Bernhard Kölver

Re-Building a Stūpa

Architectural Drawings of the Svayaṃbhūnāth

1992
VGH Wissenschaftsverlag · Bonn

NEPALICA

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON
BERNHARD KÖLVER UND SIEGFRIED LIENHARD

5.

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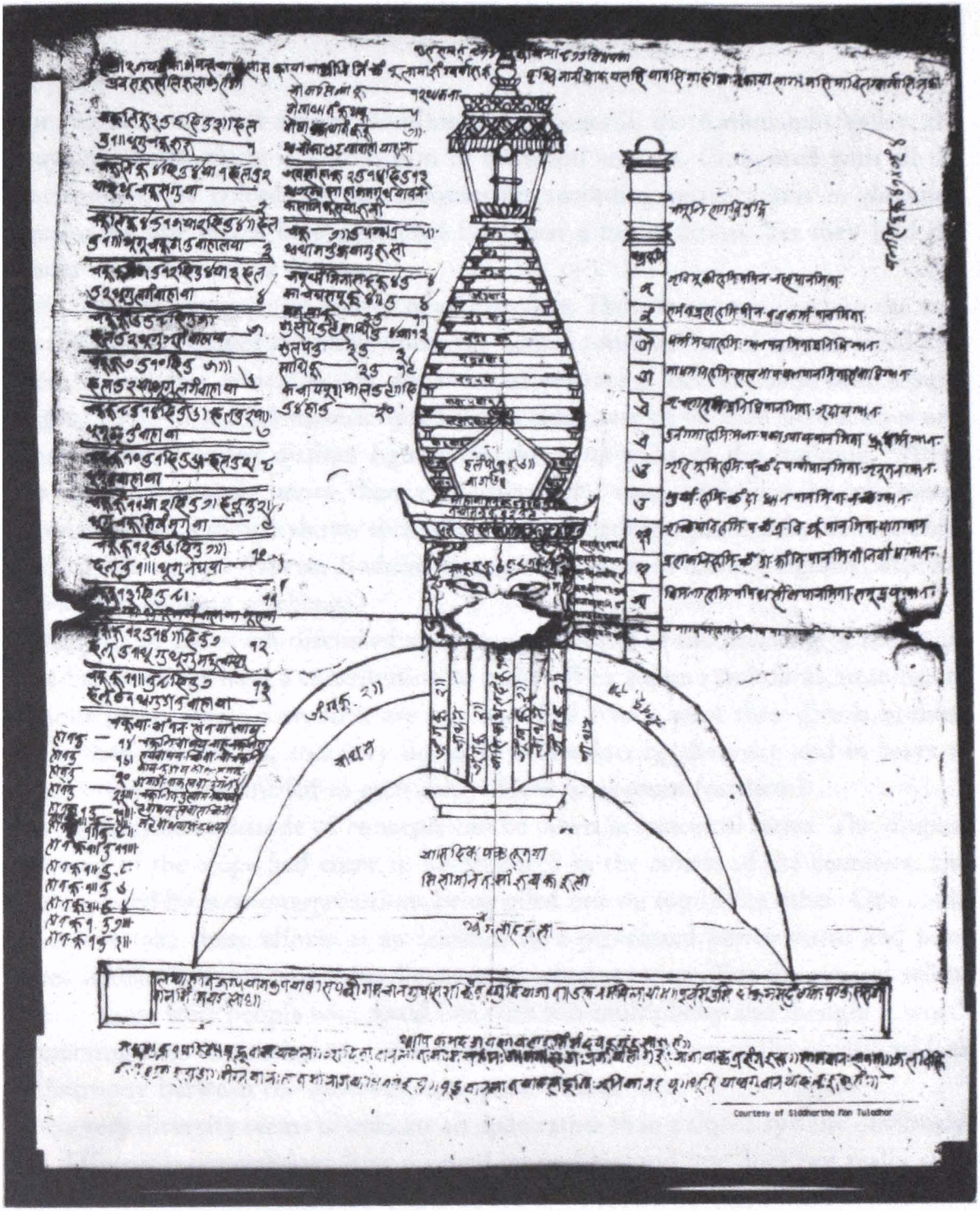

Ill. 1. Reconstructing the Svayaṃbhūnāth: Ms. C

Preface

For the most eminent among Buddhist monuments in the Kathmandu Valley, the Svayaṃbhūnāth, there is a profusion of historical sources. Compared with all the inscriptions, the colophons, the manuscripts recording restaurations or directing rituals, the few leaves here published form just a tiny fraction. Yet they lead the reader on to unfamiliar fields.

For one thing, there is the history of architecture. There is not too much in the way of traditional sources dwelling upon the actual construction of sacred buildings; there is still less which would allow us to re-trace a development over several stages. The Svayaṃbhū manuscripts contain three sets of detailed instructions and measurements, giving distinct figures for the same parts of the building. Within the space of slightly more than a century, they used variations by no means inconsiderable – which shows this stūpa, a sacred edifice guarded by the watchful eyes of Newar and Tibetan Buddhists, was not frozen in hieratic rigidity, but was allowed to respond to change.

Then, it is to the much-discussed and vexing question of the Meaning of the Stūpa that the drawings have a contribution to make: They assign symbolical meanings to various parts. To be sure, they are not doctrinal tracts: what they give is nothing more than key words, and they do so in a bewildering diversity and in ways at times not easily reconciled to each other. How to account for them?

No doubt, this multitude of concepts can be taken in historical terms. The original meaning of the stūpa had come to be obscured in the course of the centuries, and was replaced by new interpretations being piled one on top of the other. One could of course take these efforts as an instance of a protracted *horror vacui* and leave them at that. But this would hardly seem an adequate view. For the sources tell us plainly there were people who could live with this multiplicity and thought it worth preserving even in a technical context: surely they were aware of the occasional lack of harmony between the different conceptual chains.

Their very diversity seems to indicate an open rather than a closed system: obviously, the different interpretations have accrued by and by, and one does not really see a reason why other interpretations, such as are to be found here and there in Buddhist literature, would needs have to remain excluded. If so, the variations are ultimately tantamount to a shift in priorities. Say there was a time when the stūpa was meant to remind the faithful of the Buddha's death, or his life, or his teachings. At the hands of its interpreters, the emphasis was gradually changed the other way round: the drawings show the stūpa itself has now moved into the central position, and meanings were added, layer after layer. The clear order of precedence which to our

eyes distinguishes an allegory or emblem from its intended meaning is relinquished; the image assumes an independent status of its own and comes to attract meanings; it grows into a cardinal point and catalyst of Buddhist thought – which goes some way to explain why the stūpa has held its ground through so many shifts of doctrinal emphasis.

This, then, is what these unpretentious drawings have to say, and it seems an essential addition to the reflections about the Meaning of the Stūpa which have become such a popular topic for discussion in recent years.

At the end of this phase of work on the Svayaṃbhūnāth, I gratefully remember the help and encouragement I received from many sides. As always, my thanks go to the German Research Council, its staff and its reviewers, who have followed – and supported – this project with a tolerant and a benevolent eye. Through what by now is quite a few years, Mr Hemrāj Śākya and Mr Bishnu Prasād Shreshtha have accompanied my ways. We spent many weeks together, going through the Svayaṃbhū Annals, which in a sense helped to shape the background to the present book. Mr Nirmal Mān Tulādhar, always generous in his friendship, introduced me to a Tulādhar family who in the course of a long association with the sanctuary has accumulated valuable materials and pious relics – the sheet here published as Ms. C among them. The Department of Archaeology of H.M.G. under its Director General, Dr Shaphalya Amatya, kindly gave its permission to undertake research on the Svayaṃbhū, and in his interested and ready participation in the work, Dr Amatya was a colleague rather than an official. Dr Christoph Cüppers and Dr Franz Karl Ehrhard were always ready with help and advice, not only in matters relating to Tibet and Tibetans.

On a very different level, I feel deeply obliged to the religious institutions responsible for the sanctuary: they not only permitted work but allowed me to learn something about how they view its relation to the world of today. First, there is the Buddhācārya community entrusted with the upkeep and maintenance of the sanctuary, Mr Nazar Mān Buddhācārya, Mr Īshwarī Mān Buddhācārya and their colleagues. To them, the stūpa and its integrity is of a very genuine concern: their worries about the state of the all-important Central Beam, their attempts to enlist support for minor repairs were the topic of much reflection. – There were occasions when the differences in backgrounds and expectations made themselves felt; but they were resolved in a spirit I did not often meet. They had graciously given permission for measurements of the stūpa being taken, and Mr Surendra Joshi and his assistants set to work with their customary efficiency and thoroughness. As is very normal for non-specialists, the Buddhācāryas had not realized the complexities and the sheer duration of the task; as is regrettably normal for specialists, we had taken our methods as a matter of course and had thus failed to prepare the

Buddhācārya community for the actual nature and extent of the undertaking in an adequate fashion. Measurement of the complicated woodwork of the tiers, i.e. of the sacred and inaccessible parts of the stūpa, takes its time. After a while, some uneasiness made itself felt, which was not really dispelled even when the reasons for the laborious procedure had been explained. The solution they suggested was appropriate and touching: a *kṣemāpūjā* was thought advisable, i.e., to use an non-technical rendering, a *Ritual conferring Ease, Security, Happiness*. This was duly performed: Quite early one morning, the mist was still hanging over the Valley, we assembled west of the stūpa, in front of Amitābha; a Vajrācārya had come up from town and began preparations for what turned out to be an intricate chain of rites lasting for many hours. Their latter part addressed itself to the Goddess Hāratī in her temple to the northwest, and for its culmination our whole party crammed into its tiny space. The wooden doors were closed, as usual in the afternoon. Suddenly, there was a clamour to be heard from outside: a woman had come who most urgently desired to see the Goddess: the doors were opened, she squeezed through the assembly and addressed herself to the image. The disturbance of the elaborate ritual did not count against the demands of an individual in need. –

In another way, there was the Ven. Kusho Tsebchu Lama. It was in connection with Tibetan rights and functions on the hill that I wanted to see him: for the last few centuries, reports of restaurations kept mentioning Tibetan participation, guidance and assistance, both spiritual and monetary, and there was talk about documents regulating their dues. Dr Cüppers had acquainted the Lama with our intentions; Dr Amatya brought us together: one Saturday morning we met, and some time after the usual exchange of civilities the topic of the documents was actually raised. For a while, the Ven. Lama was a bit vague about whether there were such sources, and if so, whether they could be found; then he dropped pretences and explained his point of view: scholarly interests were one thing, the present political situation was quite another; with the position of the Tibetan Buddhist community being not free from strain, utilization of such materials might further dissent. Who would wish to question his judgment. –

During certain phases, Dr Niels Gutschow, a German architect, was employed by the project. It was under his guidance that Mr Surendra Joshi prepared the elevation here reproduced as Illustration 2.

* * *

The Svayaṃbhū Hill has now come to be included in the UNESCO World Heritage list – which means changes the site will eventually be subjected to, which will necessarily involve Governments and Planners. One can only hope the technicians will pay some regard to the traditional guardians: though they do not count for much in terms of political power, they stand for its social functions, its spiritual life.

Nov. 28, 1990 B. K.

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Chapter I
THE BACKGROUND

General

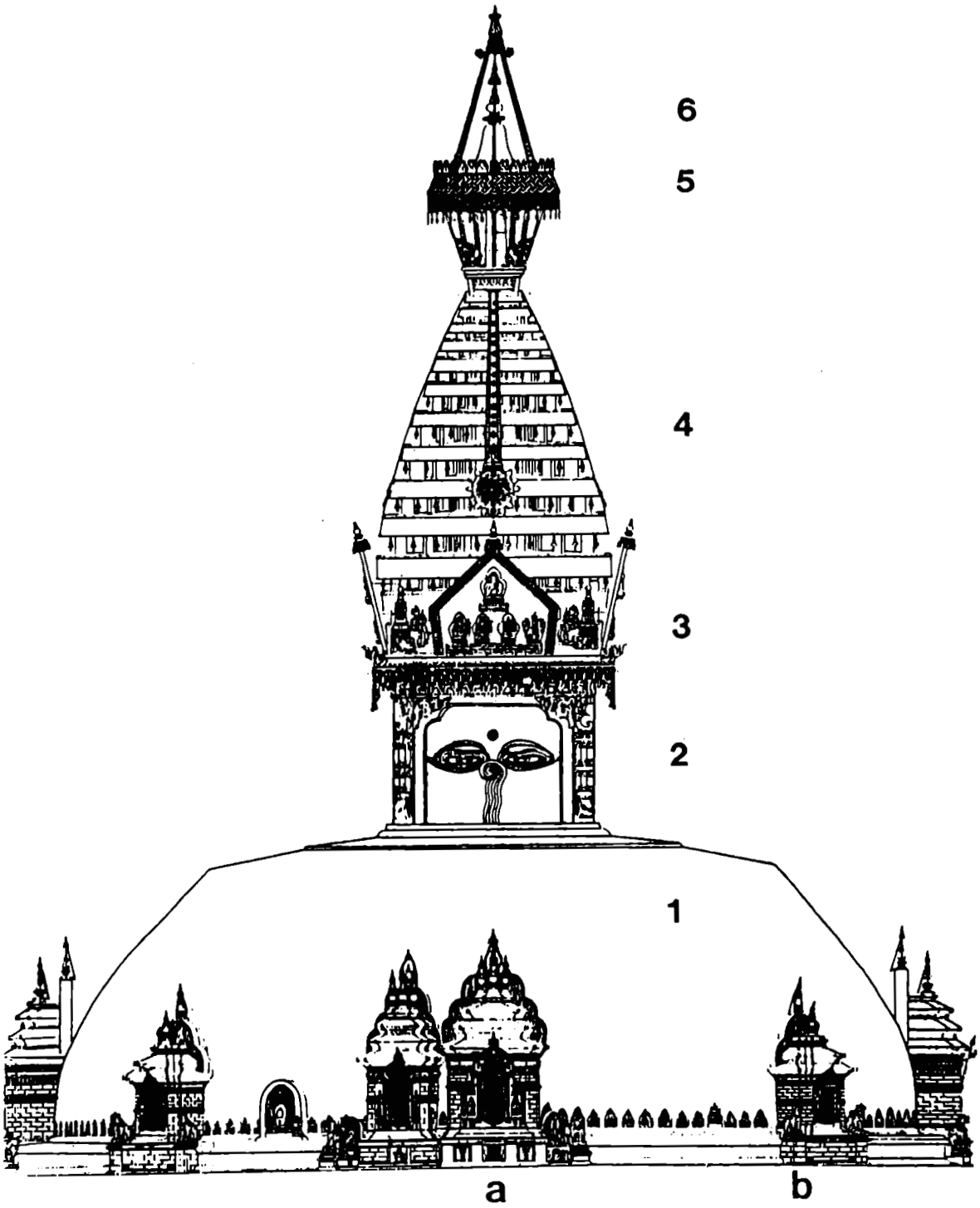
At all times, Buddhists have assigned an exalted place to the stūpa: it is one of the sacred, time-hallowed forms they use to give a visible expression to their faith. Sculptures representing the Great Teacher were late in making their appearance: in earliest times, it was symbols that stood for him, a tree, a wheel: the former was to remind the faithful of the Bodhi Tree under which he had gained Enlightenment; the latter was the Wheel of the True Law which he had set in motion when he began preaching the Doctrine at Sarnath.

It is to this oldest, symbolic series of representations of Buddhism that the stūpa belongs. Again, it marks one of the crucial stages of his earthly sojourn: this is his passing to Final Deliverance, to the Parinirvāṇa, so inappropriately reduced to common human terms by calling it his Death.

What is a Stūpa? It is a type of building very common in Buddhist lands. Stūpas are found from India to Japan, from Tibet to Indonesia: wherever Buddhists settled, they erected them as one of the central symbols of their creed.

Through the millennia and over this vast territory, their external appearance was of course subject to variation. Still, the elements found in Ill. 2 can be recognized in practically all the different forms. A dome, often nearly half a globe, rises above a plinth. This most simple of forms, a stylized mound, from earliest times onwards has two additions on top. One is a beam protruding from the centre of the mound, and often running all through it. Usually, it bears a number of tiers or umbrellas: three (or only one) in the old Indian examples, then increasing, always in odd numbers: up to thirteen in Nepal, and rising to 21 in China. Second, the tumulus is crowned by what in the oldest specimens is a kind of chest called ***harmikā***, often square in shape: this gives a direction and orientation to the building. The plinth, or an added layer below it, will have a path for circumambulation. To mark this off as sacred territory, there may be a fence (*vedikā*) which at times has entrances again placed in the four directions of the compass: in this sense, they repeat the 'chest'.

Just as the Tree and the Wheel, the stūpa derives its authority and standing from the Master himself. It is in the earliest strata of Buddhist scriptures that we find it mentioned first. Here is a short passage, transmitted in Pāli, the holy language of Theravāda Buddhism. It comes from a conversation between the Buddha and Ānanda, one of his disciples, shortly before his decease:



Ill. 2. Elevation of the Svayaṃbhūnāth.
Drawing: Surendra Joshi

'What should be done, Lord, with the remains of a Tathāgata?'
'As men treat the remains of a king of kings, so, Ānanda, should they treat the remains of a Tathāgata.'
'And how, Lord, do they treat the remains of a king of kings?'
'They wrap the body of a king of kings, Ānanda, in a new cloth.'... [other preparations for cremation.]... *'They then build a funeral pyre of all kinds of perfumes, and burn the body of the king of kings. And then at the four cross roads they erect a stūpa to the king of kings. This, Ānanda, is the way in which they treat the remains of a king of kings.*
And as they treat the remains of a king of kings, so, Ānanda, should they treat the remains of a Tathāgata. At the four cross roads a stūpa should be erected to the Tathāgata.'[1]

The text thus claims it was a traditional, solemn form of burial which the Buddha had ordained to be employed. And research bears out this assertion: stūpas have been built by faiths other than Buddhist, e.g. by Jains; the chest apparently held the mortal remains of kings, and the threefold umbrella would be used as a reminder to his status on earth.

As all sacred forms in South Asian art, this mound, simple as it is, presented a constant challenge to the human mind, people projecting their creeds and beliefs into the monumental form that marked the passing of a Great Man. Some, perhaps, took it as an embodiment of a highly elaborate cosmical symbolism. They take the Central Beam running through its core as a representation of the *axis mundi* that separates Heaven from Earth and upholds the sky. There are younger layers identifying this beam with the Sacrificial Post (*yūpa*) so essential to the old Hindu sacrifice – which post again could be taken to stand for the sacrificer himself. The Buddhists of course added meanings proper to their faith.

Different interpretations, then, could attach themselves to the same symbol, and when cited the symbol will evoke the chain, as a whole or in part.

Such diversities we shall again encounter in the stūpa, even when limiting ourselves to its Nepalese interpretations. Meanings, then, could be changed; but the form itself remained: this had been ordained and hallowed by tradition, while explanations could be added to or superseded.

Not that interpretations altogether failed to affect forms and external appearances. The type could be developed in many and different ways. But in all this variety, one does perceive fixed patterns: stūpas there have to be; they need a Central Beam; they need umbrellas, etc. But within this framework, variations were admitted.

1 Mahāparinibbāṇasuttanta, transl. T.W.Rhys-Davids, Oxford 1881, pp.92f.

Strangely enough, meanings – i.e. the religious significance – counted among the variables. Nepalese Buddhists express this very clearly, e.g., in their typology of stūpas. One place where variations abound are the tiers. Five, the Nepalese say, stand for the *śrāvaka-yāna*, i.e. for the layman and his way to deliverance; seven point to a Pratyekabuddha, i.e. him who, disregarding others, seeks Nirvāṇa only for himself; with nine, we have reached the Mahāyāna with its ideal of compassion; thirteen are taken to symbolize the Vajrayāna which allows man to reach Buddhahood in this very life. Yet all these stūpas are, in their eyes, fundamentally one – or rather, the differences between them dwindle into irrelevance before the one overwhelming fact: the stūpa, any stūpa, is a central symbol and cypher for the Buddhist faith. In a sense, then, this way to deal with distinctions is the same as that of the Hindus who use the term *darśana* to label their different orthodox philosophical systems: 'views' or 'aspects' of the truth, i.e. partial and imperfect realizations of the Absolute and Whole that will stand fully revealed only to him who has reached the end and summit of the Path.

New meanings attach themselves to old forms rather than seeking new shapes. It would be speaking from an outsider's point of view if one was to say they avail themselves of the prestige of antiquity. Those who conceived new readings rather thought they were eliciting hidden meanings.

Re-thinking the stūpa was a continuous process, responding to changes in Buddhist faith and philosophy: in this sense, it reflects part of the history of Buddhist thought. Thus, there is not one single interpretation current through the millennia; rather, it was continuously adapted to new developments of doctrine. This very fact shows the grasp it had over the religious imagination: when there were new chains of thought, the stūpa apparently was not slow to respond to them, and a few of these adaptations we shall have to pursue.

Through all these intricate chains which of course influence each other, older interpretations never quite fading while new ones were added, it is well to remember two basic thoughts which were never lost from sight, but continuously gave the stūpa its standing in Buddhist eyes: the building remained both a memorial to the Great Teacher, and a symbol of the creed and the philosophy. Of the basic Buddhist triad, then, of Buddha, Dharma, and Saṃgha – i.e. the Buddha, his Law or Teaching, and his Order of Monks – two constituents were represented in the edifice, for everyone to see, and we shall observe how Newar Buddhists in a sense found a way to add the third component, the Order.

The materials here published deal with the Svayaṃbhūnāth, one of the holy sites of Nepalese Buddhism. They allow us to re-trace the history of an eminent stūpa at least for 150 years or so. This short period, one should think, is nothing in the life of a monument. But even so, the documents show considerable changes, and

preserve traces of even more fundamental ones. What emerges is a picture of some complexity, quite different from preconceived ideas of hieratic rigidity one might have entertained.

The Svayaṃbhūnāth

To Nepalese Buddhists, the most important of stūpas no doubt is the Svayaṃbhūnāth. It rises on a hill in the West of the Kathmandu Valley, which used to be densely wooded; vegetation has grown sparse apparently only during the last decades. Approaching it from the old pilgrim's route from the East, one's back turned to the cities and most of the villages of the Valley, one first meets a gate at the foot of the hill; Tibetans and Mānangīs have recently begun constructing a wall with prayer wheels to mark the boundary of the sacred territory. A footwalk paved with flagstones then leads the pilgrim up. Testimonials of the piety of past generations line the way: numerous *caityas*, an occasional sculpture, the small *pātis* open at three sides or at least in front where people can take a rest or hold their feasts. Then the wood grows thinner and the ascent more steep. At one's side, one notices a stone which marks the water level of the lake, Kalihrada, which in a mythical past covered the whole valley with only the peak rising above. After thirty sets of three steps each, a landing: by now, the climb has grown arduous. Five groups of five steps each, then, at the end, twice three, and one has reached the platform where the stūpa is built. First, a large cylindrical structure, a bit like a drum, covered with a brass sheet showing a *maṇḍala* (of Dharmadhātuvāgīśvara) and topped by a huge Thunderbolt (*vajra*) again made of brass. Behind it, the stūpa, its white body crowned by a golden peak.

This Eastern ascent is of course conceived as an image of the pilgrim's progress; it alone would be sufficient to elevate the peak above the common round of earthly life. It is only the Eastern flank which is marked that way. The two other ways leading up, north- and southwest, rise in a gentle slope and are practically without endowment: only at their beginning there is a group of *caityas*.

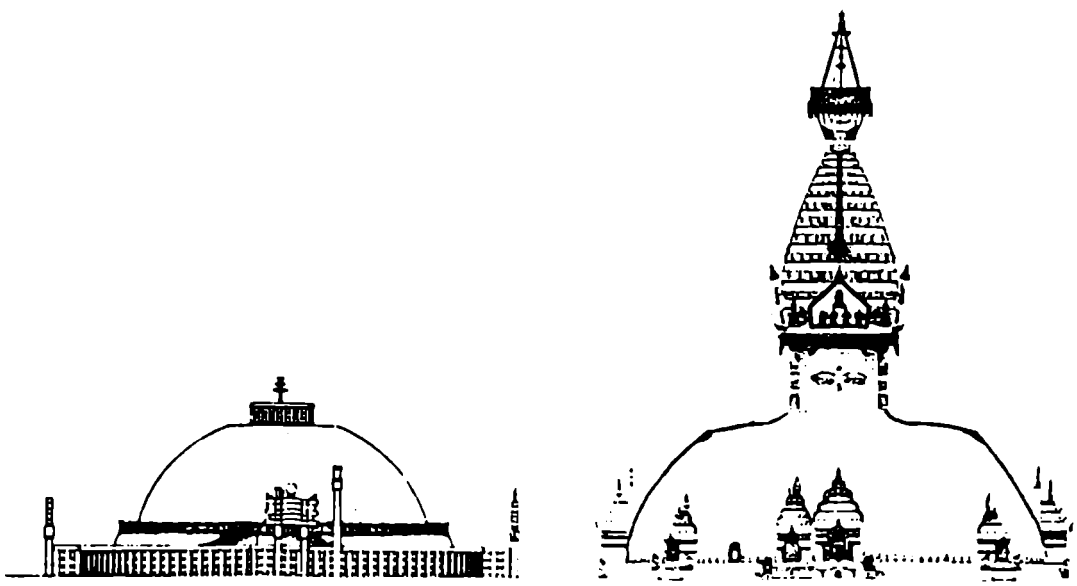
The entire hill is sacred territory. No animal must be killed, though blood sacrifices are not foreign to Newar Buddhism with its strong Tantric components. And this prohibition against slaughter in a way extends beyond the mountain proper. In the whole valley, wherever the Svayaṃbhū can be seen, peasants did not use ploughs when tilling the earth; they turned the soil using their short-handled hoe, which means they have to work close to the ground, with their backs bent: this way, they can better note the animal life which ploughing would inevitably destroy.

The top of the hill is built up to or beyond the limits of its capacity. Temples, small *caityas*, monasteries, the dwellings of Buddhācāryas (the traditional guardians

of the sanctuary) with curio shops occupying the ground floor, a small museum, again *pātis* for celebrating the feasts which conclude most rituals, sculptures, an esoteric sanctuary: all this has in the course of time assembled around the core. Only a *bodhi* Tree is missing[2]. – On festivals and holy days, the precinct is crowded almost beyond endurance: on a single day, Buddha Jayantī, Dr Schmitt-Moser has counted about 35.000 pilgrims.

With its 25 metres, the Svayaṃbhū stūpa is not the highest in the Kathmandu Valley: the Bodhnāth much exceeds it in size. Still, the Svayaṃbhū is very much the centre and focal point of Newar Buddhism.

In its overall proportions, the building looks quite different from the early Indian type. Ill.3 gives the elevations of Sāñcī I and the Svayaṃbhū with the domes reduced to approximately the same height. One notices the parts above the dome have grown so as to effect a fundamental change.



Ill. 3. Proportions of Sāñcī I and the Svayaṃbhū, compared

To give a first orientation. Broadly speaking, the stūpa consists of two parts, the dome (1)[1] and the superstructure. The latter consists of a cube (2), square in its ground plan, with a pair of eyes painted on each side. This is the old *harmikā*; the manuscripts here edited call it the 'neck' (*gala*). On top of it, there are thirteen tiers (3), called *cakuli* 'wheels', and four 'shields' (4) resting on the cube: the Newārī

2 It is still depicted on the painting printed as the frontispiece in Macdonald and Stahl: Newar art.

1 The figures are those of Ill. 2.

term, *halipaṭṭa*, is obscure. The tiers themselves are crowned by another wheel (5) which is clearly meant as an honorific umbrella. Above it, the peak (6), a precarious construction chiefly made up of a unit of pinnacle (*gajura*) plus honorific umbrella; this unit is twice repeated, much as if the architect had found it difficult to come to an end; one remembers, though, the multiple pinnacles placed side by side on the roofs of so many sacred buildings of Nepal, and one wonders whether they were the model one tried to emulate.

These, then, are the essential parts of the stūpa as seen by an outside observer. Before approaching the problem of the meaning of the whole and its parts, it will be useful to consider the name of the sanctuary. This is where we shall first encounter the complexities brought about by the long history of the stūpa, which still is largely obscure.

The Name Svayaṃbhūnāth

is a Sanskrit compound consisting of two parts. The first, *svayaṃbhū* 'Self-Created, Self-Manifest' is not one of the epithets one would normally expect to see applied to the Buddha[3]. In normal parlance, it is sometimes used to refer to God Brahmā[4]. More often perhaps, it denotes a visible form of Śiva: *liṅgas* not made by man, but found in nature, flames, or other spontaneous manifestations of his divine essence. And there is a myth being told about the first origins of the Svayaṃbhūnāth which plainly stems from the same archetype. A lotus rose from the primeval waters. It opened and revealed the 'SelfCreated' in the form of light (*jyotīrūpa-*). Men of later world periods could not bear its effulgence; hence it was covered by the stūpa we see today. –

The second part of the name, *nātha-* 'Lord', is not confined to any one of South Asian religions, nor indeed to religious usage. Still, an association with one of the forms of the Nātha cult is a possibility. These *nāthas*, 'lords', were a group of 84 saints worshipped alike in Hindu and Buddhist tradition, from Bengal to Tibet. They have not passed the Svayaṃbhū by: some of them are represented on the stūpa itself (see below, Ch. V). The notion of regarding them as manifestations of

3 It does occur a number of times in the Lalitavistara, though. To give some random examples: the long list of epithets in Ch.26 has *svayaṃbhūr ity ucyate* as its second member (ed. Vaidya, p.307); the following verses say *ṛte paropadeśena svayaṃbhūs* (verse 62, ed. Vaidya p.314) 'without being taught by another, he is the Self-Created One', with the reference not quite clear: in spite of the difference in gender, it is perhaps the *dharmacakra* that is being spoken of.

4 Even a Buddhist text has it in this sense: in the Lalitavistara (15,99 ed. Vaidya, p.163) the Buddha is called *brahmasvayaṃbhubhūtaḥ*: one as is were sees the epithet transferred into its new context.

the Buddha principle cannot have been foreign to Buddhism even before it had assumed its distinct Vajrayāna forms which hold mortal man can in this life be transformed into a living incarnation of the Buddha.

Even so, the name has a Hindu ring. And this is when one remembers two more of the great sanctuaries in the Kathmandu Valley bear names ending in *-nātha*, the Paśupati and the Bodhnāth. And one further recalls it is the sanctuary of one of the Nātha sects from which the city of Kathmandu derives its name (< Kāṣṭhamaṇḍapa, the open hall close to the Hanumān Ḍhokā Palace. This is one of the chief Gorakhnāthī sites in the Valley, and in Nepal, the Gorakhnāthīs are the most prominent among Nātha sects). There was a time, then, when their adherents were sufficiently influential to have the whole city named after their sanctuary[5] – and who knows but it was in emulation of their cult that the other sites obtained their epithet? It cannot have mattered much if Paśupati or Svayaṃbhū did not figure among traditional Nātha saints. For their enumeration shares the common fate of so many South Asian lists: everyone knows they ought to number 84. And they do – but as soon as we come to actual names, the various accounts are only in partial agreement.

The Meaning of the Stūpa

Even when passing over speculations about its pre-historic or preBuddhist significance, i.e. the whole scintillating question of its Cosmic Symbolism, the *axis mundi* etc., all the theories and possibilities that John Irwin has advocated with so much eloquence and erudition[6], there is a multitude of answers to the search after the Meaning of the stūpa.

We have seen some take it as a funerary monument to hold the relics of a Tathāgata after its death. This view rests on the most convincing authority that Buddhism has to offer, the Mahāparinibbāṇasuttanta.

And there is archaeological evidence which tallies: stūpas have been found with reliquaries embedded in their midst[7]. No doubt, then, it is a very genuine tradition which takes them in this sense.

5 See G. Unbescheid: Kānphaṭā. Untersuchungen zu Kult, Mythologie und Geschichte śivaitischer Tantriker in Nepal. Wiesbaden 1980, pp.63ff.

6 Cf. e.g. J. Irwin: The axial symbolism of the early stūpa. In: The Stūpa: its religious, historical, and architectural significance. Ed. by A.L. Dallapiccola and S. Zingel-Avé Lallemant. Wiesbaden 1980.
——: The stūpa and the cosmic axis. In: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference of South Asian Archaeologists. Napoli 1979, pp.799-845. See also the critique by G. Fussman: Symbolism of the Buddhist stūpa. In: JIABS 9,2 (1986), pp.37-53.

7 Thus, e.g., Sāñcī I, or the famous Kaniṣka stūpa at Shāh-jī-kī Ḍherī: K.W. Dobbins: The Stūpa and Vihāra of Kaniṣka I. Calcutta 1971, *passim*.

There are others who say it is to remind us of the person of the Buddha himself, in his earthly existence, and again there is evidence that can be quoted in support. To begin with the appearance of the Svayaṃbhū, and the terminology of our manuscript: There are the eyes painted onto the square which crowns the globe. There is the central beam running through nearly the whole building. Its top goes by the name of *uṣṇīṣa*, 'top-knot', as one might say: it is one of the 32 Marks of a Great Man which Buddhists have ascribed to the Master's body. Again, the shields above the eyes are vestiges of a Vajrācārya's – and thus, ultimately, the Buddha's – crown[8]. Van Nieuwenkamp's attached drawing[9] as it were bodily inserts the Buddha into the stūpa. It is a convenient summary of this view. Nor is it devoid of reality: there is the story of the holy Buddha image, the Phra Buddha Sihing, which at Sukhothai 'was placed in a magnificent stūpa built of brick and stone, covered with white stucco and topped by a maṇḍapa of gilded copper'.

Ill. 4. The Buddha inserted in a Stūpa

This equation is by no means confined to icons: There are Buddhist texts which use other, though perhaps less immediate, ways to join the building to the Buddha's life on earth. They say stūpas have been erected to mark the crucial stages in his life. There are eight of them which are linked to its main events: the one at Lumbinī is to mark his Birth, at Vārāṇasī it is the First Sermon, etc.[10]

A shrine to hold the Buddha's ashes and bones or a symbol and image of his person: the two notions may seem very different from each other, and not easily reconciled. But Buddhist tradition knows stories which as it were form a bridge between them. The Lalitavistara, a legendary account of the spiritual development of Prince Siddhārtha, tells us how he leaves his father's palace to renounce the world, and one by one he relinquishes the attributes of his kingly state (Ch. 15): his faithful Chandaka he sends back, together with his horse; he takes his sword to cut off the tuft of hair which marks him a member of Hindu society; he exchanges his silken clothes for those of a wandering ascetic. Every time, gods and heavenly beings stand to witness the scene; every time, a stūpa is erected to commemorate the event.

8 See below, Ch. V, section 5.

9 Reprinted by P. Mus: Barabudur. Reprint New York 1978, p.105.

10 Details in G. Tucci: Stupa. Art, architectonics and symbolism. English Version of Indo-Tibetica I. New Delhi 1988, pp.21ff. See also Lokesh Chandra's Introduction to this edition, pp. vff., who gives different versions of this list, from various sources.

Relics they are, these appurtenances of the Buddha's life in society, and thus on a par with the bones and ashes the stūpa held according to the earliest strata of tradition. But they also testify to the living prince who was to grow into the Buddha, and they mark the *stages* on the way to perfection rather than its attainment. In this way, the stūpa as it were gained an additional dimension of meaning: what used to be a reminder of the Perfect One had now also become a symbol to mark his aspirations *before* reaching the goal, when the Great Being only was approaching final deliverance. By these means, the stūpa was brought closer to hopes and aspirations of common man.

A third line of thought takes the monument as a symbol or reminder of the Buddhist way to Deliverance. This was a reading which at times must have been very popular: even in our manuscript, it occurs in a bewildering diversity of shapes. The tiers are the best example. For in an essential respect, they correspond to a didactic device very common among Buddhists. They were fond of presenting salient points of their doctrine in the form of conceptual chains which break a complex topic down into constituents so as to make it manageable. Buddhist texts and glossaries can be organized according to this principle.

The tiers, now, offered a structural parallel which many found striking: a unit (*viz.*, the whole group of 13) composed of a number of analogous parts, ascending from below, just as series of concepts would begin with the easiest and most accessible member. For this reason, they readily lent themselves to what one might call esoteric interpretation, this or that chain being visibly represented in the several rungs of the ladder.

The idea must have held a great appeal. In the manuscripts here edited, the tiers signify various kinds of Sacred Sites and the Stages of Perfection and the Vowels of the alphabet and different Worlds or Planes of Existence and different Kinds of Knowledge. One turns to the chief literary source about the monument, the Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa with its manifold legends, and one again sees a new meaning: in a very transparent kind of symbolism, they are the abodes of various classes of Divine Beings who live beyond the world of mortals[11].

In such ways, we find meanings and structural parts of the stūpa conjoined. And if one was to confine oneself to the drawings alone, (see, e.g., Ill. 9) one would say it was as a set of emblems, as an illustration of such doctrinal series, that the stūpa had been understood and conceived – if it was not for the correspondences so often being much less than perfect from a doctrinal point of view. For many of

11 Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa, ed. Haraprasād Shāstrī, pp.418ff.: see below, Ch. V., section 6.7, p.148.

the equations are only partial, either explaining only certain items in a continuous series of concepts, or expanding traditional notions in new and unorthodox ways.

What, then, are we to make of all this variety of interpretations, which of them holds the true meaning of the tiers or the stūpa? There seem to be two directions where an answer may be sought. They are quite different in aims and methods.

To many Buddhists, the contradictions would probably seem irrelevant, or at least do not stand in any direct and pressing need of being resolved.

From quite early in the history of Buddhism, there was no complete agreement as to how the Master's words were to be taken. 'The different schools are constantly at variance, and their contending utterances rise like the angry waves of the sea. The different sects have their separate masters, and in various directions aim at one end'. This is Hsüan-Tsang[12] – and both parts of his description are worth remembering: Doctrinal distinctions are one thing, hostility is another. Western accounts of Buddhism have drawn attention to the fact that adherents of different schools lived together within the same monastery[13], and present-day Nepal, e.g., shows this practice is still alive: Tibetans and Theravādins have been accommodated in Vajrayāna Bāhāls, though they by no means agree in matters spiritual.

This, then, is history – and one will not go wrong in extending this line of argument and saying a corresponding latitude will have been tolerated in the interpretation of one of the central symbols of Buddhism.

Yet there is another principle involved, namely, a kind of identification. To quote one of the important correspondences of Buddhism as an example. Among the Buddha's last words on earth, there is the famous instruction to his disciples which the Mahāparinibbāṇasuttanta expresses as follows:

> *'Perhaps, o Ānanda, there might be to you this (thought): The word is now without a teacher; we no longer have a teacher. But truly one should not see it that way. For the* dhamma *and the discipline which I have demonstrated and made known, this is your teacher after my death.*[14]'

In which sense are we to understand the relation between the *dhamma* and the teacher here ordained? At first sight, one would probably say it is some kind of metaphor, a set of concepts being personalized and invested with the same authority the Buddha himself had commanded. Buddhists apparently took it in a somewhat different way, namely, as an equation pure and simple: Prince Siddhārtha had become the Buddha by virtue of the *dharma* which he taught; the *dharma* was

12 Si-yu-ki. Buddhist records of the Western world transl. [...] by Samuel Beal. [Reprint] Delhi 1981, vol. 1, p.80.

13 E. Lamotte: Histoire du bouddhisme indien. Louvain 1958, p.605.

14 Dīghanikāya ed. T.W. Rhys Davids and J.E. Carpenter, vol. 2 (London 1966), p.154.

his 'essence', and in the face of this truth all accidental events of his earthly life dwindled into insignificance. This is why conventional representations and literary accounts of his person so often show him endowed with extraordinary marks, the 32 *lakṣaṇas* and 80 *upalakṣaṇas*, the SouthEast Asian representations of the soles of his feet studded with auspicious signs, etc.: by such means, he is singled out from common humanity and lifted onto a plane where his very body turns into a symbol of the transcendental.

The stūpa can be viewed the same way, as an equation pure and simple: the Buddha can be inserted bodily. This may take the shape of relics, as in the accounts of the events which followed upon his Nirvāṇa. Or we can have the idealized version of Ill.4 which transcends the impermanence of ashes and bones. There are other icons which may be meant to express the same stage. Ill.5[15] depicts him on his death-bed: above the body, there rises the three-fold umbrella which also marked the early stūpas (see Ill.3): in view of the stūpa's antecedents in funeral mounds, who is to claim this image needs has to be divorced from the rest?

Ill. 5.
The Buddha's Parinirvāṇa

These are some of the more tangible forms: variations on the themes of the Buddha's life on earth, of the Great Renunciation. And even within this limited set of motifs we find manifold readings. Once we come to the Doctrine, the latitude is much wider. For the Svayaṃbhū tiers alone, there were six separate and distinct interpretations, and they cannot really be reconciled on an intellectual or exegetical level.

Where, then, to find a common denominator to unite them? Apparently, it can be sought only on the most general level: the stūpa stands for Buddhism in its totality, in all its aspects.

Once this idea had been conceived – and the equation of the Master with his Doctrine provided the scriptural authority to do so – the monument could as it were be analyzed, and its several parts could be assigned meanings which in themselves are parts of the totality of Buddhism. What is considered as Truth must needs be

15 See M. Bénisti: Contribution à l'étude du stūpa bouddhique indien: les stūpa mineurs de Bodh-Gayā et de Ratnagiri. T.1-2. Paris 1981, plate 53.

contained within the stūpa: it just has to be recognized, extracted, discovered, much as Tibetans have their *gter-mas*, hidden jewels – documents of the faith, that is, which lie hidden and are revealed whenever the time has come for their appearance to be beneficial to mankind.

The other way to come to terms with this multiplicity of meanings is the historical approach.

Two examples, both taken from the tiers. We have seen their number was gradually increased from one to the present 13. And they evoked manifold interpretations, among them the Ten *bhūmis*, i.e. Worlds or Stages of Perfection in the lives of a Bodhisattva. Obviously, this identification does not fit a stūpa with, say, five or seven tiers, while it makes very good sense for nine (: the tenth and highest World could then be placed in the peak, visible perhaps in the honorific umbrella which crowns the central beam: No. 5 in Ill.2). There would be a perfect equivalence between the shape of the stūpa and the meaning assigned to it. And it seems quite possible this interpretation was a factor in increasing the number of tiers: as we have seen, Nepālīs say the nine-tiered stūpa stands for the Mahāyāna with its Bodhisattva ideal (as against the seven which are said to symbolize the way of Pratyekabuddhas). Who is to say the concept of the Bodhisattva's Way to Perfection did not affect the external appearance of one of the chief Buddhist symbols?

A second correspondence is less smooth, *viz.*, the vowels which are thought embedded in the tiers. There are different ways to account for this notion. In the legends the Lalitavistara tells about Prince Siddhārtha's youth, there is the story of him joining school (Chapter 10): miraculously, he turns out to possess the knowledge of language and of letters, enumerating them one by one. – Alternatively, the letters could just as easily be connected with the reflections about Language constituting a world of its own. Since the world of language directs man to concepts rather than to isolated phenomena, it is more permanent and true than the world of perception. This line of thought began quite early in the intellectual history of India, and gained new strength through Tantric speculations. Within this frame, analysis and identification of the components of language was just as essential as the identification of elements which had gone into the makings of the material world was to a natural philosopher.

Rudiments of the philosophy of language, then, or an episode from the Buddha's early life. No matter, though, which of these readings actually led to the vowels being attributed to the tiers: they will hardly belong to the early interpretations of the stūpa. Rather, they were added at a stage when, to confine ourselves to the second reading, the world of speech and language was deemed an indispensable part of Truth: how could they be missing from the stūpa, which was the very epitome of the Absolute? So they had to be found, and they were.

In such ways, meanings were evolved one after the other, at times without much regard for the whole. Unravelling the *Geistesgeschichte* of the monument, and ordering the different interpretations into a historical sequence, presupposes a thorough familiarity with the ramifications of Buddhist thought, such as at present we do not yet possess: Much in the emergence and development of Vajrayāna thought, which deeply influenced both form and meaning of the Svayaṃbhū, is still obscure.

What strikes the eye are the contradictions, are imperfections of the most glaring kind. Again the vowels: every schoolboy knew there were sixteen of them[16]. Yet, there were only thirteen tiers available – and thus their number was ruthlessly curtailed, with contrary evidence in full view[17].

In a way, such imperfections were a ferment for change. Given someone who attached sufficient importance to the idea of language and letters, and was sufficiently influential and eloquent: one can very well imagine him to argue for a further expansion to turn the stūpa into a more exact match, much as the Stages of Perfection may have played their role. At present, though, the correspondence between tiers and vowels is unsatisfactory. And similar incongruities abound: time-hallowed lists of concepts being arbitrarily expanded; readings being assigned to the same parts of the building which can hardly be reconciled to each other. One wonders how such a haphazard lot came to be accepted, and it is perhaps useful to follow one example where an original configuration which made very good sense was changed to a solution much less convincing from an intellectual point of view.

Changes in Meaning and Multiple Interpretations

Tradition says the Buddha himself called his doctrine, with its abstract concepts and injunctions, hard to grasp and difficult to practise. A tangible representation, an emblem or icon, has one very great advantage: it brings a notion within the scope of everybody. For to ritualized religion, awareness of the full significance of a religious act or idea is not a necessity. The icon itself is capable of considerable subtlety. It is not indispensable, though, that its meaning should reveal itself to those who worship.

In the cardinal directions of the dome, one finds chapels with sculptures of the Four Tathāgatas, Akṣobhya East, Ratnasaṃbhava South, Amitābha West, and Amoghasiddhi North. Their group stems from an early phase of the deification of concepts: they embody the first stage in the emergence of the worlds of forms and phenomena. Each of them is endowed with qualities of his own; each of them has

16 The usual fourteen plus *aṃ* and *aḥ*.
17 See Ch. V, section 6.2, below.

his particular attributes, gesture, colour, psychological and esoteric significance. But taken individually, one by one, they do not reveal their full meaning. The core, i.e. the real sense of the pattern, remains to be inferred. For the holiest spot of the entire stūpa is its centre, i.e. the point of intersection of the ideal lines which connect East with West and South with North: this is where the supreme principle resides, the germ of all emanations or the point prior to all of them. The emanations themselves belong to the outer shell, and they can be given a shape and a name. But the centre, from which they derive their significance, is conceived as beyond form and words; very fittingly, it is located in the inaccessible mid of the dome. So the true meaning of the icon lies hidden like the centre itself. And accessible it is only by means of its primary emanations, the Tathāgatas on the surface of the dome. Which is one reason why the orthodox form of worship, the circumambulation, is so important, nay indispensable: in performing it, one not only adores each of them in turn, but as it were implicitly and incidentally also worships their ideal centre where all oppositions are resolved. The circumambulation, then, translates a concept into an act, an act easily performed at that.

Even so, this original idea grew obscure, or was counted one of the truths hard to grasp, and ways were sought and found to make this core accessible to the normal human perhaps not yet advanced: the contemporary appearance of the Svayaṃbhū itself is a witness. For this inaccessible and ineffable central principle is given a tangible form and a name: there is the fifth Tathāgata, Vairocana, who has his chapel on the outside of the dome, almost like the others. Indeed Vairocana had been named and listed as chief of the Tathāgatas since long[18]: but the present-day Svayaṃbhū still bears an unmistakable trace of the older pattern where he was hidden. For while the Four Tathāgatas occupy the cardinal directions, Vairocana is as it were wedged in, ESE, directly adjoining Akṣobhya whose place is the East. Thus he, the most abstract among them, whose traditional place was the centre, came to disturb the ideal symmetry of the building. The reasoning is plain: the chief deity being merely *implied* by the other Four was no longer counted sufficient; he had to become visible and accessible to direct worship. What an immense advantage to be able to address oneself directly to him who was the ultimate principle! Yet, to represent him in the flesh contains the germ of a fundamental re-modelling of the old image: it potentially abandons the idea of evolution, the challenge to proceed from the visible to the unseen; it would by implication abandon the very circumambulation:

18 There is an inscription dated N.S. 213 which mentions a donation for his worship: see below, Ch. IV, §3.

he who could in the older pattern be reached only by way of his emanations, and *all* of them, now stands before one's eyes: why then address one's respects to what are but his outward forms?

Yet this did not happen, as anyone can see who spends half an hour watching the way the stūpa is worshipped: people still follow the circumambulation, and Vairocana by no means occupies the place in rituals that his dogmatic status would seem to call for. No doubt, this is the weight of a traditional form of worship common to Hindus and Buddhists alike, and not easily abandoned. Besides, even though Vairocana had moved to the periphery, the centre was not left vacant: there was and had always been the central beam; there was the goddess Uṣṇīṣavijayā (see below, p.35) who, as far as the stūpa itself is concerned, remained a mere concept and idea.

Symbolic forms, then, in themselves underwent changes. There are different modes to translate concepts into images. For some reason, dogmatic or didactic or artistic, a notion is expressed by an image: a child stands for Youth, a sheaf of grain for Autumn: simple allegories easily unravelled because the common factor is so clear. Very much the same way early Buddhist sculptures can represent the Master by a wheel. One can take it in a biographical sense and think of his first exposition of the Law, which is called 'the Wheel of *Dharma*' (*dhammacakka*). The icon is just as plausible in the context of one of the cardinal points of his teaching, the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*), i.e. the cycle of causes and effects which in twelve stages leads from Ignorance (*avidyā*) to Old Age and Death (*jarāmaraṇa*), the last stage again resulting in a new birth characterized by Ignorance: the wheel has turned full circle, and it is in this shape that the chain is so often represented in painted scrolls. One sees the aptness of the icon. And there is no need at all to choose between either of the two readings: if there are two equally valid interpretations, this can only enhance the validity of the image.

Often, however, relations between an icon and its meaning are less cogent, and accordingly at times we find the same set of concepts repeatedly encoded, by different sets of signs. There are, e.g., the Perfections (*pāramitās*): to Mahāyāna doctrine, a very fundamental list of first six, then ten (and, in our drawings, twelve) achievements which accrue to a Bodhisattva in the course of his many existences. These are represented by female deities[19], or by the tiers of the stūpa[20], or in

19 See, e.g., Snodgrass: The Matrix and Diamond World mandalas in Shingon Buddhism. New Delhi 1988, pp.426ff.

20 See below, Ch. V, section 6.5., pp.144ff.

still other ways. Ill.6 is from the cover of a kind of short Buddhist catechism recently published[21]: a hexagon, its centre showing a lamp, and the six corners, the text tells us, the Six Perfections (*pāramitās*)[22]: the series is quite new and not common knowledge, and the example is so interesting because it shows the search for visible representations of concepts has not yet come to an end.

Ill. 6. Symbolic Representation of Pāramitās

The examples considered until now have one common factor. The relation between meaning and icon is predominantly transitive: the tiers stand for the Perfections, but not the other way round: the Perfections do not stand for the tiers. With its manifold interpretations, the stūpa in a very precise sense is its counterfoil: with the usual relation of icon and meaning inverted, it posed the task of de-coding. Here is the Sacred Object, of undisputed authority – and now one sets out to find reasons for its sanctity. And so it comes to stand for the Buddha, for his death, for his way towards renunciation; it stands for his teaching; the tiers are emblems of the Perfections and the Vowels and so many other notions: in applying their minds to it, people allowed themselves the same kind of latitude we have just seen on the other side when the Perfections were encoded. Multiple meanings assigned to one object were as little disturbing as multiple embodiments of one concept.

At this point, we are close to mediaeval Christian allegories, their readings of the scriptures, their readings of the world when understood as the revelation of God: one thinks of the innumerable attempts to discover the *spiritual sense* which lay behind the literal. 'Wer die Dinge auf ihren spirituellen Sinn zu befragen gewohnt war, dem konnte es zur täglichen Andachtsübung werden, die vor den Augen liegenden Dinge

21 Pratyekmān Tulādhar: Bodhi laṃpuyā mata o prajñāpāramitā. Kathmandu 1988.

22 Tree = Giving; Moon = Virtue; Box = Forgiving; Stone spout = Fortitude; Mountains = Meditation; Eye = Wisdom.

der Welt meditierend zu allegorisieren, wie es von Gregor von Nazianz berichtet wird'[23].

But in one essential respect, there is a difference. In the stūpa, what challenged the intellect of interpreters was not 'whatever he [i.e. Gregory] saw *(/..] ut quidquid videret ad instructionem animi allegorizare studeret*, loc. cit.)', but it was only the object of acknowledged sanctity. In a way, this limitation is surprising in a traditional South Asian context where derivation of phenomena from an ultimate source is so ingrained a habit of thought. But for breaking everyday phenomena down into their components there was the established routine of philosophical analysis, understood as a verifiable model for explaining worlds, i.e. understood as a science. The Absolute, in contradistinction, in the last resort always remained ineffable, and attempts to transpose it into words or symbols could always be countered by the famous '*neti neti*, no no' of the Upaniṣad. In other words, there are dualistic tendencies lying hidden hardly below the surface: the very idea of having a sacred precinct elevated from the common world shows they exist. And of course one sees them in the very name of the sanctuary: it is 'self-created' *(svayaṃbhū)* – as opposed to the rest of creation.

But to revert to the multiple representation of concepts, the multiple interpretations for the symbol. There are fixed poles, as it were, on either side: the holy object, the doctrinal concept; both of them hallowed by tradition, neither subservient to the other; one as it were attracting meanings, the other seeking some palpable way to be embodied. Here we are touching upon the motive for the polysemy of the monument. It stands for Truth; hence it expresses whichever interpretation of truth Buddhists found valid at a particular time. This means on the tangible level of words and concepts and their visual expression, the usual relation between image and meaning is *inverted*: it is the image which is permanent, while its meaning is phrased in the terminology current at a particular time or place, audience or School: the Buddha or the Dharma, the Stages of Perfection or the Kinds of Knowledge. This, one sees, is very much the notion which we traditionally associate with Hinduism: aspects of the truth manifesting themselves in different ways to different people, or, as the famous Rigveda verse has it, What is one the Wise name in manifold ways.

Even so, the one central function of the stūpa remained patent and clear to believers: it stood for ultimate truth. The multiple interpretations, the contradictions, the historical complexity apparently disturbed hardly anyone. There were times, rather, when the monument apparently enjoyed an overwhelming authority; imperative the need to discover one's personal truth in or around it.

23 F. Ohly: Vom geistigen Sinn des Wortes im Mittelalter. In: Schriften zur mittelalterlichen Bedeutungsforschung. Darmstadt 1983, p.19.

From a sign pointing to a content beyond it, the symbol developed into an independent religious being which is worshipped for its own sake, and induced and stimulated religious thought. In this way, it grew in size and complexity and functions. And it is the network of readings rather than any single interpretation which constitutes the Meaning of the stūpa.

Permanence and Impermanence

When all is said and done, a problem of doctrine remains which any permanent symbol of Buddhism has to face, and it touches a very central point. Impermanence is the very essence of Buddhist teaching: how, then, can a sacred object, fixed, immutable by its very sanctity, be an adequate representation of a system which is based upon the doctrine of impermanence (*aniccatā*) and 'not-self' (*anattatā*)?

The very name of the stūpa shows the problem was perceived and understood. The epithet 'Self-Created', *svayaṃbhū*, establishes a contrast to the rest of creation which owes its being to an ultimate cause. It directs us to the concept of an Ideal and Perfect World at or before the beginning of time. It is in the pursuit of this idea that the components of created things are present in the stūpa or its precincts: the Five Elements in the shape of their temples or shrines, the letters of the alphabet distributed over the stūpa. Ultimately, this trend of thought amounts to a deification of the sanctuary: a hymn can say 'He is the Venerable, Self-Created one, who accomplishes the aim of every undertaking[24]', and another verse, used in the same compilation, praises 'him who has the stūpa as his Self[25]' – using this same word for 'self' (*ātman-*) which Creation is said to be devoid of (*anattā-*).

There were some, though, who seem to have realized the pitfalls of such views. When looking at the Five Tathāgatas embedded in the dome, one notices their anthropomorphic shape, and one would naturally conclude the process of deification has been completed; any doubt one might have is set at rest when reading the hymns composed in their honour, invoking their help in the vicissitudes of daily and spiritual life in much the same style that Hindus use when addressing their gods.

But there were others who apparently had not forgotten Buddhist principles of analysis which made any permanent entity a doubtful matter. They as it were turned the tables round. There is a hymn where one finds the line 'The Conquerors, they whose Self is of the nature of the Five Buddhas (i.e. the Tathāgatas), are remembered

24 *svayaṃbhūr bhagavān eṣa sarvakāryārthasādhakaḥ* (Kalaśārcanapūjāvidhi, p.81, quoting the Laghutantraṭīkā).

25 *tasmai stūpātmane namaḥ, ibid.*

as the five factors of existence[26]'. These Factors of Existence or 'heaps', the *skandhas*, are the 'properties of sentient beings'[27] – and the whole point of enumerating them is to tell man that what he regards as his identity is, in reality, nothing but a conglomerate of various components, constantly subject to change.

These 'heaps', the epitome of impermanence and the erroneousness of any conception of a Self, are here identified with the Tathāgatas, at their head Vairocana who we have seen is the very embodiment of the most comprehensive Buddha principle: if there is permanence to be found in Vajrayāna Buddhism at all, it is in their figures. The equation really forces opposites together. And one can hardly imagine it was done by innocent mechanics, one series of five (: the Tathāgatas) automatically evoking the next (: the 'heaps'). No, the author apparently realized what he was saying. The verse to be recited 'if it is the Svayaṃbhū, a stūpa, a *caitya*, or the like' is this: 'The Ether (i.e. the Supreme Element of Creation) has grown spotless, resting on properties of absolute inactivity(?); pacified is what has the Five Heaps as its Self. Veneration to Him whose Self is the stūpa[28]'. This leads the worshipper back to the stūpa, as the one embodiment of the Absolute in this world: the monument is viewed as an attempt to find a tangible form and expression for the Void.

The part-by-part interpretation of the stūpa, such as the drawings undertake, of course is a third way to resolve the quandary of having permanence in the impermanent world. For its various sections are shown to stand for *stages* in the attainment of Buddhahood, all of which are by definition transitory. By this analysis, the building is brought nearer to the impermanent world of mortals: it is turned into a gigantic didactic device, addressed to beings on their way to perfection.

When applying this chain of reasoning to the multiple interpretations of the stūpa, they tend to lose their strangeness: one could say the very variety prevents 'reification' and leads man to realize it is not one defined sense or way or religious view which is intended. The goal is there, self-embodied and thus turned towards creation: but this turn needs implies the diversity of phenomenal and conceptual worlds.

26 *pañcabuddhasvabhāvātmā (sic!) pañcaskandhā jināḥ smṛtāḥ* (*ibid.*, p.78)

27 R.C. Childers, Pāli dictionary, s.v.

28 *svayambhū, stūpa, caityādi jusāḥ – ākāśo nirmalībhūto niṣprapañcaguṇāśrayaḥ | pañcaskandhātmakaṃ śāntaṃ tasmai stūpātmane namaḥ ||* (*ibid.*, p.78, cf. p.81). – The above translation does not pretend to a considered opinion on the meaning of *niṣprapañca*.

The stūpa a node and occasion for – should one say associations, should one say visualizing Truth in whichever garb; the stūpa a complex symbol rather than a univocal icon: this makes for a certain ambiguity where its significance stands in danger of getting blurred, where meanings merge one into the other. Apparently there were those who feared its clear purpose might get lost in the maze of conflicting readings, and who thought fit to re-assert what they considered its essence and intent. It was thus that a reversion to the Centre makes its appearance. This is attested in an unexpected place: not on the stūpa itself, but in some of its traditional Newar pictorial representations on painted scrolls (*paṭṭas*).

Often, they show a goddess, Uṣṇīṣavijayā, in the middle of the dome. By the conventions of symmetry which govern the painting of paṭṭas, this placement clearly points to the high position she held. There is a circumstance, though, which on the face of it looks incongruous. The Goddess is not present in the stūpa itself: no statue, image or other visible mark to indicate her presence.

One might be tempted to interpret this discrepancy in historical or typological terms and suppose the Goddess came to be included only fairly late, when the stūpa itself had reached a codified form and could no longer respond to changed concepts, or responded only in effigies. This reading, though possible, is not conclusive since it would ignore an iconographical convention. As we have seen when speaking of the Four Tathāgatas and Vairocana, the Fifth, there were very cogent doctrinal reasons for keeping the centre vacant: this was a very palpable reminder of the cardinal Mahāyāna tenet of Emptiness. Without a doubt, dogmatists could have taken the missing representation of Uṣṇīṣavijayā the same way – which would mean she was conceived to be at the core of the stūpa.

And apparently this is where she belongs.

Who is Uṣṇīṣavijayā? In broad outlines, her antecedents are clear. (a) She obviously stems from the *uṣṇīṣa*, which is one of the 32 Characteristic Marks (*lakṣaṇas*) of a Great Man (*mahāpuruṣa*). This is a top-knot or, to be more precise, an excrescence, a knob or bump on top of his skull. Being the topmost of the *lakṣaṇas*, it could come to stand for the essence of the Master himself. Here is Snodgrass[29] quoting from the Hishokoketsu 6:

> 'The Buddha-Uṣṇīṣa is the virtue of the Tathāgata's unseen *uṣṇīṣa* mark. Although all the physical marks of the Buddha are excellent, the *uṣṇīṣa* mark is the most profoundly meritorious and most excellent of all. In particular, all the

29 Snodgrass, A.: The Matrix and Diamond World mandalas in Shingon Buddhism. New Delhi 1988, p.345.

images that are manifested above the *uṣṇīṣa* together make up the Buddha-Uṣṇīṣa Section, and (the term) 'Buddha-Uṣṇīṣa' accordingly means the highest and the incomparable'.

Similar if less explicit notions must have existed elsewhere: in pictorial representations, it is often crowned by a crest jewel (*cūḍāmaṇi*): see Ill. 22, taken from a Tibetan instruction for drawings.

Ill. 7. Maitreya's Head on a Pāṭan sculpture

(b) As one of the chief marks which distinguish the Buddha, this *uṣṇīṣa* was transferred to the stūpa: even in our drawings, the uppermost end of the Central Beam goes by the name of 'the crest jewel of the *uṣṇīṣa*' (*uṣṇīṣa-cūḍāmaṇi*)'. It is, then, part of the 'anthropomorphic' interpretation of the stūpa, referring directly to the Buddha's life, just as the eyes do.

The *uṣṇīṣa* thus was taken as the essence of the Buddha's attainments, and as such of course had its place in the stūpa. There is an icon from Pāṭan which visibly joins these two aspects and carries their combination a step further. The sculpture shows the future Buddha, Maitreya, and in front of the topknot he has – a stūpa[30]. To be sure, there was a certain similarity in shapes between them, but this gained its meaning and validity from the analogous significance they had: both could represent the Buddha and his Teaching, and therefore they were joined. Identifying the *uṣṇīṣa* with the stūpa would be the logical next step.

(c) The combination of the topknot with *vijaya*-, 'complete victory', which we find in the name of the goddess, seems to refer to the end of the way which leads to the state of a Buddha, as embodied in the *uṣṇīṣa*. The Niṣpannayogāvali distinguishes between eight forms distributed over the compass[31]. One of them is the *vijayoṣṇīṣa*-, the 'topknot of complete victory'. With its members inverted, the compound describes the same thought from a somewhat different angle: 'the

30 The reference I owe to Mr. Hemrāj Śākya, the photograph to Mr. Bala Rām Chitrakar. – The image itself is now immured, with only a hole the size of a brick allowing access. This is why one can no longer take a photograph of the entire face. F. Lüning has combined partial pictures to form the drawing attached.

31 See M.Th. de Mallmann: Introduction à l'iconographie du tāntrisme bouddhique. Paris 1975, p.386. Cf. also Snodgrass (loc.cit.), pp.344ff.

Complete Victory which is (i.e. is marked by) the *uṣṇīṣa*': in other words, it places the emphasis upon the process of attainment of Buddhahood rather than upon the result.

(d) This 'victory', or its mark, then came to be deified much as attributes of Hindu deities at times were[32]. And in the cultural context of pairs of complementary opposites like Wisdom (*prajñā*, feminine) and Means (*upāya*, masculine), like Bell (*ghaṇṭā*, feminine) and Sceptre/Thunderbolt (*vajra-*, masculine); in an intellectual climate where even the Tathāgatas were endowed with their feminine counterparts, the Tārās, it is not hard to see why this deity was visualized in feminine form.

(e) This, then, is the goddess whom the paintings show embedded in the dome: another cypher for the essence of Buddhism. And one cannot but notice that with her being introduced, in a sense the wheel has turned full circle. One remembers Ill.3 which showed how in its earliest stages, the stūpa essentially was the mound, the *harmikā* and the threefold umbrella looking like minor additions. Then this superstructure grew until its height came to exceed the mound itself. No doubt this growth was in response to new meanings being added to the monument: the Stages of Perfection, the Planes of Existences etc. With all this, the edifice slowly but perceptibly widened its meaning and function. What had been a symbol of the Ultimate Goal came to incorporate and represent various Ways towards its attainment. The stūpa, one might say, began to turn to the common man and demonstrate the steps it was his to take: the Perfection of Giving (to take one of the interpretations of the lowest tier) is perhaps not altogether beyond his reach, even in his present existence.

In a sense, this is a marked shift in emphasis: the stūpa grew into a medium of instruction, and it is chiefly the external manifestations of this added function which will strike the outside observer.

With the appearance of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, the balance is again restored. The goal and culmination is again affirmed, though stated in new terms and by means of a new image – which is just another expression for what is found in the stūpa itself. The uppermost peak of the present structure goes by the name of 'Spotlessness of the Void', *śūnyanirañjana*. This is a small pinnacle at the very top, hardly visible from the ground, almost lost in the sky which – for most of the year – is blue; and blue to Tantriks is the colour of Nothing.

* * *

32 See, e.g., Sudarśana, Viṣṇu's disc: details in W.E. Begley: Viṣṇu's flaming wheel. New York 1973.

Building a stūpa always brought merit, this most essential of preconditions for a favourable re-birth: in more senses than one, the form stood for the essence of the Buddhist faith. In this respect, Nepal is no different from other Buddhist lands: *caityas* were built from Licchavi times to the present day, and they can still be seen wherever Buddhists lived. Side by side with the more permanent forms made of stone or brickwork there were others, more transient. Small clay *caityas* made from a mould were produced in great profusion. There is a special, costly rite called *Lakṣacaitya*: a hundred thousand (or rather 125.000: for some might turn out less than perfect) of them were made, some say in order to embody one of the important Mahāyāna texts, the 'Perfection of Wisdom in a Hundred Thousand Lines', the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. Once the required number was completed, they were either embedded in a larger *caitya* of their own or, if the donor found this too expensive, immersed in the Bāgmatī river; scrolls were painted in commemoration, their inscriptions recording the details of the offering. These Nepalese *Lakṣacaitya* scrolls, incidentally, always show the Svayaṃbhū, unmistakable by the two *śikhara* temples, Anantapur and Pratāpapur, flanking its Eastern side: at least in the Kathmandu Valley, the Mahācaitya was considered the archetype of stūpas.

Renovations of *caityas* were regarded the same way, and of course the merit that accrued from such work was all the higher the greater the religious importance of the monument repaired. The Svayaṃbhūnāth with its great prestige among Newar Buddhists and beyond (: Tibetan pilgrim guides to Nepal usually include it among the list of holy sites to be visited) has greatly benefited from this belief; indeed, in a very essential way it must have contributed to its survival. For at least today, there is next to nothing in the way of financial endowment of the stūpa, such as Hindu sanctuaries enjoyed in the form of grants of lands the proceeds of which were used for their upkeep. Some such support, one would tend to think, must also have been granted to the Svayaṃbhū. If so, nothing is left of it: there are *guthis* who have funds for this ritual or that, but apparently none which has the maintenance and repair of the stūpa as its task[33]. On the other hand, our sources show traces of a different routine followed in such cases, at least for the upkeep of the tiers: in two records, certain more prominent Buddhist monasteries of Kathmandu made it their charge. They date from a time when the traditional structure may still be presumed intact. If so, it seems possible the burden of restorations was shouldered by the Buddhist community at large. At the last major renovation, in 1918, this definitely was the

33 A document is said to exist which transferred responsibility for the sacred site to a Tibetan group, at the same time granting them certain lands. This, however, is not accessible.

case. A Tulādhar merchant, grown rich in the Tibet trade, donated the immense sum of 75.000 rupees. In return, he was permitted to take the big copper jar (the *kalaśa*) which had held the stūpa's divine life while it was under repair; he also obtained a wooden carpenter's model of the cube and the tiers. Both are kept as heirlooms in his family, the jar still filled with the holy water. And his descendant says he still has a voice in planning for coming restorations.

Major repairs are necessary at periodic intervals. For the Svayaṃbhū has one fundamental weakness. This is the heavy superstructure, and particularly the Central Beam which runs through nearly the whole building, including the tiers. It has to be a single trunk, its length fixed at 48 cubits 7 fingers, i.e. some 22 m. The upper end of the cube, i.e. the place where the pole is joined to the brickwork, is the point of danger: this is where moisture will seep in and cause the wood to rot. An intact beam, however, is vital to the building, for spiritual even more than for technical reasons (: the tiers rest upon their own system of supports and are nowhere affixed to the Central Beam). When is is changed, the entire superstructure has to be dismantled, down to the cube, and the dome itself has to be opened. Then, the old beam is extracted and cremated, its ashes disposed of with solemn pomp: a procession takes them to the Twelve Holy Sites (*tīrthas*) of the Valley where they are immersed in the waters.

Inserting a new beam, then, is not so very far from building a new stūpa: and the present records show even parts that one would presume could be re-used actually were replaced. None of these, however, was given the honours accorded to the Central Beam: they were nothing but parts of a building, while the pole had a life of its own.-

Such fundamental reconstructions were not all that rare: the last four date from A.D. 1712, 1754/57, 1817, and 1918. They were treated as major events in the life of the stūpa. Annals have come down that still await publication. They are written in Newārī and record the sequence of events at considerable detail, from dismantling the stūpa to finding a suitable tree to serve as the new beam; they describe the process and rituals used when it was felled, the stages and distances of carrying it up to the hill and who took the burden for how far; they dwell upon the mishaps encountered on the way and upon the rituals that were to avert evil and reconstitute Order. Even what to contemporary eyes are minor incidents are not omitted: how some Tibetans, perhaps just by accident, drifted into the shed built for the *kalaśa* which temporarily held the stūpa's life, and the fear of pollution which arose: Hindu notions exerting their influence on a Buddhist sanctuary. – All this apparently served a dual purpose: in recording the day-by-day process of restoration, it also provided a guideline for future occasions of the same kind.

The drawings here published had similar aims in view. Most of them come from

a manuscript preserved in two copies (**A** and **B**) whose contents might be called an architectural miscellany: many folios are filled with different ground plans for houses and brief descriptions of their esoteric advantages or defects: geomancy, in short. Other parts give instructions for various kinds of buildings. Embedded in all this, there are the two drawings of the Svayaṃbhū reproduced on Plates 8 and 9. One is a schematic elevation of part of the stūpa, viz., the system of tiers with the Central Beam protruding. It assigns meanings to the various individual parts – i.e. relates them to Buddhist doctrine: here we find the chains of concepts which we have sketched.

In what to most will be the more interesting of them, we see an elevation of the stūpa. This is flanked by two columns giving the dimensions, chiefly of the woodwork, used at the 1712 and 1817 renovations; both sets of figures are close to each other but not identical. This is all the more significant since in date a third drawing, ms. **C**, comes between the two series of mss. **A** and **B**. This is a single, large sheet of Nepali paper, in the possession of the same family whose ancestor contributed so much to the 1918 restoration. It gives the figures used in 1754/57. Broadly speaking, it is organized on similar principles as the others. The measurements, though, differ in many details. On this background, the agreement between the 1712 and 1817 figures gains an added significance: the changes introduced in 1754 were largely abandoned on the occasion of the next renovation. This ought to mean the omission of the 1754 measurements from mss. **A** and **B** was intentional. For whichever reasons, its innovations had failed to stand the test of time. The old measurements were reverted to, and **A** and **B** made sure their departures from the 1754 dimensions could not be called arbitrary. –

From the nature of the figures, one would imagine it was the carpenters who needed this kind of guideline. This however is only part of the story. For the chains of concepts which **A** and **B** give in a separate sketch are also found in **C**: the technical instructions and the religious justification of measurements were but different aspects of one and the same process.

These drawings have few parallels on the subcontinent. They enable us to follow the development of an important Buddhist building over three stages. For this reason, the figures have been examined in some detail. The presentation of the evidence will doubtless weary the reader, and perhaps remind him of cabbalistic efforts such as have been directed at Stonehenge or Egyptian pyramids. But in the present instance, we are on safer ground. For one thing, we know the system and the units of measurement the architects used: hence, in calculating one is not at the mercy of deductions based upon foreign units. This means one can do more than establish proportions: one obtains actual figures. Second, and more important: in spite of a few doctrinal innovations and an *adhoc*-solution or two, we have a fair

knowledge of the philosophical and didactic system the stūpa was built to illustrate. And the very sources establish this relation between parts of the building and aspects of Buddhist doctrine; they combine technical detail and esoteric interpretation.

The analysis of the figures leads to results in two fields. First, there are apparent irregularities in the construction, which fall into place once one realizes the principles which underlie the structure. To give two examples. In accordance with iconographical rules, the stūpa was built, not on the normal secular cubit of 24 fingers, but on that of 25[34] – which the handbooks prescribe for canonical images of the Buddha. Again, the dimensions of the tiers , thirteen at present, make sense on the supposition this present number was developed from an older structure which just had nine. Translating this result into a historical hypothesis may seem risky – until one remembers the many stūpas of nine tiers, including the 'Old Svayaṃbhū'.

The second reason transcends the building proper. The figures show innovation was possible even with an edifice of acknowledged sanctity which one would presume to be highly conservative, especially so when traditional dimensions were preserved in writing. Thus, on the technical level we see repeated what the development of esoteric interpretations has taught us: the stūpa was able to respond to changing religious needs, both in meaning and in appearance. No doubt this made for its life, for its continued veneration by the community who supported it and saw it as the central, unifying symbol of their religion.

34 to be exact, 25,2: an even half of a 'finger' added was more easy to handle for the craftsmen.

Chapter II
TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

1. Description of Sources

In spite of much effort, the originals of the manuscripts labelled **A** and **B** could not be traced. One of them was in the possession of Mr Pushpa Ratna Sagara, of Tyauda Tol, Kathmandu. This was borrowed a few years ago, and never returned.

For **A**, the edition is based on a pale photocopy, on grey paper, poor in contrast, which Śrī Thakur Lal Manandhar had ordered to be made a few years ago. For **B**, the source is the slightly blurred set of photographs Herr Wilfried Kröger, Oldenburg, had made in 1971. At that time, the manuscript had a clean and modern appearance, one side, and possibly both, impregnated by *haritala*.

Both manuscripts belong to the 'folded book' (*thyāsaphu*) type, of unusual size. They are largely identical copies of the same compilation of various texts relating to architecture. The compilation apparently seems untitled; but neither copy shows one of the flaps that are so often found at the opening of Newar *thyāsaphus*, and which often bear a title.

A. Photocopy, 40 x 21 cm, original number of folios cannot be determined with certainty. Unnumbered. Newārī and Devanāgarī script.

The main body of the text is written in a clear and competent hand (**A1**); the additions of the second scribe (**A2**) look uncouth and ill-practised: odd forms for a very common word like *samvat* do not suggest a high degree of literacy. – The esoteric interpretations (Column M) are written in Devanāgarī letters, occasionally interspersed with Newārī, most probably by a third scribe (**A3**). Why he chose Devanāgarī rather than Newārī is not apparent.

B. Photographs, 39 x 21 cm (the original may have been about this size), 33 foll. used on both sides, unnumbered. Newārī script. The drawing is found on foll. 9b-12b. – A normal, clear, practised hand. The drawing looks less accomplished than that of **A**.

Readings are doubtful only for those parts of the Sanskrit text (Column M) where writing runs into the black, i.e. occasional superscript or subscript parts of *akṣaras*. –

C is a single, folded sheet of Nepali paper, in the possession of Siddhartha Man Tuladhar, Kathmandu. Its size, width by length, is 50.3 x 68 cm; it is damaged at the folds, with some loss of text. The bulk of the text is written in a practised, though not very careful hand (**C1**). Some letters are a bit odd in shape: e.g., *su*. – The scribe's Sanskrit is shaky and his familiarity with Buddist terminology, poor. A few

additions stem from a second scribe (**C2**), notably, the measurements within the tiers of the drawing, and column D: his handwriting shows some Devanāgarī influence (note the **pha** of line D3). – On the drawing, one notes the parasol crowning the tip of the central beam is lacking, though the text refers to it. The draughtsman must have misjudged the size of his paper. Apparently when drawing he followed the rule of the Vāstusūtra-Upaniṣad: 'Lines you should always draw from bottom to top[1]'.

2. Relation of Manuscripts

§1. Drawings **A** and **B** share a number of errors, peculiarities, and minor inconsistencies.

Mistakes: AR BR 27: *1½* instead of **10½* or **11½*. – AL BL 27: *10* instead of *10.5* (see Ch. III, §18c). – AL BL 35 *pha* for *phe*. – *Peculiarities*: AL BL 19 *phī*, otherwise always *phi*. – *Minor variations*: e.g. in the style of abbreviations: 'finger', the unit of measurement, usually is *aṃ*; AL BL 2 both have *aṃgu*. – AL BL 7 *ṣajjalā* vs. AR BR 7 *khajjalā*; AL BL 10 *aṃ 9* vs. AR BR 10 *aṃ 9 jā*; etc.

§2. The scribe of **B** committed occasional errors in copying, his eye catching hold of the wrong line:

BR 16 *aṃ 23 3/4* instead of *20* (from line 18); BR 32 *aṃ 11 3/4* for *aṃ 8* (from line 30). – Omissions peculiar to **B** are found in R 29, L 33.

Hence, **A** cannot have been copied from **B**.

§3. There are a few errors in **A** where **B** offers the correct text:

AR 1 *seguyā* vs. BR 1 *segudeyā*; AR AL 1 the odd spelling *saṃvta* where B has the correct form.

These are not really sufficient, though, to preclude the possibility of **B** being a copy from **A**: any practised scribe would have detected and corrected them. Besides, both of them occur in passages written by **A2**. – Apart from such errors, and those shared by both mss., there seems to be no mistake specific to **A** which is countered by an obviously correct reading in **B**. Hence, **B** in all likelihood is a copy from **A**[2]. For Drawing II, there seems to be an error that turns this into

1 lit.: to the upper limit: *nimnād ūrdhvāvadhi(ṃ) sadā rekhādīn ācara* (Cf. Vāstusūtra Upaniṣad, ed. and transl. by A. Boner, S.R. Śarmā, B. Bäumer. Delhi 1982, 4.16.)

2 One cannot, however, preclude a somewhat complicated alternative, i.e. both **A** and **B** being copies of some original **X** which had defects of the kind listed in §1, and moreover had the gaps that, in its copy **A**, were at some stage filled by **A2**, their source being either an emended **X** or **B**. As column B (the esoteric interpretations) show, the drawing was reworked.

a probable assumption: in line 1, both A and B read *dumi* instead of *bhūmi* (or, possibly, *iti*); B, being tolerably conversant with Buddhist concepts, though not really well-versed in them, would no doubt have recognized the correct reading if his original had warranted it; seeing him perpetuate the same senseless mistake, one prefers to attribute it to **A** rather than the lost original. The incomplete akṣara of line 3 would point into the same direction: in this place, the photocopy of **A** shows the letter blurred. –

3. Texts

Conventions used in transliteration:

Brackets [] enclose uncertain readings.

Parentheses () are used to mark supplied *akṣara*s or parts of *akṣara*s.

x denotes a missing,

– an illegible, and

. a missing or illegible part of an *akṣara*.

3.1. Manuscripts **A** and **B**: Drawing I.

The texts are given on the basis of **A**, but listing variants. Lines are numbered so that parallel items appear with identical figures: L10 corresponds to R10, etc. – The available photostat of ms. **A** being of poor quality, Ill.8 (p.46 overleaf) reproduces ms. **B**.

I. Left Column: Measurements of N.S. 937

1 **lipāyāgu segudeyā tāla** || (1-) **s[u]bhasaṃvta 937** (-1)
(1-1) **A2**; **B** śubhasamvat

L2 **elasi ku 4 1/2 aṃgu 8** (2-) **cakari tha** (-2)
(2-2) **A2**

L3 (4-)**caku thāma ku 7 1/2 a 3**(-4) **ninā ghasa pu**
(4-4) from **B**; **A** faded, illegible

L4 **duva thāma ku 5 1/2 aṃ 1 2/4 ninā ghasa pu**

L5 **cakā ku 11 1/2 sa du aṃ 9**

L6 **uṣṇīkara ku 3 1/2 aṃ 4**

L7 **ṣajjalā aṃ 14 ku 3 aṃ 8 ṣaṅa**

L8 **aṃlā aṃ 3 2/4**

Ill.8. Drawing I in Ms. B

L9 **avasāhā aṃ 13**

L9A **cchatala ku 8 aṃ 7 1/2 ṣaṅa**

This line A2, to the right of the normal column

L10 **cothiṃ aṃ 9**

L11 1 **cakali ku 2 1/2 aṃ phi 3 3/4 phe 1 3/4**

L12 **hota aṃ 17**

L13 2 **cakali ku 3 aṃ 4 2/4 phi aṃ 4 1/4 phe 1 3/4**

L14 **hota aṃ 20**

L15 3 **cakali ku 3 1/2 aṃ 11 phi aṃ 4 2/4 phe 1 3/4**

L16 **hota aṃ 23**

L17 4 **cakali ku 4 1/2 aṃ 10 phi aṃ 4 3/4 phe 2**

L18 **hota ku 1 aṃ 5**

L19 5 **cakali ku 5 1/2 aṃ 11 phī aṃ 5 1/4 phe 2**

L20 **hota ku 1 aṃ 5**

L21 6 **cakali ku 7 aṃ 1 phi aṃ 5 3/4 phe 2 1/4**

L22 **hota ku 1 aṃ 7 3/4**

L23 7 **cakali ku 8 aṃ 7 2/4 phi aṃ 6 1/4 phe 2 1/4**

L24 **hota ku 1 aṃ 10 3/4**

L25 8 **cakali ku 9 1/2 aṃ 1 2/4 phi aṃ 6 3/4 phe 2 1/4**

phi] A phiṃ

L26 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 1 1/4**

L27 9 **cakali ku 10 aṃ 8 1/4 phi aṃ 7 1/4 phe 2 1/4**

L28 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 1**

L29 10 **cakali ku 12 aṃ 2 2/4 phi aṃ 7 3/4 phe 1 3/4**

phe 1 3/4] om. B

L30 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 6**

L31 11 **cakali ku 13 phi aṃ 8 1/4 phe**

phe] om. B

L32 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 3**

L33 12 **cakali ku 12 aṃ 9 phi aṃ 7 1/4 phe 1 talaṃ**

phe 1 talaṃ] om. B

L34 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 3**

L35 13 **cakali ku 11 1/2 aṃ 8 phi aṃ 7 phe 1 talaṃ**

phi aṃ 7] B phi 7. – phe] A,B pha

L36 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 6**

L37 **elasi ku 21 aṃ 1**

L38 **halaṃpati ku 6 vyā ku 5 1/2 aṃ 9 jāo**

L39 **halaṃpati kā aṃ 7**

[From here, A2]

L40 **varjaleo aṃ 20**

varjaleo] **B** vajraleoṃ

L41 **caciṃ aṃ 7**

caciṃ] **B** ca[rc]i

L42 **mu[h]ā aṃ 13**

L43 **tu aṃ 8**

L44 **palepati aṃ 12**

L45 **da[rtta] aṃ 9**

Text of **B** (: da[rttu] not impossible); **A** faded, illegible

L46 **garatuki ku 8**

L47 **garatukiṃ ku 11 pekuṃrā**

pekuṃrā] **B** pekurā

L48 **piṃtu bhā kuṃ 1 aṃ 2**

L49 **elasi ku 11 aṃ 5**

L50 **pvāthasa dune ku 11 aṃ 5**

nothing in **B** but faint remainders

L51 **elasi ku 48 aṃ 7 jaṃmā**

jaṃmā] B **jammā**

II. Middle Column: The Doctrinal Significance of the Beam

The text is based upon ms. **B**, the scribe of which is much more conversant with Sanskrit. The orthographical variants, of no value for constituting the text, are collected at the end of col. M, and referred to by Arabic numerals in parentheses.

M1 **śūnyatāviśuddhi**(1) **uṣṇīṣacakravartti**(2)

M2 **anuttarasamyaksaṃ**

M3 **vodhijñāna**(3)

M4 **āsphānakaviśuddhi**(4)

M5 (on top of Tier 1) **vajrabh[ūmi]**(5)

M6 (*id.* Tier 2) **adhimukti bhūmi *upapīṭha**(6) **ratnapāramitā jñānaṃ**(7)

M7 (*id.* Tier 3) **iti pīṭha sama(ṃ)taprabhā bhūmi**

M8 **vaj(r)akarmapāramitā jñānaṃ**(8)

M9 (*id.* Tier 4) **iti upaśmaśāna dharmameghā bhūmi**

M10 **jñānapāramitā paracittajñānaṃ**

M11 (*id.* Tier 5) **iti śmaśāna sādhumati**(9) **bhūmi valapā**

M12 **ramitā saṃvṛtijñānaṃ**(10)

M13 (*id.* Tier 6) **iti upam(e)lāpaka**(11) **acalā bhūmi praṇidhi pāra**

M14 **mitā anvayajñānaṃ**(12)

M15 (*id.* Tier 7) **iti m(e)lāpaka** (13-)**duraṃgamā bhūmi**(-13) **upāyapāram[i]**

M16 **tā dharmajñānaṃ**
M17 (*id.* Tier 8) **iti upacchand(o)ha(14) sudu(r)jayā bhūmi prajñā**
M18 **pāramitā anut(p)ādajñānaṃ**
M19 (*id.* Tier 9) **iti cchand(o)ha abhimukhī(15) bhūmi dhyāna**
M20 **pāramitā akṣayajñānaṃ**
M21 (*id.* Tier 10) **iti upakṣetra(16) a(r)cişmatī(17) bhūmi v[ī](r)yya**
M22 **pāramitā mārgajñānaṃ**
M23 (*id.* Tier 11) **iti kṣ(e)tra prabhākar[ī](18) bhūmi kṣāntipāra**
M24 **mitā(19) nirodhajñānaṃ**
M25 (*id.* Tier 12) **iti upapīṭha vimalā bhūmi śīla**
M26 **pāramitā(20) samudayajñānaṃ**
M27 (*id.* Tier 13) **it(i) pīṭha pramuditā bhūmi**
M28 **dānapāramitā duḥkha**
M29 **jñānaṃ**

Variants:

[Ms. **A** unless otherwise stated]

(1) sūnyatāvisūdhi.- (2) uṣṇikhacak(r)ava(r)ti. – (3) anu[tā]rasaṃmyak°.- (4) °visuddhi. – (5) Last two *akṣaras* illegible.- (6) **A** pa[piva], **B** patra. Conjecture from line M7. – (7) bhāga, apparently from a third hand.- (8) **B** jñāna, here and often. Omissions of the *anusvāra* in this word will not be noted henceforth.- (9) sāṃprati°. – (10) saṃ[va]rti°. – (11) ūpaṃmel°. – (12) aṃnvaya°. – (13) illegible in **B**. – (14) °cchandohaḥ. – (15) cchaṃdoha abhimakṣa. – (16) °kṣatra. – (17) aciṣmati. – (18) °kari. – (19) kṣāṃti°. – (20) sīla°.

III. Right Column: Measurements of N.S. 832

R1 **[siddhaṃ] hnāpāyāgu seguyā tāla || saṃvta 832**
seguyā] **B** segudeyā. – saṃvta] **B** samvat
R2 **elasi ku 4 1/2 aṃgu 7**
R3 **caku thāma ku 7 1/2 a 3 ninā ghasa pu**
R4 **duva thāma ku 5 1/2 aṃ 1 2/4 ninā ghasa pu**
duva] **B** dava
R5 **cakā ku 11 1/2 sa du aṃ 9**
R6 **uṣṇīkara ku 3 1/2 aṃ 4**
R7 **khajjalā aṃ 14 jā ku 3 aṃ 8 pekuṃlā**
R8 **aṃlā aṃ 3 1/2**
R9 **avasāhā ku 2 1/2 aṃ 3 jā aṃ 13**
R10 **cothiṃ aṃ 9 jā**
R11 1 **cakali ku 2 1/2 aṃ 3 phi aṃ 3 yo 3 phe aṃ 1 3/4**

R12 **hota aṃ 14**
R13 2 **cakali ku 3 1/2 aṃ 4 yo 2 phi 4 2/4 phe 1 3/4**
R14 **hota aṃ 16 1/4**
R15 3 **cakali ku 3 1/2 aṃ 11 phi 4 2/4 phe 1 3/4**
R16 **hota aṃ 20**
aṃ 20] **B** aṃ 23 3/4, probably from line R18
R17 4 **cakali ku 4 1/2 aṃ 10 phi 4 3/4 phe 2**
R18 **hota aṃ 23 3/4**
R19 5 **cakali ku 5 1/2 aṃ 11 phi 5 1/4 phe 2**
R20 **hota ku 1 aṃ 3 3/4**
R21 6 **cakali ku 7 aṃ 1 phi 5 3/4 phe 2 1/4**
R22 **hota ku 1 aṃ 7 3/4**
R23 7 **cakali ku 8 aṃ 7 2/4 phi 6 1/4 phe 2 1/4**
phe] **B** phi
R24 **hota ku 1 aṃ 11 3/4**
R25 8 **cakali ku 9 1/2 aṃ 1 2/4 phi 6 3/4 phe 2 2/4**
R26 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 3 3/4**
R27 9 **cakali ku 1 1/2 aṃ 8 1/4 phi 7 1/4 phe 2 1/4**
ku 1 1/2] sic **AB**
R28 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 7 3/4**
R29 10 **cakali ku 12 aṃ 2 2/4 phi 7 3/4 phe 1 2/4**
R30 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 11 3/4**
R31 11 **cakali ku 13 aṃ 8 1/4**
R32 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 8**
aṃ 8] **B** aṃ 11 3/4, probably from line R30
R33 12 **cakali ku 12 aṃ 9 phi 7 2/4 phe 1 talaṃ**
R34 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 6**
R35 13 **cakali ku 11 1/2 aṃ 8 phi 7 phe 1 talaṃ**
R36 **hota ku 1 1/2 aṃ 4**
R37 **elasi ku 21 aṃ 1**
elasi] **B** elaṃsi
R38 **halaṃpati ku 6 vyā ku 5 1/2 aṃ 9 jāo**
R39 **halaṃpati kā aṃ 7**
[From here, **A2**]
R40 **varjaleo[ṃ] ku 1 1/2 aṃ 7**
R41 **nāgvala caciṃ aṃ 8**
caciṃ] **B** ca[rc]i
R42 **mu[h]ā aṃ 13**
[R43] *not in R*

R44 **palepati aṃ 1[3]**
aṃ 1[3]] **B** aṃ 13
R45 **da[rtta] aṃ 9**
da[rtta]] **B** da[rttu]
R46 **galatuki ku 5 aṃ 9 jā**
This line illegible in **A**.
R47 **galatukiṃ ku 11 pekurā**
pekurā] **B** pekuṃrā
R48 **pitu bhā ku 1 a 2 e 2/4**
pitu] **B** pituṃ
R49 **elas[i] ku 11 aṃ 5**
R50 **pvāthasa du ku 11 aṃ 5**
R51 **elasiṃ ku 48 aṃ 7 jaṃmā**
jaṃmā] **B** jammā

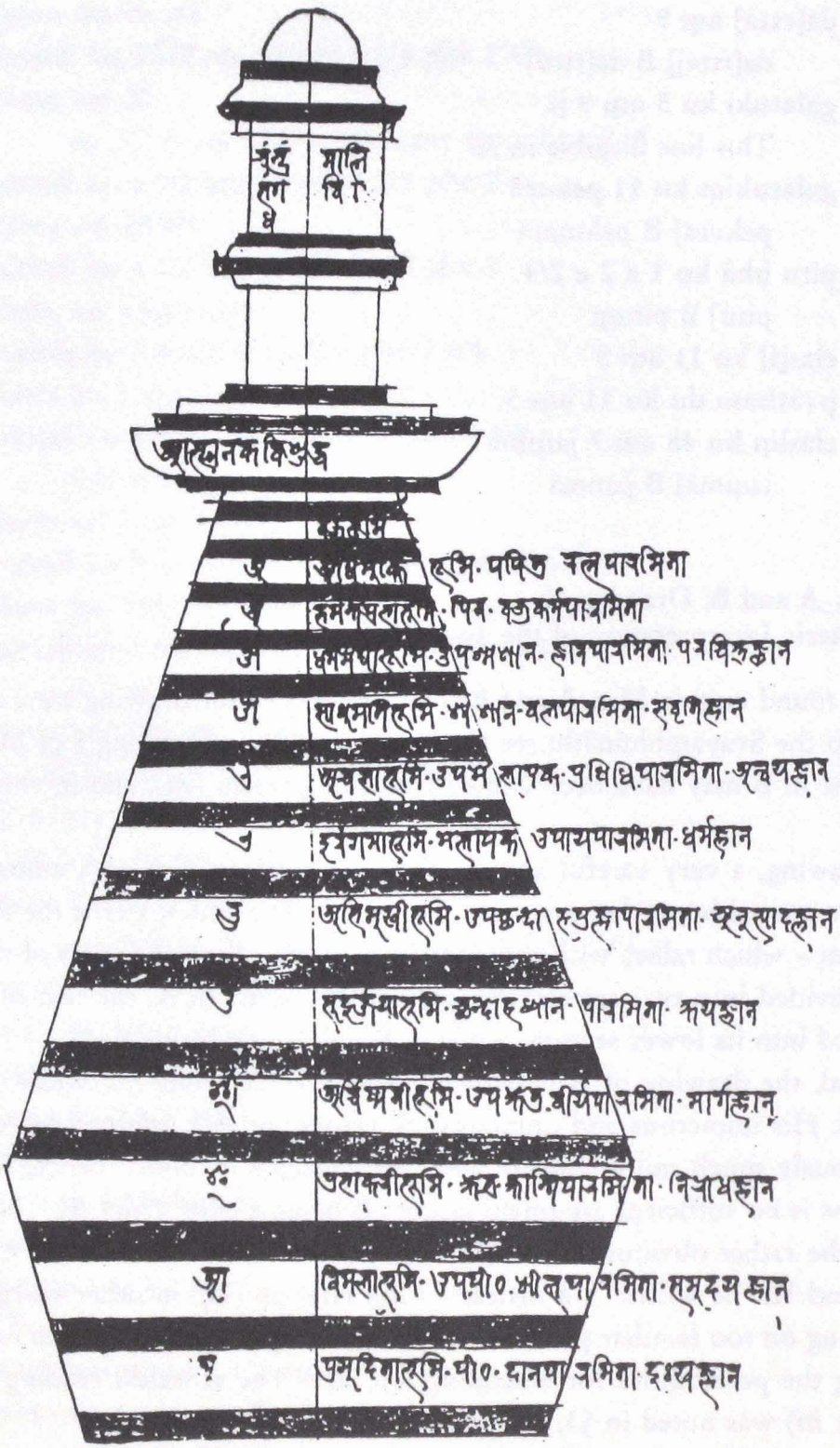
3.2. *Mss.* **A** and **B**, Drawing II: Esoteric Interpretation of the Top of a Stūpa

This in found only in Mss. **A** and **B**. The concepts of the drawing were obviously relevant to the Svayaṃbhūnāth: see the close parallels in Drawing I of Mss. **A** and **B** (: col. M in **B** may have been copied from the present list), and in column E of Ms. **C**.

The drawing, a very careful sketch, gives the thirteen tiers of a stūpa plus the part of the central beam that protrudes beyond it. The widest tier is the third from the bottom – which tallies with actual measurements. The upper part of the central beam is divided into two apparently symmetrical parts. In **A**, the text of lines 2-4 is inscribed into its lower section, while in **B** it is found inside tiers.

As usual, the drawing of **A** is better than that of **B**, while his Sanskrit is much corrupted. His numerous and uninteresting errors are as a rule not reproduced. **B** was obviously much more familiar with the concepts involved: hence, his greater correctness is no sufficient argument against **B** being a copy from **A**. – Note **B** did not find the rather obvious emendation for the mistakes in the vowels assigned to Tiers II and III: he writes **a a** instead of *aṃ* (III) *aḥ* (II); in other words, he was not treading on too familiar ground – which one might wish to keep in mind when discussing the possibilities for emending line 2f. – The senseless reading *dumi* for *bhūmi* (or *iti*) was noted in §3, above.

1 **śūnyatāviśuddhi uṣṇīṣacakra anuttarasamyaksaṃvodhi [du]mi**
2 **caṃdraṃ māli**
3 **bhaga vi x**



Ill.9. Ms. B, Drawing II:
Esoteric Interpretation of the Stūpa Peak

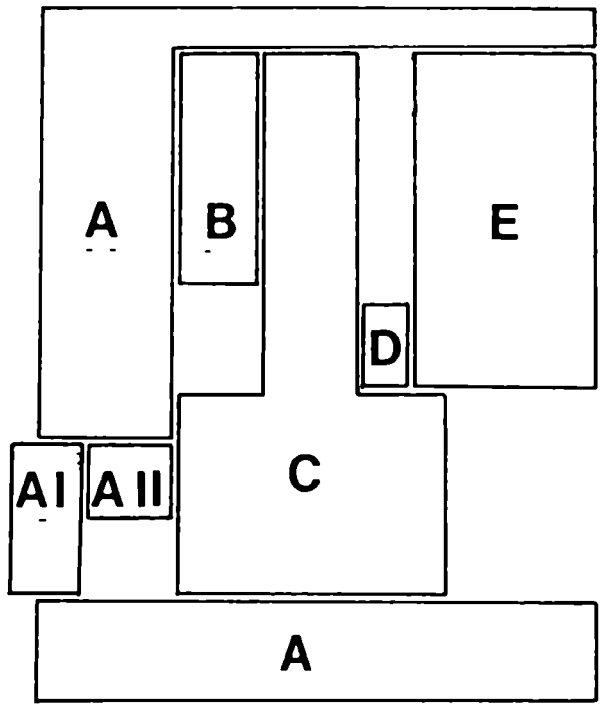
4 dha
5 āsphānakaviśuddha
6 vajrabh(ū)m[i]
7 a adhimukti bhūmi · papi[tr]a[3] ratnapāramitā
8 a samantaprabhā bhūmi · pira · vajrakarmapāramitā
9 [au] dharmameghā bhūm[i] · upaśmaśāna · jñānapāramitā · paracittajñāna
10 [o] sā[th]ūmatī bhūmi · śmaśāna · valapāramitā · saṃvṛti-jñāna
11 [ai] acalā bhūmi · upamelāpaka · praṇidhipāramitā · anvaya-jñāna
12 e duraṃgamā bhūmi · melāpaka · upāyapāramitā · dharma-jñāna
13 ū abhimukhī bhūmi · upacchandoha · prajñāpāramitā · anutpādajñāna
14 u sudurjayā bhūmi · cchand(o)ha dhyāna · pāramitā · kṣayajñāna
15 ī arciṣmatī bhūmi · upakṣetra · vīryapāramitā · mārga-jñāna
16 i prabhākarī bhūmi · kṣetra · kṣāntipāramitā · nirodha-jñāna
17 ā vimalā bhūmi · upapīṭha · sīlapāramitā · samudaya-jñāna
18 a pramuditā bhūmi · pīṭha · dānapāramitā · duḥkha-jñāna

3.3. Manuscript C

In arranging the following transliteration, certain minor simplifications haven been used in the interest of uniformity, such as standardizing the placement of tier numbers in lines A4-A29. For a facsimile, see the frontispiece, Ill.1; the sequence of transliteration is given in the diagram attached.

A1 śubha samvat 874 jyā yānyā 877 sidhayakā
A2 [siddhaṃ] śrī-2-jayaprakāśamallayā pāl[ā]sta jyā yākā śrī-rijiṃ ccheṃvū| lāmājuṃ gvarṣā juju pṛthvinārāṃyāke yalasiyāta simā phonaḥ nakvāyā| lāgā[s]a simā vila gvarṣāliḥ nakvāḥ
A3 praveśa jusyaṃli julo śubhaṃ ḥ ||

3 papi[ḍ]a not impossible



Ill.10 Arrangement of Transliteration
Ms. C

[Column A]

A4	cakūli kū 3 tu 6 phi tu 3 2/4 phela	
A5	tu 1 2/4 thūgu cakū juju	1
A6	cakūli kū 4 phi tu 4 yo 1 phela tu 2	
A7	yo 3 thū cakū seguyā	2
A8	cakūli kū 4 tu 15 yo 2 phi tu 4 2/4 phela	
A9	tu 1 3/4 thūgū cakū otu vāhālayā	3
A10	cakū kū 5 tu 12 phi tu 4 yo 3 phela	
A11	tu 2 thūgu lagaṃ vāhāyā	4
A12	cakū kū 6 tu 8 phi tu 5 1/4	
A13	phela tu 2 thūgu asaṃ vāhāyā	5
A14	cakū kū 7 tu 10 phi tu 5 3/4	
A15	phela tu 2 yo thūgu lagaṃ vāhāyā	6
A16	cakū kū 8 tu 14 phi tu 6 1/4 phela tu 2 yo 1	
A17	thūgū ituṃ vāhāyā	7

A18 **cakū kū 10 tu 1 phi tu 6 1/4[4] ph(e)la tu 2 1/4**
A19 **thūgu v.a vāhāyā 8**
A20 **cakū kū 11 yo 2 phiṃ tu 7 1/4 phelū tu 2 1/4**
A21 **thūgu cakū sikhaṃmūguyā 9**
A22 **cakū kū 12 tu 6 phi tu 7 3/4**
A23 **phelū tu 1 3/4 thūgu naghayā 10**
A24 **cakū kū 13 phi tu 8 1/4**
A25 **phela gvā thugū makhaṃ vāhāyā mūsuyā 11**
A26 **cakū kū 12 tu 14 2/4 phi tu 7**
A27 **phelū tu 1 1/4 thūgu thūgu madutvāyā 12**
A28 **cakū kū 11 2/4 tu 8 phi tu 7**
A29 **phelū tu 1 thvagu otu vāhāyā 13**
A30 **cakūyā aṃtara hotayāṃ lyāṣa**

[Column AI]

A31 *(Tier No. 1)* **hota tu 14**
A32 *(Tier No. 2)* **hota tu 16 1/4**
A33 *(Tier No. 3)* **hota tu 20**
A34 *(Tier No. 4)* **hota tu 23 3/4**
A35 *(Tier No. 5)* **hota kū 1 tu 11 3/4**
A36 *(Tier No. 6)* **hota kū 1 2/4 tu 3 3/4**
A37 *(Tier No. 7)* **hota kū 1 2/4 tu 8 2/4**
A38 *(Tier No. 8)* **hota kū 1 2/4 tu 11 3/4**
A39 *(Tier No. 9)* **hota kū 1 2/4 tu 8**
A40 *(Tier No. 10)* **hota kū 1 2/4 tu 6**
A41 *(Tier No. 11)* **hota kū 1 2/4 tu 4**
A42 *(Tier No. 12)* **hota kū 1 tu 7 3/4**
A43 *(Tier No. 13)* **hota kū 1 tu 3 2/4**

[Column AII]

AII 31 **cakuli vo thaya rāhu [c]akulisa**
AII 32 **suya vo thaya cchi vo co cakuli**
AII 33 **kāya tu oya ko thāsa gu tu**
AII 34 **o[y]āo tāka sva vo 3 gala 4**
AII 35 **cakulita tu lyā[ṣ]ana kāya v[o]**
AII 36 **9 vo thaya sva vosa cchi vo**
AII 37 **sa 9 vo thayāoṃ tu dhāye**

4 1/4 perhaps meant to be blotted out, and not corrected. The tier ought to be 6.75.

[Column B]

B1 **cauk[ā] si jmā kū 12 thya kanā**
B2 **caukhā thā taṃkū tha kū 5**
B3 **cauṣā kva thā taṃkva kū 7 2/4**
B4 **thva caukā eṭakhā vāhāyā julo**
B5 **avasāhā ku 2 tu 1 [2/4] phi tu 13**
B6 **thva avasāhā jamaguthayā vare**
B7 **kasā ni[hm]asayā julo**
B8 **cakū**[5] **7 2/4 tu [5] gvā tra**[6] **5 1/4**
B9 **thva thāma tuṃkṣeyāgu julo**
B10 **caṣū thāṃ nināsa dū kū 4 tu 4**
B11 **kāca ghasa pu kū 4 2/4 tu 4**
B12 **ṣajalā ku 3 tu 11**
B13 **śulape tu 9 sāthi tu 4 jmā tu 13**
B14 **śulape tu 3 tu 3**
B15 **sāthi kū 3 tu 19**
B16 **kacā papū [2/4] mola tu 9 2/4 phi**
B17 **tu 4 ho tu**[7] **20**

[Column C: Inscribed in the drawing; hand **C2**:]

CI 1 *(Tier No. 1)* **aṃ 3**
CI 2 *(Tier No. 2)* **aṃ 3**
CI 3 *(Tier No. 3)* **aṃ 3 tra**[8]
CI 4 *(Tier No. 4)* **aṃ 3 yo 2**
CI 5 *(Tier No. 5)* **aṃ 3 yo 3**
CI 6 *(Tier No. 6)* **aṃgu 4 yo 1**
CI 7 *(Tier No. 7)* **aṃgu 4 yo 2**
CI 8 *(Tier No. 8)* **aṃgu 5 yo**
CI 9 *(Tier No. 9)* **mātrā 5 yo 1**
CI 10 *(Tier No. 10)* **mātrā 5 yo 2**
CI 11 *(Tier No. 11)* **mā 6 yo 2**
CI 12 *(Tier No. 12)* **[mātra 6] yo 2**
CI 13 *(Tier No. 13)* **mā 5 yo [3]**

[Inside the shield; Hand **C1**:]

CII 1 **halaṃpau [vyā] kū [6] 2/4**

5 haplography: read **cakū kū**
6 i.e. **gvāḍa**, with the interchange of **tra** and **ḍa** which is not rare. Emend **gvāḍa tu**.
7 haplography; em. **hota tu**
8 emend: **yo (1)**

CII 2 **jāo 5 2/4**

[Layers beneath the shield:]

CIII 1 **sāhā thāsan ku 3 pha tu 1x**[9]

CIII 2 **tuyā mu bhū ku 12 tu 9**

CIII 3 **12 pale[pa]ti ku 12 tu 3 x [tu]**

[Inside the neck]

CIV 1 **jā ku [ca]ku[ṭa 8 tu**[10] **1]8** [tu 3]

CIV 2 **upa mapū**

CIV 3 **///tu 10**

[Inside the dome:
a) underneath the neck, written from bottom to top, transcribed from left to right:]

CV 1 **aṃga ku 2 2/4**

CV 2 **cā thane**

CV 3 **aṃga ku 2 2/4**

CV 4 **yosi cā thatu daṃ ku 10 x///**

CV 5 **aṃgva ku 2 2/4**

CV 6 **cā thane**

CV 7 **aṃgva ku 2 2/4**

b) to the sides of the centre:]

CVI 1 **aṃgva ku 2 2/4** **aṃgva ku 2 2/4**

CVI 2 **cā thane** **cā thane**

c) inside the rock:]

CVII 1 **yosi dike pañcabhūtayā**

CVII 2 **silomani ta[sā]ṃ ju vyakta julo**

CVII 3 **thvate gva loha julo**

[Column D, to the right side of the neck; Hand C2:]

D1 **sāhā si data gva 4**

D2 **sāhā si minā gva 4**

D3 **sā si lāphāṃ si 4**

D4 **kṣasa aṃlā gva 8 tu 11**

D5 **tāla mata sāli 8**

D6 **tāla dutā jaka jusa**

D7 **tā si gva 4 sāhā gva 4**

D8 **sāhā si pa[le]pati**

9 second digit illegible
10 looks like **tra**

[The Beam and its doctrinal significance]

E1 **ca muli bhāga viśuddhi**

E2 **vajrabhumi**

E3 **a**[11] **avimuktī bhumiḥ papina ratnapāramitā**

E4 **aṃ samaṃtaprabhā bhumiḥ pīna vajakarmmapāramitā**

E5 **au dharmmameghā bhumiḥ gyānaparamitā** *(sic!)* **pranidhigyānaḥ**

E6 **o sādhamati bhumi smasvanopa valapāramitā saṃ[b]odhigyānaḥ**

E7 **ai acalā bhumi[ḥ] pranidhipāramitā adoyagyānaḥ**

E8 **e duraṃgamā bhumiḥ melāpako upāyapāramitā dhrū [dha]rmma gyāna[ḥ]**

E9 **ū abhimuṣi bhumi paṃcchaṃda parjyāpāramitā anūtaragyānaḥ**

E10 **u śuryya bhumi cchaṃdo dhyānapāramitā racchegyāna[ḥ]**

E11 **ī acchiṣpati bhumi pacchetra virdyāpāramitā yogagyānaḥ**

E12 **i prabhākari bhumi cchetro kṣāṃtipāramitā nirvodhagyāna[ḥ]**

E13 **ā vimalā bhumiḥ papitha sīlapāramitā samudrayagyāna[ḥ]**

E14 **a pramoditā bhumiḥ pithva dānapāramitā duṣagyāna///**

[In right upper margin, from bottom to top:]

E15 **yalasi du kū 47 1/2 aṃ 4**

[On the socle]

A44 **lakṣyāhutijajñayā maṇḍapayā kha si pe dīgasa conagu ṣa si sacchiva kū dagu siyā jāta || uttarasa [pi]lāyā s[i] || pūrvasa u si da[kṣ]inasa duṃva siḥ pakṣisasa**[12] **o**

A45 **gala siṃ taya juloḥ ||**

[Underneath the drawing]

A46 **thvāpi [ka]madeoyā kāya bhājusiṃnaṃ dayakūgū julo śubhaṃ ||**

A47 **jeṣṭ[h]a śukra 1 ghaṭhi oā ṣuhnu vāleyā phale || ādityavāra lātaḥsāḥ sacahīnaḥ oā magāioḥ prajāyā loga juḥ rājāyā cchetrabhaṃga juyu || somavāraḥ lātasā || jalavisti**

A48 **juyu śubha juyuo || maṃglavāraḥ lātasā rogavyādhibhayaṃ juyu || vuddhavāra lātayā phaladukhiḥ anikāra juyu || thūtiyā [py]agu vārayā phalaḥ ju śubhaṃ ḥ ||**

11 emend **aḥ**

12 emend **pakṣimasa**

4.1. Manuscripts **A** and **B**, Drawing I

Since the texts of mss. **A** and **B** are largely parallel, they are translated simultaneously, with discrepancies marked L standing for the left column (i.e. N.S.937], and R standing for the right [N.S.832], the numbers indicating the lines.

The sequence has been divided into four *Blocks*: I, the part on top of the tiers; II, the tiers; III, the parts between tiers and dome, and IV, the dome itself. This is because the manuscripts calculate the length of the Central Beam for blocks II – IV.

[Block I: The Top]

L1 Later measurements of the God of the Svayaṃbhū. The auspicious year 937.

R1 Hail! Previous measurements of the Svayaṃbhū. The year 832.

LR2 The Central Beam [i.e. of the upper structure]:
[937:] cubits 4.5 fingers 8 (= 220.98 cm) on top of the parasol.
[832:] cubits 4.5 fingers 7 (= 219.075 cm)

LR3 Pillar(s) of the parasol, embracing the rafters (i.e. embedded in the rafters?): cubits 7.5 fingers 3 (= 348.62 cm)

LR4 Interior pillars, embracing the rafters (i.e. embedded in the rafters): cubits 5.5 fingers 1.5 (= 254.16 cm)

LR5 9 fingers (= 17.15 cm) inside the parasol of 11.5 cubits (= 525.78 cm)

LR6 The Uṣṇīṣacūḍāmaṇi (i.e. Crest Jewel of the Top-Knot): cubits 3.5 fingers 4 (= 167.64 cm)

LR7 The railings: 14 fingers (= 26.67 cm) in height; 3 cubits 8 fingers (= 152.4 cm) [R:] in the four directions/at the four intermediate points; [L:] as the length of sides.

LR8 Myrobalans: 3.5 fingers (= 6.67 cm)

LR9 Base of the struts: [R:] cubits 2.5 fingers 3 (= 120.02 cm); [LR:] height 13 fingers (= 24.77 cm).

L9A The Circle (i.e. of the base of the struts): cubits 8 fingers 7.5 (= 380.05 cm) (its) 'opening' (i.e. circumference).

L10 'Touching the Top': height fingers 9 (= 17.15 cm)

[Block II: The Tiers]

LR11 The First Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 2.5 (= 114.3 cm). [832:] cubits 2.5 fingers 3 (= 120.02 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 3.75 (= 7.14 cm). [832:] fingers 3.75 (= 7.14 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 1.75 (= 3.33 cm). [832:] fingers 1.75 (= 3.33 cm).

LR12 Distance (to next tier): [937:] fingers 17 (= 32.39 cm). [832:] fingers 14 (= 26.67 cm).

LR13 The Second Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 3 fingers 4.5 (= 145.73 cm). [832:] cubits 3.5 fingers 4.5 (= 168.59 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 4.25 (= 8.1 cm). [832:] fingers 4.5 (= 8.57 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 1.75 (= 3.33 cm).[832:] fingers 1.75 (= 3.33 cm).

LR14 Distance (to next tier): [937:] fingers 20 (= 38.1 cm). [832:] fingers 16.25 (= 30.96 cm).

LR15 The Third Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 3.5 fingers 11 (= 180.98 cm). [832:] cubits 3.5 fingers 11 (= 180.98 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 4.5 (= 8.57 cm). [832:] fingers 4.5 (= 8.57 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 1.75 (= 3.33 cm). [832:] fingers 1.75 (= 3.33 cm).

LR16 Distance (to next tier): [937:] fingers 23 (= 43.82 cm). [832:] fingers 20 (= 38.1 cm).

LR17 The Fourth Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 4.5 fingers 10 (= 224.79 cm). [832:] cubits 4.5 fingers 10 (= 224.79 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 4.75 (= 9.05 cm). [832:] fingers 4.75 (= 9.05 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 2 (= 3.81 cm).[832:] fingers 2 (= 3.81 cm).

LR18 Distance (to next tier): [937:] cubit 1 fingers 5 (= 55.25 cm). [832:] fingers 23.75 (= 45.24 cm).

LR19 The Fifth Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 5.5 fingers 11 (= 272.42 cm). [832:] cubits 5.5 fingers 11 (= 272.42 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 5.25 (= 10 cm). [832:] fingers 5.25 (= 10 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 2 (= 3.81 cm). [832:] fingers 2 (= 3.81 cm).

LR20 Distance (to next tier): [937:] cubit 1 fingers 5 (= 55.25 cm). [832:] cubit 1 fingers 3.75 (= 52.86 cm).

LR21 The Sixth Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 7 finger 1 (= 321.95 cm). [832:] cubits 7 finger 1 (= 321.95 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 5.75 (= 10.95 cm). [832:] fingers 5.75 (= 10.95 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 2.25 (= 4.29 cm). [832:] fingers 2.25 (= 4.29 cm).

LR22 Distance (to next tier): [937:] cubit 1 fingers 7.75 (= 60.48 cm). [832:] cubit 1 fingers 7.75 (= 60.48 cm).

LR23 The Seventh Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 8 fingers 7.5 (= 380.05 cm). [832:] cubits 8 fingers 7.5 (= 380.05 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 6.25 (= 11.91 cm). [832:] fingers 6.25 (= 11.91 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 2.25 (= 4.29 cm). [832:] fingers 2.25 (= 4.29 cm).

LR24 Distance (to next tier): [937:] cubit 1 fingers 10.75 (= 66.2 cm). [832:] cubit 1 fingers 11.75 (= 68.1 cm).

LR25 The Eighth Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 9.5 fingers 1.5 (= 437.2 cm). [832:] cubits 9.5 fingers 1.5 (= 437.2 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 6.75 (= 12.86 cm). [832:] fingers 6.75 (= 12.86 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 2.25 (= 4.29 cm). [832:] fingers 2.5 (= 4.76cm).

LR26 Distance (to next tier): [937:] cubits 1.5 fingers 1.25 (= 70.96 cm). [832:] cubits 1.5 fingers 3.75 (= 75.72 cm).

LR27 The Ninth Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 10 fingers 8.25 (= 472.92 cm). [832:] cubits 1.5 (*sic!*) fingers 8.25 (= 84.3 [!] cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 7.25 (= 13.81 cm). [832:] fingers 7.25 (= 13.81 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 2.25 (= 4.29 cm). [832:] fingers 2.25 (= 4.29 cm).

LR28 Distance (to next tier): [937:] cubits 1.5 finger 1 (= 70.49 cm). [832:] cubits 1.5 fingers 7.75 (= 83.34 cm).

LR29 The Tenth Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 12 fingers 2.5 (= 553.4 cm). [832:] cubits 12 fingers 2.5 (= 553.4 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 7.75 (= 14.76 cm). [832:] fingers 7.75 (= 14.76 cm).
Inclination: [937:] fingers 1.75 (= 3.33 cm). [832:] fingers 1.5 (= 2.86 cm).

LR30 Distance (to next tier): [937:] cubits 1.5 fingers 6 (= 80.01 cm). [832:] cubits 1.5 fingers 11.75 (= 90.96 cm).

LR31 The Eleventh Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 13 fingers – (= 594.36 cm). [832:] cubits 13 fingers 8.25 (= 610.08 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 8.25 (= 15.72 cm). [832:] *(missing)*
Inclination: (*none*)

LR32 Distance (to next tier): [937:] cubits 1.5 fingers 3 (= 74.3 cm). [832:] cubits 1.5 fingers 8 (= 83.82 cm).

LR33 The Twelfth Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 12 fingers 9 (= 565.79 cm). [832:] cubits 12 fingers 9 (= 565.79 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 7.25 (= 13.81 cm). [832:] fingers 7.5 (= 14.29 cm).
Inclination: [937:] finger 1 down (= 1.9 cm). [832:] finger 1 down (= 1.9 cm).

LR34 Distance (to next tier): [937:] cubits 1.5 fingers 3 (= 74.3 cm). [832:] cubits 1.5 fingers 6 (= 80.01 cm).

LR35 The Thirteenth Tier.
Diameter: [937:] cubits 11.5 fingers 8 (= 541.02 cm). [832:] cubits 11.5 fingers 8 (= 541.02 cm).
Width (= height): [937:] fingers 7 (= 13.34 cm). [832:] fingers 7 (= 13.34 cm).
Inclination: [937:] finger 1 down (= 1.9 cm). [832:] finger 1 down (= 1.9 cm).

LR36 Distance (to next unit): [937:] cubits 1.5 fingers 6 (= 80.01 cm). [832:] cubits 1.5 fingers 4 (= 76.2 cm).

LR37 Central Beam: cubits 21 finger 1 (= 962.03 cm)

[Blocks III and IV: Underneath the Tiers]

LR38 The shields: width cubits 6 (= 274.32 cm); height cubits 5.5 fingers 9 (= 268.61 cm)

LR39 Shields: the border fingers 7 (=13.34 cm)

LR40 (Layer of) brick dust and clay plaster: [937:] fingers 20 (= 38.1 cm); [832:] cubits 1.5 fingers 7 (= 81.92 cm)

LR41 Intermediate plastered layer with raised designs: [937:] fingers 7 (= 13.34 cm); [832:] fingers 8 (=15.24 cm)

LR42 Chief layer/base: fingers 13 (= 24.77cm)

L43 [937:] Indentation: fingers 8 (= 15.24 cm)

LR44 Lotus seed layer: [937:] fingers 12 (= 22.86 cm); [832:] fingers 13 (= 24.77 cm)

LR45 ?*dartta/darttu*?: fingers 9 (= 17.15 cm)

LR46 The neck: [937:] cubits 8 (= 365.76 cm); [832:] cubits 5 fingers 9 (= 245.75 cm)

LR47 Neck: cubits 11 (= 502.92 cm) in the four directions (i.e. square)

LR48 (Neck:) outer frame [937:] cubit 1 fingers 2 (= 49.53 cm); [832:] cubit 1 fingers 2.5 (= 50.48 cm)

LR49 The Central Beam: cubits 11 fingers 5 (= 512.45 cm)

LR50 Penetrating into the dome: cubits 11 fingers 5 (= 512.45 cm)

LR51 The Central Beam: cubits 48 fingers 7 (= 2207.9 cm) altogether.

4.2. [A bare transposition of terms into English seems beside the point: for the Texts of Drawing I, Column M, and of Drawing II, see Chapter V, and for the peak, the Commentary, p.75 below.]

4.3. Manuscript C

1 In the auspicious year 874, the work was done (i.e. begun), (in) 877, it was completed.

2–3 Hail. The work was caused to be done under the Twice Ven. Jayaprakāśamalla's protection (*pālāsta*). The Ven. Rijiṃ Cheṃbu Lāmā having begged a tree for the Central Beam from the Gorkhā King Pṛthvīnārāyaṇa, he gave a tree in his territory/domain (*lāgā*) of Nakvā (i.e. Nuvākoṭ); it was after the Gorkhāli(s) had entered Nakvā.

[Column AI: The Thirteen Tiers]

4–5 The First Tier.
Cubits 3 Thumbs 6 (= 150.5 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 3.5 (= 6.67 cm). Inclination: thumbs 1.5 (= 2.86 cm). The tier was the king's.

6–7 The Second Tier.
Cubits 4 (= 182.88 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 4.25 (= 8.1 cm). Inclination: thumbs 2.75 (= 4.76 cm). The tier was of the Svayaṃbhū.

8–9 The Third Tier.
Cubits 4 Thumbs 15.5 (= 212.41 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 4.5 (= 8.57 cm). Inclination: thumbs 1.75 (= 3.33 cm). The tier was of Otu Bāhāl.

10-11 The Fourth Tier.
Cubits 5 Thumbs 12 (= 251.46 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 4.75 (= 9.05 cm). Inclination: thumbs 2 (= 3.81 cm). It was of Lagaṃ Bāhāl.

12-13 The Fifth Tier.
Cubits 6 Thumbs 8 (= 289.56 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 5.25 (= 10 cm). Inclination: thumbs 2 (= 3.81 cm). It was of Asaṃ Bāhāl.

14-15 The Sixth Tier.
Cubits 7 Thumbs 10 (= 339.09 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 5.75 (= 10.95 cm). Inclination: thumbs 2.25[2](= cm). It was of Lagaṃ Bāhāl.

16-17 The Seventh Tier.
Cubits 8 Thumbs 14 (= 392.43 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 6.25 (= 11.91 cm). Inclination: thumbs 2.25 (= 4.29 cm). It was of Ituṃ Bāhāl.

18-19 The Eighth Tier.
Cubits 10 Thumbs). Inclination: thumbs 2.25 (= 4.29 cm). It was of Ituṃ Bāhāl.

18-19 The Eighth Tier.
Cubits 10 Thumbs 1 (= 459.11 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 6.25[3] (= 11.91 cm). Inclination: thumbs 2.25 (= 4.29 cm). It was of Oṃ Bāhāl.

20-21 The Ninth Tier.
Cubits 11.5 (= 525.78 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 7.25 (= 13.81 cm). Inclination: thumbs 2.25 (= 4.29 cm). The tier was of Sikhaṃmūgu Bāhāl.

22-23 The Tenth Tier.
Cubits 12 Thumbs 6 (= 560.07 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 7.75 (= 14.76 cm). Inclination: thumbs 1.75 (= 3.33 cm). It was of Nagha Bāhāl.

24-25 The Eleventh Tier.
Cubits 13 (= 594.36 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 8.25 (= 15.72 cm). Inclination: curved[4]. It was of Makhaṃ Bāhāl (and) of Mūsu Bāhāl.

26-27 The Twelfth Tier.
Cubits 12 Thumbs 14.5 (= 576.26 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 7 (= 13.34 cm). Inclination: thumbs 1.25 (= 2.38 cm). It was of Maru Ṭol.

28-29 The Thirteenth Tier.
Cubits 11.5 Thumbs 8 (= 541.02 cm). Width/Height: thumbs 7 (= 13.34 cm). Inclination: thumbs 1 (= 1.91 cm). It was of Otu Bāhāl.

2 A figure for the 'quarters' is not given, so that an inclination of 2 thumbs is not altogether out of the question.
3 As noted above, one has to read 6.75 (i.e. 12.86 cm) rather than 6.25.
4 i.e. the inclination changes from an outward to an inward slope.

30 Figures of the inner distance of the tiers:

31 *(First Tier:)* distance thumbs 14 (= 26.67 cm).

32 *(Second Tier:)* distance thumbs 16.25 (= 30.96 cm).

33 *(Third Tier:)* distance thumbs 20 (= 38.1 cm).

34 *(Fourth Tier:)* distance thumbs 23.75 (= 45.24 cm).

35 *(Fifth Tier:)* distance cubits 1 thumbs 11.75 (= 68.1 cm).

36 *(Sixth Tier:)* distance cubits 1.5 thumbs 3.75 (= 75.72 cm).

37 *(Seventh Tier:)* distance cubits 1.5 thumbs 8.5 (= 84.77 cm).

38 *(Eighth Tier:)* distance cubits 1.5 thumbs 11.75 (= 90.96 cm).

39 *(Ninth Tier:)* distance cubits 1.5 thumbs 8 (= 83.82 cm).

40 *(Tenth Tier:)* distance cubits 1.5 thumbs 6 (= 80.01 cm).

41 *(Eleventh Tier:)* distance cubits 1.5 thumbs 4 (= 76.2 cm).

42 *(Twelfth Tier:)* distance cubits 1 thumbs 7.75 (= 60.48 cm).

43 *(Thirteenth Tier:)* distance cubits 1 thumbs 3.5 (= 52.39 cm).

[Column AII: How to determine the size of Umbrellas]

31-33 To divide the umbrellas.
To divide Rāhu's umbrella into thirty parts. To take one part as the Top Umbrella.

33-35 (For) the thumbs to come.
When nine thumbs have come at the lower place, in dividing them, to take three parts, (for every) four of the 'neck', as the figure of thumbs for the Umbrella.

35-37 To divide (viz., the 'neck' of the *stūpa* into) nine parts. Having divided nine into one part in three parts, to call (this) the thumbs.

[Above the Tiers]

B1 The Wood of the top: altogether cubits 12 (= 548.64 cm), as told.

B2 The pillars (of the) spire, sloped, on top: cubits 5 (= 228.6 cm)

B3 The lower pillars (of the) spire, sloped (*i.e. underneath the umbrella*): cubits 7.5 (= 342.9 cm)

B4 The top was of Eṭakhā Bāhāl.

B5-7 The base of the struts: cubits 2 thumb 1 (= 93.35 cm); height: thumbs 13 (= 24.77 cm). This base was of the two groups: the Bajrācāryas and the Kasās (i.e. Kāṃsakārs) of Jamagutha.

B8-9 The Parasol: cubits 7.5 thumbs [5] (= 352.43 cm); (the) round (part, *gvā, i.e. its height?)* [thumbs] 5.25 (= 10 cm). This pillar was of Tuṃkṣe.

B10 The Parasol: the pillars which (are) in the horizontal beam: cubits 4 thumbs 4 (= 205.74 cm).

B11 The protruding beams (*kāca*) embracing (i.e. interlocking): cubits 4.5 thumbs 4 (= 213.36 cm).

B12 The railings: cubits 3 thumbs 11 (= 160.02 cm).

B13 The covering (*śulape*) thumbs 9 (= 17.15 cm), projection(?) thumbs 4 (= 7.62 cm), altogether 13 (= 24.77 cm).

B14 The covering (*śulape*) thumbs 3 thumbs 3 (= 5.72 cm).

B15 The projection (i.e. the Uṣṇīṣa°); cubits 3 thumbs 19 (= 173.36 cm).

B16 The branch wings: (cubits) 0.5 (= 22.86 cm).
The top: thumbs 9.5 (= 18.1 cm); height/width thumbs 4 (=7.62 cm); distance (thumbs) 20 (= 38.1 cm).

Breadth of the Tiers

[The following set of measurements, inscribed in the tiers, can only refer to their breadth, i.e. to the thickness of the wood.]

CI 1 *(Tier No. 1)* fingers 3 (= 5.71 cm)

CI 2 *(Tier No. 2)* fingers 3 (= 5.71 cm)

CI 3 *(Tier No. 3)* fingers 3 (emend: 3 1/4) (= 6.19 cm)

CI 4 *(Tier No. 4)* fingers 3 2/4 (= 6.67 cm)

CI 5 *(Tier No. 5)* fingers 3 3/4 (= 7.14 cm)

CI 6 *(Tier No. 6)* fingers 4 1/4 (= 8.1 cm)

CI 7 *(Tier No. 7)* fingers 4 2/4 (= 8.57 cm)

CI 8 *(Tier No. 8)* fingers 5 (= 9.53 cm)

CI 9 *(Tier No. 9)* measures (i.e. fingers) 5 1/4 (= 10 cm)

CI 10 *(Tier No. 10)* measures (i.e. fingers) 5 2/4 (= 10.48 cm)

CI 11 *(Tier No. 11)* measures (i.e. fingers) 6 2/4 (= 12.38 cm)

CI 12 *(Tier No. 12)* measures (i.e. fingers) [6] 2/4 (= 12.38 cm)

CI 13 *(Tier No. 13)* measures (i.e. fingers) 5 [3/4] (= 10.95 cm)

CII 1-2 The shields: [width] 6 2/4 cubits; height: 5 2/4 cubits

CIII 1 From the place (of) support 3 cubits; height 1? thumbs[5]

CIII 2 Chief level/layer of the indentation: 12 cubits 9 thumbs

5 Not clear: is this the width over and above the width of the shields? – Second digit of height illegible.

CIII 3 (Layer of) 12 lotus seeds: [width] 12 cubits 3 thumbs; height: ? thumbs (*illegible*)

[The 'Neck']

(Badly damaged in ms.)

CIV 1 Height: cubits for the *harmikā*: 8, 18 thumbs, 3 thumbs[6]

CIV 2 baked bricks ///

CIV 3 /// 10 thumbs

[Inside the Dome]

CV 1 Wall: cubits 2.5 (= 114.3 cm)

CV 2 To be filled with clay

CV 3 Wall: cubits 2.5 (= 114.3 cm)

CV 4 The central beam, to be well filled[7] with clay, cubits 10///

CV 5 Wall: cubits 2.5 (= 114.3 cm)

CV 6 To be filled with clay

CV 7 Wall: cubits 2.5 (= 114.3 cm)

CVI 1 Wall: cubits 2.5 (= 114.3 cm)

CVI 2 To be filled with clay

Wall[8]: cubits 2.5 (= 114.3 cm)

To be filled with clay

CVII 1-2 To make the Main Beam stay (i.e. to make it firm), the head jewel of the Five Elements has become manifest, being vertical.

C VII 3 This is round stone(s).

[Construction parts between the tiers:]

D1 wood for supports, standing: four rounded beams

D2 wood for supports, rafters[9]: four rounded beams

D3 wood for supports: wood planks/boards[10]: four

D4 wall plates at the house[11]: four rounded beams, 11 thumbs (= 20.96 cm)

6 Reference not clear.
7 i.e. surrounded
8 A translation like 'brickwork' would be more suitable.
9 emend: **ninā**
10 Probably the horizontal boards directly below the tiers which keep them level.
11 i.e. at the cube, to hold the shields in place?

D5 cross ties (for) standing oil lamps[12]: eight

D6-7 If there are crossties inside only, four rounded beams (for) the wood of crossties; four rounded beams (as) supports.

D8 wood for supports for the lotus-seed layer

E [See Chapter V and the Commentary, section 5.3., p.75 below]

A44-45 As for the pavilion for the Lakṣyāhuti Sacrifice, *khadira* wood (*Acacia catechu*) being found (i.e. being used) in the four directions, one hundred cubits, it was completed with *dagu* wood (?). (They) used *pilā* wood (*Ficus infectiora*) in the north, *u* wood (?) in the east, *uḍumbara* wood (*Ficus glomerata*) in the south, *ogala* wood (*Ficus religiosa*) in the west.

A46-47 This (?) was caused to be made by Bhājusiṃha, Kamadeva's son. Let it be auspicious.

The fruit of the lunar and solar day when (the first) *ghaṭī* (of) the first day of the bright half of Jyaiṣṭha comes.

If it falls on a Sunday, ...[13] the rain will not be sufficient, there is illness of the people, there will be the downfall of the king's dominion. If it falls on a Monday, there will be rain[14], and it will be auspicious. If it falls on a Tuesday, there will be fear of illness and disease. If it falls on a Wednesday, there will be trouble with the fruit and the winnowing of grain.

This much for the fruit of these four days. Let it be auspicious.

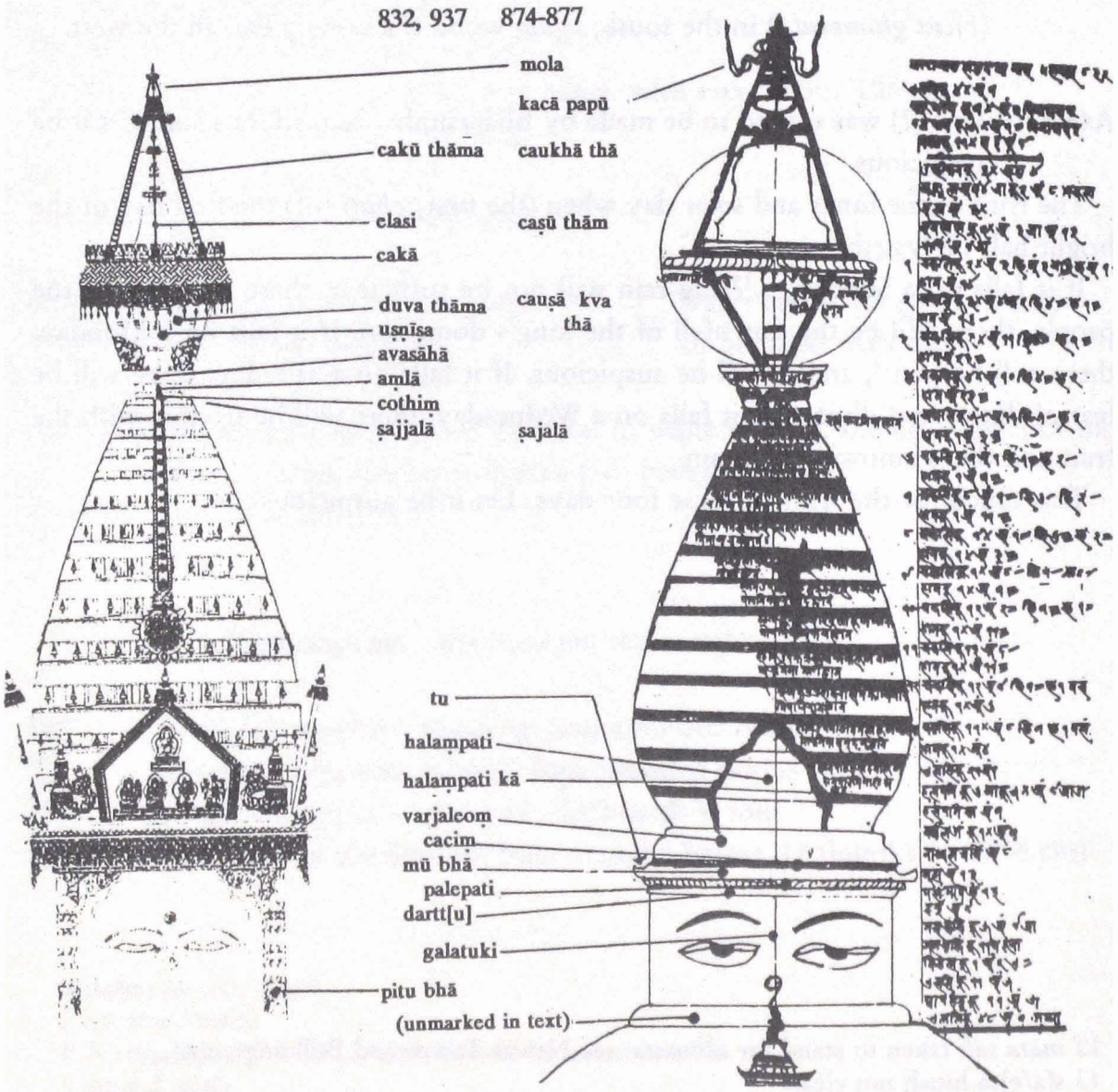
12 *mata sāli* taken to stand for *sālimata*: see Newar Towns and Buildings, s.v.

13 s[a/e]ca hīnaḥ not clear.

14 Text: rain of water, in contradistinction to, e.g., the rain of blood (*raktavṛṣṭi*-), which of course is an evil omen.

5.1. Manuscripts A and B, Drawing I

LR2-10. Description of the spire, above the tiers. The wording very brief, the terminology forgotten or obscure. Hence the following account of how the text is being understood; Plate 11 gives an illustration.



Ill. 11. Names of Parts of the Stūpa

Essentially the text proceeds from top to bottom, and in most cases confines itself to giving the heights of parts enumerated.

The most pronounced feature is the *parasol* (*cakā*, LR5). Above it, the sloping pillars (*caku thāma*, LR3) and the 'central beam' (*elasi*, LR2) on top of the parasol. Below the latter, the 'inner pillars' (*duva thāma*, LR4) which support it[15]. – Statically, the protruding part of the Main Post (i.e. the *uṣṇīṣa*, LR6) is not related to any part of the spire.

Below the 'inner pillars', there is the 'base of the struts' (*avasāhā*, LR9, its circumference being given in L9A). Then comes the myrobalan layer (*aṃlā*, LR8), which rests upon the part called 'Touching the top' (*cothiṃ*, LR10). This is either flanked by, or rests upon, the four 'railings' (*khajjalā*, LR7).

LR2. The difference between both measurements is easily understood once one relates this small Central Beam to the Main Post, the total length of which is 1159 fingers according to both manuscript calculations. The upper 'Central Beam' at present dealt with is 115 cubits according to earlier, and 116 cubits according to the later measurement – in other words, this is adding 10%, or, to use a turn of expression more adequate to Buddhism, adding an eleventh layer. The very variation, with the greater exactitude of N.S.937, we take as an indication this idea was aimed at.

LR5. i.e. the parasol is 11.5 cubits; its breadth, i.e. height, is 9 fingers.

L7. *ṣaṅa* '(as is) seen', i.e.'opening'? Cf. line L9A where it apparently denotes the circumference of a circle.

L9A. This is the circumference of the *avasāhā*: its diameter was given in R9. Note the calculation is very nearly correct: the figures show π at a value of 3.166.

LR48. *pitu bhā*. This part is not marked in the drawings; it is, however, plainly visible in the painting printed as frontispice in Macdonald/Stahl: Newar painting. – A different explanation of the term cannot be precluded, viz., the torus that intervenes between the dome and the neck: one notes it is shown in the painting while in the translation suggested, its measurements are not given in the text. The difficulty lies (1) in its height: in the present stūpa, it is considerably lower than 26 or 26.5 fingers; (2) in the manuscript totals given for Block III: if we were to take the 26/26.5 fingers as components of the total height, this would in N.S.937 be increased to 279.5, as against an ideal 269. Nor would figures tally for N.S.832 (total including 'torus' 231 as against 269). See Ch. III,4 for further discussions.

15 The turn of phrase 'inner pillars' possibly is due to the fact that at least in the contemporary stūpa, there are 'outer' ones, made of metal.

A different and in some essential respects more comprehensive account than the previous mss. gives; the only source for the structure of the dome and its components: by depicting the rock that protrudes into the dome, it solves the problem of the length of the central beam. The mss. unanimously give it as 48 cubits 7 fingers, i.e. 2207.9 cm – which is much less than the height of its tip when measured from the platform. The dome, then, encases the top of the mountain, and the central beam is erected on its peak. –

Possibly, **C** is an original drawing in the sense of not being a re-worked prototype: the omissions on top of the parasol can only be due to an error in judging the size of the paper, since the text does give their dimensions. –

The way of drawing the supports for the tiers (every tier resting upon its immediate predecessor) does not conform to the contemporary construction (which uses two interlocking series, one of the even, the other of the odd tiers). On the face of it, the solution of the drawing looks more immediately obvious. It need not for that reason be wrong: the present construction no doubt makes for greater stability and may have been evolved in response to mishaps. –

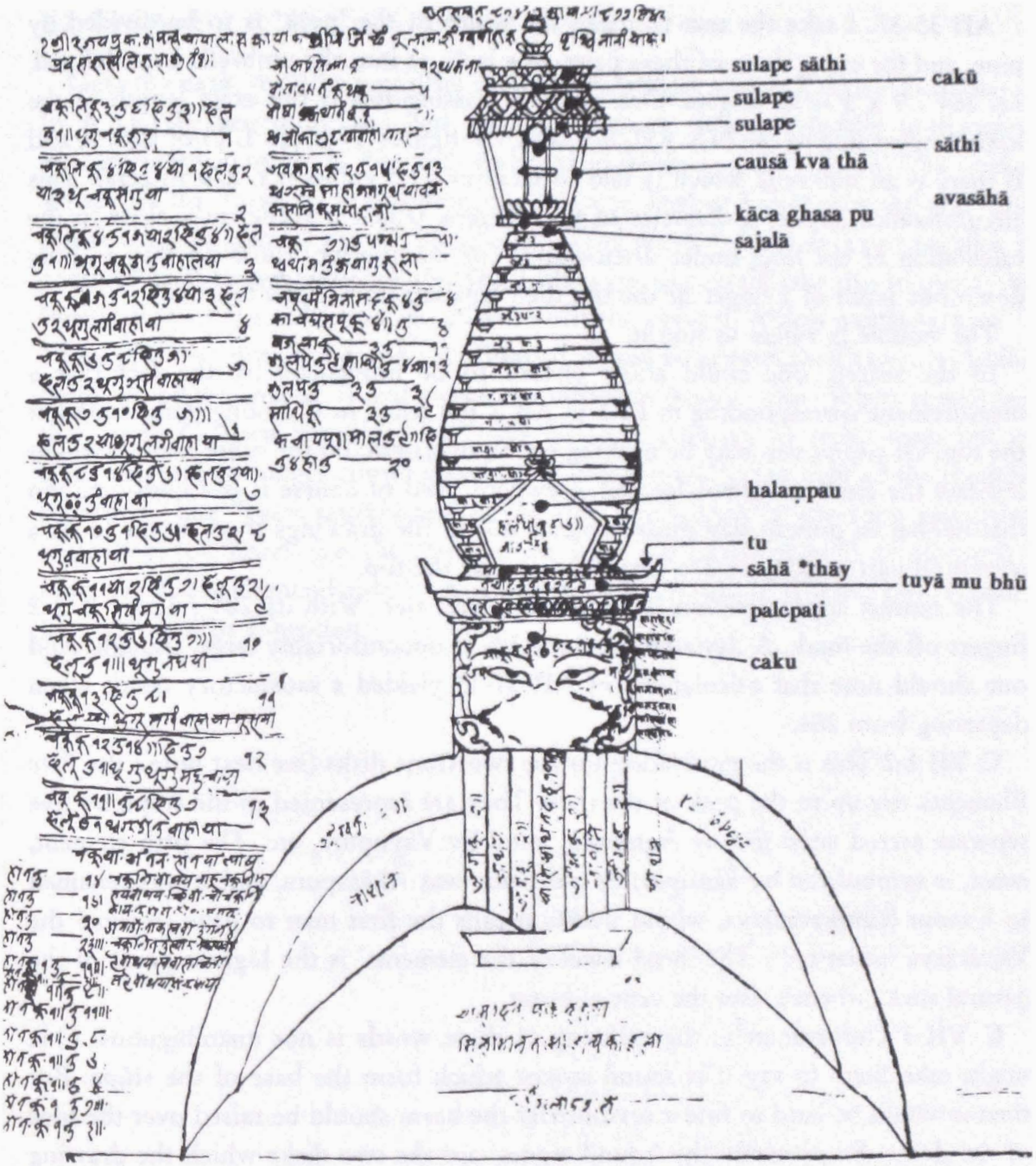
AII 31-33. This is the derivation of the measurement of Line B16 *mola tu 9.5*. Multiplying this by 30, as the manuscripts instructs us, we obtain 285 thumbs, i.e. cubits 11.5 thumbs 9. This is sufficiently close to the lowest tier with its 284 thumbs: dividing it by 30 would yield 9.47 thumbs which, given the system of counting and writing measurements, would naturally be taken down as 9.5.

Incidentally, one notices the lowest tier could go by the name of 'Rāhu's Umbrella'. This designation looks like the remnant of a nine-umbrella top, such as the 'Old Svayaṃbhū' still has it, with the umbrellas named after the Nine Planets (*navagraha*): cf. below, p.149f..

AII 33-35. [To understand this and the following instruction, one has to use the measurements of mss. **A** and **B**, since in **C** the figures for the 'neck' are lost.]

The calculation starts out from the width of the neck, which in N.S.832 and 937 is 11 cubits, i.e. 264 fingers. This is to be divided into units of nine thumbs, and to be reduced to three fourths, the calculation thus being (264:9) x (3:4), i.e. 22 thumbs, which, when multiplied by the number of units, 9, gives 198 thumbs.

(1) There seems to be no *cakra* which is exactly this size. In the normal course of things, we would now expect the author to deal with the large umbrella crowning the *uṣṇīṣa*°, which according to line L9A has a circumference of cubits 8 fingers 7.5, i.e. 199.5 fingers, which is nearly three cm wider than the figure here given. This deviation, though, arose in adding up (264:9=) 29.333 units, i.e. the deviation per unit is about 1 mm. This seems within a tolerable margin (about 0.75%).



Ill. 12. Names of Parts of the Stūpa
(Ms. C)

(2) A division and subsequent multiplication by nine are of course redundant, and the only explanation I can suggest is that there were dogmatic reasons involved, i.e. some hidden symbolic meaning. If so, it would go back to the period when the stūpa only had nine tiers (see commentary to AII 31-33, above).

AII 35-37. I take the text to mean the width of the 'neck' is to be divided by nine, and for every three of these parts, one is to go into the umbrella here defined, i.e. 264 : 9 x 3 = 88 fingers. One notes in passing this is the exact length of the *uṣṇīṣa*° according to the N.S. 832, 874, and 937 figures. Now, in LR5 of mss. **A** and **B** there is an umbrella which is said to measure 11.5 cubits (i.e. 276 fingers). This circumference implies a diameter of 87.9 fingers, which is sufficiently close to the calculation of the lines under discussion (: the manuscripts show no way to note down one tenth of a finger or thumb; their smallest unit is one fourth).

The trouble is where to find it.

In the search, one could allow oneself to be influenced by the fact that a measurement corresponding to LR5 in **AB** is not listed in **C** among items found at the top. Of course this may be nothing but an oversight; on the other hand, it might indicate the circle sought is located elsewhere. And of course it is a consideration that neither in present-day measurements nor in the drawings there seems to be a structural part as large as 276 fingers at or near the top.

The nearest approximation is again the lowest tier. With its 284 fingers, it is 8 fingers off the mark. A deviation of some 3% is uncomfortably large, though. And one should note that calculations of AII 31-33 yielded a satisfactory result when departing from 284.

C VII 1-2 This is the motivation for the two stone disks (see next note): the Five Elements rise up to the peak of the rock. They are represented in the stūpa by five separate sacred sites: *fire* by Agnipura, *wind* by Vāyupura, etc. The fifth element, *ether*, is symbolized by Śāntipur: its old name was Ākāśapura, and it was renamed to honour Śāntikarācārya, whom tradition calls the first man to have received the Vajrācārya initiation[16]. The 'head jewel of the elements' is the highest point of the natural rock, whence rises the central beam.

C VII 3 Unfortunately, the meaning of these words is not unambiguous. One might take them to say it is round stones which form the base of the stūpa. But then it would be hard to find a reason why the beam should be raised over the foot of the dome. So probably the 'round stones' are the two disks which the drawing shows in a cross section. One wonders, though, what can be the reality behind the two hillocks depicted on either side: they can hardly be the living rock. Possibly, they are layers of clay or masonry designed to hold the stone disks in place.

16 Cf. Locke, Buddhist Monasteries, pp.256f.

5.3. The Peak

Near the peak, the drawings offer more, in the way of variants, than is customary. In **A** and **B**, beginning and end are clear enough: *śūnyatāviśuddhi uṣṇīṣacakra anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi *iti* and *āsphānakaviśuddh(i)* clearly mean 'The *uṣṇīṣa* Wheel (is) the Purification of Emptiness, the utter Perfect Enlightenment' and 'The Purification (which is) the Ā° Meditation'. One notes **C** lacks an exact parallel: it confines itself to *camūlibhāgaviśuddhi*. To be sure, one could take this to mean 'the Purification of (i.e. which is associated with) the parts of Wheel and base/root'[17]. There are, however, the cryptic readings of **A** and **B**, *caṃndramālisaṃgavis(u)dha* (with an oddly shaped *l*) and *caṃdraṃmālibha[ṃ]gavi – dha*. When comparing them with **C**, these wordings look like different attempts to make sense out of some original no longer comprehensible or understood. In the light of the legends, something like **cūḍāmaṇibhāgaviśuddhi*, 'the Purification of the parts associated with the Crest Jewel' (i.e. the three *caityas* from the Lalitavistara[18]), of course is a most satisfactory emendation[19] – but in that case one would wonder how it could have come to be forgotten.

17 *ca* taken as mod. *caḥ*, i.e. *cakra-*. I cannot quote an instance for *mūli* used to stand for *mūla-*, though.

18 For their legend, see below, Chapter V, section 7.

19 *dra* and *ḍa* are easily mistaken for each other; and one does notice the *[l]i* of **A** is of a shape that could be taken as a distortion of *ṇi*.

aṃ, aṃgu 'finger' (1.905 cm). 24 aṃ make one ku 'cubit'.
aṃlā wall plate C:D4.
upa baked brick C:CIV2
e 'a quarter'. Used as a subdivision of aṃ. Cf. yo.
kacā papū 'branch wings' C:B16 i.e. the small horizontal protrusions beneath the very top of the stūpa? Perhaps the name is derived from the pennants affixed.
kāca 'protrusion, protruding beam' C:B11. i.e. the interlocking beams, with ends protruding, that form part of the base of the part above the tiers.
ku 'cubit', a measure of length, equal to 45.72 cm. It consists of 24 fingers (see aṃ, aṃgu) or thumbs (tu).
khaṅa, ṣaṅa 'opening' or 'as seen'? 1) circumference (in circles); 2) side length (in squares)
galatuki the *harmikā* AB
gvā 'rounded, curved' C:A25
gvāḍa 'circumference' C:B8
caku the *harmikā* C
cche 'house'. Its meaning in C:D4 uncertain: probably the 'neck'
jā, jāo height, width (vertical dimension)
taṃku, taṃkva 'sloped' (?) Cf. AG taṃ 2. C:B2, B3.
tu 1 'thumb'. Used by C in place of the aṃ of A and B; amounting to 1.905 cm.
tu 2 'indentation' **AB**: LR46; C:CII2
data 'standing, vertical' (??) C:D1
dartta, darttu '?' AB: LR45
ninā 'horizontal beam'
piṃtu bhā 'outer frame': cf. AG picu bāhā?
pekurā, pekuṃrā 'in the four directions'. Perhaps it means 'square'. AG: 'rectangular'.
phi 'width, thickness'
phela, phelū 'inclination'
byā 'width'
bhā 'frame': see **piṃtu bhā** 'outer frame'; **mu bhā** 'chief layer' (v.l. mu hā). Relation to bāhā not clear
bhū level, layer [in: *mu bhū* C:CIII2 'chief layer']
mata sāli a standing oil lamp (?) C:D5
yo 'a quarter'. Used as a subdivision of aṃ, tu, and kū, and written by up to three small strokes slanting upwards. See e.
lāphāṃ (cf. lhāpā 'palms of the hands') board, plank? or is it the kinds of tenon one sees between the tiers on Drawing C? C:D3
śulape 'that which hides': i.e. the covering. On the umbrella, this consists of two units of metal, and the frills underneath.
ṣaṅa see khaṅa
sā, sāhā -si seems to have the general meaning of 'support' C:D13,7,8. – **sāhā thāy** C:CIII1 not clear.
sāthi 'projection'? see C:B15 where it cannot but refer to the Uṣṇīṣa°; ibid. B13
sāli 'standing' C:D5. See **mata sāli**.
hā layer, base [in: mu hā (v.l. mu bhā). AB haḥ?]

Chapter III
MEASUREMENTS

Now to turn to an examination of the measurements the various sources attest to. Though they do show the same overall pattern, there is a good deal of variation once one looks at actual figures. And coming from written sources as they do, one will *prima facie* attribute a greater significance to them than if they had been taken from the building itself. For these latter would inevitably include deviations which are due to shortcomings of artisans; with written sources, we cannot be sure, and on the whole one tends to think it is injunctions they record rather than descriptions.

The long manuscript to which we owe drawings **A** and **B** contains a remark to fortify this assumption. On its last page, it has a sketch of the ideal pattern of a stūpa, together with its imagined infrastructure, nether worlds etc. In its margin, there is a gloss which reads

> *garatakiṃyā vo śva 3 vo thaya sva vosa ccha vo uṣṇīṣa pyakuṃrāke māla* (fol.63, right margin, lines 19-22),

'Dividing the part of the neck into three parts, one part of the three is the Uṣṇīṣa: this is necessary at the four sides.'

That is to say, the height of the Uṣṇīṣa[1] and the side length of the neck are to stand in a relation of 1 : 3. And this is precisely what is found in the stūpa measurements of both manuscripts: the *uṣṇīṣa* is given as 3.5 ku 4 aṃ, i.e. 88 fingers (lines LR6); the side length of the neck is to be 11 cubits (lines LR47), i.e. 264 fingers.

This opens wide vistas: The text claims a numerical relationship for parts of the stūpa that stand in no technical connection to each other, and which hence can only be assigned a symbolic meaning. Constructional injunctions are found to bear out this claim. On the face of it, then, one would expect other relationships of a similar type to exist between what are patently proximate parts.

The attempt to spell them out is tedious, and, to anticipate results, will often not be found conclusive: of course one would wish for guidance from texts. Even so, some tendencies emerge which allow us to see how the present structure was evolved from an earlier, less elaborate type. And there is a second point which perhaps is more important than stray historical observations. Patently, there was no fixed practice which had to be followed, down to minute details, when rebuilding the stūpa: both measurements and the principles for deriving them were subject to variations. The stūpa, then, could be – and was – re-thought; there was rather a

1 The word here is to be understood in the sense of what is otherwise termed the *uṣṇīṣacūḍāmaṇi*.

considerable elasticity even in the proportions of a building which doubtless stood for the teachings of a particular Buddhist School. In a way, one could view these technical variations as a corollary to the multiple esoteric interpretations which are re-traced in Chapter V: within the given framework, the building was open to receive new meanings and forms; not only were adjustments admitted, but, if we go by the period now open to examination, such modifications seem to have been very much the normal thing. The rigidity we tend to ascribe to hieratic forms apparently was anything but stifling.

1. The Tiers

When compared with early Indian stūpas, it is the part above the dome which has seen the greatest changes, and the increase in size and number of tiers was the most important factor in this development. No doubt this is ultimately grounded in doctrine, i.e. in the increasing complexity of meanings assigned to the entire top: even the scanty remarks of our manuscripts give an outline of different chains of concepts read into it. Again, it is about tiers that the mss. are most specific: in lavish detail, they dwell upon their separate parts. To be sure, it will have chiefly been carpenters' needs which occasioned this wealth of data: when the stūpa was renovated, the entire superstructure (including the 'neck') had to be dismantled, while the dome itself was not effected in its basic layout. Still, with their multitudinous esoteric interpretations the manuscripts show technicalities were not the only, and perhaps not even the chief reason, for the care bestowed on these parts: we shall see how the intricacies of calculations occasionally preserve traces of earlier stages in the development of the stūpa, and how the ways and means of increasing the number of tiers caused considerable difficulties. If the problem had been nothing but technical, straight proportions would have been the obvious solution. By virtue of their very lack of symmetry, the data give us a chance to identify some stages in this process of elaboration, and this is why their analysis is being undertaken.

1.1. Building the Tiers

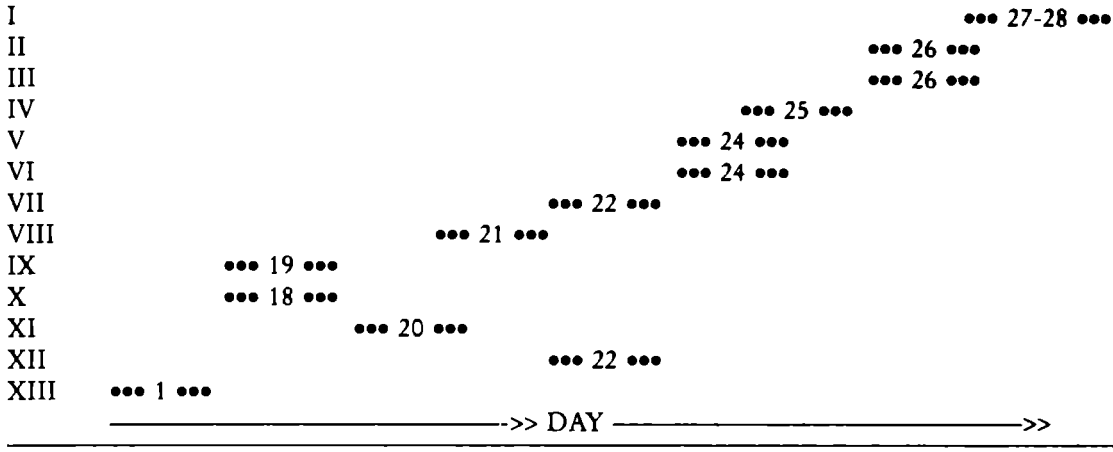
§1. An old account of how the tiers were assembled gives a first idea of the kinds of complexities. Among the manuscript chronicles which deal with restaurations of the Svayaṃbhūnāth, there is one which contains a longish account of their erection during the N.S.832 reconstruction. Its gist is as follows.

The work took a full lunar month. On the twelfth day of the dark half of Caitra, the lowest umbrella was raised. After this, there was an interruption of three weeks. It was resumed one day prior to the full moon, and completed in rapid succession, omitting only a single day, viz., the inauspicious fourth.

The chronicle reports a process of assembling which is distinctly odd in one respect. Subsequent to the lowest tier, those of the lower half (viz., Tiers VII – XII), were mounted, not in a straight sequence, but as it were starting from the middle, i.e. with IX and X, and then twice adding a tier each to both bottom and top, i.e. VIII and XI, then VII and XII. The procedure is summed up in the following diagram:

Construction of Tiers: Sequence

Figure inscribed in tier: day of construction, counted from commencement



There seem to be no technical reasons to account for this method: one sees the top tiers VI – I were affixed in a linear sequence. Indeed the procedure raises a considerable difficulty. The present stūpa uses a system of supports of tiers where every layer is anchored on posts which rest upon the second tier below it, XI being propped on XIII, X on XII, etc. This technique is incompatible with the ms. account: between the two first tiers, there is a gap of 2 that would have to be bridged. One cannot really decide whether the ms. is mistaken or whether the present construction is the result of a simplification. By the wording of the account, one would need a veritable host of supporting beams to rest on top of the neck or on the lowest tier.

However this may be: one can hardly escape noting the ms. sequence groups the lower seven tiers into a unit[2]: and once one decides not to ignore this circumstance, further groupings would seem to be the natural outcome. The diagram does suggest a possible explanation: As the numerous caityas in the valley tell us, there was a

2 Pairing would seem to be justified by VIII/XI and VII/XII: the members of both pairs were added the same day.

gradual increase in the number of tiers, starting from the three that are found in the old specimens (such as Sāñcī I), and then always adding pairs. The Nepalese typology of stūpas (cf. Ch. V, section 6) recognizes this diversity, and accounts for it in terms of Buddhist schools. And in all probability, it is this extension which is reflected in the process of construction: the older stages of 3, 5, 7, and 9 tiers are being perpetuated during actual building activities. We shall revert to this problem in §7.

1.2. Proportions of Tiers

§2. Another piece of evidence about the tiers stems from a marginal gloss which both mss. **A** and **B** have on their last page; for the facsimile of **B**, see Plate 13 below. The text which follows is cited from **A**.

1	**cakari vo 21 yo [1]**	Part(s) of tier(s): 21 1/4 parts[3]
2	**cakari vo 3/4**	Tier: 0.75 (of a) part
3	**cakari vo 1**	Tier: 1 part
4	**cakari vo 1**	Tier: 1 part
5	**cakari vo 1 1/4**	Tier: 1.25 parts
6	**cakari vo 1 2/4**	Tier: 1.5 parts
7	**cakari vo 1 2/4**	Tier: 1.5 parts
8	**cakari vo 1 3/4**	Tier: 1.75 parts
9	**cakari vo 2**	Tier: 2 parts
10	**cakari vo 2**	Tier: 2 parts
11	**cakari vo 2 1/4**	Tier: 2.25 parts
12	**cakari vo 2 1/4**	Tier: 2.25 parts
13	**cakari vo 2**	Tier: 2 parts
14	**cakari vo 2**	Tier: 2 parts
15	**cakari vo thayagu**	This is/was 'Dividing the Tiers'.
16	**juraṃ śubhaḥ||**	Let it be auspicious.

This passage gives the proportions for the thirteen tiers. Note the total is very close to what the mss. give for the total length of the part of the Central Beam which the tiers are to occupy (21 cubits 1 finger).

The series of figures has a common underlying factor, viz., 0.25. When this is extracted, one obtains the following series of multiples:

3 The scribe of ms. **B** has not understood the principle: he writes **cakari vo 21 vo**, thus distorting the addition: his own figures add up to 21.25.

I	3	IV	5	VIII	8	XI	9
II	4	V	6	IX	8	XII	8
III	4	VI	6	X	9	XIII	8
		VII	7				

Table T1. Proportions of Tiers

§3. This list of proportions does not tally with reality in one rather fundamental respect: in altogether five instances, it gives identical measurements for two successive tiers. What one would expect is a gradation, with gradual increase or decrease, such as all actual figures have it.

§4. Let us first try to test these proportions against reality. We shall take the N.S. 832 figures as an example. The complete calculations are given in Table T2. When applying the proportions to the distances between one tier and the next (i.e. to height of tier plus height of the distance in between), the values obtained are significantly close to 6 fingers (T2, col. 4) – from which one concludes this is the co-efficient of 0.25 which we have just extracted (§2). The total, then, amounts to 24 fingers, i.e. one cubit. This, then, is the basic measurement for the construction of the 832 tiers.

§5. One of the figures, though, is badly off the mark, viz., that given for the second tier. As Table T2 col. 4 shows, actual calculation is fingers 20.5 : 4 = 5.125. How to account for this deviation? It would make sense if the architect had used a divisor, not of 4, but of 3.5; in doing so, he would take account of the fact that distances and sizes change in a steady and unbroken proportion. Admitting this conjecture, the division results in 5.86 – which is well within the usual range of tolerance shown by Table T2.[4]

Thus, it appears Table T1 has to be emended in Tier II, to read 0.875 instead of 1, and we submit this is what the architect meant the figure to be.

§6. To revert to the problem stated in §3: applying the correction of §5, the number of tiers with identical measurements is reduced to four sets of two. As has been stated, stūpas which have two successive tiers of identical height and distance must be very hard to find. How, then, to account for the theoretical pattern of the text quoted in §2?

4 Given the system of notation of the text quoted in §2, one sees how the inaccuracy arose. The figure for II which would have been correct is 0.875, i.e. halfway between the 0.75 of I and the 1 of III. Noting this fraction down on paper must have been a problem: the system of writing the scribe employed uses no unit smaller than 0.25 fingers. Either alternative was equally wide of the mark; and he chose the higher one, in keeping with the principle of gradual increase.

The solution would now seem to be fairly obvious. What the text gives us actually is the first step in the extension of a nine-tier system to a pattern of thirteen tiers. And in order to disturb the older, hieratic pattern as little as possible, this expansion is effected by the simple device of duplicating some of them. (This did of course not work in practice: for the actual process, see below, §9.)
The proportions of this nine-tiered stūpa were as follows:

I	3	IV	5	VII	8
II	3.5[5]	V	6	VIII	9
III	4	VI	7	IX	8

One concludes from this table that the new tiers have been added at the lower end of the table, i.e. V, VII, VIII, and IX have been duplicated.

§7. This conclusion is borne out by what on first sight is an altogether unrelated series of facts, viz., the anomalous sequence in the process of assembling the tiers (§1). It simply perpetuates the old method which was used when building a nine-tiered stūpa: in the lower half, the craftsmen followed the old sequence of Stages IX – VIII – VII, which led them to Tiers (New Sequence) XIII – X – IX. Then, they proceeded to the next step and doubled VIII and VII, which called for Tiers (New Sequence) XI and VIII; and by repeating this process – and again starting at the lower end – they raised Tiers (New Sequence) XII and VII. On this reading, then, the erratic procedure which the chronicle describes makes sense.

At this point, we should not evade the question which does now raise its head, though it does not have an answer that can be verified. If the tiers were assembled according to the sequence shown by Diagram 1, i.e. according to the sequence of the nine-tiered stūpa, why interrupt this sequence at Tier 7? rather than go on to its very top, and adding Tiers 2, 3, 6, and one of the pair 8/9, only after the 'old' structure had been completed? A cogent answer is hard to find. To be sure, completing the entire structure by the contribution of the most prestigious donor, i.e. the King, and possibly the Svayaṃbhū, and marking this completion stands to reason: this, then, would account for Tier I (and perhaps II) being kept to mark the very end. But even so, the present sequence is imperfect: a number of solutions would have been more plausible, such as raising the additions after Tier III, etc.

A hypothesis which would fit the facts is this. The arrangement makes sense if the lower seven tiers at some time formed a unit of their own, and if the irregular way of assembling them reflects the stages of its development. It would have been this unit, then, which was subsequently extended, first to nine tiers, and then beyond.

5 conjectural: see §5.

§8. The deviations of actual measurements are largely due to the problem discussed in §6, viz., pairs of successive tiers being assigned the same coefficient for height, while in actual practice they of course conform to the usual pattern of gradual ascent or descent. The *arithmetical mean* of such pairs will be found to be remarkably close to 'ideal heights' (see Table T2, Column 6).

§9. When looking at figures, one can see how the architect actually obtained his measurements. This is shown by Column 7 of Table T2, printed on p.84. He took ideal heights of pairs which in theory, i.e. according to the Table of Proportions of §2, ought to be identical; in a next step, he leveled the difference between adjoining tiers by taking the arithmetical mean. In this way, he obtained an even series: for Tiers I – III, there is an increase of 0.5; III – X have an increase of 0.75; X – XIII uniformly decrease by 0.5.

The maximum deviation he allows himself is in Tier II, and there it amounts to some 2.5%.

§10. *The Measurements of N.S. 874-877.* The same line of reasoning proves thoroughly unsatisfactory when applied to the N.S. 874-877 renovation, as a glance at Table T3 (see p.85) will show: note the percentages of deviations (Col. 5b) and the actual differences (Col. 7).

Yet the total length of the beam that the tiers occupy continues to be 505.25 fingers, which means there will be no mistake in the actual figures, and the main proportions of the entire structure remained unaltered within the tiers block.

It was, then, the distribution of tiers over the beam which was changed: i.e. the proportions of the list quoted in §2 were no longer adhered to. Actual results of calculations are given in Col. 8. This as it were inverts the reasoning of §4: it takes the coefficient of 6 and uses it as the divisor for actual measurements: the quotients will be figures on a par with those of §2. It shows the architect obviously aiming at the series

I	3	IV	4.75	VII	8.5	XI	8
II	3.5	V	6.75	VIII	9	XII	6.5
III	4	VI	7.5	IX	8.5	XIII	5.75
				X	8.25		

(The maximum deviation lies in Tier I, which is nearly 3% lower than it ought to be. This seems a tolerable margin.)

§11. *The Measurements of the N.S. 937 Renovation* are summarized in Table T4 (see p.86).

Again, the deviations of Columns 5b and 7 are anything but trivial: Tiers I and IV are a good deal too large, VIII and IX much too small. The total height, however,

Col. 1			Col. 2		Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5		Col. 6	Col. 7[a]	Col. 8
Tier No.	ku	aṃ	Total aṃ	Sum	Coefficient Mss. A,B	Height : Proportion	Ideal Height	Deviation in %	Arithm. Mean	Col. 5A - Col. 2D	Col. 2D : 6
I		3.75	3.75								
		14	14	17.75	3	5.92	18	1.41		0.25	2.96
II		4.25[b]	4.25								
		16.25	16.25	20.5	4	5.13	24	17.07		3.5	3.42
					3.5	5.86[c]	21	2.44		0.5	
III		4.5	4.5								
		20	20	24.5	4	6.13	24	-2.04		-0.5	4.08
IV		4.75	4.75								
		23.75	23.75	28.5	5	5.70	30	5.26		1.5	4.75
V		5.25	5.25								
	1	3.75	27.75	33	6	5.50	36	9.09		3	5.5
VI		5.75	5.75						35.25		
	1	7.75	31.75	37.5	6	6.25	36	-4.00		-1.5	6.25
VII		6.25	6.25								
	1	11.75	35.75	42	7	6.00	42	0.00		0	7
VIII		6.75	6.75								
	1.5	3.75	39.75	46.5	8	5.81	48	3.23		1.5	7.75
IX		7.25	7.25						48.75		
	1.5	7.75	43.75	51	8	6.38	48	-5.88		-3	8.5
X		7.75	7.75								
	1.5	11.75	47.75	55.5	9	6.17	54	-2.70		-1.5	9.25
XI		8.25[d]	8.25						53.875		
	1.5	8	44	52.25	9	5.81	54	3.35		1.75	8.71
XII		7.5	7.5								
	1.5	6	42	49.5	8	6.19	48	-3.03		-1.5	8.25
XIII		7	7						48.25		
	1.5	4	40	47	8	5.88	48	2.13		1	7.83

Notes: (a) i.e. Ideal height minus actual height.
(b) emended from aṃ 4.5.
(c) conjectural: see §5. –
(d) emended: the mss. have 0.

Table T2. N.S. 832: Heights and Distances of Tiers

Col. 1		Col. 2			Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5		Col. 6	Col. 7[b]	Col. 8
Tier No.	ku	am	Total am	Sum	Coefficient Mss. A,B	Height : Proportion	Ideal Height	Deviation in %	Arithm. Mean	Col. 5A - Col. 2D	Col. 2D : 6
I		3.5	3.5								
		14	14	17.5	3	5.83	18	2.86		0.5	2.92
II		4.25	4.25								
		16.25	16.25	20.5	4	5.13	24	17.07		3.5	3.42
III		4.5	4.5								
		20	20	24.5	4	6.13	24	-2.04		-0.5	4.08
IV		4.75	4.75								
		23.75	23.75	28.5	5	5.70	30	5.26		1.5	4.75
V		5.25	5.25								
	1	11.75	35.75	41	6	6.83	36	-12.20		-5	6.83
VI		5.75	5.75						43.25		
	1.5	3.75	39.75	45.5	6	7.58	36	-20.88		-9.5	7.58
VII		6.25	6.25								
	1.5	8.5	44.5	50.75	7	7.25	42	-17.24		-8.75	8.46
VIII[a]		6.75	6.75								
	1.5	11.75	47.75	54.5	8	6.81	48	-11.93		-6.5	9.08
IX		7.25	7.25						52.875		
	1.5	8	44	51.25	8	6.41	48	-6.34		-3.25	8.54
X		7.75	7.75								
	1.5	6	42	49.75	9	5.53	54	8.54		4.25	8.29
XI		8.25	8.25						49		
	1.5	4	40	48.25	9	5.36	54	11.92		5.75	8.04
XII		7	7								
	1	7.75	31.75	38.75	8	4.84	48	23.87		9.25	6.46
XIII		7	7						36.625		
	1	3.5	27.5	34.5	8	4.31	48	39.13		13.5	5.75
[Sum Ms.]:				———							
	21	1		505.25							

Notes:
(a) Height emended from am 6.25. –
(b) i.e. Ideal height minus actual height

Table T3. N.S. 874-877: Heights and Distances of Tiers

Col. 1			Col. 2		Col. 3	Col. 4	Col. 5		Col. 6	Col. 7[a]	Col. 8
Tier No.	ku	aṃ	Total aṃ	Sum	Coefficient Mss. A,B	Height : Proportion	Ideal Height	Deviation in %	Arithm. Mean	Col. 5A - Col. 2D	Col. 2D : 6
I		3.75	3.75								
		17	17	20.75	3	6.92	18	-13.25		-2.75	3.46
II		4.25	4.25								
		20	20	24.25	4	6.06	24	-1.03		-0.25	4.04
III		4.5	4.5								
		23	23	27.5	4	6.88	24	-12.73		-3.5	4.58
IV		4.75	4.75								
	1	2	26[a]	30.75	5	6.15	30	-2.44		-0.75	5.13
V		5.25	5.25								
	1	5	29	34.25	6	5.71	36	5.11		1.75	5.71
VI		5.75	5.75						35.875		
	1	7.75	31.75	37.5	6	6.25	36	-4.00		-1.5	6.25
VII		6.25	6.25								
	1	10.75	34.75	41	7	5.86	42	2.44		1	6.83
VIII		6.75	6.75								
	1.5	1.25	37.25	44	8	5.50	48	9.09		4	7.33
IX		7.25	7.25						45.5		
	1.5	3.75	39.75[b]	47	8	5.88	48	2.13		1	7.83
X		7.75	7.75								
	1.5	6	42	49.75	9	5.53	54	8.54		4.25	8.29
XI		8.25	8.25						51.5		
	1.5	9	45[c]	53.25	9	5.92	54	1.41		0.75	8.88
XII		7.25	7.25								
	1.5	6	42[d]	49.25	8	6.16	48	-2.54		-1.25	8.21
XIII		7	7						47.625		
	1.5	3	39[d]	46	8	5.75	48	4.35		2	7.67
[Sum Ms.]:				———							
	21	1		505.25							

Notes:
(a) The sequence [III:] 23 – [IV:] 29 – [V:] 29 is emended to 23 – 26 – 29
(b) Arbitrary correction of distance: no evidence. Ms.: 1 aṃ
(c) Arbitrary correction of distance: no evidence. Ms.: 3 aṃ
(d) The distances of XI/XII and XII/XIII seem to have been inverted

Table T4. N.S. 937: Heights and Distances of Tiers

Tier	Tiers: Height N.S.832 Col. 1 Ideal (§2)	Step	Col. 2 Actual	Col. 3 Ideal	Step	Tiers: Height N.S.874 Col. 4 Step	Col. 4 Actual	Col. 5 Ideal	Step	Tiers: Height N.S.937 Col. 6 Step	Col. 6 Actual	Col. 7 Ideal	Step
I (13)	3		2.96	3			2.92	3			3.46	3.5	
		0.46			0.5	0.5			0.5	0.58			0.5
II (12)	3.4		3.42	3.5			3.42	3.5			4.04	4	
		0.66			0.5	0.66			0.5	0.54			0.5
III (11)	4		4.08	4			4.08	4			4.58	4.5	
		0.67			0.75	0.67			0.75	0.55			0.5
IV (10)	5		4.75	4.75			4.75	4.75			5.13	5	
		0.75			0.75	2.08			2	0.58			0.75[a]
V (9)	6		5.5	5.5			6.83	6.75			5.71	5.75	
		0.75			0.75	0.75			0.75	0.54			0.5
VI (8)	6		6.25	6.25			7.58	7.5			6.25	6.25	
		0.75			0.75	0.88			1	0.58			0.5
VII (7)	7		7	7			8.46	8.5			6.83	6.75	
		0.75			0.75	0.62			0.5	0.5			0.5
VIII (6)	8		7.75	7.75			**9.08**	9			7.33	7.25	
		0.75			0.75	-0.54			-0.5	0.5			0.5
IX (5)	8		8.5	8.5			8.54	8.5			7.83	7.75	
		0.75			0.75	-0.25			-0.25	0.46			0.5
X (4)	9		**9.25**	**9.25**			8.29	8.25			8.29	8.25	
		-0.54			-0.5	-0.25			-0.25	0.59			0.5
XI (3)	9		8.71	8.75			8.04	8			**8.88**	**8.75**	
		-0.46			-0.5	-1.58			-1.5	-0.67			-0.5
XII (2)	8		8.25	8.25			6.46	6.5			8.21	8.25	
		-0.42			-0.5	-0.71			-0.75	-0.54			-0.75
XIII (1)	8		7.83	7.75			5.75	5.75			7.67	7.5[b]	

Notes:
(a) See §15, though. –
(b) perhaps rather meant to be 7.75, to tally with N.S. 832.

Table T5. N.S. 832, 874-877, 937:
Heights of Tiers and Distances between them.
(Measurements reduced to proportions of Manuscript List [§2], i.e. by 75%)
Maximum in **bold face**

again tallies with that of the original List of Proportions: one will again have to conclude it is not a matter of scribal errors, but of changed proportions. In the present case (basing ourselves on Table T4, Col. 8) they seem to be

I	3.5	IV	5	VII	6.75	XI	8.75
II	4	V	5.75	VIII	7.25	XII	8.25
III	4.5	VI	6.25	IX	7.75	XIII	7.5
				X	8.25		

§12. Height of the Tiers compared. To sum up: there is a rather considerable variation in the way the tiers are arranged over their share of the Central Beam – and this is all the more remarkable in that the total, i.e. the part of the beam allotted to tiers remains constant. This in itself is a fact worth noting: it means the forms once found were not maintained with hieratic rigidity; rather, the authorities in charge dared depart from principles once found.

The variations, then, ought to have some significance. In the following table, the evidence will be summarized, and we shall try to find the principles which guided constructions.

§13. N.S. 832 is in theory a remarkably even and balanced structure: see Table T5, Column 3. It was noted (§9 above) how the architect had solved the problem of converting the pairs of tiers of equal dimensions into a graded continuum. When comparing ideal and actual figures, what little deviation there is was clearly meant to help towards achieving the same goal: it works in the interest of further levelling. Tier X is the one with maximum height.

§14. The figures of N.S. 874-877 are the most uneven and complex by far. Just to mention one detail: the proportions of the longest to the shortest distance, plus heights, i.e. what is called the 'step' in Table T5, is 3 : 2 (i.e. 0.75 : 0.5) both for N.S. 832 and 937; in 874, it is 2 : 0.25, i.e. 8 : 1. As we shall presently see, this is not irregularities, but a different concept that the building is meant to express.

a. Between Tiers 9 and 10 (counted from bottom up), there is a wide gap, eight times the minimum height. Its reason is not difficult to find. For we have seen the thirteen-tiered stūpa is an elaboration of the older type of nine tiers which is still frequently seen in the Valley: it is this earlier pattern which has left its mark in the shape of the clear caesura between Tier 9 and those on top of it. (The figures given for widths lead to the same conclusions: see §19.)

b. This earlier stage again accounts for another peculiarity. It will be noted that 874 has the greatest height in Tier VIII, while in 832, we find it in X, and in 937 have it only in XI.

Now, basing ourselves on the manuscript list (§2), we have reconstructed the ideal proportions of the nine-tiered stūpa (§6). Apparently, Tiers I – IX of the 874

structure aim at preserving something of this old pattern: an increase from tiers I – VIII, with IX again decreasing to the height of VII. To repeat the figures:

Tier	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX
Nine-Tier Stūpa	3	3.5	4	5	6	7	8	9	8
N.S. 874-877	3	3.5	4	4.75	6.75	7.5	8.5	9	8.5

To be sure, there is the considerable gap between IV and V – but its reason has just been discussed: the wish to mark the end of what was the old stūpa made for the decrease in IV and the increase in V. This increase had to be maintained in the succeeding tiers: for underneath IX there were four more tiers which had to be accommodated, and each of them had to be shorter than its predecessor.

c. The 874 figures, then, preserve a reminder of the older type in two different and interlocking ways:

Tier
(Roman numeral: No. from top; Arabic numeral: No. from bottom)

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	XIII
13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

While the two other renovations had levelled distances and, given the proportions of the mss., had adopted a uniform principle of construction for the tiers, the people who made the 874 design obviously had the old pattern very much in their minds. And before their eyes, one might add: the 'Old Svayaṃbhū' (Pulaṃgu Syeṃgu) on the hillock west of the main stūpa has kept to nine tiers to this very day. Its measurements, alas, are not much use in the present context: recently, it has been renovated in concrete, is very regular, and its figures tell us nothing.

d. With this principle once established, one of course wonders whether the other pronounced incision, that above tier VII, is to be taken in the same sense, i.e. whether it is a vestige of the seven-tiered structure which in ideal typology had preceded the nine.

e. There is an argument from a different source which seems to point in this direction. That voluminous collection of Svayaṃbhū myths, the Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa, tells how the stūpa had been conceived by Śāntikara, and how in the actual process of building he had received the help from various gods; many parts are listed and attributed to different deities. All this is told in standardized, enumerative verses, without excursions or deviations. Of course the tiers are included – and in their enumeration, there is a deviation from the natural sequence and principle of the list. The seventh umbrella was made by Him who has Brahman as his Body (*brahmakāyikaḥ*), surrounded by his retinue: he 'gladly' built 'the Umbrella and

the caitya's neck, too'[6]. After which, the text goes on to list the remaining tiers, all of them, without similar asides.

Why mention the 'neck', i.e. the cube on top of the dome, amidst the series of tiers? It is not in the least plausible, and the situation is all the more peculiar since a few lines earlier (p.418, line 14) the neck had been mentioned, under the same term *gala-*, and its erection had there been ascribed to 'the (planets, viz.) moon, sun, etc., and the stars (*candrasūryāditārābhis*)'. Obviously, then, this is a case of a conflation of different accounts: and the wording of the text would make sense if it had mechanically included an older version which, after mentioning the umbrellas, went on to talk about the 'neck' that intervenes between them and the dome. I find it hard to think of a different way to explain the text as it stands. But again, even this brief note shows how the Purāṇa has passages thoroughly debased; at times, one despairs of using them for any kind of specific argument. –

§15. N.S. 937 in a sense marks a return to the principles that governed N.S. 832, an even structure, on the whole more densely packed. Only the caesura which had been so pronounced in 874 has left its mark: between IV and V, the uniform 'step' of 0.5 is increased to 0.75. – The maximum height has been shifted one tier further down and is now at XI.

1.4. The Width of the Tiers

§16. The principles that govern the width of the tiers look bewildering at first sight. Yet one would think actual measurements have neither been chosen at random nor are solely due to technical or aesthetic considerations.

It is no very even path one has to follow when trying to understand the figures, and one does not see where to look for an independent verification of interpretations. In spite of this, the attempt does seem necessary: a working hypothesis which was to take actual dimensions as chosen at random would be difficult to entertain.

The data of the manuscripts are collected in Table T6 (see p.91).

§17. The variants in the three series of figures are considerable, and indeed there is only one figure which is kept constant, viz., the size of the lowermost tier.

At some stage in the attempt to translate concepts into measurements, the figure 13 must have played its role. Even multiples of 13 are found in the following instances:

832: Tiers V and VI,
874: Tiers I and XI,
937: Tiers V, VI, and XI,

6 *kṛtaṃ cakrañ ca mudā caityagalam api.* Ed. H.P. Śāstrī, p.419 line 12.

	Tiers 832: Width Emended Version: Proportions					Tiers 874: Width Proportions					Tiers 937: Width Proportions				
Col. 1			Col. 2		Col. 3			Col. 2		Col. 3			Col. 2		Col. 3
Tier No.	ku	aṃ	Total aṃ	'Step'	Coeff. 13*x	ku	aṃ	Total aṃ	'Step'	Coeff. 13*x	ku	aṃ	Total aṃ	'Step'	Coeff. 13*x
I	2.5	3	63	25.5	4.85	3	6	78	22.25	6.00	2.5		60	16.5	4.62
II	3.5	4.5	88.5	6.5	6.81	4	4.25	100.25	11.25	7.71	3	4.5	76.5	18.5	5.88
III	3.5	11	95	23	7.31	4	15.5	111.5	20.5	8.58	3.5	11	95	23	7.31
IV	4.5	10	118	25	9.08	5	12	132	20	10.15	4.5	10	118	25	9.08
V	5.5	11	143	26	11.00	6	8	152	26	11.69	5.5	11	143	26	11.00
VI	7	1	169	30.5	13.00	7	10	178	28	13.69	7	1	169	30.5	13.00
VII	8	7.5	199.5	30	15.35	8	14	206	35	15.85	8	7.5	199.5	30	15.35
VIII	9.5	1.5	229.5	30.75	17.65	10	1	241	23.5	18.54	9.5	1.5	229.5	18.75	17.65
IX	10.5	8.25	260.25	30.25	20.02	11	0.5	264.5	29.5	20.35	10	8.25	248.25	42.25	19.10
X	12	2.5	290.5	29.75	22.35	12	6	294	18	22.62	12	2.5	290.5	21.5	22.35
XI	13	8.25	320.25	-23.2	24.63	13		312	-9.5	24.00	13		312	-15	24.00
XII	12	9	297	-13	22.85	12	14.5	302.5	-18.5	23.27	12	9	297	-13	22.85
XIII	11.5	8	284		21.85	11.5	8	284		21.85	11.5	8	284		21.85

Table T6. N.S. 832, 874-877, 937:
Width of Tiers

and the number reappears in the distance which separates Tiers XII and XIII, in the 874 and 937 series.

The fact that 13 occurs in the eleventh tier would seem particularly significant in this context since it is the widest of the entire series. Its dimensions are obtained by means of a very simple process: it is the number of tiers multiplied by the basic measurement of 24 fingers = 1 cubit: one remembers it was this same figure which had also been used when fixing proportions for the heights of tiers (§4, *supra*).

§18. N.S. 832: Gradation and Deviations from Gradation.

a. With this in mind, one addresses oneself to the 832 figures and tries to extract the common factor, 13. At first sight, the results are not conclusive, but do not seem entirely irrelevant either. If one allows oneself a certain latitude, Table T6 Column 3 would suggest a sequence of 5 – 7 – 7.5 – 9 – 11 – 13 for the six uppermost tiers. One might feel inclined to extend the list by another step, admitting VII (15.35 rather than the ideal *15): but with this, the uniformity of the series is broken: to take 17.65 as 17, 20.02 as 19 etc. would seem completely arbitrary.

b. This, however, ignores the following factor. When contrasting actual figures with those of the ideal string, one notices the deviations show something resembling an arithmetical progression:

Tier	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI
Actual Figures:	15.35	17.65	20.02	22.35	24.63
Ideal String:	15	17	19	21	23
Difference:	0.35	0.65	1.02	1.35	1.63,

with a common underlying factor c, the series consisting of c, 2c,... 5c, and c amounting to some figure between 0.325 and 0.34, i.e. in all likelihood to one third (: which is difficult to express in the notations the manuscripts employ: they use signs for fourths and halves, but not for thirds).

This means the data could be understood as actually continuing the series of odd numbers that the first six tiers would suggest, ideal figures being expanded by c and its multiples. Hence, the following preliminary interpretation of measurements (the figures are to be read as multiples of 13):

I	5	IV	9	VII	15 + c	XI	23 + 5c
II	7	V	11	VIII	17 + 2c	XII	(20.5+1) + 4c
III	7.5	VI	13	IX	19 + 3c	XIII	20.5 + 4c
				X	21 + 4c		

c. A reason for this addition is not immediately apparent: why should someone feel it essential to add 4.33 fingers (i.e. one third of thirteen), or its multiples, to what on the face of it seems a satisfactory gradation? We shall revert to this problem in §18f, below, after dealing with some preliminary matters.

d. The reason for changing the dimensions of tier I (63 fingers instead of the

65 one would expect according to the preceding table) is not far to seek: 63 was the length of the Uṣṇīṣacūḍāmaṇi, and this again the manuscript had defined as one third of the side length of the 'neck'. It is this figure, then, which was again repeated at the commencement of the series of tiers.

e. Two of the figures are wide of the mark, viz., the steps of II/III and of XII/XIII, both being considerably smaller than the rest.

(1) When looking at the co-efficients used at the top of the stūpa, i.e. the series 5 – 7 – 7.5 – 9 – 11 for Tiers I – V, it is III which disturbs the sequence. The irregularity would resolve itself once we were to assume it had been inserted into the pattern after proportions had been fixed.

(2) And the dimensions of XII and XIII make sense on the same hypothesis. The usual principle in gradations is that the maximum is enclosed by two tiers of identical size: in other words, below Tier XI we should expect the figure of X repeated, i.e. the coefficient of 22.35. Instead of this, we obtain 22.85 (for XII) and 21.85 (for XIII). One notices the expected figure is the arithmetical mean between them – from which one would conclude the actual dimensions are derived by doubling the tier below XI, and fixing their sizes in equal proportion[7].

These two irregularities, then, can be understood as having arisen in the process of adapting the measurements of an eleven-tiered stūpa to an extended structure of thirteen tiers.

f. It was this insertion of the second-lowest tier which caused the problem stated in §18c, i.e. the added co-efficient. Which width was to be assigned to the new umbrella? A mere repetition was out of the question: it would have destroyed the overall shape. So the architect resorted to the device of adding – not quite an entire step of 2 x 13 fingers, but only five sixths of it, and then gradually easing this increase out, over the four tiers above that of maximum width. This he did in equal steps of 4.33 fingers until, at Tier VI, he had reached the original series of proportions which was characteristic of the eleven–tier stūpa.

g. Conclusions. The proportions of umbrellas of the eleven-tier stūpa, then, were of the most transparent nature: on top, it started out with 5 x 13 fingers, then increased this figure by 2 x 13 fingers with each tier, until reaching Tier X, which accordingly measured 23 x 13 fingers. The last tier was diminished by one of these units.

§19. The N.S. 874 stūpa has abandoned most of the measures and principles 832 had used. In one respect, it makes for greater clearness: it uses even multiples of 13 for the narrowest and the widest tier, I and XI.

7 The actual figure for XIII, 284 fingers, can be taken as 20.5 x 13 + 4c. This amounts to 283.83: the deviation from 284 is negligible. XII is then obtained by using an increment consisting of the normal factor, 13.

When comparing it to that of 832, one sees the lowest tier has been left unchanged. All the others were increased in width, with the sole exception of XI. The tiers then, have assumed a more compact and at the same time more prominent appearance: the proportion of narrowest to widest tier now is 1 : 4; in 832, it had been less than 1 : 5. This turned the top of the stūpa into more of a counterpart to the dome than it was in the other constructions.

a. As to actual measurements, it is again the eleven-tier pattern which has been the dominant influence, with the step at 2 x 13 fingers, as before. This time, however, it started out with 6 x 13, hence rose to a maximum of 24 x 13 for the last but one among these eleven.

(1) The second tier of this older series was doubled pretty much the same way as in the N.S. 832 stūpa: the new umbrella, No. II of the present construction, was as it were squeezed in, and what had thus become No. III was shifted a bit down the beam.

(2) As for the bottom pair, the method is slightly different. With 21.85 x 13, the size of Tier XIII is very close to what the lowest rung of the series of eleven ought to have been (22 x 13); indeed one wonders whether by any chance they actually re-used the old tier. XII was wedged in, with a measurement not too far off the arithmetical mean between ideal sizes (: it is something like 3 fingers wider than one would expect, i.e. about 1%).

b. Even so, the series still is markedly irregular: omitting the two insertions just discussed, realization of the ideal step of 2 (x 13) varies between a minimum of 1.38 and a maximum of 2.27.

(1) This maximum increase is found between tiers IX and X. It was in this very place that we had found the greatest gap in heights (§12a, *supra*): the incision after Tier IX which had been noted there is again expressed by another means.

(2) The next increase over the average, with 2.16 (x 13) less marked than the preceding, sets Tier VII off from its surroundings. One could of course now start thinking about a seven-tiered prototype (cf. §12e). But the deviation is not sufficiently pronounced to warrant conclusions.

§20. The stūpa of N.S. 937

a. Just as with heights and distances, the gradation of 937 in many respects marks a return to the principles of N.S. 832. The multiples of 13 are repeated in the old places, with the widest tier, XI, added: this repeats an innovation of 874, where it also amounts to 24 x 13 fingers.

b. Why, then, give up the width of I which had been introduced in 874? Its patent advantage was that it extended the factor of 13 to the very first tier. And if it was abandoned, perhaps in order to revert to the older version with more pronounced increases, why not use the 874 adaptation of the 832 figure (63), increasing it

to be another multiple of 13, viz., 65? The two added fingers would have made little difference to the visual shape. Instead of which, tier I is reduced by 3 fingers, bringing it down to 60.

Here for once, one can at least guess at a reason. As measurements stand, the difference between the widest and the most narrow tier, XI and I, is 312-60, i.e. 252. This is distributed over ten steps – i.e. the average distance of steps is 25.2 fingers. This is 21/20 of a cubit (which has 24 fingers). For the sacred building, then, someone thought of increasing the basic measurement and bringing it up to an odd rather than an even number of components: odd numbers were auspicious.

This tallies with the rules of a Buddhist iconographic manual, the Devatāpratimālakṣaṇa, which has the Buddha enter into a dialogue with Śāriputra about the size of Buddha and Bodhisattva images. 'There, the measurement of Bodhisattvas should have an extent 120 of his fingers large, that of Buddhas, 125[8].' The sentence is remarkable in two respects. For one, it clearly repeats what is one of the general South Asian assumptions: it is 'h i s o w n' measurement of fingers which an image is to use: in other words, the image is identical with the figure depicted. – Second, there are the proportions which are of course of high interest in the present context. Bodhisattvas : Buddhas = 120 : 125 = 24 : 25 – which is practically the proportion the application of which we had just deduced from the manuscript[9]. –

c. There is one considerable irregularity in the 937 figures. This occurs in the VIII-X block: the VIII/IX step is unusually low, while IX/X is very high. Probably, this is nothing but a scribal error (which would then have occurred in the prototype of both **A** and **B**). The average between the two irregular figures is 30.5 – which tallies with the data of 832. Probably, then, one ought to read 10.5 rather than 10 cubits for tier IX.

1.5. The Breadth of the Tiers

§21. The breadth of the tiers again shows the pattern by now familiar: a basic regularity repeatedly disturbed. Increases or decreases vary between 0 and 1 fingers, in steps of 0.25 (and one again has to note one fourth of a finger is the smallest unit the manuscripts employ). A regular distribution is lacking:

8 *tatra tāvat pramāṇaṃ bodhisattvānāṃ svena aṅgulipramāṇena śataṃ viṃśatyottaram buddhānāṃ pañcaviṃśatyottaraṃ* Quoted from Hara Prasad Śāstrī: A Catalogue of palm-leaf and selected paper manuscripts, vol. 2. Calcutta 1915, p.41.

9 The missing fifth of a finger transforms it into a manageable shape: what is actually added is half a finger.

TIER:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
BREADTH: (in fingers)	3	3	3.25	3.5	3.75	4.25	4.5	5	5.25	5.5	6.5	6.5	5.75

a. The actual shape of the stūpa, and the analogies of sizes and heights of tiers, lead us to distrust this series: why should the principle of gradual increase or diminution have been disrupted? For this is what the figures show in two places: there is an identical measurement in two places, viz., for tiers 1/2 and 11/12. The pattern would come closer to regularity if one was to take them as mechanical duplicates of one tier in each place, i.e. figures for an eleven-tiered stūpa being used to accommodate 13 tiers.

b. With what one might call a tolerable degree of certainty, one could go a step further. Taking the measurements for tiers 4-8, i.e. 3.5 – 3.75 – 4.25 – 4.5 – 5, one of course notes the change in intervals. By taking the arithmetic mean between 3.75 and 4.25 the series would be transformed into a regular sequence, with increases amounting to an even 0.5 fingers. This means it would make sense if there had been one tier, four fingers wide, which had as it were been split up into two, their measurements being derived from those of their antecedent by applying the usual coefficient of gradation, viz., 0.5^{10}.

c. And a very similar procedure will account for the irregularities in the continuation of the sequence: 4.5 – 5 – 5.25 – 5 for tiers 7 to 10. Again it is 5.25 (i.e. the figure for the ninth tier) that disturbs an even distribution; by the process just employed, it can be taken as a duplicate of tier 8 or of tier 9, its breadth in either case being the arithmetic mean between theirs.

d. Summary. The irregular figures given for the breadth of tiers again fall into a regular sequence on the assumption they have been derived from a nine-tier sequence. This may have taken place in two steps: the extension from 11 to 13 tiers (section (a), *supra*) follows a different principle from that of 9 to 11 (sections (b,c)). The process of extension is given in the following table:

10 - which of course led to incompatibility with adjoining figures. Before judging this too harshly, one has to remember units lower than one fourth of a finger are not used in our calculations.

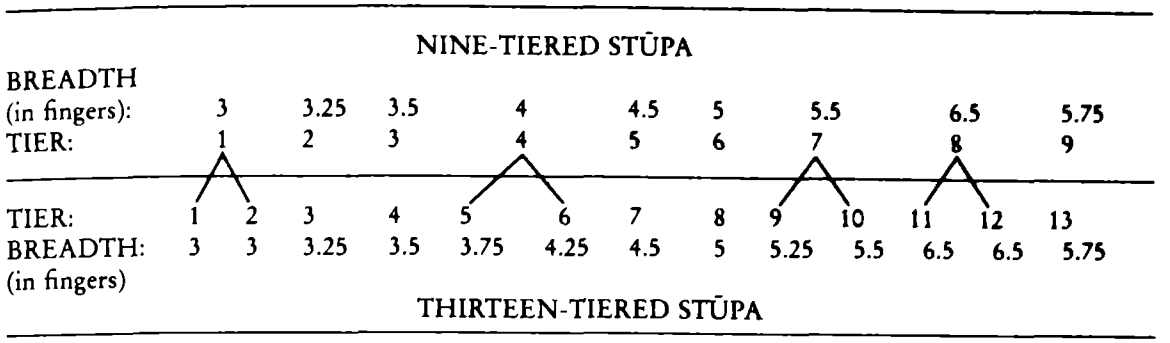


Table T9. Evolution of the Thirteen-Tiered Stūpa:
Breadth of Tiers

2. *The Top of the Stūpa*

§1. The dimensions of the various parts above the tiers are assembled in the following table. For the identification of parts, which occasionally is tentative, see the sketch, Ill.11, p.70. – Measurements of 937 tally with those of 832, with a minimal variant in the length of the beam (No. 10).

	N.S.832		N.S.874	
	Height	Width	Height	Width
(1) 'Touching the Top' (*cothiṃ*)	9			
(2) Railings (*ṣajjalā*)	14	3|8		3.0|11
(3) Square Beams (*kāca*)				4.5|4
(4) Base of struts (*avasāhā*)	13			
(5) Myrobalan Ornament (*aṃlā*)	3.5			
(6) Top of Central Beam (*uṣṇīṣa*°)	3.5|4		3.0|19	
(7) Parasol (*cakā*)	9	11.5|-	5.25	7.5|5
(8) Lower Pillars (*duva thāṃ*)	5.5|1.5		7.5|-	
(9) Upper Pillars (*caku thāma*)	7.5|3		5.0|-	
(10) Central Beam (on top of Parasol) (*elasi*)	4.5|7[11]		4.0|4	
(11) 'Covering' (*śulape*)			9+4	
(12) 'Frills' (*śulape*)			3	
(13) Branch Wings (*kacā papū*)			12	
(14) Pinnacle (*mola*)			9.5	
Total Height			12.0|-	

Notation: cubits|fingers

§2. The total height of the top cannot be verified exactly: none of the mss. has the complete set of figures.

11 N.S. 937: 4.5 cubits 8 fingers

a. N.S.874 tells us it was 12 cubits. Using the Pythagoras theorem, one can calculate the vertical diagonal of the rhomboid the sides of which are formed by the inclined beams. For N.S.874, it amounts to something like 241.5 fingers. When adding the pinnacle, the base of the struts, and the thickness of the parasol, one is still about 10 fingers short of the required figure – but there are a few measurements which are lacking, such as the *cothiṃ* and the *aṃlā*. –

In 832, this same diagonal must have been much less: it came to around 205 fingers. But the drawings themselves betray a principle which guided construction. If one draws a circle, taking the middle of the parasol as one's centre, one will find it circumscribes the *uṣṇīṣa* and the body of the *gajura* (cf. Plate 11, p.70).

b. One subtotal from the above list is essential, viz., the part of the Central Beam above the tiers. This consists of No.s (1) – (6) of the above list, excluding, of course, the railings. They add up to 116.5 fingers – half a finger more than one should expect from the other figures of mss.

§3. There are two really major alterations. One affects the parasol and its superstructure. There is the different size of the parasol: the N.S.874 structure is much lighter and smaller than the other one. It must have stood higher than that of its counterpart. To be sure, the mere lengths of pillars [(8) and (9) of the above list] add up to nearly the same total, but in view of the difference in the diameter of the parasol, N.S. 874 must have been something like 70 cm higher.

This near inversion of measurements, (8) vs. (9), has a further implication. As can be seen from Plate 2, the present-day stūpa has multiple finials. With its upper pillars only measuring 5 cubits, there hardly was room for this repetition in N.S.874, while both the earlier and the later structure would in theory admit and perhaps actually had them. The drawings themselves would seem to go some way to corroborate this conclusion: one notes **C** treats the parts of the top which rise above the parasol in a very perfunctory manner; **A** and **B** are much more explicit.

§4. These are sweeping changes in what is a very prominent part of the entire structure. They were possible because the entire parasol only gradually grew into an integral part of the stūpa. At an earlier stage, it had ended in the Crest Jewel: many of the caityas in the Valley still do. One notes the sketch of ideal proportions of a stūpa reproduced on Plate 13 (p.102) does depict worlds below the dome, but has no trace of the parasol and its superstructure: the end of the *uṣṇīṣa*° is the top.

Contemporary reality still reflects this state. There are caityas which have a parasol only during part of the year: on the full-moon day of the month of Āśvin, the four old stūpas which surround the city of Pāṭan were all offered a chattra, and this was taken down on Kṛṣṇāṣṭamī: the odd wooden structures one sees on some older etchings (e.g. Plate 25) are to hold it. The North Pāṭan stūpa shows the development

this part of the structure has taken: it has been permanently installed within the century or so since Wright had his illustration made.

§5. The height of the small Central Beam that rises on top of the parasol is not without interest. The 4.5 cubits 7 fingers of N.S.832 amount to 115 fingers; in 937, we find this figure increased by one. Now all mss. tell us the main Central Beam was to be 48 cubits 7 fingers, i.e. 1159 fingers. In other words, the small beam on top was clearly meant to reproduce it, on a scale of 1 : 10, and the added finger of N.S.937 serves to complete this equation. – The corresponding figure of N.S.874 is 4 cubits 4 fingers, i.e. 100 fingers. Those who drew up this measurement had obviously given up the old analogy. They may have aimed at a different effect: in theory, the overall height of the top was to be 12 cubits. This is quite close to one fourth of the Central Beam – though it is not clear why they omitted the 1.75 fingers which would have perfected the proportion; they could at least have put them down on paper.

3. Height of the Stūpa. The Central Beam

§1. Calculations concerning the Central Beam, and indeed the height of the entire stūpa, are vitiated by the following facts:

(1) As measurements show, the Central Beam does not reach to the base of the dome, but ends somewhere in its body. Drawing C provides an explanation: apparently it is a case of the peak of a rock protruding into the dome, and it is over its top that the Central Beam is raised. In case the present beam is the same size as its predecessors, viz., 48 cubits and 7 fingers, the height of this rock must be something like 336 cm: the total height of the dome, below the torus, is 848 cm, and it is 269 fingers of the beam that mss. say are embedded.

(2) For a precise calculation, one would need the complete data for the top of the stūpa. None of the mss. provides them.

This means figures for the overall length of the stūpa are not sufficiently reliable (see §2, below). In this position, one will let oneself be guided by the Central Beam, for which such figures do exist. In this, however, one again encounters two problems:

(a) It is only on occasion that manuscript additions tally with the sums of the various items. In case of differences, the sums noted down by scribes seem the normalized, i.e. the ideal, ones.

(b) The second difficulty is more fundamental in nature. The Central Beam was 48 cubits 7 fingers, i.e. 1159 fingers. For our purposes, this must be counted as an invariable: all sources are agreed this is the correct figure – and we have noted the

same measurement, reduced to one tenth, recurs in the Central Beam that rises on top of the parasol (*supra*, 2.2; §5). Now, 1159 is the product of two primes, 19 and 61, neither of which seems significant in the present context.

Nor does the distribution of blocks over the Central Beam follow obvious proportions: in mss. A and B, it is as follows: Block I (top etc., above tiers), 116.5 fingers; Block II (tiers) 505: Blocks III (neck) and IV (dome) 269 each[12]. How to resolve them into a plausible graded series?

The figures, then, must owe their existence to some interference. Given the kind of thinking that constantly strives for symbolic expressions of concepts, the field for speculation is wide indeed; it can be pursued indefinitely, conclusions never being more than questionable: We have seen the length of the *uṣṇīṣa*, 88 fingers, is considered important. Multiply this with the number of tiers, 13: this gives us 1144, and as to the remainder – well, there ought to be some explanation for 15, etc. etc. As long as there is no outside evidence, there does not seem to be much point in this kind of attempt, though one might accidentally hit upon the thoughts which were in the architects' minds.

§2. Some Discrepancies in Mss. Calculations

The mss. are quite definite about the height of the various Blocks, i.e. the parts of the Central Beam they are to occupy. In a surprising number of instances, these figures do not tally with the sums that result when additions are performed.

(1) N.S.832, Block II. Line R37 gives *21 ku 1 aṃ* as the total sum, i.e. 505 fingers, as does L37 for N.S. 937; when adding the manuscript figures, one arrives at 497.5. The mistake lies in the omission of the height of Tier XI (line R31). If we were to take this as 7.5 fingers, the account would stand numerically correct.

The solution is not entirely satisfactory: in N.S.937, XI, with its 8.25 fingers, actually is the highest of the entire array, and one hesitates to posit a different structure for N.S.832; the 937 figure fits into the overall pattern. Transporting it back into N.S.832 would result in Block II actually being three quarters of a finger higher than in manuscript calculations. The discrepancy can perhaps be reduced a trifle: an identical height for Tiers II and III does not inspire confidence; as has been noted, two successive layers never are of the same height; hence, perhaps one ought to read 4.25 rather than 4.5 in line R13, in conformity with N.S.937. This would still leave us with an unexplained surplus of half a finger.

(2) N.S.937, Block II. A mistake of what in all likelihood is three fingers lies in line L18 where, in order to get a plausible sequence of distances between tiers, we shall have to read *ku 1 aṃ* **2** (rather than *aṃ 5*): again the axiom of identical distances not being repeated.

12 The ms. total, then, is half a finger higher than in the scribes' figures.

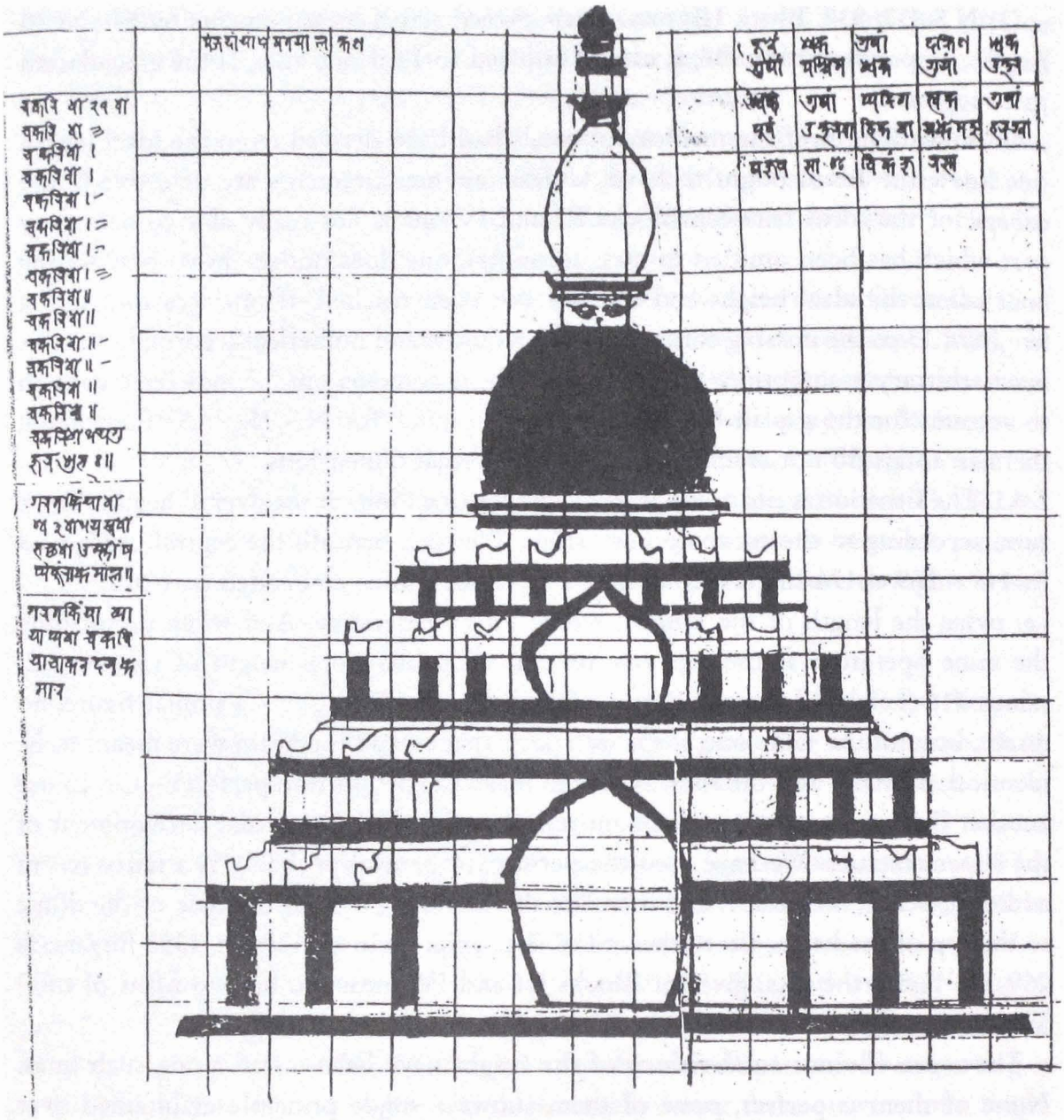
(3) N.S.832, 937, Block III: mss. totals exceed actual measurements by 54 and 16 fingers, respectively; for 937, it can be reduced to 13 if one accepts the emendation just suggested.

It looks, then, as if the manuscript totals had been derived from the ideal length one knew the Beam ought to have. Unless our measurements are defective (: and except for the torus between Blocks III and IV one is not really able to name any part which has been omitted in mss. accounts), one does not see how to avoid the conclusion the ideal height had actually not been reached. If one was to assign a height of 13 to the missing torus, N.S. 937 would stand numerically correct. But this is an arbitrary assumption: the present height is some 65 cm, i.e. not large enough to account for the gap in N.S.832, and far too much for N.S.937[13]. As they stand, the mss. totals do not seem compatible with actual dimensions.

§3. The situation is not really improved once one looks at the overall height. To be sure, according to the contemporary stūpa, the rock beneath the central beam rises to 445 – 269 = 176 fingers (total height of dome minus embedded part of beam) – i.e. twice the length of the *uṣṇīṣa*°, which looks suggestive. And when performing the same operation at the top, one obtains 12 cubits (total height of top, ms. **C**) minus 116 (height of Central Beam in Block I), i.e. 172 fingers – a similar figure, no doubt, but not the same one: if the two parts that extend the beam were meant to be identical, why not add the four fingers to make the proportion perfect? – Or, to use another line of reasoning perhaps more in keeping with the actual development of the superstructure: We have seen the permanent parasol probably is a fairly recent addition; hence, we omit it and calculate the total height from the base of the dome to the top of the beam, i.e. to the end of the *uṣṇīṣa*°: 176 + 1159, i.e. 1335 fingers. Is 269, the figure the mss. give for Blocks III and IV, meant to be two fifths of this? The correct figure is 267.

The more obvious subdivisions of the height have been tested along such lines. None of them is perfect, none of them shows a single principle maintained over the entire length. And when looking for outside evidence, one finds the idealized drawing of stūpa proportions reproduced on Plate 13. This again comes from mss. **A** and **B**. The visible parts of the stūpa, those that rise on top of the Nether Worlds, are subdivided in quite a different way: their total height is 8.5 (or perhaps 8.25) units, and dome, neck, tiers, and top are proportioned 3 : 1 : 2.5 : 2 – a pattern seen on many *paṭa*s. Present-day proportions are quite different. The cause, and the principles governing them, still remain to be found.

13 One sees with its 26 fingers, the *pitu bhā* of lines LR48 does not really solve the problem.



Ill. 13
Ideal Proportions of a Stūpa
(from Ms. **B**)

4. Neck and Dome

§1. The Neck

Between N.S.832 and 937, the proportions of the 'neck', i.e. the old *harmikā*, had undergone a fundamental change. This consisted of a considerable increase in height, with a corresponding reduction in the clay and plaster layer.

For 832, the figures are 129 fingers for the neck, 43 for the 'clay and plaster', and a total of another 43 for the small parts that come between the two. This gives a very satisfactory overall proportion, viz., 1 : 1 : 3[14]. One notes, though, this is very far from the ms. total of 269: 55 fingers are missing, and neither in the contemporary structure nor in drawings or paintings do we find additional parts to account for the deficieny.

The old proportions were abandoned either in 937 or in 874. For 937, we have 192 for the neck proper; the *vajraleoṃ* is 20, and the intervening parts come to a total of 41. 192 to 61: this is, perhaps, not too far off a proportion of 1 : 3, though one hesitates to suggest it when faced with the exactness of the predecessor. – Again, a reason for the manuscript total of 269 fingers is not apparent.

§2. The Dome

The overall height of the present-day dome is 848 cm, i.e. 445 fingers. Of this, the Central Beam occupies 269 fingers; the remainder must be the peak of the rock that protrudes into the dome. Verification of course is impossible.

If there are any exact proportions to other parts of the stūpa, they have escaped me. Of course there are numerous approximations: but there is the accuracy of subdivisions like those of the 832 'neck' to warn us.

5. Conclusions

The overall impression, then, is one of considerable disparity. All through the period of our data, the stūpa was anything but a rigid structure; rather, the figures testify to a continuous process of extension and adaptation. And we shall see this finds its corollary in its esoteric interpretations.

(1) There are not many data about the dome: the manuscripts clearly focus upon the wooden parts of the structure. And there is the living rock within the body that the Central Beam is raised upon. This vitiates attempts to understand proportions: one would of course like to know how it was that the dome came to abandon the perfect hemispherical shape.

(2) As to the neck, there are three different stages before our very eyes. In the drawing of Ideal Proportions (Plate 13), the part between dome and tiers took one unit out of a total of 8.5 that the entire building consisted of. The N.S.832 figures show this part extended to something like five thirds, and to go by overall

14 Incidentally, one notes the *pitu bhā* of lines LR48 with its 832 measurement of 26 fingers does not fit into this series.

measurements, N.S.937 had added another third, which again implies a considerable change of proportions.

(3) As for the width of the 'neck', mss. **A** and **B** relate it to the length of the *uṣṇīṣa*° (*supra*, p.102f.), the proportion being 3 : 1, and actual figures bear out the claim.

(4) The system of tiers has seen numerous innovations. And when reviewing them, one does obtain the outlines of the development which led to the present construction. For many irregularities can be understood on the assumption that they reflect older principles for building the tiers that in the course of time had come to be superseded. One cannot, of course, claim such developments necessarily stem from the Svayaṃbhū itself. Caityas were – and indeed are – being built all the time; large-size stūpas are by no means rare within the Valley; the question of how to construct them must have been a matter of routine to what probably was quite a small number of specialists. It would be odd if their habits and customs had not exerted their influence on the Mahācaitya itself. It is thus nothing but a manner of speaking if the present discussion is confined to the Svayaṃbhūnāth.

a. A *Nine-Tier pattern* has marked the structure in numerous ways. It is here that we have the strongest evidence: by assigning identical measurements to some of the 13 tiers, the List of Proportions (§2, p.80) had abandoned the principle of gradual diminution or increase of layers – and stūpas with identical diameters of two successive umbrellas are not found. Hence, duplicate figures had to be eliminated, which led to a nine-tier list (§§2-6).

Among the architects, there is nobody who had actually used this ideal list of 13. To the task, however, of expanding the list of nine, there was no constant solution; rather, one finds two separate adaptations: that of N.S. 832 (modified in 937), and another one in 874. The former essentially is an even and graded structure, with few irregularities to betray its origin. The latter in many places shows the architects still had the nine-tier pattern in their bones: deviations in heights and distances (§14) are repeated in widths (§20) and breadths (§21). – Finally, in ms. C the lowest tier could go by the name of 'Rāhu's Umbrella' (AII, line 31), which looks like a remnant of calling tiers by the name of the Nine Planets.

b. Traces of an *Eleven-Tier structure* are much less prominent. In breadths (for which we only have N.S.874 figures), there were two measurements just being duplicated (: the only instance, incidentally, in all this host of figures, and an exception to the general rule more easily borne since the thickness of 'wheels' is not visible to the outside observer). Then, there is the marked increase in distances and heights in the N.S.874 figures (§§12, 14c) which sets XII and XIII off from the rest, giving the impression as if the lowest pair had been added. And finally, there are the abnormally low increases in widths for the II/III and XII/XIII pairs,

both in N.S.832 (§18) and 874 (§19), which suggest an additional tier was as it were wedged into a sequence that one meant to disturb as little as possible. The fact that these two series of measurements offer distinct solutions to the same problem seems significant: the eleven-tier system, one would conclude, cannot have been all that remote from the designers' minds. This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that eleven-umbrella stūpas do exist (as in the Mahābauddha Caitya). Besides, there is the 1565 painting of the Svayaṃbhū: it does seem to depict 11 tiers[15] rather than 13 – though the published photographs are none too clear.

c. Occasionally, one fancies one recognizes traces of a still earlier stage, viz., the *Seven-Tier system*. One such source is the N.S.874 edifice: both in heights and in widths, there are unusual incisions which intervene between Tiers VI and VII (§§12e, 19b2). In themselves, they are perhaps not sufficiently pronounced to warrant far-reaching conclusions. But then there was the odd sequence in mounting the tiers (§1), the seven lowermost umbrellas not being raised in regular succession, but in three separate units, always starting from the bottom. This procedure, which makes no sense from a technical point of view, can hardly be anything but a historical relic. And there was the peculiar interruption in the Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa account of the sequence of tiers, the 'neck' against all reason being listed between the seventh and the eight tier (§14e): the note might stem from a time when the seventh umbrella had been the topmost one.

This much, then, for the more obvious conclusions to be drawn from irregularities. One notes I have passed over what in a sense is the most important problem of all: the proportions of the entire stūpa and of the Central Beam. All the numerous suggestions that spring to mind suffer from the same defect: they demand a greater latitude in the interpretation of figures than it is perhaps useful to allow. To give an example: the *uṣṇīṣa*° is 88 fingers; the 832 'neck' consists of a regulated sequence of units of 43 fingers each: of course one would like to relate these figures to each other and take the unit of the neck as half of the *uṣṇīṣa*° – and who is to say this is not what was meant: in (3), we had after all noted another correspondence between them. It is the very complexity of remnants and allusions, in figures that one does think one understands, which discourages such attempts.

(5) One more essential point. If we take N.S.832, our earliest series, as the basic pattern, we find it changed very considerably in N.S.874–877 – and the alterations did not only affect proportions, but even the overall shape and external appearance:

15 M.S. Slusser: On a Sixteenth-Century pictorial pilgrim's guide to Nepal. In: Archives of Asian Art 38(1985),pp.6-36 (a black-and-white photograph on p.8); M.S. Slusser: The cultural aspects of Newar painting. In: Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. St. Augustin 1987, pp.13-28 (colour plate I).

the tiers were wider, the parasol much higher up so that the *uṣṇīṣa* must have been visible from afar; the entire edifice was larger and more monumental. Then, in N.S.937, people again in all essentials reverted to the earlier state. And there is a peculiarity in the mss. tradition itself that should not be overlooked. Mss. **A** and **B** do not mention the intervening 874 restauration by as much as a syllable.

There must have been a reason, then, why one thought the 874 innovations were to be abandoned. Its nature is hard to tell. Maybe the new structure was not considered sufficiently stable – though one notes the 832 stūpa had a life of 42 years while its successor apparently stood for 60: in all fairness, it should not have been considered unnaturally fragile. It was its lifetime, however, which saw a great political upheaval, viz., the Nepālī conquest of the Valley. Given the constant striving after symbolical interpretations of the building, there may have been people who thought the changes had not stood the test of time.

Chapter IV

FINANCING RESTAURATIONS: DONORS

§1. In spite of its compact external appearance, the Svayaṃbhūnāth is not a very stable structure: renovations are necessary at fairly short intervals, usually every two generations or so. This is chiefly due to the wooden Central Beam rotting and decaying. Its replacement involves dismantling the entire superstructure, down to the neck and parts of the very dome itself.

The traditional Nepalese routine for financial support of religious institutions and establishments is, of course, the *guthi* system. People who make a major donation to a sanctuary often do not only give the costs of building etc., but also assign a steady income for periodic renewal or enactment of a rite. Usually, this takes the forms of lands the income from which is to be employed for maintenance. A congregation, i.e. a *guthi*, is then established to look after the funds, their proper management and use[1].

It is chiefly periodically recurring tasks which are financed that way. *Guthis* to ensure the performance of rituals are probably most frequent, but there are also buildings which are maintained, to take care of minor repairs: roofs etc.

Being based upon the income from lands, the whole system is geared to the yearly cycle. *Guthi* lands are usually farmed out to tenants against a fixed share of the income (usually only of the main crop). The proceeds are used to finance the tasks of the *guthi* – and its annual feast.

If there ever were such donations destined for renovations of the Svayaṃbhūnāth, they have disappeared without leaving a trace. The traditional guardians of the sanctuary, the Buddhācāryas, think the burden of an eventual restoration will fall on their shoulders; they say they have no funds nor regular income to meet them.

Since 1961, this is the normal position of a Nepalese sanctuary. The *Guthi Saṃsthān Act* gathered the landed property of nearly all religious endowments, and brought them together under a central administration. This is not the place to dwell upon its disastrous effects on the numerous tiny sanctuaries the responsibility for whose upkeep has now passed from local users to an anonymous agency. In the case of a monument of national importance like the Svayaṃbhūnāth, one presumes

1 For an example, see the Kathesimbu inscription of N.S.672 (published in D.R. Regmi: Mediaeval Nepal 4, Patna 1966, p.10f., and again in Hemraj Sakya and T.R. Vaidya: Medieval Nepal, colophons and inscriptions, Kathmandu 1970, pp.90ff.): In memory of his deceased son, one Megharāja donates what is called a *suvarṇṇamukha* for a *caitya*: Sakya and Vaidya take it as a 'golden finial'. Land is assigned for a feast in commemoration of the donation, and a *guthi* established.

funds will always be made available, and one can doubtbless count on Government assistance.

Even with this upheaval in financing religious sites, it is odd the old system should have so completely vanished. Yet none of the Buddhācāryas remembers donations to meet the expenses of the upkeep of the stūpa proper. In view of the amount of work involved, the financial outlay of a renovation must have been considerable at all times. And even if lands assigned for this purpose had been sequestered, one would expect memory to have lingered. No traditions to that effect, let alone documents, have emerged till now[2].

And there is one a priori consideration which does cast a doubt upon the *guthi* model and its applicability to the task at hand. This is the traditional economic structure.

The system was attuned to the agricultural year and thus could very well handle tasks which recur on an annual basis. Major renovations of the Svayaṃbhū, though, become necessary only at longish intervals. Which means the bulk of the proceeds of any lands granted to support them would have had to be accumulated. Handling funds destined for a purpose that arises only once every two generations was no easy task: what was one to do with the money that could not be spent for decades? Off-hand, one can only think of two ways, neither of which is very satisfactory. Either the income could have been converted into bullion, with all the attendant risks of safe-keeping, misappropriation etc. – and the problem of which share to take for the annual guthi feasts thrown in. Alternatively, the guthi would have had to resort to extended money-lending activities, ever increasing in volume, and hampered by the fact that long-term investments were not really feasible since in theory the capital might be required at any time – a host of practical difficulties, then, to be added to the familiar moral problems. For those who borrowed money did so from private need, and one would guess the number of defaulters must have been one factor in the monstrous rates of interest current in Mediaeval Nepal. Whichever way: the guthi system, while perfectly adapted to duties recurring at short intervals, was not really geared to tasks of this magnitude, which were spread out over long periods of time.

2 There has been no opportunity, however, to examine the documents recording the possessions of the Svayaṃbhūnāth. There is a story that early in the Śāha period, certain rights and responsibilities were transferred to Tibetans or Bhutanese, and appropriate lands had been granted. To be sure, this is nothing but hearsay. But the northern affiliation of the stūpa seems to be of long standing. The beam in the 1754 restoration was requested by one Rimjiṃ Cheṃbu Lāmā. In 1918, the guiding spirit behind the work again was a lama, named Sarvaśrī Śākyaśrī.

§2. In a sense, then, it is no surprise to find vestiges of a different system for financing renovations in the documents at hand. It is again based on donations, but this time, not of lands, but of labour and/or objects, i.e. parts of the building, and it worked, not by permanent provisions, but by voluntary contribution.

To resume relevant facts. In 1754, the central beam was obtained from Pṛthvīnārāyaṇ Śāha who at that time still ruled from Nuvākoṭ – presumably by way of a donation, though the text does not expressedly say so (C, line A2). – Again, one of the annals manuscripts describes, at considerable length, how on another occasion the beam was brought from a long distance, east of Bhaktapur; by villages – rarely by personal names – it lists the many people who carried it part of the way until it had finally reached the Svayaṃbhū Hill. Again one presumes this was voluntary labour, people 'making merit'. (This method, incidentally, is familiar from the procedure of many *guthis*: in restoring buildings, funds were often necessary only to buy the materials, beams, tiles etc., while *guthi* members and their families did as much of the actual work as possible, without remuneration or with remuneration consisting of participation in the feast.)

From these scattered hints, one would guess financing stūpa renovations was a problem solved when need arose, and without regular sources of funds. And Śrī Hemrāj Śākya has traced and published extracts from the accounts of the 1918 restoration: one Dhamāṃ Sāhu, a Newar Tulādhar, donated the immense sum of NR 75.000; the Lāmā Śākyaśrī contributed another 20.000, and so on[3].

Beyond these contributions, though, there seems to have been a certain established routine. Traces have emerged in two places. The descendant of Dhamāṃ Sāhu now living claims that on the strength of their previous contributions his family has certain rights in successive renovations. On their nature, he did not elaborate. But to go by the second piece of evidence we have, they are not beyond conjecture.

The available data come from two sources, one drawing (ms. C) and one chronicle (dealing with the N.S. 832 restoration). The events they record are separated by not even half a century. They are identical in many details: it does not seem hasty to deduce they point to a common pattern, which of course suggests the conditions they record belong to a regular routine.

For a few parts of the top, most notably the tiers, both sources list the donors. These are as follows (the asterisk is given against the names of bāhāls which belong to the Ācāryaguthi: see §4):

Tier 1:	Otu Bāhāl
Tier 2:	Marucchem coppersmiths
Tier 3:	[832:] Bheracchem; [874:] *Makhaṃ and *Musu Bāhāls

3 Hemrāj Śākya: Śrī-Svayaṃbhū-mahācaitya, p.328.

Tier 4:	Nagha Bāhāl[4]
Tier 5:	*Sikhaṃmugu Bāhāl
Tier 6:	*Oṃ Bāhāl
Tier 7:	*Ituṃ Bāhāl
Tier 8:	*Lagaṃ Bāhāl
Tier 9:	Asaṃ Bāhāl
Tier 10:	[832:] Oṃgala Bāhāl; [874:] *Lagaṃ Bāhāl
Tier 11:	Otu Bāhāl
Tier 12:	The Svayaṃbhūnāth
Tier 13:	The King[5]

§3. Several points are remarkable about this list. First, there is what seems to be the institutional participation of the king – i.e. the state, in spite of the fact that kings were always Hindus. To use modern terms, the sanctuary was regarded not only as a Buddhist, but also as a national monument, at least in the 18th century.

Second, one notes the Svayaṃbhūnāth is mentioned as the donor of tier 12. In a sense, this tallies with the lack of land grants for the maintenance of the stūpa which had been noted in §1: this kind of limited involvement in the costs of reconstruction presumably could be met from current funds and/or from occasional donations solicited for the purpose.

Third, there are the other donors, and the prominent place of Kathmandu monasteries among them. Their participation itself is attested since long: there is a copperplate inscription from N.S. 213[6] which records the foundation, by Iku Bāhāl, of a guthi for worshipping the Vairocana who resides in the centre of the

4 For the problem of this bāhāl belonging to the Ācāryaguthi, see below, note 9.

5 One sees changes are confined to Tiers 3 and 10. Their interpretation is vitiated by the fact that in both cases one member of the pair no longer exists or has not been identified. In 10, Lagaṃ, donor of Tier 8, has replaced Oṃgala – which looks like one institution accepting responsibility for what used to be another's, and it is perhaps not by chance that Oṃgala has since disappeared: it does not even figure in Dr Locke's List of Defunct Vihāras (see John K. Locke: Buddhist monasteries of Nepal. Kathmandu 1985, pp.419ff.). –
The second deviation is less clear. Makhaṃ and Musuṃ Bāhāls, who donated Tier 3 in N.S.874, are both included in the Kathmandu Ācāryaguthi. Bhelacchem, their equivalent of 832, has so far escaped identification – unless it stands for the Bhelakhu Vihāra of Pāṭan which at present is a branch of Tava Bāhāl, of which it was the original seat (see Locke: *ibid.*, pp.135ff.: the initiations of Tava Bāhāl are still performed at Bhelakhu). Obviously, this is an identification which leaves much to be desired. On the other hand, this does touch upon an oddity. It is strange to see the city of Pāṭan, predominently Buddhist to this day, take no part whatever in the process of restoration. If *bheracchem* should stand for what is now known as Bhelakhu, it would be the Kathmandu Ācāryaguthi seizing the last among the tiers that had not yet come under its sway.

6 See Hemrāj Śākya: Śrī-Svayaṃbhū-mahācaitya, p.124; J.K. Locke, *loc.cit.*, p.327.

Svayaṃbhūnāth. Still, for all we know this looks like an isolated donation, while here we meet with what may be an established procedure.

§4. The location of donors is given on the map, Ill.14. It is hardly surprising to see they are concentrated in the older parts of Kathmandu. Less expected is the marked emphasis upon the old diagonal axis which as it were cuts through the grid of Kathmandu streets. It was part of the old trade route between India and Tibet and thus belongs to the oldest parts of the city. Taken by itself, this location of contributing monasteries would argue for a considerable age of the present distribution. There are some points, though, one would wish to consider.

(a) As has been noted, the concentration upon Kathmandu, or at least the exclusion of Pāṭan, is surprising – particularly so in view of the painting concerning the 1565 restauration in which Pāṭan took a prominent part[7].

(b) Then, among donors there is what one might call a disproportionately large representation of vihāras which belong to the Kathmandu Ācāryaguthi. This is the congregation of monasteries which have the right to initiate Kathmandu Vajrācāryas. Among the 106[8] (formerly 123) Kathmandu monasteries, there are only 18 who enjoy this right; among the ten vihāras donating a tier, six (or perhaps seven[9]) are from this group, and Otu Bāhāl may have to be added.

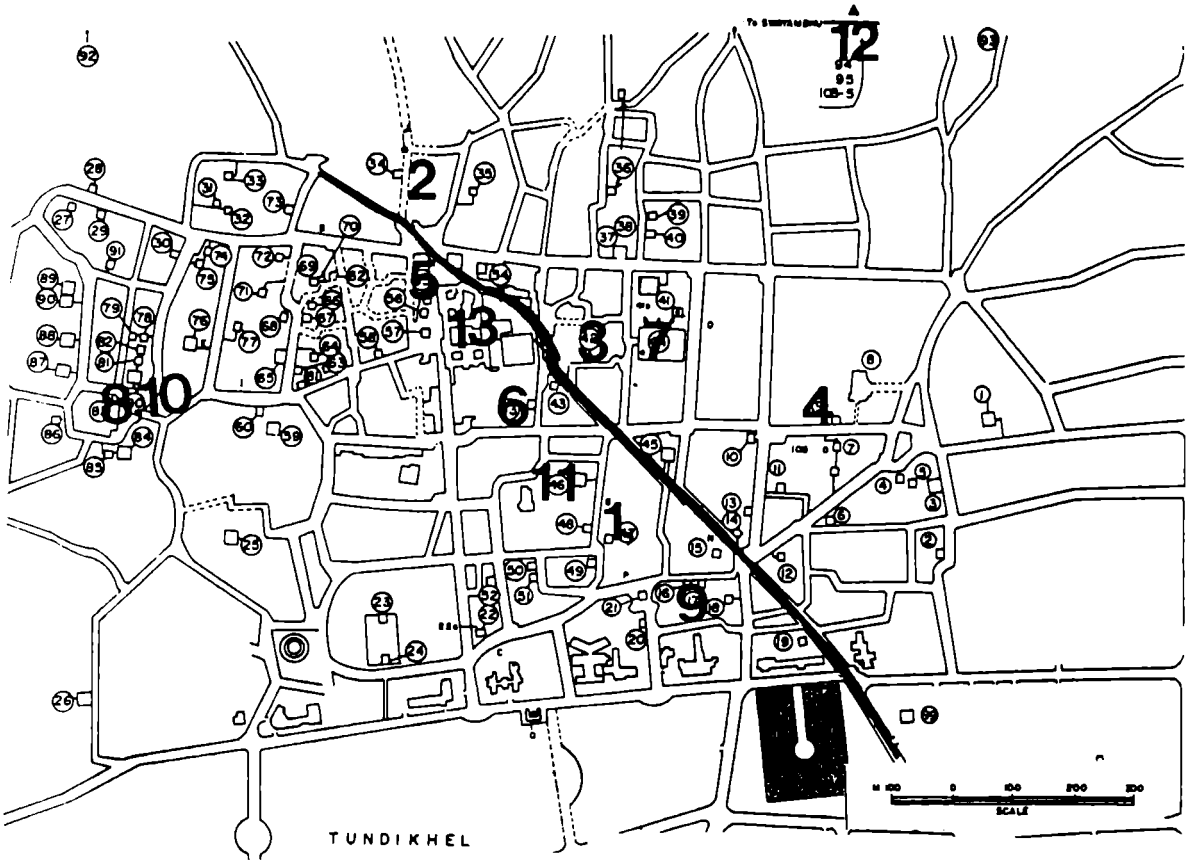
The reason is not far to seek: it lies in the links that tie Vajrācāryas to the Svayaṃbhūnāth. The chief literary source about its history, the Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa, tells the story of Śāntikara, the legendary founder of the Vajrayāna. He is said to have lived on the Hill, and it is in his honour that Ākāśapur, the highest of the sanctuaries to the elements, had been re-named Śāntipur. This building, still inaccessible to most, plays a prominent role among Kathmandu Vajrācāryas, serving as their catalyst, as it were. For it is here that the elders of the Ācāryaguthi monasteries assemble; it is here that they receive a newly initiated confrère into their fold. No wonder, then, that such doctrinal ties are reflected in what for want of a better term might be called the economy of the stūpa. –

Finally, there are the Marucchem coppersmiths. Again, the evidence cannot be called conclusive – but the only professedly secular donor, in a purely religious

7 Cf. Mary S. Slusser: On a Sixteenth Century pictorial pilgrim's guide from Nepal. In: Archives of Asian Art, 38(1985), pp.6-36, and: The cultural aspects of Newar painting. In: Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley, ed. N. Gutschow and A. Michaels. St. Augustin 1987, pp.1-27.

8 The figures are Dr Locke's. Since Oṃgala Bāhāl does not appear in his lists, the total number will have to be increased by 1.

9 Nagha Bāhāl in an equivocal case: Dr Locke (*loc.cit.*, p.340) tells us its inhabitants claim membership in the Ācāryaguthi, which the guthi itself fails to recognize. The evidence of the tiers might go some way to substantiate their claim.



Location of Donors of Tiers[10]
Bold Figures: Number of Tier (counted from below)

Ill.14. Centre of Kathmandu

sequence, would rather seem a relic of times gone by than a replacement of a defunct vihāra.

When weighing the evidence, then, one is not so sure the arrangement is as old as the distribution of donors would seem to suggest.

§5. And there is another factor. It stems from the esoteric meanings assigned to the tiers (see below, Ch. V). Among many other readings, the drawings interpret them as 'Worlds' – i.e. they take them as visual embodiments of the stages a bodhisattva passes through in his gradual ascent towards perfection. These stages usually go by the Sanskrit name of *bhūmayaḥ*, 'earths' or 'worlds'[11]. Asaṅga's Bodhisattvabhūmi, however, has a second, additional term, viz., *vihāra*: 'state of being, stage or condition of existence', as Edgerton BHSD puts it, a meaning which

10 Map: John K. Locke.

11 cf. e.g. the Dharmasaṃgraha, section 64; the Mahāvyutpatti, No.s 885*sqq.*; the Daśabhūmikasūtra and the Bodhisattvabhūmi, *passim*, etc.

very naturally follows from the normal use of the verb *viharati*. This much is obvious. It is just as clear, though, that people will have perceived a connection between these *vihāra*s which are states of existence and the other, more familiar meaning of the term, *viz.*, the monasteries. In other words: what to our eyes looks like nothing more than a case of polysemy will, to the ears of Buddhists, have established an identification: in a most immediate and obvious way, the *vihāra*s could find their very selves embodied in the stūpa. A *vihāra* (monastery) donating a *vihāra* (stage of existence, symbolized by a tier): this is a proposition that must have satisfied any traditional ear. No wonder, then, it was employed.

One notes in passing this interpretation makes sense only at a point of time when the *bhūmi*s were known as *vihāra*s[12], i.e. subsequent to Asaṅga or to the terminology he employs; and this means it makes sense only when the number of stages was ten (Asaṅga's figure) or higher. Hence, the equation between tiers and *bhūmi*s cannot have been applied to a stūpa with less than nine tiers[13].

§6. And of course the *vihāra* ambiguity and the role of the Svayaṃbhū in initiations are but two sides of the same coin: The monasteries help to maintain what in their view is the origin and chief symbol of their ritual and creed. The emerging pattern is in many respects strikingly similar to the manifold Hindu devices for the sanctification of space. They surround towns by different deities who emanate from one and the same god or abstract principle, stand for his different facets, and are meant to be seen together. The Buddhist arrangement just discussed presents an earlier stage, with the idea not yet developed into a cogent system: there seem to be no traditions that would specifically connect, say, Ituṃ Bāhāl (Tier 7) to *dūraṃgamā*, the seventh of the *bhūmi*s; there seems to be no procession linking the various donors. On the other hand, the economic and ritual ties combine to form a clear two-way relationship, with the stūpa and Śāntikara's legendary figure as the focal point. This is centralisation, then – and it is not only the members of the Ācāryaguthi who for their periodic meetings have availed themselves of it: there is the big Samyak festival that every twelve years unites the Buddhists, which is celebrated at the foot of the Hill – a clear sign for the continued attraction the stūpa exerts upon Buddhists of the Valley.

12 The Bodhisattvabhūmi, incidentally, was known and copied in Nepal: see Saṃkṣiptasūcī-pattra No. 3605.

13 in which case *dharmameghā*, the tenth *bhūmi*, would have been symbolized by some part above the tiers. Perhaps it is no chance occurrence that the donors of the uppermost tiers show something like a deviation from the usual pattern: the Svayaṃbhūnāth and the King as donors of Tiers 12 and 13 obviously do not belong to the *vihāra*s, and Otu Bāhāl for 11 is a repetition: it had donated the first (lowest) tier. – The list of seven *bhūmi*s (Mahāvyutpatti 1140-47) would hardly have been applied to a Vajrayāna stūpa: it refers to *śrāvaka*s, i.e. Hīnayāna disciples.

Renovations of the stūpa thus were an occasion for Buddhists to 'make merit' – as they still are[14]: they were a means for the Buddhists to express their allegiance to their chief sanctuary, the *Mahācaitya*. This is speaking from the individual's point of view. The public one of course is the other side of the coin. For the restorations provided a first-rate and spectacular occasion for the Buddhist community and its leaders to demonstrate their status and authority. And it is of course in this context that one has to consider the participation by the state. Here we are touching upon downright politics, *viz.*, concepts like the 'segmentary state' and its implications. We know a Hindu state used to assert – or claim – sovereignty by ritual means, and temples and their cults were crucially important places to affirm it. Assert or claim: for the rituals in which the state took part either resulted from given political conditions, or were meant to create a legitimation which, other circumstances permitting, could at a favourable moment be translated into actual political power. Of course one can view the uppermost tier – the king's – in such terms. On this background it is highly interesting to reflect about Pṛthivīnārāyaṇ Śāha's contribution of 1754. This was a time when he was still ruling from Nuvākoṭ and trying hard to get a footing in the Valley: surely it is significant he donated the Central Beam, which a ritualist might well regard as the core of the entire structure.

It is still difficult to gauge when and how the state gained actual suzerainty over the monument and the population which regarded it as their nucleus: the documents here edited only show the king being involved, while chief authority seems to have remained with the Buddhists. The role of Buddhist institutions apparently was more important.

And this brings us back to a point of religion. The participation of monasteries, the use made of the double meaning of *vihāra* – they are remarkable for a very obvious reason. When dealing with esoteric interpretations, we shall see the stūpa was taken to stand for the Buddha and for his Teaching. The *vihāra*s now, whether by virtue of their financial contributions or of the Ācāryaguthi or by the tiers taken as Stages of Perfection, add the Order of Monks, the Saṃgha – which is the one member of the traditional triad still missing. In such somewhat tenuous ways, the stūpa was completed to be an embodiment of what are the Three Jewels of Buddhism, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṃgha.

14 See the introduction to Pratyek Mān Tulādhar: Bodhi laṃpuyā mata o prajñāpāramitā. Kathmandu 1988, which lists the donors for certain repairs to the frills, 'shields' etc. performed in Vikram samvat 2032, i.e. around 1975. Even the tiniest of sums are mentioned: a gentleman who is now chief of the Buddhācāryas collected a total of NR 511/- from ten donors: the first four of them gave 5, 2, 1 and 2 rupees. Yet their names are recorded (p. ī).

Chapter V
ESOTERIC INTERPRETATIONS

1. General

The drawings present the stūpa from two different angles: they give technical instructions, and they deal with the significance of parts, i.e. with a particular form of Buddhist doctrine. Technical explanations: this was measures and measurements; it meant the names of parts and their proportions; it meant donors – everything, in short, that might be called the secular side of the building. Doctrine: this is the meaning of the whole and of its various components; it is Buddhist teaching and philosophy in diverse shapes; it is Ways to Perfection – the stūpa, in short, viewed as a cypher and symbol of the creed, and a system to instruct the faithful.

These two aspects we tend to consider as separate and unconnected. It is a truism to say traditional societies do not see things that way. Of course it is the craftsman who needs detailed instructions about measurements, such as make up the bulk of data in the drawings; no doubt, then, it is carpenters whose work they were meant to guide. Even so, and with this purpose abundantly clear, esoteric interpretations were added – which were the priest's domain rather than the craftsman's.

Both components, then, are fused. A glance at the annals dealing with the Svayaṃbhū restorations drives home the point. They speak of the consecration of the carpenters' tools, the masons' hands: one sees how the Sacred and the Secular, religion and technology are blended to form an indivisible whole. The same way, the building itself is an intellectual (: and moral) just as much as a technical structure. Indeed, if one was to assign a priority to one of the components, there is no question where it would have to belong. The carpenters' task and trade was *ancilla theologiae* in the most immediate way: his very measurements use a scale which was reserved for religious purposes. Form follows function, though in a sense different from that we are accustomed to attribute to the slogan; the religious interpretation is, not only at the core, but the very *raison d'être* of the building.

All this is very obvious, and repeated only because the wealth of readings which unfolds itself before our eyes might tend to obscure the fact, and the conflicts between them very naturally might lead to on opinion that priority rests with the structure rather than with its significance. In a sense, this is true: the building did assume a life and existence of its own; its 'true' or 'original' meaning seems to disappear behind the dense net of attempts and alternatives. In the introductory chapter, we have tried to come to terms with this change of emphasis: from an emblem to remind viewers of the Buddha's earthly life, the stūpa developed into a

complex symbol of Buddhism able to respond to changes in expressing the Goal and the Way.

Which helps us to understand one unexpected feature of interpretations. The structure, we have said, is determined by religious concepts. This would of course suggest a stability of purpose, of concepts, forms, and shapes – hieratic rigidity, in short. Instead of which, there are multiple meanings, some of them fairly recent to a historian's eye. We have taken them as a sign the sanctuary was able to adapt itself to changing expressions of Buddhism, changing conceptions of the way to deliverance. By virtue of the very contradictions, they testify to the life of the Svayaṃbhū.

*

In all the mass of details we shall now have to deal with, there is an underlying pattern which imposes order. Of course the stūpa avails itself of the language common to South Asian religious art, uses its codes and symbols. The structure of sacred objects always is governed by religious principles. To be sure, the Svayaṃbhū cannot rival the complex order of painted *maṇḍala*s or the disciplined elaboration of, say, the Borobuḍur, conceived or completed at one cast: it kept being re-thought and adapted. Even so, the model is clear enough, and the same basic assumptions that govern *maṇḍala*s, their rules about the distribution of centre and periphery, zenith and nadir, the directions of the compass etc., have also been used to regulate its structure. And one might start by pointing out the added dimension of height gives the stūpa an advantage over the painted maṇḍala: it adds a second plane, and the two directions, vertical and horizontal, are used in separate but complementary ways.

In its essentials, the *Ground Plan* follows a maṇḍala pattern, though much simplified: it consists of the absolute and its manifestations. The Centre is the ideal and invisible still point, recognized only through reflection, the inaccessible hub of the universe. It contrasts with the periphery that shows forms, shapes, figures, movement: the Four Tathāgatas with their chapels, their mounts, their Tārās, the circumambulation and its path. By their symmetrical arrangement, the chapels of the Tathāgatas in an unobtrusive yet unmistakable way point to the centre which is the core of the entire system. In strict interpretation, the stūpa with its massive dome which nowhere allows an access to the inside is a more perfect emblem of the doctrine than *maṇḍala*s are: they force the painter to fill the centre, i.e. give form and shape to what in its essence is beyond visual representation.

We have touched upon the process how this line of thought gradually got lost or was overlaid by others: we have seen how the centre, which was ineffable and remote, came to be regarded as a Tathāgata, though the first and chief among them;

how he received a name, Vairocana: representing him in tangible shape is but a logical consequence of this embodiment, and so we find him, too, on the dome, in a fifth chapel immediately south of Akṣobhya's which disturbs the ideal symmetry of the pattern. A piece of doctrinal purity was abandoned, but the loss was counterbalanced by what to some must have appeared a very essential gain: the very centre of the faith now joins in the movement at the periphery, is directly accessible to worship and takes his share in pious deeds. One sees the appeal of the tangible icon; one sees the deity move closer to the world of common man.

From its very beginning, the *Elevation* has a different aim in view: it demonstrates various models for the perfection of man. All of them use the very patent symbolism of high vs. low. The tiers express the goals of earthly existence in several different ways: There are the Places to Offer Worship which illustrate the gradual withdrawal from the fetters of social conventions, and indeed from earthly life; there are the Worlds and Perfections and Kinds of Knowledge which all show successive stages in the development of insight. All of them culminate in the abandonment of individual identity. In a very direct way, the elevation continues the 'pilgrim's progress' which is so pronounced a feature of the ascent up the Svayaṃbhū Hill, lifting it from the physical plane to the mental and spiritual; when at the dome, the pilgrim's body has reached the end of his tether, but the tapering shape of the stūpa leads his eye and mind upwards and points to the stages of the way still to be traversed before attaining the goal.

To the outside observer, there clearly is a kind of tension between the ground plan and the elevation, the Ultimate and the Ways to Perfection. Those who know will realize this is mere appearances. For there is the central beam, another emblem of Ultimate Truth, running through the entire structure: invisible during most of its course, it emerges near the top. There is the uppermost peak which is a symbol of the Ultimate Void. And if these symbols are hidden and reveal themselves only to reflection and closer inspection, this is very much in keeping with what the stūpa is also meant to be: a gigantic didactic device showing the goal as well as the ways to attain it.

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The division of the stūpa into the two parts, dome and superstructure, is quite fundamental to its interpretation, and there is not much which is pursued through the whole building and as it were hold it together.

The *Alphabet* is one. To be sure, the drawings assign letters only to the tiers, or corresponding sections of the beam: this is where one finds an abbreviated version of the Sanskrit vowels (see below, section 6.1). But this gap is to be supplemented by a passage from one of the Chronicles which says the first five rows of consonants ('the

ka, ca, ṭa, ta, and *pa* series', i.e. gutturals, palatals, retroflexes, dentals, and labials) are thought to reside within the dome. This suggestion gains probability from the well-known Tantric division of the alphabet into a first group, the vowels (*āli*), and a second, the consonants (*kāli*).

There is a Buddhist text[1] which contains a direct confirmation of this assertion. When speaking of Tathāgatas, it assigns one of these five series to each of them: Akṣobhya (who in this pattern holds the central position) 'has' the palatals, Vairocana (E) the gutturals, Ratnasaṃbhava the retroflexes, Amitābha the dentals, and Amoghasiddhi the labials. Apart from the irregular sequence of the first pair, this tallies well enough with what the chronicle says[2]. – The treatise goes on to ascribe the letters *'ya, ra, la, va etc.'* to the Adamantine Being (*vajrasattva*), 'otherwise named *dharmadhātu*'. Very similar ideas must have been current when the stūpa was built or renovated. For two of these four letters are to be found on the base of the honorific umbrella which crowns the tiers – i.e. very close to the top[3].

Till now, no trace has emerged of the concluding letters of the alphabet, i.e. of the three sibilants and of *ha*. Still, it seems practically certain they were included somewhere: one would not have left the system incomplete. –

In this fashion, the alphabet was distributed over the entire stūpa, ignoring its division into two parts, and it is the only string which demonstrably unites both. For the rest, each of them goes its own ways.

2. *The Dome*

The dome of the stūpa is surrounded by the Four Primeval and First Manifestations of the Buddha Principle, i.e. by the Four Tathāgatas, Akṣobhya in the East,

1 The Pañcākāra section of the Advayavajrasaṃgraha, ed. Haraprasad Shastri, pp.41f.

2 The deviation from the normal sequence, the inversion in the first two positions, is one of the irregularities which have a direct historical relevance. There were Buddhist traditions where Akṣobhya and Vairocana had changed places, and the Advayavajrasaṃgraha belongs to the texts which put Akṣobhya into the centre and Vairocana, East. But the sequence of consonant classes tells a different tale. Everybody knows gutturals precede palatals in reciting the alphabet. The text violates this very elementary principle of arrangement by assigning palatals – the *second* group of consonants – to the centre. This is no match. It can be understood only on one supposition: Akṣobhya had already been firmly connected with the palatals when he was shifted to the centre.

3 The struts of the umbrella rest on four intersecting beams. Two of the intersections bear the letters *raṃ* and *vaṃ* (see below, p.135). In all likelihood, *yaṃ* and *laṃ* are – or were meant to be – at the two corresponding points which remain.

Ratnasaṃbhava (South), Amitābha (West), and Amoghasiddhi (North). By their very existence, and by the differences in their shapes and attributes, they unmistakably point to the centre. For this constellation of Four is not a haphazard group of deities, but a system.

Everybody knows the historical Buddha, Gautama, had in the course of time come to be taken as one in a series of expositors of the Law: in other periods, there had been others capable of similar sustained efforts, gifted with similar insight, and similarly able to show the Way that leads to Deliverance. Nor had this series reached its end in him: the future will see other figures endowed a like way. All of them were recognized as manifestations of the Primeval Buddha (Ādibuddha): a historical sequence of 'saviours' much as the Vaiṣṇavas have their series of manifestations (*avatāras*) of Viṣṇu.

Side by side with this temporal sequence, there was another, more disciplined way to explain the workings of the absolute. This rested upon an axiom which one might paraphrase like this. The absolute is one and all-comprehensive; it is the beginning, the germ, the origin of the chain of creation. It is ineffable. The world we can observe is the other end of the scale, consisting of the multitude of created phenomena in all their diversity. Philosophical and religious exposition thus had to face the task of relating the two extremes to each other.

One way to solve it was by the idea of emanations. The absolute grows manifest and manifold, and in this process assumes properties: marks and characteristics begin to make their appearance – and with them distinctions. Images were sought to explain this evolution. There is the lotus: its bud – a single, compact shape – opens itself to reveal its calyx surrounded by a multitude of petals; yet all of them still belong to the one flower: The whole is there and readily perceived in its parts all of which are held together by the node at the centre.

The absolute can reveal itself in similar ways. Among images to describe its emanations, the most influential was, perhaps, the compass, with the directions emanating from the centre. We find it used in very many *maṇḍala*s, we find it used in the stūpa. The Four Tathāgatas on the dome are to be read with this pattern in mind. This means they are not only deities in their own right. By virtue of their arrangement they point to the centre from which they are derived, much as the lotus petals stem from and depend on stalk and calyx.

Clearly, the centre is the most important point in this icon. By definition it lacks all distinguishing marks which could be used to depict it: characteristics emerge only at the first stage of evolution. This is why the dome of the stūpa is so fitting a symbol: the core and node itself lies hidden and remains beyond observation.

Up to this point, the picture is simple and consistent. A complication arises from a very obvious thought. How could a Buddhist escape from identifying this centre

with his doctrine, with the Master who had first taught it; how could he escape from calling it the Buddha Principle or, for that matter, the Buddha? In this way, the centre came to receive a name: it was viewed as a Tathāgata. And if there were any who protested against such embodiment, their objection could always be met by pointing out that in the stūpa this centre still remained inaccessible and unrepresented.

This older, ideal state is still preserved by many of the small *caityas* in the Valley. The fifth (or first) and chief among the Tathāgatas is thought to reside in the point of intersection between the ideal lines which connect East to West, and South to North.

Two essential points are implied in this view. The Central Concept or Deity is in itself inaccessible: it lies embedded in the centre of the massive stone hemisphere. This place, then, bears the heaviest load of meaning. No wonder there were devices to mark it: there is its identification with the ultimate essence of the doctrine; there is its being viewed as the main Tathāgata, usually named Vairocana; there finally is the central beam which we shall consider in the next section.

The second implication is this. This Central Deity can be approached, and worshipped, only by means of worshipping its emanations, viz, the Four Tathāgatas placed at the periphery. And this arrangement necessarily implies one mode of worship in preference to all others, viz., circumambulation.

Any rite or offering addressed to one among the Tathāgatas of course has its sense and purpose: each of them has his specific properties, and gifts to bestow. And they are actually being used in this individualizing way: e.g. *Amitābha* sole is the lineage deity of three of the Kathmandu Buddhist monasteries[4].

All this being granted, it is well to remember the individual Tathāgata is part of the periphery, and by his very existence and location refers both to his counterparts and to the one central principle he has emanated from.

(2) We have seen why in the course of time, this abstract, chief and central point was given name and shape: he came to be called Vairocana, and received an iconographical identity, in line with the others. This as it were prepared the ground for what must have been a very fundamental innovation, gods or divine figures taking the place of philosophical principles. For the whole point of the older arrangement was that the Central Principle was beyond attributes; hence, any attempt to describe it was in a sense misleading, for it could be taken to impart an individuality to what by its very nature transcends name and form. Yet this is what happened, and this reification altered the face of the stūpa.

4 Both Musuṃ Bāhāls, Mikhā Bāhāl. See J.K. Locke: Buddhist monasteries of Nepal. Kathmandu 1985, p.518.

(3) We are now in a position to approach the figures found on the outside of the dome. First, there are the *Four Tathāgatas* of the cardinal directions.

The idea of an ineffable Primeval Principle unfolding itself and leading to a gradual emanation of phenomena, and a hierarchical order among them, of course has its Hindu analogies, and it is Hindu patterns of spatial arrangement which seem to have exerted their influence.

One notices four of the Tathāgatas are distributed in a most regular and symmetric way over the body of the dome. They mark the four cardinal directions. This same principle is again very conspicuous on the cube which rises immediately above the dome. The four pairs of eyes painted on the sides give us the first and simplest component of the meaning of this arrangement: the truths enshrined in the stūpa or in the teachings of Buddhism are addressed to the Four Directions, i.e. to everybody. And they address themselves to everybody in the same way: at this place, still very close to the centre[5], there is no difference in how they are depicted: they are identical on all four sides.

The Tathāgatas of the Four Directions, as we have seen, are not: they as it were add a second dimension, viz., the difference in manifestations or emanations – a cypher for the evolutionary process and the difference between phenomena. This is very much the kind of meaning Hindus had assigned to the image: among the liṅgas sacred to Śiva, there is the type which goes under the name of 'four-faced' (*caturmukha*): in the four directions, the shaft of the phallus is adorned with four different emanations.

Second, there are the *Tārās* who show the older pattern of Four expanded to Eight. Among Hindus, there soon appeared a second, more elaborate version of the system, eight deities instead of the older four, to tally with the eight points of the compass, i.e. adding the intermediate directions. The Buddhists followed suit[6]. Applying the expansion to the Svayaṃbhū posed a very elementary problem, though: how was one to fill the four additional places, Southeast etc.? the number of Tathāgatas was recognized as four and could not readily be added to. In retrospect, the solution they found was both elegant and convincing. The Tathāgatas had in the course of time come to be associated with female counterparts, the Tārās: and it was they who were

5 It was at the bottom of the cube (the *harmikā*) that relics of the Buddha used to be immured. The eyes, then, were very close to what must have been considered the most tangible representation of the creed.

6 There were times when such patterns of eight were very productive as a means to demonstrate phenomena were part of an organized, ideal reality. Some of them which arose in connection with the Svayaṃbhūnāth I have re-traced in my paper *Stages in the evolution of a world picture*.

assigned to the intermediate directions to make up the necessary number. In a sense, this made for an imperfect copy of the Hindu model where the eight emanations are all on a par. To Buddhists, it must have appeared most satisfactory. For the new pattern combined two separate chains of ideas. First, it brought the stūpa into line with the predominant Hindu model. Over and above that, it expressed the concept of the complementary pair of Insight and Means, *prajñā* and *upāya*, which had come to occupy such a central position in Buddhist thought. Yet the pattern thus modified could still be read as a direct continuation of the older pattern of Four: the present structure, with the shrines of the Tārās so much less elaborate than those of the Tathāgatas[7], still perpetuates the old hierarchy.

Finally, there is *Vairocana* to be considered, the chief among the Tathāgatas. The facts can be stated very briefly. He who used to be the invisible centre to resolve all distinctions, the node of the circle, assumed form and shape and was moved out to the periphery, to occupy an unexalted place, to the left of Akṣobhya, wedged in between him and Locanā (or Saptalocanī), his Tārā. And again there was Vairocana's Tārā to be accommodated. By now, the sector between Akṣobhya and Locanā was becoming crowded, and she was represented in an inconspicuous, aniconic way, by means of the small niche to his immediate left[8].

This placement points to a late date for Vairocana's move to the outside. We are quite well-informed about the meaning and significance of the various points and directions in *maṇḍala*s, and there seem to be no traditions to single out his present position. Northeast and Southeast, on the other hand, were prestigious places. Yet they were not chosen. The reason is plain: they were already occupied by the Tārās.

The resulting arrangement disturbs the symmetry of the stūpa which is so strictly observed elsewhere. In other words, the process of deification and visible representation of concepts was carried a decisive step further, and was even strong enough to override old and established patterns.

Having reached this point, one wonders how the new distribution could have been justified: a *maṇḍala* lacking a centre is a downright impossibility. And this very axiom points to the solution. For the centre was not really left vacant: there was the Central Beam to mark it. To be sure, it stems from a different and much older reading of the stūpa. But when taking the post in a merely topographical sense,

7 See Ill. 2, p.16. The large chapel centre (marked **a**) is a Tathāgata's, the smaller one left (marked **b**) holds his Tārā.

8 – which perhaps was not without scriptural justification. There is a passage in the Niṣpannayogāvali which Mme de Mallmann takes to say *she has no name* (M.Th. de Mallmann: Introduction à l'iconographie du tāntrisme bouddhique. Paris 1975, p.394).

it was a kind of duplicate to Vairocana in his old position. It is the Central Beam, then, that we shall now turn to.

3. The Central Beam

1. The architectural structure of the stūpa shows the Central Beam, which is not visible from the outside but runs through nearly the whole stūpa, is one of the essential parts of the building.

It is, and has to be, a single trunk, rooted near the bottom of the dome, and extending some small distance beyond the spire. And it is the construction of the tiers which clearly demonstrates its special character.

Rooted firmly in the dome, the beam is the strongest part of the entire wooden structure. One would naturally suppose it to be the chief support of the thirteen tiers. This is not the case: the tiers rest on a separate and complicated system of wooden supports, without ever touching the central beam; rather, their disks all have a opening in the middle, its shape an irregular rectangle, to allow the beam to pass untouched by their woodwork. The whole elaborate superstructure thus dispenses with what statically is the strongest part of the vertical. Using the central pole would have considerably simplified the construction. If, instead, we see it studiously avoided, there must have been ritual reasons to prevent its integration into the structure of the spire. There are written sources to fortify this conclusion. Drawing C gives a first inkling: apparently, when the A.D. 1754 renovation fell due, a suitable tree could not be found within the domains of the Kathmandu king. So Pṛthvīnārāyaṇ Shāh was approached, who at that time ruled in Nuvākoṭ, and he duly procured the beam. – The chronicles are more explicit. In them, no other part of the building is as elaborately described as the beam: at great length we hear how it was found and felled; how people carried it towards the Svayaṃbhūnāth; we learn of accidents, omens, mishaps on the way; we hear which rituals were used to ward them off.

No doubt, then, the beam was central in more than just the architectural sense. The drawings themselves tell us so. It is embedded in the peak of the Svayaṃbhū hill which, the way it is drawn, seems to protrude into the very dome of the stūpa. This is most probably true to fact: the length of the beam all drawings agree is 48 cubits 7 fingers, i.e. 22.08 m. This is not sufficient for the entire height down to the level of the platform and path which marks its lower edge. Ms. C apparently shows the peak of the mountain flattened and secured by a stone disk which was the foundation for the beam. This, as C tells us, stands for the Five Elements the world consists of, i.e. for ether, wind, fire, water, and earth. Then, there was the casket of relics which had to be inserted: a chronicle says its nine compartments held 'a

jewel, a golden lotus leaf, a silver lotus leaf, of gold a tortoise, a lion, an elephant, a horse, a peacock, and a Garuḍa'[9]. From this text, it looks as if it had found its place above the stone disk. One does not like the idea: it would have destroyed the level surface the beam needs as a base. Perhaps the disk was indented in the middle.

However this may be: it is on top of the symbolic representation of the world, then, and on top of sacred relics that the central beam is raised. Its upper end is similarly marked as an outstanding feature. It is called The Crest Jewel, *uṣṇīṣacūḍāmaṇi* (or *uṣṇīṣa* for short): this term denotes the last of the 32 special marks of a Great Man, i.e. someone who, acording to Buddhist lore, is destined to become either a universal monarch or a Buddha. A physical characteristic of the Buddha is transplanted on top of the beam: the emblem says the beam, or at least its tip, is equated with the Buddha himself.

It was a long time until it came to assume this meaning. There is a bewildering mass of thoughts and speculations which have in the course of the centuries come to attach themselves to the stūpa and its parts. In recent years, much labour has been devoted to the task of isolating and disentangling them, and fitting them together into a historical and typological sequence[10]. To sketch a few lines:

There are the tribals (the Rathva-Koli group of the Bhilala in Gujarāt) to whom the main beam of their houses is the potential seat of their lineage or family deity; it is at its foot that they worship and feed their deceased ancestors[11]. One fancies one recognizes the relation with the dead that still is a characteristic mark of the present stūpa. And there are the Andhau inscriptions of Rudradāman's time (i.e.

9 Ms. Nat. Arch. Kathmandu 3-270 fol. 157r9ff., dealing with the N.S.832 restauration, where a casket, incidentally, is not mentioned. The ceremony is called 'Insertion of the Jewels' (*ratnanyāsa*). These are placed on a bed consisting of a complete set of food grains (*vihidhātu*), which is spread on what goes by the name of 'Brahmā's head' (*vrahmasirāsa-*, fol.157v1): one wonders whether this is the designation of the mountain peak.

10 See, e.g., the papers of the 1978 Heidelberg seminar, collected in The Stūpa: its religious, historical, and architectural significance. Ed. by A.L. Dallapiccola and S. Zingel-Avé Lallemant. Wiesbaden 1980.

11 '*Gotar Devi* ist die Schutzgöttin der Sippe und jeder Familie. [...] Sie ist 'das, was verstorben ist' und kann direkt auch als Toter (khātri) bezeichnet werden. [...] Der tote Mensch hat seinen Platz bei ihr. Mit ihr steht nun in engster Verbindung der Zentralpfahl des Hauses (d.h. der mittlere Stützpfeiler des Firstbalkens), der an der Innenwand der Küche lokalisiert ist. [...] Der Pfahl bzw. die Gotar Devi wird als die Stütze des Hauses und der Familie bezeichnet. Beim Bau des Hauses wird der Mittelpfosten zuerst aufgestellt. [...] Bei den Jahresfesten werden an einem Abend die Verstorbenen der Familie beim Mittelpfahl verehrt. [...] Auch bei Todesfall in der Familie werden vor dem Mittelpfosten Speisen gelegt.' (etc.). This comes from this highly interesting small monograph, J. Haekel and C.B. Tripathi: Eine Besessenheits-Séance der Rathva-Koli in Gujarat (Indien), Wien 1966, p.93.

towards the end of the second century A.D.) which tell us this is not only a tribal tradition recorded in the present age. They are inscribed upon four stone slabs erected (*'uthāpita-'*) in remembrance of dead relatives, and the pillars go by the name of *laṣṭi-*, the Prākrit equivalent of skt. *yaṣṭi-*, the term which refers to the Central Beam[12].

There are the allusions to very early cosmological ideas which John Irwin has done so much to unearth and explain: the pole being the 'axle of the world', the *axis mundi*, which separated heaven from earth. Seen in this way, the beam recalls the world in the moment of its creation, in its pristine state of purity, connecting the temporal with the eternal: not so far distant from the different Ways to Salvation which the spire has come to stand for (see Section 6, below).

Elsewhere, the beam is equated with the sacrificial post (the *yūpa*) which was one of the indispensable appurtenances of Vedic ritual. In the esoteric speculations that Middle Vedic literature abounds in, this post could be identified with the person offering the sacrifice. At this point, one remembers the many small *caityas* which were set up in memory of the deceased (not only with Buddhists, incidentally: there are the *caityas* marking the *mahantas'* graves). Are we to recognize a common element in both these types, viz., perpetuating an individual, or rather, transferring him to the more permanent level of ritual?

And there are traces of wider, if elusive, meanings even in Buddhism. The Chinese equivalent of *yaṣṭi* is glossed as 'the flagpole of a monastery, surmounted by a gilt bell or pearl, symbolical of Buddhism; inferentially, a monastery with its land[13]. One could of course go on and take this 'monastery' in the sense of a Buddha field (*kṣetra-*) and then would not be so far distant from cosmological thought.

2. The Buddha or the ancestors, the *axis mundi* or pole of the Vedic sacrifice: how is one to deal with this wealth of associations; which of them leads us to the Meaning of the Beam?

The question may not have mattered so very much to those who had it erected.

Here is a short and not so very weighty episode from Buddhist legend. It comes from the Rudrāyaṇāvadāna. Mahākātyāyana, one of the eminent early followers of the Buddha, takes leave from his mother. She asks him: 'Son, if so (i.e. if you go?), give me something where I can worship while I remain'. He gave her his staff. She

12 See R.D. Banerji: The Andhau inscriptions of the time of Rudradāman. In: Epigraphia Indica 16 (1921/22; Reprint New Delhi 1983), pp.19-25. Cf. also D.R. Patil: The origin of memorial stones. In: Memorial Stones, ed. [by] S. Settar and G.D. Sontheimer. Dharwad, New Delhi 1982, pp.47-58.

13 Soothill-Hodous: A dictionary of Chinese Buddhist terms. London 1937, p.250b.

had a stūpa erected; and it (i.e. the staff) was raised in it as its measure (i.e. to indicate its height) – (which is why) "Staff-Stūpa" (*yaṣṭistūpa*) came to be its name'[14].

Why this name when stūpas in general have poles? The answer is obvious: the *yaṣṭi* the designation refers to is not the common pole, but Mahākātyāyana's staff, i.e. the relic: we remember the traditional typology according to which relics are among the holy objects to be immured in stūpas. – In a sense, then, this stūpa has a new interpretation of the beam, viz., Mahākātyāyana's staff. To be sure, this is by no means on a par with the Buddha or with the various systems of ascent: a 'new meaning' is attributed to the pole which is accidental in character, developed in the context of a particular legend, of no particular authority or standing.

Here lies the value of Mahākātyāyana's Staff to the historian: it shows how new associations could attach themselves to the beam, as to other parts of the stūpa.

This is, perhaps, the place to touch upon a strange offshoot of thinking about the beam. By its very shape, it can of course be taken as an analogy to the *liṅga*[15]. Once this correspondence was established, Tantric thoughts seized it and integrated it into their patterns.

No doubt, these are exotic blossoms of the tree. Ill.15 comes from the margin of a Japanese *caturmudrāmaṇḍala*[16]. It shows a devotee sitting in the usual cross-legged posture. On the crown of his head, there rises a *caitya* complete in all essentials, down to the shields and the fluttering pennants. The legend reads *'stabdhaliṅga'*, i.e. ithyphallic. This is explained in the Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha in the following way: 'Having by himself grown ithyphallic, let him sit (?) on a white cotton-cloth, and placing (em. *adhiṣṭhāpya*) a caitya on his member, (let him think:) "I myself am the Adamantine Element."'

The age-old pattern clearly transpires through this variant[17]: the beam as core and centre, the *caitya* its periphery. It is indispensable because it embodies the emanations, the Tathāgatas and, by implication, the remainder of the created world.

14 Divyāvadāna (ed. Cowell-Neil), p.581f.: *sā kathayati putra yady evaṃ mama kiṃcid anuprayaccha yatrāhaṃ pūjāṃ kṛtvā tiṣṭhāmīti | tena tasya yaṣṭir dattā | tayā stūpaṃ pratiṣṭhāpya sā tasmin pratimāropitā Yaṣṭistūpa iti saṃjñā saṃvṛttā |*

15 The Newārī word *yaḥsiṃ*, e.g., can denote both a liṅga and the beam.

16 Published by Lokesh Chandra: A ninth century scroll of the Vajradhātu maṇḍala. New Delhi 1986, p.336. See his explanation, *loc. cit.*, p.49. – The verse quoted is found in the Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha (ed. Lokesh Chandra), p.50, where it runs
stabdhaliṅgaḥ svayaṃ bhūtvā nipadyet paṭake site |
liṅgaṃ caityam adhiṣṭhāya vajradhātur ahaṃ svayam ||
adhiṣṭhāya] em. °*ṣṭhāpya*. – Much as one would like to follow Lokesh Chandra's suggestion to read *niṣadyet*: Edgerton BHSG does not quote the formation.

17 A similar motif is the stūpa which adorns Maitreya's curls reproduced as Ill.7.

There can be no doubt this, too, is one of the lines of meaning infused into the beam. The way its tip is drawn (cf. Ill.9) is suggestive: one remembers *maṇi* 'jewel' is one of the metaphors for the glans penis. And it is no valid objection to say the tip is called *cūḍāmaṇi* rather than just *maṇi*: partial identities always could be sufficient reason to establish complete identity. – Again, all this can of course be taken as an allegory, the events being, and the acts happening, in imagination (*bhāvanā*) only: it hardly matters whether one understands such injunctions in a literal or in a sublimated sense, whether the act is actually performed or only evoked in the imagination (the very word 'only' is misleading since it obscures the equivalence of the real and the imagined act). The object itself is of acknowledged sanctity, and as such attracts new interpretations, with older meanings perhaps obscured, but not necessarily obliterated. It thus seems there is no unequivocal and clear answer to the question of what it is that the beam – or, for that matter, the stūpa – stands for: it is a complex symbol of different interpretations and associations, always ready to receive new layers of significance. The conceptual chains ascribed to the tiers, contradictory in parts, will again confront us with the problems of multiple meanings and logically inconclusive linkings between them. –

Ill.15
From a Japanese maṇḍala

As it stands today, the beam holds another puzzle still awaiting its explanation. (The drawings themselves do not refer to it and seem to contain no hint towards its solution.) This is its inclination. For the post is not placed in a straight vertical line but has a slight tilt to the North-West. There is little doubt this is intentional, and not due to the artisans' negligence. For one thing, the construction of all the disks that make up the spire is adapted to this irregularity: the quadrangular opening in their middle is construed so as to accommodate this inclination, rather than being centered on the middle point. Second, there is a legend which says the tilt is due to the goddess Hāratī who has her temple NW of the stūpa. And finally, one of the chronicles mentions a ritual of which there seems to be but few other traces. In the A.D. 1712 restauration, there were great difficulties in raising the beam. After describing them (and mentioning the rituals and other devices used to overcome the obstacles), the task was accomplished after much effort. 'The next day', the chronicle

tells us[18], 'was Friday, the twelfth (day of the bright half of Māgha). That day, they performed the Ritual of the Sacrifice for Leaning the Central Beam, and the Ten Sacrifices, and the Libation'. Another reference to a 'Sacrifice for Leaning' has not yet turned up, and it is always risky to explain technical terms by everyday usage; but in view of the remaining evidence it seems quite possible the passage refers to the inclination.

Going by all this, one would tend to think the inclination is intentional. Its meaning is obscure. The Vedic parallels for sloped places of sacrifice and burial[19] are inconclusive.

To end with a summary, at least in outlines. The beam was the earliest means to mark the centre of the mound, at a stage when the dome itself had no direction yet. Then Mahāyānists rethought the building and placed the Four Tathāgatas in the four cardinal points of the compass. In their very inception, these four were conceived as derived from a fifth Tathāgata, usually called Vairocana, whose location had needs be in the centre. Which means the centre received a second distinguishing mark; on different historical levels, and with different associations, Vairocana and the beam expressed similar thoughts. This did not remain unnoticed: one of the means to mark the centre in a sense was redundant. One possible, and indeed obvious, solution apparently was rejected, viz., identifying Vairocana with the beam. The Svayaṃbhū shows the result of the contest. The beam remained, and Vairocana was free to 'come out' and join the other Tathāgatas at the periphery.

The beam remained: and when speaking about its upper end, the *uṣṇīṣa* (p.155ff.), we shall see how its central position in the building was newly emphasized; and we have seen how later painted scrolls show its tip gained independence and was turned into the goddess, Uṣṇīṣavijayā. In this way, it continued to occupy the religious imagination over the centuries.

4. The Cube

The dome is crowned by a square which goes back to the *harmikā*, i.e. the chest which could be used to hold the relics embedded in the stūpa[20]. This is the name

18 Ms. Nat. Arch. Kathmandu 3-270, fol. 157v9f.: *thvaṃ sati kuhnuḥ dvādasi śukravāḷaḥ thva kuhnuḥ yosi dhanayāḥ jajñakarmma pratiṣṭhāḥ daśakarmmaḥ āhūtiḥ* etc. – Note the fragmentary inscription concerning the replacement of the Central Beam of the Śāntighāṭ Mahāvihāra caitya at Kathmandu: Sakya/Vaidya, Nepalese Colophons [etc.] No.16 Line 12 (p.89) read]*thva dine kunhu [ya]rasi [tha]ṅā dina* ||. This was during the reign of Narendramalla (A.D.1538-1560).

19 See, e.g., W. Caland: Die Altindischen Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche. Amsterdam 1896, §88b, pp.143f.: in the East, the place for burying the bones is higher than in the West.

20 Cf., e.g., H. Rau: Stilgeschichte der indischen Kunst. 1, Graz 1986, p.28.

still used in the Stūpalakṣaṇakārikāvivecana[21] and the Kriyāsaṃgraha[22] where it is symbolically interpreted as 'the constituent of enlightenment called equanimity, i.e. the feeling of equanimity born on the fourth ground of meditation etc. which results in not returning to this existence' (Roth, *loc.cit.*).

The drawings do not repeat this, and probably the authors did not know of a similar tradition. For they use an odd term to denote it, *gala*, 'neck', which perhaps arose through a misunderstanding. The base or socle underneath the harmikā, which separates it from the dome, bore the Sanskrit name of *kaṇṭhaka* (with variants), i.e. 'relating or related to the neck': apparently this was erroneously extended. In a way, it is a surprising mistake: there is the pair of eyes and the curl between or underneath them which make it so very obvious it is a face which is painted onto the cube.

It is, of course, the Buddha's. The eyes are depicted in what the Guhyadhāraṇī-maṇḍala calls the Adamantine View (*vajradṛṣṭi*)[23]. Between them, there is the curl of hair that grows between the brows, the *ūrṇā*, turning to the right, like to a shell, white, and soft like cotton-wool. It is one of the 32 special marks of a Buddha, and according to the Lalitavistara recognized directly after he was born. Rays of light emanate from it:

'Then verily, ye monks, when the Bodhisattva had thus considered (viz., to excite Māra the tempter), at this same time he emitted a ray of light from the curl which was between his brows; its name was 'Effecting the Destruction of Māra's Entire Circle'. By means of this ray [...] the entire world system consisting of three thousand great thousands burst open (i.e., was manifested) by (its) great splendour'[24].

The same ray of light appears again when the Buddha contemplates the enlightenment he had finally attained and considers whether or not to propagate his way: it serves, then, as a symbol of enlightenment rather than as a means to vanquish Māra. –

In the present-day stūpa, the pattern has undergone a change: there is the dot between the eyebrows, and underneath it a curl, which is quite large and reaches down almost to the lower end of the cube. This is the 'ray of light' (*raśmi-*) of the textual sources.

21 Cf. G. Roth: Symbolism of the Buddhist stūpa, p. 194.

22 G. Roth, *loc. cit.*, p. 197.

23 See Lokesh Chandra: A Ninth century scroll of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. New Delhi 1986, p.189.

24 *atha khalu bhikṣavo bodhisattva evam anuvicintya tasyāṃ velāyāṃ bhrūvivarāntarād ūrṇākośāt sarvamāramaṇḍalavidhvaṃsanakārī nāmaikāṃ raśmim udasṛjat | yayā raśmyā [...] sarvaś cāyaṃ trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātur mahatāvabhāsena sphuṭo 'bhūt |* Lalitavistara (ed. Vaidya) p.218. Very similar words are used *ibid.*, p.287: [...] *tathāgatas tasmin samaye ūrṇākośāt prabhām utsṛjati sma yayā prabhayā trisāhasra-mahāsāhasralokadhātur suvarṇavarṇāvabhāsena sphuṭo 'bhūt |*

The drawings, however, agree in only showing one mark, which turns to the right: there can be no doubt it is meant to be the *ūrṇā*. Ms. **C**, where it is pointed upwards, has it in the expected position. In mss. **A** and **B**, it has been moved to the lower rim. Perhaps even then its function was no longer understood: from its position, it would be quite natural to take it as an effigy of a nose. This interpretation – for which I cannot quote an authority – may have occasioned the dot one sees today: it would be the *ūrṇā* restituted. –

In the overall development of the stūpa, the cube is the one part which has lost in function and importance. From an exalted place at the top it was reduced to a connecting link between the two dominating parts of dome and spire. The new term, 'neck', clearly expresses its role as an intermediary stage. Only when the Buddha came to be physically represented on the stūpa surface, the cube gained a new meaning and significance: in spite of its name, it came to bear the face. This new function incidentally ties in with one of the readings of the tiers, and it provides the decisive clue for the interpretation of the 'shields' placed on top of the cube at all four sides. To them we shall now turn.

5. The Shields

1. Rising above the cube of the 'neck', and partly obscuring the lower tiers, there are four large 'shields', of an unusual shape. Nowadays it looks like a triangle crowning a trapeze, which is what one finds in ms. **C**, which refers to the year 1754. Ms. **B** has a different form, roundish and indented – obviously a variant of the shape attested on paintings: they have what looks like a trefoil with the bottom curves missing. A very clear instance is provided by 17th century painted scroll[25].

2. Historically, they belong to the more recent parts of the stūpa. They cannot be recognized on the 1565 painting[26] – which, however, might be due to its imperfect state of preservation. And even if they are absent, this fact is not quite conclusive, since the scroll depicts the stūpa in the course of being restored, and the chronicles tell us the 'shields' were among the last parts to be installed.

Another piece of evidence is more convincing. Mss. **A** and **B** contain the drawing of the ideal pattern for stūpas which is reproduced as Ill.13. This does not include them. In other words, at the time when this pattern was developed, the shields were either not yet present or not deemed an integral constituent.

25 Printed in Macdonald and Stahl: Newar painting. Frontispiece.

26 Cf. Mary S. Slusser: The cultural aspect of Newar painting. In: Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. St. Augustin 1987, pp.3-15 and Plate I.

3. Neither the drawings nor the chronicles have a word to say about their function, nor do the sources relate them to Buddhist doctrine. This throws us back to their present-day iconographical programme – which is manifold and bewildering[27], and of limited usefulness to the argument since it stems from A.D. 1918 and bears patent traces of recent innovations[28].

What is their purpose, then? Apparently they are to be taken as a derivation from the crown or helmet such as Vajrācāryas use as a visible symbol of their identity with the Buddha[29]. The four shields of these crowns bear the figures or symbols of the Tathāgatas of the four directions. We have spoken about this icon and realized how it implicitly refers the viewer to the centre which stands for the primal principle. When the Vajrācārya wears his crown, he places his own head into this centre.

This same stage is still attested in stūpas and painted representations of the Svayaṃbhū. In depicting the shields, they do not show the present prolixity, but often confine themselves to a lotus. By common consent, the lotus stands for Amitābha, the Western Tathāgata – which is a particularly fitting choice because it is in front of his shrine that most of the important rituals are being celebrated.

By thus crowning the cube, the stūpa very directly continues the anthropomorphic reading which is so clearly evident in the upper part of the face that is painted onto the 'neck'. And we shall see how this interpretation which takes the superstructure as the Buddha's head is not exhausted yet: the uppermost part of the central beam is called 'Crest Jewel of the *uṣṇīṣa* (*uṣṇīṣacūḍāmaṇi-*)'.

27 According to their inscriptions, the figures represented are:
East shield, top: Vairocana. Second row: Samantabhadra – Kṣitigarbha Khagarbha – Kanhapā. – *South shield*, top: Buddha Śākyamuni. Second row: Guru Nāgārjuna – Ārya Maitrināth a – Vāgīndrakīrtty Ācārya. – *West shield*, top: Buddha Amitābha. Second row: Guru Śāntigupta – Lokeśvara – Guru Padmakara – Jālandharācārya. – *North shield*, top: Bhaiṣajyaguru Vaidūryaprabharāja. Second row: Vajrapāṇi – Goraṣanātha – Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin – Āryatārā.

28 The fact that the Nāthas are included is the clearest indication of innovation. They have a tenuous connection with Buddhist thought. In all likelihood, it was Gorakhnāth who was the motive. His chief sanctuary in Nepal is in a cave situated below the palace of Gorkhā, i.e. the ancestral seat of the Śāha kings, and in religion and legend he is firmly associated with the present dynasty. It was the Śāhas, now, who gave certain rights in the Svayaṃbhūnāth to Tibetans; it was Tibetans who had a prominent part in recent restorations of the monument. This prolonged interchange would provide a good reason for seeking ways to incorporate a deity with Śāha affiliations in the iconographical programme of the Svayaṃbhū. An isolated deity, though, at all times was a problem to its symmetrical and evolutionary pattern. This may be how the Nātha system entered the picture, in which Gorakhnāth held a prominent place.

29 See my paper *The Shields of the Svayaṃbhūnāth stūpa, or, the Vajrācārya crown transformed* (forthcoming).

Two points can be quoted in support of the present explanation. One of them is the term which Sanskrit and Newārī texts use to denote the shields. They are not quite transparent but apparently come from the context we have just considered. In Newārī, they are called *halaṃpati* or *halaṃpau*; the Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa has a Sanskrit word, *halipaṭṭa-*, which is otherwise unknown. Now, *paṭṭa-* is 'crown, diadem'[30]. – The first part of the compound is less unequivocal: Newārī words in ritual contexts often are not[31]. Still, *haliṃ* 'oblique'[32] does make sense; 'oblique crown' is a reasonable description: one notes the shields do not stand at an angle of 90° to the cube, but inclined outwards, to face the observer.

Second, there are sculptures of the type illustrated in Ill.16. They show the Buddha with a crown the four faces of which are triangular: an exact counterpart of the crowned Vajrācārya of today.

It is only the iconographical findings which do not tally with this hypothesis. Two points might be considered when trying to cope with the anomaly. First, there are the caityas which actually do show the expected symbols. In ideally projecting them onto the Svayaṃbhū, one notes a structural problem which would inevitably result. As worn by the Vajrācārya, the crown with its Tathāgatas repeats the endowment of the dome: a redundancy which could be abolished without loss of meaning. New room was available for representing new aspects and manifestations of the Divine, and the stūpa which tried to be significant in so many different ways stood ready to receive them.

Ill.16: A Pāla Sculpture of the Buddha

30 See P.K. Acharya: An Encyclopaedia of Hindu Architecture. New Delhi 1979², s.v. and particularly Varāhamihira's Bṛhatsaṃhitā where Ch. 49 deals with the various kinds of crowns (*paṭṭa-*) for the king, queen, and other dignitaries.

31 There is the host of undescribed changes and abbreviations Sanskrit words undergo in Newar mouths; there is the exasperating tendency to 'make sense of' the resulting chain of phonemes, i.e. to produce popular etymologies.

32 Attested in *haliṃmusi* 'oblique rafter'.

6. The Tiers

6.1 General

The cube is crowned by a series of tiers, thirteen in number, of unequal size. Starting from bottom, their diameter increases over the first three until it reaches its maximum at the third; then, in uneven steps a gradual reduction: at the top, the diameter is about one fifth of the widest among them. The overall effect thus resembles an oval, with the point of greatest width lying in the lowest quarter.

Much care and thought was bestowed on them. There are the differences in interpretation which we shall take up presently. More elementary, there are differences in the number of tiers, obvious to everyone who looks at the small *caityas* scattered over the valley: one will find anything between five and thirteen, but always an odd number. At thirteen, the development came to an end – in Nepal, but not in the Buddhist world in general[33].

Such variations of course are not arbitrary. Without remembering where he learnt it, Mr Hemrāj Śākya is familiar with a typology: a *caitya* with five tiers is called a *śrāvaka-caitya*, with seven, a *pratyeka*, with nine, a Mahāyāna, and with thirteen, a Vajrayāna-Caitya. (The variant with eleven, missing from his list, was also built in the Valley: the Kathmandu Mahābauddha-Caitya is a well-known example.)[34] This model, then, offers a clear-cut gradation, by assigning the various types to different Buddhist schools or, from the Vajrayāna point of view, to different levels of achievement: there is the ascending series starting with the Lay follower, then going on to the Awakened One who keeps his insight to himself. Then comes the Mahāyāna with its contrasting ideal of compassion and influencing creatures born into this world, and the list culminates in the Vajrayāna, the form of Buddhism current in the Valley. To be sure, it bears the unmistakable stamp of Vajrayāna values and thus has obliterated earlier views: but the principle of assigning distinct meanings to different shapes no doubt is old.

And by their very structure, the umbrellas evoked identifications: an organized whole, the peak, consisting of five, seven, nine structural parts of an analogous shape, arranged in a hierarchy: was this not but another example for analysis, the chief didactic device of Buddhism? For how can one cope with a complex whole if not by breaking it down into separate stages, all of them manageable in

33 Cf. e.g. A. Snodgrass: The symbolism of the stūpa. Ithaca 1985, p.351.

34 Typologically similar, though different as to actual interpretations, is the *caitya-lakṣaṇavidhi* which Gustav Roth (Symbolism of the Buddhist Stūpa, p.198f.) quotes from a Vajrācārya-Kriyāsamuccaya ms. from Patna: 'Here we read about one, three, five, or thirteen umbrella canopies which are on the top of Stūpas of Sambuddhas and Vajradharas, and of nine and seven on top of stūpas of Pratyekabuddhas and Śrāvakas.'

themselves? 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. Buddhist teaching is often organized according to this principle of analysis and particularization: compilations of concepts, like the Mahāvyutpatti or the Dharmasaṃgraha, employ them, arranging their materials in a vaguely systematic fashion; other texts, the Aṅguttaranikāya, the Daśottarasūtra, employ the mechanical principle of ascending numbers of members of chains.

The analogous yet graded parts of the peak readily lent themselves to explications of this type. The five tiers of the *śrāvaka* (layman's) *caitya*: are they not an emblem of the *pañcaśīla*, the Five Precepts (avoidance of killing, theft, unchastity, lying, and drinking spirits) which the layman is to observe? And of course the height was used in developing the icon: the notion of ascent can be used both in a physical and a spiritual sense.

It is this kind of allegorical interpretation which was repeatedly applied to the tiers. The variations in numbers are as it were repeated in the variations of interpretations. These do not add up to form an organized whole. Rather, they form a cluster of repeated attempts to come to terms with the stūpa, without connection or relation to each other: as we have said, from a symbol or emblem pointing to a context lying beyond it, the building had developed into a sacred object in its own right, and in their lists of barren terms the manuscipts just give the cues for understanding it in this way or that. We shall now retrace the meanings Nepalese Buddhists had infused into this most eminent of their monuments.

6.2. The Letters

The drawings insert an abbreviated version of the vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet into the stūpa. In both manuscripts **A** and **B** (Drawing II), they open the description of the tiers; in **C**, they are distributed over the entire range of the extra central beam, beginning at the level of the neck.

Read from bottom to top, they are

a ā i ī u ū e ai o au aṃ[35] *aḥ*[36]

In spite of the fact that there are four vowels omitted (*ṛ, ṝ, ḷ, ḹ*), there can be no doubt is is the entire series of vowels which is meant. At first sight, the reduction looks like an adaptation of the sequence of vowels to the thirteen tiers of the stūpa. (As in all other series, the topmost tier is of course left empty: all distinctions are resolved in the Adamantine World, the *vajrabhūmi*.)

35 The anusvāra is not visible in the photocopies of A and B.

36 All mss. read *a* only, but there can be no doubt it is *aḥ* which is intended.

In order to assess their meaning, the information from the drawings has to be supplemented from other sources. According to Chronicle C, the first five rows of consonants, consisting of five letters each, are to be found within the body of the stūpa. This distribution of vowels on the Beam vs. consonants in the rest of the stūpa recalls the division of *akṣaras* into the *āli* and the *kāli* sequence, i.e. vowels vs. consonants, which are referred to two among the Perfections (*pāramitās*) (see §5, below): the former stand for Wisdom, and the latter for Skill in Means[37].

The text does not say whether the consonants were inserted in some material form, or whether they just are to be imagined. Some bodily shape seems probable in view of what now follows.

There are now at least[38] eight letters still missing to complete the alphabet. In the course of his measurements of the stūpa tiers, Mr Surendra Joshi found two of them, the akṣaras *raṃ* and *vaṃ*[39], in an unexpected place, viz., on a pair of interlocking joists which form the base of the parasol, above the thirteenth tier[40]: these joists of course protrude beyond their point of intersection, and the letters were inscribed on the ends of the Eastern pair. It is hard to say whether the remaining six were or

37 An equation of certain classes of letters with deities is attested even in the Chāndogya-Upaniṣad: the vowels are Indra's self; the sibilants, Prajāpati's, and the stops (an imperfect rendering: the Sanskrit term, *sparśāḥ*, includes the nasals), the selves of Death (2.22.2). Note the Chronicle places the stops and nasals (*vargas ka* through *pa*) within the dome of the stūpa, i.e. where the relics were to be interred. This is not claiming an immediate historical relationship: it is but a thin thread which connects both pieces of evidence. Still, the ideas are patently analogous and do not conflict with each other.

38 One cannot be sure whether the alphabet sequence here envisaged actually ended with *h* or went on to include the ligatures *kṣa* and *jña*. On the other hand, there is what one would have to call an inverse tendency. Not counting *aṃ* and *aḥ* and the conjoint consonants, the normal alphabet consists of 14 vowels and 33 consonants; when including the two nasalized vowels, we have a proportion of 16 : 33. But there is a short ritual text, the Bhīmarathārohaṇavidhikriyā, which speaks of '16 vowels and 32 consonants (*ṣoḍaśa svara dvātriṃśat vyañjana*, p.59)' . To be sure, this gives a satisfactory proportion, 1 : 2, but it is achieved at the cost of arbitrarily curtailing an established list, in the face of evidence available and familiar to all. In a sense, this is the counterpart to the more familiar expansions of sequences in order to reach a certain pre-determined number, such as we see used for the tiers, e.g., in the Places of Worship. For the principles involved, see my paper *Stages in the Evolution of a World Picture*.

39 One notes in passing they are expanded to form *bījas* – a clear sign of their being used with an esoteric significance. In Buddhist contexts, the vowel stands for Insight, the consonant for the Means, and their fusion is indicated by nasalization.

40 The sequence is not that of the alphabet, but comes from the symbolic representation of the Elements. Cf. the Saṃvarodayatantra, ed. Tsuda, 13.9-10: 'On its top [i.e. above the letter *yaṃ* which stands for Wind] (one should imagine) the letter *raṃ*, of the shape of the Fire maṇḍala, red in colour, three-cornered, and marked by a *vajra* with three tips. And above it, the letter *vaṃ*, round, white, (of) the Water maṇḍala.'

are written on the corresponding pairs in the three remaining directions. No matter where they will eventually be found: it is worth noting this part of the building was included in esoteric interpretations, for the parasol originally was not a permanent part of the stūpa.

In spite of its missing end, one can safely assume the entire alphabet, in whichever form, was inserted into the building.

The motive of course lies in the great importance which was always assigned to language and speech. Speculations about them are very much part of Tantric thought: the world of speech was thought to exert a very direct and immediate influence upon matter and the external world. This lies at the bottom of the many seed syllables (*bījas*), the abundance of sacred formulas, the *mantras* and *dhāraṇīs*. Analysis of language into its components had always been an indispensable part and prerequisite of such efforts, and in their course the alphabet with its syllables had of course come under scrutiny. It is to such inventories of the elements of language that the alphabet of the Svayaṃbhū belongs: a list of the components, that is, which make up the world of language, much as elements like earth, water etc. make up the physical world.

Of course such lists were not made without an ulterior motive. The components isolated were assigned a significance – we shall presently come to an example – and the minimal units could of course be composed to form new and complex meanings, as *bījas* show. And perhaps it was a very definite set of meanings which is here being infused into the stūpa.

The tenth chapter of the Lalitavistara, this much respected legendary account of the Buddha's life, describes how 'the prince, grown up, was, with a hundred thousand blessings, sent to the Hall for Writing' (i.e., to school) (1); how he confounds his teacher by knowing 'kinds of writing the (very) names of which I do not know' (2); how ten million boys studied writing together with the Bodhisattva. 'And by the Bodhisattva's presence (the word can also stand for 'precedent' or 'authority'), when these boys pronounced a letter', each of them was spoken not by its usual name, but in the form of a Buddhist concept: 'When they sang out the letter *a*, then the word *anityaḥ sarvasaṃskāra*° [i.e. "Each conditioned state is impermanent[41]"] came out (of their mouths)' (3)[42]. This doubtless referred to the

41 The odd singular is conditioned by the clumsy wording of the Sanskrit text, with °*saṃskāra*° embedded in a compound.

42 The text of the three excerpt runs: (1) *saṃvṛddhaḥ kumāraḥ ... māṅgalyaśatasahasraiḥ lipiśālām upanīyate sma* [LV ed. Vaidya, p.87]; (2) *yeṣām ahaṃ nāmadheyaṃ lipīnāṃ na prajānami (sic!)* [ibid., p.88]; (3) *bodhisattvādhisthānena teṣāṃ dārakāṇāṃ mātṛkāṃ vācayatāṃ yadā akāraṃ parikīrtayanti sma, tadā anityaḥ sarvasaṃskāraśabdo niścarati sma* [ibid., p.89]

common Indian habit of reciting the alphabet by adding *-kāra* to the name of all letters but one: *a* or *e* are given as *a-kāra, e-kāra* etc. Instead of which, the boys recited *a-nityaḥ saṃskāraḥ*, and so on.

In this way, the Lalitavistara gives a new name or memorial concept to every letter of the alphabet, and each of them alludes to some Buddhist truth, so that the chain of concepts almost amounts to something like Buddhism in a nutshell, a kind of briefest catechism.

This Lalitavistara sequence, now, has the same kind of peculiarity which is found on the drawings: the letters *ṛ ṝ, ḷ, ḹ* of the usual series are missing[43]. In view of this common lacuna, it seems quite possible the stūpa drawings are in this point to be connected with the Lalitavistara account. In which case, the reduction of the series of vowels to twelve members could claim an undisputable authority: For Nepalese Buddhists count the Lalitavistara among the 'Nine *dharmas*', i.e. scriptures of special sanctity[44].

It is the doctrinal aspect, though, which is most relevant: we have seen each letter stands for some aspect of the Buddha's teachings; we have seen these concepts were evoked in pupils, i.e. in normal people, due to the Buddha's presence. The letters thus stand, not so much for the elements of all speech, but for a concise representation of the Buddha's teachings, and again relate the stūpa to the Buddha's life on earth.

6.3. Places to Offer Worship

Next, the tiers are identified with different kinds of localities: holy places, cemeteries – a list which at first sight looks strange and incongruent in its sequence. Its purpose – and the history which lies behind the present arrangement – grows clearer from other Buddhist sources; hence, it is best to start from them.

There is a verse in the Saṃvarodayatantra (26.15) which has the key concepts of the present list, together with something of an explanation of their function. It says

pīṭhe kṣetre ca cchandohe melāpakaśmaśānake |
pūjyapūjakasaṃbandhe amṛtam argham uttamam ||

43 Taken by itself, this omission could be explained by assuming a Prākrit origin; in this case, however, the presence of *ai* and *au* is hard to account for.

44 The same curtailed list of vowels is found in the Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti 4.2: Wayman (p.66) quotes a commentary which relates them to the Twelve *bhūmis*. It seems again attested on the Sugh terracotta now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi (cf. O. von Hinüber: Der Beginn der Schrift und frühe Schriftlichkeit in Indien. Stuttgart 1990, p.17 and note 33 [with references]).

'When an assembly of worshippers and those who are to be worshipped is held at a holy place, a holy field, a ?(*cchandoha*), a meeting-place, at a cremation ground, nectar is the supreme offering (*argha*).' [Tsuda p.315]

Though often repeated, it nevertheless is a peculiar list. It starts with seats of the gods, i.e. temples, pagodas, stūpas; then goes on to 'fields', i.e. the surroundings of a holy place, the lands included in a circumambulation, civilized territory in the widest sense of the term. Then – and for the moment we omit the unclear term *cchandoha-* – it proceeds to normal places of no pronounced sanctity: a *melāpaka-* might well be a public space, perhaps including those used for fairs, which do have religious overtones. At the end, there is the burning ground, a place shunned in normal, everyday life, the abode of goblins and spirits of the dead. And we shall see the list is in other sources (including the drawings) extended by another step, which possibly stands for an ossuary, i.e. the place where the bones of the cremated are finally interred.

This enumeration of places of decreasing auspiciousness is remarkable enough. Its significance is made quite clear as the Tantra proceeds: to him who is grounded in the truths of Buddhism, all places are equally suitable for invoking the deities: 'By serving at holy places and lesser holy places, a man will grow free from stains' (9.25); the horrid and inauspicious places are to teach him equanimity and composure: 'Let the *yogin* behave like to a lion, free from all doubts: by seeing and touching (these places), Perfection (*siddhi-*) is quickly attained (9.27)'. In other words, the list is meant as a psychological device, a conscious effort to turn the adept's thoughts away from everyday concepts of auspiciousness and dread.

It must have been at this stage when somebody drew an analogy. In their gradation from the *pīṭha*, of recognized auspiciousness, to the cremation ground (and ossuary), the stages demand an increasing degree of self-control and mastery of one's emotions. This development was viewed as a parallel to the Stages of Perfection which mark the gradual ascent of a Bodhisattva, i.e. to the very Ten or Twelve Worlds which are the next chain of concepts or drawings assign to the tiers. More than anything else, the equation shows how great a store Buddhists must have set by the gradual chain: conquering the loathing one feels against cemeteries was ranked as an achievement comparable to the higher stages in a Bodhisattva's development: 'Equanimity as to the purification of all *dharmas* etc.', i.e. indifference as to purity and impurity, is in the Daśabhūmakasūtra attributed to the sixth stage in his evolution[45].

The present equation of Worlds and Places (which we find both in our drawings and in a passage of the Saṃvarodayatantra: 9.22-24 ed. Tsuda) had a technical

45 *sarvadharmādiviśuddhisamatā*. Daśabhūmaka ed. Rahder, p.47.

necessity in its wake. The training in equanimity provided by the localities comprised five, or possibly six, stages; the Bodhisattvas' Worlds were ten or twelve; to effect a convincing analogy, the former series had to be brought up to the same number. This was achieved in what cannot be called an elegant manner: each of the places was provided by a counterpart called 'lesser' or 'subsidiary', *upa°*, just as the old collections of Hindu myths and legends, the Purāṇas, have a class of Upapurāṇas, 'Lesser Purāṇas' by their side which are not regarded as highly as their elder brethren. The 'holy place', the *pīṭha*, thus is accompanied by a 'lesser *pīṭha*, *upapīṭha*', and so on all through the list, down to the 'lesser ossuary'. This gave the required number of sacred localities.

In relating them to the Bodhisattva Worlds, one notes what cannot but be called a regular oversight. These stages of course approach the goal in a graded, ascending sequence. So do the localities, though in a slightly different way: they start out with a place of recognized sanctity and end with the dreaded abode of the dead. – Now, just as a 'lesser purāṇa' ranks below a purāṇa, a lesser *pīṭha* ought to stand lower than a *pīṭha*. But the sequence in the texts is different: the lesser places always rank one step higher than their bases; one fancies one sees how a set of concepts was expanded in a mechanical manner. –

This, then, is the list as we have it in the drawings:

1. Sanctuary	2. Lesser Sanctuary
3. Field	4. Lesser Field
5. ? *Cchandoha*	6. Lesser *Cchandoha*
7. Meeting Place, Fair	8. Lesser Meeting-Place
9. Burning Ground	10. Lesser Burning-Ground
11. Ossuary(?)[46]	12. Lesser Ossuary

46 A Note on *pīlava-* and *cchandoha-*

pīlava- is unexplained (Tsuda: Saṃvarodayatantra p.271; Snellgrove: Hevajratantra 1, p.68; Indo-Tibetan Buddhism p.170). The only detail to help us is the Hevrajratantra calling it 'to be found at the end of a village, **grāmāntastha-*' (I.vii.17; Text: *grāmantaṣṭha-*) – which at least places it in the same kind of locality as the burning grounds: *śmaśāna-* and *grāmānta-* are coupled in Manu 4.116 (enumeration of places where not to recite the Veda); cf. the Tibetan rendering, *groṅ mthaḥ*, which Tsuda p.271 quotes from the Ḍākārṇava. – The present tentative translation, ossuary, is suggested by a remark in Hemacandra's Anekārthasaṃgraha, which glosses *pīlu-* as *asthikhaṇḍam*. *pīlava-* would then be a Prakritic form for **pailava-*: for what according to the derivational rules of Sanskrit is an irregularity in vowel gradation, see (Wackernagel-)Debrunner, Ai.Gr. II 2, §37 p.123. Hemacandra's gloss *may* be connected with AV 18.2.48, the earliest attestation for *pīlu(mant)*: according to Kauśikasūtra 82,31 this verse is used when after cremation the bones of the deceased are interred. Note this brings us back to the context of *caityas*: see Caland: Die Ai. Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche, p.156ff.

The term *cchandoha-* remains unclear. The Kubjikāmatatantra (ed. Goudriaan/Scho-

Buddhist texts lead a step further, and there is one purely formal circumstance why one should not refuse their guidance. The drawings write the terms in an unusually garbled and mutilated fashion – which suggests they were only partly understood.

When turning to the Hevajra- and the Saṃvarodayatantra, we see an altogether different interpretation had come to be assigned to the Twelve Types of Localities. Their original meaning had in the course of time become obscure, or was lost from sight: Ritual with its mechanics, its tangible and externalized meanings, its allegorical interpretations gripped this set as so many others; what had been a means to make man realize conventional distinctions were of a limited validity was turned into – an abbreviated account of Holy Places of the Subcontinent.

Details of such ascriptions are found in the Hevajratantra (Snellgrove I vii 12-19) and the Saṃvarodayatantra (Tsuda 9.14-19). For the present purpose, it is sufficient to quote specimens:

pīṭhaṃ jālandharaṃ khyātam oḍḍiyānaṃ tathaiva ca |
pīṭhaṃ paurṇagiriś caiva kāmarūpan tathaiva ca ||

terman) offers a variant, *saṃdoha-* (2.117; 18.105; 20.23-24; cf. Snellgrove: Indo-Tibetan Buddhism p.170, quoting DasGupta: Obscure Religious Cults, p.197). This has the advantage of being comprehensible: 'Gesamtheit, Fülle, Menge' (PW s.v.). At the same time, this obviously is an attempt to make sense out of what was a term no longer understood: a corruption of a tolerably satisfactory *saṃdoha- into cchandoha-* lacks plausibility.

upacchandoha- is actually attested in free use, i.e. outside standardized lists. It occurs in a Buddhist formula to announce the resolve (*saṃkalpa-*) to make a religious donation. The Kalaśārcanapūjāvidhi contains an elaborate version: in its description of the donor's place of residence it has *jambudvīpe vāsukikṣetre āryāvartapuṇyabhūmau nepāladeśe* [... four locations omitted ...] *gopucchagirivare sudurjayābhūmibhāge upachandohapīṭhe śrīherukavirūpākṣakhagānanādivāsite anekadevālayasthāne śrīsvayambhūcaityadharmadhātuvāgīśvarasannidhāne* (p. 4). These lists usually proceed from the larger to the smaller unit. If this is the principle of the present instance, the *upachandoha pīṭha* ought to be found on the Svayaṃbhū hill, in a part which includes the *caitya* but extends beyond it. Unfortunately, though, the same text has another, much expanded version of the same list (p.121), which mentions the term quite close to the beginning: *himavatparvatadakṣiṇapārśve upachandohapīṭhe śrīsudurjayābhūmibhāge* [...] *jambudvīpe* [...] *nepālasthāne* etc.: from the placement of Jambudvīpa alone, one can see this sequence cannot claim much authority. But one does note the meaning of *upacchandoha* had apparently become obscure. Nonetheless, it continued in use: there is a *paṭa* depicting the Svayaṃbhū, dated N.S. 929, which in its legend says *gopucchagirivare upacchandapīthe [sic!] ... śrī-3-svayaṃbhucaityabhaṭṭārakasya saṃnidhāne* etc. A similar wording (printed as *...śrīsamvurākāra maṃdareḥ upachandohe kṣatre gvapuchaparvvataḥ śrīsvayabhūcaitesthāneḥ* is given in a palm-leaf document from Bhaktapur, dated N.S.862 (cf. Ś. Rājvaṃśī: Bhūmisambandhi tamsūk tāḍapatra 2, Kathmandu 2041, p.10, line 1; reading unverified).

'Jālandhara is declared a *pīṭha*, as is Oḍḍiyāna, too; and Paurṇagiri is a *pīṭha*, too; so is Kāmarūpa.' (HT 1.7.12)

śmaśānaṃ pāṭaliputraṃ śmaśānaṃ sindhum eva ca |
marukulatādvayasthānam upaśmaśāna(ṃ) kathyate ||

'Pāṭaliputra is a burning-ground, and Sindhu is a burning-ground, too; the two places of Maru and Kulatā are said to be lesser burning-grounds.' (ST 9.19)

The identifications are peculiar in one respect. The different kinds of places of the original list all appear reduced to the same level; there is no reason why Jālandhara should be called a *pīṭha* while Pāṭaliputra is a burning ground; for all we know, the designations might as well be inverted. And indeed such interchanges do occur: Arbuda is a *pīṭha* to the Saṃvarodaya, but a 'lesser field' to the Hevajra; Kulatā, which the Saṃvarodaya has just identified as an *upaśmaśāna*, is in the Hevajratantra listed among the 'lesser fields'. In other words, from the viewpoint of this list, the whole gamut of twelve concepts might as well be translated by 'holy place, *tīrtha*'.

In this process, the one essential point of the old list is as it were glossed over: the cremation ground and the ossuary always had been ill-omened places; in the new interpretation this dynamic element, ranging from extreme auspiciousness to the abominable, is obscured.

In exchange for this, the authors obtained something quite different: they made the list stand for eminent religious sites of the subcontinent. And when applying it to a definite sanctuary as the Svayaṃbhūnāth, this in a sense adds a new and important claim: in its tiers, the sanctuary has absorbed and united the beneficial properties of all these holy places. In a new and specific sense, the monument proves to be the hub of the world.

6.4. The Bodhisattvas' Worlds

1. Buddhist literature knows a classical chain of Ten Worlds or Earths, *bhūmis*, which a being will pass through on his way to perfection. Two well-known Sanskrit treatises, the Daśabhūmakasūtra and the Bodhisattvabhūmi, deal with these stages at some length. They begin their account at the point where someone decides on entering upon the long and arduous way which ultimately leads to Buddhahood: the *bhūmis,* then, are addressed to those on the point of resolving to become a Bodhisattva.

This resolve, the texts say, is necessarily preceded by two conditions which have to be fulfilled. There has to be the Ardent Desire eventually to achieve Buddhahood, and this desire in turn depends upon what we might call appropriate surroundings and a congenial disposition; the texts mean the same thing when saying man needs birth in a good family. Given these two preconditions, (1) birth in a (good) family,

gotravihāra, and (2) the ardent desire for Buddhahood, *adhimuktivihāra*, a being will successively reach ten worlds (*bhūmis*), which are named as follows:

(1) Joyful (*pramuditā*)
(2) Stainless (*vimalā*)
(3) Effecting Light (*prabhākarī*)
(4) Flaming (*arciṣmatī*)
(5) Favourable (*abhimukhī*)
(6) Very difficult to be won (*sudurjayā*)
(7) Going far (*dūraṃgamā*)
(8) Immovable (*acalā*)
(9) Of Highest Wisdom (*sādhumatī*)
(10) With Clouds of *dharma* (*dharmameghā*)

Since these concepts are, in a sense, cyphers intimately related to Buddhist philosophy and practice, it is not easy to form an adequate idea of their nature: the words are terms rather than descriptions, and the attempt to translate them into English will not be found satisfactory. This is more of an obstacle to the Western reader than to the devout Buddhist who is accustomed to the idea of a gradual relevation of truth. As they stand, they 'are simply namesakes for ordinary persons who have no experience in the Path', as Takakusu justly said. We shall quote his summaries of three of them and leave it at that:

> 'The second is the Stage of Purity (*vimalā*) in which one reaches the perfection of discipline (*śīla*) and becomes utterly taintless with regard to morality.
>
> The seventh is the Stage of Far-Going (*dūraṃgamā*) which is the position farthest removed from the selfish state of the two Vehicles. Here one completes the perfection of expediency (*upāya*) and begins to exercise great mercy to all beings.
>
> The last is the Stage of Ideal Cloud (*dharmamegha*) in which one is able to preach the Ideal to all the world equally, just as the rainclouds pour down heavy rains during drought. This is practically the stage of the Buddha who is represented by such a Bodhisattva.'[47]

In spite of the limits of our understanding, a general tendency can be observed in these stages. In the course of his development, the Bodhisattva opens himself to the world; he grasps it by his mind and thus increases his fields of influence. The process starts out from a developed individuality, and ends in subduing and overcoming it; the perfection is transacted within the adept's mind and spirit and affects it.

2. Having reached this new equation, one was faced by a problem. Ten Worlds, thirteen umbrellas: how to fill the gap? For the eleventh tier, called *samantaprabhā*, i.e. 'flaming everywhere', we can re-trace the solution from one of the standard compilations of Buddhist terms, the Mahāvyutpatti.

47 J. Takakusu: The Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy. Delhi 1978[3], pp.129f.

In its second paragraph, it enumerates the Tathāgatas by name (No. 81–101). The next section (§III, No.102) says *samantaprabhā buddhabhūmiḥ*, 'The Buddhas' world is (called) flaming everywhere'. To a mechanical mind, this must have appeared the logical end and completion of the Ten Worlds: if the Bodhisattvas on their different levels all have a world of their own, surely the place of final deliverance must have a name too, and the sentence seems to give it.

To be sure, it is not the Mahāvyutpatti which relates this World of the Buddhas, *samantaprabhā*, to those of the Bodhisattvas. The link we need is provided by the Dharmasaṃgraha, a short and unpretentious manual of Buddhist concepts[48]. In its section LXIV, it lists the usual ten; section LXV by way of a codicil adds another three, bringing the total up to 13, and the first among them is *samantaprabhā*. The Dharmasaṃgraha, then, marks two points on the way between the classical list of Ten, as described in the Daśabhūmakasūtra, and the Thirteen Worlds of the drawings: it testifies to the number of worlds being extended to 13, and to the inclusion of the eleventh stage, which is not a Bodhisattva world to the Mahāvyutpatti[49].

In this way, one lacuna was filled – rather neatly, its author may have thought, because it tops the Bodhisattvas' worlds with the Buddhas'. Of course a weighty objection could – and indeed should – be raised against him. Naming the Buddhas' location must needs be inadequate and misleading since theirs is a realm where distinctions and names have necessarily lost meaning and significance. But when considering Vairocana and his visible representation on the dome we have seen this same idea ignored in a much more conspicuous way: the tangible exerted its fascination.

3. The last two tiers are left to be accounted for. With them, we reach what seems independent thought which directly tallies with the forms of Buddhism pursued in the Valley.

Our papers have 'Of Ardent Desire' (*adhimuktī*) for 12, and *vajrabhūmi* for 13: the Diamond or Thunderbolt World, as one might render it. This last term is of course a clear reference to the Vajrayāna, and its position at the uttermost end of the list needs no explanation. The problem lies in its predecessor, the World of Ardent Desire.

Devoid of a context, the bare term again does not lead us very far. We had met with it, though, in the description of conditions which must be fulfilled before

48 It was copied in Nepal: see the Saṃkṣiptasūcīpatra s.v.; besides, there is the interesting small edition by Divyavajra Vajrācārya: Dharmasaṃgraha koṣa. Yeṃ [= Kathmandu] 1100 [N.S.].

49 Its further progress (12: 'Beyond Compare', *nirupamā*, and 13: 'Characterized by Knowing', *jñānavatī*) is foreign to the drawings and therefore will not be pursued.

someone enters upon the arduous path which is a Bodhisattva's (section 1, above). In view of the Niṣpannayogāvali maṇḍala presently to be quoted, there can be no doubt it is this term and concept which has found its way, from the pre-conditions, to a position among the worlds themselves.

How, then, could what used to be a preparatory stage come to be raised to nearly the peak of the Bodhisattvas' worlds? I have seen no written sources to enlighten us. Still, a conceivable reason is not beyond conjecture. The shift can be deduced from the Vajrayāna framework, from the theories which govern a Vajrācārya's life.

Its culmination of course is the *abhiṣeka*, i.e. the consecration which turns him into a living Buddha. This implies the various Bodhisattva stages must have been absolved – or, to express the same thing in terms of the Ten Worlds: they, being the Bodhisattvas', must have been accomplished and attained; the only thing missing is the consummation, i.e. the ritual of consecration.

This, however, is effected by a conscious decision and act: a Vajrācārya birth merely entails the right to have the ritual performed, but Buddhahood itself is only conferred by the ceremony. Undergoing it implies a number of changes in the prescribed conduct of life, and in order to avoid them, there are Vajrācāryas who decide not to take the consecration.

A stage named 'Ardent Desire' (viz., to have the ritual performed) fits very well into this frame. When born, the Vajrācārya has run through the whole ladder of existences which at long last have brought him to the threshold of Buddhahood. The only thing which still remains for him to do is to take the final step[50].

6.5. The Perfections (pāramitās)

1. The Ladder of Perfections is more comprehensive and of wider appeal than the Worlds. They are the Bodhisattvas' at their various stages; a future Buddha will cultivate and develop them in the course of his earthly existences. Unlike to the Worlds, most of their names give an adequate idea of the virtues to be fostered,

50 Admittedly, this explanation evades the question on how to understand *samantaprabhā*: on this reading, the Mahāvyutpatti definition ('The Buddhas' World') is no longer satisfactory. But this interpretation is out of the question anyway: in Vajrayāna, and in the language of the drawings, the Buddha World is of course the thirteenth stage, *vajrabhūmiḥ*. –

The first step in the above hypothesis, however, can be verified, viz., the incorporation of *adhimukti*, the preparatory stage, into the sequence of *bhūmis*. In its description of the Dharmadhātuvāgīśvaramaṇḍala, the Niṣpannayogāvali has a twelve-member list of the Bodhisattva Worlds, and this opens with *adhimukti*, coming before *pramuditā* (ed. Bhattacharyya, p.55; cf. his introduction, p.61). This odd sequence seems due to a different convention of listing: the text starts its description at the North-East rather than at the East.

though again there is a large exegetical literature to particularize and translate them into manageable instruction.

The most well-known and wide-spread group among them are the first six. In particular, Wisdom or Insight, the sixth, is the subject of an extensive literature of its own. Wisdom came to be flanked by (Skill in) Means; even when in a later stage of development the list was extended to ten, *prajñā* and *upāya* remained the concepts around which most of the thinking about Perfections revolved. In this process, the state of a Bodhisattva is as it were gradually approached: formally, the Aspiration or Resolve to attain Buddhahood is voiced only in the eighth stage. (Nevertheless, the Daśabhūmakasūtra has established the one-to-one correspondence between Worlds and Perfections which we also see employed in the Nepalese drawings[51].)

2. Again, the list of the manuscripts is extended as against the usual chains[52]: not only because of the number of tiers, but also because there was a further development of the idea of Perfections. The drawings name them as follows:

(1) Giving (*dāna*)
(2) Morality (*śīla*)
(3) Forbearance (*kṣānti*)
(4) Vigour (*vīrya*)
(5) Meditation (*dhyāna*)
(6) Wisdom (*prajñā*)
(7) (Skill in) Means (*upāya*)
(8) Aspiration, Resolve (*praṇidhi*)
(9) Strength, Perseverance (*bala*)
(10) Knowledge (*jñāna*)
(11) Diamond and Action (*vajrakarma*)[53]
(12) Jewel (*ratna*)

3. Up to the tenth, this is the conventional series. With No. 11, we enter into the esoteric and Tantric realm. The Japanese sources now accessible[54] extend the notion of Perfection by a further step. With Knowledge (No. 10), a Bodhisattva has reached what in a sense is the ultimate stage. He now begins to use his perfected attainments in the interest of other beings, i.e. he again turns outward to the world, but now with the perfection of all his achievements. (In passing, one notes this is quite similar to the Vajrācārya's situation: by his consecration, he has attained the consummation of existence, and his future life will be governed by his Buddha nature.)

Once having reached this point, the Bodhisattva will act with the perfections of 'the other shore' (Snodgrass). They manifest themselves as Four Meditations (which in turn give rise to the Four Directional Tathāgatas), and are conceptualized as female deities (: *pāramitā* is feminine in gender). Surrounding Mahāvairocana in

51 The discrepancy apparently did not go unnoticed: the Avataṃsakasūtra says the Perfections – all of the list of Ten – are attained in the Seventh of the Bodhisattva Worlds (D.T. Suzuki: Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism, New York 1973[5], pp.321f.).

52 Dharmasaṃgraha 17-18; Mahāvyutpatti 913-924.

53 For a justification of this translation, see Section 3.

54 For what follows, cf. A. Snodgrass: The Matrix and Diamond World mandalas in Shingon Buddhism. New Delhi 1988, pp.598ff.

the four cardinal directions, their names are, starting in the East: The Perfection of the Diamond (*vajra-*), of the Jewel (*ratna-*), the Law (*dharma-*)[55], and Action (*karman-*).

It is an imperfect replica of this notion which lies at the bottom of what the drawings say. The deviations were caused by the now familiar problem: in number, the tiers still available and the deities to be accommodated do not tally. This time, the solution is new. Tier 11 has *vajrakarmma*, Diamond and Action: i.e. it couples two of them and places them on the same level. For 12, one would expect an analogous combination of Law and Jewel – instead of which one only finds the Jewel (*ratna*). Why the Law is missing it is hard to say[56]. Even so, there can be little doubt it is this extended list of the Pāramitās which has been transposed to the tiers.

6.6. The Kinds of Knowledge (jñāna)

1. In the course of their way to perfection, beings grow in knowledge, and as with all global concepts, the stages of this growth are again analyzed. The doctrinal glossaries are a better guide than the drawings, since they present the more convincing sequence.

The knowledge a being is to attain will lead him to an intelligent use of what has been learnt; understanding, then, is an indispensable part. The essentials had been pronounced by the Buddha, in the shape of the Four Noble Truths which form the beginning of the present series:

(1) The Knowledge of Suffering (*duḥkhajñāna*),
(2) The Knowledge of its Origin (*samudaya°*),
(3) The Knowledge of its Obstruction (*nirodha°*), and
(4) The Knowledge of the Path (which leads to the Obstruction of Suffering) (*mārga°*)

2. One sees this enumeration presents knowledge under the aspect of what is conducive to Deliverance. Later times were of a more systematical and literal bent of mind; they apparently found the Truths an insufficient account of knowledge

55 The parallel in the Vajradhātumaṇḍala has the 'Perfection of the Lotus (*padma-*)' instead (cf. Lokesh Chandra: a ninth-century scroll of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. New Delhi 1986, *passim*). One remembers the lotus is the symbol of Amitābha, the Western Tathāgata.

56 There is a number of possibilities, and I see no criterion to choose between them. *Dharma* could of course have been placed on Tier 13 – but this highest stage may well have been left vacant to accord with the old notion of the Absolute being devoid of attributes. – A second reasoning does not carry much conviction on doctrinal grounds but might all the same lie at the bottom of the omission. The concept of *dharma-* again figures among the Kinds of Knowledge presently to be discussed, and the duplication on different levels might have disturbed somebody. – Finally, one cannot rule out a simple omission. If so, the mistake must be fairly old: both mss. **AB** and ms. **C** have it.

in that they seemed to confine themselves to religion. Hence, the inventory was extended so as to include other forms and kinds of knowledge[57], *viz.*,

(5) The Knowledge of Conditions or 'Rationality'[58] (*dharmma*°),

(6) The Knowledge of Inference (*anvaya*°),

(7) Conventional Knowledge (*saṃvṛti*°), and

(8) The Knowledge of the Thoughts of Others (*paracitta*°)[59].

The account is closed by two concepts which as it were point to the fruition of the Way:

(9) The Knowledge of Destruction (viz., of the components of existence, so 'that they never occur again'[60] (*kṣaya*°), and

(10) The Knowledge of Non-Arising (of further existences) (*anutpāda*°).

Beyond a doubt, a culmination envisaged in such terms will only be attained by a being of perfect insight: it is, then, one more instance of progressing towards the ideal, on a par with the others, and readily subsumed under the metaphor of ascent which governs the spire of the stūpa.

3. In the drawings, the last pair of concepts (9 and 10) has been shifted so as to follow the first block. A reason is not difficult to conceive: in this new arrangement, the Four Noble Truths and their results are grouped together, while the more abstract and general characteristics of knowledge are moved to the end. In this new sequence, the account now culminates in the 'Knowledge of the Thought of others': its magical ring may have been a contributing factor.

4. In a formal respect, the Kinds of Knowledge differ from the other set of concepts the tiers are equated with: they only reach up to the tenth tier; probably, then, they were taken over from a time when the stūpa only had nine tiers plus the crowning parasol – a stage attested, e.g., in the Caityavibhāgavinayodbhāvasūtra, a Sanskrit text preserved in Tibetan translation[61]. In contradistinction to the preceding series of Worlds, their list was not extended: at the tenth stage, the Perfections had reached the key term of the present group, viz., Knowledge (*jñāna*); the convergence of the two lists perhaps was a sufficient formal reason to leave things as found.

57 Cf., e.g., the Dharmasaṃgraha, Section 93.

58 This paraphrase is taken from the Pali-English Dictionary of the Pāli Text Society, s.v. *dhamma*.

59 These two groups follow upon each other in the Dasuttarasuttanta of the Dīghanikāya (ed. PTS 3, p.277): both of them consist of four members each. – The expression *paracittajñāna* is again found Yogasūtra 3.19; the Pāli has *paricce* instead.

60 Visuddhimagga XXII,122.

61 See G.Tucci: Stupa. Art, architectonics and symbolism. English version of Indo-Tibetica 1. New Delhi 1988, pp.39ff., and G. Roth: Symbolism of the Buddhist stūpa. *loc.cit.*, pp.188ff.

This, then, is what the drawings have to say about the meaning of the tiers – and here we shall for a moment turn to a new source. The Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa, a voluminous compilation, is the chief literary document concerning the stūpa. Seeing it contains a great deal of lore and legend about the Svayaṃbhū, one would expect it to offer reflections about the tiers and their significance. Which it does – but instead of being a repetition or expansion of what we have learnt from the drawings, its interpretation is altogether different. The tiers are taken – no very subtle thought – as abodes of various classes of divine beings, a series of heavens one above the other. In determining them, the author(s) of this passage[62] of course drew upon standardized tradition.

The details are as follows. Of the systematic compilations of Buddhist notions, the *Dharmasaṃgraha* and the *Mahāvyutpatti* tabulate the views about various classes of gods. First come those of the Realm of Desire (the *kāmāvacarā devāḥ*), six in number. They are followed by a second group of eighteen who all of them pertain to the Realm of Form (the *rūpāvacarā devāḥ*). To the author of the relevant Purāṇa passage, the thirteen tiers represent gods of these two classes. His variants from the codified lists are decidedly minor in character, being confined to deviations from the usual sequence[63], which may have no other cause but imprecise recollection. There is, however, the one very obvious problem which we are by now thoroughly familiar with: there were 13 tiers to be accounted for, but 6 + 18, i.e. 24 classes of deities to be accommodated. The quandary was solved in two ways: (a) by including the 'neck' and the part above the tiers into the sequence (this gave him a place for the lowest class of the gods of the Realm of Desire and for the highest of the Realm of Form), and (b) by curtailing: the eighteen classes of gods of the Realm of Form are reduced to nine[64].

No doubt the idea of using the tiers to symbolize various classes of gods readily suggested itself. It has one added twist which must have much recommended it to its author. For there is a third class of gods which goes along along with the other two, they who dwell in the Realm of Formlessness (the *arūpācarā devāḥ*); they 'have no bodily form but are mere effulgences endowed with intelligence' (Childers, *s.v.*). It must have been a great temptation to as it were complete the inventory of these

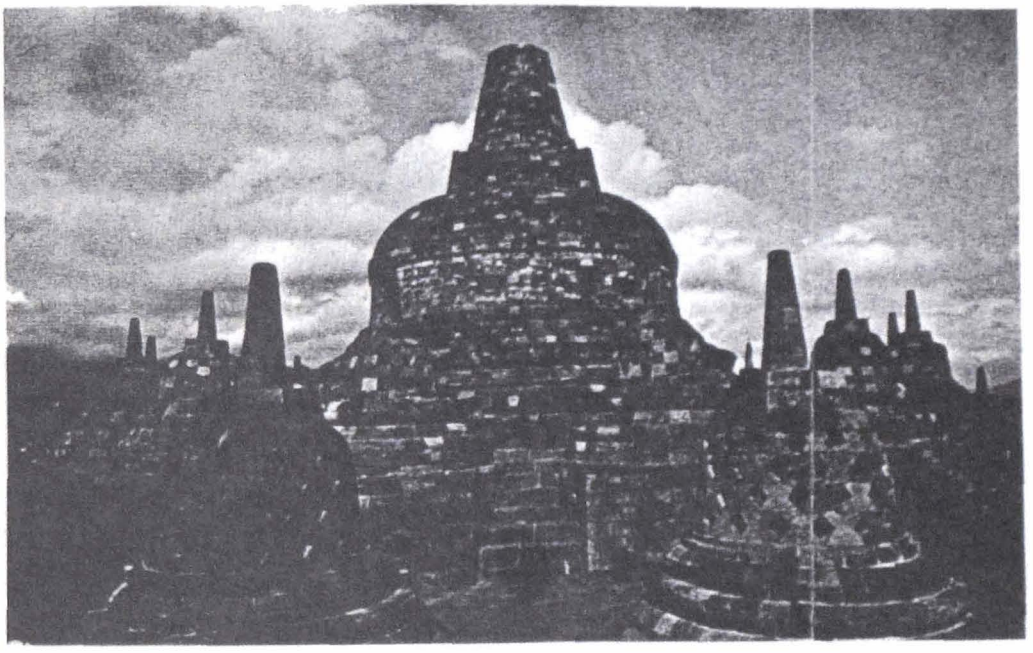
62 See the *Bṛhat-Svayambhū-Purāṇa* ed. by Haraprasād Śāstrī. Calcutta 1894-1900, pp.418ff.

63 The *tuṣita* and the *yāma* gods have changed places, and the *brahmapārṣadya* gods come two places early.

64 The whole sequence from *parīttaśubhāḥ* (Mvyutp. 3094) to *sudṛśāḥ* (Mvyutp. 3104) is omitted.

gods and assign some place to those without form. One remembers the Chandi Borobudur which tackled the problem and found what in its way is a very impressive solution: the Realm of Formlessness is represented by the *perforated stūpas* of Ill. 17[65] with the Tathāgatas inside. The author of the Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa passage was of a more literal bent of mind: from the insoluble problem of giving form to the Formless, he absolved himself. –

What is remarkable about this passage is its relation to the identifications of the drawings, or rather, its lack of it. Here was a rich tradition about the meaning of the tiers, manifold and well-attested. Yet the Purāṇa author ignores all this and as it were makes a fresh start. To him, all those thoughts which had previously gone into the the explanation cannot have been codified doctrine: they were attempts at an explanation which could be superseded by others, and so he takes the tiers as a set of emblems for a new and different set of notions.



Ill.17. Caityas from the Borobudur

6.8. The Planets

All this was Buddhist doctrine. When returning to Drawing C, one finds a lone trace of yet another signification attributed to the tiers which in a sense is similar to the preceding. In line AII 31, the lowest tier goes by the name of *rāhu cakuli-*, i.e. 'Rāhu's umbrella'. Rāhu of course is one of the Nine Planets (*navagrahāḥ*), and

65 See Soekmono: Chandi Borobudur. Assen, Amsterdam, Paris 1976, Ill. II facing p. 29.

the designation obviously implies placing the other planets on the remaining tiers. Their traditional enumeration ends in Sun and Moon – and symbols of the sun and moon are often used to crown the traditional stūpa.

If this is no misinterpretation of the manuscript term, it would be remarkable from a historical point of view. For since the planets are nine in number, the designation would be appropriate only to nine tiers. Now calculations have in several places led to the hypothesis the present thirteen-tier system was actually developed from a prototype of nine. A remnant of this older system appears to have preserved in the designation.

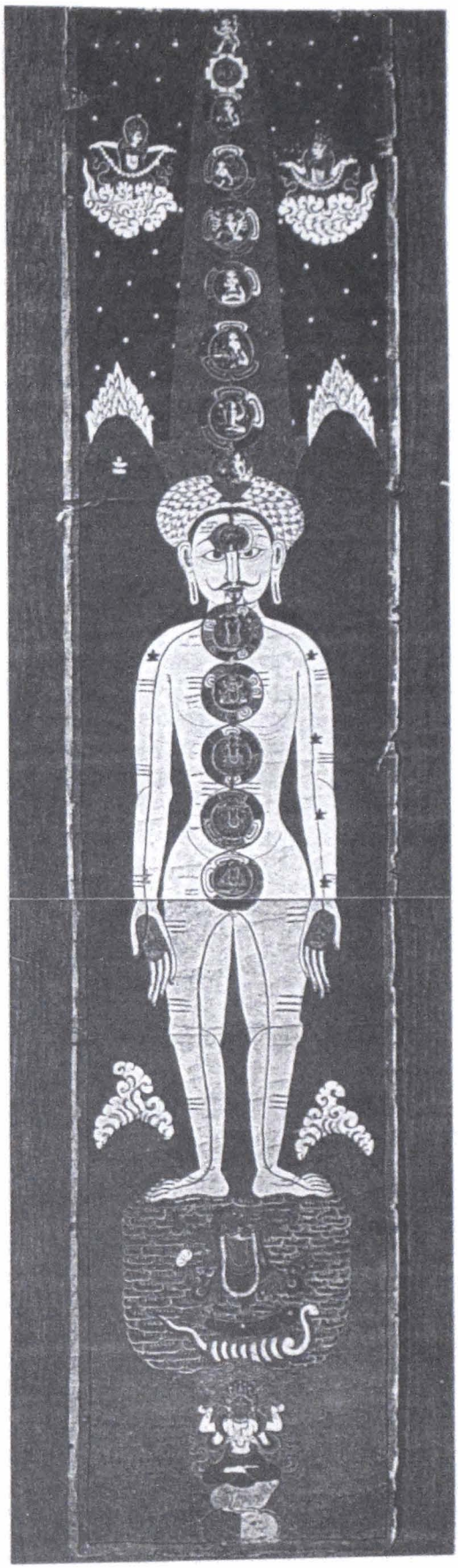
The Nine Planets of course are not an idea specifically Buddhist, but rather belong to common South Asian tradition and are familiar to everyone. It is worth noting the drawing uses the words, not in a context of esoteric interpretations, but as a normal craftsman's term. It looks like a survival from some popular interpretation of the stūpa which was based upon associations rather than upon learning.

6.9. A Hindu Use of the Pattern

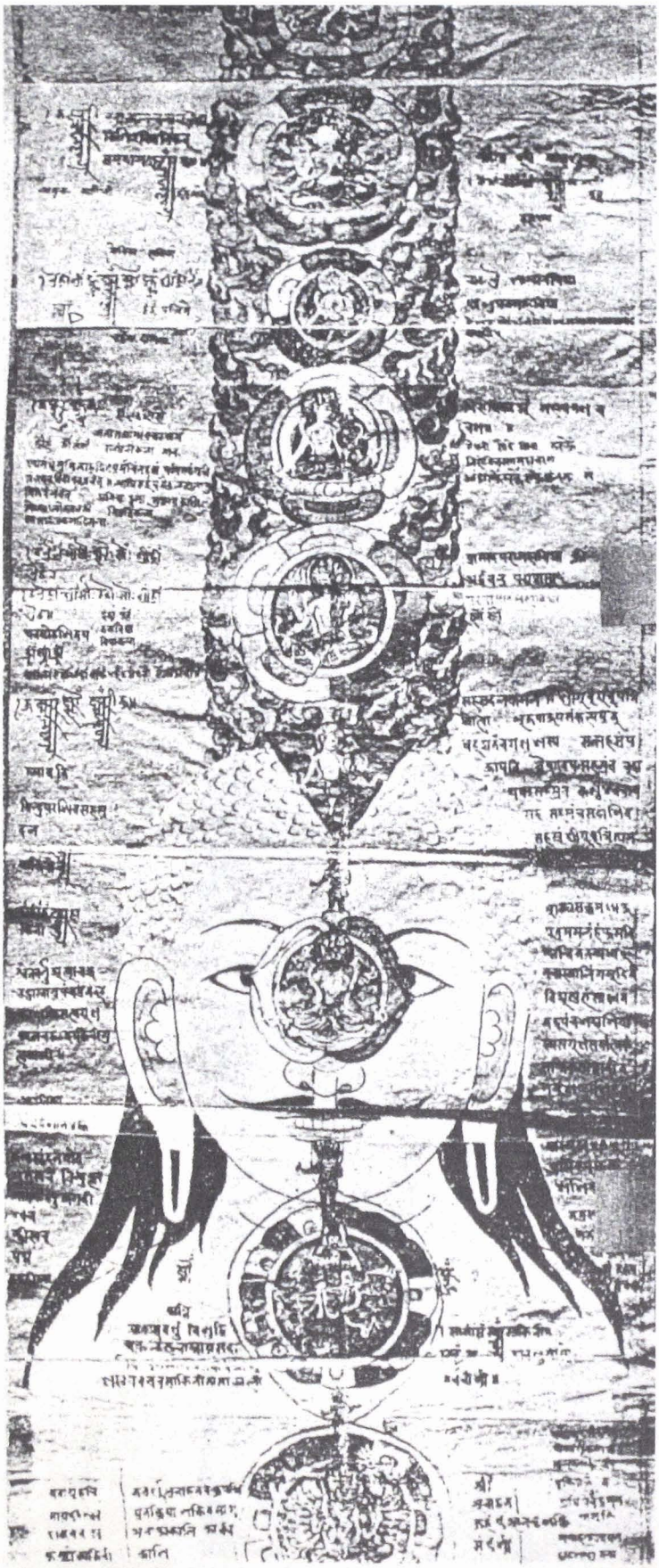
There is a Hindu parallel to the tiers which again touches upon the question of their 'meaning'. It comes from what on the face of it is a different sphere of experience and thought; yet its aims are similar, and it uses essentially identical modes of expression.

The painting reproduced as Ill.18 is a development of the wide-spread yogic and tantric notion of the Lotusses in the human body, the Centres of Energy, the *cakras*. Usually, they are seven in number. The first group of five, the lowest ones, are the representations and seats of the Five Elements within the microcosm which is Man: Earth in the anus, Water in the genitals, Fire in the belly, Air in the heart, and Ether in the throat: all of them in an ascending order lined up along the spine and connected by the arteries surrounding it. The forehead holds the sixth *cakra*, which is often taken for the Individual Soul, the *ātman*; the last, the Thousand-Petalled Lotus, is located beyond the body, above the fontanel, the *brahmarandhra*. It represents the permanent, ultimate and immovable, the *brahman*, which is the Universal Soul. All this is much as the illustration shows the body.

This image is commonly read together with the idea of the *Kuṇḍalinī*, the Serpent Power. In common man she lies curled around the lowest of the Centres, half asleep. A yogin learns to arouse her and make her ascend through the central vein. On her way, she passes through the various centres. When reaching a *cakra* in her ascent, she will cause its lotus to blossom forth and then pass on to extinction, just as a flower will after reaching its full bloom: the corresponding element is mastered and will no longer hold the yogin in thrall. So much for the familiar catena of ideas:



Ill. 18. Tantric View of the Structure of Man:
Nine levels above the Body



Ill. 19a. Tantric View of the Structure of Man: Thirteen levels above the Body (lower half)

Ill. 19b. Tantric View of the Structure of Man: Thirteen levels above the Body (upper half)

the while system is an extended image to symbolize and represent man's ascent to Ultimate Release.

The painting offers an elaboration and specification of this process. In place of what usually is the Thousand-Petalled Lotus above the head, it depicts nine such centres, which as it were break the process of gradual perfection down into a number of fixed steps until at the extreme point Man reaches the stage of Release; a related Tantric text, the Yoginīhṛdaya, calls it 'beyond thought' (*unmanas-*).

These additional Nine Centres clearly are more than just a chance analogy to the Nine Tiers which rise above the stūpa. For one thing, there is the formal correspondence. And just as there are stūpas with thirteen tiers side by side with those of nine, there is a painting which shows the number of *cakras* rising to thirteen (Ill.19). There can be no doubt it evolved from an older pattern of nine: the new plane is plainly marked by the elaborated quadrangle, a new 'earth' (*bhūpura*), which sets the uppermost four Centres off from the lower nine. There is, then, an exact morphological parallel: just as stūpas can have nine or thirteen tiers, the *cakras* can number 9 or 13.

The morphological analogy is borne out by striking similarities in thought. This is how the Stage Beyond Thought is interpreted in a Tantra:
There is no time nor its divisions, there are no elements and no deity; they call it Rudra's Face, the quite extinct, the high, the pure; Śiva's Śakti it is named, without distinction, of Ultimate Truth[1].

The tiers of the Buddhist stūpa and the Hindu *cakras*: there can be no doubt both are applications of the same underlying notion. This is an instance, then, of a common pattern, valid beyond the conflicting doctrines of the several religions or schools. One can even paraphrase what it asserts, and do so with tolerable precision: there is a way towards Ultimate Release which consists of successive stages, Nine or Thirteen, ordered in an ascending series, each more comprehensive than its predecessor.
Just as with the stūpa, the nature and exact meaning of the strata remain to be determined – a task which falls to the different schools: one will speak of Nine Worlds, the other of psychic states, etc. Common to them is the image or symbol which resolves the individual's way to release in an image of static perfection.

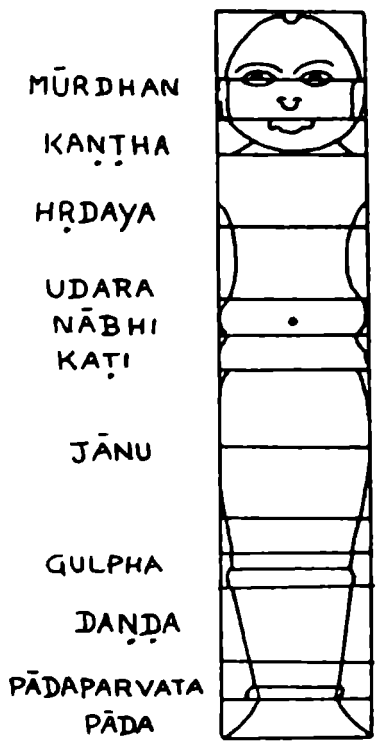
Looking back on the tiers and their varied interpretations, and asking for the meaning assigned to them, there seems to be only one possible answer. The only

1 Svacchandasaṃgraha, quoted in Yoginīhṛdayam, ed. Gopīnātha Kavirāj (Varanasi 1979[3], p.49): *nātra kālakalābhāvo na tattvaṃ na ca devatā | sunirvāṇaṃ paraṃ śuddhaṃ rudravaktraṃ tad ucyate | śivaśaktir iti khyātā nirvikalpā nirañjanā ||*

fixed point in this whole welter of ideas is the visible object: it seems to have presented a permanent challenge to the religious imagination. To repeat the words used in the introduction: what stands first in the minds of interpreters is, not this or that chain of concepts which would be illustrated by the building: its beginning and end is the stūpa itself.

7. Top-Knot and Crest Jewel

1. The tip of the Central Beam goes by a name that again recalls the Buddha and his earthly existence: it is usually called 'Crest Jewel of the Top-Knot' (*uṣṇīṣacūḍāmaṇi*) or 'Top-knot', *uṣṇīṣa*, for short. In secular usage, the latter word denotes something rising above the head or skull, often a turban; to Buddhists, it chiefly is one of the 32 characteristic marks that distinguish a Great Man. As tradition has it, he is someone destined to become either a world-conquering monarch (a *cakravartin*) or a Buddha. With a Great Being, the *uṣṇīṣa* takes the form of a protuberance or bump on top of the head: hence the rendering 'top-knot'. This, then, is the name that the top of the Central Beam goes by: a clear reminder of the archaic, anthropomorphical interpretation of the Central Beam, such as we still see it depicted following the text of this strange compilation, the Vāstusūtra-Upaniṣad. Near its peak, the stūpa thus reverts to the body of the Buddha himself.



Ill.20. Anthropomorph Interpretation of the Post

2. Its name links the tip to traditional accounts of Śākyamuni's life: so it is to legend that we have to turn.

Gods and men often adorn their hair, and when doing so, much attention is bestowed to the lock or tuft of hair on the back of the skull which as a rule must not be shaved. The Lalitavistara for instance, this old account of the earlier part of the Buddha's life which has preserved so many ideas embodied in the stūpa, describes the Guardians of the World and says they have 'jewelled diadems hanging down from their top-knots[66]'.-

66 *maṇimukuṭavilambitacūḍān* (ed. Vaidya, p.151,9).

Normally it is allowed to grow; cutting it off is one of the decisive ceremonies to mark a man's transition into the state of life of an ascetic. And cutting it is one of the acts the future Buddha performs when renouncing the world. The Lalitavistara bestows much loving care on depicting this event: it tells us how he leaves his paternal home by night, riding his horse Kaṇṭhaka and accompanied only by the faithful Chandaka; how he dismounts after six leagues, and sends Chandaka back with his horse and with his ornaments; how then he takes his sword in hand and cuts the sacred tuft (the *cūḍā*) that as it were marks him as a member of worldly society and does not befit an ascetic; how, finally, he exchanges his silken garments for the mendicant's ochre robe. Much legendary embellishment is used in describing this *rite de passage*: the Thirty-Three Gods stand ready to receive the severed lock of hair before it falls down to the ground, in order to worship it, etc. And the book adds one detail which is of great importance in our present context. For at the sites of all these three events, *there was a* caitya *erected to mark them*[67]; and these stūpas, the text goes on to say, are still ('even today', *adyāpi*) known under the names of 'Chandaka's Return', 'Receiving the Lock', and 'Taking the Ochre Robe'. And indeed this tradition was commemorated in life and art: in Bharhut, there is a relief with an inscription which speaks of 'the festival of the hairlock of the Holy One[68]': cf. the scene depicted in Ill.21[69].

No doubt, then, it is these events the tip of the stūpa is to remind us of: there is the *caitya* of the legend, and there is its name. And as for condensing these three events into a single name, this was done with an eye for graphic detail: cutting the lock is the least reversible among them. (The entire set of rituals that marks the formalized departure from secular life can still go under the name of *cūḍākarman*.) With this text in one's ear, one wonders whether the threefold division of the top-knot which is so prominent a feature of the drawing reproduced as Plate 9 could be meant as a reminder of these three *caityas* which legend had built around one of the central events of the future Buddha's life.

3. Iconographic practice takes up this motif and continues it.

The top-knot is the last and chief of the special marks: of course it remains, of course it is singled out by the ornament which is the crest jewel. Ill. 22 is from a Tibetan manual: it shows both parts clearly distinguished from each other. The picture was more influential than the legend, as one e.g. sees from King Girvāṇ's inscription to be quoted presently.

67 *tatra caityaṃ sthāpitam abhūt* LV ed. Vaidya 163,28; 164,3; 164,13.

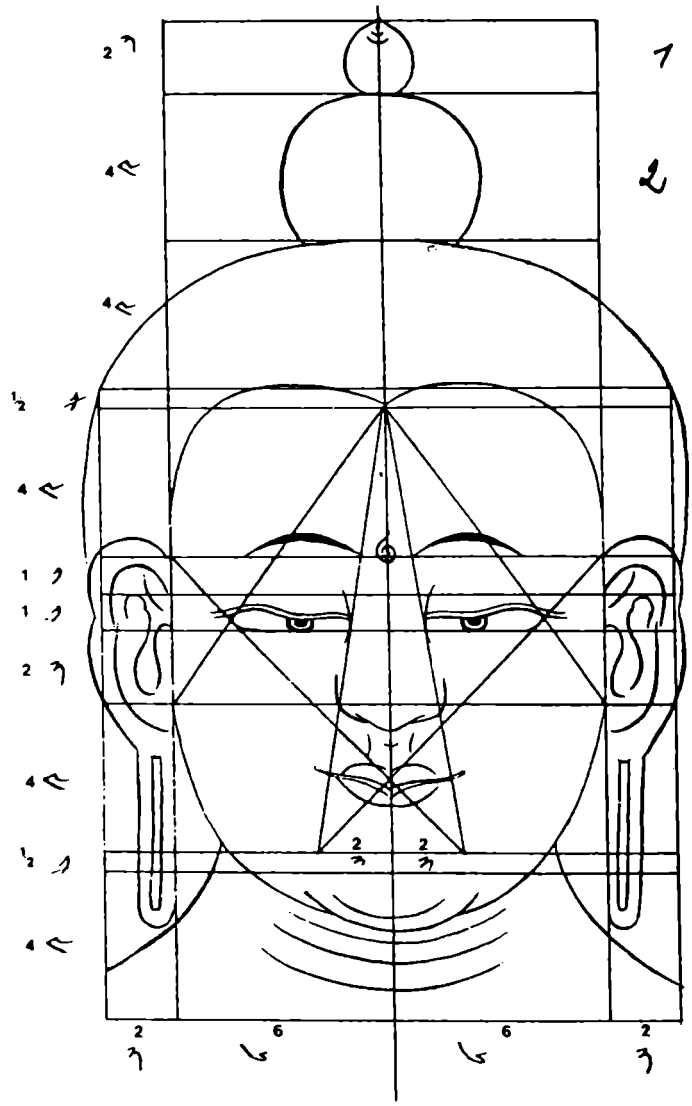
68 Lüders-Waldschmidt-Mehendale: Bharhut inscriptions. Ootacamund 1963, No. B21, p.93.

69 Reproduced from H.G. Franz: Pagode, Turmtempel, Stūpa. Graz 1978, Plate VI.

Ill.21. The *uṣṇīṣa*
within a stūpa

4. Crest Jewel, then, is the name for the peak of the beam – which gives rise to a fairly obvious question: where to find the top-knot itself? For from the cube onwards, there was the anthropomorphic current running right through the stūpa: the eyes, the whorl with its rays, the crown. If one connects them to the crest jewel, there is only one possible answer left: it is the tiers which are the *uṣṇīṣa* transformed.

This is a surprising conclusion when regarding the shape of the spire and contrasting it with the pattern of the Tibetan drawing. But one has to remember the older stūpas did not have the thirteen tiers of today, but five or seven or nine. With this in mind, a peculiarity of the spire hitherto unexplained suddenly makes sense, viz., the ascending width of the three bottom tiers. A five-tiered stūpa, with its uppermost tiers declining in width to correspond to the increase at the bottom, would present a symmetrical shape which the present building lacks, and it would be a replica of the way the top-knot is depicted in the drawing of Ill.22. In this sense, the tiers *are* the *uṣṇīṣa*, and there is a Japanese author who had perceived a morphological resemblance between them: 'The *uṣṇīṣa* on the crown of the head



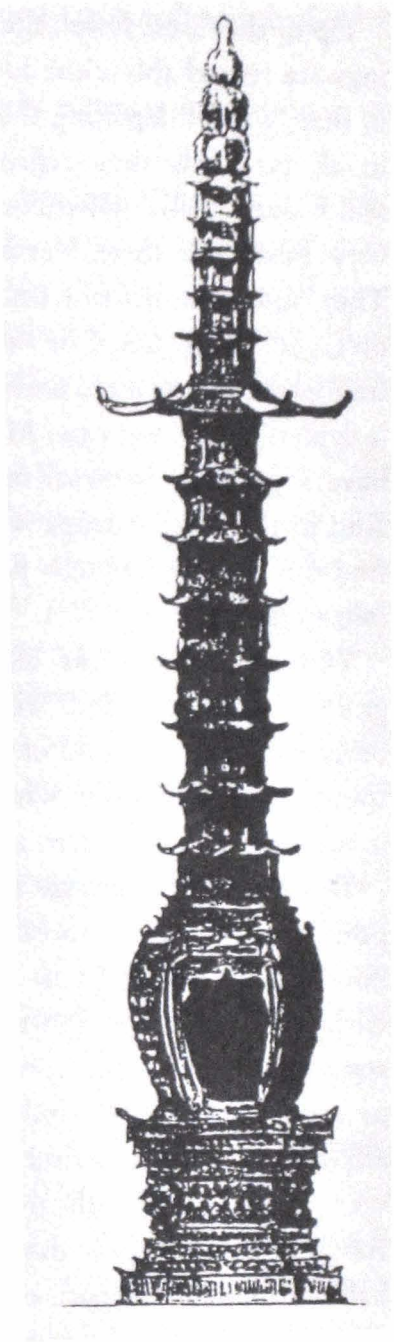
1. Crest Jewel of Top-Knot 2. Top-Knot

Ill.22. Tibetan Pattern
for drawing the Buddha's Head

of the Bhagavat is lofty and prominent, *rounded like a celestial parasol*'[70]. With the successive addition of further layers, the upper half of this circle developed into what we see today, viz., an elliptoid of increasing height. But the lower half kept close to its original shape.

70 Snodgrass, *loc. cit.* p.346; my italics.

And the reason for the continued additions to the number of tiers is again not difficult to guess. The central beam which runs through them was crowned by the honorific umbrella we shall now turn to – which in shape of course was but another tier and thus could easily be integrated into the spire. Ill.23 documents the process: it is a 13-tiered Chinese bronze pagoda with the eighth tier much wider and more elaborate than the others. Obviously, it was evolved from a seven-tier structure plus parasol, with the five upper tiers added in the style of the lower seven[71]. The parasol, then, in a sense constituted a permanent challenge, not the least, perhaps, because it added a part whose shape was analogous to tiers, thus bringing their total up to the even number one always tried to avoid.



Ill.23. Chinese Bronze Pagoda

8. The Parasol and the Uttermost Peak

1. However this may be: the tip of the Central Beam stands for the Buddha, and for a crucial stage in his career. No wonder this part had to be honoured – and honoured it was by one of the usual devices, viz., by a parasol (*chattra-*) such as is held above kings. A parasol, then, had to be fitted on top of the Crest Jewel.

Carved in stone we see it in the Illustration 24 attached.

The drawings say it is the big wooden wheel which so prominently rises above the tiers. It is named by a word which clearly describes its original function, viz., *uṣṇīṣacakra* 'the Wheel of the uṣṇīṣa'; an inscription dating from King Girvāṇ's restauration calls it 'the parasol of the Crest Jewel (*cauḍāmaṇichatra*)[72]. An alternative term is *dharmachattra*, i.e. 'Wheel (or Parasol) of the Law'.

71 Published by J. Prip-Møller: Chinese Buddhist monasteries. New Delhi 1982², p.278.

72 Hemraj Śākya: Śrīsvayaṃbhū-mahācaitya, p.285. The words *cakra* 'wheel' and *chattra* 'parasol' are often used interchangeably.

Up to the Crest Jewel, the two drawings are remarkably close to each other in their way of depicting the stūpa, and in all essentials they reproduce what still is seen. Only when coming to the very peak, the three 'versions' differ. They show the parasol embellished in divergent ways. Ms. **C** is shortest, confining itself to the mere umbrella, which it depicts with great care. Mss. **A** and **B** have a pinnacle (*gajura*) on top of it. And in the present stūpa we as it were find this unit of umbrella plus pinnacle twice repeated.

This of course looks like a case of gradual accretion. But we have seen other parts the stūpa do not allow anything like this latitude: why, then, was it admitted in the present instance?

The mass of the *caityas* in the Valley points to an answer: most of them do not have an umbrella at all, but end with the Crest Jewel. Put that way, the statement is not quite correct, though: to some, a removable umbrella will be affixed for a short period of the year, viz., between the full moon day of Āśvin and the eighth day of its dark half: it thus forms part of the annual cycle in the life of the monuments.

Ill.24. Buddha Crowned by a Parasol

There are legends to account for the rite. In one, it is related to a well-known episode from the Buddha's life. After Enlightenment, he ascended to the Trayastriṃśat Heavens; for his return to earth, Śakra built three ladders,

> 'the middle one was of yellow gold, the left-hand one of pure crystal, the right-hand one of white silver. Tathāgata [...] descended by the middle ladder. Mahā-Brahma-rāja [...], holding a white *chāmara*, came down by the white ladder

on the right, whilst Śakra [...], holding a precious canopy (*parasol*), descended by the crystal ladder on the left'[73].

This happened on the full-moon day of Āśvina, and the parasols are put up in its remembrance.

Another and probably later account relates the detachable parasols to the Svayaṃbhūnāth itself: it is said to have made its first appearance on this very full-moon day, and since it alone is the Mahācaitya, the other *caityas* as it were liken themselves to their archetype, and take their umbrella in its honour. Ill.25 shows the peak of a Pāṭan stūpa crowned by a device to install the temporary parasol.

With the Svayaṃbhūnāth, it has become permanent. Still, one fancies the traditional names of its parts come from the older, ephemeral one. The metal grid with its endless succession of entwined *śrīvatsa* patterns is called *kvay ciṃ tās*, i.e. 'brocade tied (so as to hang) down': in the removable parasols seen today, it is made of red cloth. Below it, these is what goes by the name of *kiṃkiṃjāla*, i.e. skt. *kiṅkiṇījāla*, 'net(work) of bells'. The separate droplike pendants are taken to represent jewels – which will be a more recent interpretation: they are the leaf-like extensions of the clapper of temple bells which catch the breeze and give the pleasant tinkle. Some of them can still be recognized. –

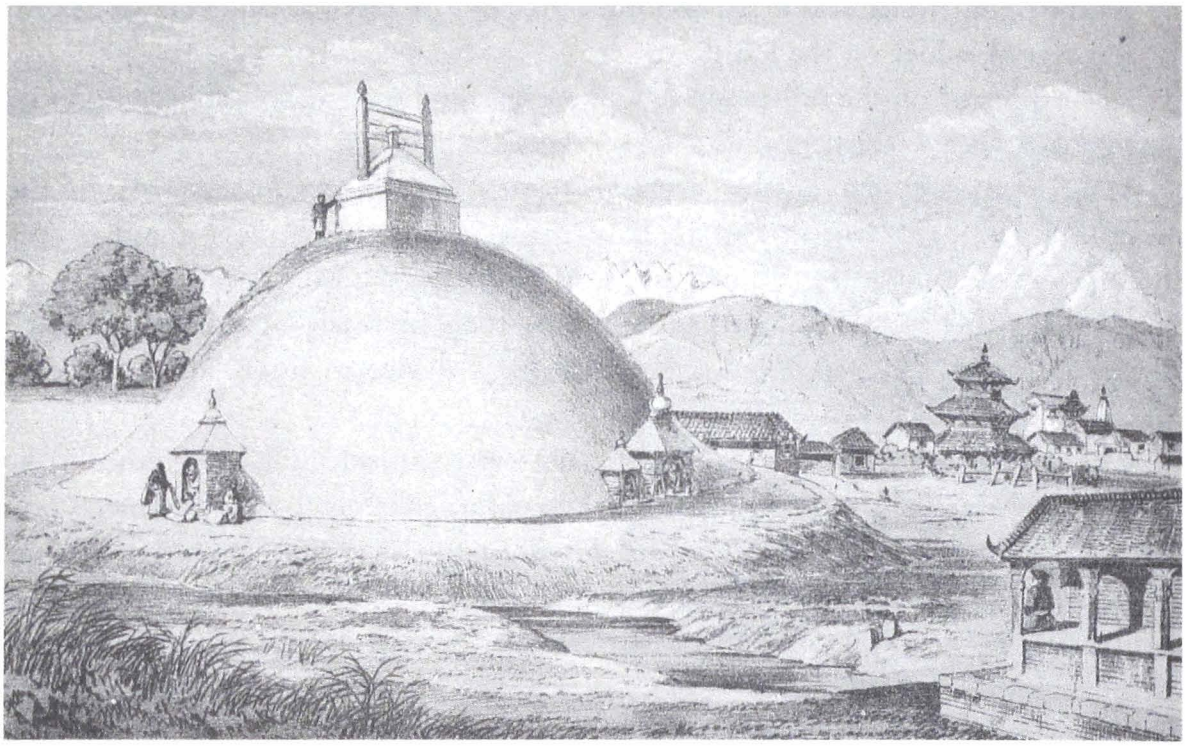
On its uppermost rim, the parasol is studded with small ornaments in a trefoil pattern, with three circles inserted in each. They are called 'jewels' (*ratna*), and each circle stands for the fundamental triad of Buddhism, i.e. the Buddha, the Law, and the Order. Nor have the metal staffs supporting the parasol escaped the interpreters' eyes: they are called *hemadaṇḍa*, 'gold staffs'.

2. Adding the parasol raised a technical problem: how was it to be fixed? Joining it to the Crest Jewel was an obvious impossibility since this stood for the Buddha's head: as we have seen, in spite of all their doctrinal significance the 13 tiers could not be joined to the body of the beam; the same objection would a fortiori apply to its tip. Some kind of support, then, was needed. This was provided by the four interlocking joists of square timber which form the base for the metal staffs on which the Umbrella rests.

3. Esoteric Interpretation: The Parasol

We thus see the parasol integrated into the building. Our sources do not say when this happened: we only know the addition was there by N.S.832.

73 S. Beal: Si-yu-ki. Buddhist records of the Western world. Delhi 1984 [reprint], 1.203. This reference, and the story which follows, I owe to Mr Hemrāj Śākya.



Ill.25. Frame for a Parasol
(a Pāṭan Stūpa)

And somewhere in the course of this process it was *given a meaning*, in the context of Release, much as the ever-growing series of tiers had been: a part as prominent as this, directly crowning the top-knot which in itself had symbolized the Buddha, could hardly escape being assigned some significance. Once the task had been recognized, its solution will have posed few difficulties: one took it to stand for the highest truth that the Buddha had recognized in his earthly life, and naturally it was formulated in keeping with Mahāyāna concepts. This is why the text says 'The Wheel of the Crest Jewel is the Purification (that consists) of Emptiness, the uttermost Perfect Enlightenment' [Drawing II, line 1]: the last part of this phrase is a standard formula frequently used in describing the ultimate goal – and the term here rendered by 'purification' denotes the utter absence of defilements such as an Arhat has achieved: the Pali dictionaries gloss its equivalent by 'purity, holiness, sanctification (etc.)'.

4. Esoteric Interpretation: The Support of the Parasol

Thus far, the reasoning and its solution must have appeared altogether satisfactory. But assigning a meaning to the parasol had a further problem in its wake: what was

one to do with its base, the construction added to support it? Leaving it unnamed, in its mere technical function, would have been awkward: it is a fairly prominent part of the building, and it rises directly above the tiers which had attracted so much thought.

The ideas adduced are surprising, and the solution is not without ingenuity. The top-knot, we have seen, was meant to direct the viewer back to the Buddha's person, and it was to the accounts of his earthly life that one turned in the endeavour to find a motive for the new structural element.

Both Pāli and Sanskrit sources are of course explicit about how Prince Siddhārtha won Enlightenment: the various stages preceding it are described in considerable detail. Two reputed teachers, Ārāḍa Kālāma and Udraka Rāmaputra, had accepted him as a pupil; he had mastered their teachings within a short time and when he still found himself dissatisfied, he started out on his own and turned to the extremes of two of the current methods of ascetic practice, viz., meditation and fasting. And again we have long accounts to depict these efforts that were to prove futile: the emaciation of the body, the meditations that nearly split the skull.

It is the extreme of meditation, in this stage which precedes the Enlightenment, that the structure supporting the parasol is named after: the drawing calls it *āsphānakaviśuddha-*[74] 'purification (or sanctification etc.: see above) by means of the āsphānaka(-meditation)'. There is no unanimity as to its precise nature, nor indeed as to the very term, and indeed Buddhist literature evaluates it in two different, even contradictory ways.

The Pāli texts have *appānaka* or *appāṇaka*, i.e. 'characterized by no breathing or little breathing[75]'. This is close to how the Mahāvastu understands the corresponding Sanskrit word, *āsphānaka-*[76] (which, however, is not an exact equivalent of the Pāli): 'Verily, ye monks, from mouth and nose and ears I interrupted breathing in and breathing out ....'[77]: one does not really see the connection between the word and the description. Snellgrove, basing himself on the Tibetan translation, takes the term to mean 'immobile concentration'[78].

The Mahāvastu has the Buddha describe the nature and effects of this meditation:

> 'When, ye monks, I had obstructed my breathing-in and breathing-out through both mouth and nostrils, loud sounds, great sounds rushed all through the insides

74 doubtless an error for °*viśuddhi*.

75 i.e. from skt. **aprāṇaka-* or **alpānaka-*: Critical Pali Dictionary s.v.

76 This has variants, *āspharaṇa-* or *āsphāraṇaka-*, again without an obvious explanation.

77 Mahāvastu, ed. Senart, 2.124: *sa khalv ahaṃ bhikṣavo mukhato nāsikāśrotrehi ca āśvāsapraśvāsā uparundhi*.

78 Indo-Tibetan Buddhism, vol.1, pp.241, 303.

of the cavities of my ear-openings. Just as, when a blacksmith's bellows are being blown, there are loud sounds, great sounds: the same way, ye monks, loud sounds, great sounds rushed all through the insides of the cavities of my ear-openings.'

Subsequently, the practice grows still more severe by the cavities of the ears also being shut off from air:

'When, ye monks, I had obstructed my breathing-in and breathing-out through both mouth and nostrils and through the insides of the cavities of my ear-openings, winds struck up high against my skull-cap and quite passed (through) it. Just as, ye monks, a butcher or a butcher's apprentice, with his sharp cow-hatchet, splits and cuts and hacks and chops (at) a cowskull, and quite chops it up – the same way, when I had obstructed my breathing-in and breathing-out through mouth and nostrils and through both cavities of my ear-openings, the winds struck up high against my skull-cap and quite wracked it[79]'.

In all this, and indeed in our present context, it is important to remember that this procedure no doubt is the culmination of a path the Buddha himself had pursued – but of a path which he had found futile and not leading to the desired end. In other words, this meditation had come to be rejected, and thus it is rather odd to see it represented in the stūpa and called a 'purification'.

But there is a second and quite different evaluation of this meditation, contained in the Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha (ed. Lokesh Chandra, p.4f.). It again shows Sarvārthasiddhi (Siddhārtha, that is) immediately before the Enlightenment and in a state of *āspharaṇa*. The Tathāgatas then give him this series of mantras: 'Om. I raise the thought of Enlightenment – Om. Vajra stay – Om. I am Vajra itself – Om. I am as all Tathāgatas are[80].' And the text goes on to say *tathāgato 'rhān samyaksaṃbuddhaḥ saṃvṛtta iti*, 'so he was transformed into a Tathāgata, an Arhat, a perfectly enlightened Buddha.' With all its Tantric associations, this version directly joins the Enlightenment and the Meditation.

This, then, is the meaning the drawings infused into the base of the staffs. It is not strict doctrine that they presents us with. But what is lost in cogency is gained in vividness: The parasol is to remind the spectator of the ultimate goal of the Buddha's way; its foundation and support leads him to the very eve of the Enlightenment, and this time not to an abstract principle, but to Śākyamuni the person, to the process of his striving before the goal had been attained. In a sense, this reading of the support

79 Mahāvastu, ed. Senart, 2.124f. – For °*śrotrehi* read °*śrotāhi*/°*śrotehi* throughout (: Edgerton, BHSG §9.102/105: *-ehi* poorly attested for feminines). For *uccaśabdo mahāśabdo* [124,12], Edgerton has suggested °*śabdā* (BHSD p.506a). The conjectural emendation of *samūhensuḥ* [125,6] is Jones's (The Mahāvastu, 2.121, note).

80 Translated by Snellgrove: *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 240f.

resumes the motif we had found at the base of the cube where relics were to be immured, and of the top-knot with its associations of the human form.

5. The Peak

With the exception of the *śūnyanirañjanā* (see below), this brings the representation of Drawing C to an end. Not so in **A** and **B**, nor in the stūpa as it is seen today.

On top of the parasol, there is a pinnacle (*gajura*) with its usual four parts: the dome, the ring of lotusses (*ambasāḥ*), the vase (*kalaśa*), and the 'mass of light' (*jyotiṣpuñja*). Except for the last, all of them can be plainly discerned in **B**.

In a way – as Hemrāj Śākya explained its significance – this pinnacle repeats what the stūpa stands for; but this time it is on the higher level of Gods. They will have been invoked to enter the vase, which therefore has to be placed on a lotus as its seat. The accumulated brilliance of their presence has as it were congealed and materialized in the shape of the Mass of Light. And this effulgence is of course again honoured by a parasol, just as the stūpa was. (In drawings **A** and **B** this can no longer be clearly distinguished: but one sees the pennants fluttering in the wind.)

The two slanting lines that enclose the pinnacle, (in reality, they are four, and they impart the necessary stability to the top) are taken as small-scale replicas of the 'Banners of Complete Victory' (*vijayapatākā*) which at the four sides of the stūpa hang down from the uppermost tier.

This completes the account given by drawings **A** and **B**. The present-day stūpa, however, found it difficult to tear itself away from the configuration of parasol and pinnacle: it is once more repeated on a much reduced scale, no doubt to indicate still higher planes of existence. Still, this repetition (which is used one more time: on top of the threefold umbrella) leaves the impression parasol and pinnacle were viewed as a conceptual unit, the *chattra* evoking the *gajura* and vice versa.

The series is as it were brought to a conclusion by a triple parasol. After the long process which led to the present elaborate shape of the superstructure, one seems to return to its beginnings: who knows but the threefold umbrella is not a reminiscence of the early stages, such as that of Sāñchī I, where it marked the top?

Even so, we have not yet reached the end of the imagination: the nexus of parasol-and-pinnacle is repeated once again. And only after this last pinnacle has again received the honour of its umbrella, we reach the final symbol.

This, then, is the Svayaṃbhūnāth as the drawings present it. Many aspects, no doubt, are omitted from the draughtsmen's account: no reference to the numerous rites and festivals which make for its life in its social surroundings; no reference even to the Tathāgatas and Tārās who, surrounding the dome, are such a conspicuous part

of its external appearance[81]. The authors meant to show what was *their* monument; they showed the icon and focal point of their doctrine, which was ever ready to receive new layers of meaning. Yet, when all is said and done, the the stūpa is crowned by an emblem of the resolution of all diversity: the uppermost peak is the Mahāyāna sign of the *śūnyanirañjanā*, the Ultimate Truth which is the Void.

81 To be sure, **A** and **B** depict a shrine in the dome. But the texts do not refer to it in any way, indeed do not even give it a name. The fact that they are primarily concerned with the carpenters' craft is not really a sufficient explanation: there are 'doctrinal diagrams' such as Ill. 9 or 13 which are in no way demanded by technical necessities; the absence of a diagram explaining the Tathāgatas is unexpected.

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Nepalica

herausgegeben von
Prof. Dr. Bernhard Kölver und Prof. Dr. Siegfried Lienhard

Band 1: Documents from the Rudravarṇa-Mahāvihāra, Pāṭan. 1. Sales and Mortgages. Edited and translated by Bernhard Kölver and Hemrāj Śākya. 1985. 284 Seiten DM 112,–

Interessenten: Indologen, Nepalforscher, Zentralasienkundler, Buddhologen und Historiker.

Bei der Renovierung einer buddhistischen Klosteranlage in Patan, Nepal, trat eine Sammlung von Palmblatt-Dokumenten zutage, die zwischen den Jahren 983 und 1768 n. Chr. abgefaßt wurden. Geschrieben sind sie in Sanskrit und Newārī (und enthalten u. a. die frühesten Belege für diese tibeto-birmanische Sprache). Als unverdächtige Zeugnisse für die Formalisierung der Rechts- und Verwaltungspraxis in einem hinduistischen Königreich des Mittelalters stehen diese Urkunden in einem interessanten Spannungsverhältnis zur indischen Rechtsliteratur mit ihrer deutlich normativen Tendenz. Die edierten Texte behandeln größtenteils Landverkäufe und Hypotheken. Die ausführliche Erörterung erläutert u. a. den juristischen Formelapparat, administrative Entwicklungen, Bodenrechte, Fragen der Besteuerung und der Landnutzung. Die beigegebenen Tafeln ermöglichen gleichzeitig einen Überblick über die Entwicklung der Paläographie. Das Material könnte Anlaß geben, verbreitete Theorien über Eigentum an Grund und Boden sowie über die sogenannte Asiatische Produktionsweise neu zu überdenken.

Band 2: Formen kulturellen Wandels und andere Beiträge zur Erforschung des Himālaya. Colloquium des Schwerpunktes Nepal, Heidelberg, 1.-4. Februar 1984. Herausgegeben von Bernhard Kölver. 1985. 460 Seiten DM 154,–

Schwerpunktthema des Bandes ist das Verhältnis zwischen den Regionaltraditionen und der übergreifenden Großen Tradition (Schlagwörter: Sanskrit und Sanskritisierung), welches die Indologie seit etlichen Jahren beschäftigt, also letztlich die Frage nach der kulturellen Identität des Subkontinents. Sie an nepalischen Daten zu verfolgen, ist aus verschiedenen Gründen lohnend: Im Unterschied zu Indien blieb Nepal muslimische Eroberung und Kolonialzeit erspart; seit schriftliche Quellen einsetzen, stand sein geistiger Mittelpunkt, das Tal von Kathmandu, unter hinduistischer Dominanz; die Hinduisierung hat die Vielzahl von Ethnien offenbar ganz unterschiedlich stark betroffen. Fast alle Beiträge sind aus der Feldarbeit erwachsen; Vertreter der verschiedenen Disziplinen und Forschungsansätze versuchen eine erste Sammlung und Sichtung der Evidenz.

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Band 3: Newar towns and buildings: an illustrated dictionary Newārī – English by Niels Gutschow, Bernhard Kölver und Ishwaranand Shresthacarya 1987. 294 S., davon 214 S. Abbildungen. DM 210,–

Interessenten: Bauhistoriker, Kunsthistoriker, Linguisten, Indologen, Nepalforscher, Zentralasienkundler.

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Band 4: Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. Proceedings of an International Conference in Lübeck, June 1985. Edited by Niels Gutschow and Axel Michaels. 1987. 512 Seiten, 8 Farbtafeln, 4 Karten DM 150,–

Interessenten: Nepal-Forscher, Indologen, Anthropologen, Historiker, Religionshistoriker, Bauhistoriker, Kunsthistoriker, Geographen, Musikwissenschaftler.

Im Rahmen einer internationalen Konferenz über das kulturelle Erbe des Kathmandu-Tales wird nach mehr als 20 Jahren intensiver Forschungsarbeit in Nepal in 21 Beiträgen der Versuch unternommen, einen Überblick über den Stand der Forschung zu vermitteln. Dabei bildet der Bereich des Stadt- und Totenrituals einen Schwerpunkt, da uns in den Städten des Kathmandu-Tales Stadtkulturen mt einem vielfältigen, lebendigen Ritual vorliegen. Weitere Schwerpunkte bilden die Problematik des Sozialen Wandels und die Interpretation von Rollbildern. In vielerlei Hinsicht weisen die Ergebnisse über den engen Rahmen des Kathmandu-Tales hinaus und liefern wichtige Beiträge zum Verständnis des indischen Subkontinents, wo früher ähnliche Strukturen vorgelegen haben, die aber heute nicht mehr beobachtbar sind.

Inhaltsübericht:

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