

Buddhist strategies of keeping its sacred images and shrines alive: the example of the Svayambhū caitya of Kathmandu

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Introduction

Religious monuments and artefacts are subject to decay and have always been so. While the efforts of present-day, western-trained conservators to address such decay stand out by their application of modern scientific methods, they are not singular. In earlier times and in other cultures such decay has also been addressed, and for this different approaches have been adopted. This continues to the present with renovations undertaken outside the orb of modern conservation efforts. The differences here are not only technological but also touch upon the underlying rationale. What, in a given context, is conceived to be the principal purpose of restoring, renewing or conserving a given object? What is at stake? What methods are identified as most adequate for the given purpose, etc.? In following this line of enquiry it becomes clear that the contemporary – in its original inspiration western – tradition of conservation is precisely that, a particular tradition with its own history and agenda, and not a naturally given, self-evident way of addressing decay.

Situating western-style conservation efforts in this way is not to deny their value. Rather, it is to allow for the possibility of alternative models. Such a move is not only of theoretical interest but can also have important practical implications on the ground, particularly when dealing with religiously charged objects that are still ‘in use’. For, as anyone involved in efforts to conserve and restore religious monuments and artefacts of a living tradition can attest, there is often a conflict between the religious sensitivities of representatives of the given tradition, the ‘owners’ of the object in question, and the aspiration of western-trained conservators to preserve this object as well as possible for posterity. Such conflicts tend to be inevitable and call for carefully negotiated compromises that allow for local sensitivities without distracting from the conservation effort.¹ The parameters of such negotiations differ widely from case

to case, and there can be no single strategy of how to conduct them. Still, it would always seem useful that they are informed by a keen understanding of the religious sensitivities at stake, and the bearings these sensitivities may have upon the project of conserving a particular object.

In this paper, I would like to turn to the world of Indian religions and consider how the decay of consecrated objects such as statues, shrines and caityas (the term commonly used for stupas in the Buddhist tradition I examine here) has been – and continues to be – addressed. My starting point and principal point of reference will be a concrete example, taken from the sphere of Indian Buddhism as it survives in the Kathmandu valley of Nepal. More precisely, I will consider the renovations of the Svayambhū-caitya (see Figure 1), the most sacred shrine of the Newar Buddhist tradition of the valley, as they have been performed periodically for at least the last 700 years, and presumably much longer. I will approach this topic from a ritual perspective, drawing upon historical records of past renovations written in the main by participating priests (von Rospatt 2002). This will lead to a broader assessment of the treatment of renovation (*jīrnoddhāra*) in the closely related ritual literature of Buddhist and Hindu tantric traditions. I will show how these sources treat the renovation of an iconic object such as a caitya or image as a highly delicate



Figure 1 Aerial photograph of Svayambhū, summer 1955. Photograph: Ganesh Man Chitrakar, © The Ganesh Photo Lab, Kathmandu.

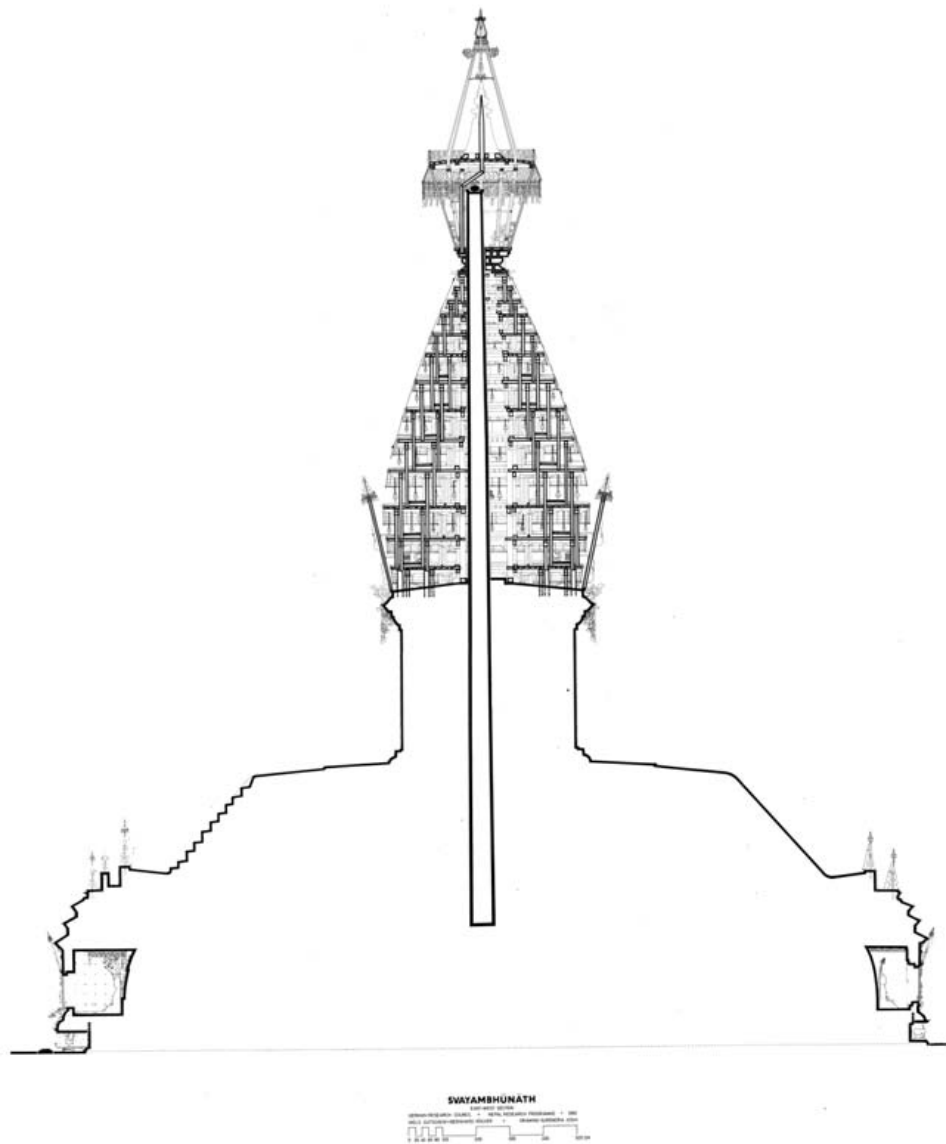


Figure 2 Cross-section of the Svayambhū-caitya. Drawing by Surendra Joshi 1986, © Niels Gutschow.

and charged operation, because the given deity (or deities) is believed to be concretely present in the object in question. The focus of concern, I will argue, is to negotiate this presence and assure the continuation of its worship. In order to allow for this, the sources typically advocate a strategy of renewal that favours replacement of a defective object over its restoration. Returning to the Svayambhū-caitya, I will show how pragmatic considerations have come to attenuate the application of this strategy in a manner that I presume to be the rule rather than the exception.

The Svayambhū-caitya and its renovations

While the Svayambhū-caitya (nowadays commonly known as Svayambhūnāth) is no doubt of great antiquity dating back

to the first millennium, there are only a very few old sources attesting to its early history. From the fourteenth century onwards, however, there is ample evidence, documenting how the caitya was renovated again and again at odd intervals. Over roughly 450 years, more precisely from 1370 to 1817, the Svayambhū-caitya was completely renewed at least 11 times, i.e. on average every 45 years (von Rospatt 2011). (On a lesser scale this practice continues to the present, with larger renovations undertaken in 1918 and from 2008 to 2010. These renovations were major affairs. The caitya was dismantled down to the dome, and the dome itself was cut open to the extent necessary for the replacement of the massive central wooden pole (*yaṣṭi*) that traverses the entire structure through the cube above the dome (*harmikā*) and thirteen rings to the very top (see Figures 2 and 3)). Once the old *yaṣṭi* had been removed, once the new one had been raised in its stead inside the dome, and once the dismantled section of the dome had been rebuilt around the new *yaṣṭi*, the entire edifice above the dome was built up with new materials, starting with the *harmikā*, continuing

with the thirteen rings, and concluding with the elaborate crowning structure, but excluding the caitya's finial (*gajur*) and its crest-jewel (*cūḍāmaṇi*) which were typically reused. In this way, the renovated caitya was – with the exception of the dome, finial and crest-jewel – essentially newly built. Crucially, this included the *yaṣṭi*, in many ways the sacred core of the caitya. Hence it is only true for the dome, but not the caitya at large, that 'in accordance with stupa building everywhere, the primitive monument must not have been replaced but, merely encased', as claimed by Mary Slusser in her treatment of Svayambhū (Slusser 1982: 298). Rather – in accordance with the treatises on this subject (*jīrṇoddhāra*) – the guiding principle of renovating the Svayambhū-caitya was not the conservation of the old structure, but its comprehensive renewal, a point that I will elaborate upon below. This should be borne in mind when I use the word 'renovation' in this paper, for want of a better term.²

The continuity of the new, comprehensively rebuilt structure with earlier forms of the caitya is assured on the ritual plane by the transference of the divine essence (*nyāsa*). It is ritually extracted before the old structure is dismantled. For the time of the renovation it is kept in a water vessel (*nyāsa-ghaṭa*), where it is worshipped on a daily basis (*nityapūjā*). Subsequently it is transferred back into the newly rebuilt edifice. On a material plane there is continuity because the dome is kept largely intact, and because the caitya's finial and its crest-jewel are reused. Moreover, the newly erected superstructure above the dome connects to the structure it replaces by mimicking its appearance. Thus, although the structure of the Svayambhū-caitya as it now stands is, apart from the dome, less than 200 years old – the *yaṣṭi* and *harmikā* date from the renovation completed in 1817, the rings above and the crowning parasol were fashioned during the renovation carried out in 1918, and all copper elements were extensively repaired and regilded from 2008 to 2010 – the present caitya still echoes how the caitya looked in the more remote past, though we do not know exactly when in that past it assumed its characteristic shape.

The foregoing has to be qualified, however, in one important way. While the newly built elements are meant to replicate the dismantled and discarded parts of the structure, the process of replacement also provided a window of opportunity to introduce change and modify the caitya, a theme I have explored in a forthcoming article (von Rospatt 2013). To start with, when rebuilding the dismantled caitya it was possible to do so at a larger scale, though the relevant literature on this theme stresses the need to preserve the overall proportions intact. While the caitya was no doubt enlarged numerous times, historical measurements of the *yaṣṭi* and caitya allow us to document this for the period between the fourteenth century and 1671. During this time the length of the newly installed *yaṣṭis* was increased by a total of 37.5 per cent, with the result that the caitya's overall height grew by roughly a third (see the table with the relevant measurements in von Rospatt 2013). Besides the increase in size, the renovations offered the opportunity to modify peripheral elements by refashioning them in altered form when the caitya was rebuilt. For instance the shields (Newari: *halampati*) attached to the *harmikā* were redesigned in conjunction with the mid-eighteenth-century

renovation.³ A further example is the refurbishing of the niches set in the dome. In 1918 this included the upgrading of the four niches set in the intermediate directions, which had previously been left empty – possibly to be filled on special occasions with portable images. They were fitted with permanently installed, cast metal statues of the respective Buddhist goddesses, viz. Locanā, Māmakī, Pāṇḍarā and Āryatārā, and the niches' framing sides and the newly added triple roofs were covered with gilded copper sheeting. Similarly in 1713 in addition to the four Buddhas of the cardinal directions a Vairocana image was newly installed in a separate niche, just next to Akṣobhya on the eastern side of the dome. Depicting Vairocana in this way broke with the configuration of the five-Buddha maṇḍala of the Yogatantras, the Vajradhātu maṇḍala, where Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi are located in the cardinal directions and surround Vairocana who occupies the centre. Given that the Svayambhū-caitya is treated again and again as an abode of the five Buddhas (*buddhālaya*) with the Vajradhātu maṇḍala as the underlying matrix it is surprising to see Vairocana manifested at the periphery of the dome. This shows that innovations were not only doctrinally motivated, but also driven by other considerations. Thus, despite the prescribed replication of the previous structure, the renovations have – to a considerable measure – allowed for change in order to adapt the caitya to doctrinal developments, new aesthetic sensitivities and so on, and thereby 'bring it up to date'. The dynamics of change observed here are characteristic for South Asia. The starting point is the faithful preservation of an ancient model of unquestioned authority, sanctity and, in a sense, truth. However, the transmission of this model is not so rigidly implemented as not to allow for change and innovation. This is not unlike the transmission of texts, teachings and doctrines: they are supposedly faithfully transmitted, but, in fact, are in the process often changed, modified and updated.

Relic stupas and the caitya in tantric Buddhism

The treatment of the Svayambhū-caitya sketched here is at odds with the way defective stupas are typically preserved in much of the Buddhist world, namely by encasing them within a larger structure newly built around the defective one. Such a procedure accords with the common Buddhist belief that the Buddha's corporeal relics are not subject to ageing, and persist unimpaired until the end of the present world age. Since it is the relics that make the Buddha present in the stupa, it is critical that they be safely enshrined; and encasing the marred structure is an effective strategy to this end. To be sure, this does not preclude extracting relics from a stupa and reinserting them in a different structure. Indeed, according to legend this famously happened when King Aśoka opened seven of the eight original relic stupas in order to extract and stretch the Buddha's relics into 84,000 portions that were then interred in 84,000 stupas, newly built for this purpose. In the Newar tradition, by contrast, caityas (as stupas are commonly known in this tradition) are not first and foremost relic shrines, but



Figure 3 The Svayambhūcaitya as seen from the northwest. Photograph: © Manik Bajracharya.

structures that make the Buddha principle present through tantric ritual; more precisely, through the mantras of the Buddhist deities with which they have been infused in the course of their construction, and at the time of their consecration. Hence the designation of the caitya's divine essence as mantra 'deposit' (*nyāsa*).⁴ Typically the core mantras are those of the five Buddhas of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala, who stand in their totality for buddhahood. Other consecrated objects such as images, paintings or even books (most commonly the *Prajñāpāramitā*) are likewise charged with the energy of mantras and thus render the deities in question present through this tantric technique.

Unlike the immutable relics, the presence of the mantras needs to be constantly renewed. This happens through daily worship of the caitya, and in the case of votive caityas, also through their annual reconsecration, which is known in Newari as *busādham* (Sanskrit: *varṣavardhana*), that is, 'anniversary'.⁵ In addition to the ritual renewal of the mantra's presence there is the perceived need to renew periodically the physical container of these mantras, i.e. the caitya, or, in other cases, the images, etc. The perception of this need is grounded in the equation of the caitya or other objects housing the mantras with the human body. Just as the human body is invariably subject to old age and decay and hence needs to be abandoned and exchanged for a new one obtained through rebirth, so the caitya inevitably becomes old, worn out and marred, and stops being a body fit to contain the Buddha essence.⁶ Accordingly, the rituals surrounding the renewal of caityas (and icons and other consecrated objects) reflect

the process of reincarnation in various ways. Thus the divine essence (*nyāsa*) is extracted from the decrepit caitya, and then later reinserted into the rebuilt caitya. Most significantly, the reconsecration rituals include the rite of birth and the whole set of subsequent childhood and adolescence life-cycle rituals – up to and including the marriage rites. Moreover, in the case of the Svayambhū-caitya, the old *yaṣṭi* removed from the decrepit caitya is cremated and its ashes discarded in a series of elaborate rituals, as if it were a human corpse.

The ritual procedure of renovating icons in tantric Buddhism and Hinduism

The process of renovating caityas that is operative in the case of the Svayambhū-caitya is set out concisely in Kuladatta's *Kriyāsamgrahapañjikā* (hereafter: *Kriyāsamgraha*) in a section entitled 'Jirṇoddhāraṇavidhi' (269,9–271,3), and in Jagaddarpaṇa's *Ācāryariyāsamuccaya* (hereafter: *Kriyāsamuccaya*) in a section called 'Jirṇoddhārghavidhi' (26,6–28,4). These two works, which date from the eleventh to the thirteenth century, are foundational for the Newar ritual tradition. The procedure prescribed in these works is attested over and over in ritual handbooks of the Newar tradition and continues to be observed in practice to the present day. Indicative of the marked continuity in practice, this includes the supplication of the concerned deity at the outset of the renovation, which is identical in the *Kriyāsamgraha* and in manuals in current use. In turn, the relevant sections in the *Kriyāsamgraha* and *Kriyāsamuccaya* bear close affinity to the treatment of *jirṇoddhāra* found in Śaiva, Śākta and Vaiṣṇava tantric works from different regions of the subcontinent, including the Kathmandu valley itself. In much the same terms as those found in such Hindu works, these two Buddhist texts affirm the necessity of taking care of sacred objects fallen into disrepair, prescribe how to remove them by means of a pair of bulls (see below), and instruct how they are subsequently to be disposed of. Indeed, the differences can largely be reduced to the deities involved and their handling by mantras and invocations, etc. It follows that the ritual strategy adopted for the renovation of the Svayambhū-caitya is in much closer accord with Hindu forms of tantric practice than with the standard non-tantric practice for stupas found across Buddhist cultures. Hence, in order to shed further light on the conception of renovation (*jirṇoddhāra*) underlying the renovations of the Svayambhū caitya, I draw in the following paragraphs on both Buddhist and Hindu ritual tantric works dealing with this subject. They generally do so as part of their larger treatment of the establishment and consecration of objects of worship, including the temples or other structures housing them.⁷ To be sure, though adducing Hindu sources I do not claim that the Svayambhū-caitya was treated in the likeness of a *liṅga* or other Hindu structure. On the contrary, the rituals performed for Svayambhū in the course of its renovation treat the caitya (as on all other occasions) again and again as an abode of the five Buddhas and hence of buddhahood, and they

do so in strict continuity with the Buddhist tradition recorded some thousand years ago in the *Kriyāsamgraha*. All the same, I feel justified in bringing to bear the rich Hindu sources on *jīrṇoddhāra* because, sharing similar tantric techniques, they reflect the same basic understanding of *jīrṇoddhāra* as is operative in Buddhist practice, and thus they can shed additional light on this practice. Also, Newar Buddhist renovation practice is related not only to these Hindu traditions, but also has its parallels in how stupas (Tib.: *mchod rten*) are renovated within the fold of Tibetan Buddhism. There, too, one can find the tradition of extracting the divine essence of the stupa before the renovation work begins, storing it in a temporary abode, typically a mirror, and reinserting it upon conclusion of the work into the stupa, which is then reconsecrated afresh.

Of central importance is the term *jīrṇoddhāra* which is used, in the Buddhist and Hindu traditions studied here, to refer to the process of renovation. The term is a *tatpuruṣa* compound. The meaning of its first component, i.e. *jīrṇa*, is not controversial, namely ‘old’, ‘worn out’, ‘dilapidated’, etc. In the compound it is nominalised and refers to the object to be renovated. The meaning of *uddhāra*, however, is open to interpretation. Literally the term refers to the act of extracting, raising up or lifting up, drawing out, pulling up, etc.⁸ But as part of the compound *jīrṇoddhāra* the dictionaries give the meaning ‘repairing’, or a variant thereof, possibly because of a metaphorical interpretation of the movement ‘lifting up’, ‘raising’ denoted by *uddhāra*. A close reading of the treatises on *jīrṇoddhāra*, however, suggests in my opinion that it is better to stick to the literal meaning – as the Vācaspatyam dictionary of Tārānātha Tarkavācaspati Bhaṭṭācārya indeed does⁹ – and to understand that the term denotes primarily ‘taking out what has become dilapidated’. Certainly, this process entails the subsequent repair of the removed object, or its replacement by an object that is near identical (made of the same material, of the same size, etc., as laid down in the handbooks). Accordingly, some sources (e.g. *Vimarśinī* 11,110) equate *jīrṇoddhāra* with *navikaraṇa*, a term that literally does mean ‘renovation’, or, more precisely ‘making new’. However, the emphasis – particularly in Hindu sources – is on the removal of the dilapidated structure. It is viewed as a potential source of calamity that may cause havoc, war and defeat, famine, and the general destruction of property and men. It is in keeping with this focus that both Hindu and Buddhist works on *jīrṇoddhāra* almost invariably have a section where they prescribe how to dispose of the removed structure and its parts in such a way that they are neutralised and do not cause misfortune.

Because the focus is on the dilapidated object and the threats it poses, the treatises on *jīrṇoddhāra* commence with a discussion of the defects that necessitate action. First is physical damage: the object may suffer from being broken, split, cleft or burst; it may be scorched or burnt by fire; it may be struck by lightning; it may be deformed by the loss of limbs or implements. As the object of regular veneration it may also lose its characteristic proportions, whether by wear and tear, or by the regular application of unguents, oil etc. In addition to such physical defects, the object may also suffer desecration, such as when it comes into contact with untouchables or dogs. Moreover, the discontinuation of regular worship (*nityapūjā*) divests the object of the divinity’s presence. As the term *jīrṇa*

suggests, the object may also simply have become old and worn by the passage of time and hence require renewal. However, as follows from the range of mentioned defects and the sequence of their enumeration, defects other than plain ageing carry the most weight.

After having outlined the various types of blemishes, the texts on *jīrṇoddhāra* typically proceed to paint a grim picture of the kind of devastation that such impaired structures invite if no action is taken. The people stray from the path of righteousness and stop venerating cows and brahmins. Storms, droughts and other catastrophes ravage the country. Cattle die, cows stop giving milk. Men become impoverished. Starved by famine, they suffer diseases and die. Social unrest, uprising and strife become the natural consequences. The country becomes easy prey for outside forces and is doomed to perish.¹⁰ On the other hand, if a decrepit *liṅga* (or other object) is removed and replaced according to precept, then king, country and people prosper.¹¹

Some sources explain why these defective structures are so harmful. The originally installed deities leave the icon or shrine once it has become unsuitable, whether because of one of the mentioned defects, simple old age or the lack of proper attendance (see for instance, *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya*, chapter 21, 1, cited in note 10). The vacated object is then occupied by potentially harmful spirits, demons etc., who tap its inherent power and use it to cause havoc and destruction. This understanding accords with the much older idea that Vedic rituals not performed correctly may fail to reach their destined recipient and end up empowering malevolent beings instead. In the Buddhist sources studied here, there is no suggestion that the calamity caused by dysfunctional shrines is brought about by malevolent beings occupying these shrines. However, in my interviews with Buddhist ritual specialists I have encountered a comparable apprehension about leaving newly constructed or reconstructed shrines or icons vacant, that is, unconsecrated, for any longer than necessary.

The process of renovation is highly sensitive because, notwithstanding notions of the abandonment of marred structures, the icon is considered to be charged with the divine essence. Because of the perceived presence of the deity (or deities) by way of its (their) mantras, there is the need to deconsecrate the icon and render it a lifeless structure so that it may be handled without transgressing against the deity and incurring immeasurable bad karma (*pāpa*). This is regarded as a delicate and even precarious operation, and hence the sources give considerable space to the deconsecration rites. First, the ‘mantra deposit’ (*nyāsa*), that is, the divine energy of the caitya (or image or other consecrated artefact) has to be extracted so as to render this object a lifeless structure which can be dismantled.¹² In order to do so, the deposited mantras are first recited and visualised, and then in this energised form transferred from that object to a water vessel or a makeshift icon. Until the completion of the renovation, this vessel (or makeshift icon) holds the *nyāsa* and functions as the temporary abode of the deity (or deities) in question. Hence, for this period, instead of the icon the vessel receives the daily worship (*nityapūjā*).

The deconsecration is not finished with the extraction of the divine essence from the defective icon. Unless dealing with

a mobile image (*cala*), it is necessary to dislodge the icon in a second step. The sources I have consulted prescribe that for this purpose a rope is fastened to the object in question and then attached to bovines. They are then made to move away so that they dislocate the structure and thereby render it fit for humans to work on. Apparently bulls are used not only because they are strong and readily available as draught animals, but also because of their religious significance. Accordingly, the bovines are deified and worshipped before they are set to work. The use of bulls is particularly appropriate in a Śaiva context since no animal could be better suited for transporting a *līṅga* than the mount (*vāhana*) of Śiva, that is, the bull. Note that in a Vaiṣṇava context the *Sātvatasamhitā* teaches similarly that the porters who are to remove the deconsecrated icon should be empowered by the mantra of the relevant mount, in this context presumably Garuḍa.¹³ Removing the *līṅga* or another sacred object from its seat is not only necessary for transporting it, but clearly is also of ritual significance. By uprooting (*uddhāra*) the *līṅga*, which by the rite of consecration (*pratiṣṭhā*) was firmly anchored and immovable (*acala*), the bulls ‘dislocate’ it, that is, they take it out of its sacred context and transform it into a profane object that may be removed and discarded.

It accords with my understanding of *jīrṇoddhāra* as the ‘uprooting of the dilapidated’ that the uprooting of the icon by bovines (or another agent) is so integral a part of the process of renovation that it is even preserved in contexts where it makes little sense. This is notably the case in the Buddhist rites of renovation as prescribed in the *Kriyāsamgraha* and *Kriyāsamuccaya*, and as surviving in the Newar tradition. Even though there is no physical necessity to dislodge large caityas since they are dismantled part by part, bovines are employed to ‘dislocate’ (*cālayati*, *vicālya*) the caitya after its divine essence has been drawn out. For this, a rope is fastened to the finial of the caitya and then attached to the two bovines. They are then made to move away so that they pull down the finial to which they are connected by the rope. Only by this second step of deconsecration is the caitya transposed from a sacred to a profane plane, thus becoming fit for humans to work on.

As mentioned above, the concern to take care of dilapidated or neglected shrines extends to their safe disposal, no doubt so as to ensure that the power supposedly still inhering in the discarded parts will not be tapped by malign demons, ghosts, spirits or other such creatures. Human corpses, which are deserted bodies similar to deconsecrated icons, are deemed to be vulnerable in a comparable way. Hence they are normally burnt as quickly as is practical, taking care that all the ashes and remaining parts of the body are properly discharged in water. This is to ensure that nothing of the corpse remains for evil forces to seize upon. Such notions and sentiments are shared, and hence Hindu and Buddhist sources prescribe in basically the same way how to dispose of deconsecrated objects. All wooden items are to be burnt in a *homa* fire after having been wrapped with cloths soaked in ghee or oil. Similarly, scroll paintings and texts are to be burnt ritually. By contrast, metals may be recycled, that is, their substance may be used again after they have been melted down and in the process purified and transformed. Objects of stone or clay (including fired bricks), which can be neither burnt nor easily

recycled, should be discarded in sufficiently deep water (at the confluence of rivers, in the ocean etc.), or – presumably in case there is no such place within reach – in a deserted area under the shade of a tree (*Bhagavantabhāskara* 50,6f), inside a secluded cave (*Kriyāsamuccaya* 27,5), or in a hole excavated for this purpose (*Viśvāmitrasamhitā* ch. 23, 14).¹⁴

It is an intrinsic element of *jīrṇoddhāra* to replace the marred object or, contingent upon a range of factors, to repair and reinstall it. If a new object of worship is set up as a replacement it may not be inferior but has to be of equal size or bigger, and needs to be made of the same or more valuable materials.¹⁵ The fabrication and installation of such objects are not dealt with in the context of *jīrṇoddhāra* because these are topics in their own right that are treated separately in the ritual literature and technical manuals. The texts on *jīrṇoddhāra* deal with the process of investing the new or repaired icon with the divine essence that was previously extracted from the marred icon and then kept in a water vessel or some other object functioning as a makeshift icon. By transferring the essence from its temporary abode into the new icon, the ritual officiant connects this icon to the marred icon it replaces. From a mere copy the new icon is transformed into an authentic equivalent that houses the same divine essence and perpetuates the blessing of the previous icon. In this way it differs from an entirely new foundation that is consecrated without connecting to a previous icon. Nevertheless, the icon is afterwards consecrated anew as if it were a new establishment. Thus in the Newar tradition the deities of the caitya undergo all the rites of passage (*saṃskāra*) and subsequent initiations (*abhiṣekas*) that form part of the standard consecration rituals.

The rationale underlying the strategy of replacement

The procedure of *jīrṇoddhāra* sketched here in summary terms differs in significant details among the Buddhist, Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions, and also within these traditions themselves. However, it is clear that across the traditions the texts are driven by the common concern to deal with impaired objects because they are perceived to be potentially harmful sources of ill fortune. Accordingly, the term *jīrṇoddhāra*, while covering in all traditions the entire process of renovation, refers more narrowly – in accordance with its literal meaning as pointed out above – to ‘the removal of what has become marred’. It is the prevailing, but not unqualified (see below), tendency in the works examined here to prescribe the disposal of the marred icon and dictate its replacement by an object that is in all aspects equivalent, though it may be larger and made of more valuable materials. While this strategy of renewal by replacement may strike the western observer as counterintuitive – imagine if one were to advocate the incineration of a cherished medieval wooden icon and the subsequent fabrication of a copy as the most appropriate way of addressing its disrepair – it has a certain plausibility in an Indic context where the manifestation of a deity in a particular object is often temporary.

The existence of Hindu and Buddhist deities transcends time and place; in principle they can be rendered present whenever and wherever the ritual officiant chooses to do so. Hence, deities normally manifest themselves in a particular place only as a result of the performance of a certain sequence of rituals, and often they do so only for a limited period of time. Thus it is one of the most basic rites of Hinduism (and tantric Buddhism) to make a deity present by summoning it into a water vessel. Once the deity has been duly worshipped, it is 'released' with the words that it ought to return whence it came. This procedure has its origins in Vedic religion, which lacks cultic images or temples. Rather, the Vedic deities are, typically, summoned to partake of the offerings cast into the sacred fire. For complex rituals, a makeshift pavilion with altars and sacrificial post may be erected, but upon conclusion of the rituals the entire structure is dismantled and often disposed of by fire. Similar to these Vedic forms of worship, as part of tantric rituals *maṇḍalas* may be laid out on the ground with coloured powder. After the appropriate set of deities has been summoned into the *maṇḍala*, they are worshipped and then released. Upon discharging the *maṇḍala*, the powder is typically collected in flasks and then consigned to the waters of a nearby river. Even images, *liṅgas*, and stupas can be made as ephemeral objects that are imbued with the divine essence only for the purpose of a particular ritual and then discarded. This, for instance, is the case in the annual festivals of Durgā, Sarasvatī and Gaṇeśa when the devotees fashion temporary images of clay or other materials. These images are used as icons only for the duration of the festival and are afterwards disposed of in water. Likewise, in Newar Buddhism there is the tradition of forming clay stupas, and in Śaivism clay *liṅgas* that are consecrated, worshipped and then discharged and discarded in a complex series of rituals.

There are, moreover, numerous cults that include, as an integral element and strategy of renewal, the periodic replacement of the icon after a specific span of time, often 12 years. These icons are normally made of wood or clay and hence, particularly in the Indian climate, prone to wear and tear. Here it is taken as a given that the natural process of decay necessitates the regular replacement of the icons. A prominent example is the Jagannāth cult of Puri in Orissa. Every 12 or 19 years the wooden images of Jagannāth and three related deities are discarded and replaced by newly fashioned icons.¹⁶ A further example comes from a largely indigenous cult that flourishes in differing forms in most Newar towns and villages of the Kathmandu valley. The focus of this cult is a group of deities that typically consists of a set of eight or nine mother goddesses (often collectively known as Navadurgā), and also includes forms of Bhairava (see Gutschow and Bāsukula 1987). These deities are brought to life every year in elaborate mask dances. The masks are consecrated with the divine essence of the deity they represent. Accordingly, they are treated with great care even when not worn. While these are mended every year, they are burnt every 12 years and then made anew. Before the masks are cremated, the dancers act out the deities' deaths in an elaborate and vivid sequence of rituals that confirms the equation of icon abandonment with death.

In the preceding examples, the provision of a new cult object is treated as the best way to renew the deity's presence

once it has become compromised and weakened by the deficiencies of the marred icon. Given the equation of the icon with the human body, it indeed makes sense to transpose the biological process of ageing, death and rebirth onto the image. Moreover, in comparing the vitality and potential of a newborn to the ailing and afflictions of an old person, one understands that the provision of a new cultic image may be regarded as a much more effective and true form of renewal for the deity than the mere mending and repair of the decrepit icon housing it. For, like the human body, the physical icon is subject to the laws of nature. When worn out and marred by the inevitable process of decay, it cannot be restored to its youthful state. This understanding is particularly poignant in a Buddhist context where doctrine and meditational practice revolve around the realisation that everyone and everything is impermanent (*anitya*) and subject to decay and destruction.

What ultimately matters from this perspective are not the (man-made) icons as such. They are only replaceable types, not inherently sacred, and hence, there is no need to preserve them. The real object of the renovation – what is preserved and renewed by the process of *jīrṇoddhāra* – is not the material object, but the presence of the deity. Hence the correct performance of rituals assumes critical importance. They alone can guarantee the continuity that is the ultimate purpose of *jīrṇoddhāra*.

Reservations against the strategy of replacement

It is obvious that this privileging of ritual over other renovation efforts such as physical labour reflects the perspective (and agenda) of the priesthood. Not surprisingly, this perspective has not gone uncontested. One can find also in an Indian context the sentiment that the presence of the deity cannot simply be severed from the icon and then, without loss, transferred to a new substitute. Instead the presence of the deity is felt to be inextricably bound up with the material icon, which rules out replacement and dictates preservation at all costs. This perspective is grounded in awe of the deity's presence in this icon and betrays a lack of trust in the ability of priests to manage this presence by way of rituals. One may easily overlook this position if focusing exclusively on ritual, highly technical texts that are written by and for ritual specialists. They assume the perspective of priests and display great confidence and trust in their ability to successfully 'handle' the deities by ritual means, notably by the use of their mantras.¹⁷ This confidence may not be shared by common believers who may view an icon as the life manifestation of a deity and attribute to it a measure of agency that is beyond priestly control.

And even some of those texts that do teach replacement bear witness to a sense of awe and apprehension. This is clearly detectable in their instruction on how to invoke the deity in question prior to the commencement of the renovation. These invocations not only inform the god of the imminent renovation and beg for his cooperation, but they also remind the god that the intervention happens in accordance with his

own command. This is so because the renovation about to be undertaken is prescribed in the *āgamas* and *saṃhitās* that the god in question (Śiva or Viṣṇu) has himself taught. The wording of the invocation typically used varies only slightly in Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava (and Buddhist) sources. As a standard example I here adduce the *Tantrasamuccaya*:

This image, oh deity, has become marred. You yourself have taught that (such a marred image) brings all sorts of harm to men, but that there is pacification if it is taken out. Hence, with your permission I take out the image in which you reside. So please grant us permission for what we have embarked upon.¹⁸

Even more strikingly, the *Viṣṇusaṃhitā* sees the need to furnish the following argument in order to set at rest qualms and doubts about the righteousness of removing the image:

Just as a blameless object, such as a flower and so on, is (first) destined for the veneration of the deity, but then subsequently (after its use) disapproved of as tarnished, so the very image that was first faultless and destined for veneration, is subsequently disapproved of as marred and tarnished. Therefore, you sirs, should leave (all) doubts behind and abandon this image, thinking of it as tarnished. This is the teaching of the treatise.¹⁹

While such passages attest to a reluctance to remove and replace icons even when they have become defective, they also show that the textual tradition regards such apprehension as a sentiment that has to be overcome. They thus confirm indirectly that, at least in the circles beholden to this textual tradition, the removal and replacement of marred icons is viewed as the appropriate strategy to deal with their impairment.

Concluding with a reconsideration of the renovations of the Svayambhū-caitya

As far as the Svayambhū-caitya is concerned – and the same also applies at least in principle to other caityas in the Newar tradition²⁰ – the strategy of replacement as laid down in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* and *Kriyāsamuccaya* has been applied over and over to the *harmikā*, the *yaṣṭi*, the thirteen rings and the crowning parasol. Crucial in this is the *yaṣṭi*. For, when the *harmikā*, rings and crowning structure were replaced, the decision to do so was bound up with the necessity of their dismantlement in order to allow for the replacement of the *yaṣṭi*. In the period stretching from the first renovation (completed in 1372) after the raid by Shams-ud-din to the renovation started in 1814, the *yaṣṭi* was replaced on average (there is no rule in this regard) every 44 years. The extant sources record only one instance where the *yaṣṭi* had to be renewed because it had been struck by lightning. This happened shortly after the renovation completed in 1595, when the damage by lightning was so severe that the caitya had to be renovated all over again from 1601 to

1604. This event being the exception, it would seem that the *yaṣṭi* lasted on average some 40–50 years before it fell into disrepair. However, the *yaṣṭi* installed in 1817 still stands straight, and proved intact in 2010 when inspected in the course of the renovation then under way.²¹ This endurance over nearly two centuries raises the question of whether the installation of a new *yaṣṭi* at past renovations was always motivated by the *yaṣṭi*'s physical disrepair. While such disrepair is explicitly recorded in some cases, there are other renovations for which we lack any mention that the old *yaṣṭi* being replaced was marred.²² I presume that at least in some of those latter cases the *yaṣṭi* was replaced not because of its poor condition but because its replacement was felt to be an integral part of the renewal of the caitya. These instances speak to the strength of the sentiment that the thorough renewal of a structure entails the replacement rather than the conservation of the material substance. They do so in a loud and clear voice, given that the procurement of a new *yaṣṭi* and its installation inside the caitya in place of the old one are by far the most time-consuming and arduous steps in the caitya's renovation.

On the other hand, the preference for replacement over repair has not been extended to the dome, which is the immutable base opened only to allow for the replacement of the *yaṣṭi* but otherwise left untouched. It is tempting to conclude on this basis that the treatment of the caitya's dome connects to the standard treatment of stupas in the Buddhist world, while the treatment of the structure above is determined by tantric developments that have their origins in the Hindu fold but also became dominant in Newar Buddhism. This, however, would be to miss the point. The different treatment of dome and superstructure is due primarily to pragmatic considerations and cannot be explained by invoking two different Buddhist models of renovation. Though fashioned of durable wood, the *yaṣṭi* and the wooden superstructure above the dome are deemed in need of regular renewal, while the solid, brick-built dome is not subject to deterioration in a comparable manner.

Such pragmatism is the rule rather than the exception. While the ritual literature teaches the replacement of impaired *liṅgas* and other objects even when they are made of stone and considered immovable (*acala*), it seems that in past and contemporary practice such objects are replaced only in extreme circumstances. A famous case concerns the central *liṅga* of the Paśupatināth temple, the most sacred Hindu shrine in Nepal. After it had been seriously damaged and desecrated by the troops of the Bengali ruler Sultan Shams-ud-din Ilyas during their ransack of the Kathmandu valley in the mid-fourteenth century, it was discarded and replaced by a new *liṅga*. Similarly, an inscription from Jodhpur in Rājasthan records the replacement of an image damaged in 1178/79 by the Turuṣkas, that is, Muslim Turkish troops.²³ Contrary to such extreme cases, it is clear that marred objects of worship and shrines are frequently not disposed of and replaced, but repaired and reinstalled. It follows that the strategy of replacement advocated in the ritual literature is in practice not implemented as the sole, unchallenged procedure of renewal. Rather a host of factors determine which course of action to take. These factors include such pragmatic considerations as the state of the marred object, its fabric, and the availability of funds and other resources. However, they also include the

sentiments of the traditional ‘owners’ and guardians of the object in question, and the opinions of the concerned priests. While these sentiments and opinions do not determine on their own which course of action is taken, they have an important bearing upon the decision-making process, hence the need to study and engage with them.

Notes

1. A good example of a conservation effort allowing for local sensitivities is the restoration of the Sulima Pagoda in Patan, Nepal, carried out by the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust in the 1990s. On completion of the restoration in 1999 a symposium was held in collaboration with the World Monuments Fund, which had supported the work. The proceedings of the symposium (Theophile *et al.* 2003: 45) offer a good overview of the issues faced by the Trust and the decisions made in the process. For example, due to theft many of the exquisite carved roof-supporting struts had been lost. Rather than replacing them with simple struts, the Trust opted to commission newly carved struts that would match the preserved struts in appearance. While the installation of these newly created struts side by side with the originals has blurred the difference between the original structure and new additions, it means that the temple does not appear defective to the faithful, who continue to worship here.
2. I use the term ‘renovation’ in a non-technical way. I prefer this to committing myself to a more specific term such as those used to identify the seven ‘levels of intervention’ that James Marston Fitch (1982) distinguishes ‘according to a scale of increasing radicality’, namely ‘1. preservation; 2. restoration; 3. conservation and consolidation; 4. reconstitution; 5. adaptive reuse; 6. reconstruction; 7. replication’. None of the seven terms as defined by Fitch adequately captures the case of Svayambhū, and since I am not aware of another technical term that would do so, I choose to use the term ‘renovation’ in a broad, general sense, rather than opting for a more specific, technical term that would not be accurate.
3. For a detailed description of the structural elements of the Nepalese caitya, see Gutschow 1997: 16–24.
4. The word *nyāsa* refers to both the action of laying down and to what has been laid down, i.e. the deposit. In a Hindu context the divine energy or essence is usually referred to as the *jīva* (‘soul’, ‘life’), or sometimes as the *jīvanīyāsa*, of the icon in question. On the practice of empowerment by the ‘deposition’ (*nyāsa*) of mantras, see Padoux 1978.
5. Despite its name, the *bhūsādham* rite in the Newar tradition is performed for all caityas on the same day, rather than on the anniversary of their establishment.
6. In the Hindu fold, the *Viṣṇusamhitā* (24,3–4ab) articulates this principle clearly as follows: ‘Just as an embodied being abandons the body worn down by age and obtains a new one, in the same way the deity, too, abandons the image worn down by age and takes possession of a new one’ (*deham dehī yathā jīrṇam tyaktvā dehāntaram vrajet| tyaktvā jīrṇam tathā bimbam devo ‘pi bhajate navam|*). See also the *Siddhāntasekhara*, as quoted in *Bhagavantabhāskara* 40,18f: *deham jīrṇam yathā dehī tyaktvānyad upagacchati| liṅgādīny atijīrṇāni tathā muñcanti devatāh|*.
7. As for the treatment of renovation (*jīrṇoddhāra*) in the Hindu fold, it can be found in the Vaiṣṇava *samhitās* of the Pañcarātra, in the Śaiva *āgamas*, and in some Purāṇas, notably

the *Agnipurāna*. It is also the subject of treatises and manuals (*paddhati*) authored by named individuals. By contrast, in the *smārta* literature the topic of renovation is, as far as I know, not discussed. Likewise, the *Brhatsamhitā* and the *Manasāra* do not deal with this theme. This suggests that the theoretical treatment of *jīrṇoddhāra* did not evolve before the eighth century.

I have not studied the literature on *jīrṇoddhāra* comprehensively, but have attempted to cover a broad and representative range of sources of Buddhist, Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva provenance. More concretely, I have consulted the *Sātvatasamhitā*, the *Viśvāmitrasamhitā*, the *Viṣṇusamhitā*, the *Pārameśvarasamhitā*, the *Īśvarasamhitā*, the *Viṣvaksenasamhitā* and the *Mahopaniṣad*. They are all early sources of the Pañcarātra dating from the eighth to the eleventh century. In addition to these quasi-canonical works that purport to be authentic records of the teachings given by god Viṣṇu himself, I have studied the *Tantrasamuccaya* and the *Bhagavantabhāskara* by Nilakaṇṭha, which incorporates sections of the *Agnipurāna*, the *Hayaśiṛṣa Pañcarātra* and the *Siddhāntasekhara*. As for Śaiva sources, I have turned to the *Somaśambhupaddhati* from the eleventh century which, thanks to the late Hélène Brunner, is available in a very useable edition accompanied by a richly annotated French translation (Brunner 1998). Further important Śaivaite sources consulted are the *Dharmasindhu* by Kāśinātha from the eighteenth century, and the *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya*, a text of Bengali provenance widely used in Nepal that dates back to at least the twelfth century.

The summary treatment I present here is deficient in various ways. Most seriously, in my treatment of the literature I do not differentiate carefully between the different religious and regional traditions; I do not stratify the material historically; and I do not discuss how the disparate sources relate to each other. Instead, I offer a rough sketch of the major features of *jīrṇoddhāra* that ignores particularities. There is some justification in doing so because on a basic level there is an essential consensus on the principles of *jīrṇoddhāra* – and it is these principles that I am concerned with here. However, it is certain that a more nuanced and detailed study of the pertinent sources and their interdependence would reveal important differences and yield a richer picture than the rough outline offered here.

8. See the entry *uddhāra* in Monier-Williams’ *A Sanskrit English Dictionary* (1899).
9. The Vācaspatyam dictionary of Tārānātha Tarkavācaspati Bhaṭṭācārya (vol. 4: 3124) offers a definition that is in keeping with the literal meaning of *uddhāra*, namely ‘the extraction of a previously established *liṅga* etc. from its place when it is broken etc.’ (*pūrvapratīṣṭhāpataliṅgādeḥ bhagnatādaḥ svasthānād uddhāre tadvidhānam*).
10. See for instance the following sources (which I have only partly translated for want of space):

- *Kriyāsamgraha* 269,6–270,1: ‘Where in villages, towns, monasteries etc. the Gods abide (in objects) from among caityas, images, banners etc. that have decayed or burst open or are burnt or broken etc., there living beings are afflicted by disasters such as the destruction of wealth, strife, famine or the loss of people. Therefore, the uprooting of the decayed has to be accomplished’ (*yatra grāmanagaravihārādiṣu caityapratimādhvajaprabhrtīnā<m?> jīrṇasphuṭitadagdhabhagnādaḥ deva avatiṣṭhante, tatra sthitānām sattvānām dhananāśakalaha-durbhikṣajanakṣayādayo doṣā bhavanti iti jīrṇoddhāro vidheyah.*).
- *Kriyāsamuccaya* 26,6ff: ... *vihāraḥkūṭālayasamsthitaḥ ye caityādibimbā atijīrṇasīrṇā bhagnāḥ sudagdhā dalitāḥ sphuṭāṅgās te dāna(?)dātur na śivāya rājñah. tasmāt prajāmaṇḍaladātṛrājñām śreyārthipunyarthimukṣubhiḥ ca samjīrṇatādyuddharanam vidheyam.*

- *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya* ch. 21, 1–8: ‘Beings (such as) spirits (*bhūta*), ghosts (*vetāla*) and demons (*rākṣasa*) occupy decayed and impaired *liṅgas* etc. which have been abandoned by the deities (established there originally). Fiercely assuming gruesome forms and constantly spreading great fear, they cause much harm in the kingdoms where they stay, [such as] great disaster, the earth’s ruin, the destruction and defeat of the army, famine, severe diseases, the ruin of the human subjects, poverty, agitation and strife, loss of one’s offspring and wealth, troubles to cows, brahmins and others, suffering and decadence of the king, the loss of valor and goodness as well as the spread (lit. conjunction, *yuktatā*) of greed, ignorance etc. And there may be torments [brought on by] defeat by enemies as well as great anxiety. When an impaired *liṅga* stands in the kingdom nothing good will come from it for the subjects and king. Therefore [an impaired *liṅga*] should be taken out according to the ritual procedure and with (the proper) mantras. A *liṅga* that has been taken out without (complying with) the ritual procedure by unqualified persons with no command of the *mantras* would necessarily come to torment the kingdom and destroy the king. Therefore, the king should quickly take out an (impaired) *liṅga* etc. in his kingdom so that cows, brahmins and the subjects as well as his kingdom may prosper’ (*atha jīrṇāṃś ca duṣṭāṃś ca liṅgādīṃś ca surojhitān/ āśrayantiha satvāni bhūtavetālarākṣasāḥ*||1|| *mahābhayakārā nityaṃ subhr̥ṣaṃ krūrārūpiṇaḥ/ kurvanti doṣasaṅghātaṃ yatra rāṣṭreṣu te sthitāḥ*||2|| *mahotpātaṃ dharānāśaṃ camūbhaṅgaṃ parābhavaṃ/ durbhikṣaṃ dāruṇaṃ rogaṃ prajānāśaṃ daridrātāṃ*||3|| *udvegaṃ ca vivadaṃ ca vināśaṃ cātma-jārthayoḥ/ pīḍā gobrahmaṇādīnāṃ rājño duḥkhaṃ kuśilatāṃ*||4|| *pratāpasattvahanīṃ ca lobhamohādiyuktatām/ śatruvyasanapīḍā ca cintā ca mahatī bhavet*||5|| *duṣṭaliṅge sthite rāṣṭre prajā-rājño na śobhanaṃ/ tasmād uddharaṇaṃ kāryaṃ vidhinā mantrapūrvakaṃ*||6|| *vidhiṃ vinoddhṛtaṃ liṅgaṃ mantrahīnais tv adaiśīkaiḥ/ rāṣṭraṃ pittena (?) saṃpīḍya bhūpaṃ uch[ē]dayed (for uchhādayed) dhruvam*||7|| *tasmād rājā svarāṣṭreṣu liṅgādy uddhārayed drutaṃ/ gobrahmaṇaprajānāṃ ca svarāṣṭrasya ca vṛddhaye*||8|| (some obvious printing mistakes have been corrected here).
- *Siddhāntaśekhara* as adduced by Nilakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa (*Bhagavantabhāskara* p. 40, 18–24): *dehaṃ jīrṇaṃ yathā dehī tyaktvānyad upagacchati/ liṅgādīny atijīrṇāni tathā muñcanti devatāḥ/ khaṇḍitaṃ cūrṇitaṃ liṅgaṃ pretādyā āśrayanti ca/ liṅgādyāṃ sattvaśūnyatvāt tathā ca brahmarākṣasāḥ/ kartur nṛpānāṃ rāṣṭrasya tadgrāmasya viśeṣataḥ/ pīḍāṃ kurvanti te hy ugrāṃ durbhikṣaṃ maraṇādīkaṃ/ tasmāt sarvaprayatnena kuryād uddharaṇakriyāṃ*.

Compare also the *Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā*’s warning (ch. 23, 32–4) that ‘great disaster would follow for king, kingdom and people’ (34cd: *kṣayo bhaved atimahān rājarāṣṭranṛṇāṃ apī*) if one reinstalled a new image (*mūrti*) without using the same mantras as employed for the establishment of the original, now uprooted *mūrti*. Moreover, the same text (ch. 23, 25cd–27a) urges that if the new image replacing the uprooted one is not made of the same material, size and kind, this will likewise lead to the ruin of king and kingdom.

11. *Bhagavantabhāskara* 50: 3: *jīrṇoddhāravindhānaṃ ca nṛparāṣṭrahitāvaham*.
12. When ordinary small statues are brought to painters for repainting, the divine essence is normally not extracted. Instead a brief ritual of pacification and forgiveness (*śāntipūjā, kṣamāpana*) is performed by the painters themselves before starting work. Despite this ritual the presence of the statues still presents a delicate situation. Thus a painter told me that inexplicable noises can be heard in his house for as long as images stay there for renewal. These noises end only when the objects have been redone and returned to the clients. Given that

this is reported with regard to simple and common statues, it may be imagined how imperative it is to correctly deconsecrate the Svayambhū-caitya, the holiest of all Newar Buddhist shrines, before starting work.

13. *Sātvatasamhitā* ch. 25, 338d–340ab: ‘But then, at the end of the fire ritual (*homa*), with these [aforementioned] mantras of Vāsudeva etc.] and with the mantra of the “vehicle” (*vāhana*), [the *ācārya*] should make the deposition [of these mantras] including the members (*sāṅga*). (He should do so) first himself and [then] for the porters (*vāhana*) [who will carry and uproot the image]. After that he should touch the *brahma* (= *brahmaśilā*), that is, the stone below the seat of the image. With the heart mantra [of the deity in question] he should then loosen [the image] and remove it (from its basis), while reciting the weapon mantra’ (*homānte tvatha taiḥ saha/ nyāsaṃ vāhanamantreṇa sāṅgaṃ kṛtvātmanā purā/ vāhanānāṃ tathā caiva brahmaiva saṃspr̥ṣed atha/ sañcālyā hr̥dayenaivaṃ japann agram athoddharet*).
14. See, for instance:

- *Kriyāsamgraha* 270,5–271,1: *yac caityādikaṃ śilāmayam sphuṭita<ṃ> dalita<ṃ> bhagnaṃ vā tad bahūdake nadisaṃgamādaṃ nikṣipet. m[ṛṇ]jaya<ṃ> caityādikasya yad yat saṃskāraṃ karttu<ṃ> na yujyate tat tatraiva nikṣipet. yad yat kāṣṭhamaya<ṃ> jīrṇāśīrṇa<ṃ>, tat tad ghṛtaplutena vastreṇa samāveṣṭya homāgninā dahet. yat tāmrādimaya<ṃ> tad drāvayitvā pūrvapramāṇān nyūnaṃ na kārayet.*
- *Kriyāsamuccaya* 27,5–7: *pāśānapṛthvimayajīrṇabimbam tīrthodake nikṣipān Jiyam etat kiṃ vā girer gūdhaguhāntarādaṃ. kāṣṭhātmakam cen navavastrabaddham tailāyadigdhām juhuyād vidhijñāḥ. dravyātmakam vā dravatām vidhāya saccātmake pūrnatamaṃ niṣīñcet. pūrvapramāṇaṃ sahasā surūpaṃ pūrvādhikam vā paripūrnadeham niṣpādyā ...*

See also *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya* ch. 21, 28–30, *Sātvatasamhitā* ch. 25,40cd, *Bhagavantabhāskara* p. 43,2–8, 48,30, 49,1 and 50,6–10, and see *Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā* ch. 23, 7cd and 14.

15. See *Sātvatasamhitā* ch. 25, 343; *Bhagavantabhāskara* p. 48, 11f and p. 49, 6f; *Pratiṣṭhālakṣaṇasārasamuccaya*, ch. 21, 31–33; *Viśvāmitrasaṃhitā* ch. 23, 25cd–26ab.
16. Unlike in the standard case described above, here the transference of the divine essence from the old to the new image includes a physical component, namely a relic-like object – possibly the remains of an image from a much earlier time – that is shifted in great secrecy from the old to the new image. See chapter 8 (‘Navakalevara. The unique ceremony of the “birth” and the death of the “Lord of the World”’) in Eschmann *et al.* 1978.
17. Fittingly, the texts (unanimously) proscribe dealing with self-manifested images in the same way. Here the deity manifests itself in a particular object, typically a stone or stone formation, of its own accord. Since human agency did not establish the deity in this object, it will also not be able to control and remove it later. Hence, one cannot (and should not) deal with these objects in the same way as prescribed for fabricated and consecrated objects that can be controlled. Besides, the notion that the icon needs to be unmarred does not apply to self-manifested icons in the same way. This is because they are normally raw, unhewn stones or stone formations that do not accord with particular iconographic or other norms and, accordingly, cannot become defective in the same way as man-made objects. Compare Alexis Sanderson’s treatment of self-manifested *liṅgas* in the Khmer tradition (2003–2004: 410–12, and notably the Śaiva sources on *svayambhuliṅgas* adduced in note 242).
18. *Tantrasamuccaya* 11,37–38: *jīrṇaṃ bimbam idaṃ deva sarvadoṣāvahaṃ nṛṇāṃ/ asyoddhāre kṛte śāntir ity evaṃ bhāṣitaṃ tvayā/ tat tvayādhiṣṭhitam deva uddharāmi tavājñāyā tad upakrāntam asmābhis tad anjūjñātum arhasi/.*

19. *Viṣṇusaṃhitā* 24.12cd–15ab: *yathaiva devapūjāyām viniyuktam aninditam// dravyam puṣpādikaṃ paścān nirmālyam iti nindyate/ evam bimbam aduṣṭam yat pūjāyām viniyujyate// tad eva dūṣitam paścān nirmālyam iti nindyate/ tasmād duṣṭam idaṃ bimbam bhavadbhir muktasaṃśayaiḥ// nirmālyabuddhā tyaktavyam iti śāstrasya śāsanam/*.
20. The renovations of the Svayambhū-caitya are not exceptional cases. Rather, they are paradigmatic and serve as examples to be emulated to the extent that funds and other circumstances permit. A pertinent example is the caitya of Cā Bahi (also known as Dharmadeva-caitya) located close to Deopatan, east of Kathmandu. When this caitya was renovated in autumn 2003, the superstructure above the dome was dismantled, the *yaṣṭi* replaced and the caitya rebuilt in basic accord with the renovations of the Svayambhū-caitya.
21. The identity of the present *yaṣṭi* as that installed in 1817 is confirmed by the inscription on its copper cover, discovered during the renovation work in 2009. This inscription (which is an integral part of the cover and was not attached later) dates to 1817, the year when the cover was made.
22. Besides the renovation at the beginning of the seventeenth century necessitated by the ravage worked by lightning, it is recorded for the renovations completed in 1413, in 1539/40, in 1683 and in 1817 that the *yaṣṭi* had become so marred that it needed to be replaced. Additionally, marring may also be presumed for the renovation completed in 1372 after the caitya had been torched by the troops of Sultan Shams ud-dīn Ilyas. Moreover, for the renovation from 1591 to 1595 it is recorded that the *yaṣṭi* had become old (*purāna*). However, instead of pointing to physical damage, this characterisation as 'old' could also reference the sentiment that the *yaṣṭi* had exhausted its life span and was in need of replacement.
23. Of interest for the present discussion are also the occasional finds of cult images in meandering river beds, ponds or caves, a phenomenon known, for instance, from the Kathmandu valley. Could it be that in some cases these objects had been disposed of in accordance with the prescriptions found in *jīrnoddhāra* treatises?

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