

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 Pāṭaliputra 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 Vābāhā'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 Dvākhābāhā 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 Bhagavānbāhā 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*

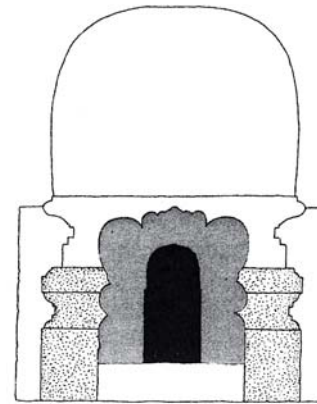
The early *caityas* of the Kathmandu Valley are often called *Aśokacaitya* as a claim to antiquity. Even *caityas* covered with layers of lime that obscure their moldings are popularly named that way.

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.

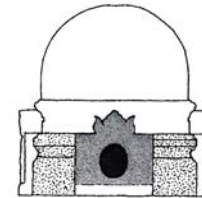
Caturvyūhacaitya at Dvākhābāhā and the *caitya* at Vābāhā, 7th century

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.

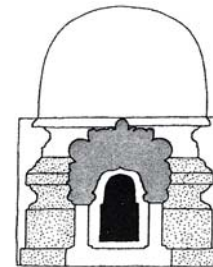
Pal even calls this votive structure a “miniature temple” and praises “the hieratic majesty of the recumbent lions.”



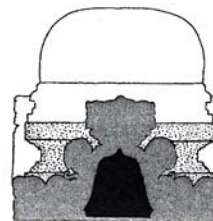
Cabahil C



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.

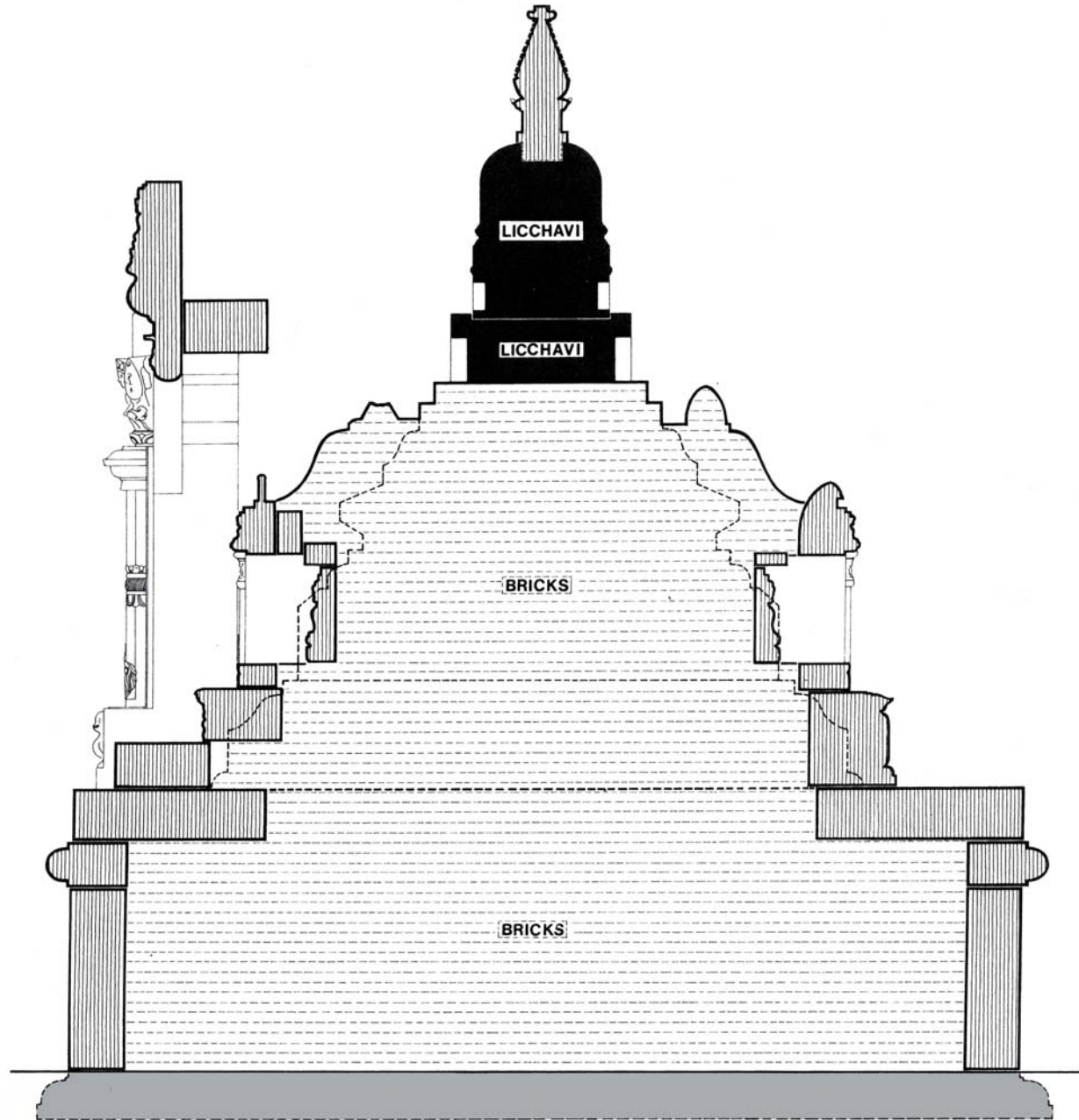
The monolithic *caitya* on top, of dome, drum, and top story, rests on a base story of the same period. Most probably the two fragments belong to the same original *caitya*, datable to the 8th century. The niches of both levels, originally occupied by Tathāgathas and Bodhisattvas, are empty for unknown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

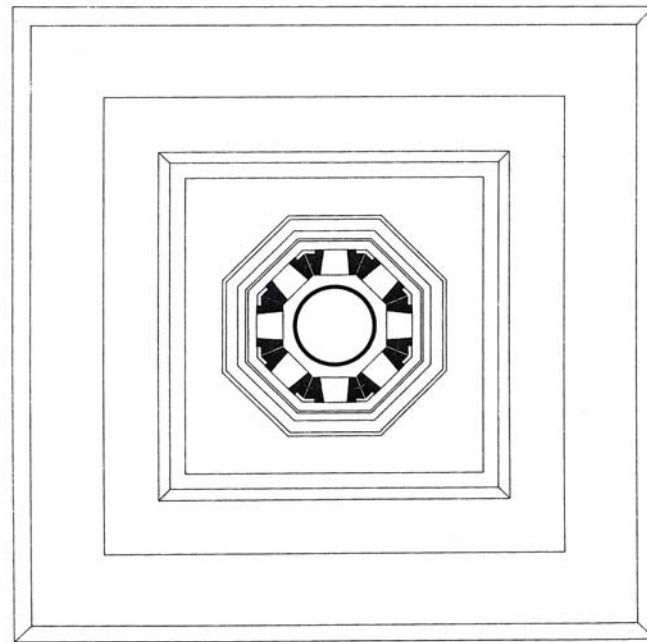
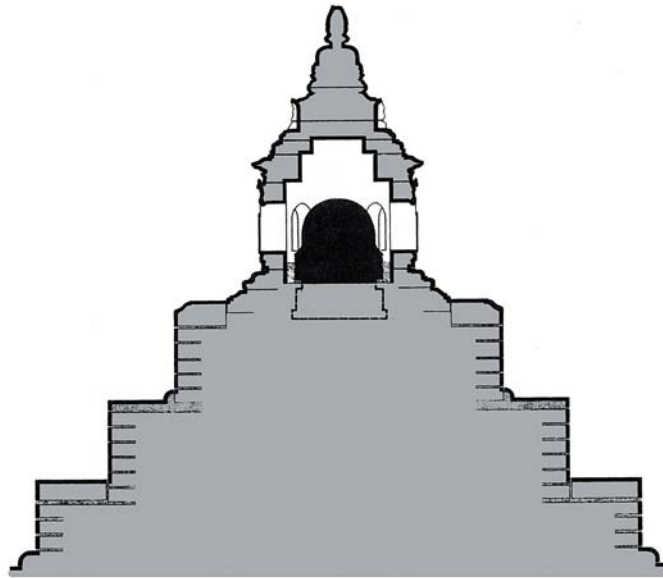




Patan
Licchavicaitya at Hakhā
Square, relocated on top
of a stepped plinth in 1673;
view from the southeast.
Photograph by Niels Gutschow,
February 1987



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



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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.

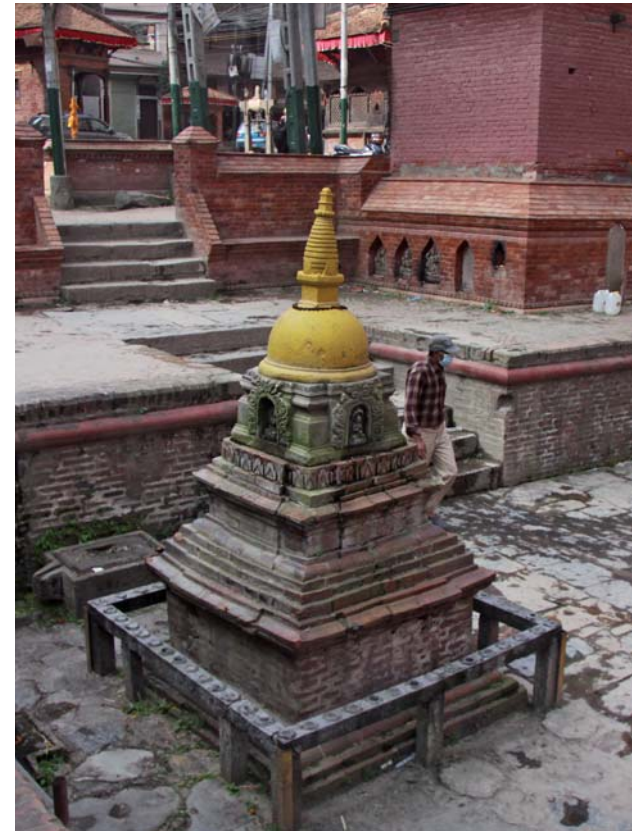
Photograph April 4, 1988



Right

Composite *caitya* at Cyaṣaḥhiti 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:

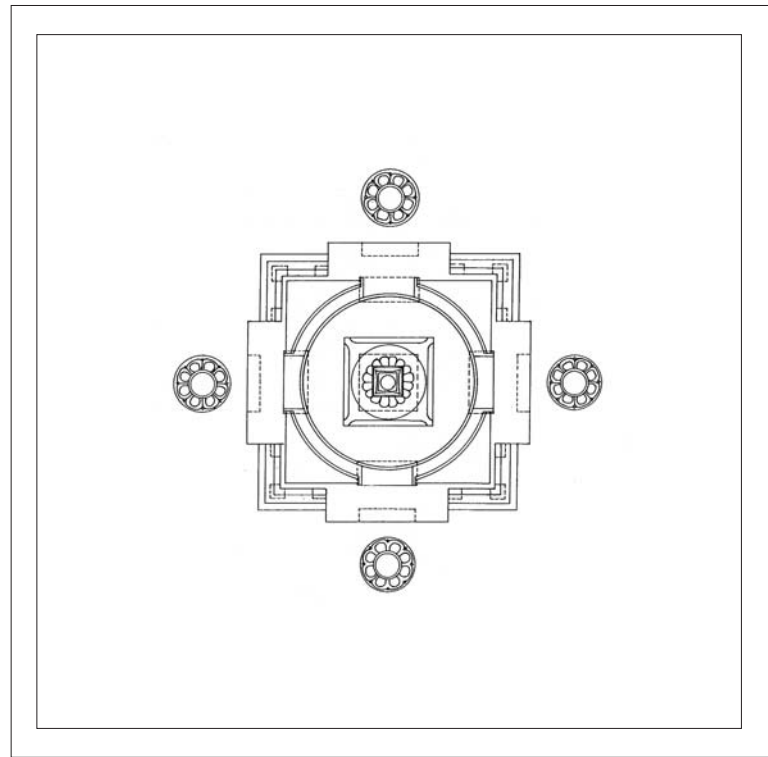
“Another illustration of the brilliant ornamentation of the Licchavi *caityas*, but with a simpler inventory of motifs, is the one at Om-bahal, Patan. The lowermost section of the plinth rests directly on the courtyard tiling,²² inset with lotus mandalas. Each face displays a major niche, surrounded 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-



380 CM

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

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

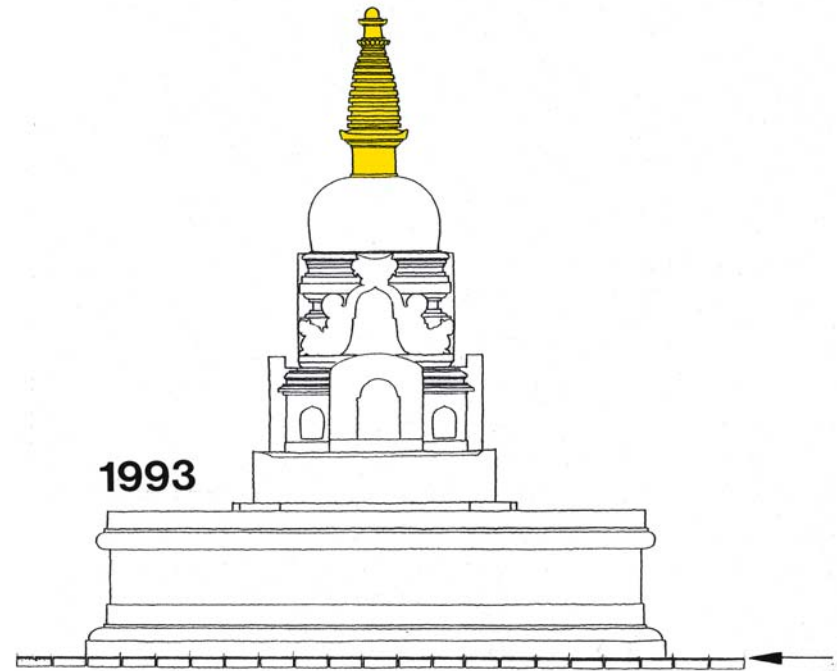
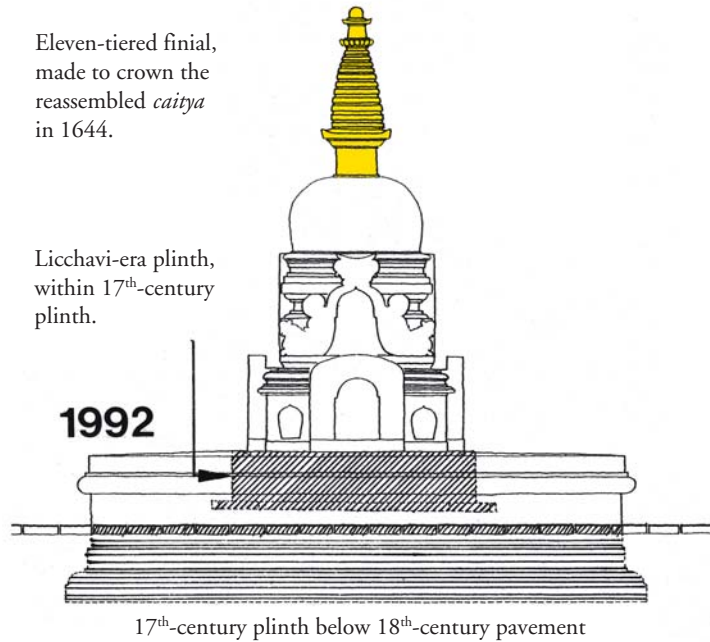




Vābhā
Licchavīcatya, 7th century, view towards southeast.
Detail of the corner of the upper base.
Photograph by Stanisław Klimek, August 10, 1992



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



Vābāhā

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 *desivā* reveals its origin from a foreign land (*deśi*). 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 Bhimsen 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.



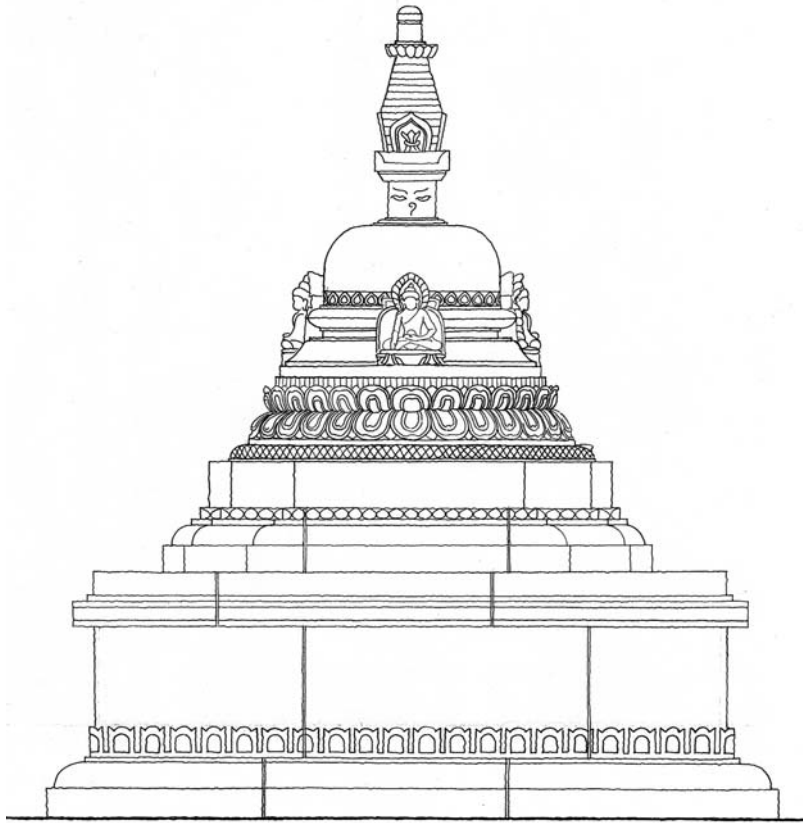
Vābhā

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.

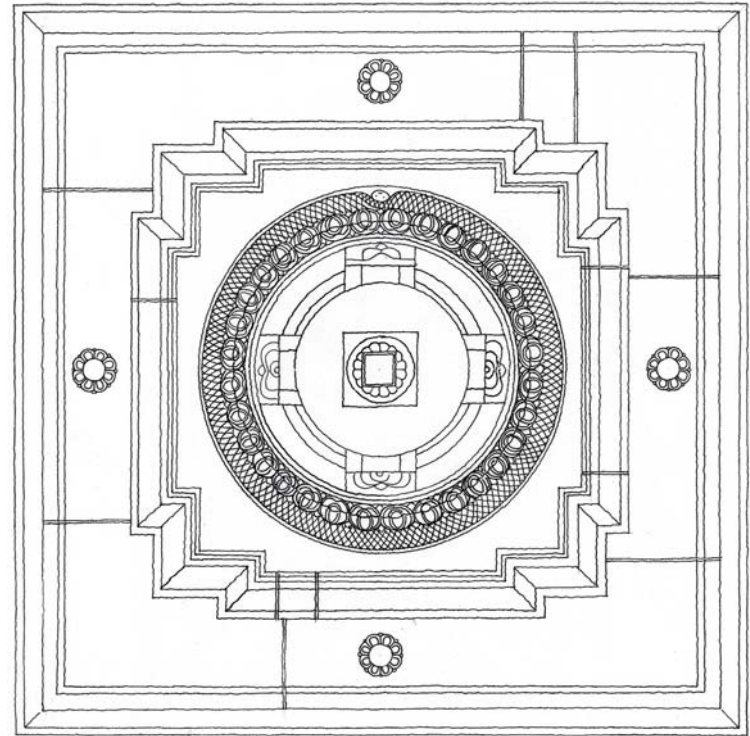


Established in 1728, the *caitya's* four Tathagatas are carved on a wide drum. On top of a massive monolithic base, with the lower circle of 32 lotus leaves and a wide platform. The lower register were recovered when the pavement of the courtyard was removed in summer 2021.

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.

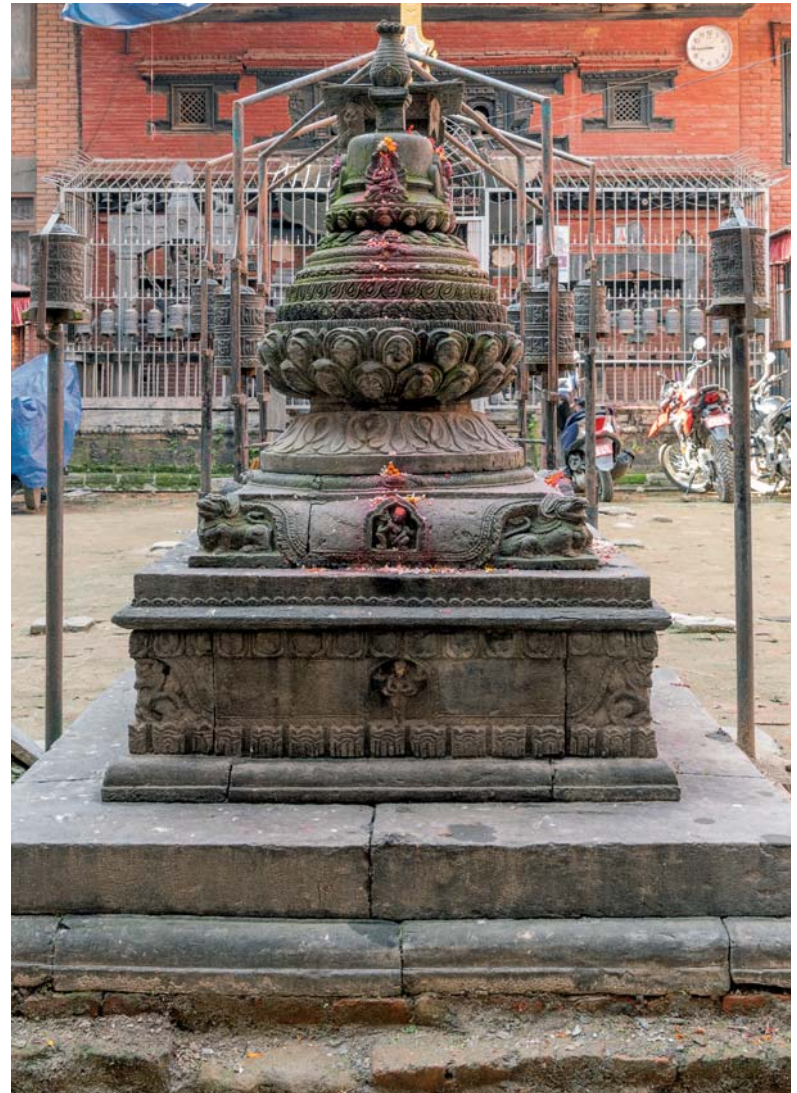
The *caitya* was established by Amṛtajyoti and his wife Devajānī in August 1728.

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



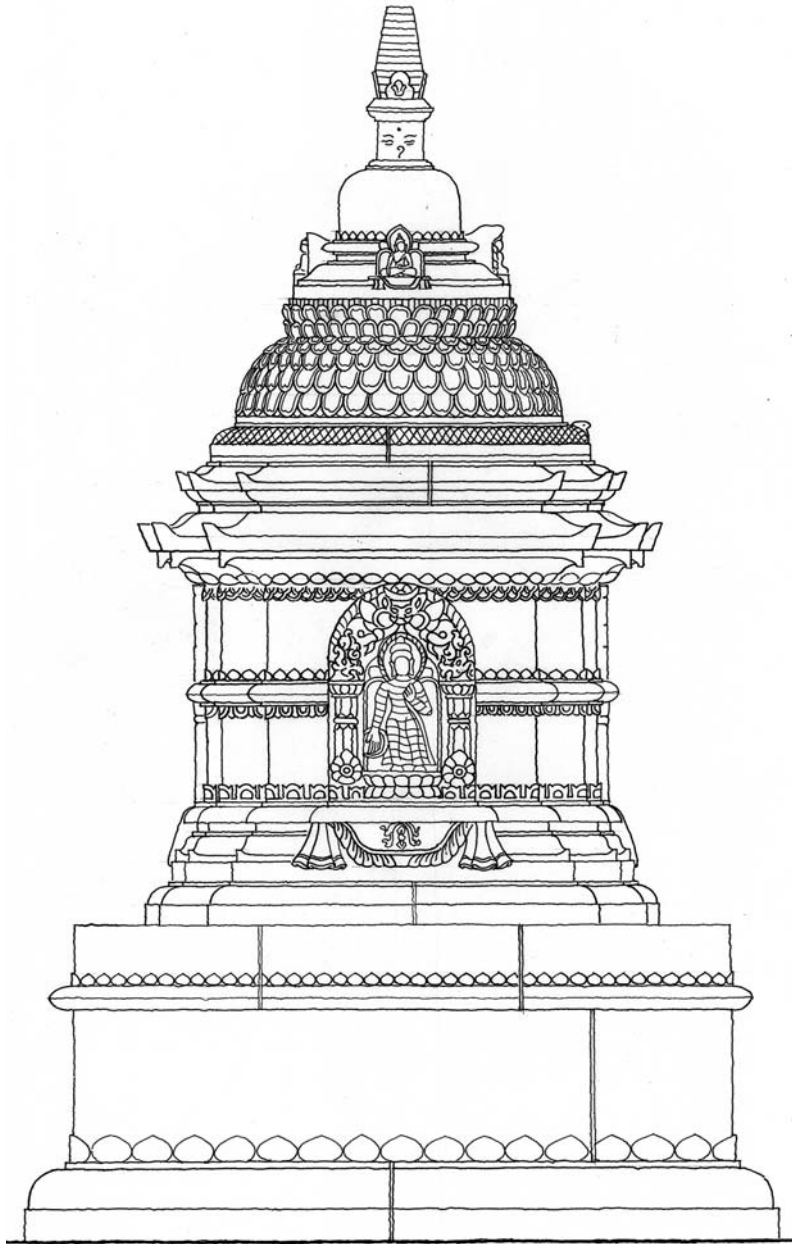
Vābhā

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



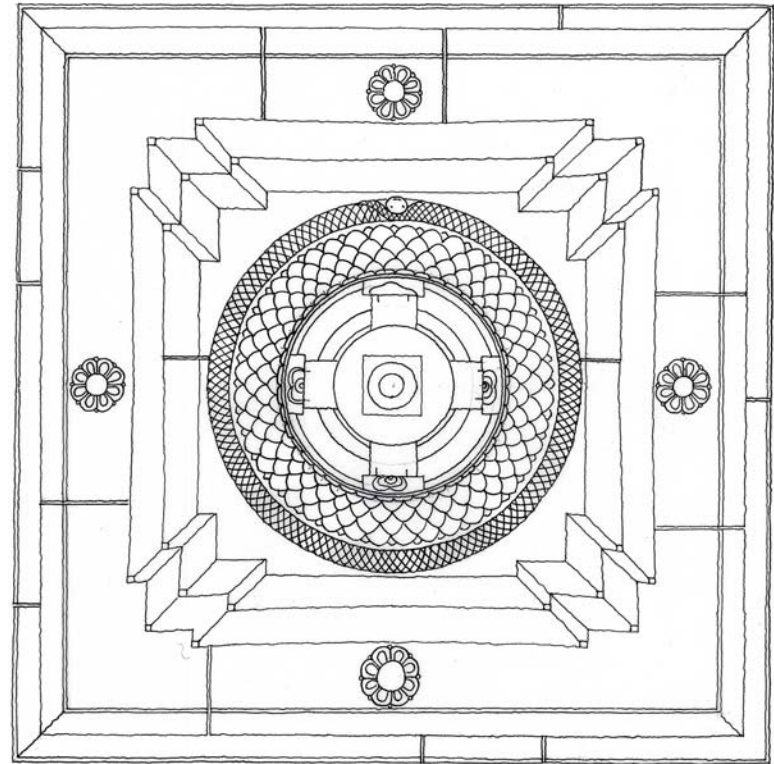
87 CM

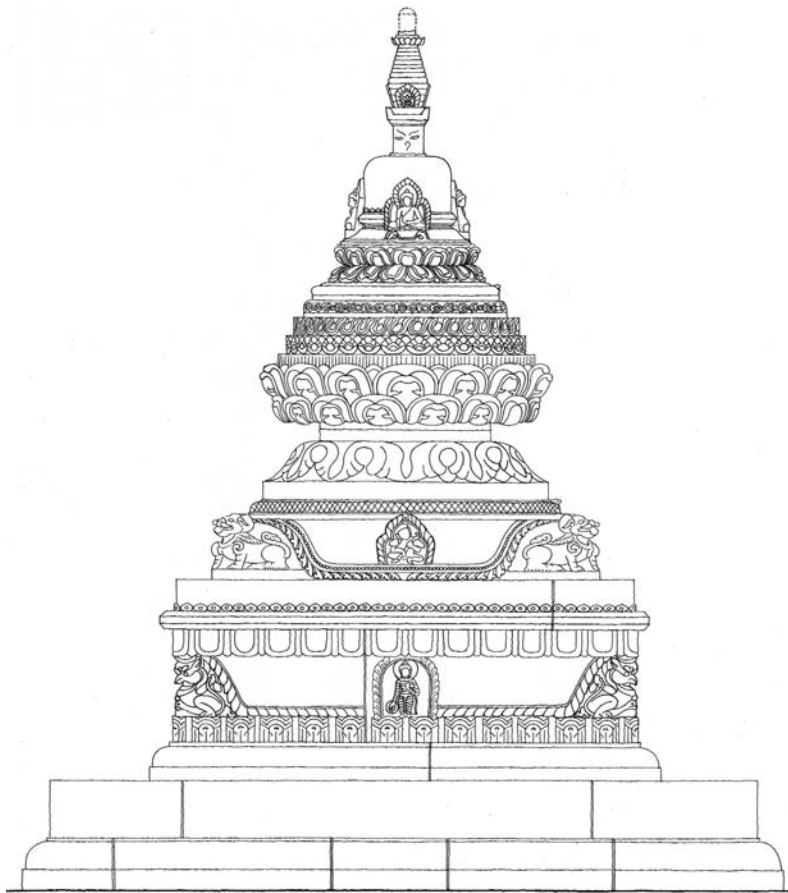
Vābāhā

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.

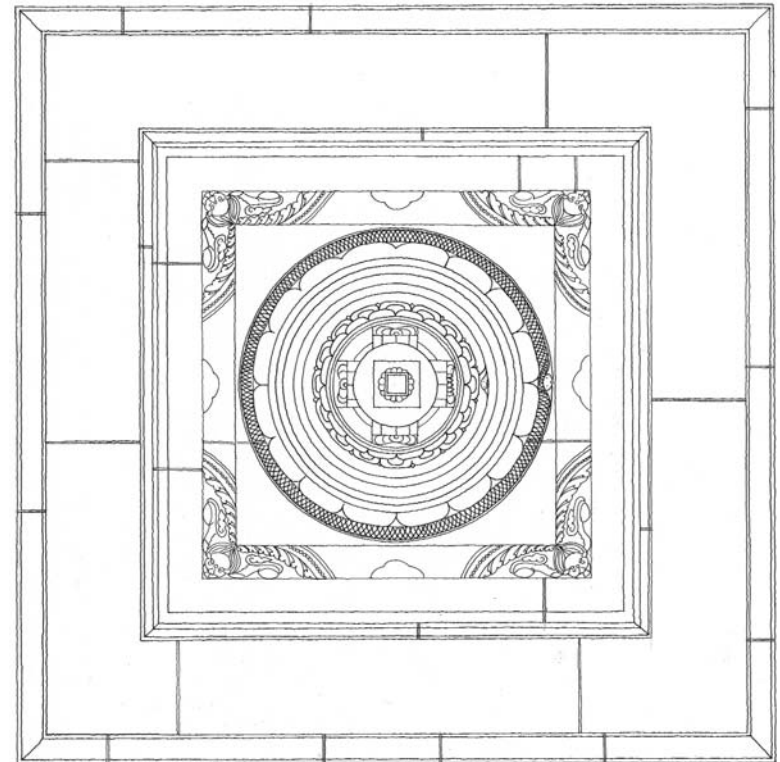
The *caitya* was established as *dharmadhātucāitya* by Kṛṣṇamuni Śākya and his family in the name of his deceased uncles in April 1734.

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 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, Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya.

In the beginning, Maṅgala Rāja Joṣī, 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 *aṣṭadīkṣāla 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 sañkalpa* (“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 (*lvahākahmi*) 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 thahta 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



Vābāhā

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 Vajracārya (with black coat, from Bubahā),
 Vajrarāja Vajracārya (with light coat, from Vābahā),
 Dharmarāja Vajracārya (white coat, in the middle, from

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



Vābhā, the Jivaninyāsa Pūjā
Jivanīyāsa 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 Vajrācārya (his head covered with a piece of cloth), starts the *pūjā*; Muktarāja Vajrācārya in his role as the Upādhyāya priest (with black coat

and cap) from Naḥṭol, and Viśvavajra Vajrācārya (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 *kalāṣa*, 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 Vajracārya, Viśvavajra Vajracārya,
Pannāratna Vajracārya, and Khaḍgarāja Vajracārya, 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 Vajracārya is offering it food,
 and Muktarāja Vajracārya 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 Jīvaninyāsa 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 Rañjitkār 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*,
Bhaktabahādura Śākya carries
the *jivanyāsa kalāśa*.

Right, Bhaktabahādura Śākya
walks on a panel of white
fabric (*vāsā lāyegū*), 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 kalaśa* on the
 first floor of the Digichē; Pannaratna Vajrācārya arranges
 the pots in the prescribed order (*kalaśagaṇā*).
 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 Vajracārya
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 (*catussāgarakalāśa*) 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 Dhūmāvati (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 Khadgarāja 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.



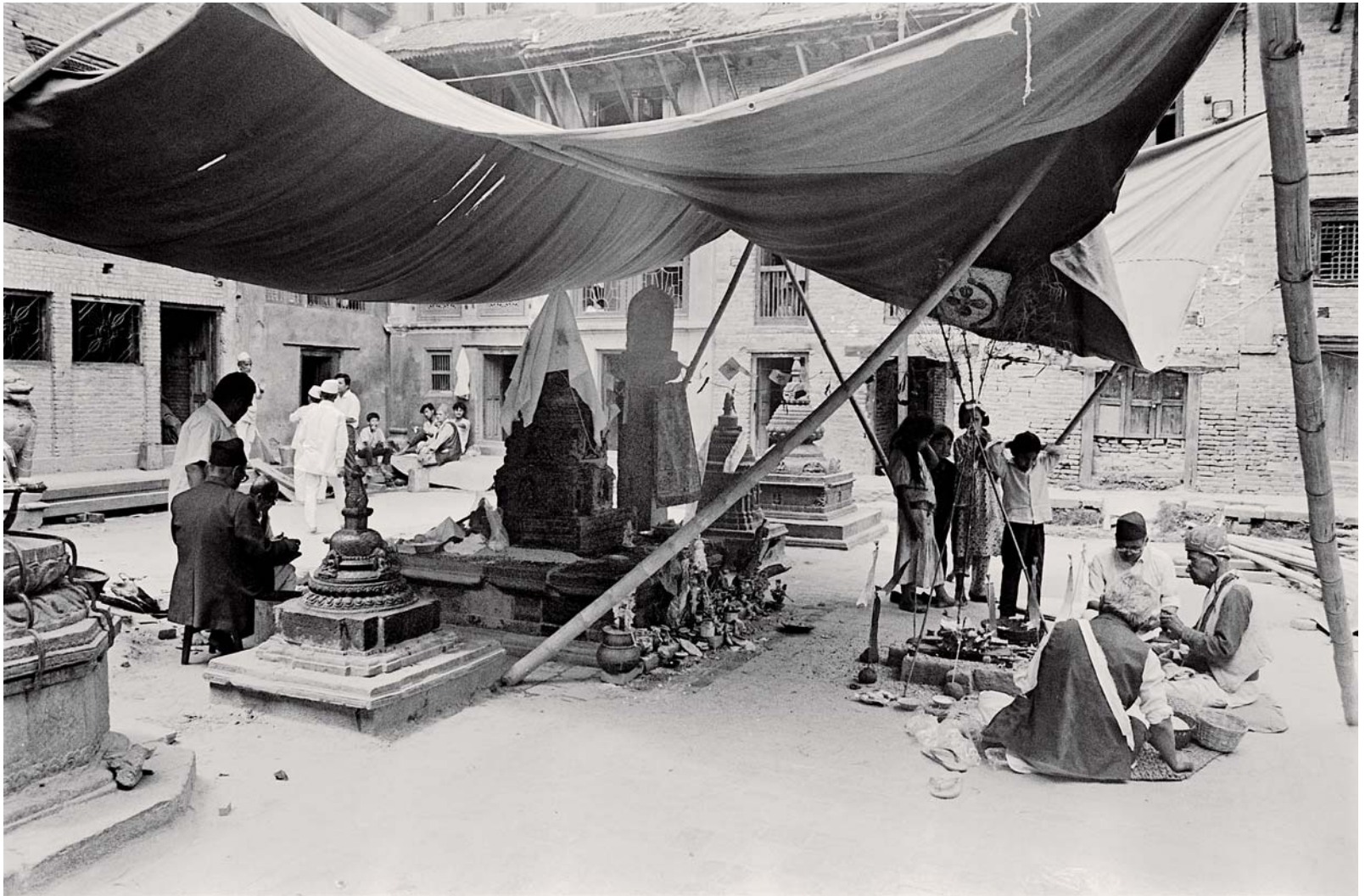
Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 The head priest, Amṛtarāja Vajrācārya, wields his *vajra* above the sacrificial firepit. To his right, Viśvavajra Vajrācārya recites the text with the *yajamāna*, Bhaktabahādura Śākya, on his left. Vikramarāja Vajrācārya decorates the *caitya*.
 Photograph by Nutandhar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



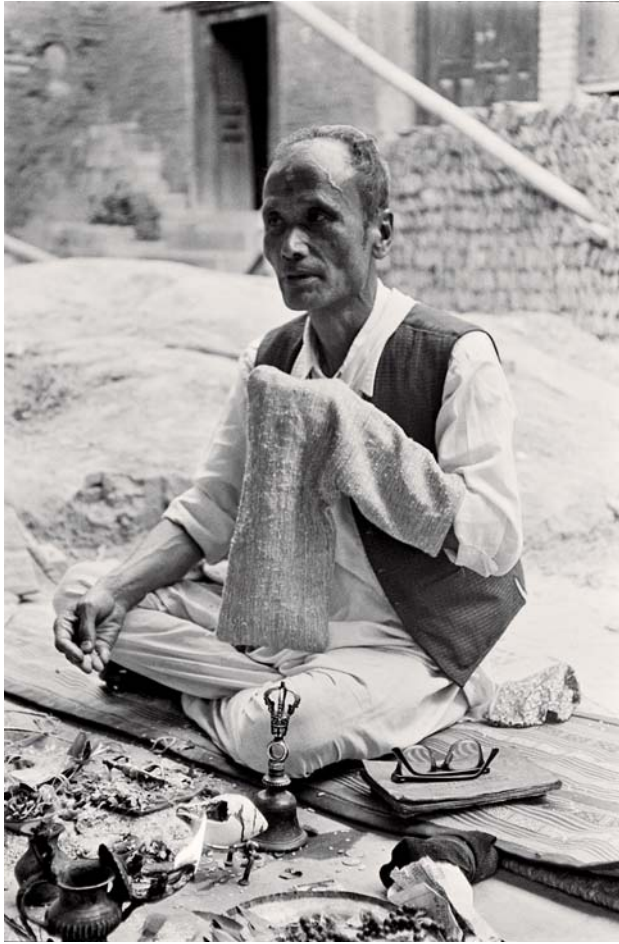
Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 Right, Amṛtarāja Vajracārya rings his bell while performing the fire-ritual; Viśvavajra Vajracārya recites a text, while Bhaktabahādura Śākya watches. Left, Dharmaratna Vajracārya reads a text, while Pannāratna Vajracārya performs the *daśakarma* ritual.
 Photograph 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 Vajrācārya, Khaḍgarāja Vajrācārya, and Dharmaratna Vajrācāryas are performing the *daśakarma* ritual.

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

Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā, May 26, 1993.



Vābāhā, 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, Lakṣmībahādur 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.

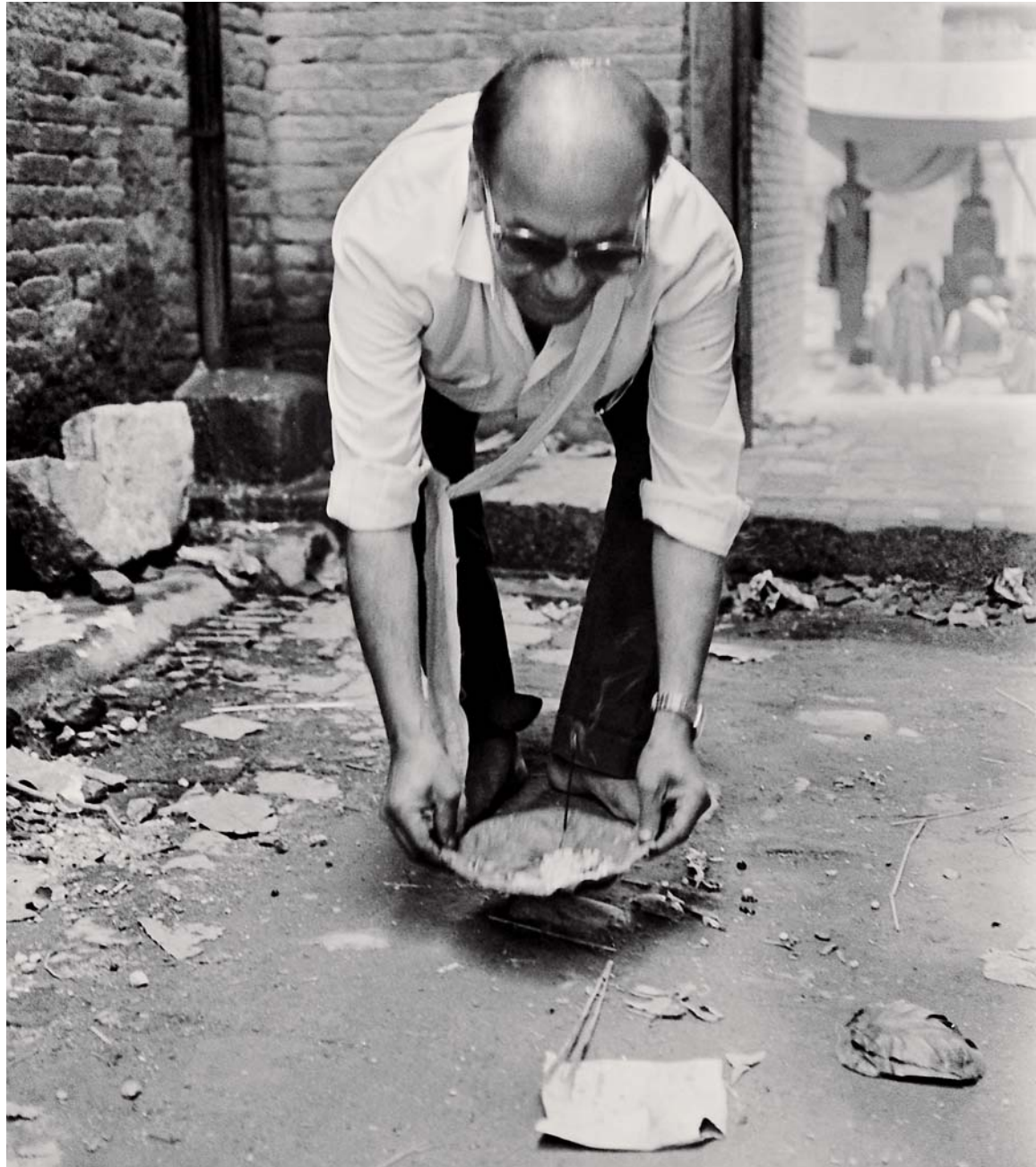


Vābhā, the Jivanyāsa Tāyegu Pūjā
 Dharmarāja Vajrācārya recites from a text and directs
 Pannāratna Vajrācārya to worship accordingly. The *caitya* is
 now decorated with three white circles on its dome, indicating
 the Three Jewels, the Buddha, *dharmā*, and *saṅgha*.
 Photograph by Nutandhar Śarmā,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

Vābāhā, 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 scepter
(*vajra salaka*). Nīla Kumārī
helps him holding the *pūjā*
plate.

Right, Pannāratna Vajrācārya,
Khaḍgarāja Vajrācārya, and
Bhaktabahādura Śākya pour
holy water from the
catuṣṣāgara kalāśa (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
Cuḍākarāṇa 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 (*siphāṃ 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.



Vābāhā, 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.