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Bijay Basukala · Niels Gutschow · Nutandhar Sharma

Patan-Vābāhā

History and Inventory
of a Newar Buddhist Monastery



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PATAN - VĀBĀHĀ

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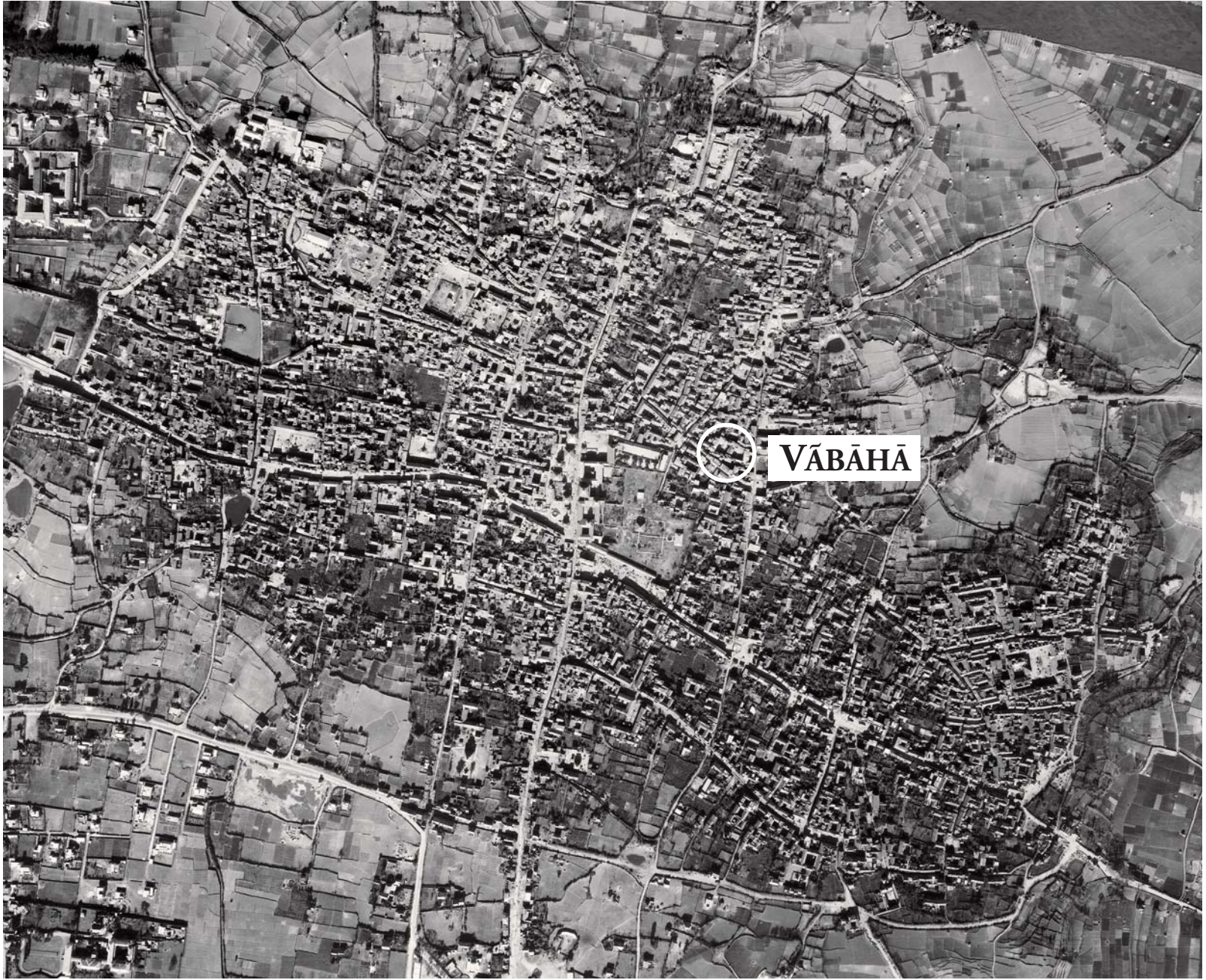
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VĀBĀHĀ

Foreword

The monastic courtyard of Vābāhā in Patan caught our attention in early 1992 in the context of the Patan Conservation and Development Programme, initiated by the German Technical Cooperation and integrated into its “urban development through local effort” project. In March the Director General of the Department of Archaeology, Dr. Shaphalya Amatya agreed to carry out the repair and restoration of the partly collapsed ridge turret (*phucā*) of the tutelary shrine (*kvāpāchē*) as a pilot project. The Sarvasaṅgha of the monastery submitted a formal request and in November Radhe Shyam and Indra Kaji Śilpakār started to produce the missing parts of the turret at their workshop in Bhaktapur on the basis of design drawings made by Bijay Basukala. Prayag Joshi designed the seismic strengthening with a ring beam composed of three layers of planks following discussions on site with Walther Mann, a leading structural engineer from the Technical University of Darmstadt in Germany. The rear wall was dismantled and renewed in February 1993, the turret installed in August and the roofing completed in September. The total cost came up to 1.3 million rupees.

This pilot project offered a unique opportunity to dismantle the Licchavicaitya and to retrieve two concealed Licchavi-era architectural fragments from the 18th-century platform below the *caitya* proper. To raise the platform to the present level of the courtyard, it was dismantled on February 15; the *caitya* was dismantled on May 17 and reconsecrated on May 26, 1993.

The project also served as a welcomed opportunity for Gyanendra Joshi to survey the monastic courtyard and the two branch monasteries, Vābāhā Dunebāhā and Lakhi-dābāhā. Nutandhar Sharma made a provisional inventory of 14 inscriptions. In May 1993 he prepared a complete photographic documentation of the consecration ritual – a highly valuable resource that is presented in the present book at length.

This work was compiled for a project report in February 1994 but never published. In January 2021 we thought

it would be worthwhile to expand the original survey and produce a fully illustrated report of the consecration rituals. With the support of the Gerda Henkel Foundation Nutandhar Sharma identified and transliterated 41 inscriptions in summer 2021 and provided the synopses. Rajendra Shakyā revised the transliteration in October 2022. Critical terms of old Nevārī were discussed with Manik Bajracharya, who also provided the translation of a couple of *stotras* in Sanskrit, which are often found at the beginning of a larger inscription. Regarding the orthography, we follow, with the exception of the presentation of the inscriptions (pp. 175-202), the conventions developed by Bernhard Kölver and Ishwaranand Shresthacarya for the edition of the illustrated dictionary of architectural terms in *Newar Towns and Buildings* in 1987.

Bijay Basukala prepared measured drawings of the three *caityas*, dated to 1728, 1750, and 1886, and Ashesh Rajbansh contributed perfect photographs of the shrine’s details and the *caitya*, taken on October 11. The outcome is the most detailed documentation of a monastic courtyard of the Newar urban culture of the Kathmandu Valley.

David Haney helped in improving the English of the first chapters. The synopses of the inscriptions are of a preliminary character. The translation of classical Nevārī is always a challenging task.

Patan - Bhaktapur - Abtsteinach, November 2022

Opposite
Aerial view of Patan,
taken by Erwin Schneider,
December 13, 1971

History of Patan and the Emergence and Development of Monastic Courtyards

Patan is known by three equally common names: Patan, Lalitapur and Yala. Patan (Pātan) represents a simplification of Laitapaṭṭana, and since the 17th century has been used mainly by outsiders and even by Nevārī speaking people of Bhaktapur - *paṭṭana* being a suffix interchangeable with - *nagara* or - *pura* to denote a city. Lalit(a)pur (or Lalita-kramā) is a more formal name, which surfaced first in 10th-century manuscripts. The 14th-century *Gopālarājavamśāvalī* chronicle refers to Maṅigvala, which denotes the center of the city with its palace comprising an urban agglomeration, the nature of which remains obscure. Common among local Nevārī speakers is the name Yala.

Several chronicles account for the origin of places, buildings and water sources in the form of narratives to provide meaning to sites and rituals.

Little is known about the process in which a couple of hamlets or even small villages merged to form a larger entity to become the city.¹ Some 105 fragments of *caityas*, Buddhist votive structures of the Licchavi era, dating to the 7th to 9th centuries most clearly demonstrate the existence of a larger Buddhist community. An early 7th-century inscription lists monasteries of which four most probably were located within what at present covers Patan.

Architectural fragments of such structures (Ukubāhā), of temples (Tvāyabāhā) and community houses (in Bhelāchē and Tyāgaḥ) have been radiocarbon dated to the 9th century.² In all probability, the present urban fabric with a cruciform plan formed by two major streets as the primary order must have emerged long before the 9th century. The four *caitya*-mounds provided orientation points within that order from very early times.

The urban fabric is based on more than a thousand courtyards (Nev. *cuka*, Nep. *cok*). Of these, 146 lay claims to a certain monastic character, since they incorporate a Buddhist shrine (*kvāpāchē*) for the guardian deity. The main monastic courtyards (*mūbāhā*) measure from 13 x 13.5 m (Kvābāhā) to 55 x 77.5 m (Tabāhā), covering

almost half a hectare. The courtyards of the many branch and lineage monasteries (*kacābāhā*) however, cover hardly more than 50 square meters. Newar Buddhism is often called “Buddhism without monks”: The householders, initiated priests (Vajrācārya) and the lower-ranking Śākya own plots facing the courtyards. Only in rare cases such as Ukubāhā, Kvābāhā or Nakabāhī is the original collective ownership of a monastery preserved.

Placing Newar Buddhism in the historical context, Alexander von Rospatt stated that it is a tradition native to the Kathmandu Valley.³ Early on that valley was drawn into the fold of South Asian religion and civilization and has, in this sense, virtually always been part of the subcontinent. Buddhism in the valley has a history of at least eighteen hundred years and in this respect Newar Buddhism is the oldest tradition to have persisted without interruption until the present.

The anthropologist David Gellner insisted that Newar Buddhism cannot exist without monks, “and that Śākyas and Vajrācāryas of the Kathmandu Valley are monks, albeit married householder monks.”⁴ Every Śākya and Vajrācārya is a member of a monastic community (*saṅgha*) and this membership provides him with the right and duty to take turns as guardian (*dyahpāla*) of the principal exoteric deity of the monastery, housed in the tutelary shrine (*kvāpāchē*). Once they are married, they “periodically reassert,” as Rospatt argues, “their identities as quasi-monks in the context of purificatory rituals.”

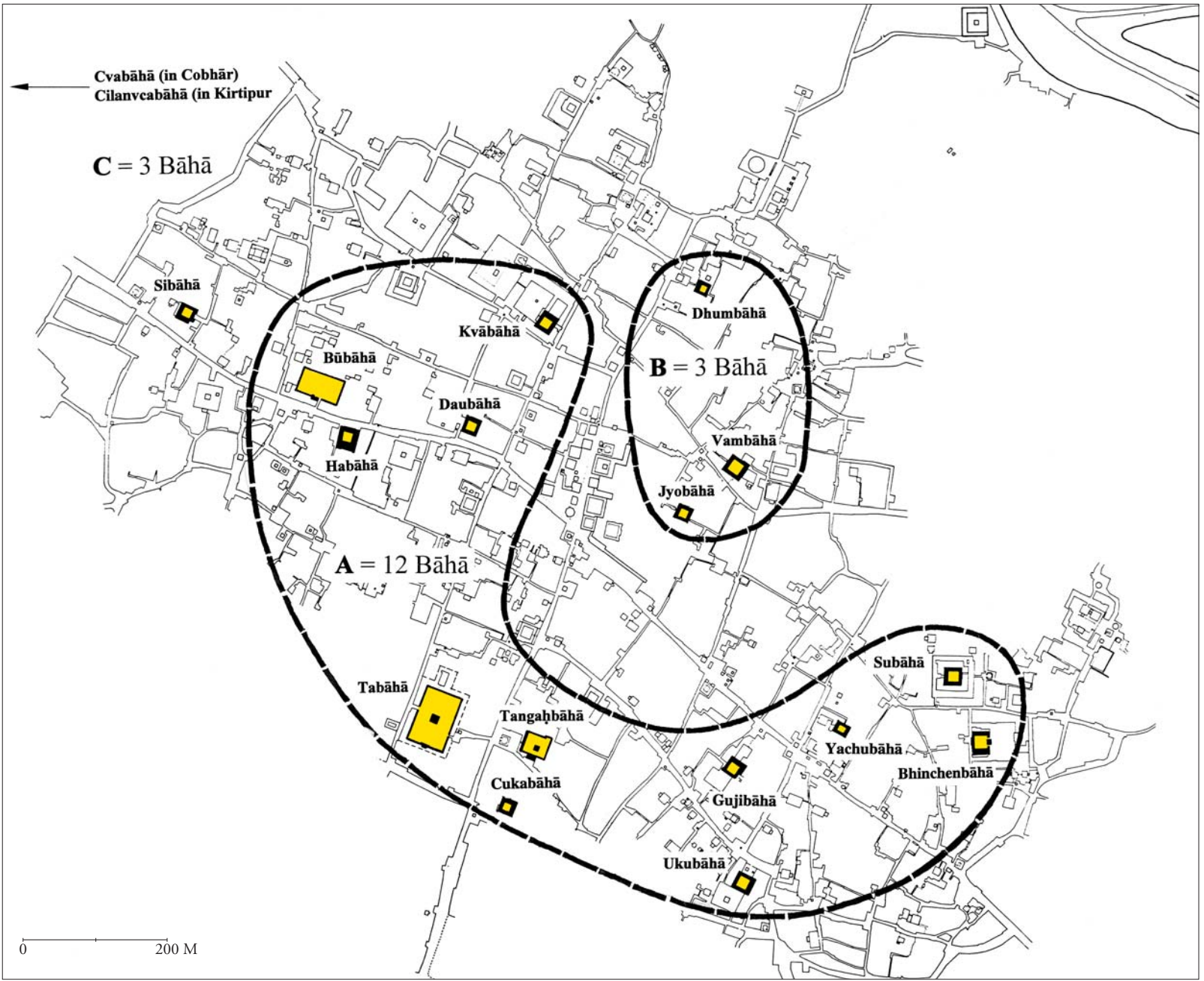
The “coexistence” or “tension” between celibate and non-celibate monastic traditions resulted in a differentiation between two types of monasteries, both being termed *vihāra* in Sanskrit, but distinguished in Nevārī as *bāhā* or *bahī*.

Of the *bahī* type of monastery 25 are located in Patan. By 1985 seven of the *bahī* type monasteries were already defunct.

Referring to the *bāhā* type, the historic core of Patan has 15 main monasteries (*mūbāhā*), nine branch, and 114 lineage monasteries.

Opposite

Location of the eighteen main monasteries (*mūbāhā*) which enjoy the right to perform monastic initiation for the sons of the *saṅgha*'s members. The group includes twelve “original” monasteries which are said to have existed prior to the regulations set up by King Siddhinarasimha Malla in the 1620s (see A in the map). Three newly founded monasteries, located almost in a cluster in the northeastern quarters of the city, were added (see B), Vābāhā, Jyobāhā and Dhumbāhā, making altogether fifteen. Later, two more monasteries in Cobhār and Kirtipur owned the right to initiate as they belonged to the territory of the kingdom of Patan. Finally, one more newly founded monastery, Sibāhā, located near the northwestern end of the city joined the group.





Regarding Vābāhā, for 1596 the renewal of the roof is mentioned in an inscription (no. 1) and for 1634 (no. 2) the offering of a tympanum, installed above the doorway. This happened at the time of King Siddhinarasiṃha Malla at the middle of the 17th century and testifies to the existence of a monastic community. However, the king “added” Vābāhā to the twelve principal *bāhās* and “arranged rules,” as an early 19th-century chronicle tells us.⁵ The chronicle tells us that one monastery “had no members of the *saṅgha* left” and that since some “of the monasteries had become empty, he let some other people be ordained and settled them into these monasteries.” Beyond this scant information which aggrandizes the leading role of the king in reorganizing the Buddhist institutions, little is known about 16th century Buddhism, the continuity of the monastic communities, and the reason that the monasteries “became empty.”

It seems quite possible that Vābāhā as well as Jyobāhā and Dhaubāhā – all three located in the northeastern sector of the city – were revived or even resettled. Vābāhā was probably resettled by a lineage originating from Sankhu, as the present occupants readily recall.

Vābāhā has a couple of branch monasteries, with the status of some of these remaining obscure. The eastern neighboring courtyard, named Dunenani or Dunebāhā, has an esoteric shrine (*āgāchē*), housing the ancestral deity (*kūladevatā*) of the Śākya, whose lineage was established by Jagatamuni Śākya in 1829. Until the early 1990s all houses around the spacious courtyard were inhabited by Śākya, who also acted as caretakers of the tutelary deity of Vābāhā. A small courtyard west of Vābāhā, named Lakhidanbāhā, belongs to a family of Āvaḥ – the community of brick makers. In his inventory of monasteries in the early

Opposite

Patan

Detail of the northeastern quarter, locating Vābāhā and its branch monasteries (*kacabāhā*), Vābāhā Dunenani (1), Lakhidanbāhā (2) Cibhaṅnani (3), Honabāhā (4) and Śaṅkhabāhā (5).



Vābāhā

The monastic courtyard in
1971, view from the north.

Photograph by Mary Slusser, 1971.

1980s, John Locke lists three more lineage monasteries, namely Cibhaṅnani, Honabāhā, and Śaṅkhabāhā. In 2021 the two *guthiars*, Barmhu Āvaḥ of Cibhaṅnani objected to any connection with Vābāhā and the remaining two, allegedly founded by Kumāḥ (Prājapati), the community of potters, have been abandoned.



Patan

The eastern mound (*thudvā*) at Imādvā.

Pencil drawing by the painter Rajman Singh from Patan, ca 1844; inscribed by Henry Ambrose Hodgson, first in pencil, then in ink: "The Téta thúdo Chaitya of Pátan (Built in Treta yuga, says tradition that is, old out of record)."

From the center rises the central shaft (*yabsi*) beside a large tree. The circumambulatory path is intact, the retaining wall and the niches housing the Tathāgatas are crumbling.

Courtesy: Royal Asiatic Society, London, 022.022.

Part I
Stūpas / Caityas
The Rebuilding of the Licchavicaitya

History and Development of Buddhist Votive Architecture in the Valley of Kathmandu

The four mounds (*thudvā*) of Patan

The origin and meaning of a Stūpa (Sanskrit) or Caitya (Nep.), its representation of the Buddhist way of salvation has been dealt with elsewhere. In the present context, it is the confined landscape of the Kathmandu Valley and the urban culture of the Newars we are concerned with.⁶

It all started with the the four mounds, called *thudvā* or *thur* in Nevārī, which roughly orient the cruciform plan of the city that forms the basis of Patan's urban landscape. Speculation about the origin of the mounds is abundant, and the legend that attributes their erection to the Mauryan emperor Aśoka, who reigned in the 3rd century BCE is widely told and taken as a historical fact. An early 19th-century chronicle tells us that it appeared to a legendary Brahmin named Sunayaśrī Mīśra that “earlier, when King Aśoka of Pātaliputra came to Nepāla to perform a *tīrthayātrā* [a pilgrimage], he founded these four *caityas*, marking the days of the beginning of the four *yugas* [world eras].”⁷

Given the lack of evidence, the British archaeologist Frank Raymond Allchin agreed that the mounds “were already in existence in Malla times” and that “the southern *stūpa* coincides with the site of some structures of the Licchavi period.” There is “no firm archaeological evidence” of any “Aśokan association with the Nepal valley” but further investigations “may even lead us to expect remains of a yet earlier period, perhaps taking us back to within a century or two of Asoka himself.”⁸ The American cultural historian Mary Slusser proposed that the four *thudvā* might have “originated as pre-Buddhist funerary tumuli”⁹ and in 1961 the British Tibetologist David Shnellgrove perceived that their origin lay in the context of the foundation of the city towards the end of the 4th century CE.¹⁰ The recent study on *Stupa and Swastika* by Mohan Pant and Shuji Funo avoids any statement regarding the origin of the four

stūpas but claims that their positioning “was indeed a planned and precisely measured configuration.”¹¹ In the light of bricks found with Aśokan-period *Brāhmī* script at the Cabahil *stūpa* the Italian archaeologist Giovanni Verardi suggested in 2009 that it would not be surprising, “to find Mauryan evidence in the valley.”¹²

The mounds differ in size but until the beginning of the 20th century, they were all covered with turf. Four drawings, made by Rajman Singh, a painter from Patan in the service of the British Resident, document their appearance ca 1844. A low retaining wall at the base was punctuated by small shrines in the cardinal directions, housing the Tathāgatas. From a cube with stepped layers of bricks at the top emerged a shaft (Skt. *yaṣṭi* or Nev. *yaḥṣī*) as the quintessential marker of a *stūpa*.¹³ What cannot be explained are the two tall pillars with three crossbars framing the cube.

Several inscriptions at the northern *stūpa* verify repairs and reconfigurations. In 1614 one Kṛṣṇarām Bhāro had the *stūpa* repaired while King Śrī Maṅglādhipati Śrī Śrī Jaya Śivasimhadeva was ruling. Two generations later, in 1689, a shrine (*devalā*) was added. In 1840 the central shaft (*garbha kāṣṭhā*) of the *stūpa* (*śrī 3 thūla devatā*) was replaced and again in 1865. On the occasion of the first replacement the *stūpa* was covered with brick dust plaster, the courtyard was paved with bricks and six *caityas* within that locality were repaired. The simple cube was replaced by a thirteen-stepped pinnacle (*harmikā*), topped by a ceremonial umbrella in imitation of the top of the Svayambhūcaitya. The western *stūpa* received a miniature *stūpa* on top, complete with base, dome, neck, and finial, with the eastern *stūpa* at Imadvā following suit in 2009.

The history, shape, and development of the large *stūpas* at Svayambhū, Bauddha and Cabahil have been presented elsewhere.¹⁴ The present publication focusses on the Licchavi era to reveal the context of Vābhā's Licchavicaitya and to present a short typology to rank the three remaining *caityas*, dating to 1728, 1750, and 1882.

Kathmandu

Left

The Caturvyūhacaitya at Dvākhābhā is datable to the Licchavi era (ca 7th century), facing west.

The tall monolithic *caitya* displays two distinct sections below a primary trio of drum, dome, and (lost, recently replaced) finial. The dome is squat in proportion, supported by a Licchavi-type drum.

Below the primary trio follows a square upper story, from which niches housing identical Tathāgatas (Amitābha) and recumbent lions sharing a common forequarter project. The scrollwork rises towards the crowning Kirtimukha spouting or devouring the frame of the niche as the embodiment of water.

The lower shaft-like part of the *caitya* houses four Bodhisattvas. The stepped profile which mediates between the lower and upper parts has two registers of dentils and a panel with lotus motifs.

Photograph August 10, 1986



Right

The Caturvyūhacaitya at Bhagavānbhā in Thamel is datable to the Licchavi era (ca 7th century).

This rare type of a monolithic four-faced *caitya* features the



four Bodhisattvas. The heads extend beyond the rim of the shaft and are backed by an aureole, framed by rock motifs in the corners. Photograph by Jaroslav Poncar, August 23, 1996

Characteristics of Licchavicaityas

The term *Aśokacaitya*

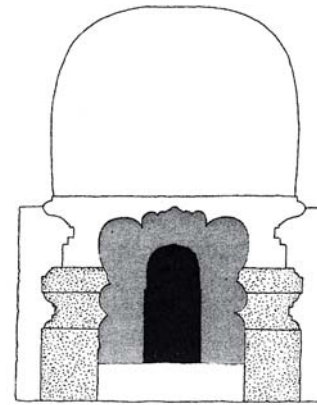
The early *caityas* of the Kathmandu Valley are often called *Aśokacaitya* as a claim to antiquity. Even *caityas* covered with layers of lime that obscure their moldings are popularly named that way.

Only historians, Nepalese, and foreign scholars name the early *caityas* Licchavicaityas in reference to the Licchavis. It is said that they left their homeland in the Gangetic plains rather than submit to the Mauryan rulers. They were the first historical kings of the valley, of whom various documents bear witness from the middle of the 6th century onwards. They reigned as Hindus “by the favour of Paśupati^{nāth}” – Śiva in his form as “Lord of all animals” – from the early 4th century to the end of the 9th century. This did not prevent them from supporting what was probably a predominantly Buddhist population. In that context the first Buddhist votive structures were created beginning in the 7th century in all settlements of the valley, and were placed in monastic courtyards, in squares, at stepwells, and rarely, along streets. This is supported by a few fragmentarily preserved inscriptions, which neither refer to a king or a date; however, palaeographic comparison has led Patan’s eminent Buddhist scholar Hemrāj Śākya to suggest a 7th-century origin.

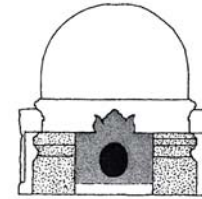
Caturvyūhacaitya at Dvākhābāhā and the *caitya* at Vābāhā, 7th century

Of paramount importance is the Caturvyūhacaitya at Dvākhābāhā, dated to the 7th century. This is the best-known Licchavi monument, repeatedly published and described by art historians. Pradapaditya Pal wrote that it represents “art historically one of the most significant sculptural works in Nepal.”¹⁵ He agreed with Stella Kramrisch’s dating to the 7th century¹⁶ and supported his opinion by comparing it with related objects in India.

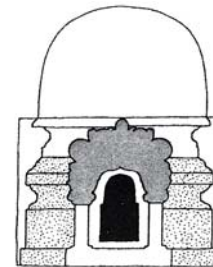
Pal even calls this votive structure a “miniature temple” and praises “the hieratic majesty of the recumbent lions.”



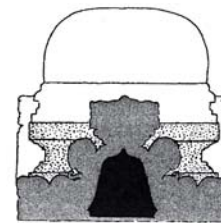
Cabahil C



Kathmandu: Sighābāhā



Kathmandu: Musūbāhā



Kathmandu: Dvākhābāhā

Licchavicaityas

Comparative presentation of base blocks which are crafted as monoliths with dome and drum. In all cases the crowning lotus foliage overlaps the moldings of the drum. In rare cases (Dhvākhābāhā and Vābāhā) the scrollwork of the niche merges with the foliated tails of lions guarding the corners.

Drawings by Niels Gutschow, 1994

Kathmandu

Licchavicaitya at Tadhābhā,
ca 7th century

This *caitya* preserves a rare
archaic form of dome, drum
and base block with its
stepped indentation,
65 cm high as a monolith.
Uninterrupted by frames of
niches, the edges of the drum's
stepped profiles and the sharp-
edged profile of the cube
endows the *caitya* with a
crystalline clarity. The bright
and shiny surface of the stone
is also superb.

As an archetype it embodies
an architectural ideal that has
undergone countless
transformations.

The truncated finial is
of recent origin.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow
March 26, 1989



He pointed out that the artist has “clearly followed the Mathura convention in delineating the garment of Maitreya with formal striation added to the volume of the garment,” adding that the manner of holding the robe shoulder-high almost certainly originated in the Amāvavati region of India – a device used ubiquitously by sculptors of Ajanta during the Gupta Periods.¹⁷

The second significant *caitya* is the one at Vābāhā, of which Mary Slusser said that it “is generally closely related” to the one at Dvākhābāhā.¹⁸ Here, the characteristic features of Licchavicaityas are recalled.

Mary Slusser presented a precise description of the characteristics of Licchavicaityas of which two sentences are quoted here:

“In keeping with the Licchavi sculptors’ flair for converting almost anything into a scroll, some bracket-capitals look like meaningless ornaments, but actually are of architectural origin. (...) In stark contrast to the abundantly decorated plinth and drum, the dome of the Licchavi *caitya* is a plain, polished hemisphere with slight variations in form and size that do not seem to be significant.”¹⁹

It should be added that until today the quarries from which the early sculptors procured the hard, dark greyish-green stone have not been located. From the 17th century onwards a somewhat soft stone of inferior quality was used which developed notch-like scratches, caused by rains.

Based on evidence from Thapahiti and Capat, both in Patan, Slusser speculated about the original finials, consisting “of a plain cube, the *harmikā*, expanded by successive stepped moldings to a broad cornice, above which was a squat pyramid of three or four steps.”²⁰ The “pyramids” were in fact preserved as stumps and may have originally had seven steps. At the same time finials with seven rings must have been widespread. A Licchavicaitya from Dipanani in Kathmandu has six of seven rings

preserved, on top of a *harmikā* identical with those at the examples in Patan.

Finials with thirteen rings or tiers representing the ceremonial umbrella were introduced in response to doctrinal consideration six- or seven-hundred years later. Slusser laments the “grossly disproportionate” new finials, and suggests that “the old finials must have been purposely removed.” As all Licchavicaityas had been relocated and reconfigured, the original finials were simply lost and later replaced from the early 17th century onwards. Monkeys used to remove loose finials which were again replaced some time in the 20th century.

Among all replacements, the finial of the Licchavicaitya at Vābāhā ranks among the most artistic one in terms of craftsmanship and proportions. The *harmikā* is still without shields but the cornice of the *harmikā* has upswept corners, a marked characteristic of Malla-period architecture.

The specific molding of the drum has to be pointed out as one characteristic of Licchavicaityas. It starts with a quarter-round beading, in contrast to the half-round torus of the Malla-period *caityas*. The underside of this profile is flat at this horizontal level and somewhat indented, with the following level denticulated. After a second indentation, two steps reach the vertical level of the quarter round. Except at this *caitya*, dentils are only found on the Caturvyūhacaitya at Dvākhābāhā, the four large *caityas* at Cabahil, and the *caitya* with its three circular stories at Teku in Kathmandu. One peculiar quality of the drum molding is little known: the horizontal underside of the quarter round that reliably allows dating a *caitya* to the Licchavi period. It can be ascertained even with closed eyes, simply by touching the molding.

Distribution of Licchavicaityas

Of the 263 Licchavicaityas and fragments that were preserved in the form of a dome and its drum or as what is called a story with niches oriented toward the four cardinal directions were located in a survey in 1986

Patan

Caitya of the Śikharakūṭa type
at Guṭtabahī cidhā.

This is the rare example of a *caitya* that features Licchavi details in a new architectural context, dated provisionally to the 9th to 13th centuries.

This *caitya* is two-storied, following the only extant prototype at Subāhāhiti, which is dated to 758 CE. Absolutely innovative is the change in scale and proportion. The earlier squat base story has now gained in height to provide ample space for the presentation of an architectural frame, complete with pilasters supporting the arched tympanum.

The low drum below the dome retains the profile characteristic of 7th to 8th-centuries Licchavicaityas. The drum rests on an intermediate element, a fully opened lotus flower. The roofed top has twelve niches, framed by scrollwork. The lower story has the indentations at mid height, an essential characteristic of Licchavicaityas, replaced by a torus profile. Makaras act as counterparts to the Kīrtimukha at the apex. Cow-eye (*gavākṣa*) motifs in the upper register confirm the association with Licchavicaityas as well as the plinth displaying rock motifs. Photograph by Stanisław Klimek, August 1992.



to 1992 of the Kathmandu Valley. These represent 13 percent of all *caityas* established till today. In Patan alone 105 Licchavicaityas were located, 73 in Kathmandu, in Bhaktapur only six, and beyond the valley in Banepa four, in Namobuddha four, in Markhu four and six even in Gorkha and Sallyan. Few *caityas* are found in the western quarters of the city, but more in the east, with eight in Guita, nine at Yacchu, four at Nāgbāhā, four at Tabāhā, five at Alkvahiti and eight at the stepwell of Tāgaḥbāhā.

Reconfiguration of fragments of Licchavicaityas

None of the Licchavicaityas is preserved in its original form and most probably not in its original location either. It remains one of the mysteries of the valley's history that the Buddhist infrastructure in the form of monasteries and *caityas* witnessed from a disturbance in the 11th to 14th centuries.

The *caitya* at Vābāhā serves as a good example of a reconfiguration in the 18th century. The monolithic dome, drum and top story were retrieved from an unknown location and placed on top of a fragment from a different location. Both in dimensions and type of carving, these two elements do not match. A small gap between the base of the upper element and the roof profile of the lower element bear witness to an obvious incongruity. Obviously disturbing were the arches above the lower niches. Two to three centimeters had to be chipped off in order not to disturb the view of the Vairocana figures in the niches on top. Below the lower element an incomplete base with rock motifs was left concealed within the platform and below that basis a flat, slightly stepped layer. The donors who decided in 1727 not to use the two bottom layers were probably reluctant to initiate the necessary repairs and thus placed the new ensemble, complete with a new thirteen-tiered finial, onto the paved platform.

The matching of fragments was not at all a singular procedure in Patan. In 1673 two fragments of Licchavicaityas were joined on top of an elaborate *caitya* in brickwork at Hakhā Square and in 1619, five Licchavicaityas

were placed on a platform at Tadhācuka in Capat in a *pañcāyatana* fashion. The impulse to honor fragments of the ancient *caityas* by creating a new configuration never stopped. One of the most recent cases attained its present shape at the northern large mound (*thudvā*) in 1918. Dome, drum, and base story were placed on top of a fully-fledged *caitya* of the Śikharakūṭa type.

Most notable is the case of a fragment that was enshrined within an early 18th-century octagonal *caitya* in Bhaktapur. The ancient dome and drum was treated like a relic, representing the Buddha in a powerful way.

There are also examples of *caityas* which try to imitate the Licchavi conventions. The *caitya* at Cyāsaḥ Hiti, for example, is made up of three elements which constitute a new type: the finial on top follows 17th century conventions with its thirteen tiers, and a shield of unusual design. The dome rests on a quarter-round but without the characteristic drum with its Licchavi-period indentation. The dimensions are too large for the base story with its crenellations at the top and projecting niches below. The base might originally have been from a different location but the carving is of a very low standard, suggesting a recent origin. The stepped plinth of recently produced bricks adds to the ad hoc nature of the entire structure.

Patan

Composite *caitya* at Hakhā Square; the Licchavicaitya was relocated on top of a stepped plinth in 1673.

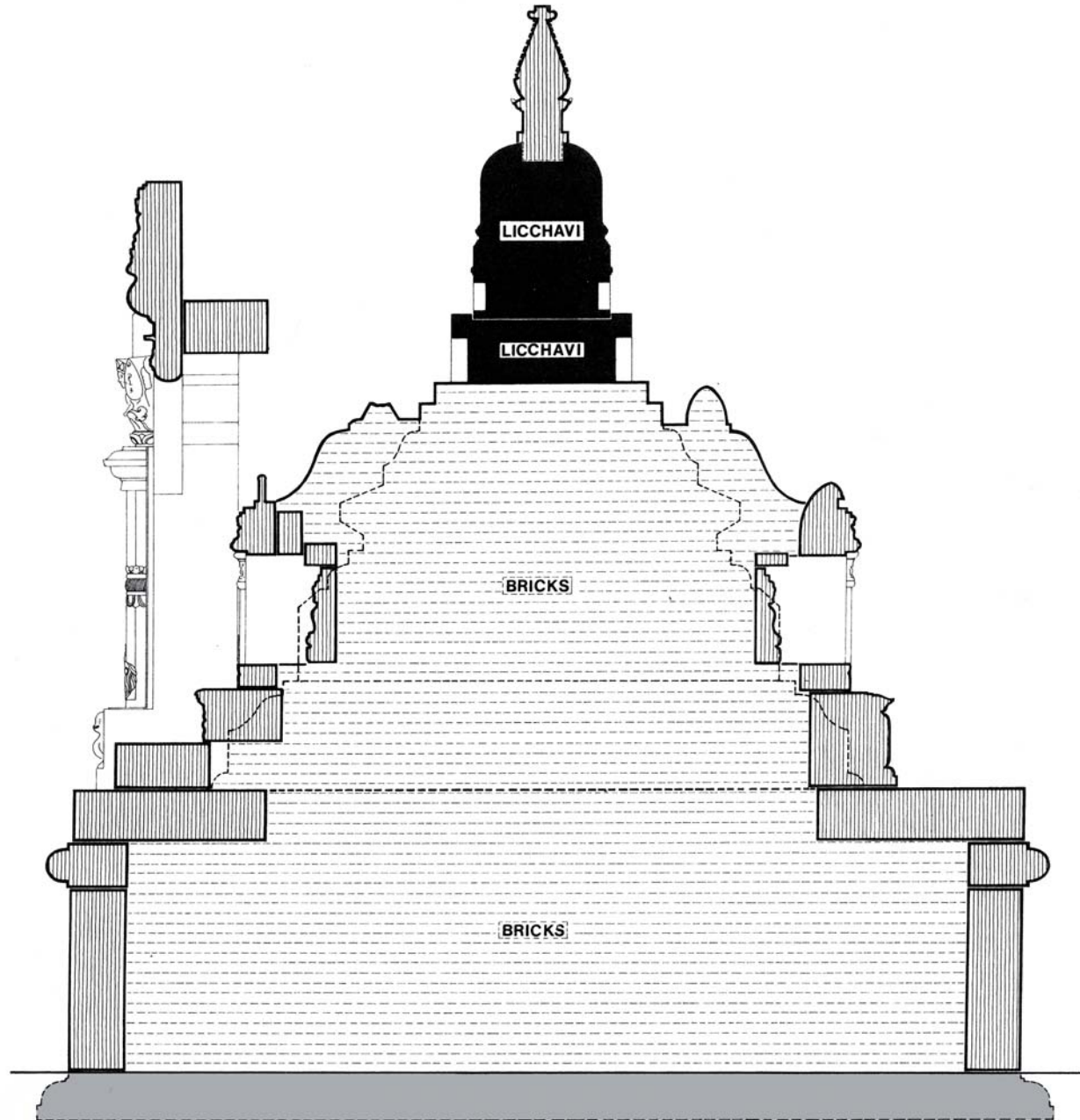
The monolithic *caitya* on top, of dome, drum, and top story, rests on a base story of the same period. Most probably the two fragments belong to the same original *caitya*, datable to the 8th century. The niches of both levels, originally occupied by Tathāgathas and Bodhisattvas, are empty for unknown reasons. The finial is of recent, early 20th-century origin.

The Licchavi ensemble is elevated onto the late 17th-century large, molded base in bricks, with protruding niches housing the four Tathāgatas.

Facing southeast, an enlarged niche frame, complete with pilasters on lion blocks and tympanum (*torana*) underlines prominence of this niche, housing Akṣobhya.

The tympanum features Garuḍa, supporting Vairocana at the apex and the four Tathāgatas to his sides along the arch, hybrid creatures of the birdmen type (*kinmaras*) hold banners at the bottom ends.

Drawing by Bijay Basukala, 1990

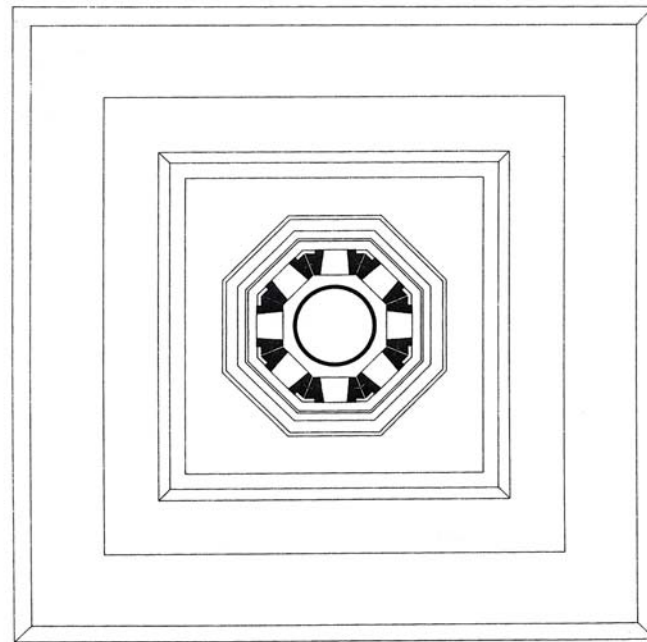
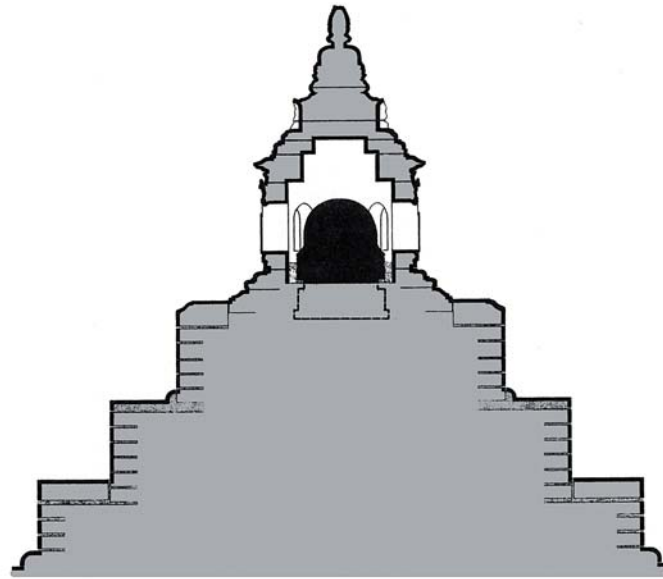




Patan
Licchavicaitya at Hakhā
Square, relocated on top
of a stepped plinth in 1673;
view from the southeast.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
February 1987



Bhaktapur
 Octagonal early 18th-century
 Śikharakuṭācaitya on a triple-
 stepped platform at the eastern
 edge of Siddhapūkhū.
 The structure on the verge of
 collapse, its three southern
 niches already disintegrated.
 Based on the specific profiles
 of the drum; the enshrined
 object is datable to the
 8th century.
 Photographs by Niels Gutschow,
 June 11, 1987



0 1 M

Bhaktapur

Octagonal early 18th-century Śikharakuṭācaitya on a triple-stepped platform at the eastern edge of Siddhapūkhū, horizontal and vertical section. From a triple-stepped plinth rises an eight-cornered base story, topped by a square intermediate story and the primary trio (drum, dome and finial) and with the four Tathāgatas engaged to the drum.

It cannot be said with certainty that the eight niches were originally open, but when the structure was in ruins in the late 1980s, it could be seen that this votive structure encloses the fragment of a Licchavicaitya, datable to the 8th century, in a vaulted relic chamber. The way a fragment of an ancient architectural object was retrieved from somewhere and treated like a relic, to be enshrined in a new structure, illustrates the inherent quality of a *caitya* as the representation of the Buddha and his Teachings
Drawings by Bijay Basukala,
April 9, 1992

Patan

Left

Composite *caitya* at the northern monumental *caitya*, the *thudvā*-mound. In 1918, a new votive structure was set up to provide an 8th-century fragment of dome, drum, and base with a new base in the style of Śikharakūṭacaityas. The frames of the Licchavicaitya's niches are covered with foliage, the architecturally framed niches of the new base, complete with pilasters bearing a tympanum, are occupied by the four Tathāgatas. The entire ensemble, including the new finial, stands on a plinth and a wide platform.

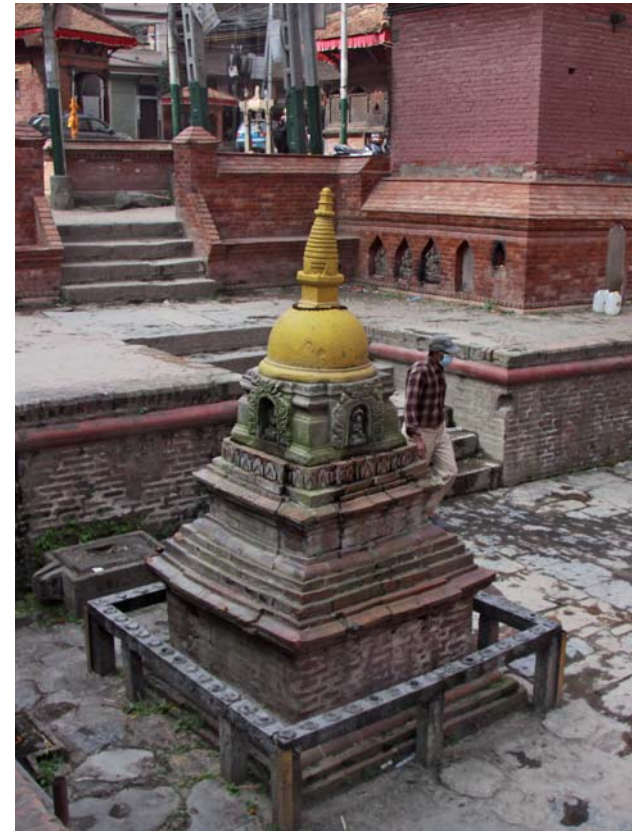
Photograph April 4, 1988



Right

Composite *caitya* at Cyaṣāḥḥiti with monolithic primary trio and base story. The finial with its protruding shaft, the dome with its quarter-round (*nāgyah*) molding, the crenellation on top of the base story and the style of carving suggest a recent origin, seen as an attempt to copy the ancient *caitya* style. Some time in the 20th century, the *caitya* was placed on a double-stepped plinth in brickwork.

Photographs by Niels Gutschow, November 7, 2021



Vābhā

The Vābāhā Caityas

The Licchavicaitya

Two fragments of Licchavicaityas were installed in 1727 on a platform, 45 cm high. A new, eleven-tiered finial was added to make up a total of 132 cm for the *caitya* proper. Eleven months later the same donors initiated the paving of the courtyard and another seven months later they established another *caitya* and a *dharmadhātumaṇḍala*, placed between the Licchavicaitya and the shrine building in January 1728.

Mary Slusser was probably the first scholar who noticed the overwhelming artistic and art historical quality of the *caitya* when she was exploring the lanes and courtyards of Patan in the late 1960s. Niels Gutschow came first to the courtyard of Vābāhā on March 21, 1974 and realized the significance of the Licchavicaitya. In 1976 Ulrich von Schroeder made an extensive photographic inventory of the *caitya*, but it took him 45 years to publish 11 photographs in his monumental inventory of *Nepalese Stone Sculptures*.²¹

In 1982 Slusser published three photographs and a concise description as follows:

“Another illustration of the brilliant ornamentation of the Licchavi *caityas*, but with a simpler inventory of motifs, is the one at Om-bahal, Patan. The lowermost section of the plinth rests directly on the courtyard tiling,²² inset with lotus mandalas. Each face displays a major niche, surrounded by a wide band of foliated scrolls, and flanked by minor niches. Carved in the principal niches are the directional Buddhas, one in each: Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi, and Akṣobhya – four of the Five Tathāgatas who comprise the Vajrayāna pentad. Above each, in the niche of the next stage, is an image of Vairocana, the fifth Tathāgata. The upper niches are surmounted with the *āmalaka*-crowned *kīrtimukha*

(attached to the *medhi*), and are framed by the foliated tails of magnificent corner guardian lions. Typically, the latter share a common head and forequarters. Above them, framed by the elaborate tails, is a series of recessed moldings. (...) Among the molded courses of the Om-bahal *caitya* drum is a row of dentils, seriate blocks of architectural derivation, also employed at Dvakha-bahal, but more aggressively.”

In 1988 Surendra Joshi made measured drawings of the *caitya* at the scale 1:20 and in December 1992 the Australian architect Robert Powell prepared a life-size pencil drawing to which in May 1993 he added those layers which were recovered from the platform when it was dismantled. The drawing was first published in 1997 and exhibited at the Zurich Völkerkunde Museum in 2001.²³ It is now kept by the Taragaon Museum in Kathmandu.

The rebuilding of the Licchavicaityas

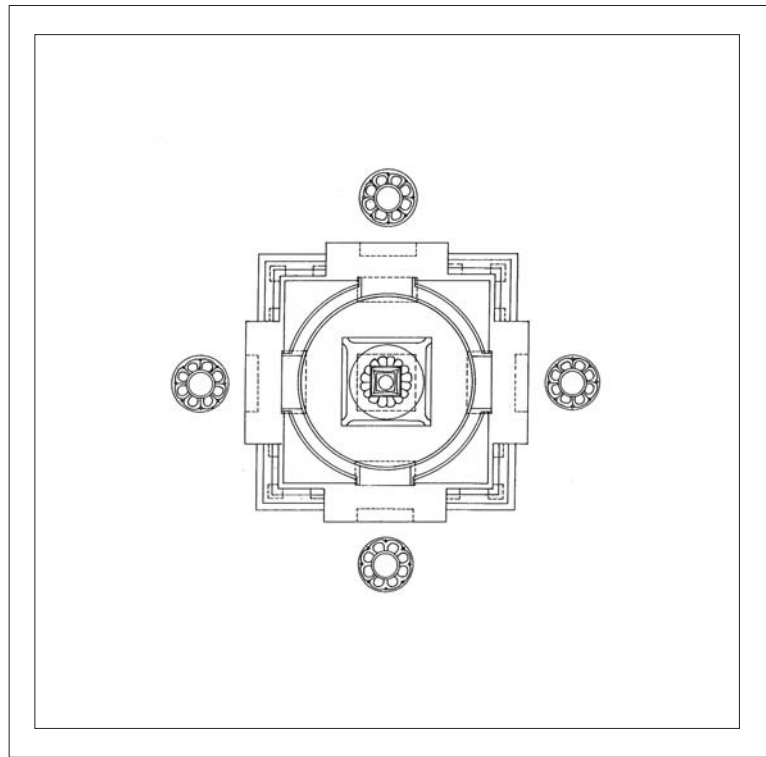
The inscription referring to the establishment of the Licchavicaitya (no. 8) in February 1727 is fixed to the wall of the Digichē. It refers to a *citahāhāla*. We must assume that the entire, 45 cm high platform was set up to install two 7th century fragments (26 and 57 cm) together with a newly carved eleven-tiered finial (49 cm high) without shields above the neck (*harmikā*). Two more fragments which obviously were considered inappropriate – one was even incomplete – were kept concealed within the platform. Another inscription dated to January 1728 (no. 9) refers to the pavement of the courtyard and in August of the same year an inscription (no. 10) obviously refers to the same pavement, while testifying to the establishment of one more *caitya* and a *dharmadhātumaṇḍala*, south of the Licchavicaitya. However this *caitya* is based on a pavement 14 cm higher than the base of the platform of the Licchavicaitya. A 19th-century pavement raised the level by another 13 cm, causing the original platform to lose 27 cm of its height. This odd develop-



Licchavicaitya, plan
and section.

Drawings by Surendra Joshi, 1988

ment, the continuous raising of the pavement level and the invisibility of two Licchavi fragments, located within the *caitya*'s platform was detected in the fall of 1992 in the context of the rehabilitation and restoration of the shrine building and initiated a reconfiguration of platform and



380 CM

caitya in the fall of 1992. The platform was dismantled on February 15 1993 and the *caitya* reconsecrated on May 26. It gained 20 cm in height and stands on a 47 cm high platform as a proud tribute to the art of Newar stone carving.



Vābhā
Licchavīcatya, 7th century,
view towards southeast.
Photograph by Stanisław Klimek,
August 10, 1992

Vābhā

Licchavīcātya, 7th century,
view towards southeast.

Detail of the two base storeys.
Photograph by Stanisław Klimek,
August 10, 1992

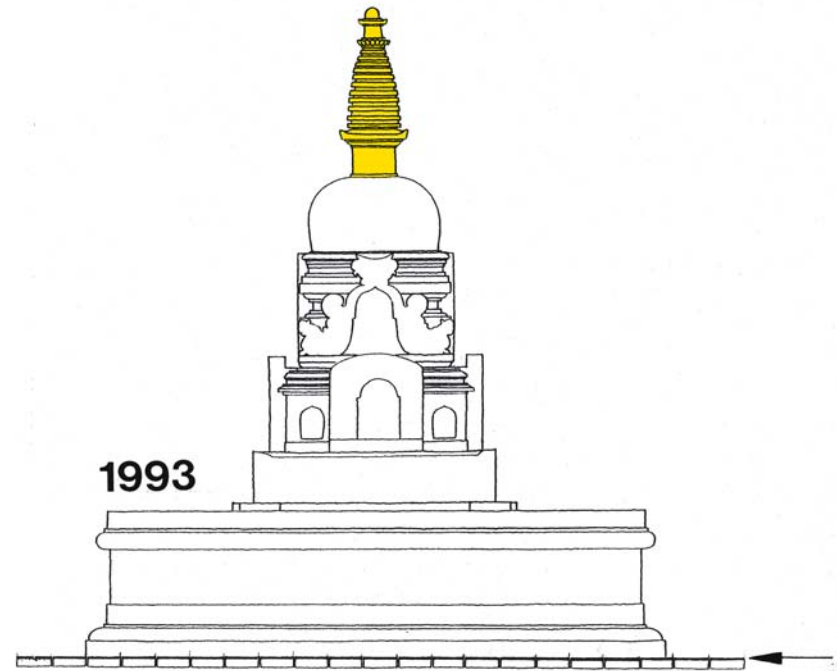
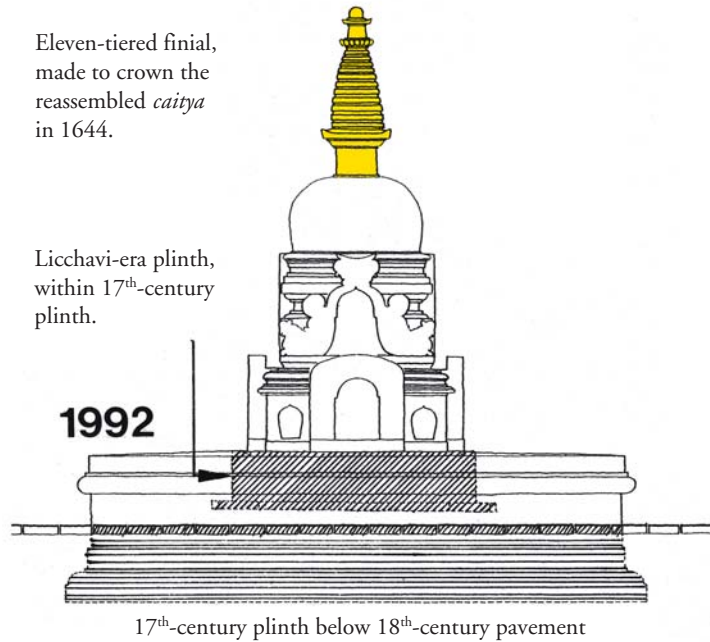




Vābhā
Licchavīcatya, 7th century, view towards southeast.
Detail of the corner of the upper base.
Photograph by Stanisław Klimek, August 10, 1992



Vābhā
Licchavica, 7th century,
detail of the western niche of
the base, featuring Amitābha.
Photograph by Stanisław Klimek,
August 10, 1992



Vābhā

Diagrammatic comparison, scale 1:20.

The platform (170 x 170 cm) of Licchavi-era (7th century) *caitya* was dismantled on 15th February 1993 to recover two levels which had been incorporated into a new plinth in 1727 on the occasion of the reconfiguration and renewal of the pavement of the courtyard.

The divine life (*nyāsa*) of the *caitya* was removed on 17th May, summoned to a sacred vase and stored in the *digi*.

The 17th-century platform was dismantled and lifted by 22 centimetres to meet the present level of the courtyard.

On 19th May the foundation ritual (*ratnanyāsa*) was performed to allow the two hitherto hidden base elements to be installed on the raised platform. The *caitya* was consecrated (*pranapratiṣṭha*) on 27th May.

Drawings by Niels Gutschow, 1993

Vābāhā

Licchavicitya, 7th century,
total height 148 cm.

The base structure is made of
four fragments, reinstalled in
this location some time in the
first half of the 17th century.

The two lower levels probably
form an original set, while the
lower base storey with the four
Tathāgatas (East: Aksobhya)
and eight empty niches and
the upper level with its four
identical Vairocanas, drum
and dome originate from
different locations.

The finial was newly crafted
when this configuration was
consecrated in the 1727.

Drawing by Robert Powell,
March 1993





Vābhā
Licchavicaitya, 7th century,
elevation east after
dismantling and
reconfiguration. The concealed
rock motifs were lifted and
the platform reinstalled in its
17th-century dimension.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
August 1993



Vabāhā
Panorama views of the
courtyard towards southeast
(top) and southwest (bottom).
Photographs by Jaroslav Poncar,
August 1995

Typology of 17th to 20th century *caityas*, with reference to the three *caityas* of Vābāhā monastery

Proto Śīkarakūṭacaitya with a plain base story

A year after the reconfiguration and reconsecration of the Licchavicaitya, the same donor couple established a *caitya* in August 1728 of a somewhat peculiar design. The inscription (no. 10) refers to a *caittabāhāra* and confirmed the existence of the paving of the courtyard which was already mentioned in an inscription (no. 9) eight months earlier.

What Mary Slusser called the primary trio of finial, dome, and drum faithfully followed conventions that were established at the end of the 17th century and remain valid still today. The thirteen-tiered finial with its ring of *āmalaka* at the top and a protruding shaft, the *yahsī*, must have attained this shape earlier, probably in the 14th century. The squat dome is monolithic with the drum which – in contrast to Licchavicaityas – has a half-round (*nāgvaḥ*) profile, a short indentation and a wide S-curve which allows panels with the four Tathāgatas to be carved on the drum, their halo extending into the dome. Till the middle of the 17th century dome and drum always remained untouched. One of the first reliably dated Śīkarakūṭacaityas at the courtyard of Cvabu (next to the northern *thudvā-stūpa*), established in 1656, had independent panels with the Tathāgatas, supported by molded roofing below. A year later, the Śīkarakūṭacaitya at Cikābahī left the primary trio without any further design intervention but placed them in the niches of a lower story. As a secondary base, below the drum follows a lotus flower with thirty-two leaves turned upwards and thirty-two leaves inverted, based on a scaled snake body. Such numbers are usually multiples of eight. The primary trio not only rests on the lotus flower, it emerges from it, thus associating the lotus flower that eons ago miraculously emerged from the lake that once filled the Kathmandu Valley. The flat base below lotus and snake represents an odd variation replacing or even avoiding the usual, richly molded story with niches.

Primary trio, lotus throne, and base is supported by a platform that follows the example of the Cvabu *caitya*, albeit not in stone but in richly molded bricks. Of note is the beading at the upper level which is not shaped as a quarter-round but rather has a flat, slightly stepped elevation. A similar, slightly larger, early 18th-century *caitya* is located in a courtyard of Nugah.

The Śīkarakūṭacaitya with seven circles of lotus leaves (*padmāvalī*)

The realization of multiple circles of lotus leaves on various *caitya* types during the last quarter of the 17th century aimed at translating the idea of the one thousand petals (*sahasra palehaḥ*) of the self-existent (*svaymbhū*) lotus with its resplendent light into built form. Usually seven but in one case even 12 circles had 252 or 336, and even the auspicious number 1008 (12 circles of 84 petals). Altogether 52 *caityas* of various types with circles of petals were established from the mid 1720s to the early 20th century. The new element took on a life of its own, becoming the dominant feature of the entire structure.

At the beginning, the seven circles of lotus leaves were introduced at two Caturvyūhacaityas at Jyābāhī in 1680 and at Taḥnani in 1709, both in Patan. There, the Tathāgathas are carved on the drum or incorporated into a flat story below the drum. The shaft-like base story has the four Bodhisattvas not in niches but rather as carved sculptures emerging from the walls.

A little later, eight *caityas* with an octagonal or circular base to accommodate the Eight Bodhisattvas were installed in Patan at the beginning of the 18th century.

The most consistent use of the circles of petals can be observed on the so-called Padmāvalicaityas, of which 14 are located in Patan and one each in Kirtipur and in Kathmandu. This fact suggests that the motif of the lotus was designed by a workshop in Patan. Nothing is known about such a design process, which must have been instigated by the community of Vajrācārya priests. Nothing is known about their specific motivation for developing further existing types and creating new ones.

The first example of this type, which may be dated by an inscription from 1723, stands at Būbāhā in Patan; the last one is at Khapīchē and dates to 1928. In all of these examples, the primary trio is almost standardized, with the Tathāgathas carved on the drum, as was seen at the *caitya* described above. Here the dome is even more reduced in scale.

The most popular incorporation of the *padmāvali* motif into a *caitya* occurred at Śikharakūṭacaityas. Fourteen *caityas* of this type are located in Patan, four in Kathmandu and one in Sunakoṭhi. The examples at Jhatapvaḥ Square, one dated 1698 and termed *pabitra-caitya* (*pabitra* = sacred, pure) in the inscription, and the one in the neighboring Cibhāḥcuka dated 1704, firmly established this type of *caitya* in Patan.

In 1734, the *caitya* at Vābāhā had a number of prototypes to refer to; the donors and the sculptors opted for the most popular one, the Śikarakūṭacaitya with seven circles of lotus petals; however, these seven circles with 40 petals each yielded 280, a multiple of seven, not eight.

This *caitya* was established (inscription no. 11) by the family of Kṛṣṇamuni Śākya in memory of his deceased uncles. Sixteen years later, a second inscription (no. 15) says that the *dharmadhātucaitya* is offered to the Daśavala Bhaṭṭāraka (the Buddha). The designation says that the *caitya* realizes the sphere (*dhātu*) of the *dharmā* or the Absolute Reality. The term Śikarakūṭacaitya never occurs on inscriptions. It was invented by a scholar from Patan, Amṛtānanda, to fulfil classificatory requirements expected by the British Resident Brian Houghton Hodgson in the 1830s, with an overt association with the mountain-like (*śikhara*) towers of Indian temples.

Compared with similar *caityas* of this type, the one at Vābāhā is about thirty percent smaller than comparable examples but retains all characteristics. It starts with the finial and the Tathāgathas engaged to the drum, which is supported by seven circles of petals which in turn are encircled by a snake to stress the association with water and the legendary lake that once filled the Kathmandu

Valley. In contrast to the *caitya* established 22 years earlier, the curvature of the dome is almost shouldered – a change in shape that turned out to remain valid for the coming twohundred years. Furthermore, the cube of the finial (*harmikā*) attains upright proportions and the shields on its cornice feature the recognition symbols of the Tathāgathas. The frame of the niches follows the formula that was well established in the middle of the 17th century: at its sides it has molded miniature pilasters and is surmounted by an arch of upright proportions, featuring the leonine face of Kīrtimukha, grasping a pair of snakes with his claws, with a pair of Makara facing outward.

The double roof moldings with upswept corners, the slightly pointed torus profile that divides the base story, the triple-stepped base profile, and the moldings of the platform below are all details that conform with earlier examples.

Jvālāvalicaitya with triple steps featuring lotus (*padma*), flame (*jvālā*) and scepter (*vajra*) motifs

As was explained above, the term was also invented in the 1830s to fulfill the expectations of the British Resident in Kathmandu who was obsessed by the idea of classifying not only the plants and animals of the Himalaya but also the architecture. There is nothing wrong with this descriptive way of creating a typology. Although it is the voluminous lotus flower with its visible stamina that dominates the *caitya*, it is the three steps on top, featuring the flame (*jvālā*) on the second step, which provided this type of *caitya* with a name.

Of the total 78 Jvālāvalicaityas in the Kathmandu Valley, more than one-third are dated by inscriptions. Accordingly, the first *caitya* of this type was constructed in 1831 at Bapunani, a courtyard near Hakhā in Patan. Others followed at Makhābāhā in Kathmandu in 1837; ten years later on Svayambhū Hill and in Sunakoṭhi in 1863. The majority of this type of *caitya* was set up at the end of the 19th century, the most recent ones at Tutūchēbāhā in Kathmandu in 1960 and at Nābāhā in 1985. A few

examples are also found at Thimi and Sanagaon. If the one at Bapunani is the very first of its type then it would again confirm the leading role of Patan in creating new varieties to fulfill the growing demand of donors among the Buddhist community. Patan has 28 *caityas* of this type, while Kathmandu has 34.

It is the rather inconspicuous three layers between the primary trio and the prominent bearing lotus, featuring a lotus, flame and scepter motif that convey a new, previously unknown message. The two lower levels have been shaped with sharp edges, displaying their motifs on the vertical plane, whereas the scepters of the third level are either displayed on the step's horizontal plane or in a beveled shape.

In the context of the Vajrayāna doctrine, the lotus symbolizes the purity of heart and the flame the process of purification which one undergoes while following the path to the *vajra* world of undestroyable truth. The lotus more or less represents the potential for awakening, and the fire the path towards that goal. It frees a person from ignorance and by this means purges the *five skandhas*, the aggregates constituting the entirety of what is generally known as personality, the twelve *āyatanas*, the sense fields, and the eighteen *dhātus*, elements that determine all mental processes. It is only after this purificatory process that the purity of the *vajra* is attained. Only at that stage does entry into the realm of the *dharma* appear possible. The realm of *dharma* represents the uncaused and immutable totality in which all phenomena arise, dwell, and pass away.

The *caitya* at Vābāhā is referred to as *dharmadhātuvagīśvara*, representing a three-dimensional *dharmadhātuvagīśvara-maṇḍala*. The *caitya* came to be a shrine housing the five Buddhas, infused with the qualities of Buddhahood. It was established in 1882, fifty years after the emergence of this type in Patan. An almost identical *caitya* was established in the same size and same year in a small courtyard of Temakva in Kathmandu.²⁴ There, the inscription refers to that *caitya* as *vajradhātucaitya*.

The primary trio is miniaturized in a similar way at the Śikharakūṭacaitya, established in 1750. The four Tathāgatas are carved on the dome and drum, while the shields above the *harmikā* display their recognition symbols. And similar to the *caitya* established in 1728, this trio is supported by a lotus flower with 16 petals turned upwards and 16 petals inverted – in an answer to the reduced size of the top element these have half the number of the 1728 example. Then follows the three steps with lotus, flame, and scepter motifs, based on a large lotus flower with two circles of 16 petals each. In contrast to the upper lotus flower, the stamina is made visible. The motif of the lotus flower seems to be replicated to provide the doctrinal message of the three motifs with the same significance as the primary trio. A constriction below the prominent flower stresses its volume and allows a gentle S-curve to lead down to a triple-stepped substructure. In a rare variation the surface of the curve is covered by a leaf pattern that recalls the ancient acanthus motif which reached the subcontinent before the Common Era and Nepal no earlier than the late 18th century. The common designation as *desisvā* reveals its origin from a foreign land (*desī*). The snake body encircling the base of the *caitya* proper reminds us of the inherent water symbolism – the *caitya* floating on the primeval ocean. On other examples of this type, this is highlighted by water motifs on the circular base just above the snake body.

The triple-stepped substructure starts with a flat throne, guarded in the corners by lions, sharing a common head and forequarters. Enclosed in niches with a lobed frame are kept further guardians, the Caturmahārājas, namely Khaḍgarāja in the east, Viṇārāja in the south, Caityarāja in the west and Dhvājarāja in the north.

The plinth has the common moldings, a torus in the upper third, with a register of seed motifs atop and lotus leaves below. A quarter-round profile recalling the snake body marks the bottom of the plinth with a register of lotus leaves in the shape of the *kasimvaḥ* pattern atop. The *caitya* with its throne and plinth is supported by a low

platform, a quarter-round profile again marking the bottom. Arched niches between the two registers of leaves house the four Bodhisattvas, namely Maitreya in the east, Vajrapāṇi in the south, Padmapāṇi in the west and Mañjuśrī in the north.

Outlook

With the building of the Jvālāvalicaitya at the northern end of the north-south axis of Vābāhā in 1882 no space was left for the establishment of further *caityas*. The *mādaḥ*-stone that receives ritual waste, *dharmadhātu-maṇḍala* (1728), the Proto Śikarakūṭacaitya with a plain base story (1728), the Licchavicaitya (1727), the pillar bearing the image of the donor couple (1728), the Śikarakūṭacaitya mit *padmāvali* motif (1750), and the Jvālāvalicaitya (1882) took advantage of the limited space of the courtyard that measures 17.60 by 17.40 m.

For more than a century the courtyard remained untouched. The Digichē was replaced by a new building in 1982 but no new structures were added to the common space. The scene changed dramatically at the end of the 1990s because the general rise in affluence created an urge to beautify the courtyard and even donate an additional shrine. In a first step, the shrine building (*kvāpāchē*) was encased with iron grillwork in 1997, allegedly to “protect” the venerable shrine but we have to understand this transparent addition as a “modern” extension of the shrine itself. The caging of sanctuaries is a trend that started in the 1980s. Referring to *caityas*, those at Guitabahī, Tambahī and Dhvākhābāhā were fenced with grillwork in the first decade of the 21st century. In 2009 the Licchavicaitya received a canopy and in the same year a large prayer wheel (*mane*) was installed in a roofed cage. Already in the 1920s two prayer wheels had been installed in niches of the ground floor wall. The donation of ever larger prayer wheels mirrors an ongoing trend. In 2015 a shrine was established dedicated to Āryanāmasaṅgītī, supported by a pillar.

The donation in August 2022 of a long banner (*pataḥ*) of metal, tied to the pinnacle on top of the roof turret and extending across the eaves, stands for another trend. The British author Isabella Tree had donated such a banner in 2013 to the Kumārīchē in Kathmandu and in March 2022 a banner was presented by Krishna Lal Maharjan, chair of Lalitpur Chamber of Commerce & Industry on the occasion of the reconsecration of the Bhīmsen Temple in Patan.

In 1992 there was a single electricity post in the courtyard heralding modernity. By 2022 the courtyard is newly paved with large-sized thin tiles imported from India. At night some 20 motor bikes are parked there. Almost all three-story houses have been replaced by six-story high reinforced concrete structures. This is an inevitable development that does not undermine the dedication and zeal of the community; the tradition is reconciled with modernity.



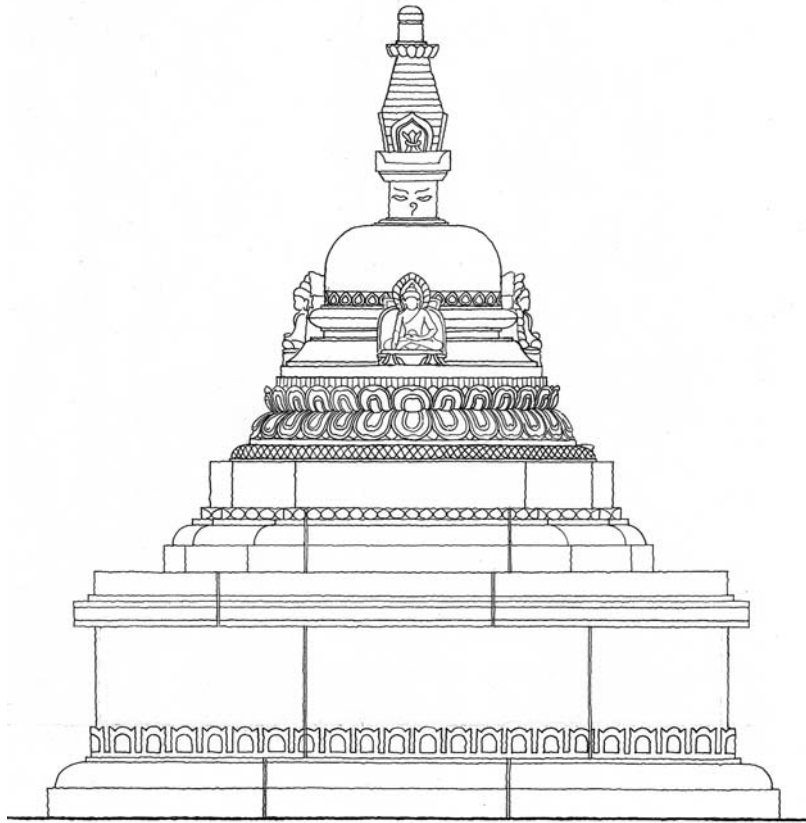
Vābhā

Established in 1728, the *dharmadhātumaṇḍala* is supported by two circles of twelve lotus leaves, placed on an octagonal plinth. The diamond scepter (*vajra*) was installed in 1890 and four prayer wheels were affixed in the early 2010s.

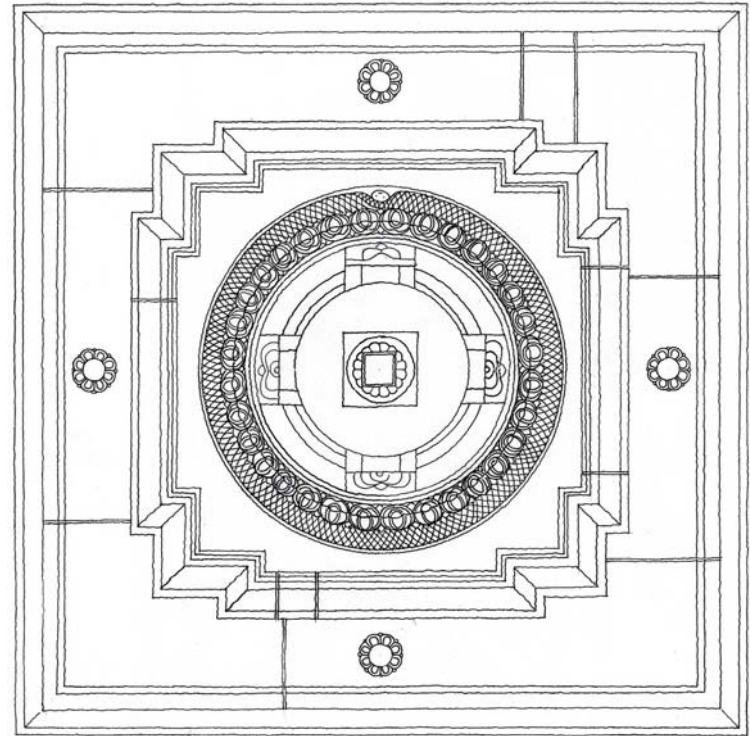


Established in 1728, the *caitya's* four Tathagatas are carved on a wide drum. On top of a massive monolithic base, with the lower circle of 32 lotus leaves and a wide platform. The lower register were recovered when the pavement of the courtyard was removed in summer 2021.

Photographs by Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021



106 CM



Vābāhā

Caitya with the four Tathāgatas engaged to a wide drum, based on double circles of lotus leaves and the usual encircling snake body. Of note is the duplication of the substructure. The first base is twenty-angled (*vimśatikona*) in plan with a quarter-round profile at the bottom; the larger one is square

in plan, again with a quarter-round profile at its bottom, which was based on the level of the original pavement.

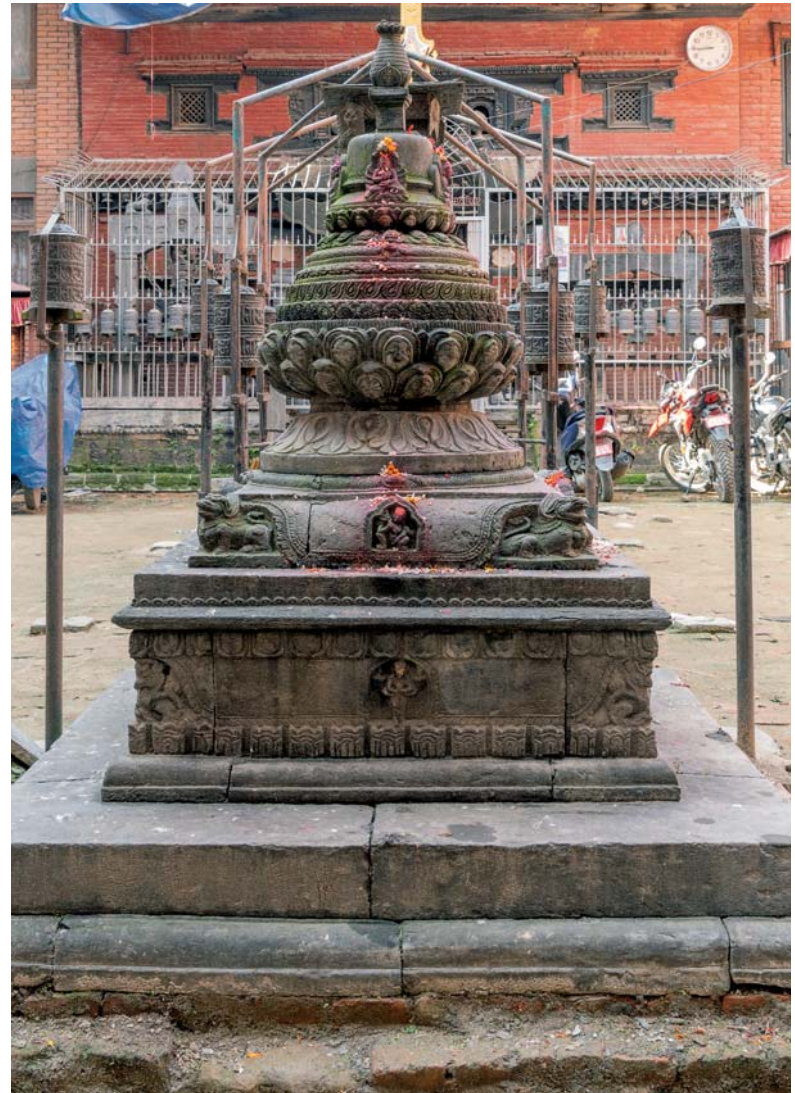
The *caitya* was established by Amṛtajyoti and his wife Devajānī in August 1728.

South Elevation and top view, drawing by Bijay Basukala, scale 1:100, October 2021



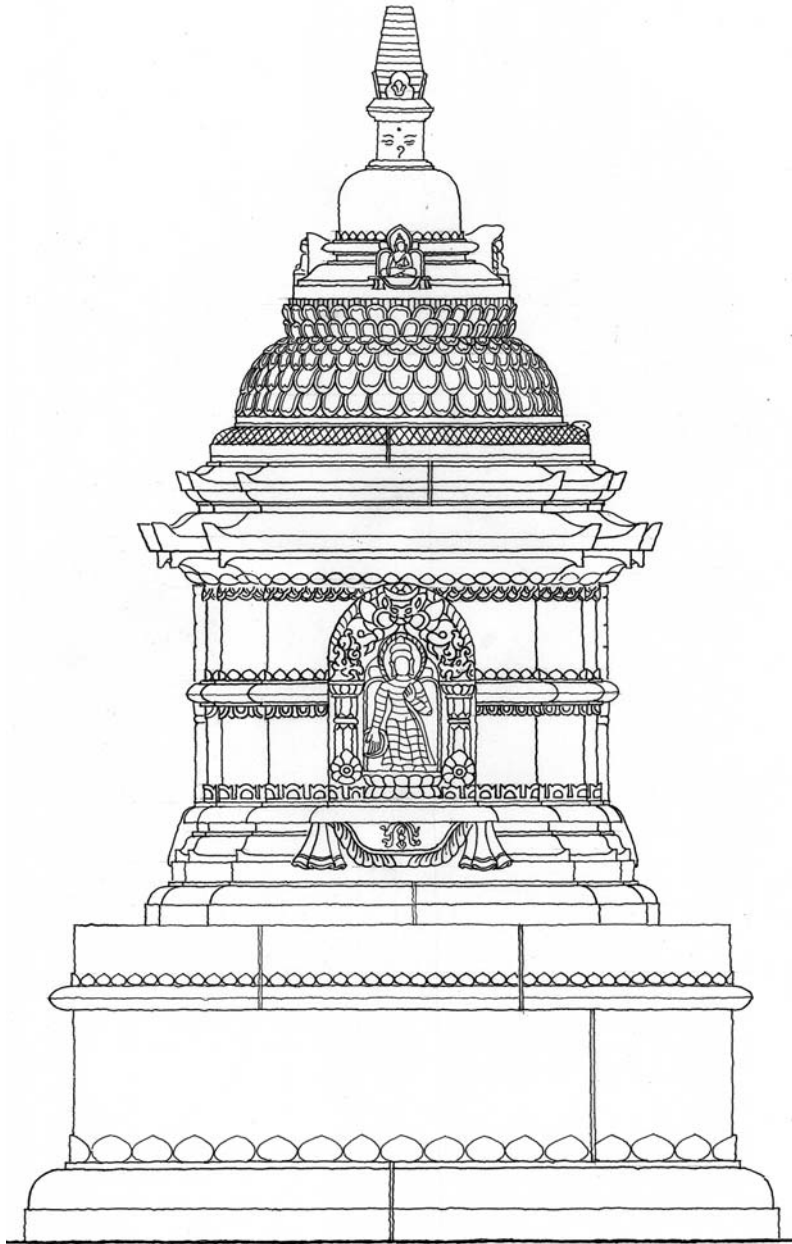
Vābhā

Established in 1734, the Śikharakūṭacaitya with seven circles of lotus leaves (*padmāvalī*) between the primary trio and the roofed base has Akṣobhya carved on the drum and Maitreya in the niche of the base. Four prayer wheels were affixed in the four corners in the 2010s.



Established in 1882 the Jvālāvalicaitya with circles of lotus, fire, and scepter motifs on two circles of voluminous lotus leaves is supported by a base and a lower platform. Amoghasiddhi is carved on the drum, Dvājarājā guards the base, with lion guardians in the corners.

Photographs by Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021



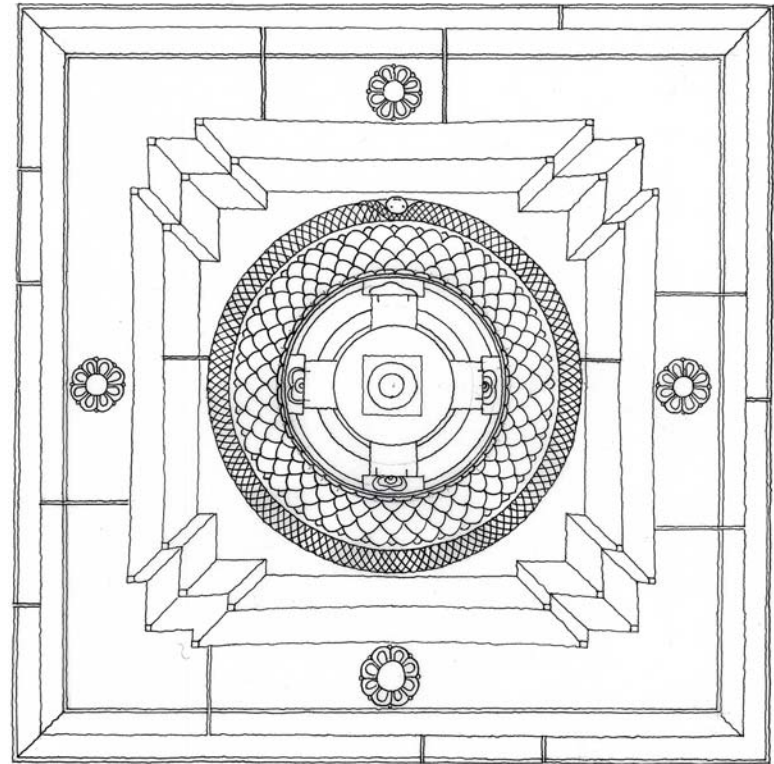
87 CM

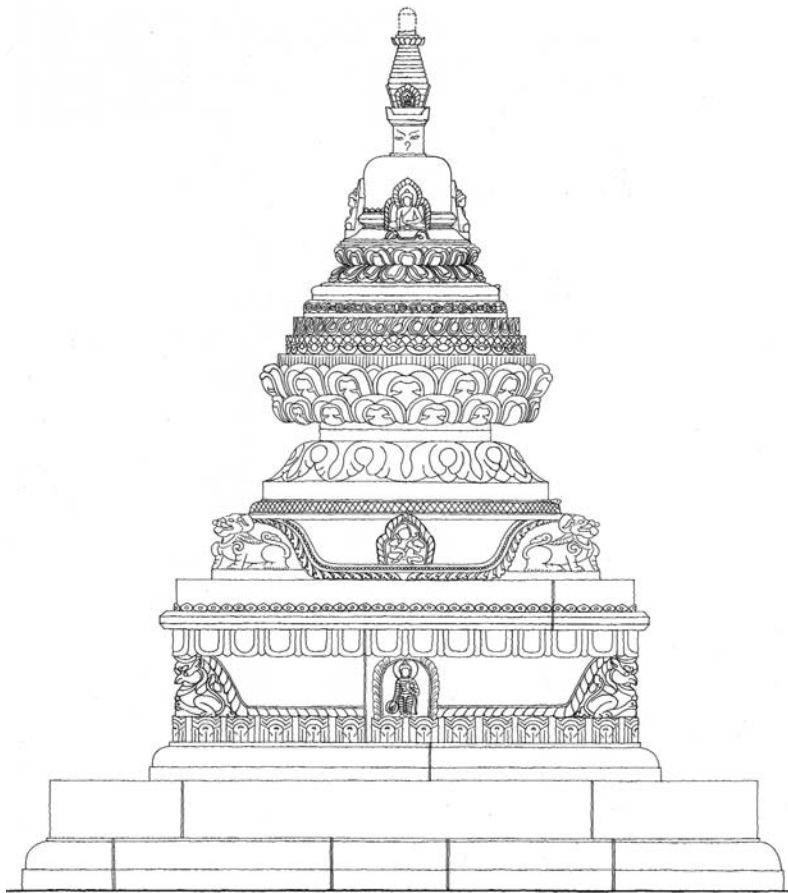
Vābāhā

Śikharakūṭacaitya facing east, with seven circles of forty lotus leaves each below the primary trio (finial, dome and drum), based on the body of a snake. The panel above the neck (*harmikā*) features the crossed scepter (*viśvavajra*), Akṣobhya is carved on the drum and the niche of the base houses Maitreya. The frilled throne features the scepter on all sides.

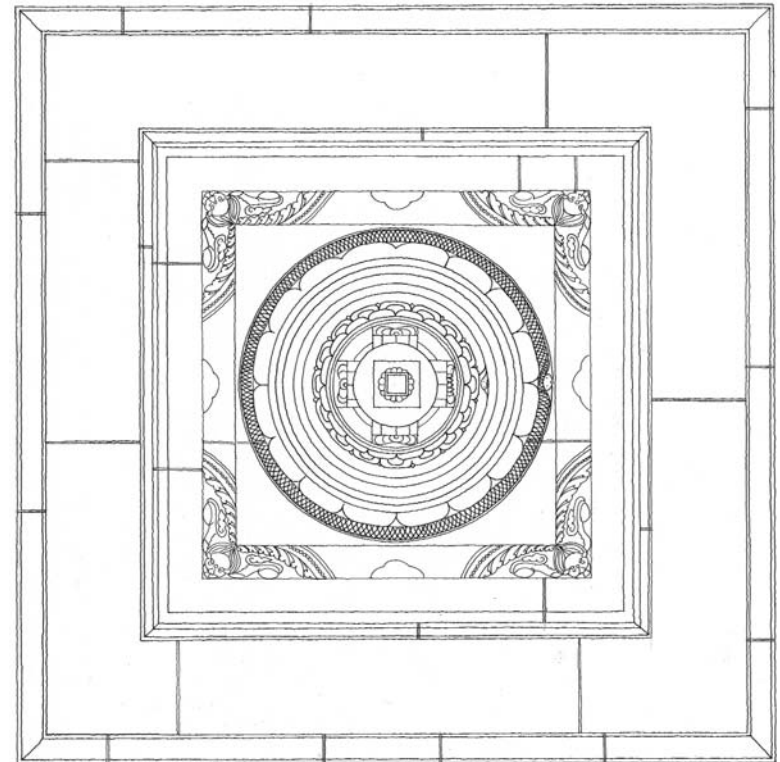
The *caitya* was established as *dharmadhātucāitya* by Kṛṣṇamuni Śākya and his family in the name of his deceased uncles in April 1734.

East Elevation and top view, scale 1:100, drawings by Bijay Basukala, April 2021





150.5 CM



Vābāhā

Jvālāvalīcaitya with triple steps featuring lotus, fire, and scepter motifs, placed on the pericarp of a voluminous lotus flower in high relief. The profile below has lotus acanthus leaves in very low relief. The throne below is guarded by lions in the corners and the guardian of the east, who carries a string instrument (*vinā*).

The square base features Maitreya in a flat niches and has the sun-bird Garuḍa as guardian in the corners.

Elevation east, scale 1:100 and top view, scale 1:200, drawing by Bijay Basukala, October 2021



Vābhā

Details of the Jvalāvalicaitya, established in 1882.

Left, open-mouthed lions with a common forequarter guard the corners of the throne below the bulbous lotus flower.

Right, Garuda guards the corners of the base, clutching with his talons a pair of snakes with a common head.

Photographs by Niels Gutschow, October 9, 2021



Vābahā

Tirtha Māyā Vajrācārya, the daughter of Amṛtarāj, who directed the renewal of the Licchavicaitya in 1993, worships the Jvālāvalicaitya in course of her regular morning service. She carries miniature effigies of her parents on her tray.
Photographs by Niels Gutschow, October 3, 2021

Rituals of Dismantling and Reconsecrating the Licchavicaitya in 1993

Introduction²⁵

When Buddhism developed into Vajrayāna and Mahāyāna in the 6th to 7th centuries, Vajrayāna Buddhism began to place importance on the the life cycle rituals, *daśakarma saṃskāra* (Ten kinds of rituals) and started practicing these rituals from at least the 11th and 12th centuries in the monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley. Earlier, such rituals (*saṃskāra*) were codified in the Hindu *Manusmṛiti* as mandatory performances among the Hindus²⁶ – not performing the rituals would even have been considered a crime. Hindu law maintains that religious monuments and ritual objects are to be treated as living beings.²⁷ The Nepālī law codex known as Mulukī Ain (1854) even considers temples and deities to be living beings. In this way a *caitya* or an icon, a banner painting or a sacred text, have to undergo the same rituals as a human body. To perform the *saṃskāra* ritual it is essential to establish and consecrate (*pratiṣṭhā*) religious monuments or objects. It is believed that the *saṃskāra* rituals are necessary to socially civilize and purify a human being. For Newars, it is impossible to imagine establishing a deity and its abode without performing the *saṃskāra* rituals. This concept was followed for the reconsecration of the Licchavi *caitya* of Vābāhā.

According to Alexander von Rospatt, Acārya Kuladatta, the son of Saṃghadatta who is said to have migrated to Nepal from Kashmir, wrote the *Kriyāsaṃgrahaṇīkā* in Sanskrit in about the 11th to 12th centuries in Nepal. This text has guided the ritual tradition of the Newar Buddhist community of the Kathmandu Valley.²⁸ According to Rospatt, the *Kriyāsaṃgrahaṇīkā* is a collection of diverse rites (*kriyā*) that foregrounds the establishment of a monastery, which relates in various ways to the

monastic handling of rites like the examination and purification of the building site, the laying of the foundation (*pādasthāpana*), elements such as the wooden gong used in daily practice (*ganḍī*), as well as the rite of ordination (*pravrajyā*), the consecration of an image (*pratimā*) or other objects serving as receptacles for the Buddhahood, such as a *caitya*, monastery, banner painting, or book. Rospatt summarizes that the *Kriyāsaṃgrahaṇīkā* presents a complex sequence of rites that collectively imbue the object with the qualities of Buddhahood and enliven it; those rites were not newly devised by Kuladatta, rather he brought these together from traditional practices, which he adapted to a tantric framework and fused into a complex but coherent and interconnected whole.

Ryugen Tanemura, who has published the critical edition of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahaṇīkā* as a part of his doctoral dissertation, identifies the employment of some Brahmanical life-cycle rituals as consecration rites in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahaṇīkā*.²⁹

Most likely these kinds of ritual ceremonies were not practiced or at least not given much importance during the consecration of Buddhist monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley in the Licchavi period. This is because the names given to the monasteries at that time were simple, and did not mention the donor who performed the consecration with the *saṃskāra* rituals. The term *pratisaṃskara* (the renovation ritual) was used in a stone inscription on a Licchavi-period Śaiva temple at Paṣupati.³⁰ Later, in the mediaeval period, the names given to the Buddhist monasteries became longer and were elaborated by mentioning who had performed the consecration rituals. For example, Vābāhā is called Sūrya Brahma (or Sūrya Varmā) Saṃkārīta Vajrakīrti Mahā-

vihāra which means “Vajrakīrti (flame of *vajra*) Monastery Consecrated by Sūrya Brahma.” Every monastery or every abode of the deity established during the Licchavi period appears to have been re-consecrated later in the mediaeval period, according to the *saṃskāras*.

The *daśakarmasaṃskāra* used by the Newars, seems to constitute an interpretation of the *ṣoḍaśasaṃskāra* (sixteen kinds of *saṃskāra* rituals). Furthermore, the code of King Jayasthiti Malla dating to the the 14th century mentions that it is mandatory to perform the *saṃskāras*.³¹ Today it is common practice among Newars to perform the *saṃskāras* both in Buddhist³² and Hindu contexts; the pattern of worship differs according to the deities addressed.

The preparation of the rituals:

When the contract between the Patan Conservation and Development Programme and the members of *sarvasaṅgha* for the restoration of Vābāhā was signed on August 27, 1992, the members of Vābahā consulted some well-known Vajrācārya priests and the prescribed texts. Since the Licchavi *caitya* is believed by the Newars to be an Aśokan *caitya*, some priests were against the dismantling of the *caitya*; they were afraid of committing sins and the ensuing harmful consequences. On the other hand, renewing a *caitya* is said to ensure more merit than renovating all the temples.³³ The *Jīrṇoddhāra Vimva Kathā* text mentions that a person who restores a *caitya* will be blessed with good health, prosperity, peace and purity in this life; in the next life one shall live a “kingly life” which ultimately will lead to the Buddhahood.³⁴ Finally, the *sarvasaṅgha* was willing to dismantle the *caitya*. The credit goes to the members of the *saṅgha* led by the elder, Amṛtarājā Vajrācārya.

In the beginning, Maṅgala Rāja Jośī, the royal astrologer from Dhalaycā in Patan made the required astrological calculation to define an auspicious time (*sāit*) for performing the ritual. The astrologer calculated the time for the three essential rituals. The time for removing the

divine life force out from the *caitya* (*jīvaninyāsa*) before dismantling the *caitya* should be from 8:44 to 8:59 or 11:01-11:05 am on May 17; the time for laying the foundation with jewels (*ratnanyāsa*) should be from 11:35 to 11:55 am on May 19, and the time for returning the divine life force to the *caitya*, the consecration (*jīvanyāsa*), should be from 7:36 to 7:51 or 11:01 to 11:35 am on May 26, 1993.

A synopsis of the *sāitapau* reads as follows:

“Obeisance to Lord Gaṇeśa. In order to renew the *caitya*, it is auspicious to pay respect to Lord Gaṇeśa and other deities (first) and to perform Jīvaninyāsana Pūjā (the act of taking the life force out of the *caitya*) on the fourth solar day of the month of Jeṣṭha in Vikram Saṃvat 2050 when the Sun is in Taurus and moon is on the 11th lunar day of the dark fortnight, when there is a particular constellation called Bhadrā and the conjunction called Viskumbha pari Pṛiti, Monday, in the morning in 8:44 to 8:59, facing west and according to the auspicious moment it is also possible to perform the same act on same day from 11:01 to 11:05 in the morning.

It is auspicious to perform the act of establishing the foundation and offering of jewels to the foundation (Ratnanyāsa) on the 6th solar day of Jyeṣṭha, when the sun is in Taurus, when the moon is on the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight, when there is a particular constellation called Aśvini and the conjunction called Śobhana pari Saubhāgya, Wednesday, in the morning from 11:35 to 11:55, facing toward the east.

It is auspicious to perform the act of returning the life force back to the *caitya* (*prāṇapratīṣṭhādī jīvanyāsana karma*) on the 13th solar day of Jeṣṭha, when the sun is in Taurus, when the moon is on the fifth day of the bright fortnight, when there is a particular constellation called Tiṣya and the conjunction called Sukarmani, Wednesday, in the morning in 7:36 to 07:51 or according to the auspicious time; it is also possible to perform the same act on the same day in morning from 11:01 to 11:35, facing west.”

The priest Dharmaratna Vajrācārya of Pyāgathā near Bubāhā in Patan had prepared a list of the *pūjā* materials to be obtained and prepared for the ritual. The following persons – all of them have passed away in the meantime – were designated to perform the ritual:

- 1 Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya, the eldest member of Vābāhā as Mūlācārya (main priest)
- 2 Bhaktabahādura Śākya, the second eldest of Vābāhā as *yajamāna* (client)
- 3 Muktarāja Vajrācārya (alias Bhīdyah Gubhāju) from Naḥbāhā as Upādhyāya (reciting texts)
- 4 Dharmaratna Vajrācārya from Pyāgathā of Bubāhā as a priest (Guruju)
- 5 Viśvavajra Vajrācārya from Daubāhā as a priest (Guruju)
- 6 Dharmarāja Vajrācārya from Daubāhā as a priest (Guruju)
- 7 Khadgarāja Vajrācārya, at that time the caretaker of the tutelary deity (*kvāpāhdyah*) of Vābahā as a priest (Guruju)
- 8 Pannāratna Vajrācārya from Vābahā as a priest (Guruju)
- 9 Nilakumārī Vajrācārya, the wife of Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya as *thakālī nakhī* (the first priestess)
- 10 Jñānamāyā Śākya, the wife of Bhaktabahādura Śākya as *kvakālī nakhī* (the second priestess)

The day of Jīvaniyāsa Pūjā **The Deconsecration of the *caitya*,** **May 17**

The gathering of the participants started at seven in the morning in the courtyard of Vābāhā. They brought the *pūjā* materials to the site. The priests drew the *maṇḍalas* with yellow and red powders in locations besmeared with cow dung. They displayed the *kalāśagaṇa* (the collective items of *suvarṇa* or *mūla kalāśa* (golden or main jar), the *dhaupati* (curd pot), the *nhāyikā* (ritual mirror), the *sinhamū* (sindur pot), *gogrāsa* (a small plate of food for a cow), the *mahābali*, *kurkulābali* (sacrificial offerings), and the *aṣṭadīkṣā patāḥ* (banners depicting the eight guardian deities) on top of the drawn *maṇḍalas*. They also prepared a *homaḡāḥ* (sacrificial firepit) in which a *maṇḍala* was drawn.³⁵

1 In the beginning, the *saṅkalpa*, the declaration of ritual intention was uttered and the *sāita pau bvanegu*, the donor's name, time, and place of performance were announced and the ritual vow for the completion of the ritual was performed. In this case, Niels Gutschow and his wife Wau Gutschow were named as donors. The main vow for all the rituals was taken by the Nutandhar Śharmā on behalf of the absent donors. Since the main deity of the *caitya* is Vairocana, the entirety of the rituals were performed in the name of Vairocana Tathāgata, one of the Five Buddhas (Pañcabuddha).

2 *Thāpam yāyegu* (“establishment of the *kalāśagaṇa*”). Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya, the Mūlācārya (main priest) established the *kalāśagaṇa*.³⁶

3 *Sūryārgḡha* (“welcoming the Sun god”). Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya welcomed the Sun god by pouring water to witness the whole rituals.

4 *Gurupādargḡha* (“welcoming the guru”). Bhaktabahādura Śākya, the Yajamāna welcomed the guru by watering the feet of the Mūlācārya.

5 *Pañcagavya śodhana* (“purifying the mixture of five kinds of cow products”). The Mūlācārya purified the *pañcagavya* by spelling mantra.

6 *Pujābhah saṅkalpa* (“taking the ritual vow by touching the *pūjā* plate”). The *yajamāna* took the ritual vow to complete today’s ritual by touching the *pūjā* plate, then handed it over to the Mūlācārya.

7 *Svabhavā pūjā* (“worship of one’s own state of being”). The Mūlācārya worshiped the main jar (in which the divine life force of the Pañcabuddha was invoked) with five types of primary *pūjā* materials such as flowers, sandal paste, incense, light, and food (*pañcopacāra*).

8 *Kāybhah pūjā* (“worship of twin pots containing vermilion”). The main priest or Mūlācārya performed the worship of the twin pots symbolizing Vajravārāhī and a cup for the collection of black soot pot as the Cakrasaṃvara.

9 *Gurumaṇḍala danegu pūjā* (“worship of the guru’s *maṇḍala*”). The Mūlācārya made the *gurumaṇḍala* and worshiped it with flowers and rice.

10 *Rahasyamaṇḍala danegu pūjā* (“worship of secret *maṇḍala*”). The *yajamāna* worshiped the *rahasyamaṇḍala* by making a circle of water with his finger tip and putting rice and flowers on it. This is considered a shortened form of *gurumaṇḍalapūjā*.

11 *Samādhi cvanegu* (“observe meditation”). The Mūlācārya took the rice from the *rahasyamaṇḍala* and made the *tri-samādhi* meditation of mind, body, and speech.

12 *Kalāsagaṇa pūjā* (“the worship of the *pūjā* pots including a *kalāśa*”). The Mūlācārya worshiped the group of *suvarṇa kalāśa* (golden jars which represents the Pañcabuddha) consisting of *dhaupati* (the curd pot, symbolizing longevity), *jvalānhāyikā* (the ritual mirror, with the omniscient face), *sinhamū* (the vermilion pot, representing Lakṣmī) and *gogrāsa* (a small plate of food for a cow).

13 *Yajña ārambha* (“starting of the fire sacrifice”). The Mūlācārya started the fire sacrifice in the sacrificial pit to be continued later by the other priest. The Upādya (priest), Muktarāja Vajrācārya, read the text called the *Yajñavidhāna*.

14 *Nirājana* (“purification”). The Mūlācārya performed the rite of purification of the fire after burning a wick.

15 *Jivanyāsa likāyegu japa* (“spelling the mantra for removing the divine life force”). Spelling *mantras* while holding a *vajra*, a flower, and the fivefold thread in one hand, moving a rosary in another by all the priests 2,000 times each. One end of the thread was tied to the *caitya* and the other end to the *jivanyāsa kalāśa* with a coconut on top. Thereby the deity is invoked and invited to dwell temporarily in the jar. The technique of visualizing the deity’s seed syllable (*viḥjantra*), made it enter (*praveśana*) into the jar, bound (*bandhana*) and pleased (*vaśīkaraṇa*).³⁷ It is believed that after this rite is finished, the divine life force of the *caitya* moves from the *caitya* into the jar. From now on the *caitya* is considered lifeless.

16 *Sāpūjā* (“worshiping a cow”). The Mūlācārya performed the worship of the cow by offering *gogrāsa* (a plate of food).

17 *Saḥkhipatā ciyegu* (“to tie with a rope”). The ritual of tying one end of the rope to the pinnacle of the *caitya* and the other end to the tail of the cow.

18 *Hastapūjā* (“worship of the hands”). The *yajamāna* worshiped the hands of the main mason (*lvahākahmī*) who was going to dismantle the *caitya*.

19 *Jyābhah laḥlhāyegu* (“handing over the tools”). The *yajamāna* handed over a hammer and a chisel to the stone mason dismantling the *caitya*. The *hastapūjā* of the worker and *jābhah laḥlhāyegu* are jointly called Viśvakarmāpūjā (worship of the divine architect) as well.

20 *Syākegu* (“demolishing”).

After the cow moved, thus pulling the rope tied to her tail to symbolically initiate the destruction of the *caitya*, the mason started to dismantle it.³⁸

21 *Godāna* (“gift of a cow”).

The *yajamāna* gifted the cow that destroyed the *caitya* to a Brahman. Since there was no Brahman except Nutandhar Śharmā, he received the gift in order to complete this ritual and gave it back.

22 *Jivanyāsa likayā thaḥta yākegu* (“to take the divine life force up”).

Bhaktabahādur Śākya, the *yajamāna*, took the jar with divine life force up to the Digichē. He, along with the divine life force, was welcomed by priestesses clearing the path and spreading white cloth on it as a kind of carpet. He was followed by the priests singing the *Dasapāramitā stotra* and sounding a conch, while the other devotees shake *cavara* (fly whisks).

23 *Homa pūrṇā yāyegu* (“the completion of the fire-sacrifice”).

The fire-sacrifice begun earlier was then completed by the priests.

24 *Rahasyamaṇḍala danegu* (“to make a secret *maṇḍala*”). The *Rahasyamaṇḍala* was drawn and worshiped by the *yajamāna*.

25 *Cākaḥpūjā* (“the circumambulatory worship”).

The *yajamāna* worshiped Caturmahārāja (the guardians of the principal directions) and other deities of the monastic courtyard during a circumambulation.

26 *Visarjana* (“discarding”).

One assistant priest, Khaḍgarāja Vajrācārya, discarded the plate of sacrificial offerings on the stone located in front of the main access to the monastery on the western side.

27 *Kalaśagaṇa tale yākā kalaśagaṇa svānā pūjā*. (“taking the *kalaśagaṇa* up and worship them by combining them with the *Jivanyāsa kalaśa*”).

The *Kalaśagaṇa* was taken to the first floor of the Digichē by the *yajamāna* and kept with *Jivanyāsa kalaśa* (the jar with the divine life force); the Mūlācārya worshiped them together with the five kinds of *pūjā* materials.

28 *Jivanyāsa kalaśa pūjā* (“worship of the jar with the divine life force”).

The Mūlācārya worshiped the jar with divine life force separately in the Digichē.

29 *Mantrajapa* (“murmuring of mantra”).

Murmuring of mantras while all priests moved their rosaries.

30 *Pañcāku kāyegu* (“having five pieces of roasted meat”).

Sitting in a row, the priests and all participants had wine (*ailaḥ*) and pieces of roasted meat as the blessings (*prasāda*) from the deity.

31 *Samaybaji nayegu* (“having tantric food”).

The priests, participants, and devotees took the tantric food (*samaybaji*) as blessings consisting of flattened rice, dried fried rice, roasted meat, ginger, garlic, black soybean, green vegetables, beans, *vaḥ* (bread made of soaked black lintel), and wine.

32 *Bhvay nayegu* (“having a feast”). In the end, all of the participants joined in a feast with meat and wine, with the priests being the first in line according to the hierarchy.

The ritual was completed at 9:30 in the evening.

The priests divided their share of murmuring mantras 125,000 times (*savālākha japa*) in front of the jar with divine life force. It was mandatory for them to complete the *mantrajapa* every day in the allotted time before the *jivanyāsa tayegu pūjā* began.



Vābāhā

Dismantling of the platform below the Licchavicaitya.

Robert Powell (left) discusses the sequence of fragments with

Nutandhar Śarmā. Vajrarāj Vajrācārya is dressed in white;

to the far right is Bijay Basukala.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow, February 10, 1993



Vābhā

Dismantling of the platform below the Licchavicaitya. Robert Powell (left) sketches the two unearthened fragments. Vajrarāj Vajrācārya and Amṛtrāj Vajrācārya squat behind the *caitya*; to the right is Bijay Basukala.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow, February 10, 1993



Vābahā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā
 Dharmaratna Vajrācārya (with black coat, from Bubahā),
 Vajrarāja Vajrācārya (with light coat, from Vābahā),
 Dharmarāja Vajrācārya (white coat, in the middle, from

Daubahā), and Viśvavajra Vajrācārya (with white shirt, from
 Daubahā) are inspecting the *pūjā* materials.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Sharmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jīvanīyāsa Pūjā
Jīvanīyāsa kalāśa filled with
water, topped with a coconut,
a peacock feather, and a piece
of cloth.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā,
May 17, 1993.



Vābahā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā
 The *mūlācārya* from Vābahā, Amṛtarāja Vajracārya (his head covered with a piece of cloth), starts the *pūjā*; Muktarāja Vajracārya in his role as the Upādhyāya priest (with black coat

and cap) from Naḥṭol, and Viśvavajra Vajracārya (behind the Licchavicaitya, white shirt) prepare for the ritual.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā
 Bhaktabahādur Śākya from Vābāhā (with black vest) acts
 as the *yajamāna* (representing the client); to his side sits
 Amṛtarāja Vajracārya (with the *uddiyāna* cap); Jñānī Māyā
 Śākya, the (wife of Bhaktabahādur Śākya hands material over

to Muktarāja Vajracārya who invokes the life force of the deity
 to the *kalāśa*, placed on top of the tripod. Vikrāma Vajracārya
 in the background acts as a helper.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābhā, Jivaninyāsa Pūjā

From left: Dharmarāja Vajracārya, Viśvavajra Vajracārya, Dharmaratna Vajracārya, Pannāratna Vajracārya, and Khaḍgarāja Vajracārya from Vābhā, murmuring the invocation *mantra*.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā
 From left: Dharmarāja Vajrācārya, Viśvavajra Vajrācārya,
 Pannāratna Vajrācārya, and Khadgarāja Vajrācārya, continue
 the murmuring of *mantra japa* with their rosaries.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jīvaninyāsa Pūjā

The couple, Amṛtarāja Vajracārya and his wife Nilakumārī

Vajracārya, continue to invoke the deity.

Photograph by Nutandhar Sharmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā
The *yajamāna*, Bhaktabahādur
Śākya, performs the
chāyhāyekegu (pouring beer)
on top of the Mahābali Pūjā.
Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā,
May 17, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā
 Worship of the cow: Lakṣmibahādur Śākya (with white shirt)
 is holding the cow, Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya is offering it food,
 and Muktarāja Vajrācārya is reciting the text.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Sharmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jīvaninyāsa Pūjā
 Bhaktabahādur Śākya (behind the *caitya*) is tying the
pañcasutra (fivefold thread) to the top of the *caitya*. Surendra
 Śākya (behind the pillar) is holding the other end; to the right
 is Muktarāja.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā

Right: Amṛtarāja Vajracārya murmurs *mantras* while holding the fivefold thread. On his right, Bhaktabahādur Śākya presents the gesture of *namaskāra*. On his left, Nilakumārī Vajracārya, Jñānī Māya Śākya and Muktarāja Vajracārya watch.

On the left (from top): Dharmarāja Vajracārya, Viśvavajra Vajracārya, Pannāratna Vajracārya, and Khaḍgarāja Vajracārya continue murmur *mantra japa* with their rosaries.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā

On both sides of the *caitya* the priests murmur *mantra japa* while moving their rosaries. Bronwen Bledsoe, a visiting scholar from Chicago is seen in the background on the left. Bhaktabahādur Śākya is presenting the *namaskāra* gesture. Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 17, 1993.

Vābāhā, the Jīvaninyāsa Pūjā
Left, the *yajamāna*,
Bhaktabahādur Śākya, offers
paise to the stone mason,
Asakaji Rañjitrkār from
Bhaktapur, after consecrating
his hands (*hastapūjā*).
Right, the stone carver
consecrates the hammer he
uses to dismantle (*sysēkegu*)
the *caitya*.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā,
May 17, 1993.





Vābhā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā
 The stone mason initiates the dismantling of the *caitya*.
 A rope is tied to the pinnacle of the *caitya* and the other end to the tail of a cow.
 A short jolt indicates the beginning of the dismantling.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jīvaninyāsa Pūjā

The life force of the *caitya* is taken in procession to the Digichē. Nilakumārī Vajracārya is sweeping the ground, and Bekhā Māyā Śākya scatters rice and flowers. Amṛtarāja Vajracārya rings the bell, while Surendra Śākya and Khadgarāja Vajracārya carry burning incense. Rāju Vajracārya blows on a conch and Muktarāja Vajracārya recites the text.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 17, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā
Left, the *yajamāna*,
Bhaktabahadura Śākya carries
the *jivanyāsa kalāśa*.

Right, Bhaktabahadura Śākya
walks on a panel of white
fabric (*vāsā layegū*), while
holding the *kalāśa* with both
hands. Pannāratna Vajrācārya
follows him with one more
kalāśa.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā,
May 17, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jīvaninyāsa Pūjā
 Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya sits next to the *jīvanīyāsa kalāśa* on the
 first floor of the Digichē; Pannaratna Vajrācārya arranges
 the pots in the prescribed order (*kalāśagaṇā*).
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 17, 1993.

Ratnanyāsapūjā
Depositing Jewels at the bottom of the Platform,
May 19

Depositing the jewels involves a simple ritual performed by the Mūlācārya and the *yajamāna*. It started at 10 in the morning and ended at 12 noon. Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya, the Mūlācārya (main priest) placed the *dhaupati* (curd pot) on the foundation of the dismantled *caitya*. The Mūlācārya and the *yajamāna* repeated the rituals of the *Jīvaninyāsa pūjā* from the second to the seventh steps, from *Sūryārgḥa* to *Svabhāva pūjā*. They offered water, rice, red and yellow *ṭikas*, wicks, incense, puffed rice, flowers, sandal wood paste, and coins and as the main items consisting of metal objects and precious stones.

The moment the *pūjā* had been completed, the devotees from the neighborhood came to offer different objects. These consisted of diamonds and precious stones such as *pañcaratna*, *navaratna*, a silver- and gold-embroidered blouse (*tāsayāgu lā*), a blouse woven with gold and silver threads (*kvacīnyāgu lā*), rings made of five kinds of metal, old and new copper coins, bank notes, a copper plate, an alms bowl of copper, five copper cups, rice, incense sticks, eight clay bowls, sacred threads, a clay cup used for burning wick lamps, wicks for the lamps, different flowers like roses, puffed rice, and red powder, all placed in the foundation of the dismantled *caitya*. In the end, the priest kept all of the offerings within the foundation.

Dusaḥ or Adhivāsana: Summoning of the deity
on the preceding day,
May 25

There was some confusion because the Mūlācārya forgot the date of the ritual – he had mistakenly taken his medicine early in the morning. In order to perform the *adhivāsana* (*dusaḥ* in Nevāri) ritual, the priest must fast until the ritual is complete. Therefore, a debate arose among the priests as to whether it would be correct to perform the ritual or not since he had already taken his medicine. The priests decided not to perform the ritual on that day because the Mūlācārya had broken his fast. Muktirāja Vajrācārya, one of the priests from Naḥṭol was very angry with the Mūlācārya's carelessness and quietly abstained from participating in the ritual thereafter.

Thus, the *adhivāsana* was postponed to the following day and the remaining priests decided that the ritual would be performed in advance of the *Jīvaninyāsa Tayegu Pūjā* and *Daśakarma* rituals.



Vābhā, the Ratnanyāsa Pūjā

The stones with quarter-round edges at the bottom of the platform have been raised to the present pavement level. Pannāratna Vajrācārya performs the foundation-laying rituals

of the *caitya* by offering the *caitya* “jewels” (*ratna*) such as gold and silver coins, as well as an embroidered blouse.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 19, 1993.



Vābhā, the Ratnanyāsa Pūjā
Pannāratna Vajrācārya
observes the offerings for the
foundation of the *caitya*.
Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā,
May 19, 1993.

Jīvanyāsa and Daśakarma homa pūjā Consecration Rituals, May 26

The gathering of the participants and preparation work started at 6 in the morning. Different groups of priests and devotees prepared the sacrificial firepit, smeared the ground with cow dung, and decorated the space with the colorful banners for Aṣṭadikpāla (The Eight Guardians of the universe) and the *bali* pot (part of the propitiatory sacrifice for wrathful deities, spirits and ancestors).³⁹

The people from the monastery and the neighborhood brought their personal statues of deities to benefit from the divine life force (*jīvanyāsa*) during the rituals without performing a separate *jīvanyāsa pūjā* for the deities owned by them. This is a common practice among Newars.

The Thakālinakhī, Nilakumārī Vajrācārya, the Kvakālinakhī, Jñānamāyā Śākya, and a peasant (Jyāpu) went to bring the Alīdyaḥ from the house of a potter (Prajāpati) in the Loḥla Quarter. The Phalīdyaḥ was provided by the Citrakāra, a painter from Ikhālaku. Rospatt comments upon the close association of Alīdyaḥ and Phalīdyaḥ; Alīdyaḥ shaped as a *caitya* represents the five Buddhas, and Phalīdyaḥ represents the five goddesses corresponding to the five Buddhas.⁴⁰ In their account describing initiation rituals in Bhaktapur, Niels Gutschow and Axel Michaels provided details on the shape, making, and meaning of the Alīdyaḥ, which in Bhaktapur is identified and worshipped as Śiva, Agni, or even Bhairava.⁴¹ Alīdyaḥ or Alinī is also called Agnidyaḥ by the Brahman and Jośī of Bhaktapur, and Egindyaḥ by the potters – a term that suggests an association with Agni, the god of fire. This in turn suggests an association with Aṛṇī Silā, the deity who sets one free from loans, and who is a Bhairava in the shape of a roundish stone used as a weight, as found in the Kathmandu Valley. The cylindrical shape of the Phalīdyaḥ can be related to *phā* or *phalinī*, measuring cups used in the household. The Newars have a long tradition of worshipping household materials as divine entities.

At 11:30 in the morning, Bhaktabahādur Śākya, the *yajamāna*, brought down the jar with the divine life force

from the first floor of the Digichē to the site in order to herald the beginning of the ritual.

1 The covering the *caitya* by a piece of white cloth symbolically indicates that until now the *caitya* did not exist. The ritual started with installation of eight bathing vessels (*snānakalaśa*). Rospatt has gone into great detail on the *snānakalaśas*.⁴² These rituals are the part of *adhivāsana pūjā*, which in fact should have been performed the preceding day.

In the beginning, the rituals of *Jīvanyāsa likāyegu pūjā* that include steps one to seven were repeated in this *Jīvanyāsa pūjā*. The *Jīvanyāsa likāyegu pūjā* was reversed in respect to the *Jīvanyāsa tayegu*. The priest recited 108 times the mantra *om hūṃ bṛiḥ vajribhava dṛdhaṃ tiṣṭha bhrūṃ khaṃ hūṃ svāhā*, while holding the five-fold thread (*pasūkā*) that was connected to the *caitya*, along with a *vajra* and a flower in his hands. After having worshiped and touched the *caitya*, the priest recited the mantra *om supṛatiṣṭhitavajrāya svāhā*, thus accomplishing the shifting of the life force of the deity of the *caitya*. This was the precondition for the performance of the life cycle rituals.

Daśakarma pūjā⁴³

The *pūjā* started by invoking the *Catussāgara* (the four kinds of *snānakalaśa* – jars that symbolically contain the water from four oceans, thereby representing all deities of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala).

1 *Yonisamśodhana karma* (“the purifying the woman’s womb”).

At the beginning of not only the *Yonisamśodhana karma* but also of each of the *daśakarma* (ten kinds of rituals), the Vajrācārya priests poured the water from the four jars (*catussāgarakalaśa*) that symbolically represent water from four oceans on top of the *caitya* (*Catussāgaram luyegu pūjā*). The two priestesses performed the *Nivāñjana pūjā* (purification of the deity with a burning lamp). The priest performed the *Ṣadāṅga nyāsa* by touching the Buddha’s ears, eyes, nose, and mouth with his *vajra*.⁴⁴ He also

offered a garland to the deity and an *āhuti* (sacrificial offering of grains to the fire-sacrifice).

Mantrajapa (“the murmuring mantras while moving the rosary by the Vajrācārya priests”) was performed.

2 *Garbhādhāna karma* (“the pregnancy”)

The Vajrācārya priest spelled out the mantra on a *jantra* (talisman) and offered it to the deity’s icon as a necklace.

3 *Jātakarma* (“the giving birth and caste”)

Pidhenegu – the symbolical cutting the umbilical cord.

Nasvām cikā tayegu – the offering fragrant herbs and oil on the navel of the deity’s icon.

Mikhā kākegu – the opening the eyes of the deity.

Ghṛtamadhuprāsana – the feeding ghee and honey.

4 *Annaprāsana karma* (“the first feeding of rice”)

Jākva bhujām tvaygu – letting the newborn touch one of the items displayed on the winnowing tray, such as a lump of clay, a brick, a book, an ornament, a pen etc. on a plate. It is performed symbolically by facing the icon.

It is believed that if the child touches the lump of clay, in the future it will become a landlord, if a book, a scholar, if an ornament, a rich person.⁴⁵

Ajaḥ ulegu – applying black soot to the eyes of the deity.

Jā nakegu – feeding the deity with rice.

Tisā vastra lalhāyegu – handing over clothes and ornaments to the deity.

Kalā vāyegu – discarding the leftover rice at the absorbing stone (*pikhālākhu*), located in front of the main gate of the monastery, after worshiping Dhūmāvātī (a manifestation of Pārvati).

5 *Nāmakarāṇa karma* (“the name giving”)

The name “Vairocana Tathāgata” was given to the deity, the main deity of the *caitya*. At that time the priest was spelling “... *vairocana thathāgata bhurbhūvaḥsvaḥ*” in Sanskrit.

6 *Cudākaraṇa karma* (“the tonsure”)

Samkhāyegu – shaving the hair of the deity.

Nhāypā pvākhanegu – piercing the ears of the deity.

In this specific case, pouring holy water from the four jars (*catussāgarām luyegu*) and *nyāsa* took place only after the *Nhāypam pvākhanegu* ritual.

Pindapātra silāyākū laḥlhāyegu – handing over an alms bowl and a wooden stick with a *caitya* symbol on top, signifying the monkhood, to the deity. The objects were handed over to Bhaktabahādur Śākya, the *yajamāna*.

Saptapada – taking seven steps on the seven lotus flowers drawn on the pavement. These steps were made by the *yajamāna* on behalf of the deity.

7 *Vratādeśa karma* (“the vows of disciple”)

Sākhāyegu – shaving the hair of the deity.

Māykeluyegu – grinding black pulses in a stone mortar at its feet, signifying the removal of negative thoughts.

Dhanuṣavāṇa, calā chēgu, kamaṇḍalu, vastra laḥlhāyegu – handing over a bow and arrow, deerskin, waterpot, and dress.

The objects were handed over to the *yajamāna*.

Saptapada – taking seven steps on the seven circles of lotus drawn on the pavement. This was done by the *yajamāna* on behalf of the deity.

Amba hambanā mvalhuyekegu – bathing the deity in a paste of myrobolan and sesame seeds; finally, all participants circumambulate around the *caitya*.

8 *Samāvartana karma* (“the return from studies”)

Gaudāna – the *yajamāna* presents a piece of gold carved with a cow to the priest on behalf of the deity.

9 *Pāṇigrahaṇa karma* (“the marriage”)

Ihipāḥ byāḥ laḥlhāyegu – placing a bel fruit associated with the bride, tied with a handkerchief on an earthen plate in front of the deity. The wedding *gāthā* was recited by the priest, symbolically representing the marriage (*ihipā*) of the deity.

Dr̥ṣṭidāna – bestowing of sight.

Citrakārapūjā – worshipping the hand of a Vajrācārya priest holding a *vajra* which represents the brush of the painter. The priest painted the eyes of Vairocana with the *vajra*.

10 *Vajrābhīṣeka* (“the scepter initiation”).⁴⁶

Samkhāyegu – shaving the hair of the deity.

Performing the rituals: *Alīdyah chāyegu* (offering Alīdyah), *Phalīdyah puikegu* (decorating with Phalīdyah), *hāsā gālegu* (fanning with a winnowing tray), *tuphi gālegu* (fanning with a broom), and *Jasikēsi lahlhāyegu* (handing over the household materials).

Udakābhīṣeka – sprinkling water.

Gā, vajra, sulāhpāḥ lalhāyegu – handing over a bell (*ghaṇṭābhīṣeka*), a sceptre (*vajrābhīṣeka*), and the ladle used during fire-sacrifice. The priest touched the chest of the deity with his *vajra*.

Nāmakaraṇa – conferring a tantric name to the deity (*nāmābhīṣeka*).

Mukhaḥ puyekegu – handing over the crown of a Vajrācārya (*mukutābhīṣeka*).

Yaḥmari, lvācāmahri luyegu – showering *yaḥmari* and *lvācāmahri* (confectionary) across the *caitya*.

Catāmahri nehecākegu – placing *catāmahri* (pancake made of rice flour) in front of the deity of the *caitya*.

Pūrṇāhuti – offering a coconut to the fire. The Mūlācārya offered an unpeeled coconut.

Samkhyāhuti – offering mixed grains to the fire while reciting the name of gods and goddesses.

Visarjana – worshipping the rice and flowers used during rituals and discarding these on the absorbing stone outside of the monastery. With this, the Daśakarma rituals of that day come to an end.

Concluding events

Śeṣāhuti – offering the remaining mixed grains to the fire-sacrifice.

Cākāhpūjā – circumambulatory worship of Caturmahārāja and other deities of the *bāhā*.

Kumārīpūjā saṅkalpa – taking a vow and handing over the *pūjā* plate with *pūjā* materials to the wife of the *yajamāna* to take to worship the goddess Kumārī. The goddess Vajrayoginī of the monastery represents the virgin goddess Kumārī.

Kumārīpūjā – worshipping Kumārī.

After the Kumārīpūjā, all statues of deities which were brought to share the divine life force (*jīvanyāsa*) by neighboring families were taken back to their homes.

Pañcāku kāyegu – seated in a row according to seniority, all participants share wine and roasted meat as blessed food (*prasāda*).

Dakṣiṇā biyegu – offering a fee to the priests. The *yajamāna* offered a fee to all priests and participants.

Samaybaji nayegu – sharing *samaybaji*, tantric food blessing by all participants and neighbors.

Bhvay nayegu – all participants and neighbors join the ritual feast with meat items and wine. The feast came to an end at 11:30 in the evening.

***Caturthīpūjā* - The Concluding Worship Ceremony May 27**

A simple, concluding worship ceremony (*pañcopacāra pūjā*) was performed by the Mūlācārya and the *yajamāna*. It started at 10 in the morning and ended two hours later. It is believed that no participant is supposed to consume *dālbhāta* (cooked rice) at home without first performing the *caturthīpūjā*.

Opposite
Vābāhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā
Dharmaratna Vajrācārya and
Khaḍgarāja Vajrācārya are
preparing the *snāna kalāśas*
(bathing jars), namely, eight
small ones representing the
eight auspicious signs
(*aṣṭmaṅgala*), which in turn
represent the Eight
Bodhisattvas, as well as larger
pots representing Śiva and
Śakti, Nāgarāja, Yakṣa, and
Gaṇeśa; herbs and sugar cane
have been brought for the
pañcapallava offerings on top
of the pots.
Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā,
May 26, 1993.





Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā

Display of the *pūjā* materials for the consecration ritual.

The canopy for the fire-ritual is of woven bamboo and displays a *viśvavajra*. Pannāratna Vajrācārya (right) is preparing the site for the ritual to the west of the reassembled *caitya*.

Photograph by Nutandhar Sharmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya starts the fire-sacrifice, while Viśvavajra
 Vajrācārya recites the prescribed text. On the stone column
 a *paubhā* banner is hung and icons from private households
 are arranged to benefit from the consecration of the *caitya*.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā

The *caitya* is covered with white cloth, indicating that the deity has not yet reached its receptacle. Left, Pannāratna Vajrācārya worships the deity, while Dharmarāja Vajrācārya recites the text. Leaning against the platform are the winnowing tray (*hasa*), a miniature stove, and sandals that

symbolize discipleship (*vratādesā*); on top of the platform, the bowl (*salapa*) and the *bel* fruit, indicating the initiation ritual for girls (*ihī*), the parental gift of a virgin. Right, behind the *caitya*, Viśvavajra Vajrācārya recites the text for the fire sacrifice and Dharmaratna Vajrācārya observes the ritual. Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 26, 1993.



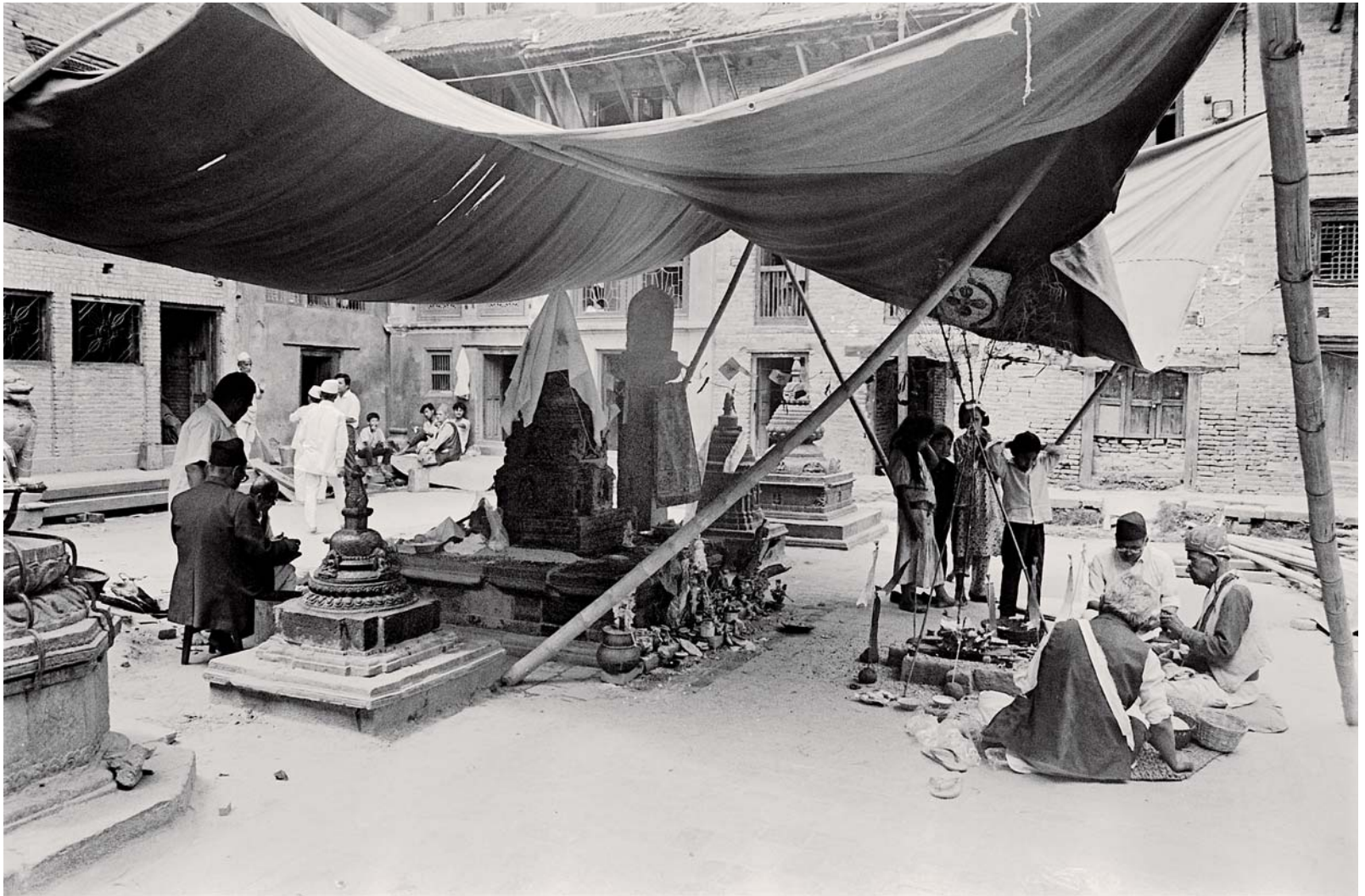
Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 The head priest, Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya, wields his *vajra* above
 the sacrificial firepit. To his right, Viśvavajra Vajrācārya recites
 the text with the *yajamāna*, Bhaktabahādura Śākya, on his left.
 Vikramarāja Vajrācārya decorates the *caitya*.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā

Left, west of the *caitya*, Pannāratna Vajrācārya performs the *daśakarman* rituals, while Dharmarāja Vajrācārya recites the text (in front). Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya is performing the fire-ritual and Bhaktabahādura Śākya and his wife Jñāni Māyā Śākya are helping him (in the background).

Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 26, 1993.



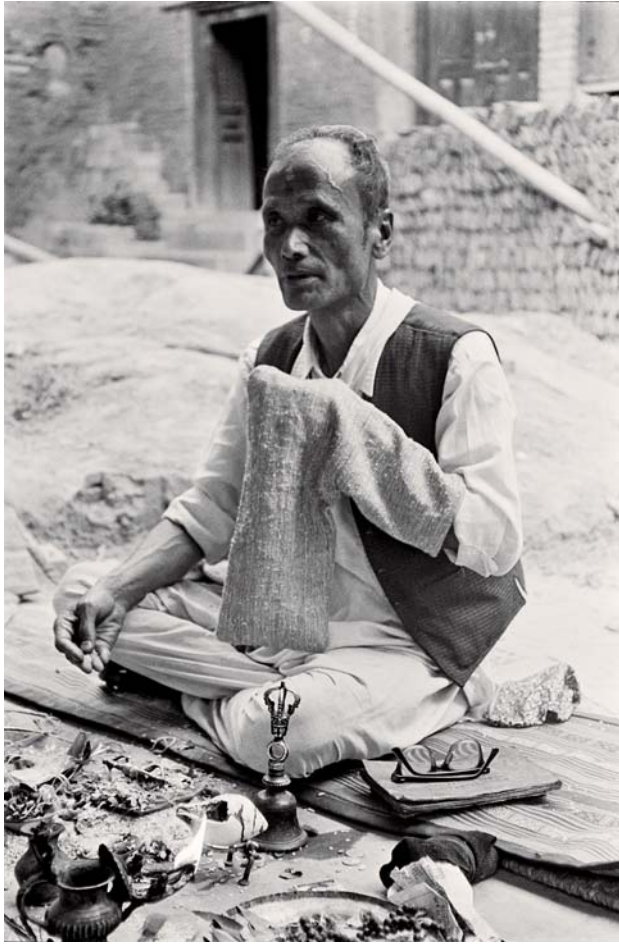
Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 Right, Amṛtarāja Vajracārya rings his bell while performing the fire-ritual; Viśvavajra Vajracārya recites a text, while Bhaktabahādura Śākya watches. Left, Dharmaratna Vajracārya reads a text, while Pannāratna Vajracārya performs the *daśakarma* ritual.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā

Right, Dharmaratna Vajracārya and Dharmarāja Vajracārya are reading the texts, while Pannāratna Vajracārya performs the *daśakarma* ritual. Left, Amṛtarāja Vajracārya murmurs the *mantra japa* without his ritual cap and keeps feeding the fire, while Viśvavajra Vajracārya recites the text.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā
Left, Pannāratna Vajrācārya
recites the *mantra japa* for
the *daśakarma* ritual with
his rosary veiled.
Right, Dharmaratna
Vajrācārya recites the text
Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā,
May 26, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā

Left, Pannāratna Vajracārya, Khaḍgarāja Vajracārya, and Dharmaratna Vajracāryas are performing the *daśakarma* ritual.

Right, Amṛtarāja Vajracārya is offering ghee to the fire using a wooden ladle (*salāku*), while Viśvavajra Vajracārya recites the text; on the right, the *yajamāna*.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā
Left, the *yajamāna*,
Bhaktabahādura Śākya,
returns from the Digichē with
the *jivanyāsa kalaśa* in his
hands, a coconut with *pasukā*
thread tied to it.
Right, holding the *jivanyāsa*
kalaśa with the life force of
the deity in his hand,
Bhaktabahādura Śākya walks
solemnly along a panel of
white cloth (*vasā lāyegu*).
Vajrarāja Vajracārya is ringing
a bell, Lakṣmībahādura Śākya
blows a conch, Vikramarāja
Vajracārya holds a yak-tail
whisk, and Dharmaratna
Vajracāryas recites *stotras*.
Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā,
May 26, 1993.

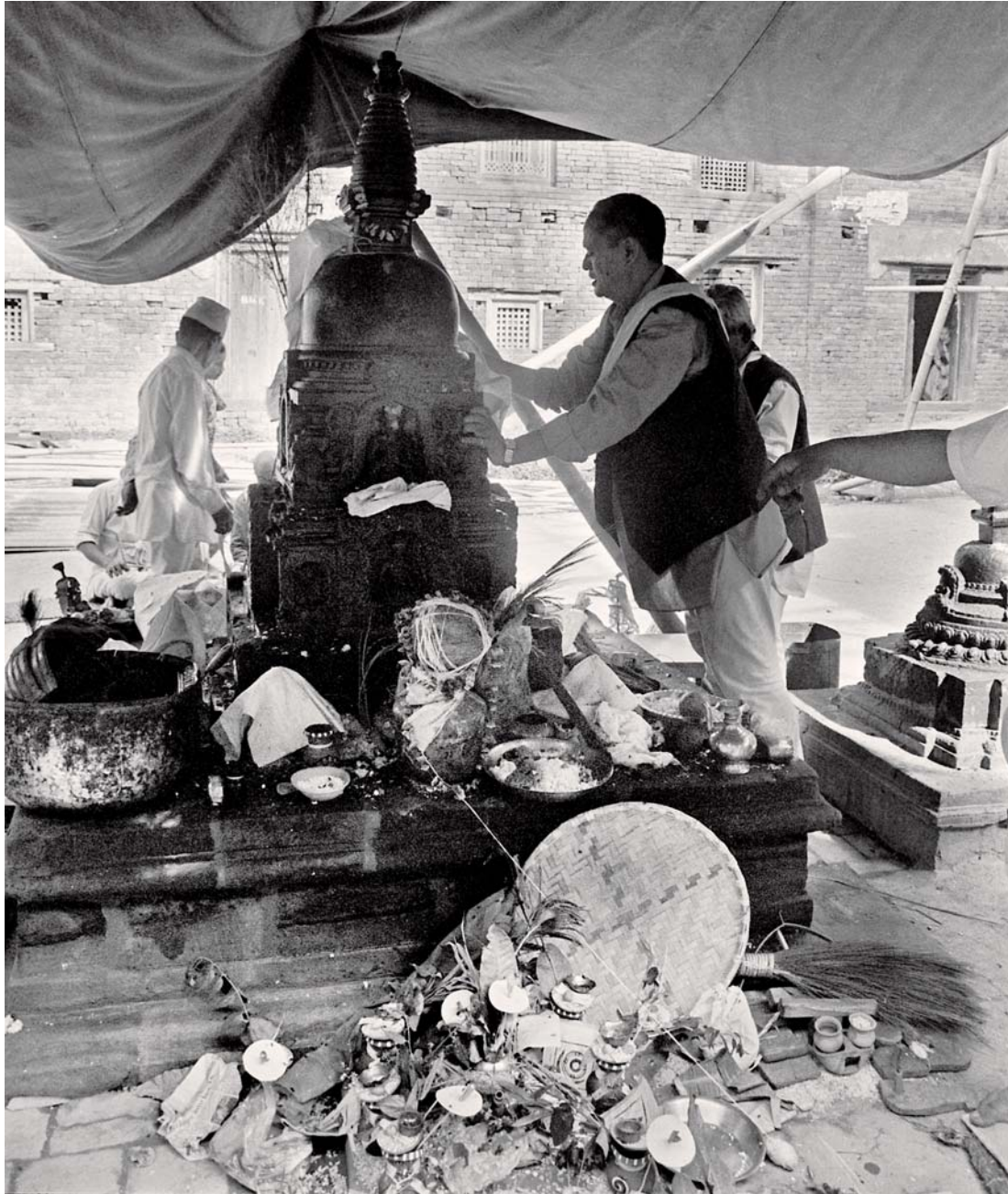
Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā

Left, Dharmarāja Vajracārya
ties the fivefold thread (*pasūkā*)
to the top of the *caitya*.

Right, offering a coin.

Photographs by Nutandhar Śarmā,
May 26, 1993.





Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā
Dharmaratna Vajrācārya
removes the white cloth from
the *caitya*. With this, he
demonstrates that the deity
is permanently fixed in its
receptacle, the *caitya*.
Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā,
May 26, 1993.

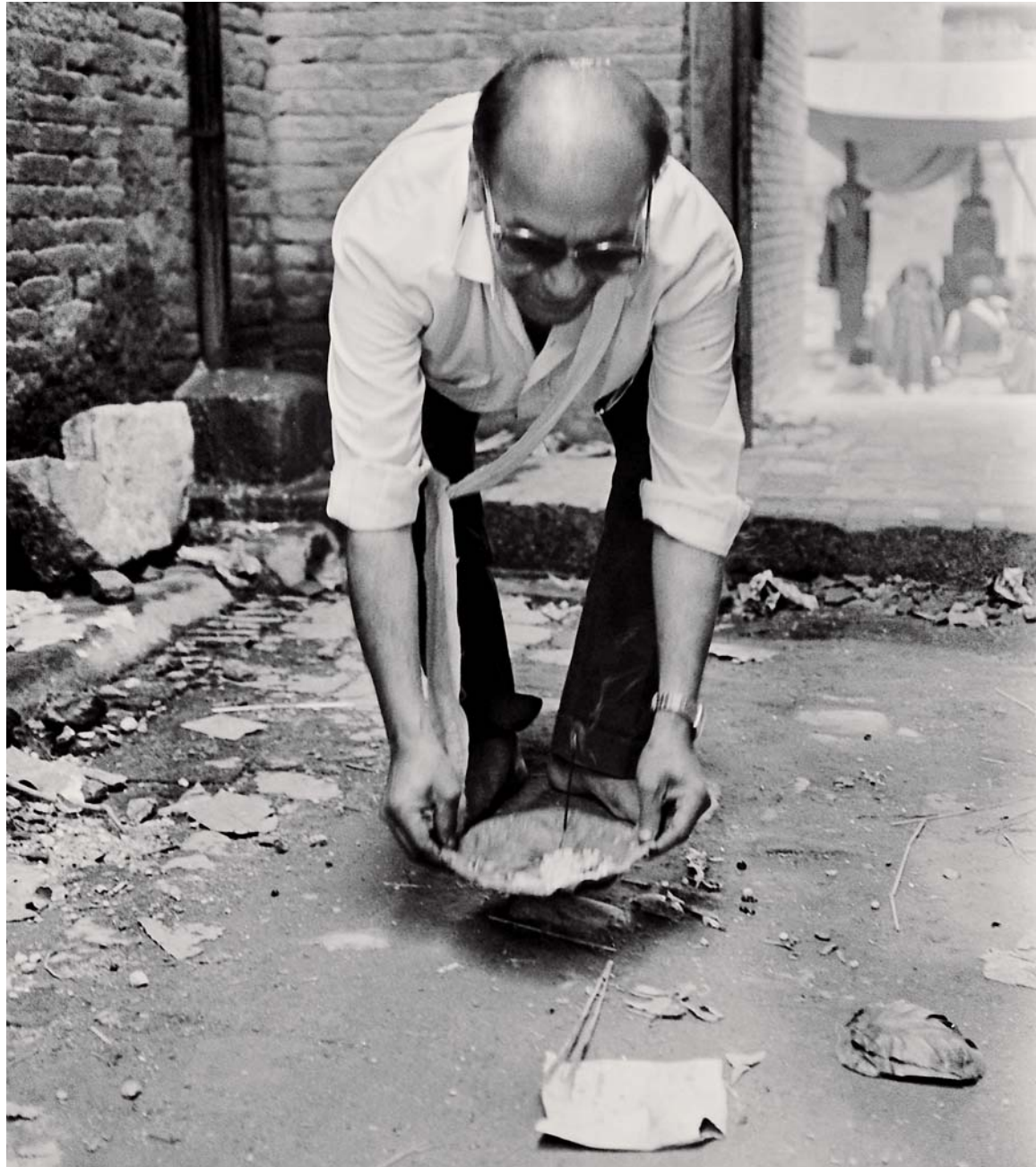


Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 Dharmarāja Vajrācārya recites from a text and directs
 Pannāratna Vajrācārya to worship accordingly. The *caitya* is
 now decorated with three white circles on its dome, indicating
 the Three Jewels, the Buddha, *dharmā*, and *saṅgha*.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 Devotional objects brought to the event from private households to benefit from the *daśakarma* ritual were also worshiped.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 26, 1993.

Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā
Khaḍgarāja Vajrācārya is
discarding the *baupāh* (a plate
of offerings used in *mahābali
pūjā*) on the absorbing stone
(*pikhālākhu*) at the western
access point to the courtyard
of the monastery.
Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā,
May 26, 1993.





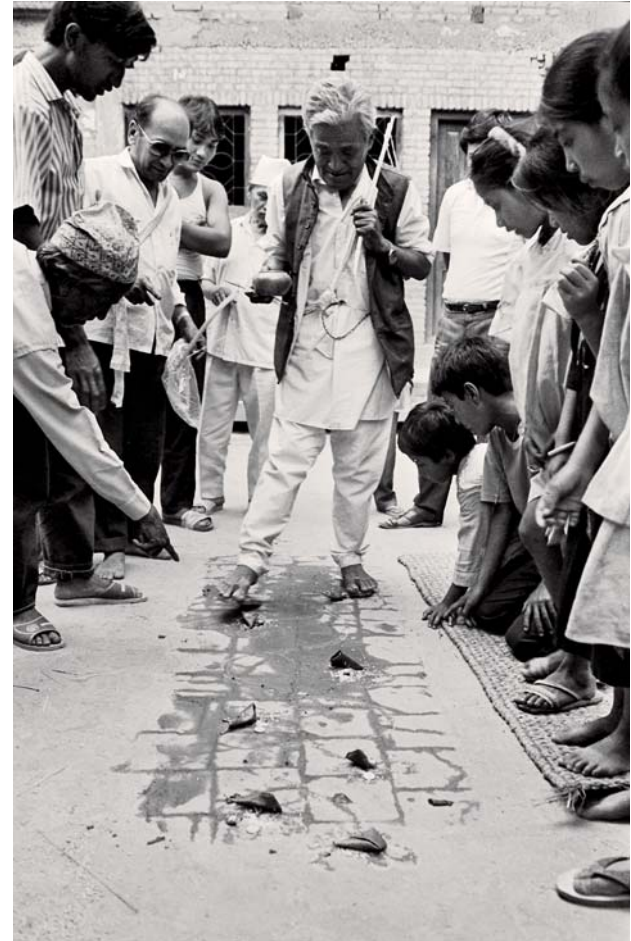
Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā
Left, Khaḍgarāja Vajrācārya
performs the *dr̥ṣṭidāna* rite,
opening of the eyes (*mikha
kankegu*) by touching the eyes
of Vairocana with black soot
on the fine end of a sceptor
(*vajra salaka*). Nīla Kumārī
helps him holding the *pūjā*
plate.

Right, Pannāratna Vajrācārya,
Khaḍgarāja Vajrācārya, and
Bhaktabahādura Śākya pour
holy water from the
catussāgara kalaśa (water of the
“four oceans”) onto the *caitya*.
Photographs by Nutandhar Śharmā,
May 26, 1993.

Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā

Left, the *yajamāna* performs
the taking of seven steps
(*saptapadi*) at the end of the
Cuḍākaṛaṇa rite. Dharmarāja
Vajrācārya is directing him.

Right, Bhaktabahādura Śākya
performs *saptapadi* (taking
seven steps on betel nuts) in
course of the initiation ritual
(*vrataḍeśa karma*); he carries a
begging bowl in his right hand
and a bow and arrow in his
left hand. Khaḍgarāja
Vajrācārya is directing him.
Photographs by Nutandhar Śarmā,
May 26, 1993.





Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā
Left, the *yajamāna* grinds
black pulses with his feet
(*māyke luyegu*) as part of the
initiation ritual (*vrataḍeśa*)
and Dharmaratna Vajrācārya
is holding the winnowing tray
painted with the *viśvavajra*
above his head.

Right, the *yajamāna* offers
a lump of clay, representing
Alīdyah to the *caitya*.
Photographs by Nutandhar Śarmā,
May 26, 1993.

Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa
Tāyegu Pūjā

Left, the *yajamāna* offers the
ihipāh-plate with a bel fruit
to the *caitya*.

Right, Khadgarāja Vajracārya
pours flowers, puffed rice and
pieces of fruit from a wooden
measuring pot (*sipham luyegu*)
onto the *caitya* in an act of
worshipping the body of the
deity. Dharmarāja Vajracārya
is directing him.

Photographs by Nutandhar Śarmā,
May 26, 1993.





Vābhā,
Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
Left, the *yajamāna* holds the
Phalīdyah, which is offered
to the *caitya* as part of the
Vajrabhīṣeka.

Right, the *yajamana* holds the
Alīdyah, a mysterious lump of
clay on top of a fan of woven
bamboo.
Photographs by Nutandhar Śharmā,
May 26, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 The *mūlācārya*, Amṛtarāja Vajracārya, offers *puṛṇābuti*,
 the coconut, to the fire. The head of the stone masons
 (foreground) grasps the flames with his palms as a ritual
 gift (*prasāda*).

Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 Jñāni Māyā Śākya performs the Kumha (Kumāri) Pūjā.
 The *saṅkalpa vākya* is recited by Pannāratna Vajrācārya (left).
 Khadgarāja Vajrācārya is burning incense. Dharmaratna
 Vajrācārya is guiding the performance. At the end, the *pūjā*
 plate is taken to the Āgā (esoteric shrine of the *bāhā*) to initiate
 the Vajravārāhī Pūjā.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śharmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābāhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
Vajrarāja Vajracārya hands the blessed objects of worship
over to their owners. Dupāḥ Tahmā receives her object.
Photograph by Nutandhar Sharmā, May 26, 1993.

Part II

The Monastic Community (*saṅgha*)
The Monastic Courtyard (*bāhā*)
and its Tutelary Deity (*kvāpādyah*)

The Monastic Community (*saṅgha*)

Legendary Origin and Membership

According to Chattra Bahādura Kāyaṣṭha, the Sūryabrahmā Saṃskārita Vajrakīrti Mahāvihāra, Vānta- or Vābāhā was founded by one Sūryavarman, one of his ancestors whom Bahādura Kāyaṣṭha believes to have lived some time during the early Licchavi period (5th to 8th centuries). In his opinion, Sūryabrahmā represents the corrupt form of Sūryavarman,⁴⁷ *varman* referring to a noble attached to the royal court. His argument suggests that the monastery is connected to the community of Kāyaṣṭha of Bakūbāhā, a quarter south of Vābāhā. Accordingly, Kāyaṣṭha Nara-siṃha, referred to in the inscription number four, dated 1678, as “*bhāro*”, and his son Mādhaḥva Siṃha, are the descendants of Sūryavarman, as are the Kāyaṣṭhas who presently reside at Bakūbāhā.⁴⁸ On the occasion of Holi Pūrṇimā, the full moon in March, the Kāyaṣṭhas still perform the anniversary ritual of the golden snake (*nāga*), which was donated by them to add to the finial of the Kvāpāchē. The inscription refers in fact to a gilt umbrella (*suvarna chatra*).

Chattra Bahādura’s speculation is not based on any evidence. It reflects the inclination of the literate members of the upper castes to construct a symbolic narrative of their own descent. The Kāyaṣṭhas belong to the group of high caste Chathariya, but they belonged to the rather lower-ranking officials at the court of the Newar kings, and were engaged as scribes. In many families such legends are recalled or constructed to explain the origin of a specific monastery, deity, or sacred object. In this case it is worth mentioning that a Hindu Chathariya makes an offering to a Buddhist monastery. There seemed to be no conflict for a Hindu to participate actively in a Buddhist context. Religion has always been tied to the specific local context. The feeling of belonging is instrumental in overriding religious restrictions.

When asked about the origin of the Vajrācāryas, the *saṅgha* members of Vābāhā explain that their ancestor

migrated from Sākhu, thus, their ancestral deity is Vajrayoginī, which is kept and worshipped at the Digichē.

A similar story is told about the origin of the group of Śākya. The prevailing assumption is that their ancestors migrated from Ombāhā in Kathmandu and in that context their ancestral deity is Caṇḍamahāroṣana of Śāntipur, the sanctuary on Svayambhū Hill. The “Fierce (*caṇḍa*) and Great (*mahā*) Wrathful (*roṣana*) One,” is also known as Acala. A replica is kept and worshipped at Dunebāhā, the branch monastery (*kacābāhā*) adjoining Vābāhā’s courtyard toward east.

Śākyas as well as Vajrācāryas form one lineage each and are thus exogamous with (in 2021) 30 Vajrācāryas and 33 Śākyas who act as caretakers of the tutelary deity.

Both the Śākyas and the Vajrācāryas explain and confirm that in the past their communities were famous for tailoring for the royals. They had been appointed as royal tailors and this tradition continued up to the end of the monarchy.

The Śākya trace their origin to one Jagatmuni, who in 1858 founded Dunebāhā as a branch monastery of Vābāhā where he installed a replica of his ancestral deity. At that time he brought an ancient text along, the Prajñāpāramitā, which dates to 1161, and had it read out. Jagatmuni had four sons, namely Dhanacamuni, Cakramuni, Jagamuni, and Paraśamuni. Everyone of the Śākya lineage traces his origin to one of these four brothers.

In summer 1992, Nutandhar Śharmā, a member of the team engaged in the restoration of Vābāhā, counted 56 members of the monastic community, from both the Vajrācārya and the Śākya. Amṛtarāj Vajrācārya acted as the *thapāju*, the eldest of the group, and the four remaining elders were Vajrarāj Vajrācārya, Keśavarāj Vajrācārya, Lakṣmibahādur Śākya, and Bhaktabahādur Śākya. Amṛtarāj is believed to be the great-grandson of the couple depicted on the stele, which was installed by Amṛtajyoti and Lakṣmījyoti (the inscription says Devajani) in 1728 whom he called his ancestors, as *pitṛdevata*. His father was Bhīmajyoti, his

List of the members of the Sarvasaṅgha of Vābahā according to seniority:

- 1 Ṭhākura Māna Śākya – Jāvalākhel
- 2 Dharmā Rāja Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 3 Vikāsa Māna Śākya – Sātadopāṭo
- 4 Sucitra Māna Śākya – Cākupāṭ
- 5 Giri Māna Śākya – Kvālakhu
- 6 Nilaratna Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 7 Bāburāja Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 8 Keśava Māna Vajrācārya – Vābahā
9. Lilārāja Śākya – Dyaḥbahāl
- 10 Herendra Māna Śākya – Bakhunḍol
- 11 Birendra Māna Śākya – Bakhunḍol
- 12 Gautam Rāja Śākya – Nyākhācoka
- 13 Prakāśa Māna Śākya – Jāvalākhel
- 14 Pradīpa Śākya
- 15 Subhāṣa Śākya – Jāvalākhel
- 16 Kumāra Śākya – Nyākhācoka
- 17 Ratna Rāja Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 18 Triratna Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 19 Pharendra Māna Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 20 Birendra Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 21 Surendra Śākya – Vābahā
- 22 Rāju Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 23 Sureśa Vajrācārya – Dyaḥbahā
- 24 Rājīva Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 25 Jñānendra Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 26 Rājan Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 27 Ravindra Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 28 Dhruva Rāja Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 29 Amṛta Śākya – Vābahā
- 30 Śrīrāja Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 31 Chūmana Śākya – Vābahā
- 32 Oṃrāja Vajrācārya – Vābahā
- 33 Sudhira Māna Śākya – Kvālakhu (son of Giri Māna)
- 34 Śālina Śākya – Cākupāṭ (son of Sucitra Māna)
- 35 Surendra Rāja Śākya – Dyaḥbahā (son of Lilā Rāja)
- 36 Ravindra Rāja Śākya – Dyaḥbahā (son of Lilā Rāja)
- 37 Bavina Vajrācārya – Vābahā (son of Bābu Rāja)

- 38 Vineśa Śākya – Sātadopāṭo (son of Vikaśa Māna)
- 39 Sanama Śākya – Nyākhācoka (son of Gautama)
- 40 Saceta Māna Śākya – Bakhunḍol (son of Herendra Māna)
- 41 Sakeśa Vajrācārya – Vābahā (son of Nilaratna)
- 42 Suvina Śākya – Cākupāṭ (son of Sucitra Māna)
- 43 Sobhi Māna Śākya – Vābahā (son of Keśava Māna)
- 44 Kavira Māna Śākya – Kvālakhu (son of Giri Māna)
- 45 Herendra Māna Śākya – Vābahā (son of late Herakāji)
- 46 Ujjvala Vajrācārya – Vābahā (son of Rāju Vajrācārya)
- 47 Svarṇima Vajrācārya – Vābahā (son of Ratna Rāja)
- 48 Satiśa Śākya – Vābahā (son late Lekha Māna)
- 49 Nieśa Śākya – Nyākhācoka (son of Gautam)
- 50 Viman Śākya – Bakhunḍola (son of Birendra Māna)
- 51 Surava Māna Śākya – Jāvalākhel (son of Subhāṣa)
- 52 Sacina Vajrācārya – Dyaḥbahā (son of late Puṣpa Rāja)
- 53 Āśiśa Vajrācārya – Vābahā (son of Triratna)
- 54 Viveka Vajrācārya – Vābahā son of Birendra)
- 55 Nhūja Vajrācārya (son of late Sānu Rāja)
- 56 Sudima Vajrācārya – Dyaḥbahā (son of Sureśa)
- 57 Sandeśa Vajrācārya – Vābahā (son of Ratna Rāja)
- 58 Sugandha Māna Śākya – Vābahā (son of Pharendra)
- 59 Samrāṭa Śākya – Kvālakhu (son of Sudhira Māna)
- 60 Iroja Śākya – Vābahā (son of Surendra)
- 61 Srjita Vajrācārya – Vābahā (son of Rājīva)
- 62 Lakṣmaṇa Vajrācārya – Vābahā son of Jñānendra)
- 63 Śrīnava Vajrācārya – Vābahā (son of Rājīva)

The cycle of the worship in the morning and *ārati* in the evening changes every fortnight. It starts the first day of the fortnight and ends on black or full moon day. The *pālovāla* member gets 1,000 Rupees for *pūjā* expenditures. If the cycle is not accepted from the *pālovāla* family, he has to pay a 2,500 rupee fine. As to the present cycle the five senior most male members did not take their turn and paid their fine.

grandfather Dhanajyoti. The annual death ritual in memory of the ancestral couple is still performed on the eighth day of the dark half of the month of Bhādra (September).

The Houses of the Saṅgha

In summer 1993 the project team mapped the ownership of nine Vajrācārya and eight Śākya houses. The central axis through the shrine almost exactly divided the Vajrācāryas of the northwest from the Śākyas of the southeast.

A generation later, this clear division is no longer valid. The ruin (no. 2) owned by Birendra Mān Śākya is now owned by a Vajrācārya. More importantly, two house owners (the present numbers 17 and 21) apparently do not belong to the *saṅgha*.

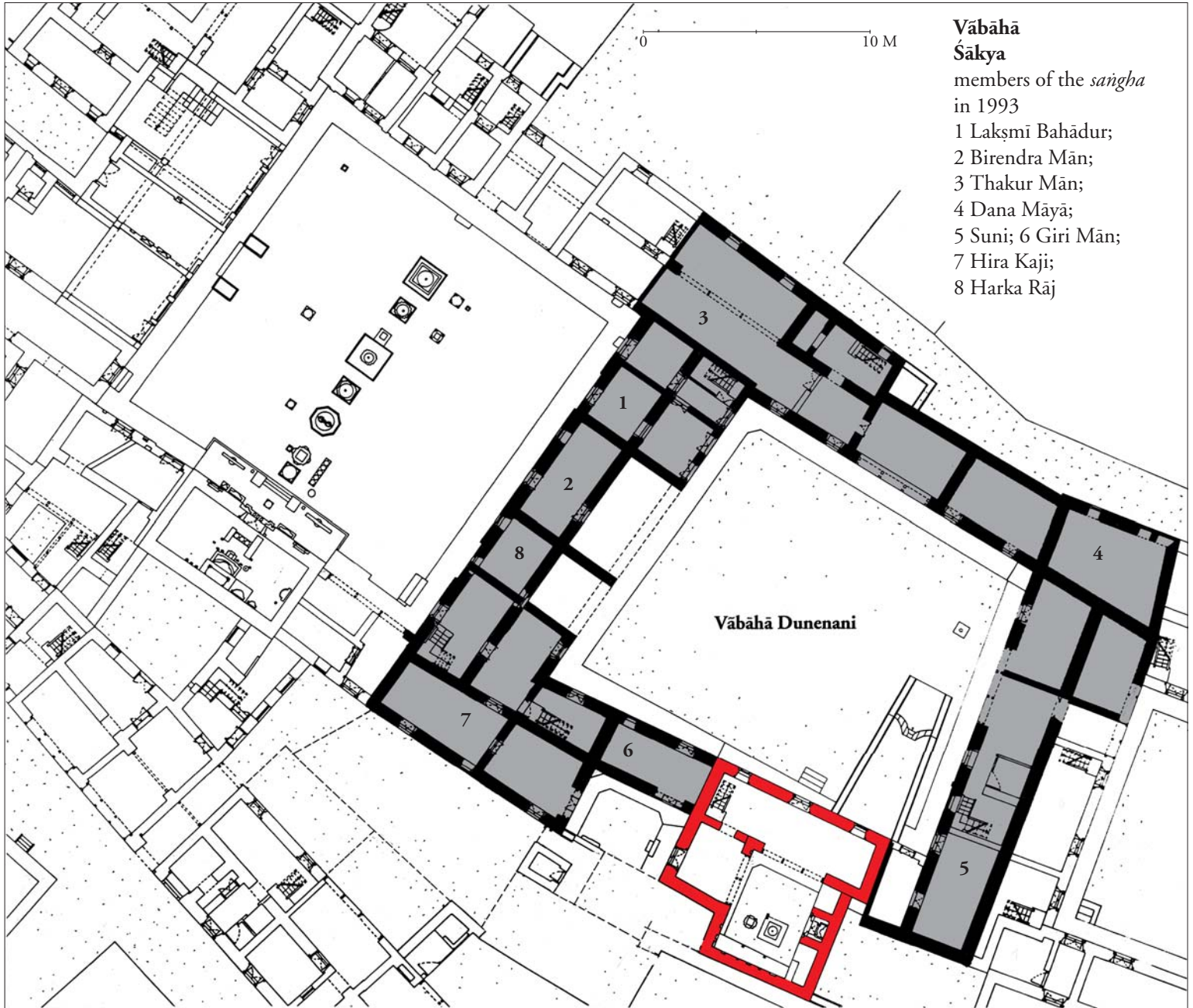
Of the 23 houses mapped around the courtyard in 1993, 13 have been dismantled and rebuilt, in some cases doubling the bulk of the earlier structures. In 2021, only four houses predated the year 1950.

The oldest house is that of Rajib Vajrācārya (son of Kanak Ratna) (no. 5) whose grandfather built it in 1944, as attested by the inscription. One floor was added to the house in the 1990s. Babindra Vajrācārya's house (no. 6) was probably built in the 1960s, similar to Śrī Ratna (son of Panna Ratna) Vajrācārya's house (no. 7). Raju Vajrācārya's (son of Khadga Rāj) house was dismantled and rebuilt in 2005. The house of Amṛta Rāj Vajrācārya (presently no. 17) was inherited by his daughter Tīrtha Māyā, who married Daugal Vajrācārya who belongs to the *saṅgha* of Kvābāhā. She keeps worshipping the tutelary deity of Vābāhā and carries on her tray small, ca five cm high, representations of her father and mother. Her husband bought a small portion of the neighboring house and built the largest house of the courtyard in 2010. The remaining part of the house (presently no. 21) was bought by Jagat Rāj Śākya from Mahābauddha in Kathmandu and rebuilt in 2012.

Thakur Mān Śākya's house (prev. no. 3, see the site map) was rebuilt by his son. Lakṣmi Bahādur Śākya's son Chuma rebuilt the house (prev. no. 1) in 2016. Siddhi Rāj Śākya's son Ratna Rāj bought the house of Birendra Mān (prev. no. 2), which had been in ruins for decades, and rebuilt it in 1995. The son of Harka Rāj Śākya (prev. no. 8), Gautam, rebuilt his house in 2008. The house of Hira Kaji Śākya (previous no. 7) dates to the 1960s.

House number nine belonged to Āsa Māyā Vajrācārya, a childless widow, who donated the entire plot covering 34 square meters to the *saṅgha*. The house had long since been used to provide access to the Āgā of the Kvāpāchē and when it was dismantled in 2002, part of the ground floor was converted into a separate room (*koṭha nirmāna*) in order to house the icon of a Buddha (*bhagavāna murti*).





Vābāhā

List of houses owned
by Vajrācārya and Śākya.

Recorded by Niels Gutschow and
Nutandhar Śarmā in October 2021

Houses built from 1594 to 1950

- 1 The Kvapāchē dates to 1594; the shrine was provided with a tympanum in 1634, then repaired and roofed again in 1654, and the struts made in 1680. Presumably, the building received in its present shape around the end of the 17th century; the ridge turret was renewed in 1993.
- 2 The house of Birendra Mān Śākya preserves part of the columned ground floor arcade, and windows with triple openings dating to the second half of the 17th century.
- 3 The house of Hirendra Mān Śākya, son of Giri Mān, which dated to about the end of the 17th century, collapsed in the 2015 earthquake; however, the ground floor survived. Hirendra now lives in Bakundol.
- 4 One of the two houses of Jñānendra Vajrācārya, son of Bikram Rāj, built ca 1925, was inherited by his father from his elder brother Vajrarāj who died childless.
- 5 The House of Rajib Vajrācārya, son of Kanak Ratna, was built in 1944 as testified by an inscription above the second floor window. Bikram Raj and Kanak Ratna were brothers.

Houses built from 1950 to 2000

- 6 The house of Babin Vajrācārya, son of the brother of Nila Ratna, built ca 1960.
- 7 The house of Ratna Vajrācārya, son of Pannā Ratna, built ca 1970.
- 8 The house of Phalendra Śākya, son of Barta Mān, built ca 1980; he later extended it in order to use part of the small lane for his staircase and to add a shop to the south.
- 9 The Digichē, built in 1682, was dismantled in ca 1982 and then rebuilt as a reinforced concrete structure, using late 19th-century windows salvaged from demolition sites.
- 10 One of the houses of Gyanendra Vajrācārya (see 4), built in 1993.
- 11 The house of Ratna Rāj Vajrācārya, brother of Babin. He bought the plot from Trilok Mān Śākya, whose whereabouts are unknown.
- 12 The house of Gautam Śākya, son of Harkha Rāj, built ca 1995.
- 13 This was the house of Asa Kaji Vajrācārya, Jñānendra's father's brother. Since he died childless, his eldest brother's son sold the house to Asta Āvale.

Houses built from 2001 to 2020

- 14 The house of Bikas Śākya, son of Thakur Mān, built in 2001.
- 15 The house offered by Āśā Māyā Vajrācārya, was dismantled in 2005, and rebuilt as a "God-house" (Bhagavānchē).
- 16 The house of Rāju Vajrācārya, son of Khaḍga Rāj, built ca 2010.
- 17 The house of Amṛta Rāja's daughter Tirtha Maya, who married Dhaugal Vajrācārya from the Kvābāhā Saṅgha, built in 2012.
- 18 The house of Sanu Kaji Śākya, built in 2013; the ground floor arcade was not kept.
- 19 The house of Chuman Śākya, son of Lakṣmī Bahādur, built in 2016.
- 20 The house of Dharma Rāj Vajrācārya, built in 2018. In 2021 he donated a silver chain for the Buddha.
- 21 The house of Jagat Rāj Śākya from Mahābaudha, Patan, who bought the plot from Harka Rāj, built in 2019.
- 22 The house of Satiś Śākya, son of Lekh Mān, built in 2019.
- 23 The Kacābāhā of Vābāhā, collapsed in the 2015 earthquake and was rebuilt in 2020.

a The house of a Mānandhar, who sold the house to a Jośi in 2005.

b The house of Āśā Rām Āvale, who bought it from a Citrakār, built in 2018.

Vābāhā
 Location of of 23 houses
 owned by Vajracārya
 (rendered grey) and Śākya;
 Kvāpāchē, Digichē,
 Bhagavānchē, and Kacābāhā
 rendered yellow.
 Mapped by Niels Gutschow
 in October, 2021



Vābhā

Rajib Vajrācārya demonstrates the 102 cm long pole (*gābhāsī*), literally the “wooden bell” and the clapper, donated in 1871. The pole is clanged 108 times in the morning to indicate the beginning of worship and again in the evening to conclude it. Photographs by Niels Gutschow, October 9, 2021



The Courtyard (*cuka*) and the Shrine Building (Kvāpāchē)

The first reference to the Sūrya Varman (also named °*dharmā*, °*brahmā* or °*varṇa*) Śaṃskārita Mahāvihāra dates to 1442. Presumably the courtyard had at that time the same size as today and the shrine was housed in a three-story structure. The members of the monastic community, the *saṅgha*, shared the plots within the quadrangle, with the houses being two bays deep (ca 5 to 6 m). Today the courtyard is accessible on all four sides through covered passages.

For 1596 the renewal of the roof is mentioned in an inscription (no. 1) and for 1634 the offering of a tympanum (no. 2), installed above the doorway. In the middle of the 17th century King Siddhinarasiṃha Malla initiated a reorganization of the Buddhist monasteries. The king “added” Vābāhā to the twelve principal *bāhās* and “laid out the rules,” as an early 19th-century chronicle tells us.⁴⁹ It seems quite possible that in this context not only Vābāhā but also Jyobāhā (also called Dyaḥbāhā) and Dhaubāhā – all three located in the northeastern sector of the city – were revived or even resettled.

The aforementioned tympanum was replaced by one in brass in 1873 and kept in the Digichē until it was recovered in 2005 to crown the doorway made in the house adjoining the shrine building to provide access to a chamber called Bhagavānchē where a new icon of the Buddha was installed (inscription no. 34: *murti sthāpana*).

At the time when the doorway’s tympanum was donated, which features Śākyamuni Buddha, framed by Prajñāpāramitā and Padmapāṇi to represent the Three Jewels (*triratna*), the shrine must have already attained its present shape. Twenty-two years later, the *sarvasaṅgha*, the members of the monastic community, established a gilded deity (*devatā*) and provided it with a tympanum (in wood) in 1658. It is probably this icon or a much earlier one that is kept as a treasured, worn-out relic in the sanctum of the

shrine. A similarly worn-out icon of Karuṇāmaya and fragments of the tympanum and the pillars of the throne are also kept. Twenty years later, in 1678, an inscription in stone (no. 3) recalls that the temple (*devalā*) was raised (*thakasyam*) and that masons covered the roof with tiles and added a roof turret which was crowned by a gilt finial (*gajū*). Even a triple-layered ceremonial umbrella was added and a flag. Four years later, one more umbrella was added to the finial and in 1680 six struts were installed (inscription no. 5) to support the eaves of the roof; this was most probably done to replace earlier struts, since in Newar architecture the roof must be supported by struts. Renewing the roof tiles after a period of 78 years is not unusual. However, in all probability, an entirely new building was erected that was topped by a turret of the style many of Patan’s monastic quadrangles of the *bāhā* and *bahī* type. The motifs of the cornice above the ground floor, and the details of the prominent first floor window with its five openings (*pasukājhyāḥ*) can be dated to the end of the 17th century, but the two small latticed windows suggest a later, early 18th century origin. The early 18th century shape of the building is still preserved today.

Twenty years after the offering of the struts, one member of the community must have donated his plot within the quadrangle in 1700 for the erection of a three-storied Digichē, a “house (*chē*)” which shelters the ancestral deity (*digidyah*) of the lineage of Vajrācāryas. With this initiative, the reshaping of the courtyard over a period of 30 years began.

First, a *caitya* was set up in 1727 by reassembling four Licchavi-era 7th century fragments, of which two remained invisible within a wide platform. The original, probably six-tiered pinnacle was replaced by a eleven-tiered one, reflecting contemporary dogmatic requirements. It remains unknown whether a fragment of a Licchavicaitya was there before, for a *caitya* was always a constitutive element of a monastic courtyard. A pillar with the statue (*sālik*) of the donor couple stands right behind the *caitya*’s platform. Eighteen months later the courtyard was paved.

In 1728 another *caitya* and a *dharmadhātumaṇḍala* were sponsored by the same donor couple (inscription no. 10), however on a level that appears to be thirteen cm higher than the pavement laid a year earlier. On that same level, in 1734 a third *caitya* was built by a Śākya family in the shape of a Śikharakūṭacaitya with seven circles of lotus leaves. A new pavement is recorded 28 months later. Inscription number 12 acknowledges that the shrine and the courtyard (*pivane* = outside) were paved with oiled tiles. Moreover, the decaying walls of the house of the monastery (*bāhāgrha*) were restored (*danāva*). It cannot be said what exactly was restored but it must be assumed that maintenance was carried out, which at most other sites is described by the term *jīrṇoddhāra*. This was probably the time when the latticed windows on first floor were introduced.

In 1742 the western entrance to the courtyard received two lions as guardians and in 1750 the family who had a *caitya* donated in 1734 had the doorway of the shrine covered in gilt copper repoussé. In 1773 the two small blind windows framing the shrine doorway received panels in stone. In the same year a new “Akṣobhya Buddha Bhagavāna” in stone replaced the “worn-out” old one (inscription no. 17). In 1857 another icon representing the Kvācapāladevatā was presented, made of gilt copper. The old one in stone was kept and the new one in copper simply placed in front. This configuration is still preserved today.

An intensive building phase followed from 1873 to 1890. Within 17 years, the original wooden tympanum was replaced by one in brass in 1873 (inscription no. 21), two bell-stands were erected on the plinth of the Kvāpāchē, a ritual firepit was built, and in 1882 the fourth *caitya* was set up in the form of a Jvālāvalicaitya. In 1890 a large sceptre (*vajra*) was placed on top of the *dharmadhātu-maṇḍala* and a large bell-stand installed on the plinth (no. 26). From that year until 1993, only one substantial offering was made by covering the latticed door leaves that provide access to the sanctum, with brass repoussé in

1925. About 30 years later, a framed niche to the left of the doorway was created to incorporate four prayer wheels without an inscription, mirroring a Tibetan influence which surfaced again fifty years later.

A new phase of interventions and offerings started in the fall of 1992 when the Patan Conservation and Development Programme decided to initiate a pilot conservation project. The roof turret (*phucā*) had partly collapsed and the roof of the shrine had been covered with corrugated iron sheet. The aim was, not to dismantle the base of the turret but to consolidate its support on third floor level without introducing steel beams. The latticework for the upper portion of the turret and the roof was made by the carpentry workshop of Indra Kaji Śilpakār and Radhe Shyam Śilpakār from Bhaktapur. The pinnacle in the shape of a *caitya*, topped by a ceremonial umbrella, was reinstalled in May 1993.

While designing and implementing that project, it was suggested to the community of Vajrācārya and Śākya that the the Licchavicaitya be dismantled and the platform raised to the present pavement level in order to regain the platform’s former, 18th-century height of 45 cm. Moreover, two Licchavi-era elements, concealed within the platform, were to be lifted in order to form the base of the newly assembled *caitya*. This effort was undertaken to confirm the unique importance of this outstanding example in the history of Newar architecture.

Four years later in 1997, a new era of beautification began with the encasement of the *bāhā*’s ground floor by a grill of iron bars (inscription no. 33). A Śākya couple acted as donors. For the first time, the monastery’s name was provided in the inscription as “Om̐bāhā.” The grill created a kind of cage that provides a sense of security in times of rampant theft. Except for the copper plate inscriptions, there is, however, no object of artistic or historical value on the elevation of the shrine building that would justify such a visually imposing intervention. The idea of the cage is therefore not based on rational considerations; rather, it

seemed to be mandatory as an expression of care and reverence. As the shelter of the tutelary deity, the shrine building is seen as a vulnerable object in need of protection at times of great social, political, and economic change. Since the 1960s, theft has resulted in great losses in the public sphere; while on the other hand, the monastic communities and the caretakers of temples were sometimes entangled in selling the very treasures that they were entrusted with. These treasures had usually been exhibited once a year during the month sacred to Buddhists, Gūlā (approx. August), in the arcade of one of the wings of the quadrangle. In the beginning of the 21st century this was rarely observed and during the pandemic it was given up altogether.

Early in the 1970s Kathmandu's Karuṇāmaya temple at Janabāhā was engaged with artistic grillwork featuring lotus flowers that were gaily colored in blue and yellow. This served as a prototype followed by many monasteries. In about 2010, at Tabāhā in Patan a high fence was even made around the 17th century triple-tiered temple and surrounding votive objects. Beyond aspects of security, these fences and grills must be seen as another structural layer, encasing sacred objects that ask for veneration. Modernity enabled industrial production to offer new building material for beautifications. Such efforts provided welcome opportunities to accumulate merit. As a result, unrefined, raw corten rods imported from India are seen as the appropriate material to serve the purpose of beautification.

In 2002 the tympanum was repaired by replacing one panel in the upper left section, and in 2005 the former house of the deceased and childless Āśā Māyā Vajrācārya was dismantled and rebuilt as a reinforced concrete structure without the historic sloped roof to house the God-House (*bhagavānchē*) for an icon of the deity (using the general term *bhagavāna murti*, not the term Śākyamuni Buddha). The façade was made up of regular bricks (*desiapā*) painted red. At the first floor level, two early 20th-century windows of upright proportions were

installed. From the income of the deity's shrine 3.5 lakh (350,000) Rupees were spent and 40,000 Rupees were offered by five individuals. The wooden tympanum which was removed from the principal doorway in 1873 was then reinstalled above the simple entrance of the newly created room. In 2009 a Śākya family from Dyahbāhā donated a canopy above the Licchavicaitya and had prayer wheels (*māne*) affixed to the four supporting steel pipes. A couple of years later, the community of Vābāhā joined in this effort to accumulate karmic merit by affixing four prayer wheels at of the *dharmadhātumaṇḍala*, and a canopy and prayer wheels on steel pipes around the Śikharakūṭacaitya and the Jvalāvalicaitya. Offering prayer wheels has become popular in recent years. In 2008 Śraddha Vajrācārya, at that time the *bāhā*'s eldest *thapāju*, introduced a small pavillion for a large prayer wheel measuring 90 by 90 cm within a roofed structure to the left of the shrine's plinth before he passed away in 2020.

In 2015 a shrine dedicated to a manifestation of Mañjuśrī, Āryanāmasaṅgīti, was erected on the level of the courtyard to the right (west) of the plinth, supported by a pillar of molded bricks, which supports the inscribed marble panel praising the karmic merit (*punya-kāryā*) of 31 named donors. In a similar manner to the cage created for the shrine building itself, the newly erected independent shrine of the transcendent Bodhisattva was encaged by steel bars on all four sides, creating an outer transparent box measuring 116 by 109 cm.

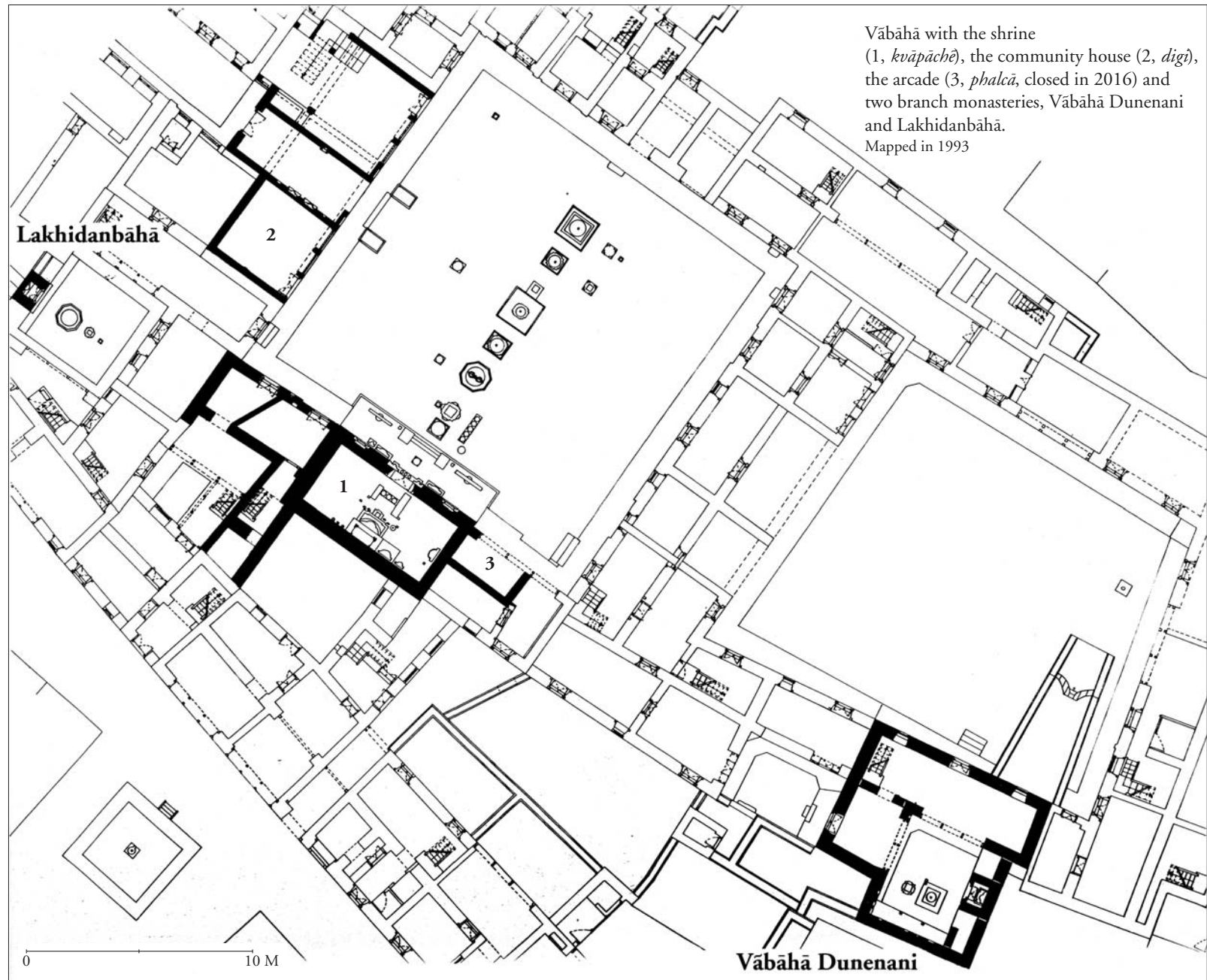
The latest occurrence of an offering is recorded on August 9th, 2021, when a family of Vajrācārya offered a long banner in brass to the Kvāpāchē, which extends from the finial on top of the roof turret beyond the eaves of the lower roof, and features Śākyamuni Buddha at the bottom.



Vābhā
View of the courtyard
towards southwest.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
August 1992



Vābhā
View of the courtyard
towards southwest.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
August 1992



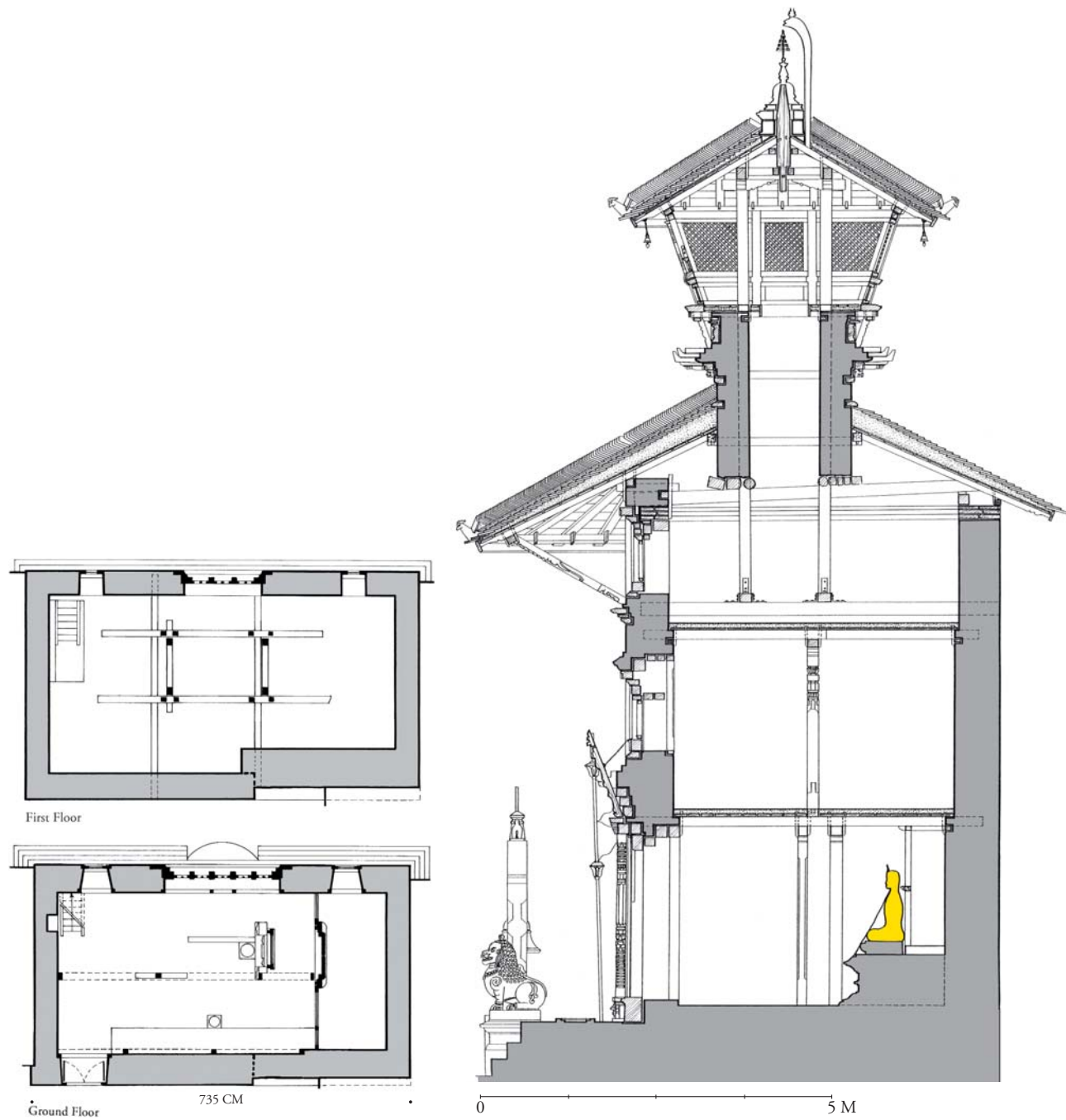
Vābhā

Section drawing north-south after restoration, 1993.

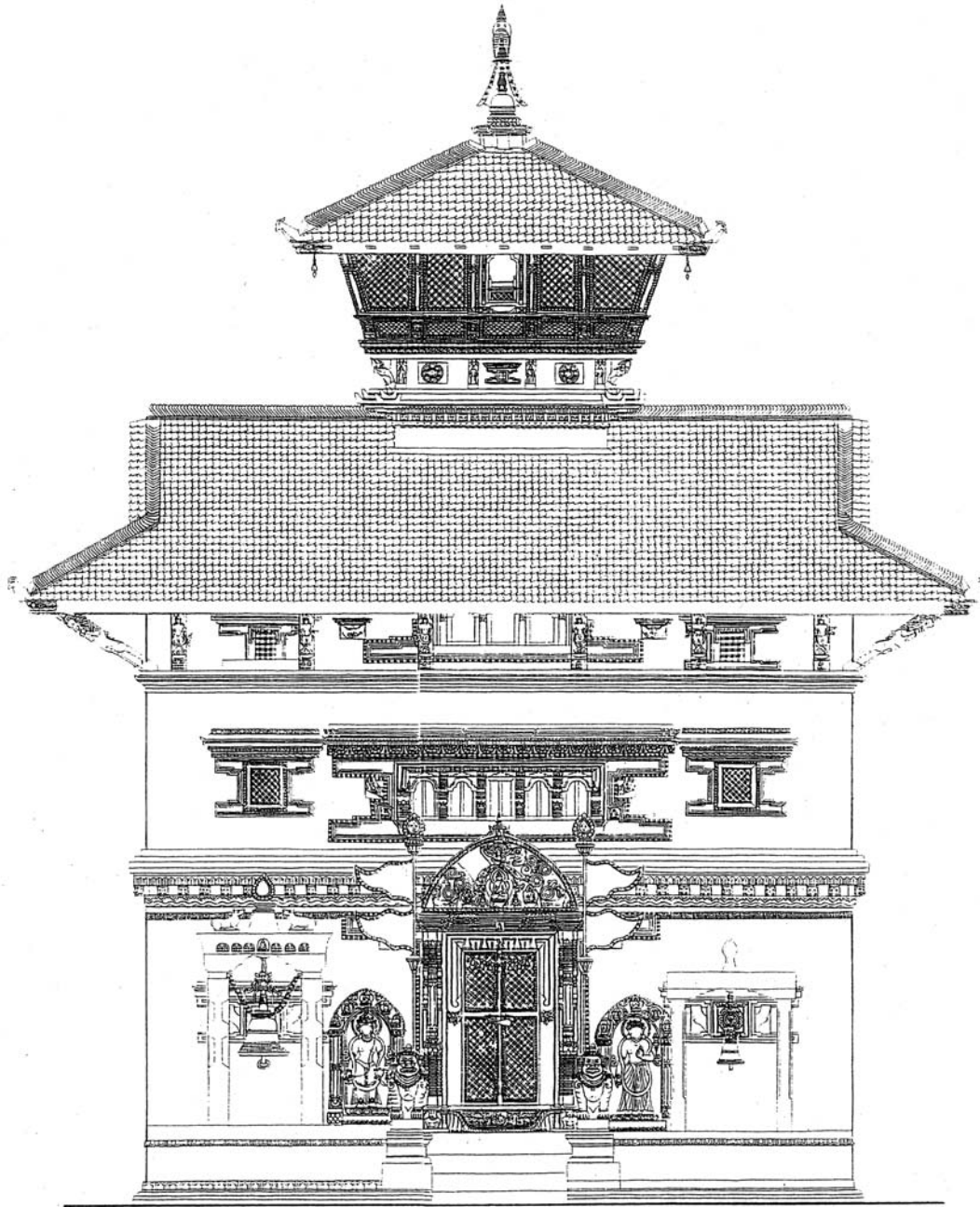
Drawing by Gyanendra Joshi, April 1993



Vābāhā
Section of the shrine
in its restored shape.
Drawing by Gyanendra Joshi,
April 1993



Vābhā
Elevation of the shrine with
its restored roof turret.
Drawing by Gyanendra Joshi, 1992

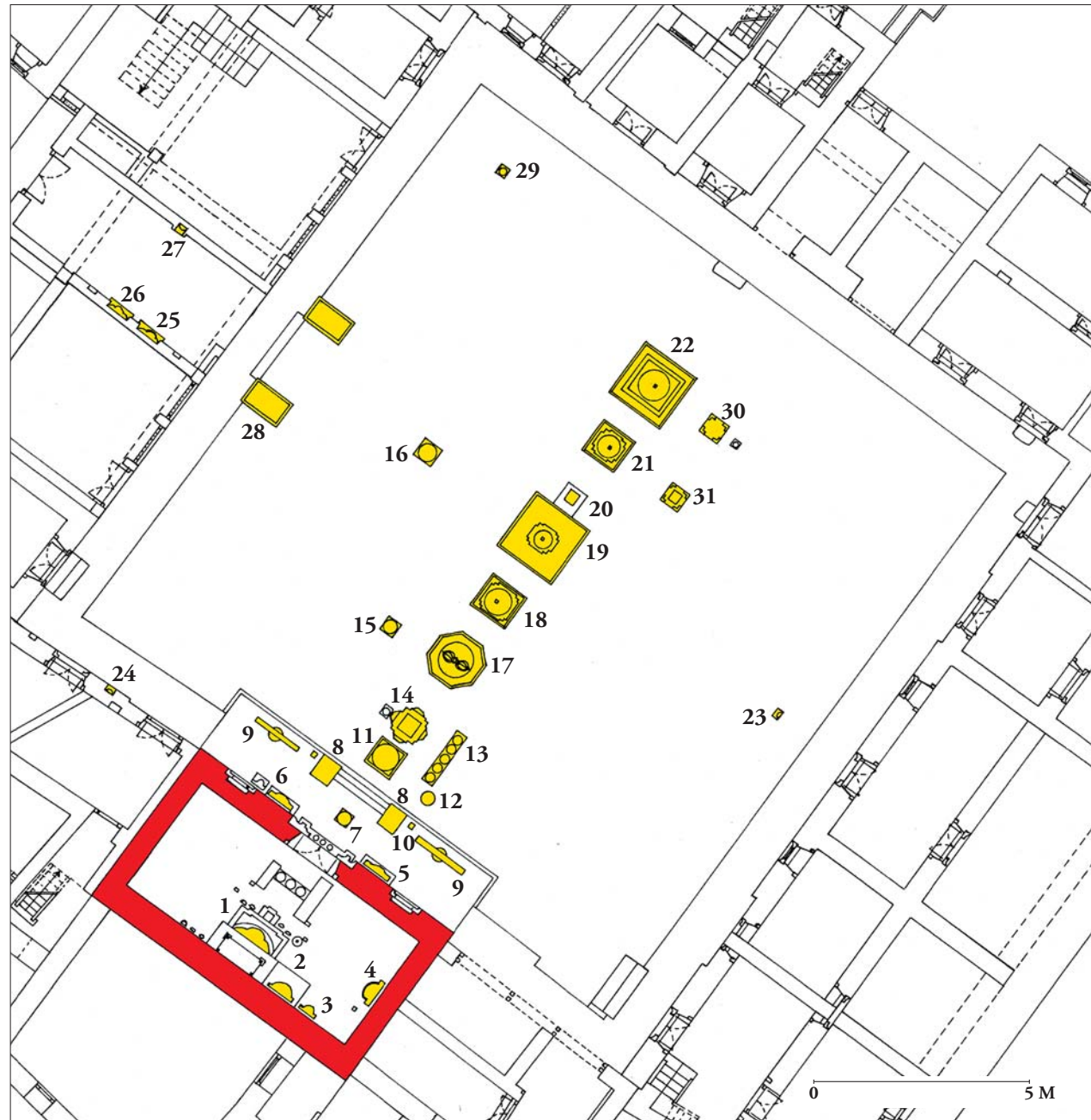


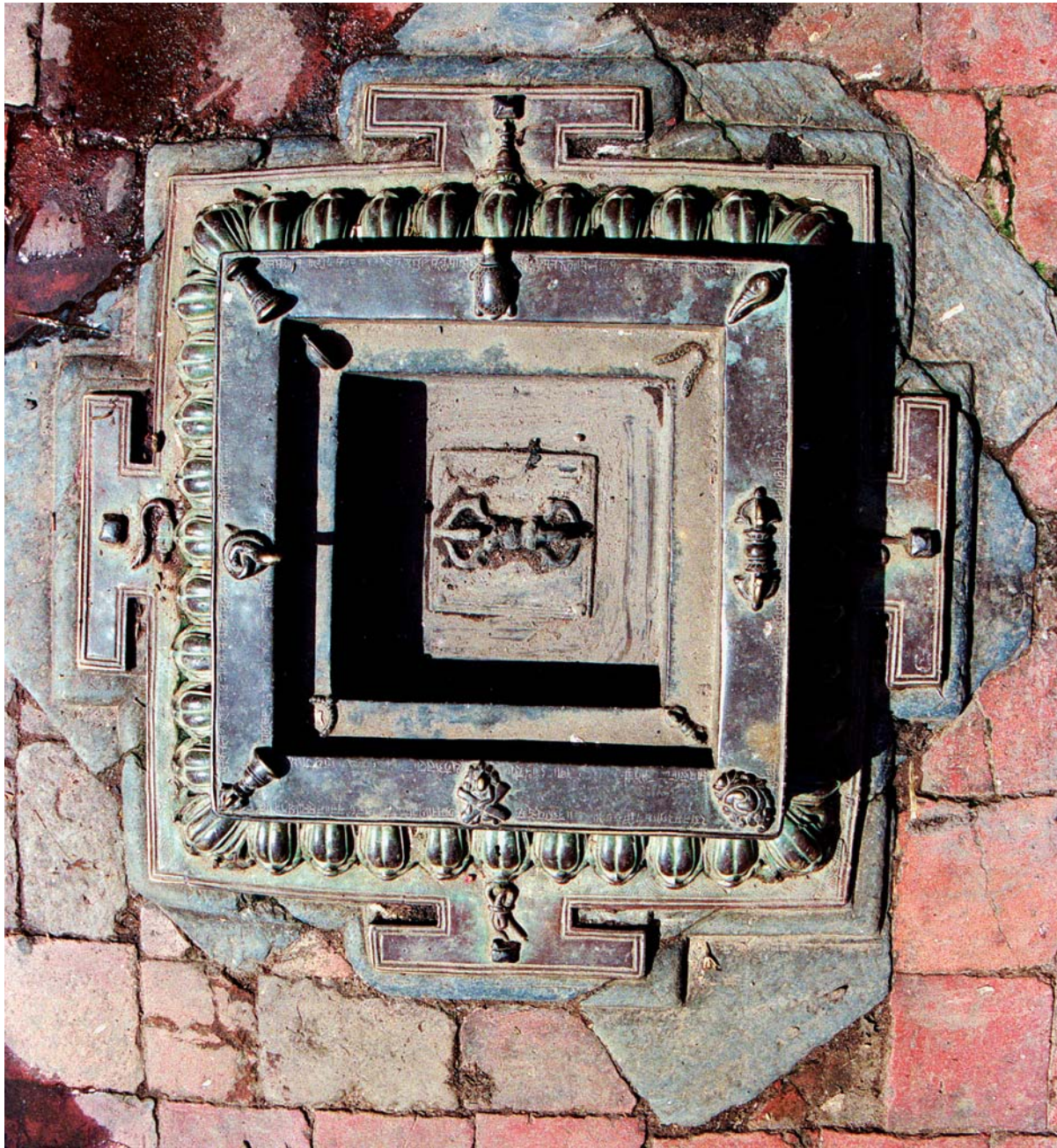
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Vābhā

Inventory of deities and votive offerings within the monastic courtyard.

- 1) Akṣobhya (in stone, the *kvāpādyah* dated 1857?);
- 2) Akṣobhya (wood, 15th c. ?);
- 3) Karunāmaya (wood, 14th c. ?);
- 4) head of Dīpaṅkara;
- 5) Āju=Amṛtajyoti;
- 6) Aji=Lakṣmījyoti; 7) *jaḡēsala* (pit for *homa*); 8) pair of protective lions; 9) two bell-stands (1876, 1890); 10) pair of ceremonial flags;
- 11) *mandah* (lotus stone, discarding *pinda*); 12) pillar (to support the *kuśibva*);
- 13) stone with five lotus flowers (Pañcabuddha) and *śrīyantra*); 14) *jaḡēsala* (pit for *homa*), 1879; 15) *maṅḍal* (lotus stone); 16) *maṅḍal* (lotus stone); 17) Dharmadhātumaṅḍala, dated 1728;
- 18) Caitya, dated 1728;
- 19) Licchavicaitya, 7th c., reestablished 1727; 20) pillar supporting Amṛtajyoti and Lakṣmījyoti, dated 1728;
- 21) Padmāvalicaitya, 1728;
- 22) Jvālāvalicaitya, 1882;
- 23) stone marking the place to erect Yamadyah;
- 24) Akṣobhya in a niche;
- 25) Gaṇeśa guardian of the gate; 26) Mahākāla, guarding the gate; 27) Hanumān, guarding the gate; 28) pair of lions, 1742; 29) Kṣetrapāla (lost); 30), 31) *jaḡēsala* (pits for *homa*).





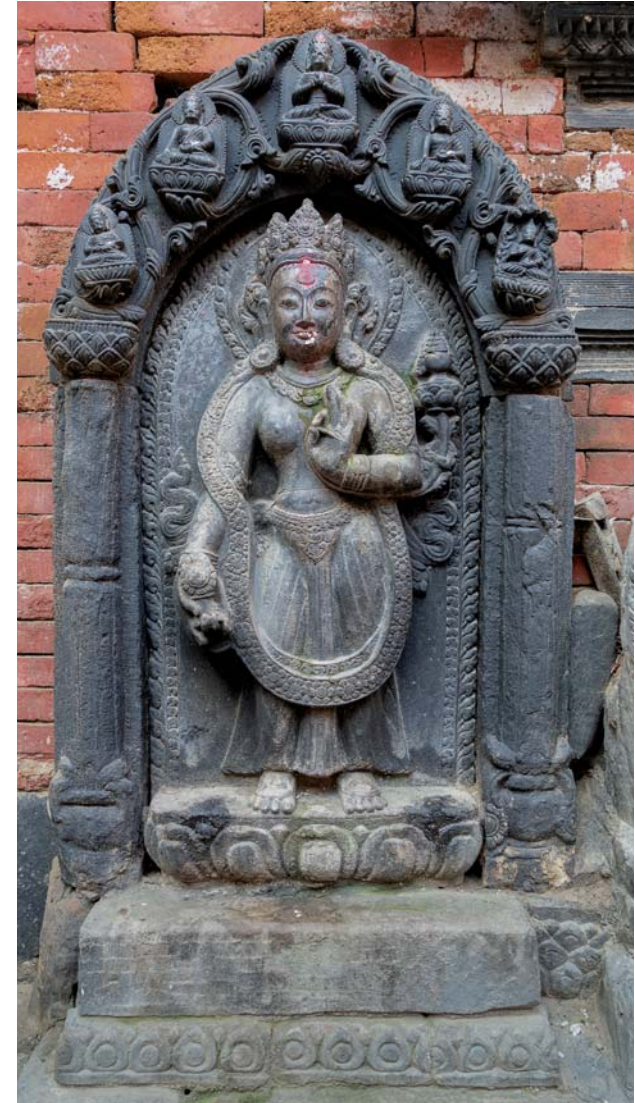
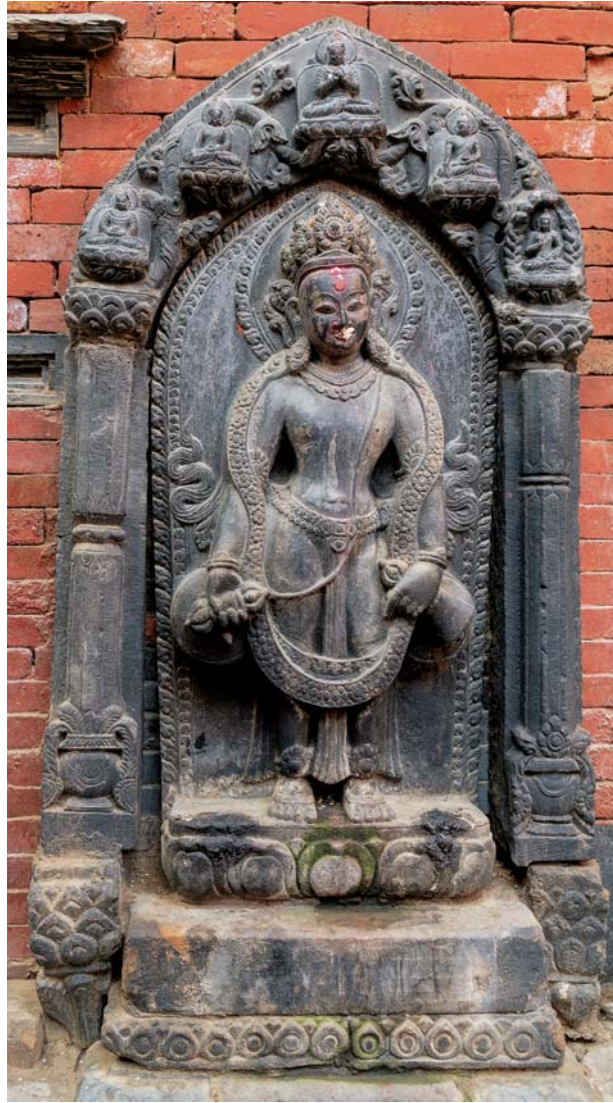
Vābhā

Pit (*jagēśāla*) for the performance of fire rituals (*homā*), installed in 1879. A *vajra* motif is carved in the center of the pit where the fire is kept burning during the ritual. On that level, the pit has four motifs in the corners: a wine cup (*pātra*), a walnut (*khvasīma*), a garland, and a *vajra*. Four unfired pots (*kacibhā*) are kept here, for various kinds (maximum 18) of grains and pulses (*vivah*) used during the ritual. On the rim of the pit appear the eight recognition symbols of the *Aṣṭadīkṣā*, the guardians of the universe: *nāga* (for Varuṇa, West), *tvāyadeva* (lamp for Vāyu), *kāpali* (tortoise for Kubera, north), *saṅkha* (conch for Isāna), *vajra* (for Indra, east), flame (for Agni), burning corpse (for Yama, south), and *ghaṅṭa* (bell for Nairṭa). On top of these, the *aṣṭadīkṣā* (eight directional flags of *Aṣṭadīkṣā*) are displayed during the ritual. The identity of the four symbols on the surrounding metal platform could not be ascertained.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow, August 28, 1992

Vābāhā

A pair of guardians, framing the doorway of the shrine. Left, Vajrasattva (holding *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā*), right, Sarasvatī (holding mirror and – indirectly – vermillion container). The tympanum features Vairocana in the apex, Ratnasambhava and Akṣobhya on the left, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi on the right. The undated relief of the couple is identified as Āju and Āji, or as Amṛtajyoti and his wife Devajāni, who acted as donors in 1728. Photographs Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021





Vābāhā

Detail of the two windows framing the doorway of the shrine. Inscription (no. 16) on the inner circle of the lotus flower, enclosing Amitābha, simply mentions the offering of the deities (*mūrti*) in April 1773.

In a rare variation, the central latticework of the windows has been replaced by reliefs depicting lotus flowers carved in stone. Photographs Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021



Vābhā

The tympanum above the doorway of the sanctum, donated in 1873. It features Vajrasattva in the apex, covered by a ceremonial umbrella, and a finial with the wish-granting gem on top, flanked by fluttering scarves. The central trilobed arch is occupied by the Three Jewels. In the centre Buddha Śākyamuni on his elephant throne flanked by a pair of sacred pots. On his left, Prajñāpāramitā as the manifestation of the Teachings (*dharmā*)

and Padmapāni on his right as the manifestation of the community (*saṅgha*). The arch shows Garuḍa in the center, his talons clutching the legs of a pair of snakes. The one on his right was replaced in 2002. A pair of celestial spirits (*kinnara*) with the hindquarters of birds guards the bottom ends of the arch, wielding flags. The birds' tails create lotus foliage that bears six four-handed female Bodhisattvas.

Photographs Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021



Vābhā

The tympanum (*torāṇa*), which in 1634 was offered to mark the doorway to the sanctum. It was removed in 1873 to be replaced by an uncarved block of wood, then covered by a new one molded in brass sheet. It was stored in the first floor Āgā and recovered in 2005 to be placed above the doorway of the newly constructed shrine to the west of the Kvāpāchē.

Vajrasattva crowns the arch under a triple umbrella on top of Garuḍa, who clutches the legs of a pair of snakes (to his right *nāgarāja*, to his left his consort,

a *nāgini*). Pairs of lions and dragons confirm the protective character of the scene above three framed niches, which represent the Three Jewels: in the center Buddha Śākyamuni on his elephant throne, to his left Prajñāpāramitā, and to his right Padmapāṇi.

The bottom ends of the arch are guarded by celestial spirits (*kinnara*) with the hindquarter of a bird, which hold banners that dissolve into pearls, thus signifying the flow of water.

Photograph Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021

Vābāhā

Relief on top of a pillar,
installed in summer 1728.

The effigy portrays Amṛtajyoti
Vajrācārya and his wife
Devajāni, who donated
a new *caitya* and
a *dhamadhātmaṇḍala*.

As was usual, the donor is
depicted larger than his wife,
with his headgear causing him
to appear even larger. Both are
seen in the gesture of
salutation, respect, and
adoration (*namaskāra*).

The composition features a
certain symmetry: him with
his left knee touching the
ground and turning slightly
to his right, her with her right
knee touching the ground and
slightly turned toward him;
their gowns dropping across
the edge of the lotus throne.

Photograph Ashesh Rajbansh,
October 11, 2021



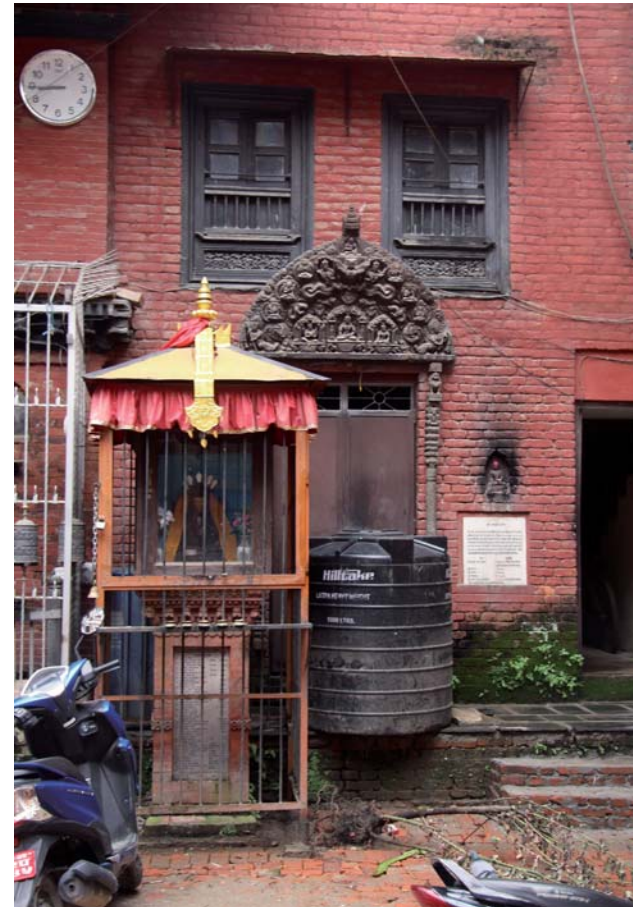


Vābahā

Left, the roofed pavilion (90 x 90 cm) with a large prayer wheel was donated by Śraddha Vajracārya in 2008, at that time the senior of the community's elders. The inscription on the protective grill records its donation by a Śākya couple in Vikram Saṃvat 2054, the 5th day of the month of Āśvina (September 21, 1997).

Right, the roofed shrine of Āryanāmasaṅgīti, established in April 2015 and placed on a pillar. The flag was donated in August 2021.

Photographs by Niels Gutschow, October 26, 2021





Vābāhā

Since the 1990s the courtyard and its built environment has changed fundamentally: The ground floor of the shrine, Kvāpāchē, is encased by a grill of iron rods in 1997, two shrines left (prayer wheel), and right (Āryanāmasaṅgīti) added in 2008 and 2015. The house to the right of the Kvāpāchē was dismantled in 2005 and rebuilt with a Bhagavāchē on ground floor, the banner was installed in August 2021 and a clock affixed to the wall. The roof of the house built in 1944 (yellow, no. 5 on the map) had been

replaced by a fourth story; the house to the left of the Kvāpāchē (no. 18) was dismantled in 2013 and replaced by a five-story house.

A lamp post and a post for electrical and telephone wires were installed in the early 2000s. Three *caityas* are framed by steel pipes bearing prayer wheels; a canopy was added to two of these in the late 2008.

Some 15 motorbikes are parked there in the nighttime; the 18th-century tile pavement (*cikāapā*) was removed in summer 2021, to be paved with large-size red bathroom tiles, produced in India.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow, October 3, 2021

The tentative history of replacements of the tutelary deity (Kvāpādyah), Akṣobhya Buddha Bhagavāna

For the tutelary deity of the shrine a couple of historic layers can be identified. Two wooden deities are kept here, which seem to predate the 17th or even 15th century. A large statue of Karuṇāmaya / Avalokiteśvara survives in a mutilated state, kept unattended as a relic in the southeastern corner of the sanctum.⁵⁰ The second deity represents Buddha Śākyamuni. Its poor state of preservation suggests an early date; however, this icon could also in fact be the “gilded deity” (*devatā*) that the *sarvasaṅgha*, the members of the monastic community, donated in 1658 (inscription no. 3) and provided with a wooden tympanum. Fragments of the tympanum and the pillars of the throne surround are still kept in the sanctum. The fact that both the deity and the throne survive only in fragments suggests a degree of neglect that is difficult to imagine. Another option would suggest that the wooden deity dates to an earlier phase of the monastery’s history and was only replaced at the end of the 18th century, because it was “worn-out”. In that case, the “gilded deity” refers to a different representation of the Buddha, which has not been preserved.

Whatever the case may be, a third statue, this one of stone, representing “Akṣobhya Buddha Bhagavāna” was offered in 1773 (inscription no. 17) by a couple of Citrakāra, the community of painters, because the old one was “completely worn-out”. This icon became visible in February 1993 when another one offered at a later date was removed to allow fundamental repairs to the entire building to be undertaken. Akṣobhya is supported by a full-fledged pedestal with roof moldings with characteristic upswept corners.

In 1857 (inscription no. 19) an extended family of Vajrācāryas offered a deity of fire-gilded copper and pledged the income of some 1,010 square meters of agricultural land for the annual rituals. This icon was placed in front of the older, slightly smaller one in stone and later covered by a cape-like sheet of brass in an effort to garb the deity. At the same time, the pillars of the former throne were replaced by a pair of standing guardians, identifiable as Āju (Vajrasattva

with scepter and bell) and Āji (with mirror and vermilion container). These are worked in copper repoussé, with lotus flowers on top. The missing tympanum was intended to be supported by the lotus pedestals but this was only installed in the 2000s. Mediocre craftsmanship testifies to its recent origin. The cusped arch has Garuḍa at the apex, grasping a pair of snakes (*nāga* and *nāginī*) with his talons. The tails of the snakes end among lotus scrolls without establishing an explicit connection to the foliated tails of the pair of Makara at the bottom of the arch.

In 1993 the deity had three feather-like ornaments (*kīkīpa*) fastened to an arch behind the crown. In 2021 eleven were counted, of which four were offered by the local women’s group in August 2021. In that year, the sheet of brass had been covered by embroidered cloth and the deity was garlanded with two long necklaces of ancient Nepalese rupee coins bordered by rings of brass and honored by two yellow and white scarfs.

Behind the deity a panel of sheet metal on wood is painted with the five colors of the Tathāgatas (yellow = Ratnasmbhava; blue = Akṣobhya; white = Vairocana; red = Amitābha; green = Amoghasiddhi).

In front of the principal tutelary deity, installed in 1857, is a smaller version of Buddha Śākyamuni crafted in monolithic stone, with a large lotus base, the leaves of which turn both upwards and downwards. This figure appears to have been somewhat too large for the molded base below. This base was probably created in 1658 to support the “gilded deity” offered by the monastic community – in contradiction to the conclusions presented above. The figure in stone replaced an earlier one which was stolen at the end of the 1980s. Thieves broke a hole in the rear wall and stole a number of valuable items from the sanctum. The photograph taken in August 1992 shows a layer of corrugated sheet iron which was installed after the break-in in order to increase security. In recent years the new figure has received an embroidered garb with a large swastika sewed on. A feather-like ornament (*kīkīpā*), a crown, and a necklace was offered to the Buddha by the Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṅgīti Khalah, the local women’s group, on the first day of the month of Gūlā (August 9, 2021).

Vābhā

Two worn-out deities,
tentatively dated to the 14th to
15th centuries, kept as relics
in the sanctum of the shrine
building.

Left, Karuṇāmaya
(or Avalokiteśvara), right,
Śākyamuni Buddha in the
form of Akṣobhya; probably
the original tutelary deity
of the monastery which was
replaced by a gilded icon
in 1658 (inscription no. 3).
Photographer anonymous,
August 2021





Vābāhā
The sanctum with the tutelary
deity, the *kvāpādyah*.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
February 2, 1993



Vābhā

Detail of the tutelary deity. The crown of Śākyamuni's gilt head, worked in copper in 1857, has eleven stylized feathers (*kīkīpa*), eight more than in 1992, of which six were donated

in 2021. The wooden tympanum was probably removed in 1857 and was only replaced by one in gilt copper in about 2010,

Photograph Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021

Objects of the sanctum and
the iconography of the doorway

Comparing photographs taken in August 1992 and October 2021 reveals a number of changes. In 2019 the stepped “altar,” made of reddish bathroom tiles of Indian production, covers the upper level and creates a step on which two representations of Sūrya frame the smaller Buddha in stone. On the left end, the finial of a *caitya* with thirteen tiers is now kept in an orderly upright position, while on the right a panel depicts a donor couple. A scepter is kept on the lower level to the left, with three icons cast in bronze that represent Vasundharā and Hālāhala Lokeśvara on the right.

The framework composed of the cane and willow of the Dīpaṅkara with its gilded head on top was formerly stored at the eastern end of the sanctum; it is now kept in the western end, next to the wooden gong, which was replaced by a new one in 1871 (inscription no. 20).

Of the original wooden doorway that dates to the late 1670s when the Kvāpāchē attained its present shape, only the lintel ends, the outer stepped frame (*purātvā*), and the mediating quarter-round frame are preserved without a sheet metal covering. The bearing frame and the colonettes (*toranṭhān*) were covered with a sheet of brass in 1873, with Vairocana in the central of the five dentils, the “teeth” of the lintel; a plaque depicting Akṣobhya with his earth-touching gesture is nailed to the triple roof molding. At the same time, the wooden tympanum that dates to 1634 was replaced by one in copper repoussé. The inner lobed panel features Buddha Śākyamuni on his lion throne, flanked by Prajñāpāramitā to his right, representing the Teachings of the Buddha and Padmapāṇi, the latter representing the order of monks. The winged sun-bird Garuḍa guards the scene at the apex, clasping a pair of female (in error?) seven-hooded snakes with his talons. Of the seven panels, the one depicting the snake virgin to the right of Garuḍa was replaced in 2005. On that occasion nine copper nails were replaced by screws. Six

female Bodhisattvas (five with identical gestures) mark the lotus scrolls emerging from the feathered hindquarters of the celestial spirits (*kinmara*), who guard the arch at the bottom ends, holding flags. A panel depicting Vajrasattva crowns the tympanum, highlighted by a finial with the usual ceremonial umbrella and fluttering pendants. In a final effort of beautification, the door leaves were covered with repoussé in brass in 1925. Above the Tibetan-style iron lock, a kneeling guardian, wielding a sword with his right arm, is accommodated in a shallow niche. A string with seven bells and inscribed (unreadable) leaves garlands the opening.

Colophon of Aṣṭasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā written
in Ṭaḍapatra with black ink.

The cover page and end pages are adorned with the goddess Prajñāpāramitā in brass and the inner first folio has depictions of the Avadāna stories.

Folio 242

line no. 2.... śrīmadānandadevasya vijayarājye samvat 281

kārtika śu-/

line no. 3. di 2 likhitamidam rājaputra śrīśrīdhareṇeti || ||

[added later, in Pracalita Nevārī script] śreyo'stu samvat 978 mi/
titi āṣāḍha śudi . aṣṭami . maṅgalavāra . thva khunhuyā dinasa
tharpāju śrī jagatamuni/

juna śrī sūryānanda bhāju pātha yāko jula mahābuddhayāmha
|| śubham ||

Translation:

Written in Rañjanā script:

During the rule of venerable [king] Ānandadeva in NS 281
[CE 1161], on the 2nd day of the bright half of lunar month
of Kārtika, written by Rājaputra [son of a king] venerable
Śrīdhara.

Added later in Pracalita Nevārī script:

On the 8th day of the bright half of the lunar month of Āṣāḍha
in NS 978 [CE 1858] on Tuesday, on this day the elder of the
vihāra (*tharpāju*) venerable Jagatamuni made venerable
Sūryānanda of Mahābuddha recite it. May all be well.



Vābāhā

The sanctum with Akṣobhya as the tutelary deity, the *kvāpādyah*.
 In front a second Akṣobhya and a small panel depicting Sūrya.
 On the left a fragmented wooden statue of Akṣobhya.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow, August 1992

Absolutely essential for the sanctum of a Newar monastery is the custody and presentation of the Prajñāpāramitā text. Literally “the Perfection of (Transcendent) Wisdom,” it is a collection of about forty texts with some 8,000 stanzas. Some of these texts are believed to be the earliest Mahāyāna Sūtras, dating to the 1st century BCE. Its understanding represents an eminent element of the Bodhisattva path. The “cult of the book”⁵¹ causes “lay-folk (to) make an offering for the privilege of a short *darśan* and having one leaf of the manuscript touch the forehead. Viewing is supposed to confer health and protection.”⁵² At Patan’s Kvābāhā the text is recited every day in the morning and in the evening. Read simultaneously by ten people, the reading takes three to four hours. At Vābāhā the daily reading of the Prajñāpāramitā in the month of Gūlā was the duty of members of a *gūthi* headed by Sucitra Mān Śākya, but due to the pandemic this was not done in either 2020 or 2021. The reading extends from the day after new moon in early August to the following new moon. The full moon commemorates the day the Buddha defeated Māra in the process of experiencing his awakening. The text is not understood by lay-people. Hearing the Teachings that provide comfort and protection is similar to viewing and being touched by the book.

The text is kept in a copper box to which plaques of the Three Jewels, the Triratna, are affixed. In a similar manner to a deity, the box is displayed on a pedestal covered by repoussé-work and a backing tympanum, complete with a finial. The box with the text is treated as a shrine, the material representation of the divine. In a further step, the text is personified as a female Bodhisattva. As such the Bodhisattva is regularly seen to the right of the Buddha, representing the Teachings as one of the Three Jewels. In her four-handed representation, the hands of the lower arms display the *dharmacakramudrā*, the turning of the wheel of the Teachings, while the upper hands hold the book and the scepter.

Similar to the Prajñāpāramitā, the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, which was compiled prior to the 2nd century CE, must have reached Newar Buddhism at an early date.

Michael Radich has pointed out that it was not only in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism that the texts were treated as a physical vestige of the body, equivalent to the remnants of His corpse after cremation. Thus, the Teachings were declared the “body” of the Buddha (*śarīra*) and in ritual terms treated in the same way as a living Buddha.⁵³

In some Patan monasteries “the entire Nava Grantha (nine tomes) distinctive to Newar Buddhist tradition” are read out: beside the *Prajñāpāramitā* these are the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, *Daśabhūmi*, *Samādhirāja*, *Lankāvatāra*, *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka*, *Lalitavistara*, *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*, and *Tathāgatagūhya*.

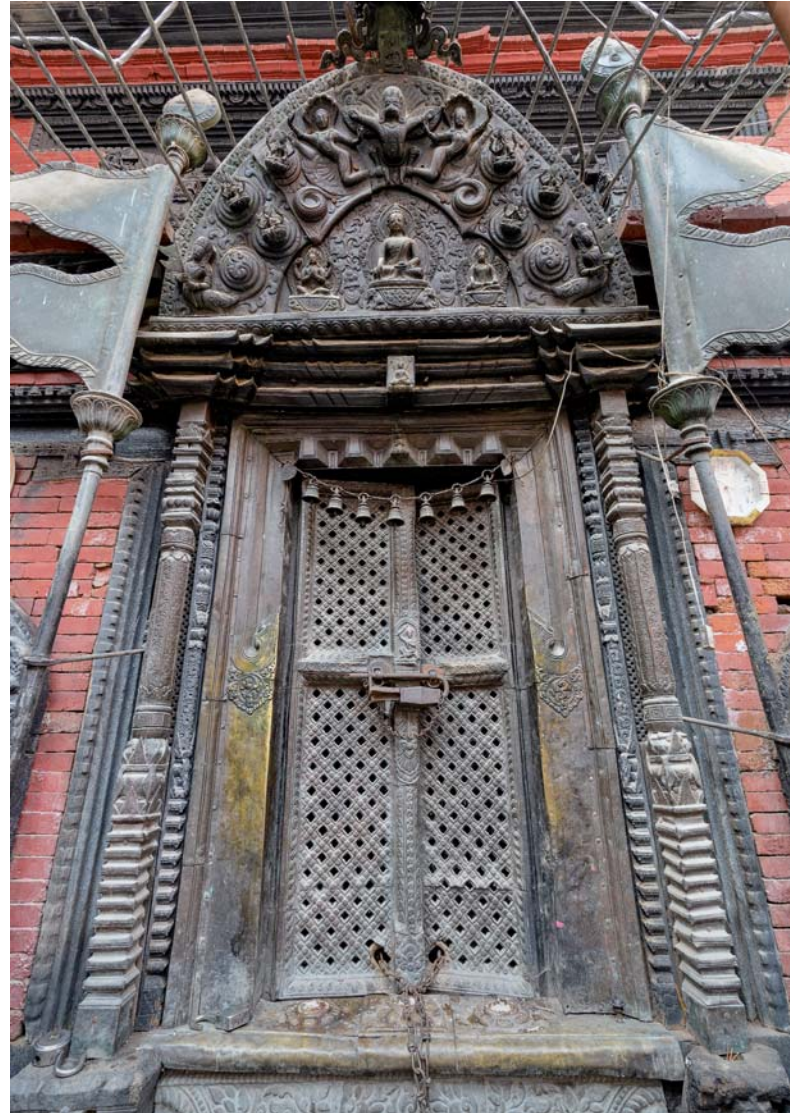
The most common text read out in the month of Gūlā is the *Nāmasaṅgīti* (literally “singing the names [of Mañjuśrī],” which is dedicated to the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī as the embodiment of wisdom and knowledge. This text is dated to the 6th or 7th centuries and is considered to be the root (*mūla*) Tantra of the *dharmadhatu* in Newar and Tibetan Buddhism. Part of the text used to be recited in the early morning by women, at Vābāhā by the members of the Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṅgīti Khalah. This group established a shrine of Āryanāmasaṅgīti in 2015 west of the Kvāpāchē and offered ornaments in early August 2021.⁵⁴

Within the sanctum, high above the pedestal with the box containing the Nāmasaṅgīti, are two frames. The small frame presents the five lines of Āratī Sloka, which is recited during the lamp offering in the evening, the larger frame presents the Daśapāramitā Stotra, which is recited during the morning service.



Vābāhā

The sanctum of the shrine with the tutelary deities. The large Amitābha worked in gilt copper dates to 1857. A small Amitābha, donated in 1773, was stolen in the 1980s and replaced ca 1990. The crown and necklace were donated in 2021.



Doorway of the Kvāpāchē

The doorframe received a gilded cover in 1750; the wooden tympanum was replaced by one in brass and the colonettes covered with brass sheeting in 1873. The door leaves were covered with molded brass in 1925.

Photographs Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021



Vābāhā

To the side of the tutelary deity, a copper box contains the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, dated CE 1161. This is a collection of about 40 texts. The name of the text, literally “the Perfection of [Transcendent] Wisdom,” is associated with the doctrine of emptiness, a central concept of Mahāyana Buddhism.

The copper box is placed on a pedestal, which is covered by lotus vine crafted in brass sheet. Affixed to the front of the box are three plaques representing the Three Jewels (*triratna*), namely the Buddha Śākyamuni framed by Prajñāpāramitā, the personification of the Buddha’s Teachings on his left, and Padmapāṇi representing the community of monks (*saṅgha*) on his right.

An elaborate tympanum graces the box, featuring a lotus flower in a lobed arch, framed by entwined snake bodies and topped by a finial. Photograph Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021

Colophon of Aṣṭasahasrikā Prajñāpāramitā written in Ṭāḍapatra with black ink.

The cover and end pages are adorned with Prajñāpāramitā. The inner first folio has depictions of Avadāna stories.

Folio 242

line no. 2. [written in Rañjanā script] śrīmadānandadevasya vijayarājye samvat 281 kārtika śu-/

line no. 3. di 2 likhitamidaṃ rājanputra śrīśrīdhareṇeti || || [Added later with Pracalita Nevārī script] śreyo’stu samvat 978 mi/ [added later with Pracalita Nevārī script]

titi āṣāḍha śudi . aṣṭami . maṅgalavāra . thva khunhuyā dinasa tharpāju śrī jagatamuni/

juna śrī sūryānanda bhāju pātha yāko jula mahābuddhayāma || śubhaṃ ||

Translation:

During the rule in the victorious land of venerable [king] Ānandadeva in the year [NS] 281 [CE 1161], on the second day of the bright fortnight of Kārtika, written by the son of a king [*rājanputra*] venerable Śrīdhara. On the eighth day of the bright half of lunar month of Āṣāḍha in the year [NS] 978 [CE 1858] on Tuesday, on this day the elder [of the *vihāra*, the *tharpāju*] venerable Jagatamuni [Śākya] caused venerable Sūryānanda of Mahābuddha to recite it. Auspiciousness.

Vābhā

The Ārati Śloka and the Daśapāramitā Stotra, both framed and exhibited in the sanctum of the Kvāpāchē beside the box containing the Prajñāpāramitā text.

Ārati Śloka

1. antatejo bahirtejo hetukṛtvā mūrṭiprabhū
2. ādharatnam mayāratnam grānu mṛtyourgryāhā
3. ādo kalyāṇa maddhya kalyāṇam parivaśāne kalyāṇa
4. svaartham suvyajane kevalam paripūrṇa pariśud-dham
5. paryavadātam brahmacāriṣam prakāśyānti smaḥ |

The first two lines are uttered during the lamp offering. Then follows:

Oṃ. The manifested celibacy - auspicious in its beginning, middle and end, self-legitimizing, decorous, whole and complete, utterly pure and spotless.

Daśapāramitā Stotra

(This *stotra* is recited during the morning *pūjā* by the priest. It is hung in the larger frame.)

1. dānabalena samudgatabuddha dānabalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
2. dānabalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||1||
3. śīlabalena samudgatabuddha śīlabalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
4. śīlabalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||2||
5. kṣāntibalena samudgatabuddha kṣāntibalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
6. kṣāntibalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||3||
7. vīryabalena samudgatabuddha vīryabalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
8. vīryabalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||4||
9. dhyānabalena samudgatabuddha dhyānabalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
10. dhyānabalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||5||

11. prajñābalena samudgatabuddha prajñābalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
12. prajñābalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||6||
13. balabalena samudgatabuddha balabalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
14. balabalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||7||
15. upāyabalena samudgatabuddha upāyabalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
16. upāyabalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||8||
17. prañidhibalena samudgatabuddha prañidhibalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
18. prañidhibalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||9||
19. jñānabalena samudgatabuddha jñānabalādhiga tānārasimhaḥ |
20. jñānabalasya ca śrūyanti śabdaḥ kārūṇikasyapure praviśānta ||10||

Translation of the first *pāramitā*:

The Buddha has appeared due to the strength of gifting, [he has] attained [the state of] the lion among the men. Whoever listens to the sound [or word] of gifting, enters into the state of the compassionate one.

The first perfection, gifting, refers to *dānabala*, the compassionate one (Kāruṇa) is the Buddha. The following five perfections refer to morality (*śīlabala*), forbearance (*kṣāntibala*), vigor (*vīryabala*), mindfulness (*dhyānabala*), and wisdom (*prajñabala*).

The verses of the Ārati Śloka are also uttered when offerings are made, “often called the *Svasti vākya* in today’s usage,” as Gregory Sharkey explains. They also appear in the *Dīpadāna vākya*, a kind of all-purpose formula sometimes recited toward the end of a personal daily worship.”

The tradition of the Six Perfections was at one time extended to incorporate ten perfections, the Daśapāramitā Stotra. The seventh perfection refers to strength (*balabalena*), the eighth to skill in means (*upāya*), the ninth to aspiration (*prañidhibala*), and the tenth to knowledge (*jñāna*).

The idea and tradition of the Six Perfections as an essential part of the Teachings might have originated in the early era of Mahāyāna which developed in India in the 1st century BCE. It is also the Bodhisattvayāna since it taught the goal of becoming a Buddha through the Bodhisattva Path. Thus, the Perfections outline the stages of the Bodhisattva to Buddhahood. It is all about virtues to be fostered. The original six perfections end up with wisdom or insight. At a later stage four more were added to approach “the state of the Bodhisattva (...) gradually,” as Bernhard Kölver writes: “The Aspiration or Resolve to attain Buddhahood is voiced only in the eighth stage.”

At a later stage of doctrinal development two more Perfections were identified. With diamond and action (*vajrakarma*), the ninth stage enters the esoteric and Tantric realm. According to Kölver, “a Bodhisattva has reached what in a sense is the ultimate stage” with knowledge. “He now begins to use his perfected attainment in the interest of other beings, i.e. he again turns outward to the world, but now, with the perfection of all his achievements.”^{***} The twelfth perfection refers to the jewel (*ratna*). This esoteric turn is difficult to understand and may simply have been “invented” in order to cover the 12 tiers of the Svayaṃbhūcaitya’s finial below its final thirteenth tier, for which no further perfection is identified. Likewise, the 12 tiers are related to 12 of the 16 vowels of the Sanskrit alphabet.^{***}



Nāmasaṅgīti Mañjuśrī

Rarely depicted outside of Nepal, this figure has six pairs of arms, representing the gestures and attributes associated with the Pañcabuddha plus Vajrasattva.

The first pair of hands is placed against the breast in a double *vyakarana mudrā*, the gesture of exposition. The second pair displays the gesture of sprinkling the ambrosia (*tarpana mudrā*); the third pair is placed on his lap, holding the bowl of ambrosia (*amṛtā*); the fourth pair holds a sword on top of a crossed *vajra*, and a ritual staff (*khaṭvāṅga*), topped by a *vajra*; the fifth pair holds a bow and arrow, his standard implements; the sixth pair is placed above his head and displays the gesture of the adamantine circle (*vajracakra mudrā* or *sumeru mudrā*), symbolizing Mount Meru and Nāmasaṅgīti's relationship to Vajrasattva.

Left

Prajñāpāramitā

The female Bodhisattva personifies the text, which stands for transcendent wisdom (*prajñā*) and as such is considered "the Mother of all Buddhas." Her inner pair of hands features the *dharmacakramudrā*, the turning of the wheel of the law, her upper, masculine right hand holds the *vajra*, indicating the essence of indestructible truth and her upper female left hand holds the book conveying transcendental wisdom.

Source: Hans Wolfgang Schumann, *Buddhistische Bilderwelt*, Munich: Eugen Diederichs Verlag, 1969, pp. 147, 157.

* Gregory Sharkey, *Buddhist Daily Ritual. The Nitya Puja in Kathmandu Valley Shrines*, Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2001, p. 92.

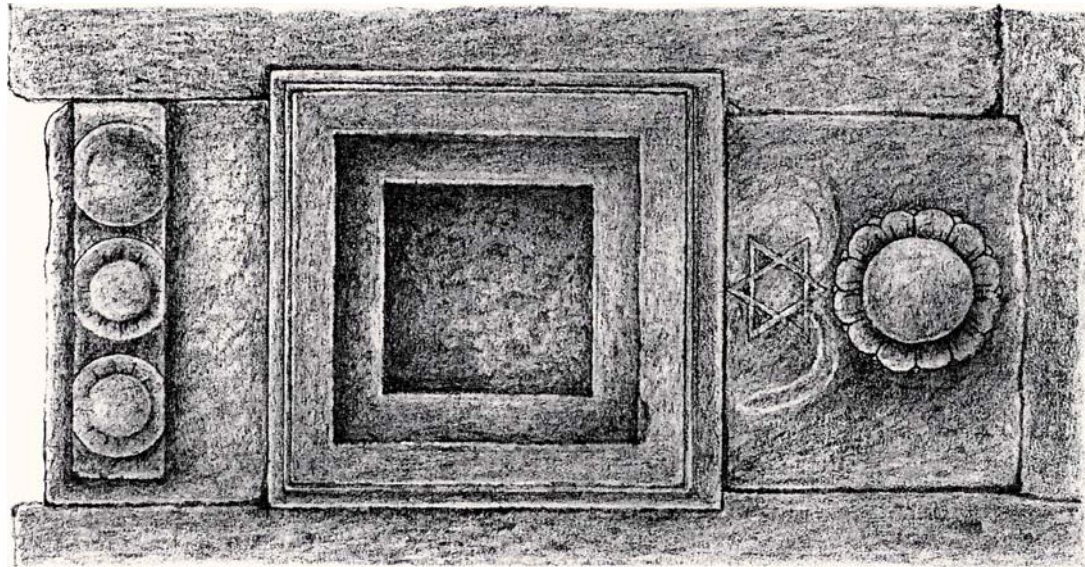
** Bernhard Kölver, *Re-Building a Stūpa. Architectural Drawings of the Svayambhūnāth*, Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1992, p. 147.

*** Niels Gutschow, *The Nepalese Caitya. 1500 Years of Buddhist Votive Architecture in the Kathmandu Valley*, Stuttgart: Edition Axel Menges, 1997, p. 87.

Vābhā

A sacrificial pit (*yajña*) for the performance of a sacred fire (*boma*) as part of the pavement of the plinth, in front of the threshold of the Kvāpāchē's doorway. To the left of it, a stone with three lotus flowers, symbolizing the Three Jewels of Buddhism, to the right, a large lotus flower and a *śrīyantra*, constituting the *gurumaṇḍala*. At this place torches are burnt on the occasion of Indrajaṭrā and the Śantipūjā is performed on the seventh day after death.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow, October 3, 2021, drawing by Bijay Basukala, October 2021



Part III

Rituals and Offerings

The display of the treasures (*bahidyah bvaṃyegu*) and the Perfect Great Gift (*samyak mahādāna*)

Gūlādharmā

The entire month of Gūlā, starting with the first day of the bright half of the moon in the month of Śrāvaṇa (late July, early August) is considered sacred to Buddhist. It is accompanied by fasting, a variety of observances and festivals. The time in summer reflects the retreat of the Buddha in the rainy season, when monks spent a month devoted to teaching the *dharma*. An essential is the daily reading of the Prajñāparamitā text, which was usually also done at Vābāhā, using an old, 12th century manuscript.

Many events take place which address the rich ritual infrastructure of Patan. Narasiṃha is taken out in procession on the fourth day of the dark moon, Kṛṣṇa's birthday is celebrated on the eighth day, and Bhīmsen is taken out in procession on the ninth day. Two circum-ambulatory processions in memory of those who died in the preceding twelve month – Gāijātrā on the first day after full moon and Matayāḥ on the second day – cover the entire urban landscape. Thousands of people join in the 12- to 16-hour-long Matayāḥ procession which makes its way by meandering in a clockwise movement, visiting some 316 places associated with Buddhism, monasteries (*bāhā, bahī*) and *caityas*. Along the continuous path which is never crossed, Buddhist households display their private treasures such as miniature *caityas* or statues.

Along the procession, Vābāhā is also visited. In the early 1990s the large Dīpaṅkara Buddha in festive garb, a small image of Buddha Śākyamuni and, placed on tiered pedestal, a 17th-century sculpture of Hālāhala Lokeśvara were exhibited in the ground floor of the Digichē. Earlier it had been an open ground floor, a *dbalā*, which also accommodated musical performances. The *bahidyah*, the deities in the possession of the monastic community, could freely be worshipped for a few days. In recent years this displaying of the deities was given up, partly because of inadequate security and the ensuing rampant theft.

A week earlier, a small image of Dīpaṅkara named Phudyaḥ is carried from Ukubāhā along two processional routes through the urban landscape while helpers collect offerings. It is the day of Pañcadān (originally called *punya jā* – boiled rice (making) merit), when husked and unhusked rice, together with sweets along with a coin is distributed by the people. Along with the Dīpaṅkara, Vajrācārya, and Śākya make their rounds collecting alms. This is one of the occasions when members of the monastic communities assume the role of monks.

Beside collective remembrance of the deceased the month also stands for individual commemoration. On the last day of the month of Gūlā, Gokaṛṇa āṣi (on the occasion of new moon), the sons perform the death ritual (*śrāddha*) for their deceased ancestors.

Vābāhā

Display of the Dipaṅkara
on the occasion of Gunipunhi.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
August 13, 1992



Samyak

In the month of Gūlā the Dīpaṅkara of Patan are exhibited in their respective monasteries, attracting crowds of devotees. They are brought from the sanctum where they are kept throughout the year, however stripped of their garb and ornaments. They emerge from the dark corner of the sanctum, to be seen at their own ambit.

On a second occasion, however (only every four years), they enter the public sphere to gather in the company of all other Dīpaṅkara of Patan, and of places within the former kingdom of Patan such as Cobhar, Kīrtipur, Cāpāgaon, and Bungamati and even Bhaktapur (Prasanna-śīlamahāvihāra) and Kathmandu (Itumbāhā). This gathering is called Samyak Mahādāna, translated as “The Perfect Great Gift” by Kerry Lucinda Brown.⁵⁵ It is celebrated on the 3rd and 4th days of the waxing moon of the month of Phāgun, approximately early March (for example March 7 and 8, 1992). The entire event is covered in detail by Brown, who aims at investigating “the role of art, ritual, and performance at the Samyak Mahādāna in constructing Buddhist identity in Nepal.”⁵⁶ She refers to local scholarship and its ambition to construct the historical development and the organization of the event⁵⁷ which we will not repeat here. But we recall the legendary origin of the event, as recounted by an early 19th-century chronicle.

It tells us that a descendant of the Ṭhakurīs of Nhūbāhā, a monastery located in the western quarters, opposite Būbāhā, named Bharibharāḍa (or Balibharāḍa) became poor.

“He collected balls of cow dung, stored this in his treasury and locked it.” As with a standard episode in Newar legends, his wife was curious, happened to find the key and discovered the cow dung turned into gold. Her husband praised her, saying “because of your virtue, the lord has happily provided us with wealth and riches.” The couple “praised Lord Buddha and worshipped glorious Śākyamuni Buddha residing at Bhāskaradeva-saṃskārīta Hiranyavarṇa Mahāvihāra, which was built by his ancestors. (...) He also invited all the deities of the

Buddhist monasteries of Lalitpattana, where *cūḍākarma* initiation was performed and also the *vandyas* belonging to the Buddhist *saṅghas*. He worshipped them and offered gifts. For the *samyaksambhojana* ceremony, he sent away the invitations, according to the rules prescribed in the texts, on the third day of the dark moon of Phālguna.⁵⁸ He had everyone sat at a place called Itilanha, offered them light, and performed rituals, staying awake the whole night. On the fourth day of the dark moon he worshipped everyone according to the rules. In order to have a similar *samyaksambhojana* ceremony performed regularly on the third day of the dark moon of Phālguna, he managed a lot of land. Since then, people have preserved this ceremony on that day at that place.”⁵⁹

The reference to the monastery, better known as Kvābāhā, opens up a historic perspective, because the Ṭhakurī king for whom the monastery was named, Bhāṣkara Devā, an ancestor of Bharibharāḍa, ruled from CE 1045 to 1048. We know that descendance is often constructed to endow a person or an event with the desired depth, but Bharibharāḍa may well have been a historical figure of the 12th century.

Samyak was observed at Vābāhā in March 1992. On the first day of the bright half of the moon in Phāgun a procession set out from the organizing monastery, Kvābāhā, to invite all monasteries of the city to participate in the event. On the third day (March 7), the Dīpaṅkara of Vābāhā was taken to the ground floor of the Digichē to be prepared for the procession towards Nāgbāhā, where in the very early morning of the following day 126 Dīpaṅkara and other Buddhist deities convene. The gilded head always remains fixed to the wooden shoulders of the deity. To reduce the weight, thin wooden arms are wrapped with wickerwork of split bamboo, ending as stumps on which the metal hands are fixed. The head receives the lotus crown with its feather-like ornaments (*kīkipa*), ornamental pendants, a heavy necklace featuring Kīrtimukha, and an embroidered, colourful garb. At his feet



Vābāhā
The Dīpaṅkara as it is stored in the southwestern corner of the sanctum.
Photograph anonymous, August 2021.

were displayed the Hālāhala Lokeśvara, the Lord of Poison, with the Yoginī Gīta.

Before midnight, the Dīpaṅkara was taken in procession to the Darbār Square, where all deities convened to be welcomed. In the early morning the procession continued towards the spacious courtyard of Nāgbāhā, where all deities take position in a sequence that only rarely allows for changes. The first 13 deities represent what Brown identified as the sources of the *dharmā*.⁶⁰ It starts with Vasundharā from Tāgaḥbāhā, Tārā from Cvabāhā, Karuṇāmaya (Būgadyaḥ) from Tabāhā, and ends with Tārā from Tāgaḥbāhā.

Then comes the first Dīpaṅkara on the 14th position from the first of the 15 Mūbāhā of Patan, Tāgaḥbāhā, followed by those from Dhumbāhā on the 16th and Cukabāhā on the 17th position. After the Dīpaṅkara from an unimportant branch monastery, Kulimhabāhā (18th), and the Blue-Horned Ox (19, Dvācā Āju), the Dīpaṅkara of the twelve remaining Mūbāhā (nos. 20 to 31) are positioned. It starts with the one from Kvābāhā, followed by Vābāhā, Dhaubāhā, Tabāhā, Būbāhā, Habāhā, Jyobāhā, Gujibāhā, Bhīchēbāhā, Ukubāhā, Subāhā, and Yachubāhā. Vābāhā's position after Kvābāhā's Dīpaṅkara, with small statues of the original donors, Balibharāda and his wife Tapasu at his feet, does not imply hierarchical importance. The sequence seems to have developed randomly. The long row of deities north of the Blue-Horned Ox, facing south ends with the Dīpaṅkara from Cvabār. Along the houses on the western side of the courtyard the sequence starts with the Dīpaṅkara from Bhaktapur (no. 35), which in 1992 did not come to join the event. Then comes a Brahmin from Sulimha (no. 36), a caretaker of Vāsukīnāga, a person receiving offerings for Gaṇedyāḥ, a caretaker of Padmanāga, and five musical

instruments (No. 40, *pañcatāl vādya*) each receiving an offering. The Phudyaḥ took the 46th position as a Dīpaṅkara in miniature form, a Tārā from Vābāhā was placed on the 63rd position. The second sequence along the northern housefront was taken by craftsmen and musicians (nos. 97-103), who were also entitled to receive offerings (*dāna*). More Dīpaṅkaras from the main and branch monasteries followed until the one from Cikābahī in the 136th position. Then followed the butcher musicians (*nāykhī-* and *jhyālibājā*) and eleven of the community of untouchables (Pvaḥ). After a turn behind the stepwell the processional circuit reached the Vāsukīnāga Phalcā (no. 200), where six beggars were seated to receive offerings. After passing the Gaṇeśa shrine (207), the path led into the courtyard behind the Vāsukī Phalcā, which served as the kitchen (*bhāsaḥ*). After passing by the shrine of Kvaynā Gaṇeśa (no. 211) and a Kṣetrapāla (no. 212), three cooks (*bhani*, nos. 214-216) receive offerings and eight hearths (nos. 221-228) where rice was cooked to be offered to all deities and participants. The cooks were Suvāl Jyāpu of Mikhābāhā and Salīchēnani. The undulating circuit was completed with the arrival at the Padmanāga Phalcā (no. 233).

The sequence provided by the Samyak Organizing Committee in 2008 and 2009 listed 126 deities. It generally conforms to the sequence we listed in 1992: Phudyaḥ shifted to the 40th position, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu came last on position 125 and 126, represented only by photographs of the deities.⁶¹

In 1980 Hemraj Shakya published a list of 100 deities or recipients of offerings, including the five musical instruments (no. 97).⁶²



Vābhā
Display of the Dīpaṅkara
on the occasion of Samek.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
March 7, 1992

Vābāhā

Display of the Dīpaṅkara
on the occasion of Samek.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
March 7, 1992





Vābhā
Display of the Dīpaṅkara
on the occasion of Samek;
detail of the necklace
featuring Kirtimukha
spouting forth lotus vine.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
March 7, 1992

Vābāhā

Display of the Dīpaṅkara
on the occasion of Samek;
the right hand with the
varāda gesture, the left hand
in *abhaya* gesture.

Photographs by Niels Gutschow,
March 7, 1992

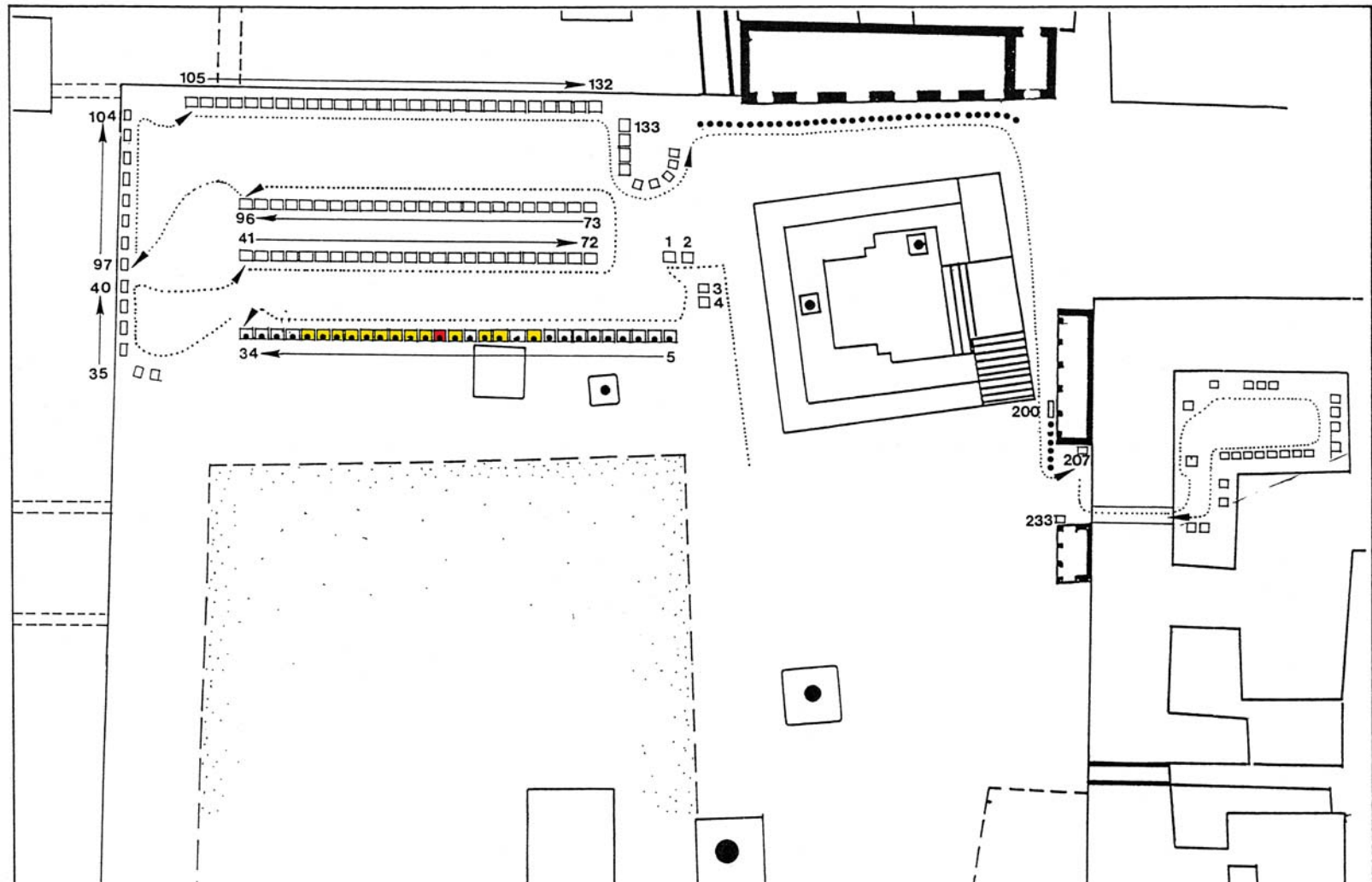




Vābāhā

The 17th-century statue of Hālāhala Lokeśvara is displayed at the foot of Dipaṅkara on the first day of the Samyak event. The six-armed, triple-headed deity, the Lord of Poison, sits in *ardhaparyāṅka* pose and holds Yoginī Gīta with his lower left hand. She is comfortably sitting with crossed knees on his left knee. Bow and arrow in his upper hands indicate his capacity to hit the poisoner.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
March 7, 1992



Patan

Site Plan of the Samyak Mahādāna, presenting the great gifts (*mahādāna*) to 233 deities, shrines, craftsmen, musicians, cooks, sweepers, and beggars following a prescribed sequence that underwent little change in the preceding decades.

Rendered in red the position of the Dīpaṅkara from Vābāhā, yellow the remaining 11 Mūbāhā.

Mapped by Niels Gutschow and Nutandhar Śharmā in March 1992.



Patan

The elder (*thapāju*) of Vābāhā, Amṛtarāj Vajrācārya, sits to the *bāhā's* Dīpaṅkara's right side. He occupies the 20th position in the first row of deities in the northwestern corner of the spacious courtyard of Nāgbāhā.

To his right stands the Dīpaṅkara of Kvābāhā. Next to his shoulder the eyes of the small image of the legendary donor of the event, Bharibharāḍa, can be seen.

Photograph by Niels Gutschow, March 8, 1992

Patan
The Dīpaṅkara of Vābhā
on display at Nagbhā.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
March 8, 1992





Patan
The Dipaṅkara of Vābhā
on display at Nāgbāhā.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
March 8, 1992

The ritual of offering ornaments to the shrine, the Kvāpāchē, the tutelary deity and the Nāmasaṅgītī shrine in August 2021

At seven in the morning of August 9, 2021, the first day of the waxing moon of the month of Śrāvaṇa, the priest Rāju Vajrācārya of Vābāhā started the preparation of the ritual. Rāju acted as the Ritual Officer (*betāju*) of the *bāhā* and as such he also acts in the life cycle rituals of the monastic community such as *bare chuyegu* and *āju luyegu*. The ritual of presenting ornaments to the deity of the monastery and the shrine serves as a good example of how the ritual of offering ornaments is performed. In the beginning, the priest draws *maṇḍalas* and displays different ritual objects in the main courtyard of the *bāhā*.

The collective clients of the ritual are the 32 members of the local women's group for the recitation of the Nāmasaṅgītī Sūtra. The Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṅgītī Khalah group was established in 1979 by 10 Vajrācārya, 7 Śākya, 9 Maharjan (farmer caste), and 6 Āvaḥ (caste of brick-makers and masons) women. They had decided in consultation with the priest in advance not to perform elaborate rituals for this event. They did not even ask an astrologer for an auspicious time (*sāit*) to perform the ritual because the day itself was auspicious, being the first day of the month of Gūlā which is sacred to Buddhists. The guiding motif was *lasatā*, which is a joyful offering, not tied to any specific wish.

Durgādevī Vajrācāryā, the president of the women's group, acted in the ritual as its representative (*yajamāna*). The priest started performing the ritual at nine. In the beginning, he performed Sūryasākṣipūjā, invoking the Sun as witness. Thereafter, he performed Gurupādārghya, welcoming Vajrasattva as the *guru*, Pañcagavyaśodhana, purifying a mixture of the five kinds of products of a cow, and Pūjābhāṇḍasaṅkalpa, receiving the *pūjā* plate from the *yajamāna* after taking a vow to complete the ritual.

Having received the *pūjā* plate with worship material, the priest performed the Gurumaṇḍalapūjā, the worship of

the *guru*, Kāybhāḥpūjā, the worship of a cup of sandalwood paste, Cakrasaṃvarasamādhi, the meditation on Cakrasaṃvara, Kalaśapūjā, the worship of the principal vase in which the deity is invoked and Samarpaṇapūjā, the taking a vow to offer the material to the deity.

Then the priest performed Cakrapūjā, the worship of the surrounding deities, Valipūjā, the sacrificial *pūjā* directed to pacify malevolent deities, Dhaupatipūjā, the worship of the yoghurt pot, Gogrāsapūjā, the worship of the plate of food for a cow, Sinhamhū-nhaykāpūjā, the worship of the vermilion cup and the mirror, and Kiḡaḥ Tanegu, the offering of ritual rice to all deities by the priest and all participants. The *vali* offering was discarded at the Mahākāla shrine, the leftovers of the Nirājanapūjā, and of the waving of lights in course of Kalaśapūjā, were discarded at the stone protecting the threshold (*pikhālākhu*).

After completing the ritual, the priest handed the vermilion cup over to Durgādevī, the client. All female participants took *tikā* from the cup. Thereafter, the priest handed over the ritual mirror, the client and all participants becoming aware of the omniscient face in the mirror. The priest also handed over the main vase to the client and the water from the vase was sprinkled on all as *prasāda* (blessed gift). In the end, the priest offered *tikā* and flowers to all participants.

The ritual was followed by the offering of five kinds of grains, Pañcadāna. The acting priest and the five elders of the monastic community, the Āju (also called *shavira* or *thāypā*), received these offerings (*dāna*), namely the sacred thread (*yajñopavitā*), a scarf (*khādā*), sweets (*lākhāmarī*), and an alms bowl (*piṇḍapātra*) with a coin, husked and unhusked rice, wheat, soybeans, salt, a juice packet, biscuits, an apple, and a banana. The first in the row was the acting priest, the second was Thākura Māna Śākya aged 87, the third Dharma Rāju Vajrācārya (77), the fourth Vikāsa Māna Śākya (72), the fifth Sucitra Māna Śākya (72), and the sixth Giri Māna Śākya (71). They



received a variety of offerings from the participants. Two of them were absent; Thākura Māna was ill and Sucitra Māna had joined a meditation (*vīpasana*) camp. They were represented by their caps, placed on chairs.

After completing the offering of Pañcadāna, the ornaments were installed. A 20-foot-long banner (*patāḥ*) made of brass, decorated with motifs in silver and a gold plated icon of Akṣobhya is taken to the top of the shrine of the tutelary deity, the Kvāpādyah, and fastened to the pinnacle (*gājū*). This should have been done by the priest. In this case a laborer of the Parbatiyā caste was hired. He also had to clean the roof and offer cone-shaped sweets of rice flour (*yaḥmarī*) by throwing it into the crowd in the courtyard.

A 38-inch-long banner (*patāḥ*) and a pinnacle made of brass were offered to the recently made shrine of a female deity in the form of Nāmasaṅgīti. As no icon of the deity

was available in the market, she is represented by a hexagon (*ṣatakona*) on the bottom end of the banner.

A crown, a necklace, a ritual mirror, and bowl for offering water (*arghya*), and five ornamental feathers (*kīkīpa*) of silver were offered to the smaller Akṣobhya of the Kvāpāchē shrine; the four larger ones to the large deity, installed in 1857. Five small silver *kīkīpa* were offered to Nāmasaṅgīti. At the end of the ritual a feast was offered to all participants, consisting of *baji* (flattened rice), pumpkin, horse gram, radish and fenugreek in the form of *acār*, soup, potato, and yoghurt.

The two banners, a pinnacle, a silver crown and a silver necklace were offered by the women's group. In order to decorate the longer banner, 315 grams (27 *tolā*) of silver were donated by Dharma Rāja Vajracārya and a gilded

Vābhā

The ritual of offering a 20-foot-long banner (*patāḥ*) to the Kvāpāchē by the Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṅgīti Khalah.

Offering of Pañcadāna, five kinds of grain, to the acting priest (left), Rāju Vajracārya, and five senior members (*āju*) of the monastery:

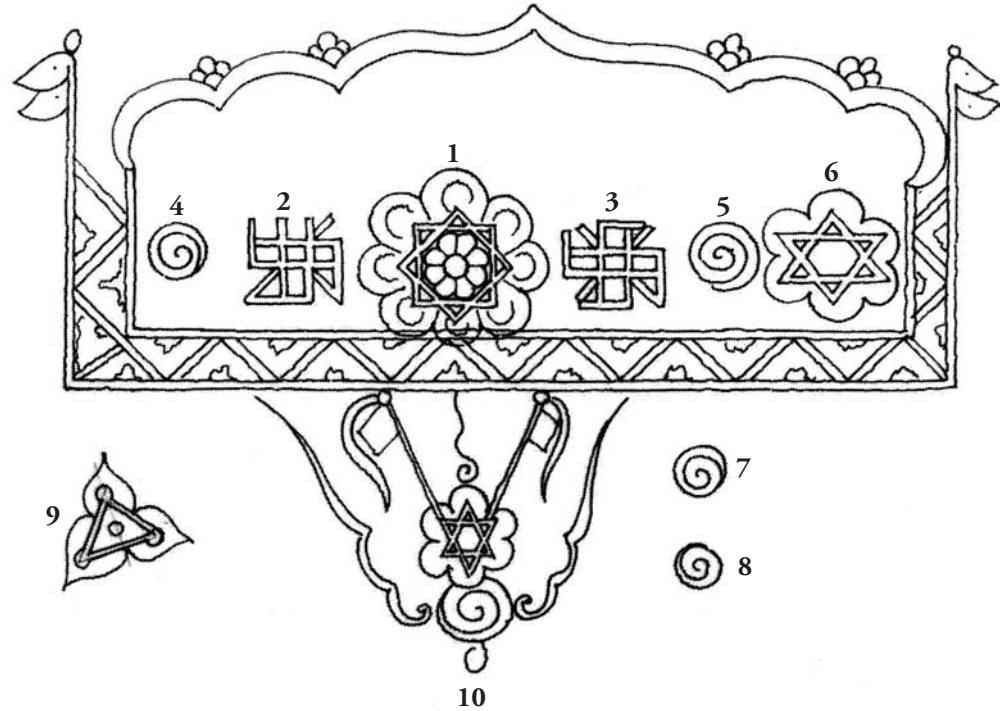
Thakuramāna Śākya (87 years old), Dharmarāja Vajracārya (77 years), VikāsaMāna Śākya (72 years), Sucitra Māna Śākya (72 years), and Girmāna Śākya (71 years). Two of these are represented by the caps in their absence, but received the same offerings.

Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, August 9, 2021

Maṇḍaḥ

Diagram created and used by Rāju Vajrācārya for the ritual of offering ornaments to the shrine, the Kvāpāchē, its tutelary deity and the Nāmasaṅgīti shrine, by the Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṅgīti Khalah on August 9, 2021.

- 1 sacred vase (*kalāśa*);
- 2 a pair of small cups with yoghurt (*dhaupati*);
- 3 “cow’s mouthful,” food on a leaf (*gogrāsa*);
- 4 mirror (*nhaykā*);
- 5 main pot of vermilion (*sinhambū*);
- 6 one cone of rice dough (*gvajā*) with black soybeans as eyes (*valipatra*);
- 7 the five products from a cow: cow dung, urine, milk, yoghurt, and butter (*pañcagavya*);
- 8 a small cup with beer (*thvā*) and spells (*mantrapātra*);
- 9 an oil lamp with a cup for oil presided over by Gaṇeśa (*sukūda*);
- 10 place for offerings (*gurumandah*)



icon of Akṣobhya at the bottom end of the banner by Kalpanā Śākya. The silver mirror and a small silver ornament were offered by Durgādevī, the president of the group. The water container and the four larger ornamental feathers of silver were offered by Sacina Vajrācārya. Tirtha Kumāri Vajrācārya, Subhadrā Śākya, Renu Vajrācārya, and Indu Vajrācārya offered small silver ornaments to the Buddha. Minu and Jaśmina Śākya jointly offered five

small ornaments of silver to Nāmasaṅgīti. Rāju Vajrācārya, the priest, had carved the silver ornaments free of cost.

A total of 840 grams (seventy-seven *tola* @ 1300 Rs = 1 *lakh* Rupees = 730 in 2021) of silver had been used. Moreover, the women’s group for the recitation of Nāmasaṅgīti spent about one hundred thousand rupees for the entire ritual.



Vābhā

The ritual of offering a 20-foot-long banner (*patāḥ*) to the Kvāpāchē, a banner and a finial to the Nāmasaṅgiti shrine, and ornaments to the deity, the larger and smaller Kvāpādyah by the Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṅgiti Khalah. Left: the priest, Rāju Vajracārya, 20 of the 32 members of the Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṅgiti Khalah present offerings.

Photographs by Nutandhar Śarmā, August 9, 2021



Vābhā

The ritual of offering a 20-foot-long banner (*patāh*) to the Kvāpāchē by the Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṅgiti Khalah, a women's group established in 1979.

A hired laborer had to clean the roof and affix the banner to the finial.

Photographs by Nutandhar Śharmā, August 9, 2021





Vābhā

The ritual of offering
a 20-foot-long banner (*patāḥ*)
to the Kvāpāchē; part of the
banner, the pinnacle (*gajū*)
and its bottom end bearing
a gilt Akṣobhya / Buddha
Śākyamuni,

Photographs by Nutandhar Śharmā,
August 9, 2021

Part IV
Inscriptions

Introduction

In April 1992 Nutandhar Śharmā identified 14 inscriptions at the Kvpāchē, the shrine of Vābāhā and the courtyard. A location map and rough summaries were published in February 1994 as “Restoration of Vābāhā – Final Report of the Conservation Pilot Project 1992-1993.” The restoration was initiated in February 1992 by the Patan Conservation and Development Programme, funded by the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The implementation was guided by Gutschow, Hagmüller & Associates and completed in September 1993.

In July 2021 Nutandhar Śharmā returned to the site. Until the end of October, 41 inscriptions were identified which were first fully transliterated. The provisional translations were called synopses because they present the actors, i.e. donors, caretakers and priests, the objects and rituals that were donated, the motivation, and finally the auspicious moment (*saiṭ*) that the donation happened as well. We are aware of the inherent difficulties in translating classical Nevāri and admit to the possibility of misunderstandings or even gross mistakes. Therefore, we see the present effort as a tentative approximation.

For the translation of formalized mantras or even spells Manik Bajracharya was of great help. He also translated the Sanskrit parts of the inscriptions nos. 3, 11, 23, which praise the Buddha in a formalized way.

The epigraphist Dhanavajra Vajrācārya has published the transliteration of inscription no. 3, which refers to the roofing of the shrine and the offering of a finial in 1678, but not the translation.⁶³

The team of the Digital Archive of Nepalese Art and Monuments (DANAM) of Heidelberg University undertook an inventory of the monastic courtyard (LAL1740) in November 2020, which covered most of the inscriptions with very short summaries.⁶⁴

The inscriptions in chronological order

The oldest inscription (no. 1) dated to 1596 CE describes the offering made by a group of 15 people - three Dongol, one Mali (the caste that is in charge of carrying Buṅgadyah), three farmers (Bhava = Maharjans / farmers), three potters (Prajāpati, who are in charge of binding the reed of the chariot of Buṅgadyah), five painters (Citrakāra) one member of a privileged caste (Vasa), and one par-priest serving in death rituals (Kraji = Karañjit). They had the roof of the shrine (*sākyamuni baṭṭāraka kāsa che*) of the principal deity covered with tiles by bricklayers. The second offering remains obscure. It is said that the donors made two golden “icons of the Buddha” for which the term *pivakhā* is used. These icons are said to have been attached to a *caitya* (*ceta*) but it is difficult to imagine how these two (and not four) icons could have been attached to a four-faced *caitya* with no trace remaining. In addition, a member of the monastic community, the *saṅgha*, offered one hundred thousand small *caityas* of clay (*lakṣacaityā*) which is a common offering accompanying an important event. Apart from the donors, a group of nine painters and one member of a privileged caste (*bhara*) are mentioned as having taken care of and completed the work (*cintāyāka*, lit. to worry).

Forty years later (no. 2) eight members of the monastic community (*saṅgha*) offered a tympanum to the principal doorway in 1634. The inscription does not mention the object but it is found on the lower register of the tympanum, which was replaced in 1925 (no. 28) by a tympanum in copper repoussé. In 2005 it was recovered from the *āgā*, the esoteric shrine on first floor and installed above the entrance to the room in the western annex of the shrine, which was dismantled and rebuilt in reinforced concrete (no. 34).

Another forty years later the five senior members (*thavayapā* = *āju*) seem to have rebuilt the entire temple (*devala*) in 1655 (no. 3). They raised it (*thaṃkāsyam*), installed a pinnacle (*pura* = most probably “*phucā*”) and had the roof tiled by bricklayers. With the offering of a sacred fire, a triple-layered umbrella and a flag were installed. The same group of elders offered a chain of silver and a pair of lotus flowers to the deity. The same inscription recalls the gilding of a Buddha. Four years later a Kāyaṣṭha couple offered four banner paintings (*bilampati*) to the deity while another noble offered a gilded umbrella in 1678 (no. 4) on top of the pinnacle. Two years later, in 1680 (no. 5), seven struts were offered to support the eaves of the roof, one by two Vajrācāryas and six by a group of five farmers. Another two years later one Vajrācārya and five farmers offered in 1680 an icon of Gaṇeśa, a banner painting, and established a *guṭhī* to celebrate the full moon days. Since the rebuilding of the Digichē in 1982, Gaṇeśa is installed in a niche along the access to the courtyard from the west. In 1700, three members of the community initiated the construction of the three-story Digichē (no. 7) under the guidance of the eldest, the *thapaāju*, on the western side of the courtyard. The roof was tiled by bricklayers. Another Vajrācārya was entrusted to take care of the building which in that context was identified as a *sattah*.

Almost a generation later we enter the active years. The shrine building (*kvāpāchē*) had probably attained its present shape in the 1670s after the initial struts had been replaced by carved ones. The house that shelters the ancestor deity, the *digidyah*, was constructed, among others, by one Devajyoti in 1700.

Only seven years later, his sons, Amṛtajyoti and Dinajyoti, their father’s mother and the eldest son’s wife, started to fundamentally reshape the courtyard in 1727 (no. 8). In February of that year they established a *caitya* (*cita bāhāla dayakā*) in the name of their father. To the north of the *caitya* they placed a pillar, whose top in the shape of a lotus flower bears the representation (*sālīka* =

statue) of their father and his wife. Fried rice, meat, and rice beer was to be offered on the occasion of the annual *caityapūjā*, and on the anniversary of their father’s death the *pañcapahārapūjā* was required to be performed with the offerings of *dhūpa*, *dīpa*, *naivedya*, *puśpa*, and *candana*. For the reconfiguration, Amṛtajyoti must have recovered four fragments of different Licchavicaityas dating to the 7th century. The top with its dome and base constitutes the most refined part. The lower base has less fine carvings and the stone originates from a different location. The third part constituted half of a former platform and the fourth part formed the lowest base. The platform and the base were at that time incorporated into a newly constructed, 46 cm high platform molded in stone.

Eleven months later, in January (Māgha) 1728 (no. 9), the two brothers and their wives initiated the paving of Vaṃtabāhāra with oiled bricks (*cikaṃna atavana*). In a rare admonition, the inscription says that nobody is allowed to appropriate bricks to pave the ground floor (*cerisa* = *chedī*) of one of the courtyard houses. Another seven months later, in August 1728 (no. 10), only Amṛtajyoti and his wife are claimed to have initiated the establishment of a *caitya* and a *dharmadhātumaṇḍala*, placed between the pedestal of the Licchavicaitya and the plinth of the shrine building. Moreover, he offered an icon of Vajrayoginī and had it installed on the first floor of the Digichē as the ancestor deity (*digideva*). In a rare incident, the stone carver’s (*lohaṃkarami*) name, Dhuni-rāma, is mentioned in the inscription.

The inscription (no. 11) dating only six years later (1734), fixed to a house in the northeast of the courtyard, refers to the establishment of a *caitya* (*cetra* or *citra bhāra*) in the name of the donor’s father Dharmadeva and the offering of a Lokeśvara (whose whereabouts are unknown) in the name of his uncle Bhagīdeva. This *caitya* could be identified, because the same family referred to it 16 years later. It is made in the form of a Śikharakūṭacaitya with a *padmāvali* motif on top. The *caitya* bears no inscription, but the house of the donor’s descendants on the northern

side of the courtyard (and its present occupants) confirm that it is their *caitya*. Thirteen *caityas* of this type were established in Patan from the early 18th century onwards through the early 20th century. The ritual of establishing a *caitya* must have been so challenging that a Vajrācārya from Būbāhā had to be called.

Two years later, in 1736 (no. 12), the “house” (*grha*) of the monastery, which was constructed in 1674 was obviously already in disrepair. Therefore, a couple from the caste of painters (Citrakāra) initiated the repair (*danāva*) of the derelict walls with oiled bricks and they had the monastery paved inside and outside. It cannot be determined exactly what space was paved. In the context of an architectural history the inscription features a rare detail: cursing people who might cause any harm to the monastery by tying an elephant in the outer lane. It remains difficult to imagine where exactly elephants had been tied, causing harm to the structure.

In 1739 (no. 13) four members of a Vajrācārya family, the father, wife, and two sons, offered a window (*jyāra*) in expression of love for Yogambara as well as an icon of the Buddha. Neither object is identifiable within the present layout of the monastic courtyard. In 1742 (no. 14) two lions were placed at the plinth of the courtyard’s western side, originally guarding the entrance to the Digichē. Today they guard the western exit of the courtyard.

Eleven years later, in 1750 (no. 15), a family of seven Śākya, the husband, grandmother, wife, daughter, brother’s wife, and two granddaughters offered a golden doorway (*suvarṇa duvāra*) in expression of love for the Daśavala Bhaṭṭāraka (the Buddha) who is represented in his *vajrāsana* position. This doorway has not survived. The inscription mentions this golden doorway a second time and adds that the *dharmadhātucāitya* mentioned in the inscription dated 1734 (no. 11) is now also dedicated to the grandmother’s two deceased sons.

In 1755 (no. 22) a small bell was offered on the right of the shrine’s entry, placed on the plinth.

In 1773 (no. 16) the two windows to the side of the shrine’s doorway received panels in stone featuring Ami-

tābha. In the same year an inscription (no. 17) records the donation of Akṣobhya Buddha Bhagavāna in stone by a couple of Citrakāra. It remains unclear to which statue this inscription refers to. It might have been the small Buddha in stone, which was stolen in the 1990s.

Eighty-four years passed before a group of 21 Vajrācāryas and Śākyas offered a gilded copper icon (*sijalayā mūrti*) of the principal deity, the Kvācāpala (no. 19) in 1857. An annual ritual was invested with the income from fields to ensure that the five senior priests (*nāoju*) are feasted and the principal priest (*cakaśvali = cakreśvara*) should recite the Svayambhū Purāṇa. One Vajrācārya composed stanzas (*śloka*) for the ritual consecration. Vīradhana was the carver (*śilpakāri*) who acted as the abode of the divine creator (*viśvakarmādhivāsakaḥ*). The whereabouts of this icon is not known, but the Gābhāsi, a five-foot-long wooden gong, was offered to replace an old one in 1870 (no. 20), is still in use. It is struck 108 times with a mallet to announce the beginning and end of the daily ritual. In 1873 (no. 21) an extended family of potters, Prajāpati, offered a tympanum (*tolana*) in brass, supported by colonettes (*toranṭhān*) wrapped in brass, as an expression of love for the deity (*bhagavāna*) of the venerable monastery. The brass tympanum did not cover the earlier carved tympanum but simply covers an uncarved block of wood. The same is true for the colonettes. Three years later in 1879, five members of the community offered a highly designed sacrificial pit for fire rituals (*jajñasāla*) (no. 23), placed just behind the large *mādah*, the circular stone which absorbs the leftovers of death rituals.

In 1882 a *dharmadhātuvagīśvara(caitya)* was installed at the northern end of the central axis of the courtyard (no. 24). This is the largest *caitya* in the monastic courtyard and is of the Jvālāvalicaitya type, with a large lotus flower supporting triple steps featuring lotus, fire, and *vajra* motifs. The first dated example of this type appeared in Patan in 1831 and remained popular until the end of the century.



Vābāhā

Inscription no. 26, seven lines on the large bell, to the left of the doorway, donated in 1890



Inscription no. 19, to the right of the doorway, 69 x 39 cm, dated 1857, referring to the offering of a new copper icon.
Photographs by Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021

In 1890 (no. 25) three Vajrācāryas formed a group of 300 people who performed a pilgrimage (*tīrthasevā*), most probably to visit the twelve *tīrthas* of the valley and Svayambhū. Using the donations of the participants, a diamond scepter (*vajra*) was installed on top of the *dharmadhātumāṇḍala* which in 1728 was established by Amṛtajyoti. A begging bowl in gold (*luyāpīṇḍapātra*) was offered in love to the deity. In the same year (no. 26) a large bell was installed to the left of the shrine's doorway. The inscription starts with ten lines eulogizing the deity of the monastery and King (*cakravartī*) Pṛthivī Bīr Vikram Śāha. The bell was offered in the name of nine living members of a family of the *saṅgha* as well as in the name of the deceased father and grandfather. This occurred on the occasion of the auspicious age of 77 years, 7 months, and 7 days of the main donor's mother, a ritual called *bhīmaratharohana*. A feast was offered to the members of "both monasteries," i.e. also to those who belonged to Jyobāhā. The artisan who cast the bell is named as Khavedana, the son of Dhija from Naḥbāhā.

A generation later, six Vajrācārya donors offered the covering of the door leaves of the doorway of the shrine with brass repoussé in 1925 (no. 28). One generation later a small copper-plate inscription (no. 30) invokes the Buddha, his teachings (*dharmā*), and the order of monks (*saṅghā*) in 1955. It addresses the female Bodhisattva Tārā as mother, *tāremām*, obviously seeking help in a personal matter. The same formula used to be common among Vajrācāryas and Śākya of Patan as a way of greeting each other. For the first time the date is given according to the Bikram Saṃvat era, the 9th day of the month of Bhādrā in 1912.

Two inscriptions in marble were placed on the wall of the Digichē, to the right and left of the western exit of the courtyard. This occurred on the occasion of the new construction of the entire building which had been dismantled in ca 1982. One inscription presents five of altogether 423 verses of the Dhammapada in the following sequence: Yamaka-vagga (no. 3), Sahassa-vagga (no. 115), Pakiṇṇaka-vagga (no. 290), Kodha-vagga (no. 223), and

Pāpa-vagga (no. 127). The Dhammapada (Sanskrit: Dhammapada) presents sayings of the Buddha in verse form. It is part of the Pali Canon of Theravāda Buddhism, which is widely considered to be datable to the 3rd century BCE, in an effort to teach the ascetic impetus of the Buddha to lay followers.

The second inscription presents the Five Precepts (*pañcaśīla*) or five rules of conduct, the basic code of Buddhist morality. These precepts were part of Buddhism at an early time and were acknowledged by all Buddhist schools. The ethic of restraint was taught to attain enlightenment. The precepts are often combined with the declaration of faith in the Three Jewels.

Eleven inscriptions cover donations of the period from 1997 and 2021. Small and artistically unimpressive offerings were made in an effort to gain merit (*puṇya*). The inscriptions convey little or nothing about the motivation of the donors and tend to bear witness of even small contributions in cash. It starts with an iron grill that was made in 1997 (no. 33) to encase the plinth and the ground floor of the shrine building up to a height of 225 cm.

In 2002 a Śākya repaired the tympanum that was offered in 1873. The piece featuring the male Nāga on the upper left had long been lost and was then replaced, bearing the name of the donor (no. 33). In 2005 (no. 34) a Vajrācārya turned the space behind the former entrance to the Āgāchē into a separate room (*koṭha nirmāna*) in which an icon (*murti*) of the deity (*bhagavāna*) was installed. The rear space was reserved for storage while access to the Āgāchē was provided by a staircase beyond the narrow passage that provides access to a small courtyard. This was done on day 17 of the month of Āṣāḍha (September 2) to celebrate the donor's 70th birthday and the 45th anniversary of his marriage. A second inscription (no. 35) mentions that one Āśā Māyā Vajrācārya donated the plot of 34.71 square meters (one *ānā* and one *dāma*) on which the house for the deity (*bhagavānchē*) was built. Four more members of the community donated altogether 30,000 rupees and a load of bricks.



Vābāhā

Inscription no. 29, below the second floor window of house no. 5 which testifies to the construction of the house in 1944. The inscription is enclosed by a cartouche, which is grasped by a pair of winged angels, carrying garlands in the fashion of the ancient, wisdom bearers (*vidyādhara*).

Photograph by Ashesh Rajbansh, October 11, 2021



Vābāhā

Top, inscription no. 21, at the top of the colonnette, framing the doorway on the right, 8.5 x 9 cm.

Dated 1873, it refers to a family of Prajāpati, who offered a new tympanum above the doorway (*torana*).

Bottom, inscription no. 33, testifying to the offering of a protective iron grill in front of the deity's shrine on September 26 1997.

Photographs by Niels Gutschow, September 26 and October 3, 2021

In 2015 a group of 31 people offered (no. 37) an icon of Āryanāmasaṅgīti and placed it in a shrine on top of a pillar to the right (west) of the shrine building's plinth. It was offered to gain merit in the name of eight deceased members of the community, among them one from Dyaḥbāhā. Most of the donors were Vajrācārya and Śākya from Vābāhā, one each from Dhumbāhā, Sātadobāto, Thamel, Nakabahī, Imāḍol, and farmers and brickmakers from Thāpa, Tūchegalli, and Tasipaḥ.

In 2009 (no. 36) a family of 11 members from Dyaḥbāhā offered a canopy and prayer wheels to the Licchavicaitya. They also offered a silver plate, a container for vermilion (*sindhura*), a mirror (*juālanhāykhā*), a sacred vase (*kalāśa*), and a *maṇḍala*. This was done to enable the deceased parents and all ancestors to reach the realm of heaven (*sukhāvati*).

Twelve years later, on August 9 2021 (no. 38), the 24th day of the month of Śrāvaṇa and the first day of the auspicious month of Gūlā, a Vajrācārya family offered a long banner (*pataḥ*) in metal extending from the finial across the eaves of the roof. It features the tutelary deity of the monastery, Akṣobhya. On the same day (no.39), the Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṅgīti Khalah, the local women's group, donated a banner of brass to the shrine of Āryanāmasaṅgīti, a crown and a necklace of silver to the icon. The six ornaments or leaves (*kīkipā*) of a crown were offered to the large tutelary deity in the shrine, inscribed in memory of the deceased (*svargiya*) Puṣparāja. A smaller *kīkpā*, a crown, and a necklace were given to the smaller Buddha in front of the large one. The presiding priest was annoyed because objects crowning a deity should never be inscribed (no. 40).

While the small branch monastery established by brickmakers named Lakhidanbāhā northeast of Vābāhā remains utterly neglected, the second branch monastery, established by the Śākya of Vābāhā in the southeast, Dunebāhā, was replaced after the 2015 earthquake by a reinforced concrete structure, and consecrated on May 14

2021. The inscription refers to the rebuilding (*puna nirmāna*) of the esoteric shrine (*āgāchē*) as the house for the ancestor deity (*kuladevatā*). Nineteen individuals – except one Vajrācārya all Śākya – the reform and development office (*sudhāra samiti*) of the monastery and the office of the Lalitpur Metropolitan City provided funds of 40 lakh (ca 28,000 Euro). The aim was to preserve the sacred place and support the Teachings of the Buddha. The inscription (no. 41) also refers to one Jagatamuni Śākya and his son, who in 1829 (no. 18) had probably established the branch monastery. In marked contrast to the new structure, the shrine of the courtyard is utterly neglected and the fragmentary tympanum has been discarded. The former arcade on the southern side of the courtyard has been dismantled; icons of Hālāhala Lokeśvara, Amitābha, Padmapāṇi, Gaṇeśa, and Mahākāla are kept in small niches.

Naming the monastery and dating inscriptions

The first known reference to the monastery dates to 1442.⁶⁵ It is found on a palm-leaf manuscript that mentions one Sūrjyabarhma Saṃskārita Mahāvihāra. The first inscription, dated to the end of the 16th century, refers to Vaṃtabāhāra, a version which is frequently used until the early 18th century. In 1773 this turns into Vanabāhāra and Vantabāhāra. Already in 1658 the original name was partially recalled by naming the monastery Sūrya Varṇa Mahāvihāra, later turning into corrupted variants such as Surja Vanta Mahāvihāla or Sūrya Oṃta Mahāvihāriya. In 1728 shorter versions such as Ontabahā or, a century later, Oṃta Vahāriya, emerged. In 1879 and 1890 the name changed for the first time into Sūryadharm Saṃskārita Vajrakīrti Mahāvihāra. No member of the *saṅgha* has an explanation for the addition of “Vajrakīrti.” The latest inscription of the branch monastery at Dunenani of May 2021 mentions three names: Sūrya Brahma Saṃskārita Bajrakīrti Mahāvihāra, Vantavihāra, and Omabāhāla.

Only in 2015 was the term *dharmā* changed to *brahmā*, representing a misunderstanding of *varma*. In 1985 John Locke presented the original name as Suryavarma Saṃskārita Vajrakīrti Mahāvihāra and added the present name Wam Bāhā. In this he followed the 19th-century chronicle, the *History of the Kings of Nepal*, which refers to Vambāhā⁶⁶ as one of the three *vihāras* which were added during the reign of Siddhinarasiṃha to the 12 *vihāras* that already existed. The name Oṃbāhāla appeared first in an inscription dated 1997.

As suggested by Ishwarananda Shresthacharya, in 1992 we decided to signify the nasalized “m” as a tilde, thus arriving at “Vābāhā.” The present text uses this version when it is a matter of describing the architectural, historical, or religious background. The translation summaries refer to the inscriptional evidence.

Dates

Except Maṅsir, every month seems to be suitable for an offering. However, Vaiśākha (five times) and Śrāvaṇa (four times) seem to be preferred. The bright half of the month (*śuklapakṣa*) is as often used as the dark half (*kr̥ṣṇapakṣa*). The third preferred day is Full Moon. The day of the week is not always mentioned, however, Thursday is preferred, followed by Monday and Saturday. In 1955 the dating first referred to the Vikram Saṃvat era and instead of the *tithi* the day of the lunisolar calendar was mentioned and no day of the week at all. In 2009 the offering of the prayer wheels to the Licchavicaitya referred to the 8th day of the Buddhist month of Gūlā, the day of offering Pañcadāna.

The act of offering

The first inscription, dated 1596, mentions 17 donors (*dānapati*). As a second category, 11 caretakers are named who belonged to a variety of communities. They had to complete the work (*sidhayakā*), acting in devotion (*bhakti*). A similar term turns up in 2005, stating *śraddhā tayā*. Throughout the coming three centuries the term

prītina or even *suprītina* – in love or great love (for the deity) – was common.

To classify the donation of ritual objects or repairs of the roof or the wall, the most common term (nine times) was *duntā*, “offered,” or *dayakā* (five times), referring to the “making” of an object. The act of making and building is also covered by the verb *danegu*. In contrast, an icon (*murti*) or *caitya* (worshipped as a deity) was “established” (*sthāpanā*, or *pratiṣṭhā* – four times). In 1925 the brass covering of the door leaves was simply “kept” (*tayā*), similar to the act of establishing a shrine in honor of Nāmasangitī (*nivane* – to keep) in 2015.

Merit making

Seven inscriptions, dated to 1727 to 1773 warn the people that whoever does something wrong in the monastic courtyard, for example damaging or even destroying a *caitya* or not performing the required annual worship of the deity or *caitya*, will be inflicted with the five great sins, such as killing a cow, a woman or a Brahman, stealing, or drinking alcohol. In five of these seven cases it is said that those who take care of the offerings made to the monastery will fulfill the requirements of *dharmā*, the teaching of the Buddha that expresses the universal truth, *karma*, the consequences of a mental or physical action, and *puṇya*, the karmic merit gained through giving alms and performing *pūjās*, believed to assure a better life in the future. Only once, when the large bell was offered in 1890 and all members of both *bāhās*, Vābāhā, and Dyaḥbāhā were feasted, the inscription (no. 26) expressed the wish that the 11 family members of the donor Kālidāsa, who were depicted in relief on the lintel of the bell-stand, may enjoy the benefits of the *caturvarga phala* – the four goals of human aspiration, namely *dharmā*, virtue, *kāma*, overcoming desire as an obstacle on the spiritual path, *artha*, possession, and *mokṣa*, the liberation or release from all worldly bonds.



Vābāhā

Inscription no. 40 on one of the six new adornments (*kīkīpa*) of the Kvāpādyah of Vābāhā, donated by Indu and Ravinā Vajracārya in memory of Puṣparāja on August 9, 2021. Photograph Nutandhar Śarmā, August 9, 2021

Annual rituals and their endowments

The first inscription, dated 1596, recalls the renewal of the roof on the occasion of which one Vajrācārya offered one hundred thousand miniature *caityas*, made of clay, from small (ca 10-cm-long) molds. This is a rare type of offering, often done in the month of Gūlā, which is sacred to Newar Buddhists. For 1634, the inscription (no. 2) mentions songs; Buddhagīta were performed and in 1674 (no. 3) a fire sacrifice (*yajña*) was offered to celebrate the installation of the finial. The offering of a fire sacrifice is also recorded for 1734, 1736, 1773, and 1879. Fire sacrifices are regularly performed on the occasion of the *caitya*'s annual ritual, *busādhana*. This was done for the last time for the Jvālāvalicaitya in 2012, on the occasion of Kojagrātūrṇimā. The firepit is always located east of the *caityas*. An elaborate pit cast in bronze had been offered to the courtyard in 1879. Also mentioned is the reading of the Svayambhūpuraṇa, or feasting the members of the monastic community.

Most important is the association of major offerings or the death of family members with establishing an endowment. It started with the reconsecration of the hybrid Licchavicaitya in 1727 and the erection of a pillar supporting a relief representing Amṛtajyoti Vajrācārya and his wife. This was sponsored by his two sons, their mother, and the wife of the elder son. On the occasion of the annual death ritual fried rice, meat, and rice beer should be served. A year later, the eldest brother and his wife established another *caitya* and dedicated the annual income from ca 2,000 square meters of fields to worship the parent's portrait and all deities of the monastery. Six years later Kṛṣṇamuni Śākya established a *caitya* in memory of his deceased father and offered the income from ca 2,000 square meters for the annual death ritual. Moreover, a golden Lokeśvara was offered in the name of father's brother. In 1750 the establishment of the *caitya* was referred to again on the occasion of the offering of a gilt doorway, now in in the name of Kṛṣṇamuni's grand-

mother's deceased two sons. In 1857, 1,000 square meters were offered to ensure the annual worship (*busādhana*) of the gilded statue of Śākyamuni Buddha, which was placed in front of the large one in stone and which still today represents the principal "living" tutelary deity of the monastery.

The large bell was offered in 1890 by one Kalidāsa and Kṛṣṇamuni in the name of their great-grandfather, his grandfather, father, and his son's dead wife. It was the auspicious occasion of celebrating his mother's *bhīmaratharohana daśakarma*, reaching the age of seventy-seven years, seven months, and seven days. An inscription dated 2005 refers to an even more worldly occasion when one Thākura Māna Śākya celebrated his 70th birthday and the 45th anniversary of his marriage with Ratnamāya Śākya. They were one of the five donors who contributed to the building of the new *bhagavānchē*, a shrine next to the tutelary deity. The donors of the prayer wheels fixed to the stands encircling the Licchavicaitya in 2009 tied their simple offering to their wish that father, mother, and all ancestors (*pita = pitarah?*) may reach the realm of heaven (*sukhāvati*).

The Inscriptions

Transliteration of the text:

1. śraiyostu || samvat 716 baiśāṣa śukla || ṛṭṭiyā kunhu , śrī vaṃtabāhāra kvācapāḍa śrīmata śrī śrī śākyamuni bhaṭṭāra-
2. kāsa che āvana cesyaṃ , śrī cetabharāḍayā pivakhā nemhaṃ luṃna dayakā juro || lakṣaceta dhammuni vaṃtabāhāra śrīdevase-
3. na juto , jike ḍhaguḍi , jikerāma ḍhaguḍi , jakerāma bhāva , jagatasi[sim]ha bani , jake bhāva , jayanarāja ḍhaguḍi
4. daśā bhāvo , rugarāja mali , prajāpati ulhā , prajāpati chasiṃha , idra[ndra]rāja krāji , prajāpati jikitāja ,
5. caita[tra]kāra keśarāja , caita[tra]kāra śakāja , caita[tra]kāra siṃharāja , caita[tra]kāra hedayasimha dhammu(?)ni thvate || cintā yāka
6. caita[tra]kāra jayabhima , caita[tra]kāra bitu || bhakti jusyaṃ dūmbiva , thvana koyā topā juro , śvatham caitrakāra bijayapāla
7. hataṣā caitrakāra kamarāja paṭako rācha tila vaṃtā caitrakāra nāthasiṃha , thyākhāche gobi[bim]dasi[sim]ha bhāro , vaṃbīraṣū
8. caitrakāra jasirāja , caitrakāra hākva , caitrakāra bābusimha , caitrakāra jayanarāja , vaṃtabāhāra śrī devasiṃha juto
9. thvatya samuccayana sidhayakā juro || śubhamatu[stu] || bhuye taṃkā 1 śu 1 sigoda 4 dubiyā ||

Synopsis:

May all be well. Jike Ḍhaguḍi, Jikerāma Ḍhaguḍi, Jakerāma Bhāva, Jagatasiṃha Vasa, Jake Bhāva, Jayanarāja Ḍhaguḍi, Daśā Bhāvo, Rugarāja Mali, Ulhā Prajāpati, Chasiṃha Prajāpati, Indrarāja Krāji, Jikitāja Prajāpati, Birāja Caitakāra, Śakrāja Caitakāra, Siṃharāja Caitakāra, Hedayasimha Caitakāra and Dhammuni had covered (the roof with tiles) of the house of twice venerable *kvāpāḍyaḥ* by brickleeyes, Śākyamuni of Vaṃtabāhā, on the third day of bright fortnight of the lunar month of Vaiśākha in NS 716. (Also, they) offered two *pivakhā* (Buddha) icons of gold in a caitya. One hundred thousand small *caityas* (*lakṣacaitya*) were offered by Dhammuni of Vaṃbahā. The caretakers of the work were Jayasiṃ Caitrakāra and Vitu Caitrakāra. Vijayapāla Caitrakāra of Svatha, Kummājara Caitrakāra of Hakhā, Nāthasiṃha Caitrakāra of Paṭako, Govindasiṃha Bhāro of Khācheṃ, Jasirāja Caitrakāra, Hākva Caitrakāra, Vābusimha Caitrakāra (and) Jayanarāja Caitrakāra of Vaṃtabāhāra, Śrī Devasiṃha of Vaṃtabāhā also joined in this work with devotion (*bhakti*). This group of these people completed (the work). May all be well.

1

Copper-plate inscription attached on the left side of the gate of the Kvāhpāḍyaḥ shrine of Vaṃbahā (NS 716, 1596 CE).

Script: a mix of Bhujimola and Pracalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

L 35 cm, W 9 cm

2

Inscription at the tympanum of the doorway to the newly built Bhagavānaceṃ of Vambāhā (NS 754, CE 1634).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

L 88 cm, W 4 cm

Above the inscription the icons of Triratna flanked by *kinnaras* are carved. On the arch Vajrasattva, Garuḍa, Kirtimukha and six female Bodhisattvas.

3

Stone inscription from the left side of the gate of the Kvāpācēṃ of Vambāhā (NS 785, CE 1665).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Sanskrit and Classical Newari

L 29 cm, W 23.5 cm

Above the inscription a *caitya*, flanked by the Moon and the Sun.

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? śrīyotu saṃvata 754 caita śukṛ[kra] paṃcamyāṃ tithva mṛgasilanakṣate[tre] śvabhānajogya vudhavārasa ,, thvakunhu du[dum]tā ,, śrī gunadeva ,, śrī su(?)lā(?)deva ,, śrī lanhamuni śrī devajoti śrī ka(?)lyā(?)na(?)si(?)ṇa(?)
2. śrī kutu , śrī manirathana ,, śrī candramuni thva cyāṃha pṛ[pra]muṣana tayā [||] śrī jayamuniyā [putra] [na]rsm̐ , thvatiyā śrī su(?)nādeva kajhī(?)ta (...) ba[bu]dhagīta na tayā juro śubha[mastu] || ||

Synopsis:

May all be well. A group of eight persons, Śrī Gunadeva, Śrī Sulādeva, Śrī Lanhamuni, Śrī Devajoti, Śrī Kalyānaśiṇa, Śrī Kutu, Śrīmatī Rathana, Śrī Candramuni offered (the tympanum) on the fifth day of the bright fortnight of the lunar month of Caitra in NS 754, a Wednesday, when there was the constellation called Mṛgasirā and conjunction called Sobhana. The leader of the group was Śrī Surādeva. They also offered Buddhagīta (religious songs).

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? oṃ namo buddhāya || dānavarājanideśita dharmmapuji-
2. taratnaviśeṣaśīta || nāśitamohaviśeṣasahaśraṃ śrī-
3. jinapadmakara praṇamāmi || || śreyo'stu saṃvat 785 jyeṣṭha
4. śukla || tṛtīyā || mṛgaśīrānakṣatra || ghṛtīyoge || ādityavāra ||
5. thva kunhu śrī sūryya varṇa mahāvihārasa ,, śrī 3 śākyamuni bhāṭṭāraka-
6. sa ,, devala thaṃkāsyam ,, pūra dvayakam ,, āvana ceṇana || suvarṇa gajurī
7. chāsyam || dina yajña yānana || pratiṣṭhā yānā dina juro || thvateyā
8. pramukha ,, sa eva , vihāriyā ,, svam̐ chunā ,, thva dhvajāvarohana yānā juro
9. || thavarapā śrī bhāsim̐devaju ,, śrīdevarathanaju || śrī candrasim̐haju
10. śrī maṃjusim̐haju || śrīmaṃjudevaju || thvate yaṇmāyā || che thāya ||
11. sa eva , śrī maṃjusim̐haju yāke juro || śubhamastu || puna bhāṣā
12. ? thvana nhā ,, samvat 778 vaiśāṣa kṛṣṇa || tṛtīyā kunhu || śrī 3 śākya-
13. muni bhāṭṭārakāsa || sarvāṃga śārīram̐ || luna sisyaṃ ,, pratiṣṭhā yānā
14. dina juro ,, thva vihāriyā ,, sarvvasaṃgha samūhana ,, dayakā juro ||
15. || punabhāṣā ,, thva vihāriyā ,, svam̐chuyāta ,, svam̐bo uti yānana ||
16. śrī 3 śākyamuni bhāṭṭārakāsa || thava che jukva || thva svachunaṃ ||
17. āsaṃdarape madayakam̐ || sarvvasaṃgha samūhana || śrī 3 devayāta
18. śuddhakam̐ tolatam̐ tayā juro || thva deva luna siyāyā , che thāya
19. śrī maṃjusim̐hajuyāke juro || || thva samvachala || tayāyā ,
20. thavayapā , śrī devarathanaju pramukhana ,, nāyaka nāmhasena
21. juro || nhā mataosa || līpatasa tayā juro ,, bhūya ||
22. jalasi gvaḍa chi 1 ohosighalimāla pu 1 obho[ho]padma-
23. svāna phola 2 thvate || thva nāmha pramukhana ,, devayā dāma-
24. nam̐ || dayakā juro || śubham̐ || śrī guluju nāyaka
25. samohona dayakā ||

Synopsis:

Svasti. Om. Obeisance to the Buddha. The *dharma* instructed by Dānavarāja, (it) is worshipped and endowed with precious jewels. I bow to glorious Jinapadmakara (probably Padmasambhava) who has destroyed thousand-fold illusions.

The five senior most male members of the *bāhā*, Śrī Bhasideva, Śrī Devarathana, Śrī Candrasimha, Śrī Mañjusimhaju, Śrī Mañjudeva raised (or built) the temple (*devala*) of Śākyamuni, constructed a *pura* (*phucā*? = pinnacle) and had (the roof) covered (by tiles) by bricklayers (Āva), offered a golden pinnacle (*gajuri*) after offering a fire-sacrifice in Sūrya Varṇa Mahāvihara on the third day of bright fortnight of lunar month of Jyeṣṭha, Sunday, when there was the constellation of Mṛgaśirā and conjunction of Dhṛtī, in NS 785 (1665). They also offered a triple tiered umbrella (*chatra*) and a flag (*dhvajā*). May all be well. Earlier, on the third day of the dark fortnight of lunar month of Vaiśākha in NS 778 (1658), the members of community (*sarvasaṅgha*) of this monastery (*bāhā*) established the glorious Śākyamuni Bhaṭṭāraka after gilding the whole body. The gilding of the deity happened at the house of Mañjusimha. Later on, the same five senior members made one *jaḥsi* (large cooking pot of copper), one silver chain and two silver lotus flowers from the income of the deity. May all be good. This work was done by the group headed by Śrī Guluju (Vajrācārya).

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? om namo buddhāyall śraiyō'stu || samvat 798
2. āṣāḍhamāse kṛṣṇapakṣe || amāvāsyāṃtitho
3. somavāsare || asma[smi]ndine || vakanabāhāra
4. sthāna , vaṃtabāhāra , libichenanicā yetāgrha
5. vāsta(?)vya , kāyaṣṭha mādhasiṃhasya putraḥ nara-
6. siṃha bhāro , bhāryyā , kamalalakṣmīmāyī , thva nemha
7. ttri[stri]puruṣana , thva vaṃtavāhāra śrī 3 devayā pū-
8. rasa , jhyāla dhyekana thaṃṃana , vilāṃpati pi 4
9. tayā || vajrācāryya śrī devarathana vaṃdeju , thavara-
10. pā(?)yā paryyāyasa juro || yatha śāstrokta phalamastu
11. gajurisa suvaṇṇ[rṇṇ]a chatra jukva || nara-
12. siṃha bhāro || duntā śubha[m] ||

Synopsis:

Narasimha Kayaṣṭha, the son of Madhavasimha, together with his wife Kamalalakṣmīmāyī, residents of Vambāhā, Liviche, Nanicā, Yetagrha of the area of Vakumbaha, offered four banner paintings (*bilāṃpati*) to the thrice venerable deity of Vambāhā on the black moon day of lunar month of Āṣāḍha, Monday, in NS 798. This was done during the time of venerable Devarath Vajrācārya, the elder (of the *saṅgha*). Narasimha Bhāro offered a gilded umbrella (*suvarṇa chatra*), (on the top of the pinnacle). May all be well.

4

Stone inscription from the right side of the Kvāhpāḥḍyahchemof Vambāhā (NS 798, CE 1678).

Script: Prācalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

Maximum Length: 32 cm

Maximum Breadth: 21 cm

Above the inscription a *caitya*, flanked by the Moon and the Sun.

5

Inscriptions from the wooden struts of the first floor of Kvāḥpāḥchem of Vaṃbāhā (NS 800, CE 1680).

Script: Pracialita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

There are seven struts which have inscriptions at the bottom which can be read as a single inscription. The numbering starts on the left.

Transliteration of the text:

The first strut

1. ... vajrācāje citāmani ,, pramuṣa
2.sasivā... ,, jetadhara ,, ma(?)
3. ... bhāva(?) ,, śrāvana , śukra aṭami(?)
4. vatā || || śubha ,,

Translation:

(The group headed by) Ciṃtāmaṇi Vajrācārya Jetadhara on the 8th of the bright fortnight of lunar month of Śrāvāṇa May all be well.

The second strut

1. ? suṣuri bhāva
2. ? gvavirāma bhāva

Translation:

Sukhuri Bhāvo, Gvavirāma Bhāvo

The third strut

1. ? desimṇa bhāva
2. saṃvat 800 ,,

Translation:

Desimṇa Bhāvo, dated NS 800 (1680)

The fourth strut

1. ? maricā bhāva
2. cikidhika ,,

Translation:

1. Maricā Bhāvo, Cikidhika

The fifth strut

1. gvamirāma bhāva

Translation:

Gomirāma Bhāvo

The sixth strut

1. ? amirāja bhāva
2. tvati samohaṇa tayā

Translation:

Amirāja Bhāvo, the group of these [persons] installed [the struts].

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? samvata 803 biram̐pati dayakā dayakā punhīmā(?) se(?)-
2. vāna dayakā juro | śrī [vajrācārja cīmtāma(?)niju [dharama]
3. siṃha bhāvo , , suṣuri bhāvo ... || virāma(?) bhāvo
4. desiṃha bhāvo , , ami(?)nā(?)ma(?) bhā...[vo] ||
5. thuti samohona daya...[kā] juro
6. śubha

Synopsis:

The group of Śrī Cintāmani Vajrācārya, Dha(ra)ma Siṃha Bhābo, Sukhuri Bhāvo, Rāma Bhāvo, Desiṃha Bhāvo and Amināma Bhāvo made a banner painting, (an icon of) Gaṇeśa and *pūrṇimā sevā* (a *guthī* to observe the full moon days) in NS 803. May all be well.

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? om̐ namaḥ śrīśākyamunaye || samvat 820 cai-
2. tramāse kṛṣṇapakṣe ||aṣṭhamyāntithau || uttarāḍhā(?)-
3. yanakṣatrā | sighi[ddhi]yoga || ādityavāra || thvakunhu
4. śrī vaṃtavāhāra yautā digiche svam̐ta chāsyam̐ ,[āva]-
5. na ceṇā dina juro || thavīrapā śrī devarathana ju...[ro]
6. śrī kutudevaju , , śrī śākyamuniju , , śrī sunādeva...[ju]
7. śrī ratnaju , , śrī devajotiju , , śrī dhanadevaju , , thvate
8. pramukhana , , sam̐gha samūhana , , dayakā juro || thva(?)
9. thāya , , saeva śrī dhanadevajuyāke juro || śubham̐ ||

Synopsis:

A group of the members of the community (*sam̐gha*) led by Śrī Devaratha, its elder (*thapāāju*), Śrī Kutudeva, Śrī Devajyoti, Śrī Dhanadeva offered a three storied digiche in the west of Vambāhā and had (the roof) tiled (with bricks) by bricklayers on the 8th of the dark fortnight of the lunar month of Caitra, a Sunday when there was constellation called Uttrāḍhā and a conjunction called Siddhi in NS 820 (1700). Vaṃśidharadeva (will take care of) this *sataḥ* (Sanskrit. *satra*). May all be well.

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? śrayostu || samvata 847 phāguṇaśukla , , saptamyāyam̐tithau
2. lo[ro]hiṇīnakṣate[tre] , , biskam̐bhajoge , , śukravālasa kubha[m̐bha]lā-
3. sī , , sabitri , , bṛṣalāsī cadram̐[andra]vasī || thvakunhu pratīhā dina ju-
4. lo || punabhāṣā , , babuju , , śrī devajotijuyāta nāmaṇa ||
5. thva citabhāla dayakā julo , , punakha , , thva kāyapani-
6. mha , , śrī amitajotiju , , śrī dinajotiju , , mātā ponadha-

6

Stone inscription from the pedestal of the Gaṇeśa icon of Vambāhā (NS 803, CE 1682).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

Maximum Length of the part

of the inscription: 29 cm

Maximum Breadth: 25 cm

7

Stone inscription from the left side of the Gaṇeśa icon of Vambāhā (NS 820, CE 1700).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

Maximum Length: 29 cm

Maximum Breadth: 18 cm

Vajra on top, flanked by the Moon and the Sun

8

Stone inscription from a private house on the right side of the Digichem̐ of Vambāhā (NS 847, CE 1727).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

Maximum Length: 35 cm

Maximum Breadth: 20 cm

On top a *caitya*, flanked by the Moon and Sun.

7. liju || bhāryā devajanaju thvatsiyana ,, samohana dayakā
8. julo || punaṣa ,, devajotijuyā ,, śalātakunhu thva citabā-
9. hāpujā ,, sālīka paṃcapahāra puja yāya pvāta 1 mata || kuda 2
10. siyaphakī ,, rā pra 7 kura 2 thva ,, thuti dāna biyamāla ,, thva ciṃtā
11. yāka ,, guthi kattakana cittā yāyamāla || thva citabāhāla
12. gvamha naṃ senakara sā ,, paṃcamahāpāpa lāka juro ,, gvaha-
13. thyā vā(?)hathyā , brahmahathyā rāka , nīdāna yāta sā dhama ,,
14. kama ,, punya rāka ,, utyaṃti julo || || śubha ||

Synopsis:

The *caitya* was made in the name of the (late) father Devaj(y)oti on the seventh day of the bright fortnight of lunar month of Phālguna, Friday, when the Sun was in Cancer, the Moon in Leo, the constellation called Rohiṇī and the conjunction called Viskambha in NS 847 by his two sons, Amitajyoti and Dinajyoti, their mother Ponadhari, and his first son's wife Devalāni.

One wick lamp, 2 *karṣa* (24 grams) of *siyāphakī* (fried rice), 7 *pra* (5376 grams) of meat and 2 *kura* (4 *mānās*) of rice beer should be offered during the *caityapūjā* and *paṃcapahāra pūjā* of the effigy (*sālīka*) on the very day of the death ritual (*śrāddha*) of Devaj(y)oti. The *guthī* members should take care of this (work). If someone destroys the *caitya*, that person will be inflicted with the five great sins such as killing a cow, a woman, a Brahman. If one takes care of (what is mentioned), he will gain *dharma*, good deed (*karmā*) and merit (*punya*). May all be well.

9

The Stone inscription from inside house of Rāju Vajrācārya of Vaṃbāhā (NS 848, CE 1728).

Script: Prācalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

Leng 32.5, W 20.5

On the top a *vajra*, flanked by the Sun and the Moon.

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? samvata 848 māghakṛṇa[ṣṇa] ,, catuda[rda]syāyāmtīthva(?) ...[||]
2. dhanaṣṭha(?) [dhaniṣṭhā]nakṣatra[tre] ,, śivajoge ,, jathāka[narṇa] maho(?)ta(?)la(?)...
3.[śana]ca...[ra]vāla [,] minarāsīgatesavitari(?)bharā... ..[osigate ca] -
4.[dramasi] ...[thva]kunhu ,, śrī vaṃtabāhāra [,] cikamna atavana[ciṇā]
5. dina juro || punbhā...[khā] śrī amittajotiju vatabāhā-
6. rayā chāya(?)la , vayā karāta dejā(?)niju(kijā) di-
7. ...[na]jotiju[bhari] mātiju thuti samuhana[nyāsa] puna
8. ...[bha]riju...[yā][mālaka] cikaatavana ciṇā juro [||] puna-
9. ...[ṣa] ,, thva ata[bahā] cerisa[hasya] tayamadu juro gvamhasyena ...[taṃsyā]
10. ...[ṣa] mayāse[tarasā] [,][śrī 3 bha]gavānaya kuditi yāka
11.[nigra][habhasmabhuta rāka brahma]hathyā(?) vāra(?)hathyā] tihathyā
12. pī(?)rtha(?)hathyā gvahathyā paṃcamahāpāpa rāka juro[suna-]
13. ... ma(?)rtya(?)va , sakalyaṃ(?) yāvigati... .. ghācadhala yā(?)nā
14. kārasya ,, mahā(?)dha(?)mṛ(?) rā(?)va(?) uteti juro ... gomhasena nidā(?)-
15. na(?) mayātasā || ta(?)sya(?)ghā(?)ce(?) naṃ_ nakemāra ,,
16. juro (flower design) śubhaṃ || bha _ _ _ ha _ _ _ _ _ yānājuro

Synopsis:

May all be well. A group of the people led by the venerable Amittajoti (Amrtajyoti) including his wife Dejāni, brother Dinajoti and wife Māti paved Vambāhā by oiled bricks and offered it on the 14th lunar day of the dark fortnight of the month of Māgha in NS 848, on Saturday, when there was the constellation called Dhaneṣṭhā and the conjunction called Śiva during the appropriate Karaṇa moment, when the Sun is in Pices and the Moon in Aquarius. Nobody is allowed to take the bricks of the *bāhā* to pave the ground floor (*cheli*) (of one of the courtyard's houses). Whoever does not follow what is taught (in the inscription), destroys (the work), shall be spotted by the bad gaze (*kudṛṣṭi*) of the deity and inflicted by the five great sins such as killing a Brahmana, killing a child, killing a woman, killing the ancestor (the father, grandfather) or killing a cow. Whoever does accordingly, may achieve *mahādharma* (and) will profit. ... should offer food ... Done so ...

Transliteration of the text:

1. ʔ śreya'stu || samvat 848 naṣṭa śrā... [vaṇa śu]kla , ca...[tu]rdda...[syāṃ]tithau
2. || śuklavāra , thvakunhu , ontavāhā... [rayā] śrī varjjacāryya vaṃdya
3. chāyara , śrī amṛtajatiju , oyā bhāryyā , devajāni , mā-
4. tāju || nihma stripuruṣa , syana samūhana , śrī otavāhārasa
5. digisa cikana atana cinā juro || śrī caittavāhāra , dha-
6. rmmadhātu , maṇḍara , vajrayoginī , digideva , thvati thā-
7. panā yañā || thvatiyā cintā yāka , phukija , kijā
8. dinajati , mhaṃ 1 || nāyakaju mhaṃ ... [5] , thvapanisyana ci-
9. ntā yāyamāra juro || devakhu...[ri] bu rova 4 thvatiyā
10. orasanana , thva sārīka deva sakareṃ puḷā yāya
11. māra juro || mayātasā , samasta , paṃcamahāpā-
12. taka rāka juro || rohaṃkarami , dhunirā-
13. jaju || śubhamastu sarvvadāḥ ||

Synopsis:

Amrtajyoti (Vajracārya) and his wife Devajāni, residents of Vambāhā, paved the Digicheṃ of Vambāhā with oiled bricks (*cikanata*) and established a *caitya*, a *dharmadhātu maṇḍala*, an icon of Vajrayoginī as the ancestor deity (*digideva*) on the 14th day of bright fortnight of the omitted (intercalactic lunar month of) Śrāvaṇa, Friday, in NS 848. His brother Dinajyoti and the five senior members should take care. Four ropanis of land in Devakhuri are offered and by the income of this the statue and all deities should be worshipped during the (annual) worship. If this is not done, the people will be inflicted by the five great sins. The stone carver was Dhunirāma. May all be well.

10

The inscription on the back of the effigy in the courtyard of Vambāhā (NS 848, CE 1728).

Script: Pracalit Newari

Language: Classical Newari

Maximum Length: 45 cm

Maximum Breadth: 35 cm

On top a *vajra*, flanked by the Moon and Sun.

11

Stone inscription on the wall of a house of the northern wing of Vaṃbāhā (NS 854, CE 1734).
 Script: Pracalita Newari
 Language: Sanskrit and Classical Newari
 Maximum Length: 46 cm
 Maximum Breadth: 28 cm
 Above the inscription Śākyamuni Buddha, flanked by the Moon and the Sun.

Transliteration of the text:

1. ॐ om namaḥ burddhā[ddhā]yaḥ ṣadharmmapuṇḍalikākṣa[m] sarvvajña karuṇāyaka samastaburddha
2. sadāsātāraṃ śākṣasiṃha[m] namāmyahaṃ || śraiyō'stuḥ saṃmvat 854 vaiśāsamāsyā
3. kṛṣṇapakṣa trayodasyāntri[ti]thau aśinī[aśvini]nakṣatre āyukumānajoge jathā
4. kaṇṇa[rṇṇa]muhurttake ādityavāraśa vṛṣarāsigate savirttala meṣarāsigate
5. te caṃndramasi tasmī vṛṣasaṃkrāntidīne thvakunhu śrī caitrabhāra pa[pra]tiṣṭhā
6. yāsyam mha 1 lokesvala pratiṣṭhā yānā dina juro || śrī kṛṣṇamuṇiju śrī jñā-
7. nadhalī mātrāju thvapani aji chaya nemha samuhana saṃkalpa yānā juro
8. svapitā śrī dammadevayā nāmāna || caitrabhāra dayakā kaneṣṭa pṛti-
9. kya śrī bhāgīdevayā nāmāna || ruyā lokesvala dayakā juro punabhā-
10. ṣā baramadu bu rova pi 4 thvateyā barasānana || busādhana kunhu jajñe
11. yāyamāra || kvāyapārādeva puja yāyamāra || pindra thayamāra juro
12. thvateyā cintā yāka || śrī panaju || śrī dharmmajatiju || śrī bhairavaju ||
13. śrī devarāyaju || śrī kṛṣṇamuṇiju || thvapani nāmhasena cintā yā-
14. yamāra juro || cintā mayākāre paṃcamahāpātaka rāka juro ||
15. ciṃntā yākāra || urttama juro ||
16. || śrī dharmmadevayā bhāyyā[ryyā] dhanaśvalī mātrāju || śrī bhāgīdevayā bhāyyā[ryyā]
17. cekati mātrāju || kaneṣṭa bhagīni candravatī mātrāju || gunavati mā-
18. tāju || dharmmadevayā putrī dhanalakṣmī mātrāju || gunalakṣmī mātāju
19. bhāgīdevayā putrī jayalakṣmī mātrāju || śubhaṃ ||

Synopsis:

Svasti. Om. Obeisance to the Buddha. The one who has eyes resembling to the lotus blossom of fine *dharma*, one who is omniscient, full of compassion and who is the teacher of Samantabhadra, I bow to such Śākyasiṃha.

Kṛṣṇamuni together with his grandmother Jñānadharī made a vow and established a *caitya* in the name of his (dead) father Dharmadeva and a golden icon of Lokesvara in the name of his (dead) uncle Bhāgīdeva on the 13th day of the dark fortnight of lunar month of Vaiśākha, Sunday, when the Sun was in Taurus and the Moon in Aris, the constellation called Aśvinī and the conjunction called Āyusmāna in NS 854. During the annual worship, a fire-sacrifice, worship dedicated to Kvāḥpāḥdyah and offering of *pinda* (rice ball) for the (annual) death ritual (*śrāddha*) should be performed (from the income of the offered land of) four *ropanis* from Baramadubu. Five persons, Śrī Pana, Dharmajyoti, Bhairava, Devarāya and Kṛṣṇamuni should take care of (of the *guthi*). If (they) do not take care of it, they may be inflicted by the five great sins. If they take care of (what is mentioned), they will prosper. (The other family members present are) Dhanaśvari, the wife of Dharmadeva, Cekati, the wife of Bhāgīdeva, Candravati and Guṇavati, the younger sisters, Dhanalakṣmī and Guṇalakṣmī, and the daughters of Dharmadeva and Jayalakṣmī, the daughter of Bhāgīdeva. May all be well.

Transliteration of the text:

1. ॐ namo buddhāya || śraiyō'stu || samvat 856 śā[śra]vaṇamāse kṛṣṇa
2. pakṣe , caturthiyāntithau , uttarābhādranakṣetre śūlayoge , bṛhaspatibā-
3. sare , thvakunhu deyalam bāhāragṛha , caitrakāla punyerāma thumṇaca bhāryyā
4. lacanāmayi ca nehma strīpurukhana , śrī vaṃthavāhāra śrīmat śrī 2 kvā-
5. capāla bhaṭṭārakasake , jalam aṃṇa cekana atana daṇāva , vāhālasam
6. vāhārapivane cekana atana ciṇāva yajña yānana pratisthā yānā
7. dina juro , thva vāhālasam , pivane lasam sunānam ki...[śi?] tānana se-
8. nakala bhā [sā] govārahāṇādi pañcamahāpātaka lāka juro , bhina-
9. kala sā utottra juro || yathā śāstrokta phalamastu || śubha ||
10. om śrī devarathanaju tharapā , , thotiā cintā yāka
11. śrī devajotiju juro , , śubha

Synopsis:

Puṇyarāma Citrakāra and his wife Lacanāmayi caused the repair of the decayed wall of the house of the monastery (*bāhāragṛha*) with oiled bricks (*cekana atana*) on the fourth day of dark fortnight of lunar month of Śrāvaṇa, Thursday, when there was the constellation called Uttarabhāra and conjunction called Śula in 856 (1736). They (also) paved the inner and outer premises of the monastery with oiled bricks and performed a fire-sacrifice (*yajña*). At this *bāhāra*, whoever by nailing (i.e. tying) an elephant at the outer lane, destroys it, will be inflicted with the five great sins, such as (taking) the life of a cow. If one does good deeds, one may achieve the goal as written in *śāstras* (texts of the spiritual leaders). (This act was done) during the time of *thavarapā* (the eldest of the *saṃgha*) Devarathana. Devajoti took care of the act. Auspiciousness.

Transliteration of the text:

1. ॐ namaḥ buddhāya || śraiyos'tuḥ samvat 859 śā[śrā]vaṇa
2. māsyā kṛṣṇapakṣa || pa[pam]camyāntithau , , āśvaṇī... ..[nakṣa]tre
3. bṛddhijoge || jathākarnamuhurtte || ādityavāra
4. śle(?) || śimharāsigate savittali , , meṣarasigata ca-
5. ndramasi || thvakunhu || śrī 3 jogāvvaṃ[gāṃva]ra prītina jhyā-
6. ra dayakā | mha 1 sāksasiṃha thāpanā yā...[syam] taya
7. dina juro || śrī vajrācāryya devarā...[ja]ju || bhā-
8. yyā [ryyā] lakṣmīśvalī mātāju || putra śrī cakrajotiju
9. śrī dharmmarā'jaju || thvapani samuhana dayakā ju-
10. ro śubha ||

Synopsis:

The group of Śrī Devarāja Va(j)rācārya, his wife Lakṣmīśvarī, his sons Śrī Cakrajyoti and Śrī Dhanmarāja made a window (*jhyāla*) and offered it in love to the thrice venerable Yogāmbara. (They also installed) an icon of Śākyasiṃha (Buddha) on the 5th day of the dark fortnight of lunar month of Śrāvaṇa, Sunday, at the proper time, when the Sun was in Leo and the Moon in Aris, the constellation called Aśvinī, conjunction called Bṛddhi, called Yathākaraṇa in NS 859.

12

Stone inscription on the right side of Mahākāla, in the passage of the Digicheṃ of Vaṃbāhā (NS 856, CE 1736).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

L 36 cm, W 28 cm

Above the inscription the Triratna, flanked by the Moon and the Sun.

13

Stone inscription from the left side of the gate of the Kvāhpāḥcheṃ of Vaṃbāhā (NS 859, CE 1739).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

Maximum length: 31 cm

Maximum breadth: 22 cm

Above the inscription a *vajra*, flanked by the Moon and Sun.

14

Stone inscription of the pedestal of the lion guarding the western exit of the Vambāhā courtyard to the left (NS 863 (1742).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Newari

L 58 cm, W 9 cm

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? śrīyostu samvatra 863 māghasira

Synopsis:

May all be well. NS 863 in the lunar month of Mangsira.

15

Copper-plate inscription on the right side of the Kvāhpāḥcheṃ of Vambāhā (NS 870, CE 1750).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Classical Newari

Maximum length: 29 cm

Maximum breadth: 18 cm

Transliteration of the text:

1. svasti nepārāvde ,, vindu parvata nāga samjuteḥ māse kārttika śukla tṛtīyā [pra]
2. caturthiyāntithau mūlanakṣatre ,, dhṛtiyoge ,, vṛhaspativāsare ,, ete divase śrī 3 vajrāsa-
3. na daśacara bha...ka prītyartha ,, śuvarṇnaduvāra sakalpa yā[nā] dina juroḥ || dānapati ,, surja-
4. vanta mahāvihālādiṣṭhita ,, śākyavaṃśa kṛṣṇamuśi[ni] ,, pitāma(?)hi(?) jñānadharī ,, śa bhari -
5. rī ,, putri candravatī sabhani cikaṭī ,, chaya dhanarakṣmī ,, gunarakṣmī ,, jayarakṣmī ete samo-
6. hana ,, śrī 3 devavara prītyarthaṃ duntā juroḥ | puna jñānadhari suputra ,, dharmādevasa bhāṭṛ(?) bhagī-
7. devaju nimha kāya divaṃgata juvana ,, nāmne(?)na ,, dharmadhātu caityaḥ śuvarṇna duvāra duntā
8. thvateyā punyaṇa prāptamastuḥ || śrī vuvāhārayā mūladvavārayā vajrācāryya
9. śrī dhajarājajuyā ,, jathāsādhā , thā, śrī 2 bhagavāna prītina ,, dohorapā juroḥ ||
10. robha yāta śā ,, paṃcamahāpāta rā[ka] juloḥ || || śubhaḥ ||

Synopsis:

The group of Kṛṣṇamuṇi Śākyavaṃśa, (his) grandmother Jñānanadharī, wife (Śanabha)rī, daughter Candravatī, (brother's wife?) Cikaṭī, granddaughters Dhanalakṣmī and Gunalakṣmī, residents of Sūrja Vantā Mahāvihāla offered a *dharmadhātucaitya* and a golden doorway (*suvarṇa duvāra*) to the Daśavala Bhaṭṭāraka (Buddha) in the name of Jñānanadharī's two dead sons Dharmādeva and Bhāgīdeva on the 3rd pra 4th day of bright fortnight of the lunar month of Kārtika, Thursday, when there was the constellation called Mūla and conjunction called Dhṛti in NS 870 (*vindu*= 0, *parvata*= 7, *nāga*=8). May this act fulfill the wish (of the donors) according to the religious text. Dvajarāja Vajrācāryya of Bubahāra (also) offered ... to the twice venerable deity. (If it is destroyed the person) will be inflicted by the five great sins. May all be well.

16

Stone inscriptions of the windows of both sides of the doorway of the Kvāhpāḥcheṃ of Vambāhā (NS 893, CE 1773).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Newari

L 29cm, W 29 cm

Transliteration of the text:

On the left side:

1.893 vaiśākha śukla titiyā juro

Synopsis:

... on the 3rd day of bright fortnight of lunar month of Vaiśākha

2. On the right side:

... .. patisthā yānā dina juro || vāhālayā _ _ _ luyā juva ...

Translation:

... .. the icon(s) have been offered... ..

Transliteration of the text:

1. om namaḥ vudhāyaḥ nama[maḥ] dhammāyaḥ namo sa[sam]ghāya.h | śrī savva
2. pū ... rikākṣa jñaku(?) ... ru(?)ka samudabhadra sadā |
3. , sā...[kya]siṃha samvata 893 bhā-
4. ...[dra]pada tithau mū(?)rānakṣatra prītijoge śu-
5. ...[kra]vāraśa || thvakunhu vantavāhāra , sūryavanta mahāvihāra
6. ...ttarakasya śrī akṣobhya vudha bhagavāna , rohona jyānāna
7. duntā juro || nhavasa vā(?)nādeva jirṇa(?) ju(?)vama duntā || mham 1 tā-
8. rādevaṃ duntā || bhākhā: dha(?)ratako bu ro 2 ja 3 thvate neyeka...
9. ju daya || varasānanayā(?) vantavāhāra[bhāṭṭā(?)rakasya vuddha bhagavā-
10. nayā vara(?)sānana yāyamārā | ja...cho(?)yakemāra pvāta 1 ghera-
11. devā choyke māra juro nisarāva phaṃ 1 dekamhā | devasta māra
12.gu(?)ra(?)vāhāra vakamvāhārayā śrī pahānajuṇa jagya yatakemāra ||
13. thvate duttā[ntā] | kāthamuti gṛra(?) vaṃntāgrha caitrakāra amaradeva , bhā-
14. ryyā rājyeśvarī , putra amṛtadeva putra jasadeva putra
15. dha(?)na(?)mitradeva thvate samuhana duntā juro || thvateyā cintā yā
16. ka vantavāhārayā(?) śrī pahānaju chusi(?)khāyā caitrakāra
17. mana(?)siṃharapā ...trakāra cikādhika thvate sva(?)-
18. mhasyana abhichina cintā yāyamāra juro ||[athe]
19.[mayāta sā] pañcamāhāpātaka rāka | u(?)ttama yāta(?)sā uttra...-
20. tama juro , thvateyā vu jyāka mādhava tyā(?)pa(?)gāma... ..
21. na bhāvo juro | oyathva juro || [||]

Synopsis:

Om. Obeisance to the Buddha, Dharma and Saṃgha. The one who has eyes resembling to the lotus blossom of fine *dharmā*, one who is omniscient, full of compassion and who is the teacher of Samantabhadra, I bow to such Śākyasiṃha.

Amaradeva Citrakāra and his wife Rājyeśvarī donated a stone icon of Buddha (Akṣobhya Buddha Bhagavāna) to Vantavāhāra Sūryavanta Mahāvihāra in the 10th (?) day of the bright fortnight of lunar month of Bhādra, Friday, when there was the constellation called Mūla and conjunction called Prīti in NS 893. It was offered since the old one was completely worn out. Tārādeva offered one piece (*mham* 1 = the deity). Two *ropanis* and 3 *javās* land of Ṭaratakobu (were offered). Every year, the annual worship of the Buddha of Vantavahāra should be performed, one ghee lamp should be lit, *nislā* (a plate of beaten

17

Stone inscription on the left side of the Kvāḥpāḥchem of Vaṃbāhā (NS 893, CE 1773).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Sanskrit and Newari

L 38 cm, W 22 cm

On top of the inscription the Buddha, flanked by the Sun and Moon. Below in the pedestal, five icons of the donors including one woman.

rice, sweets and a coin) and one *pāṭhi* (of beaten rice) should be offered to the deity. Śrī Pohoraju of Gunabahāra Vakambāhāra should make a fire-sacrifice. Amaradeva Citrakāra, his wife Rājyeśvarī, his sons Amṛtadeva, Jasadeva and Dhanamitradeva, the group of Citrakāra of Caintāgṛha offered it. Śrī Pohāna of Vambāhā, Manasiṃha Citrakāra of Chusikhā, and Cikadhika Citrakāra of Haḥkhā, the (three ?) person should take care (of the *guṭhi*). These persons should continuously take care (of it). If not done so they will be inflicted by the five great sins. If they take care of it they may prosper. Mādhava from the _ _ village was appointed as the tiller of the land. could not be done.

18

Stone inscription from Dunenani Kacābahā of Vambāhā (NS 949, CE 1829).
Script: Pracalita Newari
Language: Newari
L 51 cm, W 37 cm
On the top of the inscription a *caitya* motif.

Transliteration of the text:

1. [(saddharma)puṇḍarikākṣa sarvvagyakala[nātmakaṃ samantabhādra sātāraṃśākyarājaṃ]
2. namāmihāṃ , śreyostu saṃvata 949
3. [daśa]myāntithau || mrga[si]rā[nakṣatre] viskaṃbha yoge [maṃsira]
4. rāsiga[te] savitre , viṣarāsi[gate] [candra]masi
5. pratisthā yānā dina juro || śrī śu[ryya]ontamahā
6. [vihara] śrī jagata[mu]niju [lakṣmī]... .. [putra_paru]
7. ta śrī ca
8.
9. julo
10. yā
11. da_
12. guthi

(The lower lines are worn out, thus not readable)

Synopsis:

The one who has eyes resembling the lotus blossom of *dharma*, one who is omniscient, full of compassion and who is the teacher of Samantabhādra, I bow to Śākyasiṃha. On 10th lunar day of the month of Maṃsira, when there was the constellation called Mrgaśirā and the conjunction called Viskaṃbha, when the Sun is in Scorpio(?) and the Moon is in Taurus a *guṭhi* has been established at Sūryaontamahāvihāra during the reign of king Rājendra Vikrama Śāha in NS 949 by Jagatamuni, Lakṣmi and son Paraśu.

19

Large stone inscription of the right side of the Kvāḥpāḥchem of Vambāhā (NS 977, CE 1857).
Script: Pracalita Newari
Language: Sanskrit and Newari
L 69 cm, W 39 cm

Transliteration of the text:

1. ॐ namo ra...[tna] trayāya || namo buddhāya || namo dharmāya || namaḥ saṃghāya || || om namaḥ śrīśākyasiṃhāya || ||
2. vaṃde śrīśākyasiṃhaṃ suranaranamitaṃ sarvalokaikanāthāṃ nirji(?)tyā(?) svattyamūle namucimabhigata' nūttarajñānapātraṃ || lokāsada-
3. rśayata , mathapathikajanān , trailatājālahamṭaḥ samyaksa[sam]buddha saṃjñetyabhimataphala doḥyate rājavamśe || : 1 || śrī sureṃdron-
4. paḥ sāhadevasyarājyesa pṛthvīmahīpāyakosaujitāriṃ || mahāsiddhikha

5. galabhe anacakrepraĵāpālayitvā ciraṃjīvasaṃtu
6. ॥ 2 ॥ sūrya vaṃtovihāriya sthavīraḥśrījagamunīḥ ॥ tasya patnī padmalakṣmīsvatuḥ putrovīrājate ॥ 3 ॥ bhāja[ju]dhaṃ munidivi
7. gatāḥ svabhāryā tejamatī satām ॥ divaṃgataḥ sparśamunerasya patnī thakūṃbhidha ॥ 4 ॥ dhaṃcāmune ॥ sabhāryā bhūjñā-
8. nīthakunmamahāmatī ॥ caṃdramunīscaturthaḥ manū siddhilakṣmī manoharī ॥ 5 ॥ dhija dhaṃmunī jyeṣṭhapautraḥ
9. śaktī nhukṣathakūnsatī ॥ kālidāso kuladvīpakalyāṇa priyavādinī ॥ 6 ॥ ratnamunī siṃghamunī hermu-
10. nī siddhamunī tathā ॥ āsāmadu cakramunīḥ chatramunīritismataḥ ॥ 7 ॥ eteḥ parijanaiḥ sārddha mili-
11. tvācāryayāmyahaṃ ॥ etatpunyaprabhāveṇa saṃvodhipadamāpnūyāt ॥ 8 ॥ dhātunānirmitaṃ kṛtvāsauvarṇṇena
12. vilepitāṃ ॥ pratimāśākyakeśriyaṃ pratiṣṭhāma karoṅgunḥ ॥ 9 ॥ nepāle hāyane varṣamunivājyaṃ
13. kamīlite ॥ phālguṇaṃ śuklapakṣetu rudratithyā ॥ punarvasuḥ ॥ 10 ॥ saubhāgye śukravāre ca rāsau
14. maithuna caṃdrage ॥ pratiṣṭhāṃ kriyate rāsaukuṃbhe sūryagate dine ॥ 11 ॥ ślokaḥkartā mahābaudhdhopāsa-
15. kaḥ sūryaṃdasa ॥ śilpakārī vīradhana viśvakarmādhivāsakaḥ ॥ śubhaṃ ॥ saṃvat 977 miti phāguṇa
16. śudī 11 punarvasunakṣatra saubhāgyayoga śukravāra ku[kuṃ]bharāśigate savitari mithunagate caṃdramasi thvate parvakālasa
17. śrī sūryaṃta mahāvihārayā kvācapāla deva –1- yā sijalayā mūrṭti dayakāo luna siyāo prati-
18. ṣṭhā yāñā dina julo ॥ śubhaṃ punabhāṣā aphara bu rova 2 thoyā varavasāna
19. vusādhana yāyamāra oṃta vāhārayā nāyoju bhojana yāke
20. māra mha 5 o[om]vāhārayā cakaśūli śvayāmbhū pūrāna pātha
21. yāyamāra mhaṃ 1 guvāhājuṃ aparamitā pātha yāyamā-
22. ra ॥ thukiyā ciṃtā yāka ॥ śrī dhaṃcāmuni ॥ śrī cadra[ndra]munī ॥
23. śrī dhijadhamuni ॥ śrī kālidāsa ॥ tho pyamhasyānaṃ ciṃtā
24. yāyamāra jura ॥ śubha ॥

Synopsis:

(In the beginning, the praise of the Buddha, thereafter, the praise of the king Surendra Vikram Śāha in Sanskrit.)

The family members of venerable Jagamunī, the senior member of Sūrya Vaṃtā Mahāvihāra, his wife Padmalakṣmī, late Dhaṃmunī, his wife Tejamati, late Parśamunī, his wife Thakūṃni, Dhaṃcāmuni, his wife Bhū _ jñānīthakun, Caṃndramunī, Siddhilakṣmī, Dhijadhammuni's first grandson Śaktī, wife Thakun, Kālidāsa, Kalyāṇa, Ratnamunī, Siṃghamunī, Hermunī, Siddhamunī, Āsāmadu, Cakramunī and Chatramuni established the gilded copper icon of the venerable Kvācapāladeva of Sūryaṃta Mahāvihāra on the 11th day of bright fortnight of lunar month of Phālguṇa, Friday, in NS 977 (1857), when the Sun was in Virgo and the Moon in Gemini. May all be well. (The income of) two *ropanis* land of Aphara should be used for annual worship (*busādhana*). Five senior members (*nāyoju*) of Oṃta Vahāra should be fed. The senior member (*cakreśvara*) of the monastery should recite the Svayāmbhū Purāṇa. One Gubhaju (*guvāhāju*) priest should recite Aparamitā. The (group of) four, Dhaṃcāmuni, Candramuni, Dhijadhamuni and Kālidāsa should take care (of it). May all be good. Sūryacaṃdra, the worshipper of the Buddha, composed the stanzas (in Sanskrit) and the artisan (*śilpakār*) Viradhana acted as the abode of Viśvakarma (*viśvakarmādhivāsakaḥ*).

20

Inscription on the wooden Gābhāsī pole of the Kvāpāḥḍyaḥ shrine of Vambāhā (NS 991, CE 1871).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Newari

L 102 cm

Transliteration of the text:

1. śrī bhagavāna du[dum]tā jura
2. saṃvata 991 sāla miti mu(?)ni(?) , buddha , ca(?)
3. dramunina gabhāra gaṃbhīra dumtā jura [||] [śu]bha

Synopsis:

(Ca)ndramuni has offered the divine *gaṃbhāḥsim* (a pole to create sound in Buddhist monasteries) in NS 991 to the deity. Buddha

21

Inscribed brass sheet at the top of the colonnettes framing the doorway of the Kvāḥpāḥchem of Vambāhā (NS 993, CE 1873).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Newari

Length of the inscriptions of both colonnetes 8.5 cm

Width: 9 cm

Transliteration of the text:

I. On the left side:

1. om̐ namo budhāya || namaḥ || || śreyostu saṃ.
2. 993 mti vaiśāṃsya kṛṣṇapakṣe ,, pra-
3. tipadāyāmtithau || anulādhānakṣetre ,, pa-
4. liojoge ,, jathākaraṇṇamuhūtre ,, ma[maṇ]ga-
5. lavārasare ,, vṛṣarāsigate savi-
6. tare ,, viścikarāsigate candraṃmasi ,, ||
7. thvaṣunhu śrī ontavihārasa śrīśrīśrī
8. bhagavānayāta pilatina ,, ekacha-
9. tvāla tuṃcheyā parajāpati thakula
10. vāgasi ,, śivasundhara ,, siṃgha vi
11. mānavi ,, gvapāla ,, pāsā āsā
12. maduḥ ,, divaṃgata mātrā gaṃgālakṣmī

II. On the right side:

1. gyānathaku lakṣmīkesari ,, laṃ
2. rakṣmī ,, lakṣmīkesari ,, thvate pramu-
3. khana jarabhochisayā dharmmacita u-
4. tpati juyāo ,, thva tolana dunatā
5. juro ,, thugu punyaṇaṃ dānapratiyā-
6. ta sadākālaṃ śrī 3 bhagavānayā śu-
7. dṛṣṭi juyāo ihajanmasaṃ śukha
8. saṃpati juyāo parajanmasa mo-
9. kṣa prāpti juyamāra juro ,, śubhama-
10. stu sarvadā ,, śubhaṃ || ||

Synopsis:

After the generation of pious thoughts (*dharmacitta*), the whole family members headed by Bāgasimha Parajāpati, the senior member of the family, Śivasundhar, Siṃha Bira ; Mānavī, Gopāla, friend

Āsāmadu, dead mother Gaṅgālakṣmī, Jñānathaku, Lakṣmīkesarī, Laṃrakṣmī, Lakṣmīkesarī of Tuṃcheṃ, Ekachabāhā offered this tympanum in love to the thrice venerable deity of Onta Vihāra on the 1st day of the dark fortnight of lunar month of Vaiśākha, Tuesday in NS 993 when there was the constellation called Anurāgādhā, the conjunction called Pariga, the appropriate Karaṇa moment, when the Sun was in Taurus and the moon in Scorpio. By this religious act the donor may be blessed by the thrice venerable deity, and enjoy happiness (*śukha*) and prosperity (*sampati*) in this life and liberation (*mokṣa*) in the next life. May all be good.

Transliteration of the text:

1. (motif of a vajra) svasti || śreyo'stu || samvat 885 phāguṇa śukla || pūrṇamāsyātithau pūvphālguṇī nakṣetre || bṛ[ha]spatīvārasare || tasmī śricandragrāsa parvadinē || bakhanavāhāra chvāsaphare||
2. yanātāgrha || haridāsa bhāro || māṭṛ rukumaṇīlakṣmī || bhāryā śivarakṣmī thvapana svamha samucayana || śrī 3 vanta vāhāra kvācapāra bhaṭṭarakā pītina thva ghaṇṭha duntā juroḥ śubha ||
3. ? śrī itilāṇha(?)0 jyāyake || varmaṇa simju || puṭa || chata mina || jyānā julva || śubhaṃḥ |

Synopsis:

The group of three persons, Haridāsa Bhāro, his mother Rukumānilakṣmī, wife Śivalakṣmī, residents of Yentāgrha, Chvasaphara at Bakhanabāhā offered this bell in love to the thrice venerable deity of Vantabāhā during the moon eclipse on the full moon day of lunar month of Phālguna, Thursday, in NS 996, when there was the constellation called Pūrvaphalguṇī. May all be well.Brahma Simha (also) offered a *patāḥ* (flag) (and) *chatra* (umbrella). May all be good.

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? om namaḥ śrīśākyasiṃhāyaḥ || brahmopendra mṛḍāmarādhipatibhi vadyaṃ jinaṃ śrīghanaṃ || saṃsārādhvitarāṃgabhaṃ
2. gurukaraṃ lokābhikāṃkṣāpradaṃ || taptamaṇṇanibham suduṣkarakaraṃ dvātrimśadaṃ kaiyutaṃ 9(?) ṇa...trabhavādhipaṃ trijagatāṃ tā... ..
3. om namaḥ ||1|| śreyostu || samvat 999 jeṣṭhaśudī pūrṇamāsi anurādhānakṣatra || siddhijoga ||
- thapaka śrīsujoyadharmmasaṃ-
4. skārīta vajrakirtti mahāvihārasa śrī 2 bhagavāna pītinaṃ sayava vihārayā śākyavaṃśa śrī siṃghamuni lāni kāyajoti
5. māma jñāni... .. tirī [siṃkhvāthakuṃ] || thvate jala bho... ..[cayāṃ?]
- dharmmacita utpati juyāo[dhātu?]-
6. yā jajñāsārā dayakāo jajña yānā...[o] dumtā juro || śubha || ||

Synopsis:

Svasti. Om. Obeisance to glorious Śākyasiṃha. The Jina Śrīghana is praised by Brahmā, Upendra (i.e., Āditya), Mṛḍa (i.e., Śiva) and Amarādhipati (i.e., Indra). [He is] the one who has crossed the way of *samsāra*, *gabhaṃ gurukaraṃ* (?), who fulfils desires of the world, who resembles to *taptam aṇḍa*

22

Bronze inscriptions of a small bell hung on the right side of the gate of Kvāpācheṃ of Vambāhā (NS 996, CE 1876).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Newari

Height of the bell: 32 cm

Diameter 28 cm

23

Brass-plate inscriptions of the fire-pit in front of the Kvāhpācheṃ of Vambāhā (NS 999, CE 1879).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Sanskrit and Newari

Length fire-sacrificial pit: 45 cm x 45 cm

(lit. “hot egg,” referring to the sun?), who has practiced austerity (*suduṣkararakam*), who is endowed with thirty-two auspicious signs, ..., who is the master of three worlds, and who is the only protector of the three worlds. *Om*, obeisance.

After the generation of pious thoughts (*dharmacitta*), the whole family members of Siṃghamuni, Kī(ṛti)muni, brother’s son Mānājoti, mother Jñāni, wife... .. Siṃkhvāthakum, the residents of Sūjadh(a)rma Samskārita Vajrakirti Mahāvihāra offered the pit of metal for the fire ritual (*dhātuyā jajñasāla*) after performing a fire-sacrifice on the full moon day of lunar month of Jeṣṭha in NS 999, when there was the constellation called Anurādhā and conjunction called Siddhi. May all be well.

24

Inscriptions on the bottom of Jvalāvalicaitya of Vambāhā (NS 1002, CE 1882).
Script: Prācalita Newari
Language: Sanskrit and Newari
L 71 cm, W 5 cm

Transliteration:

1. om̐ namo śrīdharmmadhātuvāgīśvarāya namaḥ || i...se(?)svāmi prajā... ..
...pālamahindra ॥ bhā svā...dattāri daṇḍapari jayavali jidvittadā...trapā... .. ityatadvāsaga ...
...ṇati(?)thā(?)rajana
2. ...vā(?)dhā(?)mya(?)jā...pātraddattāri dantu nata maga ca(?)janī cakrapāṇi sajiya
...staṣa śunyamekaṃ mādhave kṛṣṇapakṣe ॥ trayodasyāṃ(?)tithau ॥ hapa(?)... kṣaśaśivāra ॥
āyusmāna rāmayoge || yatata dine śrī
3. 3 dharmmadhātu...ṭi... .. avvatatā || śrayostu samvata 1002 vaiśāsamāsyā kṛṣṇapakṣe ॥
trayodasvā[śyā]ṃntithau aśuni nakṣetra || āyusmānayoge yathākarnṇamūhute[rte] || somavārasare ||
vṛṣarāsigate savitare -
4. meṣarāsigate cadra[ndra]masi thuṣunhu : śrī onta mahāvihāra vajrācāryya ॥ pātā

Synopsis:

This *dharmadhātuvagīśvara caitya* has been established with love on the 13th day of dark fortnight of lunar month of Vaiśākha, Monday, in NS 1002, at the time of the Great King of Nepāl (Prithivī Bir Bikram Śāha) when the constellation called Aśvinī, the conjunction called Āyusmāna, appropriate Karāṇa moment, when the Sun was in Taurus and the Moon in Arise to (the deity of) Onta Mahāvihāra

25

Copper-plate inscription fixed on the right side of the entrance of Kvāhpāḥchem of Vambāhā (NS 1010, CE1890).
Script: Prācalita Newari
Language: Newari
L 23.5 cm, W 12.5 cm

Transliteration of the text:

1. om̐ namo buddhāya || śreyostu samvat 1010 kārttikamāse kṛṣṇapakṣe || ṣaṣṭhī para sa-
2. ptamyāṃtithau || tiṣya nakṣatra || śukara yoga || vṛhaspativāra || thvakunhu śrī 3 bhagavāna pṛīti-
3. nam ॥ śrī 3 suryadharmasamskārita mahāvihārasa ॥ chāyo kulayā ॥ śrī vajrācāryya ॥ śrī
4. kana[ka]jotiju ॥ dhanajotiju ॥ paṃcajotiju ॥ pramukhanam ॥ jalamham 23 syāṃ samohanam ॥
tirthasyevā
5. dayakāo ॥ nhāpā ājupisaṃ dayakāotagu dharmmadhātu maṃḍalasa ॥ varja tayā jula || śubham ||
6. puna ॥ tirthasyavā khalaka jaṃmā 300 thulisyāṃ jathāśakta yāgu dāmanam ॥ luyā piṇḍa-
7. pātra gvara 1 dayakāo ॥ śrī 3 bhagavāna pṛītinam duntā jula || thva nigū kirtti sunā-
8. nam lobha yāyamadu ॥ sakalasyanam nidāna yānāo tayamāla śubham || ||

Synopsis:

A group of twenty-three persons led by Kanakajoti Vajrācāryya, Dhanajoti, Paṃcajoti from the lineage called Chāyo of Sūryadharmasamskārita Mahāvihāra, after forming a *tirthasevā* (pilgrimage) group, kept this

vajra on top of the *dharmadhātumaṇḍala* which was made by the previous ancestors in devotion to the thrice venerable deity on the 6th *pra* 7th day of the dark fortnight of the lunar month of Kārtika, in NS 1010, Thursday, when the constellation was called Tīṣya and the conjunction called Śukra. The amount collected by the *tīrtha sevā khalah* (group) from altogether 300 persons one golden *piṇḍapātra* (begging bowl) has been offered in the love to the thrice venerable deity. Nobody should take these two offerings out of greed. Everybody should take good care. May all be well.

Transliteration of the text:

1. ? om namaḥ śrī śākyamunaye || buddhaḥ svayambhū vivarānprakāśyagiyam trilā[lo]keṣu(?)vivagyadeva || pāpathakānaṃ samatenarāṇaṃ namostu(?)tasme guṇasāgarāya || 1 || śrī neyepālaṃ lalitāpurākhye(?) śrīraja: gatoddiśi uttarasyāṃ śrīsūryadharmakṛta vajakīrttīvihāramāsīsugatalayaṃ ca || 2 || tasmī narendrasampālitasacha(?)bhēca || 3 || śrīśākyarājendrasuprītayena kāṃśavinirmīta ghaṃṭhamarpita śrī śākyavamaśakulajaḥ sudhinaḥ śrīkālīdāśena sugṛ(?)ha(?)yena || 4 || mātuśce sarvvavidhipūrvakena bhīmarathonāmaṃ vidhiṃ ca kṛtvā || ||
3. pratīviharañcasa saṃghasarvvaṃ ṣaṭ surasebhjana kārayitvā || 5 || prapitāmaha kṛṣṇamuni jagatamuni pitāmaha || janaka: parśamunināmno sarvvapite divagatā: || 6 || janani ca thakuṃ nāmni vidyamānāsudharmini munithakuṃ suśilā ca kālīdāsasyasuvratī || 7 || tasya bhāṭṛ āsāmadu matilāni satīpūtaḥ || tasyātmaja saṃgharatna ratna :
4. thakuṃ snuśāputra || 8 || ratnacudāmañirṇāma dvitīyasuta satsudhī || 8 || tasyamnuśā ratnathakuṃ suvratī śubhacāriṇī || 9 || bhāṭṛputro dharmmaratna suputra kuladīpaka: || caturvarggahalāptārtha saṃghabhōjyaṃ ca kārayeta || 10 || śrīmannepāmlīke varṣe vyo(?)mendukha(?)śāśrīyute || tāra punavasukhyāto endrayoge śāśīdine || 11 || atha nepālabhāśā || svasti śrī nepāla kṣatre lalitapaṭṭā :
5. nagarājagrhāuttare eśāche ṭole śrī sūryadharmma saṃskṛta vajakīrtti vihārasa virājamāna jusyaṃ vijyāka śrīśrīśrī śākyamuni bhagavāna suprītina gvala 1 kaṃśapā ghaṃṭha dohalapā || śrī pṛthvi vira vikrama sāhadeva rājāyā paryāyasa || dānapati saeva vihāra nivāsita śākyavamaśa śrī kālīdāsanam thao māmayāta bhīmarathāvarohana daśakarmma ityādi yānao lali[ta]paṭṭa :
6. nadeśesaṃ vihāra 2 patika dakva saṃghapanista bhakṣa bhōjana yātakāvall dānapatiyā prapitāmaha divaṃgata śrī kṛṣṇamuni divaṃgata pitāmaha jagatamuni divaṃgata svapitā parśamuni || sajīva mātā thakuṃ bhāryyā munithakuṃ bhāṭṛ āsāmadu snuśāmati lāni svaputra saṃgharatna snuśaratna thakuṃ dvitīya putra agamuṇi snuśaratna thakuṃ bhāṭṛputra dharmmaratna thvatejana parivāra samohanaṃ caturvarga hala :
7. lāya ichāna duntā samvat 1010 miti pauṣa śukla pūrṇṇimā punarvasu nakṣatra aindra yoga somavāra thvaśunhu duntā jula śubhaṃ || ||śubhaṃ bhuyāt [sa]rvvajagatām || thva gāṃṭha dayakumha kālīgara nhabāhālayā śrī dhījayā putra śrī khavedhamnaṃ dayakā jula subhaṃ || :||

Synopsis:

(In the beginning, the praise of the Buddha in Sanskrit. Thereafter the text in Sanskrit, the content of which is similar to the text written in Newari below.)

May all be well. One bell made of bronze (*kaṃ*) was offered in love to the thrice venerable Śākyamuni (Buddha) of Sūryadharm Saṃskārīta Vajrakīrti Vihāra, located in Ekhāchem Tole, the northern part

26

Inscription on the large bell, left of the doorway of the Kvāhpāchem of Vambāhā (NS 1010, CE 1890).

Script: Pracalita Newari

Language: Sanskrit and Newari

Height of the bell: 75 cm

Diameter: 56 cm

of Lalitapaṭṭana in Nepal, during the time of king Pṛthvi Bīra Vikrama Śāhadeva by Kālidāsa, the donor of Vajrakīrti Vihāra. after celebrating his mother's Bhīmaratharohana *daśakarṇa* ritual (performed at the age of 77 years 7 months and 7 days), together with Kṛṣṇamuni, dead grandfather Jagatamuni, dead father Paśamuni, surviving mother Thakuṃ, wife Munithakuṃ, Āsāmadu, son's wife Matilani, son Saṃgha, son's wife Rānithakuṃ. A feast was offered for all members of the both *vihāras*. The offerings were made on the full moon day of the lunar month of Pauṣa, a Monday, in NS 1010, when there was the constellation called Punarvasu and the conjunction called Indra wishing that the great-grandfather, son's dead wife Lānithakuṃ, second son _ _ gamaṇi, brother's son Dharmaratna, and all family members of the donor may enjoy the four kinds of rewards (*caturvarga phala*, viz. *dharmā, kāmā, arthā, mokṣā*) May all be good to all (the three) worlds. The artisan (*kāligara*) who made the bell was Khavedhana, the son of Śrīdhija from Naḥbāhā. May all be well.

27

Inscription on the bell-stand of the big bell (no date) of the Kvāhpāḥcheṃ of Vambāhā.
Script: Devanāgarī
Language: Newari
L of lintel: 140 cm, W 24 cm
There are 11 effigies of devotees carved and below these their names are inscribed in single line.

Transliteration:

parsamunī [and] thaku, kālidāsa [and] munithaku, āsāmadu [and] motilāni, sa[sam]gharatna [and] ratnathakuṃ, ratnacudāmani [and] ratnathakuṃ, dharmaratna

28

Inscriptions of the brass-repoussé of the door-leaves of the doorway of the Kvāpācheṃ of Vambāhā (NS 1045, CE 1925).
Script: Devanāgarī
Language: Sanskrit and Newari
Length of the gate: 158 cm
Width: 80 cm

Transliteration of the text:

1. (śvasti sign) śrī sākesihāya namaḥ || sadharmapuṇḍarikāsyē sarvajñakarūṇātmakam samantabhadrasāstāraṃ śākyarājam namastute || śrayostu samvat 1045 kārtikamāse śuklapakṣe || aṣṭamyaṃtithau || śravaṇānakṣetre || gandha[yo]geḥ bhavakarṇe maṃga-
2. lavāsare || tuḷārāsī savītara : makrarāsigate candra : || tasmī sumuhutre || dānapatī śrī sūryedharma sa[sam]skārit : || vajrakīrtimahāvihāre || vasthīta : vajrācārye : jotirāja : putra jogaratna : samantabhadra : gaṃdharvarāja || dharmā-
3. rāja || lakṣmithakuṃ : thuliyā dharmacit utpatī juyā uṃtrābhīmuṣa śrī śākyasiṃhayā thāse : līlayā dvāra tayā dina jula śubhmḥ ||

Synopsis:

The one who has eyes resembling the lotus blossom of *dharmā*, one who is omniscient, full of compassion and who is the teacher of Samantabhadra, I bow down to siuh Śākyasiṃha. After the generation of pious thoughts (*dharmacitta utpatti*), the group of donors, Jyotirāja Vajrācārya, son Jogaratna, Samantabhadra, Gandharvarāja, Dharmarāja and Lakṣmithakuṃ of Sūrye Dharma Saṃskārita Vajrakīrti Mahāvihāra covered the door (-leaves) of the venerable Śākyasiṃha's (shrine) with brass (*līlayā*) on the 8th day of the bright fortnight of lunar month of Kārtika, Tuesday, in NS 1045 (1925), when there

was the constellation called Śravaṇa and the conjunction called Gandha, at the moment called Bhava, when there was the Sun in Libra and the Moon in Capricorn. May all be well.

Transliteration of the text:

1. śrī 2
2. 2001 sāla
3. vaṃvahāla ṭola

Translation:

Twice venerable VS 2001 Vaṃvahāla Ṭola.

Transliteration of the text:

1. tāremāṃ tāremāṃ paṃcabuddha śrī bhaga-
2. vāna jaya buddha jaya dharma jaya saṃgha tri-
3. ratna śrī paṃcabuddha bhagavāna kī jeh ||
4. saṃ. 2012 sāla

Synopsis:

Save me mother! Save me mother! The Pañcabuddha are venerable deities. Hail Buddha, hail *dharma* (and) hail *saṅgha*, the three jewels (of Buddhism). Hail the Five Buddhas. Dated VS 2012.

Transliteration of the text:

1. 1. sale malāi gāligaryo, malāi piṭyo, malāi
2. harāyo, mero vastu luṭera liyo bhanera manamā gāṃṭho
3. kasdacha, usako vairabhāva kahilyai pani śānta huṃdaina |
2. 1. uttama dharmalāi najānera saya barṣa bāṃcnu bhandā
2. uttama dharmalāi jānera abhyāsa garera ekaidina
3. bāṃcnu asala ho |
3. 1. yadi thorai sukha tyāgera mahāna sukha pāine ho
2. bhane tyasa mahāna sukhako nimitta ma sānā sukha-
3. lāi tyāgnu pardacha |
4. 1. maitrīle krodhalāi jitnu pardacha, durvyavahāra garne
2. lāi sadvyavahārale jitnu pardacha, lobhīlāi
3. kehī diera jitnu pardacha, jhūṭha bolnelāi
4. satya vacanale jitnu pardacha |
5. 1. Ākāsamā, samundramā, pahāḍa kandarāmā jah#ā
2. gae panī āphno pāpa karma (duḥkha) bāṭa bacna
3. sakidaina |

29

The inscription of outer wall of a house of Vaṃbāhā, (VS 2001, CE 1944).

Script: Devanāgarī

Language: Nepali

The inscription is flanked by a pair of angles of the Anglo-Indian variety.

30

Small copper-plate inscription on the left side of the doorway of the Kvāḥpāḥceṃ of Vaṃbāhā (VS 2012, CE 1955).

Script: Devanāgarī

Language: Newari

L 8.5 cm, 4 cm

31

Inscription in marble on the wall of the Digicheṃ of Vaṃbāhā (no date, c. 1982).

Script: Devanāgarī

Language: Nepali

L 65 cm, W 49 cm

On the top of the inscription an icon of Buddha.

Translation:

1. When a person holds that he was insulted, assaulted, defeated, or robbed, his anger continues to increase. The anger of such a person has no way of subsiding. The more he goes over his imaginary trouble the greater becomes his desire to avenge it.
2. A single day's life of a seer of the Noble Teaching of the Buddha is by far greater than life of a hundred years of a person who does not see the Noblest Teaching.
3. By giving up the modicum of pleasure, which the worldly pursuits bring, if one can be assured of tremendous pleasure - which is Nibbāna -the wise person should certainly give up the little pleasure.
4. Let anger be conquered by non-anger. Let bad ones be conquered by good. Let miserliness be overcome by charity. Let the liar be conquered by the truth.
5. There is no single spot on Earth an evil-doer can take shelter in to escape the results of his evil actions. No such place is seen out there in space, or in the middle of the ocean. Neither in an opening, a cleft or a crevice in a rocky mountain can he take shelter to escape the results of his evil action.

32

Inscription in marble on the wall
of the Digicem of Vambāhā
(no date, c. CE 1982).

Script: Devanāgarī

Language: Pāli and Nepali

L 63 cm, W 49 cm

On the top of the inscription
the Buddha.

Transliteration of the text:

1. paṃcaśīla
2. paṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi |
3. ma prāṇihatyaṅ gardina bhanne śīla rāmrarī pālanā gardachu |
4. adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi |
5. ma aruko vastu nadiikana linna bhanne śīla
6. rāmrarī pālanā gardachu |
7. kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi
8. ma parapuruṣa parastrī gamana gardina bhanne śīla
9. rāmrarī pālanā gardachu |
10. musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmi |
11. ma jhūṭha kurā boldina bhanne śīla rāmrarī
12. pālanā gardachu |
13. surāmeraya majjapamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ
14. samādiyāmi |
15. ma mādaka padārtha sevana gardina bhanne śīla
16. rāmrarī pālana gardachu |

Translation:

1. I undertake the precept to abstain from killing.
2. I undertake the precept to abstain from stealing.
3. I undertake the precept to abstain from adultery.
4. I undertake the precept to abstain from false speech.
5. I undertake the precept to abstain from intoxication.

Transliteration of the text:

1. śrī suryadharmasaṃskārīta bajrakṛitīmahāvihāra
2. ombahāla
3. śrī āśāmāna śākya | śrīmatī lakṣmīmāyā śākya
4. 2054. 5. 9

Synopsis:

Āśāmāna Śākya and his wife Lakṣmīmāyā Śākya, residents of Sūrya Dharma Saṃskārīta Vajrakīrti Mahāvihāra, Ombāhāla (offered the iron grill) on the 9th day of solar month of Bhādrā, in VS 2054.

Transliteration of the text:

1. lilarāja śākya
2. 2059/6/5

Synopsis:

Salutation to the Buddha.

Lilā Rāja Śākya on the 5th day of solar month of Āśvina in VS 2059.

Transliteration of the text:

1. namo buddhāya
2. suryadharmasaṃskārīta vajrakṛitīmahāvihāra omabahāla yala nepāla
3. śrī ṭhākura māna śākyayā 70 varṣa kyaṃgu śubha upalakṣya
4. va vasapolayā śrīmatī ratna māyā śākya nāpa śubha vivāha
5. jugu 45 varṣayā śubha upalakṣya 2062 āṣāḍha 17 gate
6. śukravāra thana vihāre pavitra mahā paritrāṇa pāṭhayā lumanti
7. tho vihārayā chaku koṭhā nirmāṇa yānā śrī bhagavānaya
8. murti sthāpanā yānāgu jula || 2062/6/1 śubham |

Synopsis:

Salutation to the Buddha.

Sūrya Dharma Saṃskārīta Vajrakīrti Mahāvihāra, Ombahāla, Yala (Lalitpur), Nepal.

A room was made in the *vihāra* where an icon of the deity (Buddha) was established on the 1st day of the Solar month of Āśvina in VS 2062 in the remembrance of the day of the recitation of the holy Mahāparitrāṇa (text), when Ṭhākura Māna Śākya reached the age of 70 and celebrated the 45th marriage anniversary with Ratnamāyā Śākya on the 17th day of the Solar month of Āṣāḍha, Friday, in VS 2062 (2005).

33

Inscriptions on the iron grill of the gate of the Kvāhpāḥdyah shrine of Vambāhā (VS 2054, CE 1997).

Script: Devanāgarī

Language: Newari

34

Inscription of the brass-sheeted tympanum of the Kvāhpāḥchem of Vambāhā (VS 2059, CE 2002).

35

Marble inscription of the left side of the doorway of the Bhagavānachē of Vambāhā (VS 2062, CE 2005).

Script: Devanāgarī

Language: Newari

L 78 cm, W 61.5 cm

On top of the inscription the icon of Buddha.

36

Marble inscription on the right side of the doorway of the Bhagavānāchem of Vāmbāhā (no date).

Script: Devanāgarī

Language: Newari

L 49 cm, 46 cm

Transliteration of the text:

1. śrī bhagavāna śaraṇa
2. śrī sūryadharmasamskārīta vajrakirtimahāvihārayā bhagavānāyā chem dayakegu
3. lāgi la. pu. upa. mā. nā. pā. vaḍā nā. 11 yā kitā naṃ 677 yāgu 0-1-1-0 (ga)
4. jaggā śrīmatī āśāmāyā vajrācārya yala, dhamlācā pākhe ati śraddhā tayā
5. bhagavānāyā chem dayaketa prāpta jugu kha ukim vasapola yāta yakkō śubhāya du l
6. ale tho bhagavānāyā chem dayaketa bhagavāna yāgu āyastā pākhe vacata karīva
7. ru 3,50,000l (tīna lākha pacāsa hajāra) kharca jula l chem dayake lāgi kvaya
8. coyā tayāpi samgha sadasya pākhe prāpta jugu lasatā sahayoga thathe khaḥ
9. nāma sahayoga
10. śrī ṭhākura māna śākya ru 10,000 va niku koṭhā dayakā
11. chaguli bhagavāna sthāpanā yāgu
12. śrī virendra “ ru 10,000.
13. śrī pradīpa “ ru 10,000.
14. śrī vikāsa “ ru 5,000.
15. śrī puṣpa rāja vajrācārya ru 5,000. va chagu ṭripa appā
16. ukim vasapola pīnta sādhuṣvāda viyā cvanā l

Synopsis:

Refuge to the god.

Āśāmāyā Vajrācārya resident of Dhamlācā, Patan offered in devotion (*śraddhā*) the plot no. 667 which covers one *ānā* and one *dāma* in Lalitpur Sub Metropolitan City, ward (*vaḍā*) no. 11 to built the house for the deity (*bhagavānāchem*) of Sūrya Dharma Samskārīta Vajrakīrti Mahāvihārā. About 3,50,000 Rs. which was the saving from the income of the deity was spent for this. The list of the donation of the following members of the *samgha* who happily donated for building the house:

1. Śrī Ṭhākura Māna Śākya donated Rs. 10,000 and built two rooms. In one room the icon of the deity was established.
2. Śrī Virendra Māna Śākya donated Rs. 10,000.
3. Śrī Pradīpa Māna Śākya donated Rs. 10,000.
4. Śrī Vikāsa Māna Śākya donated Rs. 5,000 and a trip of bricks.
5. Śrī Puṣpa Rāja Vajrācārya donated Rs. 5,000,

Thanks to all donors.

37

Copper-plate inscription of the prayer wheel's post framing the Licchavi caitya of the courtyard of Vambāhā (NS 1129, VS 2066, CE 2009).

Script: Devanāgarī

Language: Newari

Length : 17.5 cm

Width: 11.5 cm

Transliteration of the text:

1. om̐ nama ratna trayāya
2. sva. mātā-pitā siṃharāja va cirimaiṃ nāpaṃ sakala divaṃgata-
3. yā sukhāvatiyā kāmanā yāseṃ ilāṃ mānye, vabhu, jvalā nhāyakaṃ
4. jala kalasa va maṇḍapāḥ dechāpim̐ lilārāja va dānamāyā śākya
5. sakala parivāra 11 dyah̐ vahāḥ 2066-4-14 buddhavāra pañcadāna
6. aṣṭamī thva dechānāguyā punyayā prabhavaṃ jagata satva prāṇipim̐
7. udhāra juimā l



Vābhā

Inscription no. 37, testifying to the offering of a canopy and prayer wheels to the Licchavicaitya by 11 members of the family of Lilarāja and Dānamāyā Śākya from Dyahbāhā on the day of Pañcadāna in August 2009. Photographs by Niels Gutschow, September 21, 2009



8. thva jyā puvamkeyā gvāhāli byupim sakala pāsāpimta
9. yakva yakva subhāya dechānā cvanā nāpaṃ puṇyanaṃ
10. lāyamā dhakā āśikā yana cvanā ||
11. iti ne. saṃ. 1129 gūlāthva aṣṭamī

Synopsis:

All the 11 members of the family of Lilārāja and Dānamāyā Śākya of Dyaḥ Bāhā offered a canopy (*ilām*), prayer wheel (*mānye*), silver plate, vermillion (*sindur*) pot and mirror (*ḥvālānhāykan*), water vase and *maṇḍala* on the 8th day of Paṃcadāna of the bright fortnight of lunar month of Guṃlā NS 1129, the 14th day of the solar month of Śrāvāna in VS 2066, wishing that Siṃharāja and Cirimai, the dead father and mother including all dead (ancestors) may reach realm of heaven (*sukhāvati*). The act of this offering may rescue all beings. Many thanks to all friends who has helped to complete the work.

38

Marble inscription of the Nāmasaṃgīti shrine in the courtyard of Vaṃbāhā (NS 1135, VS 2071, CE 2015).
Script: Devanāgarī
Language: Newari
L 76.5 cm, W 33 cm

Transliteration of the text:

- | | | |
|--|---------|-------------|
| 1. śrī sūryavramhasaṃskārita bajrakirtimahāviharasa | | |
| 2. śrī āryanāmasaṃgītiyā pratimā nisvanegu puṇyakārya puvaṃgu jula | | |
| 3. dāna[tā]pinigu nāṃ dhalāḥ | | |
| 4. 1. sva. āju siṃharāja - kāya, bhau | | |
| 5. lilārāja, dānamāyā śākya | dyobahā | reliṅgabāra |
| 6. 2. sva. cakreśvara āju amṛtarāja- | | |
| 7. mhyāy tīrthakumārī vajrācārya | omvahāḥ | 6,666/- |
| 8. 3. sva. āju āśākāji - kāy | | |
| 9. gīrīmāna śākya | kvālkhu | 5,255/- |
| 10. 4. sva. āju kulabahādura śākya - | | |
| 11. mhyāy bābā śreṣṭha | ombāhāḥ | 5,021/- |
| 12. 5. sva. āju bhaktabahādura - jahāna | | |
| 13. jñānamāyā śākya | ” | 5,005/- |
| 14. 6. sva. āju lakṣmībahādura - jahāna | | |
| 15. vekhāmāyā śākya | ” | 5,155/- |
| 16. 7. sva. cakreśvara āju bajrarāja - | | |
| 17. kāycā jñānendra vajrācārya | ” | 5,105/- |
| 18. 8. āju haṣṣarāja, candramāyā śākya | ” | 5,000/- |
| 19. 9. sva. āju vikramarāja - jahāna | | |
| 20. tejamāyā vajrācārya | ” | 5,105/- |
| 21. 10. āju ṭhākuramāna, ratnamāyā śākya | ” | 5,005/- |
| 22. 11. āju dharmarāja, āśāmāyā vajrācārya | ” | 5,005/- |
| 23. 12. sva. sānukāji - kāy | | |
| 24. ratnarāja vajrācārya | ” | 5,555/- |
| 25. 13. sva. vartamāna - kāy | | |
| 26. pharendramāna vajrācārya | ” | 5,005/- |
| 27. 14. kanakaratna vajrācārya | ” | 5,100/- |

28. 15. sva. hirākāji - jahāna		
29. aṣṭamāyā śākya	”	sijaḥ pulām
30. 16. sva. jethā - jahāna gautamī vajrācārya	”	5,125/-
31. 17. vikāsamāna, rāmakumārī śākya	”	5,005/-
32. 18. sucitramāna śākya	”	5,000/-
33. 19. sva. sunila - maṃ śāradā śākya	”	5,005/-
34. 20. gautama, sumanā śākya	”	5,555/-
35. 21. sva. miśrimāyā - kāy		
36. keśavamāna śākya	”	5,108/-
37. 22. durgādevī vajrācārya	”	5,015/-
38. 23. sva. āju puṣparāja - jahāna		
39. punamāyā vajrācārya	dhumbahāḥ	5,000/-
40. 24. sānukāji, jñānisobhā śākya	sātadobaṭo	20,205/-
41. 25. sva. tejarāja - kāy surendra śākya	ṭhamela	6,555/-
42. 26. līlāśobhā, lokaratna vajrācārya	nakabahī	5,100/-
43. 27. nānibeṭi vajrācārya	imāḍola	5,105/-
44. 28. sva. kṛṣṇa - maṃ canī bhujela	kumbheśvara	10,005/-
45. 29. śiva maharjana	thāpa	5,000/-
46. 30. tarimai avāle	tunchegalli	5,000/-
47. 31. āpulāla, mana avāle	tusiphaḥnani	5,510/-
48. 32. sva. candrarāma – kāy niraja maharjana	valkhu	5,005/-
49. 33. Nāmasaṃgīti khalah	ombahāḥ	21,186/-
50. iti ne. saṃ. 1135, vi. saṃ. 2071/12/21 caitra punhī		

Synopsis:

The meritorious work (*punyakārya*) to establish the icon of venerable Āryanāmasaṃgīti in Śrī Sūryabrahma Saṃskārīta Vajrakīrti Mahāvihāra has been fulfilled.

The list of the donors:

1. Late senior member Siṃharāja, his son and daughter in law, Lilārāja, Dānamāyā Śākya from Dyaḥ Bāhā offered the railing bar.
2. Late senior member Amṛtarāja, his daughter Tīrtha Kumārī Vajracārya from Ombahāḥ offered Rs. 6,666/-
3. Late senior member Āśākāji, the son Girimāna Śākya from Kvālakhu offered 5,255/-
4. Late senior member Kulabahādura Śākya, the daughter Bābā Śreṣṭha from Ombahāḥ offered Rs. 5,021/-
5. Late senior member Bhaktabahādur, his wife Jñānamāyā Śākya from Ombahāḥ offered Rs. 5,005/-
6. Late senior member Lakṣmībahādura, his wife Vekhāmāyā Śākya from Ombahāḥ offered Rs. 5,155/-
7. Late senior male member Bajrarāja, the brother's son Jñānedra Vajracārya from Ombahāḥ offered Rs. 5,105/-
8. The senior member Haṣṣarāja, his wife Candramāyā Śākya from Ombahāḥ offered Rs. 5,000/-
9. Late senior member Vikramarāja, his wife Tejamāyā Vjracārya from Ombahāḥ offered Rs. 5,105/-
10. Ṭhākuramāna, Ratnamāyā Śākya from Ombahāḥ offered Rs. 5,005/-

11. Senior member Dharmarāja, Āśāmāyā Vajrācārya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,005/-
 12. Late Sānukājī, the son Ratnarāja Vajrācārya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,555/-
 13. Late Vartamāna, the son Pharendramāna Vajrācārya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,005/-
 14. Kanakaratna Vajrācārya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,100/-
 15. Late Hirākājī, his wife Aṣṭamāyā Śākya from Ombāhāḥ offered old copper (sheet)
 16. Late Jeṭhā, his wife Gautamī Vajrācārya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,125/-
 17. Vikāsamāna, Rājakumārī Śākya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,005/-
 18. Sucitramāna Śākya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,000/-
 19. Late Sunila, his mother Śāradā Śākya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,005/-
 20. Gautam, Sumanā Śākya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,555/-
 21. Late Misrimāyā, the son Keśavamāna Śākya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,108/-
 22. Durgādevī Vajrācārya from Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 5,015/-
 23. Late senior member Puṣparāja, his wife Punamāyā Vajrācārya from Dhumbhāḥ offered Rs. 5,000/-
 24. Sānukājī, Jñānīśobhā Śākya from Sātadobāṭo offered Rs. 20,205/-
 25. Late Tejarāja, the son Surendra Śākya from Ṭhāmela offered Rs. 6,555/-
 26. Līlāśobhā, Lokaratna Vajrācārya from Nakabahī offered Rs. 5,100/-
 27. Nāniveṭī Vajrācārya from Imāḍola offered Rs. 5,105/-
 28. Late Kṛṣṇa, his mother Canī Bhujela from Kumbheśvara offered Rs. 10,005/-
 29. Śīva Maharjana from Thāpa offered Rs. 5,000/-
 30. Tarimai Avāle from Tunchegalli offered Rs. 5,000/-
 31. Āpulāla, Mana Avāle from Tusīphaḥ offered Rs. 5,510/-
 32. Late Candrarāma, the son Niraja Maharjana from Valkhu offered Rs. 5,005/-
 33. Nāmasaṃgīti Khalah of Ombāhāḥ offered Rs. 21,186/-
- Dated NS 1135, on the full moon day of lunar month of Caitra and VS 2071, in the 29th day of Solar month of Caitra.

39

Inscription from the brass banner
(*patāḥ*) of the Kvāḥpāḥchē of
Vaṃbāhā (VS 2078, CE 2021).
Script: Devanāgarī
Language: Newari

Transliteration of the text:

1. dharma rāja
2. (nibhā)
3. 2078|4|24
4. (vajrācārya parivāra)
5. om ābhūṣaṇa

Synopsis:

The Vajrācārya family of Dharmarāja (*nibhā* = offered the ornament) on the 24th day of the solar month of VS 2078. Om ornament.

Transliteration of the text:

1. śrī
2. bajra kṛti
3. nāma saṃgatī
4. khalah
5. vamavahāla
6. 2078|4|25

Synopsis:

Vajrakīrti Nāmasaṃgatī Khalah (the group reciting Nāmasaṃgīti) of Vamahāla on the 24th day of the solar month of Śrāvaṇa in VS 2078.

Transliteration of the text:

1. svargiya puṣparāja
2. śṛmitī
3. indu vajrācārya
4. ravinā vajrācārya

Synopsis:

In the memory of the late Puṣparāja (donated by) Indu Vajrācārya and) Ravinā Vajrācārya

Transliteration of the text:

1. namaḥ buddhāya namaḥ dharmāya namaḥ saṃghāya
2. nepālamaṇḍala yala mahānagarapālikā vaḍā naṃ. 12 sa cvaṃgu śrī sūrya bramha saṃskārita bajrakīrti
3. mahāvihāra vantavihāra (omabahāla) yā pūrva diśāya cvaṃgu kacā bahāḥ va sthavira āju jagata muni
4. śākyayā pyamha kāypinigu pyaṃgu parivārayā kūla devatā sthala āgaṃchē vi. saṃ. 2072 vaiśākha 12 gate
5. nhinesiyā 11.58 ī sa vaḥgu taḥbhukhāsaṃ dunā pātā jūguliṃ sthavira āju śraddhā māna śākyayā
6. saṃyojakatvay sakala śraddhālu dātāpinigu gvāhaliṃ vihāra āgaṃchē punarnirmāṇa sampanna jula | sakasiguṃ
7. gvāhaliṃ thugu dharmasthala surakṣita yānā buddha sīkṣā sadāṃ lyāṃkā taye phayemāla |
8. dātāpiṃ :
9. 1. sthavira āju śraddhā māna śākya pitā nhuche māna śākya 1,38,500
10. 2. sthavira āju ṭhākura māna, ratna devī śākya pitā āśā māna śākya 1,50,000
11. 3. sthavira āju vikāsa māna śākya pitā āśā māna śākya 1,25,000
12. 4. sthavira āju sucitra māna śākya pitā devendra māna śākya 2,00,000
13. 5. pradipa māna śākya pitā devendra māna śākya 5,00,000
14. 6. virendra māna śākya pitā devendra māna śākya 3,00,000
15. 7. samjhanā śākya pitā vikāsa māna śākya 1,00,000
16. 8. śṛjanā śākya pitā vikāsa māna śākya 1,00,000

40

Inscription from the brass banner (*patāḥ*) of the Nāmasaṃgīti shrine of Vambāhā (VS 2078, CE 2021).
Script: Devanāgarī
Language: Newari

41

Inscription on one of the six new ornaments (*kikīpa*) of the Kvāpādyah of Vābāhā, (no date), 2021.
Script: Devanāgarī
Language: Newari

42

Marble inscription from a Kacābahā of Vambāhā (NS 1141, VS 2078, CE 2021).
Script: Pracalita Newari
Language: Newari
L 76 cm, W 52 cm
On top of the inscription the Buddha.

17. 9. vineśa māna śākya	pitā vikāsa māna śākya	1,05,000
18. 10. vidyā śākya	pitā śraddhā māna śākya	1,00,000
19. 11. sapanā śākya	pitā ṭhākura māna śākya	1,00,000
20. 12. vekhā māyā śākya	pati lakṣmī bahādura śākya	75,000
21. 13. gautam śākya	pitā harṣa rāja śākya	25,000
22. 14. buddha lakṣmī vaidya	pāju śraddhā māna śākya	30,000
23. 15. jagata bahādura bajrācārya	pāju śraddhā māna śākya	10,000
24. 16. subhāṣa māna śākya	pitā ṭhākura māna śākya	2,00,000
25. 17. kamalā devī śākya	pitā devendra māna śākya	5,00,000
26. 18. herendra māna śākya	pitā āśā kaji śākya	25,525
27. 19. rājakumārī śākyayā nāmaṃ	dāju lakṣmī dhana śākya	6,00,000
28. 20. śrī vajrakīrti mahāvihāra sudhāra samiti		1,00,000
29. 21. la.pu. ma.na.pā. vaḍā naṃ. 12 kāryālaya		2,00,000
30. iti samvat 1141 vachalāthva akṣaya tṛtiyā (vi.sam. 2078 vaiśākha 31) śukravāra śubham		

Synopsis:

Obeisance to the Buddha. Obeisance to the Dharma. Obeisance to the Saṃgha.

The most senior-male-member Śraddhā Māna Śākya, the project co-ordinator with the help of devotees renovated the house where the ancestral deity (*kuladevatā*) of the 4 family members of the 4 sons of Sthavira āju Jagatamuni Śākya (and their) esoteric shrine (*āgamcheṃ*) of the branch (*kacā*) monastery of Śrī Sūrya Brahma Saṃskārita Bajrakīrti Mahāvihāra (or) Vantavihāra (Omabahāla), located in the eastern side, in the Nepāla Maṇḍala, Yala Municipality, ward no. 12, on the 3rd day of the bright fortnight of the lunar month of Vachalā in NS 1141 (on the 31st day of the solar month of Vaiśākha in VS 2078), Friday, since it was destroyed by the great earthquake which took place at 11:58 o'clock on the 12th day of the solar month of Vaiśākha in VS 2072. This act of saving this religious place with the help of all (persons) may sustain the teaching of the Buddha forever.

Donors:

1. Sthavira Āju Śraddhā Māna Śākya	Father(is) Nhunche Māna Śākya	1,38,500
2. Sthavira Āju Ṭhākura Māna, Ratnadevi Śākya	Father Āśā Māna Śākya	1,50,000
3. Sthavira Āju Vikāsa Māna Śākya	Father Āśā Māna Śākya	1,25,000
4. Sthavira Āju Sucitra Māna Śākya	Father Devendra Māna Śākya	2,00,000
5. Pradipa Māna Śākya	Father Devendra Māna Śākya	5,00,000
6. Birendra Māna Śākya	Father Devendra Māna Śākya	3,00,000
7. Samjhanā Śākya	Father Vikāsa Māna Śākya	1,00,000
8. Śrjanā Śākya	Father Vikāsa Māna Śākya	1,00,000
9. Vinesa Māna Śākya	Father Vikāsa Māna Śākya	1,05,000
10. Vidyā Māna Śākya	Father Śraddhā Māna Śākya	1,00,000
11. Sapanā Śākya	Father Ṭhākura Māna Śākya	1,00,000
12. Bekha Māyā Śākya	Husband Lakṣmībahādura Śākya	75,000
13. Gautam Śākya	Father Harṣarāja Śākya	25,000

14. Buddha Lakṣmī Śākya	Maternal Uncle śraddhā Māna Śākya 30,000
15. Jagata Bahadur Vajrācārya	Maternal Uncle śraddhā Māna Śākya 10,000
16. Subhāṣa Māna Śākya	Father Ṭhākura Māna Śākya 2,00,000
17. Kamalā Devī Śākya	Father Devendra Māna Śākya 5,00,000
18. Harendra Māna Śākya	Father Āśā Kāji Śākya 25,525
19. In the name (memory) of Rajakumārī Śākya	Elder Brother Lakṣmī Dhana Śākya 6,00,000
20. Śrī Vajrakīrti Mahāvihāra Reform Committee	1,00,000
21. Lalitpur Metropolitan Office, Ward #12	2,00,000

Endnotes

- ¹ Sudarshan Raj Tiwari, *The Ancient Settlement of the Kathmandu Valley*, Kathmandu: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, 2001, p. 250, map 2.
- ² Mary Slusser, *The Antiquity of Nepalese Woodcarving. A Reassessment*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2010. Includes a documentation of all ancient struts of Patan.
- ³ Alexander von Rospatt, “Itumbāhā as a monastic institution”, in: Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust (ed.), *Restoration of Itumbāhā*, 2005 (limited distribution, publication forthcoming), pp. 15-28. This text is presented here widely paraphrased.
- ⁴ David Gellner, “The Newar Buddhist Monastery. An Anthropological and Historical Typology”, in: Niels Gutschow and Axel Michaels (eds.), *Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley. Proceedings of an International Conference in Lübeck, June 1985*, St. Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1987, p. 368.
- ⁵ Manik Bajracharya and Axel Michaels, *History of the Kings of Nepal. A Buddhist Chronicle. Introduction and Translation*, Kathmandu: Himal Kitab, 2016, p. 120.
- ⁶ Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa*, Cornell. Reprint: Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1992. Heino Kottkamp, *Der Stupa als Repräsentation des buddhistischen Heilweges. Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung architektonischer Symbolik*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992. Anna Libera Dallapiccola, in collaboration with Stephanie Zingel-Avé Lallemand (eds.), *The Stūpa - Its Religious, Historical and Architectural Significance*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1980.
- ⁷ Michaels and Bajracharya, op. cit., 2016, p. 36.
- ⁸ Frank Raymond Allchin, “A Note on the ‘Asokan’ Stūpas of Pātan”, in: Dallapiccola, 1980, p. 154.
- ⁹ Mary Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982, p. 279.
- ¹⁰ David Snellgrove, “Shrines and Temples of Nepal”, in: *Arts Asiatiques*, 8: 1, 1961, p. 4.
- ¹¹ Mohan Pant and Shuji Funo, *Stupa and Swatika. Historical Urban Planning Principles in Nepal’s Kathmandu Valley*, Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 2007, p. 162.
- ¹² Personal communication October 15, 2009.
- ¹³ John Irwin, „The Stūpa and the Cosmic Axis”, in: *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference of South Asian Archaeologists*, Naples: Istituto Universitaria Orientale, 1979, p. 799-845.
- ¹⁴ Niels Gutschow, *The Nepalese Caitya. 1500 Years of Buddhist Votive Architecture in the Kathmandu Valley*, Stuttgart: Edition Axel Menges, 1997, pp. 86-99, 171. Tsering Palmo Gellek and Padma Dorje Maitland, *Light of the Valley. Renewing the Sacred Art and Traditions of Svayambhu*, Cazadero: Dharma Publishing, 2011.
- ¹⁵ Pratapaditya Pal, *The Arts of Nepal, Part I, Sculpture*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974, pp. 27-31.
- ¹⁶ Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal*, New York: Asia Society, 1964, pp. 27-29.
- ¹⁷ Pal, 1974, op. cit., p. 24.
- ¹⁸ Slusser, 1982, op. cit., p. 172.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., p. 173.
- ²⁰ Ibid, and figs. 278 and 279.
- ²¹ Ulrich von Schroeder, *Nepalese Stone Sculptures, Volume two: Buddhist*, Weesen: Visual Dharma Publications, 2019, pp. 832-833, pl. 252, 253.
- ²² An incorrect observation as it rests on the platform.
- ²³ Gutschow, 1997, p. 140. Michael Oppitz (ed.), *Robert Powell. Himalayan Drawings*, Völkerkunde Museum Zürich, 2001, p. 40. In October 2021 the Saraf Foundation for Himalayan Traditions and Culture acquired the drawing, it is now kept by the Nepal Architecture Archive of Taragaon Museum, Kathmandu.
- ²⁴ Gutschow, op. cit., 1997, p. 282.
- ²⁵ Nutandhar Śarmā has used his observation notes and photographs of the life cycle rituals performed for the raising of the Licchavicaitya at Vābāhā from May 17 to 27, 1993. He had the opportunity not only to witness the consecration

ritual but also to participate in the ritual on behalf of the donor. He observed similar rituals performed for Buddhist monuments such as the Maṅgala Bahudvāra Caitya (Tashi Gomang) at Svayambhū Hill. He has consulted numerous religious texts, articles, inscriptions, and books published on the subject, as well as Buddhist scholars.

See Nutandhar Śarmā, “Newar Rituals Related to the Restoration of a Caitya,” in: David C. Andolfatto and Thomas Schrom (eds.), *The restoration of Mangal Bahudvara Caitya, Tashi Gomang Stupa, Svayambhu, Kathmandu Valley world heritage site*, Kathmandu: UNESCO Paris and UNESCO Kathmandu Office, 2021, pp. 111-125.

²⁶ Govindasimha (ed.), *Manusmṛti*, Delhi: Sadhana Pocket Books, 1990, pp. 17-44.

²⁷ Nutandhar Śarmā, “Lalitapurako Ratneśvara Śivamandiramā Saṃkramaṇakālikā Anuṣṭhānako Nirantarāṭ,” *Amūrta Saṃskṛti* (The Journal of Intangible Culture), Year 3, Vol. 3., 2019, pp. 23-24.

²⁸ Alexander von Rospatt, “Remarks on the Consecration Ceremony in Kuladatta’s Kriyasaṃgrahapañjikā and its Development in Newar Buddhism”, in: Astrid Zotter and Christof Zotter (eds.), *Hindu and Buddhist Initiations in India and Nepal*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010, pp. 198-260.

²⁹ Ryugen Tanemura, *Kuladatta’s Kriyasaṃgrahapañjikā: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of Selected Sections*, Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2004.

³⁰ Dhanavajra Vajracārya, *Licchavikālakā Abhilekha*, Kathmandu: CNAS, 1973, p. 171.

³¹ Deviprasada Lamsal (ed.), *Bhāṣā Vaṃśāvalī*, part 2, Kathmandu: Nepal Rashtriya Pustakalaya, 1966, pp. 41-45.

³² Sarvajñaratna Vajracārya (ed.), *Vajrayāna Pūjāvidhi Saṃgraha*, Kathmandu: Nepal Bauddha Saṃskṛti Kendra, 2005.

³³ Hemarāja Śākya, *Caityayā thahgu ātmakathā*, Lalitpur: Bekhārāja Vajracārya, 1993, p. 30.

³⁴ Mohanraj Vajracharya, *Jirnoddhāra Vimva Kathā*, Lalitpur: Ira Vajracharya, 1984, p. 23-24.

³⁵ For details about the materials used in the worship rituals see: Herākāji Vajracārya (comp.), *Nevā Bauddha Paramparāyā Pūjā Kriyāy Chyelā Nālā Vayācvaṃgu Halam Jvalam va Caryānṛtyayā Vvajyā*, Lalitpur: Viśvaśānti Pustakālaya, 1994.

³⁶ cf. Nareśamāna Vajracārya (ed.), *Gurūmandālārcana Sahita Kalāsa-Māmaki Pūjā vidhi*, Kathmandu: Īsvaramāna Siṃ, 1989.

³⁷ Rospatt, 2010, op. cit., p. 201.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 245.

³⁹ Ratnakāji Vajracārya, *Baliṇpūjāyā Yathārthatā*, Kathmandu: Vajracārya Prakāśana, 1993, pp. 1-4

⁴⁰ Rospatt, 2010, op. cit., pp. 241-243

⁴¹ Niels Gutschow and Axel Michaels, *Growing up: Hindu and Buddhist Initiation Rituals among Newar Children in Bhaktapur, Nepal*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2008, pp. 130-135.

⁴² Rospatt, 2010, op. cit., pp. 214-235.

⁴³ The life-cycle rites described in the Kriyasaṃgrahapañjikā and the ritual performed here are slightly different. For example, the text describes: 1. *Yoniśodhana*, 2. *Puṃsavana*, 3. *Simantonnyana*, 4. *Jātakarman*, 5. *Nāmakarman*, 6. *Upanayana*, 7. *Phalaprāśana*, *annaprāśana* and *kaṇṭhasōdhana*, 8. *Cudākarāṇa*, 9. *Vratādeśa*, 10. *Vratamoṣaṇa* and *samāvartana*, 11. *Pānigrahaṇa*, and also *Vajrābhīṣeka*. See: Rospatt, 2010, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

⁴⁴ *Nyāsa* is invariably transferred from divine life back into the sacred object before a rite.

⁴⁵ For a variation see Gutschow / Michaels, 2008, op. cit., p. 45.

⁴⁶ This is a purely Buddhist tantric initiation after which the Vajracārya title is bestowed.

⁴⁷ Chatrabahādur Kāyaṣṭha, *Nevāḥ Jātidune Kāyaṣṭha Jāta: Chagū Addhyayana*, (Research paper presented in Kāyaṣṭha Samāja of Bhaktapur on February 20, 2016), p. 16.

⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 17.

⁴⁹ Bajracharya and Michaels, op. cit., 2016, p. 120.

⁵⁰ Mary Slusser presents two Avalokiteśvaras, the oldest Nepalese woodcarving, radiocarbon dated 531-672, height 65 cm (Museo d’Arte Orientale, Turin) and a painted one, height 75 cm (550-680, Pritzker Collection). See Mary Slusser, *The Antiquity of Nepalese Wood Carving*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2010, pp. 227-229. An additional Avalokiteśvara (radiocarbon dated 8th century), 114 cm high was exhibited in Frankfurt in 2015 (ownership undisclosed): Stephan von der Schulenburg, Elke Hessel, Karsten Schmidt, Matthias Wagner (eds.), *Buddha. 108 Encounters*, Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 2015, p. 250-251. Quite a number of Avalokiteśvaras in stone have been published by Ulrich von Schroeder, *Nepalese Stone Sculptures*, Vol. two: Buddhist, Weesen: Visual Dharma Publications, 2019., pp. 1008-1058.

⁵¹ Todd T. Lewis, “Contributions to the Study of Popular Buddhism: The Newar Buddhist Festival of Guṃlā Dharma,” in: *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1993, pp. 309-354, here p. 327.

⁵² Op. cit., p. 334.

⁵³ Michael Radich, “Das *Mahāparinirvāna-mahāsūtra* - aus dem ‘Dragon Canon’ (1735)?”, in: Axel Michaels and Margareta Pavaloi (eds.), *The Scholar’s Choice*, Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing, 2019, pp. 116-123, here: p. 119.

⁵⁴ For an extensive description of the tradition of sculptures representing Nāmasaṅgīti Mañjuśrī see: John C. Huntington and Dina Bangdel (eds.), *The Circle of Bliss. Buddhist Meditational Art*, Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2003, p. 428.

For representations of the Nāmasaṅgīti in stone see von Schroeder, op. cit., pp. 1067, 1082-1083.

⁵⁵ Kerry Lucinda Brown, *Dīpaṅkara Buddha and the Patan Samyak Mahādāna in Nepal: Performing the Sacred in Newar Buddhist Art*, PhD Dissertation, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014. Brown personally observed the ritual in 2004, 2008, and 2012.

⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 4.

⁵⁷ Hemraj Shakya, “Ilanhe Samyakā Paricaya,” in: *Samyak Mahādāna Guthi*, Kathmandu: Jagatdhar Tuladhar, NS 1100 (1980), pp. 139-144. Manik Ratna (Manish) Shakya, *A Short Introduction to Ilanhe Samyak and its Procedure*, Lalitpur: Lotus Research Centre, 2004. Min Bahadur Shakya, *Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra: A Unique Newar Buddhist Monastery*, Lalitpur: Nagarjuna Publications, 2004. Ratna Jyoti Shakya, *Samyaka Mahadana*, 2060 B.S. (CE 2004), pamphlet.

⁵⁸ Bajracharya / Michaels, 2016, op. cit, p. 75. Obviously, the chronicler made a mistake while assembling a variety of informations. The Nepālikabhūpavaṃśāvali (fol. 97b) clearly uses the Sanskrit term *vadi*.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 74-75.

⁶⁰ Brown, 2014, op. cit., fig. 2.48.

⁶¹ Brown, 2014, op. cit., pp. 282-286.

⁶² Shakya, 1980, op. cit., pp. 12.- 19.

⁶³ Vajrācārya, Dhanavajra, *Madhyakālakā Abhilekha*, Kathmandu: CNAS, 1999, pp. 136-37.

⁶⁴ danam.cats.uniheidelberg.de/report/d2578f40-cfe-4450-a8c1-3092c08ef487

⁶⁵ John Locke refers to a document dated N.S. 561 which outlines rules for the giving of Barechuyegu. Locke names

the monastery Suryavarma Saṃskārīta Vajrakīrti Mahāvihāra. John Locke, *Buddhist Monasteries of Nepal. A Survey of the Bāhās and Bahīs of the Kathmandu Valley*, Kathmandu: Sahayogi Press, 1985, p. 70.

⁶⁶ Bajracharya and Michaels, op. cit., 2016, p. 120.

⁶⁷ The following translation is taken from Weragoda Sarada Maha Thero, *Treasury of Truth. Dhammapada (Text)*. Taipei: Buddha Dharma Education Association. Inc., 1993, pp. 68, 396, 433, 721, 901.

This volume presents the religious, architectural, and textual background of Vābāhā, one of the 16 main monasteries of Patan, located in one of the three royal cities of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal. The history of the Buddhist monastic courtyard and its objects is presented along with 42 inscriptions, dating from 1596 CE to 2021.

Bijay Basukala is an artist from Bhaktapur, engaged in the documentation of the architectural heritage of the Newars. He documented three of the monastery's four caityas in 2021 with measured drawings. Niels Gutschow is an architectural historian from Heidelberg University in Germany who has been working in Nepal since 1970. In 1993 he was in charge of the restoration of the shrine building of Vābāhā and initiated the dismantling and re-erection of the monastery's Licchavicaitya. Nutandhar Sharma is a cultural historian from Patan, who documented the re-erection of the Licchavicaitya in 1993 and compiled the transliteration and synopses of 42 inscriptions in 2021.