

**AN  
INTRODUCTION  
TO  
BUDDHIST MONASTERIES OF  
KATHMANDU VALLEY**

**BY  
MIN BAHADUR SHAKYA**

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# PREFACE

These four essays should find a good reception by those wishing to know more about the ideas and symbols used in the Newar Buddhist art of Nepal. The religious symbols seen in the Viharas and around the major stupas of the Kathmandu Valley seem quite confusing and even mysterious at first glance. Happily Min Bahadur Shakya has taken the time to give a detailed explanation of many of the most important Buddhist symbols which occur at four of the most prominent Buddhist sites in the Valley. These four prominent Buddhist places (Swayambhu, Bodhnath, Kwa Baha, and Uku Baha) moreover, have always been occupied by Buddhist sanghas, and do not generally exhibit a mixture of Hindu and Buddhist symbolism as in other religious locales in the Valley. This fact simplifies the explanation of what is seen at these places, and gives one a real feel for Buddhism as practiced by the Newars, and Tibetans as well.

I am sure that this small publication will be of great benefit for anyone who visits any one of these four notable Buddhist neighborhoods. It can serve as a guide written by one who has made the study of Buddhism a lifetime occupation. Beyond this, it can serve as a reminder of many powerful and moving Buddhist images which are so easily accessible to anyone who visits Nepal. I hope to see more publications of this type in the near future---that is, those which are useful as well as enlightening as Min Bahadur's is.

Charles M. Novak  
Sasunani, Patan.

# An Introduction To Hiranyavarna Mahavihara

**T**he Buddhist monastic shrine of Kvabahal, popularly known as Golden Temple is one of Nepal's most beautiful and famous temples. It is situated north of Patan Durbar Square at a distance about 200 metres on the road leading to Kumbheshwara. Although it is more commonly known in Patan as Kvabahal its sanskrit name is Hiranyavarna Mahavihara i.e. Golden Coloured Monastery.

**A Legendary Account of Origin of Kvabahal:**  
Wright's Cronicle, The story begins thus: A certain queen of Marawara country Pingala by name having been disgraced by her husband, came to Guhyeshwari to which she was directed in a vision. Here she performed penance by fasting. and goddess being propitiated, told her to build a vihara and live there and to apply to her eyes a certain Anjana (black

ointment) which could enchant her husband. The Rani did as she was told and placed images of gods and goddesses in the Bahalakot, which she built and named it Pingala Bahal (now very few traces of remains are found near the Pasupati area) Through the effects of her great penance the mind of the king Sudatta, the king of Marawara country became uneasy and he came here in search of his wife. While he was paying a visit to Guhyeshwari, the Rani was also there and some of the gods tried to catch hold of her she called out in terror to the goddesses that she was Pingala. The king hearing this, looked at her attentively and recognised some traces of his former love although she was now changed to a perfect beauty. He accordingly claimed her, whereupon a quarrel ensued, which was terminated by the intercession of the goddesses who reconciled the king and the queen and persuaded the gods not to interfere. The royal couple having appointed Baudhamargis priest or Banras or vajracharyas to take care of the Pingala bahal kot, returned to their own country.

After many years had been elapsed, in the time of the King Bhaskar Deva Varma the Banras of Pingala Bahal removed to the other places. Their descendants who were Acharyas became Banras and lived in Nyakhachok in Patan. The Bhikshus

of Devapattan and Chabahil came to these people and told them that they had heard from some people who were working in the fields that they had seen the main god of Pingala Bahal. They accordingly went to see and found the image buried under the Pingala Bahal and brought Him to Patan. While they taking Him thither, when they arrived at a bowshot north of Mangal Bazar i e. Durbar square of Patan where they saw Laxmi Devi of Lagankhel in the form of a kite and one of the Vajracharya, by the influence of his mantras, brought her down and the Devi became stationery there in the road.

After this they took the image to Nyakhachok. but He said He would not like to live there. This having been brought to the notice of the king Bhaskar Deva, he caused a new Vihara named Nhu-Vihara, to be built for Lord Shakyamuni. This new house also being disapproved of by the Image the king went to ask where the image would like to fix his residence. The Image said He would like to live in a place where a mouse attacked and drove away a cat. The king himself then went in search of such place and one day at a certain spot he saw a golden mouse chasing a cat. Here he built a Vihara and named it Hiranyavarna Mahavihara

and having placed the Image in it, with Agama Devatas just as they were in the Pingala Bahal, he assigned lands as guthis for the maintenance of the establishments. The Banras who came with the god to reside here were those of Thyakayel and Hakhayal. The aforesaid account does not mention the exact date of the establishment but the cronology of kings puts us roughly in the period of 12th century. Since, then it has been renovated several times and it has probably existed in its present state about the 19th century.

### Its Structure

This temple is not of the typical pagoda style but has a uniqueness of its own beauty. It is built in the multystoreyed style equipped heavily with gilded ornaments. The main shrine is eclipsed by the smaller free standing shrine dedicated to Adi Bu'dha Swoyambhu or Dharmadhata. The main shrine is set in raised small paved court displaying numerous Sculptures of bronze of fantastic artistry, oil lamps and prayer wheel railings and a raised circumambulatory walkway surround the courtyard itself. It is supported by subsidiary buildings containing halls spacious enough to display sculptures in moderate number. The wealth of sculptures and artistic embellishments along

with their sublime philosophical religious symbolism have made its fame widespread in Nepal & other countries.

First of all we find two large black stone lions by the entrance of Kvabahal. After entering the gate and walking through a short narrow path we reach another gate consisting of two stage wooden shrine displaying various Buddhist tantric deities painted and carved. For a casual non Buddhist visitor their eyes do not rest here long. After entering the gate we see miniature images on the walls and a fearful tantric guardian god Mahakala with Kartri and Kap'ala in his two hands and a Kalasha symbol in a lotus throne representing tantric goddess NAIRATM-YA i. e. No-Soul. After crossing this small passage we are struck by such a great complexity of dazzling art that the scene is really beyond description.

The door way which leads to the main courtyard from the entry passageway has a large bronze Torana equipped with sublime philosophical symbolic arts.

There are beautiful drawings of clouds symbolizing the basis of life or compassion. According to Dharma sangiti sutra Bodhicita or Mahakaruna is the ornament of the Dasaparmita. It is also said

that cloud represents the tenth bhumi Dharmamegha of Dasabhumika sutra. Every Torana holds a fourfold small umbrella or chatra symbolizing that we are under the sublime shade of Dharma i.e. **DHARMACHHAYA**. Generally at the centre of the torana the main deity is portrayed to indicate that inside the shrine it is He who resides. Here the main deity is the dhyani Buddha Akshyobhya in earth toucamudra and other four dhyani buddhas arranged semicircularly. Besides that the Torana gate holds eight auspicious symbols symbolizing that one who knows Dharma and practises gains the luck for this world as well as in the other world. Because the Buddha had blessed the eight objects they symbolize The Noble Eight Fold Path, in order to bestow good fortune or happiness on the living beings, these objects came to be known as Eight Auspicious Objects. In Tibetan or Nepalese traditions these objects are displayed after a consecration or initiation ceremony to bestow good fortune or happiness on all living beings.

The pillars of the doors are covered over with a thin plate of metal and the doors are also metal covered with symbolic eyes of the Buddha and Purna kalasha representations modelled on them. The second floor of this building is dedicated to



Tantric deity Yogambara where various tantric ritual and practices are performed under strict rules & regulations. The eight exterior wooden tonals show the eight goddesses of direction of Yogambara Mandala namely Vajradakini, Ghoradakini, Vetali Candalini, Simhini, Vyaghri, Jambuki, and Uluki.

The main shrine where Lord Buddha Shakyamuni is enshrined is a three stage structure and all of its roofs are covered with gilded gold. There are corner curves mounted with miniature birds holding leaf shaped forms in their beaks and below it are the four metal plates in which four guardian kings namely Dhritarastra, Baishrawan, Birudhak and Birupaksha are carved in four corners.

All the roof edges hold bronze heads of Great Siddhas of this Jambudvipa. The pinnacle of the main temple consists of 13 smaller stupas with three small umbrellas mounted at the centre of the group. And there are numerous tonals of multiarmed deities of Akshobhya Mandala and also that of Panchraksha. There are four gilded dhwajas or metal banners which descends from the pinnacle of the top of the roof. At the bottom of the shrine the platform which stands 2ft. above the ground is considered to be ground even more

sacred than courtyard itself. At the centre of the main shrine there is a Torana Gate as described previously consisting of Five dhyani Buddhas and other tantric deities equipped with most marvellous silver gilded ornaments. The entire first level of the shrine seems to be covered with bronze of exquisite artistry. Among them four standing images of Lokeshwaras are typical one each situated at the corners of the courtyard. Above the Torana there are seven images in the sitting posture portraying the figures of Prajna Paramita, Five Dhyani Buddhas and Avolokiteshwara as the three Jewels of Buddhism. Four large bronze oil lamps are suspended from the roof by the chains at door level. On either side of the entrance of the main shrine on lotus thrones there are two large bronze lions of excellent artistry on the back of which stand two Buddhist goddesses Taras in their Lalita attitude with a compassionate look. The doorway and the walls of the ground floor of the main shrine are covered with a host of deities of the Mahayana Pantheon and scenes from the Buddha's Life story. Besides that a big bell hung near the entrance to the main shrine is another attractive feature.

At the centre of the courtyard stands a smaller shrine dedicated to the Adibuddha Shwayambhu

or Dharmadhatu It has some extraordinary metal work and dazzling appearance. The roof is entirely covered with gold. The pinnacle consist of four snakes with their curved tails raised to hold seven staged small umbrellas over the main GRIVA i.e. bell shaped symbol. Four dhvajas descend from this pinnacle hanging over each side of the shrine. This shrine is equipped with extraordinary metal statues of twelve month Lokeshwaras i.e, Khadkshari, Shree-mal, Halahala, Khasarpana, Simhanada, Padma nritya, Hariharavahan, Trailokyabashankari, Rakta, Neel Kantha, Mayajalakrama, Karandabyuha, and the Five dhyani Buddhas such as Vairochana, Akshovya, Amitabha, Ratna Sambhava and Amogh Siddhi. Among them the largest, most fierce and interesting bronze image of celestial leographs namely Simha, Sardul, Mahanaga and Azara purusha are the four 5ft. tall guardian celestial beings standing at the four corners of the shrine. Their appearance is very terrible for they have long pointed teeth, sharp curled claws, long curving snouts and are standing on their hind legs. They are really the dynamic elements of this shrine which would impress whoever visits the vihara.

The southern side of the building contains

a large image of Amitabha Buddha with his two attendant Bodhisatvas Avalokiteswara and Mahasthamprapta in graceful attitudes Besides this there are innumerable collections of bronze images of superior quality which are too many to be listed here. At the ground floor of this building there are marvellous images of Taras and Manjushree enshrined. It seems that this is one temple complex that has kept its collections of treasures in a very organised pattern.

The northern part of the monastery building contains an excellent image of Amoghpara Lokeshwara as well as a very large prayer wheel carving six letters OM MANI PAD ME HUM modelled after that of the Sera monastery of the Lhasa some forty years ago. The walls of the monastery hall are decorated with paintings of the Lamaistic Pantheon such as Lord Shakyamuni, Padmashambhava, Great Eight Bodhisatvas Sahashrabhuja Lokeshwara, Vajradhara, Buddha Aparimita, Buddha Vaishajya, Two tantric Herukas, Hayagriva, Cuturmaharajas, Taras and Innumerable Bodhisatvas and Gurus of the Lamaistic faith. There is also a set of the Kanjur in one hundred volumes and a set of Sherpheyin i. e.

Prajna Paramita in Tibetan script. Very often, learned Incarnate Lamas come here to perform the initiation ceremony and preach the True Doctrine of the Exalted One. Hosts of pious devotees used to be in fasting on every sacred day such as the Full moon, New moon, half moon day etc. There is a religious brotherhood who performs regularly the DASHAMIPUJA and recite the very sacred text Dzogs chen Kun zan bla-ma i.e. the doctrines of "Great Perfection" every month. On the ground floor of this building at the northwest corner there are excellent images of Guru Vajrasattva with vajra and bell in his two hands, Vairochana Buddha and Tara.

### Its administration and management

This vihara is one of few monastic groupings which has retained the character and appearance of a religious unit. A few words must be said about the administration and the special temple attendants of Khabaju i.e. Lord Buddha. The vihara holds some 2000 members mostly Shakyas and vajracharyas from a dozen localities. The people of aforesaid areas come to this vihara for ordination at the very early age of only four days. After ordination

they become Shakyabhikshus and members of this Kvabahal sangha. On a seniority basis each one should take responsibility for temple service. When one's time approaches he must appoint two persons as attendants of Lord Buddha. Among these two attendants one is usually a boy of 8. They must shave their head with their new white clothes and appear at the temple at the appointed time to take over his duties. Ten main Elders usually Dashaparamita Ajus and the executive members of the Sangha come to the temple on the day of the changeover to take an inventory of the accessories in the temple and the considerable treasures which belongs to Kvabahaju. When the inventory is completed the charge is handed over to the new man; and from this period this new man is responsible for temple service and safeguarding the treasures until the end of his one month period.

During the period this priest must stay at the temple. They are allowed to eat only one meal during a given twentyfour hour period, and is not allowed to eat any meat or liquor during his term of service. Each day the Bafacha i: e. small priest must bath four times and perform worship at

4:00, 9:00, A. M. 3.00 P. M. and 7:00 P. M. At the other times of the day he is to be on duty to guard the temple, and assist worshippers in lighting the lamps, burning incense, making yellow paste etc. At two times of day i. e. 9:00 A. M. and 5:00 P. M. this Bafacha should go round the prescribed city area ringing the bell. Inside the main shrine there is a well known scripture namely ARYA PRAJNA PARAMITA which is recited very often by the priests or Vajracharyas. The scripture seems to be very old dating from Nepal Era 345. The people here pay a great devotion to this scripture as a goddess of wisdom of Buddhas. However these priests must perform the worship with strict rules and disciplines otherwise they have to observe the signs of evil and have to perform SANTI KRIYA through Vajracharyas. Hosts of devotees come early in the morning to witness the bathing ceremony of Lord Buddha. They usually sing a great deal of devotional songs to Lord Buddha, Avalokiteshwara, Manjushri and other Bodhisattvas. Without a doubt the scene of the bathing ceremony of Lord Buddha is a spectacular and thrilling one in this Vihara.



# Legends of Bodhnath Stupa

## Introduction:

The Bodhnath stupa is one of the most celebrated places of Lamaist pilgrimage in Nepal. This Stupa is situated at about three miles north east of Kathmandu, It is the most important Buddhist monument now existing in Nepal. Although the site had no connection with the traditional history of Gautama Buddha, yet it is prominently mentioned in the sacred literature of Tibet. The stupa was built in Nepalese architectural style consisting of raised plinth, a dome, a steeple, a spire of discs numbering upto thirteen gradually diminishing in size & surmounted by a wheel & the symbols of sun & moon. The stupa stands upon a square and the very massive basement which is composed of three broad terraces rising one above the other. These broad terraces are circumscribed by walls with sixteen angles. In these walls are inserted 11



khopa; (niches) each containing 5 prayer wheels. Inside these niches are the beautiful moral paintings of Buddhas of Confession (Tri-skandha) Above the niches there are small chaityas thus numbering  $11 \times 16 = 176$  in all. In four corners of the stupa there are four Kings namely Dhritarastra, Birudhak, Birupaksha, most & Vaishnavan. And in each cardinal direction there are four gates for entrance. At present the Northern gate is supposed to be the main entrance to the chaitya. Near it there is a small pagoda-style, copper gilded, onestoreyed temple enshrining the goddess (Mother) (Azima)- Above the terraces which are in the form of a mandala is a big hemisphere of about ninety feet in diameter. Around its base there are a series of small recesses consisting of not less than 108 stone sculptures executed in a neat manner. According to Dr. D. R. Regmi there are forty seven images represented in Yab-Yum and the rest are single. About ten images depict the Siddhas of Tibet such as Milarapa, Marpa Naropa and others. Collectively there are five images of Vajrasatva according to the variation of five families; five images of Acala due to five colour variations five images of Kalacakra; images issuing from Guhyasamaja; Five dhyanis Buddhas with their

consorts and without consorts; four Yoginis; images of Ushnishvijaya; Figures of Manjushree, Samvaras of Mahakala, Guru Padma Sambhava and the illustrious lamas of Nyin mapa and Sa-skyapa school.

Above the hemispherical dome there is the square torana built of bricks covered with gold gilded plate which has the all pervading eyes of the Buddha painted on each of its four sides with a compassionate look.

Again the spire is in the shape of a four sided pyramid, the thirteen divisions of which are covered with plates of gilded copper. It is surmounted by a large gilded chhatra. Above the chhatra stands a bellshaped Griva. Within this large chhatra contains a mandala of Heruka. This chhatra is decorated with Padmavali and Usnisha chudamani. At the top of the Griva is a three-staged chhatra with a Golden kalasha symbol. Thus from its great bulk and height of its glittering spire, it can be seen from all parts of the valley.

The Stupa thus stands at the centre of the valley as a Jewel, a powerful focal point of psychic

energy and spritual centre for both the Tibetans and Nepalese people. An immense number of Tibetan Lamas and laymen and women visit every year in winter season and encamp themselves in the surrounding areas. Previously, when the passes to western and central Tibet were open, traders pilgrims and travellers sought blessings at the season for safe conduct over the high Himalayas and gave thanks upon their safe arrival. Even today pilgrims congregate in great number during the autumn season at the stupa from various Himalayan valleys. On the south side of the lowest terrace, facing the road there are several funeral chaityas as monuments to the memory of eminent incarnate Tibetan lamas who have died in the vicinity of the Temple. According to H. A. Oldfield the stupa itself have been built over tne tomb containing the relics of an eminent Tibetan Lama named Kasha, who having coming to Nepal on a pilgrimage from Lhasa, died, and was either burnt or buried here. This stupa, having been erected to his memory, was called after his name as Kasha Caitya. The stupa has various names such as khasti - khasuti - khasauchen Mahakut - Jhyarung

khasyor etc.. How these names came into existence will be clear from the legends both Nepalese and Tibetan which follow.

Legendary Origin of Bodhnath Stupa.  
(Tibetan version) L. A. Waddell's Cronicle;

This stupa enshrines the spirit of the Buddhas of the ten directions and of the Buddhas of the three times and of all the Bodhisatvas, and it holds the Dharamakaya.

“When king Thi Sron Deucan (742-707 A. D) asked Padma Sambhava at Samye, to tell him the history of the Ma-gu-ta stupa in Nepal, made by the four sons of ‘the bestower of gifts’ named the poor mother Pyandsi-ma (pronounced Jhyan-ji ma) (fowl-keeper), then the Guru Rimpoche related the story thus:-

“In a former Kalpa—time beyond conception the Bodhisatva Mahasatva Avalokiteshvara approached the Tathagata Amitabha and prayed for the animals immersed in slough, and after saving these he went Potala.

There he saw hosts of unsaved animals,

innumerable like unto mounds of murwa lees, and ( seeing this he ) wept. Two of his pitying tears were born into Indra's heaven as god's daughters named respectively Kan-ma and the little Kan-ma or Kan-ch'un-ma. This later having stolen in heaven some flowers, was as a punishment reborn in earth, in a low pigherd's family in Maguta in Nepal, under the name by Sambara or the Chief Happiness' her mother's name being Purna. On marriage she had four sons, and her husband's early death left her with the sole care of the family. She with her family undertook the herding and rearing of geese for the wealthy, and having in this pursuit amassed much wealth she-Ma-pya-rdsi-ma-ma (mother fowl keeper) decided to build a large stupa in honour of the Tathagata. She, thereon, went to the king and begged for a site, saying she wanted only so much ground as one hide could cover. The king assented, saying. "Ja-run" which literally means "do"- "can" i. e. "you can do so" Then she cutting a hide into thin thongs (forming a long rope) enclosed that very large space which now is occupied by this chaitya. And she, with her four sons, and a servant, and an elephant and an ass, as beasts of burden brought earth and

stones, and commenced to build this chaitya by their own personal labour.

“Then the king’s ministers appealed to the king to stop such an ambitious building as they asserted its magnificence put to shame the religious buildings of the kings and the nobles. But the king answered “K’a-sor” which literally means “mouth (has) spoken”—and so refused to interfere (Thus is the name of the stupa—‘J’a-run K’a-sor” (pronounced Jhyarung Khashyor Chorten).

After four years, when only the base had been laid, the mother died, but her sons continued the building till its completion. And the receptacle was placed one Magadha measure (drone) of the relics of the Tathagata Kashyapa. This event was celebrated by the manifestation in the sky above the stupa, of Kashyapa himself, and the circles of celestial Buddhas and Bodhisatvas, and their hosts of retinue, and amongst showers of flowers the gods contributed divine music and rained perfume. Earthquake thrice occurred, and through the glory of the assembled divinities there was no darkness for five days and nights.

“One of the sons then prayed” May I in my next rebirth be born as great scholar (to benefit mankind)”—and he was born as Tho-mi Sambhota (introducer of so called Tibetan character and first translator of Indian Buddhist texts into Tibetan) circa 650 A. D.

The second son prayed in a similar manner, and was reborn as ‘The bodhisatva’ (the abbot of the first monastery of Tibet).

“Then the elephant (hearing these prayers) said: These two, neglecting me who contributed so much assistance, are asking all the good things for themselves let me reborn in a form to destroy them or their work”. And he was afterwards reborn as Landarma (the persecuter of Lamaism)

“The third son, hearing the elephant’s request prayed that he might be reborn in a form to neutralize the evil of the elephant’s incarnation; and he was born as Lhalun phel kyî rdo-rje (the Lama who murdered Landarma. This ends the Waddell’s version.

Mr. Hem Raj Shakya in his ‘HISTORY OF BODHNATH STUPA’ has a little different

account from that of Waddell's version. It goes thus. The eldest son then prayed, "May I in my next birth be born as a great King (Dharmaraja), protector of good law in the land of Tibet for the benefit of mankind and he was now been born as the Great King Thi Srong Deucan. The second son then prayed in a similar manner and was born as Bodhisatva Santarakshita (725-762 A. D.). The third son prayed that he might be reborn in a form who neutralize the evil like the sun dispelling the darkness. And he was reborn now as Great Guru Rimpoche himself who dispelled the darkness of ignorance in the land of Tibet. The fourth son prayed that he might be reborn as the one who can solve the knotty problems with great compassion and friendliness and he was now reborn as a religious minister named Bhamithi.

At that time, a bee bit in the head of first son (horse-keeper). When the horse keeper took it in hand the bee was found dead. Thus he with compassion prayed for it that it might be born as his daughter when he would become a great King in his next birth. Hearing these prayers the ass



who assisted much in the construction of the stupa became very angry because he was neglected by not making prayer for him and he in return prayed otherwise that he might be reborn as a Minister with a malicious that will render whatever actions the King perform ineffective. Consequently he was reborn now as the wicked minister named Mashang Tromba and the bee was reborn as princess Padma Salso,

On hearing the prayer made by the ass, the servant prayed that he be born as one who can destroy any evil efforts that would occur. Consequently he was reborn as Pema Khungtshen, the minister of Good Law or Buddhist Doctrine. In the same manner an ox, who also contributed much in construction of the Stupa thinking himself neglected by the horse keeper prayed that he might be reborn as the son of that very king and would put obstacles to his virtuous works. And he was reborn as ox headed king (Landerma). Hearing his wrong intention a crow who was at that time sitting on the top of a tree, thought of himself to be reborn as a Bodhisatva who can remove these obstacles at that time when these

wicked people try to destroy the Buddhist doctrine. And then he was now reborn as devaputra Murukt Sempo or Motimali; and again as the Bodhisatva Lhalung Palgyi dorje.

In this same country there was a Brahmana. He had two brothers named Suvarna and Kanaka. Both of these Brahmans prayed in front of this stupa that both of them might be reborn as great Scholars and by their combined efforts might translate all the 84000 volumes of Buddhist Doctrine in the land of Tibet. Now both of them were reborn as Lo-cha-va i. e. Kaba Paltsek and Chokyi Luigyaltzen.

On this occasion two princesses named Prajnavatis also prayed that they might be reborn as Epigraphists who can write and preserve the Buddhist doctrine in beautiful Script. They were now reborn as Den-ma-che-long and Le-gzin-nyi-ma.

Hence the stupa favoured by all the Buddhas and Bodhisatvas is important because of its power as Wish Granting or Fulfilling Gem. The stupa is also worshipped by the Newar Buddhists but

Especially it is Tibetans who adored the Stupa. Although it was originally built by Nepalese Buddhist, it is still kept in repair by the Tibetan authorities. The gilding of the spire is occasionally renewed. The ordinary repair of the masonry of which the temple is constructed are annually made by some of the pilgrims (Tibetan) during their stay at the spot. They also clean away the weeds and grass with which the mound and terraces become covered during the rains; they repaint the devine eyes on the four sides of the toran, and daub with mortar and whitewash various parts of the temple. Annually Tibetan pilgrims offer various sorts of things to earn merit (punya). In the text of Hem Raj Sakya's cronicle there are an elaborate description of merit of offering, circummabulation, prayer to the Stupa. There is a short list of its contents which are interesting as they show the deep faith of Tibetan people to this Stupa.

One's desire and aspiration will be fulfilled if some one prays in front of this stupa, enshrining, the sprit of the Buddhas of the ten directions and of the Buddhas of the Three times."

"The devotee will not fall into three lower

forms of life, will gain deep meditation." On who salute the stupa from the depth of the heart by fivefold and eightfold formula will born as a Universal monarch, will gain Arya Seven Treasures, will gain precious human body having unique occasion and right juncture.

“One who offers lamp will gain insight and right view on the True doctrine. “One who offers five kinds of medicines will never be affected by four kinds of disease and will gain sound health. He also will be free from eight great fears if he offers beautiful clothes, for decoration of the stupa.

“Besides if he offers Seven treasures, he will gain Dharmacakra, peace, prajnahetu Knowledge of skill in means, ultimate power, four miracles, royal power, power for destroying defilements and will gain peace if he offers eight great auspicious symbols. In similar manner if one offers eight kinds of food grains (Asta-brihi), five garments (panchvastra), Three sweet juices (madhurasa) tsampa and Torma, five nectar delicious food, he will accordingly gain good fame, excellent dress, excellent juice, will never be born in Preta world and will gain always good food.

The devotee will obtain perfection in exoteric and esoteric doctrines if he performs ganacakra worship with deep faith in front of this stupa, the house of all Buddhas, Gurus, Devas and Dakinis. One will never fall into three lower forms of life if some one takes care and preserve the stupa. And he will reborn in Buddha family obtaining perfection in Mahamudra if he considers it as his principal tutelary deity.

The devotee will obtain the knowledge of former lives if he recites and meditates about this sublime caitya after getting Lung and dvang.

The devotee will reborn in heaven if he devotes his time in restoration of the stupa and will lead a life of good moral character.

Thus in brief the devotee will reborn in the heaven of Sukhavati on the Lotus throne in front of Buddha Amitabha in the western direction.

On the contrary if someone destroys, deformed misutilize, and other works which is harmful to the stupa then he will surely reborn or fall into Avichi Hell.

It will be impossible for us to describe the merits of this stupa, enshrining the sprit of Buddhas of Three Times consisting of Three Kayas namely Dharmakaya, Sambhoga kaya and Nirmanakaya. In brief it can be said definitely that one will surely find it as the Wish Fulfilling Gem for the sake of gaining the Liberation. Hence it is this virtue of the Stupa which fulfills the wish and aspirations of all sorts of the devotee that the tibetan people paid great respect and deep faith on this stupa and thus it is also called "Sarvaprānidhisidhi Caitya literally it means one who fulfils all the wish, aspirations and prayer."

### Nepalese version on the origin of Bodhnath Stupa: Wright's cronicle

At the time when Raja Dharmadatta founded the city of Bisal-nagar, an inspired devotee had built, at a spot at the foot of the Satarudra mountain namely Shivapuri, the shrine of Jalasayana Narayana, or Buddha Nilkantha. The Raja Vikramajit visited this shrine everyday, and having obtained the permission of the deity, he made a stone image of the Narayana with four arms and two dharas to feed the tank. One of these

fountains brings forth a Kund-flower every year, and he who is fortunate enough to get possession of this becomes wealthy and prosperous.

After this, Vikramajit caused a great temple to be built, the south of which he erected a summer house over the spot where he had buried a throne, named Devidatta simhasana, which possessed the thirty two attributes. He used to sit there daily and administer justice to his subjects. He ruled one thousand years and his glory and fame were great. Having installed his son Vikrama Keshari on the throne. he died at-Mani Jogini.

The Raja was also very punctual in observing and much devoted to, the rules and ceremonies of his religion. He built a durbar nine stories high, and surrounded the city with gardens and a wide ditch. He also appointed a day for his subjects to observe the Dewali Puja. Sometime after this, he was much grieved at seeing the memorial of his fore fathers the Narayana fountain, became dry; and he therefore went to Budha Nilkantha for advice. The deity told him to consult the astrologers. He did so, and after some deliberation they said that it required a

sacrifice of a human being possessed of the thirty two attributes. The Raja resolved to obey these directions; thinking that to sacrifice a subject would be a sin, and to kill his own son, who possessed all the requisite attributes, would be cruel, he determined to be himself the victim. He therefore called his son Bhup-Keshari, and ordered him to kill, without looking at his face, a certain man, who, on the fourth day after that, he should find lying covered over on the fountain. The prince, going there on the appointed day, in accordance with his father's commands, and not knowing who the person was, cut off his head. Blood rushed out of the fountain and the crocodile on the fountain turned back his head that he might not see a patricide. The son then went to wash his hands in the Ikshumati river and was surprised to see swarms of worms floating in the water. On returning to his house, he heard a great noise of people shouting out that the prince had killed his father. The prince then silently performed his father's funeral ceremonies and making over change of the government to his mother he went to Mani Jogini to expiate the sin of parricide. Seeing him very forlorn, the Jogini informed him that he could



expiate his crime by building a large Buddhist temple, two miles in circumference, and having four circles of gods. The spot for the temple would be indicated by the perching of a Kulang (crane), which would take its flight from that mountain. The bird accordingly alighted the spot for the temple was marked out, and the work was begun.

Another version of the story is, that it was Raja Vikmanti who was sacrificed, and that his son Mandeva was the parricide. The parricide not being able to disengage his hand, to which the severed head attached itself, went to Mani Jogini by whose advice he built the Buddhist temple, and then the head became detached, which head (i. e. an image of it) is seen to the present day at Mani Jogini.

When Manadeva began the work of building the temple, there was a great drought, so that the labourers making the bricks could only get water by soaking cloths (in the beds of the streams) and bringing out the moisture. When the bricks were being made. Barahi Devi, to test their str-

enght, came in the shape of a sow and trod on them. This visit being repeated, the Raja inquired who she was, and the Devi, according to his prayer, disclosed herself in her true form. The Raja to show his gratitude, placed her image at the entrance of the Buddhist temple which contained all the deities. Manadeva on this occasion composed a special prayer, which is repeated by every Buddhist when performing puja in holy places.

—THE PRAYER—

Reverence to Ratna trayaya.

I bow to thy lotus-like feet, O Lord !

Thou art Buddha—thine asylum I seek.

There are countless merits in worshipping  
Buddha.

Thou art the master of religion, etc.

After finishing the temple, the prince presented himself before Mani Jogini. She was well pleased with him for having punctually carried out the directions which she had given for building the temple, and said: You have been cleansed from sin, and your grandfather, who got the tree of riches and expended them in charity, will again

appear in the world, when three thousand years of the Kali Yuga have passed away, and he will change the era, which will then be known as Vikramsamvat or the Era of Bikramaditya. Having heard these words, the prince returns to his palace. His mother had meanwhile ruled the people with great justice, so that they were full of her praises. She built many monuments, and at last consecrated an image of Navasagara Bhagavati. This image that of Bhagavati of Palanchok and that of Sobhabhagavati, were all made by the same artist.

# The origin of swayambhu stupa

Meaning of Swayambhu mahacaitya;

The word 'Swayambhu' means self originated divine light a manifestation of Adi Buddha or primordial Awareness. In Nepalese Buddhist tradition Swayambhu is also known as Adi Buddha, Jyotirupa, Buddha Vajradhara, Vajrasattva or Dharmadhatu Vagishvara. All these names have different meanings externally, but one meaning in their essence- i. e. suchness, Tathata or shunyata of the body and all phenomena. In other words, all beings lack inherent existence.

Legendary origin of Swayambhu mahacaitya;

According to the Swayambhu purana, a discourse on the origin of Swayambhu stupa by Sakya muni Buddha himself, ninety one aeons ago Kathmandu Valley was a lake full of water called Nagarhada the abode of serpents Once Lord Bipashvi Buddha

appeared in this world and came to this lake. He threw a lotus seed from Jatamatroch Hill now called Nagarjuna Hill. At that time Satyadharma Bodhisatva who was to become Sakyamuni Buddha was following with Bipashvi Buddha. Lord Bipashvi Buddha, then threw a lotus seed into the lake. When his disciples asked why he did so, Lord Bipashvi Buddha explained that there will appear a self-originated divine light, a manifestation of Adi Buddha from Akanistha Heaven People will call it Swayambhu. He also predicted that in the future Bodhisatva Manjushree will drain the water from the Valley and make it habitable land. Thus it will be a sacred land full of deities and will be protected by Lord Swayambhu, the Adi Buddha. Thus the Jatamatroch Hill was blessed by Lord Bipasvi Buddha. A big white chaitya was constructed there to commemorate the visit of Lord Vipashvi Buddha. On the memory of planting of Lotus seed by Bipashvi Buddha a festival is held even today in the month of March every year. Locally it is called Lhutipunhi.

In due course of time, Lord Sikhi Buddha knowing that a self-originated divine light has appeared on the beautiful blooming thousand petalled

lotus, came to pay homage to it with his disciples along with Kshemendraraja Grahapati who was to become Lord Swayambhu and merged with Swayambhu Dharmadhatu i. e. attained Mahaparinirvana. He predicted that from the root of the lotus an image of Nairatma, the goddess of No-self, will appear. This he preached in the southern mountain called Dhyanochcha. To commemorate the day of arrival of Lord Sikhi Buddha a festival is still held in the new year day of the Nepalese calendar. Locally it is called Khaisanlu in Nepal,

Later Lord B'ishvabhu Buddha came to pay homage to Lord Swayambhu with his disciples and offered 125000 flowers from the eastern mountain called Fullochcha (Height of flowers).

Bodhisatva Manjushree was gladdened to see the glorious light of Adi Buddha and he determined to drain the water from the lake so that it would become habitable and people would amass merit for generations to come. For this act Lord Bishvabhu Buddha sent his chief bodhisattvas such as Parbatakshya, who was to become Shakyamuni and Bodhisatva Gaganganja to Kathmandu Valley to pay homage to Lord Swayambhu. He also gave

them a golden lotus to offer to Bodhisattva Manjushree who had performed the outstanding act of founding Kathmandu Valley. Bodhisattva Manjushree founded a city called Manjupattan which extended up to the areas of Guhyeshvari shrine in Kathmandu. To commemorate this act a white chaitya was erected called (Manjushree Memorial Chaitya) at the western part of the Swayambhu Hill. A festival is still held in the month of January-February to commemorate the date of the arrival of Manjushree from Great China. Thousands of visitors come here to pay homage to this Bodhisattva of wisdom.

In a later period, Krakuchchanda Buddha came (with his chief disciples Jyotipala and Gunadhvaja) to pay homage to Swayambhu. This Jyotipala was to be the future Buddha, Sakyamuni. After paying homage to Lord Swayambhu he paid homage to Nairatmya Devi (goddess of Non-self) the consort of Hevajra. Then he climbed up to Siddhi Fullochcha Parvat, now called Sivapuri Hill, in the northern part of the Kathmandu Valley. Then he preached extensively the doctrine of the 37 factors of enlightenment for Shravakas, six

perfections for Bodhisattvas, and yogic methods for yogis. There he also made ordination for 700 disciples and caused a spring to issue forth by uttering some mantras. This place is called Vagdevara and it is from this place the Bagmati River originates.

In the same way Kanakamuni Buddha, remembering the deeds of former Buddhas also come to pay homage to Lord Swayambhu and preached the Doctrine extensively. After his parinirvana a stupa was erected near Kapilavastu at Niglihawa in the western Terai region of Nepal. This is supported by the Ashokan pillar inscription found there.

In course of time Buddha Kashyapa from Varanasi came to Kathmandu to pay homage to Lord Swayambhu. At that time, Jyoti Raj Bodhisattva, who was later to become Sakyamuni Buddha, was following this Buddha along with such chief disciples as Tisya, Uttama and Sotthita. After performing that He returned to His country Varanasi His country Varanasi. He then went to Gaud (probably modern Orissa in India). In that



city there lived a pious king Prachanda Deva who used to subdue his enemies and appreciated the deeds of the sages. After taking blessings and instructions from Tathagata Kashyapa he went to Kathmandu, renouncing all his kingdom. King Prachandra Deva paid his homage to Lord Swayambhu and became a disciple of Bhikshu Gunakara. Bhikshu Gunakara ordained and initiated him in the Sutras and Tantras. He was then called Santasri.

Bhikshu Santasri, thinking that in later periods people with evil mind might destroy this self originated divine light, decided to cover this divine flame by erecting a stupa on it. Bhikshu Gunakar, a disciple of Bodhisatva Manjushree gave him permission to consecrate the construction of this stupa and conferred on him the title of Vajracharya. Since then he was called Santikara Acharya. After completing the stupa he went to retreat in Santipur.

Shakyamuni Buddha too, after visiting Kapilavastu came to Kathmandu to pay homage to Lord Swayambhu following the path of earlier

Buddhas. He delivered sermons on the origin of this Holy Swayambhu Stupa to Bodhisatva Maitreya at the Gopuchcha Mountain. This place is now called Parvatsthana. A Buddhist Vihara has been established there under the name of Dharmachakra Vihara. According to Nepalese historians Sakyamuni Buddha, after delivering the sermons on the origin of Swayambhu, went to the Golden Mountain now called Namu Buddha. Lord Sakyamuni Buddha, remembering his past lives, saluted thrice to that place. Sariputra Sthavira asked why Buddha saluted such a small, insignificant place. Buddha then related the story of his former birth as Mahasatva (the story of the tigress and its five cubs).

Two hundred years after the parinirvana of Lord Buddha, Great Emperor Ashoka reigned over Jambudvipa. Under the instructions of his Guru Upagupta he established many stupas and sent missionaries to many places outside India. Guru Upagupta related the origin of Swayambhu stupa to Emperor Ashoka. He told the king that he had heard the origin of Swayambhu stupa in the following manner:

Buddha Sakyamuni transmitted it to Ven. Ananda, Ven. Ananda to Bhikshu Jayasri, Bhikshu Jayasri to Bodhisatva Jinasriraja, Jinasriraja Bodhisatva to Bhikshu Sanavasi and to Guru Upagupta Bhikshu himself. Guru Upagupta Bhikshu was relating the origin of Swayambhu Stupa to emperor Ashoka in the monastery of Kukutaram vihara. This ends the transmission of the origin of Glorious Stupa.

# Rudravarna Mahavihara

This monastery is situated in the east about half Kilometer from Patan Durbar square. It is about 50 meters from the Mahabuddha Temple. Its Sanskrit name is Omkuli Sri Rudravarna Mahavihara. It was established by the then king Siva Deva.

Historical data on the origin of the Temple.

During the Lichchavi period a mighty and virtuous king Siva Deva ruled the city of Lalitpur with peace and justice for more than forty years. Feeling disgust with his luxurious palace life he sought advice from a royal Buddhist monk. This Buddhist monk advised the king to build a Buddhist vihar for the benefit of future generations and for the diffusion of Buddhadharm. Accordingly the king executed the precious advice of the royal preceptor. The king amassed vast merit because of his convi-

ction in the precious doctrine of the Buddha and so he built the 'Siva deva vihara' after his own name.

The king himself became a buddhist monk for some years, following all the disciplines very strictly. Later on he became unable to continue the life of monk and disrobed according to the instructions of his preceptor Guru. He was initiated into the doctrines of Mahayana for practice of a lay Bodhisatva. Since then this system of ordaining (Chuda karma avishēka) has been continued by the Shakyas of Nepal.

Due to historic denudation and natural calamities this vihara suffered bravely. Seeing the delapidated conditon of the vihar king Rudra Deva renov-ated it at about 980 A. D.

King Rudra Deva too, being sincere follower of Buddha used to received gifts or offerings in the Sammek ceremony, Ninefold offering and Five-fold offering peculiar to the Nepalese Buddhist tradition.

This pious king Rudradeva became monk and renounced his kingly occupation and donation all

his property of the welfare of future generations of the vihara. Due to his liberal donations to this vihara the name of the vihara was changed and called 'Rudra Deva.'

#### Its structure and present condition:

Rudra varna Mahavihara is a typical Newar Buddhist shrine heavily adored with bronze and wooden art work. This monastery consists of two courtyards, On the entrance one comes across a pair of ferocious looking lions in stones guarding the vihara. After crossing the main entrance one has to pass through small courtyard with two miniature sikhara style temples on each side. This little courtyard was used by the then king as the platform for justice where people were given the opportunity of an audience. The two sikhara style temples consist of the image of Buddha and the Bodhisatva Padmapani.

Before entering second entrance one comes across a stone staircase flanked by the image of a tortoise, an elephant and the image of Haribari-harihari vahana Lokeshvara on both sides.

After entering the second entrance one can see two little platforms where visitors rest for a while and on some holy occasions Newar Buddhists used to sing devotional songs to Lord Buddha while staying in this areas. On the left platform there is the image of Mahakala with Kartri Kapala and Khatvang symbols who serves as protector deity of this vihara.

After this one sees the courtyard which is about 55 ft square. The main shrine faces north having three storeyed roofs. The main deity of the shrine i. e. Kwapa Aju is that of Shakyamuni with the earthtouching gesture seated in a golden throne with legs crossed. His face is painted red because he defeated the four kinds of demons or Mara. So the red colour of Buddha signifies his victory over Mara. The main shrine gate is made of metal heavily adored with artistic embellishments. The front part of the main shrine is decorated with many artistic images such as Bhikshu Sariputra and Maudgalyayana holding a bowl and staff, two guardian Kings Veena raj and Dhvajaraj, Ganga, Jamuna, Nag kanya, symbols of the sun and moon having seven horses and seven swans as vehicles.

There are a number of embossed copper-plated images standing against the walls of the main shrine. They are:

1. Manjushree (bodhisatva of wisdom) with the preaching attitude
2. Padmapani (bodhisatva of compassion) with the gesture of blessing
3. Samantabhadra bodhisatva with the gesture of preaching
4. Vajrapani (Bodhisatva of power) with bell and vajra symbols
5. Ratnapani Bodhisatva holding precious jewels
6. Vishvapani Bodhisatva holding crossed dorje (Vishvavajra)
7. King Suddhodana holding a book
8. Queen Mayadevi bending slightly and holding a branch of the plaksha tree

Just at the sides of the staircase there are two magnificent images of Simhanada Lokeshvara standing on the throne of lions with auspicious Kalasha (vase) symbols. Besides, there are many artistic embellishments of birds and spiders, flowers and fruits depicted in the toran design.



In order to decorate the vihara the artists have presented here many images of animals who came to take refuge in Lord Buddha during his sojourn in the forest. They are:

1. two lions on both sides
2. two elephants sitting
3. two flying horses standing on two legs
4. two flying lions
5. two lions trying to rise
6. two dragons expecting to circumambulate
7. two dragons praying
8. two peacocks stretching their tails and wings
9. a standing image of a king giving a message to his people.

In the center of the courtyard one can see a Lichchavi chaitya (6th Century) embellished with a golden umbrella (chhatra). There is also a Yajnamandapa (sacrificial fire offerings). Then in the same line there is a Vajradhatu and a dharmadhatu mandala which are peculiar feature of any Nepalese Buddhist Vihara.

Similarly there are carved wooden images of eight bodhisatvas namely,

1. Manjushree
2. Vajrapani
3. Kshiti Garbha
4. Gaganganja
5. Khagarbha
6. Samantabhadra
7. Sarvanivarana
8. Maitreya

and eight matrika goddesses namely,

1. Brahmayani Devi
2. Varahi Devi
3. Indrayani Devi
4. Rudrayani Devi
5. Kaumari Devi
6. Vaishnavi
7. Camundra Devi
8. Maha Laxmi Devi

These images are kept just beneath the window on the small wooden plates in the second floor of the main shrine.

Also there are eight images of gods direction of namely

1. Indra
2. Yama

3. Varuna
- 4 Kubera
5. Isana
6. Agni
7. Nairrtya
8. Vayu

Similarly, on the rear wall of the main shrine, there are many struts or tonals with exquisite wooden carvings depicting heavenly maidens or Apsaras in half balanced poses which date back to 13th century A. D.

Just at the left of the main shrine there is a gate or door leading to the secret Agama retreat room. In the western side of Vihara there is a image of Amoghpaśh Lokeshvara installed in the upper part of the buliding. where many devotees come to take refuge in Triple gem the eight precepts from a learned Nepali Buddhist monk are in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Besides there also the images of Akshobhya Buddha and Amitabha Buddha in the same shrine. Here local monks from the lineage of the Nyingma- pa tradition perform the recitation of Nying thig text; and observe the Ten day Festival of Guru Rimpoche. Also they perform the fasting ceremony of the Nyune practice of 1000 armed Avalokiteshvara.

So, next to Hiranyavarna Mahavihara this vihara stands prominent in the practice and diffusion of Mahayana Buddhism in particular to the Newar Buddhists of Patan.

**Its administration and daily rituals**

The officiating priest of this vihara usually open the main door of the shrine and performs bathing, cleaning, adjusting the robes, of the main deity i. e: the red-faces Shakyamuni Buddha.

He then prepares the worshipping materials in a plate. The officiating priest usually wears civara (yellow robes) for performing the ritual. After performing the rituals he recites the Six Paramita stava. He draws out a wooden rod and strikes 103 times with the recitation of Aparimita Dharani and then offers flowers to the Seven Buddhas of the Three times. During the period of worship the devotees outside the main shrine recite the devotional hymns and sutras Dharanis. Such as Bodhicitta prayer, Arya Namasangiti, Mangalastava, Vairocanastava, Dasabalastava, Bhadracaryapranidhana, Shakyamuni Dharani, Aparimita Dharani, Dasaparamitastava, and Bodhiparinamana Gatha. After offering fivefold elements he again strikes 108 times and after prostrating to the Buddha he closes the door and ends the morning sessions. Similar rituals follow at afternoon and evening sessions.

