ARCHITECTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF BAHĀḤ & BAHĪ

PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE *KRIYĀSAṂGRAHA*

बहा:बहीको वास्तुकला र कार्यव्यवस्था

क्रियासंग्रहसम्बन्धी अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय संगोष्ठीको कार्यवृत्त

Kvā-bahāḥ (Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra), Patan.
Photograph by 2022 Field Survey Team



Manuscripts of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* Preserved in the Collection of Akṣayeśvara Mahāvihāra Library
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Architecture and Functions of Bahāḥ & Bahī
Proceedings of the International Symposium on the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*

Edited by
Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group
(Ryugen Tanemura, Taiken Kyuma, Lata Shakya, Gyanendra Shakya, Manindra Shrestha)

Coordinated by
Lata Shakya
Gyanendra Shakya

Contributors *(in alphabetical order of surnames)*
Shaashi Ahlawat (University of Pennsylvania)
Abhishek Amar (Hamilton College)
Surendra Man Bajracharya (Lotus Research Center)
Taiken Kyuma (Mie University)
Gyanendra Shakya (Lotus Research Center)
Lata Shakya (Ritsumeikan University)
Sudan Shakya (Shuchiin University)
Manindra Shrestha (Kasthamandap Reconstruction Committee)
Ryugen Tanemura (Taisho University)

Nepali Translation
Gyanendra Shakya
Manindra Shrestha
Lata Shakya

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ललितपुर महानगरपालिका
मल्ल महानगरपालिका
Lalitpur Metropolitan City

Pulchowk, Lalitpur, Bagmati Province, Nepal

मिति २०८२/११/०४
ने.स. ११४६,सिल्लागा, चतुदर्शी

ललितपुर महानगरपालिका बौद्ध सम्पदाको एक जीवन्त भण्डार हो । ती मध्ये, बहाः-बही वास्तुकलाले नेपालमण्डल सभ्यताको सांस्कृतिक तथा शहरी पहिचान प्रदान गर्दै आएका छन् । यद्यपि, यी वास्तुकला सम्पदाहरु सम्बन्धी शास्त्रीय ग्रन्थहरुको अझै पनि पर्याप्त रुपमा अन्वेषण हुन नसकेको यथार्थ हामी सामु छ र निरन्तर अध्ययनको आवश्यकता छ ।

यस सन्दर्भमा, बौद्ध विहार संघ र लोटस रिसर्च सेन्टरको आयोजनामा भएको **"कियासंग्रह सम्बन्धी अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय संगोष्ठी"** समयसापेक्ष र अत्यन्तै महत्वपूर्ण रहेको मैले ठानेको छु । बौद्ध अध्ययन र वास्तुकला अनुसन्धानलाई एकै मंचमा समेट्दै एघारौं शताब्दीको यस महत्वपुर्ण ग्रन्थ सम्बन्धी अध्ययन विवेचना मार्फत यस संगोष्ठीले बहाः-बही वास्तुकलाको योजना सिद्धान्त तथा सांस्कृतिक अर्थबोध सम्बन्धी नयाँ दृष्टिकोण प्रस्तुत गरेको छ । यस्तो महत्वपुर्ण संगोष्ठीमा प्रस्तुत भएका विषयवस्तुहरु यस प्रकाशनमार्फत दस्तावेजीकरण गरिएको जानकारी गराउन पाँउदा म अत्यन्तै हर्षित छु ।

ललितपुर महानगरपालिका यस्ता पहलहरुलाई हार्दिक स्वागत र समर्थन गर्दछ । यस संगोष्ठीमा प्रस्तुत अनुसन्धानमुलक कार्यपत्रहरु तथा निर्ष्कषहरुले सम्पदा संरक्षण, पुनर्निर्माण तथा बौद्ध धरोहरको दिगो निरन्तरतामा धर्वपूर्ण योगदान पुऱ्याउने विश्वास लिएको छु । यस्ता प्राज्ञिक तथा समुदायमुखी पहलहरुमा ललितपुर महानगरपालिकाले भविष्यमा पनि सकारात्मक सहकार्य र समर्थन निरन्तर प्रदान गर्ने प्रतिबद्धता व्यक्त गर्दछु । यस संगोष्ठी सफलतापूवर्क सम्पन्न गराउन समर्पित आयोजकवर्ग विद्वत्वर्ग तथा सम्पूर्ण संलग्न महानुभावहरु प्रति म हार्दिक धन्यवाद व्यक्त गर्दछु ।

मञ्जली शाक्य वज्राचार्य
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मल मद्दानगरपालिका

Lalitpur Metropolitan City

Pulchowk, Lalitpur, Bagmati Province, Nepal

Lalitpur Mertopollitan City is a living repository of Buddhist heritage, where Bahah and Bahi monasteries continue to shap the cultural, spiritual, and urban identity of the Kathmandu Valley. I understand that these architectural heritage has remained largely unexplored especially through the classical texts.

In this context, the International Symbosium on the Kriyasamgraha organized by Bauddha Bihar Sangha, Lalitpur and Lotus Research Center is both timely and significant. By bringing together Buddhist studies and architectural research, and by re-examining an improtant eleventh-century ritual and architectural treatise, this symposium offers new perspectives on the planning principles, spatial logic, and cultural meanings of Bahah and Bahi. I am also glad to know that these discussions are being compiled and documented in this publication.

Lalitpur Mertopolitan City warmly welcomes and supports such interdisciplinary initiatives. I am confident that the discussions and findings presented in these proceedings will contribute meaningfully to hearitage conservation, informed reconstruction, and the sustainable continuation of our shared Buddhist legacy. In this regard, Lalitpur Metropolitan City remains committed to extanding its positive cooperation and institutional support to similar academic and community-oriented initives in the future.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the organizers, scholars, practitioners, and community members whose dedication made this symposium possible.

Manjali Shakya Bajracharya
Deputy Mayor
Lalitpur Metropolitan City.

Tel: 977-01-5440906, Fax : 977-1-5553966, Email: info@lmc.gov.np, Website: www.lmc.gov.np

Govt. Regd.

Tel : 5427670

बौद्ध विहार संघ (ललितपुर)

(The Organisation of Buddhist Monasteries of Lalitpur, Nepal)

Achheswar Maha-Vihar, Pulchowk, Lalitpur-3, Nepal

अछेश्वर महाविहार
पुल्चोक, ललितपुर-३
नेपाल ।

पत्र संख्या:-
च.नं १०२/२०८२/०८३

मितिः जेष्ठ १५ २०८२/२/२८

२०८२/११/१२

मन्तव्य

'क्रियासंग्रह' विषयक अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय संगोष्ठीको सह-आयोजना गर्न पाउँदा हामी अत्यन्त हर्षित छौं । यस संगोष्ठीमा प्रस्तुत भएका कार्यपत्रहरू तथा टिप्पणीहरू आदि सबै समेटी प्रकाशन गरिएको यो कार्यवृत्त पुस्तकले गोष्ठीमा भएका गहन छलफल तथा निष्कर्षहरूलाई अभिलेखीकरण गर्नेछ । बहाः/बहीहरूको वास्तुकला तथा व्यवस्था सम्बन्धी बहुआयामिक विषयमा केन्द्रित यो संगोष्ठीले बौद्ध अध्ययन, इतिहास, संस्कृत साहित्य तथा सांस्कृतिक सम्पदाको संरक्षणजस्ता विविध क्षेत्रबीच अर्थपूर्ण संवादको अवसर प्रदान गऱ्यो । यस प्रकारको बहुविषयक विमर्शले क्रियासंग्रहसम्बन्धी अध्ययनलाई नयाँ दृष्टिकोणबाट अघि बढाउने सुदृढ आधार तयार गरेको छ।

यस सफल कार्यक्रमका लागि हामी विशेष रूपमा प्रमुख वक्ता प्रा. रुगेन तानेमुएन्यू प्रति हार्दिक कृतज्ञता व्यक्त गर्दछौं, जसको विद्वतापूर्ण मन्तव्यले संगोष्ठीको बौद्धिक आधारलाई समृद्ध बनाएको थियो । त्यस्तै, आफ्ना अनुसन्धानपरक कार्यपत्रहरू प्रस्तुत गर्ने सम्पूर्ण प्रस्तुतकर्ताहरू, सूक्ष्म तथा रचनात्मक टिप्पणीमार्फत विमर्शलाई गहन बनाउने समीक्षकहरू, प्रश्नोत्तर तथा छलफलमा सक्रिय सहभागिता जनाउने सहभागीहरू तथा प्रत्यक्ष र अनलाइन माध्यमबाट जोडिनुहुने सम्पूर्ण उपस्थित महानुभावहरूप्रति हार्दिक धन्यवाद ज्ञापन गर्दछौं । यहाँहरूको सक्रिय सहभागिता बिना यो कार्यक्रम यति सफल र सार्थक हुन सम्भव हुने थिएन ।

यस अवसरमा, यस बहुविषयक अनुसन्धान पहलको महत्वलाई आत्मसात् गर्दै आर्थिक सहयोग प्रदान गर्नुहुने ललितपुर महानगरपालिका कार्यालयप्रति विशेष आभार व्यक्त गर्दछौं । यस्ता शैक्षिक तथा अनुसन्धानमूलक कार्यक्रमहरूलाई सहयोग र प्रत्साहन दिनु महानगरपालिकाको दूरदर्शी सोच र सांस्कृतिक सम्पदाप्रतिको प्रतिबद्धताको द्योतक हो । यस्तै यो पुस्तक छपाइका लागि सहयोग गर्नुहुने विहार प्रोजेक्टलाई पनि हार्दिक कृतज्ञता व्यक्त गर्दछु । यस प्रकाशनका सम्पादकहरू लगायत प्रत्यक्ष अप्रत्यक्ष सहयोग गर्नु हुने सम्पूर्णमा हार्दिक धन्यवाद व्यक्त गर्दै यस गोष्ठीले विद्वत् समाजमा नयाँ जिज्ञासा र अनुसन्धानका सम्भावनाहरू उजागर गर्नेछ भने अपेक्षा गर्दछौं ।

करुणारत्न वज्राचार्य

अध्यक्ष

Govt. Regd. 336/2051

लोटस रिसर्च सेन्टर
LOTUS RESEARCH CENTRE
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FOREWORD

The international symposium on 'Kriyasamgraha: Architecture and Functions of Baha and Bahi Monasteries' was held on December 20–21. This significant event was jointly organized by Boudha Vihara Sangha (Lalitpur) and the Lotus Research Centre, in collaboration with the Kriyasamgraha Study Group at Akṣayesvara Mahāvihāra, Pulchowk, Lalitpur. The symposium provided an opportunity for speakers, paper presenters, and attendees—both in person and online—to explore various aspects of the Sanskrit scripture.

The inaugural session, led by Manjali Shakya Bajracharya, Deputy Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City, included a keynote address by Prof. Dr. Ryugen Tanemura on the significance of Kriyasamgrahapanjika. There were altogether five papers commented on by four commentators. The question-and-answer session allowed presenters and organizers to address audience inquiries regarding the presentations, Kriyasamgrahapanjika, and the functions of Baha Bahi. The closing session provided remarks summarizing the first day.

In addition to the established architectural and functional aspects of Baha Bahi discussed in the *Kriyasamgrahapanjika*, the symposium promoted examination of previously unexplored dimensions of the text, fostering scholarly discussion and collaboration. Researchers from Japan, USA, and Nepal presented recent findings.

On the second day, a guided tour was organized for paper presenters and interested participants to visit relevant Baha and Bahi monasteries, allowing comparison between scriptural descriptions and the current conditions and functions of these sites. The symposium concluded with reflections on the insights gained and an emphasis on the importance of continued research into Kriyasamgrahapanjika.

The Lotus Research Centre is honored to have served as co-organizer of the event and extends sincere gratitude to all who contributed to its successful completion. Special thanks go to Mr. Karuna Ratna Bajracharya, president of Baudha Vihar Sangha, Lalitpur; members of the Kriyasamgraha Group; the keynote speaker, Prof. Dr. Ryugen Tanemura; all paper presenters; commentators; active participants in the question-and-answer session; and the audience.

To reach a wider readership, the papers presented at the symposium, along with the keynote address and vernacular translations of selected papers, are published in this volume. The Centre anticipates that this publication will foster further research concerning Kriyasamgrahapanjika.

Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya
Chairman
Lotus Research Centre

P.O. Box No. 59, Kamaldanam Mahavihar, Khwayebahil, Lalitpur, Nepal. Phone : 5005253 Email: info@lrcnepal.org
Website : http://www.lrcnepal.org

Preface

In the years following the 2015 Gorkha earthquake, extensive reconstruction efforts were carried out throughout the Kathmandu Valley. While these initiatives were essential for restoring daily life and improving structural safety, many reconstruction practices resulted in the gradual loss of historical and architectural values. In particular, the heritage significance of Buddhist monasteries—Bahāḥ and Bahī has often been diminished, as modern construction methods have been prioritized over traditional materials and building knowledge.

At the same time, research in Buddhist studies, especially on Newar Buddhism, has made significant scholarly progress. Studies on ritual practices, textual traditions, and historical development have deepened our understanding of Buddhist monastic institutions. However, despite the presence of architectural descriptions in classical ritual texts, these sources have rarely been examined from an architectural perspective. As a result, the spatial logic, construction principles, and urban significance of Bahāḥ and Bahī have remained insufficiently articulated within both academic research and conservation practice.

In response to this disciplinary gap, the Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group was established to promote interdisciplinary research integrating Buddhist studies and architecture. Focusing on the *Kriyāsaṃgraha,* an eleventh-century Sanskrit treatise on Buddhist ritual and monastic architecture, the group has sought to reinterpret classical textual sources through architectural analysis and field-based investigation. This approach aims to clarify the architectural meaning of Bahāḥ and Bahī and to contribute to more historically grounded conservation and reconstruction strategies.

Based on this background, our symposium was organized by the Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha (BVS) and the Lotus Research Center, in collaboration with The Vihāra Project (JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP22H00002) and the Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group, to present the outcomes of this collaborative research and to create a platform for interdisciplinary dialogue.

The symposium was held on 20 December 2025 at Akṣayeśvara Mahāvihāra, Lalitpur, in a hybrid format (on-site and online). It brought together more than 80 on-site participants and 46 online participants, reflecting strong academic and community engagement.

In preparing this volume, references have been standardized according to the Harvard referencing style (12th edition). Sanskrit and Newar technical terms are presented using standard IAST transliteration where appropriate. Italicization is applied selectively to technical terms and to the titles of books and journals, while place names and commonly used terms appear in their conventional English forms.

प्राक्कथन

२०१५ सालको गोरखा भूकम्पपछि काठमाडौँ उपत्यकाभर व्यापक पुनर्निर्माण कार्यहरू सञ्चालन गरिए। यी प्रयासहरू दैनिक जीवन पुनःस्थापना गर्न र संरचनात्मक सुरक्षामा सुधार ल्याउन अत्यन्त आवश्यक थियो। यी मध्ये कतिपय सम्पदा पुनर्निर्माणको हकमा ती सम्पदाहरूको ऐतिहासिक तथा वास्तुकला मूल्यमा क्रमिक ह्रास ल्याएको देखियो। विशेषतः बहाः र बहीको पुनर्निर्माण कार्यमा परम्परागत निर्माण प्रविधि तथा सामग्रीको जगेर्ना गर्नु भन्दा आधुनिक निर्माण विधिहरूलाई बढी प्राथमिकता दिइएको देखियो। यो अवस्था बहाःबही वास्तुकला र यसको संरक्षण सम्बन्धी पर्याप्त ज्ञानको कमीका कारण भएको हुनसक्ने अनुमान लगाउनु सकिन्छ।

आजको दिनमा बौद्ध अध्ययन, विशेषगरी नेवाः बौद्ध परम्परासम्बन्धी अध्ययन अनुसन्धानमा उल्लेखनीय प्रगति भएको देखिएपनि शास्त्रीय पूजाविधि ग्रन्थहरूका आधारमा वास्तुशास्त्रीय दृष्टिकोणबाट यी संरचनाहरूको विरलै अध्ययन भएको छ। यसैको परिणामस्वरूप, बहाः र बहीको वास्तुकला अवधारणा, निर्माण सिद्धान्त तथा शहरी महत्त्व पर्याप्त रूपमा स्पष्ट हुन सकेको छैन। यस शैक्षिक रिक्ततालाई सम्बोधन गर्दै बौद्ध अध्ययन र वास्तुकलालाई एकीकृत रूपमा बुझ्ने उद्देश्यले क्रियासंग्रह अनुसन्धान समूह गठन भएको हो। बौद्ध पूजाविधि तथा विहार निर्माण सम्बन्धी एघारौँ शताब्दीको संस्कृत ग्रन्थ क्रियासंग्रहपञ्जिकालाई केन्द्रमा राख्दै, यस समूहले वास्तु विश्लेषण तथा स्थलगत अध्ययनमार्फत शास्त्रीय ग्रन्थहरूको अध्ययन गर्ने प्रयास गरेको छ। यस प्रयासले बहाः र बहीको वास्तुकला सम्बन्धी अर्थ स्पष्ट पार्ने र यसको संरक्षण तथा पुनर्निर्माण रणनीतिमा केहिं योगदान हुने अपेक्षा राखिएको छ।

यस पृष्ठभूमिमा, "क्रियासंग्रह–बहाःबहीको वास्तुकला र कार्यव्यवस्था" शीर्षकमा आयोजित अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय संगोष्ठी बौद्ध विहार संघ, ललितपुर र लोटस रिसर्च सेन्टरको संयुक्त तत्त्वावधानमा द विहार प्रोजेक्ट (JSPS KAKENHI Grant No. 22H00002) तथा क्रियासंग्रह अनुसन्धान समूहको सहकार्यमा सम्पन्न गरिएको थियो। यस संगोष्ठीको उद्देश्य यस सहकार्यात्मक अनुसन्धानका उपलब्धीहरू प्रस्तुत गर्नु र अन्तरविषयक संवादको लागि एउटा मञ्चको सिर्जना गर्नु थियो।

यो संगोष्ठी २०८२ पुष ५ गते शनिवार तदनुसार २० डिसेम्बर २०२५ का दिन ललितपुरस्थित अक्षयेश्वर महाविहारमा प्रत्यक्ष तथा अनलाइन (हाइब्रिड विधि) मा सम्पन्न भएको थियो। कार्यक्रममा प्राज्ञिक तथा सामुदायिक क्षेत्रबाट ८० जना भन्दा बढी प्रत्यक्ष सहभागी तथा ४६ जना अनलाइन सहभागीहरूको सहभागिता रहेको थियो।

यस ग्रन्थमा सन्दर्भ स्रोतहरूलाई हावर्ड रेफरेन्सिङ्ग स्टाइल (१२औं संस्करण) अनुसार राखिएको छ। संम्पूर्ण संस्कृत तथा नेवार प्राविधिक शब्दहरू आवश्यकतानुसार IAST transliteration विधि अनुसार प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। प्राविधिक शब्दहरू तथा पुस्तक र जर्नलका शीर्षकहरूलाई italic मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ, भने स्थाननामहरू तथा सामान्य रूपमा प्रयोग हुने शब्दहरूलाई प्रचलित रोमनमा नै प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ।

Overview of the Symposium

The symposium opened with welcoming remarks by Mr. Karuna Ratna Bajracharya, President of the Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha (BVS), who emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts among scholars, practitioners, and local institutions for the sustainable management of bahāḥ and bahī. Dr. Lata Shakya presented the purpose and structure of the symposium, outlining the need for interdisciplinary research integrating Buddhist textual studies and architectural analysis. The Deputy Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City, Ms. Manjali Shakya Bajracharya, attended as Chief Guest and expressed municipal support for initiatives aimed at safeguarding monastic heritage within the historic urban landscape of Lalitpur. The symposium was organized into three thematic parts.

Part I: Text, Architecture, and Local Monastic Traditions

The first part focused on the relationship between the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and bahāḥ and bahī in the Kathmandu Valley. The keynote lecture by Prof. Ryugen Tanemura examined the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* as an authoritative ritual and architectural manual and presented inscriptional and textual evidence demonstrating its influence on Newar Buddhist monastic construction. Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya discussed the architectural tradition of bahāḥ and bahī within the broader framework of Newar Vajrayāna Buddhism, highlighting their ritual atmosphere and spatial organization. Dr. Sudan Shakya analyzed monastic iconography, emphasizing the role of images and ritual programs in shaping the meaning and function of bahāḥ and bahī. Gyanendra Shakya, representing from the Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group presented interdisciplinary findings on the adaptation of textual prescriptions into built form, demonstrating correspondences between ritual manuals and architectural elements.

Part II: Indian Vihāra Traditions in Comparative Perspective

The second part expanded the scope of discussion by situating bahāḥ and bahī within the broader context of South Asian monastic architecture. Prof. Taiken Kyuma introduced the Vihāra Project, outlining its interdisciplinary investigation into Indian Buddhist monasteries from the Gupta period onward. Prof. Abhishek Amar, Dr. Shaashi Ahlawat and Prof. Kyuma presented a typological study of Indian vihāra architecture and examined its potential connections and divergences with bahāḥ and bahī in the Kathmandu Valley. This comparative framework enabled participants to reflect on regional continuities and transformations in Buddhist monastic architecture.

Part III: Panel Discussion and Q&A

A panel discussion titled “Past, Present, and Future of Bahāḥ & Bahī.” was moderated by Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya. Commentators included Dr. Sudarshan Raj Tiwari and Prof. Mohan Moorti Pant, both specialists in architectural history, as well as Lecturer Shantashree Ratna Bajracharya and Asst. Prof. Sanjay Shakya, representing Buddhist studies. From the floor, the founding member, Dr. Bajra Raj Shakya, expressed his gratitude for the organizing committee of the symposium. He noted that he had long worked to establish a connection between the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and the bahāḥ-bahī tradition, an effort that had not previously been successful. The discussion emphasized the importance of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* as a foundational source for understanding Newar monastic architecture. The commentators further highlighted the need for continued research on related historical documents and inscriptional materials from the periods before and after the composition of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha.* They also stressed the significance of field-based surveys in clarifying the relationship between textual prescriptions and built form.

Participants from both on-site and online audiences raised questions concerning the balance between conservation practices and seismic safety, connections with Indian vihāra traditions, the transmission of ritual knowledge, and the institutional continuity of the Saṅgha. The session ultimately underscored the necessity of sustained interdisciplinary collaboration to ensure the long-term sustainability of bahāḥ and bahī.

Concluding Session

The symposium concluded with a formal closing session, during which certificates of appreciation were presented to speakers and commentators. The president of the Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha, Lalitpur delivered closing remarks, reaffirming the importance of continued interdisciplinary collaboration. The event ended with informal networking, fostering further dialogue among scholars, community members, and institutional representatives.

Program of the Symposium

09:00–09:30	**Registration & Tea**
09:30–10:00	**MC: Ms. Prativa Shakya** **Opening & Introductory Remarks** *Welcome speech* **Mr. Karuna Ratna Bajracharya,** President, Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha, Lalitpur *Purpose and Overview of the Symposium* **Dr. Lata Shakya and Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group** *Remarks from the chief guest* **Deputy Mayor of LMC, Ms. Manjali Shakya Bajracharya**
10:00–10:35	**Keynote Speech** *The Kriyāsaṃgraha and Its Importance for Understanding Newar Buddhism* **Prof. Ryugen Tanemura** (Taisho University)
10:35–10:50	**Presentation 1:** *Architectural Tradition in Buddhism in Nepālamaṇḍala* **Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya** (Lotus Research Center)
10:50–11:25	**Presentation 2:** *Adaptation of the Kriyāsaṃgraha in Bahāḥ & Bahī Architecture – Research Outcomes of Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group* **Ar. Gyanendra Shakya** (Lotus Research Center) **& Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group**
11:25 – 11:40	**Comments by Prof. Dr. Sudarshan Raj Tiwari (**Institute of Engineering, T.U.)
11:40–11:55	**Presentation 3:** *Monastic Iconography: Images, Rituals, and Meaning in the Kathmandu Valley* **Prof. Sudan Shakya** (Shuchiin University)
12:00–13:30	**Lunch Break**
13:30–13:55	**Presentation 5:** *Introduction to the Vihāra Project (India)* **Prof. Taiken Kyuma** (Mie University)
13:55–14:20	**Presentation 6:** *Typology of Vihāra in India and Its Connection with bahāḥ & bahī in Nepal* **Prof. Abhishek Amar** (Hamilton College) **& Dr. Shaashi Ahlawat** (University of Pennsylvania) **& Prof. Taiken Kyuma**
14:20–14:30	**Break**
14:30–16:00	**Panel Discussion and Q&A** *"Past (Indian Vihāra, Kriyāsaṃgraha), Present (Bahāḥ Bahī in modern Nepal) and Future of Bahāḥ & Bahī"* Panelist: Presenters **Moderators: Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya, Dr. Lata Shakya** Commentators: Lect., Shantashree Ratna Bajracharya (Sugat Buddhist College) Asst. Prof. Sanjay Shakya (Lumbini Buddhist University) Prof. Mohan Moorti Pant (Khwopa Eng. College)
16:00–16:30	**Closing Session** Handing over the certificates of appreciation to all presenters and commentators Handing over the souvenir to guest presenters Closing remarks by Karuna Ratna Bajracharya, President of BVS **Networking & Wrap-up**

Acknowledgments

The editors sincerely hope that this publication will serve as an important first step toward integrated research and the establishment of a stronger foundation for the sustainable conservation of bahāḥ and bahī as living heritage in the Kathmandu Valley.

We would first like to express our deepest gratitude to the Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha, Lalitpur (BVS), a key organization supporting the continuity and sustainability of bahāḥ and bahī, and to the Lotus Research Center (LRC), an important institution promoting Buddhist studies in Nepal. We are especially thankful to Mr. Karuna Ratna Bajracharya, President of BVS, for his generous initiation and continuous support from the preparation stage to the excursion program, including the provision of the venue and logistical arrangements. We also extend our sincere thanks to Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya, President of the Lotus Research Center, for his academic leadership and support throughout the symposium. Our heartfelt appreciation is also extended to the executive members and staff of BVS and LRC, whose dedicated cooperation and organizational support were essential to the successful realization of the symposium.

Our sincere appreciation is also extended to Lalitpur Metropolitan City Office for its continuous encouragement and institutional support. We are particularly grateful to Ms. Manjali Shakya, Deputy Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City, for her encouragement and support in realizing this symposium.

The invitation to the international scholars and the implementation of the symposium were made possible through the support of The Vihāra Project (JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP22H00002). We gratefully acknowledge this essential financial and academic support, which has also enabled the publication of these proceedings.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to all speakers, commentators, and participants, whose contributions made our symposium a meaningful and intellectually stimulating event.

Special thanks are due to Ar. Prativa Shakya for serving as Master of Ceremonies and ensuring the smooth progression of the program, and to Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya for skillfully moderating the sessions and fostering constructive interdisciplinary dialogue.

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Finally, the editors acknowledge the collaborative efforts of the Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha Lalitpur and the Lotus Research Center in co-organizing the symposium and fostering continued dialogue on the future of bahāḥ and bahī as living heritage.

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The Need for Interdisciplinary Research and the Recognition of Historical Values of Bahāḥ and Bahī

बहा:बहीका ऐतिहासिक मूल्यको पहिचान र अन्तरविषयक अनुसन्धानको आवश्यकता

Lata Shakya,

Visiting Researcher, Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage (DMUCH), Ritsumeikan University, Japan

E-mail : shakya@fc.ritsumei.ac.jp

लता शाक्य,

अतिथि अनुसन्धानकर्ता, शहरी सांस्कृतिक सम्पदा विपद् न्यूनीकरण संस्थान (DMUCH)

रित्सुमेइकान विश्वविद्यालय, जापान

विषयवस्तुको सारांश

काठमाडौँ उपत्यकाका परम्परागत बहाः बहीले पाटनजस्ता ऐतिहासिक शहरहरूको धार्मिक, सामाजिक तथा स्थानिक संरचना निर्माणमा महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेलेको देखिन्छ । यी बहा:/बहीलाई धार्मिक एवं ऐतिहासिक सम्पदाका रूपमा चिनिएतापनि, तिनको अन्तरविषयक दृष्टिकोणबाट पर्याप्त रूपमा अध्ययन गरिएको पाइदैन । यस लेखले परस्पर सम्बन्धित तीन आयामहरूको विश्लेषण गर्ने जमर्को गरेको छ । पहिलो, बहा:/बहीको चोक-आधारित वास्तुकला र शहरी बस्ती निर्माण बीच रहेको सम्बन्धको अध्ययन गर्न खोजिएको छ । दोस्रो, भूकम्पपछिको पुनर्निर्माण नीतिहरूले परम्परागत निर्माण प्रविधिभन्दा आधुनिक स्ट्रक्चर डिजाइन मापदण्डलाई प्राथमिकता दिएको कारण वास्तुकला र सांस्कृतिक मूल्य जोखिममा परेको अवस्थाको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । तेस्रो, विहार सञ्चालन गर्ने संघ व्यवस्थामा आएको रूपान्तरणको समीक्षा गरिएको छ । पूर्वकालमा बौद्ध भिक्षुहरूको निवास, शिक्षाभ्यासस्थलका रूपमा बनेका यी बहा:बहीहरू क्रमशः पूजाआजामा केन्द्रित वंशपरम्परानुसार सञ्चालित धार्मिक सांस्कृतिक स्थलका रूपमा रूपान्तरण भएको देखिन्छ । हाल विद्यमान प्रव्रज्यासंवर (चूडाकर्म) तथा संघ व्यवस्था तत्कालीन व्यवस्थाहरूकै निरन्तरताका रूपमा चलिआएको देखिन्छ । बहा:/बहीलाई भौतिक, धार्मिक, व्यवस्थापन र शहरी पक्षलाई एकीकृत गर्ने जीवित प्रणालीका रूपमा बुझिनुपर्छ भन्ने तर्क यस लेख मार्फत प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । क्रियासंग्रह अनुसन्धान समूहको गठन र यस संगोष्ठीबाट उपत्यकाको ऐतिहासिक शहरी संरचनाभित्र बहा:/बहीको दिगो संरक्षणका लागि अन्तरविषयक ढाँचा निर्माणतर्फको प्रारम्भिक कदम हुने अपेक्षा लिइएको छ ।

Keywords: Bahāḥ and Bahī; Buddhist Monastery; Living Heritage; Courtyard Architecture; Post-earthquake Reconstruction, Nepal.

1. Introduction

Bahāḥ and bahī, the traditional Buddhist monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley, have played a central role in shaping the religious, social, and spatial structure of historic cities, particularly in Patan. Today, they are widely recognized as sacred places and historic monuments. However, their deeper architectural logic and the ways in which they relate to broader patterns of urban formation and heritage values have not yet been sufficiently examined through an integrated scholarly approach. For this reason, the heritage value of bahāḥ and bahī has often been diminished, as reconstruction has tended to prioritize modern construction methods over traditional materials and building knowledge. The *Kriyāsaṃgraha* is an eleventh-century Sanskrit treatise on Buddhist ritual and monastic architecture, attributed to Kuladatta, a master of Vajrayāna Buddhism. This text has long been regarded as a key reference for the ritual organization and architectural formation of bahāḥ and bahī in the Kathmandu Valley. Importantly, its historical application is supported by epigraphic evidence. A stone inscription

at Pinchebahāḥ in Kathmandu, dated 713 NS (1593 CE), records Śākyabhikṣu Jayalakṣa consecrating the Jāmbunadamahāvihāra according to the rituals prescribed in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahaśāstra* (Regmi, 1965, part IV, No. 27). This inscription demonstrates that the text functioned not merely as a theoretical treatise but as an operative ritual-architectural reference in the early modern period. While the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* has been studied within the field of Buddhist studies, its architectural implications have rarely been analyzed in detail. As a result, the architectural values embedded in classical Buddhist texts remain underrepresented in discussions of heritage and conservation.

In response to this situation, the Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group was established to promote interdisciplinary research integrating Buddhist studies and architecture. The symposium was organized to introduce the research framework of the Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group and to foster interdisciplinary discussion on the past, present, and future of bahāḥ and bahī. By integrating perspectives from Buddhist studies, architecture, and heritage conservation, the symposium sought to deepen understanding of their historical formation, particularly from an architectural perspective, and to explore future directions for heritage practice and cultural sustainability.

This paper aims to clarify why an integrated perspective is essential for recognizing the historic values of these monasteries and for reassessing their significance in the present day. In this sense, the paper serves as an introductory framework and conceptual overview for the need for a more fundamental and interdisciplinary understanding of bahāḥ and bahī.

2. Bahāḥ and Bahī as Courtyard Architecture and Urban Formation of Patan

Bahāḥ and bahī derive from the Sanskrit term *'vihāra'* and share their origins with ancient Indian Buddhist monasteries such as Nālandā Mahāvihāra. They developed as courtyard-centered residential complexes for Buddhist monks, managed by the saṃgha. From the medieval period onward, bahāḥ were primarily associated with non-celibate monks, while bahī housed celibate monks, although both types retained a common courtyard-based spatial logic (Fig. 1, Fig. 3a, Fig. 3b). While a typical courtyard measures around 10 × 10 meters, bahāḥ and bahī exhibit wide variation in scale, ranging from small shared courtyards of approximately 20 m² to large complexes exceeding 5,000 m² (Shakya et al., 2018). In many cases, these courtyards are shared with surrounding residential houses and are locally known as nani or cuka, reflecting the deep integration of monastic space into the everyday urban fabric.

The courtyard-centered spatial structure of bahāḥ and bahī influenced not only Buddhist monastic architecture but also the urban formation of Patan. During the medieval Malla period, this spatial concept is thought to have spread from royal palaces to the residences of state officials and, subsequently, to ordinary dwellings, contributing to the development of the city as a "courtyard-style settlement."

2.1. Relationship of Bahāḥ and Bahī with the UNESCO WHS Patan Durbar Square

Patan Durbar Square, a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Fig. 2), is characterized by a composition of multiple courtyards that define the urban core. According to local oral traditions, a Buddhist monastery once occupied this site and was later relocated to allow for the construction of the palace; the relocated monastery is known today as Haḥ-bahāḥ (Ratnākara Mahāvihāra) (Locke, 1985). This memory persists in contemporary religious practice, as Patan Durbar Square is included among important pilgrimage sites during Guṃlā, the sacred Buddhist month.

Supporting this oral tradition, a detailed architectural study conducted by the Nippon Institute of Technology (1985) demonstrates that courtyard type buildings of royal palace and bahāḥ monasteries share common compositional principles in wall articulation and spatial organization, despite differences in ornamentation. The study argues that the influence of Buddhist monastery architecture can be clearly

observed in the buildings of the Patan Royal Palace. It further clarifies that the arrangement of multiple courtyards within the palace complex resembles the continuous layout of bahāḥ as an architectural group and shows similarities to the spatial organization of Nālandā Mahāvihāra in India.

Based on these findings, the study suggests that courtyard-based architecture in Nepal predates the Malla period and was most likely introduced during the Licchavī dynasty. The study emphasizes that to further clarify the historical development of this architectural tradition, comparative research particularly in relation to Indian architectural contexts remains essential.

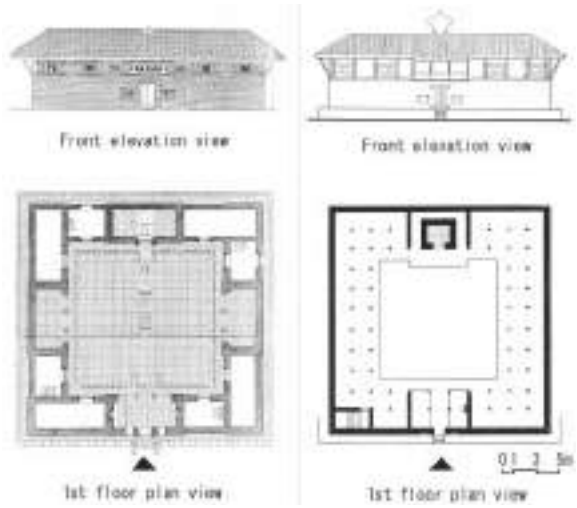


Figure 1: Chusyā-bahāḥ (left) and Pintu-bahī (right). (Source: Korn, 1977, pp. 16–17)

2.2 Relationship of Bahāḥ and Bahī with the Residential Courtyards

Another important contribution is the work of Prof. Mohan Moorti Pant, who investigated the spatial structure of Newar settlements. His research demonstrated that large residential courtyard blocks were intentionally planned and that this planning principle has its roots in Buddhist monastic traditions. He identified a strong correspondence between the courtyard layouts of residential blocks and those of bahāḥ monasteries, suggesting that the spatial logic of

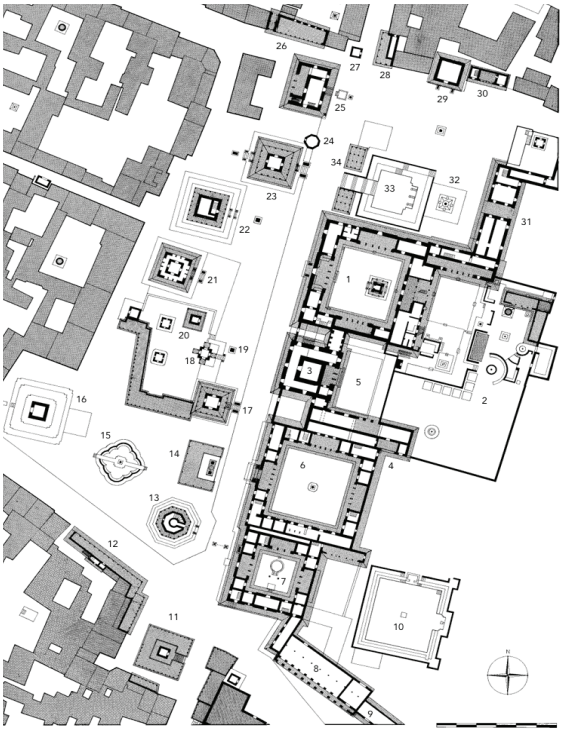


Figure 2: Plan of Patan Durbar Square. (Source: KVPT, 2006, p. 14)



Figure 3a: Chusyā-bahāḥ (Source: NHDP–DANAM)



Figure 3b: Pintu-bahī. (before demolishing) (Photograph by Lata Shakya)

the historic town evolved following the introduction of Vajrayāna Buddhism, likely around the seventh or eighth century. His case studies further indicate that such courtyard-based planning was already established by the twelfth century (Pant & Funo, 2004).

2.3. Hand Written Manuscript on Courtyard Architecture

This interpretation is further supported by manuscript evidence. Numerous handwritten manuscripts illustrate courtyard-centered house layouts and are believed to have been produced by scribes drawing on the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā.* These illustrated manuscripts are preserved in institutions such as Āśā Saphū Kuthi, National Archives and are also held by local carpenters and house builders, written in classical Sanskrit and later, Newar language.

Figure 4 presents a representative example illustrating the symbolic meanings of different courtyard configurations and the buildings enclosing them. In the upper row, the first image from the left depicts a *svastika*, and the second depicts a *vihāra*; both bear the inscription, "Those who live in this house will be blessed with everything." This inscription appears to promote the construction of dwellings in the form of *catuṣśālā*, a courtyard enclosed by buildings on all four sides. Together, textual sources, manuscript evidence, and architectural studies indicate a close relationship between Buddhist ritual traditions, monastic architecture, and the development of courtyard-based urban form. However, an integrated historical understanding that clearly connects monastic architecture with the urban-scale formation of Patan remains limited.



Figure 4: Handwritten Manuscript in Paper
It depicts layout and description of buildings surrounding the courtyard. (Source: Āśā Saphū Kuthi collection)

3. Recognition of Bahāḥ and Bahī as Important Historic Monuments

Despite their historical, architectural, and cultural significance, bahāḥ and bahī have not been sufficiently recognized within Nepal's legal and institutional heritage frameworks.

3.1. The Ancient Monument Preservation Act

The Ancient Monument Preservation Act (AMPA), enacted in 1956, remains the principal legislation governing heritage conservation in Nepal. The Act defines "Ancient Monuments," "Archaeological Objects," and provides for the classification of heritage into three categories: monuments of international, national, and local importance. However, although temples, monasteries, houses, stupas, and vihāra older than one hundred years are defined as ancient monuments, the specific categories have not yet been formally listed. The terms bahāḥ and bahī are not explicitly mentioned in the Act; instead, they are subsumed under the broader category of monasteries or vihāra. A clause concerning the operation of religious institutions (Section 3E) stipulates that up to fifty percent of donated funds must be used for conservation and environmental improvement. While this provision includes bahāḥ and bahī in principle, the Act does not provide a clear definition of their unique characteristics as courtyard-based monastic residential complexes with living ritual and communal functions.

3.2 Post-Earthquake Reconstruction Guidelines (2018)

Following the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake, the government issued the "Procedure Related to the Conservation, Renovation and Reconstruction of Gumbā, Vihāra, and Stūpa Affected by the Earthquake, 2075" (NRA, 2018). This guideline classifies monasteries nationwide according to coverage area

and proposes standardized reconstruction models, including one- or two-storied structures built with reinforced concrete (RCC) frames and brick or stone infill. While this approach ensures structural safety and efficiency, it reflects a predominantly engineering-oriented perspective. The specific architectural logic of bahāḥ and bahī—such as their courtyard configuration, traditional construction methods, communal ownership systems, and ritual spatial hierarchy—is not adequately addressed.

3.3 Differences among Bahāḥ/Bahī, Theravāda Vihāra, and Tibetan Gumbā

In Nepal, the English term "monasteries" encompasses different Buddhist traditions, including bahāḥ and bahī of the Newar Buddhist community, Theravāda Vihāra, and Tibetan Buddhist gumbā. Although all represent Buddhist institutions, their historical development, institutional organization, and architectural formation differ significantly.

Bahāḥ and bahī have historically been organized in a saṃgha system for each monastery and sustained through hereditary succession among Śākya and Vajrācārya lineages. Their institutional continuity is embedded within the historic urban fabric of the Kathmandu Valley, where courtyard-based spatial organization and localized saṃgha networks evolved over centuries. Theravāda institutions in Nepal, while rooted in an ancient Buddhist tradition, were institutionally established primarily in the twentieth century. They are organized under a nationwide saṃgha of ordained monks structured through ordination lineage rather than hereditary systems. This national monastic structure often maintains connections with transnational Theravāda networks. Tibetan Buddhist gumbā possess long historical traditions in Himalayan regions and are typically organized through lineage-based monastic orders. In the Kathmandu Valley, however, many gumbā represent relatively recent institutional establishments. Their architectural forms and spatial settings differ from the historically evolved urban courtyard-based bahāḥ and bahī system.

Such diversity underscores the need for clearer legal and heritage classifications. The historical transformation of bahāḥ and bahī, discussed in the following section (see Fig. 9)

3.4 Consequences for Conservation Practice

As a result of these definitional and regulatory gaps, conservation practices have often focused primarily on physical elements such as walls, roofs, and façades, without sufficient attention to architectural integrity and cultural continuity. In several post-earthquake reconstruction projects, traditional construction elements were altered or removed (Fig. 5, 6, 7 & 8) for example:

1) the removal of the base stone of pillars (ilvahaṁ)
2) replacement of original pillars with new ones
3) insertion of additional wooden frames within brick walls

Although local experts and community members raised concerns regarding these interventions, reconstruction proceeded claiming that it is in accordance with the National Building Code 203 and related seismic standards. In the absence of clearly articulated legal definitions and heritage-specific guidelines for bahāḥ and bahī, engineering compliance became the primary reference point (Shakya et al., 2025).

These cases underscore the urgent need to document and systematize the traditional construction methods and spatial principles unique to bahāḥ and bahī. Without such documentation and shared guidelines, post-disaster restoration risks undermining the very historic and cultural values it seeks to preserve.

4. Transformation of Bahāḥ and Bahī and Living Heritage Values for Future Sustainability

Bahāḥ and bahī, the traditional Buddhist monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley, are not static monuments but dynamic institutions that have continuously transformed in response to political, social, and religious change. However, they continue to embody rich tangible and intangible values.

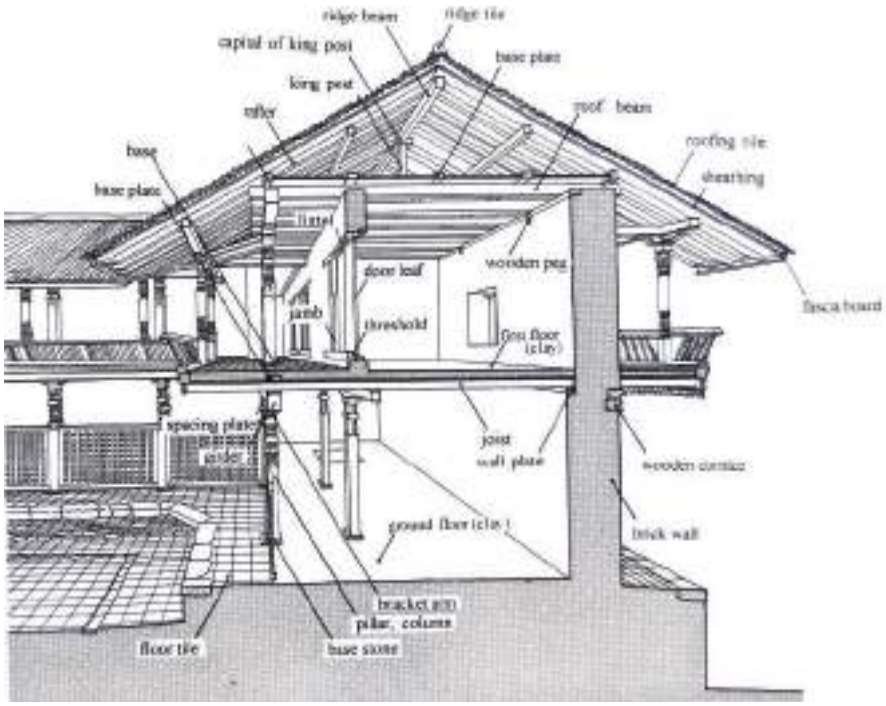


Figure 5: Traditional Structural System of a Courtyard-Type Buddhist Monastery. Sectional drawing illustrating the load-bearing masonry walls, and column system with stone-based (ilvahaṁ) (source: Watanabe et al., 1998, Appendix).

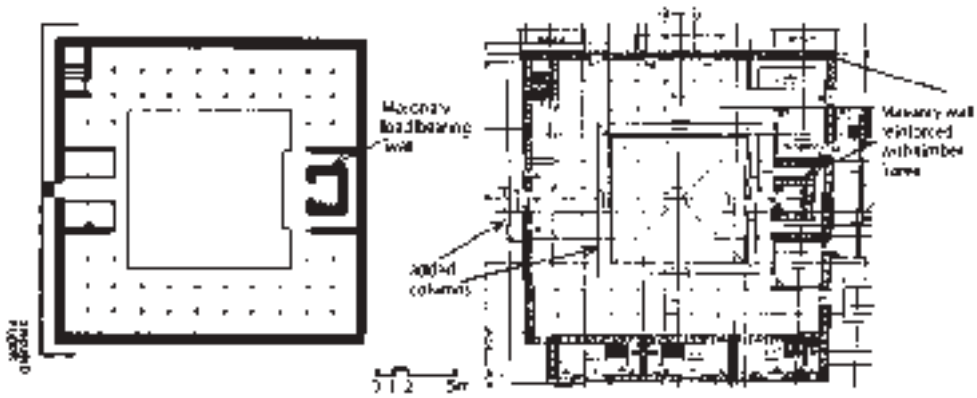


Figure 6: Comparison between Traditional and Reconstructed Ground Floor Plans of Pintu-bahī.
Left: Traditional ground floor plan based on load-bearing masonry and timber columns (Source: Korn, 1998).
Right: Proposed reconstruction plan introducing additional columns and modified wall structures (National Reconstruction Authority, 2021).



Figure 7: Original Columns
Columns with Stone Bases (ilvahaṁ) Prior to Demolition for Reconstruction. (Photograph by Lata Shakya)



Figure 8: Newly Installed Columns
Columns without base stone instead placed over the wooden member burried in ground without any dampproofing measures. (Photograph by Lata Shakya)

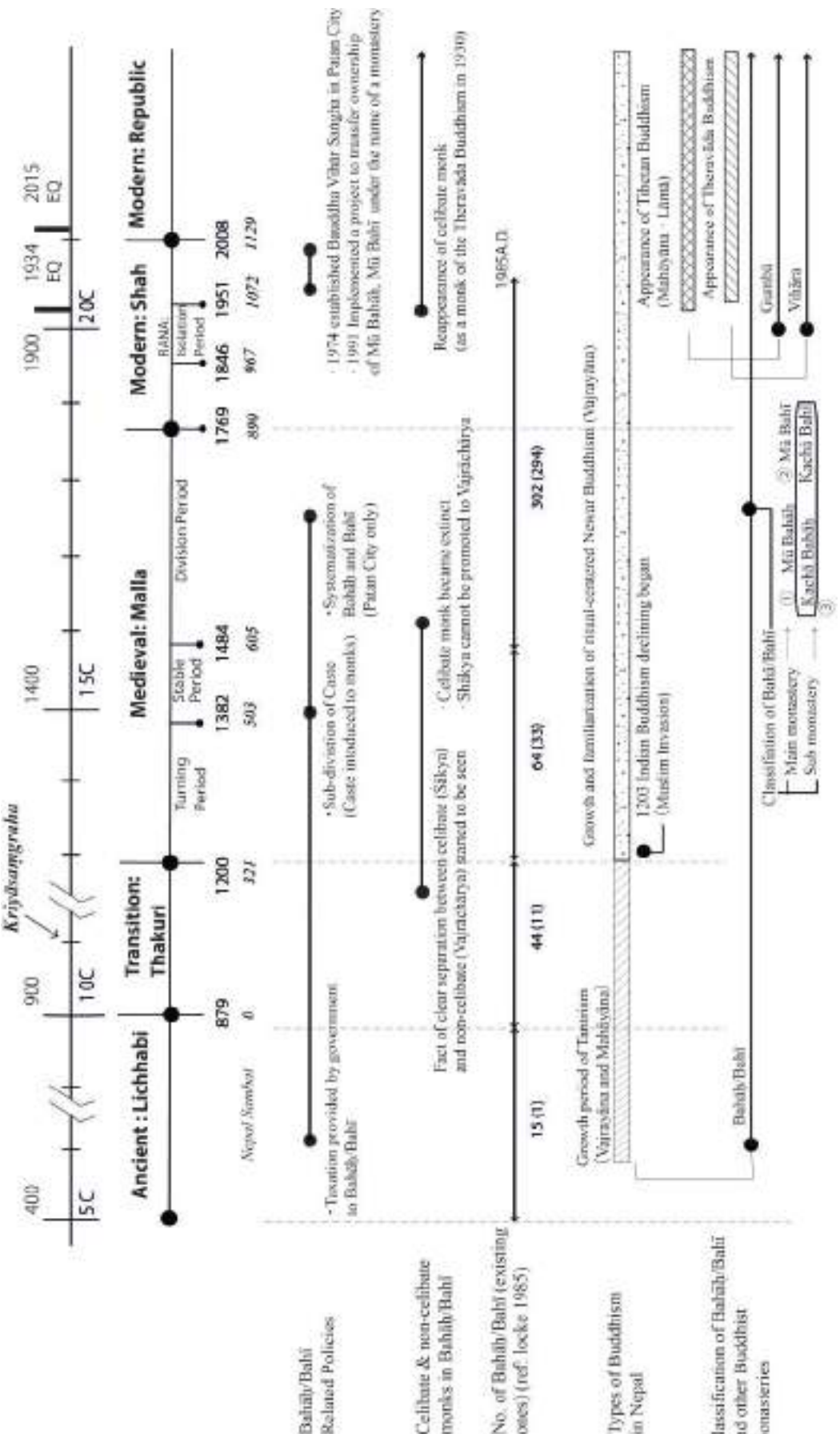


Figure 9: Historical Timeline of Bahāḥ and Bahī in Relation to Political Periods, Buddhist Traditions, Institutional Changes of the Saṃgha, and the Composition of Monastic Communities in the Kathmandu Valley. Source: Author, based on multiple references; originally developed in Shakya et al. (2018).

4.1 Transformation of Bahāḥ and Bahī

As illustrated in Fig. 9, although the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* was compiled in the eleventh century, the majority of extant bahāḥ and bahī were established after the twelfth century. A stone inscription at Pinchebahāḥ (1593 CE) records a monastery consecrated according to the *Kriyāsaṃgrahaśāstra*, suggesting that the text remained influential in subsequent centuries. It is therefore reasonable to assume that its architectural and ritual principles influenced a significant number of these monasteries. Over time, monastic life shifted from academically oriented celibate communities toward increasingly ritual-centered and hereditary systems shaped by caste organization and state policies.

Between the eighth and twelfth centuries, bahāḥ and bahī primarily functioned as residences for celibate monks engaged in Buddhist study. By the medieval period, monastic practitioners became differentiated into celibate monks residing in bahī and non-celibate monks (*gṛhastha bhikṣu/vajrācārya*) residing in bahāḥ. This institutional transformation corresponded with architectural evolution, as monasteries developed from hall-type structures into residential complexes composed of private rooms. Under the Malla dynasty, monastic institutions were further formalized through lineage-based organization, and ritual practices such as *cūḍākarma* (bare chuyegu) became central mechanisms of continuity. By the late seventeenth century, hierarchical classifications into Mu-bahā, Mu-bahī, and Kacā-bahāḥ/bahī (sub-monasteries) established networks of ritual authority that continue to structure monastic organization today (Shakya et al., 2018).

4.2 Modernization and Succession of Monastic Community "Saṃgha"

Modernization introduced additional transformations. Urbanization, migration, and shifts in occupational patterns altered the residential and economic foundations of the saṃgha. In some areas, particularly in Kathmandu, commercial development (Fig. 10) and the decline of resident monastic communities weakened institutional continuity. In contrast, Patan



Figure 10: Makhaṃbahī, Kathmandu
Illustrating the commercialization of bahī spaces in the urban context (Photograph by Lata Shakya).



Figure 11: Cve Puco Bahī, Patan
The monastery building has been reconstructed in reinforced concrete (RCC) while continuing to function as a Buddhist center (Photograph by The 2022 Field Survey Team).

has maintained relatively stronger organizational structures, partly due to the establishment of the Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha, Lalitpur in 1974 who facilitated obtaining property ownership certificate in name of vihāra institution (Fig. 11). Nevertheless, demographic change and overseas migration present emerging challenges for succession (Shakya et.al., 2018).

According to a 2022 field survey conducted by the author jointly with the Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha under a

JSPS-funded research project, among 46 monasteries where cūḍākarma is still performed, five bahī reported zero active saṃgha members. In such cases, management has been transferred to umbrella organizations or neighboring monasteries, demonstrating the emergence of adaptive governance networks. However, increasing overseas education and migration among younger generations raise critical concerns regarding long-term succession and institutional continuity.

Ensuring the sustainability of bahāḥ and bahī therefore requires not only architectural conservation but also the strengthening of collective management frameworks capable of responding to demographic change.

4.3 Living Heritage Value of Bahāḥ and Bahī

Despite these transformations, bahāḥ and bahī remain living heritage sites. Their value extends beyond architectural form to encompass ritual continuity, governance systems, artisanal traditions, and communal practices embedded in courtyard spaces (Fig. 12). The monasteries integrate tangible elements such as brick-timber structures, sculptural programs, and spatial hierarchies with intangible cultural practices, including initiation rites (*cūḍākarma*), daily worship (*nityapūjā*), alms (*pañjara/samyaka mahādāna*), pilgrimage cycles (*matayāḥ, bahāḥpūjā*), and collective management knowledge.



Figure 12: Kvā-bahāḥ, Ilaṃnani and Its Surrounding Residential Cluster (Photograph by Suman Ratna Dhakhwa)

In addition, the use of monastery courtyards as evacuation spaces following the 2015 earthquake further demonstrates their role as infrastructures of social resilience (Shakya et al., 2019).

Although bahāḥ and bahī have continuously transformed, their courtyard-based spatial logic, ritual continuity, and community governance systems demonstrate that they remain living heritage embedded in the urban fabric of historic cities. This perspective aligns with discussions on the interdependence of tangible and intangible heritage in disaster-resilient historic cities (Fig. 13) (Shakya, 2019).

5. The Need for Interdisciplinary Research

The fundamental relationship between courtyard architecture and urban formation, the clarity of traditional structural principles, and the recognition of their combined tangible and intangible values remain insufficiently articulated in both academic and



Figure 13: The Ilaṃnani Courtyard
An illustration showing the life during evacuation in the courtyard. (Illustrated by Ar. Rimishna Manandhar, Source: Shakya et al., 2019, p. 59)

policy frameworks. Addressing these gaps requires a systematic interdisciplinary approach.

With this motivation, the Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group was established with five members from Japan and Nepal. The group has held monthly online meetings since September 2024. The group aims to conduct interdisciplinary research on the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* manuscript from an architectural perspective. The establishment of the Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group and the organization of this symposium represent an initial step toward clarifying these architectural, historical, and living heritage dimensions and toward formulating a sustainable framework for the future of bahāḥ and bahī.

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The *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and Its Importance for Understanding Newar Buddhism

Ryugen Tanemura

Professor of Buddhist Studies and Classical Indology at Taisho University, Tokyo, Japan.
Email: r_tanemura@mail.tais.ac.jp

Abstract

This paper discusses the influence of Kuladatta's *Kriyāsaṃgraha(-pañjikā)* on the development of Newar Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley. Specifically, this paper reports on the inscription which mentions the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* as an authoritative text for Buddhist monastery construction, and pieces of evidence that the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* was used as a manual in actual monastery construction. As a conclusion, it is argued that deep understanding of the traditional Buddhist architecture based upon the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* (and related texts) is necessary for the compatibility of cultural property conservation and city-planning in the Kathmandu Valley.

Keywords: *Kriyāsaṃgraha(pañjikā);* Newar Buddhism; Monastery Construction Manual

1. Introduction

In course of its development, Tantric Buddhism extended over a wider social domain, offering a wide range of public rituals. Tantric Buddhism offered various kinds of consecration ceremonies *(pratiṣṭhā).* Śaivism, another Tantric religion, produced Paddhatis and Pratiṣṭhātantras which teach the details of these public social rituals. Tantric Buddhism also produced a number of manuals which are closely comparable to Śaiva Pratiṣṭhātantras and Paddhatis. Of these, three manuals are particularly rich in information: the *Kriyāsaṃgraha,* more precisely the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā,* of Kuladatta, the *Vajrāvalī* of Abhayākaragupta, and the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya* of Jagaddarpaṇa or Darpaṇācārya, which incorporates much of the *Vajrāvalī* but adds some new materials. Of these three, the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* is an important text in the respects that it contains much information about the Buddhist architecture and that it has a strong influence on Newar Buddhism.

2. The *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley

The close connection between the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley is seen from several things. First, in his *rNal ' byor rgyud kyi rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru gzings (The Boat Entering the Ocean of the Yogatantra),* Bu ston, an eminent scholar monk in Tibet, mentions only the name of the author Kuladatta, saying that he is of Nepalese origin. We do not have other biographical information regarding him.

> *bal pa'i pa ṇḍi ta rigs kyis byin pa zhes bya ba mdzad pa'i rdo rje byings kyi dkyil cho ga bya ba bsdus pa zhes bya ba lo tsha ba grags pa rgyal gyis bsgyur ba zhig 'od do |*
> *Bu ston's rNal 'byor rgyud kyi rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru gzings (f.91v5).*
>
> (Trsl.) The translator Grags rgyal translated the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* written by a Nepalese scholar named Kuladatta, which is a manual of ritual [based on] the Vajradhātumaṇḍala [taught in the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*].

Kazumi Yoshizaki, a Japanese scholar of Newar Buddhism, has introduced the description of Kuladatta in a Newari source that he has consulted. There Kuladatta is closely associated with Tathāgatavajra who organized the *vajrācāryasaṃgha* of the Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra when it was constructed

by King Bhāskaradeva (reigned 1045–48) (Tanaka &Yoshizaki, 1998, p. 28).[1]

I received a letter from Yoshizaki concerning this matter. According to the Nepalese source which he consulted, Kuladatta is a *tvāy pāśā* of Tathāgatavajra. In modern Newari, tvāy means a friend or fictitious brother (relation established ritually).

There are some elements peculiar to Buddhism in the Kathmandu valley in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha.* The greatest peculiarity is that Kuladatta teaches "the ten rites *(daśa kriyāḥ)"* in the section of *pratiṣṭhā* (consecration ritual of Buddhist images and other sacred objects). These ten rites correspond to the life-cycle rites which are still performed among the Newar Buddhists today.

In addition, in the same section, there is a short description which is reminiscent of the lost wax method, a traditional casting method in the Himalayan region.

3. The *Kriyāsaṃgraha as* a Monastery Construction Manual

As a *maṇḍalavidhi, Kriyāsaṃgraha* teaches procedures of various rites related to a *maṇḍala.* One of its greatest characteristicst is that the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* is as a whole a monastery construction manual. I show in the table which chapter corresponds to which phase of the construction of a monastery.

Chapter 1	Choice of a site
Chapter 2	Levelling the ground
Chapter 3	'Preparatory religious performance' to the foundation work
Chapter 4	Planning
Chapter 5	Choice of wood or stone suitable for making image; and Installation of doors and pillars
Chapter 6	Construction of a maṇḍala including rituals employing it
Chapter 7	Decoration inside and outside a monastery
Chapter 8	Supplementary and concluding rituals

(Tanemura, 2004, p. 17, Table 1.3)

There is a piece of evidence which proves that the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* was an authority for a monastery construction in the Kathmadu Valley. There is an inscription which says that Śākyabhikṣu Jayalakṣa alias Jayaharṣapāla inaugurated the *pratiṣṭhā* (consecration) of the Jāmbūnadamahāvihāra in Kathmandu in Nepal Saṃvat 711, specifying the ritual would be done following the prescription of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* (See also Tanemura (2004, p. 16, footnote 36).

> Regmi (1965, part 4, pp. 27–44, Inscription No. 27) and Alexis Sanderson's "corrected" text.
> *evaṃ vihārapratiṣṭhāpitārthaṃ prathamaṃ bhūparigraha-krodhā(23)gnipūjā- *kumāryarcana (: kumārī, arcana R)-marīcirakṣā *śalyaparīkṣā (: śalyoparīkṣā R)-bhūmiyācanā- ekāśītikoṣṭhasthadevatāpūjā- yavaropa*na(: naṃ R)jāṅguli(24)pūjā-kalaśādhivāsana- kīlak*āropaṇa(: ālopanaṃ R)-sūtrapāta*na-(: naṃ R)-vāstupar*ī(: i R)kṣā-sandhiparīkṣā-bhūm ikhaṇḍapādasthāpanaparyantānāṃ yathākri(25) yāsaṃgrahaśāstroktakrama*paripātena (for paripāṭyā) pṛthak pṛthak pūjāhomādikaṃ kṛtvā asmiñ jāmbūnadaṃ mahāvihāraṃ pādasthāpitaṃ bhava*tu(: tuḥ R). (26) tadanantaraṃ(: tadantara R)-gavākṣasthāpa*na(: naṃ R)-śirodārusthāpanaparyantānāṃ yathāvidhivat karma kṛtvā varṣaike(27)na saṃpūrṇaṃ bha*vatu(: vantu R). nepā*la(: le R)saṃvatsare ña e dvi [712] vaiśā*kha(: ṣa R) kṛṣṇapakṣe saptamyāṃ tithau śravaṇanakṣatre somavāsare asmin dine idaṃ (28)vihā*ra(: raṃ R) śṛṅkhal*āvarohaṇaṃ (: āvalohanaṃ R) bhavatu. śre(: śri R)yo 'stu.*
> R: Regmi

(Trsl.) In order that thus the monastery is consecrated, first, [the following rites] would be performed [in due order]: obtaining of a site for the monastery, worship of the wrathful fire, worship of a *kumārī,* protection by Marīci, examination of extraneous things beneath the site, begging the site [from the Goddess of the Earth], worship of the deities who reside in the eighty-one compartment [on the site], planting

1 See Tanemura (2004, p. 8, footnote 21). Yoshizaki does not mention the source of this information. Iain Sinclair informed me that Āśākāji Bajrācārya mentions this information in his *Tārāpārājikā,* on page ja. Perhaps Yoshizaki's source is also this book.



Figure 1: Manuscripts of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* Preserved in the Collection of Akṣayeśvara Mahāvihāra Library

of barley, worship of Jāṅguli, incubation of the water pots, driving of the ritual spikes, setting of the cords [for the planning], examination of the [nāga] of the site, examination of the junctions, and up to the installation of the "feet" in the spots of the site. [These rites were performed] in the manners taught in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahaśāstra*, and in each rite, worship, homa and other [necessary rites] would be performed. [After that,] the Jāmbūnada Great Monastery would be established here [in this place].

After that, the rites up to the installation of round windows and *śirodāru* were performed following the rules, and after one year [the monastery] would be perfected. In the Nepal year of 712, on the seventh lunar day of the waning fortnight of the month of Vaiśākha, in the lunar mansion of Śravaṇa, on Monday today, this releasing of iron chains from the monastery(?) would be done. May there be religious merits.

4. *Kriyāsaṃgraha* as a Practical Manual Used in the Kathmandu Valley

The fact that many manuscripts of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* shows that it has been an influential manual for Newar Buddhism. In addition, many of the manuscripts which I have consulted have leaves at the end on which tables of contents are written; and some of those manuscripts have notes apparently written by officiants, who used them as manuals in actual rituals, between the lines and in the margin. It is particularly interesting that in the section of the *vāstunāga* some of the measurements are modified in one of the manuscripts. Most probably this is because there was slight difference between the theoretical measurements and the actual measurements on the site for a monastery. These facts show that the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* was actually used as a manual for monastery construction ritual in the Kathmandu Valley.

There is another small piece of evidence that some of the monastery in the valley were built following the teachings of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*. The following passage is quoted from the *vāstunāga* section.

> *ṣoḍaśahastalanayopalakṣitabhaviṣyadvihāra-bhūbhāge pratidinaṃ pādonatrayodaśāṅgulaṃ vāstunāgasya saṃkramaṇaṃ bhavati*
> (Tanemura, 2002, p. 557).
> (Trsl.) On the site for a monastery of which [the size] is indicated by the monk's cell of 16 cubits, the *vāstunāga* moves 12.75 *aṅgula*s (breadth of fingers) every day.

A *vāstunāga* rotates clockwise once around his centre, i.e. the navel, spending one year. The site for a monastery is divided into 81 compartments, which means a side of the site was divided into 9. A *vāstunāga* moves three compartments spending one month, which means that he rotates from one end to the other end of a side spending 90 days. This means that the length of the site is 12.75 x 90 = 1147.5 *aṅgula*s. This length is approximately 22 meters. This



Figure 2: *Gṛhapratiṣṭhāpustaka,* DPN 2857, folio-032, *Āśā Saphū Kuthi*

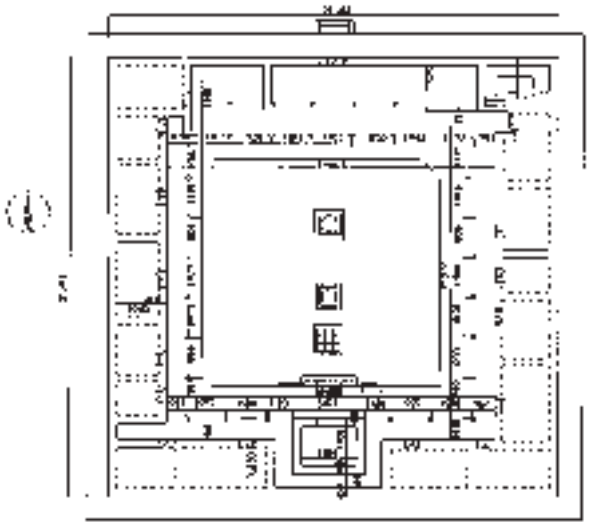


Figure 3: Floor plan of *Cābahī,* Kathmandu
(Pant & Funo 2007: p. 142)

calculation result is very close to the plans of *Cābahī* and *Ibabahī.* The plan of the former is a square with a side of slightly more than 21 meters, and the latter one with a side of slightly more than 23 meters.

5. Concluding Remarks

As stated above, the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* has several elements peculiar to Newar Buddhist tradition in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha.* However, it is also true that there are many parts which we do not really understand if we do not know the architectural tradition in the Kathmandu Valley. I hope that cross-disciplinary research like this symposium help our understanding of the Buddhist tradition in the Kathmandu Valley, and that this understanding will make possible the compatibility of cultural property conservation and city-planning in the Kathmandu Valley.

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(Note: Nepal Saṃvat dates are indicated as NS)

क्रियासंग्रह र नेवाः बौद्धधर्मको अध्ययनमा यसको महत्त्व

र्‍यूगेन तानेमुरा

प्रोफेसर, ताइशो विश्वविद्यालय, टोकियो, जापान

विषयवस्तुको सारांश

यस लेखमा काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा प्रचलित नेवाः बौद्धधर्मको विकासमा कुलदत्त विरचित क्रियासंग्रह(-पञ्जिका)को प्रभावको बारे विवेचना गरिएको छ । विशेष रूपमा, यस लेखले क्रियासंग्रह विहार निर्माणको लागि आधिकारिक स्रोत ग्रन्थका रूपमा रहेको कुरा प्रमाणित गर्ने अभिलेख प्रमाणहरूको बारेमा पनि चर्चा गरेको छ । निष्कर्षमा, काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा सांस्कृतिक सम्पदा संरक्षणका लागि क्रियासंग्रहमा आधारित परम्परागत बौद्ध वास्तुकलाको गहिरो ज्ञान आवश्यक रहेको तर्क यस लेखमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ ।

मुख्य शब्दहरू: क्रियासंग्रह(-पञ्जिका); नेवाः बौद्धधर्म; विहार निर्माण निर्देशिका

१. परिचय

वज्रयान बौद्धधर्मको विकासक्रमसँगै यसले समाजमा व्यापकता पायो र विभिन्न प्रकारका अनुष्ठानहरू सहितको परम्परा स्थापित गर्यो । यसले विभिन्न किसिमका प्रतिष्ठा सम्बन्धी पूजाविधिहरू पनि प्रचलनमा ल्यायो । तान्त्रिक पद्धति अन्तर्गतकै अर्को शैव परम्पराले पनि यस्ता विभिन्न अनुष्ठानहरूको विस्तृत विधि वर्णन गर्ने *पद्धति* तथा *प्रतिष्ठातन्त्र* वर्गका ग्रन्थहरूको निर्माण गर्यो । यसरी नै वज्रयान बौद्ध धर्मले पनि शैव प्रतिष्ठातन्त्र र पद्धति जस्तै खालका विभिन्न क्रिया–ग्रन्थहरू रचना गर्यो । तीमध्ये तीन ग्रन्थहरू विशेष रूपमा महत्त्वपूर्ण मानिन्छन् – कुलदत्त विरचित *क्रियासंग्रह वा क्रियासंग्रहपञ्जिका*, अभय-करगुप्त विरचित *वज्रावली* र जगद्दर्पण वा दर्पणाचार्य विरचित *आचार्यक्रियासमुच्चय*। यीमध्ये *आचार्यक्रियासमुच्चय*मा दर्पणाचार्यले *वज्रावली*का धेरै कुराहरू समावेश गरी नयाँ सामग्रीहरू समेत थपी उक्त ग्रन्थ रचना गरिएको देखिन्छ ।

यी तीन ग्रन्थहरूमध्ये *क्रियासंग्रह* विशेष रूपमा महत्त्वपूर्ण छ जसमा बौद्ध पूजाविधि र बौद्ध वास्तुकलासम्बन्धी प्रशस्त विवरण समावेश छन् जसको गहिरो प्रभाव नेवार बौद्धधर्ममा रहेको देखिन्छ ।

२. क्रियासंग्रह र नेपालमण्डलको बौद्ध धर्म

*क्रियासंग्रह*र नेपालमण्डलको बौद्धधर्म परम्परा बीचको घनिष्ट सम्बन्ध रहेको देखिन्छ । यो कुरा निम्नानुसार आधारहरूबाट पुष्टि हुन्छ ।

क. कुलदत्त नेपाली मूलका पण्डित - तिब्बतका एक प्रख्यात विद्वान् भिक्षु बु-तोनले आफ्नो ग्रन्थ རྣལ་འབྱོར་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མཚོར་འཇུག་པའི་གྲུ་གཟིངས། (योगतन्त्रको महासागरमा प्रवेश गर्ने नौका) नामक ग्रन्थमा कुलदत्तको नाम उल्लेख गरी उनी नेपाली मूलका भएको कुरा उल्लेख गरेका छन् । यो भन्दा बाहेक कुलदत्तको जीवनी सम्बन्धी अन्य विस्तृत जानकारी उपलब्ध छैन । त्यस ग्रन्थको उल्लेख यस प्रकार छ— བལ་པའི་པཉྩ་ཀ་ཨེགས་ཀྱིས་བྱིན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་མཛད་པའི་རྗེ་རྗེ་བྱིངས་ཀྱི་དཀྱིལ་ཆོ་གར་བྱ་བ་བསྒྲུབ་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ལོ་སྟོང་གགས་པ་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་བསྒྲུར་བ་ཞིག་འདུ་དོ། བྱ་སྟོན་གྱི་ རྣལ་འབྱོར་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མཚོར་འཇུག་པའི་གྲུ་གཟིངས།, *f.91v5*

अनुवाद - *सर्वतथागततत्त्वसंग्रह*मा उल्लेख भए अनुसारको वज्रधातु-मण्डलमा आधारित अनुष्ठानविधिसम्बन्धी यस ग्रन्थ नेपाली विद्वान् कुलदत्तद्वारा रचित *क्रियासंग्रह* अनुवादक ड्राक् ग्यालले तिब्बती भाषामा अनुवाद गरेका हुन् ।

ख. कुलदत्त नेपाली वज्राचार्य तथागतवज्रका मित - एक नेवारी स्रोतका अनुसार कुलदत्त आचार्य तथागतवज्रका मित थिए । तथागतवज्रलाई राजा भास्करदेव (शासनकाल १०४५–१०४८ ई.) द्वारा निर्माण गराइएको हिरण्यवर्ण महाविहारको वज्राचार्यसंघलाई संगठित गर्ने व्यक्तिका रूपमा उल्लेख गरिएको छ । (Tanaka &Yoshizaki, 1998, p. 28; Bajracharya, NS 1103)

ग. दशक्रिया (दर्शकर्म विधि) - काठमाडौं उपत्यकाको बौद्ध परम्परामा प्रचलित केहिं कुराहरू *क्रियासंग्रह*मा उल्लेख भएको पाइन्छन् । तीमध्ये कुलदत्तले *प्रतिष्ठा* (बौद्ध प्रतिमा तथा अन्य पवित्र वस्तुहरूको अभिषेक संस्कार) सम्बन्धी खण्डमा "दशक्रिया" को विधि निर्दिष्ट गरिएको छ । यी दशक्रियाहरू नेवार बौद्ध समुदायमा अद्यापि प्रचलित जीवन-संस्कारहरूसँग हुबहु मिल्छ ।

मैन पगालेर मूर्ति ढाल्ने विधि - त्यसै खण्डमा मैन पगालेर धातुको मूर्ति ढाल्ने प्रविधि (जसलाई lost wax method भनिन्छ) को बारे पनि छोटो वर्णन समावेश छ ।

३. विहार निर्माण विधिका रूपमा क्रियासंग्रह

मण्डलविधिका रूपमा रहेको *क्रियासंग्रह*ले मण्डलसँग सम्बन्धित विभिन्न विधिहरू निर्दिष्ट गरेको छ । *क्रियासंग्रह* ग्रन्थ पुरै विहार निर्माण निर्देशिकाका रूपमा रहेको कुरा यस ग्रन्थको विशेषता हो । यसको प्रत्येक अध्याय विहार निर्माणको कुनै एक चरणसँग सम्बन्धित गरी लेखिएको छ ।

पहिलो अध्याय विहार निर्माणका लागि जग्गा छनोटसँग सम्बन्धित छ भने दोस्रो अध्याय भूमि समथर पार्ने; तेस्रो अध्याय जग निर्माणपूर्व गरिने धार्मिक अनुष्ठानहरू; चौथो अध्याय विहार भवनको योजना; पाँचौं अध्याय प्रतिमा निर्माण, झ्यालढोका र स्तम्भहरूका लागि उपयुक्त काठ वा ढुंगाको छनोटा; छैठौं अध्याय मण्डल निर्माण तथा त्यससँग सम्बन्धित अनुष्ठान; सातौं अध्याय विहारको भित्री र बाहिरी सजावट; र आठौं अध्याय पूरक तथा समापन अनुष्ठानहरूसँग सम्बन्धित छ ।

काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा विहार निर्माणका लागि *क्रियासंग्रह* एक आधिकारिक ग्रन्थका रूपमा प्रयोग भएको पुष्टि गर्ने एक महत्वपूर्ण अभिलेख प्रमाण पनि उपलब्ध छ । नेपाल संवत् ७११ मा शाक्यभिक्षु जयलक्ष (उपनाम जयहर्षपाल)ले काठमाडौंस्थित जाम्बूनद महाविहार (पिन्छे बहाः)को प्रतिष्ठा सम्पन्न गरेको उल्लेख भएको एक अभिलेख त्यहिं विहार भित्र अवस्थित छ । Regmi, (1966, pp. 27–44) मा प्रकाशित अभिलेख संख्या २७, मा एलेक्सिस स्यान्डरसनद्वारा संशोधित पाठ यस प्रकार छ—

२२. ...एवं विहारप्रतिष्ठापितार्थं प्रथमं भूपरिग्रहक्रोधा
२३ ग्निपूजाकुमार्यर्चन (: कुमारी, अर्चन) मरीचिरक्षा-
शल्यपरीक्षा (: शल्योपरीक्षा) भूमियाचना-
एकाशीतिकोष्ठस्थदेवतापूजायवरोपन जाङ्गुलि
२४ पूजाकलशाधिवासनकीलक् आरोपण (: आलोपनं) सूत्रपातन
(: नं) वास्तुपरीक्षासन्धिपरीक्षाभूमिखण्डपादस्थापनपर्यन्तानां
यथाक्रि
२५ यासंग्रहशास्त्रोक्तक्रम परिपातेन (: परिपाट्या) पृथक् पृथक्
पूजाहोमादिकं कृत्वा अस्मिन् जाम्बूनदं महाविहारं
पादस्थापितं भवतु (तुः).
२६ तदनन्तरं(: तदन्तर) गवाक्षस्थापन(: नं R)
शिरोदारुस्थापनपर्यन्तानां यथाविधिवत् कर्म कृत्वा वर्षैके
२७) न संपूर्णं भवतु (: वन्तु). नेपाल(: ले) संवत्सरे ञ ए द्वि [७१२]
वैशाख (: ष) कृष्णपक्षे सप्तम्यां तिथौ श्रवणनक्षत्रे सोमवासरे
अस्मिन् दिने इदं
२८ विहार (: रं) शृङ्खलावरोहणं (: आवलोहनं) भवतु. श्रे(: श्रि)
योऽस्तु ।
पुनश्चः – कोष्ठक भित्र रहेका शब्दांशहरू Regmi (1966) अनुसार
हुन् ।

अनुवाद–यसरी विहारको प्रतिष्ठा सम्पन्न होस् भन्ने उद्देश्यले प्रारम्भमा निम्न कर्महरू विधिपूर्वक सम्पन्न गरियो—विहारस्थल प्राप्ति, क्रोधाग्निपूजा, कुमारीपूजा, मारीचिद्वारा संरक्षण, जमिनमुनि रहेका अशुद्ध तत्त्वहरूको परीक्षण, भूमिदेवीसँग भूमि याचन, भूमिका एकासी कोष्ठमा वास गर्ने देवताहरूको पूजा, जौरोपण, जाङ्गुलीपूजा, कलशाधिवासन, कील गाड्ने कर्म, सूत्रपातन, वास्तुनागपरीक्षा, सन्धिपरीक्षा, तथा 'पाद' स्थापना हुने चरणसम्मका सम्पूर्ण कर्महरू । यी सबै कर्महरू *क्रियासंग्रहशास्त्र*मा वर्णित विधिअनुसार सम्पन्न गरियो, र प्रत्येक चरणमा पूजा, होम तथा अन्य आवश्यक अनुष्ठानहरू पनि गरियो । यसरी, यस स्थानमा जाम्बूनद महाविहारको स्थापना सम्पन्न भयो । त्यसपश्चात्, गवाक्ष (झ्याल) तथा शिरोदारू स्थापना हुने चरणसम्मका कर्महरू विधिपूर्वक सम्पन्न गरियो, र एक वर्षपछि विहार निर्माण पूर्ण रूपमा सम्पन्न भयो । नेपाल संवत् ७१२, वैशाख कृष्ण सप्तमी, श्रवण नक्षत्र परेको सोमबारका दिन, यस विहारमा शृङ्खला अवरोहण सम्पन्न गरियो । धार्मिक पुण्य लाभ होस् ।

४. काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा प्रयोगमा रहेको व्यावहारिक निर्देशिकाका रूपमा *क्रियासंग्रह*

*क्रियासंग्रह*का धेरै हस्तलिखित प्रतिहरू उपलब्ध हुनु आफैमा यो ग्रन्थ नेवार बौद्ध धर्ममा अत्यन्त प्रभावशाली ग्रन्थ भएको तथ्यको द्योतक हो । यसका अतिरिक्त, मैले अध्ययन गरेका धेरै हस्तलिखित प्रतिहरूको अन्त्यतिर विषयसूची (Table of Contents) लेखिएका पानाहरू पाइन्छन् । तीमध्ये केही हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थहरूमा वास्तविक अनुष्ठान

क्रिया संचालन गर्ने आचार्यद्वारा लेखिएका जस्तो देखिने टिप्पणीहरू पंक्तिबीच र किनारामा लेखिएको पाइन्छ, जसले ती प्रतिहरू व्यवहारमा पूजाविधि पुस्तकका रूपमा प्रयोग गरिएको स्पष्ट संकेत गर्दछ।

एक रोचक पक्ष के छ भने, एक हस्तिलिखत पाण्डुलिपिको वास्तुनागसम्बन्धी खण्डमा केहि मापनहरू परिमार्जन गर्ने कुरा उल्लेख गरिएको देखिन्छ। सम्भवतः यसको कारण सैद्धान्तिक रूपमा निर्दिष्ट मापन र वास्तविक विहारस्थलमा उपलब्ध मापनबीच देखिएको भिन्नता हुनसक्छ । यी सबै तथ्यहरूबाट *क्रियासंग्रह* काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा विहार निर्माणसम्बन्धी अनुष्ठानका लागि प्रयोगमा आएको व्यावहारिक निर्देशिका भएको पुष्टि गर्छ।

उपत्यकाका केही विहारहरू *क्रियासंग्रह*अनुसार निर्माण गरिएको प्रमाण दिने अर्को सानो तर महत्वपूर्ण निम्नलिखित उद्धरण *वास्तुनाग* खण्डबाट लिइएको हो–

षोडशहस्तलनयोपलक्षितभविष्यद्विहारभूभागे प्रतिदिनं
पादोनत्रयोदशाङ्गुलं वास्तुनागस्य संक्रमणं भवति

(Tanemura, 2004, p. 557)

अनुवाद–१६ हात भएको कक्षद्वारा संकेत गरिएको वास्तुनाग प्रत्येक दिन १२.७५ अङ्गुल दूरीले सर्दछ।

वास्तुनागको केन्द्र अर्थात् नाभिलाई आधार मानी एक वर्षमा एकपटक घडीको दिशामा पूरा घुम्छ । विहारस्थललाई ८१ कोष्ठमा विभाजन गरिन्छ, जसको अर्थ स्थलको प्रत्येक किनारालाई ९ भागमा विभाजन गरिएको हुन्छ । वास्तुनाग एक महिनामा तीन कोष्ठ सर्दछ, अर्थात् स्थलको एक किनाराको एक छेउबाट अर्को छेउसम्म पुग्न उसलाई ९० दिन लाग्छ। यस आधारमा स्थलको लम्बाइ १२.७५ × ९० = ११४७.५ अङ्गुल हुन आउँछ, जुन करिब २२ मिटर बराबर हुन्छ। (हेर्नुस् - अंग्रजी मूल पाठको चित्र नं. २ र ३)

यो गणनाबाट प्राप्त नतिजा चाबही र इबाबहीका योजनासँग अत्यन्त नजिक देखिन्छ। चाबहीको योजना करिब २१ मिटर लम्बाइ भएको वर्गाकार छ भने इबाबहीको योजना करिब २३ मिटर लम्बाइ भएको वर्गाकार छ।

५. उपसंहार

माथि उल्लेख गरिएझैं, *क्रियासंग्रह*मा नेवाः बौद्ध परम्परासँग सम्बन्धित विविध तत्त्वहरू समावेश छन् । तथापि, काठमाडौं उपत्यकाको वास्तुकला परम्पराबारे पर्याप्त ज्ञान नभएसम्म यस ग्रन्थका धेरै अंशहरूलाई पूर्ण रूपमा बुझ्न सकिँदैन भन्ने यथार्थ पनि उत्तिकै सत्य हो । यस प्रकारका बहुविधाका अध्येता सम्मिलित अध्ययन तथा कार्यशालाहरूले काठमाडौं उपत्यकाको बौद्ध परम्पराबारे बुझाइलाई अझ गहिरो बनाउने विश्वास गरिएको छ। साथै, यसरी सहि बुझाई भएमा यसले काठमाडौं उपत्यकामा सांस्कृतिक सम्पदाको संरक्षण र शहरी योजनामा सन्तुलन बनाउन महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेल्ने अपेक्षा लिइएको छ।

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The Architectural Tradition in Buddhist Monasticism

बौद्ध संघीय व्यवस्थामा वास्तुकला परम्परा

Surendra Man Bajracharya

Chairperson, Lotus Research Centre

E-mail: surendra.inthoughts@gmail.com

सुरेन्द्रमान वज्राचार्य

अध्यक्ष, लोटस रिसर्च सेन्टर

विषयवस्तुको सारांश

पूर्व मध्यकालमा निर्मित नेपालमण्डलका बहाः र बहीहरूमा वास्तुकला परम्पराले सुदृढरूपमा निरन्तरता पाएको देखिन्छ । यस कालखण्डमा विहारहरू गृहत्यागी एकान्तवासी स्वरूप (Eremitic) बाट समुदायमा बस्ने खालको गृहस्थ भिक्षु परम्परा (Coenobitic) तर्फ रूपान्तरण भएको देखिन्छ । यससँगै यस कालमा बहाःको स्वरूप, संरचना तथा त्यहाँका क्रियाकलापहरू वज्रयान पद्धतिमा ढालिएको पाइन्छ । यसर्थ, यी विहारहरूको उद्देश्य केवल भिक्षुहरूको आवास मात्र नभई एक विशुद्ध वज्रयानी परिवेशको सिर्जना गर्नु पनि रहेको देखिन्छ । यो उद्देश्य परिपूर्तिका लागि यहाँ विभिन्न स्थानीय मूल्यमान्यता अनुरूप समेत मिल्ने देवीदेवताहरूको स्थापना, चैत्य आदि प्रतीकात्मक विषयवस्तुहरू निर्माण गरिएको हुन्छ । यस बाहेक, यहाँ वज्रयान परम्परासम्बद्ध पूजाविधिहरूको निरन्तरता दिइएको हुन्छ भने सामुदायिक सहभागिता सुनिश्चित गरिएको हुन्छ । यस्ता विहारहरू मार्फत विभिन्न समुदायहरू बीच परस्पर सम्बन्ध विकास गराई बलियो एकीकृत बौद्ध समाज निर्माणमा महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निर्वाह गरेको हुन्छ । तसर्थ, बहाःको प्रमुख उद्देश्य आफ्नो र वरिपरिको परिवेशलाई वज्रयान सिद्धान्तअनुरूप बनाउँदै लानु रहेको हुन्छ । नेवाः बौद्ध परम्परा श्रावकयान, पारमितायान र वज्रयान तीनै यानहरूको एकिकृत स्वरूपमा रहेको देखिन्छ, जुन एकल परम्पराको दृष्टिकोणबाट हेर्दा असामान्य जस्तो देखिन सक्छ । यस खालको त्रियानको एकिकृत स्वरूपले नेवार विहारहरूलाई विशिष्ट स्वरूप प्रदान गरेको छ । क्रियासंग्रह तथा क्रियासमुच्चय जस्ता ग्रन्थहरूले नेवार विहारहरूको निर्माण तथा सञ्चालनका लागि आधिकारिक शास्त्रीय मार्गदर्शकको भूमिका निर्वाह गर्दै आएका छन् । यस लेखमा यिनै पक्षहरूलाई केन्द्रमा राख्दै, विशेषतः नेवार विहारहरूको वास्तुकला परम्पराको विश्लेषण गरिएको छ ।

Keywords: Bahāḥ and Bahī; Nepālamaṇḍala; Vajrayāna Architecture; Monastic Layout and Function; Community Integration; Coenobitic Monasticism; *Kriyāsaṃgraha*; Architectural Tradition

Some observers are of the opinion that there is no monasticism in Nepalese Buddhism. If so, a very striking question arises: what and why did numerous Buddhist monasteries that are still extant in the Kathmandu valley stand for? The valley is distinguished by its old monasteries, attracting scores of visitors/tourists even today. One can easily assume these were not mere buildings. The dwelling place of saṃgha members or the monks is a monastery where they dedicate their life in the practice and propagation of the Dharma. After all, monasteries are the buildings where monks or monastics live as a community (Hornby, 1995, p. 751). An attempt is made here to provide information on old monasteries of Nepālamaṇḍala related to indigenous Nepalese Buddhism[1] also known as Newar Buddhism. Architectural features of the monasteries give a clear indication that they must have been used for the specific purpose, which is none other than the practice and propagation of Dharma. Monasteries (Vihāras) served as centers for the socio-religious affairs of the entire Buddhist community (Slusser, 1998, p. 288). In other words, they are the centers where monastic activities are carried out. Another way to assess the magnitude

1. Nepalese Buddhism is generally understood as traditional Newar Buddhism, though there are at present three types of Buddhism in the kingdom of Nepal, viz., 1. Theravādins, 2. Northern Buddhism or Himalayan Buddhism, and 3.Traditional Nepalese Buddhism.

of Newar monasticism is by looking at its magnificent monasteries. Nepal is home to a large number of old monasteries. It serves to exemplify and provide proof of the greatness of the Nepalese monastic system. To create a Buddhist society with a large monastic segment, however, meant there had to be thousands of people willing to pursue the Buddhist teachings. These people are bound together and to the Dharma through the monasteries. In Nepal, the monastery is a Newar Buddhist religious complex where monastic saṃgha members live by performing different types of rites and rituals. It is a place of religious bliss and a Buddhist religious center.

1. Meaning and Its Types

The monastery is defined as a building in which Buddhist icons are lodged, and monastics—monks and nuns are housed (Nagao, 2010, p. 189). The definition does not wholly fit to the description of earlier monastic dwellings at the time of Buddha. In the earliest stages, the monastic institutions had room neither for the worship of icons nor the quartering of monks. It meant a temporary shelter for eremitic monks from all four quarters (cāturdiśa saṃgha) at a difficult time like rainy season (Nagao, 2010, p. 190). After the transformation of monastic shelter into the monastery called initially as 'Vihāra' (Anandakaushalyayan, 1989, p. 305) deriving from its Pāli root '*Viharati*' meaning for walking and staying, monasticism grew profusely. Our knowledge of Buddhist monastic institutions is derived mostly from the Vinaya, the Buddhist monastic code, which, however, took its present textual form only about the beginning of the Christian era. Thus, these texts, though they refer to many incidents contemporaneous with the Buddha himself, reflect the thinking of a much later time, when they were redacted. As the monastery reaches full maturity later, it developed as a coenobium.

In Nepalese context, a monastery not only denotes to the dwelling place of monastics, the seat of triple gems, the center of Buddhist activities, the storehouse of Buddhist icons and teachings, it also bears the total essence of Nepalese Buddhism because it, as a whole, is visualized as Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Maṇḍala is one of the important parts of Vajrayāna Buddhism, and it is used as the medium of actualizing Buddhist concepts. Unless knowledge of maṇḍala is known, Buddhism of Nepālamaṇḍala cannot be understood. Vajradhātu Maṇḍala is one of the Maṇḍala which represents dharmakāya, the Buddha essence. According to the celebrated Buddhist text *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā,* a vihāra is constructed on Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Therefore, Nepalese monastery itself represents Buddha essence as it is erected over Vajradhātu Maṇḍala.



Figure 1: Performing Dharmagaṇḍī Ritual at Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra (Photograph by Sanjay Shakya)

2. Bahāḥ and Bahī Monasteries

Monasteries in Nepālamaṇḍala were called Vihāras in the ancient period, Mahāvihāras in the medieval period, and bahāḥ and bahī in the post medieval or modern period till today. Though all the monasteries of Newar Buddhism are still called Mahāvihāra in Sanskrit, they differ substantially according to their saṃghas. However, these terms are often used interchangeably to denote the monastery. They must have been called Mahāvihāra, considering their importance. The term Mahāvihāra was used in India for a cluster of vihāras, or a large vihāra that had many branches, such as the complex that existed in Nālandā (Locke, 1985, p. 9). This definition seems valid only for big monasteries like Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra and Rudravarṇa Mahāvihāra having many śākhā (branch) vihāras. Otherwise, in Nepal, individual monasteries having a significant role is called Mahāvihāra. The three cities of Kathmandu valley: Kantipur, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur consist of a large number of Buddhist monasteries which are locally known as bahāḥ or bahī. The existence of numerous vihāras in the Kathmandu Valley, more particularly in Patan City, suggests that monasticism is very old and has remained popular in Nepal. Bahāḥ is the degenerated form of its Sanskrit term *'Vihāra'* for the monastery (Locke, 1985, pp. 3, 21–28, 247, 425–427). Though the meaning and purpose are nearly the same, bahāḥ and bahī slightly differ in architectural form. The differentiation between bahāḥ and bahī in Nepālamaṇḍala follows from the two different monastic traditions. It is assumed that bahī, deriving from the word *'bāhira'* meaning outside settlement, was designed to accommodate celibate Bhikṣus only. So, they were originally built outside the residential area of the city. The location of bahīs like Pucobahī, Guitaḥbahī proves this postulation. In some texts, bahī is mentioned under the class *"Madhymaka Vihāra"* (Shakya, 1995, p. 4). Similar structures have occupied the sites of many vihāra for at least 1200 years (Korn, 1976, p. 27). This is known from the architecture of the monastery, which was mostly based on the text *Kriyāsaṃgraha.* Present vihāras have preserved ancient style, though none of them is older than perhaps three to four hundred years, since they were either constructed or renovated during the medieval period.



Figure 2: Shakya Child during Pravrajya (Bare Chuyegu)
Source: Slusser (1998, Plate 488)

Later, Vajrayāna ideals permitted marriage to the monks. Those monks who married left bahī and joined another type of vihāra called bahāḥ, where they lived with their family as gṛhaṣtha bhikṣu (Korn, 1976, p. 27). This shifting was taking place since the 13th century, as Dharmasvāmī's account testifies that pure Mahāyāna without esoteric features was still in practice, though most of the old vihāras (bahīs) had been deserted (Regmi, 1965, p. 865). With the growing popularity of Vajrayāna, the tendency of following gṛhaṣtha bhikṣu system also grew. As a consequence, more and more bahāḥs were built. Some scholars believe that Newar monasteries (bahāḥ and bahī both) once housed celibate monks who converted to married *'Bare'*[2] later (Greenwold, 1974, pp. 129–148). But the former view seems more reasonable as the number of bahāḥs is much more than the bahīs. From the strictly religious point of view, all bahāḥ and bahī are equally monasteries (vihāra), and all of them must have at least a caitya, the main shrine, and a tantric shrine

2. The term *'Bare'* is derived from the sanskrit word 'Bandhya' literally means 'honorable' which is being commonly used to called ordained monk of bahāḥ or bahī.



Figure 3: Rudravarṇa Mahāvihāra (Okubahāḥ),
Photograph by Suman Ratna Dhakhwa



Figure 4: Rajaśri Mahāvihāra (Ibābahī)
Photograph by Suman Ratna Dhakhwa

Table 1: Differences between Bahāḥ and Bahī Monasteries

	Bahāḥ	Bahī
1.	Lions guard the entrance	Generally, no lion guard
2.	One low plinth-step surround the building externally	At least one high plinth-step surrounds the building externally
3.	Toraṇa (Tympanum) above the entrance door	Generally, no Toraṇa
4.	A clearly defined entrance area(foyer) with Phalchās (Vestibules)	Partition walls forming the entrance area: probably a later addition
5.	The central room of the front wing a bay-window or pasūkā jhyāḥ facing the front yard/road	The central room of the front wing has a wide doorway with balcony above facing the road.
6.	Four narrow staircases leading to four separate groups of rooms	One broad wooden staircase leading to the hall of the upper floor.
7.	Small groups of rooms organized into isolated groups	An open colonnade in both storeys
8.	The shrine is the part of the building structure	The shrine is an isolated room forming an circumabulatory passage around the shrine.
10.	A caitya-shaped pinnacle or Gajur on the roof directly above the shrine.	A temple-like lantern (cupolā) called *phucā, pura* or *pula* above the shrine.
	Representative example: Chusyā bahāḥ (Guṇākara Mahāvihāra)	Representative example: Iba Bahī (Rajaśri Mahāvihāra)

'āgaṁ' (Gellner, 1993, p. 168). And, in those periods, anyone from any caste could become a monk.

With urbanization, bahīs also became surrounded by the settlements as the bahāḥ was, and its original purpose became less tenable. While bahāḥs have an explicit Tantric agenda and remained the place for vajrayānā practice, bahīs are institutions where, by contrast, the principle of celibate monkhood was emphasized, and so believed to have stuck to the pure Mahāyāna Buddhism (Gellner, 2001, p. 161). This view is also revealed from Wright's chronicle, which mentioned bahī as *'nivānika vānaprastha vihāra'* (meaning a place for recluses aiming at nirvāṇa) while bahāḥ *'saṁsārika tantrika vihāra'* (meaning a place for practitioners of tantric serving worldly people) (Wright, 2000, p. 237). Therefore, bahī is the monastery where celibate monks reside (Gyawali, 2019 V.S., p. 183). This must be the reason that still now the monastics of bahī are called *'bikhu bare'*, actually it must have meant *'bhikṣu bare'* (celibate monks), while others are called just bare (venerable ones). Another view is that the bahīs were a lower class of vihāra where the bhikṣus or the monastics would receive their first training. After completing training, they would become upasampradāya bhikṣus and join a bahāḥ for further study and training (Locke, 1980, p. 19).

Bahīs are considered a lower form of Buddhist institutions than bahāḥs. This seems to mean that the schedule of rituals in a bahāḥ is more rigid, the rituals more elaborate and better organized. Bahī monasteries mostly have Śākyas in their saṃgha, while bahāḥ monasteries may have only Śākyas or Vajrācāryas or both in their saṃgha.

Apart from the above-mentioned differences between bahāḥ and bahī, some important structural differences are presented in Table:1 based on Korn (1976, p. 36)

2.1. Mū-bahāḥ, the Principal Monastery

Some bahāḥs are classed as principal monasteries, mū-bahāḥ, to which is attached a separate or independent saṃgha for the performance of its monastic activities. The saṃgha has its own elders and is not considered a part of another saṃgha. Mū-bahāḥ generally must have Vajrācāryas as their saṃgha members, exclusively or in addition to Śakyabhikṣus. However, this does not apply in Patan as there are mū-bahāḥs without Vajrācāryas saṃgha members. In other words, Vajrācārya saṃgha members are associated only with mū-bahāḥ monasteries. Initiation programs regularly take place in mū-bahāḥ. One ground of knowing mū-bahāḥ is that there is a ritual of beating Dharmagaṇḍī which is meant to inform the locals about the occurrence of religious performances at the monasteries (Shakya, 1995, p. 4). Previously, it was done four times a day, but these days it is done in lesser times as a part of the ritual in mū-bahāḥ (Fig. 1).

They must have been called principal vihāra, as they have active saṃghas that play a dominant role in decision-making regarding Newar monasticism. Śākyas residing in principle vihāras are called Śākyabhikṣus or Śākyavaṃśa, while those associated to bahāḥ and kācā bahāḥ are called Śākyavaṁśa and those in the bahī, Brahmacarya bhikṣus or Brahmacarya śākya or bikhu bare. Nowadays, the difference is considered negligible.

2.2. Kacā Bahāḥ, Kacā Bahī

Some principal Mahāvihāra (Mū-bahāḥ), bahāḥs, and bahī have their branches, which are categorized as sāmanya vihāra (ordinary monastery) called *'kacā bahāḥ'*, meaning branch monastery. Daily routine ritual pūjā is performed, but initiation for the monks does not take place in such kacā bahāḥ. Branch (śākhā or kacā) bahāḥ means a bahāḥ whose saṃgha is not independent, but is considered a part of the saṃgha of a principal bahāḥ where initiations are performed. It can be easily assumed that as the saṃgha members grew, those monastics who could not be accommodated in the main bahāḥ were settled there.

2.3. Nani-Bahāḥ

Mū-bahāḥ has associated clusters of the residential quarters with open spaces called *'nani'*, most of which are located adjacent to the mū-bahāḥ. In some cases, the nani-courtyard has gained status of nani-bahāḥ having kvāpādyaḥ shrine and associated rituals. The ritual of beating Dharmagaṇḍī is not performed in nani-bahāḥ.

3. Development of Monasteries in Nepālamaṇḍala

Vihāras or monasteries must have come into existence in the Kathmandu Valley a long time ago (Vaidya, 1986, p. 1). According to the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* chronicles and popular belief, the Kathmandu Valley became fit for human habitation after bodhisattva Mañjuśrī drained the water from the Valley, which was once a lake–Nāgahrada (serpent lake). Mañjuśrī then enthroned King Dharmākara, and a large number of the followers of the king began to reside in the valley as celibate monks who were influenced and initiated by Krakuchanda Buddha in Tretāyuga (Shakya, 2001, pp. 94–104 & Bhandari, 2025 V.S., p. 21). When the Buddha stayed at Bāgdvāra of Śivapuri Hill (Siphucho Hill in Newārī) in the north of Kathmandu Valley, he was believed to have ordained some 700 disciples, including Guṇadhvaja Brāhmana and Abhayananda Kṣetrī (Shakya, 2004, p. 19; Bhandari, 2025 V.S.; & Gellner, 1993, p. 193). The Tathāgata established a monastery and arranged for the first time a saṃgha (Shakya, 2036 V.S., pp. 88–89). It is believed that vihāras were built for the residence of these celibate monks for their monastic practice in that period.

Historically, the resting places of the monks, āvāsa or ārāma in Śākyamuni Buddha's time, were the monastery. As mentioned in Buddhist literature, Gautam Buddha and his followers stayed at Nyāgrodhārāma vihāra during his visit to Kapilavastu of Nepal. It is said that in the first year of his enlightenment, twenty thousand monks accompanied the Buddha and stayed at this vihāra. However, it is understood that the earlier Buddhist monument was the caitya, which predates the monastery that we conceived of. It is evident from historical records in India, e.g., Sānci, Bharhut, Bhājā, and Nepal. Svayambhū caitya, Namrā caitya (Namo Buddha caitya), Sāṁkhu caitya, Khāsti (Bauddha) caitya of Nepālamaṇḍala indicated the same. Then there was a tradition of constructing vihāra in the vicinity or premises of the caityas. There were remnants of monasteries in India near the caityas. In Nepal, Sinaguvihāra of Svayambhū, Guṁvihāra of Sāṁkhu, and so forth reveal the same fact. Still, the Svayambhū area, Baudha caitya area, and Namrā area are among the most preferred sites for the construction of monasteries (mainly gompās, i.e., Buddhist monasteries of Himalayan Buddhism based on Tibetan style). Caitya later became an integral part of the monastery. Therefore, it can be said that in the beginning, monasteries were made outside the settlement areas in solitary places, mostly near the famous caityas. Later, monasteries also came to be surrounded by settlements with growing urbanization. After the conversion of celibate monks into married householder monastics, monasteries, especially bahāḥs, were built within the city area so that they could be engaged in various occupations and could have better social involvement. There were 'bahī' vihāras which continued to house celibate monks, located outside the residential areas till the medieval period. But, later, these bahīs too were surrounded by the settlements due to unchecked growing urbanization. By the end of the medieval period, almost all vihāras were surrounded by settlements. In Lalitpur, the state territories were demarcated by the cluster of vihāras in divisions like Uttaravihāra (Northern vihāra site), Dakṣiṇavihāra (southern vihāra site), and Pinthavihāra (site of Pim vihāra) ruled separately by feudal Mahāpātras (three dynasties of Mahāpātras among saptakutumba - seven dynasties) till the time of Viṣnu Singh around 1720 CE (Bajracharya, 2056 V.S., p. 471). Similarly, territories of Kāntipur were divided according to a group of monasteries at a place called *'Pui'* (a consolidated vihāra area). It shows the importance of monasteries in Nepālamaṇḍala.

Historically known oldest Vihāra in Nepālamaṇḍala, is Guṁ Vihāra situated on the hillock in Sāṁkhu. This vihāra is supposed to have been made to accommodate the members of the Buddhist missionary sent by Emperor Aśoka to Himvatkhaṇḍa under the leadership of Majjhima Thera, possibly in 236 BC (Sudarśana, 2040 V.S., pp. 30–32). According to Acharya (2018 VS), twenty-four vihāras were built by the former king Pushupreksha or Puspadeva, some generations before the establishment of the Licchavī dynasty by king Bhumivarma, to provide accommodation for *bandeju*s, the monks. Several vihāras were mentioned in various Licchavī inscriptions, indicating the popularity of the practice of monasticism in Nepal. For example, Guṁ-vihāra, Māna-vihāra, Śrīrāj-vihāra, Kharjurikā-vihāra, and Madhyama-vihāra are mentioned in the famous Hāndigaon inscription of best known Licchavī period king Aṃśuvarma (621 CE)'s time. About 15 monasteries were known of the Licchavi period (Regmi, 2037 V.S., pp. 145–146). Monasteries were established in different periods by various rulers and individuals. Most of them are ancient. The number of monasteries grew to its highest peak during the medieval period of Nepalese history. The existing monasteries are the remnants of the Medieval period.

It would be interesting to note that most of the monasteries were built by contemporary rulers and kings. Some examples are as follows (Shakya, 1995, p. 2): Licchavī king Vṛṣadeva of 4th century, after having renovated the Svayambhū Mahācaitya under the able leadership of Bhikṣu Śāntiśila, established the monastery 'Śrīsamhegu Vihāra' on the Svayambhū hill. He also had a monastery built in Badegāon— a

village which became famous as Bandepur. The king Śaṃkaradeva (the son of Vṛṣadeva) constructed 'Śrī Mayūrvarṇa Mahāvihāra at the instigation of Jayaśrī Miśra. The king Dharmadeva built Rāja-vihāra and established the Dharma-caitya. The king Mānadeva constructed Māna-vihāra. The king Śivadeva built 'Śivadeva-vihāra'. King Aṃśuvarma is credited to have built another Rāja-vihāra. The king Narendradeva constructed Rājkīrti-vihāra and presented it to his ācārya Bandhudatta. King Devādeva had built Devapāla-vihāra. Similarly, the king Campādeva established 'Futo-vihāra'. The king Bālārcandeva erected 'Jeṣṭhavarṇa Mahāvihār' and initiated the festival Matayāḥ, which is still celebrated in Lalitpur. The king Bhāṣkaradeva built several vihāras like Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra, Keśacandrapārāvarta Mahāvihāra etc. Likewise, king Guṇakāmadeva built Padmacakra-vihāra and Ratnākara Mahāvihāra. Guṇalakṣmi Varma constructed Dhumbahāḥ. King Indradeva constructed Kacchapālagirī Mahāvihāra (Cvabahāḥ) and Jayamanohara Mahāvihāra (Subahāḥ). Jagatapāla, the feudal ruler of Lalitpur in Pimbahāḥ territory, built Jagatapāla Vihāra in Kīrtipur around 1515 CE (Bajracharya, 2056 V.S., p. 472). There were several other references regarding the construction of monasteries. All this shows how monasticism was supported by the kings. Besides, there were monasteries built by the monastics and devotees. Therefore, the rulers, monastics, and devotees contributed to the monasticism of Nepālamaṇḍala by the construction of monasteries, most of which still survive today, being repeatedly renovated at times.

Till the Licchavī period, monasteries were built for lodging the monks and nuns coming from the four quarters, as it is understood from the Licchavī inscriptions bearing the line of words *'caturdiśārya bhikṣu saṃgha'* (Bajracharya, 2030 V.S., pp. 496–497)—meaning the saṃgha of monks coming from four directions. This shows that the purpose of vihāra in Licchavī time resembles the instruction of the Buddha, who, upon being questioned by Anāthapiṇḍaka, stated in reply that vihāra donation is for monks of the saṃgha hailing from four quarters[3].

3. *Vinayapitaka, Cullavagga, Senasankkhandhaka* (VRI, 2026)

On the other hand, it also reveals that monks had not turned to married householders but were peripatetic at that time.

In the medieval period main objectives of establishing a Buddhist monastery were to help the Buddhist lifestyle, for the benefit of all, to impart Buddhist teaching for the improvement of conduct and thought, and to create a field of merit by establishing Buddhaśāsana. Besides the rulers, the leading Buddhist masters/scholars also contributed to the field, "the Buddhist monastery". The early medieval period witnessed a turning point in the monasticism and the Buddhism grew to the peak with construction of numerous monasteries. Vajrayāna became popular, and monasteries were built to suit vajrayānic form of monasticism. Monasteries were constructed following an elaborate religious process.

Some of the renowned bahāḥs in their preserved and classic form are Kvā-bahāḥ, Uku-bahāḥ, Haḥ-bahāḥ and Guji-bahāḥ of Lalitpur, Chusyā-bahāḥ, Itum-bahāḥ and Yatkhā-bahāḥ of Kāntipur. Others are Bhinche-bahāḥ, Bu-bahāḥ, Su-bahāḥ, Taṃga-bahāḥ, and Taḥ-bahāḥ. Similarly well preserved bahīs are Cikaṁ-bahī, Ibā-bahī, Jyāba-bahī, Naka-bahī, Nhāykaṃ-bahī, Ubābahī, I-bahī, Pintu-bahī and Konti-bahī of Lalitpur. Other bahīs like Khvāy-bahī, Ilāy-bahī, Gustala-bahī, Thapā-bahī, Dhapagā-bahī are in the state of deterioration.

There are more than 400 ancient monasteries (bahāḥ and bahīs) related to Mahāyāna-vajrayāna Buddhism in the Kathmandu valley and some 125 vihāras related to the Theravāda tradition. The number of gompās is approximately 5000 (Locke, 1985, p. 7 & Gurung, 2060 V.S.). Thus, though small in size, Nepal has comparatively and surprisingly the greatest number of Buddhist Monasteries and gompas, which serve as the teaching grounds for the Buddhist learners (Bajracharya, 2062 V.S.). Since the present topic has to deal with monasticism in indigenous Nepalese Buddhism, which is also known as Newar Buddhism, only bahāḥ and bahī are being focused.



Figure 5: Jāmbūnada Mahāvihāra (also called Pimkṣe Vihār, Khuṃbahāḥ), Kathmandu
Photograph by Manindra Shrestha

4. General Structure of Nepalese Buddhist Monasteries

Nothing can be said precisely about the details of Licchavī monasteries, as none of them survives today in their pristine form. They must have been destroyed, changed, or renovated many times before they came to the present form. However, it can be assumed that they must have been simpler as those found in ruins on Nāgarjunakonda, Takṣaśila, Orissa in India in the contemporary period.

4.1. Construction Base

Vihāras extant at present are of medieval construction, which must have been based upon Licchavī origin because art and architecture of a place takes hundreds of years to develop into a particular form. By the time of the early medieval period, the guidebooks of Vihāra construction like the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and the *Kriyāsamuccaya* had already been formed and followed. Nepalese monasteries were known to have been constructed according to the rules and rituals mentioned in Kuladutta's *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā,* a commentary on the collection of Buddhist tantric rituals. *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* served as a kind of authorized monastery construction manual. There is an inscription which mentions that Śākyabhikṣu Jayalakṣa alias Jayaharṣapāla inaugurated the pratiṣṭhā of the Jāmbūnada Mahāvihāra (Pimkṣebahāḥ, Fig. 5) in Kathmandu in 1590 CE, specifying the rituals followed would be as per *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* (Regmi, 1965, pp. 27–44, Inscription No. 27).

Kuladatta was a Nepalese Buddhist master of the 12th century and was a companion of Tathāgatavajra who organized the Vajrācārya saṃgha of Hiranyavarṇa Mahāvihāra (Tanemura, 2004, pp. 5–9). All the details starting from the prescription of the choice of a site for a monastery (bhumiparikṣā), the preparation of the water jugs employed in consecration ritual (kalaśādhivāsana), the casting of cords on the site for a monastery (sūtrapātanavidhi), the consecration of images and other objects of worship (pratimādipratisthā) etc. were done as per rules and rituals mentioned in the text and indicated by the inscription mentioned above. In the process, Vajradhātu Maṇḍala is visualized upon which a vihāra is constructed. In Sūtrapātan, the land is divided into 81 cells where various gods and goddesses are invoked, seated, and worshipped. The central cell is meant for the Vairocana Buddha. Contents of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* bear similarity with other known ritual texts like *Kriyāsamuccaya, Vajrāvalī,* and *Sarvavajrodaya.*

4.2. Outlook of a Vihāra at a Glance

A vihāra is a quadrangular edifice from the outside with tiled roofs. Trabeated structures in wood and brick masonry were used in Newar vihāra construction. The artistic decoration was entirely Newar style, which displays craftsmanship and skillful creativity. Ground floor plan are in concomitant with old vihāras like those found in vestiges in Takṣaśila, Nāgarjunakondā, Nālandā, etc. Upper floors exhibit Nepaleseness with indigenous features like wooden lattice windows.

Vihāra construction seems to have adopted ample earthquake resistant measure, as most of them survived the 1934 devastating earthquake. Besides, other details in decoration vary according to the type of monastery.

4.3. Description

Structurally, a vihāra has remained unaltered for centuries. Vihāras in Kathmandu Valley, while on the one hand preserving the ancient features, turned into a Buddhist characteristic of the country with definite indigenous architectural features, which are unique to the Buddhist ways of life. The vihāra or monastery is laid out in traditional Buddhist style according to a quadrangular plan with an open courtyard in the middle. It is often set back from the road in a courtyard so that one has to pass through a door to get into it. The Buddhist monastery is usually a two-storied structure laid out around an open courtyard. A typical Bahāḥ, which is similar to those mentioned in any relevant texts, has images of Mahānkāla and Gaṇeśa, two protective deities, positioned as guards on either side of the entrance to the bahāḥ (Hornby, 1995, p. 26).

The monastery remains inclusive of all requisites needed for Dharma practice and its propagation. It functions as the focus of the attached saṃgha, housing its deities and shrine rooms and providing space for rituals and other cultic activities. In all monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal, two themes recur consistently in their architecture, which are also significant in the religious practices of Newar Buddhism. The monasteries always stood on the Dharmadhātu maṇḍalā and there is always a representation of the Svayambhū Mahācaitya (in the form of caitya). In Lalitpur, monasteries include Svayambhū Mahācaitya and Dharmadhātu maṇḍalā physically in the courtyard. Svayambhū is the most sacred monument in the Newar Buddhist community and serves as the ontological source of the religion, as indicated by textual evidence and ritual practices. In the middle of the court, one can find an ancient caitya belonging to the monastery, the symbol of Svayambhū representing the ultimate reality of the world, which is the essential part of a Newar Monastery. The presence of a secondary surrogate of Svayambhū, found in the courtyards of virtually every monastery, further suggests that Svayambhū Mahācaitya is the generating source of the Buddhist environment of the Valley. There can be other caityas, too, installed by the individual members. Nearby the main caitya stands Dharmadhātu Maṇḍalā surmounted by a vajra. Dharmadhātu is the representation of the purified universe as directly perceived by the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. The courtyard of the monastery served the purpose of an assembly ground for the practitioners and followers, and a display of Buddhist articles on occasions. On the four sides of the courtyard, there stand two-storied buildings. One side of the courtyard opposite to the entrance may have a distinctly recognizable multi-storied building with a pinnacle or cupolā on the rooftop, which houses the main deity. It generally houses on the ground floor a large Buddha image. The main deity seated on a lotus throne is usually the big statue of Śākyamuni Buddha, with an earth-touching gesture. Occasionally, there may be other forms of Buddhist deities like Dīpaṃkara or Avalokiteśvara, or anyone from the Pañca-Buddha family. On the ground floor beside the main deity image, there are rooms for display of Buddhist articles on occasions, long rooms for Dharma teaching or preaching, and on the first floor, rooms for further extensive practice of Dharma, a storeroom, and living quarters of the monastics, etc.

The most important part in the first floor is an enclosed secret room or shrine where Tantric deities (āgaṃdyāh), most commonly Cakrasaṃvara and his consort Vajravārāhī are installed along with other subordinate deities. The tantric shrine (āgaṃ) is either directly above the main principal deity or on the firstfloor room opposite to it, or it can also be to one side of the first floor. Attached to the Tantric shrine is an esoteric chamber, digi which further provides the provision for Vajrayāna practice in the monastery. Dikṣā, locally called dekhā, the formal initiation into Vajrayāna yoga tantra, is held from time to time in this chamber for those who want to enter the Vajrayāna way of Buddhist practice. In the ground space between the



Figure 6: Vajradhātu Maṇḍala Deities in 81 Square Maṇḍala (Illustrated by Gyanendra Shakya Based on Kriyāsaṃgraha-pañjikā Text)

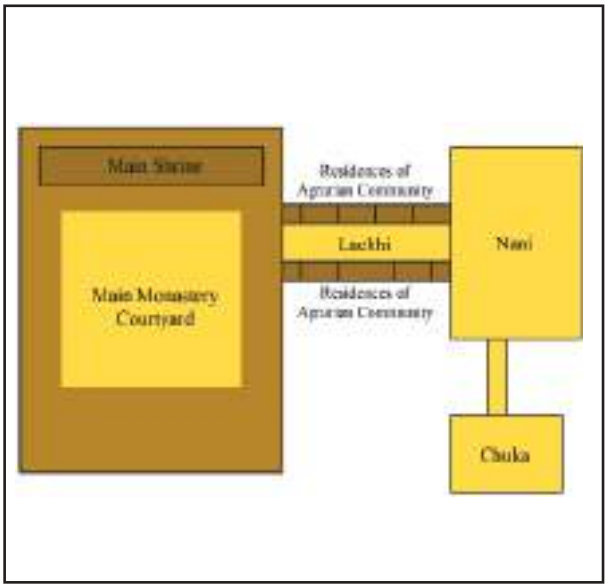


Figure 7: Schematic Diagram of General Spatial Planning of the Nepalese Monastery

image of the main deity and the caitya is a yajñāśāla, a one-foot square fireplace where sacrifices are offered during worship.

From the 18th century, no new monastery has been built of a similar description. Many of the buildings within the monasteries started to change their appearance, and many of them were completely remodeled, leaving only a few today in their original form. Therefore, the majority of the monasteries still existing today have been either extensively modified for residential purposes, have fallen into disrepair, or have become unrecognizable. No monastery is to be found outside the limits of the city cores. All have been surrounded by residential houses. Where monasteries were found within the city, the Toles (local settlements) around them bear their names, indicating the popularity of the monasteries in those areas. Bahāḥs like Te-bahāḥ, Dhvākā-bahāḥ, and bahīls such as Cābahī and Marubahī provide clear examples of lending their names to the localities. Many bahīs are in the state of collapse. Recently, a traditional Newar vihāra has been constructed at Lumbini, applying the same old rituals and forms.

5. Sacredness of the Monastery

Though originally built to shelter monks during the rainy season, the Buddhist monastery took on a sacred character when small stupas and images of the Buddha were installed within it. The vihāra in the Nepalese context is visualized as sacred from the very selection of the site for its construction, when rituals are performed, turning it into the abode of numerous Buddhist deities. According to *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā,* the proposed ground for vihāra construction should be visualized as the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. During the consecration of the ground, one hundred and twenty-one deities are worshipped. Forty goddesses, in sets of ten, outside 81 deities assigned for each square. Eighty-one deities are positioned in eighty-one spots (koṣṭhaka) divided into five groups. The group of forty goddesses includes the ten bhumis (foundations), the ten pāramitās (perfections), the ten vasitas, and the ten dhāranis (possessions). The host, consisting of eighty-one deities, includes forty-nine deities from the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala (Vairocana, four Buddha goddesses, sixteen vajrasattvas, sixteen bodhisattvas, eight goddesses of offerings, and four door guardians), vajrahumkāra and the krodhas, the nine planets, the ten lokapālas, prithvi, and nāga. All these deities are duly visualized and are worshipped with their mantra. After the purification, the vihāra site is visualized as the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala and worshipped accordingly. Kvāpādyaḥ shrine and āgaṃ chambers are also full of Buddhist deities. Therefore, Nepalese vihāras are holy sanctums having significant

spirituality. Buddhist deities in various art forms, like sculptures, paintings, installed in a monastery are not only aesthetic objects but are sacred too adding to spirituality. The Newar Buddhist monasteries have at least one main and several other caityas. Caitya is an integral part of the monastery. It is regarded as the abode of Pañcabuddha whose images are depicted on its four sides, and whose forms have gone through long and complex architectural and iconographic evolution. Previously, when caityas were not included in the monastery, the main part of the monastery was the assembly hall (upatthānaśāla in Pāli, upasthānśālā in Saṅskrit). With the introduction of caitya in the monastery, Upatthānaśālā was ignored (Nagao, 2010, p. 195).

The sacredness of a vihāra is maintained by its inhabitant saṃgha members and practicing the Dharma by following a set of prescribed rules and regulations, synonymously known as vinaya or prātimokṣya. Actually, monasticism comprises the activities exercised and exhibited by the saṃgha members in a monastery towards the practice and propagation of the Dharma. Nepalese Buddhists have been following the same age-old tradition, and the existence of numerous old monasteries is indicative of the fact that the Kathmandu Valley is the stronghold of the Buddhists. Buddhist masters and ācāryas mostly dwell around the monastery. They preach Dharma discourse, teach Dharma lessons, and guide the lay followers. The lay followers throng into the nearby monastery to earn merit by listening to Buddhist masters or ācāryas, worshipping the Buddhist deities, etc. The monastery is also the center of Dharma practice by the fully ordained Buddhist initiates, their socio-cultural accomplishment and teaching-learning activities. All these chores, along with the monasteries concerned, make up monasticism. So, a monastery occupies a vital pivoted position in the Buddhist tradition for the formation of the saṃgha, besides its use as lodging for Buddhist masters, a place for socio-cultural activities, and spiritual practice.

The architecture of the Newar Buddhist monastery is such that it has three shrines (i) first, the shrine of the main deity, who explicitly stands for the Śrāvakayāna

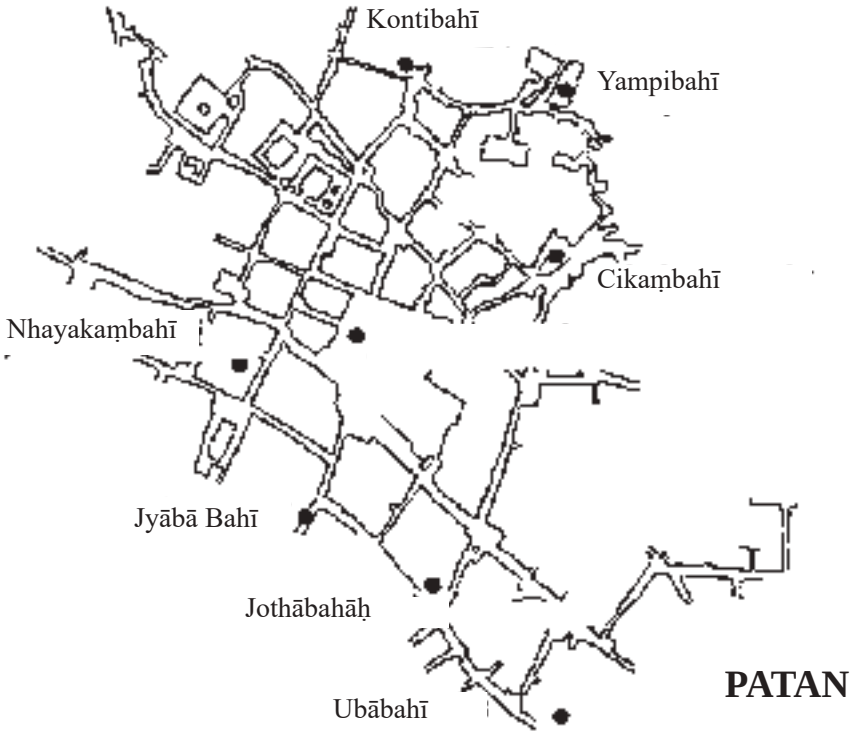


Figure 9: A Map Showing a Cluster of Monasteries in a Locality with Patan Durbar at the Center.
(Map Source: Nippon Institute of Technology Research Mission, 1998)

part of Newar Buddhism, (ii) second, the shrine of the Bodhisattva like Amoghapāsa Lokeśwara, Padmapāni Lokeśwara or Tārā and decoration with their paintings and statues along with other Mahāyānist deities represent Pāramitāyāna part and (iii) third, tantric shrine, the āgaṃ with the esoteric deities, the Vajrāyāna part (Gellner, 1993, p. 292). In addition, there are wooden struts with symbols like multi-armed Tantric forms of the five Buddhas or the five protective deities (Sādhanā), which may be given a vajrayānic way interpretation (Gellner, 1993, p. 186). Thus, the Śrāvakayāna activity has been put in a Mahāyāna framework in a typical Newari Buddhist style in the Newar monastery (Gellner, 1993). This also reflects the hierarchy of three vehicles in Nepalese Buddhism.

Furthermore, this structure of three ways is built into the Newar Buddhist tradition and, in particular, to the sequence whereby a young Vajrācārya passes first through monastic initiation, then becomes a householder, and finally undergoes the consecration of a vajra master. All these activities are centered at the monastery. On the traditional Newar Buddhist view, then all three ways were taught by the Buddha; the difference between them is explained by the fact that the Buddha adapted his message to the capacities and needs of his listeners (Gellner, 1993, p. 114). Therefore, the monastery is not only home to the saṃgha members and the center of their religious activities, it is also the abode of deities belonging to three different vehicles of Buddhism. Hence, it is a sacred place.

Every day in the early morning main deity and other deities are kept open for daily worship after the deity and the shrines have been cleaned and worshipped by the Dyaḥpālāḥ, the in-charge and his assistants. The in-charge person changes rotationally, turn by turn, as per the rule of the saṃgha of the monastery. In most of the vihāras, Mahāyāna sūtras are generally recited in the morning. Except on special days doors of the shrine-rooms are kept closed during the day. In the evening, prayers are made with the butter lamps lighted up before the doors of the vihāras and deities. Dharmagaṇḍī is beaten, and the monastery is circumambulated by the attendant holding lit incense in hand and ringing the bell. While doing such activities, the serving attendants have to bare his right hand, showing the gesture of cīvara adorned.

6. Social Connectivity of Newar Monasteries

The structure of the Nepalese Buddhist monastery as a whole seems to have been constructed to accommodate different kinds of Buddhist people (Fig. 7). The underlying intention is apparent to lodge not only the monastics but also the lay followers' group. Vihāra architecture in Nepal was designed from the very early period to maintain several activities that promoted vihāra culture and monasticism. The vihāras were centers of religion, education, and cultural activities in the Medieval period. The main monastic shrine is annexed through a passage called lāchi to inner courtyards called nani. A proper nani is a courtyard with houses around it, and generally, it has a caitya at the center (Locke, 1985, p. 6). But, it normally does not have kvāpādyaḥ and āgaṃ. It also gives an impression of bahāḥ when it contains kvāpādyaḥ, and in this case, it is called nani-bahāḥ. But, nanis are often called nani-bahāḥ in Bhaktapur even though they do not have kvāpādyaḥ. Along the lāchi on both sides, are the residential buildings of lay followers, mainly farmers known as Jyāpu. They are burly men who can undertake any laborious jobs in performing regular Buddhist activities. Along the four sides of the rectangular nani are the houses of those members of the saṃgha, who are not accommodated in the main monastery and its branches. It may also have houses of other Buddhist castes apart from Bare. The Nani may be connected by a narrow passage to other squares of an area called 'cuka' where different kinds of lay followers like Chitrakar, Tuladhar, Ranjit etc. reside. The establishment of vihāras and the settlements of monastics would no doubt have attracted settlers such as cultivators, artisans, among others, whose services for the institution are required. There can be a cluster of more than one lācchi, nani and chuka around the Monastery. Thus, the Newar Buddhist

monastery mostly remains diffused in the settlements due to its integration into the surrounding architecture and becomes externally inconspicuous (Korn, 1976, p. 26).

There are a few other types of Buddhist courtyards which might be called an extended bahāḥ complex: a very large courtyard (almost as large as a playground or a football field) surrounded by residential buildings with a bahāḥ shrine situated along one side (Locke, 1985, p. 5). The courtyard is usually replete with images and caityas. Perhaps the best examples of this are Kayagunani of Itum bahāḥ, and Te bahāḥ in Kathmandu, and Bu bahāḥ, Nāga bahāḥ, and Nyākhācuka in Patan. So, the general structure of the monastery also gives us a clue to conclude that Buddhism in Nepal is not only for the monks and nuns or the priestly class, but it is also for the laypeople (laity), and it has been practiced through generations.

Besides intra-social-connectivity of the monastery, there are interconnections among the monasteries of an area. As mentioned above, such connections were once utilized in the demarcation of the territories of the state in the Medieval period. Lalitpur was divided into Uttara-vihāra area, Dakṣina-vihāra area, and Pintha-vihāra areas, which were ruled by separate feudal heads, Mahāpātras. Similarly, Kāntipur was divided into four separate regions called 'Pui' according to the grouping of the monasteries. Such connections are still seen physically and in the working pattern during 'Pui Ācā Gū' (regional gathering). Kacā Bahāḥs are mostly clustered around the principal monastery with which they are affiliated or associated. Interconnection among the monasteries is based on such a territorial architectural design that it facilitates not only the annual gathering of saṃgha members but also one of the important practices of Newar Buddhists called bahāḥ pūjā. During its celebration, all the bahāḥ and bahī monasteries are visited and worshipped by the Buddhists, including monastics and lay followers (upāsaka and upāsika). Also, the monastic functions held at one monastery are witnessed by the saṃgha members of neighbouring monasteries. There can be several examples to reveal the interrelation among the monasteries of one locality. Below (Fig. 9) is a piece of a map from Patan that gives a picture of the connection among them.

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(Note: Vikrama Saṃvat dates are indicated as VS)

Monastic Iconography:
Images, Rituals, and Meaning in the Kathmandu Valley
काठमाडौं उपत्यकाका बहा:बहीको प्रतिमा लक्षण–मूर्ति, पूजाविधि तथा भावार्थ

Sudan Shakya

Professor, Department of Buddhist Studies, Shuchiin University, Japan
E-mail: shakya@shuchiin.ac.jp

सुदन शाक्य

प्रोफेसर, बौद्ध अध्ययन विभाग, सुचिन विश्विविद्यालय

विषयवस्तुको सारांश

संस्कृत शब्द 'विहार' को मूल अर्थ 'घुम्नु' वा 'हिडडुल' गर्नु हो। तर बौद्ध सन्दर्भमा यसको अर्थ क्रमशः परिवर्तन हुँदै बौद्ध भिक्षुभिक्षुणीहरूको लागि 'विश्राम गर्ने स्थान' जनाउन थाल्यो। नेपालमा, विशेषतः काठमाडौँ उपत्यकाभरि परम्परागत बौद्ध विहारहरू ठूलो संख्यामा पाइन्छ। परम्परानुसार यी विहारहरूले प्राचीन भारतका विक्रमशीला तथा नालन्दा महाविहारबाट पलायन भई आएका आचार्यहरूलाई आश्रय प्रदान गरेका थिए भन्ने विश्वास गरिन्छ। यी बहा:बहीहरू बहुआयामिक बौद्ध देवताहरूलाई प्रतिष्ठित गराइएका पवित्र मण्डलाकार संरचनाका रूपमा विकसित भएको देखिन्छ। अद्यापि, यी विहारहरू नेपालमण्डलका नेवाः बौद्धहरूको प्रमुख धार्मिक केन्द्रका रूपमा चलिआएको छ। यस लेखमा विहारहरूको प्रतिमालक्षण पक्षको विश्लेषणका साथै तिनको धार्मिक-सांस्कृतिक महत्त्वको समीक्षा गरिएको छ। यसमा विशेष गरी पाटनस्थित प्रसिद्ध हिरण्यवर्ण महाविहारमा केन्द्रित भई उदाहरणहरू प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ, जहाँ क्रियासंग्रह अनुरूपका अनुष्ठानहरू आजसम्म पनि प्रचलनमा रहेका छन्। यस लेखमा चर्चा गरिएको अर्को महत्त्वपूर्ण विषय पूजाविधि अनुष्ठानहरूको "नेपालीकरण" प्रक्रिया पनि हो। परम्परागत निरन्तरता कायम राख्दै नेपाली बौद्ध परम्पराभित्र सांस्कृतिक परिवर्तनसँग अनुकूलन गरिएको सन्दर्भको बारे पनि यहाँ विश्लेषण गरिएको छ।

Keywords: Bahāḥ-bahī Monasteries; Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra; Newar Buddhism; Maṇḍala Cosmology; *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha;* Ritual Architecture; Iconography; Kathmandu Valley.

1. Introduction

The Sanskrit term "*vihāra*", originally meaning "roaming" or "moving about," gradually shifted in Buddhist contexts to denote a monastic complex. In Nepal, hundreds of traditional Buddhist monasteries known as vihāra or mahāvihāra are dotted throughout the Kathmandu Valley.[1] Locally, these institutions are

1. The terms bahāḥ and bahī are also written as bāhā/bahī or vahā/vahī, while in this paper, I adopt the former spellings (Bahāḥ, Bahī).

Bahāḥ derives from the Sanskrit word *vihāra*, a term denoting a place where Buddhist monks reside. Although the spelling vahā is etymologically closer to vihāra, the sounds b and v are often used interchangeably in Newar usage; accordingly, this paper adopts the more widely established form Bahāḥ. By contrast, bahī derives from the Sanskrit bahir ("outside") and, in the Nepalese context, generally refers to monasteries located on the outer edges of a settlement or town. Since the spelling bahī is already well established, this paper likewise employs Bahī throughout.

In many cases, the names of both types of monasteries are written with the suffix "—Mahāvihāra." For example, a representative Bahāḥ discussed in this paper is Kvā Bahāḥ, widely known as the "Golden Temple" and formally designated Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra. As a representative bahī, Pucobahī—formally Akṣayeśvara Mahāvihāra—was traditionally established on the periphery of the old city of Patan (Pāṭana). Owing to recent population growth and urban expansion, however, it is no longer always appropriate to characterize such bahī monasteries as being located on the "outskirts" of the city.

John K. Locke, a renowned scholar of Nepalese Buddhism, by contrast, uses the latter forms. He catalogued a total of 363 bāhā/bahī in the Kathmandu Valley—185 in Pāṭan, 130 in Kathmandu, and 48 in Bhaktapur—and published his findings in a report. For details, see (Locke, 1985). Traditionally, these monasteries are said to have been classified into three types: (1) mū-bahāḥ, (2) bahī, and (3) kacā-bahāḥ. The term mū derives from Sanskrit mūla and means "root" or "foundation," while

called bahāḥ and bahī and are said to have once served as refuges for monks who fled from Indian monastic centers such as Vikramaśilā and Nālandā.

This paper examines selected icons and rituals to demonstrate how the Golden Temple[2] serves as a locus through which Buddhist traditions transmitted from India remain living and publicly legible in the Kathmandu Valley.

2. The Three Forms of Buddhism Currently Existing in Nepal

Before turning to the main topic of Nepal's Buddhist monasteries, I first outline the forms of Buddhism currently practiced in the country, which I have discussed in previous publications[3], and offer a concise overview here. In Nepal, the following three forms of Buddhism coexist:

(1) Theravāda Buddhism
(2) Tibetan Buddhism
(3) Nepalese Traditional Buddhism (Nepalese Buddhism)

Three forms of Buddhism coexist in Nepal, and since all are generally regarded as the teachings of Śākyamuni Buddha—a historically revered national figure in Nepal, it is not uncommon for individuals to embrace and practice all three simultaneously. Each of these traditions has developed in distinct ways, with local modifications, and in recent years they have come to be known locally as Tri-yāna* ("Three Vehicles").

2.1. Theravāda Buddhism

Theravāda Buddhism, often identified locally with Śrāvakayāna, is based primarily on the Pāli Canon, which was reintroduced to Nepal in the modern period from Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand; its history in Nepal spans less than a century. Many of its adherents are Newar Buddhists in the Kathmandu Valley, including members of the Śākya and Vajrācārya communities.

Unlike Nepalese Traditional Buddhism, discussed below, Theravāda Buddhism is open to all and is not restricted by caste boundaries. As a result, individuals from various ethnic groups and caste backgrounds have also converted, becoming lay followers, monks, or nuns. In recent decades, many new monasteries (vihāras) have been established, where monastics observe disciplinary rules—such as refraining from eating after noon, renouncing household life, and living communally. Because this lifestyle evokes that of the historical Buddha's community, and because monks and nuns frequently offer public Dharma teachings in local languages in an accessible manner, Theravāda Buddhism spread rapidly in Nepal over a relatively short period and has since become one of the country's major Buddhist traditions.

2.2. Tibetan Buddhism

Tibetan Buddhism in Nepal is a form of Buddhism that integrates Mahāyāna and Esoteric (tantric) elements, drawing on Tibetan translations of Sanskrit scriptures as well as works composed by eminent Tibetan masters. This tradition has long been widely practiced among Nepal's mountain ethnic groups, especially the Tamang, Sherpa, Lama, Rai, Limbu and Gurung etc. In addition, some Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, who historically maintained close commercial and cultural ties with Tibet, are also followers. Following the political developments in Tibet in the 1950s and the unrest associated with them, especially around 1959, many Tibetans fled to Nepal. This migration further expanded Tibetan Buddhism within the country, accompanied by the construction of many new Tibetan monasteries *dGon pa*; locally called gumbā, and it has since developed into a major religious presence in Nepal.

kacā denotes a "branch" or "sub-branch." In other words, kacā-bahāḥ refers to subordinate branch monasteries affiliated with the principal establishments—namely, mū-Bahāḥ and bahī (both regarded as mahāvihāras). Complex ritual cycles, such as ordination rites and transmission initiations (abhiṣeka), are said not to be performed at kacā-bahāḥ. See, Vajracarya (2000, p. 11).

2. For details, see Hutt (1994); Shakya (2003); Shakya (2010); & Shakya (2013).

3. See Shakya (2010); & Shakya (2017).

2.3. Nepalese Traditional Buddhism

Nepalese Traditional Buddhism is centered on Buddhist monasteries— bahāḥ and bahī, scattered throughout the Kathmandu Valley[4] and are deeply rooted in the Newar community. This tradition preserves what is often understood as the Sanskrit-based Buddhist and esoteric heritage that largely disappeared in India in the early thirteenth century. Because it represents a distinctive religious tradition of Nepal, it is often referred to as "Nepalese Buddhism." Moreover, since its principal practitioners are the Newars—whose mother tongue is the non-Indo-Aryan Newar language *(Nevāra)*, belonging to the Tibeto-Burman language family—and particularly the Śākya and Vajrācārya communities, it is also known as "Newar Buddhism." As it developed around the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* and reflects a later phase of Esoteric Buddhism, it is further identified as "Vajrayāna."

As will be discussed below, the doctrinal foundation of this tradition consists of nine scriptures known as the "Nine Dharma Texts" (*Nava-dharma*). At the same time, it practices complex rituals, including fire offerings (*homa*) accompanied by maṇḍalas and initiation rites (*abhiṣeka*), many of which are based on later Tantric scriptures such as the *Cakrasaṃvara*, *Hevajra*, and related Tantras.

Alongside the worship of *stūpas*, devotion to bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara is also widespread in Nepal. Indeed, many of the thousands of *stūpas* scattered across the bahāḥ and bahī, as well as throughout Newar Buddhist settlements in the Kathmandu Valley, may be regarded as three-dimensional representations of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala (and, in some cases, the Dharmadhātu Maṇḍala[5]). On their four sides are carved the Four Buddhas—Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi—and the *stūpa* as a whole is understood as Mahāvairocana, the central figure of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. In some cases, however, this central deity is placed beside Akṣobhya, as can be seen at the *Svayambhū-stūpa* in Kathmandu.

Thus, in Nepalese Traditional Buddhism, objects of devotion include Śākyamuni Buddha, various Mahāyāna Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and numerous deities associated with the middle and later phases of Esoteric Buddhism.

Historical Transformation of Bahāḥ/Bahī and Maṇḍalic Space

Over the centuries, these bahāḥ/bahī monasteries have undergone significant historical transformations while preserving essential features of Indian Buddhism. Originally, they functioned as residential monasteries for celibate monks and as sacred abodes of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Gradually, however, they evolved into ritual-centered sacred spaces within the Newar Buddhist tradition. Today, bahāḥ/bahī function less as residential space for monks, but shares as sacred maṇḍalic spaces. In some bahāḥ/bahī, much of the courtyard space has been converted into private residences. By contrast, as seen at the Golden Temple and Ubahāḥ of Patan city, there are also cases in which the entire square courtyard is maintained as a unified sacred temple space. They enshrine diverse Buddhist deities and serve as ritual and communal centers for Nepalese Traditional Buddhism. In this sense, they function in ways comparable to Hindu temples—such as *mandira*—while retaining distinct Buddhist doctrinal and ritual identities.

The bahāḥ/bahī monasteries enshrine hundreds of magnificent Buddhist images, each bearing specific doctrinal and ritual significance. Through the iconographic arrangement of these images, the monasteries are transformed into sacred maṇḍalic spaces, in which architecture, imagery, and ritual

4. A new Bahāḥ has recently been established in the Lumbini Monastic Zone at Lumbini, known as Nepal Vajrayana Mahavihara. It is said to be the first traditional Bahāḥ monastery to be built outside the Kathmandu Valley in several centuries. Its central deity is Mahāvairocana displaying the modified Bodhyagrī gesture, and the monastery was formally opened to the public in 2024.

5. Dharmadhātu Maṇḍala is a common designation for the Dharmadhātuvāgīśvara Maṇḍala, one of the most widely venerated maṇḍalas in Nepal. Its primary textual source is the *Nāmasaṃgīti* (v115cd), one of the most frequently recited scriptures in Nepal. For details, see Shakya (2008).



Figure 1: Golden Temple (Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra) Patan (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)



Figure 2: Durgatipariśodhana-Maṇḍala on the Ceiling (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)

practice collectively embody a cosmological order. As already stated above, these spaces continue to host numerous Buddhist rituals that are believed to preserve practices once performed in major Indian monastic centers prior to the decline of institutional Buddhism in India around the thirteenth century.

From this perspective, Nepalese bahāḥ/bahī monasteries may be understood as a "living history" of Sanskrit-based Indian Buddhism. They preserve Nepalized forms of sacred space, ritual systems, iconography, and clerical roles—including *bhikṣus* and *ācāryas*—constituting a unique continuity of Buddhist tradition in Asia. The value of bahāḥ/bahī monasteries lies in their ability to maintain sacredness through the integrated preservation of ritual practice, iconography, and social organization *saṃgha/guthi* system. Once these elements are lost, the monasteries risk becoming ordinary community spaces, thereby losing their sacred character; therefore, proper preservation has no alternative. Accordingly, bahāḥ/bahī monasteries should be regarded not only as religious heritage spaces of Nepalese Buddhists, but also as invaluable cultural and historical treasures of Nepal and the wider world.

3. Some Icons and Rituals of the Golden Temple

The Golden Temple (Fig.1), formally known as Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra, is located a short distance north of Patan Durbar Square. This elegant Buddhist monastery was constructed in the twelfth century during the reign of King Bhāskaradevavarmā and thus represents nearly nine hundred years of continuous history. Owing to careful preservation by successive generations, the monastery stands today as a living witness to the development of Nepalese Buddhist religious culture and art. The monastery is also traditionally associated with many prominent twelfth-century scholar-monks, like Kuladatta, who authored the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā.* This association further highlights the importance of the Golden Temple as a center of ritual and textual transmission.

The Golden Temple preserves a wide range of traditional rituals and iconographic elements. These ritual practices and images can be traced back to Buddhist scriptures dating from the seventh to eleventh centuries—such as the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha, Nāmasaṃgīti*, and *Durgatipariśodhana*, among others—as well as to ritual compendia from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, including the *Vajrāvalī*, *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*, *Ādikarmapradīpa*, and *Kudṛṣṭinirghātana.* Together, they demonstrate the continuity of textual traditions and lived ritual practices within Newar Buddhist. monastery.

In this article, the focus is placed on selected case studies to illustrate how canonical doctrines, Esoteric maṇḍalic structures, and local ritual customs are integrated within the spatial and ritual framework of the Golden Temple.

3.1. Icons

3.1.1. The Durgatipariśodhana-Maṇḍala Centered on Sarvavid-Vairocana

Immediately after passing through the stone-made main gateway of the Golden Temple, one encounters a stone ceiling maṇḍala (Fig. 2).[6] Structurally, this maṇḍala closely corresponds to the root maṇḍala centered on Sarvavid Vairocana, as prescribed in the so-called "old version" of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra (sByong rgyud* Tōhoku no. 483; Ōtani no. 116).[7]

6. At the same time, this ceiling maṇḍala is locally understood as a "Dharmadhātuvāgīśvara-Maṇḍala," and at present a caption board for visitors presents it accordingly. It, however, the ceiling maṇḍala is indeed the "Durgatipariśodhana Maṇḍala" described in this, then anyone entering the monastery necessarily passes beneath it when going through the gate. It is therefore plausible that the maṇḍala was placed on the ceiling with the intention that visitors' misdeeds be purified as they pass under it.

7. In my master's thesis, I examined the maṇḍala ritual procedures (vidhi) of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra* (Skorupski 1983, pp. 132–314), and I later published part of those results in Ronshū No. 29 (Shakya, 2002). In particular, the root maṇḍala of 149 deities is also described in the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-maṇḍalavidhi-kṛpāvalī* (Tōhoku no. 2531, 145a4–149a2; Otani no. 3458: 172a8–177a6), authored by Ānandagarbha. Moreover, Professor Musashi Tachikawa likewise notes that this ceiling maṇḍala may be regarded as an example of the Durgatipariśodhana-Maṇḍala. See, Shakya (2002), Tachikawa (2015, pp. 270–276).



Figure 3: Stone and Metal Gate (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)

To outline part of the maṇḍala structure described in this tantra: in the central area, four tathāgatas—Durgatipariśodhana, Ratnaketu, Śākyamuni, and Saṃkusumitarāja are placed at the four directions around the principal deity, while at the four corners four female deities Buddhalocanā, Māmakī, Pāṇḍarā, and Tārā are arranged. Surrounding them, an outer circle contains the sixteen Mahābodhisattvas. Among them, four deities are placed at each cardinal direction: at the east, Vajrasattva, Vajrarāja, Vajrarāga, and Vajrasādhu; at the south, Vajraratna, Vajrateja, Vajraketu, and Vajrahāsa; at the west, Vajradharma, Vajratīkṣṇa, Vajrahetu, and Vajrabhāṣa; and at the north, Vajrakarma, Vajrarakṣa, Vajrayakṣa, and Vajrasandhi. In addition, two sets of female offering deities the four inner offering deities (Vajralāsyā, Vajramālā, Vajragītā, and Vajranṛtyā) and the four outer offering deities (Vajradhūpā, Vajrapuṣpā, Vajrālokā, and Vajragandhā) are arranged in vertical rows at each of the four corners. At the four gates, Vajrāṅkuśa, Vajrapāśa, Vajrasphoṭa, and Vajrāveśa are placed at the cardinal directions. All bodhisattvas and female deities are designated by the prefix *Vajra-* in this context derive from the *Vajradhātu* Maṇḍala tradition. Further figures include the sixteen Bhadrakalpa bodhisattvas, the eight disciples of the Buddha, the eight wrathful deities (*vidyārājas*), the eight directional gods, and the eight planets; moreover, on the exterior of the circular outline of the ceiling



Figure 4: The Śākyamuni Triad: Prajñāpāramitā (left) and Avalokiteśvara (right), Golden Temple (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)

maṇḍala, relatively large carvings of the Four Great Kings are executed at the four corners.

The *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra* is generally understood as a funerary scripture concerned with how a person, after death, may avoid falling into the "evil destinies" (*durgati*) and how to accomplish the purification of all evil destinies. In present-day Nepal, it has become common in funerary contexts to employ the "Nine Uṣṇīṣa Maṇḍala," centered on Śākyamuni, as taught in the **Navoṣṇīṣa-Durgatipariśodhana-tantra (gTsug dgu'i sGyud* Tōhoku no. 485; Ōtani no. 117),[8] which is often treated as the "new version."[9] From this perspective, the very existence of a ceiling maṇḍala centered on Sarvavid Vairocana may be regarded as valuable evidence that, alongside the tantra regarded as "new," an "old version" tantra also circulated in Nepal.

3.1.2. Triadic Iconography of the Triratna

Passing through the main gate of the Golden Temple, one encounters a small stone-paved courtyard. Directly ahead stands another stone gate furnished with small lion statues, whose surroundings, as shown in Fig. 3, are richly adorned with multiple Buddha images and various carvings. Further inside, a metal gate has been installed. What the present author wishes to draw attention to here is the row of three small images, approximately 10 cm in height, aligned horizontally above this metal gate.

As shown in Fig. 4, the center figure is Śākyamuni Buddha, displaying the earth-touching gesture (*bhūmisparśamudrā*), or alternatively Akṣobhya. To the viewer's left stands the four-armed female deity Prajñāpāramitā, holding a scripture, which constitutes her primary iconographic attribute. While to the right a four-armed Avalokiteśvara, identifiable by the louts he holds. In fact, the triad above the gate materializes the act of taking refuge in the Three Jewels and reflects the tripartite maṇḍala arrangement known as the *Triratna-maṇḍala* corresponding to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṃgha—a structure that will be discussed below.[10]

At the Golden Temple, multiple examples of the so-called triadic configuration representing the Three Jewels can be identified. On the ground floor of the main shrine of this Bahāḥ, the principal image displaying the *bhūmisparśamudrā* is enshrined and is locally known as "Kvābājyu." Above the entrance to this hall, a silver *toraṇa* is installed, bearing an inscription in Rañjanā script. The inscription dates the *toraṇa* to the reign of Pṛthvīvīravikramaśāhadeva of the Shah dynasty (r. 1891–1911 CE). By contrast, above the entrance directly opposite the main shrine hangs a brass *toraṇa* (Fig.5) whose iconographic program closely parallels that of the silver example. Originally installed at the shrine's principal entrance, it was replaced at the end of the nineteenth century, when a new silver *toraṇa* was commissioned in imitation of it, and was subsequently relocated to its present position. The inscription[11] on the brass *toraṇa* dates its production to the reign of Siddhinarasiṃha Malla (r. 1619–1661 CE). In what follows, I focus on the iconographic program of this brass *toraṇa*.

At the center is carved a comparatively large seated image of Śākyamuni (Akṣobhya) displaying the *bhūmisparśa-mudrā*. Flanking him are images of his two principal disciples, ②Maudgalyāyana and

8. In the Nine Uṣṇīṣa Maṇḍala, the central deity is Śākyasiṃha. He is surrounded by four deities placed at the cardinal directions—Vajroṣṇīṣa (east), Ratnoṣṇīṣa (south), Padmoṣṇīṣa (west), and Viśvoṣṇīṣa (north)—and by four further deities positioned at the corners: Tejoṣṇīṣa (southeast), Dhvajoṣṇīṣa (southwest), Tīkṣoṣṇīṣa (northwest), and Chatroṣṇīṣa (northeast). Textual details are discussed in Skorupski (1983, pp. 22, 152, 153), while iconographic aspects are treated in Tachikawa, Ito, Vajracarya (2006, pp. 292–297).

9. For further discussion, see Skorupski (1983, pp. xvii–xxix)

10. The author has focused on the three maṇḍalas representing refuge in the Three Jewels as a significant feature of Nepalese Traditional Buddhism and has pursued research on this topic. Some of the results have already been published (Shakya, 2010; Shakya, 2017; & Shakya, 2022). The present article builds upon these earlier studies.

11. Romanized transliteration of the Rañjanā inscription:
Sabuddhapuṇḍalīkākṣa supavakra kuruṇākara samantabhadra śāstāra śākyasiṃha namāmyaha/ rājyasiddhinṛsiṃhasya sṭhita daśavatre sraṃti// arpitatoraṇa tasmai paraloka viśuddhibhiḥ//
In the inscription, the form siddhinṛsiṃha is attested; this should probably be understood as referring to Malla King Siddhinarasiṃha.



Figure 5: The Brass Toraṇa Facing the Main Shrine, Depicting: ①Śākyamuni (Akṣobhya), ② Maudgalyāyana, ③ Śāriputra, ④ Prajñāpāramitā, ⑤ Avalokiteśvara, ⑥ Vairocana, ⑨ Ratnasambhava, ⑧ Amitābha, ⑨ Amoghasiddhi, ⑩⑪Vajrasattva (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)



Figure 6: Seven-Deity Configuration on the Wall of Golden Temple (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)

③Śāriputra. Viewed in isolation, the central section of the *toraṇa* forms a Buddha-disciple triad that recalls the iconographic arrangements commonly associated with Theravāda Buddhist contexts.

Beneath the disciple figures, symmetrically disposed to the left and right, are two Mahāyāna deities. The figure holding a scripture represents ④Prajñāpāramitā, while that holding a lotus represents ⑤Avalokiteśvara. Together with the central Śākyamuni, they form the aforementioned triad Śākyamuni-Prajñāpāramitā-Avalokiteśvara (Fig. 4), a configuration that may be regarded as emblematic of Nepalese Buddhist iconography.

Along the outer frame of the *toraṇa* are arranged, in clockwise order from left to right, ⑥Vairocana, ⑦ Ratnasambhava, ⑩Vajrasattva, ⑧Amitābha, and ⑨Amoghasiddhi. As can be seen in the figure, Vajrasattva is positioned directly above the central Akṣobhya. Above him, at the apex of the outer frame of the *toraṇa,* is installed another image of ⑪Vajrasattva surmounted by a canopy (in the case of the silver *toraṇa,* the corresponding position is occupied by Vairocana). The overall arrangement places Vajrasattva at the structural center and expresses a distinctly Vajrayāna cosmology. While Vairocana occupies the central position in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, later developments in Esoteric Buddhism particularly within the *Guhyasamāja* tradition elevate Akṣobhya to central prominence. The placement of Akṣobhya at the center of this *toraṇa* may therefore reflect the influence of these doctrinal developments.

Taken together, the silver and brass *toraṇas* juxtapose the two principal disciples associated with Theravāda traditions (Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana), Mahāyāna figures such as Prajñāpāramitā and Avalokiteśvara, and—at the Vajrayāna level—the Five Buddhas together with Vajrasattva. Their iconographic configurations may thus be understood as layered compositions in which Theravāda, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna elements are superimposed and integrated. Moreover, the shift in central placement between Vairocana and Akṣobhya may be read as indicative of the transition from Middle to Later Esoteric Buddhism, reflecting, in miniature, processes of reception and subsequent development of Buddhist thought and practice in Nepal. In this sense, the *toraṇas* may be read as a microcosm of Nepalese Buddhism.

In addition, on the wall of the pagoda enshrining the principal deity, one can observe, as shown in Fig.6, a row of seven brass figures aligned in a single register. This constitutes a seven-deity configuration composed of the Five Buddhas centered on Vairocana, together with Prajñāpāramitā and Avalokiteśvara, and may be understood as a development of the triadic

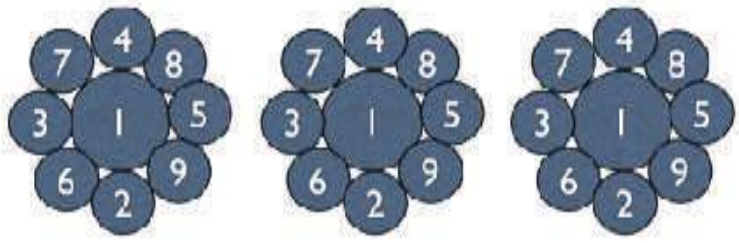
configurations discussed above. From left to right, the figures are arranged as follows: Prajñāpāramitā, Ratnasambhava, Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi, and Avalokiteśvara. Such seven-deity configurations are frequently installed facing outward on the second-storey exterior wall of the main shrine in Nepalese Buddhist monasteries Bahāḥs as well in Bahīs. In the case of the Golden Temple, the two flanking deities are four-armed, whereas in other Bahāḥs and Bahīs they may appear in two-armed form.

Both the triadic and seven-deity schemes exemplify a distinctively Nepalese iconographic reconfiguration[12] of the *Triratna-maṇḍala*, whereby a tripartite maṇḍala, primarily ritual in function, is codified as a durable visual language.

The Source of Triadic Iconography

In Buddhism, the Three Jewels *(triratna)* refer to the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṃgha, and taking refuge in them constitutes the point of departure for becoming a Buddhist. In Nepalese traditional Buddhism, particularly in ritual systems that incorporate maṇḍalas, it is customary to begin by taking refuge in the Three Jewels through the *Triratna-maṇḍala,* comprising the Buddha-maṇḍala, the Dharma-maṇḍala, and the Saṃgha-maṇḍala. Before constructing the rite's principal (mūla) maṇḍala, these eight-spoked three maṇḍalas (Fig.7) are either drawn on the ritual ground or visualized mentally as part of the initial devotional act of refuge. This procedure remains observable in Nitya-karma (daily devotional practice), Vrata rites devoted to specific deities, and other complex ritual systems.

12. The triad of Akṣobhya (or Śākyamuni), Prajñāpāramitā, and Avalokiteśvara is widely disseminated within the Nepalese Buddhist pantheon, though variants are also attested. In some cases, Nāmasaṃgīti Mañjuśrī (e.g., at Tarumūla Mahāvihāra) or Dharmadhātuvāgīśvara replaces the usual central deity (Akṣobhya/Śākyamuni or, in related schemes, the Pañca Buddhas). Nevertheless, Prajñāpāramitā and Avalokiteśvara remain the flanking figures, even if their left–right positions may occasionally be reversed. Such shifts in the identity of the central deity within the Buddha-maṇḍala likely reflect broader doctrinal developments in Nepalese Buddhism. For further discussion, see Shakya (2017) & Shakya (2022).



Buddha-maṇḍala Dharma-maṇḍala Saṃgha-maṇḍala

Table 1: Deities and Sūtras Associated with the Triratna-Maṇḍala

Maṇḍala / Direction	Buddha-maṇḍala (deities)	Dharma-maṇḍala (sūtras)	Saṃgha-maṇḍala (deities)
Center	1. Vairocana	1. *Prajñāpāramitā*	1. Avalokiteśvara
East	2. Akṣobhya	2. *Gaṇḍhavyūha*	2. Maitreya
South	3. Ratnasambhava	3. *Daśabhūmika*	3. Gaganagañja
West	4. Amitābha	4. *Samādhirāja*	4. Samantabhadra
North	5. Amoghasiddhi	5. *Laṃkāvatāra*	5. Vajrapāṇi
South-east	6. Locanā	6. *Saddharmapūṇḍarīka*	6. Mañjughoṣa
South-west	7. Māmakī	7. *Tathāgataguhyaka*	7. Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin
North-west	8. Pāṇḍarā	8. *Lalitavistara*	8. Kṣitigarbha
North-east	9. Tārā	9. *Suvarṇaprabhāsa*	9. Khagarbha



Figure 7: An Eight-Spoked Triratna-Maṇḍala Prepared for a Vrata Ritual (Patan) (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)

In Nepalese traditional Buddhism, the performance of elaborate ritual procedures such as maṇḍala rites and fire offerings (*homa*) is, in principle, restricted to members of the Vajrācārya caste, who alone possess the hereditary right to receive the consecratory initiation (*Vajrācāryābhiṣeka*), thereby attaining full ritual eligibility within the Newar Buddhist ritual system. By contrast, the *Nitya-karma* (Nw. *nhikaṃ*) is a daily early-morning rite performed by those who have received *dīkṣā* (Newar: *dekhā*), an Esoteric initiation that authorizes the practice and is open to men and women alike, monastic and lay. The *Vrata* may be understood as a ritual complex performed under the direction of a priest (Ācārya), through which participants, irrespective of formal qualification, are able to enact a simulated experience of maṇḍala-centered rites. Rooted in Newar cultural conventions, it comprises a carefully articulated ensemble of liturgical procedures.

In the procedural manuals of both the *Nitya-karma* and the *Vrata,*[13] the constituent elements of the maṇḍala are fundamentally the same; however, the specification of directional placement tends to be articulated more explicitly in the latter. The composition of the Triratna-maṇḍala is shown below together with the accompanying table.

In the Buddha-maṇḍala, Vairocana occupies the central position and is surrounded by eight deities: Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi, Locanā, Māmakī, Pāṇḍarā, and Tārā. The maṇḍala thus comprises the Five Tathāgatas together with four female deities (see Table 1 for their directional arrangement).

In the Dharma-maṇḍala, scriptures rather than deities are installed. Prajñāpāramitā occupies the center, encircled by eight Mahāyāna scriptures: the *Gaṇḍhavyūha, Daśabhūmika, Samādhirāja, Laṃkāvatāra, Saddharmapuṇḍarīka, Tathāgataguhyaka, Lalitavistara*, and *Suvarṇaprabhāsa.* The Dharma-maṇḍala thus comprises nine texts corresponding to what is popularly known in Nepal as the *Navagrantha* (or *Navadharma*).

In the Saṃgha-maṇḍala, Avalokiteśvara occupies the central position, surrounded by Maitreya, Gaganagañja, Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi, Mañjughoṣa, Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin, Kṣitigarbha, and Khagarbha, forming a group of nine bodhisattvas.

Taken together, the Triratna-maṇḍala is structured as three parallel ninefold sets deities, scriptures, and bodhisattvas each organized around a central figure and eight surrounding members.

It has already been observed that the triadic and seven-deity configurations at the Golden Temple derive from the Triratna-maṇḍala. As indicated in the Table 1 above, Vairocana occupies the center of the Buddha-maṇḍala, the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* that of the Dharma-maṇḍala, and Avalokiteśvara that of the Saṃgha-maṇḍala. In the triadic configuration, *Prajñāpāramitā*, who symbolizes the Dharma-maṇḍala, is the personification of the *Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra*, while Avalokiteśvara represents the Saṃgha-maṇḍala. By structural logic, Vairocana would therefore be expected at the center of the triad. Yet many examples including Fig. 4, 5 & 6 instead present Akṣobhya (identified with Śākyamuni) as the central figure. In the seven-deity configuration, by contrast, the central five figures constitute the Five Buddhas, including Vairocana (Fig. 6).

13. See Vajrācārya (2005) on Nitya-karma and Vajrācārya (2008) for the Vrata ritual.

In this context, it is worth drawing attention to the following discussion of the three maṇḍalas Buddha, Dharma, and Saṃgha in the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*, traditionally attributed to Jagaddarpaṇa (11th–12th century):

Then, having first recited the "verse of cow dung," one should perform the act of giving and construct the three maṇḍalas. The Buddha-maṇḍala consists of Akṣobhya serves as the central deity, surrounded by (2) Vairocana, (3) Ratnasambhava, (4) Amitābha, and (5) Amoghasiddhi. The Dharma-maṇḍala consists of the Yoginīniruttara Tantra as its central element, encircled by (2) Kriyātantra, (3) Caryātantra, (4) Yogatantra, and (5) Yoginītantra. The Saṃgha-maṇḍala is that in which Avalokiteśvara serves as its leader, encircled by (2) Maitreya, (3) Gaganagañja, (4) Samantabhadra, (5) Vajrapāṇi, (6) Mañjughoṣa, (7) Sarvanivāraṇaviṣkambhin, (8) Kṣitigarbha, and (9) Jñānottara. [14]

Before turning to the Triratna-maṇḍala itself, it is first necessary to address the reference, cited above, to the recitation of the "verse of cow dung." As is well known, Nepalese traditional Buddhism continues to perform a variety of complex rituals involving the construction of maṇḍalas. In all such rites, purification procedures are indispensable. In preparing the ritual ground for the establishment of a maṇḍala, cow dung—often mixed with red earth in practice—is applied to purify the surface; the resulting space is termed a *gomayamaṇḍala*, as prescribed in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra*.[15] Indeed, purification rites



Figure 8: Mahāvairocana
(Source: Shuchiin University)

may be regarded as the point of entry into all Esoteric ritual practices.

Both the Baogui and Yijing Chinese translations of the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra* refer to the practice of constructing a ritual platform by smearing the ground with cow dung. In the former, it is stated that the ground should be coated with dung to form a ritual space measuring seven cubits in length and breadth, upon which flowers are to be scattered.[16] In the latter, the ground is likewise smeared with cow dung to create a platform measuring eight cubits, over which various flowers are to be strewn.[17] With regard to the translation of *maṇḍala*, Baogui renders the term as "daochang" (道場 'place of enlightenment' or

14. For quick look, Chandra (1967, p. 318, 159b5). The following passage is drawn from the section on the three maṇḍalas in the manuscript of the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya* preserved in the National Archives of Nepal (Mf. B103/11, 237b4–8):
tato dānaṃ gomayagāthāpāthapūrvakaṃ trīṇi maṇḍalāni kuryāt// tatra vairocanaratnasaṃbhvāmitābhāmoghasiddhip arivṛtākṣobhyanāyakaṃ buddhamaṇḍalaṃ// kriyācaryāygayo-ginītantraparivṛtayo[gi]nīniruttaratantranāyakaṃ dhar-ma-maṇḍalaḥ// maitreyagaganagañjasamantabhadravajrapāṇi-ma-ñjughoṣasarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhikṣitigarbhajñānottara-parivṛtalo-keśvaranāyakaṃ saṃghamaṇḍalaṃ/

15. For its Sanskrit text see, Bagchi (1967, p. 56). The "verse of cow dung" mentioned in the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya* is described in the Mahayāna scripture *Suvarṇaprabhāsa* (Chapter *Sarasvatīdevīparivarta*) which says:
gomayamaṇḍalaṃ kṛtvā muktapuṣpāṇi sthāpayet/
suvarṇabhāṇḍe rūpyabhāṇḍe madhureṇa sthāpayet// 5//
varmitāśca puruṣāste catvāri tatra sthāpayet/
kanyāḥ subhūṣitāḥ nyastāścatvāro ghaṭadhāriṇyaḥ |//6 //
(Having prepared a maṇḍala with cow dung, one should scatter loose flowers upon it. In golden vessels and silver vessels, one should place sweet substances. There one should install four armored men and four beautifully adorned maidens, bearing water jars.)

16. Baogui 宝貴T. No.664,386c:
以牛糞塗地。縱廣七肘以爲道場。以華散著道場中。

17. Yijing義浄T. No.665,435a:
若樂如法洗浴時　應作壇場方八肘　可於寂靜安隱處　念所求事不離心　應塗牛糞作其壇　於上普散諸花彩。



Figure 9: Mahāvairocana Displaying the Preaching Gesture (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)



Figure 10: Vajrācārya Priest Displaying the Bodhyagrī-Gesture (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)

ritual site), whereas Yijing translates it as "tanchang" (壇場, 'ritual platform'). A discrepancy is thus evident in the specified dimensions. It should be noted, however, that the extant Sanskrit text does not explicitly indicate any measurements.

As shown in Table 2, in the Buddha-maṇḍala of the Triratna-maṇḍala the central deity is Akṣobhya, surrounded by the four Buddhas. As noted above, the elevation of Akṣobhya, rather than Vairocana, to the central position reflects later esoteric developments associated with the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. Moreover, the form attested in ritual manuals such as the Nitya-karma and Vrata in which the Five Buddhas are supplemented by four female deities, including Locanā, producing an eight-spoked (nine-deity) Buddha-maṇḍala may be understood as a further development of the five-spoked Buddha-maṇḍala described in the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*. The placement of Akṣobhya in the triadic configuration as currently attested may reflect the residual influence of the composition described in the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*.

Table 2: Triratna-Maṇḍalas Described in the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*

Buddha-maṇḍala (deities)	Dharma-maṇḍala (tantra categories)	Saṃgha-maṇḍala (deities)
1. Akṣobhya	1. Yoginīniruttara	1. Lokeśvara
2. Vairocana	2. Kriyā	2. Maitreya
3. Ratnasambhava	3. Caryā	3. Gaganagañja
4. Amitābha	4. Yoga	4. Samantabhadra
5. Amoghasiddhi	5. Yoginī	5. Vajrapāṇi
		6. Mañjughoṣa
		7. Sarvanivārana-viṣkaṃbhin
		8. Kṣitigarbha
		9. Jñānottara

The Dharma-maṇḍala described in the *Ācāryakriyāsa-muccaya* employs five categories of tantras—*Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga, Yoginī,* and *Yoginīniruttara*—an arrangement that differs from the maṇḍalas of the Nitya-karma and vrata traditions, in which specific scriptures such as the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* are installed. At the same time, the designation of these

five tantric categories in the Dharma-maṇḍala of the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya* provides an important clue for understanding the classification of tantras. By contrast, the ritual manuals of the Nityakarma and vrata traditions do not organize the Dharma-maṇḍala according to tantric genres, rather, they arrange group of nine scriptures known as the "Nine Dharmas" (Navadharma).

In the Saṃgha-maṇḍala, the basic structure corresponds to the form widely attested today: Avalokiteśvara occupies the center and is surrounded by eight bodhisattvas, including Maitreya. At the same time, the presence here of Jñānottara replaced in contemporary Saṃgha-maṇḍalas by Ākāśagarbha points to a historical process of adjustment within the surrounding set.

As discussed above, ritual manuals such as the Nitya-karma and Vrata texts were compiled later than the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*. The forms of the Triratna-maṇḍala widely disseminated in Nepal today should therefore be understood as developments deriving from the system described in the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*. The iconographic configurations that embody this development namely, the triadic and seven-deity schemes attested at the Golden Temple and at numerous bahāḥ and bahī constitute characteristic Nepalized expressions of Nepalese Traditional Buddhism and suggest the continuity of a tradition extending back at least to the twelfth century.

3.1.3. Mahāvairocana in the Vajrasattva Chamber

The *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* (7CE) describes the Vajradhātumaṇḍala, and the practice of visualizing this maṇḍala continues, particularly within the Tendai and Shingon schools of Japanese Buddhism (Fig. 8). The central deity of this maṇḍala is Mahāvairocana (Vairocana), seated cross-legged and displaying the Bodhyagrī gesture (Tib. *byan chub mchog phyag rgya*), also known as the Jñānamuṣṭi-mudrā. This gesture is widely attested across Tibetan, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese Buddhist traditions.

Regarding the textual source, the Bodhyagrī gesture first appears in the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*, which states as below:

Having firmly formed the vajra-fist (*vajramuṣṭi)* with concentrated attention, one should divide it into two, whereby a pair of vajra-mudrās comes into being, after which the binding proceeds. The raised vajra-finger (*vajrāṅguli*) of the left hand is then to be grasped by the right. This mudrā is called Bodhyagrī, the bestower of Buddhahood.[18]

In a later period, the gesture is described more concisely in the Vajradhātumaṇḍala chapter of the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* compliled by Abhayākaraguptā that states that Bodhyagrīmudrā: the gesture in which the extended forefinger of the left hand is enclosed by the right clenched hand (Fig. 8).[19]

In the Nepalese context, although the *Sarvatathāgatat-attvasaṃgraha* itself is not widely known, ritual traditions based on this text remain in active practice. The Sanskrit manuscript of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* was discovered from the Kesar Library in 1932 by the Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci, a finding that significantly advanced the study of Esoteric Buddhism.[20] The preservation of this text in Nepal strongly suggests the historical transmission of the ritual traditions associated with it. Indeed, Vajradhātu-maṇḍala–related imagery is widely attested in Nepal, including cibhā and caitya stupas that arrange the four directional Buddhas around a central axis, as well as representations of

18. Horiuchi (1983, p. 185, *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*):
vajramuṣṭiṃ dṛḍhāṃ baddhvā dvidhīkuryāt samāhitaḥ /
vajramudrādvayaṃ bhūyāt tato bandhaḥ pravartyate /
vāma-vajrāṅgulir grāhyā dakṣiṇena samutthitā /
bodhyāgrī nāma mudreyaṃ buddha-bodhi-pradāyikā //
For an iconographic study of Mahāvairocana see, Yoritomi 2007.

19. Tachikawa (1995, p. 4, *Niṣpannayogāvalī*):
vāme vajramuṣṭes tarjanyā utthītāyā dakṣiṇe vajramuṣṭinā grahaṇe sati bodhyagrīmudrā.

20. Professor Kanjin Horiuchi published a critical edition of the Sanskrit text of *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* (Horiuchi 1983, 1974) on the basis of a manuscript discovered in Nepal, which is now remains as fundamental resources for the textual study of Esoteric Buddhism.



Figure 11: Mahāvairocana Displaying the Bodhyagrī-gesture, Golden Temple (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)



Figure 12: Principal Gilt-Copper Image of Kvābājyu (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)

the five Buddhas, popularly known as Pañcabuddha. Such caityas may be understood as three-dimensional expressions of the core structure of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala. In contemporary Nepal, Mahāvairocana is most commonly depicted with the preaching gesture (Dharmacakrapravartana-mudrā) as seen Fig. 9. Numerous hereditary artist families in the Kathmandu Valley continue to produce sculptures and paubhās in which Mahāvairocana typically appears in this preaching gesture.

Interestingly, however, Nepalese Vajrayāna ritual practice preserves an older stratum of the tradition. In visualization rites, Vajrācārya priests form the Bodhyagrī gesture (Fig. 10) for Mahāvairocana rather than the Dharmacakrapravartana gesture. This suggests that the Dharmacakrapravartana gesture represents a later iconographic transformation of the original Bodhyagrī form—an important distinction generally unknown to lay practitioners but well understood among Vajrācārya priests.

To the right (northwest) of the main shrine of the Golden Temple stands a small chapel known as the Vajrasattva Chamber. Inside, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrasattva, and Vasudhārā are arranged together with Mahāvairocana in an L-shaped configuration. As the name of the chamber indicates, the central icon is Vajrasattva, revered as the Ādibuddha or a Guru, especially by Vajrācārya priests. Particularly noteworthy is the gilt-copper image of Mahāvairocana (Fig.11) enshrined beside Vajrasattva. It displays the Bodhyagrīmudrā and the so-called left-extended posture. In Nepal, images of Mahāvairocana more commonly display the Dharmacakrapravartanamudrā; this example therefore represents a relatively rare iconographic type. It can further be confirmed that Vajrācārya priests employ the same Bodhyagrī mudrā when visualizing Mahāvairocana in ritual practice.

In sum, the preservation of related manuscripts, the iconographic record, and the continuity of visualization practice strongly suggest that Nepalese traditional Buddhism has maintained a deep historical connection with the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* lineage.

3.2. Rituals

3.2.1. Daily Face-Washing Ceremony of the Main Deity

At the Golden Temple, the day begins with devotional rites performed before dawn in front of the main shrine hall. These rites include the recitation of the *Nāmasaṃgīti* and various *dhāraṇīs*, a tradition that continues to be maintained today.

Following the recitation of the *Nāmasaṃgīti*, the recitation of *dhāraṇīs* continues; simultaneously, the face-washing rite of the principal gilt-copper image locally known as Kvābājyu (Fig.12) and identified with Śākyamuni or Akṣobhya is performed while devotees gathered in front of the main shrine chant a particular *dhāraṇī*. In this rite (*mukhaśauca-*), sacred water, known in Newari as nī la, is used to wash the face of the principal deity. This daily regimen treats the principal deity in a manner analogous to a living person: devotional services and the face-washing rite in the morning, a food offering (*bhojanapūjā*) by midday,[21] and further devotional services in the evening. At night, the head officiant (nw. Dyo-pālā) addresses the deity in Newari—"dhaṃ diyā vijyahuṃ" ("please rest")—while placing the prescribed cloth over the image, after which he closes the doors of the main shrine, thereby marking the conclusion of the day's rituals.

These practices closely resemble ritual prescriptions found in eleventh/twelfth-century ritual texts, such as the *Kudṛṣṭinirghātana* attributed to Advayavajra and the *Ādikarmapradīpa* attributed to Anupamavajra, which prescribe that the practitioner should rise early in the morning and, after washing face, recite various *dhāraṇīs* as well as the *Nāmasaṃgīti*.[22] Likewise, the prose section of the *Nāmasaṃgīti* itself extols the merits obtained through daily recitation of the scripture. It is therefore possible to discern in the monastery's daily liturgy traces of older ritual traditions associated with Indian Buddhism.[23]



Figure 13: Washing of the Principal Image's Face
(Photograph by Sudan Shakya)

More broadly, washing one's face has long marked the beginning of the day, while taking meals and bidding "good night" before going to sleep may be regarded as everyday acts characteristic of embodied human life. At the Golden Temple, such ordinary rhythms are ritually formalized and transformed into sacralized acts. Within this framework of ritual embodiment, the principal deity is not treated as a distant abstraction but instantiated as an embodied presence functionally equivalent to a living human being. As noted above, before dawn, scriptures and *dhāraṇīs* are recited, after which the face of the principal image is ritually washed with sacred water and wiped clean with a towel. As seen in Fig.13, the caretaker monk, with a

21. In this respect, the mode of attending to the principal deity (Kvābājyu) as if it were a living presence invites comparison with Nyūjō belief at Okunoin on Mount Kōya, where Kūkai is ritually regarded and treated as an enduringly "living" presence.

22. Mikkyō seiten Kenkyūkai (1988, pp. 16–18, *Kudṛṣṭinirghātana*):
prātaḥprahare samutthāya mukhaśaucādiṃ kṛtvā ratnatrayam anusmaran oṃ āḥ hūṃ ity anenātmayogarakṣāṃ kṛtvā yathādhigamadhyānajapasaṃstavādikaṃ kuryāt/
Nāmasaṃgītiṃ ca triṣkālam āvartayet/
(Having waken up during the early morning watch and having performed face-washing and related purifications, one should recollect the Three Jewels. Reciting "oṃ āḥ hūṃ," one should establish protection of onself and yogic discipline. Thereafter, one should undertake meditation, mantra recitation, hymnic praise, and related practices according to one's level of attainment. The *Nāmasaṃgīti* should also be recited three times.)
Takahashi (1993, p. 132, *Ādikarmapradīpa*):
mukhaśaucādikaṃ kṛtvā prātarddhyānaṃ japan tathā/
nāmasaṃgītipāṭhaṃ ca kuryāt praṇidhim eva ca //4//
(After completing face-washing and related purifications, one should perform morning meditation, recite mantras, undertake the recitation of the *Nāmasaṃgīti*, as well as make a vow or dedication.)

23. See Shakya (2010).

yellow towel draped over his shoulder, performs the washing of the principal image's face.

These practices are grounded in the recognition that the deity is continuously present within the temples space—that is, in a sustained sense of cultic presence. Accordingly, the Golden Temple may be understood as a locus of lived religiosity, constituted through ritual embodiment and maintained as a durable spiritual axis for the community.

3.2.2. Ritual of Restoration

Man-made objects—newly produced or restored paintings, statues, temples, and other religious materials—are established as objects of devotion through prescribed ritual procedures by which sacred efficacy is conferred and ritually authorized. Through these rites, what is humanly made and initially profane is ritually transformed into a sacralized locus of worship. Such practices are long-standing, while in Nepalese traditional Buddhism, this process is articulated through a paired set of rites: *Nyāsa-tayagu or Ji-nyāsa-tayagu*, the installation of "life" or sacred potency, and, prior to restoration, *Ji-nyāsa-likāegu*, the provisional withdrawal of the indwelling divine presence so that physical intervention may proceed.[24]

The same principle applies to manuscripts, which are accorded a status equivalent to that of the deity; their repair likewise unfolds as a ritually codified procedure. At the Golden Temple, a Rañjanā manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* is used almost daily in the recitation rite known as *Pāṭha-yākegu* (also



Figure 14: Restoration of Manuscripts (Photograph by Sudan Shakya)

spelled *Pāthyākegu*). In general, such recitations are performed by Buddhist officiants at the request of devotees in order to secure health, prosperity, and others—worldly benefits, as well as supramundane benefits. Scribed in gold paste on indigo-dyed paper, the manuscript inevitably suffers wear and abrasion, necessitating periodic restoration. This restoration should not be understood as merely a technical or practical undertaking, rather, it constitutes a ritually regulated act embedded within a normative framework traceable to Tantric ritual literatures. In particular, two ritual manuals dating from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries—Kuladatta's *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* and Jagaddarpaṇa's *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*—set out the relevant procedures in detail. Chapter 8 of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* includes a section entitled *Jīrṇoddhāraṇavidhi*, which prescribes methods for repairing old and damaged materials. Similarly, the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya* contains a section entitled *Jīrṇoddhāraṇārghavidhi*, which likewise describes the restoration process.[25]

24. Comparable ritual procedures are also observed in the case of protective amulets. For further details, see Shakya (2019a). The Newar term *Ji-nyāsa* derives from Sanskrit *jīvanyāsa*: ji corresponds to Sanskrit *jīva* (life), while *nyāsa* is based on Sanskrit ni-√as (to place or to install). The Newar verb *tayagu* means to add or to affix; accordingly, *nyāsa-tayagu* denotes the ritual act of installing sacred potency, or conferring divine efficacy, upon an object. On the other hand, in *Ji-nyāsa-likāegu*, the Newar verb *likāegu* means to remove or to extract. The term refers to the procedure by which sacred presence is provisionally withdrawn prior to restoration, transferred elsewhere, and subsequently reinstalled upon completion, thereby effecting re-sacralization.

25. Briefly stated, as described in the ritual manuals, before undertaking the restoration of a divine object, the Buddhist officiant ritually requests that the indwelling divine presence be transferred into a consecrated vase. Through this rite, the object is ritually desacralized and treated as a normal material artifact,

In the case of the restoration (Fig. 14) of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript at the Golden Temple,[26] the divine presence (identified as the female deity Prajñāpāramitā) believed to inhere in the manuscript is ritually transferred into a consecrated vessel prior to repair, thereby rendering the manuscript temporarily desacralized and allowing physical restoration to proceed. These restoration rites are performed during the intercalary month (*adhikamāsa*), which is considered unsuitable for regular recitation but auspicious for other meritorious undertakings. Upon completion, the presence is reinstalled through consecration (*pratiṣṭhā*), a rite locally designated as *Ji-nyāsa-tayagu*, whereby the repaired object resumes its status as a locus of divine presence.

Notably, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript comprises 325 folios, and its colophon attributes the copying to Ānanda Bhikṣu in 1125 CE. While this would suggest a history of more than nine centuries, the manuscript's present form does not fully preserve what would be expected of a twelfth-century exemplar. Faded gold letters are restored with reference to P. L. Vaidya's 1960 critical edition, such that a modern printed text effectively functions as the authority for repairing a medieval manuscript. From a philological perspective, this practice carries the risk of gradually replacing earlier readings with those of the critical edition.

Yet the production of a new copy for ritual use has not been adopted as a solution and appears unlikely to be adopted. This reflects a broader Nepalese manuscript culture in which manuscripts are not treated as mere textual witnesses but as a locus of accumulated sacred potency generated through centuries of recitation. Even if the text could be reproduced, the sacred presence believed to reside in the old manuscript is not considered transferable in any straightforward manner. Manuscripts are thus treated primarily as sacred objects rather than as materials for scholarly inquiry.

The Golden Temple's restoration of the manuscript is itself a pious act, and may be read as a local enactment of the paired rites *Ji-nyāsa-tayagu* and *Ji-nyāsa-likāegu* within the normative *Jīrṇoddhāraṇa* procedure prescribed in the aforementioned ritual manuals. It may therefore be taken to suggest the continued transmission and institutional maintenance of Esoteric ritual protocols ultimately traceable to Indian Tantric traditions within this Bahāḥ community in Nepal.

4. Conclusion

These examples from Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra demonstrate how Nepalese Buddhist monasteries preserve a Sanskrit-based tradition of Newar Buddhism while functioning as integrated ritual and maṇḍalic systems. They embody a continuous tradition in which Sanskrit textual heritage, esoteric cosmology, and local ritual practice are dynamically interconnected.

Nepalese Buddhist monasteries have repeatedly undergone destruction and reconstruction as a result of recurrent earthquakes, including the devastating 2015 Nepal earthquake. In such restoration work, the saying "There should be the right thing in the right place" seems to function as an important guiding principle. The phrase can read as a respect for order and harmony, as well as for values cultivated over long periods of time. In practical terms, the idea of "right placement" seems to influence how monastery layouts are rebuilt, how images are returned to their proper places, and how rituals connected to those spaces are resumed. The wisdom of earlier generations is not merely a legacy of the past; it also provides a foundation for judgments and actions in the present. To pass this wisdom on to future generations does not simply mean preserving it, but also understanding its meaning and conveying it in ways appropriate to changing circumstances. It is perhaps in part for

thereby permitting physical repair to proceed. Once repairs are completed, the sacred presence is formally reinstalled through consecration. For a quick overview of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, see Rāṇī (1977, folio 135a5–136a3) and Skorupski (2002, pp. 171–172). For the *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*, see Chandra (1977, folio 13b6–14b4). On the manuscript culture of Nepal, see Shakya (2017).

26. For details, see Emmrich (2009) and Shakya (2017, pp. 243–245).

this reason that these monasteries have been able to sustain Buddhist traditions transmitted from India into the present.

This case invites us to reconsider how Buddhist traditions endure not only through texts but also through ritualized space in other parts of Asia, and it underscores the heritage value of traditional bahāḥ/bahī monasteries as living religious and cultural institutions.

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Adaptation of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* in Bahāḥ & Bahī Architecture

बहाः बही वास्तुकलामा क्रियासंग्रहको प्रयोग

Gyanendra Shakya[1]
Executive Member, Lotus Reaserch Center
E-mail : gshakyaguita@gmail.com

Ryugen Tanemura[2]
Professor of Buddhist Studies and Classical Indology at Taisho University, Tokyo, Japan
E-mail : r_tanemura@mail.tais.ac.jp

Taiken Kyuma[3]
Professor, Faculty of Humanities, Law and Economics, Mie University, Japan
E-mail : kyuma.human@mie-u.ac.jp

Lata Shakya[4]
Visiting Researcher, Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage (DMUCH), Ritsumeikan University, Japan
E-mail : lata62shakya@gmail.com

Manindra Shrestha[5]
Project Manager, Kasthamandap Reconstruction Committee
E-mail : manindrashrestha@yahoo.com

ज्ञानेन्द्र शाक्य [1]
सदस्य लोटस रिसर्च सेन्टर

र्‍युगेन तानेमुरा[2]
प्रोफेसर, ताइशो विश्वविद्यालय, टोकियो, जापान

टाइकेन क्युमा[3]
प्रोफेसर, मिइ विश्वविद्यालय, जापान

लता शाक्य[4]
अतिथि अनुसन्धानकर्ता, शहरी सांस्कृतिक सम्पदा विपद् न्यूनीकरण संस्थान (DMUCH), रित्सुमेइकान विश्वविद्यालय, जापान

मणीन्द्र श्रेष्ठ[5]
परियोजना व्यवस्थापक, काष्ठमण्डप पुनर्निर्माण समिति

विषयवस्तुको सारांश

काठमाडौँ उपत्यकाले विश्वकै सबैभन्दा प्राचीन र निरन्तर जीवित बौद्ध परम्परामध्ये एक नेवार बौद्ध परम्परा संरक्षित राखेको छ । यो वज्रयानको स्थानीयकृत रूप हो, जसले पूजाविधि अभ्यास, शास्त्रीय अध्ययन तथा वास्तुकला अभिव्यक्तिलाई एकीकृत गर्दछ । यस परम्पराको केन्द्रीय संस्थागत आधार बहाःबहीहरू हुन्, जसले एकैसाथ मण्डल, विहारको संस्थागत स्वरूप तथा आवासीय संरचनाको रूपमा कार्य गर्दछ । यद्यपि तिनको ऐतिहासिक तथा सांस्कृतिक महत्त्व अत्यन्त उच्च छ । यी विहारहरू सम्बन्धी गरिएका हालसम्मको अनुसन्धान प्रायः वर्णनात्मक सीमामा सीमित रहेको छ र तिनको वास्तुकला अवधारणालाई मार्गदर्शन गर्ने शास्त्रीय आधारहरू संगको अन्तरसम्बन्धका बारेमा अपेक्षित गहिरो अध्ययन भएको पाइँदैन । यस शोधपत्रले उक्त अभावलाई सम्बोधन गर्दै वज्रयानका पूजाविधि ग्रन्थहरू विशेषतः कुलदत्तकृत क्रियासंग्रहपञ्जिका र काठमाडौँ उपत्यकास्थित बहाःबहीहरूको वास्तुकला स्वरूप, तथा निर्माण अभ्यासबीचको सम्बन्धको विश्लेषण गर्दछ । गुणात्मक तथा अन्तरविषयक पद्धतिमा आधारित यस अध्ययनले संस्कृत पाण्डुलिपिहरूको समीक्षात्मक विश्लेषणलाई विद्यमान विहार संरचनाहरूको स्थलगत अवस्थासंग तुलना गरिएको छ । यस अध्ययनबाट निर्माणस्थल चयन, मण्डलाकार योजना, चोक तथा शाला अनुसारको योजना, पानी निकास, अनुपात नियम, इँटा तथा काठका मापदण्ड, स्तम्भ तथा द्वार संरचना, र प्रतीकात्मक अलङ्कारजस्ता प्रमुख वास्तुकलाका विषयहरूमा उल्लेख गरिएका क्रियासंगहपञ्जिकाका प्रावधानहरूसँग विद्यमान विहार संरचना घनिष्ठ रूपमा सम्बद्ध रहेको तथ्य थाहा भएको छ । यी निष्कर्षहरूले क्रियासंग्रहपञ्जिका केवल पूजाविधि ग्रन्थ मात्र नभई विहार निर्माण तथा प्रतिष्ठा प्रक्रियालाई निर्देशित गर्ने व्यवहारिक निर्देशिकाका रूपमा पनि प्रयोगमा रहेको तथ्यलाई उद्घाटित गर्दछ । यी शास्त्रीय आधारहरूको सम्यक् बोधले सम्पदा संरक्षण तथा पुनर्स्थापना कार्यका लागि सहि दिशा दिने अपेक्षा लिइएको छ । यसरी, प्रस्तुत अध्ययनले बौद्ध वास्तुकला इतिहास, वज्रयान अध्ययन तथा सम्पदा अध्ययनमा महत्वपूर्ण योगदान पुर्‍याउँछ ।

Keywords: Newar Buddhism; Bahāḥ Bahī; *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*; Vajrayāna Architecture; Mandala Planning; Heritage Conservation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

Nepālamaṇḍala refers to the Kathmandu Valley and its surrounding region, recognized as one of the world's most ancient and surviving seat of Buddhist communities. It represents the last remaining legacy of Indian Buddhism (Bangdel 3). Historical evidence suggests that Buddhism has been present in this region since the time of the Buddha himself (Shakya, 1995, p. 3). Throughout its long history, Buddhism in Nepal has experienced various phases of growth, transformation and decline. The Licchavi period is often regarded as a golden era for Buddhism, while it significantly declined after the late Malla period, largely due to the process of forced Hinduisation.

During these centuries, multiple Buddhist sects flourished in the region, mainly Mahāsāṅghika, Sarvāstivāda, Sammitīya, and Sthaviravāda (Bajracharya, 2014). The Kathmandu Valley also functioned as a critical intermediary point along Himalayan trade routes, attracting great Buddhist masters from both the Indian subcontinent and the Tibetan plateau. As a result, diverse traditions came into contact, exchanging philosophies, rituals, and practices. Under the influence of these masters and adapting to local circumstances, a distinct form of Buddhism evolved one shaped by regional necessities, environmental conditions, and the socio-cultural dynamics of the time. This refined and localized tradition is today known as Newar (Nevāra) Buddhism. It represents a sophisticated and historically rich form of Vajrayāna Buddhism, deeply rooted in local identity. Newar Buddhism is particularly notable for preserving esoteric teachings, Sanskrit Buddhist texts, and symbolic traditions that have apparently disappeared elsewhere.

Key features of Newar Buddhism include: Svayambhūcentric religious activity; a householder monastic tradition (gṛhastha bhikṣu); ritual-based and maṇḍala-oriented practice; emphasis on Jātakas (stories of the Buddha's past lives) and Avadānas (moral legends) as tools for ethical education and communal values; a living continuation of the Nālandā scholastic and ritual tradition; and rich artistic and architectural heritage. This unique synthesis of scriptural scholarship, tantric ritual, lay-monastic integration, and cultural expression renders Newar Buddhism a significant and vibrant branch of the broader Buddhist tradition.

The Nepālamaṇḍala is distinguished by its unique form of monastic architecture, notably the bahāḥ and bahī complexes, which serve as both religious institutions and residential units. These monastic structures are not merely physical spaces but are imbued with deep cosmological, ritual, and symbolic significance, informed by the prescriptions of Vajrayana ritual manuals.

Historical records suggest that Buddhist monasteries during the Licchavī period received substantial endowments and held considerable socio-political influence (Bajracharya, 1974, p. 320). However, our understanding of the architectural form of these early monastic complexes from that period remains limited. What survives from that period are stone sculptures, inscriptions, and votive caityas, while the original monastic buildings themselves no longer exist.

Given the architectural practices of the later Malla period, it may be reasonably inferred that Licchavī period monasteries were likely constructed from perishable materials such as timber and brick, making them vulnerable to natural decay and hence requiring periodic reconstruction. This suggests that the monasteries in the following Malla era were not entirely new inventions but rather evolved forms, developed over time from architectural templates already present during the Licchavī era.

Nevertheless, due to the absence of surviving structures or detailed visual documentation, it is not possible to definitively reconstruct the appearance of Licchavī-period monasteries. It is plausible, however, that their design was influenced by Indian Buddhist monastic architecture, as seen in the case of Tibetan monasteries. Historical accounts state that the first monastery built in Tibet in 835 AD was modeled after the Odantapuri Monastery in India. (Sankrityayana, 2014, p. 9)

Even though physical evidence are non-existent, there exist epigraphic records and literary references that indicate the presence and use of ritual manuals for vihāra construction during the Medieval Period (Regmi, 1966, p. 37). Texts such as the *Kriyāsaṃgrahakārikā, Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā,* and *Kriyāsamuccaya,* alongside illustrated ritual handbooks, contain detailed prescriptions for the construction, consecration, and renovation of sacred structures. These texts emphasize the use of geometric precision, symbolic spatial arrangements, the selection of appropriate construction and ritual materials, and proportioning principles and measurements that aligned with Buddhist cosmological principles.

In addition, a *vaṃśāvalī* (chronicle) detailing the construction of Yampi Bahī refers explicitly to ritual procedures carried out in accordance with such texts (Shrestha, 2012, p. 5). This further supports the hypothesis that the architectural knowledge in a ritualized form guided monastic construction practices in the Kathmandu Valley from at least the medieval period, if not earlier. An important historical validation of such practices is found in a stone inscription at Pinchebahāḥ, Kathmandu, dated NS 713 (1593 AD). It records Śākyabhikṣu Jayalakṣa consecrating the Jāmbunadamahāvihāra by following the rituals outlined in *Kriyāsaṃgraha* (Regmi, 1966, p. 37). This confirms that the prescriptions of these texts were not abstract ideas but rather workable outlines that actively shaped the medieval monastic architecture of Nepālamaṇḍala. The consecration transforms bahāḥ, bahī, and Cibāḥ into Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, making them microcosmic replicas of the Buddhist universe. Other practices include the Aṣṭavarga Parīkṣā, Gavākṣa windows, Daśakarma rituals, pravrajyāsaṃvara *(bare chuyegu)*, and symbolic elements like *gaṇḍī (gamāḥsiṃ, dharmagaṇḍī),* etc.— many of which are still integral to the daily as well as other life cycle rituals of Newar Buddhist communities.

Despite this rich heritage, research on bahāḥ and bahī architecture has remained largely descriptive, focusing on form and ornamentation while neglecting its classical roots and textual foundations. There is a critical lack of systematic study connecting these structures to their architectural origins.

This study has been envisaged as a crucial step in addressing the under-documentation of bahāḥ & bahī, and it explores the relationship between the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and the form and architectural design of these monasteries. It aims to examine how the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* influenced bahāḥ & bahī, and how this knowledge can be applied to heritage preservation today. This study has conducted some field studies to examine to which the extant architectural features of bahā and bahī show conformity or deviation from textual guidelines.

1.2 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This research examines how the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* a comprehensive Vajrayāna ritual manual containing detailed prescriptions for monastic layout, ritual spaces, and architectural features is reflected in the architectural forms of bahāḥ and bahī monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley. Although the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* is an extensive Sanskrit text encompassing a wide range of ritual procedures and spatial guidelines, this study focuses only on those sections that are directly relevant to the physical organization, spatial hierarchy, and structural components of the monastic architecture. Consequently, only selected and thematically pertinent portions of the text have been translated and analysed.

The architectural comparison in this study is limited to extant Buddhist monasteries within the Kathmandu Valley. These sites have been selected due to their continuous historical use, accessibility, and their availability for architectural documentation. While it would have been valuable to extend the comparative framework to include monasteries from other regions—both within and beyond Nepal—such an expansion falls outside the scope of this study for now, while the possibility for future studies always remains open.

Thus, the findings and interpretations of this research are contextually bounded by the selected textual

excerpts and the architectural examples of the Kathmandu Valley. They should be viewed as a focused inquiry rather than an exhaustive account of the broader architectural influence of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* across the world.

1.3. Introduction to the Text

The *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, attributed to Kuladatta, a master of Vajrayāna Buddhism, is an eleventh-century Buddhist ritual and architectural treatise in Sanskrit that has been used in the construction of bahāḥ & bahī since the Medieval period. The title of the text *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* implies that it is a commentary on the main text entitled *Kriyāsaṃgraha.* Showing that the text is not composed in *pañjika* style, scholars concluded that it is an independent text, although it is named as *pañjika* (Tanemura, 2004, p. 4). Tanemura suggests that this text must be the commentary on the text *Kriyāsaṃgrahakārikā* ascribed to *Nāgārjunapāda.*[1]

The author of this text is Kuladatta, who is clearly mentioned in the colophons of the Sanskrit manuscripts. Bu-ston mentions that he is of Nepalese origin. (Tanemura, 2004, p. 5). However, there is no clear evidence to support this theory; nonetheless, there are several pieces of circumstantial evidence that imply Kuladatta's close association with the Kathmandu Valley. This association is also corroborated by the extant Buddhist rituals and life cycle rites in the Buddhist community of Kathmandu Valley. Daśakarma Vidhi, the ten abhiṣekas to be taken by a to-be Vajracārya, the lost wax method of making statues, etc., are some of such extant cultures. B. Bhattacharya identifies Kula, the author of *Sitaprajñapāramitā,* which was copied in 1165 AD, as Kuladatta. Bu-Ston shows the lineage of the persons who transmitted the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* as Kuladatta - Sucandraśrī - Vijayarakṣita - Jātasena and Gautamaśrī - bla ma Ni ma'i zabs - Bu-ston. At another place in the text by Bu-ston, he has presented the lineage bit differently, which includes Vibhūticandra – Vijayarakṣita – bla ma Nyi ma'i zabs Bu-ston. Comparing the time period of these lineages, the time period of the Kuladatta has been estimated from the first half of the 12th century AD to the first half of the 13th century AD (Tanemura, 2004, p. 9). The oldest manuscript of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* is dated Samvat 336 (1216 AD), which is preserved in the Kaiser Library and was copied while he was still alive (Petech, 1984, p. 81). Yoshizaki's version of dating suggests of 11th century AD, based on the fact that he was the *tvay pāsā* (close friend as fictitious brother) of Tathāgatavajra, who organized the Vajracārya saṃgha of Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra when it was constructed by king Bhaskarvarma (reigned AD 1045–48) (Bajracharya, 1986, p. 'ja')

The text is composed in 8 chapters, corresponding to stages in the construction of a monastery, calling each chapter *prakaraṇa.* The overview of the main content of the chapters is given below:

Chapter no.	Main content of the chapters
Chapter 1	Selection and preparation of the site for the construction of a vihāra
Chapter 2	Consecrate the land as vajradhātu-maṇḍala with 81 square and 40 nāḍīs
Chapter 3	Preparatory rituals to the foundation work
Chapter 4	Planning of the building blocks and spaces within
Chapter 5	Choice of wood and stone; installation of pillars, doors, windows, and cornices, etc.
Chapter 6	Maṇḍala rituals, ten rites, abhiṣeka, etc.
Chapter 7	Placement of the images and other ritual elements in the vihāra, all about Dharmagaṇḍī and Pravrajyāsaṃvara
Chapter 8	Design and symbolism of caitya, and other ritual objects

1.4 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, interdisciplinary research methodology grounded in textual analysis and architectural documentation to achieve the objectives of the research.

1. The available text of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahakārikā* is an incomplete manuscript, but the verses of it correspond well to the contents of Kuladatta's *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā.* This text is available in https://www.dsbcproject.org/canon-text/content/602/2730.

For the textual analysis, the preliminary transliteration of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* by Prof. Tanemura, done in the year between 1997–2000, has been used. It was received in the form of an e-text. The *Kriyāsaṃgraha* research group has been working on the task that will provide a critical edition and annotated translation of the selected texts that were used in this article. Prof. Tanemura transliterated this text basically from two oldest available palm leaf manuscripts in Bhujimol script from Nepal: 1) National Archives, Kathmandu 4–318 = Nepal-German Manuscript Project Reel Number A934/10, from NS 337; 2) Palm leaf manuscript, Matsunami Catalogue 117, General Library, The University of Tokyo, Kawaguchi Ekai Collection, from NS 385. (For details of these manuscripts, see Tanemura, 2004). Relevant sections were selected and translated into Nepali and English, which are closely related to vihāra construction, consecration, and spatial symbolism. Besides, handwritten manuscripts were studied that were in the collection at Aśā Saphū Kuthi, a locally run archive of Newar literary works. These manuscripts are the personal handbooks or notes that have been prepared by the scriber based on the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* text. Pictorial illustrations in these manuscripts are interesting and useful features that significantly helped in understanding the text. The study used hermeneutical analysis to interpret these texts in relation to architectural meaning and ritual function.

Dimensions and the pertinent features of the existing bahāḥ and bahī are referred from both secondary sources as well as from field visits. Photographic documentation, architectural sketching, and analysis of built form have been done to testify the positions mentioned in the text. Comparative analysis method has been adopted, which compares findings from the textual and architectural domains to identify correlations and divergences.

1.5 Literature Review

The foundation of this research rests upon textual and scholarly works that illuminate the ritual and traditions associated with Buddhist architecture, especially within the context of the Kathmandu Valley. Several research and publications can be seen that provide a general understanding of the traditions and architecture of bahāḥ and bahī. The present study builds upon the following works, which have laid the foundation for this work.

More explicitly addressing the ritual and textual dimensions, Prof. Tanemura's scholarship stands as the most significant contribution to understanding the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* in a Nepalese context. Tanemura's *Kuladatta's Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā: A Critical Edition and Annoted Translation of Selected Sections (2004)* offers a direct access to the ritual procedures surrounding the consecration and construction of Buddhist structure. Tanemura further elaborates on the ritual and sectarian affiliations of the text, identifying parallels with Śaiva Pratiṣṭhātantras and thereby revealing the hybrid ritual culture of medieval South Asia (Tanemura, 2020). These studies illuminate the prescriptive role that Vajrayana texts played in shaping sacred architecture and provide a theoretical basis for analyzing their material manifestations in the Kathmandu Valley (Tanemura, 1993).

On the other hand, Tadeusz Skorupski's *Kriyāsaṃgraha: Compendium of Buddhist Rituals – An Abridged Version (2002)* offers an accessible overview of the text. Though abridged, the work provides essential insight into the structure and function of various rituals prescribed in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha.* Skorupski provides valuable translation and commentary on the ritual text itself. (Skorupski, 2002)

Pant and Funo (2004) have investigated the spatial patterns of Newar settlements and have concluded that Buddhist monastery residential quarters demonstrate that the dwelling plots of large residential courts were planned, and the planning principle has its roots in Buddhist traditions. He concluded that the svastika pattern of layout proves to be a rational layout in the courtyard settlement planning, which facilitates the light and ventilation for the corner rooms, which would otherwise remain largely dark and gloomy.

The study of Newar Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley has received significant scholarly attention, particularly in areas of architectural typology, urban monasticism, and ritual continuity. Foundational works such as those by Locke (1985); Gutschow and Śākya (1980); Korn (1998); Slusser (1982); and Gellner (1987) have richly documented the spatial, structural, and cultural characteristics of Newar monastic architecture. Meanwhile, scholars like Bangdel (1999); Bajracharya (1995); Von Rospatt (2010); and Bajracharya (2014) have explored ritual symbolism, iconographic programs, and religious performances within these spaces.

While there is growing interest in heritage conservation and adaptive reuse of monastic spaces, the Vajrayana ritual logic that may have originally shaped these spaces is often overlooked in contemporary architectural or conservation discourses. This gap risks reducing such monasteries to static heritage artifacts rather than dynamic ritual landscapes. This study seeks to address this lacuna by investigating how specific architectural elements and spatial arrangements within Newar Buddhist monasteries correspond to—or have been shaped by—ritual prescriptions found in Buddhist ritual manuals, particularly *Kuladatta's Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā.*

2. Textual Study and Comparative Analysis

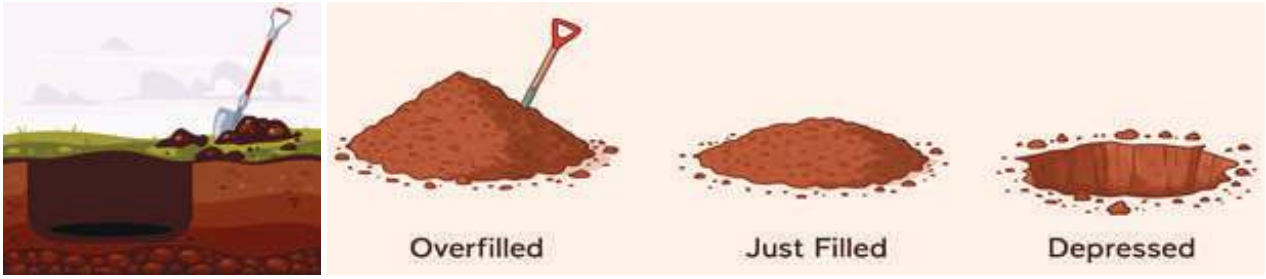
For this study, two categories of manuscripts were studied. The first one is the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā,* composed by Kuladutta, which is found in the collections of individuals and in archives both in Nepal and outside. The second category of the manuscripts is the handbooks and notes, which are prepared based on the prescripts mentioned in *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā.* Many of them don't even have the title. A few of them are from the collection of the Āśā Saphū Kuthi.

Among the eight chapters of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha-pañjikā,* all except Chapters 3 and 7 contain materials that in some way relate to architecture. Chapter 8 primarily provides details concerning caitya structures and other ritual objects, which fall outside the scope of the present paper. In the following sections, contents and prescriptions of *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* will be briefly presented based on the interpretation of the text. They will be further compared with the Newari handbook manuscripts and the on-site observations.

A. Characteristics of the Unsuitable and Suitable Site

Verses of Chapter 1 of the text give general criteria for the selection of a site. It disqualifies the sites which are humpy, irregular, swampy, and uneven. Its unsuspiciousness is marked by the predictive bad results. It mentions that lands that are in the shape of a staff, cart, sun, serpent, tortoise, bow, gaping mouth, drum, triangle, fan, and the like, or that are swampy, hollowed, uneven, or marked by an excessive number of irregular forms, are indeed inauspicious. Such lands become causes of the loss of livestock and grain, diseases of the eyes, captivity and affliction, danger of theft and fire, harm of wealth and women, fear of the king, mental disturbance, poverty, and sorrow.

Furthermore, it also instructs that the vihāra should not be constructed, displacing the habitats [of other creatures], encroaching on the existing social-religious structure, and over the archeological sites. It prohibits selecting the sites which were used for



Digging a pit | Good | Moderate | Bad

Figure 1: Method of Checking Land Suitability

sacrificial rites, cremation grounds, and the various dwelling places of serpents in the past. Likewise, places inhabited by nāgas—such as ponds—as well as locations where stupas, hermitages, temples, and similar sacred structures are situated, are prescribed as undesirable.

The latter part of the chapter, stipulates the criteria for suitable construction site. It prescribe that relatively regular expansive land is suitable for the construction of a vihāra. It implies that those sites that are expansive or well-formed whether elongated, circular, or square become sources of success in one's aims, the bestowal of accomplishments, increase of intelligence, and the granting of wealth and grain.

B. The Examination of a Ground by Digging a Pit

Chapter 1 also prescribes the method for assessing the ground by examining the compactness of its soil. These kinds of instruction are also found in the *Bṛhatsaṃhita* (Sastri and Bhat, 1946, p. 448). It says that if a pit is dug using only the hands and then refilled with the same soil, the amount of soil that remains whether less, more, or equal determines the land to be of inferior, superior, or of middling quality, respectively.

C. Meditating on the Forty Deities Whose Natures are the Forty Nāḍīs

Chapter 2 indicates that the ācārya should meditate upon the eighty-one squares as the individual chambers or abodes of the respective deities, while the intersecting grid lines are to be conceived as forty nāḍīs (subtle energy channels). Each line extending from one direction to another is to be visualized as a nāḍīs. In contemporary ritual practice, these deities are visualized and worshipped at the pegs marking the four cardinal directions (Bajracharya, 1990, pp. 2–6). The verses that follow enumerate the names of the nāḍīs, each identified with a specific set of doctrinal



Figure 2: 81 Square Maṇḍala for Sūtrapātana Vidhi: A Representation of Vajradhatumaṇḍala
(Source: Āśā Saphū Kuthi)

categories. On the eastern side, the nāḍīs are named after the ten bodhisattva-bhūmis; on the southern side, after the ten pāramitās (perfections); on the western side, after the ten vasitās; and on the northern side, after the ten dhāraṇī-devīs.

D. Meditating on the Site as the Vajradhātumaṇḍala

The next section of Chapter 2 instructs the practitioner to meditate upon the deities occupying the eighty-one squares, with Mahāvairocana presiding as the principal deity. In the verses that follow, the text enumerates the names of these deities. While the Vajradhātumaṇḍala traditionally comprises fifty-three deities, the completion of the eighty-one-square grid is achieved by concealing four of the Pañca Buddhas and incorporating an additional thirty deities drawn from various classes, including Dikpāla, Krodha, Brahmādaya, and Navagraha deities. Once each square is assigned its respective deity, the text subsequently designates specific spatial locations by invoking the names of these deities. For instance, when prescribing the appropriate placement of the courtyard drain, the text identifies the location through reference to the deities Vajradīpa and Mahākāla. It translates as - after that, having visualized Mahāvairocana and the other deities residing in the eighty-one compartments, one should worship each of them with their respective mantras, offering durvā grass, jasmine flowers, unhusked rice grains, lājā (puffed rice), flowers, fruits and etc.

E. The Characteristics of the Brick

The chapter 4 starts with the description of the characteristics of the brick. It implies that the width of a brick is three parts of its five-part length. The length of the brick is half the thickness of the wall. One of the three parts of the width is the thickness. These prescribed brick proportions were compared with bricks used in Nepal from the ancient period to the present, as summarized in Table 1. The Mā Appā bricks employed during the medieval period—and still used in traditional construction today correspond very closely to these textual prescriptions. In the case of Mā Appā bricks, the deviation in breadth is +3 mm (approximately 2.5%), while the deviation in thickness is +5 mm (approximately 11.11%), variations that are most plausibly attributable to differences arising during the firing process. Similarly,

S.N.	Description	Actual Size of Brick			Brick Size/Proportion Prescribed in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*			
		Length (L)	Breadth (B)	Thick (T)	(3/5) L=B'	(1/3) B=T'	L:T=5:1	B:T=3:1
1	Dhando Caitya (ca. 3rd c. BC)	355	230	70	213	77	5.07	3.29
2	Brahmā Temple (6th c.)	330	220	50	198	73	6.60	4.40
3	Aṃśuvarma Brick (ca. 7th c.)	355	228	64	213	76	5.59	3.59
4	Jayabāgesvari Temple	250	175	60	150	58	4.17	2.92
5	Kasthamandap Brick 1 (7th c.)	245	165	50	147	55	4.90	3.30
6	Kasthamandap Brick 2 (7th c.)	220	150	50	132	50	4.40	3.00
7	Local Mā Appā	195	120	45	117	40	4.33	2.67

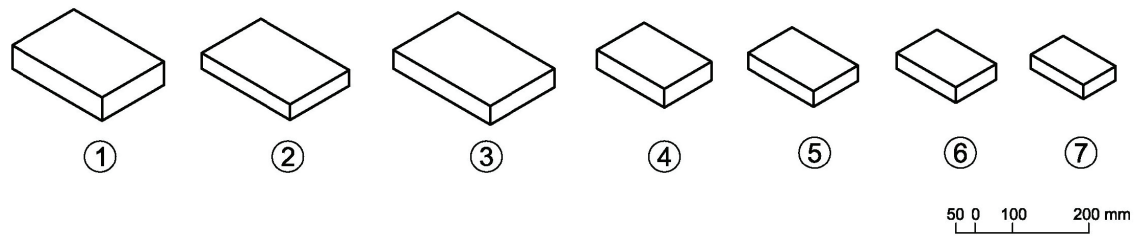


Table 1: Proportion Study and Comparison of Bricks of Different Periods

Data source: SN 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 are site measurements; SN 5 - (Tiwari, 1988, p. 4); SN 6 - (Darnal, 2005, p. 49)

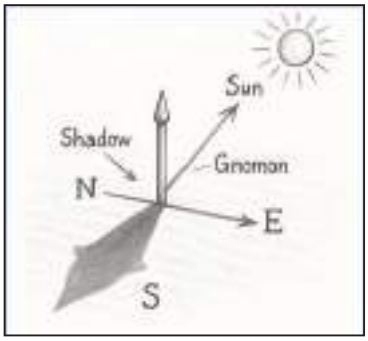


Figure 3: Grasping the Directions



Figure 4a: Prescription of the Drainage Outlet. Location of the drainage is marked in Newar manuscript.

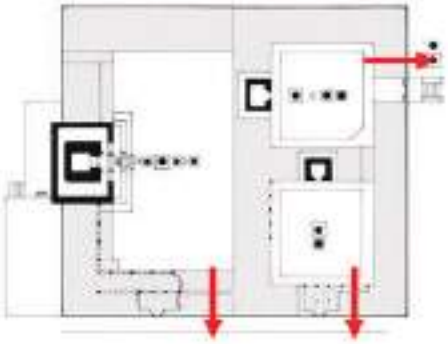


Figure 4b: Drainage Location in Three Bahīs of Guita (Source: based on a drawing provided by DANAM; annotation by the author)

the brick proportions recorded at Cārumatī Stūpa also closely align with the prescriptions set out in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*.

F. Grasp of the Directions

The next section of the chapter 4 explains the procedure for determining the directions. When the sun enters Aries, in the purified and leveled center of the site, one should correct the directions by testing with a water-level. There, a gnomon (śaṅku) 12 aṅgulas high, 3 aṅgulas wide at the base, and tapering like a needle at the top, made of khadira wood and inscribed with Rudra-lines, should be placed at the center upon a circle. The distance from the center to the edge of the circle should equal the height of the gnomon. Then, first at sunrise, one should mark the direction as west where the shadow falls. Likewise, at noon, the direction where the shadow falls should be marked north. Similarly, at sunset, the direction where the shadow is cast should be marked as east.

G. The Rules for Placing the Drain

Chapter 4 also explains the rules concerning the placement of water outlets. It says that when the increase of welfare, people, and wealth is desired, one should make the water outlet to the north, between the squares of Vajradīpa and Mahākāla in the northwestern direction. When, however, the increase of longevity, health, and happiness is desired, one should make the water outlet to the east, between the squares of Vajragandha and Uṣṇīṣa in the Kapardi (North-east) direction. For the sake of avoiding defects, one should not keep doors at the joints of channels. Then, the foundation (vedi) should be made equal to one-third or one-fourth of the length of the building. There should be arrangements for water drains, the support of serpents, and a spire. The wall should be half of the spire.

This prescription was tested against case studies from selected bahāḥ and bahī monasteries and was found to conform closely to the prescriptions of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*. Sites examined for this purpose include Prathamaśrī Mahāvihāra, Vasuccaśīla Mahāvihāra, Gustala Mahāvihāra (see Figure 2), and Maitrīpur Mahāvihāra (Kvabahā, Kathmandu). Śrīvaccha Mahāvihāra originally possessed a drainage outlet at the north-east corner, which was later relocated to the south-east side. However, the construction of the drain outlet in the form of a serpent and spire, as prescribed in the text, is not observed in the architectural practice of bahāḥ and bahī.

H. Building Form Typologies

The *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* prescribed four categories of building forms that are suitable for the construction of a monastery. These forms are based on the number of block, hence called (1) Ekaśālā, (2) Dviśālā, (3) Triśālā and (4) Catuṣśālā. Catuṣśālā is further classified into four forms - (a) Rucaka, (b) Svastika, (c) Vardhamāna and (d) Nadyāvarta or Nadikāvarta or Nandāvarta. Each of these building forms are briefly explained as expounded by the text.

1. Ekaśālā

Ekaśālā is the form in which the number of the blocks is one. It says that if the single block is laid out toward the western side, it results in a loss of wealth. Likewise, if it is laid out on the northern side, the donor does not survive. If it is laid out on the eastern side, there is no increase in progeny. Therefore, the single-block structure should be laid out in the southern direction, and facing north bestows prosperity, longevity, and wealth.

This arrangement appears to have been a well-established norm in the Kathmandu Valley, as it is clearly documented in various Newar manuscripts (Figure 5). In all cases of bahāḥ constructed according to the Ekaśālā typology, the residential block is consistently positioned on the southern side of the courtyard, facing the shrine on the north. Examples of such bahāḥs include Taḥbahā, Jyobahāḥ, Bubahāḥ, Vaṃbahāḥ, Cukaḥbahāḥ, and Dhumbahāḥ.

2. Dviśālā

Dviśālā is the building form in which the number of blocks is two. The text lists the names of various configurations of Dviśālā typology. It says that two-hall buildings are classified as Yamasūrya, Gṛhacullī, Kāca, Daṇḍākṣa, Vātākṣa, and Siddhārtha. These bring about death, loss of wealth, enmity with relatives, royal punishment, quarrels, disturbances, and misfortunes as per their respective configurations.

The typology with the blocks on the north and west side is called Yamasūrya; that with the blocks in the east and west is called Gṛhacullī; that with the blocks

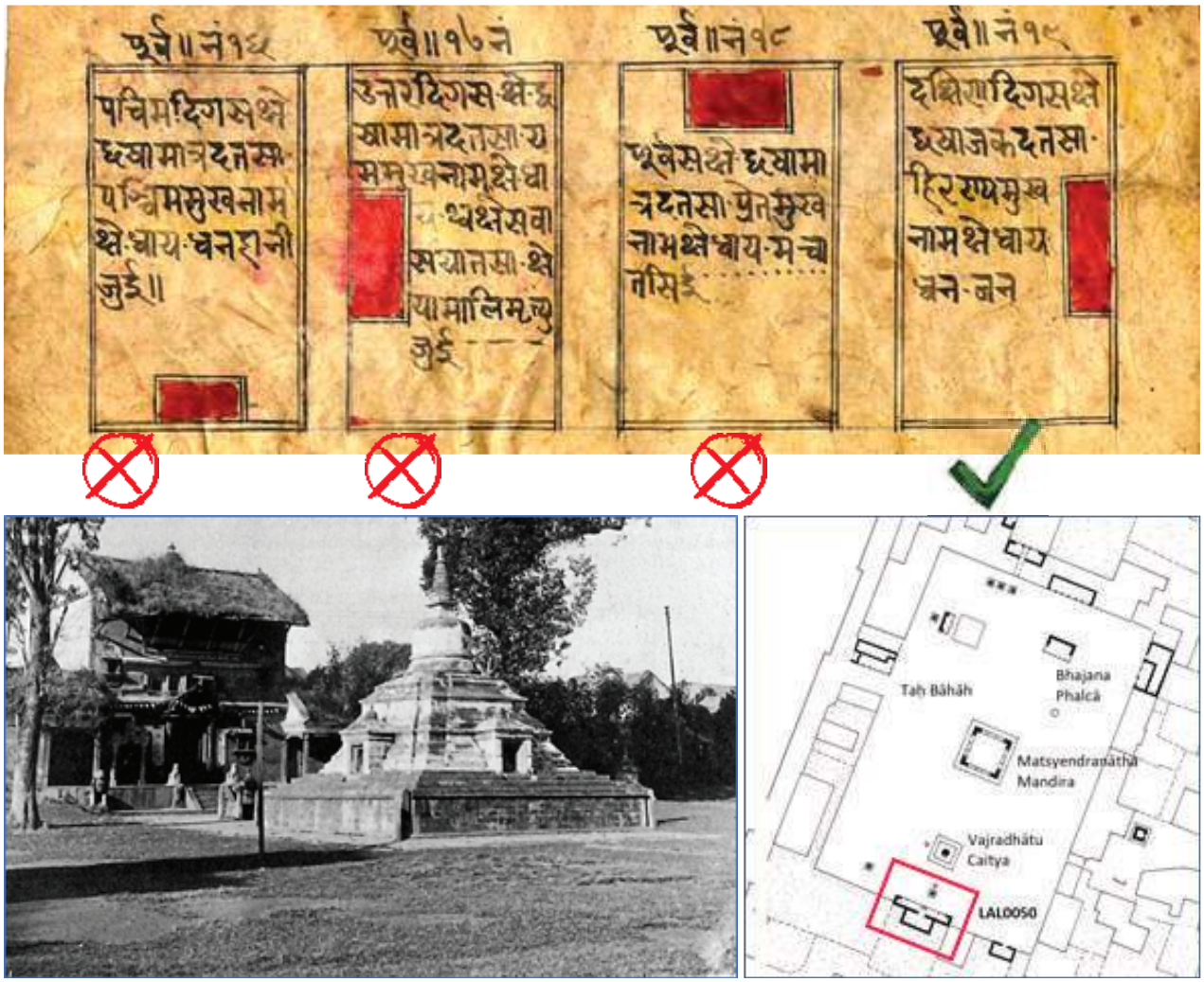


Figure 5: Ekaśālā Layout as Prescribed in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, Colorfully Illustrated with Annotation in Newar Manuscripts in collection of Āśā Saphū Kuthi (above); **Taḥbahāḥ in 1970s Photograph by Ganeshman Chitrakar,** Source: Pruscha Carl 139 (below left); **Site Plan of Taḥbahāḥ,** dwg source: DANAM (below right)

in the south and north is called Kāca; that with the blocks in the north and east is called Daṇḍākṣa; that with the blocks in the south and east is called Vātākṣa and the typology with the blocks in the south and west is called Siddhārtha.

Since all these typologies are designated inauspicious, these types do not appear to have been used in bahāḥ bahī, or at least their use has not been identified so far. Similar content is also found in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (Sastri and Bhat, 1946, p. 432) and in other Newar handbook manuscripts.

3. Triśālā

Triśālā is the building form in which the number of the Blocks is three. The text lists the names of various configurations of Triśālā typology. It says that temples lacking the block at yama (south), varuna (west), north, and east are respectively named Cullī, Pakṣaghna, Hiraṇyanābha, and Sukṣetra. Among these, Cullī causes loss of wealth and Pakṣaghna brings about the destruction of sons and enmity; Hiraṇyanābha bestows prosperity and happiness; and Sukṣetra brings an increase of merits, wealth, cattle, and livestock.

This norm appears to have continued from earlier periods and is also found in other traditions, such as Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (Sastri & Bhat, 1946, p. 432). These are also documented in the Newar manuscripts with drawing illustrations (Figure 6). This type of layout is evident in several bahīs, where multiple bahīs are constructed adjoining one another. Guitabahī comprises three adjoining bahīs, in which the Vasuccaśila Mahāvihāra follows the Rucaka plan, while the Prathamaśila Mahāvihāra and the Gustala Mahāvihāra follow the Hiraṇyanābha and Sukṣetra plans, respectively. Another example is Yampi Mahāvihāra (Ibahi), where Karunacuka Bahī and Ibahi are adjoining. Ibahi follows the Rucaka plan, whereas Karunacuka follows the Hiraṇyanābha plan. In both cases, a deliberate attempt can be observed to avoid the Culli and Pakṣaghna plans, which are described as producing unfavorable results.

4. Catuśśālā

Catuśśālā is a building form typology in which the number of the halls is four. It mentions that the four-hall monastery (Prāsāda, literally means palace) are known by the names Rucaka, Svastika, Vardhamāna,

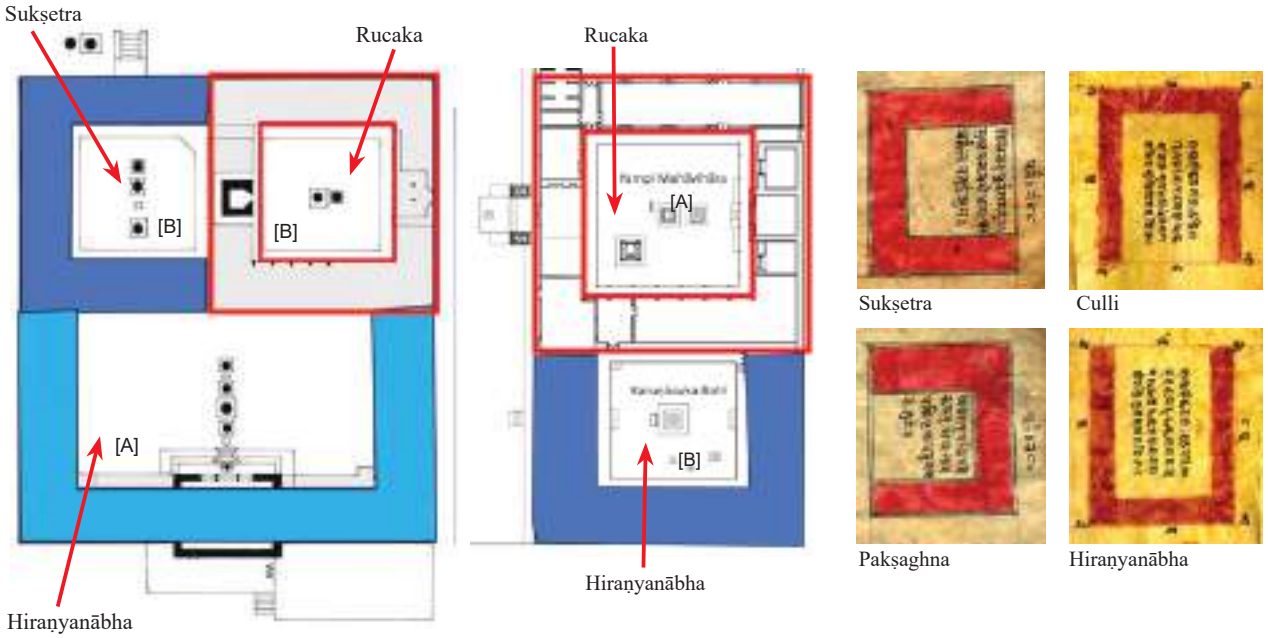


Figure 6: Three Bahī of Guita. (A) Prathamśri Mahāvihāra, (B) Gustala Mahāvihāra & (C) Vasuccaśila Mahāvihāra, (above) Source: Based on drawing provided by DANAM; annotations by the author **(A) Yampi Mahāvihāra & (B) Karuṇācuka Vihāra, (bottom left)** Source: Based on drawing provided by DANAM; annotations by the author DANAM; **Polychrome Illustration of Triśālā in Newar Manuscript, DPN 2857, Āśā Saphū Kuthi Collection (bottom right)**

Nandāvarta, and Sarvārthasiddhi and it prescribes the detailed characteristics of these typologies as presented below:

4.1. Rucaka

The characteristics of Rucaka are explained as follows:

a. **Placement of gateway:** It may have principal gateway on any one of the three cardinal directions—east, north, and west. It prohibits placing the main entrance of the monastery on the southern side (Figure 7), a prescription that appears to have been consistently followed in bahāḥ and bahī architecture.

b. **Two bay structure:** The building is formed by a two-bay structural system with three load-bearing elements, either made of masonry walls or a row of columns that is laid out as external, internal, and middle elements (Figure 7B). It further suggests to lay *Stambhapaṃkti,* a row of columns for the internal and middle load-bearing element. This system seems to have been adopted in bahī structures, whereas bahā structures are predominantly constructed using a single-bay system. Some of the bahī such as Cābahī, have not followed this prescription for laying *staṃbhapaṃkti* for middle element however it followed the 3/5B rule.

c. **Extended halls:** Its length extends fully to both ends.

d. **Dimension range:** Its length ranges from 30 hastas to 1000 hastas.

e. **Length breadth ratio:** The breadth (width) is equals to one-fifth of its total length.

f. **Unequal bay:** The middle wall or a row of pillars should be placed at the distance of the 3/5 of breadth. (Figure 9)

g. **Auspicious results:** The well-proportioned building for conforming to this type brings longevity, progeny, wealth, wellbeing (kṣema), and abundance (Lakṣmī).

4.2. Svastika

The characteristics of Svastika are explained as follows:

a. **Length breadth ratio:** The breadth [of the building] is one-sixth of its total length (of outer wall).

b. **Three blocks facade:** The text states *"āyāmas tu vyāyāmasya dviguṇam"* which means "The length is twice the breadth". It is not clear which length it is referring to. Examining the on-site situation, it is apparent that the wall facade facing the courtyard is rendered with the wall offsets of 4–5 inches, resembling it as a row of three blocks. It can be inferred that the abovementioned statement possibly refers to the middle block which complies the proportion prescribed by the text. It also states that the length of the side block is equal to the breadth (Figure 9).

c. **Twin doors:** At the face of each of the side blocks should have a door at the center.

d. **Auspiciousness:** This Svastika building enhances the wealth, family, longevity, livestock, and fame of the beings residing there.

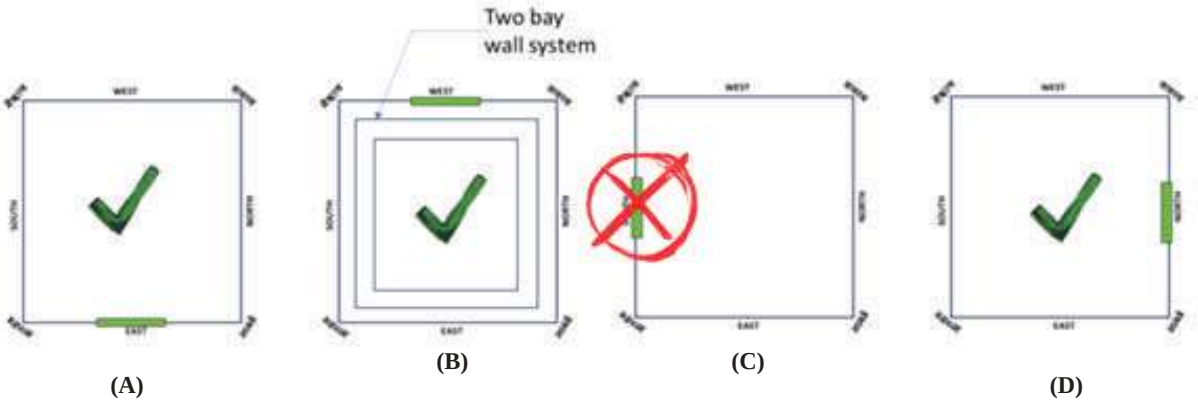


Figure 7: Illustration of Rucaka Form
(A), (B) and (C) shows the favorable door locations as prescribed by the text. (C) has a door on the south side, which is not favorable. (B) shows a triple-structured wall system.

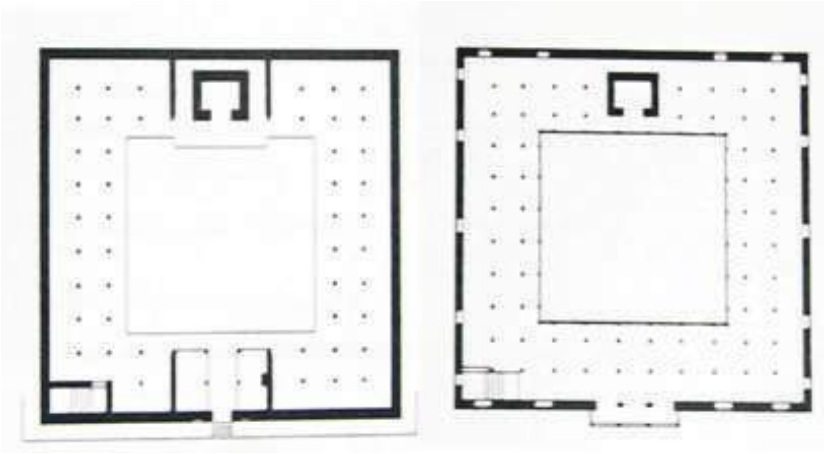


Figure 8: The Plan of Nāpicandra Mahāvihāra Duntu Bahī
(Slusser, 1982, Part 2, Fig. 11) It reflects conformity with the prescription of replacing walls with rows of columns in a two-bay system. Additionally, the length of the room spaces is extended up to the edges, as prescribed in the text. This constitutes one of the distinctive characteristics of bahī architecture in contrast to the floor plans of bahāḥ.

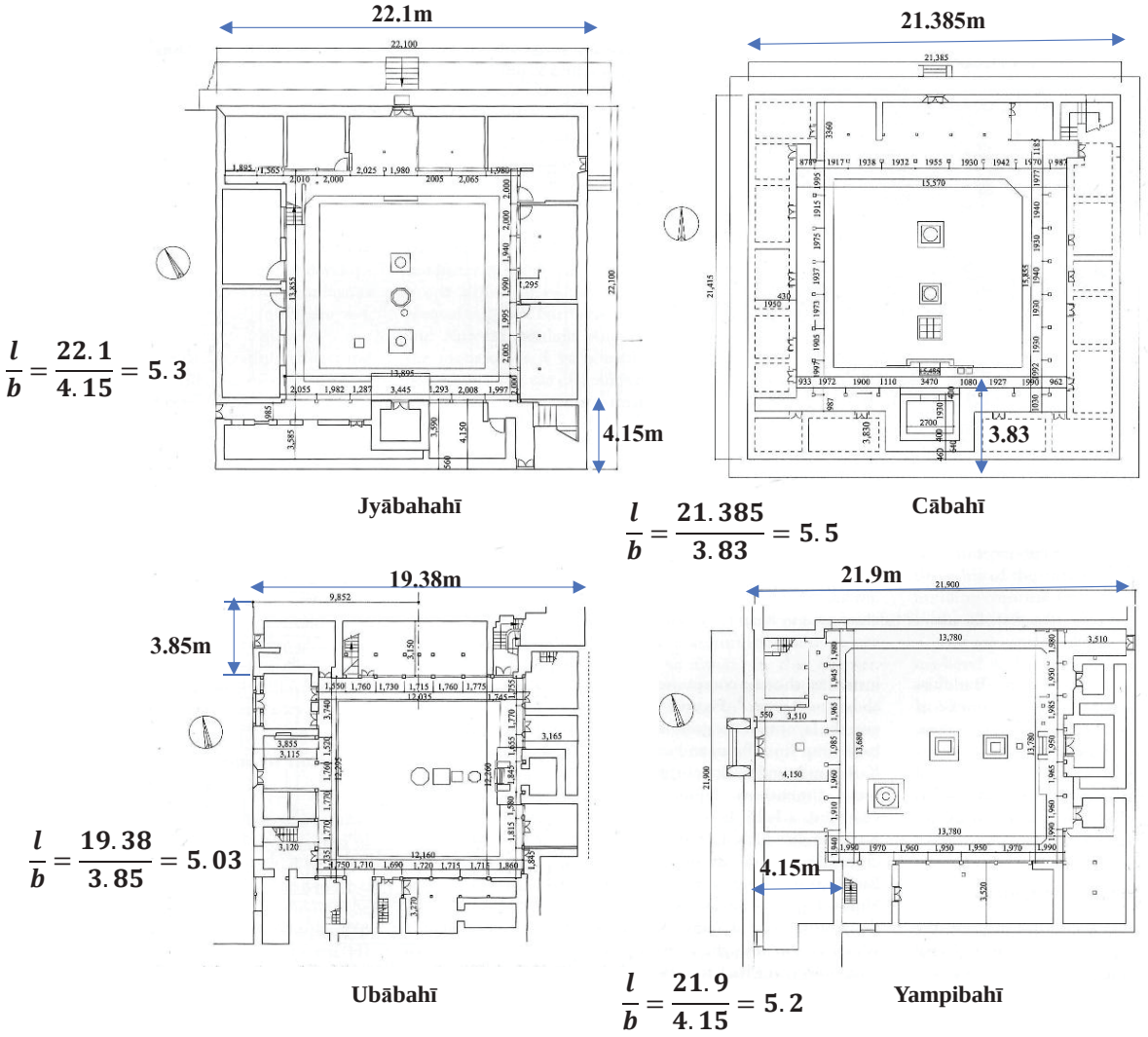


Figure 9: Proportion Study of Bahīs against the Prescription of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*
The length of extant bahīs is found to be no less than 30 hasta, that is, approximately 13.71 m (45 ft), considering 1 hasta = 450 mm (1′–6″). The length–breadth ratio is maintained close to 5 in Jyābabahī, Cābahī, Ubahahī, and Yampibahī. In these bahīs, at least one row of columns is provided. The central row of walls or columns is deliberately positioned at three-fifths of the total width of the building as per the prescriptions of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha.*
(Source: Based on drawings provided by Panta & Funo, 2007, pp. 142–143; annotations by the author)

4.3. Vardhamāna

The text does not mention rules for the dimensioning of this type of monastery, as did for previous types. From this, it can be inferred that the charateristics mentioned in this section is addition attributes to the previously mentioned types. It states that it have a square courtyard and buildings around it, but having a water source (spout) in only the southern block. This model is not found in the case of bahāḥ & bahī. The passage mentions that the left and right sides of the southern block have water sources (spout) facing north, and the north, west and eastern blocks are without water sources. This type also has auspicious results that promotes the increase of wealth and grains (Figure 11) .

4.4. Nandikāvarta

It is a type of catuṣśālā with 'kṣaṇa-yuta' at the left side. Here 'kṣaṇa-yuta' literally mean 'a segment or a division'. It does not provide a detailed description of this, which makes it obscure. However, we can infer that it is possible that the one presented in hand drawings of Newar manuscripts as shown in Figures 12(a) and 12(b) could be Nandikāvarta. The text states that the configuration is auspicious and brings happiness, wealth, and well-being to the residents. Examining the on-site cases, Figure 12(b) is prevalent, whereas the type shown in Figure 12(a) is not.

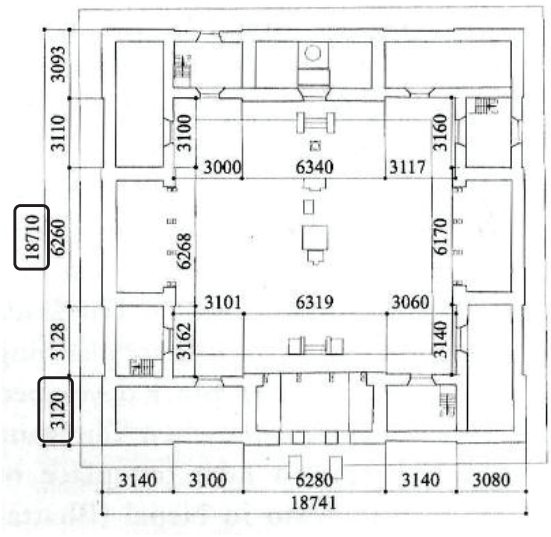
4.5. Sarvārthasiddhi

This the building form that consists of eight halls with water sources included. It states that the type is auspicious and promotes wealth, grains (Figure 12c).

Catuṣśālā is the most commonly used form in bahāḥ and bahī architecture. Among these, Dviśālā and Sarvārthasiddhi do not appear to have been prevalent. Of the five typologies of Catuṣśālā mentioned above, Rucaka, Svastika, Vardhamāna, and Nandāvarta are also described in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā;* however, their detailed descriptions differ significantly. (Sastri & Bhat, 1946, pp. 430–432).

I. Characteristics of the Devālaya

The text also has a sectin on characteristics of devālaya. It seems to represent an isolated temple



$$\frac{l}{b} = \frac{18.71}{3.12} = 5.996$$

Figure 10: Chusyabahāḥ, an example of Svastika
(Source: Based on drawings provided by Panta & Funo, 2007, pp. 113; annotations by the author)

Most bahāḥ are modeled in this form. In Chusyabahāḥ, the length breadth ratio of the Svastika form is 6, and two entrances are provided along the longer wall, indicating that the bahāḥ was constructed in accordance with the standards prescribed in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha.* Chusyabahāḥ also clearly exhibits the plan form and staircase layout of the Nandāvarta type. It thus appears that this bahāḥ was constructed by incorporating features of both the Svastika and Nandāvarta types.

Bahāḥs in Patan, such as Okubaha, Haḥbahāḥ, Kvābahāḥ, Sibahāḥ, and others, also appear to have been built following this typology; however, only partial remnants of the Nandāvarta plan form are now visible in these structures. Past renovations either due to a lack of awareness of the textual prescriptions or for reasons of convenience have alter

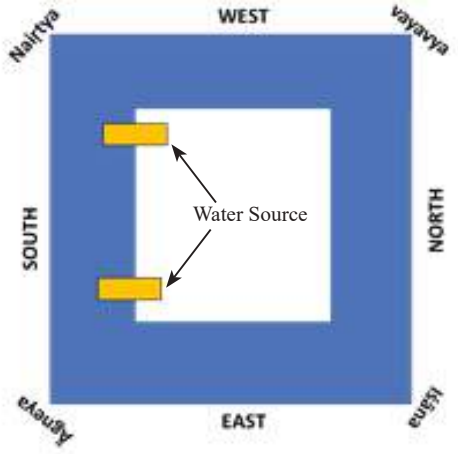


Figure 11: Conceptual sketch of Vardhamāna as Decribed in the text

structure. In the context of the Kathmandu Valley, only Mayūravarṇa Mahāvihāra exhibits this type of structure. However, the proportions and other architectural details prescribed in the text closely correspond with those of the devālaya within this bahāḥ. In addition, the Buṅgamalokeśvara Temple at Taḥbahāḥ and Jeṣṭhavarṇa Mahāvihāra (Taṃgabahāḥ) also contain isolated devālaya structures. A detailed study of these types and comparing them with the prescriptions of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* has been deferred to the next phase of the research. It states that among four-row of eighty-one cell construction, the outer thirty-two cells in the first and second stories are built as walls.

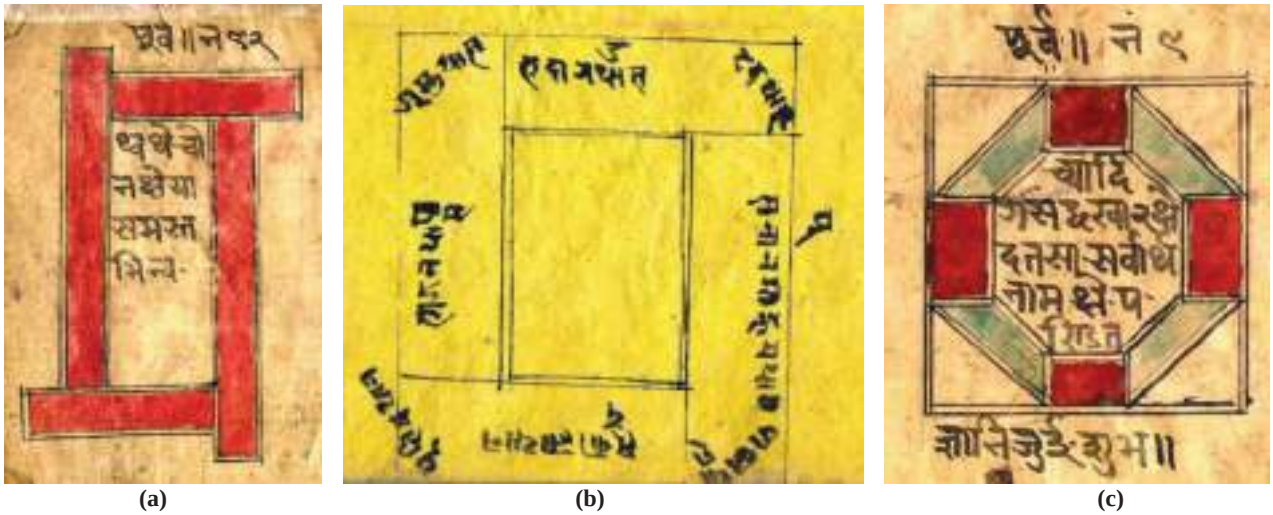
The passage gives the details of the typology as: the first story has a height equal to its breadth, while the second story is lower in height according to the cell units. Above these, walls are constructed in the third and fourth stories. The lower story is divided into nine sections, each in a proportion of five parts; in these nine sections, the outer cells have walls. Accordingly, a wall is constructed around the outer perimeter of the nine compartments. However, the upper section of the third panel is equal to one of the three parts of the first panel. The height of the third story is one-third of the first story, and its height is twice that of the fourth story. The altar (Vedi) is constructed with a base of two walls.

J. Unit of Measurement

Chapter 5 explains the system of measurements, giving the units of measurement and their respective conversions. It says that in this system of measurement, seven paramāṇus (atoms) constitute an aṇḍa (particle). Seven aṇḍas make a sūkṣmaraja (extremely fine dust). Seven sūkṣmarajas produce a śaśarajas, a particle resembling the dirt of a hare. Seven śaśarajas form an edakaraja, a particle comparable to the dirt of a goat. Seven edakarajas form a goraja, a particle like dirt of a cow. Seven gorajas constitute a yūkā (a louse). Seven yūkās make a yava (a barley grain). Six yavas equal one aṅgula measured by the little finger. Seven yavas equal one aṅgula measured by the middle finger. Eight yavas equal one aṅgula measured by the index finger. Twelve aṅgulas make one vitasti (span). Two vitastis constitute one hasta (cubit). Thus, the variations of the aṅgula are explained according to varna.[2]

K. Measures of Doors in the Case of the Shrine

Chapter 5 is majorly dedicated to the wood work. It explains rituals and process required for obtaining wood from the forest. Besides, it provides the proportioning system which appears to have been



(a) (b) (c)

Figure 12: (a) Drawing in Newar Manuscripts with Segment Protruding at the Corner; (b) Drawing in Newar Manuscripts with a Segment Extending up to the Edge of the Building Protruding at the Corner but not Protruding from the Corners; (c) Sarvārthasiddhi (Source: Āśā Saphū Kuthi)

2. The concept of varṇa has two implications: firstly, caste system according to the Vedic tradition; and secondly, it is a person's characteristic defined by Nakṣatra of one's birth time. Given that Buddhists do not adopt caste system positively, we can infer that Kuladutta is referring to the latter one.

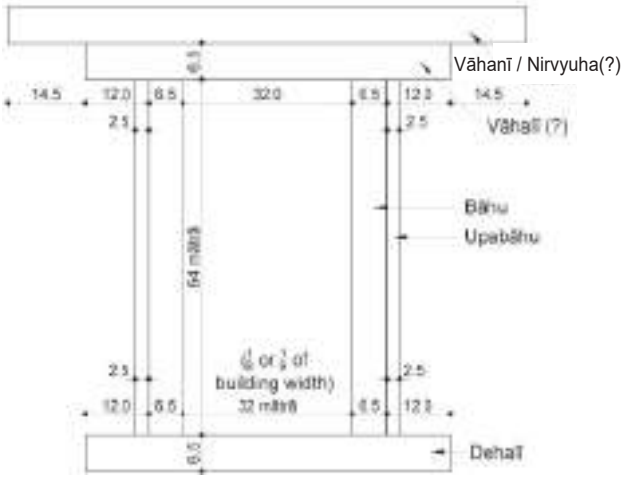


Figure 13: Characteristics of Doors (Drawn by Manindra Shrestha, based on the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*)

largely implemented in bahāḥ and bahī. It prescribes the placing a toraṇa about the door. The standard practice of installing a toraṇa above the shrine is also a commonly observed architectural feature in bahāḥ Bahī. The extensive use of nāga imagery in toranas seems to reflect the influence of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha.* At the same time, the frequent presence of makara motifs and kīrtimukha as principal elements of toraṇas in bahāḥ–bahī architecture is not explicitly mentioned in the text. It is possible that kīrtimukha and makara were understood as belonging to a broader category of serpent-related or liminal beings and therefore did not require separate specification in the textual prescriptions. The use of symbols associated with the Pañca Buddhas, as prescribed in the text, is not widely observed; however, such symbolism can be identified in the miniature toranas of the granthakūṭa (śikhara) temples at Chusyabahā and Bubahā. Some of the other features mentioned in the texts are as follows:

a. **Rule for defining width:** In temple or sanctuary structures (prāsāda), the width of the doorway should measure one-eighth or one-ninth of the total building. Furthermore, it states the doorway itself should have a width of thirty-two mātrās, and its height must be twice that measure.

b. **The threshold (dehalī) and the lintel (vāhalī):** It should be constructed using twelve mātrās. Or they may alternatively be made with eight and a half mātrās.

c. **The measurement of the arm (bāhu):** It should be six and a half mātrās or four and a half mātrās. its outer arm or projection (upabāhu) is to be made measuring two and a half mātrās, though one and a half mātrās is also acceptable.

d. **The outer extension:** It should be constructed using five mātrās, either symmetrically or asymmetrically.

e. **The vāhanī or niryūha** (decorated superstructure above the doorway): It must measure fourteen and a half mātrās.

f. **The pallava** (upper decorative element): It should be built to a measure of twenty mātrās. Above and below this, there should be components measuring six and a half mātrās and five mātrās, respectively.

g. **Toraṇa:** Toraṇas with a variety of appropriate ornaments such as vajra, jewel (ratna), lotus (padma), wheel (cakra), and figures of deities, nāgas, yakṣas, and vidyādharas, should be crafted.

L. Measures of Doors in the Case of Devālaya

It states that the width of the temple doorway must be equal to two koṣṭhas. The remaining measurements and proportional specifications follow the same procedure as described earlier. However, no clear evidence of this practice has been identified in bahāḥ and bahī contexts till date.

M. Characteristics of Pillars

Chapter 5 also provides *stambhāḥ lakṣaṇa,* i.e. Characteristics of pillars. It states that the columns, in their entirety, should be well-proportioned with balanced width and height, possessing an elegant form, constructed from high-strength timber, free from curvature, and characterized by qualities such as squareness. Furthermore, it gives all the rules of dimensioning as follows:

a. The width (diameter) of the column should be one and a half aṣṭa-mātrās (i.e., 8.5 mātrās) or seven mātrās.

b. The length (height) should be determined in accordance with the required elevation of the building.

c. The midpoint of the column's height lies beneath the crescent-mark (candrarekhā).

d. Above that, after omitting six units, an eighth-

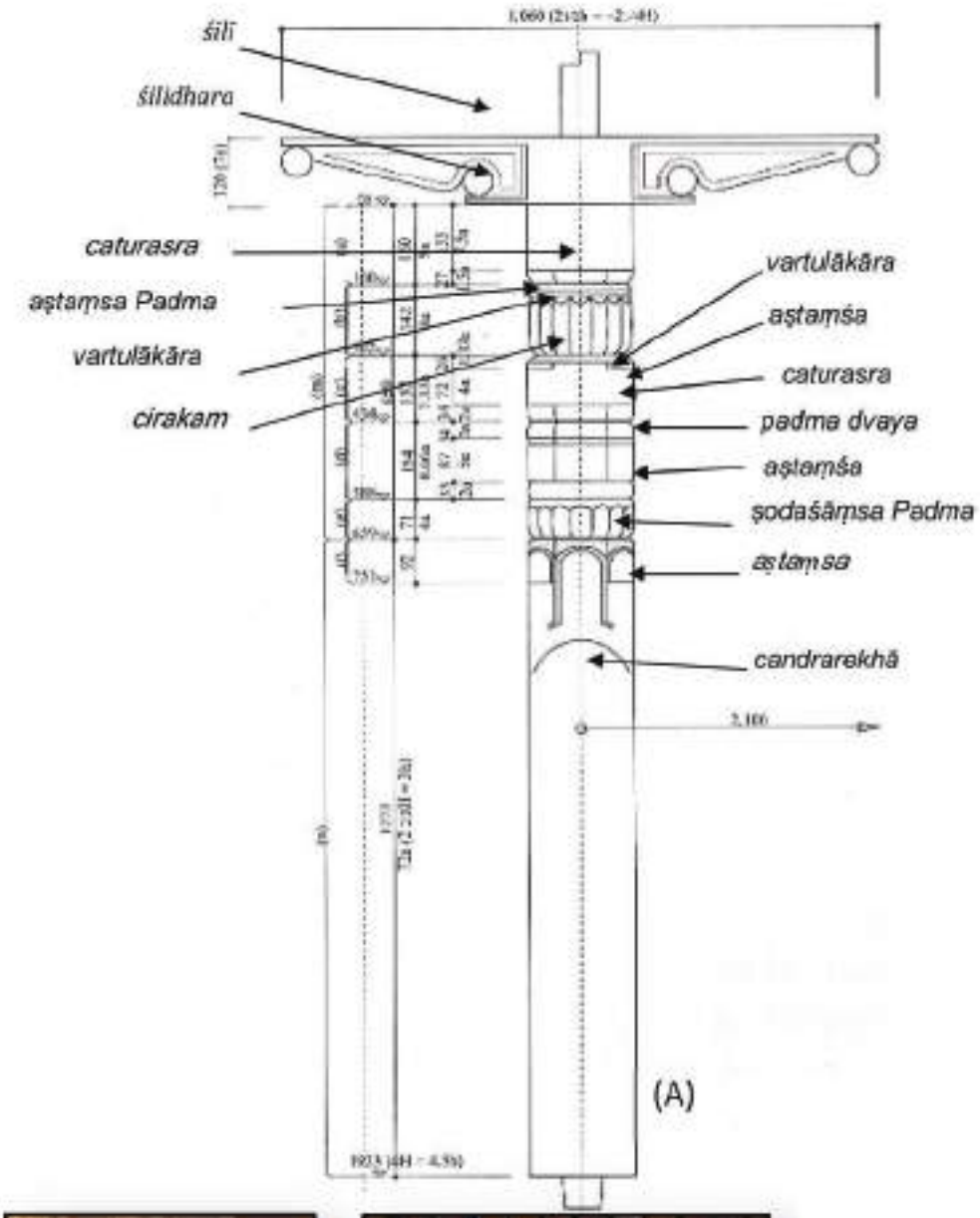






Figure 14 (A): Pillar Detail from Guita Bahi.
(Source: Based on drawing provided Pant and Funo, 2007, p. 149; annotations by the author)

Figure 14 (B): Pillar at Ibabahī.
(Photograph by Gyanendra Shakya)

Figure 14 (C): New Pillar Installed at Guita Bahī
It can be clearly seen that many of the prescriptions in the text were discontinued. Candra-rekhā and other features were not featured in this new one. (Photograph by Gyanendra Shakya)

part proportion is formed using a measure of one-and-a-half dvi-mātrās (2.5 mātrās).

e. Above this, using a measure of one-and-a-half mātrās (1.5 mātrās), a sixteenth-part proportion must be executed in the form of a necklace-band (hārapaṭṭī) or a lotus-moulding (padmāṅkana).

f. Above that lies an eight-unit maṇi section, furnished with a protective ornamental band (kavaca).

g. Thereafter, an octant section measuring one and a half dvimātras (2.5 mātras) should be formed.

h. Above that, a garland-band (hārapaṭṭi) or a row of nāga-flowers (nāgapuṣpapaṃkti), resembling a floral festoon, is to be crafted in the measure of one mātra.

i. Above this, in an octant section measuring two mātras, two padmas (a pair of lotus-based mouldings) should be made.

j. Thereafter, a square (caturasra) section of two mātras is to be made.

k. Above that, an octant section measuring one mātra should be formed.

l. Above this lies a circular element measuring half a mātra.

m. Above that, a cīraka (encircling or ornamental band) measuring six mātras is to be installed.

n. Above this rests a circular top section measuring one mātra.

o. Above that, in an octant section of one mātra, a padma (lotus-shaped ornament) is to be placed.

p. Thereafter, the remaining portion must be constructed in a square form.

q. Above this, the śilīdhara (capital) must be constructed, which should be measured forty-five mātras on both ends.

r. Above that, the śilī (load-bearing stone block, nindāl) of the required size should be installed.

N. Installing the Doors and Pillars

This section of chapter 5 further prescribes applying the protective coating to the wood members. It says, for the installation of the gateways and pillars, they should first be anointed with an oil that facilitates adhesion and then adorned with sindūra and other substances. They must be decorated with various fabrics, red-colored fragrant materials, parasols, priyaṅgu, kuṅkuma, dūrvā grass, water pots (kuṇḍa), leaves of the Bodhi tree, garlands, the pañcopahāra (the five ritual offerings), fruits, and similar items. Thereafter, the gateways in all four directions whether one, three, five, or seven according to the directional scheme—are to be installed properly while reciting the wrathful king mantras (krodharāja-mantras) in accordance with the prescribed ritual.

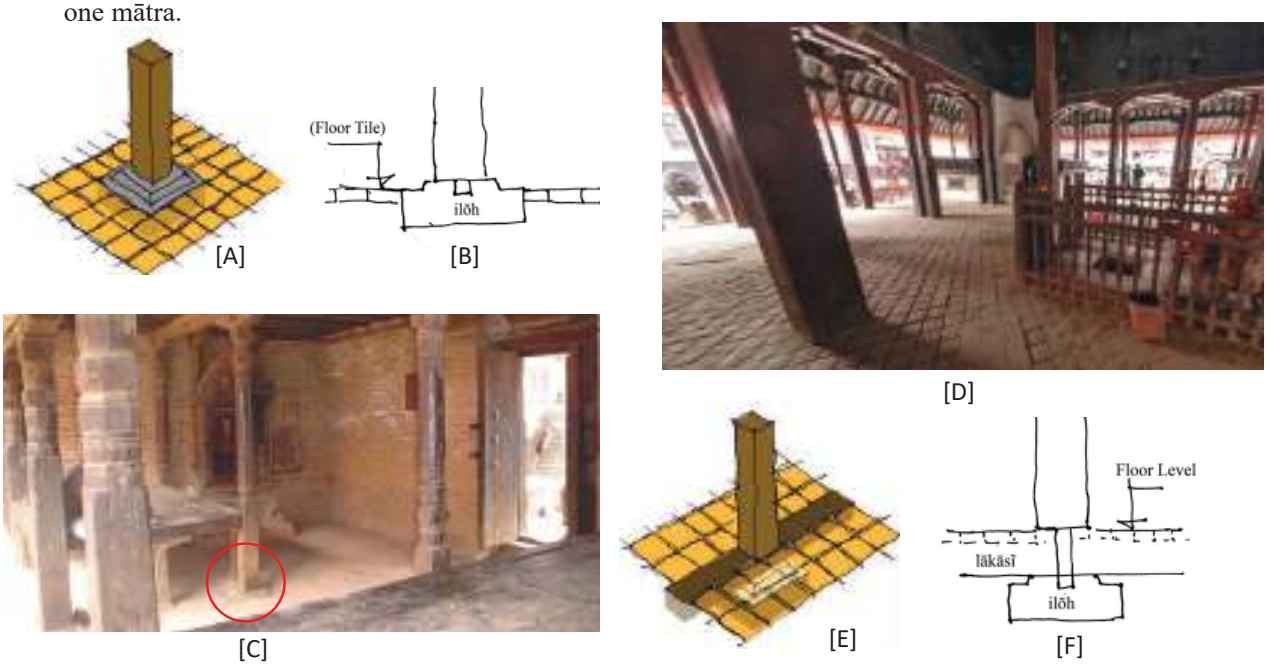


Figure 15: Base Stone (ilvalaṃ) for the Columns (Source: [A], [B], [E] & [F] illustred by Manindra Shrestha; [D] photograph by Manindra Shrestha; [C] photograph by Gyanendra Shakya)



[A] [B]

Figure 16: Cornice Details: (A) cornice detail with Nagavali, sinhamuka and other decorateive features as mentioned by the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* (image source: Gutschow et al. 251). The text also mentions that the Siṃhamukha may be carved or just without carved. (A) is an example of carved siṃhamukha. (B) shows the example of uncarved one from Śrivaccha Mahāvihāra, Sibahāḥ. In both figures nagavali and hārapatti is clearly evident. (Photograph by Gyanendra Shakya)

O. Pillars

The text further instructs to place the column on the base stone. It is living tradition in Kathmandu Valley that the columns are placed on the Ratnaśilā (newar-Ilvahaṃ; Eng. - base stone) to provide a firm base and to protect the column from moistures. In figure 15, (A) and (B) illustrates the way the column installed on the base stone. (C) is the one of the examples of same in Ibābahī. In recent days, this traditional detail has been discarded by DUDBC stating that it is unsafe and new details are being implemented as shown in (E) and (F) (Shakya et al., 2024, pp. 46–48). (D) is from Kāṣṭhamaṇḍapa before collapse in Gorkha Earthquake 2015. In later renovation, the pavement of the Kāṣṭhamaṇḍapa have been raised above the basestone which cause detrimental effect on the column. This ignorance about the importance of Ratnaśilā was the one of the prime causes of collapse of Kāṣṭhamaṇḍapa.

P. Symbolism of Columns

There are verses in chapter 5 which explains the sacred symbolism of these columns. According to these verses, the columns are not mere structural elements but the object of meditation of 37 Bodhipakṣika Dharma. These are seven sets of qualities conducive or related to awakening/understanding (bodhi), i.e., the factors and wholesome qualities which are developed when the mind is trained (for more detail, see Gethin, 1992).

Q. Traditional Cornice

The text also explains about the standard decorations on the top of the pillar as follows:

a. Lay rows of bricks aligned with the sections of the gateways and pillars.
b. Place a śilī-dhara (meth, capital) on top of the pillar.
c. Above that, place the śilī (nidal, beam).
d. Upon the śilī, install the nāgavalī or decorative garland band along the upper course of masonry.
e. Above this, place the siṅhamukha (lion-head motif), carved or uncarved.
f. Above it, add the ornamental features.
g. Above these will be the grīvā (neck section).
h. When all the brickwork has been completed, a golden band (suvarṇa-paṭṭī) is to be placed above the Śili (Nidāl).
i. Above this, lotus-petal moldings are to be installed, and above them the platform (sthāna) will be situated.
j. Upon that, the kaṇṭhikā (neck-molding or intermediary member) will be placed.
k. On the exterior, the piṇḍikā (rounded base) and the vedikā (low platform or plinth) should be arranged in half-scale (ardha-pramāṇa), in an expanded form (niryūha).

R. Dhāraṇikā

It prescribes the method of installation of a pair of the wood beams (niṃdāla) aligned with the brick courses. It further instructs that no perforation or cutting shall be made in the middle, which remarkably reduces its bearing capacity.

S. Characteristics of a Window

This section sets out detailed proportional standards for windows, although some of the provisions remain obscure. The term gavākṣa appears to have been adopted into the Newar language through multiple derivations. In Newar usage, a wall niche known as gvākha is understood as a phonetic corruption of the Sanskrit term gavākṣa. Similarly, in the Newar dialect, a window with five openings is referred to as pasūkā jhyāḥ, which bears a close phonetic resemblance to pañca-akṣa or pañcākṣa. A convention has developed whereby any window of this type is referred to as pasūkā jhyāḥ, irrespective of the actual number of openings (Gutschow et al., 1987, p. 209), as in expressions such as "pasūkā jhyāḥ with three openings.". As the Newar term gaḥ jhyāḥ may also plausibly be derived from gavākṣa jhyāḥ. Some of the features mentioned in this section are as follows:

a. the size of the window opening at the center (gavākṣa) together with the lattice (kaṅkaṭaka) is one-third of the doorway.
b. threshold should be 9 units and Lintel extension should be 20 units.
c. floral decoration as 14 units. (??)
d. opening 14.5 units. (??)
e. lower lintel 8 units. (?)
f. niryuha (thickness) 4.5 units. (?)
g. floral decoration 28 units.
h. opening for that is 6 units.
i. bahu (Jamb) is 4.5 units.
j. secondary jamb is 1.5 units.
k. decorative pillars are 3.5 units.
l. a projection above the pillars is one unit.
m. outer and inner pillars and inner wood support is one unit.
n. the śākhā is constructed in a four-and-a-half units.

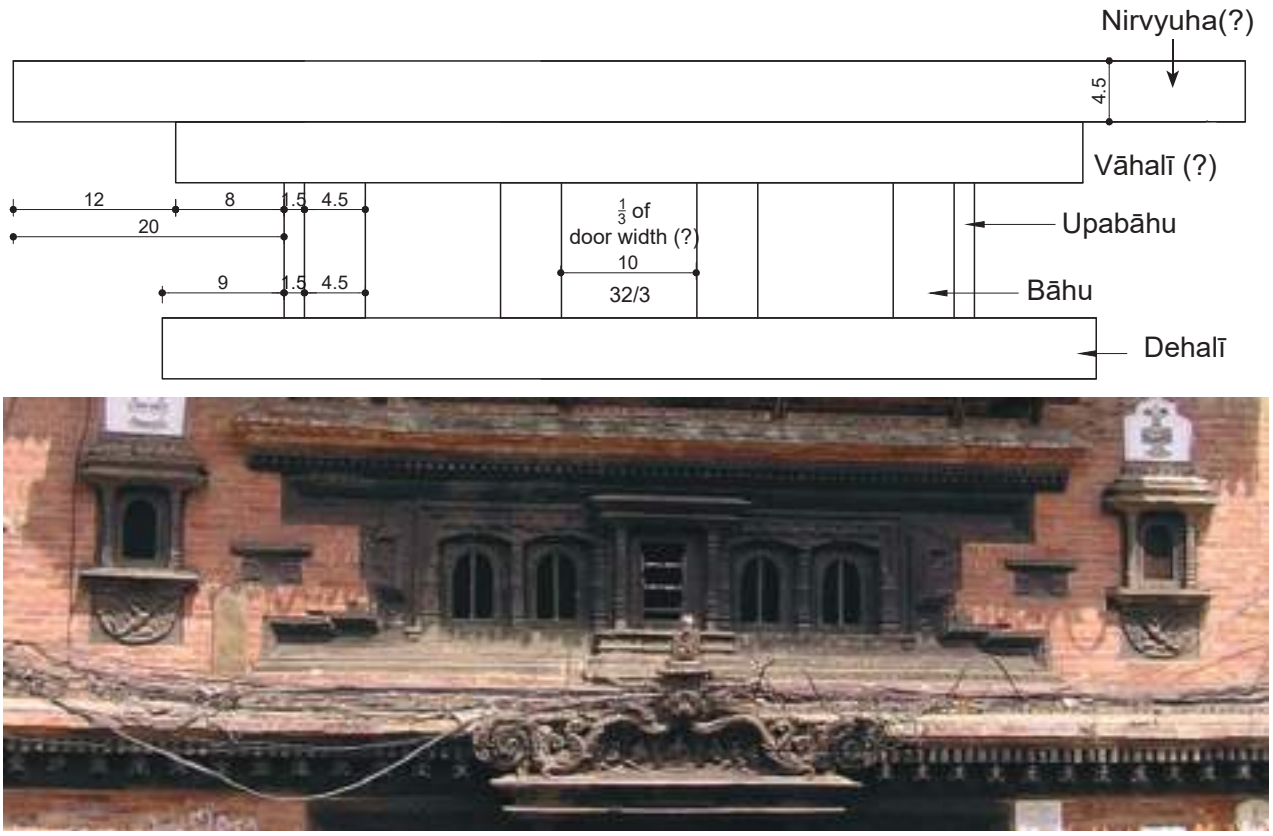


Figure 17: Illustration for Gavakṣa. Window as per prescribed by *Kriyāsaṃgraha* (above) (Source: Drawn by Manindra Shrestha); Example of Pancākṣa window from Yatkhabahāḥ (bellow) (Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pasukha_jhya_krt.jpg)

o. the dehalī and vāhalī are to be appropriately prepared for ornamental decoration.

p. above these, an attractive decorative element is to be placed.

q. various ornaments and embellishments—such as figures of Vidyādhara, Śālabhañjikā, and others—are arranged in accordance with aesthetic propriety.

r. the gavākṣa is constructed in three, five, or seven openings. Where if the Gavākṣa is 3 opening, then it symbolizes three Vimokṣa i.e., Emptiness (Śūnyatā), Signlessness (Animittatā), and Wishlessness (Apraṇihitatā). If the Gavākṣa is with 5 openings, it symbolizes five kinds of eyes, they are: Divine-, Insight-, Dharma-, Knowledge-, and Buddha-eye. if the Gavākṣa is with 7 openings, it symbolizes 'seven factors of awakening' (Saptabodhyaṅga)—Mindfulness, Investigation, Diligence, Rapture, Tranquility, Absorption, and Equanimity.

s. the bricks are to be laid in either header or stretcher courses as required.

t. above this, at the appropriate positions, a pair of beams is to be set on a header brick course.

T. Citrakarma

Chapter 7 of the text instructs the placing of iconographic artworks especially paintings in the monaster after soon after the completion of the construction works. Its instructions are as follows:

a. Thereafter, once the vihāra or similar structure has been completed, Tathāgatas, Bodhisattvas, Vidyā goddesses, wrathful deities (krodha-gaṇa), and Vidyādharas are to be depicted at their prescribed locations, both on the exterior and in the interior. At each doorway, pairs of eyes and pairs of ritual vases (kalaśa) are also to be drawn.

b. On the exterior wall of the temple (devāgāra), to the left and right sides of the doorway, the figures of Kumbhakarṇa and Daśamukha (Rāvaṇa) should be depicted. Thereafter, other attendant figures should be drawn.

c. Nearby, representations of one's chosen vidyā-devatās together with various ritual implements for worship should be depicted. Above the principal gavākṣa (window-head), the Five Tathāgatas should be portrayed; above the heads of the subsidiary gavākṣas, the chosen Bodhisattvas should be depicted. The remaining ornamental elements should be rendered appropriately, in accordance with aesthetic propriety.

d. Within the interior, behind the deity to be installed, a Bodhi tree is to be painted. On the left and right side walls of the Blessed One, the two lords of the Yakṣas are to be depicted. There, Varuṇa is to be represented as white in color, adorned with nine serpent hoods, seated in sattva-paryaṅka posture, two-armed, and holding a nāga-noose and a jewel in his left and right hands respectively. The other Yakṣa lord is to be painted as yellow in color, holding a mongoose and a citron (bījapūraka) in his hands, seated in sattva-paryaṅka posture.

e. On the southern side of the doorway, Mahābala and Mahākāla are to be depicted. There, Mahābala is to be represented as black in color, two-armed and single-faced, short and pot-bellied, with a frowning countenance, three circular red eyes, tawny hair standing upright, and clad in a tiger-skin garment. He stands firmly with both feet upon a universal lotus and sun-disc, his face fierce with protruding fangs, and adorned with ornaments of eight nāgas. His right armpit encloses the four fingers of the left hand, and his left armpit encloses the four fingers of the right hand; in this manner, his form is to be painted.

Mahākāla is to be depicted standing in the Pratyālīḍha posture upon a universal lotus and sun-disc, short and pot-bellied, two-armed and single-faced, with three circular red eyes, black in color, holding a chopper (kartṛkā) and a skull-cup (kapāla). His appearance is terrifying and fearsome, with a fanged and ferocious visage, and he is adorned with ornaments of nāgas; such is the form of Mahākāla to be painted.

f. On the left side of the doorway, Hārītī and Jājāna are to be depicted facing one another. There,

Hārītī, the great Yakṣiṇī, is to be painted seated in a graceful posture upon a jeweled pedestal, fair in complexion, of incomparable beauty and blissful appearance, adorned with all ornaments, bearing a precious jewel upon her lap, her hands marked with jewels, her face gently smiling, and surrounded by the festive play of five hundred children.

g. Jājāna, also known as Yaśonara, the lord among kings, is likewise to be depicted, adorned with all ornaments, of vermilion complexion, seated playfully upon a lion throne. Thus concludes the section on pictorial work.

Chapter 7 consists of the prescriptions for the placement and consecration of different deities. It instructs to place paintings of different deities. Table 2 assesses how these prescriptions are followed in bahāḥ and bahīs. The text says that a skilled artisan should construct a balipiṇḍikā from firm, well-born stone, duly endowed with correct measurements and defining characteristics.

4. Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that the architectural form and spatial organization of bahāḥ and bahī of the Kathmandu Valley cannot be fully understood without reference to the ritual and textual frameworks prescribed in Vajrayāna kriyā manuals, particularly Kuladatta's *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā.* Far from being merely descriptive or symbolic texts, these manuals functioned as operative guides that informed site selection, spatial hierarchy, construction techniques, proportional systems, iconographic placement, and ritual consecration. The findings of this research clearly indicate that medieval Newar monastic architecture represents a materialized ritual cosmology rather than an ad hoc or purely vernacular building tradition.

Table 2: Placement of Deities in Painting as per the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*
(Created by Gyanendra Shakya based on the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā)*

S.N.	Deity	Location	Remarks
1.	Tathāgatas, Bodhisattvas, Vidyādevas, Krodhagaṇas, Vidhyādharas	Not specified	Can be seen placed in the roof struts, walls
2.	Pair of eyes and kalaśas	On every door	Only in the doors of Āgama, not so prevalent in others
3.	Kumbhakarṇa and Daśamukha and their attendants	On the outer wall of the main temple structure	Not in practice
4.	Pañca Tathāgata	Above the Gavakṣa	This is very common in only Bahāḥ. In addition to Pañca tathagata, Ṣaḍakṣari, Prajñapāramita, Mahākāla, and Mahābala are also placed
5.	Bodhi Tree	At the back wall of the main deity of the vihāra	Not in practice
6.	Varuna Yakṣa in White and Jambala Yakṣa in Yellow	At the left and right sides of the blessed one	Not in practice
7.	Mahābala and Mahākāla	At the right side of the main entrance door	Mahākāla is very common. Mahabala is installed only in a few bahāḥs. (e.g. Ratnakara Mahāvihāra ?)
8.	Harati	At the left side of the main entrance	Not very common. Only Ubahabahī have Harati image at the entrance area
9.	Jānānam or Yaśonara	At the left side of the main entrance	Not in practice
10.	Balipiṇḍikā	Not specified	A common practice

Through systematic textual analysis and comparative examination of extant monastic complexes, this study has shown a high degree of correspondence between the prescriptions of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* tradition and the details of built forms of bahāḥ and bahī. Key architectural elements such as the use of the 9×9 Vajradhātumaṇḍala grid, typologies of śālā arrangements (Ekaśālā, Triśālā, Catuṣśālā), location of drainage placement, brick proportions, design of columns, beams, rafters, doorway, windows, etc. exhibit remarkable continuity between text and practice.

The study also reveals that Newar Buddhist monasteries were conceived not merely as residential or institutional spaces but as ritually activated landscapes. The consecration process transformed these architectural complexes into Vajradhātumaṇḍalas, rendering them microcosmic representations of the Buddhist universe. Architectural components such as columns, drains, doors, and courtyards were ritually encoded with doctrinal meanings—most notably through the meditation on nāḍīs, Bodhipakṣika Dharmas, Tathāgatas, and Bodhisattvas—thereby integrating doctrinal cosmology directly into the built environment. This confirms that bahāḥ and bahī are best understood as living ritual instruments rather than static building structures.

At the same time, the study acknowledges areas of divergence and adaptation. Not all typologies prescribed in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* such as Dviśālā or Sarvārthasiddhi layouts are attested in surviving monasteries, suggesting selective adoption shaped by local conditions, spatial constraints, and evolving ritual priorities.

By foregrounding the ritual logic underlying Newar monastic architecture, this research addresses a critical gap in existing scholarship, which has tended to privilege stylistic description, urban morphology, or art-historical analysis while overlooking the prescriptive role of Vajrayāna ritual manuals. From a heritage-conservation perspective, the findings of this study carry significant implications for both policy formulation and on-the-ground practice in the Kathmandu Valley. Conservation approaches that focus merely on material authenticity, stylistic restoration, or structural stabilization risk overlooking the ritual logic that originally generated and sustained bahāḥ and bahī-s. Since these monastic complexes were conceived as ritually activated mandalic environments, conservation policies must move beyond fabric-based criteria and incorporate intangible dimensions such as ritual zoning, iconographic placement, spatial hierarchy, and ceremonial use. This calls for closer collaboration between heritage authorities, ritual specialists (Vajrācāryas), local saṅghas, and conservation professionals in the preparation of guidelines, conservation plans, and adaptive-reuse strategies. Integrating kriyā-based architectural principles into heritage management frameworks particularly in documentation standards, reconstruction decisions, and post-earthquake interventions would ensure that conservation practice remains aligned with the living religious traditions of Newar Buddhism, thereby ensuring not only the physical survival but also the cultural and ritual integrity of these monastic sites.

In conclusion, this study establishes that the bahāḥ and bahī of the Kathmandu Valley are the products of a sophisticated synthesis of Vajrayāna ritual theory, textual tradition, and architectural practice. The *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* emerges as a central intellectual and practical source in this process, providing a coherent framework through which Newar Buddhism articulated its cosmology in built form. Future research expanding comparative analysis beyond the Kathmandu Valley, or examining the continued ritual life of these structures in contemporary practice, would further deepen our understanding of this enduring and unique Newar architectural tradition. In addition, this subject warrants further investigation in relation to other influential ritual texts such as the *Kriyāsamuccaya, Vajrāvalī,* and *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* which fall outside the scope of the present study but are likely to have played a significant role in shaping ritual-architectural knowledge.

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Introduction to the Vihāra Project

विहार परियोजनाको परिचय

Taiken Kyuma

Faculty of Humanities, Law and Economics, Mie University, Japan
E-mail : kyuma.human@mie-u.ac.jp

ताइकेन क्युमा

प्राध्यापक, मानविकी, कानून र अर्थशास्त्र संकाय, मी विश्वविद्यालय, जापान

विषयवस्तुको सारांश

यस लेखमा जापान सोसाइटी फर द प्रमोशन अफ साइन्स (JSPS) को सहयोगमा सञ्चालित विहार परियोजना (TheVihāra Project) को परिचय प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । यस परियोजनामा गुप्तकालदेखिको भारतीय बौद्धधर्मको इतिहासलाई बौद्ध विहारहरूको परम्परामार्फत अध्ययन गर्ने जमर्को गरिएको छ । तान्त्रिक बौद्धधर्मको उदयपछि भारतीय बौद्धधर्म पतनतर्फ गयो भन्ने सरल भाष्यलाई सिधै स्वीकार गर्नुको सट्टा यस परियोजनाले शास्त्रीय, संस्थागत तथा लौकिक-सामाजिक आदि विविध आयामहरूको विश्लेषण गरी वास्तविक तथ्यहरू प्रकाशित गर्ने प्रयासमा रहेको छ । यस लेखमा विहार परियोजनाको पहिलो अनुसन्धान चरणको उद्देश्य र त्यसका लागि अपनाइएको बहुविषयक अनुसन्धान संरचना—पाण्डुलिपि अध्ययन, अभिलेखशास्त्र, पुरातत्त्व तथा कला इतिहास, तथा डिजिटल मानविकी—को रूपरेखा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ । यस पहिलो चरणमा प्राप्त निष्कर्षहरूको आधारमा, परियोजनाको दोस्रो अनुसन्धान चरणको अवधारणा तयार गरिएको थियो, जसले विहार र लौकिकताबीचको सम्बन्धलाई केन्द्रीय विषयका रूपमा राखेको छ । विशेष रूपमा, सामान्यजन, लौकिक सत्ता, र तान्त्रिक बौद्धधर्मबीचको अन्तरसम्बन्ध, साथै विहारभित्र तान्त्रिक अभ्यास र विनयबीच देखिने जटिल सहअस्तित्वलाई व्यवस्थित रूपमा बुझ्ने प्रयास गरिएको छ । साथै, यस लेखले विहारसँग सम्बन्धित "स्थान" को अवधारणालाई शास्त्रीय र वास्तुकलात्मक सीमाभन्दा बाहिर विस्तार गर्दै पानी वितरण प्रणाली र सुरक्षात्मक संरचनाजस्ता सामाजिक तथा राजनीतिक आयामहरू समेत समेट्नु पर्ने धारणा व्यक्त गरेको छ । अन्त्यमा, नेपाली बौद्ध विहारहरूको अध्ययनका लागि केहिं प्रश्नहरू प्रस्तुत गर्दै, यस अनुसन्धान ढाँचाले दक्षिण एशियामा विहारहरूको स्थानिक, संस्थागत र सामाजिक भूमिकालाई अझ गहिरो रूपमा बुझ्न योगदान पुऱ्याउने छ भन्ने अपेक्षा लिइएको छ ।

Keywords: Indian Buddhist Monasteries; Monastic Secularity; Tantric Buddhism; Vinaya and Samaya; Gupta Period; Pāla Dynasty; Lay-Monastic Relations; Monastic Space and Political Power.

1. Introductory Remarks: Research Background

It is my great pleasure to be able to organize such a wonderful international symposium here at Akṣayeśvara Mahāvihāra in Lalitpur, Nepal, under the auspices of the Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha and Lotus Research Center. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to all the organizers of this symposium and the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science for their kind and constant support.

The starting point of the Vihāra Project, funded by the JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) was to reconsider the decline of Indian Buddhism. It is well known that a certain number of great monasteries were still active around the 13th century. The decline of Indian Buddhism has also been associated with the rise of tantric Buddhism. Nevertheless, recent studies clearly show that the system of tantric Buddhism developed to the fullest extent in late Indian Buddhism, even though it was influenced by Hinduism. In any case, it is necessary to reconsider the assumption that Indian Buddhism showed a downward curve after the rise of tantric Buddhism.

We have been trying to shed light on the decline of Indian Buddhism from different angles, focusing on the tradition of Buddhist monasteries from the

Gupta period onward. We are grateful to the project members, who did their research very energetically during the first research term (from FY2018 to FY2021). We then proceeded to the next stage of the project (from FY2022 to FY2025), to elucidate the relationship between monasteries and secularity (for further details about the outcome of the first research term, cf. *Vihāra Project Newsletter*, vol. 7).

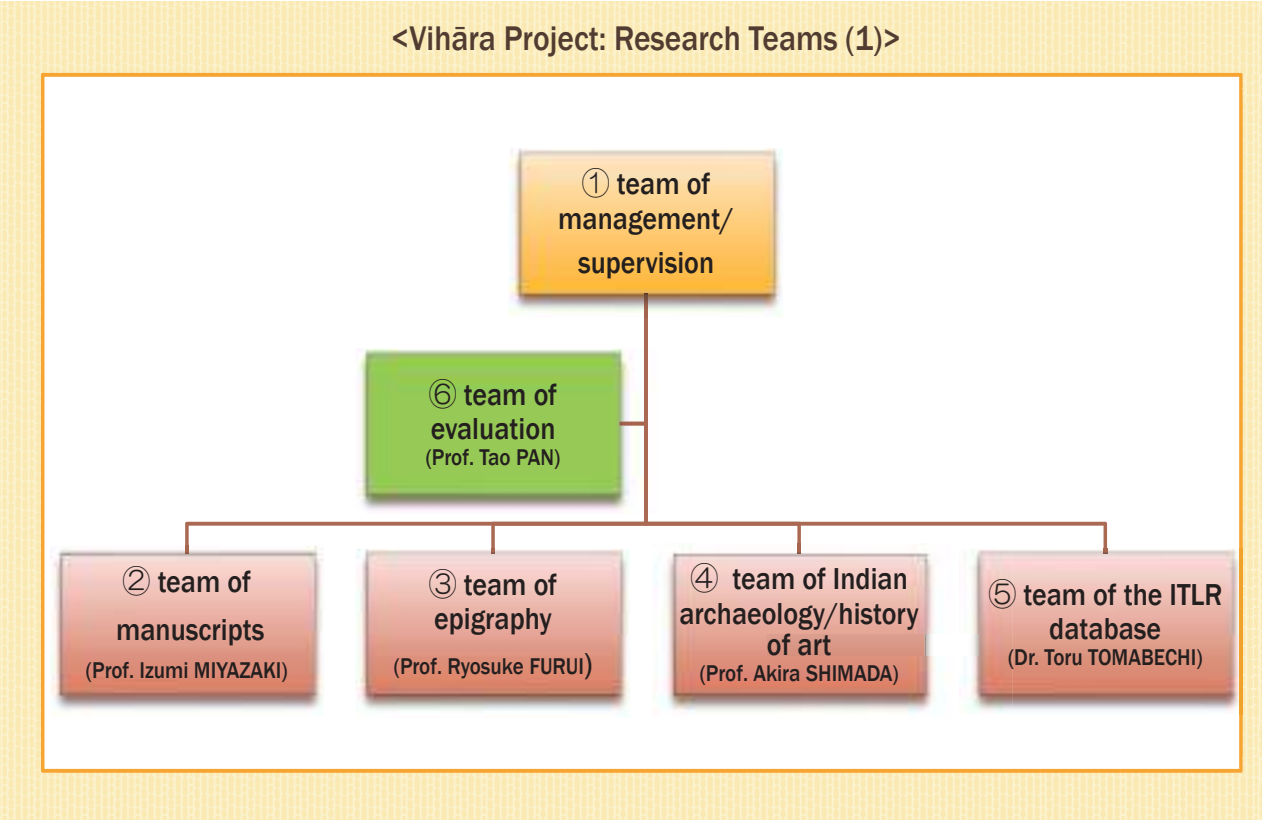
2. Interdisciplinary Research Framework

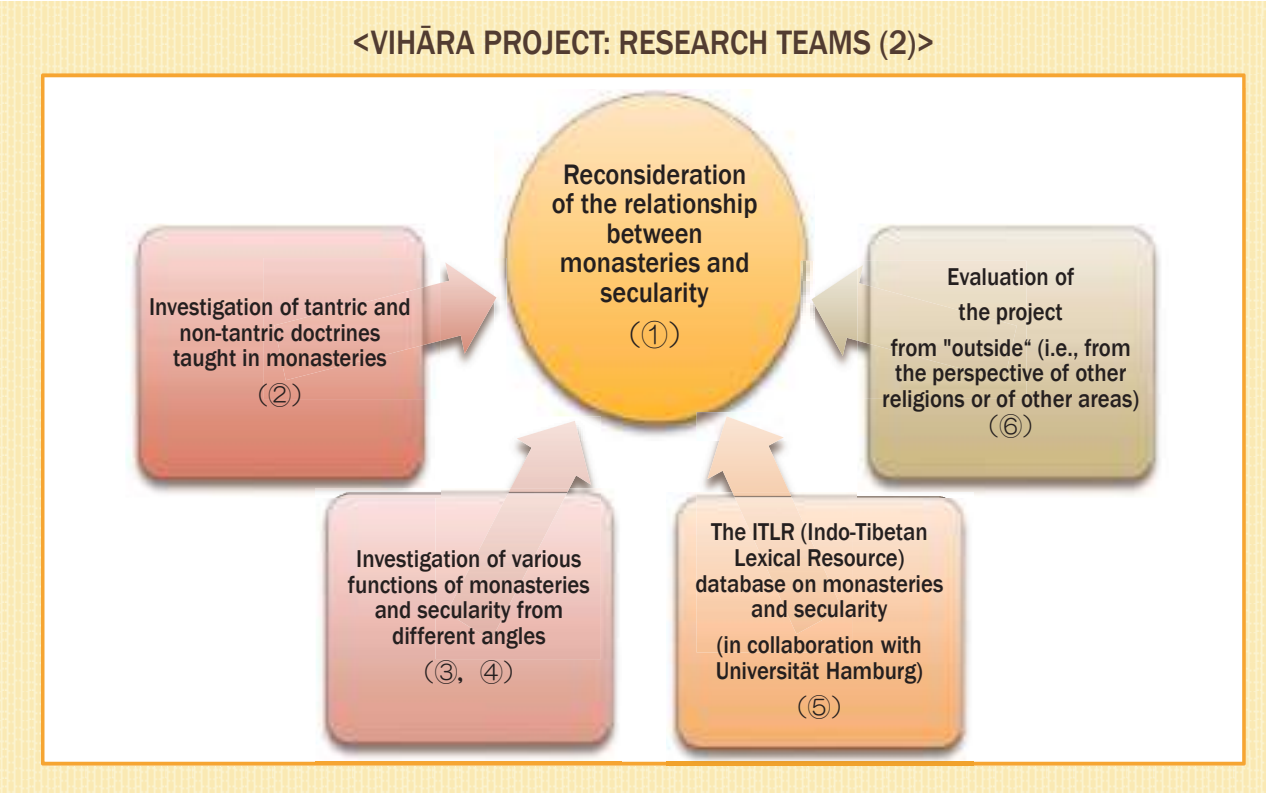
The project consists of (1) team of management/supervision, (2) team of manuscripts, (3) team of epigraphy, (4) team of Indian archaeology/history of art, (5) team of the ITLR (Indo-Tibetan Lexical Resource) database, and (6) team of evaluation (which examines the direction of the project from the perspective of adjacent fields).

3. Second Phase of the Project: Buddhist Monasteries and Secularity

The second phase of this project aims to comprehensively examine the relationship between monasteries and secularity in Indian Buddhism from the Gupta period onward through collaboration between multiple research teams based on different research fields and methodologies.

The relationship between religion and secularity is a universal question. Buddhist studies have also long addressed this relationship. Three main points of discussion regarding this relationship can be presented: (a) laity (or layperson devotees); (b) (its relationship with) secular power; (c) tantric Buddhism, which is said to have arisen around the start of the Gupta dynasty (around the years 320–550 CE). Among these, (a) and (b) already existed in Mahayana Buddhism and Hinayana Buddhism, which existed before tantric Buddhism. However, with the addition of (c) tantric Buddhism (its doctrines/practical systems include sexual rituals and the acceptance of killing), the secularity of Buddhist ideas became more prominent. Among the issues sharply highlighted because of this, there is an argument regarding Vinaya. Parts of tantric Buddhist ideas deviate from a monk's precepts. Nevertheless, these tantric Buddhist ideas also occupied an important position in monasteries from the Gupta period onward. Concepts analogous to Vinaya, such as pledges (*samaya*), also exist in





tantric Buddhism but can be distinguished by their acceptance of taboos, such as killing. Many points regarding the manner in which these tantric Buddhist precepts were practiced in monasteries and their relationship with the Vinaya of Hinayana Buddhism (traditional sectarian Buddhism) or Bodhisattva vows remain unknown.

Simultaneously, in Indian Buddhism from the Gupta period onward, both (a) layperson devotees and (b) secular authorities became involved with (c) tantric Buddhism. For example, when (a) and (b) worship and hold services for tantric Buddhist deities, putting tantric Buddhist rituals/beliefs into practice, in what form and to what degree would the monasteries have been involved? In recent years, there have been discussions about the relationship between monasteries and tantric Buddhist saints (*siddha*) who converted while still being like laypeople, as well as the relationship between large or small monasteries and secular power since the Gupta dynasty.

In addition to the major dynasties, this includes more small-scale regional forms of government, such as the Pāla dynasty (from the middle of the 8th century to the end of the 12th century). The three points of (a) to (c) mentioned above, which are related to the secular nature of Indian Buddhism, are each commonly known points of discussion. However, this research includes an awareness of issues relating to a focus on and a systematic understanding of the secular nature of Indian Buddhism that became prominent since the Gupta dynasty—particularly in terms of its relationship with monasteries—and the questioning of the necessity of creating a new blueprint in terms of the history of Indian Buddhism. There are also other relevant issues, such as monasteries and tantric siddhas (as related to laity and monasteries), monasteries and secular powers (not only dynasties but also local polities).

4. Expanding the Concept of Space Related to Monasteries

How, then, should the reality of monastic secularity be uncovered? A starting point is to expand the concept of "space" related to monasteries in various ways, beyond the doctrinal boundaries of monasteries and individual buildings as physical bases (although

they are also important). Examples include a water distribution system around a monastery, which can function as a point of contact between monasteries/monastics and secular people in their daily lives and in the context of agriculture. We should also pay more attention to a monastery's bastions on the outer wall (e.g., Vikramaśīla), which suggests that a monastery could have functioned as a military base.

5. Conclusion: Implications for the Study of Nepalese Monasteries

To conclude, I would like to raise the following two questions about Nepalese monasteries:

(1) How does the monastic building structure reflect the relationship between monasteries and secularity?

(2) How does the relationship between monasteries and secularity manifest in their surrounding areas?

I hope that these issues, which are also relevant to the Vihāra Project, will be fully discussed in this symposium's panel discussion.

*This presentation is partly based on the Vihāra Project Newsletter (esp. vols. 1&8, https://mie-u.repo.nii.ac.jp/), my keynote speech for the Vihāra Kickoff Symposium 2022, and my recent article (written in Japanese):「インド仏教僧院をめぐる近年の研究動向について」，『南アジア研究』第35号 ('Indo Bukkyō Sōin wo meguru Kinnen no Kenkyū Dōkō ni tsuite'), *Journal of the Japanese Association for South Asian Studies*, vol. 35, 2024, pp. 75–83.

Typology of Vihāra in India and Its Connections with Bahāḥ and Bahī

भारतीय विहारको प्ररूपक तथा बहाःबहीहरूसँग यसको सम्बन्ध

Shaashi Ahlawat

Affiliate Scholar, South Asia Center, and Center for Ancient Studies, University of Pennsylvania

E-mail : shaashi@sas.upenn.edu

शाशी अहलावत

साउथ एशिया सेन्टर एवं सेन्टर फॉर एन्सिएंट स्टडीज़, पेनसिलवेनिया विश्वविध्यालय

Abhishek Singh Amar

Professor & Director, Asian Studies, Hamilton College, USA

E-mail : aamar@hamilton.edu

अभिषेक अमर

प्रोफेसर, निर्देशक - एशियाली अध्ययन, हायमिल्टन कलेज, अमेरिका

विषयवस्तुको सारांश

दक्षिण एशियालि वृहत् भूभागमा बौद्ध विहार वास्तुकलाका विविध स्वरूपहरूको सिर्जना भएको देखिन्छ। यस प्रक्रियामा विभिन्न परम्पराहरू, संस्थागत संरचना र अन्तरक्षेत्रीय आदान-प्रदानले महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका खेलेको देखिन्छ । भारतीय उपमहाद्वीपमा विकसित प्रारम्भदेखि उत्तर-मध्यकालसम्मका विहारहरूको रूपान्तरण प्रक्रिया समेतलाई विश्लेषण गर्दै पुरातात्त्विक तथा अन्य प्रमाणहरूको अध्ययनबाट प्राप्त निष्कर्शहरू यस लेखमा प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ। यस अनुसार प्रारम्भिककालका विहारहरू बाँस, माटो आदि नाशवान् सामग्रीहरूबाट निर्माण हुन्थे भने पछि क्रमशः स्थायी प्रकृतिको चतुष्कोणाकार गरी बनाउन थाले । यसैकालमा चोक वरिपरि कोष्ठहरू राख्ने र आवासीय परिसरभित्रै बुद्धमूर्ति सहित पूजाकोठा बनाउने प्रचलन विकास भयो। मूलसर्वास्तिवादी विनय अनुसार यो ढाँचा इसवीको सुरुका शताब्दीहरू देखि नै प्रारम्भ भएको देखिन्छ। यस्तै, नालन्दा, पहाडपुर, र शालबन विहार आदि उदाहरणहरूबाट यी चोकशैलीका विहारहरू आवासीय, धार्मिक र प्रशासनिक क्रियाकलापहरू सहित बहुआयामिक स्थलका रूपमा रहेको देखाउँछ । यी पुरातात्त्विक प्रमाणहरूबाट विहार निर्माणमा भएको क्रमिक विकासलाई उजागर गर्दछ । नालन्दामा देखिएका उत्तर-मध्यकालीन परिवर्तनहरू—जस्तै गुम्बजयुक्त कक्ष (vaulted rooms)हरू आदि नवीन निर्माण प्रविधिहरूबाट ठूला बौद्ध संस्थाहरूको पतनपश्चात् पनि वास्तुकला निर्माणमा निरन्तर रूपान्तरण भइरहेको देखाउँछ। यो लेखले काठमाडौं उपत्यकाका बहाःबहीहरूलाई पनि यो समग्र परिदृश्य भित्र राखी हर्ने जमर्को गरिएको छ। यी बहाःबही र भारतका विहारहरूमा केहिं मूलभूत सिद्धान्तहरू साझा रहेको पाइन्छ। विशेष गरी खुला चोक वरिपरि विहार भवन बनाउने ढाँचा साझा रहेपनि ती स्वरूपलाई नेवारहरूले स्थानीय सामग्री, मौलिक काष्ठकला, र सघन शहरी बस्तीसँग एकीकृत गर्ने आदि गरिएको देखिन्छ। यस लेखले काठमाडौंका बहाःबहीहरू पनि यस अन्तरक्षेत्रीय वास्तुशिल्पीय परिवेश अन्तर्गत स्थानीयकृत र ऐतिहासिक रूपमा गहिरो सम्बन्ध रहेको संरचनाको रूपमा रहेको कुरा अभिव्यक्त गरेको छ।

Keywords: Vihāra Typology; Courtyard Monasteries; Nalanda; Bahāḥ-Bahī Architecture; Kathmandu Valley; Gupta and Early Medieval India; Transregional Architectural Exchange; Monastic Urbanism.

1. Introduction

Buddhist monastic architecture in South Asia developed over a long temporal span and across a wide geographical range, resulting in a complex architectural landscape shaped by a myriad of factors, including functionality and local as well as transregional trends. Vihāra architecture across this vast region does not reflect a single, linear evolutionary sequence, but an overlapping tradition that responded to changing political contexts, ritual practices, and institutional needs. This essay offers a synthetic account of the development of vihāra

typologies across India, with particular attention to their architectural transformation in the early and late medieval periods. It further considers how late medieval modifications at some of these sites, including Nalanda, provide an important comparative framework for understanding the bahāḥ and bahī monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal. This discussion does not aim to propose a novel theoretical model but instead seeks to bring together existing archaeological and architectural scholarship with close attention to architectural detail and regional specificity. By tracing continuities and transformations in monastic layouts, materials, and spatial hierarchies, the essay situates Nepal Valley monasteries within a broader transregional architectural milieu extending across Eastern India and beyond.

2. Early Buddhist Monastic Architecture and Regional Diversity

Early Buddhist monastic architecture emerged in diverse ecological and cultural contexts across the Indian subcontinent as early as 100 BCE and, more importantly, between the first and sixth centuries CE. While the Gangetic plain is often foregrounded for its association with the Buddha's life and early Buddhist communities, archaeological evidence shows that monastic institutions developed simultaneously across multiple regions, including Central India, the western Deccan, and other parts of the subcontinent. These early monasteries were shaped as much by local conditions and building traditions as by shared idioms.

One of the central challenges in reconstructing early vihāra architecture is the limited survival of early structural remains. The earliest monasteries, likely constructed using perishable materials such as wood and mud, rarely survive archaeologically. As a result, subsequent phases of construction often in brick or stone or carved into rock tend to dominate the archaeological record. This issue has been emphasized in archaeological studies of early Buddhism, which caution against assuming that the earliest surviving forms represent original architectural intentions (Copplestone, 2024, p. 30 & Fogelin, 2015, p. 89).

Western India provides one of the clearest sequences of early monastic development due to the preservation of rock-cut architecture. Cave complexes such as Bhaja, Karle, Bedsa, and Nasik, dateable between 100 BCE

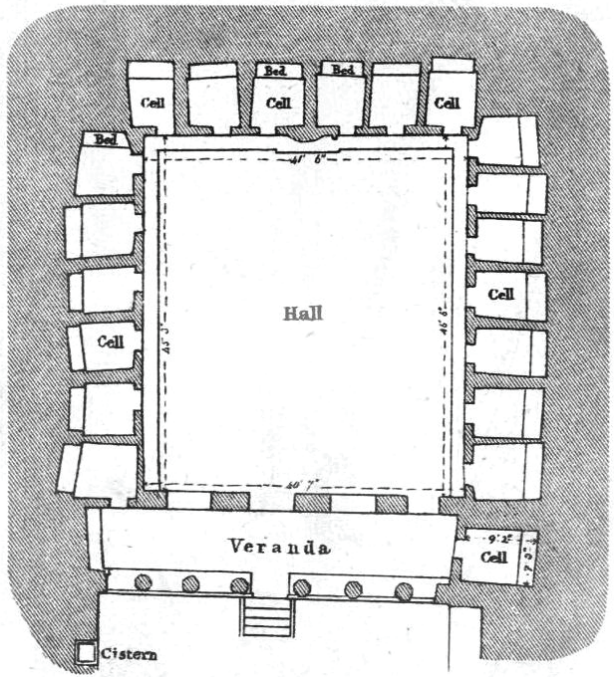


Figure 1: Plan of an Early Vihāra as Seen at Nasik Cave 3 (c. Late First Century CE). Source: Wikimedia Commons; author: James Fergusson.

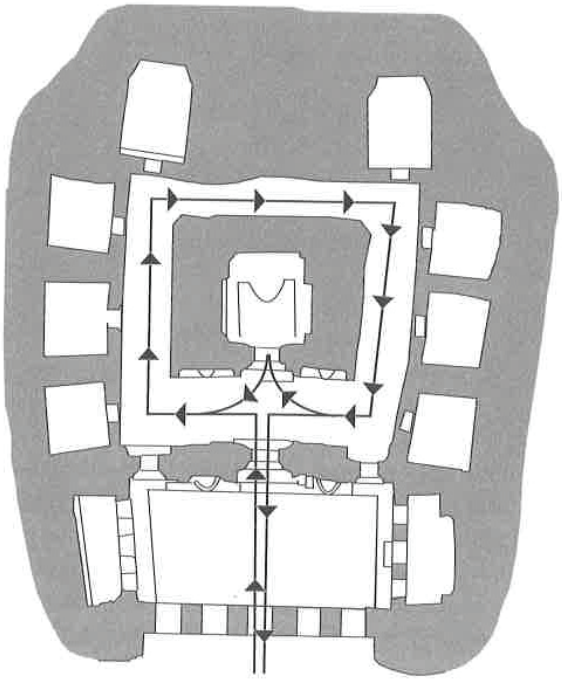


Figure 2: Circumambulation Path in Aurangabad Cave 7 (c. Sixth Century CE). Source: Fogelin (2015); author: James Fergusson.

and 100 CE, preserve early residential cells, assembly halls, and ritual spaces carved into rock. These sites use an architectural vocabulary of an enclosure of monastic cells around a central courtyard (Fig. 1). A central shrine facing the main entrance contained Buddha images. This basic plan is also seen in eastern Deccan at Nagarjunakonda (c. third-fifth centuries CE), in Central India at Sanchi (Monastery 45, c. tenth century CE), and in Northwestern India at Takht-i-Bahi (c. first century BCE-seventh centuries CE) (Fogelin, 2015, p. 159). Significant regional variations are seen in some cases. For example, at Nagarjunakonda, a pair of apsidal caityas were incorporated within the square plan (Fogelin, 2015, p. 161). At Bagh, a stūpa replaced Buddha images in the central shrine within the monastic complex (Mitra, 1971, pp. 99–100), while designated circumambulation paths were added to the shrines containing the Buddha images in some vihāras at Aurangabad and Ellora (Fig. 2) (Fogelin, 2015, pp. 163–64). Early monasteries in the Gangetic plain, such as Piprahwa, follow this typical square layout but are often built of brick and may have been two or more stories high (Mitra, 1971, p. 81).

Overall, archaeological remains suggest that early vihāras were modest in scale, primarily residential, and closely associated with stūpas that served as the principal ritual focus (Fogelin, 2015, pp. 184–86). At this stage, monastic architecture appears flexible and experimental, with no single dominant typology. During the early historic period, monasteries gradually took the form of freestanding quadrangle- or courtyard monasteries, especially in Eastern regions.

3. The Emergence of Courtyard Vihāras and Architectural Standardization

By the Gupta period and into the early medieval phase, the courtyard vihāra emerged as a dominant architectural form. These monasteries typically consist of a square or rectangular enclosure organized around a central open courtyard, with monastic cells arranged along the perimeter and a shrine (gandhakuṭī)

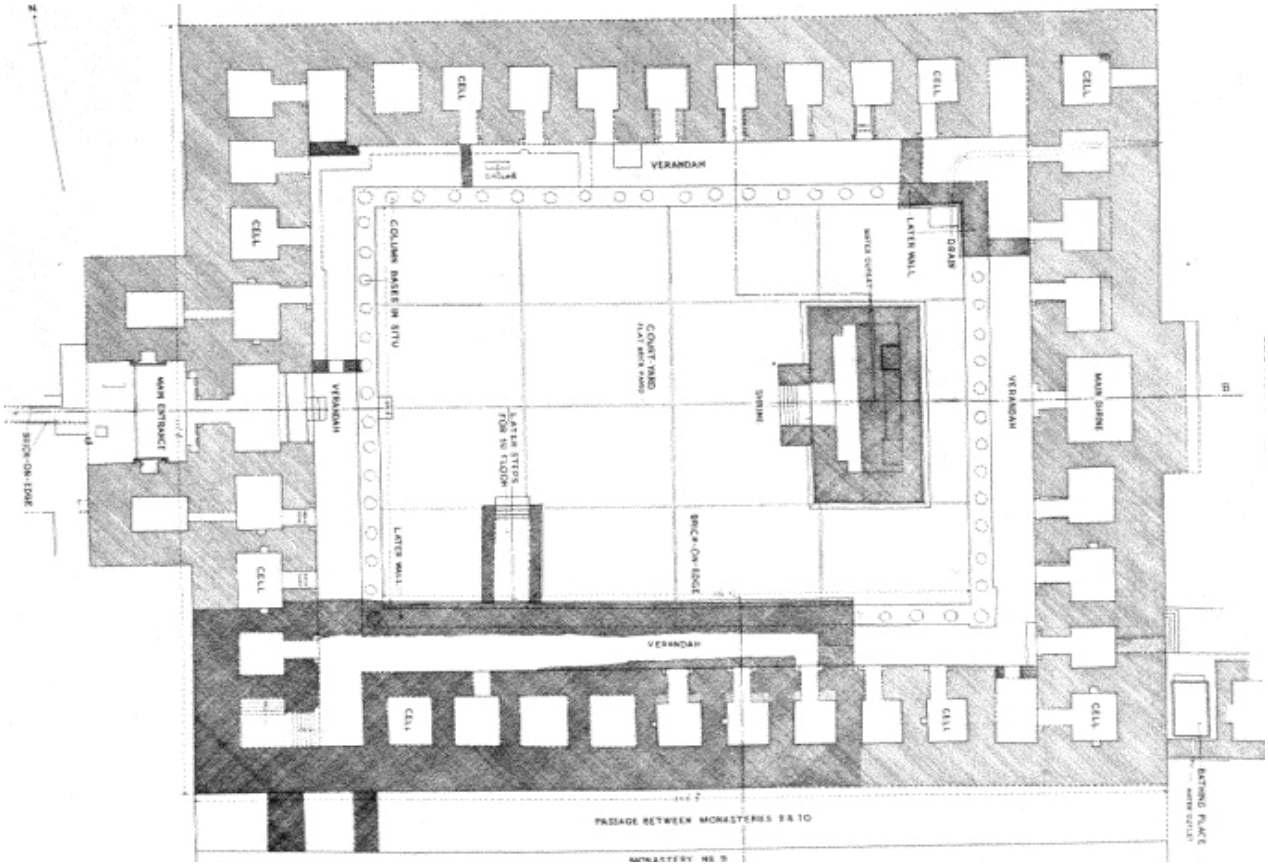


Figure 3: Plan of a Typical Early Medieval Courtyard Monastery as Seen at Nālandā Site No. 10 (c. Ninth-Tenth Century CE). Source: *Annual Report Archaeological Survey of India* (1930–34) Plate LXXII.

placed in the rear wall facing the entrance (Fig. 3). This layout was seen across much of India by the mid-first millennium CE and continued to be adapted in various forms over subsequent centuries. Its widespread adoption may be related to its articulation within the Vinaya, primarily the Mūlasarvāstivāda, a corpus of monastic regulations likely compiled in the early centuries CE in Northwestern India, where one section, called *Śayanāsanavastu*, is dedicated to monastic architectural plans, including a brief description of a quadrangular monastery:

"A monastery with three cells (tri-layanaṃ) should have the Perfume Chamber (gandhakuṭi) in the middle, with two cells on either side. A similar arrangement is applicable in monasteries with three sides and nine cells (*tri-śāle nava-layanāni*), and thus too for one with four cells; in which case the Perfume Chamber is situated opposite the entrance hall (*dvāra-koṣṭhaka*)" (Schopen, 2000, p. 153).

According to Max Deeg (2021, pp. 93–105), this description can be understood as a recorded architectural convention prevalent at the time the Mūlasarvāstivāda was composed. This model with a *gandhakuṭī* at the center of the rear wall becomes a common typology across the subcontinent after the sixth century.

Sites such as Sirpur in Chhattisgarh, Nalanda in southern Bihar, Moghalmari in West Bengal, and monasteries in Bangladesh exemplify this architectural trend (Copplestone, 2024, p. 28). At these large institutional centers, the courtyard units seems to have served as a multipurpose space for residence (monastic cells), ritual activity (personal and common shrines), water management (drainage and well), and communal interaction. The integration of shrine spaces within residential compounds reflects changing devotional practices, particularly the increasing prominence of Buddha and Bodhisattva images (Copplestone, 2024, pp. 33–35; Fogelin, 2015, pp. 164–73; & Shimada, 2021, pp. 53–61). Lars Fogelin has argued that this architectural standardization corresponds with broader institutional developments in Buddhism, including the expansion of monastic landholdings, the growth of scholastic activity, and closer relationships between monasteries and political authorities (Fogelin, 2015, pp. 168–79). In the backdrop of these crucial factors, both architectural standardization and the monumentality of early medieval monasteries can be understood as material expressions of institutional reorientation during this period. This standardization, however, did not result in architectural uniformity but rather established a flexible framework within which regional materials, construction practices, and institutional priorities continued to shape monastic space.

Differences in scale, construction techniques, material use, and spatial organization indicate that vihāra architecture continued to respond to regional conditions and long-standing local building traditions. Rock-cut monasteries, for example, remained an active architectural mode well into the sixth and seventh centuries CE and beyond, as evidenced by large complexes such as Sankaran in the eastern Deccan, where rock-cut spaces coexist with brick-built structures (Shimada, 2021, p. 61). In Eastern India, brick architecture was not only becoming increasingly dominant but was also accompanied by the emergence of distinctive temple-monastery layouts. As demonstrated by Louis Copplestone, early medieval sites such as Paharpur, Shalban Vihāra, and Antichak illustrate this synthesis during the eighth-ninth centuries, when monastic residential spaces and monumental shrine architecture were closely integrated (Copplestone, 2024, pp. 91–105 & 125–29).

The growing reliance on brick construction in Eastern India reflects both material trends and evolving monastic typologies. Brick facilitated large-scale construction while simultaneously allowing for phased rebuilding, repair, and expansion, making it particularly well-suited to long-lived monastic institutions. This material flexibility enabled monasteries to undergo repeated phases of architectural modification without disrupting the complex's fundamental spatial logic. As Copplestone demonstrates, between the tenth and

thirteenth centuries, construction activity at major monastic sites increasingly focused on renovation, the addition of subsidiary shrines and structures around established cores, and, in some cases, the reconstruction of entire buildings, such as at Somapura and Shalban Vihāra (Copplestone, 2024, pp. 129–33).

These material and structural developments also had implications for how space was organized and differentiated within monastic compounds. Archaeological evidence from several early medieval sites, including Lalpahari in Bihar and Paharpur in Bangladesh, indicates that certain monastic cells were treated differently from others. Painted surfaces, raised platforms, and distinctive decorative schemes appear only in selected spaces, raising questions about their use and occupants. These architectural distinctions find a close parallel in textual sources, most notably in the account of the seventh-century Chinese monk Yijing, who records that learned monks (*bhadantas*) were assigned superior cells at the four corners of quadrangular monasteries (Deeg, 2021, pp. 117–18, 123n159). The case of Lalpahari is further unique, as several cells within this hilltop monastery feature raised platforms with attached drainage channels (Fig. 4), suggesting the presence of personal shrines or ritual installations embedded within individual residential units (Kumar et al., 2019, pp. 80-81). These features highlight the multifunctional nature of monastic cells, which could serve simultaneously as residences, sites of personal devotion, and markers of monastic status. The monastery also increasingly functioned as an institution of economic and political power. Large monasteries accumulated land grants, controlled agricultural production, and exercised authority over surrounding territories. During the medieval period, architectural features such as fortification and bastion-like projections also became frequent. Excavations at Lalpahari and Jagjivanpur in West Bengal have revealed bastions, while colonial survey reports record fortification at numerous sites, including Tetrawan, Ghosrawan, and Dariyapur Parvati (Amar, 2021, pp. 143n12). Remains of fortification surrounded by a moat can still be noticed in Bihar Sharif, where Uddaṇḍapura Mahāvihāra once stood (Ahlawat, 2025, pp. 24–27). These elements suggest that monasteries in medieval Eastern India consciously projected authority and legitimacy through built form, positioning themselves as dominant institutions within the landscape. Such architectural strategies of authority and spatial control were not limited to Buddhist institutions and continued to shape monastic architecture in the region well into the medieval period.

Architectural and functional parallels to this mode of monastic organization can be observed in Daśanāmī Śaiva monasteries in Bihar. The largest of these,



Fig. 4: Monastic Cell with a Personal Shrine and a Water Outlet at Lalpahari (c. Eleventh Century CE). Photograph by Shaashi Ahlawat.

located at Bodh Gaya, is architecturally articulated in the manner of an elite residential complex, incorporating bastion-like elements and a strongly hierarchical internal layout. Within the monastery, the central courtyard is organized around a principal shrine associated with the seat of the chief mahant, while residential cells for monks, storage areas for agricultural produce, and spaces for processing and managing resources are clearly differentiated (Fig. 5). Such spatial zoning foregrounds the authority of the monastic head and integrates ritual, administrative, and economic functions within a single architectural framework. Daśanāmī institutions were active in the region from the sixteenth century onward and, particularly under Mughal patronage, accumulated extensive landholdings through grants, eventually controlling thousands of villages. Their subsequent occupation of earlier Buddhist centers, including Mahabodhi and Nalanda (Geary, 2013, pp. 366–83; & Ahlawat, 2025, pp. 251–54), reflects not only religious and political change but also the reuse and adaptation of established monastic modes and architectural forms developed in medieval Eastern India.

Among these, Nalanda, in particular, is often presented as a paradigmatic example of early medieval Buddhist monastic architecture, yet closer examination reveals significant architectural diversity and evidence of late medieval transformation. Archaeological material at Nalanda indicates multiple construction phases spanning from the seventh to the eleventh century, reflecting evolving architectural practices and broader cultural interactions (Copplestone, 2024, pp. 94–104). Subsequent phases of transformation become apparent when considering features such as the vaulted chambers at Site No. 1, true arches at Site No. 10, and stone pillars at Site No. 11 (Ahlawat, 2025, pp. 93–114). These elements, which can be dated between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, suggest engagement with architectural techniques circulating across Eastern India and beyond during the late medieval period. These transformations complicate narratives of abrupt decline following the waning of large Buddhist institutions in Eastern India. They point to gradual processes of adaptation and hybridization, in which both local and transregional architectural ideas manifested simultaneously.



Fig. 5: Courtyard at Daśanāmī Monastery at Bodh Gaya
It consist a shrine dedicated to the Chief Mahant in the centre (left) surrounded by residential cells and other functional parts of the complex. Photograph by Abhishek S. Amar.

4. Transregional Connections and the Bahāḥ-Bahī Monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley

The late medieval architectural features observed at Nalanda offer an important comparative framework for interpreting the bahāḥ and bahī monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley. These Newar Buddhist monastic complexes are often treated as distinct or isolated traditions, yet their architectural organization reveals clear affinities with earlier vihāra typologies of Northern and Eastern India.

One of the most evident continuities is the courtyard-centered plan. Bahāḥ and bahī typically consist of residential and ritual spaces arranged around a central open courtyard, a configuration that closely parallels quadrangle or courtyard vihāras seen across the subcontinent. Chambers like *digis* as spaces for elders *and āgama*s as private shrines of the *saṃgha'*s presiding Tantric deities reflect arrangements observed at sites like Paharpur and Lalpahari in medieval Eastern India. The presence of these forms of spatial logic suggests the transmission of monastic planning principles across long distances. At the same time, similar to well-known Eastern Indian examples, fortified monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley were not unusual, as several instances are known from the outskirts of city centers (Locke, 1985, p. 485n17). Material traditions further underscore these connections. Brick construction, a defining feature of early medieval monasteries in Eastern India, became central to monastic architecture in the Kathmandu Valley through the Malla period (c. 1201-1779 CE). The sustained use of brick reflects both local preferences and participation in a shared architectural tradition. While ornamental bricks and stucco plaster designs are more widespread across Eastern India, Newar builders transformed this tradition through extensive use of timber elements, including carved struts, wooden pillars, ornate windows, and elaborately articulated façades. These features give bahāḥ and bahī complexes a distinctive visual identity while retaining underlying structural principles that resonate with earlier vihāra forms and their elaborate forms seen across Eastern India.

The reinterpretation of space is equally significant. In the Kathmandu Valley, monastic courtyards function not only as ritual centers but also as integral components of dense urban neighborhoods. Bahāḥ and bahī complexes are embedded within residential blocks across the city centers of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur, especially as they housed married monks and their families since the thirteenth century CE (Locke, 1985, pp. 4–5). As such, the courtyards serve as public spaces, a parallel of which is unknown from the rest of the Indian subcontinent. This embeddedness of bahāḥ and bahī complexes in local social life allows for the transformation of a relatively simple monastic layout into a complex urban institution, unique to Nepal's context.

While the architectural principle of quadrangle vihāra is undeniable in bahāḥ and bahī complexes, it is pertinent not to portray Nepal as a passive recipient of 'Indic' forms. Recent scholars, including Tuladhar-Douglas (2006), have argued for a more bi-directional flow of ideas and culture across Nepal and Eastern India. This was carried out through the movement of Nepalese scholars travelling between the Valley and regions such as Magadha in present-day Bihar (Tuladhar-Douglas, 2006, pp. 137–38). Seen in this light, bahāḥ and bahī monasteries exemplify how transregional architectural idioms were neither passively inherited nor rigidly preserved but actively reinterpreted through local craft traditions and socio-religious structures. This reinterpretation is an ongoing process as modern complexes only loosely follow the earlier forms. The bahāḥ-bahī architecture thus offers a critical lens for examining how Buddhist monastic forms continued to circulate, mutate, and acquire new meanings across regions, even in periods when institutional Buddhism had waned elsewhere on the subcontinent.

5. Conclusion

An examination of vihāra typologies across India reveals Buddhist monastic architecture as a dynamic and interconnected tradition shaped by local conditions, institutional trajectories, and long-distance cultural

exchange. From early experimental monastic forms to standardized courtyard vihāras and late medieval architectural transformations, Buddhist monasteries continually adapted to new ritual, social, and political contexts. Late medieval modifications at Nalanda demonstrate that Buddhist architecture in Eastern India remained engaged with broader architectural currents well into periods often characterized as 'decline'. Using Nalanda as a comparative framework further allows bahāḥ and bahī monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley to be understood as continually evolving phenomena. These monasteries exhibit sophisticated reinterpretations of long-standing monastic architectural principles known across the Indian subcontinent, as their local renditions evolved to the specific context of the Valley. Seen in this light, the bahāḥ and bahī complexes of Nepal represent a continuation of transregional architectural traditions, reshaped merely over a few centuries through local materials, craft practices, and urban contexts. More than anywhere else in the subcontinent, the Buddhist monastic architecture of Nepal therefore needs to be approached beyond a fixed typological sequence, as a living architectural system marked by regional-transregional play.

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Secularity and Architectural Typology of Buddhist Monasteries

बौद्ध विहारहरूको लौकिकता तथा वास्तुकला प्ररूपक

Taiken Kyuma

Professor, Faculty of Humanities, Law and Economics, Mie University, Japan
E-mail : kyuma.human@mie-u.ac.jp

टाइकेन क्युमा

प्रोफेसर, मानविकी, कानून तथा अर्थशास्त्र संकाय, मिइ विश्वविद्यालय, जापान

विषयवस्तुको सारांश

यस अनुसन्धानपत्रले दक्षिण एशिया र नेपालका शास्त्रीय उल्लेख तथा वास्तुकलाको तुलनात्मक अध्ययनमार्फत लौकिक जनजीवन (secularity) र विहार वास्तुकलाबीचको सम्बन्ध बारे सहि बुझाइ विकास गर्ने जमर्को गरेको छ । यसमा प्रा. य्युगेन तानेमुराज्यूको अनुसन्धानलाई आधार मानी यस अध्ययनले क्रियासंग्रहपञ्जिकाको अध्याय ४ लाई वराहमिहिरकृत वृहत्संहिताको अध्याय ५३ सँग तुलना गरी पुनःपरीक्षण गरिएको छ । क्रियासंग्रहपञ्जिकाले विहारका प्रकारहरू वर्गीकरण गरी तिनका शुभ-अशुभ फलहरूको विस्तृत विवेचना प्रस्तुत गर्दा, बृहत्संहिताले देवालयको सट्टा राजकीय तथा उच्चवर्गीय आवासका समानान्तर प्रकारहरूलाई निर्दिष्ट गरेको छ । यसले विहार वास्तुकलामा अन्तर्निहित "लौकिक जनजीवन" को आयामलाई प्रतिविम्बित गर्दछ । साथै, क्रियासंग्रहपञ्जिकाको फलाफलमा दिइएको विशेष जोडले पुण्यसञ्चय सिद्धान्त तथा दातृ-संरक्षकको गहिरो संलग्नता देखाउँछ । यसले विहार संरचनालाई धार्मिक दृष्टिले महत्त्वपूर्ण र सामाजिक दृष्टिले समन्वित संस्थाका रूपमा रहेको देखाउँछ । यसपछि यो लेखले नेपालमा विद्यमान वास्तुकलाका केही प्रमाणहरूतर्फ ध्यान केन्द्रित गरेको छ । विशेषतः निप्पोन इन्स्टिच्युट अफ टेक्नोलोजीको अनुसन्धानमा पाइएको पाटन दरबारको मूलचोक र सुन्दरीचोकसँग मुस्याबहाः, खुँबहाः र छुस्याबहाः जस्ता प्रमुख बहाःहरूबीच देखिएका संरचनात्मक समानताहरूको विश्लेषण गरेको छ । भित्ताका सतहको डिजाइन, मध्यरेखाको दायाँबायाँ समान हुने गरी बनाइएको संरचना, एक केन्द्रमा दृष्टिगत जोड, चोकशैलीमा आधारित योजना जस्ता समान विशेषताहरूले दरबार र विहार वास्तुकला एउटै अवधारणा अनुसार सञ्चालित भएको प्रमाणित गर्दछ । यी उदाहरणहरूमा पूजाविधि अभ्यास र स्थानिक संरचनाहरूमा पनि अन्तरसम्बन्ध रहेको कुरा देखाउँछ । यी निष्कर्षहरू अनुसार नेपालको परिवेशमा धार्मिक र लौकिक वास्तुकलाबीचको अपेक्षित विभाजनको स्पष्टता हराउँछ । अन्ततः, यस अध्ययनले प्रारम्भिक शैव आगमिक ग्रन्थहरूमा उल्लिखित देवालयहरूको विवेचनालाई समेट्दै यी अवलोकनहरूलाई भारतवर्षीय वास्तुकला परिवेशभित्र स्थापित गर्दछ । यसबाट क्रियासंग्रहपञ्जिकामा वर्णित विहार निर्माणसम्बन्धी प्रावधानहरू *वृहत्संहिता*का दरबार निर्माण गर्ने प्रावधानहरूबाट मात्र नभई शैव देवालय-परम्पराबाट समेत प्रभावित भएको देखिन्छ । शाक्य / वज्राचार्य शिल्पी–भिक्षुहरूको भूमिकासमेत समेटेर शास्त्र ग्रन्थ, वास्तुकला तथा सामाजिक दृष्टिकोणको समेत समग्र अध्ययनमार्फत यस लेखले नेपाली बहाःबही, राजदरवार र देवालयहरू सबै एक साझा वास्तु-संस्कृति अन्तर्गत विकसित भएको कुरा देखाउँछ । यसर्थ, नेपाली विहारहरूलाई पृथक् धार्मिक संरचनाका रूपमा मात्र नभई दक्षिण एशियाभर फैलिएको लौकिक जनजीवन, धार्मिक व्यवस्था र शिल्पी सञ्जालबीचको गहन अन्तरक्रियाबाट उत्पन्न स्थापत्य संस्कृतिको रूपमा बुझ्नुपर्छ ।

Keywords: Secularity; Buddhist Monastic Architecture; Architectural Typology; *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā; Bṛhatsaṃhitā;* Palace Architecture; Bahāḥ and Bahī; Ritual and Merit Theory.

1. Secularity in Monastic Architecture

Notably, monastic architecture typology is closely related to that of secular architecture[1]. In his insightful essay ("Secularity of Buddhist Monasteries as Seen in Monastery Construction Rituals"), Prof. Ryugen Tanemura states the following (Tanemura, 2024, pp. 2–3):

> "In discussing the layout of monasteries, Chapter 4 of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* divides them into four types and explains the fruit/outcome of each. Similar prescriptions can be found in Chapter 53 of Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṃhitā*. Of exceptional interest is the fact that the prescriptions in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* do not refer to plans for temples but to residences for personages such as the king, commanding general, and crown prince. The reason why the layout of palaces should be applied to the layout of monasteries is unclear, but this may be a partial expression of the secularity of monasteries."

He points out that Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (ca. sixth century CE), which provides a detailed account of secular architecture, should be considered when discussing the typology of Buddhist monasteries. Prof. Tanemura also compares the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* with the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (Chap. 53, vv. 31–42) from the description of outcomes (Tanemura, 2004, p. 14):

> "The major difference between the two texts is that the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* provides us with more information on auspicious and inauspicious outcomes. For instance, while the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* does not mention a house with one hall, the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* explains outcomes of a shrine with one hall. While the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* simply states that a house with four halls is auspicious, the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* teaches concrete outcomes specific to each type of shrine with four halls."

According to Prof. Tanemura, the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* is more focused on the (auspicious and inauspicious) outcomes of each type of shrine. We may also assume that the author of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* is more conscious of explaining the merit accumulation theory to donors and encouraging them to build a large shrine. In this respect, it is also a desideratum to ask the extent to which the monastic structure described in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* was secularized or open to the secular world[2].

2. Royal Palace and Buddhist Monasteries

The structural similarities between the Nepalese royal palace (as a symbol of secular power) and Buddhist monasteries have been discussed in greater detail by the research group of the Nippon Institute of Technology. I would like to draw attention to one of their conclusions, which succinctly shows the structural similarities between the *Mul-chok* and the *Sundari-chok* in the royal palace of Patan and some significant bahāḥ (i.e., Musyā, Khuṃ, and Chusyā) (Nippon Institute of Technology Research Mission, 1985, p. 62):

1. As for the role of architecture in the typology of Nepalese Buddhist monasteries, cf. Gellner, 2001, p. 159: "... Nearly all of these differences between the bahī and the bahāḥ can be interpreted as illustrating or meant to illustrate the closer proximity of the former to the genuine monasticism of the past. The architecture of the bahī is indeed clearly monastic, and the circumambulatory passage around the main deity goes back to the rock chapels of western India of the last century BCE, in which the main cult object was a caitya, not a statue of the Buddha. However, architecture is one thing, and social rules and customs are another ... It would seem that the members of the bahī deliberately constructed an archaic identity for themselves by not changing the architecture of their monasteries, and by calling themselves 'celibate monks' (though they were married) in opposition to the 'Śākya lineage' monks of the bahāḥ. Unfortunately most of this is a matter of historical reconstruction …" The dichotomy between "architecture" and "social rules and customs" should be reconsidered from different perspectives (secular architecture, other religions such as Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, etc.). However, it is important to bear the concept of "historical reconstruction" in mind, which is not irrelevant to the context of heritage preservation.

2. It remains questionable whether bahī, which could have been designed for monastic life in its origin, is more closely related to the description of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* (rather than bahāḥ).

> "The examination of the *Mul Chok* and the *Sundari Chok* in the royal palace of Patan, as well as the study of the three examples of *Baha*, served to clarify the fact that the composition of the wall surfaces surrounding the courtyard were all very much alike. The differences which exist among courtyard-type buildings are basically due to the iconological differences in the applied ornamentation."

Interestingly, a list of concrete similarities is also provided in the conclusion section (Nippon Institute, 1985, p. 62; cf. also p. 138 in Japanese):

> (1) clear articulation accomplished by the projected or indented wall surfaces within each individual wing
> (2) the presence of a visible central axis found within each articulated wall-surface unit
> (3) the tendency for the different designs of the overall forms of openings in the wall surfaces to establish a central point of visual focus

Future interdisciplinary research will enable scholars working on literal sources to consult such architectural details[3]. The research group of Nippon Institute of Technology also raises the following thought-provoking issue (*ibid.* p. 62; cf. also p. 138 in Japanese):

> "In view of these common characteristics, it can be said that the architectural examples which we have dealt with in this thesis affect a compositional method in which form is derived from the proliferation of individual units."

In my view, this depends on the expertise and network of artisans in/beyond Nepal, who should have worked on such "individual units" in architecture. More importantly, monks (such as Śākya and Vajrācārya),

3. In this regard, it should be noted that Watanabe et al. (1998) have proposed to classify Nepalese Buddhist monasteries (bahāḥ, bahī, and a mixed form of both) into four types (I to IV), focusing not on their terminology but on their architectural styles (such as shrine structure and the openness/closeness of space). Cf. Watanabe et al., 1998, p. 4 (English version) and p. 121 (Japanese version). Such a perspective will serve as an effective tool when we try to take a closer look at the network and reality of artisans.



Figure 1: Mul Chok Courtyard Looking South
Photograph by Stanislav Klimek, October, 2006 (Source : Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust, 2006, p. 51)

classified as specific castes in Nepalese society, also live as artisans engaged in crafts[4]. This contrasts starkly with Buddhist monasteries in India.

The abovementioned similarities between the royal palace and three bahāḥs (i.e., Musyā, Khuṃ, and Chusyā) suggest that secular power (related to Hinduism as well, such as Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism) is not irrelevant to monastic architecture, and the network of artisans (apart from the syncretic relationship of different religions) should always be considered when dealing with the relationship between Buddhist monasteries and secularity.

Let us turn to another significant study on the architecture of Nepalese royal buildings. The structural features of the Mul Chok are summarized by Kurotsu (1991) as follows[5]:

(1) Built independently
(2) A two-story courtyard-style building with an approximately square floor plan
(3) Each room on the first floor is independent of the others and is arranged in a row
(4) No structural columns are erected in the rooms' center or within the walls
(5) The courtyard has a square shape with *dalān* on three sides
(6) The courtyard has a north-south axis, with the sacred room located at the southern end and the entrance located perpendicular to this axis

The author points out that the five characteristics of the Mul Chok, i.e., (1)–(5), are shared by Chusyābahāḥ. He also adds that both have the following common characteristics (Kurotsu, 1991, p. 44):

(1) The eaves of the buildings surrounding the courtyard are covered with statues of gods
(2) The recessed part of the wall corresponds to the partition wall position

His argument clearly shows that the Mul Chok and Chusyābahāḥ share the spatial function of ritual and worship use. As far as the Nepalese architectural tradition is concerned, it seems difficult to draw a distinct line between royal palace buildings (with religious aspects) and Buddhist monasteries.

3. Temple Design in Early Śaivism

Given that Nepalese Buddhism and Śaivism are interrelated in the Kathmandu Valley, the typology of Śaiva temples should also be considered. It has already been pointed out that plans for different temple types are given in early Śaiva scriptures (Mills, 2019)[6].

In this admirable work, the author also provides a comparative table of temple types given in different sources including the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (Mills 2019, pp. 610–611, Table 6). It is worthwhile to consider the possibility that the monastery types described in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* was influenced not only by the prescription/description of temple types in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* but also by relevant passages in such early Śaiva sources[7].

4. Conclusion: Implications for the Study of Nepalese Monasteries

One of our future tasks is to trace the origins of Nepalese monasteries using Hindu (not only Śaiva but also Vaiṣṇava) sources, as well as the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*. In the case of India, as mentioned above, residence types of kings, ministers, etc. as described in the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (Chap. 53) are parallel to the shrine types described in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*. Regarding Nepalese monasteries, structural similarities have been argued

4. For a concise and clear-cut summary of this argument, cf. Shakya, 2026, p. 5.
5. Kurotsu, 1991, p. 40 – originally written in Japanese and translated into English by the present author. The term *dalān* means a room open to the ouside on the courtyard side.
6. Mills, 2019, pp. 52–58, where the author enumerates a variety of temple types: Meru, Mandara, Kailāsa, Bhadra, Gaja, Vimāna, Siṃha, Haṃsa, Vardhamāna Śrīvatsa, Saṃpūrṇaśāla Śrīvatsa, Khaṇḍaśāla Śrīvatsa, Nandivardhana Śrīvatsa, Garuḍa, Valabhī/vaḍabhī, Caturaśra, Aṣṭāśra, Ṣoḍaśāśra, Padma, Gṛharāja (=Agni), Vṛtta, Caturaśrāyata and Vṛttāyata. The genealogy of these different temple types will be helpful in analyzing that of Nepalese Buddhist monasteries.
7. As for the terminology of prescription/description, cf. Mills, 2019, p. 21: "The texts direct the reader in a prescriptive optative mode." I wonder whether such prescriptive sources on monastery/temple construction actually describe artisans' manuals/experiences/skills.

between the royal palace of Patan (the Mul Chok and the Sundari Chok) and the three bahāḥs (i.e., Musyā, Khuṃ, and Chusyā). Is this a sheer coincidence? Or should we combine these two facts? The second option will lead us to consider the origins of bahāḥ/bahī (as well as the relationship of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* with Nepal) in a broader context.

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(This is a revised and enlarged version of my presentation at the symposium.)

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Panel Discussion
"Past, Present and Future of Bahāḥ & Bahī"

सामूहिक छलफल - "बहा:बहीको विगत, वर्तमान र भविष्य"

Scholars' Commentary
विज्ञहरूको टिप्पणी



Prof. Sudarshan Raj Tiwari, Tribhuvan University

As I listened to the three presentations, I felt that this is one of the rare occasions when the architecture of bahāḥ and bahī has been studied from a textual perspective. Generally, these monuments have been examined in terms of form, construction, or material artefacts. But here, for the first time, I am seeing a methodological attempt to correlate textual prescriptions with existing architectural elements in the Kathmandu Valley. I find this approach both noble and commendable, and I would like to congratulate all the researchers involved.

I was particularly surprised by the similarities between the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and other architectural traditions in the Valley. As Prof. Tanemura mentioned, the *Śaiva Pratiṣṭhā Tantra* itself was based on earlier tantric documents. These texts from the 10th and 11th centuries show clear parallels with the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* and the *Mānasāra Vāstuśāstra*. So the similarities are understandable. What surprises me, however, is how sincerely and systematically the prescriptions of a document written in the 11th century appear to have been followed from site selection and layout to ritual consecration, construction processes, and the accommodation of deities within architectural space. Architecture here becomes ritualized; society is brought into the building, and the building becomes a socio-cultural space.

Regarding Vajrayāna development in the Kathmandu Valley, I would caution against assuming that it was merely informed by Tibetan and Indian traditions. My own studies suggest that Vajrayāna may have originated here much earlier, perhaps in the 4th or 5th century. There was certainly mutual exchange. Tibetans learned from us, and later there was reverse influence as well. It is a cyclical process of cultural interaction. As for the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, it does not seem to clearly distinguish between bahāḥ and bahī, at least as presented here. However, when we examine the construction stage and especially the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, we see a cosmological system that parallels the 81-square Vāstupuruṣa maṇḍala described in *Mānasāra*, but with Vajrayāna deities occupying the cosmic grid. This is not merely architectural planning; it is Buddhist cosmology expressed in space.

I was very impressed by the field verification of the textual hypotheses. The discussion of the Nāga-based proportional system and the approximate 22-meter dimension was particularly interesting. In Nepal, we use a multiple-of-seven measurement system, whereas in the broader Indian system, multiples of eight are more common. This difference significantly affects the dimensions of units such as angula and hasta. For example, in Nepal, the middle aṅgula appears to be consistently used, and one hasta with one 'ku' or hasta taken as 25 aṅgulas for bahāḥ/bahī works out to approximately 55 centimeters, as I have discussed in my earlier work. This distinctive measurement logic deserves further study. We may need to clarify whether the half-hasta should be read as 12 or perhaps 12.5 units. Similarly, the numeralization of 'trayodaśa' in the vāstunāga śloka stated in

Prof. Tanemura's keynote as 12.75 should be revised as 13.33. Such analysis could refine our understanding of Nepalese architectural proportioning.

In terms of typology, the Ekśālā, Dviśālā, Triśālā, and Catuśālā systems are important. Most bahāḥ appear to follow the catuśālā arrangement. The Svastika pattern, in particular, seems highly significant. It explains the four staircases and the dalāna system and may be closely related to Vajrayāna spatial logic. Further research on Svastika and Rucaka patterns could deepen our understanding of monastic life within these spaces.

I was also intrigued by the detailed study of doorways, gavākṣa (pasūkā) windows, columns, and cornices. The transformation of square sections into hexagonal or multi-sided forms and eventually circular profiles in timber posts may reduce structural strength, yet it must carry ritual or symbolic meaning. Such ritual-structural relationships require further investigation. The reference to ratnaśilā in the text is also noteworthy. It suggests early awareness of durability and moisture protection, possibly dating back to the Licchavi period. This indicates that technical knowledge and ritual knowledge were intertwined from an early stage.

Finally, I would suggest further investigation into how the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala informs the placement of Kvāpādyo and the circumambulatory system in bahī structures. If we can explore these aspects in more detail, it will greatly enhance both scholarship and conservation practice. Many of the principles of properly constructed bahāḥ are gradually being lost because we have lost the knowledge system itself. If we can revive and properly understand that knowledge system, I believe it will contribute significantly to better conservation and reconstruction in the future. I look forward to seeing how this research develops further.



Prof. Mohan Moorti Pant, Kwopa Engineering College

Listening to all the presentations today, I would like to share a few reflections. First, the symposium was clearly guided by the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, and Prof. Tanemura's introduction was very important. His attempt to locate Kuladatta in Nepal through textual references was convincing, and the discussion of Vāstunāga was particularly interesting. However, regarding the measurement of 12.75 aṅgula, I feel we need to be cautious. Vāstunāga is a metaphysical concept, so its dimensions may have been derived from existing buildings rather than the other way around. Interpretation must move in both directions between text and built form. We should be careful not to take the literature for granted.

Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya's explanation of the 81 deities and the directional deities arranged in a grid was very informative. Still, I wonder whether this grid truly guided the construction process, or whether it was mainly used ritually at the time of consecration. This point needs further clarification. The discussion of Nani-bahāḥ was new to me. It would be useful to examine more closely whether it is truly a distinct category or part of another spatial tradition. The diagram showing the relationship between main bahāḥ, kacā bahāḥ, nani, and lāchi was excellent, especially in demonstrating how monastic architecture integrates into the urban fabric.

The presentation comparing textual prescriptions with actual architectural planning was very valuable. Such studies are rare in Nepal's architectural history. At the same time, monastic architecture should not be understood only as a physical structure. It is a dynamic ritual space. We need to examine more closely how ritual and secular activities shaped the design. The *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* does not explain everything; local needs, topography, and practical wisdom must also be considered.

The iconographic study, especially of the three maṇḍalas, was also very interesting. It would be worthwhile to explore whether these have any relationship with the 81-grid planning system. Dr. Lata's presentation on chronological development was important. Understanding earlier forms helps us see how texts and practice interacted. Monasteries are not isolated monuments; they shape the city itself—its structure and history. This urban dimension should not be overlooked. For conservation, we must understand not only later manuals but also earlier Buddhist literature to grasp the guiding principles behind construction.

Finally, the discussion on secular connections especially links with palace architecture and residential courtyards raises important questions. The similarities in layout suggest a close relationship, but we still need to determine the direction of influence. Monastic architecture is also connected to broader social, economic, and communal systems. These are my general impressions from today's presentations. Thank you very much.



Prof. Bajra Raj Shakya, Lotus Research Center

I would like to share two of my experiences related to this text. We have already heard very important presentations, which are significant for the preservation and promotion of Newar Buddhism in Kathmandu. I once wished to have the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* translated into Nepal Bhasa and get it published, as our advisor, the late Dibyavajra Bajracharya, had encouraged us to do so. Unfortunately, during my tenure as the president of the Lotus Research Centre, this could not be accomplished due to various circumstances. Therefore, I am very happy that at least a symposium on this subject has taken place today.

First, we constructed Vajrayāna Mahāvihāra in Lumbini in accordance with the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*. For this, we needed land and approached the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The team was led by Dr. Naresh Man Bajracharya, and included Dhammavati Guruma, Manik Ratna Sakyavamsa, and myself. Naresh Guruju always carried a thyāsaphu manuscript of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and explained to the ministry officials that while many countries had built monasteries in Lumbini according to their own traditions, we did not yet have one built according to our own system of Nepālamaṇḍala, i.e., as described in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*. Eventually, the minister granted us land on the condition that we need to lay at least the foundation within one year. The communities responded enthusiastically—Lalitpur raised 33 lakhs, Bhaktapur 34 lakhs, Kathmandu more than 1 crore 60 lakhs, and Banepa and Kirtipur also contributed generously. Within a year, we completed not only the foundation but also the entire ground floor.

Secondly, about ten years ago during the renovation of Svayambhū Caitya, Badri Ratna Bajracharya performed rituals in Shantipur and once explained to me the deeper meaning of the caitya. Swayambhu is the essence—intangible, beyond space and time—while Svayambhū Caitya is its tangible form. The caitya embodies five elements: the square base represents earth; the circular form above represents water; the triangle represents fire; the crescent-like form represents wind; and above all is nāda, representing space. These correspond to colors and the Five Buddhas—Ratnasambhava (earth), Akṣobhya (water), Amitābha (fire), Amoghasiddhi (wind), and Vairocana (space). In this way, the entire system of Newar Buddhism is symbolically grounded in the caitya. I may be a little forgetful now, as I am approaching ninety years of age. Please excuse me. Thank you very much.



Asst. Prof. Sanjay Shakya, Lumbini Buddhist University

I would like to reflect on the possibilities regarding the vihāras and their existence, based on different variables in our understanding. In Pāli literature, Buddha speaks about five types of settlements for bhikṣus. Mary Slusser, in her *Nepal Mandala*, described Patan as something resembling a university complex with a web of Buddhist monasteries. The translations of the text by Tadeusz Skorupski and Prof. Ryugen Tanemura are great achievements, especially for those not well versed in Sanskrit.

When discussing the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, we often fix it in the 11th century. However, we must also consider earlier periods and ask whether preliminary planning for monasteries existed before that. Even if the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* dates to the 11th century, earlier monasteries must have been based on some prior documentation or tradition.

A Licchavī inscription dated 499 AD at Cābahī mentions land allocated for bhikṣu saṃghas and Mahāmunis, possibly for temple purposes or daily needs. This raises the question where those bhikṣus resided and what their monasteries looked like. Around the 7th century, during Aṃśuvarmā's time, grants were given to prominent mahāvihāras, equal to those given to major Hindu temples such as Changu Narayan and Pashupati. This indicates that monasteries must have been of considerable scale, as confirmed by inscriptions of King Narendra Dev and accounts of the Chinese envoy Wang Huan Swei, who noted the grandeur of Nepalese architecture. A recent discovery at Tvāybahāḥ in Sundhara is significant. Although the Kvāpādyaḥ inscription dates to 1528 AD, carbon dating of Avalokiteśvara images in the temple suggests a 9th–10th century origin. This indicates that architectural and artistic evidence may precede available written documentation.

I agree with Prof. Amar, Dr. Ahlawat, and Prof. Kyuma that travel and exchange may have influenced architectural forms. Richard Cohen's research on Ajanta mentions inscriptions of Śākyabhikṣus, suggesting historical connectivity. An inscription from Guitaḥ dated around 542 AD mentions Yaśomitra Śākyabhikṣu commissioning a bronze Buddha image, further demonstrating early Buddhist activity. While documentary evidence is limited, architectural and artistic remains suggest that monasteries have existed since their earlier period. Perhaps during Kuladatta's time, there was an effort to systematize planning as monastery construction expanded. In this way, the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* provides justification and guidance, which should continue to inform the construction of Vajrayāna vihāras in Lumbini and future Buddhist monasteries from a Mahāyāna perspective.



Lecturer, Shanta Shree Ratna Bajracharya, Lumbini Buddhist University

As I myself am a Guruju, my opinion may differ slightly. In my view, Kuladatta's ideas on constructing vihāras and mahāvihāras are not purely architectural; nearly 75% of the text is religious and ritualistic in nature. Therefore, beyond architectural beauty, spirituality must be included in this research. Before giving feedback to each scholar, I would like to share my experience with this sacred text. As a Vajrayāna priest, I rely on the handwritten *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* while performing rituals. Although the text covers many topics, it can be broadly divided into three parts: duties of guru and disciple, vāstuśāstra (architecture), and pratiṣṭhā-vidhi and saṃskāra-karma (consecration and ritual).

Simply constructing bahāḥ-bahī, statues, or caityas is not sufficient; spiritual life must be infused through consecration. A statue without life force is like a flower without fragrance. The *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* describes in

detail the rituals required for consecrating monasteries, caityas, and deities. After a vihāra is built, prāṇapratiṣṭhā is performed for the Buddha images, Bodhisattvas, deities, the gajura, dharmapālas, and guardian deities such as Hāritī, Mahākāla, and Gaṇeśa. In this way, Acharya Kuladatta integrated architecture and ritual into a unified religious system, connecting belief with living practice.

Although the text dates to around the 11th century, some subjects resemble the *Kriyāsaṃgrahakārikā* attributed to Nāgārjuna. However, Kuladatta's work includes independent elements, notably the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. The text explains Sūtrapātana and Dhusaḥmaṇḍala (Adhivāsana Maṇḍala) rituals required for abhiṣeka. The Vajradhātu Maṇḍala symbolizes the wisdom leading to Buddhahood and is considered the heart of Vajrayāna Buddhism. We should reconsider whether existing Vajrayāna vihāras were truly built according to this text. If so, architectural design and ritual practice are in unison, reflecting both physical structure and spiritual meaning. When vihāras are rebuilt after damage, both aspects must be followed to preserve authenticity.

(Translated from Newari)
If we understand the importance of these bahāḥ-bahī, I believe this research work will be appreciated beyond our imagination. Vihāra is a means to achieve Buddhahood. There are five stages in Bodhisattva mārga—viz. Sambhāramārga, Prayogamārga, Darśanamārga, Bhāvanāmārga and Aśaikṣamārga. If we look closely, we can see that a vihāra incorporates all of these mārga-s, starting from the main gate, i.e. a vihar is designed with infrastructures for a person to achieve Buddhahood. There is a 2nd century text namely *Kriyāsaṃgrahakārikā*, written by Nāgārjunapāda, which includes almost similar content as *Kriyāsaṃgraha*. Like Sanjay sir mentioned, texts like *Kriyāsaṃgrahakārikā* were in use ever since 2nd century. If we intend to properly study *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, we also need to include *Kriyāsaṃgrahakārikā* into our research.

If you look into the text of *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* written by Kuladatta, you may find that some 25% of the text deals with the architectural treatises while almost 75% of the text is related to puja/ritual procedures on how to consecrate a vihāra, i.e. how to breathe life into it. Accordingly, it starts with Sūtrapātana Vidhi in which a 81 square maṇḍala is made and 53 gods of Vajradhātu Maṇḍala along with other 32 deities providing protection and siddhi, the ten Pāramitā-s, the ten Vaśitā-s, the ten Dhāraṇī-s, the ten Bhūmi-s are also given their due positions on par with the infrastructures for a person to achieve Buddhahood. Hence beyond academic aspect, its ritual value is even greater. Like Bajra Raj sir mentioned earlier, if we watch carefully what steps are performed while constructing a vihar right from the very beginning, we will realize that its value is far greater beyond its architectural form.

The text describes the entire consecration process: selecting the land, sowing and harvesting barley, performing Sūtrapātana, conducting Pādasthāpana by digging nine pits while avoiding the body of Nāga, placing precious gems through Ratnanyāsa, and finally performing the consecration ritual in which abhiṣeka is given to the vihāra. Even the daśakarma rites—from garbhādhāna to pāṇigrahaṇa—normally performed for a living person, are symbolically carried out for the vihāra. Gurujus follow the procedures described in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* for each ritual stage.

Therefore, the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* is not merely an architectural manual; it is a comprehensive ritual text encompassing the spiritual processes of life. It underscores not only the design and construction of a vihāra but also the knowledge that gives it value and leads toward liberation and ultimately Buddhahood. This research conducted by national and international scholars will greatly help us in strengthening our own heritage. We sincerely commend the scholars and organizers for this fruitful research. Thank you.

Q&A and Floor Discussion

प्रश्नोत्तर तथा छलफल

Surendra Man Bajracharya (Moderator, hereafter "M")

Q (online): Paromita Desarkar

Many traditional Newar buildings, including bahāḥ and bahī, have suffered severe damage or partial collapse in major earthquakes, especially in unreinforced masonry sections. Can your textual studies of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* reveal flexible interpretations for incorporating new yet traditional appropriate earthquake-resistant materials, construction techniques or structural details during reconstruction without compromising the ritual integrity of the text? Could this lead to a framework for scripture-informed seismic retrofitting guidelines?

A: Gyanendra Shakya

Thank you, Paromita. You raised a pertinent question that, while we are having *Kriyāsaṃgraha*-like text which instructs the construction of vihara. On the other hand, we have the risk of big disaster like the earthquake. I believe you are concerned about how we can balance these both issues, right? We have raised some of the issues in the presentation for example about "ratnaśiloparī." People are assuming that removing *ilvahaṃ* (base stone) is retrofitting. We are not against the retrofitting or safety issue. But we consider that traditional architecture is a time-tested thing and it is through evolution of practice that people dealt with disasters. No doubt people kept on improvising over the centuries however in ratnaśila case, it was not a retrofitting, it was a disaster. We already have the case with Kaṣṭhamaṇḍapa, where the floor finish was raised, and the ground moisture touched the column, and we can see how it damaged the structure. We already had such a big disaster, and again, people are designing by directly keeping the timber on the soil. Thatôs the issue. So, principally, we agree with what you have raised, but in practice and in that particular project, the structural engineers overpowered the conservation issue. And the sad thing was that it came into the building code, based on which the concerned people blindly remained adamant. As you can see, *Kriyāsaṃgraha* is not a rigid document and includes very indicative principles. To the core, it also accommodates all the retrofitting, all the structural strengthening, and all the structural stability measures. In this sense, safety issues were never overlooked in traditional construction.

A: Lata Shakya

When reconstruction is undertaken, architects are naturally concerned about structural safety. However, in heritage contexts, safety must be considered together with heritage value. A conservation architect must understand what should be retained, what can be replaced, and what constitutes the essential cultural value of the structure.

For example, "Traditional skills, techniques and knowledge for the conservation and transmission of wooden architecture in Japan", inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2020. It recognizes not only traditional materials, skills and construction techniques but also the knowledge and processes involved in restoration. In the conservation and repair of cultural properties in Japan, restoration policies are also informed by research findings, including studies and experiments on seismic performance, and efforts are made to utilize traditional construction methods to the greatest extent possible while improving structural safety. This demonstrates that it is possible to balance structural safety with heritage value, although such work requires time, research, and specialized expertise.

The *Kriyāsaṃgraha* may not explicitly address modern structural engineering in contemporary terms, but it reflects a tradition in which long-term durability and stability were embedded within construction practice. In the case of Ibābahī, reconstructed with Japanese assistance using traditional techniques and which did not suffer major damage in the earthquake, demonstrates that traditional technology itself is not inherently weak.

Therefore, the key issue is not whether we prioritize safety or heritage, but how conservation professionals are trained. Heritage reconstruction requires a deeper study of traditional systems, values, and construction logic. Structural safety and heritage conservation should not be seen as opposing goals, but as dimensions that must be integrated through informed and sensitive practice.

Q: Sachin Bajracharya

What about the well? Beside design and ritual of bahāḥ-bahī, is there any topic related to strength and load bearing capacity and design analysis mentioned in *Kriyāsaṃgraha*? Is this valid for temples as well?

A: Gyanendra Shakya

It does not specifically speak about well, but in the typology of Vardhamāna, it says the water source is to be placed in a certain block or certain side But we did not find the Vardhamāna typology followed in our case.

Concerning the second question, there is a broad, qualitative remark that timber should be hardwood and of very good quality. It is, anyway, related to the structural safety. And it says that timber should be placed on the stone base because that is where all the issues of structural safety rest. So, things are mentioned indicatively without any detailed structural calculations.

As for the third question, we still have to check on the chapter on Devālaya Lakṣana. We need to check if the prescriptions for Devālaya style are really valid in three vihāras namely Bhinchebahāḥ, Taḥbahāḥ and Taṃgabahāḥ.

Q:

What is the difference between vihāra and mahāvihāra according to *Kriyāsṃagraha?*

A: Gyanendra Shakya

Kriyāsaṃgraha only mentions about vihāra and not about mahāvihāra. The word mahāvihāra came into use only around the time of Nalanda University because it is immense in scale and has got the inscription seals with the name Nālandā Mahāvihāra. And earlier inscriptions from different period do not use the word 'Mahāvihāra' much, and it might have been used only later, possibly from late medieval period. Nowadays, the term 'Mahāvihāra' is generally used to a main vihāra and 'vihāra' to mean a branch vihāra.

Q (online): Samir Amar Kansakar

Did the artisan communities in the Nepālamaṇḍala, e.g. Sthapit and Sikharakar, maintain manuscript libraries - oral, corporal, or apprenticeship notes that cite *Kriyāsaṃgraha* or similar texts?

A: Gyanendra Shakya

We can find a number of manuscripts which are apparently inspired from *Kriyāsaṃgraha,* e.g. with similar figures, but without any quoted sources or direct citation from *Kriyāsaṃgraha.* The titles like *Gṛha Pratiṣṭha or Gṛha Pratiṣṭha Kriyā* are used but never *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* or *Kriyāsaṃgraha.*

Q (online): Samir Amar Kansakar

Could *Kriyāsaṃgraha* have been transmitted as local variants, commentaries among craftsmen, without formal archival conservation?

A: Gyanendra Shakya

Commentator Shanta Shree Bajracharya mentioned about a text called *Kriyāsaṃgrahakārikā*, attributed to Nāgārjunapāda. We don't know if this Nāgārjunapāda is the same person who wrote *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and *Prajñāpāramitā* text. So in a way, we can say that *Kriyāsaṃgraha* is a *Pañjikā* for that *kārikā*. *Kriyāsaṃgrahakārikā* is a concise document while *Kriyāsaṃgraha* is quite detailed. However, many things written in *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* is not followed here.

M: Surendra Man Bajracharya

We definitely have several local ritual books based upon *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* but most of them concern themselves only with ritual processes.

Q (online): Samir Amar Kansakar

How did temple construction intersect with Guthis and lay patronage? Did ritual gurujus mediate the architectural choices based on textual norms?

A: Gyanendra Shakya

Commentator Shanta Shree Bajracharya already mentioned that many of the rituals are based on *Kriyāsaṃgraha,* and vihāra is a living heritage because of these rituals and processes. It is not so clear that you are talking about building a vihāra or a secular residential building. But we have a tradition that when we start building, people first go to guruju and ask if the land is good or not. Taking some soil, and from an astrological perspective, they confirm if the land is suitable or not. That kind of connection is there, and *Kriyāsaṃgraha* also has a lot of material regarding astrology.

M: Surendra Man Bajracharya

I have noticed two questions from Prof. Kyuma in his presentation. First, how does the structure of monastic buildings reflect the relationship between monasteries and secularity? And another one is, how does the relationship between monasteries and secularity reveal itself in the area surrounding them?

I can relate to it. I can relate to this question. Regarding your first question, I have shown one picture in my presentation showing how monasteries are connected to the community. So, community means that they are not monastic people. Different communities reside in the vicinity of monastery and they interact with each other.

Besides, according to the philosophy of the middle path associated with Nepalese Buddhism, many Hindu elements are also incorporated in the vihāra. They look similar, and this helped in broadening the philosophy as well as the views towards the monastery. And regarding the next question, we can see that these days vihāra courtyard are being used in different ways, even for non-religious purpose, e.g. playground, health post camp, and sometimes even as poll centre during elections. So, it is being used in different ways.

A: Abhishek Amar

You haven't said much about patrons. Who are the patrons in this context, and what role do they play? Do they have any say in the design? I understand the urge to connect the text directly to what we see on the ground, but I also feel there is a tension in the way the text is being approached. Texts need to be treated more critically.

Speaking as someone who works on the pre-modern period, these kinds of texts were not widely circulated. They were typically accessible only to a selected few. So the key question becomes: how was this knowledge transmitted to the artisan community, such that it could shape built form across multiple mahāvihāras/bahāḥ-bahī-s? If your data is accurate and there is indeed a close match between the text and existing conditions, then there must have been a phase when this knowledge became common—or at least operational—among artisans.

Because this is a relatively small "micro-region," it is plausible that the same or overlapping groups of artisans worked across sites, producing a degree of uniformity. But if that is the case, then historically the process may not be as long as we often assume. I would suspect a much shorter timeframe—perhaps 100 to 200 years, and I would be hesitant to extend it much beyond that.

This also relates to the question Sanjay Shakya raised: what comes first—text or practice? When we look at what exists on the ground, there is clearly a lot of agency in the hands of artisans, patrons, and other participants, because people constantly modify and remake spaces. So I agree that the text may articulate principles, but we still need to explain how those principles are translated into practice and become concrete, tangible spaces. The connection cannot be as straightforward as we sometimes try to make it; that tension is precisely what needs more careful thinking.

A second set of questions concerns the formation of the text itself. You mentioned the possibility of some kind of "handbook" used by artisans—so where does that handbook come from? Is it derived from artisan practice? Who writes it down? How does it relate to the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* text we are using?

And then there is the question of Kuladatta. Who is he? A monk? A vajrācārya? An architect? What do we actually know about his background? Or is this more like the case of Varāhamihira—someone compiling encyclopedic knowledge that reflects much older traditions? We need to pause and think about the process through which the text was compiled and authored.

From a heritage perspective, I understand the appeal; we want to use the text to argue for how something "should" be. But even within a micro-region there is often significant internal diversity, shaped by people and patronage. Patronage is rarely consistent; it comes in phases. Ajantā is a classic example: early activity, then long discontinuity, and later an intense burst under the Vākāṭakas within a short span. These histories show discontinuity and disruption. We cannot simply assume an unbroken continuity from, say, the 5th or 12th century to the 20th.

So if we see a certain uniformity across monasteries, it may reflect episodes of reconstruction guided by a shared principle within a particular period, carried by a set of artisans with consolidated knowledge. This leads to the larger questions we need to consider more carefully: artisanal groups, patronage, circulation of texts, circulation of knowledge, and the processes through which knowledge is stabilized and transmitted. Otherwise, we risk treating the text as if it were a perfect description of reality, when in fact it may be more prescriptive than descriptive.

In short, any study of a text requires a text-critical approach. We cannot take it at face value as a perfect match with practice. For me, as a historian and archaeologist, that is a major red flag—and also a productive direction for further research.

A: Sanjay Shakya

In Nepal, we have a strong tradition of localizing and adapting knowledge. This tendency toward adaptation may help explain how textual principles were incorporated into local architectural practice.

If we consider texts such as Varāhamihira's *Bṛhatsaṃhitā,* which is a large compendium covering diverse topics including iconographic prescriptions for Buddhist images, we see that such texts often function as collected bodies of knowledge rather than strictly original compositions. In this sense, the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* may similarly represent a collation of accumulated traditions.

When Kuladatta was composing the text, he likely observed considerable variation in the construction of bahāḥ and bahī. Given the presence of wealthy merchant patrons and the active construction of monasteries during that period, it is possible that he sought to systematize these practices into clearer guidelines. The text may therefore reflect an effort to codify diverse practices into a more standardized framework.

Q:

In Indian Buddhist architecture, vihāras developed over time with typological patterns based on function and construction method. However, these patterns later declined in India. What were the causes and consequences of this decline, and what is the future of vihāra development?

A: Abhishek Amar

The so-called "decline of Buddhism" is a highly complex and contested issue. Recent scholars have challenged the conventional narrative that Buddhism disappeared from regions such as Bihar by the 13th century. For example, recent research—including Dr. Shaashi Ahlawat's dissertation—demonstrates that sites like Nālandā continued to function until the 15th century. This significantly revises earlier assumptions. There are numerous pockets where Buddhism continued to survive well into the late medieval period.

Archaeological evidence supports this. Inscriptions and excavations from Bodh Gayā, Telhāra, Lal Pahāḍī, and other sites show continuity of Buddhist activity into the 14th and 15th centuries. Manuscript production also continued, as shown in the work of scholars such as Dr. Shinichiro Hori. The narrative of abrupt decline is largely a product of colonial historiography, which imposed artificial period divisions—for example, treating the 13th century and the arrival of Islamic rule as a total break. However, societies do not simply stop practicing religion overnight. There was transformation and change, but not necessarily complete disappearance.

Furthermore, many medieval monasteries in India became major landed institutions, receiving grants and accumulating property. While institutional shifts may have affected centers like Nālandā, this does not equate to the disappearance of Buddhism itself. In villages across regions such as Nālandā and Gayā, hundreds of Buddhist sculptures remain in situ, indicating continued religious presence at the local level.

M: Surendra Man Bajracharya

Regarding the transmission of skills, we should consider another important text: the *Kriyāsamuccaya.* This text describes the qualities of an ācārya, who should be knowledgeable not only in ritual matters but also in arts, astrology, and astronomy. In the Kathmandu Valley, Bajrācāryas traditionally functioned as resource persons responsible for vihāra activities. They were not only ritual specialists but also facilitators of artistic production. They instructed artisan groups such as Chitrakārs and Rañjitkārs in producing the required artefacts. This system of knowledge transmission continues in certain forms today.

On the issue of Buddhism's decline in India, traditional explanations often state that Buddhism remained largely monastic and did not penetrate deeply into broader society, and therefore disappeared when monastic communities fled. However, the situation in Nepal differed because Buddhism became deeply integrated into the social and cultural fabric of the Kathmandu Valley, which contributed to its survival.

A: Abhishek Amar

Recent research challenges the notion that Buddhism disappeared simply because monastic institutions weakened. Archaeological and textual evidence shows that Buddhist practices and manuscript production continued well into the 15th century.

The perceived "decline" often reflects disciplinary divides among scholars. Scholars of medieval India frequently rely on Islamic sources, while scholars of ancient India focus on Sanskrit sources, creating artificial separations. Archaeology has also adopted this periodization, treating the 13th century as a rupture. But religious practice and community life rarely end abruptly.

Therefore, rather than framing the issue solely as decline, we should examine transformation, adaptation, and regional variation over time.

Q:

In your presentation, you mentioned the Daśanāmī Maṭha. Does this maṭha belong to a landlord group that holds power? What were its historical and present consequences?

A: Abhishek Amar

The Daśanāmīs are a Śaiva ascetic order divided into ten sub-groups. The example shown in the presentation refers to the Giri Daśanāmīs, one branch of this order. As a Śaiva monastic institution, they exercised significant regional influence.

They attracted patronage from Mughal rulers, local kings, and later the Tekari Maharaj. Through land grants, they accumulated substantial property and became major landlords. According to a 1956 Supreme Court of India settlement, they controlled at least 435 villages at that time, and they continue to hold considerable land today.

Such transformation into landed institutions is characteristic of many medieval monasteries in post-Gupta India. While these developments may have affected institutions such as Nālandā, they do not in themselves prove the "decline" of Buddhism. Buddhist material culture continued to exist at the village level, as evidenced by the large number of surviving sculptures across the region.

Q (online): Srijana

Since when was the term 'manda' used? Does *Kriyāsaṃgraha* only mention about the construction of bahāḥ-bahī or does it also include something on Newar settlement?

A: Gyanendra Shakya

The text is specifically related to the construction of vihāra. It does not even mention the word Bahāḥ or Bahī. And we are just making sense that the construction of vihāra and its heritage. It has laid foundation to expand the city as a fabric of networks of vihāra. And as Surendra sir mentioned about various spaces like the nani, the kacābahāḥ, and when we walk through Patan, we can find that it is a fabric of network of Bahāḥ and the secondary development of the Bahāḥ construction. So in that way we can interpret, we can see, we can feel this thing, but text does not specifically mention about city planning.

Q: Heritage Nepal

We have heard the architecture style of temples in Nepal is called 'Pagoda style', but cultural experts suggest not to call it Pagoda style, but Nepali style. Could you please justify it?

A: Gyanendra Shakya

This is another interesting question. Although it is not directly related to the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, it is nevertheless worth addressing. We have long referred to the temples in and around the Kathmandu Valley as "pagodas." However, Prof. Tiwari has argued in his writings that the term pagoda is in fact a misnomer. Originally, it was associated with a Buddhist architectural form. The Sri Lankan term *'dāgobā'*, derived from the Sanskrit dhātu-garbha (relic chamber), gradually evolved in various East and Southeast Asian languages into the word pagoda. In Myanmar, for example, one encounters numerous structures identified as pagodas, all of which are Buddhist monuments; the term is not used for Hindu temples.

Ironically, Western writers who visited Nepal during the Rana period were fascinated by the distinctive temple architecture of the Valley. In their publications, they adopted the term pagoda to describe these multi-tiered temples. Prof. Tiwari, however, has demonstrated through textual sources, including manuscripts, that this terminology is inaccurate and inconsistent with indigenous usage. In Newar manuscripts, temples of this type are often designated with the suffix *-pola*. He also suggested that the term tallākāra—referring to tiered or multi-storied structures would be a more appropriate nomenclature. For instance, the well-known five-tiered temple Nyātapola in Bhaktapur incorporates the term pola, which in the Newar language denotes a tier or roof. This usage can be traced in numerous manuscript sources. With increased scholarly awareness, recent publications have gradually abandoned the word pagoda and instead adopted the Nepali term *'tale śailīko mandira'* (tiered temple) to refer to these tiered temples of the Kathmandu Valley.

Q (online): Samata Bajracharya

From today's presentation, I got a chance to know importance of *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, which provides bahāḥ-bahī layout and design process traditionally. Besides this, Pādasthāpana and Pratiṣṭhāpūjā also help those monasteries in their life. My request to the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* research team, are you able to draft a building code to rebuild old bahāḥ bahis and new construction on the basis of our traditional manuscripts discussed today?

A: Gyanendra Shakya

This is a pertinent question, and there is a process for drafting a building code. From these kinds of research, discussions, and debates, we can influence the process of formulating the building code. Actually, the first building code was drafted in Nepal in 1994, and there have been several amendments ever since. And even just two months ago, the building code was revised. With increased awareness on heritage conservation issues, we will be able to put our point strongly, and that will possibly be heard by the authority. However, we are not in a position to draft a building code straight away.

M: Surendra Man Bajracharya

Mohan Moorti Pant has raised one question whether nani can be a bahāḥ? Is there any nani bahāḥ? Nāgbahāḥ itself is nani. In the book, namely *Buddhist Monasteries of Kathmandu Valley* by John K. Locke, the author has mentioned some viharas named as nani. Though not an elaborate one like the main bahāḥ, the nani-bahāḥ can be considered to be a simple bahāḥ.

Conclusion and Future Direction

निष्कर्ष तथा भावी दिशानिर्देश

The International Symposium on the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* has demonstrated the importance of sustained interdisciplinary dialogue between Buddhist studies, architectural history, archaeology, conservation practice, and living monastic communities. The discussions reaffirmed that the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* constitutes a significant source for understanding ritual and architectural principles related to bahāḥ and bahī; however, it must be approached through historically grounded and text-critical analysis. Rather than assuming a direct and linear correspondence between textual prescription and built form, attention must be given to the historical processes through which knowledge was transmitted, adapted, and materialized in architectural space. The agency of artisans, patrons, and monastic institutions remains central to this inquiry.

Comparative perspectives on Indian vihāra traditions further revealed that Buddhist monastic architecture developed through phases of adaptation, discontinuity, and regional reinterpretation. The bahāḥ and bahī of the Kathmandu Valley should therefore be situated within a broader transregional architectural context while recognizing their distinctive urban embeddedness and socio-religious transformation. They are neither static survivals nor passive inheritances, but dynamic institutions shaped by layered historical processes.

Contemporary challenges, particularly in the context of post-earthquake reconstruction, have underscored the necessity of balancing structural safety with heritage value and ritual continuity. Traditional construction knowledge, refined through centuries of practice, warrants careful study before being dismissed as structurally inadequate. Future research must further explore historically informed conservation strategies and examine how textual principles may inform—without rigidly determining—architectural practice in the present.

Ultimately, the sustainability of bahāḥ and bahī depends not only on architectural conservation but also on institutional continuity, generational succession within the Saṅgha, and active community engagement.

In light of these discussions, the Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group reaffirms its commitment to continuing collaborative research that integrates textual scholarship, field-based architectural investigation, and dialogue with monastic and community stakeholders. Through sustained interdisciplinary and international collaboration, the Group aims to further clarify the historical formation, transmission, and contemporary significance of bahāḥ and bahī as living heritage.

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Excursion Report

ललितपुर (पाटन)को पुरानो आवासीय क्षेत्र भ्रमण प्रतिवेदन

Field Visit – 21th December 2025,
Old Residential Area of Lalitpur (Patan)

Lata Shakya

Visiting Researcher, Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage (DMUCH), Ritsumeikan University, Japan

1. Overview

On 21 December 2025, a field visit was conducted as part of the symposium. The excursion aimed to connect textual discussions with the lived architectural and ritual environment of Newar Buddhist monasteries in the old residential area of Lalitpur. The excursion was attended by approximately twenty participants, including guest scholars from India and Japan, representatives and members of Bauddha Vihāra Saṃgha and Lotus research center. Participants walked through a sequence of bahāḥ and bahī, observing their spatial organization, ritual functions, and integration within the urban fabric.

2. Visited Places

The excursion commenced began at Hakabahāḥ (Ratnākar Mahāvihāra), followed by Bubahāḥ (Yaśodharā Mahāvihāra), Nakabahī (Lokakīrti Mahāvihāra), Nyākhācuka (Bhāskaravarṇa Mahāvihāra), Akibahāḥ (Ataśakīrti Vihāra), Dhakhvācuka, Nāgabahāḥ (Vasuvarddhana Vihāra), Ilānanī (including Baidyabahā – Dvārakābahāḥ and Michubahāḥ, Kvābahāḥ (Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra), Patan Durbar Square, Ibābahī (Rājaśrī Mahāvihāra), Okubahāḥ (Rudravarṇa Mahāvihāra), and Mahābauddha (Bodhimaṇḍapa Vihāra), before concluding at Goodwill Hotel (cf. p. 110, Fig. 1).

In order to reach each site, the group passed through multiple narrow galli-like passages and interconnected residential courtyards, demonstrating that the courtyard system is not confined to monastic compounds but is deeply embedded in domestic architecture throughout the old residential area. This route was intentionally planned to reveal the spatial continuity between monastery and residence. In particular, Site 6 (Dhākhvā-cuka) featured a residential courtyard with elaborately carved wooden windows on all four sides, exemplifying refined Newar craftsmanship and the aesthetic integration of sacred and domestic space. At Kvābahāḥ (Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra), attention was given to ritual circulation, rich iconographic monuments and spiritual vibes. The group also had the opportunity to witness a *Prajñāpāramitā* Pūjā and recitation, providing a rare occasion to observe ritual practices described in the manuscripts in an active and living context. Participants also observed numerous Buddhist artefacts installed within courtyards—including stūpas, caityas, and representations of the Dharmadhātu—illustrating how ritual symbols permeate both monastic and domestic environments.

Further visits to Ibābahī and Okubahāḥ enabled comparison between bahāḥ and bahī typologies, particularly regarding scale, enclosure, and residential occupation. The group also passed near Patan Durbar Square, highlighting the spatial continuity between royal, civic, and monastic domains Participants noted that observing rituals and daily religious practices on site significantly deepened their understanding beyond textual descriptions in the manuscripts.

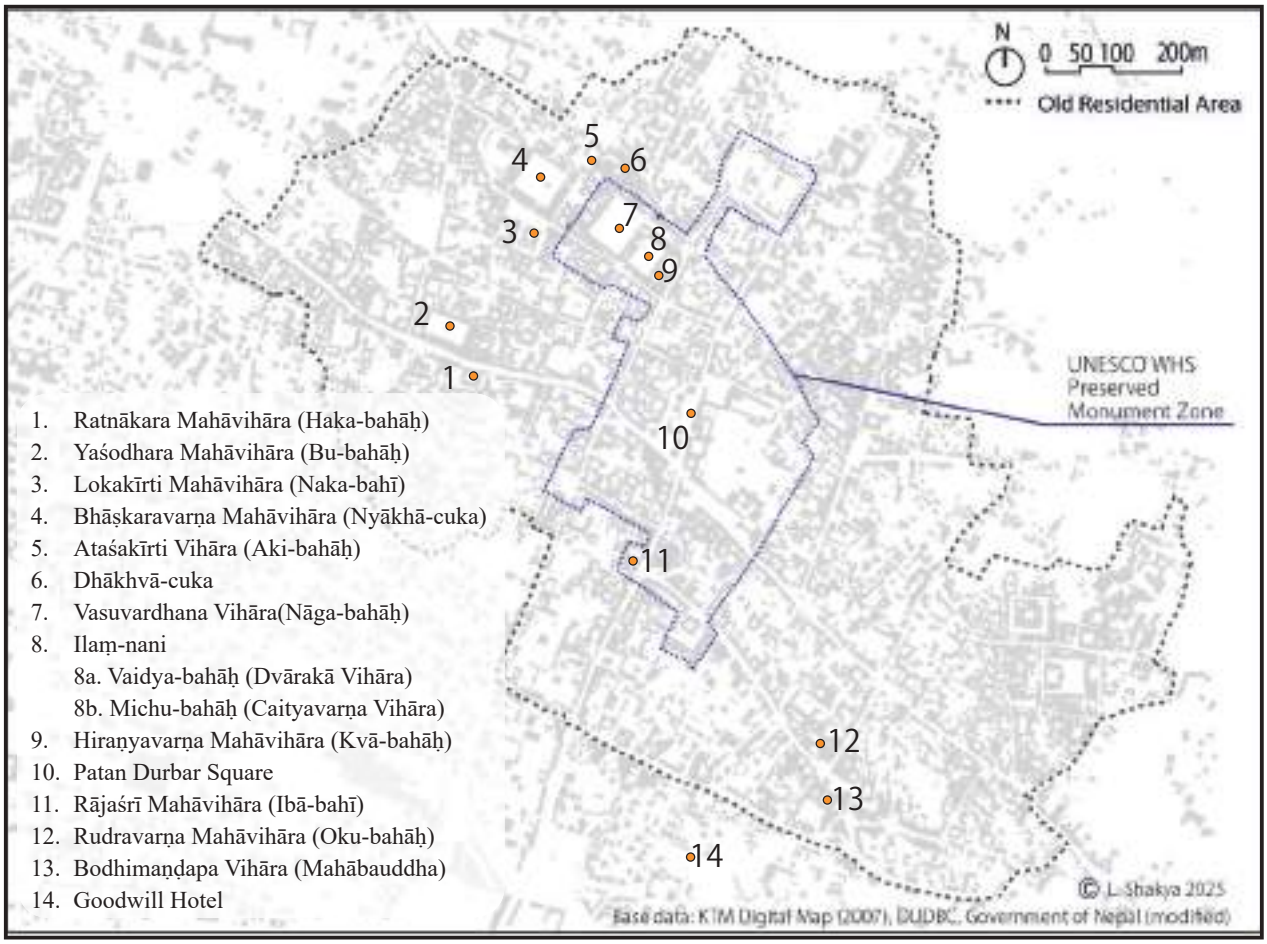


Figure 1: Excursion Route and Visited Bahāḥ(Mahāvihāra) and Bahī (Vihāra) in the Old Residential Area of Patan, Lalitpur Metropolitan City (Source: Base map prepared by the author by integrating and editing CAD data from the KTM Digital Map (2007), DUDBC, Government of Nepal. Route and additional boundaries added by the author.)

3. Interactive Session

An interactive session was held at Goodwill Hotel near to Okubahāḥ (Mahāvihāra).

The discussion focused primarily on:

- The future bearers of the Saṅgha and issues of generational succession
- Contemporary methods to raise awareness of the value of bahāḥ and bahī
- The potential use of social media and modern communication strategies for heritage transmission

Participants reflected on the previous day's symposium sessions and commented that the field visit had been highly enriching. Guest scholars expressed particular satisfaction, noting that witnessing rituals and ongoing practices described in the manuscripts significantly deepened their understanding. The dialogue underscored the importance of continued collaboration between international researchers and local custodians, and several participants expressed their intention to pursue further academic exchange and future collaborative research initiatives.

Photo Documentation



Participants of the Symposium



Deputy Mayor Manjali Shakya Bajracharya inaugurating the symposium



Deputy Mayor Manjali Shakya Bajracharya delivering her remarks



Dr. Lata Shakya presenting "Purpose and Overview of the Symposium"



Group chanting of Bodhicittotpāda



Audience at the symposium



Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya presenting about "Architectural Tradition in Buddhiṣṭ Monaṣticism"



Prof. Sudan Shakya presenting about "Monaṣtic Iconography"



Ar. Gyanendra Shakya presenting Adaptation of *Kriyāsaṃgraha* in Bahāḥ & Bahī Architecture (the outcome of the Kriyāsaṃgraha Research Group's research work)



Prof. Sudarshan Raj Tiwari commenting on the papers



Panelists during the panel discussion (from left to right): Prof. Mohan Moorti Pant (on screen), Dr. Bajra Raj Shakya, Lect. Shanta Shree Bajracharya, Asst. Prof. Sanjay Shakya, moderator Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya, Dr. Shaashi Ahlwat, Prof. Abhishek Amar, Prof. Taiken Kyuma



Prof. Taiken Kyuma introducing "the Vihar Project (India)"



Dr. Abhishek Amar presenting their joint paper "Typology of Vihāra in India and Its Connections with Bahāḥs and Bahīs"



Dr. Shaashi Ahlawat presenting their joint paper "Typology of Vihāra in India and Its Connections with Bahāḥs and Bahīs"



Dr. Bajra Raj Shakya delivering a speech on past research and implementation of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*



Audience at the symposium



Presentation certificate and a token of appreciation to Prof. Taiken Kyuma by the Chairperson of BVS



Presentation of certificate to Dr. Lata Shakya



Presentation of certificate to Ar. Gyanendra Shakya



Presentation of certificate to Ar. Manindra Shrestha



Audience at the symposium



Presentation of certificate and a token of appreciation to Prof. Abhisek Amar by the Chairperson of BVS



Presentation of certificate and a token of appreciation to Dr. Shaashi Ahlawat



Presentation of certificate to Dr. Surendra Man Bajracharya



Presentation of certificate to Asst. Prof. Sanjay Shakya



Participants in the excursion tour at Ratnākara Mahāvihāra



Sharing and discussion after the excursion



Excursion visit to Bubahāḥ

Profiles of Resource Persons

Inaugural Speakers (Opening Addresses)



Manjali Shakya Bajracharya
Deputy Mayor of Lalitpur Metropolitan City

She offered opening remarks at the symposium, expressing her appreciation for the initiative and reaffirming the city's support for academic and community-based approaches to the safeguarding of Buddhist heritage.



Karuna Ratna Bajracharya
Chairperson of the Baudha Vihāra Saṃgha, Lalitpur

He delivered the opening remarks at the symposium. On behalf of the organizers, he welcomed the participants and expressed his opinion on the importance of this symposium and its aim to foster dialogue between the Saṃgha and researchers.

Contributors



Keynote Speaker
Ryugen Tanemura
Professor of Buddhist studies and classical Indology, Taisho University, Japan.

He is a professor of Buddhist studies and classical Indology at Taisho University, Tokyo, Japan. He did his doctoral research on Tantric Buddhism at Oxford under the supervision of Professor Alexis Sanderson for five years. He took his DPhil in classical Indology at the University of Oxford (2003). His main research field is Indian tantric Buddhism, and he has authored many works in this area, including Kuladatta's Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of Selected Sections (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2004).



Speaker
Taiken Kyuma
Professor, Faculty of Humanities, Law and Economics, Mie University, Japan

He received his Dr. Phil. in Buddhist studies from the University of Vienna in 1999. His research focuses mainly on Buddhist logic and epistemology, and he is currently leading a research project on Indian Buddhist monasteries from the Gupta period onward (JSPS KAKENHI Grant Numbers: JP18H03569, JP22H00002).



Speaker
Sudan Shakya
Professor, Department of Buddhist Studies, Shuchiin University, Japan

He holds MA and PhD degrees from Tohoku University. He is known for his research in Buddhist philology, Indian Esoteric Buddhism, and Nepalese Buddhism. He actively participates in various scholarly societies, including the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies and the Nippon Esoteric Buddhist Society, and has contributed extensively through his research and publications, as well as through his role as a professor.



Speaker
Abhishek Singh Amar
Professor & Director, Asian Studies, Hamilton College, USA

He specializes in the archaeological history of Buddhism in India. Amar has held fellowships in the US (ACLS/Ho Family Foundation research fellowship), Germany, UK and India. He has published a co-authored book titled 'Archaeological Gazetteer of Gaya District' (KPJRI, 2017), two co-edited volumes titled 'Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on a contested Buddhist site: Bodhgaya Jataka' (Routledge, 2012) and On the Regional Development of Early Medieval Buddhist Monasteries in South Asia, (The Centre for South Asian Studies, Ryukoku University, 2022). Amar also directs two digital Humanities projects titled 'Sacred Centers in India' to create databases of Hindu and Buddhist temples, sculptures, and monasteries South Asia. (https://sci.hamiltonlits.org/omeka/s/main/page/sitedescriptions), and 'Indian Buddhist Monasteries Database' (https://hamiltonlits.org/indian-buddhist-monasteries/s/Indian-Buddhist-Monasteries/page/home)



Speaker
Shaashi Ahlawat
Affiliate Scholar, South Asia Center and Center for Ancient Studies, University of Pennsylvania

She is a historian of premodern South Asia interested in the history of Buddhism in Eastern India. She recently completed her Ph.D. in South Asia Regional Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where her dissertation offered a new interpretation of the decline of Buddhism in Eastern India. Shaashi is currently an affiliate scholar with the Centre for Ancient Studies at Penn and will join Prof. Kyuma at Mie University next year for her postdoctoral project on the rise of early medieval Buddhist mahāvihāras, supported by the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK) Fellowship.



Speaker and Moderator
Surendra Man Bajracharya
Chairperson, Lotus Research Center

He is a scholar of Buddhist Studies and currently, a member of the Academic Council, Lumbini Buddhist University. He earned his PhD in Buddhist Studies from Tribhuvan University in 2014 with a dissertation entitled "Monasticism in Buddhism of Nepal Mandala: Continuity and Changes." Dr. Vajracharya has been serving as chairperson of the Lotus Research Centre, and as advisor to Organizations such as Dharmodaya Sabhā and Pratibhā Samāj.



Co-Author
Manindra Shrestha
Project Manager, Kaṣṭhamaṇḍapa Reconstruction Committee

He has been a heritage and conservation architect for the past twenty years. He was one of the founding members of ICOMOS Nepal. In the aftermath of the 2015 Gorkha earthquake, he worked as a liaison officer in the Earthquake Response Coordination Office at Department of Archaeology and with support from the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu. He served in the capacity of Project Manager and the Team Leader of the in-house technical team during the reconstruction of Kāṣṭhamaṇḍap, which was completed in December 2021.



Speaker and Co-Ordinator
Gyanendra Shakya
Executive member, Lotus Research Center

He is an architect and urban planner with a Master's degree from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU). His research interests lie at the intersection of Buddhist ritual traditions, monastic architecture, and heritage conservation, with practical experience in the conservation and reconstruction of Buddhist monasteries in Patan.



Speaker and Co-Ordinator
Lata Shakya
Visiting Researcher, Institute of Disaster Mitigation for Urban Cultural Heritage (DMUCH), Ritsumeikan University, Japan

She is an architectural and urban planning scholar specializing in residential environments, urban commons, and community-based disaster risk management. Her research advances resilience and sustainability in historic cities through interdisciplinary and action-oriented approaches. She earned her Doctorate in Engineering from Kyoto University and formerly served as a JSPS Research Fellow at the University of Tokyo and as an Associate Professor at Ritsumeikan University. Her recent publications include Role of Intangible Cultural Heritage for Disaster Resilient Historic Cities (Springer, 2025) and Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage (Routledge, 2023).

Commentators



Sudarshan Raj Tiwari
Professor, Institute of Engineering (IOE), Tribhuvan University, Lalitpur

He is a distinguished Professor of Architecture at Tribhuvan University, former Dean of the Institute of Engineering (IOE), and a renowned conservationist known for his deep expertise in Nepali history, culture, urbanism, and traditional architecture, with influential books like The Temples of Nepal Valley and work on heritage sites, significantly shaping architectural education and heritage preservation in Nepal.



Mohan Moorti Pant
Professor, Kwopa Engineering College, Bhaktapur

He is a distinguished professor, and researcher specializing in Nepal's traditional urbanism, Kathmandu Valley settlements, and vernacular architecture, known for his PhD and post-doc from Kyoto University, authoring key books like Stupa and Swastika, and teaching at Khwopa Engineering College, where he's an adjunct professor. He focuses on preserving heritage through urban design and conservation, contributing extensively to understanding Nepal's historic towns.



Shantashree Ranta Bajracharya
Lecturer, Sugat Buddhist College, Lalitpur

Shanta Shree Ratna Bajracharya, affiliated with Śrīkhaṇḍatarumūla Mahāvihāra, is a Ph.D. scholar in Mahayana Buddhism at Lumbini Buddhist University (2023–present). He holds a Master's degree in Buddhist Studies from Sugata Buddhist College, Lumbini Buddhist University (2018). Since 2019, he has served as a Lecturer in Mahayana Buddhism at Sugata Buddhist College. He holds prominent spiritual responsibilities as Rāja-Guruju and Chief Guruju (Head Priest) and serves as the spiritual guide to the Living Goddess Kumari in Kathmandu. A respected scholar-practitioner, he is the author of Pūjā Vidhi Saṃgraha (NS 1132), and has been publishing research papers in national journals.



Sanjay Shakya
Asst. Professor, Department of Buddhist Studies, Lumbini University, Lumbini

He has been awarded the academic honors entitled "Nepāl Vidyābhūṣaṇa" and "Vedjvālā Gold Medal" by the President of Nepal in 2012. His recent publications include a chapter in Modernity of Buddhism (2024) published in the Centre for Bhutan and GNH Studies, Newar Art Traditions (2021), and Intangible Heritage of Pāṭan (2018). He is a proud metal sculptor artist continuing the artistic legacy inherited from his forefathers. His keen interest is in Buddhist art, particularly the chronological development of artistic embellishment in the Avalokiteśvara of Nepal.

Supporting Contributors



Prativa Shakya
Architect, Symposium Master of Ceremonies

She is an architect and urban planner with a Master's degree from the Institute of Housing and Urban Development (HIS), Erasmus University, Rotterdam. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Mahāyāna Buddhism. She is the managing director of Prativa Architects and Associates Pvt. Ltd.



Prasanna Bajracharya
Architect, Volunteer

Ar. Prasanna Bajracharya is a graduate of the Bachelor of Architecture program at Himalaya College of Engineering, Tribhuvan University. Her undergraduate thesis focused on integrating traditional building knowledge with contemporary conservation approaches in Patan. She has been involved in heritage documentation initiatives and is interested in context-sensitive and resilient conservation practices.



Anupam Bajracharya
IT support volunteer

Anupam Bajra Bajracharya is a heritage enthusiast who is focused on preservation of Newa Buddhism. His professional field is in Data & AI. He is also the co-director of a documentary on Newa Buddhism in Nepal focused on the Bahā Bahīs of Patan.



Manjil Shakya
IT support volunteer

Manjil Shakya is a product manager for a SaaS CRM product and the President of the Rotaract Club of Lalitpur. His keen interest in life skills, he actively supports initiatives that promote personal growth, communication, and teamwork.

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