their] father's mother ... ... the venerable Visvanānju (one person), [his] son Prīsiadevāsājau (two persons), [his] grandson Tavadhihāra (one person) [and ... 

On that day the busāḍhāna homa was performed. Furthermore, the following [lit. these] people should be fed: Sricakresvari (one person), the Vajrācārya of Bubhāra, the venerable Dharmadeva Upādhyāya (one person), Guruvāhāra of Akobhāra (one person), the thurapāju [= clan head] of the venerable Bubhāra husband and wife (two persons), the thurapāju of the venerable Valālāre (one person).

Furthermore, on the full moon day of Kārttika (katinipūrī) will chops of ghee should be lighted. On the following day ... should be offered. Of this the anniversary of the consecration should be celebrated.

[The following are the people] who shall look after [these matters]: the venerable Dhanaju, the venerable Ratnajyotijau, the venerable Musyasimhaju, the venerable Padmapānijau of Narāhaura, the venerable Ratnasriju of Okubhāra, the venerable [bhiksū] Vajrapānijau (two persons) of Yampibhāhirī. 

All these things should be looked after. 

Auspiciousness (subha).
1 Om svadharmahatvam namah // // st..tr..y.na svad.dharmam tr*i*..kya s..p..r..k..a..s..t[a] ... 

2 wandham saranantarat adivesytya // // adya m..tno rama) advances the other side 

3 svat... c...m...at... j...t...a...d...j...t...ia...j)

4 vajracitramahavasattva and vajracitramahavasattva in kathmandu. 

5 maharaja ram nirahjam gaganavadanihham cittacaitanyacaityam

6 tracetabjyamahapati // // danapatiya ihalo jana // //

7 samprakasita

8 ram nirahjam gaganavadanihham cittacaitanyacaityam

9 tracetabjyamahapati // // danapatiya ihalo jana // //

10 Om. I, having taken refuge, how down. 

11 Om namah srivajadhatuve jayate va yo harati vasundharani suklavastamiya dine ratnanyasa yana sukha

12 ... // //

13 jartrahumanth Hill and built in ca. 1920 AD. 

14 thayamadu in Thayamadu in

15 Jalaharvuparisunlerucaitya

16 vajradhatucaitya srivajradcvisevitavajracvaya

17 vajracarya, the brave swordsman, the di-

18 Vajracarya, the brave swordsman, the di-

19 Syamgumahavihara in the great city of 

20 Sthapitajana hrichi siya durgatimocana juyah jdoukaji

21 sida yana dina // // svasti yana dina // //... 

22 Through the merit (jaya) of this all the beings of the world be saved. May the de-

23 ceased persons reside in Sukhavati. May the donor obtain happiness and wealth in this world and a good mode of existence (jaya) in the next world. In Nepal Santwar 1040 in the 11th day of the waning moon of [the month of] Jyestha. Friday. This merit (jaya) liberates (mocun) the deceased Jogaratna and all departed souls of the family from the evil state of existence (taranag) and may they reside in Sukhavati.

Aspiration (srivijayagamani)
Thoughts on the Nepalese caitya and the need for funerary monuments

The fact that neither Hinduism nor Buddhism provides for funerary architecture may be a starting point to examine the caityas of the Kathmandu Valley, a 1,500-year-old tradition which has produced some of the subcontinent’s finest stone architecture. In a city like Patan, the caitya is a regular and indispensable feature of every courtyard – the first thing one sees as one enters, on the axis formed by portal and shrine. In many urban spaces, both residential and religious, they gather in clusters and loose grids to form sculptural groves of urban and personal religious monuments. Their role deserves consideration.

Inscriptions with significant details suggesting motives for the establishment of these structures are only extant from the last three centuries. For these years, one can hope to find stated reasons for the construction and dedication of these miniature buildings. First, as is the case for many activities repeated as part of the Buddhist way of life, the establishment of a votive caitya brings merit (punya). There is a common but complex relationship between caityas and deceased family members. Inscriptions proclaim the merit that accrues to the dead individual, to the donor (usually a father, brother or uncle) and, more generally, to “all other beings” as well.

As these references suggest, the caitya is never reduced exclusively to a funerary monument. In the tradition of the Buddha Sakyamuni, all caityas represent “transcendental form” (dharma-kāya) and are thus the focus of public worship – without any reference to the deceased person for whose sake the building was dedicated, or to the donor. In keeping with this notion, the caitya is almost always found in a semi-public courtyard or public space, and only rarely in a private residence.

If the caitya invites a daily rhythm of regular worship by lustration, application of vermilion or anointment with oil, in its funerary role it becomes the focus of an annual rite performed by descendants of the deceased. This bhisadha, during which a sacred fire (homa) is given 32 offerings by a Bajracarya priest, exhibits traits of a ritual of renewal, as if in remembrance of the original rite of consecration (prānapratisaṁśāvān) which imbued the caitya with cosmic energy, and of the later performance of rites of passage (dasakarma-ritu). The anniversary ritual suggests that the structure is a spiritual body, and not a permanent substitute for the mortal one. And it is the Buddha, not the mortal body of the individual for whose sake the building was dedicated, that its anthropomorphic features inevitably recall.

In another association with death, in this case with ancestors, caityas in a few Sāky and Bajracarya communities are established to represent a clan god, digudya. Initiation of new members unites them with the group during rituals at this symbolic structure, in which bonds of kinship are gathered up.
A caitiya's association with death may of course seem inevitable, given its archaic role as the container of the Buddha’s relics (sarira). The Buddha himself encouraged this practice when he gave away strands of hair and fingernail clippings to his first lay followers to enable them to worship the Tathāgata even in his absence. These relics were to be housed in stūpas or caityas. In a later generation, eight such sarirastūpas came to be recognized as symbolizing the efficacy of relics in the eight regions of the world.

Centuries later, in the Mahāyāna context, “as the idea of manifestation in time was gradually replaced by the cosmic idea of manifestation in space, it was natural that the caitiya came to symbolize the very centre of existence, as the absolute nonmanifest point whence Buddhas and all else emerge, and whither they return” (Snellgrove 1978: 137). The caitiya represented the dharmakāya, the body of the great order. Thus it was timeless, permanent, devoid of characteristics, free from all duality – just the opposite of a funerary monument, whose very existence bespeaks duality.

In the Nepalese context, the decorative vocabulary of the lotus dominated the miniature buildings, reducing the caitiya proper – the dome, drum and finial – to insignificance. Representing the “cosmic idea of manifestation in space”, the lotus stands for the Creation of the microcosmos, the Kathmandu Valley. That more than one hundred caityas should have been established around Swayambhūnāth, the Mahācaitya that protects the resplendent lotus (the self-existent – sva-yāmāḥ), can thus be well understood. Donors sought the nearness to the “centre of existence”.

Among Hindus is seen a similar tendency to construct votive buildings which simultaneously provide monuments to the dead. At Pasupatināth, one of the great tīrthas of Nepal, and the most prestigious cremation ground in the country, the construction of temples dedicated to Mahādeva has developed in intriguing ways over the last centuries. Temples named Muktēsvara, proclaiming “liberation”, have replaced Bhaktēsvara temples dedicated as “devotion” along the nearby Bāgmatī River. The shift in building activity from the core areas to the riverside began under the Sāhasas at the turn of the 18th century and follows the prototype of Vārānasī – a refocusing that is understandable, given the provenance of both the kings’ and later the Rānas’ gurus from that city. The Bhimbēkaktaēsvara temple built by Bhimsen Thāpā in 1823 within the compound of his palace on the south-eastern edge of Kathmandu was probably the first in the long series that followed. After his death in 1837 a Bhimuktesvara followed on the bank of the Bīsnumarī River. On a much smaller scale, votive temples were built by members of the Rān family at Pasupatināth from the middle of the 19th century onwards. Although no Muktēsvara temple was established within the temple compound, six of the 26 temples opposite the compound on the other side of the river, following a stereotypical design, were dedicated to the “liberation” of one or the other member of the Rān family. Bīsnu Kumārī Rān, the younger queen of Janga Bahādur Rān, was the first person for whom, in 1858, such a temple was established. The temple for Subha Kumārī Rān was built in the same year. The temple in memory of Rādhā Devī Rān, the elder queen (jēti māhārāni), was built in 1860, while the temple for Hema Kumārī Rān, the fourth queen in rank was built in 1864. Finally, Janga Bahādur Rān established the Janghirāneyahema Nārāyana at Kālamomens Ghāṭ along the Bāgmatī in order to acquire merit (punya) for himself and two of his queens, Hiranya and Hema. This he did expressly in order to reduce the sin (papa) he committed during the Kot massacre of 1846. The monumental temple with its sivalaya was built at the same site where the bodies of his victims had been cremated. A religious trust was established to make sure that dukṣśadā would be given to sannyasis every year on the occasion of Sivarātrī.
Iconography

The Tathāgatas: the five transcendent Buddhas

Throughout the 1,500 years of evolution, transformation and variation in the Nepalese caitya, the representation of the Tathāgatas, the five transcendent Buddhas, remains almost unchanged. They constitute the principal iconographic programme of the caitya. The name Tathāgata refers to the “one who, on the way to truth, has attained supreme enlightenment”.

The Tathāgatas first appear on the caityas of the 6th and 7th centuries, the example of Vābāhā (or Ombāhā) representing an early and mature version. At the end of the 20th century, the Tathāgatas adorn the shaft of the Sumercucaityas, and are being carved by Śākya stonecutters of Bhicēbāhā even while this book is being written. On the caitya of Vābāhā, four of the Tathāgatas are enshrined in niches of a base storey, facing the cardinal directions, while above them the fifth, Vairocana, is repeated identically in four niches of the upper storey, which is monolithic with dome and drum.

The Tathāgata commands the ten powers of the Buddha and the cosmic principle: he acts as a mediator between the essential and the phenomenal world and is, in the absolute sense, often equated with sūnyatā, emptiness. In Nepal, the five Tathāgatas are known as the Pañcabuddhas. The term Jina is found only once, in an inscription of Itōbāhā that designates a Catuvṛtthacaiyya of around 1600 as a pāhcajinalaya. The term Dhyanabuddha, invented by Amṛitananda, the informant of Brian Houghton Hodgson, the representative of the East India Company to the court of Nepal from 1821 to 1843, is one that gained “wide currency through the combination of Hodgson’s influence and the inertia of textbook tradition”, as David Gellner has pointed out (1989: 14).

The gestures associated with the Pañcabuddhas in the context of Vajrayana Buddhism were already known from the iconography of the historical Buddha. At least some of these mudrās are not necessarily linked to the particulars of the Buddha’s life but to general qualities exhibited by him (Kottkamp 1993: 389). It was only during the era of the late Guptas that mudrās came to be associated with the mahaprajñāpāramitā, the great events, with bhūmisparśamudrā symbolizing the Buddha’s enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, dharmacakramudrā the first sermon in Sārnāth, varadamudrā the descent from the Trayāstrīma paradise to Kasi, abhayamudrā the pacification of the wild elephant in Rāja-grha, and dhyānamudrā the offering of honey by a monkey in Vaisālī. In the Nepalese context, the relation of the Pañcabuddhas to these sacred places is only vaguely acknowledged and is distinctly confused.

Amitābha, lit. “boundless light” (Skt.), the most important and popular of the Tathāgatas in Mahāyāna, is considered to be the ruler of the western paradise Sukhavatī. He faces west and rests in meditation (dhyānamudrā) on a peacock. His attribute is a lotus (padma), a symbol of purity.

Amoghasiddhi (lit. “who unerringly achieves his goal” (Skt.)) is associated with the earthly Buddha. He faces north and rests on Garuda, making a gesture of fearlessness (abhaya-mudrā). His attribute is the visvavajra, two vajras crossed. In the early form he takes at Vābāhā, Amoghasiddhi appears underneath a snake hood, which has proved to be, since the 16th century at least, a main means of recognizing him. It recalls the serpent Mucalinda, the tutelary of a lake deity, who once sheltered the Buddha during torrential rains at Bodh Gaya. Aksobhya (lit. “the immovable” (Skt.)) reigns over the eastern paradise Abhirati, the realm of joy, and symbolizes the overcoming of passion. He faces east and rides an elephant, his hands displaying the earth-touching gesture (bhūmisparśamudrā), with which the Buddha summoned the earth as witness to his realization of enlightenment. His attribute is the vajra, the diamond sceptre.

Ratnasambhava (lit. “the jewel-born one” (Skt.)) faces south. He rides a horse, displaying the gesture of wish-granting (varadamudrā). A jewel (ratna) serves as his attribute.

Vairocana (lit. “he who is like the sun” (Skt.)) occupies the centre of the group of Pañcabuddhas and of the universe. In the same way, he is considered to occupy the centre of the caitya. Vairocana rides a lion (simha), his hands displaying the wisdom-fist gesture (bodhyangamudrā). His right hand encloses the index finger of his left without touching it, symbolizing the turning of the phenomenal world around the invisible absolute, as Tsering Tashi Thingo has pointed out (1991: 126). In many cases, however, it is difficult to identify the bodhyangamudrā, as the hands exchange functions, and quite often Vairocana displays a gesture that can be identified as the dharmacakramudrā, that of turning the Wheel of the Law, which is normally displayed by the Śākyamuni Buddha or Maitreya.

On a total of six Licchavicaityas, the four Tathāgatas appear in niches in the directions they were to occupy until the 19th century, which brought in change. Obviously, however, it took time to establish an accepted order, one that proved valid for some 1,200 years. Thus, on the caitya at Alkavahi, Amoghasiddhi, seated upon a serpent, faces west, and Amitābha occurs twice. On another caitya, at Nāgābāhāhiti, Amoghasiddhi has changed places with Ratnasambhava.

A fifth niche for Vairocana was probably introduced only at the beginning of the 16th century. A renovation of Cilāvacaiyya in Kiritpur in 1504 allowed for a fifth niche, and this may have been at the same time that a fifth niche was introduced at Svayambhūnāth and Kathesibhucacaiyya. Most of the votive caityas of the 16th century place the niches with the
Tathāgatas at the square-shaped level below the dome, but at this level Vairocana never appears. On the larger caityas mentioned above, which date to the earliest times but have been renovated and thus redesigned upon occasion, Vairocana’s niche is invariably placed beside Aksobhya’s and faces southeast. Representing the centre of the caitya, it, the invisible, has been turned outward at an odd direction, in the case of Svayambhunāth twelve degrees south of east. Centuries later, with the advent of the Jalalāharyaparismuimerucaityas and the Sumeru-caityas in the middle of the 19th century, Vairocana replaced Aksobhya in facing east, while Amitābha took up the southern position, leaving the west to Vajrasattva and the north to Maitreya—a fundamental change.

To return to the four Tathāgatas: they, it has already been said, were enshrined in niches of a rather squat base storey under the dome on, as is the case of the circular caityas of the 17th century, are engaged to an extended drum profile. The emergence of the Sikkharakūṭa caitya saw no change in this placement, although variations appeared: the rather large structure at Kāṭi in Patan (erected in 1656) displays individually carved plaques inserted with tenons into the multi-layered roof coverings above the base. In some of these 17th-century Sikkharakūṭa caityas, the Tathāgatas appear a second time, in the niches of the main storey, which acquired a shrine-like look, but I assume that these represent recent replacements. Figures placed within the niche structure always represent Bodhisattvas or the Tathāgatas of the level above. The base storey, however, provided space for the sculpting of various attendants and pujādevis, but in one case (Janabāhā/Kathmandu) the Tathāgatas were repeated four times emerging from the wall surface beside the niches that house the Bodhisattvas.

The Sikkharakūṭa caitya at Kāṭi probably represents an early move of the Tathāgatas from the niches of the base towards the dome and its moulded drum. This position was anticipated even earlier by the singular Licchavi caitya at Gaihridhrā in Kathmandu that displays the Tathāgatas, seated on lotus flowers, in an unparalleled position of dominance against the background of drum and dome. By the end of the 17th century, the Tathāgatas occupied this position regularly on all types of caityas that employed the padmavālī element (five to seven tapering circles of lotus petals), and also on the Tathāgatas were repeated or transferred to the level immediately below the dome, thus becoming engaged to the lotus flower that supports the upper trio. They are seated on thrones against a lobed background and arc only rarely squeezed into tiny niches.

Although the shafts of the early, and until recently regularly copied Catuvyūha caityas exposed either the Śākyamuni Buddha or the Bodhisattvas in a standing position, the Jalalāharyaparismuimerucaityas and Sumeru caityas of the past 140 years have repeated the Tathāgatas of the upper level emerging from the shaft below the upper trio in a seated position. In a rare case (near Hākhābhā, Patan, erected 1921), the Tathāgatas appear even a third time, in the niches of the throne below the shaft. There are still other singular cases, in which form and design appear varied: on a composite caitya in Hākhā/Patan (erected 1831), the Tathāgatas are placed within the niche structure always north of Vajrasattva. On the same caitya, Aksobhya is repeated in an unusually large size on the eastern side, well placed under a kirtimukha mask in relief on the upper section of the bulgy dome. Secondary repoussé coverings of domes in the 19th century even introduce the Tathāgatas as small metal figures affixed to the drum (Nāyakābāhi/Kathmandu) or the dome (Subāhā/Patan).

The recognition symbols (pañcakula) of the Tathāgatas

The Tathāgatas are identifiable by their gesture (mudrā) and their colour: they are assigned to cardinal directions, and each of them is associated with a special recognition symbol, called pañcakula, which their respective Saktis and Bodhisattvas also invariably bear. Amitābha has the lotus (padma), Amoghasiddhi the crossed vajra (visvavajra), Aksobhya the vajra, and Ratnasambhava the jewel (ratna).

With the introduction of shields above the cube (New. gala, Skt. harmikā) in the middle of the 17th century, these recognition symbols became an indispensable element of the iconographical programme of the caitya. The pointed or trilobed arch of the shield provides a moulded frame for the symbol: the lotus flower with four or eight petals, the vajra always in an upright position.

Although the appearance of the symbols seems to be tied to the introduction of the sikkharakūṭa type of caitya, prototypes are found on the drum of the large caitya at Tukābhā in Kathmandu, which Pratapaditya Pal (1974: 104, figs. 162–164) dated to the 8th century. Five reliefs of different size are placed below the niche of Amitābha, displaying a vajra surrounded by foliage (1); two recumbent lions facing a vajra, with flying kinnaras in the upper register (2); a human couple with offerings adoring a vase (kalasa), out of which projects a lotus flower (3); a pair of antelopes with flapping scarves, flanking what Pal identifies as the Wheel of the Law, which supports a lotus flower (4); a conch shell (sankha) on top of a lotus flower, encompassed by foliage and crowned by flames (5). Two final reliefs may be seen, one below the niche of Aksobhya, depicts a vajra amidst flames (6), and one below the niche of Ratnasambhava, depicting the Wheel of the Law amidst foliage and again supporting flame motifs (7). All reliefs rest on a base of rockery, at times with swaying tips (1 and 5). A full analysis of the reliefs will have to take into account evidence from Licchavi sculptures. For the present it may, however, be said that they display an extremely mature craftsmanship, the results of
which acted as valid prototypes for the coming centuries, and were never surpassed in their artistic quality.

Water and fire symbolism clearly dominates the reliefs, water generally being identified with the Primeval Ocean from which the lotus arose, and fire referring to the Buddha, who represents the Fire of Knowledge. The vajra stands for Vajrayana, the Diamond Vehicle, which originated around the middle of the millennium. Later, representations of the vajra and lotus became an all-pervading iconographical feature. On Sikharakūtacaitiyas, Jalaharyuparisumerucaityas and Sumerucaityas, these symbols were depicted on the four sides of the plinths, in the middle of the throne element guarded by a pair of lions. Thus the prolific use of vajras and padmas can be taken as a sign of preference for one or the other of the Tathāgatas: it is either Amitābha or Aksobhya to whom offerings are usually made.

The recognition symbols of the four Tathāgatas did not only appear on the shields but also in the centre of the thrones of the Bodhisattvas. While the protruding and in most cases frilled thrones of the early Sikharakūtacaitiyas were bare of any other decoration (see the Cikābakācita, dated 1657), later examples tended to be exuberant in their display of frilling, of vihānas and of other motifs, with the recognition symbols invariably in the centre.

As is the case with so many phenomena of caitya architecture, there appear to be variations in the use of the recognition symbols that bespeak a flexibility in handling the entire programme over a period of centuries. Within the usual range of variation, a pattern of repetitiveness seemed nevertheless almost always obvious. Thus, in the case of a Sumerucaitya at Kandacuka in Kathmandu dating to the end of the 19th century, the recognition symbols were repeated thirteen times and in this manner related to the thirteen tiers of the spire, being spread like a quadripartite banner across the finial.

The example of the caitya of Tadhācuka in Patan, dated 1831, was documented above. The Tathāgatas, in their characteristic 19th-century configuration (south: Amitābha; west: Amoghasiddhi; north: Vairocana, east: Aksobhya), are repeated on the shields, which have been transformed into tiny niches. A similar transformation can be documented for a Sumerucaitya in Panauti: there the recognition symbols of the Tathāgatas appear engaged to the dome and drum, in the place where one would expect the Tathāgatas to be. And on one Sikharakūtacaitiya (dating to 1710) in a small courtyard north-east of Bubāhā, the recognition symbols adorn the niches of the base storey, which in all other cases are occupied by the Bodhisattvas. Like the figures they are associated with, the symbols are placed on lotus thrones. In the case of the vajra, the frame repeats the peculiar throne elements known from ancient sculptures, with a kirtimukha on top. The two variations demonstrate, in fact, that the anthropomorphic representations of the Tathāgatas or Bodhisattvas may well be replaceable by their symbols.

Mounts (vihānas) and other mythical animals

The vihāna, literally “vehicle” or “mount”, represents the theriomorphic form of the character of a deity. In the Vedic religion, gods were not found in the company of vihānas. Only in Purānic Hinduism do vihānas figure prominently, with each of the deities being accompanied by or riding on the back of a specific land animal or bird.

Likewise in Buddhism, the live Tathāgatas were equipped with mounts: Amitābha with a peacock (mayūra), the bird of immortality; Amoghasiddhi with Garuda, a mythical bird considered to be a solar symbol (representing “the all-consuming fire of the sun’s rays”), and a sworn enemy of the nāgas (the serpents representing earth); Aksobhya with an elephant (gaja), a symbol of strength, virility and wisdom, and in general of the Buddha; Ratnasambhava with a horse (asva), and Vairocana with a lion (simha).

It cannot with certainty be said when the vihānas were introduced into the architecture of caityas, but it may well have been in the early 17th century, alongside the appearance of the recognition symbols. The monumental caitya of Marutvā in Kathmandu was possibly one of the first caityas on which the vihānas obtained a prominent role, the latter being carved out of the horizontal block below the niches. The vihānas, in fact, support the architectural frame of the rectangular niche. Other 17th-century monumental caityas, such as the one from Tāsipākha in Kathmandu, still do without the supporting block, the niche being simply placed onto the moulded base storey. Early evidence of vihānas includes another monumental caitya at Michhubāhā, dated 1685. On Sikharakūtacaitiyas, the vihānas appeared at about the same time and became a regular feature from the early 18th century onwards. The vihānas were confined in the beginning to the throne-like element below the niches of the Tathāgatas, but during the 19th century they were repeated on the plinths of almost every type of caitya. On the lotus caitya of Kuticuka in Patan, dated 1763, the vihānas are confined to the base in a frontal depiction, while on the caitya at Tadhācuka in Hākhā, dated 1831, they appear in pairs, facing each other and bearing a variety of symbols.

A new era opens up for the representations of vihānas with the advent of the Jalaharyuparisumerucaityas and Sumerucaityas around the middle of the 19th century. These vihānas were depicted frontally, as on the caitya at Kirtipunyamahāvihāra in Kathmandu, dated 1869, where they occupy a prominent place on the throne under the Tathāgatas. In other cases they appear in pairs, framing the Caturmahārajas or the Bodhisattvas, their bodies turning away from the centre, but at times with heads twisted to look towards the central medallion.
30. Patan: octagonal Sikharakūtacāitya with padmāvaṭṭi at Tāgabāhā, built in 17th. Akṣobhya appears at the level of the drum.

31. Patan: Sikharakūtacāitya at Vanabāhā built in 1845. Engaged to the drum and dome, Vajrasattva—with vajra and bell in hands—occupies all four directions (total height 13 cm).

32. Kathmandu: Jalaharyuparīnemerucāitya in Bhismañāthā, 19th century. Engaged to the drum and dome, and resting on a lotus throne, Vairocana occupies the eastern direction, his gesture being the dharmamucakramādṛś.

33. Patan: composite cāitya at Tadhācūka in Hakkā, established in 1831, elevation east and top view, scale 1:10.
Although the vahanas did not appear on caitya architecture prior to the 17th century, a variety of mythical animals were depicted from the Licchavi era on. Most of them carried a connotation of water: the combination of makaras (a sea monster with an elephant’s trunk and a fish’s tail, the latter ending in foliage) on each side of the niche and a kirtimukha crowning it developed as an element that has remained valid until today. The chapter on Licchavicaityas elaborates on variations of these motifs and the symbolic implications of the kirtimukha, which, as the Face of Glory, represents the cosmic fire that generates and destroys everything. In its beaked form, the face assumes the identity of Garuda, who represents another solar symbol. On Licchavicaityas, the kirtimukha appears with a moustache and jaw, devouring strands of foliage that form the frame of the niche, which is easily identifiable as water spewed forth by the makara. On all caityas of later periods, the kirtimukha is depicted with claws grasping snake bodies. As in so many other respects, the caitya of Guitabahi cithā, which provisionally can be dated to the Transitional Period of Nepalese history (9th–13th centuries), provides the first evidence of the more elaborate form of the kirtimukha. On 18th-century Sikharaikutacaityas, the body of the snake became scaled, designed in windings or coils, often with a clearly defined tail, and without any contact with the makaras, which are supported by the pilasters framing the niche.

On Licchavicaityas, gandharvas, musicians of the gods having human upper bodies and the hindquarters of a horse or bird, appear as guardians of the niches, but their role is also played by nágakanyás, snake virgins with human upper bodies in the pose of adoration, or hamsas, ganders representing a variation on the sun bird and, in the Buddhist context, the propagation of the doctrine to all realms (Liebert 1976: 99).

Almost none of these mythical animals survived the Licchavi period. Only the lions (simha) as the guardians of the corners (see the caityas from Vábháhá, Dvákabháhá, Subabháhíti) seemed appropriate for depiction during the Late Malla period, being confined to the threshold element of the niches or the plinth below the base storey. In rare cases (caityas at Marutvá in Kathmandu), the nágakanyás also guarded the niches beside the pilasters.
43-47. Kathmandu: a row of five reliefs fixed to the drum of the large cāitya at Tukābha. Placed below the niche of Amitābha, the reliefs face west, scale 1:2.

48-49. Kathmandu: reliefs fixed to the drum of the large cāitya at Tukābha. To the left, affixed below the eastern niche of Aksobhya, is the Wheel of the Law with mountain motifs below and fire above; to the right, the vajra, affixed below the southern niche of Rāmatūsamabhava, scale 1:2.

Matyas (fish) appear only as one element of the avastamangala (eight auspicious things) in the north-western corner of the vimsatikona base of Sumerucaitiyas or the base storey of Sikharakūtacaitiyas (including those with an octagonal base). The other auspicious objects are: cāmara (fly-whisk), sāṅkha (conch shell), chaura (parasol), padma (lotus), srivatsa (endless knot), kalasa (vase) and dhvāja (banner).

The Four Guardian Kings

Among the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley the Four Guardian Kings are always called Caturmahārājas, literally “the four kings”. Hinduism knows of eight Lokapālas, world protectors who rule over the eight cardinal and intermediate directions of the world. Of these only Kubera, the protector of the north, numbered among the four Lokapālas that appeared in early Buddhism, the other three being Virūdhaka (south), Dhṛtarāṣṭra (east) and Virūpākṣa (west). The group was placed on the four sides of the early stūpas (2nd/1st century BC) at Sāncī and Bharhut. Kubera was named Vaisravana; as the king of the Lokapalas he ruled over the north, while in other cases he holds a banner (dhvāja) in his right hand and a mongoose (nakula) in his left hand. Virūdhaka, another yakṣa and king of the Khumbhanda demons, holds a sword, while Dhrtrarāṣṭra, the king of the celestial musicians (gandharvas), holds a stringed instrument. Finally, Virūpākṣa, the king of the serpents (nāga), holds a small shrine (or a jewel) and a serpent.

In Nepal, these Lokapālas underwent an iconographical change, inasmuch as Kubera not only assumes the role of Virūpākṣa as the guardian of the west, but also frequently serves as a dvārakālā, the guardian of doors and gates of monasteries and their shrines (Slusser 1980: ill. 173). The chief means of recognizing him is the mongoose vomiting jewels or, alternatively, a money bag as the source of wealth. The mongoose may be substituted by a jewel-bearing nāga, while in his left or right hand Kubera holds a cāitīya and is thus known as Cāityarakṣa, a guardian of doors and gates. Kubera also guards the north, in that case holding a banner (dvārā or dhrāja) and thus known as Dhrtrarāṣṭra. The guardian of the east is playing a vina and thus is known as Virūdhaka; the guardian of the south carries a sword (khadga) in his right hand and is known as Khadgarāja.

As Caturmahārājas, the Four Guardian Kings first appear under the lotuses that support the four representations of the Sākyamuni Buddha on the Caturvyuḥacaitiya at Iūbhāha, erected around 1600. While the guardians do not appear on the Sikharakūtacaitiyas of the 17th century, they do occupy the corners of a replica of the early Caturvyuḥacaitiyas in Thimi and of the 18th-century Sikharakūtacaitiyas that support several layers of padmavāli. Moreover, they appear as individually carved sculptures in the corners of the composite lotus cāitīya at Sākvātha in Bhaktapur. In those cases they are shaped in their characteristic potbellied dwarf...
form and are fixed to the caitya structure by tenons. This specific position and appearance remained rare, the Caturmahārājas becoming a regular part of the iconographical programme of a caitya type only in the middle of the 19th century. They appear on oval-pointed medallions of the thrones that support the seated Tathāgatas of the Jalāharyuparisumerucaitya dated 1667 and on the first Sumerucaitya, dated 1854, and after that are found on almost every one of the 84 Jalāharyuparisumerucaityas and 373 Sumerucaityas that have been built up to the present. In a few cases the Caturmahārājas change places with the Bodhisattvas and appear in the medallions of the upper socle which supports the large lotus flower of the Sumerucaityas. In rare cases the guardians are also found on the socle of Jalavālīcaityas.

The iconographical trademarks of three of the Caturmahārājas have remained consistent over the past 140 years, although Khadgaraja, who normally holds his sword in his right hand, is sometimes depicted in the act of unsheathing it. In these cases, one example of which is found at Sighahhā in Kathmandu, the Caturmahārājas are shown as warriors dressed in armour. Fierce in appearance, they protect the dharmā and the caitya. Cāityarāja, however, is depicted with considerable variation. On the previously mentioned Caturvyūhacaitya of Itbhāhā, he holds a caitya in his left hand in his lap and an unidentified object in his raised right hand. During the 19th century his right hand is in a lowered position and holds the mongoose that vomits jewels, while his left hand is raised and supports a caitya.
54. Kathmandu: tympumun (torana) above the southern entrance of Balakr Nosvaru in Teku, built as a massive three-storeyed pagoda in 1712. Over the crowning face of a kirimukha appears a separate skull, representing death, which the kirimukha itself symbolizes.

55. Patan: the face of a kirimukha, designed as a relief covering the surface of the dome of a cōitya at Tadghuata in Hakhā built in 1831. The claws hold the ends of bodies of snakes, here rendered as beaded garlands, which do not terminate in the kirimukha's maw.

56. Patan: composite cōitya at Tadghuata in Hakhā, built in 1831: a pair of elephants, the mount of Akṣobhya, below a lotus.


57. Patan: Ghatāhā (cido), western niche of the base.


59. Cābyāhā.

60. Cābyāhā: Cāitya G, secondary niche of the lowest most base.


63-65. Lions sharing a common head and forequarters dominate the corners of square plinths as protectors of the edifice, and are placed either on a separate base or on a stringcourse.

63. Patan: Sumerucaitya at Kutisaukab, built in 1923.
64. Patan: composite caryat at Tathācuka in Hākha, built in 1831.
65. Patan: Sikkhākūta cairya at Cikābahi, built in 1657.
67. Patan: composite caryat at Kathabāhā, facing north. The primary trio with its lotus throne is supported by a moulded base with kulasā emblems that incorporate the eight auspicious objects (asaṃamangala). Garuđa, the vehicle of Amoghasiddhi, the Tathāgata of the north, graces the plinth, while monkeys guard the four corners.
68. Patan: composite caiya at Nāgbāhā with a circular base storey and octagonal plinth. Early 18th century. Seated Bodhisattvas occupy the niches of the base, lotus flowers divide the circle in the intermediate directions, and the remaining space is occupied by the eight auspicious objects (astamangala).

69. Kathmandu: Caiyāraja, figuring prominently on a socle.

70. Kathmandu: Catureyūhacaiya at Īṭhāhā, early 17th century. On the socle are depicted the Caturmahārājas in their supporting role of the lotus below the Sākyamuni Buddha.

71. Dvajāraja. with lotus foliage replacing the mukanas.

72. Kathmandu: Vināraja on a lotus throne, flanked by a pair of elephants, the valuna of Aksobhya. Fragment of a Śikharakūta caiya relocated to a Sumeru caiya at Īṭhāhā.

68    70

69    72

71
73-76. Kathmandu: Jaloharyupariserucaiya at Sighabahá dated 1878. The Catumahárajá on the thrones below the shaft are each flanked by a pair of valunnut associated with their respective Tathágatas.
73. Cuiryája, facing west with a caviya (right hand) and a nukale (left hand).
74. Khadgarája, facing east with his sword.
75. Dhojíja, facing north with his banner.
76. Vinárája, facing south with his musical instrument.

77. Kathmandu: niche of a Sikharuktacaiya at Sighabahá (early 18th century) with a Bodhisattva displaying dharmacakra mudrā. A vajra is set on a lotus to his right, and a pase (noose) to his left.
78. Kathmandu: southern niche of a Sikharuktacaiya at Sighabahá dated 1684, depicting Pratamnátipita Lokesvara, identifiable by his karnandala.
79. Kathmandu: eastern niche of a Sikharuktacaiya at Tébáha with Bodhisattva Maitreya.
Bodhisattvas

A Bodhisattva is "one whose essence is perfect knowledge". The Bodhisattva acts as a kind of saviour who postpones voluntarily his own salvation, his entrance into nirvāṇa, in order to help other beings to gain salvation. The earliest concept of Bodhisattvas was developed in Mahāyāna Buddhism. A system was arrived at according to which each Buddha corresponds to one Bodhisattva. By way of distinction from the Buddhas, the Bodhisattvas wear princely ornaments and a crown. The most important Bodhisattvas are Padmapāṇi/Avalokiteśvara, identifiable by the lotus flower he carries, Maitreya, the future human Buddha, identifiable by a caitya, kalāsa (vase) or nāgakesara flower, and Mañjuśrī, who represents wisdom and thus carries a book (pustaka).

Among other Bodhisattvas depicted on caityas are Visvāpani, who holds the crossed vajra in his hand, Vajrapāni, who holds a plain vajra, and Ratnapāni, who bears a jewel (rāmaṇa). A variety of other Bodhisattvas appear at the base of octagonal caityas or on the circular base below the primary trio.

Only a few votive caityas of the Licchavi era have survived with the Tathāgatas occupying the niches. In a single case, at Alkāvahā in Patan, Maitreya is found seated with pendant legs (pralambhapādāsana) facing north. On the three Caturvyūha caityas of the Licchavi era, at Nāgāhā and Thāpahā in Patan and at Dvākakāmā in Kathmandu, at least three Bodhisattvas—Maitreya (west or south), Vajrapāni (north or east) and Padmapāṇi (south or west)—are depicted, while the fourth niche is occupied by the Sākyamuni Buddha. As early as the 6th century there are examples of a figure in a striated robe, widely identified as Maitreya, who holds the garment with his raised left hand and displays varādamudrā with his right hand. This Bodhisattva can be differentiated from the historical Buddha only by means of the garment, the latter of the two wearing a smooth robe (Gail 1992: 85).

When the Caturvyūha caitya came to be copied from the late 17th century onwards, the Sākyamuni Buddha was replaced by Mañjuśrī, and the directions associated with the Bodhisattvas were changed. Already on the earliest dated Sikharakūta caitya at Cīkābhā (1657) an order evolved, around the middle of the 17th century, that has remained valid until today:

East: Maitreya in a striated robe, his left hand grasping the robe, his right hand in varādamudrā

South: Vajrapāni holding a vajra or having one or two of them displayed in an upright or horizontal position on one or two lotus flowers

West: Padmapāṇi holding a lotus flower (padma) in his left hand, with the right hand displaying varādamudrā

North: Mañjuśrī in dharmaacakramudrā, his primary attributes—the book (pustaka) and sword of wisdom (prajñākhyāda)—being displayed on lotus flowers to his left and right, or even on the architectural frame of the niche.

In most cases the Bodhisattvas are depicted in a standing position and placed within architecturally framed niches that form an integral part of the caitya. Only in rare cases are the Bodhisattvas seen in a seated position, on a lotus throne (padmāsana) that projects from the base storey. On a large Sikharakūta caitya at Vanābhā, which dates to 1686, the Bodhisattvas clearly dominate the base storey of the particular type of Sikharakūta caitya, where a reduced base storey appears to be supported by a squat lotus base, the Bodhisattvas are invariably—with only one exception at Jayābhā/Kathmandu—depicted seated.

Besides Maitreya, Vajrapāni is the only Bodhisattva to display a marked difference in appearance and a variety of attributes. On a Sikharakūta caitya at Sīhagābhā in Kathmandu, he is depicted with the gesture of dharmaacakramudrā, while his attributes, the vajra and the pasa (noose), are placed on lotus flowers to the right and left of him. Again equipped with a vajra and pasa on a caitya at Lagābhā in Kathmandu, he there projects a fierce expression, girded with snakes and dressed in a tiger skin. There is nothing to parallel this representation, which bears witness to Tibetan influence.

In rare cases, as on another Sikharakūta caitya of Sīhagābhā, one dating to 1684, the niche facing south, which is normally reserved for Vajrapāni, is occupied by Pretasantarṣita Lokēsvara, the "Lokēsvara who is satiated with corpses". In the context of Newar Buddhism, he is recognizable by the kamaṇḍalu ("water-jar") he carries.

Only a few examples of Sikharakūta caityas from the 17th century that do not follow the obviously widely accepted order explained above are found in Patan. The caityas at Krupāchānī, dating to 1669, and at Sasanuni, which is assignable to the same period (an inscription on the āsana of Vajrapāni mentions Dharmasimha as the donor but no date), display Visvāpani facing north, Vajrapāni facing east and Ratnapāni facing south, while Padmapāṇi remains unchanged in the west. The iconography of Svayambhū Mahācātiva, which was fundamentally revised in 1917–1918 for the enlargement of the niches, recalls this 18th-century sequence of Bodhisattvas, though Samantabhadra is made to guard the niche occupied by Vairocana.

This order obviously put into practice the sequence prescribed by the Nispamayogavâti, written in 1165 by Mahāpendita Abhayākāra Gupta. This text mentions specifically that the
Bodhisattvas should display the recognition symbol of the Tathāgata they are considered an emanation of. Thus Padmapani bears the lotus of Amitābha. Amoghasiddhi is the leader of the visvavajra (double vajra) family. Akṣobhya of the vajra family and Ratnapāṇi is the embodiment of the jewel (citramanidhvaja) family.

On caitiyas with an octagonal base, the four Bodhisattvas are accompanied by their female counterparts. Such examples are found on the caitiyas of Gujihābāhī ruddhā and in a small courtyard near Nakabahi, both in Patan. In most cases, however, as on the octagonal Sikharakūtacāitya behind Haugābahī in Patan, dating to 1687, the following sequence of Eight Bodhisattvas (Astabodhisattvās) is found:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Deity</th>
<th>Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>Mahājuniṣṭha</td>
<td>sword (khadgā) and book (pustaka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-east</td>
<td>Candraprabha</td>
<td>moon (candra) and disc (cakra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>Maitreyā</td>
<td>striated robe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-east</td>
<td>Ājānirprabhā</td>
<td>sun (stūra) on lotus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>vajra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-west</td>
<td>Visvapāṇi</td>
<td>crossed vajras (visvavajra)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>Padmapāṇi</td>
<td>lotus (padma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-west</td>
<td>Jñānaketu</td>
<td>staff with jewel (citramanidhvaja)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In rare cases, as on the squat base of an 18th-century caitiya north of Vanabāhā, the positions of Jñānaketu and Visvapāṇi are reversed.

Other groups of Bodhisattvas occur on caitiyas in Kathmandu and on a Sikharakūtacāitya at Gujihābāhī in Patan dating to 1821. On the latter, the usual group of four Bodhisattvas in the niches of the base storey are flanked by pairs of unique Bodhisattvas, ones not easily recognizable – not to mention the fact that the underlying concept remains obscure. Padmapāṇi is flanked by Mahājuniṣṭha (right) and Maitreyā (left), and holds a lotus flower in his raised left hand. Mahājuniṣṭha is flanked by two Maitreyā figures, one holding a vase (kalasa) and the other holding sprigs of the nāgakhesara flower; Maitreyā is flanked by Prajñāpāramitā and Maitreyā, the latter holding a lotus; Vajrapāṇi is flanked by two Maitreyās, one holding a camṣa flower, the other a bowl (pindapātra). Depicted in his characteristic striated robe, Maitreyā appears a total of six times with different attributes – more than are usually listed in iconographical dictionaries.

Obviously, Maitreyā is depicted in the most varied ways on caitiyas. A few 17th-century Sikharakūtacāityas in Kathmandu bear witness to this fact. One at Chusyābhāhī houses Maitreyā in the usual eastern direction, in jñānamudrā, while at Sighābhāhī he occupies all four niches of the base storey: in abhayamudrā in the north, and in varudamudrā in all remaining directions. Another example, at Cvasapābhā, exhibits one identical figure in four different gestures. Only one of these gestures may be identified as those of Maitreyā, while the others seem to recur to a scheme that is documented by the 6th-century Caturvyūhačāitya on Svayambhūnath Hill and its early-17th-century replica at Itūbhāhī. This unique transfer of an iconographical programme from one distinct type to another bespeaks the broad perspective of the 17th century, which opened up to ever new variations.

At about the same time as the Astabodhisattvás were introduced into the cardinal and intermediate directions of octagonal base storeys, the group of Sixteen Bodhisattvās (Sodasabodhisattvas) apparently began to be considered a suitable iconographical programme for caitiya architecture.

The first dated example (1673) is found at Mulguitabahi in Patan. There the base storey of a Sikharakūtacāitya displays eight Bodhisattvas in seated position on the upper register and eight on the lower register. These remain unidentifiable because their attributes have to a large extent worn off. Only a decade later, on the large caitiya at Yetalihi (600 metres from Guia), which dates to 1684, and on the caitiya of Michū bhāhī, which dates to 1686, the Sodasabodhisattvas adorn small niches on a circular base below the primary tria, each of them identifiable – and at Michūbhāhī even associated with a donor by means of an inscription on the lotus throne below. Another inscription at Michūbhāhī mentions that the spirit of the damaged caitiya, which serves as the lineage deity (istadevata) of the Śākya community of Michūbhāhī, had been taken out and a new caitiya established (pratistha) on the full moon day of the month of Vaisakhā (April/May) in Nepāl Samvat 807 (1686 AD). The Tathāgatas of the preceding caitiya are still visible in the deep niches of the plinth. New Tathāgatas were placed into the niches of the base storey, one step above the plinth. A third set of Tathāgatas with three heads (trunukha) and eight arms occupies the niches in the intermediate directions. The space in between is occupied by the Sodasabodhisattvas. The iconographical programme of Michūbhāhī is further elaborated by the placement of the four dance deities in the corners of the base storey, while on the caitiya of Yetalihi the entire troupe of Sodasalāsāyas (see the following section) is added to the circle of Bodhisattvās, the Sodasalāsāyas flanking in pairs the Buddhasākṣitas, and the Bodhisattvās flanking in pairs the Tathāgatas.

The Sodasabodhisattvās also appear on the elaborately carved Ramyakūtagaracāityas of Kathmandu and the replica on Svayambhūnath Hill. One of these is datable by an inscription to 1686, while the others certainly go back to the 18th and 19th centuries. In deviation from the caitiyas of Patan, the Sodasabodhisattvas on the Ramyakūtagaracāitya at Lagābhāhī, which has a sequence that differs from the one quoted from the Nispāmasyogavali, are depicted in standing positions.
The examples of elaborate iconographical programmes described above add to the evidence of an obvious need in the course of the 17th century to depict the Sodasabodhisattvas and Sodasalasyas not only on mandala paintings but also in a three-dimensional form. The caitiya of the late 17th century gives rise to a mandala in built form, one expressive of a cosmological world-view. It not only stands for the Buddha and his Teachings but also incorporates those Bodhisattvas and deities that were revered by Vajrayāna Buddhism.

The Sixteen Goddesses (Sodasalasyas)

The Sixteen Goddesses are identified either as Sodasalasyas, the "sixteen dancing girls", or as pījā (or "worship") goddesses representing the sixteenfold worship that a Nepalese Buddhist performs every day. The goddesses are each invoked with a seed mantra and a gesture (mudra) (Shima 1991: 64-65).

These Sixteen Goddesses are completely depicted on caitiyas only in one case; more often they occur in varying combinations: as a pair, as a group of four or, at most, eight. Besides the sixteen listed by David Gellner in the manuscript version of his dissertation, there is also Hasyadevi, who appears as the smiling goddess playing cymbals, and Sabhadevi, who plays a

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84, 85. Patan: octagonal Sākharakutascitya with padmaśāla at Gupākhā cindhā, built around 1760. The base storey displays four Bodhisattvas in varada-mudrā in the main directions and their respective Sakṣis with identical symbols, but in abhayamudrā in the intermediate directions. The tympana over the niches display crowning kirtimukhas and hamsas above the column which rests on kalasa in the column of the Sakṣis, and beaked kirtimukhas and makaras above the column which rests on lions (in the case of the Bodhisattvas).


86. Patan: iconographical programme of the caitiya at Michubāhā, built in 1685.

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87. Sixteen Goddesses (Sodakalasīnyās).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Name (Inscription)</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Associated dancer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Samantabhadra</td>
<td>Samantabhadra</td>
<td>cintamani-jewel</td>
<td>Śrī Amśadeva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Kasyani</td>
<td>Kasyani</td>
<td>kharīja-woṛd</td>
<td>Śrī Dhanākṣa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Aksobhya Tathāgata</td>
<td>Aksobhya</td>
<td>kalpavrikṣa</td>
<td>Śrī Nāga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Akāshagāthā</td>
<td>Akāshagāthā</td>
<td>cintamani-woṛd</td>
<td>Śrī Negi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Maitri Tīrī</td>
<td>Maitri Tīrī</td>
<td>kalpavrikṣa</td>
<td>Śrī Jādewi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Manjusri</td>
<td>Manjusri</td>
<td>cintamani-jewel</td>
<td>Śrī Mahānandha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Ratnasambhava</td>
<td>Ratnasambhava</td>
<td>padma-woṛd</td>
<td>Śrī Panasaṅga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Vajrayogini</td>
<td>Vajrayogini</td>
<td>kharīja-woṛd</td>
<td>Śrī Puṣrakṣa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9   | South    | Pāṇḍarāni          | Pāṇḍarāni    | sakti-koṭch | Śrī Puṣrakṣa-śuruk |}

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88. Climatic diagram for the year 1917 AD.
lute, symbolic of sound as a quality of space that is experienced through the ear. Puspadevi is also called Namaskārādevī, because she holds a flower with the gesture of namaskāramudrā. Adarsadevi is also known as Rūpadevi, representing form that is experienced through the eye.

The complete group of the Sixteen Goddesses is found on the cāitīya at Yetalibi, erected in 1684 behind Ukubāhā in Patan. This cāitīya at the same time represents almost the earliest dated evidence for them, and it is the only one containing their inscribed names. Below the circular drum, the niches with the Tathāgatas and the intermediate niches with their respective Saktis divide the circular base. In between are placed the Sixteen Bodhisattvas, flanking the Tathāgatas in pairs, even as the Sodasalāsīya flank their Saktis in pairs. To the immediate right of these Saktis are placed the four dance deities (SE: Mālādevī, SW: Gitadevi, NW: Nṛtyadevi, NE: Lasyādevī), and to their left the four goddesses of music (SE: Vinādevī, SW: Vamśadevi, NW: Mṛdangadevi, NE: Murajadevi). The goddesses of dance are accompanied by those attributed to the fifth sense, that of smell, and to the three offerings made in rituals, namely fire, incense and flowers (SE: Dhūpadevi, SW: Dipadevi, NW: Gandhadevi, NE: Puspadevi), while the goddesses of music are accompanied by those representing the four senses (SE: Rūpadevi, SW: Sabdadevi, NW: Rūpadevi, NE: Sparsadevi). All goddesses are addressed by means of the prefix svraj(r)ā, as if to ensure the proper Vajrayāna context.

A list of the Sodasalāsīya of Yetalibi/Patan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Goddess</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Dance Deity</th>
<th>Music Deity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rūpadevi</td>
<td>South-west</td>
<td>dance deity</td>
<td>music deity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Vinādevī</td>
<td>South-east</td>
<td>sense: of form through the eye</td>
<td>att.: mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mālādevī</td>
<td>North-west</td>
<td>ritual offering</td>
<td>att.: lute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dhūpadevi</td>
<td>North-east</td>
<td>sense: of sound through the ear</td>
<td>att.: lute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nṛtyadevi</td>
<td>South-west</td>
<td>sense: of taste through the tongue</td>
<td>att.: bowl with incense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vamśadevi</td>
<td>North-east</td>
<td>att.: lute</td>
<td>att.: bowl with incense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Gitadevi</td>
<td>South-east</td>
<td>att.: drum</td>
<td>att.: druṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dipadevi</td>
<td>North-west</td>
<td>att.: fire in a bowl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rūpadevi</td>
<td>South-west</td>
<td>att.: vajra and bell</td>
<td>att.: shell conch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mṛdangadevi</td>
<td>North-east</td>
<td>att.: vajra</td>
<td>att.: double-headed drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nṛtyadevi</td>
<td>South-west</td>
<td>att.: svraj(r)ā</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Gandhadevi</td>
<td>North-west</td>
<td>sense: of odour</td>
<td>att.: cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sparsadevi</td>
<td>South-east</td>
<td>sense: of touch through the skin</td>
<td>att.: flower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Murajadevi</td>
<td>North-west</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Lasyādevi</td>
<td>North-east</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Puspadevi</td>
<td>South-west</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides in this complete group of Sodasalāsīya, the four dance deities, namely Gitadevi (NW). Nṛtyadevi (NE), Lasyādevī (SE) and Mālādevī (SW), are elaborately depicted, in a seated position, occupying the corners above the base storey of the large cāitīya of Michubāhā, which was reconstructed and reshaped in 1686, only two years later than the cāitīya described above. The names of the goddesses are inscribed on the leaves of the lotus throne the deities sit in, which is flanked by two other Bodhisattvas, Mahājñāpiṇī (with sword and book) to his right and Maitreyā (with a flower in his raised left hand) to his left.

Another complete set of goddesses is found on a cāitīya at Sākyaṭhā in Bhaktapur. Each of the eight goddesses portrayed represents two forms of the Sodasalāsīya. Two flank the four Bodhisattvas of the base storey on either side. While the Bodhisattvas are placed into architecturally framed niches of the usual type, the Sodasalāsīya – like the Bodhisattvas, in a standing position – are placed into shallow niches under a trilobed arch framed by lotus foliage that originates in its downward flow from a blossom in the apex.

In Patan, this group of Eight Goddesses is collectively known as Āṣṭantrayāgātidevī. They represent the four musical instruments (vāṃśa: flute, vina: lute, mṛdunga: double-headed drum, and mura: drum) and the four forms of stage performance (the dance deities referred
to earlier). Benoytosh Bhattacharya (1968: 312–315) has identified them according to the pañcakāda[m] mandala of the Nispannayogavālī. On the Bhaktapur caitya, however, the Aṣṭarāntyayati-devīs are provided with four hands in order to be able to display the attributes of those goddesses generally referred to as aṣṭaṇījādevīs, who represent the five “knowing agents” (jñānendriya) by means of which man apprehends the gross forms of manifested substance, namely sābda (sound), sparśa (touch), rūpa (form), rasa (taste) and gandha (odour), and the three offerings in rituals, namely flowers, incense and fire. Thus the entire range of Sixteen Goddesses is covered. Häṣyādevī is introduced to replace Gitādevī, and Sabādevī to replace Dharmadhātuvaṇjāra, whom David Gellner (1989: 228) calls the “final goddess”, to be considered as a kind of summation of the others.

The Eight Goddesses of the Bhaktapur caitya represent quite a unique order, possibly the result of a misunderstanding of the ancient text or of a personal preference on the part of the donor or the craftsman. We know in fact from other examples that the freedom of individual expression led to variations in architectural forms and iconographical details, ones which do not easily fit into a canonical order. The caitya of Bhaktapur is not datable by inscription; the type of craftsmanship and the peculiar grain of stone which was used lead to the assumption that it was dedicated about one hundred years later than the caitya at Michubāhā, at the end of the 18th century.

The order of the goddesses is as follows:

South-south-east: Vamsādevī – Dhūpādevī  
att.: flute – incense and fan
South-south-west: Puspadēvi – Rasadevī  
att.: flower – six balls (tastes)
West-south-west: Mṛdangadevī – Dipadevī  
att.: drum – fire and fly-whisk
West-north-west: Häṣyādevī – Sparsadevī  
att.: cymbals – cloth
North-north-west: Mūrjadēvī – Gandhadevī  
att.: drum – conch shell
North-north-east: Nṛtyadevī – Sabādevī  
att.: dance – book
East-north-east: Viṇādevī – Mālādevī  
att.: lute – garland
East-south-east: Lāṣyādevī – Aḍarsadevī  
att.: dance – mirror

Rare is the case of Gandhadevi being depicted holding a conch shell in her right hand and a plate with sandal paste in her left. The conch shell containing the sandal paste (gandha-sāṅkha) would have been sufficient in itself to symbolize smell or odour (gandha). Aḍarsadevi holds a mirror (adarsa or darpana), which symbolizes the image of the void, for it reflects all the factors of the phenomenal (rūpa = form) world but deprives them of substance.

Another group of Eight Goddesses is found flanking the Bodhisattvās of the base storey on an undated Sīkharakūṭacaitya near Kvarāchéna, representing the four dance deities and the group comprising the three ritual offerings and the fifth sense. The sequence follows similar examples quoted above, but the directions they are associated with are different: Gitādevī is in the west-north-west, and her partner is Puspadēvi. Although difficult to identify, the same group of Eight Goddesses, flanking the Mahābuddhas in the upper storey, may be represented on the Rājyakūṭāgaracaitya at Lagābāhā in Kathmandu, which was established in 1676, eight years earlier than the one at Yetalī. The former caitya served as a prototype for a replica constructed on Svaṃbhūnāth Hill probably a century later, and duplicated again there in the 19th century. Similar groups of the Eight Goddesses are found on 17th-century caityas at Janabāhā and Musyābāhā in Kathmandu.
A few more Sikharakūṭacaitiyas are found in Patan depicting unidentifiable pujaśādīvīs holding a vajra and a fly-whisk (on three sides of a caitīya at Kvarācheñāni dated 1669). On an 18th-century Sikharakūṭacaitīya at Bakānanī, eight identical dance deities flank the Bodhisattvas on the lower register, while unidentified Bodhisattvas occupy the upper register. In a few cases, these deities are also known as cāmaraṇaparāśus or cāmaraṇadharinīs, in that they hold the bushy tail of a yak (cāmara) in their right hand, symbolizing either compassion or royalty. For example, the Maitreya on the base storey of the Sikharakūṭacaitīya erected in 1657 at Cikābhā is flanked by such cāmaraṇaparāśus, who have not been placed into niches but set against the profiled base storey.

Dating the first occurrence of the Sadasalāyā in caitīvas poses definite problems. In all probability, they started appearing in the second half of the 17th century, at a time when the Caturmahārājas, the Four Guardian Kings of the universe, also made their début on caitīya architecture. It may well be that a growing Tibetan influence led to the diversification of iconographical programmes on caitīvas. The complete version of the Sadasalāyā occurs certainly under the influence of the Nispānayogavali, alluded to above, in view of the fact that the Sixteen Bodhisattvas of the caitīya at Michubhā exactly follow the list quoted in that text.

**Triratna (Three Jewels) and Āramatna (Four Jewels)**

The Three Jewels or Three Precious Ones (triratna) is the designation given to the three essential components of Buddhism: the Buddha, the truth expounded by him (dharma) and the followers living in accordance with his truth (sangha). These Three Jewels are objects of veneration and are considered places of refuge. The symbol of the Three Jewels is a triangle (trikona), which was introduced into the iconographical programme of caitīya architecture at the beginning of the 17th century. Its variations are described in the chapter dealing with the Wheel of the Law and deer motifs. Like the Awakened One, dharma and sangha are conceived as deities and worshipped in anthropomorphic forms.

On Nepalese caitīvas, the earliest known occurrence of the Three Jewels in such an anthropomorphic form is known from the Sikharakūṭacaitīya at Cikābhā in Patan, dating to 1657. A pedestal facing east is engaged to the plinth, resting on a flat platform; three niches are set upon a common lotus throne, the middle one with Aksobhya in bhūmisparṣapadgura, representing the historical Buddha, being slightly larger than the other two, namely Prajñāpāramitā to the left, representing dharma, and Sadaksari Lokesvara to the right, representing the sangha. Sadaksari Lokesvara, literally “the lord of the six-syllable mantra”, is usually depicted with two hands in the gesture of namskāraviprakāśa, while the other raised right and left hands are holding a garland (matā) and a lotus (padma). Prajñāpāramitā represents the personification of the scripture Prajñāpāramitā, the Great Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom. In this form she is considered an emanation of Aksobhya, and as a female Bodhisattva she is regarded as the Sakti of the Ādibuddha.

91. Bhaktapur. Sikharakūṭacaitīya in a courtyard of Sālavathā, surrounded by another Sikharakūṭacaitīya (north), a Śumeracaitīya (west), an octagonal Śikharakūṭacaitīya (south) and a Jvālavacaitīya (east).
92. The eastern face of the lower storey, with Maitreya in the central niche, flanked by Vinādevi/Maityadevi (left) and Lasyādevi/Adenādevi (right).
93. Padmapani, flanked by Mrdandadevi/Digadevi (left) and Hasyadevi/Sparśadevi (right).
94. Mahjñi, flanked by Muraṇadevi/Gandiladevi (left) and Nityadevi/Śadadevi (right).
95. Patan. Gitaśādīvi, the goddess of song who plays the lute (vina), placed into the north-western corner of the caitīya at Michubhā (built in 1685).
96. Kathmandu. Sikharakūṭacaitīya at Janahālm, late 17th century. The upper storey has been architecturally shaped following Liechavi prototypes. Rūtnasambhuva is flanked by two of the Astamūrtīśādīvis, while the niches in the corners are occupied by Amoghaśādi (SE) and another Rūtnasambhuva (SW). The profile of the roof below is interrupted by a niche occupied by Māmākī.
97. Patan. Sikharakūṭacaitīya with a padmāvalī element below the primary trio at Bakānanī, 17th century; detail of the base storey, with Padmapāni occupying the niche, flanked by identical dancing deities of the Astamūrtīśādīvi family (lower register) and unidentified Bodhisattvas (upper register).
At Bikaneri, the Three Jewels appear in a form similar to the example afforded by Cikshãhã in Patna. The representations of the Buddha, dharmã and sañghã are placed in a separate structure, a small eastern shrine (complete with roof and three finials) set on the lowest platform and flanked by a pair of protective lions. More often, Sàdakãsàri Lokesvara and Pràjñàpàramitã appear as small figures flanking the eastern niche of a Sikharakûtaçãitya, occupied by Vajrapâni (Kvapaçñhãñi/Patna, dated 1669) or Maitreya (Sasunãni/Patna, 18th century).

The concept of the Three Jewels, which from earliest times onwards was considered a decisive element of the Teachings of the Buddha, at some point in time was transformed into the concept of the Four Jewels (caturãrãna) in recognition of the existence of the Vajrayûna system. While Pràjñàpàramitã and Sàdakãsàri Lokesvara remained on to represent dharmã and sañghã, the Buddha is now represented by Mahaãpàramitã, who is considered to be an emanation of Amitãbha. Entirely new is Màñjûsîri, the Bodhisattva of wisdom, who dispels the darkness of ignorance. Vis-à-vis the other three, Màñjûsîri is considered to be the guru, literally the “spiritual preceptor”.

Mahaãpàramitã has six arms, the upper pair holding an image of Aminâbhã (amitãbhabhãma - right hand) and a lotus (left), the middle ones an arrow (sara) and bow (dhanus), while the lower ones enfold the bowl (pindapâtra) of Aminâbhã.

Màñjûsîri is depicted four-armed, with the sword of wisdom (pràjñâkhâda) in his upper right and a bow (dhanus) in his upper left hand. The lower hands hold an arrow (sara) and the book of wisdom (pustakã), the personification of which is represented by Pràjñàpâramitã.

The Four Jewels appear on Jalâharyuparisumerucãityas in Kathmanda (Tabhã 1863, Kandacuka 1864, Mhahabhã 1884, Itubbhã 1897) and on Svayambhûnath Hill. Only in rare cases do the Four Jewels also guard the corners of the plinth of a Sumemerucãity (Kandacuka, ca. 1880). The appearance of the Four Jewels on those caitya types that gained unrivalled popularity in the middle of the 19th century coincides with a drastic change in the iconographical programme of the primary niches. As was pointed out earlier, Vairoçana replaced Akshobhya at the drum level, and Vajrasattva replaced Aminâbhã, who assumed watch over the southern side, while Maitreya ended up facing north. There are no explanations at hand as to why in the middle of the 19th century a Tathãgata should have been replaced by a Bodhisattva within the primary trio, and the Four Jewels introduced to guard the caitya in the corners, thus taking on the role of the Guardian Kings of the universe (Catmurzarâjas) or the Four Dance Deities (Càrrntyadeys). While the Catmurzarâjas had been introduced a century earlier to guard the corners of the padmâvali element, the dance deities were already functioning in that capacity in 1686, when the caitya of Micuhbãhã was reshaped.

In the context of an iconographical study of caityas, not much more than the introduction of new elements on certain types of structures can be pointed out. A more profound analysis will have to address the religious background and take into account written documents.

Deer and Wheel of the Law motifs

As will be explained in greater detail in a further chapter, the Mahàbuddha temple in Patna was consecrated in 1601, after a long period of construction. In the end it turned out to be a mere throwback to the original Mahâbodhi temple at Bodh Gaya in North India, the site where the Sàkúmûni Buddha attained enlightenment. However, there is one similarity worth mentioning, in that it loosed itself from its original context and has been used in the shaping of caityas in Nepal up to the present.

On the original Mahâbodhi temple, the gavaksa (“round window”) motif no doubt represents the dominant element. Along with it, a row of niches separated by pilasters house stucco images of the Sàkúmûni Buddha, depicted with his right arm in the earth-touching gesture (bhûmisparśamudrã). This gesture makes specific reference to the demon Mâra’s attempt to dissuade him from his quest for enlightenment. The mûraçâyã episode is conceived as having taken place just prior to the successful conclusion of Sàkúmûni’s long search for an answer to the meaning of life and death - that is, to his enlightenment, attained while meditating on the diamond seat under the sacred pipal tree in Bodh Gaya. In response to the attack of Mâra and his army, Sàkúmûni touched the ground to call upon the earth goddess to bear witness to his right to enlightenment. She responded affirmatively with a thundering roar, thus convincing the implacable Mâra, who with his legions then fled in ignominious defeat.

The temple in Patna reiterates in a similar way the depiction of the Sàkúmûni Buddha, whose images are placed in the 126 large niches of the plinth, while thousands of Buddhás in the meditation pose (samadhîmûdra) are found in rows of small niches, including those niches that adorn the sikhara tower. Besides a host of other iconographical details that respond to the particular concerns of Newar Buddhism, there is a peculiar feature that immediately draws the observer’s attention: the design and iconographical programme of the tympanum above the vestibule of the second storey and above the windows of the third storey. The tympanum above the vestibule is of an extremely complex nature, with repeated steps culminating in a caitya flanked by a pair of deer (itrnya). The tympanum above the third storey, however, was to serve as a prototype for niches of caityas over a period of two hundred years. A simplified version of it even appeared in 1983, on a caitya in a courtyard near Bûbahã.

The tympanum under discussion is two-tiered, with certain elements being repeated. It is placed on a lintel of stone that covers the vestibule. The central motif is a cusped arch, the end
of which terminates in foliage that mingles with the flourishes of the tails of the makaras flanking the arch. The arch embraces bands of pearls with hanging bells—a motif spewed by the pair of makaras. On steps along the sides of the arch are found birds in varying poses. The stair-stepped frame is surmounted by deer worshiping the Wheel of the Law (dharmacakra), the latter encased in a triangle. A pair of honorific flags (dhvaja) are visible behind the deer. Rising above the triangle is a lotus flower, which supports the vajra, the ultimate symbol of Vajrayana Buddhism. This vajra is the diamond that represents true reality, the being or essence of everything that exists. The motif of the deer refers to the “first turning of the Wheel of the Law” at the Deer Grove in Sarnath, where the Sakyamuni Buddha gave his first discourse, the content of which was the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Whereas in Hinayana Buddhism bodhi is equated with the perfection of insight into, and realization of, the Four Noble Truths, which perfection means the cessation of suffering, in Mahayana Buddhism bodhi is mainly understood as being the wisdom based on insight into the unity of subject and object—generally symbolized by the vajra. Thus bodhi is insight into the essential emptiness of the world as visualized through the vajra.

Above a cornice of lotus flowers there follows the second level of the tympanum, made up of a block surmounted by a repetition of the lotus throne (padmásana) supporting a vajra. The
scene on the block centres around the Wheel of the Law, which here is encased in an isosceles triangle that, perhaps, is an allusion to Buddha-dharma-sangha, the Three Jewels (the Buddha, the doctrine, the community). In this case it is cows that are depicted worshipping the Wheel of the Law, flanked as before by a pair of banners. The vajra of the composition may well correspond to the bells in the cusped arch. Both instruments are employed in the ritual of Vajrayāna, the vajra being held in the right hand, and the bell in the left. Drawing the evidence together, one might venture to say that the tympana of the Mahābuddha Temple in Patan, in a rare combination, incorporate symbols inherent to Hinayāna into an architectural ensemble of 17th-century Vajrayāna.

The elaborate tympanum of the Mahābuddha temple is reduced to about a quarter of its size in order to serve a similar purpose on the caitya of the potter community's quarter of Cyāga, which structure is said to have been erected to cover over the moulds from which the terra-cotta components of the Mahābuddha temple were once formed. In a way, the caitya represents a shrine dedicated to the tools of the craftsmen. A second set of moulds is said to be kept by the sangha of Bodhimandapavihāra, as the branch monastery of Ucbubāhā that centres around the Mahābuddha temple is called.

Without inscriptive evidence it cannot be said whether the caitya encases the moulds that were used at the end of the 16th century to build the Mahābuddha temple. As a comparison with other building activities in Patan suggests, and in view of the fact that no votive caitya dating to the first half of the 17th century is known of up to now, it may well be that the present caitya in Cyāga originated in a later period of repair or even reconstruction. One inscribed brick of the temple bears the date 1776, indicating that such periods of reshaping or repairing the existing building in fact took place.

All questions of the origin of the Cyāga caitya aside, its niche frames with the surmounting tympana are the most exuberant and delicate of their kind. One fundamental difference from its prototype is the fact that the entire element, 63 centimetres high, is made up of only four terra-cotta components. The base under the niche opening is divided up into three parts, while the elaborately carved upper structure is fashioned whole. The tapering tympanum is not separated from the architecturally shaped frame of the niche. An inevitable pair of mákaras rest on pilasters, with the vase (kalasa) and fruit of immortality (ānālaka) motifs below and above to support the cusped arch and the peculiar stepped frame. It is not birds but foliage that rises in steps, though the surmounting element of the Wheel of the Law, triangle, lotus throne and vajra follows the formula of the prototype.

Deer worshipping the Wheel of the Law occur only on the upper level, where the lotus throne with vajra elements is much more dominant than on the prototype of the Mahābuddha temple.

The caitya is clearly dominated by the dome, while the drum moulding is of the peculiar type that was introduced into caitya architecture only during the 17th century. The sharp-edged torus bears a course of vajra motifs, while the S-shaped base is covered with eight petals of a lotus flower. The base storey below is of squat proportions, resembling the shape of the so-called "monumental caitya", which is discussed in a separate chapter. A transitional element containing 44 niches – complete with pilasters, stepped frame and the Wheel of the Law – and enclosing miniature images of the Sākyamuni Buddha in the earth-touching gesture mediates between the top and the only recently cemented block-like plinth, which originally may have displayed more details corresponding to the terra-cotta structure above. Altogether nine miniature images have already disappeared.

The first example of the Mahābuddha type of niche design carved in stone is found in the temple itself. On the third level there is a small caitya 120 centimetres high, the niches of which, only 15 centimetres high, display the basic programme explained above. The two levels of primary tympanum and elaborate superstructure are more clearly identifiable than before. Again prominent is the pair of deer worshipping the Wheel of the Law and the lotus throne. In this case, the throne does not support a vajra, but it is conceivable that a vajra was once in place as a movable object. The pair of banners is replaced by flowers.

The above-mentioned examples relate directly to the details of the Mahābuddha temple. But the prototype, once duplicated, was promulgated over the entire territory of Patan, and even beyond its limits to Sunakothi, Thankot and Kirtipur. Altogether 22 examples have been identified so far. The oldest datable example is from 1658, as niches of the upper storey of a Sikhara-kutacakitya at Nyakhaeuka. It preserves the cusped arch, the three-stepped order and the Wheel of the Law. The most recent example dates to 1983, constructed on the occasion of a jākya ritual (an old-age ceremony) near Bubāhā.

The more simple reproductions of the prototype are confined to the cusped arch that is supported by a stepped frame. The geometric character of this frame stands in contrast to the projecting building in form of the arch. The example from Thankot transforms the bells into flowers, and the steps end in a triangle that encases a throne from which a lotus ascends. Similarly, the niches of the example at Thakubāhā in Patan, which dates to 1767, also display variations. The niches of the base storey are confined to the arch and the step motifs, while the niches of the intermediate level make do without the upper roof level, displaying deer worshipping what may be identified as a lotus or jewel rather than the Wheel of the Law.

Other examples mainly occur on large caityas classified as "monumental" or on those for which the caitya of the Mahābuddha temple itself served as a prototype. Three of these date to 1685, 1709 and 1714, thus supporting the conjecture that the detail under discussion seemed
109, 110. Thakot: 17th-century Sikharakatakai caitya on a vimsatikona base. The frame of the niche with its polished arch and stepped crown reflects the formula of Mihābauddha in Patan.
to be a desirable option for clients and craftsmen, making as it did special reference to Patan's most revered architectural achievement.

The two examples from the Yetalibi caiyya, dating to 1685, and from the Pucva caiyya, dating to 1714, are among the most elaborate ones deserving further discussion. The design of the niches of these caiyyas sticks fairly closely to the programme set by the prototype, though these niches do document the range of variation in design that turns any scrupulous analysis of caiyya details into an adventure of discovery. Most prominent is the transformation of the three-stepped design into a roof-like structure. Only the intermediate step with its sharp-edged profile follows the prototype exactly, whereas the cluster of lotus flowers above and below was given the shape of sloping roof elements. What on the niches of other caiyyas seems to be stylized roofing is now virtually transformed into sloping roofs. The large niche of the caiyya at Yetalibi, with a height of 127 centimetres, seems to convey additional energy, part of which is spent to elaborate the scheme of the prototype. The stepped frame is now set in front of an arch that spans the entire motif, as if to create a notion of increased depth. The same is true for the upper level: the triangle is repeated, while the repetitions are separated from the
front by an inverted arch. The *vajra* emerging from that throne, in being thrust up by the layers of triangles above the panel, appears as the crown of its entire composition more clearly than ever before.

Still, the *vajra* was not exclusively meant to represent the crowning element. The niches of the *caitya* at Michubāhā, which dates to 1687, retain the main features of the prototype, but they lack the *makara* and *marga* motifs. Moreover, the Wheel of the Law above the cusped arch is turned into a flower, and the throne above supports a jewel (*muni*) on a tiny circle of *āmalaka* fruits, the combination representing the enlightened mind (*buddhicitta*). The deviation from the Mahābuddha prototype extends even further. The upper triangle with the worshipping deer encases a vase (*kalasa*) that signifies the “treasure of all desires”. Thus the two symbols of the obviously full vase and the jewel both symbolize the plenitude of the enlightened mind. The jewel at the top of the niche frame, like the jewel at the top of the pillar enclosed by the *caitya*, represents the unique principle of the whole edifice, and thus the unique principle of the cosmos.

115. Patan: Mahābuddha temple, top of the multitered roof over the first-floor vestibule, with a *vajra* worshipped by a pair of deer.

116. Patan: western niche of the base storey of the *caitya* at Michubāhā, dated 1685, scale 1:2.5. Above, occupies the architecturally framed niche under a roof of three tiers covered with stylized roof tiles. In the apex: a crowning element with triangle (*trikona*), deer (*marga*), and jewel (*muni*) motifs.


120. Patan: Sikharākṣita caitya with a lotus base under the upper storey at Thakăbahā, built in 1762.

121–122. Patan: caitya behind Nakabahā
121. Detail of the niche, scale 1:2.5.
122. Top view and elevation south, scale 1:20.
Ritual

A chapter about ritual has all the markings of an ambitious undertaking. A separate book concerning rituals which address caityas could easily be written. In the context of architectural typology, however, a cursory account of the many ritual aspects may suffice. The emphasis will here not be on rituals performed by ritual specialists, but on the daily and seasonal worship of the Buddhist population as part of a tradition that very much goes to define the urban culture of the Newars.

Once one looks for them, caityas are present almost everywhere. They replace representations of auspicious deities (particularly Ganesa) in the lintel above the entrance of the house, and they are found as pinnacles (gaaj) on top of Buddhist temples and esoteric shrine buildings (agāhē) - sometimes in a row of thirteen, representing the Bodhisattvas' Worlds. Sometimes four caityas adorn the ritual crown of the Bajrācārya priest, who places his own head into the centre of the cosmic configuration. Caityas are found on metal flags (kikipata), are dislodged and exhibited on the open ground floor level on the occasion of buahdyah buayegu in the holy month of Gārh, and even carried in procession like deities. Ephemeral caityas are made of sand, in a likeness to the primeval mound, or of mud in tiny moulds, or else are laid grain by grain in picture form.

Regular worship

The most essential mode of worship is the sunwise circumambulation (pradaksina) of a caitya, no matter whether it is a small votive caitya or one of the large Mahācaityas. Usually there is no formal beginning or end. As the circumambulation normally leads only to the four niches in the cardinal directions, it may cover only three-quarters of a circle before being curtailed with the next object of worship in view. At Svayambhūnāth, the circumambulation usually starts with the worship of Aksobhya in the niche one passes first along the eastern ascent of the hill. The Mahācaityas were encircled by frames or walls with prayer wheels, at Bodhnāth already around 1860, at Svayambhūnāth around 1920 and at Cabahil only in 1994. Closely attached to the circular drum at Svayambhūnāth and Cabahil, the prayer wheels cater to a mode of worship practised by Tibetans. At Bodhnāth, the circumambulatory path follows a wall that encloses the caitya with its three terraces of vimsati kona plan. Thus there is hardly any visual contact across the wall to the building itself. One must enter the interior compound through a gate from the north past the guarding shrine of Ajimā having climbed the three platforms, the devotee can then circumambulate the caitya on the level of the circular drum, starting with Amoghasiddhi, looking north, and passing around the caitya mandala with its 108 deities.

The circumambulation of a caitya may be a casual exercise, something which becomes almost an automatic part of everyday life, as all kinds of sacred objects are observed by passing sunwise around them. It starts with leaving the house, keeping the pikhalakha, the guardian stone of the threshold, which usually absorbs ritual waste, always to the right side. Once the circumambulation constitutes a ritual act, it incorporates offerings of vermillion (sinhah), rice (aksata), flowers, fire and water to the four Tathāgatas or Bodhisattvas. Preferential ritual treatment is usually accorded to Amitābha, the Tathāgata who is the ruler of the western paradise Sukhāvati. In rare cases, not only the faces of the deities are dabbed with vermillion, but the entire figure or even the entire caitya is anointed with mustard oil (cikā), especially on the occasion of the anniversary ritual (busadhā). Oil is also offered to feed wick lamps either on the plinth itself, or in specially and often recently provided lamp-stands (cākhāmuta) around the plinth.

Alongside the usual worship carried out by the female members of the household, males may decide to lustrate a caitya by pouring water on it from a kumandala, a water jar that is thought of as symbolizing the "receptacle of knowledge", being filled with sacred water equaling the water from the Ganges.

A special offering of cotton swabs twisted into long strips (kapaya bhu) is devoted to Amoghasiddhi's northern facing canopy of snakes. This offering is meant as a gift to the waters of Nāgapura, the abode of serpents. At the caityas of Svayambhūnāth and Cabahil, a pit facing the northern niches is identified as this abode, whose inhabitants are pacified with such offerings. A stone in front of the plinth is likewise identified in the case of some of the monumental caityas (for example, the one at Nāgārikha in Bhaktapur). The serpents are given the cotton offerings in order to provide relief to family members who suffer from fever or bleeding.

Regular worship also may involve the offering of flags (dhvaja) to the cube and finial of the Mahācaityas at Svayambhūnāth, Bodhnāth and Cabahil. At Svayambhūnāth, such flags until recently were offered regularly by a guthi of Tulādhars from Kathmandu. Similarly, the offering of a coat of lime (sakhih panye) and a lotus leaf pattern in yellow powder (kusum) represents an individual, if only occasional, act. Whitewashing is banned, however, in the period between Lhutipunhi and Katipunhi. It is members of the Dongol farmer caste from Kathmandu who engage in the process, the material for which is brought by Gathus, a low caste of gardeners. The offering does not imply the climbing of the dome, as Gustav Roth (1985: 185) argued earlier. At certain intervals, the lime is removed from the dome. This last occurred at Svayambhūnāth in 1949. At that time the lime, rather than being discarded, was regarded as
such an inextricable part of the Mahacaiya that a new caiya near the saddle of the hill was built to house it. The yellow leaves are applied by Tibetans, who at Swayambhunath, Bodhnath and Cabahil, however, are excluded from climbing the finial to fasten flags, a task reserved for Dongols.

Whitewashing constitutes a basic form of caiya worship for Tibetans. With the increasing presence of Tibetan institutions on the hill, almost all caiyas are indiscriminately doused with buckets of lime. Caretakers from the Buddhacarya community make efforts to remove the lime and keep the caiyas in their original condition, ready to be anointed.

There is a marked exception to this differentiation between Tibetan and Newar worship practices in Kathmandu. There whitewashing has spread to a certain extent, and can be observed on some eighteen caiyas, including those at Janabahä, Mubähä, Assähä and Makhabähä. The caiyas which are not adverse to a coating of lime are well known, and their number seems to remain the same. Over the past twenty years, at least, no new caiyas have been affected by the custom. All such caiyas are called Asokacaiyas, as if a patina of antiquity is attained by obscuring the shape beyond easy recognition. This is probably indicative of a wish to reestablish a primal form bare of any moulding and iconographical traits. Usually only small holes betray the probable locations of the Tathāgatas or Bodhisattvas, who appear to orient the amorphous white incrustations of lime to the cardinal directions. Stripped of their obvious Buddhist content, these caiyas seem to return to the point of departure more than two thousand years ago. They resemble less a mound than an aniconic stele. One does well to remember the Newar's preference for aniconic representations of place. The amorphous caiya is suddenly everything at once: a representation of place and of the dharmakāya, as well as testimony to a pious act in the name of all beings.

The spirit (jivanyāsa) of the caiya

The building of any caiya requires the laying of a foundation, and this involves in turn the prior offering of thirteen jewels (ratananyāsa). Once completed, the structure must undergo rites of passage, in which its “lifeless” or dead material is imbued with spirit, and only then can it be treated as a ritual entity, a part of Buddhist life. It was stated previously that the caiya represents not only the dharmakāya but the Buddha himself. Having been consecrated, the building is considered a deity. In the same way, among the Hindu Newars all ritually relevant objects are made to pass through the ten stages of life (dakṣarṇa) in order to become a full “member” of the ritual world. For example, the two poles (yahat) newly acquired for the bikṣuṣātra in Bhaktapur must be married before they can be of any ritual use. A caiya’s life cycle ritual ends with the vajrabhiseka, the “consecration of the diamond”. Not only a newly built caiya passes through this ritual; when an old one is renovated or enlarged, the extant structure must be ritually demolished before the hands of the craftsmen may touch it. Towards this end the spirit of the caiya is transferred to a flask (jivanyāsa likayegu) and a cow is
tethered to the pinnacle of the caitya and allowed to produce the first cracks. The hands of the mason will then be purified (hastapiñā), before he proceeds to carefully disassemble the structure from top to bottom. Once the renovated caitya is set up again, it is veiled in a white cloth, indicating that the building is still without a spirit and ritually "dead."

To secure the return of the spirit, the stages of life (dasakarmapiñā) are reenacted with a sacred fire (homa) under the supervision of the eldest member of the bahā, who acts as the mañjāra, the master of the ceremony:

1. yonisamsodhanakarma  
   purification of the womb
2. garbhadhanakarma  
   procreation
3. jātakarma  
   birth: the umbilical cord is cut (piddhanegu)  
   anointment of the navel (nava-cikā uayegu)  
   the eyes are opened (mikhā kākegu)  
   ghee and honey are fed (gratamadhuprāsana)
4. annaprāsana  
   rice is fed (jā nakegu)  
   clothes and ornaments are provided (tisāvatra lahlhāyegu)
5. nāmakarana  
   providing the name Vairocana Tathāgata
6. cīdakarana  
   tonsure ceremony (sā khāyegu)  
   piercing the ears (nhāyāpā pvakhanegu)
7. vrata desa  
   vowing to leave the home
8. samavartana  
   offering a coin (gauḍāṇa)
9. pānigrahana  
   mock marriage with a betel fruit (ihipāh byā lahlhāyegu)
10. vajrāhīṣeṣa  
    consecration of the diamond

129. Patan: Illustration of a caitya at Cābhačoka, in which water is poured over the crowning jewel from a kamandala, March 1974.

130–132. Asokacayitas of Kathmandu, the shape obscured by repeated lime coatings. In some cases the initial remains visible, and in general small holes enable the devotee to present the usual offerings to the Tattagatas or Boddhisattvas.

133. Kathmandu: A Sumeracayita at Makhahāmc transformed into an Asokacayita through repeated lime coatings.
The notion of the “living spirit” comes also to the fore during the caitvajatra in Sākhu on the occasion of the full moon in April (called Sākhupunhā in Kathmandu, Lhutipunhā). The festival starts on the night of the full moon day at the satah, or annex, above the temple of Vajrayogini which enshrines the ancient rock-hewn Svayambhūcāitya. A wooden caitya 175 cm in height is disassembled into five parts, and the latter individually carried down the hill to a large palanquin (khāh), on which it is reassembled. While the three lower components, namely the plinth, lower storey and upper storey, are not treated with any special care, being gaudily worn around the neck like a collar, the bulging dome and finial are borne by two people who keep it carefully covered under a red carpet. Butchers, sounding their characteristic drum (nāykhā) and cymbals (jyolī), accompany the disassembled caitya to the tune of chvay kayegu, the usual one butchers play when they come to call for a deity. Earlier they had accompanied the main goddess of the festival, the yellow-faced Mhāsukhvaṃjāju, on her way down to her khāh, to the tune called sibājā, which is reserved for death processions. And the large figure of Mhāsukhvaṃjāju is, in fact, carried under a white cloth, indicating her state of death. The caitya for its part is taken from under its red carpet only after it is reassembled and tied to the khāh, that is, only when it has obviously regained its spirit and is ready for the jātra, the ritual
journey down to and around Sākhu. The date of the jātra is noteworthy, as it coincides with
the anniversary of the mythic event when the Buddha Vipasyi threw the seed of the lotus into
the lake that once filled the Valley. Six months later the resplendent lotus, the Self-Created
One in the form of light, rose from the waters.

The notions of creation and death seem to coincide on such occasions. At Sākhu, the caitya,
probably considered a portable representation of the rock-hewn Swayambhucāitya, is ritually
renewed and taken around to serve as a living witness of this annual process of renewal. In the
early morning, thousands of unmarried young boys and girls from the Newar community join
to climb the Jāmācāva hill on the western ridge of the Valley, there to pay respect to the site of
the broadcasting of the lotus seed. Having descended the mountain, the devotees pay a conclu-
ding visit to Pulāguhyesvari, the “old” Guhyesvari, who watches over the place where the
lotus rose.

Throughout the day the hill is full of Tamangs, who gather on it from all over Nepal to com-
memorate their deceased.

Six months later, on Katipunhi, the full moon in October, the ritual rebirth of Swayam-
bhūnāth is enacted through the renewal of the shrine’s eyes. This renewal encompasses many
other fixtures in the religious scene of the hill as well: the mythic grandparents Ājou/Ajimā, the
serpent king Kārkotaka, who guards the eastern ascent. Hārītī and the Tathāgatas along with
their Saktis have their eyes reopened by a painter (Pū) from Kathmandu. The most critical rit-
ual, however, is devoted to the renewal of Agnipura, which represents the element fire and is
considered the “seat” or aniconic representation of Amitābha. The face of Ākāśa Bhairava is
painted onto this stone and consecrated the following night during an esoteric ritual, a guh-
veptīja.
With these two full moons the procreation and birth of Swayambhūnāth is thus duly commemorated. Events that refer to other stages of life or stages in the construction of the actual caitya are not generally celebrated. An exception is the anniversary of the crest jewel, which is called yahšt busāthā after the central shaft. It is celebrated on the ninth day of the bright moon in the month of Cātra, five days before Lhutupunhi by a gāthī of Khusah from Patan. This is a low Buddhist caste, the members of which provide ritual services to those who rank below them. Legend tells us that the serpent (nāgarāja) of the hill was so impressed by the devotion of two Khusah sisters from Kūṭi in Patan that he gave away his jewel (manī), knowing that he would not survive that act of generosity. The sisters in turn offered the jewel to Swayambhūnāth. Since that time their descendants climb the caitya on the anniversary day and throw rice bread (rāṭāma) from the level of the crest jewel into the crowd gathered below.

One other ritual at Swayambhūnāth embodies the notion of a spirit and its annual renewal. The crest jewel, the protruding section of the central shaft and the thirteen tiers of the finial used to be protected by bamboo mats (palu bune gōjī) on the occasion of bhagāstī, the eighth day of the dark moon of the month of Asād (in July). The mats remained there for two and a half months until the maha-astami day of Dasai, the eighth day of the bright moon of the month of Asvin (in October). One is inclined to explain the veiling of the final in functional terms. On bhagāstī the planting of rice seedlings is performed and the rams are supposed to start. Although thanks are due for the rain already on the occasion of Indrajātā, when Indra is asked to hold back his benevolent rain, it is on maha-astami that the growing season formally ends with the beginning of harvest. Other rituals are connected with these two dates, all of them suggesting an intriguing relation with death and birth. For example, the Navadurgā in the form of ritual masks borne by Gāthā dancers of Bhaktapur “die” on bhagāstī. The masks are cremated and the ashes consigned to the waters of the Hanumante. By this means the Navadurgā are allowed to sanctify the waters that inundate the fields. On maha-astami, however, newly made masks are consecrated and imbued with spirit. On the following day the Navadurgā troupe returns to town to act as protective gods and goddesses for another season. The city is without the protection of the gods for the period of the rains, and
this seems to be why the Swayambhunath Mahacaitya is partially covered. There is no direct indication that the caitya has been deprived of its spirit.

The head of the Buddhadārya community, the caretakers of Swayambhunath whose settlement surrounds the caitya, worships a small bamboo mat representative of the mats in their entirety. This mat is then kept in the niche housing Aṃitābha.

Originally about 150 large mats were needed to veil the entire finial. Four groups of Sesiya and Dongols were in charge of the veiling. During the past few decades, though, only the Dongol farmers from Tukābhā have been fulfilling this obligation. Some forty mats are crudely fixed to the upper tiers in a faint memory of the ancient ritual. The four groups were from different areas of Kathmandu, demonstrating how the whole city was once linked to the caitya. In a way, the finial mirrors the urban and social fabric of the neighbouring city in such rituals. Bernhard Kolver (1992: 109-110) has brought to light one particular facet of the relationship. On the occasion of the renewal of the finial, the duties and costs were once shared among the king, who offered the uppermost tier, various bāhas, and the coppersmiths of Ma-rup, who offered the second lowest tier.

_Caitya worship in the context of the anniversary ritual_

A caitya's anniversary (busādha) is celebrated by the descendants of the donor. Observation of such rituals over a period of years – for example, at Sighabhā in 1987 and 1990 – has shown that busādha is not performed annually, but only at certain larger intervals. Economic pressures and a change in values probably make it more difficult to fulfil the ritual obligation regularly. The fact that busādha today is only performed at caityas constructed over the past two hundred years demonstrates that the relationship between the donor's descendants and the monument does not last indefinitely. Only in rare cases is busādha performed for older caityas. At Sighabhā, for example, the ritual is directed towards a Liechavicaitya that was relocated onto a 17th-century base storey. The ritual probably recalls an even more recent renovation.

141, 142. Swayambhunath Hill: the ritual of veiling the finial of the Mahacaitya (pala bane puja) on the occasion of bhagastami in June with the formal beginning of the rainy season. 141. Identification of four sections of the finial veiled with mats by the groups marked on the map. 142. Location of the four areas from which the groups came to provide woven bamboo mats (1 Sesiya from Kusthiyaliali, 2 Dongols from Mahābhā, 3 Dongols from Nāybhuc, 4 Dongols from Tukābhā).
143. Kathmandu: anniversary ritual of a Jātharayupamukrauciya at Sighabhābā on the occasion of Sighabhāpunhi. While the Bajrācārya priest prepares the sacred fire (homa), the head of the Nakahami (blacksmith) family which established the chaitya annoints the dome and the shaft that displays the Tathāgatas with mustard oil (cīkā). 144. Bhaktapur: monumental chaitya at Kvaṭhādau Square with a temporary parasol structure placed on top of the finial on the occasion of Kojagrapūrṇimā. 145. Pāga: anniversary ritual of a Sīkarakutacaiya. A canopy is hung up to cover the chaitya, a temporary finial placed over the top, and the frames of the niches covered by replicas of the frames in brass repoussé.

The donor’s descendants call a Bajrācārya priest to perform a homa, with a representative from among their ranks acting as the patron (ajaman), who follows the instructions of the priest and goes to the decoration of the chaitya. The most basic form of worship is the anointment of the entire “body” of the miniature building. An additional crest jewel, brought from the ritual chamber at home, may be added to the finial. The dome is garlanded with flowers or, if the busaḍāḥ falls on Karti punhi (in Kathmandu called Sighabhāpunhi after the festival centered around Sighabhābā), with barley shoots (nabūha). This latter offering marks the closing of the period of the bright moon in the month of Āsvin. The barley is sown on the first day (nabāhī svarne) of the period. On the tenth day (vijayadāsami) (vijaya), the shoots are offered to Dūrja in commemoration of her mythic victory over the buffalo-demon, and after that day it is used daily as a ritual offering. The last shoots go to the chaitya on the occasion that commemorates the emergence of the lotus from the mythic lake. The remainder is treated as ritual waste and is absorbed by the pikhalaḥku stone in front of the house. The more elaborate anniversary rituals include offerings of 108 lights (dipā), 108 small earthen bowls with rice and a coin (kisalī), 108 copper bowls with water (jul) and 108 cones of wheat flour (gavlāha). While these offerings are usually placed on the steps of the platform and plinth of a chaitya, they are lined up in front of monumental chaityas, on the axis of Amītābha’s niche. In rare cases the chaitya is decorated with sheets of brass repoussé, which may duplicate the frames of niches. Frames are placed above the finials, complete with fluttering pennants in metal and crowned by a gaṭī with kalasa and crest jewel. Temporary posts are added around the chaitya to allow a canopy to be put over it.

**Processions: caityapūja, matayā and bāhāpūja**

There are certain occasions when the entire Buddhist “infrastructure” of a settlement is worshipped in a single continuous procession both through and around it. In most cases such a procession is held on the initiative of an individual sponsor or family. Thus it is quite similar to the Hindu puja-pujā, which in Patan, for example in the case of all chaityas located in the courtyards of bhāsas or along the route. In Kathmandu, a total of 128 bhāsas, Buddhist temples and chaityas are covered (Gutschow 1982: 133). The procession starts at Svayambhūnāth and makes its way in three separate rounds towards the bhāha responsible for organizing the procession. In Patan, the sixteen main bhāsas are covered in a single procession, while at Tabāhā not only the two outward-lying bhāsas (Cvabhā and Cilācīcbabhā) are symbolically present but also Svayambhū Bhagavān, as the Mahāchaitya is called in this context. Only in Bhaktapur does the visit of – in its case – fifteen bhāsas constitute a regular ritual performance, to be enacted on pañcadaśacarha, the final day of the month of observance, gilabharma (August). Chaityapūja (also called cihāhpūja) are performed in Patan and Bhaktapur. In Patan, such an undertaking is based on a sponsor willing to organize it, and Katipunhi, the full moon in October, is again the most favoured occasion for the procession. The route, to more than 600 Buddhist objects, is identical with that followed during matayā, the festival of light (Gutschow 1982: 170). Matayā is organized every year by a different locality in a ten-year rotation. The procession has a strong funerary character, as those who join it have been bereaved during the previous year. Hence the main offering to the chaityas is a light. Besides the association with death, the festival traditionally “celebrates the Buddha’s defeat of the Māras and his attainment of enlightenment” (Gelner 1992: 97) in Bodh Gaya. Groups of young men put on masks and make a lot of noise by rattling cans. They are said to represent the Māras, the “destroyers” or tempters who put several hindrances in the way of the Buddha. The procession starts before dawn and takes fourteen hours to complete – fourteen hours of fast movement, if not running. The line takes more than two hours to pass one point, as thousands of people, in groups of five to twenty, take part.

**Cauityapūja** is slower and of a more formal and solemn character. Its line takes “only” one hour to pass, and the last participants will reach the destination just before midnight. The line is led by the sponsor or initiator, who wears a white turban and crown of brass. He strikes a drum monotonously, and Mahājan helpers following him lure the hula-dancers of the 516 chaityas in Patan with water and put a white parasol of paper on top of their finials. Thousands of people join the procession to offer a small bowl of paddy and a coin to each chaitya. Although the procession is called caityapūja, all manner of temples along the procession path, and even aniconic representations of gods (pīgha), are incorporated into the worship. Once again, the emphasis is more on “place” and less on a dogmatically restricted group of religious objects.

For both occasions, matayā as well as caityapūja, the bhāhā and bhū communities (sangha) shift their bhāhīdhālag, usually easily portable chaityas, into their courtyard to attract the offerings of those who pass by. Round tablets (hasa) for the offerings are placed in front of the objects and presided over by the owners. In many cases, the chaityas along the processional route are anointed and decorated. Finials moulded in brass are added on top so as to cover the original one. Wooden frames are installed around the finial as a mounting for ornaments, ceremonial scarves and offerings of oranges and flowers.

The caityapūja of Bhaktapur is performed only on the rare occasion when a newly built chaitya is consecrated. The procession welcomes, as it were, the new “member” to the group of
existing ones—at present 93. Special reverence is paid to the lineage god of the Bajrācārya, the Guhyesvari at Siddhapūkhā. As in Patan, the procession is one continuous movement through and around the urban space, with the route never crossing over itself. In Patan, the intersection of the two main streets constitutes the city’s ideal (as well as geographical) centre, around which the procession advances. Roughly speaking, the four thudvās define the outermost points of reference, although the procession does lead down to Śankhamūlaghāt to take in the two caityas along the Bāgmati. It also leads up to Pīcva Hill and south towards the shrine of Bājukha Bhairava.

In Kathmandu, the caityapūṭa is performed in quite a different way. It does not include a procession on an urban scale but focuses rather on a group of twelve prominent caityas over the period of a year. A few hundred people congregate around the caitya of the month and listen to Buddhist instruction, much as the custom developed in recent years in the context of the Theravāda movement would dictate. It is not a ritual that is the centre of attention, but the expounding of the dharmā. Men from the Buddhist Māṇandhar or Tulādhār community are the organizers, and the women of the community sit in rows in front of the caitya—at Yetkhābahā in front of Amoghasiddhi, the Tathāgata who normally attracts least attention.
Observances

The Sākyas and Bajrácāryas do not practise lifelong celibate monasticism, but they have preserved the following of the Eight Precepts (Gellner 1992: 221). These are: undertaking not to take life, not to steal, not to engage in sexual acts, not to tell lies, not to become intoxicated, not to eat after midday, not to watch dancing or singing, and not to wear perfumes and finery. Since such observance is commonly attended to on the eighth day of the bright moon, it is called astamī vrata. The precepts are chanted by the priest, but the participants are often totally ignorant of the background. Astamī vrata is, in fact, primarily a ritual of devotion to the Bodhisattva Amoghapāsa Lokesvara, a particular form of Avalokitesvara.

The vow of astamī vrata is performed in the upper rooms of monasteries which contain a shrine dedicated to Amoghapāsa Lokesvara. The most popular way of following the observance, however, is related to the sacred topography of the Valley. Twelve sacred water places (tīrthas), confluences of small or even invisible rivers with the Bāgmāti and Bisnumati, are visited over a period of twelve months. A concluding visit is devoted to Svayambhūcātiya. There is also an option to extend the astamī vrata over two years. In that case, the Eight Passionless Ones (Aṣṭavārajāgas), the Four Caiyās (Sväyambhūnāth, Bodhnāth, Cabahiul and Baregaon) and the caitya at Namobuddha are included in the sequence of small pilgrimages. The vrata is thus seen to involve a pilgrimage to the most important caityas and sacred places, the ones connected with confluentes that are believed to be the abode of the serpent kings (nāgarājā). The sequence starts at Punyātīrtha (no.1) in Gokarna, moves down the Bāgmāti, taking in Manorathātīrtha (no. 5) on the Kesavati (or Bisnumati), and ends at Jayatīrtha (no. 12) below Kirtipur. Of central importance is the performance of the sacred fire ritual in front of a mandala dedicated to Amoghapāsa Lokesvara. The ritual axis is defined by a caitya and a figure of Amoghapāsa Lokesvara facing the priest on the other side.

Of importance in the context of an architectural account of caityas is the conical heap of sand called balikhacātiya. It is surrounded by circles of 108 bowls of rice (kisāli), 108 lamps (dipa), 108 bowls of water (jāl) and 108 cones made of wheat flour (gāvahāja). For most of the time that is spent at such a confluence, the participants of the observance do not pay attention to the sacred fire, the main ritual event, but are individually engaged in producing countless miniature caityas of sand, using small, six-to-ten-centimetre-long moulds of brass. The visit to the abode of the serpent kings and the production of caityas must be seen in the context of the myth of the creation of the Valley as the microcosm. The serpent kings represent the primeval waters, which are now reduced to rivers that drain the Valley. The caityas recall Svayambhūnāth Hill, which emerged from the mythic lake, much as the Primordial Hilocek floating on the Primeval Ocean.

Moulding of caityas is also practised during the Buddhist holy month of Gūla, which begins on the day after the new moon in the month of Srīvan (in August) with the observance of fasting. After four weeks a feast marks the end of the period. Named gūladharana, the observance calls for, among other things, the production of 125,000 small caityas from black mud (hakṣācā), a job preferably done by women from the Māṇandhar community. On the concluding day a nāgapaṇī is performed and the caityas, packed into big amorphous lumps, are dissolved at the nearest ghat into the river.
In Kathmandu, pious Buddhists observe a daily visit to Swayambhunath during Gēla. The Māṇandharas of Bhaktapur also engage in daily processions to the sound of their horns and trumpets, but it is only every Wednesday (buddhabāra), that they leave their confined ritual territory for pilgrimages to those Buddhist places they consider most important. At the beginning of the month they take a purifying bath at Mahādevopokhari, located on the eastern ridge of the Valley, followed by a visit, on the first Wednesday, to Namobuddha. The second visit is dedicated to Vajrayogini and the rock-hewn Swayambhūcātīya, and includes a bath at Māniceḍāha, a small pond at the site of Mambilgesvara, one of the Eight Passionless Ones. The third pilgrimage leads to Bāgamati for the worship of Mātsyendranath, and the final one to Swayambhūcātīya. On the occasion of the full moon (Gāpuni or Janaipūrmima) there is an additional pilgrimage, extending over a week, to the glacier lake of Gosāikunda. As the goal is far, most people are content to celebrate the festival at Kumbhèsvara in Patan, where a bath in a subsidiary kūnda bestows equal merit.

In the context of “countless” cātivas being made part of an observance, a word may be said about the historical dimension of this act. The Chinese travellers of the 7th century already commented upon the making of ephemeral structures as a particular act of worship. Yijing reported the following from India:

"Sometimes they build Stūpas of the Buddha by making a pile and surrounding it with bricks. They sometimes form these Stūpas in lonely fields, and leave them to fall in ruins. ... This is the reason why the Sūtras praise in parables the merit of making images of Kātyāyas as unspeakable. Even if a man make an image as small as a grain of barley, or a Kātyā the size of a small jujube, placing on it a round figure or a staff like a small pin, a special cause for good birth is obtained thereby; and will be as limitless as the seven seas, and good rewards will last as long as the coming four births." (cited from Kottkamp 1992: 285)
154–157. Patan: Cauyjdra on the occasion of Katis-
punhi, 3 October 1990.
All 515 caityas and various temples, aniconic gods
(jīva) and objects of worship (such as caityas kept in
agō shrines and miniature versions of the Matsyend-
ranath chariot) are visited in a continuous proces-
sion which extends over a long day. Most caityas are
adorned with ornaments, scarves, garlands of jīvā
(copied barley seedlings) or flowers, and secondary
finials in brass repoussé. Members of the families who
established the caitya “own” the right to collect the of-
ferings placed on a tablet in front of it.
154. Śikharaiccaitya on a lotus near Būhāhā.
155. Sumeracaitiya in Haatha.
156. Small portable caitya placed on a tablet in a court-
yard near Būhāhā.
157. Padmāvalicaitiya at Būhāhā.

158, 159. Ritual dedicated to Amoghapāsa Lokesvara
on the occasion of the observance (āstami vīra) at
Manorathāthābhā, 19 March 1986.
158. The bahukhrercaitya of sand, surrounded by circles
of 108 bowls of rice, 108 lamps, 108 bowls of water and
108 cones made of wheat flour.
159. View across the site of the ritual with the Bajrā-
cārya priest facing west, the sacred fire under a tripod,
the Amoghapāsa mandala, the bahukhrercaitya and an
icon of Amoghapāsa Lokesvara.
160. Bhaktapur: Moulding of 125,000 small caityas
on the occasion of the observance during the Buddhist
holy month of Čaūs, 26 August 1976.

154 155 158
156 157 159
160
161. Jaya Bahadur.

164. Swayambhunath Hill: Digudyahpūjā of Buddha, on the occasion of the yearly rotation of garudgharship (idpahguthu) on kārik-krama-trayodasi in October. Clad in his ceremonial dress, Najar Maha Buddhaka circumambulates the Mahacuṭi with a portable image of Aksobhya in his arm – the clan deity which is taken to Pulasgucuṭiya, 8 October 1988.

165. Sequence of pilgrimages by Mahaandharas from Bhaktapur, performed on successive Wednesdays on Namobuddha, Vajravogini, Būgamati and Swayambhunath) as part of the gūḍaḍharma observance in August. A special pilgrimage leads north to Gosāikunda.

166. Kathmandu: exhibition of a wooden caitya at Jhāhā at the end of the month of Gág (in August) as part of the bahishya brāvyag, the occasion when the monasteries display their ritual objects.
Lineage deities bind together groups of families which are thought of as being related, even if no relationship is engrained in memory. One consequence is that people who share the same lineage deity regularly intermarry. Among high-caste Hindus, lineage deity worship (digudyahpūjā) is gradually being given up, and among many farmer castes the lineage deity guthi has been divided to such an extent that the digudyahpūjā ends up being performed individually by core families.

While normally aniconic stones beyond the city limits serve as lineage deities, among Śākyas and Bajrācāryas caityas may also function in the same capacity. To name only a few, the Śākyas of Michubhā in Patan so treat the caitya on the axis of the āgārā shrine, the Śākyas and Bajrācāryas of Kvābāhā the Svayambhūcaitya of their courtyard, many Śākyas and Bajrācāryas of Kathmandu the rock-hewn Svayambhūcaitya of Sākhu/Vajrayogini, and the Buddhācāryas of Svayambhūnāth Hill Pulšēgucaitya (the “old” Svayambhūnāth). David Gellner (1992: 240) has pointed out that lineage deity worship at Kvābāhā “is directed both to the caitya and to the Tantric deity (here, Yogāmbara), and implies an identity between them”.

The same is true in the case of the four lineages (kavāh) of the Buddhācārya community of Svayambhūnāth Hill. Twenty-six families (as of 1986) act as caretakers (dyaṃpāla). These families perform their digudyahpūjā, which extends over eight days, from the fourth to the
eleventh day of the bright moon of the month of Caitra (April). On the first day, the acting caretaker receives offerings from every household. He climbs the caitya to offer milk and water to the central shaft (yabh). All the other caretakers congregate around the caitya to receive flowers and bread thrown from the top of the caitya. Once back down, the acting caretaker distributes a few drops of water for purification purposes, as for the coming eight days only pure food will be taken, thus excluding the consumption of garlic, onions and chicken meat. On the fourth day, a small figure of Aksobhya, who represents the caitya, is brought in a portable shrine (khu), from the household of an elder of the Buddhacarya community. It is placed into the eastern niche, and the other Tathāgatas are adorned with crowns and dresses.

From this point on, the space around Pulasevagacaitya, as clearly defined by an encircling wall, is closed to outsiders. Entering that space and worshipping Aksobhya constitutes an act vital for confirming membership in the lineage deity guru. Children who have the rice-feeding ceremony behind them are welcomed on this occasion into the community, by the elder and his wife, who wait for them at the eastern gate and lead them around the caitya. As a sign of their attendance, all twenty-six families send a ritual basket and a jar of beer. In the presence of these symbols, the elder and the representatives of the four lineages take their seat beside the acting Bajacarya priest from Kathmandu and proceed to admit the newcomers to the community. Later, a ceremonial banner (pata) is fixed to the finial of the caitya and small portions of bread are thrown into the crowd. Then the community as a whole circumambulates the entire space, including the caitya, worshipping Bhairava, Vāsukīnāga (the serpent king), Yogāmbara and the four Tathāgatas. And finally, the elder offers buffalo meat to Yogāmbara, the Tantric lineage deity in aniconic form, who, as stated earlier, in this context is considered identical with the caitya as the prime focus of the digudyahpījā. All caretakers now take their seats, plates and beer jars in hand, on the axis of Yogāmbara, there to receive tikā and mvahni (a black stroke on the forehead, the colour of which comes from the burned meat of the sacrificial animal). The concluding feast represents another means to establish and renew membership in the guru. Various other feasts follow on succeeding days, before Aksobhya is carried back to the elder’s house on the eighth day.

A second digudyahpījā is performed on the occasion of the thirteenth day of the dark moon of the month of Asvin, three days before the beginning of Dasai. The elder carries the portable Aksobhya figure in his arm first around the Mahācaitya and then down to Pulasevagacaitya. The deity remains there only for a few hours to witness the yearly rotation of caretakers. Representatives of all twenty-six families are present on that occasion and share food and beer. Pulasevagacaitya represents the focal “deity” for the Buddhacarya community also on the occasion of bare chuyega, the monastic initiation.
The Great Caityas (Mahācaityas)

The four caityas or thudvās of Patan

"It is a curious paradox that the tiny valley of Nepal possesses such a wealth of archaeological remains of the Licchavi and later periods, including an enormous number of inscriptions, sculptures, and monuments, but that virtually nothing is known of its earlier history."

This statement by Frank Raymond Allchin (1980: 147) on the occasion of a conference in Heidelberg in 1977 is still valid today. Because of the lack of archaeological evidence, the speaker was careful enough to say that "the Asokan Stūpas of Patan" were already in existence in Malla times but that he expected one day to discover "remains of a yet earlier period, perhaps taking us back to within a century or two of Asoka himself." Mary Slusser (1982: 279) shared Allchin's caution but was probably being led astray when she earlier speculated that "they might even have originated as pre-Buddhist funerary tumuli". David Snellgrove (1961: 4) has argued that the four thudvās might have been erected in connection with the foundation of Patan towards the end of the 4th century AD. From an architecturally typological point of view, nothing further can be added to these statements.

The four thudvās of Patan are indeed shaped like tumuli, and as such they are unique testimony to an ancient architectural tradition. Whereas the Newār ending dva refers to a "heap" of the kind generally found in fields as the abode of a bhūt or pret (ghost), the prefix thu has not yet been satisfactorily explained. In a more formal context, when, for example, the procession to the four thudvās takes place on the occasion of sadyah or guijārā, the mounds are addressed as thur.

A 19th-century Buddhist chronicle edited by Daniel Wright (1972: 77) has preserved the legend that Emperor Asoka erected the four thudvās during a visit to Nepal, each "founded on the anniversary of the commencement of one of the four stūpas". Tradition affirms this episode and tells us that Asoka also founded a monastery in Cabahil and named it Cāru-matthiśāra after his daughter, whom he gave in marriage to a local ruler who, in turn, is reputed to have founded a city in nearby Dēcopatan. Asoka is also said to have founded a caitya in Kirtipur and visited the shrine of Guhyesvari and the Mahācaitya at Svayambhu.

Allchin (1980: 151) has already stated that "to speak of the four stūpas as marking the cardinal points is somewhat misleading". The location of the mounds is not understandable under such an assumption, nor does the cross formed by the connecting lines make any particular sense. Given the nonorientational character of both the actual and underlying primary street cross (Gutschow 1982: 155), one might suspect that the location of the four mounds conceals some hidden geomantic values still to be unveiled. The discussion of the various groups of Aṣṭamārka shrines in the Valley has already provided ample evidence that the image of a mandala is not necessarily mirrored in reality. Analogously, we may assume that the four mounds in theory were established to provide orientation to a spatial entity which remains unknown below the present pattern of settlement. We must admit that we do not know anything about such settlement patterns prior to the Malla era. Altogether 104 extant Licchavī caityas or fragments of such structures have been identified in Patan, but in all probability not a single one has survived in its original location and structural coherence.
The wish to provide cardinal orientation to a defined entity is in fact a phenomenon not confined to the Buddhist world. Four pre-Buddhist caityas are said to have already existed around Vaishali during the Buddha’s lifetime. Much later, in the middle of the 17th century, four large stūpas were placed in the cardinal directions around Mukden.

leaving the realm of speculation concerning the age and function of the four thudvās aside, a description of the mounds discloses the fact that until the beginning of the 20th century they differed in size but, as a common feature, were all covered with turf. All have a recent plastered retaining wall by way of a drum around the base, with shrines of recent origin dedicated to the usual Tathāgatas. Even the finials are of recent origin. The northern mound stands at the edge of the medieval settlement, on the bank of a terrace, high above the flood plains of the river Bagmati. The renovation at the beginning of the 20th century aimed at shaping the mound after the prototype of Svayambhūnāth. Bricks and plaster cover the earthen mound, while the finial with its harmikā and thirteen steps is patterned after the Mahācāitya of Bodhnāth.

171 The southern mound in Lagā is the largest of the thudvās, measuring 47.40 m in diameter and 11.80 m in height. The mound is crowned by a recent structure, which seems to be a miniature caitya added on top, complete with a square substructure and primary trio. Strangely enough, this miniature caitya does not conform in orientation with the mound below. The shrines of the Tathāgatas were presumably added in 1878, even as others were added to the eastern mound in 1846. An inscription tells us that on the western thudvā the Tathāgatas were already in place by 1455.

The set of four caityas of the Valley

There is a long tradition in the Kathmandu Valley of relating four deities in a defining and patterning role to the microcosmos. This tradition extends also to four caityas, which are recognized as constituting just such a pattern. Following the concept of the mandala, a delineated area—literally an area delineated by a “circle”—is separated from its potentially unordered surroundings.

The Mahācāityas of Svayambhūnāth and Bodhnāth figure as the prominent ones of the set of four. And although those at Bodhnāth and in Cabahil were founded by successors of Vṛṣadeva, prevailing legends maintain that Vṛṣadeva himself founded a fourth one at Baregaon to round out the existing three (Slusser 1982: 276) at the beginning of the 5th century.

Svayambhūnāth Mahācāitya

One of the earliest foundations, if not the earliest, of the Valley is the Mahācāitya, the Great caitya of Svayambhūnāth, the “Self-Existent Lord”, established “almost with certainty” (Slusser 1982: 275) about the beginning of the 5th century by the Buddhist king Vṛṣadeva. Evidence for this ascription is provided by the Gopalarājavanamsavali, which states that Vṛṣadeva consecrated the “Singu-vihāra-caitya-bhaṭṭārika”. The identification of Singuvihāra as Svayambhūnāth is secured through the colloquial name for the entire sanctuary, Sigu. Twenty
years ago a stela existed nearby, one set up by Vṛṣadeva’s grandson Manadeva (464–505). Apparently the Mahācāturya was already called Svayambhū in an inscription of Amuvarman (605–621). We do not know what Vṛṣadeva’s foundation looked like, and we know almost nothing about the changes in size and shape the caitya underwent over a thousand years to come. The only remnants from an early period found thus far are four plaques in stone relief. Depictions of the recognition symbols of the Tathāgatas were part of the drum, which was oriented by them. These reliefs, which resemble those of the caitya at Tukābha and of the Dharmandaevacāturya in Cānihil – these latter dated by Pratapaṇḍita Pat (1974: pls. 158, 160–164) to the 7th or 8th century – are now almost invisible behind vihāras, which were installed under extended niches only in 1918.

Repairs and successive enlargements must certainly have been carried out in Licchavi times. The earliest restoration is recorded for the end of the 11th century, in a 17th-century manuscript, and the following one for 1129, in an inscription adjacent to the drum of the caitya. During the second half of the 13th century the hitherto first documented renovation of the caitya sponsored by Tibetan donors occurred (Ehrhard 1990:16–18). In fact, it was ḏpon-chen Śākyā bzang-po (the first chief administrator of Tibet, appointed by Bla-ma Phrags-pa (1235–1274)) who donated fifty bāles of gold for that pious act, and it is the same ḏpon-chen Śākyā bzang-po who provided funds for the building of a temple at Sa-skya monastery – a work accomplished by eighty craftsmen from Nepal under the guidance of the artist Arniko in 1261–1262.

Probably more extensive was the renovation of 1372, when the maha-patras of Kathmandu repaired the caitya 23 years after its sack by a Muslim invasion. The most frequent repair was devoted to the renewal of the central wooden shaft, the vahās, which could be damaged by lightning or storms. The shaft was renewed in the year 1413 during the reign of Jyotir Malla (1408–1428). Donations arrived from Tibet, and the “great teacher Sāriputra” from India was responsible for overseeing the actual labour. In a translation of the account by Franz-Karl Ehrhard (1991:15):

“The king of Nepal, Sri Jayajyotirmalladeva, superintended and, after having praised the assembled bares in an official writing, called together the craftsmen under his charge. The parasol together with the accompanying discs was completed in a proper manner on the full moon day of the fourth month in the serpent year (1413).”

His son Yakṣa Malla (1428–1482) sponsored another renewal of the shaft. In 1504 Yakṣa Malla’s son Raina Malla (1484–1520) and his ministers called upon a wandering yogin named gtṣang-smyon He-ru-ka (1452–1507) to undertake a complete renovation of Svayambhuṇāṭ (Ehrhard 1991:14). Vinayaka, the guardian god of Svayambhuṇāṭ, is said to have asked the holy man already upon his first visit to the Kathmandu Valley in 1476 to repair the Mahacatya. The task was finally accomplished during his third stay, from 1501 to 1504, with donations from the king of Gu-ge and the ruler of Mustang.

In 1565 the mahāpatras of Patan repaired the caitya again. A painted cloth (pata) recalls the completion of the reconsecration ceremony of “Sri Syamgu” (Slusser 1987:20). No more than thirty years later Sivasimha Malla (1578–1619) had to repair the caitya and replace the central shaft once more. After another fifteen years the final was struck by lightning, the occasion for
During the reign of his successor, Lakśminarasimha Malla (1619–1641), a lama from Tibet is said to have renewed the shaft (a 19th-century chronicle names it “garbha kālaḥ” – Wright 1971: 215). Lakśminarasimha’s son, Pratāpa Malla (1641–1674), not only constructed the two sikhara-type temples to frame the ascent of the hill, and the large vajradhātu-mandala in between, but also carried out major repairs of the caitya. Pratāpa Malla’s successor reigned only six years, passing the sceptre on to Parthivendra, who remained in power for seven years. During the latter’s rule, the central shaft broke while the statues of the Tathāgatas were being replaced and the finial was being repaired. Rang-rig ras-pa of Spiti had it renewed in 1680. An inventory of that work, the so-called ‘Phags-pa shing-kun dkar-chag, states in Ehrhard’s translation (1991: 12):

“Then, after some time, when the venerable Rang-rig (ras-pa) himself had affixed the great pinnacle (garjira, N. gajatra) to (Bya-rung) Kha-shor (Stūpa), he yielded up what was available in leftover gold, (namely) 32 ounces, to King Parthivendra-malla and Tse-kur hab-chu (?), saying: ‘As obviously repair of ‘Phags-pa shing-kun Stūpa is necessary in connection with the statues of the four cardinal directions act (accordingly).’

The king (however), did not carry out (the repair) that year; the following year the central mast (vasī) broke and tilted to the left. A prophecy having been communicated to King Parthivendra-malla through Ganapati (i. e. Ganesa), a treasure of gold was unearthed at Kāṣyapa Stūpa. After the craftsmen under the (king’s) control had assembled, they erected a sal tree (spus dkar shing = shing sa la = Shorea robusta), that is, the central mast 6 ‘dom thick and 47 ‘dom long. Afterwards the “palace”, the discus, the top and the statues of the four cardinal directions were prepared, together with the backside screens, from (an alloy of) gold and copper.”

The consecration was conducted on the full moon day of the fifth month in the iron-monkey year (1680), and during the time all (the participants) observed rainbows, a rain of flowers and the tones of (sonorous) music.”

We come across the first well-documented repair of Svayambhūnāth in 1751 to 1757, which was again initiated by a Tibetan lama (Ehrhard 1989, Kolver 1992). Tshe-dbang nor-bu

176. Svayambhūnāt: earliest Western depiction of the Mahācātuyā (right: the temple of Haris, left: Ananthapura), made on the occasion of the visit of Prince Wake-mar of Prussia to Nepal in February and March 1845.

177. Svayambhūnāth: aerial photograph, c. 1960 (Ganesh Photo, Kathmandu).

(1698–1755) came to the Kathmandu Valley first in 1726 as a pilgrim to pay respect to the two Mahâcaityas, Svayambhûnâth and Bodhnâth. Sent to Nepal again in 1748 in order to round the repair of the Bodhnâth Mahâcaitya off with a consecration ceremony, Tsho-dbang nor-bu probably raised concerns about the state of repair of Svayambhûnâth. In the following year he addressed a letter to the king and ministers of Kathmandu, expressing his “desire to put Svayambhûnâth Stupa ... back into presentable shape” (Ehrhard 1989: 6). This plan was approved by Jayapratâsa Malla (1735–1768) and Prthvinârayana Sâhâ, who had already moved from Gorkhâ to Nuvâkot. The renovation was postponed until 1751:

“The gods Mahadeva-Ganesa and Kumâra Karttikâ, who are willing to guarantee the materials for the renovation, manifest themselves, and Visnu in the form of a Brahman gives instructions that a pillar should be chosen for the repair work which is similar to a ‘sacrificial post for the gods.’” (Ehrhard 1989: 6)

The pillar was procured by Prthvinârayana Sâhâ from Nuvâkot and carried across the hills all the way to Kathmandu. Although the shaft was finally erected in 1755, the work was completed only in 1757, and in the following year the consecration was performed by the Seventh dPa’-bo Rin-po-che (year of death 1781).

A manuscript from a Tulâdhâr family in Kathmandu also documents this renovation, as follows:

“... the work was caused to be done under the Twice Ven. Jayapratâsamalla’s protection (palâsta). The Ven. Rajim Chembu Lâmâ having begged a tree for the Central Beam from the Gorkhâ King Prthvinârayana, he gave a tree in his territory/domain (lagâ of Nakâvâ, i.e. Nuvâkot); it was after the Gorkhalâ(s) had entered Nakâvâ.” (Kölver 1992: 64)

For the first time, an almost accurate drawing of the caiyya was produced, which managed to serve as an account of measurements. For the thirteen tiers, diameter, height and distance between tiers is exactly provided down to the quarter of a finger’s breadth. Moreover, the donors of the tiers are mentioned, and a number of meaningful relationships between structural parts and the world of Vajrayâna are provided. Most important, however, is the fact that the dome is presented in what amounts to a section. The central shaft can be seen resting on a stone which, according to the manuscript, stands for the five elements, namely ether, wind, fire, water and earth. The length of the shaft provided by the manuscript is 48 cubits and 7 fingers, that is 22.08 metres, according to Bernhard Kölver’s calculation. The rock of the hill obviously extends into the dome of the caiyya, or, in other words, the caiyya was from the beginning built around the peak of the hill. This fact recalls Barabudur, the gigantic terrace stûpa which was also built, from 755 to 825, on top of and around a hill. It is believed (Kottkamp 1992: 367) that Barabudur was at one time even surrounded by a lake so as to be seen as a representation of the world floating on the Primordial Ocean, with the surrounding mountain ranges symbolizing the cakravala.

With drum, dome and a finial of thirteen tiers, the Mahâcaitya in the drawings comes very near to its present shape. Painted versions, such as the one on the early banner dated 1565 referred to above, tend to present the drum with an articulated moulding, of which only the half-

179. East-west section through Svayambhûnâth Hill. The dome of the caiyya covers the peak of the hill and forms a platform at a level of 1403.26 m. The central shaft or wooden pillar (yâlas) of the caiyya rests on the peak. Thirty-one metres below the platform is placed a stone representing Bhairava as the kovâl or guardian god of the hill, at the very level to which the waters of Kâlîhrâda, the prehistoric lake, is said to have reached.

180. The central shaft of the caiyya represents Indra’s mythic pillar, the axis of the world, and the dome represents the Primordial Hillrock, floating on the Primordial Ocean. In Nepal, the symbolism of the hillrock is twice repeated: it is represented both by the hill rising up out of the lake Kâlîhrâda and by the dome of the building.
round profile along the upper edge and the quarter-round that mediates between the drum and the circumambulatory path survive.

One other manuscript documents the measurements that resulted when the central shaft was renewed in 1817, and it compares them with those of a renewal in 1712, of which no contemporary account has been handed down. The drawing of this manuscript is more correct in the rendering of details and even in vertical proportions. The drum moulding and the outline of the niche are correct in architectural terms, and so is the pinnacle on top, supported by a bell-shaped substructure and encased in a triangular frame. The account of the 1817 renovation seems to contradict the account provided by Henry Ambrose Oldfield (1988: 222-223), who spent a few years at the British residency in the middle of the 19th century. He recalls that in 1816 "during a violent storm, its central beam was snapped in two ... and the whole spire fell to the ground". It was years before enough funds, including contributions from Lhasa, could be collected to renew the central shaft and the entire spire from 1825 to 1826. At the same time, the so-called Vasubandhucaitya was built on the saddle of the hill below the Mahācaitya to house the Tathāgatas which, until the end of the 17th century, had been en-
shrined in the Mahācāitya. They had been lying around ever since Parthivendra Malla had installed new ones.

The latest renewal of the central shaft dates to 1918, when Dham Sāhu, a Tuladhar from Kathmandu, donated the sum of 75,000 rupees for that purpose. The guiding spirit behind this undertaking was again a Tibetan lama, in this case Sarvasri Sākṣyastri (Kölver 1992: 108), who joined in with a donation of 20,000 rupees. This was probably one of the most intensive renovations of the Mahācāitya, and it turned out to be a major reshaping. Until 1918 the niches rested on the drum, but since that time they project across the drum moulding. Now guarded by lions, and with vahanas inserted into the soole, they entirely obscure the earlier lineaments. While the niches of the Saktis were previously of a simple shape, they now rival those of the Tathāgatas in every detail. The cornice above the cube (gāla or harāmikā) has been doubled to bear the shields, which obviously owe their iconographical programme, including the Nāthas (the Great Magicians), to an earlier renovation. On the view provided by Daniel Wright (1972: pl. IV), five figures can be identified on the eastern shield. In all probability, a second pinnacle or gajī was added on top of the renewed triangle that frames the two lower gajīs. While the corners of the cube already in the 19th century displayed decorative elements of Tibetan provenance, the eyes were different - more in the style presented on the painting that, in disregard of the Tibetan lama’s initiative, dates the beginning of the renovation to 1754 and its completion to 1757. To sum up: the early 20th-century renovation put a new layer upon an older structure. The relief fragments of the 8th century arc all that remains lo testify that, in disregard of the plans presented by John Irwin in his many articles has so convincingly expounded.

In architectural terms, the most important piece of information in the manuscript Bernhard Kölver has devoted much detailed observation to is the exact measurement of the central shaft to 22.08 metres. A section through the entire hill on which the Mahācāitya rests documents how the drum of the caitya rests on a platform of infill, which measures three to six metres in depth and occupies an area roughly fifty metres square around the caitya. The summit of the hill pierces this infill to support the central shaft. The platform supports the dome, which serves to ensure that the shaft remains in an upright position. As the base below the shaft is located in the lower third of the dome, and almost half of it extends beyond the cube, it is understandable that storm and weather should cause havoc, to which the large number of accounts of renewal bear witness. The placement of the central shaft on top of an emerging rock is remarkable in many ways. The shaft takes on a cosmogenic role, especially in the context of the prevailing myth about the creation of the Valley, which is quoted below in the chapter on the lotus motif.

Here the fact only needs to be mentioned that the Valley is thought to have formed a lake in mythic times, from which Swayambhunāth Hill alone stuck out, bearing a lotus flower which "revealed the Self-Created (svayambhī) in the form of light (jyotirāpa). Men of later world periods could not bear its effulgence; hence it was covered by the stūpa we see today" (Kölver 1992: 21). There is a general acceptance of the myth among the Newars of the Valley, and indeed there seems to be reason enough for it. Climbing up the hill along the eastern steps, one passes an aniconic representation of Bhairava in the form of a stone at the height of 1372.17 m. Positioned exactly 31.09 m below the platform and 34.70 m below the summit of the hill, Bhairava takes on the role of a kutyala, a guardian placed at the level of the mythic waters. One is led to recall in this context Bhairava's role as the guardian of Vārānasī. His place at Kālamocana also marks the edge of the "womb"-form assumed by Vārānasī up to the 19th century, on the occasion of Matsyodari Yoga, when the waters turned Vārānasī into an island. Vārānasī, the Kathmandu Valley or Barabudur - the notion of the Primordial Hillock floating on the Primordial Ocean is all-pervasive. At Swayambhunāth, the shaft, the yahṣi or yasti of the manuscript, adds a key element to the cosmogenic context, as John Irwin in his many articles has so convincingly expounded.

According to him the yahṣi of the caitya must be seen as "none other than the Axis Mundus itself, metaphysically identified with the World Tree and the World Pillar as interchangeable images of the instrument used to both separate and unite heaven and earth at the Creation. Both are in turn identified with the sun, which was released from the Cosmic Ocean at the moment of separation to create Time and the Seasons. By its orientation to the four cardinal points, the Axis expresses the unity of Space-Time and enables the worshipper, by performance of the rite of sunwise circumambulation (pradaksina), to identify with the rhythm of the cosmic cycle" (1979: 833-834).

Passing the stone identified as Bhairava on up the steps, the worshipper first comes across the vahanas of the Tathāgatas. The move upwards equals a circumambulation against the movement of the sun. Amoghasiddhi’s Garuda, bound up with aquatic associations, is met first. Vairocana’s lion crowns the entire group. Then one passes an aniconic representation of Ghyvesvari - an inconspicuous stone placed in a low niche. Although Ghyvesvari’s main seat has strong Hindu connotations. Pulaghyvesvari (lit. “old Ghyvesvari”) is found on the northern slope of the Jāmača mountain, marking the spot where the seat fell from which the lotus...
185. Svayambhunath Mahacaitya: elevation cast.

186. Svayambhunath Mahacaitya: plan.
came forth. The occurrence of the stone just below the Mahâcaitya’s platform thus recalls the mythic event that caused the appearance of the lotus carrying the Self-Created in the form of Light. The five vahanas along the steps represent the Tathâgatas, who add linear orientation to the Mahâcaitya’s access.

On a different level of time and space, the Tathâgatas together with their Saktis, Mahâsuri, Yogâmbara and Hârtti are found around the hill, serving to establish ritual contact to sacred water places (tirthas). The five main tirthas, i.e. those dedicated to the Tathâgatas of the Mahâcaitya, are visited in those years when the sacred month of Gûla has five Wednesdays (buddhabhû). The thirteenth tirtha, at the confluence of Bhacakhusi and Bîshnumati, is related to Svayambhûnâth itself. All tirthas are not only associated with the deities mentioned above but also with the serpent kings (nâgaraja) and shrines (pihâs), which latter are considered as the “seats” of the deities. For example, the seats of the Tathâgatas represent the Five Elements located on the summit of the hill: Aksobyya’s seat is Vasupura (earth), Ratnasambhava’s is Vâyupura (wind), Amitâbha’s is Agnipurâ (fire), Amoghasiddhi’s is Nâgâpura (water) and Vairocana’s is Akâsâpura (ether).

The thirteen tirthas are visited in the course of one entire year, in the tradition of the tir-thajatâ associated with the twelve tirthas of the Valley on the occasion of asatmi vrata. Both pilgrimages reflect the tendency of shrines to establish an ordered environment that transcends the notion of place. Ever wider territories of differing extent and constellation tend to be defined in a ritual that spans across an auspicious passage of time.

**Bodhnath Mahâcaitya**

Various and contradicting traditions account for the establishment and recovery of the caitya at Bodhnath, which generally ranks as one of the Mahâcaityas of the Valley. Franz-Karl Ehrhard has shed considerable light on the discrepancies. The following summary is based on his “preliminary analysis of the written sources” (1990).

According to the 19th-century vansâvali which was edited by Daniel Wright (1972: 66-67), the Mahâcaitya of Bodhnath was established by King Mânadeva I (464-505). A Tibetan legend considers Mânadeva as the incarnation of a Tibetan lama named Khâsâ. But such a legend, according to Ehrhard, seems secondary in nature, constructed to provide a popular explanation for the widely used term Khâsâcaitya. An almost similar term, Khâsticaitya, is found in a legend concerning the foundation of the caitya common among the Newars of the Valley. This legend is also mentioned in the 19th-century chronicle: there is said to have been a great drought when Mânadeva built the caitya. Cloth was spread at night and the dew (New. khasu = dew and ti = water) squeezed from it provided the necessary water for the construction process. A third legend explains the term as being derived from the name of the Mânus Buddha Kâsyapa, whose relics are said to be enclosed by the caitya. The much earlier Gopalarâjâvamsâvali (Vajrâcârya and Malla 1985: 277) records the following background of the Mahâcaitya:

“He (Mânadeva) killed his father unwittingly. As he had committed such a monstrous crime, he wandered crying (in consternation). On reaching the hillock of Guvihâra he observed penances. By the merit of these penances, a great chaitya emerged (on the hillock). He consecrated the chaitya.”

The caitya was cut from solid rock, and later, probably in the 17th century, it was enclosed in a two-tiered degab (“temple”) dedicated to the goddess Mahâmâyûri. Although the thirteen tiers of the caitya finial that extend into the upper storey of that building testify to a 17th-century origin, its antiquity is widely acknowledged. The pinnacle might well be due to a later renovation, given the fact that only four pinnacles of Licchavi origin have survived the ravages of time.

Along with Svayambhûnâth, the caitya of Kâvâbha (in Patan) and the one in Baregaon, the rock-hewn caitya of Guvihâra at Sâkhu is considered to be one of the four “self-created” (svayambhû) caityas of the Kathmandu Valley.

According to the Gopalarâjâvamsâvali (Vajrâcârya and Malla 1985: 123-124), one of Mânadeva’s successors, Sâivadeva (590-604), “built a big khasan chaitya”. The obvious contradiction between the message of the later and the earlier chronicle could, as Mary Slusser (1982: 277) proposed, be understood in terms of successive events: “It seems probable, however, that Mânadeva was the builder, because of the persistent tradition that links his name to the stûpa, and that Sâivadeva, the chronicler’s choice, was its restorer.” In the context of an architectural history that contradiction has no meaning, because the caitya under discussion was never mentioned again over a period of nine hundred years. It was neglected, like so many other artifacts of the Licchavi era, and obviously only survived as a site – a mound covered with turf.

The second period in the life of the Bodhnath Mahâcaitya begins again with a legend that refers to popular etymology. In an account by the Eighth Si-tupa Chos-kyi ‘byung-gnas (1700 to 1774), who visited the Kathmandu Valley during two trips in 1723 and 1748, it is said that the Nepalese designate the mound as Khâ-sâ caitya. The khâ-sâ of this diary, however, must be understood as a corrupt form of kha-ta, which would mean “excavated (caitya)”. Further on the diary recalls that “Yo-o-mo-hu Sâkya bzang-po unearthed the mound, and consequently this stûpa existed as something brought forth from a treasure” (in the translation by Ehrhard, 1990: 4)
A younger contemporary of the Eighth Sī-tu-pa, the Fourth Khams-sprul Rin-po-che Chos-kyi nyi-ma (1730–1780), in a detailed “description of the sacred abodes” of the Kathmandu Valley, wrote of the Bya-rung Kha-shor (literally, “Permission To Do What’s Proper”) caitya that it “was covered with dirt, sand etc. to the point that it became invisible. When the moment for realizing the prophecies of Guru Rin-po-che arrived, the holy reincarnation, the Yol-mo-pa Rig’dzin Sākya bzang-po unearthed it, carried out with exactitude the repairs and restorations, and made known its true worth. The name of the great stupa became once more as famous as that of sun and moon” (Ehrhard 1990: 7). The Tantric master of the rNying-ma-pa school to which this account refers lived around 1500. Moreover, the account mentions neither Mānadeva nor Sivadeva, but instead states that “bones of the Nepalese king Am-suvarman were brought to light” – the king who ruled from 605 to 621 in succession of Sivadeva.

Following the recovery of the caitya, the members of this incarnational lineage, the so-called Yol-mo-ba sprul-skus, were responsible for the maintenance of the caitya up into the 18th century. From the rule of Sivasimha Malla (1587–1617) on, their function as Tibetan residents or “sextons” at the caitya was regularly reconfirmed. It must have been at that time that one Rang-tig ras-pa donated a new finial for the caitya. The first renovation after the “recovery” of the caitya began after a lapse of two centuries. It is not known when the process of renovation started, but the consecration ceremony (rab gnas) must have been performed in 1728. The biography of Rig’dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu (1698–1755) tells us (Ehrhard 1989: 3) that this lama received a summons from South Tibet to complete the renovation of the caitya. Pho-lha-ba bSod-nams stobs-rgyas, it seems, wanted to ensure a happy end to his battle campaign in Central Tibet by this pious act. Twenty years later Rig’dzin Tshe dbang nor-bu returned to Nepal to check up on Bodhnāth, or Khāsacaitya, although the renovation of the Sva- yambhūcaitya received more of his attention, and more funding, at the time.

After the Nepal-Tibet wars ties between Tibet and the resident at Bodhnāth were severed. A new line of caretakers was installed in the year 1859, when Chini Tefi Sim Lama became the “priest of the Shri Baudhanath Shrine” (Ehrhard 1991: 6).

A major intervention which aimed at the beautification of the caitya had taken place in 1821. At a time when significant repair activities were also directed towards Sva-yambhūnāth, Zhabs-dkar Tshogs-drug rang-grol (1781–1851) ordered the cube and the thirteen-stepped finial to be covered with gilded copper sheets. It was at this time that the caitya probably attained its present shape. While nothing is known about the shape of the caitya as originally established, the Tibetan “excavation” and subsequent reconstruction at the turn of the 15th century resulted in the largest structure ever built in the Valley until the advent of the Sāhas at the end of the 18th century.

The stepped base of vimāna-kona shape of the caitya at Bodhnāth is inscribed into a large square measuring 82.36 (east-west) by 83.03 (north-south) metres. The basic difference in design from the already existing Sva-yambhūnāth Mahācaitya at the turn of the 15th century was the introduction of three successive terraces below what, even in this case, may by identified
as the primary trio. The drum has 108 small niches, with the Tathāgatas enshrined among deities that belong to a cycle of the gTer-ston O-rgyan gling-pa, each complete with a torana. Keith Dowman (1993: 24) assumes that the stone-sculptured deities of the Nyingma school’s pantheon “were almost certainly commissioned at once by Sakya Zampo” to establish a formal “stūpa-mandala”. The most characteristic element of the finial of the Mahācāitya is the representation of the thirteen tiers by steps – a design element which can also be observed on the ancient caityas at Guia in Patan and in Cābāhī, as well as at the more recent Vasubandhu-cāitya on Svayambhūnāth Hill and the northern side of Patan. For lack of written or inscriptive sources, it cannot be said when this design was introduced, but it may reflect finials of votive caityas of the Licchavi era like the one from Tulānā, which preserves four out of probably seven steps. The top, with its massive amalaka ring, the protruding central shaft (yuhis), the frilled canopy above and the crowning gajī with flame (cvalāmū) and vase (kulaṇa), repeats the prototype represented by the Svayambhūnāth Mahācāitya.

Speculation may be allowed concerning the three terraces of vimsatikona shape. Licchavi-caityas introduced the plan of twenty angles for successive storeys, and the base below the primary trio attained a vimsatikona shape already in the early 18th century. The element of three distinct terraces of vimsatikona shape started appearing only in the early 19th century, with ample evidence in Kathmandu and on Svayambhūnāth Hill. For these latter, the substructure of the caitya at Bodnāth obviously must be recognized as the prototype. If the Astacaityas of the Tibetan tradition are taken as the point of reference, we would have to identify the caitya with three terraces of vimsatikona plan as the cho-'phral mechod-iten, or Prāthāyacāitya, which recalls the miracles at Śrāvasti. As what we find at Bodnāth is not a votive caitya but a true monumental one, the socle structure or lion throne otherwise prescribed is missing.

The three terraces of vimsatikona shape also appear beneath the caitya of Namura or Namobuddha, which is closely linked to the Bodnāth Mahācāitya. Tibetan tradition associates this caitya with the Vīṣṇu jataka, the story of a previous birth of the Buddha in which he offers his own body to feed a starving tigress. The Nepalese version shifts the locale to Panauti, a small Newari town in a valley neighbouring Kathmandu to the east. It is now the son of the ruler of Panauti who is said to have been out hunting when he encountered the tigress. But as she refuses to take his body, he feeds himself to her by his own hand. The caitya on the ridge a few miles east of Panauti is believed to contain the prince’s relics. Here, the three terraces are set onto a square socle of seven by seven metres, and between the primary trio and these terraces three circles of lotus leaves may possibly be identified under thick coatings of lime. If such they are, the caitya could also be called a pad-spungs mechod-iten, or Padmakatakacāitya, which recalls the event of the Buddha’s birth.

The group of three caityas consisting of the Svayambhūnāth and Bodnāth Mahācāityas as well as the one at Namobuddha are often depicted as a triad in block prints. Jigs-bral Ye-shes rdo-rje (1904–1987) devoted a poem to this triad (Ehrhard 1991: 13):

In Nepal, the Upachandoha-Land, on the ox horn’s peak, the relics, blessed by all the Buddhas of the past, came forth.
To the miracle well known by the name “Venerable All-Trees” –
to the self-existing Great Stūpa I pray!

Having taken courage, the Mighty Muni, the prince, to the hungry tigress offered his own body.
On this holy spot, the relics came forth of him who acted in the way of Mahābodhisattva –
to the Great Stūpa of Enlightenment I pray!

It was erected by the poultry woman, maintained by the four sons through continued activity, who, each by his own resolution, undertook to tame the snowland.
To that which fulfills wishes completely and is famous under the name “Permission to Do What’s Proper” –
to the Great Stūpa, whose sight liberates, I pray!

The three stūpas, every connection with which has meaning – through the merits of bringing offerings devotedly to them and circumambulating them, all evil deeds, sins and obscurations of myself and others, having totally been purified, may the state of liberation, the excellent fruit of enlightenment, soon be reached!
The Licchavicaitya

Remarks concerning the term

The early caityas of the valley of Kathmandu, which share easily perceptible features, are popularly called Asokacaityas. It is mainly in Kathmandu that one finds the use of this term, especially for caityas which have become shapeless under a thick layer of repeated lime offerings, though there is also one such case in Bhaklapur and two in Patan. However, only in one case (Savalabha, Kathmandu) is such an Asokacaitya a Licchavicaitya at its core. The visit of the emperor Asoka to the Nepal Valley remains legendary, but the name lays claim to antiquity and the blessing of the great “universal ruler” (cakravartin) who spread the Teaching of the Buddha over much of the subcontinent.

A second term, one widely accepted among Nepalese and foreign scholars, is used in reference to the Licchavis, who left their homeland in the Gangetic plains rather than submit to the Mauryan dynasty. They were the first historical kings of the Valley, of whom various documents tell from the middle of the 6th century onwards; they reigned as Hindus “by the favour of Pasupatinath” from ca. 400 to 900 AD. Even as we call the inscriptions of that time “Licchavi inscriptions”, so too the term Licchavicaitya has gradually become a familiar one.
Evidence for dating

Three inscriptions on the base storeys of Lichhavi caityas in Patan (Tyāgah and Utambhā) and Kathmandu (Dhvākhābāhā) are only fragmentarily preserved. They do not mention a date or a king, but paleographic comparisons have led Hemraj Sākya and Dhanavajra Vajrācārya to assume that these caityas, which have not survived in their original context, were probably built in the 7th century. Figural stone reliefs on plaques placed below the niches of the large caityas at Svayambhūnāth, Cabahil and Tukābahā (in Kathmandu) have been tentatively dated by Mary Slusser (1982) and Pratapaditya Pal (1974) to the 6th or 8th century, although earlier caitya structures may have already existed at these sites.

Two other inscriptions, at Subāhāhiti and Guitabahi, are dated 758 AD and 1024 AD, but both are found on a stone slab serving as a socle below the actual caitya structure. A common
context of origin, therefore, is not guaranteed. We are hampered by the very meagreness of
historical evidence: a study of some 250 roles, both intact and fragmentary, has yet to produce
a satisfactory understanding of stylistic development that could lead to more secure dates.

The examples of archaic caityas at Tabahai and Tabaha in Kathmandu, both without any
niches, may well have been constructed at the same time as artists were labouring over the
caving of the profuse decorations of the caityas at Cabahai, at Vihabahi (Patan) or at

The only ascertainable changes of a profound nature are manifested in the examples at
Tabaha, Subhaha and Subhabaha, all in Patan. At Tabaha, the indented moulding of the storey
has been dropped and replaced by its opposite, a moulded profile with garabata motifs on top
and a looted frieze below. At Subhaha, a lotus flower is introduced below the now missing
dome, and at Gaihabhai caity there finally appears the prototype of the Sakhavacaitaya,
which came to be the most widely represented type of caitya architecture in the 17th and 18th
centuries.

This sole existing link to date between the early Licchavicaityas and those of the 16th cen-
turies poses innumerable problems. One might place its origin in the 9th century or much later
in the 14th century, if only to avoid the Transitional Period (c. 900-1200 AD), which left so lit-
tle historical information behind. Did this example mark the end of one productive period or
the advent of a new period of construction and craftsmanship? Both options seem possible, as
Licchavi details remain, but a new tectonic order is introduced.

The location of the Licchavicaityas

If a count is made of all Licchavicaityas and all fragments that have survived in the form of a
dome or a storey, the figure arrived at is 265, which represents 13% of all caityas in the Kath-
mandu Valley. This figure is far under the one Mary Slusser (1982: 171) quotes as coming
from Hemraj Saky (Patan: 130; Kathmandu: 130). She considers “this to be a gross underesti-
mate”, estimating the number herself at “well over a thousand”. The large majority of these
caityas are located in Patan (164) or Kathmandu (77). Another significant location is Cabahai
with 24 caityas. Still others are Bhaktapur (6), Bodhnath (5), Sva-yambhunath (10), SiddhaVai-
raysinghi (6) and Deopatan (10). Only a few still remain standing in Thimi (2), Bagewa (1),
Bilgami (5), Hirdagha (1), Banchu (4), Nimo-budhia (4) and Markhu (4).

While there have been preferred locations, certainly as early as the 6th century, are step-wells
(15% of all Licchavicaityas) and the area around the large caityas in Cabahai (15) and Sva-
ambhunath (4). One may assume, for instance, that the CaturyaVishcaityas in the fountains at
Nagabahi and Thapabahi always stood within these structures. Apart from the caityas, there
have also been preserved spouts (hininagad) and drinking water tanks (gadhahabahin), and also
sometimes parts of the profiled edging, and as fragments these have been reused in the suc-
cooling structures of the 16th or 17th century. Caiyyas are today found at Bhimsenath and at
Mahakaleshwar in Bhaktapur, in Gahurkha in the northern part of Kathmandu, at Kavwols,
Nayabha and Gahihahi in the southern part of Kathmandu and at the step-wells of Kaliy, Cysah,
bhubha and Thapata in Patan. Entire groups of Licchavicaityas are located at Alivati (6) in
the northern part of Patan and at the step-well (8) in front of Tagabahi. The caitya at step-
wells are placed right over the spout (Nagabahlit) or in the corners of the low-level lying space
the left and right of the ascending stairs (Bhimsenath). Tagabahlit with its eight caityas situ-
at on three different levels looks more like a dumping site, where all kinds of fragments
were assembled over the centuries.

Why only the caityas of the Licchavi period should have been built at step-wells is difficult to
explain, for if, for example, an association with the lotus that rose up out of the prehistoric
lake was intended, as told of in the Sva-yambhunathraja, then it remains inexplicable why this
motif did not recur in later centuries. John Irwin has shown in numerous articles how closely
the caityas were associated with water from the earliest periods onward. In Gahurkha, for
example, blue-glazed tiles have been found with which the circumabulatory path was paved. In
the early period at least, the caitya dominated by the dome symbolized the world egg floating
on the Primordial Ocean. This reference to the creation of the universe, the Nepalese version
of which found its way into the Sa-vyambhunathraja, later ceased to be taken literally. Water
was rendered architecturally by such various motifs as kauhasana (“wave pattern”). At later
step-wells, including the most recent ones, aivaruha occur in the positions corresponding to
those of caityas. Neatness of caiyya structures to water in again attempted only in the 19th and
20th centuries, along the newly constructed ghats, particularly on the Binsavati and in Teku
at the confluence of the Binsavati and Bagnati. There, a short but clearly demarcated dis-
tance from the zone of the cremation sites of the Saktas of Kathmandu, stands one of the
more important caityas, with three circular storeys. Two other Licchavi fragments have been
built into a modern construction nearby. It is the only case in which an association with crea-
tion grounds is known. One can assume that the present-day cremation grounds lying along
rivers in Kathmandu and Patan originated at the earliest in the 18th or even 19th century. In
Patan, two old cremation grounds are known to have existed in the north behind the southern
Shukla, and in the south behind the southern Shukla.

A few of the other caityas that are more than fragments are located in the courtyards of for-
mer monasteries (bahaba-bhah), either to the south, north or west of the kwipadyak (“image”)
housed on the ground floor, as is the case in Kathmandu at Svalabahi, Dvivakhahia, Ja-
mabhah and Dakabhahia, and in Patan at Ukhah, Hakhahia, Dvakhahia, Atibahi, Dantu-
bahi and Ktvahahi. Remarkably, therefore, it is only a few Licchavicaityas that were inten-
tionally brought into a relation with one of the numerous monasteries recon-
structed during the 16th and 17th centuries. Without exception they are found in a row of
several votive buildings that, alongside caitya, include dharmabahisumandala and vatsan on
pedestals.
The overwhelming majority of Licchavi caiyias came to be at their present-day locations only very recently. The fifteen caiyias of Sighabhâhâ (Kathmandu), whose relocation there occurred only sixty years ago on the occasion of the restoration of Katheshbihâcaiyia, are typical examples: eight caiyias are placed on the two levels of the large caiyia's socle, and the rest raised up on simplified brick pedestals. Only one of these prominent caiyias is likely to have been put in place as early as the 18th century. An inscription reports only a later renovation of it in 1898. Similarly, eight caiyias are placed on the socle of a larger caiyia at Tebhâhâ (Kathmandu), and in Patan three caiyias are found as pinnacles on the niches of the monumental caiyia at Tebhâhâ, as well as six caiyias on the niches of the large caiyia site at Guita. The niches of the Dharma dvecaitya in Cabahil are also crowned by Licchavi fragments. More or less classifiable in a similar manner are three caiyias at Ganabahâh in Kathmandu and three other, heavily damaged examples at the Dipankara temple in the southern part of the city. By contrast, the many monolithic caiyias consisting of dome, drum and upper storey placed on the base storey of a sikharâ type of caiyia in the 18th or 19th century tended to be set rather more fastidiously in the courtyards of the large bahâs.

A few of the Licchavi fragments can be identified as such only when closely examined. They are integrated into a wall (Deopatan - Sundhâra), stand along the edge of a road, are sunk into the ground (Ilayabahi/Patan) or even built completely into a later caiyia (Siddhapokhari/Bhaktapur). Three other caiyias, at Guvihâra/Sâkhu, Bâpunâ/Kathmandu and Kaya- gunani/Patan, were later covered over by architectural structures. It is only in the first two cases, however, that they are Licchavai caiyias surrounded by temple-like edifices. At Guvihâra it is even the case that the form is one of a two-storeyed pagoda rising up over the caiyia, which is hewn out of the existing rock.

The ways in which Licchavi caiyias were reused

In the previous section it was pointed out that hardly any of the Licchavi caiyias are found in situ. Perhaps in all it is only the five caiyias placed around the Dharma dvecaitya (Cabahil: B, D, G, F, H), each preserved with its original socle. Similar to these are the nine caiyias standing almost at ground level at Musâbahâhâ and two of the eight caiyias at Tebhâhâ in Kathmandu, though in these cases the socles are of secondary origin and often scantily held together by recently laid cement. All other caiyias were most certainly moved and relocated within a newly defined context. This is the case with the previously mentioned locations at a step-well or on the axis defined by the âgâ shrine of a monastery (bâhâ/bâhit), or else on a shrine in it. A large number of smaller Licchavi caiyias (approximately 25) were used to crown the niches of later caiyias or to mark the corners of their socles.
Besides these many cases of relocation, the reassembly of various fragments was obviously another common practice. Only a minority of Licchavicaityas remain in their original context of a monolithic dome, drum and upper storey and a lower storey. The case of an assemblage at Gaihrinharā in northern Kathmandu shows three fragments placed above each other, although no structural relationship exists: the lower square base is similar to those of Subhā, the circular storey in between resembles those found at Teku and Cabahi, while the element on top is a complete caitya with dome, drum and base, and is in fact unparalleled in its design, with the Tāthaṅgatas fully engaged to dome and drum, and seated on lotus flowers which emerge from the base.

An obviously well-targeted reutilization, one emphasized by architectonic design, can be observed, from the 17th century onwards, in Patan. Of particular significance is the construction of a pañcāyatana scheme in 1619 at Tatāhācuka. There a small stepped pyramid has been erected with a double platform. In the upper step are located four niches with contemporary Tāthaṅgatas. Stone frames were fashioned independently of these niches, portraying the four Tāthaṅgatas in the tyanum and, additionally, Vairocana in the crown. The largest of the five caityas stands in the middle, clearly dominating the site; standing in the corners of the lower storey, by contrast, are a wide variety of fragments that were obviously found in the immediate vicinity. There was no compulsion to create a symphony by the placement of similar fragments. A pair of lions in the west orient the site clearly about that direction, thereby providing a heightened sense of respect for Amitābha.

In 1673, in a quite similar manner, two Licchavi fragments on Hākha Square in Patan were placed within a new context in the immediate vicinity of the palace. There a complete caitya storey was put in place on a narrow soole of vinsaṭikona shape, displaying today a full profile, from which niches housing the Tāthaṅgatas project. On top of this caitya storey is set a Licchavi fragment in the form of a lower storey with niches, and on top of it, in turn, a fragment consisting of dome, drum profile and upper storey. The entire superstructure has been displaced somewhat off the middle axis towards the west in order to make room for a large arch-like frame, which is shifted far from the eastern niche, with the result that Aksobhya and, architectonically, the whole site is endowed with a surprising validity of character unmatched by other caityas. Numerous other relocations of the 17th century are far less spectacular. Worth mentioning are the two caityas at Tyagah, and others at Utambāhā and Dhapāgābhā, all in Patan.

The renovation of the caitya at Vābhāhā in May 1993 provided the chance to analyse another prominent case. The plinth of the caitya had sunk below the present level of the courtyard, last repaired in 1728. A stone inscription recalls an earlier restoration of the courtyard in 1644, and it must have been at that time that the eleven-tiered finial and the plinth were surmounted on a Licchavi fragment and made to support an assemblage of elements, the lowest of which, a fragmentary Licchavi socle with mountain symbolism, remained invisible, having for whatever reason been encased in the newly constructed plinth.

In Kathmandu, the structures at Tatāhācuka and Arakhubahi are characteristic: they no longer stand on the typical base-storey pedestals of the 17th century but rather on lower storeys of Sikharakūtacaitayas, and do date necessarily to the beginning of the 18th century. Arakhubahi even has two storeys, under a dome fragment and a circular upper storey (similar to those at Cabahi and Teku); the four Tāthaṅgatas are placed in the niches of the upper of the two, and four Bodhisattvas in unadorned niche frames in the lower one. This use of full storeys of Sikharakūtacaitayas under Licchavi fragments continues in the 19th and also in the 20th century. One such edifice at Nāgbāhā dates to the year 1895, and a similar one next to the northern Ṭhutdvā of Patan to the year 1918.

This does not mean that a compulsory norm held sway in the 19th century. On the eastern steps of Svayambhunāth Hill stands a fragment atop a stepped substructure identical to that of many caityas with vinsaṭikona support in the immediate vicinity built approximately between 1830 and 1880. This is a type of building specific to Kathmandu, one that appeared at the beginning of the 19th century and ceased to be constructed after the middle of it.

Finally, a case from Bhaktapur may be mentioned that goes beyond what has been mentioned previously. On a stepped socle at the eastern edge of Siddhapplekha stands a caitya with an eight-cornered lower storey crowned by a brief socle with niches, dome and finial. This complete edifice, which presumably was erected in the 18th century, was in a state of ruin in 1885 (and repaired in 1889), and thus provided an opportunity to examine its inner construction. Startlingly, under the cantilevered dome of the upper superstructure is found, in a chamber, the fragment of a Licchavicaitya identifiable as such by its dome and characteristic drum profile. It can no longer be said with certainty whether the niches of the eight-cornered base storey were always open to provide a free line of sight to the smooth surface of the dome, or whether there were once Bodhisattvas in the niches. In the end, this is doubtless of secondary importance. The decisive point is that the old fragment is encased like a jewel and has been preserved by this means. The new caitya makes the old fragment appear to be a relic bearing testimony to the continuity of the teaching of the Buddha. The encasement of a fragment is witnessed in this one case only. On the one hand, the occurrence is startling, given that more than 25 Licchavi domes were treated as debris and are not paid any respect. On the other hand, the case is comparable with the development of the great caityas of Cabahi, Bodnāth and Svayambhunāth, which up to very recent times were so constantly being added on to that we have no idea today what they originally looked like. John Irwin has made reference in this connection to the transformation of the large caityas in the Himalayan foreland, which were enlarged layer by layer, similar to the layers of an onion.
204. Patan: five Licchavīcayastas at Tadhaica in Copp that were placed onto a raised platform in patayāsing style in 1619.


205, 206. Base storey of a caitya vimukatika in shape its protruding blocks profusely carved with the hanked head of Garuda on top and variously designed gandharas exhibiting apotropaic gestures below. Framed nakaras add to the richness of the carving and the iconographical programme.

207, 208. Circular storey of a caitya with eight primary niches crowned by a kirtimukha and framed by a par of nakaras, the mouths of the latter turning towards the openings of the secondary smaller niches with lotus flowers on top.

210. Bodhnath: five Licchavicaityas of various size and shape, located north of the Mahacaittya but still within the enclosure wall.

211. Bode: fragment of a Licchavicaitya (dome and upper storey) on top of a 16th-century monumental caittya, serving as a complex and unidentified timai.

212. Kathmandu: Sikkirakuta caittya of the 17th century at Arakhuabhi, integrating Licchavi caittya fragments (dome and drum, circular upper storey).
The problem of the vacant niche

Most of the approximately 200 Licchavicaityas that exist beyond the form of a mere dome fragment contain at least four niches, and in the case of multi-storeyed structures eight or even sixteen niches, insofar as there exists such a first- and second-level order. In the large Licchavicaityas with circular storeys, finally, there are far more niches — in the example in Teku as many as 48.

Most caitiyas furnished with niches have sacrificed their iconographical trappings. Besides the five well-known and frequently described Caturvyhacaitiyas on Swayambhūnāth Hill, at Dhvākhābāhā, Nagbāhāhitī, Thāhāhitī, Carumātibhā and Thāhāhitī, there are numerous other Licchavicaityas or fragments in the form of lower storeys whose figures have been preserved, if not always in the best condition — among them one caitiya at Vābāhā, two at Alkvaimitī, one at Nagbāhāhītī, one at Dhapāgabahī and one at Kvālībhī cīdhā (all in Patān). Further worth mentioning is the caitiya at Nakabahī (in Patān), whose lower-storey niches — five on each side — are filled with masks, a scheme very similar to that of the blind windows (gahījyāhī) we find in temples. Finally, one caitiya at Kumahnanī survives with miniature caitiyas depicted in the niches.
Not all Licchavicaityas display outstanding handiwork, and at times one may be inclined to regard a specimen that is weathered and crude in appearance as an attempt at revival by later centuries. Of the examples mentioned above, this applies to the fragments at Nágabhátí and at Kúrthíva ciḍhá, though in no way to those at Dhapagábahi or Alkvahtí.

On the other hand, the Tathágatas at Alkvahtí and the Vairočanas at Vábhá are of a convincing plasticity. Compared to them, the eight Amitáhha figures in both storeys of a structure at Sighalbáhá, which at first glance looks exactly like a Licchavicaitya, must be adjudged the product of a revival of historical models. Here, in contrast to other Neo-Licchavicaityas introduced elsewhere, the profiles and the form of the dome are so similar to those of their models as to cause confusion. The niche frames have been carefully crafted, though they have no prototype. The figures are comparatively flat and on the surface not very different one from the next.

All those scholars who have previously considered the matter agree that the niches of Licchavicaityas were all originally furnished with figures or else with plaques that displayed a caitya in turn. Mary Slusser states “that the images were later removed or that they once held removable images of metal or stone” (1982: 172). Referring to the Cabahihí ciśćya, Pratapadíhí Pal suggests that “very likely each of its niches once held simply a miniature caitya” (1974: 103). And in another context he remarks that “curiously all niches in these early caityas are now gapingly empty”. Only Ulrich Wiesner (1980: 169) offers an explanation, a very daring and challenging one in fact. On the Licchavicaitya in front of the Mahákálí temple in Kathmandu he identifies “unmistakable traces of a revision”, according to him “tangible evidence of an iconographical detail being chiseled away”, this “as a form of censorship”. Although the above list proves that about five percent of all Licchavicaityas have survived with their niche contents intact, Wiesner (1980: 171) maintains that all caityas were affected, calling the revision “a centrally organized, large-scale operation”, and further speculates that “what had once been cult objects specific to one definite cult now became ambiguous monuments that could be adapted for the purposes of other cults”.

In fact, however, up to now no evidence has been found to indicate such a supposed adaptation to another cult. In Patan there is merely a small dome fragment that, together with other field stones, is worshipped as a pigá, that is, an aniconic representation of a deity.

Wiesner’s explanation for the empty niches appears to be unfounded. Why should some figures be forcibly removed and others left unmolested? This contrast is obvious already in the case of the Caturvyúhacáitíyas: the figures in the niches are preserved at Dhvákábháhá but not in the structures on Svaýambhúnátí Hill or at Bodhnáth that were in place probably only a
short time later. The lone and less sensational explanation probably is that in the one case the figures were fashioned in a piece with the caitya itself, and in the other they were placed into it. The means of securing these figures were likely to have broken loose over the centuries and finally lost. To an even greater extent the caitya finials were also lost, as they were produced exclusively as separate elements. Originally the finials were mere conic elements lacking even steps, as the example of Tabahā in Patan shows. Even one of the two sole remaining ancient finials from Dipanani with its seven parasols, in the southern part of Kathmandu, is likely to have been a replacement from some later century. Still, it is an extremely rare example, containing seven clearly contrasting round parasols.

Finally, there is hardly a single Lichhavaitiya left standing on its original socle or even at its original location. Only the ensemble surrounding the Dharmadevacaitya in Callahal appears for the most part to have been left untouched. There the socles are also in most cases the original ones (with certainty at Caityas B, D, F, G, H), but all niches are vacant.

In a certain sense it is only the raw material of the Lichchavaityas that has been preserved: the monolithic upper segments with dome, drum and upper storey, and alongside these the only somewhat larger lower storey in fragmentary form, as it is usually found in a secondary location. Given the fact that, following a presumably stable phase between the 6th and 9th centuries, this “raw material” was relocated in many cases only in the 16th century or even much later, and that it was placed within new contexts while many monasteries were being renovated, it is understandable that the contents of the niches should have been lost.

Empty niches are by no means a phenomenon that is restricted to the architectural monuments of the early period. Buildings from all later centuries were subject to the same option: namely, either to fashion the figures in a piece with the niches themselves or else to place the figures firmly anchored in the niche openings.

In the two Lichchavaityas at Subahā and neighbouring Subahāhitī are found remains of plagues with sculptures that show that they totally filled the openings and had to be pressed into them. A wedge must have long held them there in place. It was only with the coming of the 17th century that, in order to secure the figures on Sikharakūtacaitya, metal tongues began to be stuck through small slits into the niches of the base storeys, the latter often consisting of stone slabs resting against a brick core. Such tongues may still be seen in one of the empty niches of a Ramyakūtāgaracaitya at Lagabhā in Kathmandu built in 1866, and slits can be observed on a caitya at Chusaubhā, again in Kathmandu.

The main advantage of introducing independently fashioned figures was that a stark relief could be achieved. But this advantage was seldom exploited, the figures in the niches, particularly in later times, having been fashioned almost without exception as plaques placed into the niches so as to fill the openings entirely. It was only as a result of the frequent substitute measures of the 19th and 20th centuries, in which lime mortar and, more recently, cement mortar were made use of, that less attention was paid to the fit. In the very recent past the figures of the Tathāgatas have been much too small, so that they are pressed into the cement mortar. A restoration or refashioning of the Tathāgatas in a Lichchavaitya on Śvātā Square in Patan occurred in 1987 on the occasion of the mātāya festival in August, during which all the caityas of the city, in tribute to deceased persons, are honoured in a continuous procession lasting over eighteen hours. The patron in such cases appears to be following an old tradition: he not only contributes to completing a small building but also gains merit in doing so by carrying out the act in the context defined by mātāya. Not only the construction but also the renovation of a caitya occurs for the sake of a deceased person. Thus the figures in the niches may have offered a welcome restoration opportunity. It is not the case that they were removable and only installed on certain occasions, as Mary Slusser supposes. Seasonal rituals, above all those on a caitya’s anniversary day or those occasioned by a caityajātra, witness the transport of movable Tathāgatas from the āgā of a group of Sakyas or Bajraecāyas to their point of reference, the four niches of the caitya. No case has yet been observed of a Tathāgata being placed in a niche that was empty throughout the year.

Many Tathāgatas or Bodhisattivas in the niches are so disfigured that it is difficult to imagine how such damage was possible by itself. Imaginative speculation aside, however, the damage bears witness to one fact, which can be elucidated by an example taken from the plinth of a dharmadhatumandala at Pimbhā; the figures are in different stages of decay, and one has disappeared altogether.

Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.

221, 222. Patan: reinstallment of newly produced Tathāgatas into the niches of a Lichchavaitya on the occasion of mātāya at Śvātā Square, 27 August 1986.
223. Patan: row of niches at the upper end of the plinth of a dharmadhatumandala at Pimbhā. The figures of the niches are in different stages of decay, and one has disappeared altogether.
224. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
228, 305. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
217, 219, 224. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
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242. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
244. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
246. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
248. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
250. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
252. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
254. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.
256. Kathmandu: detail of an 18th-century Ramyakūtāgara-caitya at Lagabhā built in 1866. The deep niches are already vacant, but the metal tongues which were inserted through small slits from behind to secure the Tathāgatas can still be observed.

225. 226. Patan: Licchaviciya at Vābāhā, with the four Tathāgatas (Amitabhā/west) in the niches of the lower story (225) and four identical Vairocanas in dharmacakra-mudrā in the niches of the upper story (226).


228. Patan: fragment of a Licchaviciya with cracked dome and original finial that has sunk into the ground near the entrance to Vābāhā.

229. Patan: Licchaviciya at Tulanani.
Remarks concerning the iconography of the 7th to 9th centuries

Pratapaditya Pal has discoursed in detail concerning the iconography of the Caturvāyuḥacaitya. Probably the oldest of them, the one on Swayambhūnāth Hill (5th century), has to date been unsatisfactorily interpreted. Tathāgatas appear on all four sides without the characteristic crown of Bodhisattvas, and only the one facing west can be identified, as Maitreya, the future Buddha. Nepalese scholars, however, maintain that the four images represent the Śākyamuni Buddha in four different gestures. The famous caitya at Dhvakabhāhiti from the 7th century displays a similar iconography. Next to Maitreya (facing south) on the 8th-century caitya at Nāgbhāhiti appear two Bodhisattvas, Vajrapāṇī facing east and Padmapāṇī facing west, while the fourth figure has tentatively been identified by Mary Slusser and Pratapaditya Pal as the Śākyamuni Buddha. The caitya at Thāpāhiti displays (next to Maitreya) Vajrapāṇi and Padmapāṇi in the same directions as above, but the figure in the north with a crown is clearly recognizable as a Bodhisattva and not as Śākyamuni.

Thus the groundwork was to a certain extent laid for the adornment, typical from the 17th century onwards, of base storeys with four Bodhisattvas: Maitreya (east), Vajrapāṇi (south), Padmapāṇi (west) and Mañjuśrī (north). It is significant that Maitreya faces east and Padmapāṇi occupies the western direction. Maitreya's eastern placement was already heralded on Swayambhūnāth Hill, and Padmapāṇi's western placement at Thāpāhiti and Nāgbhāhiti. But it is impossible to say when Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva particularly connected with the Valley's history, first appeared.

The Dhvakabhāhiti caitya has four seated figures of the same Tathāgata in the niches of the upper superstructure. All are alike and display the gesture of meditation (samādhiṃḍudra), but they are without the bowl characteristic of Amitābha. The Tathāgata invariably associated with the western direction. It is only with the coming of the 19th century that he is also found facing south.

The Vābhā caitya (Patan), which may also be dated to the 7th century, similarly displays four identical figures in the upper niches, but the four Tathāgatas in the lower zone are the ones who have been associated up to the present with the four directions: Amitābha (west—still without bowl); Amoghasiddhi (north—still without the later snake hood); Aksobhya (east) and Ratnasambhava (south). Thus the caitya reveals an arrangement that is rare and elsewhere has not survived in such clarity: in the upper storey is seated Vairocana as the caitya's invisible centre. He is the middle point that is inverted outwardly, as it were, while the four Tathāgatas appear in the lower storey as representatives of the four regions of the world, defining the quadrants of the universe. The four Tathāgatas appear in the same constellation in the Licchavi fragment at Dhapāgabahi in Patan; the fragment is placed on a 16th-century caitya which again displays the four Tathāgatas in the niches of the base storey. At Khvāhāhiti cārīda in Patan the same order is found. Although these examples established the iconographic norm still operative today, other coeval caityas reflect a contemporary uncertainty about the directions assigned to the four Tathāgatas. Mary Slusser (1982: 273) maintains that “the coexistence of the diverse doctrines is also borne out in the diversity of iconographic traditions.” She classifies the Vābhā caitya as a Vajrayāna monument, the Dharma cārīda at Nāgbhāhiti displays (next to Maitreya) a further transitional hesitancy between the two in other cases.

The caityas at Alkvbhāhiti and at Nāgbhāhiti display some uncertainty as to the directions assigned to the Tathāgatas. On the Alkvbhāhiti caitya, Aksobhya faces east, Amoghasiddhi, seated upon and canopied by a serpent (Mucalinda), faces west, and Amitābha occurs twice, in the southern and northern niches. The situation is similar at Nāgbhāhiti, where Amoghasiddhi, however, faces south and Ratnasambhava north, while Aksobhya and Amitābha remain unchanged in their position.

On another caitya of Alkvbhāhiti (placed above the central spout of the step-well) a further variation appears: Aksobhya faces west and Amitābha east, while another Buddha in bhumi-sparśamudra, seated with folded legs on a rocky throne, faces south, and the fourth image, seated with pendant legs (pratambapadosana) in dharmacakramudra, faces north. Mary Slusser (1982: 273) argues that, rather than Vairocana, the last image could represent Maitreya, as the position reflects Kusāna royal practice.

An exception is formed by a fragment from a step-well in Hadigaon displaying a musician in the niche. Although the entire scheme with protruding niche and indented moulding would suggest that the fragment is part of a caitya, the iconography rules this out. As building types other than caityas have survived from the Licchavi era only in fragments, it may well be possible that this fragment originated in a different context.

The final

A final crowns every caitya. It displays three distinct elements: the harmika, a plain cube covered by a stepped moulding, which represents a kind of roof; above the roof rises a spire, divided into a series of horizontal layers, which represent the multiple canopies of the cosmic parasol; at the top of them emerges the central pillar surmounted by a jewel (asuras). The number of surviving original finials of Licchavicaityas is not the dozen Mary Slusser (1982: 173) assumed more than a decade ago, but four, all of them in a fragmentary shape. A fifth one existed until about a decade ago on a caitya beside the fountain in Thapata (Slusser 1982: pl. 278).
Surprisingly, two of these finials survive on top of a peculiar type of cāitya, one at Dipanani in Kathmandu and the other at Tulanani in Patan. Characteristic of both is a bulgy dome attached to a drum, which is placed on a low octagonal moulded socle and a plinth containing reliefs within a framing border. These plain structures remained without any niches.

The finial of the cāitya at Tulanani contains a plain cube with a moulded roof. Out of that sloped roof emerges a stepped pyramidal shaft. Three steps have remained, while the line of a fourth is identifiable, but only on the eastern side. The top of the shaft with its suggestion of what was surely once three more steps and the crowning jewel has broken off. A fragment of a similar finial survives on a cāitya at Carumativihāra in Cabahil. Likewise, the cāitya at Dipanani has survived only fragmentarily. In its case, the six canopies or tiers of the cosmic parasol are shaped as discs of diminishing size separated by clear intervals. The basic shape of the finial is that of a cone, whereas the cornice above the harmikā assumes the character of a base, from which the visible central pillar emerges with the same dimensions as the cube below.

Finally, the fourth finial has survived in the shape of a plain pyramidal shaft, without any indication of steps or grooves, on a fragment of a dome near Tabahā in Patan.

We can only assume that, at the early stage of Vajrayāna Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley, the finials of cāityas had seven steps or discs, which represented the stages of progressive development (bhūmi) of a Bodhisattva. In a more general way, the seven "steps" represent the seven heavens, which make up the totality of states of existence one moves through to reach finally the Heaven of the Final Limit of Form (akṣaraśaśa bhūvana). Thus the finial symbolizes the upward path towards enlightenment, ending in the level of non-returners.

All other Lichhavīcāityas have secondary finials with eleven or thirteen steps or discs. Instead of a plain cone or pyramid, these finials are of a bulgy shape with grooves indicating the tiers. They originated either in the 17th century, at a time when many Lichchavīcāityas were obviously relocated, or, as is the case of the vast majority of finials, date from the present century. Invariably, this latest generation of finials is grossly disproportionate, most of them being much too small.

Three cases remain to be mentioned in which the finials may predate the 17th century, although it is left to speculation whether they originated in the Transitional Period (10th–13th centuries) or in early Malla times (14th–15th centuries). Interestingly, all three examples follow the formula of Dipanani, exposing discs with clear intervals in between. The cāitya at Alkavāhīl has eleven discs topped by a flaming jewel, which symbolizes the enlightened mind (bodhicitta), whose radiance illumines the worlds. It is possibly the earliest surviving top of a finial. The second example has survived as a fragment kept amidst the five relocated Lichchavi cāityas of Tadhācukā in Patan with thirteen discs. The third, with eleven tiers, survives at Vābhā, probably dating back to the restoration of the entire courtyard in 1644.

Mary Slusser (1982: 173) argues that the ancient finials may have been despoiled by treasure seekers or removed in response to doctrinal considerations. Both possibilities are assumptions lacking documentary evidence. The rareness of original finials seems rather to be the consequence of grave damage inflicted upon them by monkeys and children and the repeated relocation of these fragile monuments.

The dome

The outward appearance of domes is extraordinarily rich in variety. It varies quite fundamentally in shape, size and in the relation between the base line and the rising of the vault.

The smallest dome of a Lichchavi-period cāitya is located at Dhvākhābāhā in Kathmandu. It crowns the tall, shrine-like substructure of the Caturvyūhatācāitya and measures merely 10.3 cm, while the dome of a cāitya at Dugābāhā, with a totally different form, rises to 12 cm. When these are placed over against the large domes of the cāityas in Cabahil (B, D) and Alkavāhīl, with vault risings of 38 cm, 39 cm and again 38 cm, a spectrum of sizes emerges bearing an observable relation to form.

The two smallest domes, besides being such, are also the squattest, with ratios of base line to vault rising of 2.41 and 2.06. Of like squatness are the domes at Tebahā (B) and on Svayambhūnāth Hill (A), with ratios of 1.9 and 1.87. The average ratio is between 1.5 and 1.7. These are then domes in which the base line is at least half again as wide as the vault rising. With a ratio of 1.59, the dome of the classical cāitya at Tadhācukā in Kathmandu attains to a mean typical for the Lichchavi period. In a few cases (Dipanani I.37 and Cabahil D I.34) the vault rising increases even more in relation to the base line, until finally, in the example of Musābāhā (D), which is exceptional in many respects, it almost equals it.

The absolute size of domes, however, is determined not by the vault rising but by the circumference of the circle formed where the dome rests upon the drum profile. The diameter of the circle, here called the base line, measures in the case of the cāitya in Teku 60.2 cm, in Cabahil (Cāitya B) 58 cm and at Alkavāhīl 55.1 cm.

The variety of dome forms reflects the above exhibited spectrum of ratios of vault rising to base line. Only very few domes assume the form of a truncated sphere. Remarkable in its own right is the cāitya at Dugābāhā, whose dome nearly forms a hemisphere, as the centre of the spherical form lies only one centimetre under the dome's base line. In the case of a few other
caityas, the centre of the spherical form lies approximately five centimetres above the base line. In such cases, the result is either a bulging body (Sighabahā A), in which the base line is shorter than the diameter of the spherical dome, or else the base is longer (Sibhā in Patan), so that the lower part of the sphere takes on the appearance of a hat brim. The many possibilities for dome forms are played out between these two extremes, that is, a retracted, narrow base line and a broad one. The dome of the caitya at Tadbabhāhā has already been termed classical: its form, however, only approximates that of a sphere, being in actuality geometrically indefinable, as in its upper portion the dome is more strongly curved than a sphere. This curvature becomes so strong in many caityas (Teku, Cabahil B. Dipanani) that a bulgy form results, as if the sphere had raised its shoulders. In the lower portion of the dome, the curvature does not always continue uniformly true to a circular segment. At times (Dipanani) lines occur that turn inward, thus producing the form of a cone fragment, or else the curvature in the dome’s upper portion continues downwards in vertical lines (Musubhāhā D) and so produces a cylindrical socle that usurps the function of the drum, there being no transition, however, from one form (dome) to the next (cylinder) by means of a profile.

The drum

The dome rests on a drum that, with its stepped profile, displays a clear programme. It is only at the seams, that is, at transition points between dome and drum and between drum and the following storey or socle, that individual variations are possible. In a mere two cases (Teku and Cabahil H) the base of the dome is formally highlighted by a frieze of leaf motifs, with the result that the distinctness and clarity of the architectonic form is dampened or muddled.

What this is meant to suggest is the motif of the lotus blossom on which the dome rests, a motif that recurs in the 16th century, and which later, in the 19th. What this is meant to suggest is the motif of the lotus blossom on which the dome rests, a motif that recurs in the 16th century, and which later, in the 19th.

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even 20 cm. The ratio between drum height and dome height also varies correspondingly. At Dipanani it is 1 to 2.5, and at Dugabhā the drum attains to the height of the dome, which in this case is very low.

As a rule, the profile of the drum forms a monolith with the dome on top and the upper storey below (as seen in classical form, without any niches, in the caitya in Tādābāhā/Kathmandu). But there are also cases in which only the dome and drum are monolithic (example 2, also Dugabhā), or in which the profile of the drum is even split up: in one caitya fragment of Cārumatiśātā (example 3), the dome with the quarter-round forms one structural section, and the lower stepping of the drum profile with the adjoining upper storey the next.

The division of the stepped substructure of the primary trio into storeys

If one disregards the Caturvyūha caityas with their central shaft or shrine-like substructure, essentially three types of Licchavicaityas may be distinguished:

In the first case, the monolith of dome and drum profile rests on top of a profiled socle, which in turn may be raised onto a substructure of several levels, usually as a result of the relocation of caitya fragments in the 17th century or later.

In the second case, the dome forms a monolith with the profile of the drum and an additional storey, under which further storeys follow.

In the third case, the drum under the dome forms the upper storey, under which there follows a composition of several levels. Here each storey forms a separate whole, and may be round, octagonal or of vimsatikōsta shape, that is, one based on a ground plan with “twenty angles”.

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Profiled socles without niches

Numerous domes with drums attached to them exist in the form of an unrelated fragment set atop a secondary socle (Kathmandu: Nabhāha or Deopatan; Navalhil: Sākhu; Vajrayogini or Cabahi: Cārumati-vihāra). Only in seven cases has the original substructure been preserved as a low octagonal socle with the indentation characteristic of the Licchavi period: Tuliānī and Tadhākūka in Patan, Dipa-nāni, Thābāhā and Gaihrīdihārā in Kathmandu, and at Cārumati-vihāra in Cabahi. Alongside these, there are a few special variations at Dugābāhā and Pīkkhābāhā in Kathmandu: two caityas with small, flattened domes placed atop a low, double-stepped socle only twenty-five centimetres high. The upper element of the socle, vimsatikona in form, displays the typical recessional profile, though the upper and lower ends are endowed with upward turned corner motifs (kulā), which are absent from the previously mentioned caityas having an octagonal socle storey.

The lower socle element has a total of four levels, with a quarter-round being used in the middle zone. The surface polish and fine consistency of the stone material are characteristic of both socles. The surface shows no traces of weathering even after more than a millennium. A similar socle, one that has been put to secondary use, is located under the Licchavicaitya on Swayambhūnāth Hill on the axis of Sābyāgubhā. At other sites, such socle profiles have a similar outward appearance, and also an identical surface, beneath the sculptures of the Licchavi period.

Beyond the socles described up to now, which are notable for their extraordinarily flat proportions, socle storeys more deserving of the name are the rule in the Licchavi period, the profiled quadratic cube being furnished with projecting niches, guardian figures in the corners and, in the end, also with architectonic elements. A single caitya, at Tadhābāhā in Kathmandu, manages without any of these accessories, conveying thereby an unusually arcaic formative impulse. The uninterrupted lines of the profile and the sharp-edgedness of the cube endow the caitya with a crystalline clarity. The relocated caitya, which has been well preserved with a bright and shiny surface, is set atop a socle that is seventy-five centimetres high. It represents the archetype of an architectural ideal that has undergone countless transformations.

Far less imposing is a second example, one that at the same time makes the switch from quadratic to vimsatikona ground plan. The lower storey of Caitya A at Tēbāhā, which stands out alone by reason of its octagonal drum base, was fashioned without any niches. It is easy to see that the middle sections projecting from the quadratic cube lent themselves, in the other caityas, to the presence of niches. This example, then, provides a unique case, in that the stepped recession continues around the whole storey.

It is doubtless tempting to view the material presented above as defining a historical sequence, that is, a continuous development from a single basic form. There is no indication up to now, however, of any such chronological order. Typological observations are thus necessarily offered without any proof of interdependence. In the South Asian context, an approach that pretends to recognize a development from a clear form to a multifariousness of detail has all too often proved to be deceptive. At the present stage of research, it would seem to make more sense to sort out the various possibilities open to the form socles may take and to characterize them with exactitude than to venture to impose a chronology upon them. Such an ordering will only be possible when all fragments of other architectures of that period in the valley of Kathmandu have been systematically examined.

Storeys with niches

The above described limitations placed on typological conclusions having been made, it is for the present assumed that representatives of what are called the "archaic" style and those with low octagonal socles were constructed at the same time as all other caityas that display a niche in the projecting middle portion of the vimsatikona ground plan, and that they developed in the process an unforeseen spectrum of formative possibilities.

It is seldom that niches occur as a formative element above the first storey so as to be positioned in front of the drum and at times to extend into the zone of the dome. Four examples prove, on the other hand, that such a design may be applied to a wide variety of types. On
Although the moulded indentation follows the accepted formula in all cases, the base may be of square, octagonal or vinmathuna shape and of varying height.

236. Liechavicaitya: comparative study of niches of lower storeys as separate structural elements.
The protruding block of the niche element provides a fairly strict frame, beyond which the figurative frame extends only marginally. In some cases the protruding block repeats the profile of the front; the figurative frame of the niche overlaps this profile (Uttambhâ), or remains clearly below it (Swayambhunath).

In all cases the torana with its crowning karmukha or lotus flower extends into the moulding of the drum.
The square base with its moulded indentation serves as a background and occasionally determines the size of the niche block. Only in rare cases is the figurative frame of the niches entirely superimposed on the base.

238. Liechavicaitya: comparative study of niches of the upper storey.
Some niche frames overlap the moulding of the drum.
In such cases the drum may exceed the base below it in size. Other frames extend beyond the base without touching the drum, in which case the drum is markedly smaller than the base.

239. Liechavicaitya: a voluminous niche with an outward projection of three centimetres is placed in front of the tall drum profile, its top extending seven centimetres up over the dome and covering the vault of the latter. To a certain extent this defines a second drum zone. In the second case, the caitya at Krâitäbhâ in Patan, the niche remains below the level of the dome, and when taken with its frame is even wider than it is tall. Its forward edge defines the length of the sides of the octagonal storey underneath it. Between the niches, moreover, the socle zone of the drum is covered with variously sculpted lotus motifs. The third case is a heavily damaged caitya at Subâhâhât, of which only the dome with the drum on a profiled socle remains. The socle zone of the drum, however, is octagonal and displays niches that extend into the zone of the dome, and so are very similar to the example of Musâhâ (B). The fourth
case, finally, is the extraordinary guvaka nische of the caitya at Nakabahi, which will be described in detail further below.

Set over against these exceptional approaches, in which niches are placed in front of the drum, are the majority of the approximately 150 Licchavicaityas in which the dome is constructed monolithically with the profile of the drum and the underlying storey. In a few cases (Svayambhunath; Swayambhunath, Cabahil; Kuthubahi, Patan; Subhah) the storey lying immediately below is connected monolithically with the upper part. Some observations should first be made with regard to the niches of the upper storey, as they differ in a number of respects from those of the lower.

Basically, two possibilities may be distinguished in the form niches take: either the niche frame is enclosed within the sides of a rectangle predefined by the vimsastikona ground plan, or else the frame has a free border matching that of the motifs, the latter taking the form of flower patterns and scrollwork.

The first approach is generally more austere and emphasizes the architectonic structure of the entire caitya; the second one lays stress on the frame’s narrative potential, taking the profiled cube of the storey as its background. Intersections occur between the edges of the profile and the free boundary of the niches, enlivening and emphasizing the three-dimensionality of the entire structure.

Apart from a few exceptional cases, the notching that divides the cube storey into an upper and a lower part in a ratio of approximately one to two is the decisive design feature, it being in the case of the previously mentioned nicheless caitya the sole means of subdividing the wall surface.

The notching of the upper storeys is basically the same in size and design as that of the lower ones, and is also similar to that found on the profile of the drum. The recessed surface for its part may be between 1.5 and 3 cm wide, and a number of steps (in some cases rounded) mediate between the two levels, those of the recessed surface and the outer face. The moulded covering termed a “roof”, which assumes the same function to the quadrant of a drum, is recessed about 2 cm. This recession may occur along a straight line (see example 9, 10 of mouldings) or in the exposed double curve of the cyma (example 12). The corners of the quadratic covering converge to a point, forming the kula-motif characteristic of Newar architecture. This form of covering for a storey remains characteristic of the caityas of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The notched profile is not found on storeyed caityas of circular or octagonal design (Teku, Cabahil, Kvithabah) or on caityas whose architectonic division is pronounced (Sibahah), and which – possibly towards the end of the Licchavdi period – replaced the notching by its opposite: a torus profile or half-round, which in all succeeding caitya types provides for the division of all socle storeys.

Along with the above listed examples, there are a few additional caityas (Sighahabah B) on which, under the roof cornice, guardian figures of various shape are so arranged as not to leave any room for the customary notching, and not even the edges of the cube appear.

Still one other variational element deserves mention, making once again clear the extent to which the architecture of the Licchavi period gave scope to individual imagination. Without a doubt caityas represent a form of architecture similar to the principle of the stepped pyramid:
the levels narrow along a number of socles, ending finally in a pinnacle. In conformance to this principle, therefore, the drum is smaller in diameter than the length of the sides of the quadratic storey underneath it. This stepped ordering appears in classical form in the previously introduced caiyā at Tadhāhāḥa, and stands out most prominently in the caityas that have niches whose crowns project beyond the drum (Cābaḥil D, the lower storey of Vābahā). nevertheless, there are also drum diameters that are larger than the storey below. This is first and foremost possible where the niches of the storey below extend as far as the beginning of the dome and cover the drum profile.

Niches
Niches of lower storeys

The large majority of lower storeys consist of structural elements that are largely independent of the upper storey and that appear to be inserted underneath the superstructure. Indeed it is rare for the original context between the superstructure and the lower storey to have been preserved. During relocation a lower storey that was too large or too small frequently ended up under a superstructure of different origin. A small notching is usually present on the surface, however, to insure a proper fit of the upper portion against the primary trio and storey.

Due to the fact that the lower storey was obviously conceived to be a self-contained structural element, the niche crown projects up over the roof cornice only in rare cases (Cābaḥil E). In most other cases the profile of the roof cornice is even repeated on the projecting niche blocks. In such cases the niche crown, in the form of a kirtimukha face or a lotus blossom, either overlies the cornice (Utambāḥa) or else remains noticeably below it. This occurs above all when the niche blocks are architectonically framed by pilasters and simultaneously display dentils under their covering (Svayambhānath Hill, Sīgahāhā A, B, Mūsābāhā B, Guṭabāhā). In rare cases (Deopatan: Śūndhārā fragment) the niches form a clearly rectangular block ending flush against the roof cornice without any additional profile. In these cases the facade with the niche opening and the surrounding relief produce the effect of a picture surface, behind which the cube of the storey is recessed one and a half centimetres.

The situation is completely different in cases where the upper storey with the primary trio above it forms a structural unit together with the lower storey, where, in other words, one and the same freestone has been used for modelling (Cābaḥil: Kuthubāḥa, Svayambhū: Sābyāgūbahā), for then the crown of the lower niche extends into the socle profile of the upper one. In addition, this socle profile is completely disjoined from the upper storey. The result clearly differs from that of caityas reassembled from several parts and conveys an air of remarkable homogeneity, one that convincingly reinforces their monolithic character. While the placement one upon another of lower storey, upper storey and drum with the repetition of similar notchings is one theme of the architectonic structure, that of the niche blocks sets itself off as a second. The pictorially modelled parts of the building with their niches, which once housed the objects of worship, thus give the impression of being a picture scroll hanging from the dome and nestled against the changing cross section from upper to lower storey. The upper niche is generally narrower and more slimly proportioned than the lower one, thus re-emphasizing the stepped ordering from above to below.
The openings of the niche

The openings of niches differ markedly in many respects. In their simplest form, they are vertically rectangular and at the top overarched by a hemispherical curve, with the ratio of width of opening to height being as much as two to one. The division of an opening is made by having the beginning of the arch marked by a shoulder, and the vertex emphasized by having the curve culminate in a beak. In rare cases (Cabahil E) the top is doubled, with the chin of the crowning kirtimukha mask injecting itself, as it were, between the bodies of two stylized serpents, which end up in its mouth. In a further variation, the niche opening has no clearly detectable base. On the caitya at Vābaha, the primary frame of the niche curves outward under the shoulder and disappears behind the tufts of lions' tails in the corners of the storey. The ratio of width to height tends to vary most for openings of niches in the lower storeys. The result is wide-framed openings in which the height may measure even less than the width (Cabahil E).
The frame of the niche

The frames of niches have primary and secondary outlines. The primary outline generally consists of a multi-stepped profile, which in rare cases (Utambhâ, Yâgubhâ, Cabahil G) frames the niche opening in the form of a simple, undecorated band, and which has a socle fillet as its counterpart. Frequently individual sculptural elements of the secondary relief frame extend into the band, thus lessening the impression of rigidity that the latter produces against the dynamic relief. This opposition disappears completely in a further formal variation, namely one in which the sculptural secondary frame takes on the role of the primary one. In such cases (Cabahil E, Alkvahiti) profiled pilasters, or even only stumps of pilasters, are tasked with delimiting the niche in its lower portion, while the arch that spans the opening in the form of a stylized serpent’s body assumes the smooth surface of the primary frame.

Motifs of the niche frame

Niche frames offer a welcome opportunity to give sculptural form to profiles, for which purpose, under closer examination, a limited canon of iconographic, aquatic and floral motifs are seen to be available.

Almost all motifs have an aquatic association or one which refers to water’s cyclic course. Lotuses thus assume preeminent significance. As a flower or a leaf, the lotus represents the support of the world and is identified with the waters that uphold the entire cosmos. At the crown of the frame, the apex of the lintel arch, it is widely interchangeable with the kiritumkha, the Face of Glory. In the Skandapurâna, the kiritumkha represents the cosmic fire which periodically annihilates the world, and elsewhere it represents the sun and death, that which generates and destroys everything. Its jaws destroy but are also the source of rain, the water that brings life and fertility. In rare cases the horned kiritumkha face is beaked, and in two cases (Deopatan: Sundhârâ fragment, Cabahil G), where the horns do not appear, the mask assumes the appearance of Garuda, the sun-bird. The lion, another symbol of the sun, appears in various configurations. Its body tends to guard the corners of the square base and occupies only in a single case (Cabahil G) the position of the makara as the guardian of the niche frame. The makara is a mythic creature which combines features of the crocodile, elephant and serpent and, like them, has aquatic associations. The body of a nûga (serpent) is spewed forth by the kiritumkha, which is depicted with claws grasping the nûga’s body only in the version of a Srikâlakâitya of the Transitional Period found at Guitâ cidhâ, clearly marking the transition to a new architectural ideal. Only in one case, too, (Cabahil B) is the nûga’s body rendered with scales and clearly pointing downwards, terminating in the human heads of a nûgakanyâ (snake virgin) under a single hood.

The pair of makaras are interchangeable with the motif of the gander (hamsa), another sun-bird, which plunges down into the waters and again flies upwards to the sky. This creature represents breath and stands for the sound of the out-breath “sa” and the sound of the in-breath “ham”. In addition, it symbolizes the propagation of Buddhist doctrine to all realms.

Moreover, the makaras are interchangeable with gandharvas, deities dwelling in the atmosphere. The latter are depicted with the upper half of their body human, though wings are attached to the shoulders (very prominent at Alkvahiti and Cabahil E), and the lower half bird-like. Only the gandharvas of the fragment of Sundhârâ in Deopatan are depicted with arms instead of wings. The Rgveda describes the gandharvas as guardians of the celestial soma—that is, rain—and they may represent the rain cloud itself. In later texts like the Mahâbhârata, they are said to be musicians of the gods.

Finally, on Caitya E in Cabahil there appears a gana in the form of a squatting goblin in the central axis below the niche opening, as if bearing the load of the upper structure. And on a caitya of Nâgbhâ the usual corner lions assume the appearance of a chimera with long horns and a foliated tail.

Besides these iconographical elements, figurative caityas appear as interceptive elements between niches on the multi-storied caityas at Cabahil (B, E, G), either resting on circles of petals and an amalaka motif or on two circles of petals turned upwards and downwards. The cogged rim of the amalaka represents the fruits of the primordial tree and the celestial world.

In a survey of the given formal elements of the niche frame, the aquatic association is clearly conspicuous: serpents represent water’s life-enhancing powers, as do makaras, hamsas, gandharvas or lotus blossoms. Alongside aquatic representations, lions and Garuda appear as heavenly elements cognate to the sun. The kiritumkha, which is also called sinhamukha, the “lion face”, embodies both simultaneously.

Round niches occur not only on the circular storeys of the caityas in Cabahil and Teku as well as on various fragments; they are further found primarily on caityas displaying a marked architectonic division between storeys. In no case are they truly circular openings, which always produce a squat effect optically, being rather, as a rule, ten to twenty percent higher than wide.
The dynamic aspect comes out in the spatial relation of the individual elements to one another: the kiritimukha always appears at the apex of the opening; he devours or spews forth the bodies of two serpents, which symbolize water. Thematic play having been given to the cyclical course of water in its symbolization of life, the niche opening is at once the doorway of death and the door of deliverance. It is on account of this cycle and in order to overcome it that the Tathāgatas or the Bodhisattvas stand within the niches, as they are the actual objects of worship. A torana of the Balaknresvara temple in Teku (built in 1712) documents the extent to which the kiritimukha represents the aspect of death and destruction. There a skull can be seen over the kiritimukha, in the torana and in the roof cornice.

The niche crowns: kiritimukha and lotus

The face or the mask of a kiritimukha crowns the niche opening in hundredfold variations, so that it is difficult to point to iconographic constants or even a norm governing their variety. Nevertheless, the attempt will be made to present a number of basic models. It is above all the horns that assume quite different shapes, finally coming to lie atop the mask in an elongated form like a crown. The viewer, of course, is constantly tempted to fabricate a chronology, taking the transformation from concrete to nonrepresentational as sequential in time. Since dates are lacking, however, it would appear to make more sense to treat the various outward forms on a coequal basis with one another. The kiritimukha appears as a fully formed face with bulging, glaring eyes, prominent nose, curved eyebrows, mustache and ears on a caitya at the northern thudāvā in Patan, on a fragment at Sundharā in Deopatan, and in Cabahil (A, C, E).

It is striking how rarely fangs occur (Gulubunani). In all cases horns act as the base for lotus elements, the latter usually taking the form of open flowers. Sometimes, though, they may also be buds, in which case they appear as jewels (manī). Occasionally the lotus flowers are set on top of a line of pearl or seed motifs, which can also be interpreted as the amalaka. In some cases the kiritimukha is completely separate from the scrollwork next to the niches, in others the scrollwork appears to support the face (Mūsūbāhā), and in still others the face is actually submerged in between the scrollwork that develops out of the tails of the makaras. In the example of the caitya at the northern thudāvā in Patan, a crown is formed from the horns into a semicircle, within which an open lotus flower is accommodated.

On the multi-storeyed caityas in Cabahil, which in many respects offer superb variations on well-known approaches in Kathmandu and Patan, the kiritimukha faces appear with horns that curve outward behind long ears (H) or otherwise widely project (D).

Lotus flowers or lotus leaves occupy the kiritimukha’s position at the crown of the niche so frequently that it is possible to talk in terms of an interchangeability between the motifs. It is not rare for the two motifs to occur on the same storey of a caitya; frequently, however, the kiritimukha face adorns one storey, and the lotus the other. Only seldom does the flower of the lotus appear as a crowning element that rests merely on the leaf and scrollwork of the frame (Mūsūbāhā D, upper storey). On the drum of the caitya at Kvstibahi, lotus flowers are even used as an additional enrichment of the space between the niches, alternating between flowers enclosed by leaves on all four sides and a kind of side view, in which the flower base appears blunted.

Usually, however, lotus flowers are enclosed in scrollwork, upon which they rest in the same way as kiritimukhas. The motif appears most clearly as an open flower on the caitya at Dyabhāhā in Patan.

In a third variation, the kiritimukha face is replaced by a band that unites the two strands of the stylized serpent bodies (Sikabahi). In their upper portion these strands develop into lotus foliage, undergoing in the process an amazing transformation. The foliage, finally, bears the blooming flower at its apex.

In some cases a flattened arch resembling the kiritimukha’s horns that have been joined into a crown occurs between the foliage and the flower. The two motifs thus prove to be not only interchangeable but almost identical. The true message is decoded only upon close inspection.

One particular development of the lotus motif is borne witness to by Cāitya G in Cabahil over the niches of its two lower storeys. There the primary niche frame, or the frame that accompanies the foliage, is clearly bound together by an amalaka motif which, in this position, quite obviously represents the celestial world. Whereas on Indian temples the kalasā with the nectar of immortality (umra) stands over or on top of the amalaka motif, here a lotus bud appears, not unlike the jewel motif resting on the caitya’s central pillar.

The niche frame

In many cases (Patan: Kvstibahi, Kvatihiiti, Tadhācuka) the niche frame consists only of lotus foliage displaying a lotus flower or kiritimukha face at the crown of the opening. In the majority of cases, however, pairs of makaras or hamsas, or less frequently gandharvas or simhas, are found at the foot of the niche opening. The foliage develops without exception from their tails, turning into scrollwork at both sides of the opening in the upper sector. This motif, which in a wider architectural context was employed principally at the ends of door and window lintels, is identified by craftsmen as a whirlpool (tāhṇvāli).
The pairs of makaras and hamsas are depicted in various positions. Usually they turn their head away from the opening, so that the foliage surrounding the opening develops out of the animals' tails. Yet one also finds these portal guardians, in the same standard position, curving their neck in such a manner that the wide-open jaws of the makara or the beak of the hamsa is turned towards the niche opening. It is less usual for the makara's body to be turned with its jaws facing the opening in order to spew out or swallow up the stylized body of a serpent. In such cases, the makara is raised onto the architectonic element of a pillar, thus assuming the position that eight hundred years later became the norm on Srikarukīcāyita. The foliage that emerges from the tail is then either directed upwards (Cahabhi E) or cascades down, forming a garland parallel to the pillar (Cahabhi G). Still another formal variation appears worth mentioning: in some cases a continuous movement is delineated between the primary and secondary niches of the circular storeys, with the bodies of the makaras representing the linking member between the niches. One frame develops from the jaws (or—viewed the other way around—is swallowed up into them), and the other frame from the tail (Cahabhi B, Deopatan: Sūndhārā). The hamsa motif is similarly varied, giving or receiving depending on whether it is represented as exhaling or inhaling. On the three-storeyed caitya in Teku, the hamsa of the large round niche appears to be feeding the small hamsa of the secondary niche, and on Caiyita G in Cahabhi the scrollwork the hamsa rests upon, and which develops out of its plumage, ends up in its beak.

All guardian figures, and also the lotus flowers, occur independently of the niche frame, namely on the parts of the socle available on the primary cube next to the niches. When lions occur in this space, their figures not seldom share a common head and forequarters, thus adopting Gupta models, while at the same time anticipating a formal treatment of the socle that would become the norm in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The rock formation as a motif

The rock formation occurs as a motif on many caityas, either at the very bottom as a socle beneath a multi-storeyed caitya (Cahabhi D, F, H) or as a socle under the drum (Sibhā, Tabhā, Guitabāhi, and also on the Caturvyūhacayita at Thāba). It is only on the Caturvyūhacayita at Nāgabhāthi that rock formations become the dominant element, where they overlie the entire column and the four figures rising out of the column, while functioning additionally as a socle. It must be said in this context that the rock motif predominates as the basis for decorative reliefs (for example, on the caityta of Tukabha). Pratapaditya Pal (1974: 104) argues that "this is an influence of the hills and mountains that surround the valley, although there is no attempt at naturalistic delineation. Rather, the Nepali artist gives us even a more stylized and flamboyant version of the conceptualized rocks that the Indians had employed at Sanchi and then at Ajanta".

The representation of rock formations is indeed highly stylized, but how else is the perceived environment to be transformed into a sculpture? Only with the 19th century does the rock motif come to be treated more realistically, and under a very recent Sumerucayita at Būbha, finally, the edge of the Kathmandu Valley is depicted in a literal manner, so to include various structure temples.

For the 7th and 8th centuries, the first question should be that of the mythological background. The Vedic myth leaves no room for doubt in describing the mountain or the rock as an island floating on the Primordial Ocean of universal possibility. It was Indra's demiurgic act of cleaving the rock that first allowed the waters to flow free. With a pillar he separated heaven and earth and fixed the Primordial Rock to the bottom of the Cosmic Ocean. Indra's pillar is identified also as a mountain, on which basis the modelling of the column on the caityta at Nāgabhāthi becomes intelligible. There the pillar has become the dominant symbol in the middle portion of the caityta, whereas on all other caitytas it is identifiable only as the pinnacle that emerges from the layers of the parasol.

On the caitytas in Cahabhi, the sequence of the motifs occurring on a number of socles does not seem to be understandable as a literal rendering of the myth, for if the lotus supports the world, which is represented by the dome of the caityta, then the symbol of the rock would represent this world a second time in a different guise.

But when—as in Cahabhi—the round lotus flower the caityta stands on is surrounded by rock motifs with twelve swaying tips, then it may be supposed that the socle depicts the creation myth of the Valley: surrounded by four high mountains, the Valley formed a receptacle for a lake in which a lotus appeared, the source of whose light was protected by the dome of a caityta. Such interpretive schemes remain, however, within the realm of speculation, as the earliest manuscripts to contain the creation myth of the Svayambhunara date to the 12th century.

This creation myth is represented pictorially on the relief below the caityta at Tulanani in such a manner as to support the notion, in one way or another, a well-known motif was newly adapted. A lotus flower rests upon a rock motif and is framed by a pair of makaras, whose wide-open jaws with rolled trunk enclose the garland of petals.

In a certain sense the ground plan of Cahabhi Caiyita H has been folded onto a vertical plane of representation by the Tulanani relief, whereas the primary architectural trio remains in place on top of it.
What is surely noteworthy is the fact that, among the caityas of the Licchavi period, the dome displays a frieze of stylized leaves demarcating the transition from dome to drum only in two cases (Teku and Ukubahi). On the caitya at Ukubahi, in addition, the dome is covered by eight overlapping petals radially inverted from the border of the harmika. The caityas of the 8th century (Subaha, Subahahi = dated to 758) and Bhichebaha are the first ones in which the dome rests on an unfolded lotus flower, and in the 17th century this became such a dominant formal element that the dome was henceforth only of secondary importance.

On the remaining Licchavi caityas, the profile appears in the form of a quarter-round, and might be interpreted as the body of a serpent. This is repeated as a socle profile on the caitya of Cabahil B and Nakabahi. The aquatic association is here quite clear: the caitya’s dome represents the earth, which rests on the Primordial Ocean. The reason for interpreting the quarter-round as a serpent body is because this profile was made wide use of centuries later, at which time the serpent body was frequently represented with scales. Since the 19th century, finally, the serpent bodies have been provided with heads that point north and tails that overlap in the south.
The architectonic order of the storeys

Whereas in the previous section the niches and the modelling of the niche frames were focused on as the dominant elements in the subdivision of storeys within the primary trio, the task at hand is to exhibit a further step in structural shaping, one in which formal elements architectonic in nature assume an important role. Again three different types stand out:

In the first case, a full pilaster, or even a stump of one (Cabahil E), takes on the role of demarcating frames. They function as jambs for the opening, with mukha perched on top of them. The stumps of the pilasters are studded with rosettes, and in their most crassly reduced form consist of nothing more than a stepped profile atop a lotus flower (Cabahil C). The example from Kuthubahi, in Cabahil shows how the lotus motif is slowly elevated, and how the amalaka motif contributes to the division of the stumps. A more pronounced profil-

262. Putan: Lichchivictiya at Tābāhā. Detail of the base storey with a stringcourse of lotus leaves, a quarter-round profile and a gajākṣa motif on the wall face.
ing of the pilaster is already evident in the case of the niche on the caitya at Vākulabhā, and it is done to perfection, with suitable proportions, on the caityas at Alkvahiti and at Sikabahi in Patan.

In the second case, the pilasters take on the function of demarcating the niche elements that develop out of the cube (Musūbhā B, Guitabhā, Sighabhā B and B. Svayambhūnāth), and this new architectural order not infrequently is carried over to the modelling of the corners of the cube. A total of twelve three-quarter pilasters occur (Cabahi G), and if pilasters are also set in the negative corners of the vimsatikona ground plan (Duntubah), a total of twenty results, corresponding to the vimsatikona shape of the plan.

As a rule, the pilasters display in their upper portion profiling characterized by transitions from a quadrangular to octagonal pillar cross section, with ămalka motifs inserted in between. Under the profiling is a capital of floral formation from a quadrangular to octagonal pillar cross section. With these again this four-storeyed dynamic elaboration in Cabahi brackets with rather nondescript flourishes. Though they do undergo flamboyant and at times dynamic elaboration in Cabahi (G), with tiny gavāksa elements crowning the pillar. Once again this four-storeyed caitya proves itself to be extraordinary in this particular example of Nepalese miniature architecture a masterpiece of the early period.

One exception among the described orders of pilasters is the three-quarter pillars of the Caturvyūhacaitayas at Dhvakabhā B in Kathmandu and on Svayambhūnāth Hill, where the pillars demarcate the niches and at the same time form the corners of the lower storey, their brackets having been precisely carved into a convoluted form.

In the third case, the architectonic modelling of the storey is total, as there are no longer any niche elements projecting out over the uninterrupted roof cornice. As a rule, dentils are found under the roof cornice. In the case of the caitya at Sibabhā, the austerely quadratic storey is divided by pilasters into three equal parts, and the very similar octagonal caitya at Kvātibahi has eight wall surfaces separated in an identical manner by niches that are themselves separated by pilasters. In the case of the caitya at Nakabhā, the division of the base storey with its vimsatikona ground plan is more complex: the tripartition of the projecting middle portion indicates a shift of emphasis onto the middle axis, while the wall surfaces of the cube behind appropriate for themselves the proportions of the middle axis. The original decoration of the niches with mask-like heads has been preserved only in this last example.

**Division of storeys by means of moulded profiles: the first indication of the emergence of a new type of caitya**

Around the middle of the 8th century a new development cautiously made its presence known through the division of the wall surfaces of the base storey – a development that eventually resulted in a new type of caitya. The use of the moulding of the roof cornice as a divisional element proved to be the decisive step. The caityas at Tabahi, Bhichēbahā and Subabahāti offer more or less two variants, which in turn, together with other lines of development, issue into the Sikharakutacaitya of Guitabha cidadhā. Whereas the caitya at Subabahāti can be dated to the year 758 with great certainty, the age of the first Sikharakutacaitya at Guita has yet to be determined. The moulding of the drum, the crenellations above the storeys and the modelling of the pilasters would seem to favour the building’s being a mature work of the late Lichchhavī period, though it appears to be just as possible that it is the creation of some later period with a strong orientation to the old models.

The caityas at Tabahi and at Bhichēbahā are similar to the caitya at Kumahnnani in the way their niches are modelled, though for their rock formations in front of the drum they adopt the forms of the caitya at Guitabha. Added to these elements is a dividing torus profile that supports a gavāksa motif in the upper third of the cube’s wall surface. The caitya at Subabahāti with its flattened proportions, on the other hand, adheres to the storey proportions of Caitya G in Cabahi. It is, moreover, one of the examples in which the roof moulding remains horizontally on the same level, but nevertheless follows the vimsatikona outline. The division by means of pilasters is used only in the corners of the projecting middle portion, while the clearly identifiable moulding subdividing the wall surface adopts a smaller version of the cross section of the roof moulding. In this case, too, the moulding bears a gavāksa motif. The base storey of the Sikharakutacaitya in Guita is fully accomplished in its effect in comparison to its models, and also more than twice as large as the Tabahi caitya, while having assumed the latter’s proportions. Here again the strip of moulding supports gavāksa motifs. In both, the Sikharakutacaitya conforms closely to the previously mentioned models, whereas in the 17th century gavāksa motifs were no longer used, and the strip of moulding acquired a semicircular shape, having been reinterpreted as the body of a snake.
Besides the previously introduced elements used in modelling the storeys of a caitya under the primary trio, the motif of the caitya window (gavakṣa) also deserves particular mention, as it documents the influence of North India on the architecture of the Kathmandu Valley, being a living remnant of the Gupta tradition. At the same time it is an extremely typical element in the architecture of the Licchavi period; after the 8th century this motif occurs only on the Sīhakārātika caitya at Guita and on the caitya at Nagubahā, the latter an imitation of the former dating to 1673.

The gavakṣa motif appears in three styles and sizes on approximately fifteen caityas. On four (Cabahil B and H; Teku, Mahākāla/Kathmandu) of a total of six surviving drums that were formed simultaneously into storeys under dentils and a hint of notchting, the sixteen or twelve niches, as the case may be, have the shape of so-called caitya windows. This motif is found in monumental form and in imposing variety and frequency not only in the caitya caves and on the temples of the Guptas; it is also employed as a decorative element above the niches of the votive caityas in Bodh Gayā. In Nalanda, the motif was introduced as a repetitive element to the so called fīzes at the base of temples. There it appears with characteristic raised corners, its round opening being filled with a lotus flower. Also typical is the gathering up of the crowning foliage into a bundle-like mass. It is only at Kurkihar that roughly fashioned dome fragments of granite having large niche frames in gavakṣa form can be found.

All gavakṣa-shaped niches of the above-mentioned drum storeys are surrounded by foliage and crowned by a highly stylized leaf. The austere frames of the Guptas models, often accentuated by edged beading, were thus effectively adapted to the gentle and narrational manner of the Licchavi artists. Only on the caitya in Cabahil is the exterior boundary of the niche frame defined more clearly, while the primary frame of the opening is fitted out with a line of pearls, a revival of a favourite motif of the Guptas.

The gavakṣa niches of the round middle storey in Teku surpass all other examples in size and decoration. Only the round opening with its accompanying pearl frieze survives from the model of the Guptas. The decoration of the frame by means of a pair of hamsas, scrollwork and a crowning kirtimukha face conforms to the program familiar to the sculptors of the Licchavi period. Perhaps it is even possible at this point to venture the assertion that Nepalese artists tend to transform formal elements and to shape them in detail throughout. Even in the architecture of the later period, the main formal concern is not so much to penetrate structural bodies in depth as to model the whole of the surface.

The gavakṣa niche of the caitya at Nakabahi in Patan documents by its completely unique approach the artists’ special ability to provide creative form in masterly fashion. The gavakṣa niche as a whole forms the crown of a niche that, having been architectonically framed by pilasters, roof cornice and dentils, focuses attention away from the lower part of the upper storey onto itself. The gavakṣa niche above it, in contrast, covers the drum moulding and extends, in a manner seldom encountered on Licchavi caityas (compare Musūbhā B), up into the dome sector. In imitation of the previously described example in Teku, a pair of hamsas have been placed at the side of the niche, with their heads turned away from the opening, though their necks describe a flourishing circular movement. Foliage bound together above the niche’s rounded upper border and bearing a lotus flower develops from the tails of the animals. This motif has not been treated in such a clear manner on any other niche. The stalk of the lotus flower appears to grow from the bound foliage and the bottom of the niche. The composition of niche opening and frame in the form of a triangle accentuates the high crown and the repetition of the flower motif at the base.

In a further type of caitya from the Licchavi period, represented a mere total of three times (Subāhā, Subāhāhiti and Gahribhā), the gavakṣa motif occurs under the unfolded lotus flower, which supports the dome on its upper profile. The prominent niche element borrowed its conventional clear outline from other caityas. Lotus flowers appear on an arc and at the foot of the decorative frame, in such a way that the positions of makaras and hamsas seem to be being imitated. When the crown was dealt with above, the interchangeability of the kirtimukha face with a vegetal-floral element was advertised to. This applies also here, in particular to the base. The primary frame sits atop a so-called fillet, beneath which crenellations lead down to the roof cornice of the lower storey.

In a further variant, gavakṣa motifs occur as decorative elements smaller in size, namely on the three caityas (Tabahā, Subahāhiti, Bhīchabhā) on which the surface of the storey’s cube is subdivided by a type of moulding taken from the roof cornice. Here, too, and on the often cited first Sīhakārātika caitya at Guita, the mastery of the Nepalese artists is evident in transforming the motif into a flamboyant pattern with varied foliage, in which only the rounded middle still harks back to the model. On the caitya near Sīhā, the artist goes a decisive step further by merging the gavakṣa motif into a rock formation, which forms the base of the round opening and accentuates the corners on both sides. Such examples, occurring only a single time, document an all-pervading tendency on the part of Nepalese artists to fabulation, which provides them with the means to transform well-known motifs into a specifically Nepalese composite form. It is this openness to ever new variations, in the end, which may have encouraged the development of ever new types of caityas in the 18th and 19th centuries, ones which appropriated only individual structural elements of the older types and created new areas of focus with the new elements. Within this process, the primary trio was continuously being reduced to a secondary element.
Remarks on the nature of surface crafting

There quite obviously existed various methods when it came to crafting niche frames, that is, to providing surface relief. The results differ to such an extent that one can even speak in terms of two different styles.

The basic difference between the two styles of handiwork lies in the depth of relief. Shallow relief is relatively rare, having come about in the context of clearly outlined frames and the avoiding of an independent outline, the effect of which tends to be overly three-dimensional.

The storey of the monolithic caiya at Yāgubāhā may be taken as paradigmatic, its four niche frames having been fashioned with great richness of variety. In three cases, a pair of nakras, each in an altered stance, occupies the base. Two hamsas assume this role at the western niche. In addition, two lotus flowers within a frame are represented in the socle zone of the storey's cube. A further example of this type of relief work has been preserved on a fragment at Sundhāra in Deopatan. It is the lower storey of a caiya with conspicuous moulding on the roof cornice and notching, into which space the slightly projecting niche block penetrates vertically. Horizontally, though, it ends flush against the roof cornice. The logicality of this demarcation heightens the pictorial character of the niche frame, whose surface is almost completely covered with scrollwork displaying the finest of detail, while at the same time presenting to view only a small volume of the volutes.

In stark contrast to this pictorialness of representation, the upper storey of the caiya at Vābāhā is marked by an unusually deeply cut relief. The niche frame is not one provided by an architectonic element but rather extends up over the whole of the storey and over the drum above. Since even the primary frame of the opening occurs without a clear base, and the bodies of lions occupy the corners of the storey's cube, what is represented by relief is uncommonly architectonic in the effect it creates. Or conversely: the architectonic definition of bodies by clearly drawn lines is covered over by plastic elements to such an extent that a sculpture results.
In this respect, the caitya at Vābāhā doubtless represents the maturest work of the Licchavi period, which possibly only the caitya in Teku and several caityas in Cabahil, as well as the Caturvyūhacaitiya at Dhvākhābāhā, measure up to.

The configuration of two storeys one above another at Vābāhā shows how close the two types of relief are to each other. Whereas in the upper storey the elements of the niche frame are spread out in a positively dynamic fashion, an austere frame that projects semicircularly out over the roof moulding results, in the lower storey, in a rather pictorial representation in shallow relief. Located between these two ways of crafting the surface is the relief of the niche frame of the caitya in front of Sābyāgubhāhā on Swayambhūnāth Hill. There the finest detail work has produced a masterful play of outlines within a double course of lines. The impression of voluminous bodies can be created, therefore, inside a very small space and with the use of a relatively shallow depth of relief.

274. Kathmandu Valley: location of 263 Licchaviciyas or fragments of the same in thirteen different locations. Documentation: out of a total of 263 Licchaviciyas which could be identified in a survey stretching over a period of five years (1986-1991), 38 examples were documented with an elevation and a top view. In a few cases, the elevation was supplemented with details. Nine examples are from Patan (one example, that of Tuḥnāt, is presented in the section dealing with finalis); thirteen examples from Kathmandu (of these, six alone are from Musīkahā and the adjoining three courtyards), four examples from Svaṃbhūnāth Hill, and eight examples from Ćabāhi. Four additional examples of Catsvarvahiaciyas from Kathmandu and Svaṃbhūnāth Hill are presented in separate chapters, and one Licchaviciya is presented in the chapter on Sīkharakūtaciyas.
Bhaktapur: location of six Liechavacaityas. Only two caityas, at Bhimsenkhiti, survive as two-storied buildings with dome and drum. The others are fragmentary. Included are such barely recognizable (Taumadha), or enclosed, and thus hidden within later structures (Siddhapokhari).

Patan: location of 105 Liechavacaityas or fragments of the same. The caityas are fairly evenly distributed over the southern, eastern, and northern quarters, but there is a certain concentration in Taga with twenty caityas, in Capat with nine caityas, and in the area of Nagbahādi Khačhē with twenty-six caityas. (Numbers on the map indicate places with more than one Liechavacaitya, either in a small courtyard or in a step-well)

Detail of the niche frame of the upper storey.

General view from the north-west.

Elevation south and top view, scale 1:10, before renovation. Two-storied caitya on a recent large platform, with lotus stones placed in the four directions. The final with its pronounced amalaka motifs above the eleven tiers is of convincing craftsmanship, equaling that of the structure below. It probably dates to 1644, when the courtyard was reshaped and the fragments of the Liechavi period assembled on a new plinth.

Although the carvings of the upper storey, which forms a monolithic element with dome and drum, and those of the lower storey display quite different dynamism in the scrollwork and depth of relief, it may be that the entire structure survives in its original form. The carvings are exceptionally well preserved, only the pointed top portions of the lower niches are missing. The four Tālāgatas of the lower primary niches and the four Vairocanas of the upper niches are the original ones, carved from the same stone, whereas the eight secondary niches of the lower storey are now vacant.

The dome is slightly bulged and rests on a low drum with dentils below the quarter-round profile. The upper storey displays the usual incised moulding, while the figural elements form a secondary level of surface, extending over the entire storey and into the drum above. Only a hint of the corner line remains visible, with lions sharing a common head and forequarters dominating the niches as protective elements. From their tails develops the shouldered, elegantly curved frame of the niche openings. Floral scrollwork engaged to the incised moulding forms a secondary element of the frame, which is crowned by a karinmukha face set against the moulding of the drum. The control shown in the carved relief set against strict and sharp-edged mouldings creates a vivid contrast and makes this caitya a masterpiece of Nepalese sculptural art, easily comparable to the universally praised Dvīkhaṇbāhi caitya.

The niches of the lower storey are treated as independent elements projecting from the main body and extending beyond the moulding of the roof. The entire surface of the frame is carved without an articulate edge. In contrast to the design of the upper niches, the movement is introvert: the pair of mukaras at the base lie on their back, while their tails develop scrollwork which, in the upper portions, frame the demon’s face. The secondary niches have a conventional frame of leaf pattern.

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Patan: Liechavicateya on the axis of Vibha, elevation east and top view, scale 1:5.

One-storeyed raijya with dome, drum and plinth. The niches have recently been filled with small figures of the four Tathagatas, on each side flanked by a pair of Tara of identical design. The stump of a finial is fixed into the dome. Only the eastern gavaksa element remains intact; the northern and southern ones are heavily defaced. Parts of the dome and the drum have broken away, along with two corners of the roof above the base storey. The base of the dome is bell-shaped and rests on a drum of the usual moulding. In a rare configuration (no other example has been found), a small gavaksa element (see also detail drawing) is set in front of the drum moulding as if to serve as the usual niche, although the opening is indicated only by an incised line. This gavaksa element is flanked by painted corners bearing engravings generally interpreted as mountain patterns. A square roof with painted corners and dentils covers the architecturally ordered base storey (see also detail drawing). Four pillars of identical shape divide the base into three parts of different size. The middle part is slightly larger than those on the two sides. All niches are shouldered in threefold outline; the arch of the middle niche however, touches the supporting beam. Foliated capitals with a tiny gavaksa motif in the centre add a lively vegetative feeling to the otherwise austere architectural order. The base storey rests upon a plinth, the latter fixed into another cemented plinth. An inscription on the eastern side of the plinth is defaced.
The monolithic one-storeyed caitya with its exceptionally bulky dome remains as a fragment below a very recent finial and embedded in the moulded base of a three-stepped plinth (not shown in the drawing), which recalls over 4 cm of its lower portion and thus distorts its original proportions. Likewise, the Tathagatas in the niches are of recent origin. The carvings have heavily weathered, the kirtimukha above the niche remains preserved only on the southern face, and the line in the north-eastern corner is missing. The caitya is one of those rare examples with convincing Lichavī details but without the usual moulded indentations. In fact, the profile of the recessed wall portions with the ganapāla motif on top of a half-round profile and a frieze of leaves below anticipates common features of later Śikharakālīcaityas, which dominated the building scene of the 17th and 18th centuries. The moulded plasters with nukhur on top and the crowning kirtimukha that is devouring snakes represent a feature of Lichavīcaityas that was used in later centuries. The roof with dentils below, rock pattern on top, pointed primary corners and small lintels in the secondary corners also displays elements common to the Lichavī era.

Two-storeyed caitya with a secondary bulky finial probably of 17th-century origin, secondary figures in the niches (the four Tathagatas and their Saktis in the niches of the upper story, and four Bodhisattvas in the niches of the lower story) and a fragmentary inscription of the 7th century on all four sides of the lower story, on each side of the niches. The Lichavī structure rests in a stepped monolithic stone socle on top of a stone and brick platform, indicating that the caitya was relocated in the 17th century.

The high dome rests on a short drum moulding. The upper story is of octagonal shape with eight identical niches, the primary frames of which, with rounded arches, are bare of any decoration. Mahakāla heads seem to come forth from a hidden second level behind the frames, their unseen tails developing into scrollwork supporting a crown in the form of a lotus bud, which slightly changes in design from one arch to the next.

The lower storey is of viśvanātha shape with the usual indented moulding. The protruding blocks of the niches bear the profile of the roof, to which the kirtimukha face crowning the frame of the shouldered niche is engaged. The pair of ganders guarding the opening turn their heads away from the niche opening, while their tails extended towards the outline. Foliated scrollwork fills the gap between the ganders and the face on top.

Two-storeyed caitya with a secondary finial of recent origin, placed on a multi-stepped plinth with recently cemented mouldings. The figures occupying the sixteen niches are likewise of recent origin. The dome rests on a unique moulding, the lower side of the half-round being curved and without an indented portion. The upper storey has pointed corners bearing engravings of mountain patterns, which extend all around the caitya. The moulding below the roof corresponds in its curved shape to that of the drum. The niches are arc framed by nukhur creatures resting on tiny mountain patterns. Their heads turn either away from the niche (north and south) or are twisted towards the niche opening (east and west). Their tails develop into foliage, which ends in a crown-like configuration with a flower resting on an anupadaka motif. The lower storey is dominated by the architectural framing of the protruding middle portion. Its niches are framed by simple foliage, which ends like the foliage of the niches of the upper storey. Similar foliage is used as half-capitals above the pillars, which are moulded over the corners. The niches of the wall portions of the square base have a protruding shouldered outline. The roofs above the lower storey are crowned by a battlement-like motif, with dentils below them. The two Lichavī components of the caitya rest on a square plinth without any mouldings, but with an inscription* on the southern face mentioning the year 1024 (NS 144). The upper caitya structure and the inscribed plinth below do not necessarily belong to the same period of construction.

*The original text has been published along with a translation of it into Nepali: Lalitpur Guhatattarpats: Abhilekha. The Abhilekha Sangraha, IX, Kathmandu: Samudraha mandalas. V. S. 2020, p. 25.
286. Patan: Licchavi caitya at Alkovahiti, elevation east, scale 1:5.
One-storeyed caitya with a bulgy dome and an arcade but definitely secondary finial resting on a drum of usual size and moulding. The square base storey has an exceptional shape, but the roof and the moulding of the indentation below display a customary pattern. The four niches are comparatively large and cover the full height of the base and the drum. Each shouldered and pointed niche has an architectural frame of low pillars with an anulaka motif and a floral capital, on which gaudharvas rest. From the tails and the wangs of these celestial musicians develop scrollwork and with an exceptional scale one. However, remains almost intact.

287. Details of the lower storey with gavakṣa motif.
288. View from the north.
289. Elevation east and top view, scale 1:10.
Two-storeyed caitya on a high plinth with components of different eras, including a secondary dome, which is too small for the moulded frame of the upper storey, and a recent finial defaced by cement plaster. All corners and the eaves have weathered away. The frames of the upper niches are heavily damaged; the southern one, however, remains almost intact. The carvings of the lower niches, too, are comparatively well preserved. A defaced image of Amoghasiddhi in the northern niche of the upper storey and three Bodhisattvas in the niches of the lower storey remain as secondary fillings.
The upper storey is of vimūrtikāma shape, with four almost circular niches. The double outline of the niches is pointed and topped by a lotus flower which develops from the foliated frame. Noteworthy is the ending of this foliage in lotus flowers. Lions are carved in high relief and share a common head as the corner guardians. Instead of a drum, a circular lotus flower tops the upper storey, with one circle of petals turned upwards and one circle downwards. The lower storey is likewise of vimūrtikāma shape and dominated by niches in the centre. The niches are framed by a double-stepped pointed outline, the projecting middle portion of the storey being framed by pilasters with an incised crescent and anulaka pattern. The space between the niche outline and the pilasters is filled with foliage, which is transformed, in repetition of the motif on the upper storey, into a lotus bud (north) or a pair of ganders (east). The wall beside the central protruding portion is divided by a pointed quarter-round moulding, with a stringcourse of lotus flowers below and gavakṣa motifs above. The roof above the lower storey is of the usual moulding, but topped by a battle-ax-like pattern, alternately of half-round and stepped shape, forming a separate structural element. The upper structure rests on a multi-stepped plinth bearing the fragment of an inscription on its southern face that mentions the date 758 AD.

287. Patan: Licchavi caitya at Alkovahiti, elevation east, scale 1:5.

There is a marked concentration of caityas in the southern quarter around Moshbaha (25 examples). Similar groups occur only at Tebahā (eight caityas in the courtyard and two more outside) and at Sīgabhāhā, where fifteen Licchavacaityas are assembled.

Placed at the southern corner of the platform of the bahā's large caitya, this two-storeyed caitya has a drum of rare octagonal shape. Dome, drum and upper storey are monolithic and were relocated onto a fragment of different origin. The upper storey, without nitches, is of viexisting shape, while the lower storey has the usual moulding and a niche framed by a pair of heavily worn ganders and scrollwork.

Two-storeyed caitya of existing shape and with circular drum, placed on a cemented platform in front of the houses aligned along the southern border of the large courtyard. The surface of the dome is chipped, and the carvings are worn, being fairly well preserved only on the western (lower storey) and southern (upper storey) sides. Both storeys display the usual indented moulding. The upper niche has a unique frame, with a pair of lotus buds replacing the usual gander or mukura motifs. Scrollwork develops from the bud, while another bud crowns the niche opening. The niches of the lower storey are framed by a pair of mukuras placed on pilaster stumps and crowned by a kīrāṁśukha.

Caitya A is at the south-western corner of the main caitya's upper platform, and Caitya B at the north-western corner. Both caityas are two-storeyed, have a secondary finial and belong to a group of eight Licchavicaityas relocated onto the two-stepped platform of Katheshbhucaitya. Both have additionally been disfigured by countless lime coatings that have veiled the carved details.

Caitya A has the typical Licchavi moulding only on the upper storey, and Caitya B only on the lower storey. Both caityas are of virtutikous shape, with pointed corners above the roof of the upper storey and similar designs for the niches. The upper niche is of gosakos shape and framed by floral elements. The lower niche is architecturally framed below dentils. The pilasters of Caitya A are squat and look like stumps, whereas those of Caitya B are slender, with correct proportions.

Kathmandu: Licchavicaitya at Dughabhi, elevation and top view, scale 1:10. Below: the present view of the caitya with its secondary finial. The flat vaulted dome is monolithic with the moulded drum; the socle, however, consists of two compartments placed on a recent high platform. The sharply-edged socle with an extremely smooth surface is cracked.

Kathmandu: Licchavicaitya at Tadhabhi, elevation and top view, scale 1:10.

Kathmandu: Licchavicaitya at Pkhabhi. Dome and drum are monolithic, and the socle is multi-layered.
299. Kathmandu: Musubaha, site plan.

With nine Licchavicaityas at Musubaha itself and three others in the adjoining courtyards, the area contains the single greatest assembly of ancient Buddhist monuments in Kathmandu. This may have been brought about by the Twelve-Year Well (no. 4) in the middle of the courtyard, although the legends connected with it refer to kings who reigned centuries later. The legend referring to the Baha-bansa Inar says (Slusser 1982: 354-356) that once King Gunakamadeva (987-990) sought the counsel of Saktikaraiytra to forestall a future drought. The saint, who lived at Sumsambhau in a cave, advised the king to win Karkotaka, the king of serpents and controller of rain. Following that advice, Gunakamadeva came to Musubaha in the company of Saktikaraiytra. A well was sunk which, after twelve years of digging, led to the nagaraaya’s realm. One hundred eight hymns were intoned, and Karkotaka promised to ensure rain in times of scarcity. Even today the Twelve-Year Well is cleaned every twelve years, and in times of drought it is emptied by ritual specialists, with hymns being recited to induce rain to fall.

Both bahas of the courtyard (nos. 1 and 2) have sanghas of their own. The sangha of Bajracarayas of the first bahu performs a puja in honour of the Maitreya housed in the small shrine building that faces west (no. 3) and is in charge of the Twelve-Year Well ritual, the 1979 performance of which has been described by John Locke (1985: 329-330). The sangha of the second bahu also comprises Bajracarayas.

Caitras: A, B = Licchavicaityas (documented); C = Neo-Lichavicaitya (documented); D = Licchavicaitya (documented); E, F, G, H, I = Licchavicaityas; J = Neo-Lichavicaitya; K = Sumerucaitya; L = Licchavicaitya with complete niche; M, N = Licchavicaitya; O = Sumerucaitya; P = Neo-Lichavicaitya; Q = Licchavicaitya with original finial.

Temples and shrines: 1. Shrine of the Manavanghu-mahavahara (Musubaha) with Amithaba as kshipradhyu; 2. Shrine of the Manavanghu-mahavahara (also one of the two sanghas of Musubaha) with Akshobhya as kshipradhyu; 3. Shrine with a large enthroned Maitreya modelled in clay, who is popularly called Sursvatidhyu; 4. Baha-bansa Inar, the Twelve-Year Well; 5. Akshobhya; 6. Mahakala; 7. Aniconic shrine with representations of Catu Ajima and Ganesa; 8. Bhatrava (aniconic); 9. Aniconic shrine with representations of Saktikarai and Mahakala; 10. kattrupa (guardian stone of the courtyard); 11. Aniconic shrine of Ganesa; 12 Stone above the drain representing Nagaraaya, the king of the serpents; 13. Temple of Mahadyah with a linga.
Kathmandu: Lichhavi caitya B at Musahâha, elevation east and top view, scale 1:5. Two-storied monolithic caitya lacking a finial on a dilapidated plinth with vacant niches. All carvings are heavily worn, and the corners and large sections of the dome broken off. The dome rests upon a drum of unusual design as the diameter of the latter slightly exceeds the sides of the square base. The two storeys of the base are designed as a continuous element, as are the niches on each side. The upper storey has the usual indented moulding in its upper third, with crown-like elements placed in the four corners. The wall displays stringcourses of flower designs, a rare feature anticipating later types of caityas. The lower storey is covered by only a hint of a roof, with dentils below the eaves. The upper niches are of gurâka shape with deep (2.5 cm) round openings and a foliated frame. The four large and the eight small niches of the lower storey are similarly framed by foliage, which supports a lotus flower on top. The projecting central niches, moreover, are framed by the architectural motif of pilasters, complete with amalaka motif and capital.

Kathmandu: Lichhavi caitya L at Gulhunani near Musahâha, elevation west, scale 1:5. One-storied caitya with dome and drum. The finial with its broken top is of recent origin. The southern corners of the roof above the base storey, most of the surface of the dome and the moulding of the drum are damaged. The flat reliefs of the niche frames, however, are in good condition. The dome rests on the usual moulding of the drum, while the base storey with moulded indentations and protruding niches has been placed on a square base. The design of the niche represents the only known example of its kind, with a caitya, complete with drum, dome and finial, placed into it on an opened lotus flower. The triple outline of the niche develops from the tail of a mukara creature and ends in the flanks of the kirtimukha crowning the pointed arch. The mukaras of the eastern and western niches twist their heads toward the opening, whereas at the northern and southern niches their mouths turn away from the opening of the niche. The curved outline of the opening has foliage on both sides; on the outside it ends in scroll-like, inside it turns towards the small caitya in high relief. The roundish face of the kirtimukha has a mustache and a broad flat crown of stylized horns topped by a lata flower. The monolithic caitya rests on a stone platform, which rests in turn on an 80-centimetre-high stepped plinth with a cemented surface. Located exactly on the western axis in front of the plinth are two field stones in a hole, representing Lukumahadāya. Towards the south lies a heap of stones, representing Sitakali and Mahalaksmi.
One-storeyed cāitya on a multi-stepped plinth, with vacant niches and lacking a finial. All corners of the base storey as well as parts of the drum moulding, the surface of the dome and the face of the kirtimukha have broken off. Only the carving of the western niche, a product of masterful craftsmanship, remains intact.
The dome rests on the usual short drum moulding. The bases of the slightly projecting niches are extended to form a step around the entire cāitya.
The niches are framed by a pair of gandharas that avert their gaze from the opening. Their tails turn into foliage and scrollwork, which frame the kirtimukha on top. There is a slight variation in the design of the pointed outline of the niche opening. On the southern and western sides, an element similar to a drop of water is carved so as to form the crown of the arch.
The cāitya rests on a square base stone of rough dressing, which in turn rests on a large profiled stone placed upon a plastered brick plinth.

303. Kathmandu: Licchaviciyā D at Mūshālā, elevation north and top view, scale 1:5.
Two-storeyed cāitya on a base that has sunk into the ground, with vacant niches and lacking a finial. All carvings except those of the northern niche of the upper storey and the southern niche of the lower storey are worn away. The corners of the lower storey have broken off, and the surface of the dome has flaked.
The dome is of an unusually elongated shape and has been placed on an equally unusual drum, which in this case serves as a full storey, with four niches being engaged to the mouldings of the dome. These niches not
only overlap the moulding of the drum, but extend up into the dome itself. The frame of the niches is foliated right from the base upwards and supports a lotus flower, which crowns the opening of the niche. The square lower storey displays the usual moulding. Its niches are, in contrast to those above, of rather squat proportions. Ganders, their heads turned towards the niche opening, form the base of the frame; the foliage above sets off the crowning kirtimukha. The plinth is again square, with a quarter-round mediating between an upper and lower level.

304, 305. Kathmandu: Licchaviciyana Q at Dipanani, top view and elevation west, scale 1:5. As an exceptional case, the primary trio of finial, bulgy dome and drum survives in its original form. The seven tiers of the finial above a simple harmika bear witness to the antiquity of the structure, as eleven or thirteen tiers were introduced only after the 15th century. The protruding end of the central pillar with the crest jewel, however, has broken off. The base below the primary trio is of octagonal shape and displays the classic indented moulding. Instead of "storeys" with niches, a two-stepped plinth with framed designs lies under the upper caitya structure. The upper design narrates the creation of Swayambhu; a lotus flower rests on mountain symbolism rendered as a rocky element, while aquatic monsters in the shape of makhara with winding tails turn towards the resplendent flower. The lower design is not fully framed and may have been brought into its present structural position from a different source. It displays again a lotus flower surrounded by foliage.

306. Elevation.


308. Three-storeyed caitya with a secondary finial and vacant niches, placed on a very recent three-stepped plinth, in the immediate neighbourhood of the cremation ground used by the Sthiya community of Kathmandu.

The bulgy dome rests on a drum profile with dentils below and a frieze of leaves on top. The uppermost circular storey, with sixteen circular niches of equal size, is part of the extended drum. The foliated frames of the niches display slight variations, making the ones in the main and intermediate directions stand out somewhat. The two lower storeys are also circular, with sixteen niches each and identical roof moulding above dentils.

In the middle storey, circular niches alternate with pointed openings, whereas in the lower level wide, pointed, shouldered openings alternate with smaller ones without shoulders. The circular niches of the middle storey are framed by beads and pairs of ganders, the latter feeding other ganders that frame the smaller openings. This narrative pose provides an element of continuous movement from one niche to the other. The large niches of the storey are crowned by elaborate kirtimukhas, whose stylized horns remain strictly below the dentils, while the small niches are crowned by lotus elements. The lowest level varies the narrative theme: large makaras have been placed beside the low bases of the large niches, and they turn their heads as if to establish contact with the crowning face of the kirtimukha, whose horns overlap the dentils. Surprisingly, behind each large makara appears the head of another makara, whose invisible body seems to frame the smaller niche opening, the latter crowned by a beaked face representing Garuda.

The carvings display a convincing craftsmanship and are excellently preserved, although some parts have broken off. One and a half niches are missing on the western side of the uppermost storey.
Svayambhunath Hill: Licchavaciya in front of Sabyagubha.


Two-storeyed monolithic caitya with dome and drum and a linial of recent origin. The niches are vacant. The upper section of the plinth is certainly of Licchavi origin but used here in a secondary context. The carvings have partly weathered away, but where they are intact they display an excellent craftsmanship.

The dome with moulded drum is of striking appearance, as its diameter exceeds the upper storey together with the latter’s projecting niches. The frame of the niches displays ganders on a low base, their tails dissolving into foliage which covers the plain outline.

Higher up, this foliage turns into scrollwork to frame the crowning element, a lotus flower. In a slight variation, the ganders of the eastern facade and the mukaras of the lower storey turn their heads toward the niche openings.

The lower storey has niches which project as a block. Here the frame displays a pair of mukaras whose tails do not extend into the plain outline of the opening. The foliage above these creatures turns into scrollwork which undergirds the crowning kirtimukha above the pointed secondary outline.

The stepped plinth is made up of a carefully moulded upper part of vimana/kausa shape and a lower part of two different stones: a square slab placed onto another slab with a half-round profile.

310. Detail of niches below the primary trio.
Both caityas have secondary finials and are placed on equally recent plinths with a quarter-round profile. The base storeys of the monolithic buildings display the usual indented moulding with slight variations, but to Caitya A a projecting socle has been added which serves as a base for the niche frame. The figurative frame of Caitya B rests on pilaster stumps, complete with an amalaka pattern and lotus design. On Caitya A, a pair of ganders flanks the niche opening, with scrollwork developing from their tails, while on Caitya B pairs of makaras rest on pilaster stumps, turning their gaping mouths either towards the opening (north, east, south) or away from it (west). Their tails frame the crowning kirtimukha. On Caitya A, the scrolls support the crowning lotus element. In both cases, the crowns are fully engaged to the drum moulding, reaching up to the dome.

The whole ensemble rests on a plastered plinth fixed into the neighbours plinth of Pratāppura. Parts of the surface of the dome were damaged in 1980. The carvings of the upper structure remain in good condition, although a large portion of the north-eastern corner of the base has broken off, and was recently replaced by cement plaster. Likewise, the lion of that corner is defaced.

The dome with its moulded drum rests on an upper storey without the usual moldings. Instead, lions are placed as corner guardians, their bodies extending into the drum. Each lion rests on a small base above a more prominent primary base, which is incised with lines symbolizing mountains. The frame of the niche is foliated, the leaves extending up to a crowning flower above the block of the niche element. The lower storey displays the usual moulding and roof, and the frames of the niches reflect the design in a very articulate architectural manner, complete with a double-stepped base, dentils below the roof and moulded pilasters in the corners. The surface thus delimited provides space for an independent foliated niche frame. The plinth below the caitya is itself the lower storey of a Licchavicaitya, with moulding, roof and block-like nicher.

The carved frames are heavily worn, but the design is still recognizable: makaras frame the openings, with their tails developing into scrollwork and a flower as a crown.

311. Svayambhūnāth Hill: Licchavacityas at the foot of the eastern stairs. Two-storied monolithic caityas with a secondary finial of recent origin and vacant niches, placed onto a Licchavi fragment which served as the lower storey of a larger caitya elsewhere. The whole ensemble rests on a plastered plinth fixed into the neighbouring plinth of Pratāppura. Parts of the surface of the dome were damaged in 1980. The carvings of the upper structure remain in good condition, although a large portion of the north-eastern corner of the base has broken off, and was recently replaced by cement plaster. Likewise, the lion of that corner is defaced.

The dome with its moulded drum rests on an upper storey without the usual moldings. Instead, lions are placed as corner guardians, their bodies extending into the drum. Each lion rests on a small base above a more prominent primary base, which is incised with lines symbolizing mountains. The frame of the niche is foliated, the leaves extending up to a crowning flower above the block of the niche element. The lower storey displays the usual moulding and roof, and the frames of the niches reflect the design in a very articulate architectural manner, complete with a double-stepped base, dentils below the roof and moulded pilasters in the corners. The surface thus delimited provides space for an independent foliated niche frame. The plinth below the caitya is itself the lower storey of a Licchavicaitya, with moulding, roof and block-like niches. The carved frames are heavily worn, but the design is still recognizable: makaras frame the openings, with their tails developing into scrollwork and a flower as a crown.

312. Caitya B: elevation north and top view, scale 1:10.

314. Cabahil: site plan.

Left:
1. Cirimatiṭhāra (Mahārāja- or Rajāvihāra)
2. Square courtyard building of monastery
3. Sanctum with kāpālyas
4. Three Licchavi caityas (right: dome on base; middle: three bases placed above each other)
5. Platform with five Licchavi caityas, all with a dome and base, and a secondary final
6. Caturvyuha caitya
7. Jñāvali caitya (20th century)
8. Jñāvali caitya (20th century)
9. Drinking water fountain (jādhāhāhi)
10. Mahākāla
11. Licchavi caitya
12. Platform (dahī) with lotus stone
13. Well (ātī)
14. Shelter (pātī)
15. Fragment of a Licchavi caitya (dome) on a raised platform, with an enshrined Ganesa
16. Large caitya (plastered with cement)
17. Sumeru caitya (20th century)
18. Shelter (pātī) and well (ātī)
Dharmadevacātīya and Mahājudevavāhā compound in Cabahil.

Right:
A-H Licchavi caityas (see documentation)
1. Dharmadevacātīya
1.1-1.5 Niches with relief plaques (7th-8th century)
1.1. Amtābha
1.2. Amoghasiddhi (with bhasugabha)
1.3. Akṣobhyāra
1.4. Ratnasambhava
1.5. Vairocana
2. Sanctum of Mahājudevavāhā with kāpālyas
(Avalokitesvara, ca. 800)
3. Large lotus stone and jagtīnā (fire pit)
4. Licchavi caitya
5. Makeshift open structure with an Avalokitesvara relief and a symbolic representation of Vatsundhara
6. Avalokitesvara (ca. 800)
7. Patti with a palanquin for the Ganesa of Cabahil and a figure of Mañjuśrī in the wall.
8. Caturya fragment (dome and socle, 19th century)
9. Sumerucātīya (20th century)
10. Sumerucātīya (20th century)
11. Caturya fragment
12. Caturya (unidentifiable), plastered with cement and placed on a large platform.
13. Caturya, plastered with cement
14. Caturya, plastered with cement
15. Licchavi caitya
16. Caturya, plastered with cement
17. Newly constructed house (1986) sheltering a standing Boddha, 19th century
18. Mahakāla, placed in a large niche
315. Cabahil: Dharmadevacātīya, seen from the south.

159.
316. Cabahil: Dharmadevacaiya (1) and Manjudevavihara (2) with identification of the documented Lechavicaliya A–H site plan.

317. Cabahil: Caitya F. view from the south.
Two-storied cetiya with dome and drum on a plinth, and vacant niches. All carvings are well preserved. The squat dome rests on a moulding with a quarter-round and an indentation, the latter repeated on the two storeys below. The moulded indentation does not rest upon the usual drum: below the moulding there appears a peculiar curve directed inwards. The projecting niches overlap this curve and the indentation, thus emphasising the monolithic structure of the entire cetiya. The upper storey is square, displaying the usual layers of moulded indentation and roof. The slim, shouldered niches rest on an elevated base with flanking ganders (kumbas), which have extremely curved necks. The bodies of the ganders are directed outwards; their heads, however, are twisted and turned towards the opening. Above there follows foliage and scrollwork, framing a lotus flower on top. The base is decorated with gan- dhuratas, who have a human head and the body of a bird. The figures, which are not carved over the corners, are set in high relief within a frame. A roof with pointed corners covers the upper storey. The lower storey is again square and designed in layers according to the pattern provided by the upper storey, with the projecting niches extending into the base of the upper niche. The shouldered and pointed outline of the four niches is straight rather than curved at the base, and develops from the right leg of the mukaras which guard the openings. The bodies of these creatures have dwindled to the point that prominence falls to their large opened mouth and trunk, turned towards the opening. The tails develop into foliage and scrollwork, framing the kiranwanka on top. The horns of the face are transformed into a stylized crown bearing a lotus flower. The base is decorated in much the same way as the upper storey; the gandhurata, however, are replaced by lions. The simple plinth is square below, and of vanaankona shape in its upper level.
The structure is a two-storeyed caitya with a dome and drum on a stepped plinth, a secondary incomplete frieze of recent origin, and vacant niches. The roof edge of the upper storey has broken off in three places; only four corners of the lower roof remain undamaged. Half of the plinth is scoured under dirt. The bulging dome rests on a moulding with a quarter-round, an indented profile and a roof with dentils. The drum has twelve niches of identical circular shape framed by a string of pearls. The outline of the frame displays foliage and is similar to that of Cātīya H, being a larger version of the decorative ganākṣa element found on friezes. In between the niches, the foliage bears a tiny caitya motif above an annalaka pattern. The upper storey is twelve-cornered, with twelve niches of equal size and identical frame. The corners are occupied by squatting gandharvas, whose arms develop into scrollwork framing the niches and ending in the fangs of kirtimukha faces on top. The curved horns and the lotus bud in between overlap the dentils below the roof, which has pointed corners.

The lower storey is of viṃstatīkona shape and contains four primary, eight secondary and eight tertiary niches. The primary niches are framed by mukara creatures which turn towards the niche openings, and whose tails develop into foliage framing the secondary niches. The crown above the arch of the primary niches has the shape of a kirtimukha with long horns; the crown of the secondary and much smaller niches has almost the same shape, but the stylized horns rest on foliage and serve as a kind of platform for a lotus flower. The secondary niches, the largest of the group, are crowned in a still different fashion: the flanking snake-virūpas (nāga-kanjā) under a single hood develop into twisted serpent bodies which frame the entire outline of the niche, and eventually turn into lotus flowers of triangular shape. The variation of the crowning motif on one and the same storey of a caitya illustrates the interchangeability of such patterns. The obvious representation of a serpent body, moreover, proves that the strings which frame the niches and end in the crowns either dissolve into foliage or held fast in the fangs of a kirtimukha, are in all cases to be understood as the stylized bodies of such creatures. A simple roof with pointed corners and dentils crowns the lower storey. The upper structure, made up of three individual elements, rests upon a multi-stepped plinth of viṃstatīkona shape. The upper frieze is designed with stylized lotus petals. Quarter-rounds mediate between the steps in the form of serpent bodies, which symbolize the water below the lotus flower.
Two-storeyed caitya with dome and drum on a double-stepped plinth, a broken secondary finial of recent origin and vacant niches. Three corners of the lower storey roof appear to have broken off; the carvings of the niche frame, however, are in good condition. The bulgy dome rests on a quarter-round, a moulded indentation and a low indented drum. The comparatively squat upper storey is square, with niches projecting up to five centimetres and overlapping the drum by one-third of its total height. The slender niches are framed by ganders and rest on a socle with framed foliated decoration. The necks of the latter are twisted, so that their heads turn towards the opening. The tails develop into foliage and scrollwork, framing a lotus flower with petals on top of the arch. The base is decorated with framed makara creatures in high relief, their opened mouths turned up and slightly towards the niche. The roof is faintly curved so as to provide a certain emphasis to the pointed corners.

The lower storey is of vimsatikona shape; the central niches project only slightly, and the moulded indentation hardly differs from that of the upper storey. The pointed niches are prominently framed by makaras placed on a small pedesial, which rests on the petals of a lotus flower. The mouths of these aquatic creatures turn outward, while the tails develop into the usual foliage and scrollwork framing the face of a kirimukha with stylized crown and, on top, foliage and lotus bud. The base is furnished with lions resting on a projecting step. The two-stepped plinth is again of vimsatikona shape and without any decorative elements.
Cababul. Lichchhavi caitiya D, simplified elevation and top view with the half-round profile of the drum and mountain patterns of the plinth, scale 1:20.

Elevation south, scale 1:10.

Two-storeyed caitiya with dome and drum, placed on a two-stepped plinth. The slender and incomplete finial is of recent origin and markedly small in proportion to the drum. Half of the plinth lies beneath the surface. The niches are vacant; the carvings of the niches are in good condition. The bulgy dome rests on a moulding with a quarter-round and an indentation which is repeated on the two storeys below. The upper storey is square in plan, containing four projecting niches, each with a shouldered double oolithic. The frame displays ganders at the base in a dynamic pose, their bodies turning decidedly away from the opening, whereas the heads are twisted and turned towards it. From the tails develop, on top of the niche, scrollwork and a lotus flower. The flower extends partly beyond the projecting block of the niche without, however, being engaged to the drum. It looks very much like a stylized kirtimukha with nose and horns. In the upper third of the storey, a moulded indentation mediates towards the roof with its pointed corners. The lower storey is again square, and of the same proportions and design as the upper one. The projecting niches are similarly framed; the iconographical details, though, are different. At the base, pairs of makaras are depicted in a position similar to that of the ganders, the bodies of the creatures again turning away from the opening and the mouths turning towards it. A kirtimukha crowns the niches, with strings of the framing scrollwork ending in its jaws. The face is anthropomorphic, with a large nose, mustache, bulging eyes and small ears, but from the forehead protrude curved horns, which turn backward across the projection of the niche to touch the base of the upper niche. The upper step of the plinth, of Jivantakosha shape, is profusely decorated with engravings and pointed corners symbolizing mountains. The lower step is square.
Two-storeyed caitya with dome and drum on a plinth, and with a broken secondary finial of recent origin. All carvings are well preserved; the pointed corners are slightly worn. The bulgy dome with its faintly tapered base rests on a quarter-round, a moulded indentation and a low drum. The upper storey is square, with projecting niches partially engaged to the drum. The shouldered opening of the niches rests on a comparatively high socle (more than one-third of the height of the opening) with a framed panel of unique design: in the centre a squatting goblin (gana) is depicted holding flowers by their stalk, the flowers developing into scrolls. The openings of the niches are framed by gandharvas perched on either side of the socle. The faces of these beings are carved over the corner, whereas their two legs are seen from the front. The tail of the bird-like body develops into scrollwork without touching the flat frame parallel to the outline of the opening. The arch is crowned by a comparatively small decorative element, possibly a flower on an amalaka motif. The corners of the base of the niche are engraved, within a framing border: with ganders, which display a unique element of continuous design: the tail develops into scrollwork, while the bill is opened to bite off the bud of a lotus flower. A simple roof with pointed corners lies on top of a moulded indentation similar to those above the drum and below the roof of the lower storey. The lower storey is again square. The wide opening of the projecting niches does not have the usual outline that is distinct from the framing figures. Instead the outline itself is defined by the framing elements, a makara with open mouth, fluted trunk and profusely foliated tail resting on the stump of a pilaster shaped into an amalaka rosette. The entire configuration is crowned by a kriyamsaka in the act of devouring the strings developing from the makara's mouth. In a rare display of exuberance, the tails of the makara pierce the normally constrictive frame set by the projection of the niche. The base is decorated with crouching lions in high relief sharing a common head and forequarters. The stepped plinth is of vimsatikona shape, the lower level fashioned as a quarter-round in brick to represent the serpent body on which the entire structure rests.
Two-storeyed caitya with dome and drum on a double-stepped plinth, and with a secondary finial of recent origin. The edges of the three circular roofs have deteriorated at eight different spots; two of the pointed corners of the plinth have broken off, half of the plinth is covered under dirt. The comparatively squat dome rests on a quarter-round mould with dentils. The circular drum has sixteen niches, each framed by foliage and topped by a lotus flower. In between the niches, the foliage bears a triangular lotus motif. The upper storey is circular in plan and has eight identically shaped niches framed by gandharvas in a pose of worship towards caitya motifs between the niches. The tails of the creatures develop into scrollwork and a threefold shouldered niche outline ending in the fangs of the crowning kirimukha, which is depicted without horns, and with its foliated ears overlapping the dentils. A lotus bud crowning the kirimukha also interrupts the string of dentils. Figural caityas between the niches are supported by a lotus flower with two circles of petals, one turned upward and one turned downward (a stalk can be identified below the opened flower). These motifs display the primary trio of finial, dome and drum. Above the finial is placed a wide umbrella, from which flags (pasas) appear to flutter in the wind. A simple roof with dentils tops the upper storey. The lower storey is again circular and has eight primary and eight secondary niches. In between are placed makaras, in a unique position, their bodies are turned towards the secondary niches, and the foliage which develops from their mouths frames the niches and a triangular lotus bud on top. Similarly, foliage develops from their tails, turning into scrollwork and a string ending in the mouth of the kirimukha on top of the primary niches. The makara thus forms an element of continuous movement between the smaller and the larger niches. The face of the kirimukha has tiny ears along with long curved horns which overlap the dentils above. The lotus bud between the horns is smaller than the one of the upper storey. The upper structure, made up of three building components, rests on a plinth of vimarshika shape. The upper level with its twelve pointed corners and carved mountain patterns frames a circular platform without any carved lotus elements. The lower level displays a curved quarter-round probably symbolizing the body of a snake.
Three-storied chaitya with dome and drum, placed onto a secondary plinth. The pinnacle is lost and has not been replaced; the niches remain vacant. The roofs are heavily damaged at all corners, as is the entire southwestern corner of the lower storey. Otherwise the details of the carvings are well preserved. The plinth is covered under dirt. The dome with its slightly indented base rests upon the drum, a quarter-round on top of which serves as a roof. The extended drum contains twelve niches. With their crowning elements, the niches overlap the moulding of the drum. In between the niches (see also detail drawing), a triangular lotus bud or jewel rests on an anulaka-patterned ring. The uppermost storey is twelve-cornered, and the twelve corresponding niches are, as on the drum, identically shaped.

In between the niches and carved over the corners are found, instead of lotus buds, miniature chaityas resting on an opened lotus flower atop an anulaka pattern. Visible above the horamika and the tiers of the finial is a shaft with a crowning umbrella and flags (pans), which appear to rotate in the wind. Scrollwork develops from the lotus below the cuniya, framing the niches and ending in the mouth of a kirrimukha face with stylized horns. A moulded roof with dentils and corners in a kula design covers this storey. The middle storey is of vimutikona shape, with four primary niches and eight secondary ones, and corresponds to the ground plan of twenty corners. The primary niches (see also detail drawing) are flanked by a pair of dragons (snakes), their heads crowned by lotus buds placed on an anulaka pattern. The wings of the dragons develop into scrollwork framing the niche, which is crowned again by a lotus bud on an anulaka pattern. The secondary niches are framed in a similar way by a pair of ganders (hamsa), whose tails develop likewise into scrollwork. In this rare case, though, their tails end in their beaks. Above the niches, foliage frames what is either a central triangular leaf or bud. The covering roof is moulded similarly to the one above the upper storey. The lower storey is again of vimutikona shape, with four primary niches and eight secondary ones. The central niches are shouldered, like those of the upper storeys, and are, in addition, pointed (see also detail drawing). The frame of the primary niches mixes architectural, iconographical and floral designs: a pillar stump reaches the height of the inner shoulder, mukuras form the capitals, and foliage developing from the creatures' mouths frames a lotus bud placed upon the pointed apex of the niche. The secondary niches are framed by a pair of mukuras, their tails developing into foliage. A beaked kirrimukha with a wide open maw and big ears, but without horns, tops each of the niches. At each of the twelve outer corners, pillars with the archaic crescent motif and several mouldings are topped by a govakhya motif. Together with radiating floral motifs, this latter forms a stylized capital of unique design, which never occurred in wooden architecture.

328. Top view, scale 1:10.
329-331. Details of the niches.
332. Cabahil: Cailya H. elevation south and top view.

Two-storeyed cailya with dome and drum on a low plinth, a secondary finial of recent origin and empty niches. All edges of the roofs are damaged. Six of the pointed corners of the plinth have broken away. The bulgy dome with a frieze of lotus leaves at its base rests on a type of moulding not found elsewhere: a half-round lying on a step separating it from dentils. The drum follows with twelve circular niches of equal size. The frame of the niches is made up of foliage supporting a flower on top, which extends into the dartils. Below, the foliage develops into a triangular lotus flower set in between the niches. The upper storey has a circular roof but a twelve-cornered base, with twelve niches of equal size. The shouldered niches with double outline are framed by foliage developing from the tails of ganders (*hamsa*), which guard the projecting base. The strands of the foliage turn into fully opened lotus flowers crowning the arch of the niche. The corners are occupied by snake-virgins (*nadakanya*) in the pose of worship under the hood of a snake. A slim circular roof mould with dentils covers the upper storey, introducing another frieze with lotus leaves to correspond to the base frieze of the dome. The lower storey is of *vinsati-kona* shape. The four primary niches of the main axis are each crowned with a *kirtimukha* face, its big ears and horns turned downwards behind it (see detail drawing); their mouths engulf the outer outline of the niche. *Makara* creatures placed on small platforms above the base guard the opening of the niche, with foliage developing from their tails. The eight secondary niches are of the same height as the primary ones; the crowning *kirtimukha*, however, has only tiny ears, and its forbidding horns turn upward. The head bears a stylized lotus flower even bigger than the one above the primary niches. *Gandharvas* - half human, half bird - guard the niches from their location below the base of the niches. The heads of these celestial musicians are turned in such a way as to be facing the same direction. This asymmetry is unique. The eight tertiary niches are set on either side of the primary ones, and are much smaller in size. They are guarded by small ganders (*hamsa*) and framed by only a hint of foliage. The tertiary outline of the niche develops into a triangular lotus flower on top. The projecting middle portion of the *vinsatikona* plan provides space on the two shorter sides for a pair of ganders, the tails of which develop into profuse scrollwork. A roof moulding with dentils and a half-round covers the lower storey; the frieze on top, however, does not display lotus flowers but rather the *gandaka* motif, that is, a round window with a curved or stepped frame. The upper structure, made up of three building components, rests upon a low plinth shaped like a circular lotus flower, which is surrounded by a frieze of *vinsatikona* shape, its twelve outwardly pointed corners bearing engravings that commonly symbolize mountains.
The Cailya faces north-east, twelve degrees off true north. A brick-paved path of three to four metres in width leads around the building, whose four large niches contain the four Tathāgatas, with a smaller one dedicated to Vairocana and four vestigial ones with holes representing the Sakins of the Tathāgatas. Stones with later designs of various shape are aligned with the niches, and a small water basin containing a stone identified as Vasūkīndaka has been added in front of the northern niche. The Cailya was established by King Dharma-Deva about the middle of the fifth century; later inscriptions record repairs in 1606 by Pratāpa Malla and in 1771 by Mahendra-Malla. Only the base reliefs below the niches of the four Tathāgatas remained as donations made to the Cailya during the Licchavi period, most probably in the 7th or 8th century. The present shape of the dome and the niches may have been redesigned in the early 18th century, while the finial with its thirteen step-like tiers, the anulāka ring and the protruding central pillar may have assumed its shape during the 19th century. Three Lichchhavīcaityas were reused as niche finials (east, south, north), probably in the context of a thorough reshaping in the early 18th century.
The Neo-Licchavicaitya

The Licchavicaityas, whose structure evidently changed little, if at all, over the centuries — and most certainly not from the 6th to the 8th — were furnished in the 17th century not only with a new crown and placed on new multi-stepped pedestals. It is certain that they influenced so permanently the notion of what the traditional type of such votive buildings was that several donors decided to have the old formula of dome and drum, of storey division and niche revived — and that at a time when a new type of building began to emerge in the form of the Sikharakūtaicaitya.

To be sure, the examples that are judged to be Neo-Licchavicaityas are extraordinarily rare. During the detailed listing of all caityas three structures attracted notice that at the beginning — that is, in 1968/67 — were dated to the Licchavi period on the basis of the moldings in the area of the drums as well as on that of the notchings in the storey below. It was only after an intensive comparison with all other caityas of the early epoch that distinguishing stylistic features were brought to light. The caityas in question are those at Musūbāhā, Sighabhābā (both in Kathmandu) and at Tācaph (in Bhaktapur). The architectural order of the caitya at Sighabhābā is astonishingly correct, whereas in the case of the caitya at Musūbāhā the moulding of the drum creates an unproportioned effect from being set bluntly on the lower storey. The flat lower surface of the quarter-round profile is the only element recalling the molding of the Licchavi period.

At Tācaph, on the other hand, the drum molding has lapsed into a gratuitous notchings. In the two examples from Kathmandu, the uncommonly flat relief calls attention to itself, achieving, through the structuring of the niche space, a result that differs considerably from that of the Licchavi period. On the caitya at Musūbāhā, the lateral scrollwork has shrunk to a narrow strip, while the mask of the kirimukha at the crown appears disproportionately large. On the lower storey of the caitya at Sighabhābā, by contrast, a broad arch spans the niche frame, on which lotus motifs occur only scatteredly. Such a feature as represented by the arch cannot be found on Licchavicaityas.

The Tāhāgatas in the niches have been extremely well preserved on both caityas, so that it may be assumed, in view of the previously mentioned characteristics relating to composition, proportions and plastic form, that they were fashioned in the late 17th or even in the 18th century.

The relief of the caitya at Tācaph, on the other hand, has a quite different appearance, one positively archaic in nature. Though the motif of the gander (hamsa) is incorporated into the base of the niche frame, the vegetal motif is distributed over the crown in a highly simplified representation, with no lotuses or kirimukha mask. In its case, too, the assumption is that it originated in the 18th century.

A second group of Neo-Licchavicaityas came into being only in very recent times, from the middle of the 20th century onwards, and nowhere but in Kathmandu. In the southern part of the city there are two within the grounds of Musūbāhā and five in neighbouring Barenani, in the form of crowning elements of a large caitya shrine of pañchakāta design. The large base of this shrine should be mentioned because of its peculiar iconography. Amītābha presides over the usual direction, but Vairocana is found in the north, Ratnasambhava in the east and a Bodhisattva, Padmapani, in the south. Three other Neo-Licchavicaityas are found at Bodhicika, in the vicinity of Asā. Characteristic of the caityas from this most recent period is a highly simplified relief manifesting little artistic expressiveness. While a feeling for the motifs of the niche frames in their movement has been recaptured from those of the Licchavi period, the lotus leaves have scarcely anything in common with those of the old caityas. The base of the domes does not display the taper, characteristic of Licchavicaityas, that produces a bulgy form. Instead, the base widens out, producing the form of a pitcher. The example from Bodhicika displays, in addition, a multi-levelled division of the socle, which does not fail to include the scaly body of a serpent. Quite obviously, therefore, in the design of these crudely recreated caityas, recourse was had to the vocabulary of the most recent Sumerucaityas, which have practically become the norm within the last fifty years.

The example of a minuscule caitya at Sighabhābā in Kathmandu makes it clear that, in recreated versions of caityas, elements of various epochs have even been mingled. Whereas in this case the form of the niche obviously attempts to hark back to Licchavicaityas, the socle storey is divided in rough fashion by profiling, so that a feature of the Sikharakūtaicaityas of the 17th century surfaces. The dome rests on a pointed profile, beneath which the root of the socle storey rises diagonally, thus avoiding one of the customary drum profiles. Given the total disregard of form-governing laws, the result is necessarily one of unclear transactions. And, in fact, this example is a recent creation, one paying no heed to the traditions that were adhered to, refined and varied for over 1,500 years.
337. Patan: Caturvyūhacaitya at Thāpāhiti with Maitreya facing south, 7th century (Lāchāvē era).

338. Patan: Caturvyūhacaitya at Nāgāhāhiti with Maitreya facing east and placed against a shaft decorated with rockery. The flamed halo overlaps the moulding of the drum below a vestigial dome, which is now topped by a cemented finial.

339. Svayambhūnāth Hill: Caturvyūhacaitya with the Sakyamuni Buddha displaying the gesture of fearlessness (abhīṣamudrā), facing east. The left hand seems to be gathering up the robe.
The Caturvyūhacāitya

The present chapter is devoted to the Caturvyūhacāitya as an independent caitya type. There are a total of twelve examples of the type, but they cover, surprisingly, a period of fifteen hundred years: whereas the Caturvyūhacāitya on Svayambhūnāth Hill, according to Pratapaditya Pal (1974: 53–54), should be dated to the 5th century, the most recent example, at Lagbāhā in Kathmandu, dates to the late 19th or early 20th century.

Pal introduces the term caumukha (“four-faced”), noting that “the concept of a Buddhist caumukha appears to have had some currency in Bihar”, and he suspects that the idea of it derives from the Jaina tradition. Mary Slusser (1982: 171) subscribes to the same view and mentions, in addition, the four epanary forms of Visu (caturvyūha) as a possible reference. It is this term that is commonly used by Nepalese scholars, such as Hemraj Sākya.

The first example, from Svayambhūnāth Hill, at the same time corresponds in absolute terms to the oldest caitya in Nepal, even though the dome itself crowns a conically tapering shaft. This dome, in deviation from what is found on all other caityas of the Licchavi period, rests not on a drum with its typical moulded indentation but rather on a narrow torus. A further characteristic feature is the position of the shaft on a lotus base, with the latter resting in turn in a jaladroni (lit. “water duct”), the spout of which points northwards. Such jaladronis no longer occur in later Licchavi period caityas, and were first used again as a motif only eleven hundred years later during the construction of a replica for Itūbāhā in Kathmandu. At that same time there first occurred in Kathmandu the Jalaharyuparismo vomu caitya as an independent caitya type, on which the jaladroni appears raised atop a base, and four seated Tathāgata-tas take the place of the caumukha. Striking in the case of the caitya at Svayambhūnāth is the stuary motionlessness of the four figures, whose garments are only hinted at.

The Caturvyūhacāitya at the step-well sites of Nāgābhā and Thāpāhitī in Patan may have been erected one or two centuries later, as is perhaps also the case with the one in the outer courtyard of Thābhā in Kathmandu, although Pal (1974: 108) argues in favour of the 10th century for the latter. The first two cases display relatively small shafts (52 and 60 cm long), atop which are set minuscule domes (10 and 4 cm high); under the dome of the caitya at Nāgābhā may already be found the characteristic dome moulding, even if it is almost completely covered over by the haloes of the Bodhisattvas, who stand forth in shallow relief from the rock-carved shaft, now no longer stilly but in dehanchement. Pal has identified the figures as the Sākyamuni Buddha (north), Maitreya (south) and the Bodhisattvas Vajrapāṇī (east) and Padmapāṇī (west) – a grouping repeated on the Dhvakhabāhā, though not the Thāpāhitī caitya. On the former, Padmapāṇī, Vajrapāṇī and Maitreya are identifiable (in spite of the left hand having broken off in the last case); the figure to the north, however, is clearly represented as a Bodhisattva, with his sacred thread, armlet and crown.

On the Thābhā caitya in Kathmandu, the rockery with its swaying tips is distinctly separated by a profile from the smooth shaft, and the dome stands out boldly from it, its drum moulding intact. For the first time the actual element associated with caityas is more than a crowning addition, coming fully into its own architectonically.

Alongside these four examples, whose figures were modelled from a shaft, three further examples from the 7th century are found at Dhvakhabāhā, on Svayambhūnāth Hill and at Bodnāth, though at the last two places in a version smaller by about one fourth and without the figures. All cases represent a combination of a typical Licchavīcaitya with decorative niche frames, drum profile and moulded indentation of the storey placed on a narrow, shrine-like substructure. Pillars with stylized capitals mark the substructure’s corners, while the walls with the niche openings are somewhat set back. The outline of both domes by themselves clearly shows what scope was possible during the Licchavi period and to what extent design possibilities were restricted by norms. The caitya at Svayambhūnāth repeats almost down to the details the design programme of the caitya at Dhvakhabāhā, while still reserving some deviations for itself. For example, the dividing cover over caitya and base is set atop a lotus-leaf frieze instead of one displaying a doubled dentil motif, and the band of the profile is not subdivided into separate medallions.

The motif of the replica

Towards the end of the 16th century the Caturvyūhacāitya recurs as a type in the obvious replica of the Caturvyūhacāitya on Svayambhūnāth Hill at Itūbāhā in Kathmandu. The heavily damaged inscription on the covering over the shaft mentions the construction of a padaçayitaya during the period of King Sivasimhadeva (1578–1619). What is notable is the fact that the figures, this time already 96 cm tall, resemble those on Svayambhūnāth Hill in their stuary posture, and above all in what Pal (1974: 54) calls their “clumsy gestures”: Here, too, Maitreya is standing to the east, his right hand in the abhaya gesture and his left grasping the end of his robe. A Sākyamuni Buddha is again standing with a varada gesture in the south; another Budhha, with the dharmacakra mudrā, to the west; and a third, whose mudrā is averted in Gandhāra fashion, in the north. The figures’ arms extend out over the angular shaft, which is visible only in its upper portion. Their garments have a decorative lower border, and a carefully fashioned sash is draped over their legs; their heads are surrounded by a halo with...
flamed edging. A typical miniature caitya from the 17th century with the complete primary trio of finial, dome and moulded drum now rests atop the shaft. In the framed niches are placed the Tathāgatas of the four directions. Dentils and a stepped profile with raised corners serve as the base for the caitya, and at the same time as a covering for the shaft. The four Buddhas are each reposing atop a lotus flower rising up out of a block that, in the middle of the four directions, depicts the Caturmahārājas, the latter framed by a pair of makaras or lotus flowers.

Two further copies of the 5th-century caitya on Swayambhūnāth Hill is found in Kathmandu. At Lagābāhā, the shaft is set atop a round base, which in turn is set upon a two-stepped platform. Maitreya again faces east, the direction assigned to the future Buddha as early as the 16th century, at least whenever he appears with Vajrapāni (south), Padmapāni (west) and Mahāṣrī (north) in the group of the four Bodhisattvas. It is seen from the positions of the hands, even though difficult to identify, that this is a copy of the above-mentioned original. A caitya with finial, dome and drum rests upon the shaft, which at its upper extremity displays the jackfruit motif (New. phvāsi) typical of Sumerucaityas. The four Tathāgatas lean plaque-like against the drum. In this case the jaladroni is not present under the shaft. A second copy, this time a miniature version, is found at Janabāhā.

There exist three other Caturvyaḥacaityas along with the three obvious replicas. The one in Jyābāhā in Kathmandu rests on a jaladroni. Iconographically, it is more similar to the model in Thāpāhiti. The construction from the 17th century displays again Maitreya with his typical striated robe in the east and Padmapāni in the west; the two other Bodhisattvas are Ratnapāni in the south and Mahāṣrī in the north. The 60-centimetre-tall figures in 6-centimetre relief were sculpted identically, as Bodhisattvas with recurring details of dress, from the shaft, which rests on a lotus flower and dominates with its edges. A complete caitya with damaged finial, dome and drum profile rests on the shaft; the Tathāgatas again cover the profile as plaques, serving as a dividing element between shaft and caitya is a broad course in vimsatiṃkova shape, covered with rosette motifs. A rough version of the same type is also found on Swayambhūnāth Hill.

The second example is a caitya of almost identical size in the north-west corner of Nhyākacuka in Patan. This is a structure from the late 18th century. The shaft with the Bodhi-
sattvas typical of the period (east: Maitreya etc.) stands on a plinth of vimsatkona shape, and it in turn on a pedestal. The Bodhisattvas' heads are ringed by a halo, which in its further winding follows the edge of the shaft, thus recapitulating a feature of the nearby Thāpahīrī caiyā. Atop the shaft rests once again a complete caiyā with the four Tathāgatas in front of the dome and drum. The primary trio rests on a lotus flower with one circle of petals turned upwards and one circle of petals turned downwards—a motif that is elaborated into a dominant feature in the following examples.

**Caturvyāhaçaityas with padmāvali elements**

The Caturvyāhaçaitya as a type probably was transformed into something new at the end of the 17th century in Patan, no doubt at the same time as a replica of it was being installed at Itāhā in Kathmandu. One example was built in front of Jyābābā in Patan, and another followed in Thīmi more than a century later in what can only be considered a somewhat clumsy copy of the former one.

The caiyā at Jyābābā is datable by means of an inscription to the year 1680 and is surrounded by a covered stone wall that leaves only 30 cm free for a circumambulatory path (pradaksīnapāthā) between the caiyā and wall. In the corners are found the rudiments necessary for setting up a frame for supporting a canopy (iala) over the caiyā on festival days. The caiyā's shaft face, in contrast to the previous ones, is almost quadratic in the section where the Bodhisattvas are portrayed. The figures have a relief of 9 cm and rest on a half-round projecting lotus socle. The Bodhisattvas no longer dominate the shaft but are visually part of a larger representation, in which the highly protruding figures are woen about by a shallow relief of lotus stems arising out of two vases (kalasas) at both sides of the figures. Maitreya again faces east in his striated garment, his left hand in varadamudrā. Mahājūrī's symbols rest on two lotus flowers rising parallel to his arms: the sword (khadga) to the right, the book (pustaka) to the left; both hands form the dharmacakramudrā. The shaft rests on a vimsatikona-shaped quarter-round, which ends in the heads of a pair of serpents framing the lotus
flower under Mañjusri. Resting on the shaft is the typical roof moulding with raised corners, and above it rise seven circles of petals of a profusely blooming lotus flower (padmāvāli); six are turned downward and one upward.

The motif of the lotus that, according to the Svayambhūpurāṇa, arose out of the Nāghrada ("serpent lake") thus occurs twice: once under the Bodhisattvas, where the serpents symbolize the Primordial Ocean, and again a second time in the shape of a lotus under the primary trio of the cāitya.

The cāitya at Dīgutā in Thimi repeats the essential features of the example from Patan. However, the shaft ends in a festoon, and its base rests on a socle of vimsatkona shape, displaying altogether eight lotus blossoms. Squatting serpent kings (nāgarājas) appear above the lotuses in the corners. The most important innovation, however, is the moulded profile that divides the longish shaft down the middle. The Bodhisattvas cover only half of the shaft's surface. While the plinth largely repeats the arrangement found in Patan, a second snake body ending in one head is placed below the lotus flower, five circles of whose petals are here turned down, and two up. The details elucidate the extent to which a sculptor was allowed to deviate from the prototype that his client obviously had ordered.

A more decisive variation of the caturvyūha type of cāitya was already being formed in 1688 at Trān̄n̄i in the Kvalalāche quarter in Patan. The overall design very much resembles that of Jyāhāhāi: the shaft, however, is of vimsatkona shape and is divided by a moulded profile, while the relief of the Bodhisattvas covers only little more than half of the shaft's surface.
345. East: Maitreya.
347. Dharmacakramudrā at the Caturvṛtyācāitya.
348. Swyambhunāth Hill: Caturvṛtyācāitya north-west of the Mahācāitya, elevation east and top view, scale 1:10.

This archaic and unique structure with the caitya dome on top reduced to a vestigial element no doubt dates to the Licchavi era. It served as a kind of prototype for later caityas in Kathmandu that are similar in design and proportion (at līṭābahā, early 17th century; at Jyābahā, 17th century; at Lagābahā, late 19th century). The final represents the only recent element. The platform, on which a monolithic and slightly conical shaft with four representations of the Buddha stands, is shaped in the form of a planedron, its mouth facing north. The four Buddhas are popularly associated with four famous places that figured in the life of the Buddha, namely Kapilavastu, Vaisali, Sārnāth and Bodh Gaya. The image in the east (see drawing) displays the gesture of assurance (abhaya) with the right hand raised; the left hand is turned down, gathering up the ends of the robe below the waistline. The southern image makes the gesture of munificence (varuṇa), its left hand again gathering up the ends of the robe, while also bearing a small lotus flower. The gestures of the other figures are not clearly defined. Pal (1974: 53/54) suggests that one is a crude version of the dharmacakramudrā (west), and the other (north) a rudimentary form of this gesture that originated in Gandhāra, in which the right hand is clasped over the fingers of the left one. The eastern figure can probably be identified as Maitreya, who is found with virtually the same gesture and in an identical position on later Caturvṛtyācāityas, ones already mentioned above, on which he always faces east. Pratapaditya Pal points out the clumsiness of the gestures, the delineation of the broad and Mongoloid face and the astonishing flatness of profile. The four figures stand on a lotus flower, and each is sculptured in moderate relief on the smooth-surfaced shaft. The shaft extends beyond the figures and forms a halo-like semicircle above their heads. In architectural terms, the structure displays another peculiarity; the dome rests on a half-round mould which is partly overlapped by the four semicircles of the shaft. This Licchavīcāitya is thus the only one without an articulate drum. Pal postulates that it may "represent one of the earliest attempts by a Nepali sculptor to imitate a Sārnāth Buddha." He tentatively dates it to the late 5th century with the remark "that the rather coarse delineation of the hands betrays the Nepali artist's inadequate understanding of the gestures"; a confusion which could only have occurred at that early stage.
Kathmandu: Caturvyūhacaitya at Bha-
gavainaha in Thamel, elevation west, scale 1:4 and top
view, scale 1:5.

Swayambhunath Hill: Licchavicaitya in front of the
Devadhanamahāvihāra, elevation west and top view,
scale 1:5.

Two-storied monolithic Licchavicaitya with dome and
drum and a finial of recent origin. The caitya is set in a
jagati, which is partly covered by the plaster of an
adjacent large caitya. The niches of both the upper storey
and the lower lower storey are vacant. All carvings
have worn away and are hardly traceable. The upper
part of the caitya with dome, drum, and a finial of recent
origin, which share a common head. Unusual is the high lower
storey of square plan, with pilasters in the corners. The
frame of the shouldered niche is decorated with foliage.
The roof above serves as a clear division between the
upper caitya structure and the lower shrine-like storey.
The projection of the roof displays three lotus flowers
in a frame.
The Caturvārhyakāyika rests on the axis of the krūpāvāra of the bāha, and is aligned with two recent raiyas as well as the small fragment of another Lēchāvaiyaka. In 1994 it was enclosed by railings. The north-eastern corner of the socle has broken off and been restored with plaster; otherwise the raiya is well preserved. It is the best-known Lēchāvaiyaka monument, repeatedly mentioned and described by art historians. Pratapaditya Pal writes that it represents, “art historically, one of the most significant sculptural works in Nepal” (1974: 27-33). He agrees with Stella Kramrisch’s dating of it (1964: 27-29) to the 7th century, which he bolsters by comparing it with related material in India. The tall monolithic structure displays two distinct sections under the primary raiya. Pal goes so far as to call the whole a “miniature temple”. The initial is of recent origin, as is the incision of the raiya into a small plinth. The corners of the upper section have partly broken off (south), but the carvings survive in good condition. The dome has a squat appearance and rests on a drum of typical Lēchāvaiyaka moulding without dentils. Below the primary raiya follows a square upper storey, from which niches and recumbent corner lions project. The four Tathāgatas in the niches are identical, each displaying the samādhi mudrā characteristic of Amīśālha. Whereas on the similar raiya at Vāhāha in Patan the Tathāgatas sit on the same level as the lions, here they rest on a shallow step which forms a base for the niche, the latter displaying a strict vertical alignment. The curved and shouldered foliated niche frame rests on a row of five beads, which forms an intermediate element. The scrollwork of the frame rises towards the crowning āṇuśāvaṇa face but does not touch it. The āṇuśāvaṇa, represented with pronounced nose, eyes and ears, seems to devour the frame of the niche. A lotus flower is supported by his crown-like horns. The corner lions are set apart from the niche proper, although they occupy the same level. The scrollwork of their tails impinges on the niche frames. Pal attributes a “hieratic majesty” to these lions that accords with a basic scheme developed by the Guptas. The lower storey contains figures 70 cm in height standing in deep niches. These figures were earlier [Pal and others] identified as Maitreya (west), Padmapani (south), Sākyamuni (east) and Vajrapāni (north). Recently Adalbert Gaili (1992: 85) produced further evidence that in the Nepalcse context Sākyamuni in a sitedrobe should be reidentified as Maitreya, the future Buddha. John Locke (1989: 78) credits “popular devotion” with being the moving force that “identifies the image as Maitreya”. Nepalese scholars label his gesture vināyakaupamāndita. Above the shrine-like lower storey there is a projecting roof, which at the same time serves as a base for the upper storey. The upper section of the crown profile displays a row of rosettes in strict symmetry; below follow doubled dentils. The primary order of the lower storey is an architectural one with carefully carved three-quarter pillars below brackets – a scheme which transports wooden architecture onto a miniature shrine of stone. The decorative patterns on the pillar are unique and do not appear on any other raiya. In deviation from Lēchāvaiyaka
pillars which survive only as fragments, the miniature pillars of this caitya display a full floral medallion as a base and a half-medallion at its upper end. The proper frame of the slightly recessed niche has an articulate shoulder and a complete semicircular arch carved with different motifs that vary from one side of the caitya to the next. Pal discusses at length the qualities and iconographic peculiarities of the three Bodhisattvas and the Sakyamuni Buddha. The main points: Padmapani is accompanied by a suavely and richly modelled korecling female to his right and holds a lotus in his left hand. He wears a serpent as an armlet, a distinct triple-lobed crown on his head and a heavy shawl of volumetric delineation across his thighs. The stalk of the lotus always in serpentine fashion as it rises to support a full-drawn flower. Vajrapani grasps the upper portion of a cakra emerging from the head of a dwarf who, with his arms in the attitude of submission, is the personification of that attribute. One of the Bodhisattvas represents the future Buddha, Maitreya. Pal mentions that "from an early period it was common practice to depict Maitreya in the garb of the Buddha" (1974:28). With their left hand raised to shoulder level to gather up the ends of the robe with an elegant sweep and their right hand in the varada gesture, the figures of Maitreya and Sakyamuni are identical down to the belt around the waist. Pal points out that the artist has "clearly followed the Mahārāja convention in delineating the garment of Maitreya with formal striation added to emphasize the volume of the garment", and adds that "the manner of holding the robe shoulder high almost certainly originated in the Amāvaśya region of India and was used ubiquitously by the sculptors of Ajanta during the Gupta period" (1974:29). The Maitreya of the Divyakālāmālā might well have served as the prototype for hundreds of 17th- and 18th-century caityas that show him in his characteristic striated robe; he has continued to be depicted in this fashion down to the present. In later times, however, Maitreya invariably occupies the niche facing east; he never is associated with the Tathāgatas, only with the Bodhisattvas. The small so-called fragments of an inscription on its eastern face.

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354–355. Patan: Caturvyūha caitya at Dvaharni in Hkhā. 354, 355. The caitya is set in a shrine of elaborate stone architecture built in 1665. The roof, in the shape of a caitya, is supported by four bracketed pillars. The niches of the caitya house the four Tathāgatas and are topped by a dharma-cakra flanked by a pair of deis (nāgarī). The entrances of the lower shrine storey are treated like niche openings, being crowned by a frieze-like tympanum displaying the face of a karunakha above the centre, while the flanking mukaras turn their heads either towards the face to engulf the body of a snake (north and south) or away from the centre. 356. Elevation west, scale 1:5. The four Bodhisattvas (W: Padmapani, N: Mahāpaj, E: Maitreya, S: Vajrapani) emerge from the shaft, their flamed halo overlapping its moulded end, which serves as a socle for the caitya on top. The primary two tests on a base of vimānaka shape and a lotus flower, overlapped by plaques of the four Tathāgatas. The thirteen tiers of the finial end abruptly, with an incised circle on the flat top.
357. Patan: Caturvṛtyaḥacāitya in front of Jyābāhi, hall in 1600, elevation north and top view, scale 1:20. The cāitya stands on a double-stepped plinth and thus almost rises to the level of the encircling wall, which defines an enclosed interior space without any access. The shaft below the upper trio represents the main feature of the cāitya. It assumes the dimensions of the base stone of a Śikhara-kālācaitya, though one in which the four Bodhisattvas are not set into niches but emerge in high relief, while creepers rise from vases (kalasa) toward the frame. The Bodhisattvas rest on lotus flowers projecting from the shaft. On the northern side, two snakes developing from the quarter-round profile of the socle below the shaft frame the lotus flower on which Mahājāri stands in dharmacakramudrā, his symbols (khadga and pustika) resting on other lotus flowers. The Tathāgatas are engaged to the drum, which rests on a profusely petalled lotus flower, six circles of which are turned downwards and one upwards. The finial displays the symbols of the Tathāgatas on the shields, behind which the spire rises with eleven discs.


359. Patan: Caturvṛtyaḥacāitya at Nvākkācaka, probably modelled after the example from Itūbāhā towards the end of 11th century, but introducing the four conventional Bodhisattvas (Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi—seen on the picture with the vajra placed on the lotus flower—, Padmapāṇi and Mañjuśrī) instead of four representations of the Śākyamuni Buddha.

360. Thimi: Caturvṛtyaḥacāitya at Dīgauta, elevation north and top view, scale 1:10. Mañjuśrī evolves from the shaft in dharmacakramudrā, with his symbols (khadga and pustika) placed on lotus flowers.
The monumental caitya

Definition and chronological setting

When one thinks of "monumental caityas", then one has in mind primarily structures that were for the most part built in the 16th and 17th centuries, and are distinguishable from Licchavicaityas and Sikharakūtacaityas (the latter type began to appear around 1650) first and foremost by reason of their size. As a rule, the Licchavicaityas were small objects, and only in individual cases, as in the largest examples in Cabahil, did they attain a height of 180 cm, thus approaching in size the later common Sikharakūtacaityas, late representatives of which, from the 19th century, were only exceptionally more than 200 cm tall. The "monumental caitya" thus stands out, in the truest sense of the word, from the mass of votive structures. It is not - that it is to say, it is no longer - the representative of a miniature architecture whose intention it is to recreate a model on a reduced scale. Instead, buildings arise that have an impact on the urban space and stand in true proportion to the built-up environment.
361. Kathmandu: View in 1988, from the south-east, of the large caitya at Tukabaha, which was repaired in 1614 by King Sadasiva Malla. In August 1995 the pipal tree was removed, the dome replastered, and a newly designed finial added.

362. Kathmandu: Location of 25 monumental caityas in a variety of forms, 7th to 19th centuries. Legends connect the three large caityas at Tukabaha, Tebahia and Cibhabakhya to Asoka. The circular base of the Tukabaha caitya no doubt dates to the 7th century, while the bases of the other caityas survive in much altered form. The second group of large caityas includes those at Sighabaha, Veckhabaha and Mahabauddha. No information exists about their foundation. For the caitya at Pyukha and Taspakha, inscriptions testify to renovations in 1554 and 1592, suggesting much older foundation dates. The two examples from Maru represent a prototype built in moulded bricks which was widely used during the 17th century.

363. Patan: Location of 51 monumental caityas in a variety of forms, 13th to 18th centuries. Besides the four mounds (shukdar) that define the urban space of Patan, there are three large caityas at Guita and Pimbaha that bear inscriptional evidence from the 13th and 14th centuries but are probably much older. The next group of caityas, at Kaviyabaha and the northern shukdar, was probably erected during the 16th century; inscriptions testify to renovations in 1614 and 1615 respectively. A third group, at Ukubaha and Guipbah, from the late 17th century, introduces large lotuses to form the base under extended drum mouldings. All others conform to the designs of the regular prototype and were erected during the 17th and early 18th centuries.
Monumental caityas, which as a type are usually called in inscriptions Vajradhātucaityas, first appear in the period that we may justifiably call the “dark epoch”, as far as the history of the development of caityas is concerned. There is a total lack of reliable data on the original donation of such structures. Inscriptions that tell of the renovation of these caityas in the years 1524 (Thahiti, Kathmandu), 1554 (Pyukha, Kathmandu), 1587 (Thimi), 1592 (Tāsāpākha, Kathmandu) or 1614 (Kvayabahi, Patan) and 1615 (at the northern lāndvā, Patan) suggest that they arose in the early 16th or even as early as the 15th century. Only in the case of the caitya at Thahiti is the foundation reliably dated, there to 1482.

Supported by a number of datings, the development of variations can be traced into the following 18th century and, in individual cases, up into the 19th and early 20th centuries. Under the term “monumental caitya”, therefore, are subsumed a group of buildings that – if one disregards the few earlier structures – occur repeatedly over a period of four hundred years.

A relatively heterogeneous group of caityas will be described in the following, during the course of which historical and typological considerations will continually overlap. In the final analysis, the buildings are of mixed provenance. On the one hand, the old prototypes have survived, and on the other, a trend may be noted under whose influence votive caityas once again develop out of monumental ones. Ever new variations arise over a period of several centuries, in an unbroken dialogue between model and representation.

Location and distribution

Altogether some 140 examples of variously shaped monumental caityas have been identified, including a few miniature versions that reflect the design of the larger ones. Patan takes the lead with 59 caityas, followed by Kathmandu with 26, and Kirtipur with 10. The type spread out into almost every settlement, with a particularly marked presence in eight villages south of Patan, including five in Chapagaon, three in Baregaon, three in Thābā, and three in Thēva. In contrast, only five such caityas are found in Bhaktapur, but there are eight in Thēmi, where they add considerably to the townscape, in that part of it where the main road leads along the ridge.

Many of the monumental caityas are placed in the courtyards of monasteries: to mention only a few, those at Tabāhā, Dhumbāhā, Kvbāhā, Bhelakhubhāhā, Sijabhāhā and Nhūbhāhā in Patan, and those at Tabāhā, Tabāhā, Yetkhāhāhā and Sīgabhāhāhā in Kathmandu. More often, and in contrast to caitya types prevalent in the 18th century, they are located on public squares, which they tend to dominate by reason of their massiveness. Their placement in a sequence of several squares even suggests a preconceived pattern, which remains to be deciphered. For example, the three caityas of Kvātalāchā, Chāyabhāhāvā and Nautā in Patan seem to be deliberately placed to mark the western edge of the city, corresponding to others in town at Kvbālakā Square. Dupāt and Tyāgāh. In the same manner, two caityas in Kathmandu of moderate dimensions, each following the same design in moulded bricks, stand astride the road that leads from the Bisnumati River up to Maru. Two other caityas of a similar design at Tāsāpākha, provisionally dated to the 17th and 18th centuries, mark the place where Svayambhū Bhagavān is welcomed with ḫwakkuṣapāja on the occasion of his procession down from Svayambhūnāth Hill into Kathmandu during samek.

Svayambhūnāth Mahācaitya: the prototype

The Svayambhūnāth Mahācaitya is widely considered to be the prototype of all caityas of the valley of Nepal Mandala. Not only does it stand for the creation of the microcosmos; it has also served as the point of reference for all caityas, no matter what shape they assume over the following fifteen hundred years. The votive caityas of the Licchavi era, however, the largest of which rise to a maximum of 180 cm, are guided by a structural and architectural vocabulary of their own. Their articulated drum moulding and sequence of “storeys” do not reflect the design scheme of any prototype but rather seem to have developed in a dialogue with contemporary caityas at North Indian Buddhist centres like Nāgārjuna and Nalanda.

Almost no trace of the original Svayambhūnāth caitya has survived down to the present day. The finial has been renewed and thus changed more than a dozen times; the circular plinth and the niches have been enlarged, adding even more layers around the ancient core. With its repetition of finials (gañjukas), the caitya today rises to a height of 27 metres.

The basic scheme of finial, dome and circular plinth, however, certainly dates back to the 6th century and has been replicated several times since. The three caityas at Tukāhāhā (in Kathmandu), Guita (in Patana) and in Cabahīl preserve this scheme at its purest, although only the circular plinths of the caitya at Tukāhāhā and the Dharmadevacaitya in Cabahīl retain fragments of ancient bas-reliefs, which without doubt date back to the Licchavi era. The caitya of Guita received a new layer of lime and brick dust plaster only in recent times. The more ancient niche frames of an earlier version can still be identified, however, with the southern one bearing an inscription from the year 1247. New, too, is the stepped design of the finials on the caityas of Guita and Cabahil, which apparently are modelled on the finial of the caitya at Bodhānāth.
A more literal repetition of the Swayambhūnāth caitya is represented by the Pulāsēgucaiṭya, which is considered to be the ancient (New, pulă) or primeval caitya on the hill by the community of Buddhācāryas living on it. It is this caitya to which Swayambhū Bhagavān, represented by Aksobhya, is brought by that community on the occasion of their digudayāpāja or during the performance of life-cycle rituals for their male members.

The finial of Pulāsēgucaiṭya with its nine tiers may represent an ancient tradition, but it is quite possible that the two uppermost tiers were lost when the finial collapsed in 1934. The design of the entire structure, including the miniature caityas topping the frames of the niches, seems to be of 19th- if not early 20th-century origin. Similarly, the Vasubandhucaitya nearby is said to represent a copy of certain features of Swayambhūnāth, as in 1825 the five Tathāgatas, stone sculptures that were replaced in the Mahācaitya by King Nṛpendra Malla (1674 to 1680), were reenshrined there. As the donors were Tibetan monks, the finial with its 13 steps follows again the scheme of Bodhānāth. A third monumental caitya on the hill, located beside the Vasubandhucaiṭya, has an articulated bulging dome that rests on what could be called the makings of a short drum but, as on the Vasubandhucaiṭya, is supported by a flight of square plinths. One rare feature is the fact that the structure has no niches – probably the single such example with a dominant dome.

The caityas on Swayambhūnāth Hill that are said to have been modelled on the ancient prototype represent the most recent examples of the monumental caityas under discussion here.
The more ancient ones, with a dominant dome and large niches engaged to the dome and drum, are the ones at Sighabhähā, at Mahābuddha and near Tebhāh in Kathmandu. To a certain extent, the caitya at Cibhākhhyā may also be counted among these, although it was entirely renewed some sixty years ago and again reshaped some ten years ago, and now has a bulging dome of hitherto unparalleled proportions.

The caitya at Sighabhähā also goes by the name Kathesibhū, the "Svayambhūnātha of Kathmandu." The entire courtyard houses, in fact, the religious infrastructure of Svayambhūnāth Hill and thus not only represents the caitya itself but is considered a replica of the nearby sanctuary with all its subsidiary shrines. In a way, Kathesibhū does not represent the most accurate replica of the Svayambhūnātha caitya, but this first impression is misleading. A drawing made in 1854 depicts the caitya in ruins (Wright 1972: 63), with much smaller niches and a deflected finial. The large dome with its flat drum already rests on a stepped plinth of vinisatikōna shape, with the Lichchūvīcāya places placed in the corners being reduced to relics of ancient times.

The earliest available inscription dates to 1552 and records a renovation. Admittedly, we do not know anything about the shape of the caitya at that time; we can only assume that it may not have been very different from the shape recorded in 1854.

Two other groups of caityas, whose representatives are considerably smaller than the examples described so far, are oriented, in terms of shape, towards the Svayambhūnātha caitya, with niches that are set into the drum and that extend far up into the dome. There are a total of five caityas with a circular plinth: in Chapagaon, Balābu, Patan (Sibhāhā) and Kathmandu. The two representatives in Chapagaon date to 1705 and 1725 – that is, they align themselves with the Svayambhūnātha prototype at a relatively late period. In the case of the caitya in Balābu and at Sibhāhā, the shift in scale down to a votive caitya approximately one metre in height demonstrates that the stepped round socle under the primary trio was an option that, while seldom made use of at the beginning of the 18th century, nevertheless represented an accepted approach.

In a variation of the round socle, caityas of the same type, with plinths of square or vinisatikōna shape, arose with certainty from the 16th century onwards. In this combination, the two-five-to-six-metre-tall caityas at Tāsipākha and Tebhāh (both in Kathmandu) embody the ideal of the 16th century, in which the dome of the structure stands out fairly prominently. In both cases, the socle lays claim to an extended space: there are three or four traversable steps on the quadratic flat plinth of the socle leading to the drum, in which niches the Tathāgatas are housed. The most prominent representative of this type is, without a doubt, the approximately 10-metre-tall Cīlavacācāya in Kīrtipur, whose monumental site surely goes back to the 12th century. A further remodelling dates to 1509, thus offering additional evidence for developments in the 16th century.

Five further caityas in Sanagaon and Patan (Gujibhāhā, Ukubhāhā/Yetalībī and Pūcavā) occupy a place more or less between the two previously described types. They appropriate the traditional order of niches set into a broadly curved drum profile, but the primary trio rests on a two-stepped socle, the bottommost step being quadratic, and the one above it of vinisatikōna shape. Indeed these caityas, which were built in the second half of the 17th or in the early 18th century, assume the form of enlarged votive caityas and attain heights of as much as 750 cm (Sanagaon). The foundation, consisting of one or two quadratic plinths, has a serene and stable effect. Above it towers another socle level of vinisatikōna shape, which forms the base for a truly large lotus blossom that opens out upwards and downwards. On all other caitvas previously described in this chapter, the S-shaped profile of the drum could be identified as a lotus, on top of which the dome finally rests. What elsewhere is perhaps covered by layers of plaster has clearly been carved out in stone and preserved for later generations on the caityas in Sanagaon, at Gujibhāhā and on Pūcavā hill. In repetition of the lotus motif, however, the entire primary trio now rests on a completely unfolded lotus blossom. The allusion to the Sikharakulacāya type, which was becoming standard in the middle of the 17th century, is made eminently clear by this motif being placed under the primary trio and by the reduction of the

366. Comparative representations of a “monumental” caitya and a Sikhara-kulacāya.

While the basic features and the sequence of the stepped socle remain the same, other features, such as the primary trio and the squat storey with the Tathāgatas, are reduced to fit into the vertical composition. The most important innovation is the introduction of the base storey with Bodhisattvas as a shrine-like element called the kītāqrāra.

367. Comparative representations of six examples of the “monumental” caitya type, dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

The primary trio of finial, dome and drum, and the socle with its quarter-round moulding, very much correspond to designs used in 17th-century Sikhara-kulacāyas. The shape of the bulging dome and the moulding of the drum are in fact identical in both types. The example from Nubhāhā corresponds down to the size. In general, however, the dome is much larger than those on Sikhara-kulacāyas. The niches of the squarish base storey invariably project to form architecturally suggestive elements, a notable feature found even in a rare miniature version at Nubhāhā. In marked contrast to earlier and contemporary designs, the usual vinisatikōna shape of the base is replaced by a circular base of lotus flower shape, while the niches extend into the drum moulding.
In addition, the two structures in Patan and the one on the hill of Pucva resort to the tympana motif as the crowning element of the niche, a feature common after the completion of the Mahabuddha temple in 1601, as described in detail elsewhere. The caitya on Pucva dates to 1714, and the one at Yetali to 1685. With this little to go by, it is clear that this niche motif enjoyed great popularity at the turn of the 18th century. The inscription on Pucva is of particular interest, moreover, because it states expressly that the sponsor (danapati), Bhavanvarimayi, in constructing the caitya in stone, built it over an older caitya, in the name of the deceased Kutu Simha.

The flattening of the niche storey as a typological feature

Along with caitvas that, in their round base and niches that stand out from the drum profile, follow the example set by Swayambhunath, a new type of caitya developed, presumably as early as the 14th century, in which the primary trio rests on a flattened socle storey of vimshati-kona shape, the niches being now assigned to the latter. The primary trio rises out up of the multi-stepped substructure in a clear architectonic sequence that avoids any obscuration of the ground plan and the profile. The separation of the multi-stepped substructure from the primary trio on top of it thus occurs more distinctly than ever before - a separation that is largely dispensed with in the later development. For in the 18th and 19th centuries the Tathagatas are once again attached to the primary trio in the manner of plaques, in most cases to the drum moulding, but in rare cases even to the vault of the dome.

The rise of the squat storey element and its spread in the 16th century remains unexplained. The caitya at Subhahiti, whose inscription documents its origin in the year 758, represents the actual prototype, in which a broad socle storey containing a median torus is first recognizable. The flattened storey is divided by a torus that continues around corners and is interrupted along the axes by niches. The profile covering the pilaster-framed niches is assimilated into the one covering the storey as a whole. This, too, provides an essential formal resource of later monumental caitvas. These two special features of the Subhahiti caitya were destined to develop in two directions. For the Sikharakutacaitya of the 17th century, the socle storey with its vertical effect became characteristic, its niches additionally creating space for a new iconographic element, the four Bodhisattvas. Above it, the squat upper storey with the Tathagatas takes on the appearance, if anything, of a decorative element. Only a closer look reveals that the upper storey is a miniaturization of the socle storey that had probably been standard since the 16th century on the larger caitvas.

For the monumental caitvas, which certainly dominated the scene by the beginning of the 17th century, the flattened, squat storey is the norm. A comparative representation shows that the profiles with their upturned edges in the kulat style up and down the storey become so prominent in the 17th century that only a very small wall surface can be made out next to the obligatory torus profile.

In order to provide some idea of the architectural development of the caitya in what has previously been termed the "dark" epoch, recourse to a pictorial representation may exceptionally be allowed. In a palm-leaf manuscript dating to 1015, the primary trio with its five levels rests on a socle storey. This storey has a cover and rests on the primary trio and a doubly unfolded lotus. Instead of a niche, one can make out a wave-like motif, which can be interpreted as the body of a serpent. The socle storey without any niche in a sense documents a type that has not been architecturally preserved. Only in the 18th century will there again be a few Sikharakutacaityas without niches in the base storey.

Tectonic analysis

Analysing a "monumental" caitya and a Sikharakutacaitya into their component parts and then confronting them with each other on the same scale shows that the leap in scale is the most important distinguishing feature. The squat storey turns into a finely crafted piece of work, whose wall surface is reduced to a few millimetres. The niches containing the Tathagatas pierce the profile of the covering roof, with a form totally independent of the latter, whereas in the monumental caitya the horizontal lines are unbroken, thus strengthening the low outline of the structure. In the profiles of the cover layer of the monumental caityas, moreover, the corners with their swaying tips have a far gentler effect on the eye than they do on Sikharakutacaityas, where their repetitive occurrence blurs any notion of corners and supports the vertical intent of the structure.

If one could characterize the two types of caitvas in general terms at all, one would have to say that the monumental type achieves a balance between the horizontal masses of the substructure and the verticality of the superstructure with its tiered finial and protruding central pillar. In the sikharakutis type, all elements contribute to a general sense of verticality, somewhat pyramidal in character. The flat square plinth below the entire composition does not balance out these forces but merely seems to provide and demarcate their proper setting.

A further glance at the comparative presentation of the six exponents of the type under discussion demonstrates the extent of variation in roofing profiles above the base storey and in the moulded foot of the storey. More often than not the roofing profile is made up of a double
layer in a repetition of kūla motifs. Precisely this repetition is what characterizes the roofing above the base storey of the Sikharakutacaitya, in which no roofing ever occurs above the squat upper storey.

Another feature is striking from an overview perspective: while the caitya at Neta in Kathmandu is of a truly "monumental" character (270 cm tall) compared to the sikharakuta type (a term that refers to the mountain-like appearance of temple towers), the caitya at Khapichëcuka (210 cm tall), built in 1652, is already approaching the size of a Sikharakutacaitya. The high square plinth and the intermediate level with 36 niches stress the pyramidal character of the composition. The same is true of the terracotta caitya of the neighbouring Yagnā courtyard with its 44 niches on the intermediate level. The caitya at Lubhu exploits the same option, having four protruding niches on the intermediate level. At Khapichëcuka, only 32 figures remain, in a pose of devotion, while the figures of the central niches are lost. As on the Lubhu caitya, the Tathagatas of the base storey above are repeated, and the same may have been true of the caitya at Khapichëcuka or the elaborate caitya at Mihubāhā. One might even go so far as to maintain that, as regards their iconographic programmes, the defining features of the monumental caityas, and the variations on them in size and shape, are confined to the Tathagatas alone. It is thus the introduction of the specific substructure of the sikharakuta element that allowed for a placement of the Bodhisattvas on a level below the Tathagatas. Only on the caitya built of moulded bricks in 1856 at Tēbāhā does a Maitreya occur alone, depicted on the stone slab that serves for the inscription.

In a way, one could replace the intermediate levels of the caityas discussed above by a fully developed base storey complete with Bodhisattvas and end up with a fully developed Sīkharakutacaitya, albeit of large size. This observation can even be brought down to a more general level: caitya types survive down through the centuries, while new ones evolve; whatever components are found between the primary trio and a square plinth or platform seem to be interchangeable. Only in rare cases can iconographical restrictions be observed.

In the same way, the early 19th-century caitya at Tēbāhā, which was established some two hundred years later than the well-developed prototypes of the 17th century in Māra and Tāspākha, attains the proportions and size of a typical contemporary votive caitya, while displaying a marked verticality. The example from Nhūbāh represents the most refined reduction in size. With its prominent and even dominant niches, this caitya seems to be modelled after a monumental archetypal well known to the craftsman.

The small-sized base storey of monumental caityas also served as a support for relocated Lichehacaityas. Thirteen such cases have been identified in Patan alone, and inscriptive evidence suggests that most of them were relocated and reestablished throughout the entire 17th century.

368. 369. Detail of a palm-leaf manuscript dated 1015 (published by Bechter and Knobloch 1984: 67). The drawing to the left represents the tracing from the manuscript; to the right, a transcription into an architectural drawing.

370. Kathmandu, Kathmandu Suryabāhāra, view of the dilapidated building as seen in 1856 by Henry Ambrose Oldfield.
371. Elevation west, scale 1:100.


374. Kathmandu: Sighahabhi (Srighatamahavihara) or Khyselbhu, site plan.

Within the spacious courtyard of the bahva, whose central caitya rests on a high platform, are located the mansions of the elements (1= Vayupura/air wind; 2= Vyasupura/earth; 3= Agnipura/fire; 4= Nagapuraput water and 5= Santipura/sky), the shrine building behind the courtyard housing the sacred vessels (srignaha), the Navadurga and a Laxchav inscription. The courtyard also houses a temple dedicated to Hariti and a figure in a large niche representing Manjusri. The sacred pattern of Swayambhunath Hill is thus found replicated within the urban context of Kathmandu town. On the southern side of the quadrangle lies the esoteric shrine (agakh) of the Sakyamuni, while several buildings (sahab) belonging to the bahva are located on the western side, including one hall for the annual exhibition of the Buddhas (buddhavah). A special hall for the music group of the bahva (Gumenala sahab) and a newly founded Theravada monastery for nuns (Dharmanakritisvihara) add to the variety of institutions. Forty-eight votive caityas are colonized around the central caitya so as to reflect its orientation of five degrees off that of the courtyard, which latter conforms to the urban street grid. Fifteen of these caityas are rectangular ones, of which eight (a) are embedded on the corners of the two stepped platforms of the central caitya, and eight others (b) are Sumeru caityas of recent origin.

Cilacavahal (Cithabahal) compound: besides the large Cilacavacaiya (1) with four caityas (2,3,4,5) in its corners, there are seven more caityas, two caitya fragments (13,14), lotus stones representing Swayambhunath (15) and Guhyesvari (16) and a sikhaa temple (17) dedicated to the Sakyamuni Buddha. 6: caitya on a round base; 7: Sikharakutacaiya; 8: caitya on an octagonal base; 9: monumental caitya built in brick, dated 1088. 10: Sikharakutacaiya; 11: fragments of a monumental caitya; 12: Sumercacaiya, dated 1088.

376. Kharipur: location of 53 caityas (based on a map by Herdick).

Fourteen of the 23 Sumercacaiyas are located in the north-western quarter of the town (Devrat), where no caitya of another type is found. The thirteen Sikharakutacaiyas are all located around Cilacavahal (1) with its dominating five caityas on a raised platform. Similarly, four 17th-century monumental caityas (2:1668; 3:1665; 4:5) are centred on the Cilacavacaiya, which underwent a far-reaching restructuring in 1589. Another large brick caitya below Cilacavacaiya was built in 1688. The twelve dated Sumercacaiyas were built between 1912 and 1962. Number 6, representing a hybrid form of caitya, with the four Bodhisattvas being replaced by Siva, Visnu, Rama and Krishna, was built in 1971.


Right: detail of the southern niche.
380, 381. Chapagson: cāitya on a circular socle and a flat square platform, built in 1705 in Yakhavā. The primary trio, with finial, dome and drum measuring a total height of 280 centimetres, represents a four-to fivefold enlarged version of the primary trio of the contemporary Sīkharakṣa-cāitya. The architecturally framed niches with the Tathāgatas intersect the gentle slope of the drum moulding.

380. Top view. Scale 1:40.
82. 83. Luhur: monumental caitya, 17th century.
82. Top view, scale 1:40.
83. Elevation east, scale 1:20.


386. Patan: monumental cāitya at Daubāhānani, elevation east and top view.

Each niche on all sides but one of the ground floor of vimānas' shape is domed and crowned with amalaka and nārāyaṇa motifs, the niche facing east being crowned by three miniature cāityas. The opening of the latter niche, which houses Amāśākha, is framed by an elaborate nārāyaṇa and guarded by a pair of lions. A pair of secondary niches, following the design of the niches on the other sides of the cāitya, house one Maitreya and an inscription. The cāitya probably dates to the 17th century. Inscriptions record renovations in 1852 and 1880.
Palan
probably 17th century.

Monumental cahiya at Dhumbháhá, probably 18th/19th century.

Monumental cahiya at Sijabáhá, probably 17th century.

Monumental cahiya at Valanáni, probably 17th century.

Monumental cahiya at Dupát, probably 16th century.

Monumental cahiya at Nyákhalu, probably 17th century.

Patan: cahiya at Núbháhá, probably 17th century.

Patan: cahiya at Gújhháhá, probably 17th century.
Kathmandu

395.400. Kathmandu
396. Monumental caitya at Mahabudhā, probably 17th century.
397. Monumental caitya at Tāhāhā, probably 17th century.
398. Monumental caitya at Tāhāhā, probably 16th century.
399. Monumental caitya in Pyukha, probably 15th century.
400. Monumental caitya at Tebahāhā, probably 16th century.

401. Balāhāhā, circular caitya, probably 17th century.
The upper trio with the Tathāgatas engaged to the drum rests on a double lotus flower. The uppermost level of the three-stepped plinth contains the Tathāgatas in the main niches and their Saktis in the secondary niches.

402. Patan: monumental caitya at Nyākācuūka, probably early 17th century. The trilobate tympanum above the niche is a design typical of 17th-century caityas of Patan. Three-stepped square plinths raise the caityas to a considerable height. Rare is the course of twenty niches between the primary trio and the lotus flower support below.
403. Sarnagat: monumental caitya at Pinani built entirely of stone, probably early 17th century. The primary trio rests on a lotus flower raised on a two-stepped socle. The cañikāvattis lamp railing represents a recent addition.

395 396 401
397 398 402
399 400 403
404, 405. Patan: caitya with a squat base storey and large crowned niches at Nubshet, 17th century.
405. Elevation south, scale 1:10.
46. 47. Senagaon: monumental caitya at Pinani, probably 17th century.
48. Top view, scale 1:100.
47. Elevation north, scale 1:50.
408, 409. Patan: monumental caitya at Khapcheula, built in 1692.
408. Elevation east and top view, scale 1:20.
409. General view from the south-west.
Located on the axis of the deity shrine of the large Tabahā courtyard, the caitya, 635 cm high, is one of the largest in Patan. Built probably at the end of the 16th century with moulded bricks, it was renovated in 1716 and again in 1879. It is not known to what extent the first renovation modified the shape of the caitya, the dome and drum of which are supported by a flight of sloping socles. The second renovation, however, saw the entire superstructure covered with a plaster of brick dust, and the niches and plinth enlarged by a layer of dressed stone. The niches were topped by dome fragments in three cases of Licchavi origin. The original Tathāgatas have remained in the niches; Aksobhya, however, faces west and Amītābha east. Moulded bricks with three Śakyamuni Buddhas each emerge from the original structure at the drum level. Large stone plaques with unidentified guardians are in the intermediate directions.
411. Patan: monumental caitya of circular plan at Gluk. The original structure, which bears an inscription from 1247 next to the southern niche, has entirely been covered by a plaster of brick dust. The niches and the stepped final with its conspicuously protruding central pillar have been reshaped to comply with 19th-century compositional ideals, but the archaic appearance has survived.

412. Patan: monumental caitya at Tabikhâ, whose plinth and superstructure were covered by a plaster of brick dust in 1879.

413. Thani: caitya at Gûgapalâ. An 18th-century primary trio, covered by brass repousse in 1940, rests on a two-stepped socle. The whole has been placed on a wide platform, and surrounded by eight smaller caityas, in the corners on square socles, and in the cardinal directions (Padmâvali caitya) on octagonal socles.

414. Baročya: monumental caitya in Dharâvâ, entirely constructed of moulded bricks and carved terra-cotta elements, early 17th-century. In an effort to restore the original shape, a thick covering of plaster was removed in 1989. The stepped plinth with its double layer of niches survives—a very rare design.

415. Kathmandu: monumental caitya at Itâbîha, probably late 16th century.
416. Thimi: distribution of 38 caityas, the majority of which are located along the north-south axis of the village. Besides three Licchavi caityas (one, at Dhapuñâ, relocated in 1688), five Siharankutucaityas and nine Sumerucaityas (the latest having been established in 1991), there are eight large caityas, termed "monumental" caityas, in squares along the main road. Originally built in moulded bricks, these caityas were covered by a plaster of brick dust during the 19th century, and more recently by cement plaster, to the detriment of their former fine profiles. Only one caitya can be dated, to 1587, one of the earliest available dates for a caitya of the later period. The placement of these rather large, 350- to 500-centimetre-high structures at the urban centre can be seen in contrast to the shrines of the Astamātrikās, which tend to encircle the settlement in their function as protective goddesses.
The Sikharakūṭa caitya

The introduction of a shrine-like base storey to house the Bodhisattvas

The Sikharakūṭa caitya is doubtless the most representative type of Nepalese caitya, defining with its approximately 350 examples the general impression one has of votive caityas. Prototype of it came into being in the fading years of the Licchavi period in the 8th century and in the succeeding Transitional Period, and by the middle of the 17th century a definitive type came to be represented in Patan in a number of examples. The majority of Sikharakūṭa caityas, of which 124 are located in Patan, 109 in Kathmandu, 70 on Swayambhūnāth Hill and 17 in Bhaktapur, arose between 1650 and 1850, but isolated examples are found, particularly in Kathmandu, that were built only a generation ago.

The term, invented by Amṛtananda in the middle of the 19th century in collaboration with Brian Houghton Hodgson, refers to the Indian sikhara temple, whose tower-like superstructure over a sanctum appears to be recreated in this type. There are indeed parallels, inasmuch as the base storey with the niches containing the Bodhisattvas appears to be the most striking innovation, above which the whole upper structure with the roof-like covering, the thinner upper storey, the lotus throne, the drum, dome and finial are taken at first glance to be a homogeneous, steadily tapering pinnacle. With the Bodhisattvas attracting worship to themselves and the base storey for the first time assuming the shape of a cube – over the course of time with increasingly more vertical proportions –, the comparison with a temple is not entirely fanciful. In some cases, the niches in this cube are dispensed with, namely when an interior space has been created for the figure of an Aksobhya or Amitābha, who are preferred above the other Tathāgatas.

Prototype buildings

Two strands of historical architectural development have resulted in the Sikharakūṭa caitya type, the earliest datable example of which, at Cikābahi (1657), has already attained to full effect, a valid shape that continued to live on in all the details of its composition and moulding throughout the following three centuries. However, the same qualification applies here as it did for the other caitya types: there is no certainty that this is the oldest representative of the type, though with great probability it is one of the earliest. For if, among the 28 examples in the eastern quarters of Patan (Cyisah, Guita, Tyagah), the erection of every second caitya is documented by an inscription, with six of them bearing such dates as 1657, 1673, 1677, 1686, 1697 and 1699, then the assertion that the Sikharakūṭa caitya came into being around the middle of the 17th century would appear to be fairly well buttressed.

A total of four caityas of the Licchavi, late Licchavi and post-Licchavi periods enable the genesis of the Sikharakūṭa caitya to be traced. The small caitya at Tabāhā in Patan probably represents the first stage of development. It abandons the constricted moulding of the base storey and replaces it with its opposite, a torus moulding, which divides the facade into an upper part with guavāka motifs and a lower part bare of any decoration. The niche has an
architecturally modelled frame, which represented a not altogether rare scheme of the Licchavi era. The frame fails to define the outline of the vimsanatkona ground plan, while its crowning kirtimukha of flamboyant design cuts across the mouldings of the covering profile and extends well up into the drum. The architectonic framing of the niche by means of pilasters is hardly unusual. Numerous examples from the 6th and 7th centuries display an astonishing diversity of such pilasters. Nor are the dentils under the roof-like covering, which were replaced in the 17th century by the walnut motif, rare either.

The second stage of development is documented by a caitya of approximately the same size at Bichëbâhâ. There the divisional torus moulding is arranged in a series of steps down to a foliated frieze on its lower side. The architectonic framing of the niche opening now defines the entire composition. With the pilasters setting the tone for the projecting middle section and the capitals having been shifted upwards, the small amount of wall surface on the cube is scarcely noticeable. The profile of the covering above the cube storey fully adheres to contemporary practice, but the replacement of the customary drum profile by a torus-like lotus blossom that unfolds upwards and downwards represents a pioneering innovation. Here, for the first time possibly, the lotus blossom appears as the throne-like base under a dome.

The caitya at Subâhâhîti, datable by means of an inscription on the socle to the year 758, marks the third stage of development. On this two-storeyed caitya, whose dome and finial have not been preserved, the previously mentioned elements occur in a remarkable variation. The divisional profile, the lotus throne under the dome and the architectonic framing of the niche (whose pilasters at the same time define the outline of the vimsanatkona ground plan) show signs of what has gone before. New, however, is the squat form of the lower storey, the wall surface of which achieves prominence thanks mainly to the uninterrupted covering profile. The decorative niche framing now appears highly restrained – one might even say constrained – within a structural convention that stresses architectonics. New, too, is the clearly stepped arrangement from the lower to the upper storey. The form of the upper storey is based on older designs from the Licchavi period and is not employed again in later centuries.

The fourth and decisive last stage of development is documented by a caitya at Gustalabahí (also called Guitabahi cîdha) in Guita, the historically rich eastern section of Patan. As there is no inscription, only a rough dating to the so-called Transitional Period is possible. For the time being it is unclear whether the caitya should be dated to the 9th or as late as the 13th century. Only a detailed stylistic comparison with sculptures of this period will be able to offer new clues.

This small edifice with its secondary finial is clearly located between two eras. The socle storey is now no longer of squat proportions but highly erect. The vertical lines are set by a vimsanatkona ground plan and thus form the prototype of the base storey that is so characteristic of the later Sîkharakūtacaitya. The divisional profile and niche framing have also already acquired a fullness of form and differ only minimally from later examples. The gavakṣa motif ceases to be used, and from the 17th century onwards the kirtimukha face is consistently supplied with paws that clutch a serpent's body adjacent to the arch-shaped niche opening. Occurring with equal clarity are formal features relating back to precedents from the Licchavi period and here marking an end of their development. These include the drum profile, dentils under the covering profiles (which display upward pointing crenellation) and the convention-
Sikharakutacaya, comparative overview of four examples of different sizes and changing proportions over a span of about two centuries.

Kathmandu: A total of 109 Sikharakutacyas are fairly evenly distributed over the entire urban core, with only one example beyond the Bhimsenni. Clusters can be identified around Vábáha, Makhábaha and Sghabháhá, the latter alone containing ten examples in a single courtyard. Only fifteen dates are available, of which only three are from the 18th century (1705, 1715, 1757). Such recent dates at 1711 and 1762 (at Asá) attest to the validity and allure of this courtyard type up to a generation ago.

Patan: Licchavicaity at Bhágábáha with a base story in sikharakut style, elevation south. Scale 1:100.

Patan: some 124 Sikharakutacyas form distinct clusters around Bhágáhá, Naugáhá, Bhéchábháha and Naágáhá. Thirty-two dates are available, of which as many as fifteen are from the second half of the 17th century, convincingly demonstrating the emergence of this courtyard type around the middle of that century.
423. Patan: <i>canya</i> of the Transitional Period (9th-10th century) at Guitizahi <i>cudhi</i>, eastern view with the secondary figures in the niches, Aksobhya in the upper storey and Maitreya in the lower storey.
al composition of the upper storey with main and subsidiary niches, the whole atop a battlement-like frieze, which in later centuries ceases to occur. The prominent rock motif, which here functions as a socle, will be revived again only in the 18th century; the shape of the lotus flower under the drum, however, is more indicative of things to come and serves to form a type.

The discussion of prototypes within this sequence calls, finally, for mention to be made of the caitya at Nagubahā, which was probably erected in 1673, when the bāhā was consecrated by the main priest, the mūlicārya of Būbā, in the presence of Yoganarendra Malla. This is what is reported on the small copperplate which was nailed next to the door leading to the aḍā of the bāhā as a replacement for a stolen inscription. It is next to certain that this caitya was made in imitation of the one at Guitabahi cidhā. The proportions are changed, the dome having been shrunk to a tenth of the original volume—a loss that is compensated for in the structure as a whole by a socle. The profiling of the divisional torus moulding has been retained, however, as have the dentils, the gavakṣa motif, the composition of the upper storey and the rock motif beneath the base storey. The growing tendency to provide decorative form has here, it must be admitted, gained the upper hand: the swaying tips of the rock formation are fitted out with lions in the corners, while the secondary corners of the vimsatikona ground plan exhibit the vahanas of the Tathāgatas. Just how accurate the copy was is seen in the fact that the kirtimukha face has not been given any paws—and this during a period when serpent bodies were represented only in the kirtimukha’s grasp.

The second strand of architectural development concerns the caityas that were erected in the 16th and perhaps as early as the 15th century but nowadays lie hidden, almost to the point of being unrecognizable, under multiple layers of brick-dust plaster and cement. These three-to-five-metre-tall buildings, which as a rule were constructed of moulded bricks, differ first of all in size from the votive buildings of the Licchavi period and those that appeared in great variety after the middle of the 17th century. Characteristic of what are elsewhere termed “monumental” caityas is the squat storey beneath the dome, drum and lotus flower. This storey always has a vimsatikona shape and is divided in the middle by a pronounced profile, so that only a small amount of wall surface remains. The niche is usually shaped architectonically with pilasters and covered with a profile of its own.

This squat storey will be incorporated in almost identical form into the composition of the Sikharakūtacaiya. It is only the niche that will follow other traditions, its curved tympanum overshadowing the profile of the roof-like covering. The clear architectonic form is thus abandoned in favour of a freer decorative scheme.

If the lower storey of the caitya at Guitabahi cidhā is added to the squat storey of the 16th-century caityas, the Sikharakūtacaiya is what results. The primary trio on the doubly unfolding lotus flower more closely follows the older pattern, while the socle composition follows ones created in the 16th century.

Transitions

The new type of structure appears fully developed, with impressive clarity, in the caitya (dated 1657) at Cikāhā. The student of architectural forms searches in vain for transitional tones. Only two such caityas exist, both of which, while exhibiting essential characteristics of the Sikharakūtacaiya, nevertheless deviate from it in important details. Both, in other words, are lacking in the full range of features.

One of these caityas, dating to 1656 and located in a large courtyard in Cvabu, directly south of the great northern thudvā of Patan, has a large base storey with strongly pronounced verticality, but the niche, in imitation of temples with a tympanum, is topped by an arc of a circle—an idiosyncratic form that does not recur again. Moreover, the niche does not rest on the lower profile of the storey, being totally encased within wall space, while the kahsimvah (“course of leaves”) motif beneath it runs unobstructed all the way around the building. The idiosyncratic formation of the niche may be viewed as an incidental detail. Of greater moment for the structure as a whole, however, is the lack of an upper storey. In its absence, the primary trio rests with the doubly unfolding lotus flower on the upper part of the base storey. Plaques with the Tathāgatas are attached to the latter in order to fulfil the programme in at least iconographic terms, the base storey having possibly been introduced mainly with the intention of providing space for the Bodhisattvas on a lower level.

The second example worthy of note is situated on Saugah Square in Patan. An inscription on the west side of the caitya was still legible enough in 1988 to determine that it took notice of a renovation that had occurred in 1680. The year in which this significant structure was sponsored remains necessarily a matter of speculation, but it may at present be assumed that it was towards the end of the 16th or the beginning of the 17th century, clearly before the earliest Sikharakūtacaiyas in any case. The socle, base storey and squat upper storey anticipate the articulation of storeys on Sikharakūtacaiyas. By contrast, the squat proportions of the base storey—a ratio of almost 1:3 between height and width—is merely an easily understood harking back to the character of 16th-century buildings, to which the niches remain faithful by their display of pilaster frames and their impingement upon the covering profile. The upwardly unfolded lotus under the primary trio also follows 16th-century models.

Two-storied caitya on a low plinth and with a secondary finial, representing the prototype of the Siharapkakacayta. The building displays several characteristics, however highly suggestive of the Licchavi era: the stone material is similar to that of the 7th century and has produced some smooth surface common from that time. The dome has not yet dwindled to a vestigial element, and the drum moulding follows the standard early formula. The plinth with its rock pattern and swaying tips above a quarter-rounded profile repeats a scheme known from Cahahil (Caiyayas H and J).

Other elements appeared earlier as individual designs on various Licchavicaiyatas: the lotus base below the drum is known from the caityas at Subahili and Subahili in Patan and Guhrindhuriga in Kathmandu, and the architectural framing of the niche with flanking gurukor motifs, from the caitya at Subahili and Tabahi, both in Patan. Now, however, is the introduction of the lower storey as the dominant element. Such a design was already developed in a miniature version on the caitya at Tabahi, but only at Guptabhi caitya does the niche frame remain under a covering roof. A prototype thus evolved and was repeated hundreds of times until the early 20th century. In view of our limited knowledge of architecture and sculpture of the 9th to 14th centuries, the caitya may provisionally be dated to the period between the 9th and 13th century. The images in all of the sixteen niches are of secondary origin and may have replaced earlier ones in the 19th century. The surface of the dome is damaged, the stone having oxidated the way many Licchavi domes have. The swaying tips of the roof moldings have partly broken off, but all carvings are well preserved. The mode of construction differs considerably from that of other Licchavicaiyatas. Horizontally, the caitya has nine layers of construction, but not all of these layers are consistent. The base storey and even the base below the upper storey, for example, have additional vertical parts in the east-west direction.

The bulky dome rests on a drum with Licchavi moldings. This uppermost monolithic element, which could crown any other Licchavicaitya, rests on a lotus socle with one circle of petals turned upwards and one circle turned downwards. The upper storey is of vinayakor shape and of flat proportions, similar to that of Cahahil Caiyay G and is topped by a roof with raised corners and dentils. A small band with battlement motifs serves as a socle for the lotus and mediates towards the roof below. The primary niches with their recent images of the four Tathagatases display small foliated primary frames. A pair of nagaikamis, their winding tails ending in foliage, is set before the primary frame of the eastern niche. The southern and northern niches are framed by dragons, whose tails develop into scrollwork, while the western niche is framed by Garudas, their heads turned towards the beholder. The secondary niches, with unidentified seated Bodhisattvas, are likewise framed by foliage and topped by a lotus flower. Garudas figures guard the openings. The roof above the dominant lower storey has the same profile as the upper roof, but it differs in scale. The stylized battlement motif of the socle displays tiny circular openings. More importantly, the cube of the base storey introduces previously unencountered proportions, which established the standard for hundreds of Siharapkakacaydas to come. Further, the niche frame with its carved pilasters, the pair of mukotan resting on a plate on top of the pilasters and the kirtimukha below the roof moulding display a decisive order, which earlier was clearly anticipated by the Cahahil caitya and those of Subahili and Nakabahi (in Patan), but only with this example does the base storey attain a dominant status. The face of the kirtimukha appears above the slender niche opening on the eastern and western faces, while above the northern and southern niches the face is seen to represent Garuda with a sharp beak and without a crown. This variation occurs again at the lower ends of the pillars: the eastern and western ones display bands of amitaka patterning, while on the northern and southern side the pillars rise from kublins. The present four images in the niches represent the four Bodhisattvas (Maitreya, Vajrapani, Padmapani, Mahasiddha), who seem to have become the main focus of worship only in the 16th century: it is not known what the original images were. Figuring as one of the main features of the base storey is a profile moulded in the same fashion as the roof above. It clearly divides the base into a lower section, with stringcourses below the profile and above the socle, and an upper section with garukor motifs. The lower storey rests on a stepped base. The entire entire structure rests on a peculiar plinth, one that exhibits rock formations above a supporting quarter-round profile.
Composition

The Sikharakūtacaitiya with its socle, base storey, covering profile, upper storey, lotus and primary trio was articulated in a manner that remained nearly unchanged for over 300 years. No other caitya type remained actively replicated for such a long period of time. All the elements of this articulation are already found on the caitya at Cikābahi, constructed in 1657. Simplifications occur with respect to it, particularly in the formation of the profiles, and are characteristic of the transitional stages. Under the base storey, as a rule, there is a profile with swaying tips, the so-called kulā motif, the effect of which is heightened by a construction. Beneath it follows a quarter-round moulding. In a few cases this profile is reduced; at Tsusikācuka, for instance, the quarter-round moulding is left out, and only the lowermost element of the kulā motif is used. The late caitya of Bāsagvapahā takes the same approach, so that the large, scarcely articulated base storey rests almost directly on the socle. This is also true of the caitya at Sākvatā, which completely dispenses with the kulā motif. The covering profile above the base storey of the caitya at Tsusikācuka in Patan is also highly simplified. The customary swaying tips of the edges are reduced to a single layer.

The upper storey always follows the model represented by the caitya at Saugah, which was introduced above. The caitya constructed in 1686 at Vanabāhā in Patan is the only one to offer an alternative, which reappears about a generation later on the type of caitya that rests on a lotus. The upper storey is no longer squat, its proportions clearly approximating those of the base storey. A transitional frieze, usually of stylized cucumber seeds, has been set under the doubly unfolded lotus above the upper storey. Only in rare cases is the lotus raised still further by means of a quarter-round moulding. The drum profile is generally characterized by a pointed torus profile and a gently sloping moulding, which is covered occasionally by destisā motifs, the acanthus leaves that made their way to India via Gandhāra and became popular in the 19th century. The finial has frequently been preserved in its original state and always consists of a harmikā with a covering profile topped by shields, the thirteen parasols and an āsah ring constricting the protruding shaft.

The wall surface of the base storey

What I term the wall surface of the Sikharakūtacaitiya is the visible surface of the cube constituting the base storey between the socle profile and the covering profile. In most cases, the plane of this surface is broken by a niche, but there are individual cases of caityas (Thimi 1728, Patan: Naudvāha, Bhaktapur: Bvalāche) having a base storey without niches, so that the wall surface stands out. In other cases, however, niches occupy a prominent frontal position along with the profusion of their frames; the wall surface to their rear forms a background of horizontal motifs that is accentuated only by the vimsatikona form of the ground plan.

An essential element of the horizontal ordering is the profile used to subdivide storeys. In contrast to the step-like profiling on the prototype buildings, what is usually encountered from the middle of the 17th century on is a half-round moulding, which may be pointed (examples 6, 10) or be reduced to a flattened rounding (example 9). But it can also be replaced by a slightly profiled fillet (example 7). The torus profile generally impinges obtusely upon the niche frames or upon the protruding surfaces defined by the vimsatikona ground plan. Sometimes this profile ends in a lotus motif or also in serpent heads (Cikābahi 1657), so that the aquatic association of the half-round profile is highlighted. The torus profile may even be dispensed with in rare cases, when highly plastic wall decoration occurs. Only the prototype building at Civaubu dating to 1656 and a few caityas of the 18th century (at Pilāche Dāthubhā in Patan) contain a torus profile unaccompanied by any frieze. On both sides of the torus there are usually leaf or flower motifs, though the cucumber motif (examples 3, 4) and the frill motif (libi - example 1) also come into play. In one case (example 8), lotus petals delicately inscribed with minuscule kirrimikha faces occur.

Friezes again are placed on the upper and lower registers of the wall surface: on the upper register, a lotus petal or frill motif is usually used (examples 3, 4, 5, 7, 8), and on the lower register a flower or kahsimvah motif (examples 2, 5, 10), the latter identifiable also as a stylized lotus petal. The wall surface acquires an architectonic quality particularly through use of the libi (above) and kahsimvah (below) motifs, as in the construction of temples and palaces the kahsimvah motif tops off nearly every socle profile, while the libi motif adorns the lower edge of numerous cornices, thus forming a transition between a projecting moulding and a wall surface. A rule clearly is present but, given the exceptions to it, does not appear to be strict. Thus it may occur that the lowest frieze is replaced by dhāranis (example 3), magical formulas encapsulating the essence of a teaching and inducing a particular state of mind through its repetition.

The final upper termination, the linking element between the frill frieze and the cornice of the covering roof element, is formed by the khaubhī motif, a row of walnut patterning. Here again, there are exceptions. One caitya at Tēbāhā (example 9) makes do without any frieze at the upper and lower ends of the wall surface, having the simplest of stepped arrangements as a transition to the socle and roof covering.

The remaining wall surface in many cases bears additional iconographical elements, which may reflect the contents of the niches. Either the astamangala, the eight auspicious objects (example 4), or the previously mentioned dhāranis may appear, or else the Tathāgatas in four-
Two-storeyed caitya with complete primary trio placed on a plinth. The finial seems to be the original one, as do the figures in the sixteen niches. All details are well preserved; the northern corners, however, have broken off. This caitya continues to pose questions which cannot be answered with certainty. A few details, such as the gopura motif and the whirls of the mukuta, etc. are quite archaic, but most others are of a more elaborate type, common to what developed in the 17th century. Even the type of stone points to the same state, as do the faïrs. Earlier caityas are made of stone with an ending smooth surface. Here a type of stone was used consisting of softer grain, which has become exposed from the disintegrating effect of rain through the centuries. In spite of this, such stone was used for quite a number of Sthānakaśālakayana during the 17th century. These considerations lead to the assumption that the artist revived archaic motifs of Licchavi provenance and combined them with contemporary themes to achieve a masterpiece of exquisite proportions. Most probably he was filling an order, commissioned on the occasion of the consecration of the bāha in 1673. The finial has a comparatively large protruding central pillar under an umbrella of metal, from which (as of 1960) four serpent bodies made of metal hang down. The shield above the harināṭī display the symbols of the Tathāgatas. The dome is of squat proportions, and the drum of a type quite different from Licchavi ones. The upper quarter-round is set under a leaf-patterned stringcourse, while the base extends horizontally with an S-shaped mould. The upper trio rests on a lotus flower, one circle of whose petals are turned upwards and one circle downwards. The upper storey is of vinayakakona shape. It rests on a quarter-round and is topped by a roof with raised corners that has denticles below and a leaf pattern on top. The primary niches house the Tathāgatas and are framed by the mounts (north: Garuda in the pose of adoration), whose tails develop into scrollwork. On the eastern side, the corners are shaped in a vajra pattern associated with Aksobhya. The secondary niches house eight figures, whose crowns identify them as Bodhisattvas, though a more exact identification seems to be impossible. On the eastern side, these figures are holding a fly whisk (vāsikāra) either in the right (left side) or the left hand (right side). On the southern side they display different and unidentifiable symbols, and again the postures are in symmetrical relation: the left-hand figure has its right leg raised, and the right-hand figure its left leg. On the western side the left-hand figure is holding a sankhā, the right-hand one a cakra, and both have their left leg raised. The figures on the northern side are identical, each holding a sword in its left hand.

In the corners are lions that share a common head. The lower storey is again of vinayakakona shape but has only four niches, each housing an erect Bodhisattva (north: Mahāyāni; east: Maitreya; south: Vajrapani; west: Padmapani). The niches are framed by moulded pilasters; Kalāyas serve as bases, and kūla designs with denticles as capitals, which form part of a moulded frieze around the entire structure, accompanied by a leaf-patterned festoon below. On the capitals are resting makaras with short serpent bodies that emerge from their mouths and end up in the Fangs of a crowning karnamukha. On the face of the receded wall there appear gaukāska motifs enclosing tiny lotus flowers. The roof above the lower storey is shaped in imitation of the upper roof, with quarter-rounds added above and below the kūla designs. The base below the lower storey is surprisingly rich in design. It follows the precedents set by the caitya of Guṭahārī cīrāh and Caityas D and F from Cābahi with their characteristic raised corners and rock patterns. Below the rock patterns follow another 32-petalled lotus flower, squeezed into the 20-cornered frame. The whole structure rests on a plinth with a pointed profile in the shape of two serpent bodies, which culminate in the north as an anthropomorphomorphic nagaraṇa and nāgaṇa (the snake king and his consort) holding a chain. The plinth rests on a quarter-round with accompanying leaf pattern.
A throne follows below the niche. On the early example at Cikābahi, this throne is still an asana in the form of a carpet, which appears to be spread out over the socle profile. Later it is a formally shaped element that retraces the projection of the niche along the moldings of the socle, thereby emphasizing the architectonic intention of the scheme. The frilled textile pattern that is now offered invariably encloses a lotus flower and is guarded by a pair of lions. The example from Janabahi presents itself as the one with the most sophisticated designs: the asana is rendered as no more than a frill from which two horizontally directed makara heads appear. Finally, the caitya at Vanabahi (dated 1686), which was mentioned earlier on account of its unique upper storey, fully dispenses with niches. The Bodhisattvas appear in a sitting position, surrounded by a trilobed arch of foliage. They are placed on a projecting lotus throne that covers the upper part of the socle moulding.
426. Patan: caitya at Nagubahā, northern view with primary figures in the niches (Amoghasiddhi in the upper storey and Mahāsattva in the base storey).

427. Patan: Sikharakūṭa caitya at Cvabū in the quarter of Kuvahā, built in 1658. In front of the dome, but not touching the dome, the four Tathāgatas, as if set in shields. They appear as images (probably recent plasters) in the niches of the base storey, which are topped by tympana on a pair of pilasters.

on the platform below the caitya is a panel-like altar with three niches, the middle one containing the Buddha (indhūmūrti), the one on the right dharmā (represented by Prajñāparamitā) and the one on the left dhyā (represented by Padmapāni).

Top view, scale 1:20.

Elevation east, scale 1:10.
431. Sikharakula caityas of the 17th and 18th centuries: Variations in decoration of the dominant base states, with roof, the main body being divided by a half-round profile and socle moulding.
1 Kathmandu: at Suryabhan, built in 1684; 2 Patan: in the Kvaipachhêni courtyard near Darbar Square, built in 1669; 3 Kathmandu: in a courtyard of Tirthaharka, 18th century; 4 Patan: in a courtyard of Thana, built in 1797.

432. Sikharakula caityas of the 17th and 18th centuries: Variations in decoration of the dominant base states, with roof, the main body being divided by a half-round profile and socle moulding.
1 Patan: Cvaub, built in 1656; 2 Bhaktapur: in Bavo graph Square, 19th century; 3 Patan: in the courtyard of Thana, built in 1680.
433. Sikharākatatūlaicas of the 17th century in Kathmandu:
Variations of the dominant basic storey with roof, the main body being divided by a half-round pedile and soffit moulding, scale 1:4.
1 Jarahāhā; 2 Tebāhā; 3 Chusyāhāhā.

434. Patan: Sikharākatatūlaicas at Janābāhā (Bāvāca, navahārā), a branch monastery of Ukubāhā. Sections of the frames of the four niches of the base storey, 15th century, scale 1:2.
East  South  West  North
The niches of the upper storey

The niches of the upper storey follow the pattern provided by the base storey. The proportions are more squat, however, not only because such are more suitable to the generally squat nature of the upper storey, but also because they house the Tathāgatas in a sitting position. The niche frame, as before, consists of a pair of pilasters and a tympanum, the arch of which extends to the height of the block. A cucumber seed motif is placed along the upper edge, mediating upwards. The projecting socle profile determines the projection of the niche, whose frame undergoes a frontal shift to the plane of the quarter-round moulding. This moulding is always interrupted by the āśarna of the niche. In some cases the arch of the tympanum extends beyond the storey, without, however, accommodating itself to the underlying profile. But there are also isolated cases in which the niche crown is continued in the following lotus element. The caitya at Kvaṭpāchenānī that was built in 1669 displays such an approach. While the actual niche frame follows the conventions, it undergoes a triangular extension through a motif that was defined in the construction of the Mahābuddha temple, completed in 1601, and is characteristic of many structures in Patan, namely a pair of deer (mṛga) worshipping the dharmacakra, the Wheel of the Law, which is inscribed in a triangle. The motif is crowned in turn by a lotus flower.

The whole motif had been used eleven years earlier on the upper storey of a caitya at Nyākhačauka. There, though, it was a continuous niche crown, which projected seven centimetres above the upper storey. The niche opening is framed by simple pilasters and a tri-lobed arch crowned by tiny lotus flowers. The step-like superstructure is interrupted by a frieze extending around all four sides and forming the top of the upper storey, while at the same time forming the base for the other two sides of a triangle containing the Wheel of the Law. The triangle is framed by foliage, which supports a parasol.

Finally, the previously mentioned caitya at Naudvābāhā has a place in this account of the range of variation, as it makes do without niches in the base storey. The Tathāgatas in the upper storey are part of a plaque-like projection that emerges from the storey.
440. Elevation cast, scale 1:10.
441. 442. Kathmandu: Sīkharakutacāya along Naumugallī, established in 1757.
441. Top view, scale 1:20.
442. Elevation north, scale 1:10.

444. Svayambhumih Hill: Sikharakotacaitya near Singpura, established during the reign of Rajendra Bārama Šaha (1816-1847), elevation east, scale 1:10. (drawing: Ada Gannach-Wilson, 1986.)
The four Tathāgatas are engaged in the drum, their four respective Sahās having been placed into the deep niches of the upper storey, while niches with the four Mahākāyikas, flanked by four-handed pājamārvās, cover the entire surface of the lower storey. Maitreya faces east, with Amṛtaśānti/Śrīgāmaḍi on his right and Vīṣṇu/Kāmaḍi on his left side.
Patan: Sikharakutacaitiya -t Kvāpacchānani, built in 1660, on the axis of an āṭṭi shrine of Lākhe Sēyā.

47. Base storey with Vajrapāni facing east, flanked by four-armed Manjusri (left: Sadajña Lokesvarā, right: Prajñāparamita). A small image on the column records the establishment of the caitiya in 1677. The base storey displays an inscription depicting Maitreya; above appears Aksobhya as the Tathāgata of the east.

48. Upper storey with Aksobhya, the niche framed by a pair of deer, a parasol and a viśvarūpa.

49. Patan: Sikharakutacaitiya at Cibhācukha, a former monastery of Cikābēni. A small shrine on the eastern side of the lower platform records the establishment of the caitiya in 1677. The base storey displays an inscription depicting Maitreya; above appears Aksobhya as the Tathāgata of the east.

50. Kathmandu: Sikharakutacaitiya at Janahā, late 17th or early 18th century. Here the elaborately carved base storey, with Maitreya occupying the niche of the eastern facade, and Aksobhya, the corresponding Tathāgata, being repeated four times on the wall surfaces.
Kathmandu: Sikharakūṭacaitya at Janabāhā, late 17th or early 18th century. Here the southern face with Vajrapāni in the niche of the base storey and Ratnasambhava, the corresponding Tathāgata, repeated four times in the form of a plaque on the wall surface.

Patan: location of fifteen Sikharakūṭacaityas on iron bases. More than half of these are found around Nārabāhā. The available dates suggest the emergence of this type in the early 18th century and a prevalence throughout the 19th century.

Patan: Sikharakūṭacaitya at Vanaśāhā, built in 1686.

Patan: Sikharakūṭacaitya without niches in the base storey, at Nārabāhā, end of 17th century.
456–458. Patan: Sikkharākṣitaśāra with a lotus face under the upper storey, at Cibbareska near Bhaktapur, dated 1792.
457. Elevation north, scale 1:10.
An anthropomorphic view: shifts in the centre of gravity

The Nepalese caitya offers a unique opportunity to study the continuous and complex evolution of an architectural type over more than a millennium. It is a curious type, one which often crosses the line between votive sculpture and miniature building. This multiple reading of the structures can be deepened through a consideration of the caitya's anthropomorphic qualities, its visual weight and character, and its scale with respect to the worshipper. Such a reading allows for a better appreciation of their inherent charm and diversity of visual effect in the lanes and courtyards of the towns and villages of the Kathmandu Valley. Moreover, in the development of this architectural type in later centuries, one sees not only reflections of the stylistic trends of contemporary monumental architecture, but also, and once again, the freedom of the craftsmen of the Valley to explore ever new variations on a theme.

A simple anthropomorphic comparison equates dome with head, middle portion with torso, and stepped base with lower extremities. Curiously, over the centuries the dome of the Sikharasikhi, the original focus of worship, diminishes in size, while the overall size of the structure increases. Although the diminutive early caityas allowed the worshipper to overlook the upper dome from above, the top level of 19th-century shrines is beyond human reach, even when the worshipper ascends the base platform. The "foot" of the caitya is recognized more clearly in the earlier examples, there being a direct relationship between the heavier dome and the base which supports it. In the later evolution, however, the base is greatly enlarged through the multiplication of platforms, so that it comes to resemble a step pyramid.

The anthropomorphic metaphor is less clear. The bulky base could possibly read as a shoulder supporting the caitya, which would thus lack torso and limbs. Jumping forward to the contemporary pagoda and sikharas temples on the Darbar Squares of the late 17th century, one notes a corresponding inclination towards verticality in the increase of heights and multiplication of platforms and roofs. Similarly, the change of proportions which accompanies this drive towards height and verticality is apparent in both the base stories of the caityas and the window openings of Malla architecture. Windows of horizontally resting proportions first become more vertical in the 18th century, and by the 19th are upright rectangles, whose wide lintels and sills are concealed behind the brick of the facade.

As the stepped base (the "leg" of the anthropomorphic composition) becomes elongated into a conical form, so too the centre of gravity shifts down to a more firmly set point. Whereas on the caitya at Subahāhitī the centre of gravity seems to be at the level of the lotus under the dome, on the caityas at Guitaḥahi cīdhā and Cikābahi it hovers between dome and base story. The delicate proportions of the late 17th-century caitya of Tsusikācūka allow the centre of gravity to rest in the niche of the base storey.

Contrariwise, the varying proportions of the horizontal base storey shift the centre of gravity in the opposite direction. While the flat base storey of the Cikābahi caitya (height-to-base ratio: one to two) appears compressed and suggests a heavy centre just above it, the taller 19th-century base storey (height-to-base ratio: one and a half to two) forces the centre of visual weight upwards.
Is the Nepalese caitya a building or a votive sculpture? The scale of later structures is clearly suggestive of an architectural intent, but it is in the details of one 8th-century caitya that this sense of a building “in miniature” first surfaces. In clear contrast to some 300 votive caityas of the two preceding centuries, those of the 8th century conjure up roofs and walls through the introduction of mouldings which make the transition from square base to dome. These simple but subtle formal cues give the caityas a scaleless quality. One is almost led to believe that they are models of the large caitya or stūpa structures from which they descend, structures which attain to a height ten times greater. The measured drawings of the caityas can often be read simultaneously as miniature shrines and massive buildings. The robust architectural character of the 8th-century caityas does not carry over to those of the 17th to 19th centuries. The intricate profiles of the latter are fragile, their diminutive domes looking like vulnerable jewels, just visible above a protective covering. In what is perhaps related to these phenomena, a protective wall first appears around the plinth of four 17th- and 18th-century caityas in Patan, implying that the structures, in their delicateness, must be fenced off from a possibly inhospitable outside world. The walls may also, however, be a throwback to the railings of ancient stūpas.

The proportions of 19th-century caityas which simply double those of the 17th suggest a Wagnerian approach to scale, displaying a sense of drama that is particularly evident in the base of the Bhaktapur caityas. In the end one must wonder how an architectural structure of this size – one which the worshipper must ascend even to worship the lower storey – evolved from the small votive donations of 1100 years before.
The lotus motif

The lotus (Skt. padma), a plant belonging to the water lily family (Nelumbo nucifera, also Nelumium speciosum), is accorded great significance in both Hinduism and Buddhism. Used as a base on which the caitya or primary trio rests, the flower also serves as a throne of the Buddha. The lotus is an attribute of the Bodhisattva Padmapani, and within the teachings of the Pure Land school it is the symbol of the Buddha's doctrine.

Additionally, in medieval symbolism the expanded lotus denoted the manifested universe, and was also held to represent nonattachment. Just as the lotus floats on the water and yet remains dry, so should the spiritual aspirant live in the world without being affected by it, "in the world but not of it" (Schuhmacher et al. 206).

In Buddhism, the lotus becomes the symbol of the nature of beings unstained by ignorance. Lying at the innermost centre of the being, it opens, when nurtured by meditation, to reveal the indwelling Buddha-nature. The flowering of the lotus symbolizes the attainment of enlightenment.

These numerous manifestations of the plant are best understood against the background of Hindu myths of creation, especially the myth which describes the origin of the Kathmandu Valley. In the Satapathabrahmana (7.4.18) the lotus is equated with water. It symbolizes the life-giving power of fertility of the liquid element in which it grows. The Taittiriyabrahmana (1.1.3,5) assigns the origin of the lotus to the primeval waters, from which it emerged on the eve of creation, or to the cosmic renewal, which is conceived as a thousand-leaved plant.
emerging from Visnu's navel. This centre of the energy of the universe represents Visnu's first manifestation; it also supports Brahma, who is seated on the opened flower. In the Agnipurāṇa (XLIX,24), the lotus represents the material aspect of evolution, and the petals the consecutive forms it assumes.

Beyond these spiritual implications, the arrangement of the lotus and the composition of the Caitya suggest cosmological associations. In most cases the lotus supports the primary trio even as it supports the world: as the lotus is identified with the waters that uphold the cosmos, the Caitya thus becomes the cosmos. As stated in the introductory chapter, the Caitya can also be seen as an imago mundi. In Nepal, this symbolism corresponds directly to the local sacred geography.

The mythic emergence of the lotus took place after Vipasyi Buddha threw its seed on the day of Lhutipūrṇīma (full moon in April) from Jāmaea Mountain into Nāghrada, the lake which once filled the Valley during the age of Satayu. The lotus reappeared six months later on the day of Āsvipuṇrṇīma in October. A flame, Swayambhū-in-the-form-of-light (jyotirīpī), emanated from the resplendent flower. At another mythic time, ages later, the Bodhisattva Vajrasattva is said to have concealed Swayambhū under a slab of stone, as he feared it would not survive unharmed the coming age of Kaliyuga. Finally there came the great master Santikārācārya, the legendary founder of the Bājārācārya priesthood, who raised a Caitya over the hidden Swayambhū to protect it even more.

If the essence of both strands of myth is combined, then each Caitya of the Kathmandu Valley can be thought of not only as an image of the cosmos resting on the lotus or of the creation of the universe -- as suggested by John Irwin --, but also as an image of Swayambhūnāth, which is supported by the lotus, and which was only later covered, and thus guarded and protected, by a Caitya.

This myth of creation, contained in the Swayambhūpurāṇa and thus familiar to every Buddhist in the Valley, surely led to the lotus becoming the dominant element in the composition of Caityas. Having in early Caityas served merely as the base of the entire structure, the lotus eventually was raised together with the dome itself to a higher level, where it finally dominated the small edifice as part of a multi-stepped structure.

Beyond its limited utilization for Buddhist Caityas, the lotus is also a widespread base motif in Hindu architecture. Next to the palace in Bhaktapur, for example, at the Bhandarkhal, is found a pair of lingas with the yoni under them set atop an open lotus blossom. The base in the form of a lotus appears so all-purpose that the primary trio of a Caitya might just as easily have occurred in place of the linga.

The lotus is inseparably linked with the goddess Laksmi, Visnu's consort, who even lays claim to the epithet padmā (lotus). The goddess of good fortune, she dwells in the lotus, often portrayed standing on it or else holding it in her hand.

The arrangement of the image of Visnu at Cāngu, a statue dating to the 8th or 9th century, may be taken as a paradigm for the cosmological role of the lotus. While Visnu stands on a pedestal that takes the form of a water-jar (kalāsa) garlanded with lotus motifs, and Laksmi on a lotus, Garuda stands to the left on a pedestal composed of rock-like elements. The trio is framed by an arc of flames. Thus fire, water and earth come together, with water clearly the linking and dominant element, as suggested by the lotus base under Laksmi, the lotus in Visnu's lower right hand and the kalāsa, all representing water, fertility and wealth.

This excursus may serve to indicate that the lotus is a ubiquitous motif of the base, one that carries an unchanging cosmological message within a variety of contexts.
The emergence of the lotus motif as a support of the caiyya

The lotus motif occurs relatively seldom in the Licchavi period. In all known cases the dome rests atop a standardized drum moulding, under which not a lotus but rock-related symbols appear and these only occasionally. The most that occurs is a frieze of petals above the drum profile of the round caiyya in Teku. The lotus base of Caiyya H in Cabahil, however, is of astounding expressive force under the multi-storeyed structure. As only very few of the Licchavi caiyyas have been preserved in their original architectural context, it may be supposed that from the beginning there were a number of versions of this base form, given its sophisticated nature. This evolution was then halted for almost a thousand years until the model was "rediscovered" in the 17th century.

It was not the early Licchavi period that proved to be the immediate arbiter of form for the further development of building style but the late Licchavi period of the 8th and 9th centuries, the outlines of which are only imprecisely delineable, given the lack of data. The period is represented by five caiyyas located at Subähā, Bhilchēhā and Guita in Patan, as well as at Gaiŋrītāra in Kathmandu, all of which exhibit, under the primary trio, a lotus blossom with one circle of petals each pointing up and down. It is striking that the upper circle assumes a lip-shaped form, whereas the lower one is broadened out. All five caiyyas introduce a profile to subdivide the lower storey, and display the gavakṣa motif. The lotus thus occurs here for the first time as the base of the primary trio, and this in conjunction with a whole series of stylistic innovations, which later, in the 17th century, were further elaborated in the Śikharakaṭacaiyya type.

It becomes clear, then, that the lotus was extremely rare in the Licchavi period as an element serving structural, architectonic ends. Its use as a figurative motif, however, presents a picture of incomparable diversity. Floral motifs with aquatic associations predominate in the niche frames, and almost always the lotus occurs as the crown above the niche opening, either as an independent motif or as a secondary element on the crown of the kritimukha face that presides over the frame. In all these cases the lotus is represented either in bloom or closed as a bud.

The lotus blossom opened up in full glory also occurs in relief as an independent figurative motif on the flat pedestals underneath the characteristic octagonal bases. This is seen with particular clarity on the caiyya at Dipanani in the southern part of Kathmandu. Within the framed reliefs, the lotuses rest on a base of rockery and are encompassed at both sides by the widely gaping jaws of mākaras, whose tails trail off into floral swirls. Such representations point up the prime significance of the lotus motif even in early architecture, but the manner of its narrative presentation forms a strand of artistic expression that was not destined to be revived in later centuries. Instead the lotus gains significance in its use as an architectonic element in the composition of the caiyya, coming finally in the 19th century to predominate to the same extent as the dome, the actual starting point for this type of building, sank into insignificance.
In the following chapter this angle will be pursued in a twofold manner. First, under the guiding term padmāvali, it will be shown how the lotus developed ever more broadly as the throne of the primary trio, to the point where it finally displays as many as twelve rings of petals. Then the lotus will be presented as an architectural divisional element, namely in its use as a secondary base of an intermediate section.

The lotus as the dominant element of architectural articulation

Although the lotus of Lichchavīcaiṭya H at Cabahil supports the upper structure of three storeys, it is nevertheless a quite unnoticeable wavy profile, one disappearing, moreover, behind the swaying tips of the rock motifs. This rather restrained use of the lotus motif was to change suddenly at the beginning of the 18th century; the door was simultaneously opened to a hitherto unknown diversity of patterns that accorded the lotus prime significance as a shaping element.

A chronology of the forms can here be attempted only tentatively, on the basis of the data at hand. Since, however, there are not inscriptions on all caiṇyas, and the inscriptions of the 17th century, in particular, have usually been preserved only in a fragmentary form, the following chronology can serve merely as a rough guideline. Surprising regroupings appear definitely possible. This was shown, for example, when an inscription placing construction in the year 1667 during the reign of King Jayapraṭāpa Malla was found on the base under the Tathāgatas of a Jalāharyupārisumercāiṭya in Neta (Kathmandu). This was unexpected, inasmuch as all comparable data had led to the supposition that this type of building came into being in the 19th century. The nearest dating, in fact, is for the year 1828, but it was only the second half of that century that saw it flourish, with about ninety examples of the type being built.

The Caturvyūhacaiṭya of Itūbahā in Kathmandu, which was erected around 1600 during the reign of Sivasimha Malla, already exhibits the lotus motif within the jaladroni or jalahari, and it is repeated as a figure in high relief on the base of the shaft. The shaft’s four Sākyamuni Buddhās, moreover, have come to stand on lotus blossoms. This configuration represents the only preparatory stage that could conceivably have led to the Jalāharyupārisumercāiṭya in Neta, which was erected in 1667 only a few hundred metres away in the northern part of the city. There, though, the four Tathāgatas take the place of the Buddhās. The shaft is greatly reduced in height, so that the figures are represented as sitting on a throne (asana). The height that is gained for construction by reducing the shaft has gone into the multi-levelled base. As a result of this measure alone, a fundamentally different style of building has resulted: a shrine-like structure instead of a stèle.

The square lotus blossom projects up out of the jaladroni, so that the structure of the caiṇya above it is perceived as resting clearly in the blossom. Both elements, jaladroni and lotus, doubtless represent further developments of the flat socle of the Caturvyūhacaiṭya. But this use of the jaladroni apparently characterizes only one strand of the development, for the jaladroni element at least, which in 1667 and from 1828 onwards occurs only in this specific configuration under a lotus, seems to be borrowed directly from the composition of comparable sivalingas. Indeed, only a stylistic difference can be detected in the crafting of the jaladronis below a linga and below the shaft of a caiṇya. The container-like circular base with a groove and a spout that is oriented towards the north, where it narrows off, is surrounded at half its height by the scaled body of a serpent that terminates in the north, usually with the head and tail under the spout.

The figure of the jaladronis under the lingas and the caiṇyas serves the same function, namely to channel the runoff of water used in lustrations. If such elements assume the same shape on two different types of building, this is not necessarily due to dogmatic considerations.

While the Jalāharyupārisumercāiṭya of 1667, as a one-time phenomenon, remains hard to explain, the lotus came into use again in the middle of the 18th century as a dominant element in the composition of caiṇyas, on which by the beginning of the 19th century it had established a fixed place for itself.

The type represented by the example dating to 1753 at Kutieuka in Patan is rare. There the lotus is well contoured in its curvatures, with three rings of petals. Directly on top of the base of the blossom there rests a flat quarter-round moulding taking the form of a serpent’s body. The latter supports the upper lotus blossom, which, having opened upwards and downwards, is interrupted by the plaque-like Tathāgatas. The primary trio above achieves the full effect of its plasticity because the drum moulding with its pointed beading remains undisturbed. The socle structure has two steps and is subdivided into three parts by serpent profiles. This is the prototype of a composition that will be repeated according to formula during the 18th and 19th centuries in all variations of the caiṇya types.

While the caiṇya from Kutieuka did not lead to the formation of a type that was to be copied, a few other examples may illustrate the widespread introduction and application of the lotus as the dominant element below the primary trio. Two rather small exponents of this type exemplify the range of possible variations: one at Khāčēbāhā and another in a neighbouring courtyard near Nakabahi in Patan. Both are miniature caiṇyas that do without the mediating element which was customarily inserted into all other lotus caiṇyas presently under discussion.
The **cayita** at Khāchēbāhā, built in 1805, in a way predefines the composition of the later Jvalāvalaicaityas, to which a triple-levelled middle section supporting a second lotus is added. The **cayita** in the neighbouring courtyard uses a much less constricted base below the lotus to form the voluminous octagonal lotus stem, with representations of the usual group of Bodhisattvas in the cardinal directions and their Saktis in the intermediate directions.

Another variation that needs to be mentioned here is represented by the **cayita** of Dyahna-nihāhā in Bhaktapur, which tentatively may be dated to the end of the 18th century. There the lotus, between the primary trio with only a slight indication of a drum and a triple-stepped circular plinth bare of any decorative profiles and iconographical elements, achieves a balanced effect. It is in fact one of the very rare **cayitas** with a dominant, conspicuously bell-shaped dome.

In 1752, almost simultaneously with the Kuticuka lotus **cayita**, a **cayita** with a large, flat lotus blossom that rests atop a serpent profile and supports the storey of a Śikharakūtacayita was built in a neighbouring courtyard. On the covering of the storey there rests an upper lotus, which in turn supports the primary trio. With this **cayita** a type was initiated that in the 19th century was repeated fourteen times in Patan and eleven in Kathmandu. In the later buildings the flat lotus assumes a fuller form, finally producing a waist-like constriction below. Such types of lotus are found on comparable **cayitas** in the 19th century, as in the case of the Jvalāvalaicaitya or the Sumerucaitya.

Whereas the use of the lotus as a structuring element of the composition is merely announced in these types, at the beginning of the 19th century it becomes a widespread phenomenon: in 1828 the first of around eighty later Jalāharyuparismumerucaityas was built in Kathmandu; in 1831, in Patan, the first dated Jvalāvalaicaitya (Bapunani) appears; and in 1854, again in Kathmandu, in a transformation of the Jalāharyuparismumerucaitya, the first dated Sumerucaitya (Mahābuddhā).

The Jvalāvalaicaitya integrates into itself a large lotus blossom with one or two circles of petals. The lotus base is constricted to such an extent that the impression it gives is one of resting on a stem that has risen up out of the Primordial Ocean. And in fact this stem can in some cases be recognized as a round cylinder several centimetres in length. Between the lower and upper lotuses there intervenes, in these cases, a triple-levelled structural element with fire and **vajra** motifs.

The last **cayita** type in the series of definable lotus **cayitas** is the Sumerucaitya, in which the **jaladron** element is replaced by the highly constricted, stem-like base. Significantly, a round base with torus moulding in the shape of a serpent’s body occurs only on the first dated Sumerucaitya. The northward pointing spout of the **jaladron** appears as if it had been simply cut off.

If a glance is taken at the comparative description of the four types of **cayitas**, the compositional features of the socle, including its iconographic adornment, appear largely interchangeable. One constant is formed by the primary trio, whose iconography, though, changes with lasting effect in the Sumerucaitya: the primary trio is even completely dispensed with on a number of Jalāharyuparismumerucaityas, where it is replaced by figural representations of Vajrasattva and Vairocana (or Mañjugśrī). The real variation in the various building types takes place wholly in the middle section, between the lower and upper lotuses. If in one case what appears is the architectonically modelled storey furnished with niches—the type that attained full form in the 17th century, having announced its outlines centuries before—, in the next case it is a type that is specific as to its choice of motifs (jvalāvala), and in the last case, finally, it is the element of the shaft, adopted from the Caturvyūhacayita, that assumes the role of depicting the Tathāgatas.
Palan: lotus caitya in a courtyard east of Nakahachi, probably 18th century. The primary trio, with the Tathāgatas emerging from the drum, is supported by a large lotus flower on a round stem. In front of the stem are the four Bodhisattvas and their respective Saktis (in the intermediate directions). The octagonal base rests on a square socle which exhibits water patterns (khushi) on its upper surface.

Comparison of caitya types which introduce a lotus throne between the lower tiers of diminishing socles and platforms and the primary trio, which invariably is supported by a lotus of its own. The upper lotus rests on the lower one, or, as is the case with most examples, a supporting structure of an architectural or sculptural derivation is inserted between the two. Scale 1:15.

Patan: Kuticuka, 1753; Patan: Saugah, 1825; Kathmandu: Temakva, 1882; Patan: Saugah, 1913.

Bhaktapur: caitya at Dyahnanibribh, elevation south and top view, scale 1:20.

Flat niches with the Tathāgatas and their respective, identically depicted Saktis emerge from the dome. Instead of a drum, the latter is supported directly by a lotus flower with 24 leaves, which rests on the body of a snake. Two of the three steps of the plinth (possibly a reference to the three different worlds (triloka) that constitute samādhi) are of round shape. On the four sides of the emerging shaft (yaśas), in a rare variation, are depicted Vairocana (E) and Prajñāpāramitā (W), with four arms, two displaying dharmacakramudra, and two with a book and rosary respectively), a bell (N) and a flame (S). In yet another rare variation, the mounts of the Tathāgatas are depicted in front of the niches, on top of the lotus flower.
Structural form and myth

An account has previously been given of the appearance of rock formations in the composition of Licchavicaityas. Rock formations are used as a base under a lotus flower only under Caityas H, D and F in Cabahil. There are numerous other caityas of the 7th century, by contrast, that exhibit this form element as an isolated transitional member with swaying tips between the storey with the niches and the drum, but do so without disturbing the stepped moulding of the latter. The lotus with water and rock symbolism appears for the first time in a narrative context only in relief, on the base of the Licchavicaitya at Tulanani. In this case the lotus, which rests on a stylized rock formation, is framed by a pair of makaras that produce an apparent aquatic association.

The narrative context of water, rock (or mountain) and lotus was not adopted on the caityas of the 11th and 12th centuries. Instead the lotus alone served from the waning Licchavi period on almost uninterruptedly as the base of the primary trio, becoming at the end of the 12th century, through the repetition of circles of petals, the predominant element of the entire composition. Even later, in the 19th century, the lotus motif became dominant on quite various types of caityas. Aquatic associations are represented on Licchivacaityas primarily by iconographic elements, such as ganders (kamsa) and makaras. Serpent bodies occur on scattered occasions only, and then as nāgakanīyas (snake virgins), whose distinctly scaly bodies in one case alone (Cabahil Caitya B) frame the niche openings. On this particular caitya, quarter-round profiles eliciting an association with, if anything, the body of a serpent appear on the base. It is only in a later period that such profiles end in the head of a serpent, over which its tail is laid. This more concrete formal development of the profile is what first gives cogency to the interpretation of similar profiles from an earlier period as serpent bodies. The faintly carved quarter-round moulding directly under the dome – so characteristic of the Licchavicaitya – might similarly be construed as a representation of the serpent body that symbolizes the waters of the Primordial Ocean.

In the 11th and 12th centuries the Śikharakūṭaaitiya becomes the vehicle bearing the serpent moulding, which occurs with increasing frequency on one and the same building. A total of seven quarter-round or half-round profiles, serpent bodies entwining, as it were, the building in multiple folds, can thus be identified on the caitya built in 1752 along Naumugahgalli in Kathmandu. Three of these profiles – three of the four bottommost – end with head and tail facing north: they form twice, as quarter-round profiles, the termination of two different bases below or divide once, as a half-round profile, the flat platform at the very bottom through the middle. In seldom cases (Tahmáni, Patán; built in 1704) there are two serpent bodies at the same level encircling the base. Both bodies start from the south and end up with heads supporting a kalasa in the north – the water-jar that in Buddhism symbolizes the “treasure of all desires”.

This varied water symbolism unfolds like a picture on the front of caityas in Bhaktapur, assuming the appearance of a trilobed arch. There the representation of the water on the façades of the bases appears on the same level as that of the rock formation, which rises by steps up to the corners. The surface of this vertically divided element exhibits sign-like incisions resembling the forms of L, S, T or Y that seem to be following some convention, though incisions also occur in the form of a bow. Whereas on the caitya at Tathubahi these incisions are symmetrically placed at both sides of the water element, only a rudimentary symmetry can be made out in the case of the caitya at Śākavatā in Bhaktapur.

The round or (in the case of Bakubhā in Kathmandu) octagonal stem of a lotus plant stretches upward clearly behind the rock and water formation. The round stem slightly gains in thickness on both structures in Bhaktapur – that is, the surface underlying the lotus blossom broadens out somewhat. Only on the caitya at Bakubhā does the stem rise vertically, bearing on each of the eight faces a detailed sculptural representation of a lotus stem, each with six leaves. In Bhaktapur, by contrast, the lotus motif is simplified: the bulky cylinders, which are twice as broad as at Bakubhā, bear representations of a lotus stem, each with a mere two leaves, in the four cardinal directions. These representations were once veiled by plaques containing likenesses of Bodhisattvas.

The lotus blossoms are developed in various ways on the aforementioned round or octagonal stems. In two cases they contain five circles of petals with a total of 240 individual petals; on the caitya in Śākavatā, on the other hand, it is a flower unfolding upwards and downwards, its circles of petals being separated by a cylindrical stump divided through the middle by a half-round profile. It seems obvious that the multiple (usually seven) circles of petals that came into use on the Padmāvalicāitya type of structure, which likely started appearing at the same time, broadly defined the form of caityas in the first half of the 18th century, and gave impetus as well to entirely new kinds of composition.

It was noted at the beginning of the chapter that this motif, termed sahasra palekah (lit. “one thousand lotus petals”), symbolizes the multiplicity of phenomena – the universe in its complete distension, as it were.

Resting on the flower, whose pericarp in two cases forms a platform, is the primary trio atop either an additional squat storey or (on the caitya at Bakubhā) a serpent body. The drum is unusual in the latter case, its profile being greatly reduced, to a cylindrical stump or shaft, which in this form possibly revives the main motif of the lotus stem. The stem is covered
Comparative presentation of snake/water motifs and lotus motifs on 11th-century temples.


234. Kathmandu: Sikkaramatāetrīva along Naumopah, built in 1752. The serpent body surrounds the entrance at seven levels, either as a quarter-round serving as an extended arcade, or as a pointed half-round profile defining the lower platform, the socle above, the base storey and the squat upper storey. Additionally, a half-round profile mediates between the dome and the drum.
476. Bhaktapur: Composite caitya in a courtyard of Sākāvatā. Elevation west and top view, scale 1:10. From a large platform, which is encircled and partly overlapped by an octagonal rail with 19 lamps (cakhalma), rises a base storey with a square niche moulded in the shape of a serpent’s body, complete with head and tail intertwined and facing north. Above the niche follows the round stem of a lotus identifiable as the mythic flower that rose from Nagbhadrata, the lake that once filled the valley of Kathmandu. It is encircled by a stepped rock formation that represents the four mountains defining the Valley, while at the centre of each side appears a water pattern (khauhautan) indicating the lake. A conch shell seems to float playfully on the waters (southern and eastern sides). The blooming flower opens from the lotus stem, with one circle of petals turned upwards to display the pericarp (karnika) and one circle of petals inverted. In a rare example of its kind, the two circles of petals are separated by yet another manifestation of the rising lotus stem, divided by a quarter-round profile that repeats the serpent symbolism. Above the lotus is set the upper trum with an elaborately moulded base, to which plaque-like representations of the Tathāgatās (west: Aṃśukha) of recent origin are affixed. The dome rests directly on another lotus flower (one circle of petals turned upwards and one inverted), thus abandoning the element of a moulded drum that usually mediates between the dome and the lotus below. The finial displays the usual order, with a harāmika (the block on top of the dome with slight incisions indicating a pair of eyes, a whorl of hair and the third eye between the eyebrows), followed by thirteen tiers, trefoil shields with the emblems of the Tathāgatās, a stringcourse of annalaka and the protruding shaft (yathā) with a jewel (cālāmanta) on top. Above the tripled arches of the water pattern were once plaques depicting the four Bodhisattvas; the four plaques placed into the corners above the rock formation have remained in situ along with depictions of the Caturnārājjas as the guardians of the four quarters of the world (NE: Dhairijāraja, SE: Khadgarāja, SW: Vīṇāraja, NW: Caityaraaja).

477. Kathmandu: Composite caitya at Bakubāhā, built in 1780, detail of the octagonal lotus stem below a padmāvata element.

478. Bhaktapur: Composite caitya near Tathabhāb, detail of the base bearing a padmāvata element (five circles of petals), first half of the 18th century.

479. Bhaktapur: Composite caitya at Sākāvatā, 18th century.
by a quarter-round profile, upon which the four Tathāgatas rest in the form of plaques. Lotus blossoms reappear as a motif on the two caityas in Bhaktapur—indeed, in the case of the one at Sa- kvathā, in fact, to the exclusion of any further drum profile. Only on the caitya of Tathubhāni is use made of the customary drum profile of the 18th century, characterized by an S-shaped moulding.

The variety displayed in the composition of the drum on these three caityas alone, which have been grouped here together on account of their prominent motif, shows with what little dogmatism the formation of these votive structures was approached even as early as the 18th century. A surprising amount of freedom and optionality exists in the design, and in its actualization, from the socle to the dome and pinnacle.

Besides these three caityas, each of which in a similar way, but also with a richness of variety, has brought water, lotus and rock motifs to bear in the architectonic structure, there are several other caityas on which one or two but not all three motifs are made the dominant element of composition. The caitya at Motibaha in Patan, a private branch of Kvabhāni, appears to be particularly worthy of note. Resting on the socle is a serpent’s body that is coiled to an extraordinary degree; it supports the most distinctive rock formation that has ever been conceived under the primary trio. The entire formation is divided into corner elements, each framing a middle block. Each side is symmetrically arranged; the projecting tips display inclinations similar to the ones described previously. Tathāgatas rest in niches on the tips of the middle elements, while their Sakis are enthroned in the form of plaques fastened in place in the corners. A broadly developing lotus is separated from the substructure by means of a joint, though there is no water pattern occurring in this zone. The top is formed by a primary trio resting on a lotus flower with a double circle of petals turned downwards.

While the heavy emphasis on rock and lotus symbolism is not repeated in this form elsewhere, there are some ten examples of another type of caitya in Bhaktapur, Kathmandu and Banepa calling for notice in this context. These are the so-called caitya steles, in which the primary caitya elements, represented by the primary trio and a substructure, are supported on a column shaft 50 cm to 150 cm in height, the latter in turn rising up from a meaningfully fashioned socle. The column shaft is quadratic or octagonal and supports a projecting lotus flower in bloom with several circles of petals, so that it may be interpreted as the lotus stem rising up out of the primordial ground. This association is particularly striking in an example of this caitya type at Dyahanabhāni in Bhaktapur. There the shaft rises from a zone containing water symbols in which aquatic animals are found. This narrative variant depicting aquatic animals occurred previously on the caitya in front of Tathubhāni, where a conch shell (sankha) is represented in the middle of the water motif. Most examples of this type of caitya date to the 19th or early 20th century, so that the primary trio rests on the central shaft element of a Sumeru-caitya, as exemplified in Banepa (or at Kvabhāni, Kathmandu and Bhichabhāni, Patan). Thus the column shaft merely replaced the multi-levelled socle structure.

If one now examines the caityas presented above with their water, lotus and rock symbolism, the obvious conclusion is that the account of the origin of the Swayambhūcaitya, as it has come down in the Swayambhūpurāna, is no longer alluded to merely by way of the dominant element in the tectonic composition, the lotus. Rather a number of elements are used which, in interplay with one another, render the traditional account of Creation quite literally. Thus it seems natural to take the rock symbolism as the representation of the run with its four mountains (Jāmavā, Sipueva, Pāuna, Dhiłaeva) surrounding the Kathmandu Valley. The mythical lake Nāghrāda, from which Swayambhū arose in the centre of the lotus blossom in the period of the Tretayuga, formerly filled the Valley. According to the legend, the hill in the western part of the Valley on which the large caitya is today located rose only 35 metres above the lake surface. Finally, in the Kaliyuga, Vajrasattva is said to have covered Swayambhū’s radiating light with a rock in order to preserve it from defilement, and as a final act Śāntik-aracārya built a caitya on it.

All elements of this legend may be found on the votive caityas that have been presented in this chapter: the lotus grows up out of the rock-rimmed waters with a stem of huge proportions and a surfeit of petals. Directly on top of the lotus, as may be seen in the example of Motibaha, rests the caitya with dome, drum profile and finial, or else there is a kind of middle storey sandwiched in between, which may be understood as being the heavy covering for the endangered source of light.

If every caitya of the Valley, on the basis of its particular features and its overemphasis of the lotus motif, can be read as a representation of the Swayambhūnāth Mahācaitya, as a copy of a primordial image, this is even truer of the examples presented in this chapter, in that they go a decisive step further, transposing a legend onto a three-dimensionally sculptured miniature building. It is quite evident that from the early 18th century onwards there was a recurring need to tread this path of direct depiction. If the two caityas in Bhaktapur can tentatively be dated to the first half of the 18th century, the one at Motibaha was likely erected in the second half of the 18th century, and the caityas on the column shaft, by contrast, one hundred years later. The caitya at Bakubhāni is the only one dated by an inscription, to 1780.
From a recently cemented double-stepped platform emerges a base storey bearing the basic elements of the mythic lotus that once appeared on Naghsara. The round stem of the lotus, with a pair of leaves in relief, each of the four directions, apparently roots from the waters, which are indicated by a uniled apron containing a water pattern (khusihina). These arches, supported plaques with tenoned Bodhisattvas (of which only Maitreya has survived, mistakenly placed in the western direction). From the centre line the steps are pointed corners, the surfaces of which bear incriptions used since early times to express rock symbols. The raised corners of the square that surrounds the lotus presumably contained depictions of the Caturmukhas and represent the four mountains that define the space of the valley of Kathmandu, while the mythic lake conveyed by the khusihina is folded forward into the vertical plane. On top of the lotus stem, the lotus opens in full bloom with five circles of 48 petals each. Resting on the lotus flower is a squat octagonal base storey with an elaborately moulded projecting socle and a roof-like covering, topped by a seed pattern indicating the pen-carp. The eight niches protrude slightly, their frames bearing courses with beads and leaves. Filled carpets developed from the niches and fall across the mouldings of the socle. The niches in the cardinal directions display four Thahagatas of recent origin, while the niches in the intermediate directions probably contained their respective Sakris. Mediating between the primary trio with its projecting S-shaped drum moulding and the octagonal base is another lotus flower, with one circle of petals turned upwards and one circle inverted. The final is of recent origin. The craftsmanship and the mouldings of the base storey suggest a dating to the first half of the 18th century.

A profuse rock formation serves as the prominent motif, one supporting four niches with the Thahagatas and plaques depicting their Sakris.
483. Bhaktapur: caitya on a shaft at Dhyanañahā, elevation north and top view, scale 1:10. The upper trio of the caitya, with the Tathāgata emerging from a vestigial drum, rests on a stepped socle. The upper structure has been placed on an opened lotus flower, which rises with its stem in the shape of an octagonal tapering shaft from the Primordial Ocean, the latter encircled by a serpent. An octagonal plinth supports what can only be understood as the essential message of the Swayambhu-purana, the emergence of the lotus from Nāgabrata, transformed into architectural form.

484. Bhaktapur: base of caitya stele at Dhyanañahā, early 20th century. Frogs and fish are in the waters that surround the stele. Plan, scale 1:5.

485. Banepa: the upper element of a Sumerucaitya, consisting of the primary trio (the finial is missing), a shaft containing the preeminent Tathāgatas, and a voluminous lotus flower resting on a stele, the whole acquiring an orientation by the carving of Padmapani, the Bodhisattva related to the Tathāgata Amītābha above. The stele is divided by incisions; an inscription occupies the surface below Padmapani.
The Ramyakūtāgaracaitya

The term Ramyakūtāgaracaitya was introduced by Amṛtānanda Sākya in his Dharmakosa, which he prepared for Brian Houghton Hodgson. In it he refers to the caitya at Nagabhā (dated 1673) and mentions sixteen deities as an essential feature for such a caitya type. According to Hemraj Sākya, the most conspicuous feature is the presence of two storeys with niches for eight or sixteen Bodhisattvas or Lasyadevis. The caitya at Nagabhā remains true to the one identified as its prototype at Guitabahi cīḍā. There an upper storey houses the Tathāgatas in the central niches, and four Bodhisattvas in standing position occupy the niches of the base storey, the shape of which follows the pattern set by the sikhārakūtā type of caitya. Similarly, the 17th-century Sikkharakūtacaitya at Janabāhā in Kathmandu has an upper storey with twenty niches. There the Tathāgatas are flanked by Lasyadevis, and the former appear again in the corners; Vairocana and Aksobhya facing east, Amoghasiddhi and Ratnasambhava facing south, Vairocana and Amoghadhī facing north. This scheme is reproduced with simplifications on a similar caitya at Muyabahā in Kathmandu.

Five more caityas from Kathmandu and Swayambhūnāth may be classified as Ramyakūtāgaracaityas. One at Lagabāhā, dated 1686, obviously served as a prototype for a similar caitya on Swayambhūnāth Hill located to the side of Pratappura. Established about a generation later (the inscription mentions only some repair work of 1779), this latter caitya was in turn replicated at the same site, probably in the middle of the 19th century. Two other caityas at Lagabāhā in Kathmandu deviate from the prototype, but follow the same general plan of design. One of them preserves its primary trio in an architecturally pure form, while four Tathāgatas in triplicate occupy the niches of the upper, and twelve Bodhisattvas the niches of the lower storey. The second one has niches for the Tathāgatas engaged to the drum, and niches in a single base storey for the four Bodhisattvas accompanied by the Sodasa Lāṣyās.

No doubt, the caitya that deserves prime attention is the one at Lagabāhā which was established on the sixth day of the waning moon in the month of Karttika, a Wednesday, in Nepāl Samvat 796 (1686). In contrast to the Sikkharakūtacaitya type of the 17th century and its variations with a circle of lotus petals, the primary trio on a Ramyakūtāgaracaitya retains the importance it once had during the Licchavi era. While on Sikkharakūtacaitya the primary trio makes only one-quarter of the entire structure, it is exactly half on the caitya under discussion. As the plinth is comparatively high, the total height of 150 centimetres produces a very object of perfect dimensions and proportions. The excellent craftsmanship achieves a blend of sculptural presentation and three courses of decorative ramāṇa script that adds to the visual grace of the caitya.

The platform that supports the caitya is of vimsatikona shape, and displays the usual flatness. Above the platform, however, the base storey starts with a supporting kula profile punctuated by small medallions depicting the Four Guardians Kings. Quite unusual is the absence of any plinth or terrace to mediate between the platform and the base storey. The architecturally framed niches of the base storey are grouped into threes on each of the projecting parts and one each in the corners. The four usual Bodhisattvas are placed in the centre niches, and the Sodasadothās are placed in the remaining ones. Most of the images are damaged and therefore unidentifiable. The arches above the niches bear floretted motifs, with three countable flowers – possibly an allusion to the Three Jewels. The neighbouring caitya, where three circular elements unite to form a single flower, bears an even more apparent allusion to the Three Jewels.

A course of ramāṇa script runs along the base of the niches on all four sides. On the eastern side, the fifth stanza of the Pañcatathāgata Jñānāgātha of the Mañjūśri Nāmasangiti, a collection of devotional hymns dedicated to Mañjūśri, is reproduced. On the other three sides the donor (danapati), a Sākyabhikṣu from Mahagora (an unidentifiable location) who had the caitya erected at Kirtipunyavihāra in 1686 in memory of his deceased son, is mentioned. The roof covering bears a second course of ramāṇa script, an inscription of one hundred letters representing the saukṣaramadhanam, a mystical charm dedicated to Vajrasattva. It is said the mere uttering of this dharama removes sins.

The upper storey of the caitya represents a miniature version of the base storey, complete with vimsatikona foundation, architecturally framed niches and a more sophisticated roof covering. The central niches are occupied by the four Mahābuddhas – eight-armed Tathāgatas with four heads. In the remaining niches are found Bodhisattvas and Lasyadevis. The base bears, as the third course in ramāṇa script, the first four stanzas of the Pañcatathāgata Jñānāgātha (M.B. Shakya 1993: 31).

The primary trio rises above the upper storey on a lotus throne, with two circles of petals each turned upwards and downwards. Engaged to the drum moulding are four large niches for the Tathāgatas, and small ones for their respective Saktis. These figures have disappeared. Hooks projecting from the interior indicate that they were once inserted into the niches. The large niches support crowns in the shape of caityas, thus defining a pañcagacaitya configuration. These caityas are complete with plinth and primary trio, and framed by garlands of flowers. The dome is of a slightly inverted shape. The cove, the protruding central pole (yāhsl) and the āmalāka circle on top are articulately carved, displaying a superb craftsmanship.
H. Kathmandu: Ramyakotagiracaitya at Lagabaha, built in 1686.

486. Elevation south, scale 1:5.

487. Top view.

488. Kathmandu: Ramyakotagiracaitya at Lagabaha, built in 1686, northern face.
Caityas with vimsatikona support

Caityas with a lotus throne and a triple-stepped primary socle vimsatikona in shape

Among the numerous new caitya types in the 18th and 19th centuries, one type stands out by reason of its strikingly narrow range of variation in form and iconography. On the basis of a few recognizable features, however, an unmistakable type was created.

Sixty-three examples of this type have been identified together on Swayambhūnāth Hill (44) and in Kathmandu (19). A further isolated case may be found far away in Banepa. Fourteen inscriptions have dates ranging between 1802 and 1874, but a core period between 1821 and 1851 can clearly be made out, during which twelve inscriptions bear witness to the development of this caitya type. Tūlādhars, Mahārjans and Silakārs are identified as the donors – members, that is, of those Buddhist groups in Kathmandu which have engaged in trade, artsanship or farming.

If one disregards the primary trio and the simple socle construction, the latter generally consisting of one or more steps not formally shaped – all of which is repeated in stereotype fashion –, then what is left as the characteristic features are the throne in the form of a simple and upwardly unfolding lotus blossom under the primary trio and a triple-stepped primary socle, always vimsatikona in shape – this in striking contrast to the quadratic form of the secondary socle underneath it. The height of the steps decreases upwards, so that the lowest step is twice as high as the upper.

The lotus blossom exhibits several petals, but as a rule it, together with the dome and drum, is covered by mortar made from brick dust, thus producing the effect of a dish under the primary trio, whose bulgy dome contrasts effectively with it.

The sudden appearance of this building type and its disappearance after about two generations raises the question of what the dogmatic implications are. Contemporary Buddhist treatises having not been consulted, this can be answered only tentatively. The three levels may represent the Three Worlds (trīloka), the three bodies possessed by a Buddha (Skt. trikāya) or the three precious ones or jewels (Skt. trīrūpa: the Buddha, dharma, sangha), given that a caitya can always be regarded as an image of the Teaching of the Buddha. Hemraj Sākya, however, posits that the “three vehicles” (Skt. trīyāna) are what is meant. These are the three paths that lead to nirvāṇa: bottommost śāstrīvāṇa, the path that leads to arahatship and is equated with Hinayāna; in the middle pratyekavāṇa, which leads to Buddhahood attained for one’s own sake; and finally the uppermost level, representing bodhisattvavāṇa or Mahāyāna, which leads to supreme Buddhahood only after countless lives. This interpretation by a Newar scholar needs to be mentioned here, even though it may be difficult to find it compelling – compelling in the way, for example, that the four levels or steps under the dome of a Bodhicaitya are, as these are paired from bottom to top respectively to the four awarenesses (smtvyapāṣṭhāna), four perfect renunciations (prahāna), four coefficients of miraculous pow-
ers (rādhīpāda) and the five faculties (pañcendriya). These latter assignments are not speculation but the statements of a text that has become widely familiar through Tucci’s translation (Tucci 1932: 40-41). Within the Newar context, similar translations that would make the data submitted here appear under a new perspective still remain to be made.

Caityas with vimsatikona support in Patan (17th–18th centuries)

The Mahābuddha temple of Patan played an important formative role in the development of caitya types throughout the 17th century. The decorative details of the temple, with its peculiar motifs of deer worshipping the Wheel of the Law, found their way into the design of 17th- and early 18th-century caityas. Examples may be found even beyond Patan, in Thankot, Kirtipur and Sunakothi. The chapter on iconography provides a full account of the spread and variation of this motif. Similarly, the caitya that is placed on the third-floor level of the Mahābuddha temple assumed the role of a prototype that was repeated until the middle of the 18th century.

The primary trio on a supporting lotus throne is shaped according to a formula that, with slight variations, can be observed widely on most of the caitya types that developed over the 17th and 18th centuries. However, should the Mahābuddha temple with its caitya really have been consecrated in 1601, as the chronicles tell us, then the design of the primary trio on it together with its drum mouldings would lay claim to being an archetype that influenced caitya architecture for centuries to come.

The characteristic element of the caitya under discussion is neither the primary trio nor the main base with its exuberant niches but the intermediate base of vimsatikona shape that supports the lotus throne. The flatness of this intermediate base is uniquely stark in its simplicity, although the base itself is borne by a moulded quarter-round, which is usually at the foot of this tier, symbolizing the snake as the all-pervasive element of support.

The plinth with the four lavishly carved niches, which have been explained elsewhere, is again of vimsatikona shape and divided by a sharp-edged stepped profile that repeats the motif of the stringcourse in the shape of a snake.

Platforms, plinths and socles are widely found in vimsatikona shape, the mandala-based plan that provides the basic orientation of any built structure by pointing towards the cardinal directions. There are, however, no explanations at hand why, on the type under discussion, a distinct base of that shape should remain without any decorative elements, merely mediating between the lower and upper parts of the structure. The base of vimsatikona shape suddenly reappeared at the beginning of the 19th century in Kathmandu, serving as a triple-stepped socle or support that emphasizes the tiered form of the caitya; ever more platforms or socles were welcomed because they pushed the primary trio, the former prime object of worship, ever higher up.

40. Kathmandu: location of 18 caityas with a lotus throne and triple-stepped socle of vimsatikona shape, built during the first half of the 19th century.
402. Swayambhūnāth Hill: caitya with a lotus throne on a triple-stepped primary socle of vimsatikona shape, built in 1831, elevation east and top view, scale 1:50.
403. Kathmandu: two caityas with a lotus throne on a triple-stepped primary socle of vimsatikona shape in a courtyard behind Cābāha, built in 1859.
494. Elevation north, scale 1:10.
Fifteen examples of caityas are known in Patan on which the characteristic vimsatikona base is found, above main bases of different shape. In a courtyard near Vanabähá, the upper structure with primary trio and base almost exactly copies the prototype of Mahábuddha, the size being reduced by thirty percent. A caitya near Nugah, again smaller than the prototype, dispenses with niches on the base storey, thus stressing the architectural character of the building. In this case, the vimsatikona base takes on the more obvious role as the support of the primary trio, while the lower structure is seen to be a double-stepped plinth with repetitive snake elements. Only three caityas of this type are dated, spanning a period from 1707 to 1736. The example from the courtyard behind Vanabähá, which represents a true replica of its prototype, was erected in 1709. Although the prototype is considered to have been built a century earlier, a certain connection between the construction of the caitya in question and repair work on the Mahábuddha temple seems possible.
496. Patan: cairn of the third floor of the Mahaboudha temple, early 18th century.
This analytical drawing isolates the *vimatsu*ko base as the formative element, it being placed above the base storey and supporting the lotus throne under the primary trio.

497. Patan: cairn north of Nakabahi (northern face), with large niches projecting from a socle of *vimatsu*ko shape and housing the four Tathāgatas.

498. Patan: location of the twelve early 18th-century *cairns* for which a base of *vimatsu*ko shape under the lotus throne of the primary trio is a characteristic feature. Two *cairns* rest on an octagonal socle, and the others on a square socle.
499. Patan: *cairn* with a base of *vimatsu*ko shape in Naga, early 18th-century, elevation north and view, scale 1:10.
The Padmāvalicaitya

The element of the padmāvali

The myth of creation as told in the Svayambhūpurāṇa attributes highly unique qualities to the lotus that appeared on the surface of Nāghrāda. It was not only self-existent (svayambhū) and resplendent but also had one thousand petals (sahāra paḷeṭuḥ). The figure one thousand conveys a sense of innumerable expressive of the abundant qualities of the flower, which stands for the multifarious manifestations of the universe.

The realization of the padmāvali element on various types of caitya in the last quarter of the 17th century seemed aimed at translating the concept of the lotus of one thousand petals into architectural terms. In such cases, characteristically, the circle of lotus petals is repeated seven and in one case (Svayambhūnāṭh Hill) even twelve times, thus referring to numbers that carry strong connotations of time. Although in most cases only 252 or 336 petals can be identified, on two examples on Svayambhūnāṭh Hill the total number, 1008 (12 circles of 84 petals each), exceeds even the mythic number.

Only 52 caityas of various types make use of the padmāvali element, but they add considerably to the overall impression of great diversity within the building scene of the early 19th century. The emergence of the lotus as the dominant element of the entire composition in the 17th and 18th centuries was elaborated on earlier. The introduction of the padmāvali element occurred at the same time and was revived in the early 19th century, at a time when the caitya architecture of the Kathmandu Valley reached its acme.

Padmāvalicaityas

After seven circles of lotus petals came into use, at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century, between the upper primary trio and a lower storey, this element evidently took on a life of its own, becoming within a new constellation the main theme of the entire caitya structure.

The most consistent use of the lotus circles as controlling motif is on the so-called Padmāvalicaityas, of which fourteen remain standing in Patan and one each in Kirtipur and Kathmandu. Significantly, this type of caitya occurs neither on Svayambhūnāṭh Hill nor in other places in the Valley. It can therefore be said almost without qualification that it is again a type of structure that was developed in Patan.

One half of all Padmāvalicaityas in Patan are datable by means of inscriptions. The dates range over two hundred years from 1723 (Bubāhā) up to the year 1928 (next to Khapičēcukā). One clear period of heightened activity can be detected in the middle of the 18th century. The caitya from the year 1928 can be explained by merely noting that, in type if not in the details and in the arching of the lotus petals, it quite obviously was modelled after an earlier Padmāvalicaitya in the same courtyard. The Maharjans who lived at the courtyard site (the inscription mentions one Dhiro Narsin) evidently thought it appropriate, when erecting a caitya, to make it similar to the one their ancestors had erected 97 years before.

Of the fourteen Padmāvalicaityas in Patan, only two are located along public thoroughfares and on public grounds; three are located in the courtyards belonging to farmer castes in the eastern part of the city, six in the courtyards in the city's western part, and only two are found in a monastery courtyard, namely at Bubāhā (called Bubabārā in the inscription) and at Yokubāhā.

The central element of the caityas, the seven circles of lotus petals, are approximately 30 centimetres tall and take up about one fourth of the total height of the relatively low structures. Almost without exception, two of the circles are pointed upwards, while five are inverted. But as in so many cases, here too the norm is breached: in two cases (Nyākāhācukā and behind Habāhā) three circles point up and four down. A wide range is exhibited in the number of petals, blurring any trace of a system. In many cases the circles are formed on the basis of symbolically laden numbers, such as seven, nine or twelve, so that a total of 196, 234 or 336 petals result. But also prime numbers, such as 41 (Khapičēcukā, 1930), occur. The upwardly and downwardly pointed circles were in each case always wrought from a single freestone. It is only in the example at Bubāhā that the circles that point upwards are structurally separated from the others.

The primary trio, with finial, dome and drum resting on the lotus base, is always represented in the same manner. The dome is hardly noticeable. Much more prominent is the pointed half-round profile and the curved profile of the drum. The four Tathāgatas in the form of plaques overlie this profile and extend up into the area of the dome. Under the lotus flower there follows the scaled body of a serpent, which terminates with its head and tail in the north. Only in one case (Khapibēcukā) is this motif repeated, being positioned between the circles of up- and downwardly pointing leaves. The form of the base displays as much regularity as that of the superstructure. Seven of the caityas have either a quadratic base or an octagonal one. The profile of these bases again adheres to a unified programme. Under the serpent's body there follows, in a few cases only, a transitional level with lotus motifs in the shape of a circle, octagon or square, or in a vimśatiśatenā form.

503 Patan: caitya of the third floor of the Mahābuddha temple.
There then follows the actual base, with a pointed half-round profile in the upper third, which often takes the form of a simple band with sharp edges. This profile is accompanied on the upper side by seed motifs, and on the lower one by lotus leaves. The base ends with a quarter-round that repeats the symbolism of the serpent and is accompanied by a lotus leaf (palehah) motif or the characteristic kuhsimvah, which likewise makes use of a lotus motif.

This caitya type consisting of three elements may be placed on further base levels (Bubaha), or else one level is inserted between the lotus and standard base. The caitya at Yokubaha, which serves in an additional function as the local point for the initiation into the currently 115-member Sakya sangha, the members being therefore called caihaka Sakya (Locke 1985: 225), has a circular intermediate storey with the four Tathagatas in niches, and with their four Saktis occupying the medial points in distinctly smaller niches. In the intermediate spaces are affixed the astumangala, the eight auspicious objects.

The bases exhibit niches in one case only, that of the octagonal base in the courtyard west of Yokubaha, in whose niches eight Bodhisattvas are housed. The niche form recurs to the motif, characteristic of Patan, that was established by the Mahābuddha temple – that of the trilobed opening topped by a stepped outer outline.

The padmāvali motif on Sikharakūṭacaityas

The element of successive rings with lotus petals occurs for the first time on the Caturvyūha-caitya in front of Jyābaha in Patan, a caitya that in many respects occupies a special place as a formative entity within the history of its class development. On the one hand, the caitya type under present discussion documents the further line of development within the Caturvyūha-caitya, as the middle section can clearly be read as a shaft, from which the four standing Bodhisattvas protrude with plastic starkness. On the other hand, the introduction of the sevenfold circle of lotus petals between the primary trio and the roof-like covering over the shaft signifies a clear innovation. As fewer than half of the 22 similar Sikharakūṭacaityas furnished with a padmāvali element are datable by means of an inscription, it cannot be said with finality that the caitya in question from Jyābaha does represent the first use of the motif, though comparison with the other examples makes it seem very probable.

The caitya at Jyābaha, dating to the year 1680, exhibits a total of seven circles of 36 lotus petals each. One circle points up, and the six remaining ones down. It would appear noteworthy that the primary trio does not yet rest on an articulated pericarp, nor the circles of petals...
atop a serpent’s body. Both features were obviously introduced only in the 18th century, in order to intensify the motif of the petals and the water symbolism.

The caitya at Tahhani in Patan, similar by reason of the simple socle and the Bodhisattvas that stand out in relief, copies the padmāvali motif of the caitya of Jyābābha in the year 1709. Of decisive importance here, however, is the introduction of a profile in the shape of a half-round, which divides the socle storey approximately in half, thus employing an essential formal element of Sikharakutacaitiyas. In addition, the socle storey is of vimsatikona shape and thereby deviates from the strictly quadratically shaped shaft of the Caturvyūhacaitiyas. If note is taken of the rudimentary beginnings of an upper storey to which are engaged niches with the trilobed arches typical of Patan, it becomes obvious that this caitya is one that does not easily fit into any typology, representing rather a transition. Such one-of-a-kind structures provide enough evidence, repeatedly and in every epoch, that the person commissioning the work, together with the mason, knew how to make use of the freedom of choice arising from the vast supply of formal vocabulary available to him.

Individual elements of such unique caityas attained to full formal maturity at the beginning of the 18th century, so that an additive usage easily led to satisfactory results. It is in these terms that the multifarious use of the padmāvali motif, which was employed for over 150 years, and afterwards in scattered cases also in the 20th century, should be understood. In order to round out the details of the Caturvyūhacaitiya at Jyābābha it should be mentioned that, in later succession, and probably only in the 19th century, two caityas were built in Thimi and Chapagaon that likewise exhibit the seven padmāvali circles of petals.

Already one decade before the complex caitya at Tahhani was erected the Sikharakutacaitiya north of Jhatapvah Square was in place in Patan, being termed a pabitraucaitiya (Skt. pābitra = “sacred”, “pure”) in the inscription of around 1698 (the last figure in the year is unclear). In its case, the seven rings of the lotus petals are divided into two that point up and five that are inverted. The primary trio with the Tathāgatas rests on the pericarp, but the seven padmāvalis lie directly on top of the roof-like covering of the socle storey. On the diagonals of this covering halved lotus flowers appear in the exact places where, only six years later (1704), at neighbouring Gihānacuka, the figures of the Caturmahārājas were inserted. Worthy of note in the example from 1698 is the simple formation of the petals by a midrib. The effect the lotus achieves thereby is starkly abstract and architectonic, less floral and decorative. The neighbouring example from the year 1704 not only is decidedly larger but also exhibits petals with a double notching. This caitya represents the type that was to be copied, almost without alteration, in the area around Patan’s Darbār Square in the first half of the 19th century. Even the total height of approximately 240 centimetres is repeated any number of times, as is the use of an upper socle with a dividing profile and with guardian lions in the corners, along with a much thinner socle, which appears to have been wedged under the entire building like a pedestal, and which, like the main storey and the upper socle, rests atop a serpent’s body whose form is that of a quarter-round moulding.

The two caityas with padmāvalis at Vābāhā and Bakanani Square (both in Patan) are also presumably among the older examples from the early 18th century. All the other datable ones, by contrast, are from the first half of the 19th century (1819, 1821, 1834). Only four caityas of this type can be found in Kathmandu; there is one in Sunakothi, and all others are located in Patan. The latter city has thus once again demonstrated its creative vigour in the ongoing process of giving form to Buddhist votive structures.
The primary trio of finial, dome and drum figures less prominently than the lotus flower with its two circles of petals turned upward and five circles of petals turned downward. On the finial, the protruding central pillar (yuhkha) and the circle of uttaraka patterning on top of its thirteen tiers are covered with moulded copper. The shields with depictions of the symbols of the four Tathāgatas, and the cube (hanumika) follow a pattern which in the 17th century became very common. The shape of the dome and drum is to a large extent obscured by depictions of the Tathāgatas. The half-round of the drum with a tiny stringcourse of cucumber seed patterning and curved base below corresponds in design to the prominently edged shape of the dome. Below the trio and the lotus flower there follows the circular-scaled body of a snake, which develops into the snake's head, the latter turned towards north and overlapped by its tail. These basic features of a caitya rest on a triple-stepped plinth. The upper step is in stone, with a pointed half-round profile in the upper third accompanied by a stringcourse of seed patterning, and with a quarter-round at the base accompanied by a stringcourse of lotus leaves. The two lower steps of the plinth are made of stones mixed with panels of conical bricks (dārāja), the upper one having a quarter-round as a base. A stone inscription on the northern side has been incorporated into the plinth.

504, 505. Patan: Pārīśākhyāyā at Bounā, built in 1723.

504. Top view, scale 1:20.
505. Elevation north, scale 1:10.
In the shaping of the *padmāvalis* there was quite obviously wide scope for free play, and this in a variety of respects. The *caitya* at Nakabahi (in Patan), the only one to follow the paradigm of the Caturvyūha-CAITYA at Jyābābahi, displays one circle of petals pointing up and six down. At Vāchēnā, behind Habāhā there are only a total of six circles, one of which points up and five down, while at Svayambhūnāth there is one example with six circles turned up and one turned down. At Tabāhā (in Kathmandu) and in the courtyard of Dāthutahjhyah (near Patan's Darbār Square), three circles are pointing up and four down. A further variation, in terra-cotta, exists near the temple of Lhuinajīmā in Kathmandu; there four circles are turned down, while below these circles there follows a kind of base with one circle pointing up and one down. The rule, however, is quite obviously a division into two upwardly and five downwardly pointing circles. This standard representation also prevailed in the building type which is classified as Padmāvalicaitiya. In the constructional formation of *padmāvalis*, too, quite a variety of approaches occur. Often the dome with the drum and the upwardly pointing circles of lotus petals make up one part of the work, and the circles with inverted petals together with the beading in the form of a serpent body the other. The lower circles, however, may display further sectioning, above the lowest or third lowest circle from below, while the dome and drum are also frequently separated from the *padmāvalis*, forming a distinct unit of their own.

Besides the example with 36 petals per circle mentioned at the beginning, 32 petals is the number that occurs most frequently, based on the division of eight petals per quadrant and thus on one of the most common spatially significant numerals. In a few cases, those with 48 (four times twelve), a number with a time reference occurs, or else numbers like 44, the meaning of which for the present remains obscure.

The serpent body, symbolizing the water element, is usually found under the *padmāvalis*, and in a few cases (as at Gvāhābāhā in Patan) has been shaped into a half-round profile that rests on a minusecule step profile, thereby setting itself off from the roof-like covering that follows below. In four cases (as at Jhatapvah in Patan: Tabābāh in Kathmandu) this half-round, which contains scales and is thus easily recognizable as a serpent’s body, marks the constriction between the upwardly and downwardly pointing circles and in this manner asserts itself to good effect within the whole of the composition.

The base storey with double roof-like covering (displaying a *kula* profile), niches, half-round profile dividing the storey in the middle, and stepped profile of the storey socle with swaying tips is completely identical with the storey formation of the Sikharakutacaityas. Likewise identical is the double-stepped platform under the actual *caitya* structure proper. As a rule, however, the lower platform is of squat proportions, it being supported in turn by the quarter-round moulding of a serpent body.

The examples presented here are similar down to their iconographical adornment to those presented in the chapter on Sikharakutacaityas. The four Tathāgatas are either engaged to the dome on plaques or have been inserted into small niches. In the intermediate directions are found the Saktis of the Tathāgatas, but they always remain underneath the heading of the drum profile and thus at times are of diminutive size (as at the Cībhāheka courtyard at Jhatapvah). In a few cases the figures of the Caturmahārājas (at the courtyard of Dāthutahjhyah)
or the Saktis of the Tathāgatas (at the courtyard west of Patukva, Patan) are affixed within the diagonals and thus, being greatly exposed, have been only fragmentarily preserved.

The usual four Bodhisattvas are found in the storeys, though there is some doubt whether it is Vajrapāni or Ratnapāni who is featured in the south alongside Padmapāni (W), Mañjusri (N) and Maitreya (E). The steps of the pedestal remain largely bare of iconographical adornment. In one case, only the symbols of the Tathāgatas are found on the throne-like āsanas: in the north the viśvajñāna, in the east the vajra, in the south the jewel (ratna), and in the west the lotus (padma).

In another variation of the iconographical programme, the base storey of the Padmāvali-caitya acquires an octagonal shape. The vertical composition in no way deviates from the earlier discussed Sikharakūtacāitya with a padmāvali element. The primary trio on top and the stepped plinth of either square or octagonal shape repeats a well-known formula. Even the octagonal base storey with its niches and roof-like covering very much repeats the usual decorative elements of square base storeys. Only in one case (near Suhāhā, Patan) is the usual niche frame replaced by foliage, which encompasses the entire opening. Instead of four niches, eight are introduced to house the Astabodhisattvas, namely Maitreya (E), Śūryaprabha (SE), Vajrapāni (S), Visvapāni (SW), Padmapāni (W), Dhvajapāni (NW), Mañjusri (N) and Candraprabha (NE). In a few cases (for example, Gujīrāhā) only four Bodhisattvas (Vajrapāni (E), Ratnapāni (S), Padmapāni (W), Visvapāni (N)) appear, occupying the cardinal directions and each displaying varadāmudrā, while the intermediate directions are occupied by their Saktis, each holding the symbols or attributes of the Bodhisattvas and displaying abhayamudrā. The latter disposition was used in Kathmandu (Jyābāhā, Janabāhā) and Patan (Gujīrāhā).[511] The padmāvali element between the primary trio and the base storey undergoes variation in a manner discussed earlier: the range is from three circles up and four down (Gujīrāhā cidhā) to two up and five down (Tāgābāhā) and one up and six down (Janabāhā).

Alltogether sixteen examples of this octagonal cāitya type exist, all fairly evenly distributed among the three prominent cities and even Svayambhūnāth Hill. None of these cāityas has a complete inscription that would allow a reliable dating. Two examples from Svayambhūnāth, one from Tāgābāhā and one from Gujīrāhā cidhā may, however, be placed in chronological proximity to the early Sikharakūtacāityas bearing the padmāvali element near Jhatapvah, which are dated 1698 and 1704.
312. Kathmandu: Sīkharakūṭa-cāitya with a padmāvali at Cetiṇāra, late 18th century, elevation west and top view, scale 1:20.
313. Patan: Sīkharakūṭa-cāitya at Hābāhā, as seen from the east. The Tathāgata are engaged to the drum above a lotus flower and appear again in the architecturally framed niches of the base storey.
314. Patan: Sīkharakūṭa-cāitya of the early 17th century at Bāktānī. An inscription records the repairing of the courtyard with tiles in 1687.
A separate shrine-like element is located on the eastern side of the courtyard, with representations of the Buddha, dipṃa and sangha in niches guarded by a pair of lions.
315. Patan: Sīkharakūṭa-cāitya with a padmāvali at Jhānpāṇḍ/Chāṁbhāpta, built in 1704. The four Tathāgatas are engaged to the drum, along with four tiny Saktis, the seven circles of the lotus leaves (padmāvali) are guarded by the Caturmahārājas in the diagonals (one is lion). In the niches of the base storey are displayed the four Bodhisattvas. The lower plinth was enclosed by a low wall in 1757, thus raising the entire structure above the level of the courtyard. The wall leaves space for a lobed opening above the guardian stone (kṣetrapāla) of the courtyard.
The Jvalivalicaitya

Of the total of 78 Jvalivalicaityas, more than one-third are precisely dated by inscriptions. Accordingly, the first structure of this type came into being in the year 1831 at Bapunani, a courtyard near Hakhā in Patan. Others followed in 1837 (at Makhāhā in Kathmandu), in 1847 (on Svayambhu-nath Hill) and 1863 (in Sunakothi). The majority of Jvalivalicaityas were endowed by the turn of the century, but the building type recurs occasionally in more recent times too—for instance, at Tutuchēhā in Kathmandu (1960) and at Nābāhā in Patan (1985). Examples are found also in Thimi and Sanagaon.

The earliest dated example, the one at Bapunani, appears to be a mature stage in the development process and impresses the viewer as being a perfect model in all formative details. In vain is the search made for forerunner structures that hint at the introduction of the circular, triple-levelled middle section on top of the lotus blossom, for this tripartite element is the actual conveyer of a new, previously unknown dogmatic message. All other details, by contrast, occur at least from the 18th century onwards on other caitya types.

The three levels above the lotus are bearers of lotus, flame and vajra motifs. The building type, however, owes its name alone to the circular frieze of flames, called jvalivali. The two lower levels have usually been hewn with sharp right angles and display the motifs on their vertical plane, whereas the following frieze with the vajra motifs is placed either on the zone’s horizontal plane or on a bevelled zone, which sometimes is shaped into a shallow depression, thus leading over to the following torus moulding of the serpent’s body.

In the thought of the Bajrācārya priests, the lotus symbolizes a purity of heart, and the flame the process of purification on the path leading to the vajra world. The lotus thus more or less represents the potential for enlightenment, and the fire the path to it. The fire frees a person from ignorance and by this means purges the five skandhas, the five aggregates constituting the entirety of what is generally known as personality, the twelve āyatana, the sense fields, and the eighteen dhītas, elements that determine all mental processes. It is only after this purificatory process that the purity of the vajra, which represents the essence of all that exists, is attained. And it is only at that stage that entry into the dharmañcitta, the realm of dharma, becomes possible. This realm of dharma represents the uncaused and immutable totality in which all phenomena arise, dwell and pass away.

Every dharmañcittamandala is surrounded by these three rings with lotus, flame and vajra motifs. In their own fashion, the rings represent the hindrances that must be overcome in order to penetrate into the inside of the mandala. Seen in this way, the Jvalivalicaitya represents a three-dimensional mandala, the core of which is occupied by the primary trio, the latter resting in turn on the pericarp of a lotus, with doubly unfolded circles of petals and the body of a snake. In this case of a three-dimensional mandala, where the previously mentioned rings are
arranged in stepped form, one may even talk in terms of an ascent, which ends at the level of the akārṇītha bhūvana at the top of the shaft (yathā), and on it there rests the jewel (cādāmanī) that is identified with the element ether (ākāśa) the latter signifying perfected consciousness.

In individual cases the three rings also occur on the horizontal plane below the dominant lotus, as on theŚikharakūṭacāitya that was built in 1762 at Thakūbhāhā in Patan. There the topside of the large lotus blossom on which the superstructure of the cāitya rests is furnished, in a somewhat different sequence, with motifs of the dharmaśātamandala. The vajra lies in the middle between an outer circle with flame motifs and an inner ring with lotus petals. The actual cāitya thus represents even more clearly the dharmaśātamandala, which in so many other places is placed on pedestals in front of the cāitya structures.

This altered sequence of motifs recurs on the previously mentioned cāityas only at Tūtchēbāhā, the misconceived proportions of which forcefully document the decline of an architectural tradition.

In one more case, on the cāitya of Makhābhāhā, built in 1837, the vajrāvati is placed in the middle of the three circles in keeping with the order of the dharmaśātamandala, but the other two circles for some unknown reason are reversed, the jvalāvati being the upper and innermost, and the padmāvati the lower and outermost one.

Heino Kottkamp (1992: 324-333), in an evaluation of literary sources, has basically confirmed the view of the Newar priest cited above, and added some general remarks of his own about "the structural congruency of stūpa, worldview and mandala". According to him, the vajrāvati is equivalent to the diamond wall (also called vajraprakara), which stands for the highest stage of awareness. As the innermost circle, the padmāvati stands for spiritual rebirth, a prerequisite for access to the sacred realm of the mandala. Kottkamp subscribes to the idea that, following the concept of the mandala, the celestial palace (kūṭāgāra) which encloses the sacred realm defined by an inner circle is represented as a mchod-rten (or cāitya in the Nepalese context). He considers the quadratic plinth of the cāitya to be identical with the plan of the kūṭāgāra, while the dome coincides with the sacred realm termed kūṭāgargra, the inner realm. Besides architectural congruencies, Kottkamp also points to congruencies in essence, iconography and underlying cosmology. To illustrate this, he quotes Giuseppe Tucci (1949: 318) in his now famous postulation of the identity of mandala and stūpa – a quote which seems also appropriate in the context of the Nepalese cāitya:

"The mandala, like the stūpa, is a psychocosmogram: it represents a scheme of the world in the liturgical drama, indeed it is the universe itself led back from its material multiplicity to its quintessential unity; while the stūpa represents in an architectural manner this cosmos and the persons who perform the ritual circumambulation around it go back from the expanded and displayed world to the source of all things, thus becoming unified with it. The mandala is the linear and pictorial scheme of that identification and of that same process: it gives us, horizontally, the plan of the stūpa, it is the stūpa seen from above, with the doors of the pradaksīna and its centre; the mandala too is 'entered into', the ceremony of initiation is a ‘pravesa’, an entry."

In its vertical ordering the Śikharakūṭacāitya follows a scheme similar to that of the Sumeru-cāityas or Śikharakūṭacāityas that rest on a lotus. The primary trio contains a hump-like dome, pointed beading and an S-shaped, outwardly thrust drum profile. The four Tāhāgatas are engaged in the form of plaques to the drum profile or placed in niches. Once the figures of what are for the most part identically wrought Saktis are added, almost no trace of the drum profile remains.

The primary trio rests on a lotus blossom that is opened both upwards and downwards, in each case with 32 petals, and beneath the latter is the serpent body, heightening the water symbolism of the lotus. The triple-levelled ordering with the lotus, flame and vajra motifs is in rare cases supplemented by a level whose vertical plane is covered by sītras containing magical formulas composed of syllables of symbolic content that transmit knowledge. The dominant lotus underneath exhibits one or two circles of 16 petals, each in bold relief. It seems not insignificant in this type of cāitya that not only the stepped nature of the middle section but also the number of petals, namely 32 above and 16 below, is precisely defined. The sharply protruding blossom develops out of a short stem, which trails off below into an S-shaped profile, the upper surface of which is occasionally adorned with lotus petals. In a single case (Vāhāhā, Patan) this leaf pattern is even rendered in the form of a deśavā motif, which was borrowed from ancient India and widely used in the 19th century, being an elaboration of the acanthus motif. Beneath the waist-like constriction, which discloses the round lotus stem over a length of several centimetres, begins the multi-stepped composition of the socle. The uppermost section has two or three levels, depending on whether it follows the circular stem of the lotus or is octagonal in transition to the square base. The level at the extreme top is always furnished with water motifs (khusibutta) on its vertical plane, and the next highest level fashioned as a scaled serpent body. Beneath these, in rare cases (for example, Cābāhā, Kathmandu), there follows an additional level of vimsatikona shape. The water motif and the serpent body clearly show that the dominant lotus is rising from the waters, from which it supports the cosmos as represented by the cāitya dome and the central shaft, which here, moreover, occupies the centre of the dharmaśātamandala, being equivalent to the celestial palace (kūṭāgāra), the latter also identified as the City of Great Liberation (mahānāmokṣapura).
On the platform, which figures as an opened lotus flower, are carved consecutive circles of flame (vāde), vajra and lotus (padma) motifs as the base for a three-dimensional dharmaśūlūmūrta. The four Tathāgatas are engaged to the drum, their Saktis having been placed into niches of the upper storey, and the corresponding Bodhisattvas into the niches of the lower storey.

Kathmandu: Jvalāvalīcāitya at Makhābāhā, built in 1837. The circle with vajra motifs is placed between the lotus and fire motifs.

Patan: Jvalāvalīcāitya near Haugah. The detail shows an additional circle with Budhānā spells (dīrghāyati) in rāṣṭrā script placed below the three circles of lotus, fire and vajra motifs.

Patan: Jvalāvalīcāitya in Bīrāčhā. The inscription of 1863 mentions the consecration of the caitya (lit. “consecration through breathing” – prāṇapratisthā) and calls it by the name Dīvīuvāgavara. The four Tathāgatas are engaged to the dome. The iconographical programme is as follows: on the upper socle there are unidentified Bodhisattvas (possibly variations of Mahāmāyuri, with three heads and eight arms), while the socle proper has circular niches containing images of the Caturmahārkhas. Towards the east a small image of Maitreya projects from the socle. The total height of 260 cm makes this example the highest among all Jvalāvalīcāityas.
The inscriptions on the eastern and northern sides of the plinth mention a Sukya family as the donors; the individual family members are depicted in a pose of devotion. The caitya is called a Vajradhātucāitya, and its construction dated 1882 (Nepal Samvat 1002). Its anniversary (bhūpadhi) ceremony is still performed on the occasion of pausa ekadasi krsnapaksā (the eleventh day of the dark moon in December). The details of the caitya are exquisitely carved and in good condition.

The final with protruding central pillar (yasti), crest jewel, circle of amalaka motifs on top of the thirteen tiers, shields with symbols of the Tathāgatas and cubes rests on a small dome. The drum (including its half-round), the indentation and the curved base can barely be seen, as the niches of the four Tathāgatas and four minor niches housing their Sakis are engaged to it. This primary trio of the caitya rests on the petal of a lotus flower with two circles of 32 petals, one turned upward and one downward. Below the flower follows the half-round profile of a snake, its head turned towards north, thus orienting the building. The upper order is in a way repeated below: the primary trio rests on a structure of three steps with diamond sceptre (vajra, repeated 32 times), flame (yomike) and lotus (padma) designs, the whole in turn resting on another petal of a lotus flower with two circles of sixteen large petals. Comparable to the design of a Sumerucāitya, this upper structure rests on a slim waist. Beneath, a pair of plinth levels broaden out again. As is the case with the upper lotus flower, the scaly body of a snake with a string of water motifs on top serves as the primary base. The whole structure rests on a plinth of the usual shape, with a half-round at the upper end, combined with a stringcourse of seed motifs on top and lotus leaves below. Lions sharing a common head guard the corners. A festive frame the remaining wall space, with standing Bodhisattvas (east: Maitreya, south: Ratnapāni; west: Padmapāni, north: Saigyadhra) figuring in the central niches. On its base, the plinth displays again a quarter-round, topped by a band of upright lotus petals.

524. Elevation north, scale 1:10.
The dome of the cāitya has dwindled to insignificance; it is the repeated lotus and snake motifs that dominate the 163-centimetre-high building. A special feature is three successively stepped circles with vajra (above), flame (middle) and lotus (below) designs placed between the upper and lower lotuses. The whole structure has eight constructional levels: finial (1), dome, drum, upper lotus and threefold circles (2), lower lotus (3), curved profile with a water pattern (4), serpent body (5) and, finally, plant, divided into an upper (6), middle (7) and lower (8) part. The upper four levels are monolithic, the lower four levels not.

Detail of the lotus flower with three circles of lotus, flame and vajra motifs on top.

Beneath this middle section, which is largely defined by the lotus and the associated water symbolism, come further socle levels, but these do not differ in their design from those of other cāitya types. Characteristic are the half-round profiles and the quarter-round mouldings, which accentuate the consecutive division of the building and, additionally, mediate down to the next following level. These half-round and quarter-round mouldings represent a repetition of the serpent body, which encircles the cāitya up to seven times, its northward pointing head and tail often providing a basic mode of orientation. The Caturmahārājas, the four Bodhisattvas, the vahanas of the Tathāgatas or a lotus motif appears in niches or medallions on the various levels of the socle. Depending on the number of socle levels in their substructure, the height of the small votive buildings varies between one metre (Lagabāhā, Kathmandu) and two hundred sixty centimetres (Bhelāche, Patan). They thus attain to a respectable size, one on a par with the Sikharakūtacāityas and Sumucrucaityas that were being built at the same time.
The Jalayharyuparisumerucaitya and the Sumerucaitya

The emergence of drain (jalahari) and shaft elements

In 1667 a completely new type of caitya came into being in the northern part of Kathmandu, as the innovations concerned several facets of the composition at the same time. The most striking one is the novel formation of the jalahari element, which mediates between the multi-levelled socle composition and the caitya proper. This jalahari element in the end gave the structure type the descriptive name later coined for it, Jalayharyuparisumerucaitya, it being a Sumerucaitya on top of a drain (Skt. jalahari “small pit for water”). Among the other innovations is the sandwiching of an upwardly and downwardly unfolding lotus blossom between the primary trio and a shaft. In contrast to the Caturvyuhacaityas built around 1600 at Itibaha and in 1680 in front of Jyibabahi, the shaft under the lotus is squat and its surface area is taken up almost completely by representations of seated Tathāgatas, which correspond to those on the drum. The edges along the upper end of the shaft, moreover, are shaped like jackfruits (New. phvāsi), in reference to one jītaka. The Tathāgatas are seated on thrones, which rest not on top of but within a lotus flower.

The drain doubtless represents the most noteworthy innovation of this caitya type. It is invariably termed jalahari in the Buddhist context, although the word also denotes the yoni depicted alone without the linga. Without question, the shape of the jalahari is no longer that of a “small pit for water”, but—and very much so—of the drain in which, in most cases, the linga rests. In the Śaiva context this drain is called yoni, the typical symbol of the divine procreative energy.

Bernhard Kölver (1992: 216) maintains that “the caitya was re-shaped in response to that most common of Śaiva emblems, the linga raised in the yoni. The Tathāgatas on the four sides correspond to the four faces of the Śaiva emblem (in its caturmukhalinga form), and its top, which as usual consists of a “neck” and the tiers rising above it, is a morphological parallel to Isāna, the fifth and central head of the caturmukhalinga”. Moreover, he asserts that “the reduced volume of the caitya and the jalahari or yoni condition each other, and both are brought about in the attempt to adapt the caitya to one of the hallowed Śaiva symbols”.

A survey of the caitvas built between the early 6th and early 17th century reveals that it was especially Caturvyuhacaityas with a dominant shaft that were provided with a jalahari, although the latter was on the ground level or elevated only onto a flat platform. There is an evident functional identity between the yoni below a linga and a jalahari below a caitya, as both serve to drain water used for the lustration of the object of worship, one of the usual types of ritual act in both Buddhism and Hinduism. It is by no means the case, however, that the re-
duced volume of the caitya occasioned the jalāhāri drain, as the Caturvyūha śārīra of the 6th century (Svayambhunāth, Nāgbhāhāti, Thāpāhāti) had already reduced the caitya element to insignificant proportions. But even if one assigns a functional purpose to the drain and takes the abbreviated shaft with the Tathāgatas as being a further development and reshaping of an original Caturvyūha śārīra, there is no sufficiently clear explanation of why the jalāhāri should be raised to a higher level, to a position of primenece. The most striking fact is that the jalāhāri element does not, as opposed to the case of the previously mentioned Caturvyūha śārīras, at the same time form a socle under the whole ensemble, being raised, rather, atop a high socle.

The drain has functional drawbacks, in that the water of the lustration spills out onto the socle and is not drained effectively. As for the shape of the jalāhāri drain, it is noteworthy that the curvature is relatively flat, compared with the form of the yoni under the linga, and that the length of the northern pointing spout as a rule equals the entire height of the jalāhāri. The scele body of a serpent encircles the upper third of the curved surface and proceeds out along the spout, under which the head appears. In some cases (as in one example in Bhimsenthan, Kathmandu), the serpent's body encircles only the curvature and does not continue to the spout.

Such forms also occur on the yonis of the 19th century, but usually the circle is not constricted by a stepped profile, so that the spout results from the lengthening of the upper moulding.

Against this expanded background, one may return once more to Kölve's (1992: 221) hypothesis. He asserts that the drain was added to the caitya so "as to achieve a plausible approximation between the central symbols of Buddhism and Saivism", thus calling up Hacker's concept of "inclusivism". He also asserts that jalāhāri and yoni "testify to the emergence of a common set of signs and symbols, valid beyond the territory of an individual religion".

The solution may be sought along these lines, but it is less straightforward than it appears at first sight. Certainly it is open to question whether what occurred was a conscious act of adaptation or whether it was not rather a gradual process, with movements in both directions. The shaft under the primary trio, which rests without exception on a lotus flower — a motif that is repeated under the shaft —, enjoys only superficially a morphological relationship with the linga, and must surely be viewed as being completely unconnected with the central pillar (yasthal), which only appears at those points where it pierces the thirteen tiers above the harsnikā. In the Buddhist context, the shaft under the lotus flower doubtless represents the stem of the flower, which floats on the waters. This motif is elaborated on several examples from the following century, in what can only be called a narrative style.

In spite of these qualifications, which amount to reservations when it comes to making morphological comparisons, changes doubtless started occurring in the 19th century, among which the jalāhāri element may be taken as a syncretistic striving. On the one hand, these changes led to a complete abandonment of the primary trio and its being replaced by representations of Vajrasattva and Vairocana (or Mañjuśrī). On the other hand, the example of a Jalāharyuparisumeruśārīra that was built at Nhāyākabahi in Kathmandu in 1869 demonstrates that, morphological interpretation aside, very concrete overlapping was possible, as the Tathāgatas on the shaft of this example are adorned with the symbols of Siva and Viśṇu. The level of design that merely suggests the various interpretative schemes but does not clinch them is thus abandoned. All the Tathāgatas wear a serpent in the form of a chain (nāgamaṭa). It is Amitābha who alone appears unchanged. In the eastern direction, a Buddha is enthroned upon the elephant of Ākṣobhya, his right hand in the varadamudrā and his left holding his garment at shoulder level — a pose that Maitreya assumes in Nepal, at least when he faces east and is portrayed along with the other three Bodhisattvas. This specific visvavākaranamudrā is in fact identified exclusively with Maitreya (Locke 1989: 78), particularly when the garment displays folds over the entire body. The other two Tathāgatas have four hands that contain the symbols of Siva and Viśṇu. The one corresponding to Viśṇu, facing north, appears with śūkka, cakra, gādā and padma; and to Siva, facing south, with vibhūti, damaru, trisūla and kamanandalu. The adornment of the Tathāgatas in this way with Saiva and Vaishnava symbols testifies to a unique melding of the two religions, one which is not similarly repeated elsewhere. This impression is strengthened at Nhāyākabahi by the fact that, as the inscription on the āgā building of the bahi documents, the annual homa fire is observed on Sivarātrī, Siva's dark new moon night in February.

In 1869 a Buddhist edifice in Kathmandu acquired a Hindu look through slight changes in the cult figures. Almost one hundred years later, in 1967, an exclusively Hindu votive building taking form of a Sumeruśārīra was erected by a Maharjan in Sanagaon, on the Pinani courtyard, being termed a Cārdhāma in the inscription. In place of the primary trio there is a gajāṭra of the same size, while the shaft is occupied by four different Hindu gods: Viśṇu appears in the north with his vihāra Garuda under a canopy of serpent heads, Siva in the west with Nandi, Ram in the south with Hanumān, and Kṛṣṇa in the east with Garuda. The Caturmāhārājas appear in shattered form as the guardians of the world at the throne under the shaft.

With the building in Sanagaon we appear to come full cycle. Whereas for the formation of the Jalāharyuparisumeruśārīra type a traditional element in the composition of caityas was adopted and oriented around the yoni, now, conversely, the entire Sumeruśārīra type was adopted and filled with Hindu content. Even the choice of the four deities corresponds to this dynamic. Alongside the two "old" gods, Siva and Viśṇu, there now appear Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, the two "modern" figures. Their combination in a building oriented towards the four directions catered to a desire on the part of the Maharjan sponsor to adapt a familiar form of architecture to new values.
The overlap of forms and meanings described here defines only one direction to the changes taking place in the 19th century. It was mentioned earlier that this process also led to the primary trio being completely abandoned and being replaced by representations of Vajrasattva and Vairocana (or Mañjuśrī). The complete abandonment of the central element of a caitya, which was reduced in size and in importance— all dome, drum and finial— atop an altered substructure over a period of centuries, can for the time being only be characterized in terms of an architectural typology. With the replacement of the dome by a double-faced plaque depicting Vajrasattva and Vairocana, a typological end point was more or less reached. But these, too, are exceptions, which witnessed no successors.

One of these edifices, which can scarcely be termed a caitya in real terms, is located in Bhimsenath in Kathmandu and shows Vairocana in bodhyangimudrā facing east and Mañjuśrī in dharmacakramudrā facing west, his sword on a lotus flower in his right hand and his book on a flower in his left. A second example, in Sākhu, has Vairocana again in bodhyangimudrā, the objects in his hands being reversed, and Vajrasattva in dharmacakramudrā. This configuration is repeated in a courtyard in Maru/Kathmandu. In all three cases, the pair of deities may be said to metaphorically represent the caitya.

At Svayambhūnāth, Vairocana, who occupies a niche of his own south-east of Akṣobhya, in a certain manner of speaking represents the outwardly projected and hence perceptible centre of the edifice. In this context, too, it would appear to be significant that four identical Vairocanas are placed in the niches under the dome of the Lichehacaitya at Vāhāhā— exactly as if the dome's centre was made visible on the plane beneath it. Being the first of the five transcendental Buddhas, Vairocana in the course of time came to be identified with the Ādibuddha, the primordial Buddha. In the context of Newar Buddhism, however, “Ādibuddha” is usually used as an epithet of Svayambhū, the primordial caitya of the Valley, as David Gellner pointed out recently (Gellner 1989: 13). Vajrasattva in general represents “the principle of purity and purification” (Schuhmacher 1989: 398). He unifies all five Buddha families, even as the white colour of his body unifies all five colours. The vajra to his right signifies “his indestructible essence”, and the bell in his left hand is “an expression of compassion”. The pair Vairocana/Vajrasattva can again probably be seen as a metaphoric representation of the caitya proper. But as long as documents do not confirm such an interpretation, we remain within the realm of mere speculation.

Distribution

Between 1852 (Makahābāhā/Kathmandu) and 1906 (Lukhatirtha/Kathmandu) a total of 72 Jalalharyuparisumerucaityas were erected in Kathmandu, along with five others on Swayambhunāth Hill. three in Bhaktapur, two in Hadigaon and only one each in Patan, Thimi and Banepa. It was therefore a type of caitya that obviously not only appeared for the first time in Kathmandu during the 17th century but was favoured in that particular locale. Hardly had this type with its characteristic jalalhari drain been reintroduced there after an interval of almost two hundred years, however, when its essential feature, the spout, was removed, in 1854. All additional elements on the first dated Sumerecaityas in Kathmandu were left untouched. The type of caitya that came to be most popular in the following years arose as a slight variation on
this. By the end of the century it had almost completely eclipsed the Jaliharyuparismesrmeucaitya. But the other caitya types were also very seldom preferred, so that the dominance of the Sumeraucaitya went unchallenged, with increasing building activity being documented even in the remoter villages, such as Pyangao and Thcva or Sanagaon and Nagades. Of a total of about 400 Sumeraucaityas, again one half are located in Kathmandu. Patan follows with 54 examples, Kirtipur with 23, Sanagaon and Bhaktapur with 14 each, and Swayambhunath Hill with 13. These data the chronological and typological context is defined. In the following, the architectonic structure will be described in greater detail, and the scope of variation among the elements that helped the two building types to acquire an unmistakable form of their own will be disclosed.

**The Jaliharyuparismesrmeucaitya. Composition and iconography**

The first caitya of this type, dated to 1667, already displays all the characteristic structural features. The primary trio with the Tathagatas in the niches inevitably rests upon a lotus flower that opens both upwards and downwards, in each case with twenty petals. The shaft below with the sitting Tathagatas is clearly recognizable on the basis of its edges. The throne (udana) on which the Tathagatas are sitting is of strict quadratic form, with the vahana of the Tathagatas placed in the corners and the Caturnaharajas, the four protectors of the world, in oval medallions. The throne for its part rests within an open lotus flower with serrated petals, in whose large forms a detailed network of foliage is developed. The serrated pattern vaguely recalls the typical appearance of the rock formations on other caityas. The association engendered by these indentations is confirmed primarily by the fact that they do not occur on the surface of the four middle leaves. On these only naturalistic representations of foliage appear. The lotus flower rests in a jalhari drain, which has already been explained in terms of its characteristic formation. The spout projects only minimally, continuing beyond the socle moulding in the form of a serpent body. A thin plinth of vipsaitikona shape mediates between the upper composition and a rough plinth, which seems to have been recently cemented.

A comparative study reveals that the 85 Jaliharyuparismesrmeucaityas that were erected in the second half of the 19th century have the Tathagatas in the area of the dome appearing almost exclusively in the form of plaques, and only exceptionally house them in tiny niches as separate objects. Usually, though, the Tathagatas are replaced by a group of figures whose composite meaning has yet to be determined. Of the usual four Tathagatas, only Amitabha has been included in it, but he now appears facing south. Maitreya appears in his characteristic visvaayakaramanudra in the north, Vajrasattva with a vajra and ghanta in the west, and Vairocana in dharmacakrahurdra in the east. Whereas Amitabha and Vairocana display the hair style of the Tathagatas, Vajrasattva and Maitreya wear their hair after the fashion of Bodhisattvas. The east-west axis, occupied by Vairocana and Vajrasattva, is the one that completely replaces the primary trio in the three previously discussed cases. The obvious recourse, then, is to regard the programmatic change and the replacement of the primary trio in a single context. There can be no explanatory models, however, until such time as text studies provide the necessary background. Even though the "new" programme continues to be followed today on the Sumeraucaityas, neither the Sakya stoneseaters nor the sponsors nor Buddhist scholars such as Hemraj Sakyas have an explanation for the transformation that occurred in the 19th century to the iconographical content at the dome level.
539. Kathmandu: location of 71 Jalaharyuparisumzeru- 
castiya.
540. Bhaktapur, Jalaharyuparisumzeru castiya in Tācapah, 
elevation east and top view, scale 1:20.
The stupa was built by a Vajrācārya of Tarmulamahā-vihāra during the reign of Surendra Bir Bikrāma Śāha (1847-1881). Vajrasākeśa appears on the drum, Ami-
tabha on the shaft, and Ģaṭṭīkāya in a medallion of
the throne, flanked by a pair of peacocks, the mount
of Amītabha. In the corners of the plinth can be seen
Prajñāpāramitā (left: NW) and Maṇjuśrī (right: SW).
The plinth is guarded by lions sharing a common head.

541. Elevation west, scale 1:10.
542. Top view, scale 1:10.
The four sitting Tathāgatas that are carved out of the shaft have been copied without change down through the 20th century. The Jalāhayuparīsmerucaitya at Nhāykābāti in Kathmandu, constructed in 1869, forms the only exception, Ratnasambhava being superseded by Śiva and Amoghasiddhi by Viṣṇu.

The throne under the Tathāgatas, however, obviously offered scope for formational variations. The throne's crowning level, for instance, in spite of its quadratic form, is moulded in the form of a frieze with lotus petals. Frequently, too, the throne is shaped vamstatikona in plan. Appearing in the corners are lions that share a common head or the vahanas of the Tathāgatas. In contrast with the rare examples where starkness and flat surfaces are the order of the day (as in Sunakothe, 1863), there is a prevalence of cases where every nook and cranny of the small edifice is exploited. In such cases, the lions appear in the corners, and the vahanas in the secondary corners or to the left and right of the medallion in the middle containing the
Caturmahārājas. It is only on the oft-mentioned cāitya at Nāhyākabhi that the vahanas have become the central element of the throne, astounding the viewer with their unusually heightened plasticity. The Four Guardian Kings (Caturmahārājas) are represented by Cāityyarāja in the west, Vīnārāja in the east and Dhvajārāja in the north. Cāityyarāja, as a rule, holds a cāitya in his left hand, though a jewel-vomiting mongoose (nakula) often appears in it, the cāitya then being borne in his raised right hand. In rare cases a lotus flower appears in place of the Guardian Kings. The main lotus motif is once again drawn on to support the throne with upwardly and downwardly pointing petals. In some cases the lotus is shaped like a container, so that the throne together with the shaft and the primary trio rests inside the blossom, which wraps itself protectively around the socle. The lotus motif works to good effect, having been pressed somewhat painstakingly into a quadratic base form. Its surface is usually covered by threefold overlapping petals, which form a delicate relief.

The Four Jewels – Mahājūrī, Sadakṣari Lokesvara, Mahāpārīmita and Prajañāpāramitā – may be traced to the corners of lotus flowers along their diagonals, but normally this group, representing the Three Jewels (the Buddha, dharma, saṅgha) supplemented by Mahājūrī, is placed on the flat slab under the jalāhāra drain. The drain of the jalāhāra usually projects out over the upper socle, which in most cases rests directly on the paved surface of the courtyard or square. The middle section of the socle, shaped with lions in the corners, the vajra symbol in centred medallions and a semicircular moulding at the lower end, is repeated stereotypically. In place of the vajra, four-armed Bodhisattvas (Kvathsdau in Bhaktapur, 1897) or else Sadakṣari Lokesvara, alone and facing east, may occur. Beneath the socle, a flat platform upon occasion serves the purpose of raising the entire composition once more above the pavement level.

The Sumerucaitya. Composition and iconography

The first dated Sumerucaitya is the one built in 1854 near Mahābuddha along the eastern border of Kathmandu. Others followed in Sunakothi (1863), at Nāgbāhā in Patan (1864) and in Pāga (again 1864). Numerous cāityas of this type date to the following decades, particularly in Kathmandu, and by the beginning of the 20th century it appears to have nudged aside all competition from other types of cāityas. Some dozen examples of other cāitya types (Jālavālalicāitya, Padmāvalicāitya, Sīkharakūtacāitya) arose, along with, still later, Bodhicāityas, but the Sumerucaitya dominated throughout. In Kathmandu alone there are over 200 cāityas of this type, and in Patan 54. Since 1970 an increasing number of Sumerucaityas have been sponsored, primarily in peripheral villages: Saŋgaon, Sunakothi, Nagadé or Thīmi. Today there are a total of about 400 Sumerucaityas, so that it may be said that almost every fourth cāitya of the 1,800 in the Kathmandu Valley is of this type.

Since the year in which each Sumerucaitya was constructed is far from being preserved on inscriptions, it cannot of course be said with finality when the first cāitya of this type came into being. What can be said, however, is that the Sumerucaitya that was constructed in Kathmandu in 1854 documented in impressive fashion the points of variation with the type of Jalāharuyuparisumerucaitya represented at Makhābāhā, which was built in 1852. Under this variation, nothing changed with respect to vertical composition and iconographic programme; a rather conspicuous remodelling is seen in the details, though. It looks as if the spout of the jalāhāra has been dispensed with. Halfway up the cylindrical base the body of a serpent can nevertheless still be seen coiled about it: the serpent’s head is slightly raised, and above the head, carved out of the surface of the cylinder, there appears the serpent’s crowning jewel (nāga-mani), while the tail is placed behind the head. The motif is repeated a few centimetres below, where the edge of the quadratical socle plinth, moulded into a quarter-round, likewise takes the form of the scaly body of a serpent.

In point of iconographic programme, the Sumerucaitya does not differ in any respect from the type of the Jalāharuyuparisumerucaitya. Representatives of the two types situated right next to one another at Kandacuka in Kathmandu, each dating to 1868, show clearly that the jalāhāra element merely needed to be replaced by a round lotus flower. In the case of the Sumerucaitya at Kandacuka, the approach is out of the ordinary, in that the quadratically shaped lotus flower motif which remains under the throne of the Tathāgatas is repeated in rounded form, unfolding both upwards and downwards. This type of base is later iterated in similar fashion in several locations (for example, at Tukābāhā, constructed in 1963), but then the lotus flower comes to occupy the spot directly under the throne. A serpent body modelled out of a quarter-round always forms the lower end of the lotus flower; it lies atop a flat plinth of vināsitakotu shape.

In its classical design, however, the Sumerucaitya makes use of a differently shaped socle. This shape is already fully developed in the examples in Sunakothi (1863), Patan (Nāgbāhā 1864) and Pāga (1865) and undergoes only minor changes in subsequent decades. The example from Saŋgah in Patan, dating to 1913, documents the complete ornamentation. The upper composition with primary trio, shaft and throne is identical down to the details with what has been described under the Jalāharuyparisumerucaitya as a type. It is only the lotus flower beneath the primary trio that appears to have undergone large-scale variation: instead of a lotus flower that unfolds upwards and downwards there appears a hemispherically shaped flower with a triple row of overlapping petals. The Tathāgatas placed at the level of the dome are the
same ones as in the shaft. The group Amitābha/Vairocana/Maitreya/Vajrasattva seems to be far more common for both, however. A close check in Kathmandu yields the fact that the traditional group Aksobhya/Ratnasambhava/Amitābha/Amoghasiddhi is represented on only every twentieth caitya. The shaft itself usually exhibits soft vertical edges, which remain perceptible throughout their entire length. Sometimes (e.g. Sunakothi) the shaft tapers, though, thus adapting itself opportunistically to the composition of the sitting Tathāgata figures.

Under the whole of the upper structure there follows a multiform stepped socle composition. A rounded lotus flower undergoing voluminous unfolding acts as a platform and thus figures also in compositional terms as the central element, the one drawing the focus of attention. It is only in rare cases that this flower has been reworked into a square containing a depression, so that the upper composition rests in the flower and not on top of it.

The stalk of the lotus under the flower is characterized by water symbolism (khusibutta), and the aquatic link is strengthened by the quarter-round of a serpent's body below rounding out the curved element of the socle composition. A flat plinth of vinsatikona shape, which on Jahanryuparismumerucaityas is found under the jahahari element, mediates to the following quadratic socle levels. The surfaces of this plinth offer space for the mantra "om mani padme hum" and the astamangala, the eight auspicious objects, while the twelve outwardly pointing angles are formed as a vajra.

The upper socle level repeats the throne motif below the Tathāgatas, with Bodhisattvas (usually Maitreya (E), Ratnapāni (S), Padmapāni (W), Visvapāni or Mañjuśrī (N)) or the Caturmahārājas in the central medallions and lions in the corners. Only in rare cases (e.g. Tāndāhā in Patan, erected in 1919) does this socle level repeat the vinsatikona shape of the plinth on top of it. A quarter-round moulding in the form of a serpent body forms the bottommost element.

The lower socle level usually displays a pointed moulding in the upper third and a quarter-round at its base. Beneath it, finally, a further flat plinth or else a broad socle of brickwork may follow. No barriers are set to individual variation of form.

Prospects

One caitya at Būhāhā (erected in 1971) may serve to close out the discussion of the Sumeru-caitya type. By standards of composition it is a Sumerucaitya, even though the proportions of the lotus flower under the primary trio and under the shaft are the reverse of what they normally are, thus producing a strangely mannered effect. Moreover, four standing Bodhisattvas have been formed out of the shaft, so that a typological connection has been established with the Caturvyūhacaitiyas. A further innovation is the forming of the socle under the shaft into a dharmaśāntamandala set within circles of vajrāvalis and padmāvalis. Confirmation is thus found for the earlier statement that the inner realm of the mandala, the kuṭāgaragṛha, corresponds to the dome of a caitya. In this case a double lotus throne (padmāsana) supporting Bodhisattvas and Tathāgatas adds to the iconography of the centre. The mandala is surrounded by mountain symbolism, which in its plethora of attributes and miniature temples creates a clearly defined link with the topography of the Kathmandu Valley. A tiny spout for draining off the water of the Valley in what is a quite literal portrayal of the act recalls, finally, the Jalakaryuparismumerucaitya type. This edifice, which was built a little more than two decades ago, substantiates that the narrative element in the formation of caityas comes out clearly over and over again. In the end, this component is what has led in the last twenty years to the repeated birth of new caitya types that attempt to combine the characteristics of various types.
546-548. Sumerucaityas in different locations.
546. In a field in Sunakothi.
547. In a courtyard north of Nāgbāhā in Patan (built in 1864).
548. On a square in Pāga, built in 1865.
549. Svayamabhūṭā Hill: Sumerucaitya beside Śāntipur, built in 1920, elevation west and top view, scale 1:10.
550. Patan: Sumeruciya in Suagah, elevation south, structural analysis - levels of interpretation. Scale 1:20. Iconography (left): The four Tathāgatas (1) are found in niches facing the cardinal directions and extending up over the entire drum and into the dome of the caityā (Vinasambhava (south), Amitābha (west), Amoghāsiddhi (north) and Akṣobhya (east)). Smaller niches in the four intermediate directions accommodate the Śukis of the Tathāgatas: Māmukī Tārā (south-east), Pundara (south-west), Tārā (north-west) and Sātī Loka (north-east). The shields (kālāmpikā) display the symbols of the four Tathāgatas: jewel (south), lotus (west), vajra (north) and vajra (east). Below the dome and its lotus base, the four Tathāgatas (4) appear again, leaning against the shaft-like pillar in the centre of the building. The sōs below is of vīṣṇuṃkōnī shape and has vajra symbols (7) at its outwardly pointing angles and the mounts (6) of the Tathāgatas at the inwardly pointing ones. Horse (southern), peacock (west), Garūḍa (north) and elephant (east); these flank the four corresponding Bodhisattvas (5) in central niches: Mañjūṣrī (south), Padmapani (west), Vaiśravaṇī (north), Mañjūṣrī (east). The lower lotus with its circle of water motifs and quarter-round serpent body rests on still another sōs (āṭama) of vīṣṇuṃkōnī shape, with vajra symbols (9) at all its corners and the eight auspicious objects (8v uala-umga) on either side of the mantra om snāne padme hum, the latter in niyoga script: kalasa and dhvaja (south), maṇi and cânara (west), sankha and chitra (north) and padma and trisula (east). Below the second sōs follows a two-stepped plinth. The upper one exhibits the Caturmahārajās (10) in central niches - Khaḍgarāja (south), Caityarāja (west), Dhvājarāja (north), Vīnārajā (east) - and lions (11) in the corners, placed on a quarter-round in the shape of a snake (12) with its head and tail facing north. The lower step again contains lions and bears fourteen figures of the donors in votive posture.

Dome and snake (middle): the dome, originally the body of the caityā proper, dwindles to an insignificant and scarcely visible part of the entire structure, having been placed on top of a multi-stepped substructure, and out of reach of the devotee. The objects of worship are now the four large Tathāgatas, placed 120 cm above the ground. The dome sits on a half-round profile. This latter element is repeated four times below the base, which is covered with water patterning. Both the serpent bodies and the water pattern remind the devotee of the essential message of the Śivasambhavabhinirvāṇa, which narrates how the lotus flower once arose from the lake called Nagārada.

Traits of the lotus flower (right): The dome of the caityā rests on a small stringcourse (1) with lotus leaves just above the half-round. The composite of dome and drum, containing eight niches, rests in turn on the pericarp of a fully opened lotus flower (2) with three circles of petals opened upward. The niches of the sōs on which the Tathāgatas sit are framed by lotus leaves (3), and the frill of the āṭama is designed with the same motif (4). Below the āṭama follows again the pericarp of an opened lotus flower (5) with two circles of petals. The two-stepped plinth has five bands of different lotus leaves turned upwards (6, 9, 10, 13) or downwards (11). The frills are again shaped as lotus leaves (8, 12), as is the frame of the niches (7) in the upper plinth.
Patan: Sumeru-caitya in Saugah, elevation south, scale 1:10.

The inscription on the northern face of the double-stepped plinth mentions the date of construction of this Cātyābhisagavan ("lord caitya") as being śrāvaka sūkla dasami, nepāl samvat 1033 (1913). It was built by one Kul Bahlādur Visvakarmi, his wife Hira Lakṣmī and the rest of his family in memory of his ancestors and to fulfill the wish of their heart (manovachā). Being a carpenter (Sikahū), Kul Bahlādur established the caitya in front of his ancestral home (kalchā), in a courtyard where carpenters work and live even today, although he had, as the inscription mentions, already moved to the carpenter community of Mahāpāla-Yantiagiriha. The entire structure of the caitya is made up of ten building components. The stone finial has been improperly oriented, so that the symbol of visavarāja faces south instead of north. A dharmaḥaṭumandala is situated on the northern axis of the caitya.
552. Kathmandu: detail of the southern elevation of two Sumercuacaitas at Dhaulashahar, scale 1:5. Both caityas were erected in 1008 (Nepal Samvat 1008) by Mahamaitri families in a courtyard behind an oil press, called dhatasala, in memory of their parents and grandparents. The inscriptions name the motive for the construction of the caityas dharmakirta ("religious duty") and, in describing the location, mention Nepal Mandala (the valley of Kathmandu), Suvarnapurani (referring to a "golden well" which once existed nearby and survives in the place name Thahiti), Mahatimari (Kathmandu), Samsthapa (referring to the sacred vessels of the nearby Sighabhabha) and Mahatma. Both caityas are named termed Vajradhatucaitas.

Right: western caitya of the courtyard, consecrated on Sarana kar Warsuka nepal samvat 1008 (the day is not mentioned), that is, in August 1008. The four usual Tathagatas (with Ratanasambhava facing south) are carved in high relief, and shown seated on front of a central shaft which, at its upper end, bears features of a jackfruit tree (phutis). Above the Tathagatas appears a lotus flower, the projection of which serves as a kind of canopy. The flower has one circle of leaves turned downward and only one circle turned upward. On top of the flower rests the caitya proper, with dome, drum and finial. Figures of two Tathagatas (Amitabha and Drdhyaksha) and two Budhisatvas (Vajrasatva and Maitreya) are set like plaques against the drum and extend up over the dome. The Tathagatas rest upon a lotus flower whose petals are arranged in the shape of a square, corresponding to the square socle below. In the niches of this socle are images of the Four Guar- dians Kings (Caturmaharajas), flanked by the mounts (vahanas) of the Tathagatas (Ratnasambhava: horse). Lions have been carved over the corners. Below the square socle there again appears a lotus flower of square shape, in which the upper socle is embedded. The above illustrated upper part of the caitya rests upon another lotus flower and a multi-stepped plinth with inscriptions on all its northern, eastern and southern sides, and a Mahaparin figure in front of the western side.

Left: eastern caitya of the courtyard, consecrated on Bhadra sukha astami (July 1008 = 1008 Nepal Samvat). The four usual Tathagatas are carved as on the neighboring caitya, the proportions of the central shaft, however, appear to be slimmer. On top there is a lotus flower which opens upward, with four successive circles of petals. Below the Tathagatas there is a socle of vamsankhara shape. The outwardly pointing angles are carved with ajaras, and the inwardly pointing ones with the mounts of the Tathagatas. These mounts flank niches containing the Caturmahabhras. Below the socle follows a lotus flower of circular shape, and still further below a multi-stepped plinth, with the four Sakis in the niches of the uppermost step, inscriptions on the western and eastern sides, and a Suravati figure placed in front of the northern side.

553. 554. Sunakothi: lotus base (553) and shaft, with Amitabha placed above the base (554), built in 1083.
555, 556. Kathmandu: lotus base (555) and drum of the Sumercuacaita at Mahabuddha, with a vermont below the base (556), built in 1054.
557, Kathmandu: Sumercuacaita at Tukhesh, built in 1936. The shaft with the Tathagatas rests on a double lotus, one circle of petals turned upwards and another turned downwards.
558. Patan: Sumercuacaita at Tajabaho, built in 1039. The socle below the lotus is of vamsankhara shape and moulded with a kala ornaments, according to a traditional formula. The throne motif with a pair of guardian lions is confined to the middle portion.
The rockery itself forms an enclosure drained by a small bronze spout in the shape of a hitimāgali, thus incorporating the essential feature of a Jalaharyuparisumerucaiya in miniature version. Around the circular stalk of the lower lotus there is a small step shaped with bands of lotus petals, a vajra and a second series of lotus petal patterning in the form of a mandala. The rockery reflects the eight tiny bronze caiyās. The four standing Bodhisattvas form part of a round stalk, which rises from one lotus flower and supports a second one. The primary trio rests on the upper lotus, with the four Tathāgatas engaged to the drum as plaques. Above the emerging central shaft of the final is affixed a secondary wooden finial bearing a jewel on top.

Tibetan caitya types

In his fundamental study of the "art, architectonics and symbolism" of the stūpa, Giuseppe Tucci (1988: 13) pointed out that the forms of Tibetan caityas or mechod-riens (Tibetan) vary, but "are mainly to be reduced to eight fundamental ones". Each of them is said to be shaped after a prototype set up in ancient times in specific places connected in Buddhist literature with the life or the Teaching of the Buddha. In Tibetan literature, descriptions of eight different types are found to guide donors and craftsmen in the proportions and procedures of construction. Four of these were meant to commemorate the central events of the Buddha's earthly life, namely his birth in Kapilavastu - circular base with steps of lotus petals (1); his enlightenment in Bodh Gaya - quadrangular with four consecutively recessed terraces (2); his first sermon in Sarnāth - quadrangular with doors in the terraces (3); his death or purinirvāna in Kurinagara - bell-shaped dome without any substructure (8). Four caityas commemorate some of the Buddha's most famous miracles, namely his descent from the Trāyastirīma paradise down to Kasi - quadrangular with stairs leading up the terraces (5); the great miracle at Śrāvasti - twenty-angled terraces (4); the miracles in Vaiśali - circular terraces of three steps (7); the conciliation of the dissidents in Rājagaha - octagonal terraces (6).

The commemoration of these events and their identification by a canonical form make it clear that a caitya was not necessarily built to contain a relic but may have been intended rather to convey a particular symbolic meaning. Tucci (1988: 26) stressed the point that caityas in Tibet - in marked contrast to those in the Kathmandu Valley - generally display no funerary traits, and even if such traits were present, they would be of secondary importance. Once constructed, a caitya is nevertheless widely used as a receptacle of relics, such sacred things as tsha-ḥshas, small clay images in the form of a caitya or Buddhist deity, sometimes containing one of the many formulas that sum up the doctrine. These tsha-ḥshas are often made on the occasion of a death, and while most of them are discarded into a river, at least some are placed in the interior chamber of a caitya, as allowed for by small connecting holes. In fact, the caitva is considered in Tibet the safest repository for all kinds of sacred objects. 

Tucci notes that the byang-chub mechod-riens, celebrating the Buddha’s enlightenment, represents the most common form of a caitva in western Tibet, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh. But he observed also examples of the sgo-mang mechod-riens, which memorializes the first sermon. Jan Pieper (1980) provides evidence of the dbYen-zhum (recalling the “conciliation of the dissidents” in Rājagaha) and cho-ḥphral (“miracle”) types of mechod-riens in Ladakh. My recent surveys in Mustang (1991) and Ladakh (1994) confirm Tucci’s observations: caitya types with three circular or four quadrangular steps below the inverted dome, the most characteristic element of Tibetan caityas, are common. These same surveys also resulted in the identification of bka’-gdamgs mechod-riens, which recall the descent of the Buddha. Characteristic is the bell-shaped dome, with an inverted base, of two such small structures at Hemis and Stok. Lha-bals mechod-riens, which recall the Buddha’s descent from the Tisata heaven while he was in Kasi, are not found at all in Mustang, but in abundance in places like Rupile in Ladakh, probably indicative of early building activity after the turn of the first millennium. The most popular and widespread type, however, which is also found in the far-western Nepalese provinces of Humla and Mugu, is of quite a different design: in most cases a square stump, somewhat resembling the haraṃkā, resting on a substructure with projecting roof and platform. Betraying no hint of a dome, these caityas represent a vernacular variation reduced to its original function, that of holding the central pole, the srog-shing, upright and in place. In various locations, however, the entire group of eight caityas appears in a fixed spatial context,
either in a row (as in Lo Manthang) or in two rows of four, forming a solid block and even sharing a common roof (as in Tangye, Mustang). Recently such a group of eight cāityas has even been established in the vicinity of the Bodhnāth Mahacāitya.

Within the valley of Kathmandu or Nepāl Mandala, no reference to the eight types of cāityas can be observed until the early 18th century.

The introduction of the padma-vali element, the repetitive circles of lotus petals below the primary trio demonstrated by the padmakataaka type of cāitya (or pad-spungs type of mchod-rten), might be considered a faint reference to the event of birth. Likewise, the vimsatikona platform or base of twenty angles, which is recommended by the Kriyasamgraha pañjika (Slusser 1980: 159), recalls the prāthārhya type of cāitya (or cho-phrul type of mchod-rten); and finally, the octagonal base, which was already being built in the Licchavi era, recalls the antaryañā type of cāitya (or dbyen-ṣṭum type of mchod-rten). The standard traditions, however, do not confirm such affiliations.

The first evidence of a cāitya that refers obviously to the mahābodhi type of cāitya with a quadrangular base of four recessed terraces below the primary trio is found at Cvasapabāhā in Kathmandu (built in 1701). The plinth of the throne of the cāitya, with its base and “roof” as well as the four terraces, very much resembles the Tibetan prototype. The repetition of the lotus motifs above the base and below the roof of the throne appears to be a Nepalese feature. The decoration of the corners of the throne with vajra motifs and the depiction of Bodhisattvas in the centre of the “wall” surfaces – carved in relief rather than being placed into niches – is also of Nepalese origin. The four terraces each have a distinct “roof” covering and bear inscribed dhāranis. Finally, the primary trio follows Nepalese prototypes that had been evolving since the middle of the 17th century.

A second example of a Mahābodhicaitya, dated 1797, is found on Svayambhūnāth Hill. The design follows the prototype from Kathmandu almost exactly. The uppermost terrace, however, has disappeared, what remains serving instead as the base for the primary trio.

A third cāitya that obviously follows a Tibetan prototype, and probably was erected at the same time as the one described above, is found near the entrance of Sāntipura on top of Sva-yambhūnāth Hill. The base or throne of the structure follows the same formula as the cāitya in Kathmandu. Instead of the stepped quadrangular element there is a circular one with three steps, obviously in reference to the vișuyya type of cāitya (or ram-rgyal type of mchod-rten).
566. Top view, scale 1:20.
567. Elevation, scale 1:10.
Kathmandu: Bodhigaya of Tibetan style at Cvasapahā, built in 1701. The primary trio with its niches engaged to dome and drum follows the formula that has widely been adopted since the early 17th century. The plinth, or “lion throne”, however, and the intermediate element with its characteristic four terraces called hung-rim, symbolizing the attainment of those powers command of which is a precondition of enlightenment, represent the innovative elements. The “lion throne” is guarded by vajras in the four corners. Following again a Nepalese formula, the four Bodhisattvas (east: Maitreya) occupy the centre, while the steps upwards and downwards are designed as lotus flowers. Four courses of decorative ranjana script recall a dharmā (with obeisance to vajradhātu and Āparāmitā) and document the establishment of the caitya in memory of a coppersmith, Dharmājya Tāmrakara Irom Marutivā, during the waning moon of the month of Jestha in Nepal Samvat 822.

The Bodhisattvas adorn the lion throne, as in the example from Kathmandu, while the Tathāgatas, placed in tiny niches, punctuate the continuous circle of the second terrace, and the primary trio, finally, with its slightly inverted dome, appears as an undisturbed architectural finial of the entire structure.

A fourth caitya, in the Maru section of Kathmandu, seems not to follow any one of the eight prototypes but to represent a miniature version of the great stupa at Gyantse in Tibet. The four terraces are of vinsaikoua shape with an additional projection, resulting in not 20 but altogether 36 angles.

At Gyantse, the mchod-rten may be identified as one reminiscent of the first sermon of the Buddha in Sarnāth. The most conspicuous element of this, the sgo-mang type of mchod-rten is the row of five openings or doors on each side of the structure and on each of the four terraces. Thus a total of eighty openings occur. The great mchod-rten of Gyantse represents the most elaborate one of this type, when compared with those at Tshal Gung-thang, built in 1187, Khro-phu, built in the early 13th century, Jo-nang, built in the mid 14th century, and Changspa in Ladakh. At Gyantse, “the inscription explicitly recalls the fundamental meaning of the Buddhist stupa as a symbol of the dharmakāya and defines this great stupa of Gyantse as one able to direct those who contemplate it towards the path of release (mihong-gral)” (Lo Bue and Rice 1993: 36).

In the Nepalese context, no inscription is known which attaches to the mere act of “seeing” a caitya such a “sacramental character”.

The votive caitya at Maru adopts a plan with 36 angles for the socle structure of three steps and for the four terraces below a primary trio of usual design. The supporting structure has been Nepalized by shaping the levels below the terrace as a lotus with 48 petals, while the doors on the four terraces are completely missing. Instead the Tathāgatas, their vahanas and the Caturmaharajas, the 120 niches house all those Bodhisattvas and deities who were instrumental in the renovation of the Mahācaitya that took place in 1918.

Similar votive caityas of the same size occur in Ladakh as part of the complete set of eight mchod-rten - for example, in Lamayuru. There, the forty doors are not architecturally present but applied in painting to the wall surface of the four terraces.

Bodhicaityas commemorating the enlightenment of the Buddha

After a gap of some two hundred forty years, the mahābodhi type of caitya (or byang-chub type of mchod-rten) was again reproduced, having now generally come to be known in Nepal by the term Bodhicaitya. It follows the programme of the Tibetan prototype more strictly, although not in its entirety. Altogether eleven representatives of this type are located on Svayambhūnāth Hill, clustered around the shrine of Manjusri and the shrine of Sāntipura, and dating to between 1940 and 1979. These Bodhicaityas were not established by Tibetans, as one might suppose, but by Tulādhar or Mānandhar families from Kathmandu. It may not be going too far to assume that the donor families had had some contact with Tibet or had even taken residence in Lhasa. A caitya dated 1974 is named Asokacaitya in the inscription and was established by a Manandhar from Thahiti. Another caitya was established in 1945 by an merchant (sahū) named Bekha Ratna Tulādhar in memory of his teacher Sri Lokason Namgyal, who was considered an incarnation (in the inscription: avatāra) of Sri Vajradhara. In this case the inscription mentions the establishment of a Bodhicaitya. The renovation of the Svayambhūnāth Mahācaitya in 1918, initiated by a Tulādhar merchant on his return from Lhasa, conceivably adds to the evidence of such relations.

The different elements of the Bodhicaitya call up symbolic associations which have been dealt with by Tucci (1988), Roth (1980), Schwalbe (1979) and Lo Bue/Rice (1993). Tucci and Roth refer to texts, while Schwalbe’s account is based upon a traditional knowledge of the Solo Khumbu territory of the Sherpas in East Nepal. Schwalbe introduces the caitya as a “pictorial diagram of the knowledge broken into their parts to aid understanding” (Schwalbe 1979: 57), and in explanation of the term Bodhicaitya he adds that these “knowledges are conducive to enlightenment”.

The Bodhicaitya is basically divided into five parts: the plinth or “lion throne” (Skt. simhasa- na), the four terraces of quadrangular shape, the dome and the finial. The Nepalese version adds to these a platform on which the entire structure rests.

The lion throne consists of eight layers. The first layer represents the foundation or ground, and it is followed by three steps (Tib. thens-skas gsun) symbolizing the three worlds of earth, heaven and hell, through which the Buddha ascends to his enlightened position on the throne. The massive block of the substructure is called the “large face” (glang-chen), a metaphor for the lion, which is strong enough to support the following three layers of “carpets” (gsang-mtan) on which the Buddha sits (Schwalbe 1979: 58), and which are also identified as the “roof”. A flight of four terraced steps called mchod-rten, is itself supported by a thin platform representing the Ten Virtues (dgye-bden), a set of preliminary injunctions for those beginning on the path. The first terrace represents the Four Awarenesses (drang-pa nyer-gzhag kyi), namely body, sensation, mind...
and law (Skt. kāya, vedānta, citra, dharma). The second terrace represents the Four Perfect Re-
nunciations (yān-dag spang-ba bzhis), the third terrace the Four Magical Powers (rdzul phrin
rang-pa bzhis). The fourth and final terrace symbolizes the Five Powers (dhung-po lnga) of faith,
energy, awareness, concentration and mystic science.

Upon attainment of these powers, one has the strength to proceed to the second section of
knowledge, symbolized by the dome and the cube on top of it. The thin layer below the dome,
on Nepalese caiyās usually shaped as a lotus flower, symbolizes the Five Corresponding Powers
(stobs-linga), which grow directly out of the powers of the fourth terrace.

The inverted dome, or bum-pa, stands for the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (byung-chub
yan-lag bdun), namely awareness, examination of law, energy, satisfaction, serenity, concentra-
tion and equanimity. Above the dome, the cube or brē, elevated above a small base (bre-
gdan), represents the Noble Eightfold Path (phags-pa'i lam-yun-lag bṛgyad), which brings re-
lease from suffering: perfect view, perfect resolve, perfect speech, perfect conduct, perfect
livelihood, perfect effort, perfect mindfulness and perfect concentration.

Reaching the cube that represents the Eightfold Path implies having accomplished all efforts
directed towards transcendence. The way up from here onward is emblematic of the fruit ob-
tainable once the path has been transcended. An eight-petalled lotus flower supports the thir-
ten tiers of the spire (chos-khor), which symbolize the Ten Powers (Skt. dasabhāta) of the Bud-
da (Tucci 1988: 42 and Roth 1980: 189) and the three supports of awareness peculiar to the
Buddhas. The umbrella (char-khehs) symbolizes the Great Compassion (Skt. mahākaraṇa), by
which the Buddha performs what is good for all creatures. In the Nepalese version of the Bodhi-
caiyā, the central pole or srog-shing (literally “the life-force tree”), symbolizing the Ten Knowl-
edges (Skt. dasajñāna), remains invisible. The umbrella is decorated with festoon motifs and is
supported by a circle of amalaka, the fruit of the sun-tree, whose radiating sectors represent the
sun’s rays (Snodgras 1985: 151).

Caityās in Tibet as well as in northern Nepal and Bhutan usually end in a threefold crown, consist-
ing of the moon (zla-ba), sun (nyi-ma) and a top element (rīog) that images forth the radiating qual-
ities of the Buddha’s teachings. Sun and moon appear as a contrasting pair transcended by the caiyā
itself. According to Tucci the sun stands for wisdom (prajñā) and the moon for compassion (karunā),
the two forces from which the Fire of Supreme Illumination (bodhicirpa) springs. The transcendence
of the opposites is symbolized by the final, unitary golden drop on top, which corresponds to the
usnu or cīḍāmānī found on top of the protruding central pole of Nepalese caiyās as the symbol of
nirvāna. On Bodhicaityās of Svayambhūnāth Hill, the symbols of sun and moon do not form a sil-
houette, but are fully carved in stone. The small “drop”, or usnu, on top is almost invisible.
Temple with caityas

The Mahābuddha Temple in Patan

The Mahābuddha Temple is located in the vicinity of Ukubāhā in the south-eastern quarter of Patan. Standing in a narrow courtyard, it is surrounded by houses of Sākya families, almost all of whom are engaged in the trade of bronze casting.

The building is not a caitya but rather a sikhara type of temple. Still, a total of eight caityas crown the five pavilions and the roof above the vestibule to the east, and two others are housed in the cult rooms of the upper storeys.

The temple is of particular importance for Nepal, inasmuch as it does not exemplify any widely known type, being a unique - if greatly altered - copy of the Mahābodhi temple, which probably arose around the dawn of the Christian era not far from Bodhī-Gayā in Bihar, at the spot where the Sākyamuni Buddha attained enlightenment (bodhi) under a pipal tree. This place, a few days' journey from the Kathmandu Valley, had long been the most significant pilgrimage destination for Nepalese Buddhists. And thus the Mahābuddha temple in Patan owes its existence to the fulfilling of a vow that one pilgrim made in the 16th century. A chronicle of the early 19th century (Wright 1972: 204, 205) provides a detailed, and at the same time contradictory account of this pilgrim and his descendants:

"In this reign [that of King Amara Malla, regnal period 1538-1560] there lived a Baudhāchārya, by name Abhayarāj, clever and devoted to his religion. He had three wives, two of whom had been fruitful, one having two sons and the other four. He then married a fourth wife, and seeing that his elder sons were displeased at this, he left the wife with four sons at Onkuli Bihār, and the other with two sons at a house which he had recently built, and he himself went to Bauddi Gayā with his newly-married wife. He remained there three years as a devotee of Buddha. One day he heard a voice from the sky, telling him that Mahābuddha had accepted his service and worship, and that he should now return to his home, where Mahābuddha would come to visit him, and where he would receive the royal favour. The voice also told him that she who spoke was Bhīdādhārī-devī, a handmaid of Mahābuddha. At this time, however, Abhayarāj's wife was pregnant, and they therefore could not undertake the journey. In due season a son was born, and named Baudhdhaju. After this they returned home, taking with them a model Baudhā image from that place. On arriving at home, Abhayarāj built a three-storied Buddhist temple, and erected a Baudh with an image of Sākya Muni, in which he placed the model image. To the east of the temple, in his former house, he built an Āgama, and placed there an image of Bīdādhārī-devī. Rājā Amara Malla called him before him, and told him that, as his (the Rājā's) father had appointed Madhana, Abhayarāj's father, as Dīṭhā Nāikāyā, to superintend the making of pice, he now appointed him to the same post."

The same chronicle tells of the construction of the temple by Jivarāj, a grandson of Abhayarāj. He, too, is said to have visited Bodh Gayā and afterwards, during the reign of Sadasiva Malla (1576-1581), to have erected the copy in Patan.

It is striking that the term bodhi is consistently replaced by bauddha. The village is called not Bodh Gayā but Bauddhā Gayā: the temple in Nepal is not the Bodhi temple but the Mahābuddha temple, which is consecrated to the Great Buddha. The remark that Abhayarāj built not only a temple but also a "Baudh" with an image, and that a model of the temple was housed in the bauddha, remains unclear.

The mention of both Abhayarāj and of Jivarāj as the builders of the temple may be readily explained, inasmuch as members of Sākya families living in the vicinity of the temple say that Abhayarāj began construction of the temple in the year Nepal Samvat 685 (1564 AD) but did not get beyond the foundations. His sons were the ones upon whom the work then devolved. After the first four had died, the goddess Vidyādharī appeared to Baudhdhaju in a dream. Thus refortified, he continued on with the construction of the temple together with his son Ji-varāj and his grandson Jāyamuni. Baudhdhaju died when the two lower storeys were finally completed, but the temple was in the end consecrated by King Sivasimha on the auspicious day of aksaya tritiya, the auspicious "indestructible third" day after the full moon in April, in 1610.

In the following centuries repeated renovations were carried out, and this is all the more likely given that earthquakes could easily have caused damage to the narrow tower. One brick from the frieze has the year 896 incised into it, so that it may be assumed that the temple was partially renovated in the year 1776 AD. The earthquake in January 1934 had devastating consequences: the four upper storeys collapsed, so that the caitya of the second storey became exposed to the elements. By 1937, however, the pinnacle of the sikhara tower was restored in an exact reconstruction.

We know of the original form of the Mahābodhi temple in Bihar from models that probably date to the 12th century (Slusser 1988). Thus the temple consisted of a socle storey with a vestibule; over this socle rose the sikhara tower, whose lowest storey, in the reconstruction by Percy Brown (pp. 133-44, figs. XXXVIII, XXXIX), was also furnished with a vestibule. In the corners of the socle there were two small pavilion-like sikhara towers, which repeats the outline of the main tower, thus forming a pañcayatana configuration. The tower rises in seven levels over the socle. Each level is slightly recessed with respect to the one below, so that the
tower gradually tapers from bottom to top. The levels go to make up a slightly stepped progression (in one of the surviving models there are only three levels), with niches of gāvākṣa shape in which figures were at one time located. Each of the seven levels is set off from the next by a profile consisting of a series of small niches. On the flattened pinnacle there is a caitya with dome, hāniśṭhā and umbrella. Repetent renovations have greatly altered the original temple: the pinnacle has been replaced by a later type of caitya resting on a weighty round anālaka.

The Mahābuddha temple in Patan is astonishingly true to the prototype in Bihar. It, too, has a socle to which a vestibule has been attached, and from the socle there rises the actual sikhara tower, surrounded by the four pavilions in the corners. The lowest storey of the tower is again clearly fashioned as a storey with an eaves cornice. The tapering tower above it is horizontally divided into fourteen levels, and vertically into seven sections. A total of 74 identical niches containing images of Amitābha fill the fields resulting from the horizontal and vertical divisions. And finally, there is a caitya on top, set on an anālaka base.

These similarities in the structural form are noticeable, to be sure, only on closer inspection. The overall effect is different simply because, at 18.70 metres in height, the temple is significantly smaller than the 90-metre original in Bihar. The temple differs too, though, in its extremely rich treatment of details which, while formed entirely in terra-cotta and stone, nevertheless adhere closely to prototypes in wood. It is the details of the stepped cornices and the dividing friezes above all that betray the completely unhindered formal scope of the Newar artisans. The dominant element in Bihar, the gāvākṣa, which was repeatedly used on the caityas of the Lichchhavi period, is replaced by a niche framed by pilasters and crowned by the dharmacakra motif. By its choice of such motifs, the Mahābuddha temple in Patan is able to exercise an astonishing degree of free play.

A description of the structure

The temple rests on a flat 45-centimetre-tall platform. A gap in the form of a gate is formed in the wall on the ground floor in each of the four directions. The openings are framed by pilasters, on top of which rest tympana with Garuda and nakara motifs. The opening in the east is extended into a vestibule, in the niches of which Samantabhadraka and Vajrapani stand flanking the door of the shrine, and Dipankara (the past Buddha) and Maitreya (the future Buddha) stand facing each other. In the shrine itself is found the Sākyamuni Buddha, displaying the bhūmisparsa (earth-touching) mudrā. Three more Bodhisattvas - Ratnapāni, Padmapāni and Visvāpāni - are housed in the niches of the narrow pradaksina path around the shrine. Thus the Bodhisattvas of the five transcendental Buddhas (Tathāgatas) are represented on the ground floor. Ten other niches containing other Bodhisattvas and Lokeshvaras flank the path around the shrine. Two narrow staircases in the corners between the vestibule and pradaksina lead to the upper storey.

The wall surface of the sole storey is stepped after the customary viṃsatikona model, the result being five vertical registers, as in the prototype in Bihar. Two rows of large niches framed by pilasters, the foundations and capitals of which display lotus flowers, are laid out between base and cornice. Projecting brackets with finely modelled floral motifs are set on top of the capitals. A profiled trilobed arch stretches over the niches, ending at the apex in a triangle enclosing the round Wheel of the Law (dharmacakra).

A total of five courses containing niches run along the outer fields of the socle. The two middle rows of large niches are undergirded by moulded bricks displaying tiny niches in triplicate. Beneath the cornice, moreover, there is a third size of niche, a smaller version of the large niches. Angular stringcourse bricks of fine relief form the prominent feature in the articulation of wall space between the niches. Lotus flowers alternating with vajra, the latter lying or on end, adorn the surface. A total of seven such friezes divide the wall between.

Figures of Amitābha modelled in a simudhi pose occupy the small niches (436 in all in the socle) as well as the somewhat larger ones (159 in all) that run along the tympana. By contrast, figures of Akṣobhya are found in the large niches (112 in all). In repetition of the figure in the sanctum of the socle.

The cornice above the socle projects 35 centimetres, and is very similar in shape to the wooden cornices familiar from present-day temples: above the myrobalan motif (anālaka) there follows a frieze containing dentils as the stylized ends of ceiling beams (dhatukhvah) with images of the heads of mythical animals (kīrtirūpa), and above these a course of lotus leaves, a stylized festoon (libi) with pendent bells, a further row of bells and two other bricks with lotus leaves and lotus flowers.
Ground Floor
1 Sākyamuni Buddha (Ak)
2 Amoghāpāsa Lokesvara
3 Mahāmājusri
4 Prajñāpāramitā
5 Ratnakarṣa
6 Vajrankusa
Vestibule:
7 Samantabhadra
8 Vajrapāni
9 Dipankara
10 Maitreya

First Floor
1 Amitābha
2 Candraprabha
3 Suryaprabha
4 Ratnosnisa
5 Padmisnisa
6 Visvospnisa
Southwestern Pavillon:
7 Sarvasokatamanirghātānī
8 Mahāsthāna
9 Surangama

First Floor
Svayambhūdharmadhātucātya

Third Floor
Dharmadhātumandala

Fourth Floor
Vajradhātumandala

Fifth Floor
Svayambhūdharmadhātucātya

Sixth Floor
Sunyaniranjanacātya
578. Iconography of the seven levels.
579. Detail of the ground-floor base, with Amitâbha figures as part of a stringcourse. Moulded bricks expose three niches, while the corner brick ends in a half-niche filled with a lotus flower. The larger niches are formed by two architectural elements joined together. The figure is housed in the niche as an independent object.
580. Details of the corner pavilions with 44 niches in the upper section, each with a figure of Amitâbha. The niches are flanked by pilasters with both bases and capitals of lotus flowers. The tympanum over the opening of the niche is dominated by the Wheel of the Law, flanked and topped by lotus flowers.
581. Section with identification of the main objects enshrined in the six chambers of the tower, scale 1:100.

582. Detail of the ground-floor elevation, scale 1:10. The niche motif occurs in four variants of different size. The larger niches, with images of Akyabhyas in his earth-touching pose, dominate the wall. One row of niches, with the same architectural elements but in half the size, extends under the cornice. Stringcourses with simple niches containing Amtabhā figures form a kind of base for the large niches, while still smaller niches, housing lotus flowers, form the base of the secondary niches and part of the base of the entire building.

583. Detail of the four pavilions on top of the base storey. Tympana have been placed above the main niches, and a pair of merged snake virgins (nadakānya) protrude from the corners, their hands positioned above each other so as to encircle a hole, into which on certain occasions, such as Katipunhi (the full-moon day in October), torches were placed to illuminate the building.

584. Detail of the ground-floor base, with Amtabhā figures as part of a stringcourse. Moulded bricks expose three niches, while the corner brick ends in a half-niche filled with a lotus flower. The larger niches are formed by two architectural elements joined together. The figure is housed in the niche as an independent object.
Other types of Buddhist temples

Two types of buildings developed during the 17th century along with the Mahābuddha temple, and had the latter as their prototype. One type is represented by the usual Śikhara-kūṭa-caitiya with a garbhagṛha, or ‘womb chamber’, inserted into the base story. One of these is located on Śvayambhu-nāth Hill, with Śukhāvati Lokesvara in a chamber opening towards the south and three Guardian Kings on the remaining sides of the base story: Khaḍgārāja facing west, Caityarāja facing north and Dvājakāraja facing east. Two similar caityas, one dated 1697, are found at Nāgabhā, with Akṣobhya in a chamber facing east. Still another, with a peculiar roof profile of three layers, is located at Ibāh in Patan.

Structures larger than caityas were built to house Caturvyūha-caitiyas. The most elaborate one, built in 1665 at Dyahmani near Hākha in Patan, comes closest to perfection, and almost follows the design of the so-called massive pagoda, the tapering roof being crowned by a caitya complete with niches that house the Tathāgatas.

A third type represents the most perfect duplication of a temple, which in the Hindu context of Patan houses either Ganesa, Kṛṣṇa, Vamsa Gopāl or Hari-Saṅkara. A few miniature versions of śikhara temples of two or three metres in height have been erected in Patan, nowhere else, for Hindu gods. Miniature temples with colonnades around a garbhagṛha crowned by a śikhara tower are reserved for Maṇjūśri or Vairocana. Two almost identical examples of this type are found at Bābhā facing each other, and another one is located at Chusyābhā in Kāthmandu, which in the 1970s was relocated from the square in front of the bāhā into the courtyard.

The eastern temple at Bābhā is described in detail by Hemraj Sākya (1993). The inscription begins with a namaskāra to the enshrined deities, namely the triratna (Buddha, dharma and saṅgha), Maṇjūśri, Ganesa and Mahākāla, and Vasundharadēvi and Bṛgamalakēsva, and goes on to mention a type of building, termed a pīṭhugṛha with thāmas (pillars), constructed by one Ratnadeva from Kacudgāla in Bābhā on the eighth day of the waxing moon of the month of Jēṣṭha in Nepal Samvat 817 (1687), in the presence of King Yoganarendra Malla. The colonnade with the tiny garbhagṛha rests on a stepped plinth of three levels. The torana on the western side bears the recognition symbols of the Pāñcabuddhas, the dharmacakra of Vairocana being placed at the apex. The ‘roof’ with abāh motifs and dentils (dhālikvah) serves to support chapels called kaçaḍegah (lit. ‘small temples’), with the Tathāgatas and the eight Protectors of the World (Āstakṣapāla) as well as eight identical representations of a caitya appearing in the niches of the corner chapels. The rising śikhara tower is adorned with the recognition symbols of the Pāñcabuddhas. The primary trio of a caitya functions as the pinnacle of the temple. It is set on a lotus and a circle of abāh motifs, and the whole is supported by a bell-shaped base which Hemraj Sākya calls a ghantākāra.

The second temple or degah at Bābhā faces east, with Vairocana placed in the garbhagṛha, and Ganesa and Mahākāla acting as guardians. The kacḍegahs are of a simpler design. The Tathāgatas are found in the central chapels, and the usual astamangala (matsya, cámara, kalasa, chātttra, padma, granthi, śīṅkhā, dhvāja) in the outer niches of the corner ones.

The Maṇjūśri temple at Chusyābhā in Kathmandu is similar to the one at Bābhā, although the plinth with its large protective lions is of a different order. The eight auspicious objects in the niches of the kaçaḍegah diverge from the customary set, with flames replacing the endless knot. The primary trio of a caitya that serves as the pinnacle rests on a simple roof profile with tiny abāh motifs and a course of lotus leaves.
586, 587. Patan: Mahājusridegah B at Būbhāhā, established in 1687.
586. Detail of the “small temples” above ground floor.
587. Diagrammatic representation of the iconography of the śikhara level:
A. Kuṭāleghā in the corners with symbols representing the āstādikāyās: 1 NNW dhvaja / banner = Vaiśravaṇa; 2 WNW nāgopāta / snake-neck = Varuṇa; 3 WSW khadga / sword = Nārāyaṇa; 4 SSW danda / stick = Yama; 5. SSE trivā / laddle = Śiva; 6 ESE vajra / thunderbolt = Indra; 7. ENE trisula / trident = Iśana; 8. NNE rana / jewel = Kubera.
B. Central kuṭāleghā with the Tathāgatas: 9 Amitābha; 10 Rāmasambhava; 11 Aksobhya; 12 Anūdiffidhī. Recognition symbols (pakṣakula) of the Tathāgatas: 13 padma / lotus; 14 rata / jewel; 15 vajra / diamond; 16 viśvavajra / crossed diamond.
588, 589. Kathmandu: Mahājusridegah at Chusybaha.
588. East-west section and ground plan, scale 1:20.
589. Elevation west, scale 1:10.
590. Patan: early-17th-century caturya at Kayagunam, east-west section and ground plan, scale 1:50.
The caturya is housed in a chamber accessible from four sides. A bell stand, a vajra on a socle and a dhur-
mandhatumanandala have been added as votive offerings to the east.
591. Patan: catura shrine at Dyahdli in Hakka.
591. Ground plan, scale 1:50.
592. Section, scale 1:25.

The shrine, with a pillared chamber enshrining a Catur-
vyuha-cagaya, rises above a double-stepped plinth. The
profusely moulded roof assumes the shape of a spiked
capron complete with base-storey (displaying the four
Lauhagatas in niches) and the primary trio on top.
The small square chamber of the shrine, built in 1665,
har four pillars to define the central space for a spouted
platform (jaladruma), which supports a Caturvyuha-cag-
aya as the enshrined object of worship. During the daily
morning ritual (mitayapsa) of the Sakyas caretaker only
the western door is opened, to allow worship of Pada-
mapani as Karunamaya.

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593. Patan: Mahpurodegah at Bubahā seen from the
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The forms of built environment are not always and everywhere determined by »commodity, firmness and delight«, but are also regulated by meaning: in many traditions symbolism dictates architecture's composition, siting, orientation, geometry, proportion and ornament. In such traditions the built form is an imago mundi; it expresses a world view and embodies a teleology; it models the manner in which existences derive from their Ultimate Principle, how the manifold is manifested in the One.

Adrian Snodgras, 1990