

Light of the Valley

Renewing the Sacred Art and Traditions of Svayambhu

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*Light of the Valley:
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Frontispiece: Detail of one of the gilded victory banners placed above the harmika of the Svayambhu Stupa. Courtesy of TNMC.

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The Past Renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya

By Alexander von Rospatt

By far the most important shrine for Newar Buddhists, in particular those of Kathmandu, is the Svayambhūcaitya. Located about a mile west of Kathmandu on top of a hillock called in Newari, the local vernacular, Semgu or Segu or a variation thereof, it oversees much of the Valley and functions as the focal point that attracts all Newar Buddhists beyond the barriers imposed by caste and locality. The various recensions of the *Svayambhūpurāṇa* place its mythological origins in a prehistoric time.¹ As for the historical beginnings of the Svayambhūcaitya, they are obscure. The little evidence that points to the existence of the Svayambhūcaitya in the fifth and seventh century is flimsy and far from conclusive (see below). However, from the fourteenth century onwards there is ample evidence, documenting how the *caitya* was renovated again and again at odd intervals. The renovation completed in 2010 and commemorated in this volume stands in the tradition of these periodic renovations and continues it. Though unique with its principal objective of newly gilding the *caitya*, the present renovation has shared many of the most salient features of past renovations and has in a sense been a very traditional undertaking. Essentially the same set of rituals as in the past were performed in the Newar and Tibetan tradition by the same kind of priests and ritual specialists. Newar artisans and craftsmen with the same social background employed basically the same techniques and tools as in the past, when they dismantled the copper sheeting and other metalwork, repaired the wood and brickwork below, restored and newly gilded the dismantled sheets and metalwork, and finally reinstalled them. And as in the past there were numerous stakeholders in the renovation—the Tibetan donors, the Archeology Department and the municipality of Kathmandu as well as other governmental bodies, the local committees overseeing Svayambhū, the traditional caretaker priests residing at Svayambhū (i.e. the Buddhācāryas), the Newar and Tibetan priests, the artisans and craftsmen, etc.—who brought conflicting interests and perspectives to bear, something that remained a constant challenge right until the very end of the

*View of the Svayambhū Stupa
after the completion of the
fifteenth renovation from the
southwest corner.*

1. For details of the Svayambhūpurāṇa and its mythological account of Svayambhu see my article “The Sacred Origins of the Svayambhūcaitya and the Nepal Valley: Foreign Speculation and Local Myth.” *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* vol. 13. Kathmandu: Nepal Research Centre 2009, pp. 33-91.

renovation and the concluding consecration rituals. Because of all these continuities it is of interest for the present volume to harken back and examine the principal (known) renovations of the past.

Within roughly 450 years, more precisely from 1370 to 1817, the Svayambhūcaitya was completely renewed at least eleven times, i.e. on average every forty-five years or so. These renovations were major affairs. Rather than merely fixing what was marred, the entire superstructure above the dome was dismantled and the dome itself opened, so as to allow for the replacement of the massive central wooden pole (*yaṣṭi*) traversing the entire structure from the bottom to the top. Except for the metal, which was melted down for reuse, all dismantled parts were discarded ritually. Once the new *yaṣṭi* had been erected and the dome sealed, the entire superstructure above was built up anew, starting with the *harmikā*, continuing with the thirteen rings and ending with the honorific parasol and finial above. Thus—in accordance with the treatises on this subject (*jīṃoddhāravidhi*)—the guiding principle of renovating the Svayambhūcaitya was not the conservation of the old structure but its comprehensive renewal. This should be borne in mind when I use the word “renovation,” for lack of a better term, besides “rebuilding,” etc.

The old structure before and the new comprehensively rebuilt structure after the renovation are linked by the divine essence (*nyāsa*) of the caitya. It is ritually extracted before the old structure is dismantled. Having been kept and worshipped on a daily basis (*nityapūjā*) in a water vessel (*nyāsaḥaṭa*), it is transferred back into the newly erected structure that replaces the former one. In addition the identity of the new and old structure is assured by the persisting dome with its nine niches, housing the five principal exoteric Buddhas of Newar Buddhism and the four correlated Buddhist goddesses statues. Moreover, the *caitya*'s finial (*gajur*) and its crest-jewel (*cūḍāmaṇi*) are reused, so that there is some continuity between the old and new structure also on this count. And most importantly of all, the appearance of the newly erected superstructure above the dome mirrors the structure it replaces. Thus, although most of the present *caitya* at Semgu was constructed only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (parts of the structure date from the renovation completed in 1816 and parts from the penultimate renovation carried out in 1918, while some parts were restored and added at the most recent renovation completed in 2010), it still mirrors to some extent how the *caitya* must have looked centuries before then, and arguably even how the caitya looked originally. This has to be qualified, however. To start with, the new caitya replacing the old one may be bigger, as long as the proportions are not changed. While the *caitya* was presumably enlarged several times, at least one such occurrence can be documented. An undated gloss in the Newari language added in a second hand to a likewise undated manuscript, with the title *Stūpalakṣaṇakārikāvivecana*, preserved in the National Archives of Kathmandu² records the measurements for the Svayambhūcaitya for an unspecified time. The script of the gloss and the features of the Newari point to the late fourteenth or fifteenth century, though this is not certain. There is another set of historical measurements for the Svayambhūcaitya, namely those recorded in an historical architectural drawing giving, **part by part, the measurements of the caitya after the completion of the renovation in nepāl samvat**³ 832 (1712). Accession no. 3-366, NGMPP Reel No. A 969/13. This text, but not the gloss with the measurements, has been studied by Gustav Roth (“Symbolism of the Buddhist Stūpa,” in *The Stūpa: Its Religious, Historical and Architectural Significance*, edited by Anna L. Dallapiccola, Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1980: 183-209 [esp. 193-196]).

3. The era *nepāl samvat* started on 20 October 879 A.D. In the following *nepāl samvat* is abbreviated as “NS.”

A.D.) and in NS 937 (1817 A.D.).⁴ A comparison of the measurements of the gloss with those of the drawing suggests that in the time between the measurements of the gloss and 1712 the caitya was increased in size by exactly one third.⁵ In the process of enlarging the Svayambhūcaitya, the proportions of the various parts of the caitya remained constant. Besides being increased in size, peripheral elements such as the shields (Newari: *halampati*) attached to the cube above the dome (*harmikā*) were also replaced in altered form when the caitya was rebuilt.⁶ Also, more fundamental changes were made if deemed necessary. Thus initially there were at most four niches set in the dome. Later a fifth niche for Vairocana and a further four niches for the Buddhist goddesses of the intermediate directions were added. It is also likely that the number of massive rings which are mounted above the *harmikā* and extend to just below the *chattra* have been increased to the standard thirteen over the more than one thousand years that the *caitya* has existed. This is suggested by the prominent examples of clearly very old *caityas* with fewer rings, such as the Pulām Semgu caitya, which only has nine rings. Thus, despite the duplication of the previous structure, there has been enough scope for change in order to adapt the *caitya* to doctrinal developments and “bring it up to date.” Hence it may be more appropriate to say that the present structure reflects, rather than mirrors, the way the Svayambhūcaitya may have looked a thousand years ago or earlier. 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 rigid 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 and modified.

In this chapter I want to give an overview of the major renovations, that is, all renovations that entailed the dismantling of the old structure, the replacement of the central pole (*yaṣṭi*) and the rebuilding of a new *caitya* to succeed the dismantled one. Smaller renovations involving only the replacement of the honorific parasol (*chattra*) have not been taken into account. But I do include the renovation carried out by gTsang-smyon Heruka in 1504, when the upper part of the *caitya*, including the thirteen rings, was renewed, and the renovation from 1918 when the caitya was extensively refurbished, albeit without replacing the *yaṣṭi*. The main source for the seven renovations undertaken between the end of the sixteenth century and 1817 are chronicle-like texts that were written (in Newari) either by one of the participating priests or by close observers.⁷ Focusing on the rituals rather than on the building process as such, these texts record all major steps in the course of a renovation, starting with the procurement of a new *yaṣṭi* and ending with the final extended reconsecration. They document in great detail how the caitya was renovated at the time, providing a wealth of details on

4. There are two copies of this drawing. They have been transmitted in two different manuscripts which have been published by Bernhard Kölver, in his book *Re-building a Stūpa: Architectural Drawings of the Svayambhūnāth* (Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1992) as “manuscript A” and “manuscript B.”

5. The details of these measurements are too technical to allow for an easy presentation that would fit the present framework.

6. For a detailed description of the structural elements of the Nepalese caitya see the section guide to Terms and Structural Elements relating to a caitya in Niels Gutschow’s *The Nepalese Caitya: 1500 Years of Buddhist Votive Architecture in the Kathmandu Valley* (Stuttgart/London: Edition Axel Menges, 1997), pp. 16-24.

7. I gratefully acknowledge the help of Kashinath Tamot with whom I read most of these Newari texts.

the rituals and on such circumstantial issues as the organization of the Newar priesthood, the sponsorship, collective support and involvement of much of the upper-caste Buddhist populace of Kathmandu, and the role of the king, I have presented and evaluated this material in an extensive study entitled *The Svayambhū Caitya of Kathmandu and its Renovations*, which is forthcoming with the Lumbini International Research Institute in Nepal. Here I confine myself to a summary account of the past renovations without offering an extensive analysis of the material.⁸

The Svayambhūcaitya is a revered shrine not only for Newars, but also for Tibetans who have sponsored and actively participated in numerous renovations. Therefore, there is not only Newar but—as Franz-Karl Ehrhard has shown in three articles (1989, 1991, 2007) on this subject⁹—also important Tibetan material that has to be taken into account.¹⁰ Besides the sources referring to specific renovations, there is a summary of the Svayambhūcaitya’s renovations which the Tibetan savant Brag dkar rta so sprul sku Chos kyi dbang phyug provided in his pilgrim guide of Nepal entitled *Bal yul gyi gnas dang rten gyi lo rgyus nges par brjod pa ’phrul snang (?) nor bu’i me long*, which was presumably composed in 1816 or 1817.¹¹ Moreover, there are two “inventories” (*dkar chag*) that register in chronological order the renovations known to their Tibetan compilers. The more widely noted inventory is the *dkar chag* with the title *Bal yul mchod rten ’phags pa shing kun dang de’i gnas gzhan rnam kyi dkar chag bzhus* so which was published by Turrell Wylie as Appendix B to his *A Tibetan Religious Geography of Nepal* (Rome: Is.M.E.O., 1970). The other inventory is the five-folio Tibetan *dkar chag* called *Dus gsum sangs rgyas thams cad kyi thugs kyi rten ’phags pa shing kun dkar chag* (“A Register of ‘Noble All [Kinds of] Trees; Mind Support of All the Buddhas of the Three Times”) which, according to the colophon, was first composed by Chos skyabs dpal bzang po and then compiled in 1413 by Pūṇyaśrībhadrā [= bSod nams dpal bzang po]. Though already published in 1976, it went largely unnoticed until Franz-Karl Ehrhard (1991) drew attention to it. The *dkar chags* only record renovations with significant Tibetan involvement. Much more comprehensive than these accounts is Hemraj Shakyā’s monumental study *Śrī-Svayambhū Mahācaitya* (Kathmandu: Svayambhū Vikāsa Maṇḍala, [1978/79]). Using a great array of Newar sources and consulting to some extent Tibetan sources as well, he compiled a vast corpus of material relating to the history of Svayambhū. The following overview is much more limited in scope, confining itself to the major

8. The present overview is a substantially revised version of my article “A Historical Overview of the Renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya at Kathmandu,” published in the *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* vol. 12 (2001, pp. 195-241). It incorporates new material and reassesses material presented before. Note, however, that for want of space I refrain here from offering a detailed account of the Newar manuscripts used for my study of the Svayambhūcaitya. For this and for further bibliographical references I refer the reader to my mentioned article from 2001 and to my forthcoming book.

9. Franz-Karl Ehrhard: “A Renovation of the Svayambhūnath-Stupa in the 18th Century and its History” (*Ancient Nepal* 114. 1989: 1-9), “Further Renovations of Svayambhūnath Stupa (from the 13th to the 17th Centuries)” (*Ancient Nepal* 123-125. 1991: 10-20), and “Old And New Tibetan Sources Concerning Svayambhūnath” (*Zentralasiatische Studien* 36 (2007), pp. 105-130).

10. The Tibetan material presented in the following I owe largely to Franz-Karl Ehrhard and Hubert Decler who generously shared with me the results of their painstaking research on Tibetan sources related to Nepal.

11. Vol. *ta* (entitled *rnam nges skor*) of the Collective Writings of Brag dkar rta so sprul sku Chos kyi dbang phyug. I am grateful to Hubert Decler for making available his draft translation of this text, which was “discovered” by Franz-Karl Ehrhard.

renovations involving the replacement of the *yaṣṭi*. However, I make use of sources, both Newar and Tibetan, which Hemraj Shakya did not have at his disposal, in order to give as complete an account as possible. It is almost certain that the sources identified by me record all major renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya since the end of the sixteenth century and most, if not all, renovations that were undertaken in the 250 years before then. However, there are few sources attesting to renovations before the middle of the fourteenth century, so that there have certainly been more comprehensive renovations than attested in this overview.

The evidence before the mid-fourteenth century: Newar sources

Before the sack of Kathmandu by the Bengali King Shams ud-dīn in the middle of the fourteenth century, there are very few indigenous sources on the Svayambhūcaitya. The oldest record is handed down in the *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī*, a chronicle from the late fourteenth century.¹² It relates that King Viśvadeva (in all likelihood Vṛṣadeva, who flourished around 400 CE) completed the consecration of the “revered *caitya* of the monastery at Sinagu” (*sīnaguvihāracaityabhaṭṭārika*) (20v2f.), that is, the hillock on which Svayambhū is located (and which in the Newar sources chronicling renovations in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries is called “Semgu” or “Segu”). I presume that this refers to the Svayambhūcaitya rather than to another *caitya* such as the aforementioned “Old Caitya of Semgu” (Pulām Semgu *caitya*) located likewise on the Semgu hillock. This accords with the Tibetan register of 1413 which relates that “a king called Viśvadeva ... erected this Noble All [Kinds of] Trees, a superior receptacle,” i.e. the Svayambhūcaitya (Ehrhard 2007, *op. cit.*, p. 111). While the record of the *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī* could conceivably refer to a consecration performed upon the completion of a renovation, the Tibetan source suggests that King Vṛṣadeva newly erected, rather than renovated, the *caitya*. At any rate, the mention of Viśvadeva (for Vṛṣadeva) provides the earliest date for the existence of the Svayambhūcaitya. We need to bear in mind, however, that the *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī* was only compiled some thousand years after Vṛṣadeva (to be precise, between ca. 1387 and 1390 CE), so that its testimony has to be treated with due prudence. The same holds true even more for the record of the Tibetan register, which is roughly contemporaneous with the *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī* and might be indebted to it or to a common (oral?) source.

The other evidence commonly cited to prove the antiquity of Svayambhū is the Aṃśuvarman inscription found at Gokarṇa, several miles to the west of Svayambhū in another part of the Valley.¹³ However, this badly damaged inscription from the beginning of the seventh century only refers to the Svayambhūcaitya if it is accepted that the preserved letters ... *bhūcaityabhaṭṭā* ... form part of the conjectured word “Svayambhūcaityabhaṭṭāraka,” as Dhanavajra Vajrācārya (not unreasonably) proposes. Furthermore, there is the record in the *Bhāṣāvamśāvalī* (p. 78), a chronicle composed in the eighteenth century in the Nepali language after the conquest of the Valley by the Śāhas.¹⁴ It relates that the Licchavi King Mānadeva, who set

12. *Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī*. Edited and translated by Dhanavajra Vajrācārya and Kamal P. Malla. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1985.

13. Cf. Dhanavajra Vajrācārya: *Licchavikālakā abhilekha*. Kathmandu: CNAS, 1996 (2nd edition), pp. 370f.

14. Pauḍel, Nayanātha (ed.): *Bhāṣā Vamśāvalī*. Part 1, Kathmandu: Nepāla Rāṣṭriya Pustakālaya, 1963.

up the famous inscription of Cāriḡu Nārāyaṇa and was presumably the great-grandson of Vṛṣadeva, offered a *chattra* to the Svayambhūcaitya. Because this source was composed thirteen centuries after the supposed donation in the fifth century, it is also questionable how much weight can be attached to its testimony. Yet, despite the tenuousness of all these sources, there are good reasons to believe in the antiquity of the Svayambhūcaitya. For it is likely that the hillock was an important sacred place that was transformed into a Buddhist sanctuary upon the advent of Buddhism in the Valley.¹⁵

Much later, by the beginning of the eleventh century CE, the *caitya* had—according to the narrative found in the *Rnam thar brgyas pa*—become so well-known a site even in the Gangetic plain that the great scholar Atiśa used the intention to visit the *caitya* as a reason when seeking leave from Vikramaśīla.¹⁶ Even if we dismiss the *Rnam thar brgyas pa* as a later work that may not be historically accurate, there is independent evidence proving that the fame of the Svayambhūcaitya had spread in the the eleventh century beyond Nepal. This evidence comes in the form of an illuminated manuscript from 1071 that has depictions of sacred Buddhist sites across the subcontinent. The miniature of the Svayambhūcaitya looks like the generic depiction of a small *caitya*, built of solid stones. It bears no resemblance to its present appearance, nor, I suppose, to the appearance it had back then. It can only be identified by way of its caption *nepāle śvayambhūcaitraḡ*. Judging by its script, the manuscript looks like a Nepalese production. Even so, I wonder whether the artist responsible for the illumination was from elsewhere and, never having seen the Svayambhūcaitya, chose to depict the generic form of a small free-standing *caitya* such as can be found in the ruins at Nālanda and elsewhere. However that may be, the inclusion of the Svayambhūcaitya in a pan-South Asian collection of Buddhist sites that has only one other object assigned to Nepal (namely the “Lokeśvara of Buṅgama[ti],” commonly known as Buṅgadyaḡ or Karuṅāmaya or Rāto Matsyendranāth) attests to the importance and fame that the *caitya* must have enjoyed in the eleventh century.

As for historic evidence of renovations, Mary Slusser refers to a seventeenth-century unpublished *thyāsaphū* that reportedly records a renovation of the Svayambhūcaitya in the reign of King Haṛṣadeva at the end of the eleventh century.¹⁷ Leaving the record in the *Gopālarājavamśāvali* aside, this would be the earliest renovation recorded in a Nepalese source. Regrettably, it was not possible to verify this information, which was imparted to Mary Slusser by Gautamvajra Bajracharya. At any rate, one wonders how reliable one isolated reference in a record compiled six centuries later can be. Significantly, Hemraj Shakya in his encyclopedic *Mahācaitya* makes no mention of this renovation.

There is a further Newar source that may refer to a renovation before Shams ud-dīn, namely an inscription kept in the Mūrtisaṅgrahālaya Museum up at Svayambhū. It has been published by Hemraj Shakya and Tulsi Ram Vaidya.¹⁸ Unfortunately, the inscription is so badly worn that even such an experienced epigrapher

15. I have argued this point in detail in my paper “The Sacred Origins of the Svayambhūcaitya and the Nepal Valley: Foreign Speculation and Local Myth,” in *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* vol. 13 (2009), pp. 33–91.

16. See p. 174 of Hubert Decler “Atiśa’s Journey to Tibet,” published in Lopez, Don (ed.) 1997, *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press (Princeton Readings in Religions), 1997, pp.157–177.

17. Mary Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press 1982: p. 298, fn. 149.

18. Shakya, Hemraj and Tulsi Ram Vaidya: *Medieval Nepal: Colophons and Inscriptions*. Kathmandu: T.R. Vaidya,



*Illuminated folio of Calcutta
Manuscript No. A 15. The
caption above the text on the
left side identifies the object
as nepāle śvayambhūcaitraḥ.
Copyright Jinah Kim.*

as Hemraj Shakya could only identify a few *akṣaras* on each line. All the same, the legible letters suggest clearly that the inscription records a renovation. On epigraphic grounds Shakya (*ibid.*) dates the inscription tentatively to the twelfth century. Mary Slusser noticed three ciphers inscribed at the upper edge of the stone bearing the inscription. She read these ciphers as 2 4 9 and hence dates the inscription to NS 249 (= 1128/9 CE). However, the ciphers are (at least nowadays) badly damaged and allow for a highly conjectural reading at best. More troubling, the numbers were executed in a different hand and clearly do not form part of the original inscription. The most favorable explanation would be that they were added later as a kind of label dating the inscription, possibly when the date recorded as part of the inscription had already faded or was on the point of becoming obliterated. Hence, it is far from certain that the inscription really dates from 1129. Also, Shakya's dating of the inscription to the twelfth century is not secure. On the other hand, on paleographic and other grounds it indeed seems likely that the inscription predates Shams ud-din's raid of the Valley in November 1349 CE.

The renovation accomplished by Jo btsun sPrad pa in the 13th century

The gap in our knowledge of renovations before Shams ud-din is filled in a little by two Tibetan sources, namely the *Red Annals* (*deb ther dmar po*), a chronicle compiled in the fourteenth century, and by the aforementioned *dkar chag* of five folios compiled in 1413. The *Red Annals* record—sadly without providing dates—that a certain Jo btsun sP/Srad/s pa (hereafter: sPrad pa) renovated the Svayambhūcaitya when he came to Nepal (pp. 146,21 — 147,6). The passage in question is reproduced in slightly modified form in the *Gung thang dkar chag* (fol. 26b), a chronicle written in 1782 and recently the subject of an extensive study by Per Sørensen and Guntram Hazod.¹⁹ The critical passage reads in their translation (pp. 137f.) as follows:

The disciple of Rin-po-che gDan-sa-ba [i.e. lHa Phyug-mkhar?] named Jo btsun sPrad-pa went towards the West (sTod), where he founded the dPal-ba Me-tse [*sic*] monastery and [later] the Bla-shod monastery in the direction of Blo-smad [i.e. Glo-smad, Lower Mustang], where he established a teaching college for Madhyamaka [studies] (*dbu ma'i bshad grva*). After he had brought his mind to maturation in meditation and spiritual realization, he arrived in Nepal

1970: pp. 55-57.

19. Per K. Sørensen and Guntram Hazod in cooperation with Tsering Gyalbo: *Rulers on the Celestial Plain. Ecclesiastic and Secular Hegemony in Medieval Tibet. A Study of Tshal Gung-thang*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007.

[Balyul], and having greatly worked for the benefit of the Nepalese people, [he intended to] renew the central pole (*srog shing, yaṣṭi*) of Ārya Svayambhū[-caitya] [‘Phags-pa Shing-kun], whereupon he cut down one [trunk] among three [trunks being found suitable to serve as] a central pole that were found growing in Sing-ga-nags [i.e. Nuwākof] and exchanged it with the central pole originally set up by ‘Phags-pa Klu-sgrub [i.e. Ārya Nāgārjuna]. He then set up a new *chattra*, white-washed the [re-consecrated] *caitya* and installed a monolith (*rdo ring*) [commemorating the renovation]. He [thus] succeeded in accomplishing the promotion²⁰ on an immeasurable scale through his karmic feats. The Nepalese king and the Newār noble citizens (*‘ba’ ro, bhāro*) [of Kathmandu] presented [Jo-btsun] with a [miniature] bKra-shis sgo-mangs [stūpa] along with an endless number of gifts [as a token of gratitude] such as cotton [cloth], etc. He thereafter went back [towards Tibet], only to pass away [at a place called] Ra-sha ma-se.

As for the *dkar chag*, it has the following entry:

Then, after some time, the central pole (*srog shing*) broke. *dPon chen* Śākya bzang po donated three large *dronas* and 50 ounces of gold. The *kalyāṇamitras* from dBus and gTsang, the noblemen (*‘ba’ ro > bhāro*) from Nepal, [and] the *thakkuras* from India (also) donated much. Upon this, the lama of dBus and his disciples set up the (new replacement) pole.²¹

Śākya bzang po held office as *dPon chen*, the first chief administrator of the whole of Tibet (*chol kha gsum*) from 1264 to 1270, answerable directly to the Mongolian leadership. Though it is likely that the renovation of Svayambhū recorded in the *dkar chag* was carried out (or initiated) within this period, this does not necessarily have to be so. For already since 1244 Śākya bzang po had been overlord of Sa skya and in this function held the title *dPon chen*. As for the Red Annals, neither this chronicle nor related pertinent sources on the dissemination of the Tshal pa bKa’ brgyud pa school in Western Tibet provide chronological data that would allow for precise dating of the renovation attributed to Jo btsun sPrad pa. However, it is related in the Red Annals (pp. 133, 146) that Jo btsun sPrad pa was a disciple of lHa phyug mkhar ba Nyi zla ’od (1135–1215), who was the fourth throne-holder of the mother monastery of the Tshal pa bKa’ brgyud pa school at Gung thang from 1210 to 1214, and that he was also a student of Sangs rgyas ’bum, who was the next throne holder from 1214 to 1219 (or to 1231 according to a different tradition). These dates place Jo btsun sPrad pa

20. Sørensen and Hazod specify in their translation here that “he succeeded in accomplishing the promotion [for the welfare of the Nepalese people].” I find it unlikely that the Tibetan sponsors and participants in the renovation would have been motivated by the desire to work for the welfare of the Nepalese people. Rather, I suspect that their material and physical support of Svayambhū were motivated by their perception of the sanctity of the *caitya* and their belief in the universal benefit its renovation would generate.

21. My translation largely follows Ehrhard 2007, *op.cit.*, p. 115. However, besides some minor stylistic modifications, I adopt Vitali’s crucial suggestion and understand *bla ma dbus pa* to designate a specific individual (and not “the religious teachers from dBus” as Ehrhard has it), while I take *yab sras* (lit. “father son”) to refer to his disciples. Cf. Ehrhard 1991, *op.cit.*, p. 17, n. 10, where the Tibetan text is reproduced.

so early in the thirteenth century that I doubted his involvement in the renovation recorded in the *dkar chag*. Moreover, I had supposed that the relations between the Tshal pa bKa' brgyud pas and Sa skya pas were too strained to allow for joint participation in one and the same renovation. Hence, in my previous assessment of this material (von Rospatt 2001, pp. 200f.), I came to what I now believe to be a wrong conclusion, namely that these two accounts refer to two different renovations, which took place respectively in the first and second halves of the thirteenth century.

The crucial clue that the two sources cited here probably refer to the same renovation comes from the biographies of U rgyan pa (1229/1230–1309) (alias Seng ge dpal or Rin chen dpal) by bSod nams 'od zer and Zla ba seng ge, studied by Roberto Vitali.²² As Vitali writes in an e-mail communication (April 20, 2009), “these sources state that one Lama dBu ma pa, an acquaintance of U rgyan pa, died of drowning at an obscure locality—namely Ra sha dba' se or Ra sa na wa se—on his way back to Tibet from the Kathmandu Valley.” Despite the slight discrepancy in spelling, this otherwise unknown locality, which lies between the Nepal Valley and Kyirong (sKyid grong),²³ is the very place where, according to the *Red Annals*, Jo btsun sPrad pa died, when he was on his way from Kathmandu to Tibet. It is difficult to believe that this agreement in the two accounts can be coincidental. Rather, it raises the strong possibility that the contemporaneous Jo btsun sPrad pa and dBu ma pa are in fact one and the same person. Such an identification gains additional weight from the account (recorded as part of the life story of U rgyan pa) that dBu ma pa when meeting U rgyan pa, boasted of the work he had done for Svayambhū. The identity of Jo btsun sPrad pa and dBu ma pa becomes practically a certainty if one follows Vitali's reasonable suggestion that “dBu ma pa” and “bla ma dBus pa” may be two versions of the same name, so that the dBu ma pa of the *rnam thars* of U rgyan pa would be the very bla ma dBus pa, whom the *dkar chag* credits with having set up the new *srog shing*. For in that case Jo btsun sPrad pa and dBu ma pa/dBus pa will have died within the same century, at the same, otherwise unknown place while traveling to Tibet, and both of them would have replaced the central pole of the Svayambhūcaitya before—something that would be next to impossible unless they were one and the same person. What is more, Jo btsun sPrad pa is known to have been a supporter of the *madhyamaka* teachings, even setting up a seminary for studies (*dbu ma'i bshad grva*). The word dBu ma pa (which is used as a name in the *rnam thars* of U rgyan pa) means *madhyamaka* and hence may have functioned as an alias for Jo btsun sPrad pa. Besides, Jo btsun sPrad pa came from the region of dBus, so that the appellation “bla ma dBus pa” in the *dkar chag* would fit even if it were not emended to read dBu{s} <ma> pa.

The arguments presented here have been developed by Roberto Vitali. I find them convincing and follow them, though it has to be remembered that the paucity and terseness of the material does not allow for complete certainty. While in my mind there remain some unsolved questions, I accept that the renovation we

22. The results of this study will be published as part of Roberto Vitali's forthcoming monograph *On some early bKa' brgyud pa in the lands on the “upper side” (1191–1344)*. I am deeply indebted to Vitali, who has generously shared his material and insights with me, through both oral communication and writing.

23. See Sörensen and Hazod 2007, *op.cit.*, p. 138, n. 336.

are considering here is likely to have been completed shortly before 1266.²⁴ Vitali arrives at this quite precise dating by matching the *Red Annals*' report that Jo btsun sPrad pa died on his way back from Kathmandu as he was traveling towards Kyirong, with dating the mentioned meeting between bla ma dBu ma pa (alias Jo btsun sPrad pa) with U rgyan pa to around 1266. If we follow Vitali, the renovation would thus have been completed at the time when Śākya bzang po held office as *dPon chen* not only of Sa skya but of the whole of Tibet (*chol kha gsum*), which one might have expected to be the likely import of the cited passage from the *Red Annals*.

What matters more for our present purposes than the precise dating are the main features of the renovation we are considering here. To start with, we learn from the *dkar chag* that the renovation was necessitated by damage to the central pole of the *caitya*, the *srog shing* or *yaṣṭi*, to use the Sanskrit word.²⁵ The tree to replace the damaged pole was, according to the *Red Annals*, cut in the forest of Siṅga. This forest was located in the environs of Nuwakot, i.e. in the deep valley cut by the Trishuli river to the north of the Kathmandu Valley, which is the area from which the trees for all later renovations also came. rTa tshag Tshe dbang rgyal relates in his *tHo rang Chos 'byung* (written ca. 1446, pp. 151–53) that the Siṅga forest was an important retreat place (*sgrub gnas*) in the Ras chung sNyan brgyud tradition, which goes, via Ras chung rDo rje grags pa (1085–1161), back to Mi la ras pa (1040–1123).²⁶ This raises the possibility that this specific location was chosen because of its association with Mi la ras pa, the idea being that the tree was imbued with the sanctity of the place from whence it came.

The renovation's central act was the replacement of the *yaṣṭi*, but we learn that Jo btsun sPrad pa also installed a new *chattrā* and whitewashed the rebuilt *caitya*. He also set up a “long stone” (*rdo ring*), that is, presumably an inscription. However, no Tibetan inscription from the thirteenth century is preserved at Svayambhū. There is the largely effaced Sanskrit inscription mentioned in the previous section, but this can hardly be the inscription set up by Jo btsun sPrad pa, which most likely would have been executed at least partly in Tibetan. At most, it could be argued that the Sanskrit inscription was an equivalent set up on the same occasion. This would, however, not tally with Slusser's (uncertain) reading of this inscription's date 2 4 9 (= 1128/9 CE).

The *dkar chag* credits *dPon chen* Śākya bzang po with having been the principal donor of the renovation, contributing 3 *bre* (according to the Mahāvīyutpatti = *drona* in Sanskrit) as well as fifty ounces of gold. A *bre* is used to measure liquids and grains, and according to dictionaries corresponds to roughly two pints, i.e. a little less than a liter. This would mean that the gold donated by *dPon chen* Śākya bzang po would have had the

24. Note that Per Sørensen and Guntram Hazod have also come tentatively to follow Vitali, when considering the sparse information on Jo btsun sPrad pa in their aforementioned study of the *Gung thang* chronicle (p. 137, n. 333).

25. The *Red Annals* have it that the *yaṣṭi* that was replaced had been set up Ārya Nāgārjuna ('*phags pa klu sgrub kyis btsugs pa'i srog shing*). Rather than presenting Nāgārjuna as the last individual who installed a new *yaṣṭi* when renovating the *caitya*, the chronicle associates the mythical Nāgārjuna with the foundation of the *caitya*. I am not familiar with any other source that would identify Nāgārjuna in this way with the origins of the Svayambhūcaitya.

26. In the twelfth century rDo rje grags pa's disciple Ngam rdzong ras pa stayed there with his followers. Cf. Macdonald and Dvags po Rin po che's "Un guide peu lu des Lieux-saints du Nepal" (in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R. A. Stein*, edited by M. Strickmann, Brussels: Institut Belge des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1981, pp. 237-273) p. 270.

volume of roughly six pints, not to mention an additional fifty ounces weighing about a kilogram and a half. This is a stunning but not unrealistic amount, particularly if some of the gold was used for gilding parts of the *caitya* such as the rings.²⁷ At any rate, there is no reason to doubt that *dPon chen Śākya bzang po* was the principal donor behind the renovation carried out by Jo btsun sPrad pa. After all he was also in charge of the finances for the building of a temple with a golden roof at Sa skya—a project in which the celebrated artist Arniko (1244–1306) participated (cf. Ehrhard 1991, *op.cit.*). The *dkar chag* also credits additional donors from Tibet (“the *kalyāṇamitras* from dBus and gTsang”), from Nepal (“the *bhāros*”) and from India (“*thakkuras*”) with contributing. I suspect that these donors were wealthy individual sponsors who are identified here in an honorific manner as spiritual friends, *kalyāṇamitras*, or noblemen (*bhāro*, *thakkura*). While contributions from Tibetan and Nepalese benefactors are a standard feature of the renovations of Svayambhū, it is extraordinary to learn about the sponsorship by *thakkuras* from India. While the generic designation as *thakkuras* does not allow for any precise identification, it suggests that the Svayambhūcaitya enjoyed such fame among the dwindling number of Buddhists living in India in the mid-thirteenth century that it attracted donations. However, we should not be blind to the possibility that mention of the *thakkuras* from Indian in the *dkar chag* may lack a genuine material basis and owe to the wish of the *dkar chag*’s compiler (or his precursors) to aggrandize the renovation as a work so important that it found supporters not only from Tibet and Nepal, but also from the sacred motherland of Buddhism, i.e. India proper.

It is worth noting that the *Red Annals* make no mention of *dPon chen Śākya bzang po* or any other sponsor of the renovation. Possibly this omission can be explained by the wish not to detract from Jo btsun sPrad pa’s contribution. This would be in line with the emphatic account in the *Annals* of how the king and nobility of Nepal honored Jo btsun sPrad pa with special gifts upon conclusion of the renovation. Conversely, the *dkar chag* may have deliberately obscured the role of Jo btsun sPrad pa by referring to him only anonymously as lama of dBus (or as lama dBu ma pa if we follow Vitali’s proposed emendation of the *dkar chag*), while highlighting the role of *dPon chen Śākya bzang po* as principal sponsor. However that may be, it is clear that the renovation considered here was largely a Tibetan undertaking. The funds were provided in the main by Tibetans, and a Tibetan lama and his following were apparently in charge of the actual renovation work. Even so, the Nepalese are not entirely ignored and are presented either as grateful and devout locals honoring Jo btsun sPrad pa with gifts (*Red Annals*), or as sponsors who contributed towards the expenses of the renovation (*dkar chag*).

27. Note, however, that the same *dkar chag* provides unreliable measurements elsewhere. Thus it claims that the central pole of the renovation carried out from 1681 to 1683 measured in length 47 *dom* (cf. Ehrhard 1991, *op.cit.*, p. 12). This would be correct if a *dom* measured one foot. However, the dictionaries I have consulted indicate that a *dom* corresponds to six feet.

The renovation completed in 1372 after the raid of Shams ud-dīn in 1349

In stark contrast to the paucity of evidence for renovations before Shams ud-dīn, there is an impressive array of different textual sources recording most, and conceivably even all, major renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya since the second half of the fourteenth century.²⁸ To start with, there is an inscription at Svayambhū²⁹ that commemorates how the *caitya* was repaired some twenty years after it had been set on fire (*dagdha*) as part of the sacking of the Valley by the troops of Shams ud-dīn in 1349.³⁰ In addition there is a short and selective chronology of events concerning the Svayambhūcaitya, written in NS 1037 (CE 1916/7) by a Buddhācārya from Sempu by the name of Ratnadhana (henceforth: *Ratnadhana's chronicle*). This text is available to me in a handwritten copy prepared by Ratna Kaji Bajracharya.

The main donor was a certain Rājahaṛṣa with his family (lines 19–24 of the inscription), who obtained permission from King Jayārjunadeva of Bhaktapur and from Jayasthiti Malla of Kathmandu, who was nominally “deputy king” (*upendra*).³¹ Upon the hoisting of the precious *chattra*, the *caitya* was reconsecrated, on the full moon day of the month of *aśvin* in NS 492 (CE Sept./Oct. 1372), with an extended fire ritual of one hundred thousand oblations (*lakṣāhuti*), lasting four days and nights (*caturahorātrayajña*) (ll. 16–18, 29f. and 31f. *Ratnadhana's chronicle* 11). In addition to the *chattra* and the thirteen gilded rings (*cakrāvalī*) rising above the *harmikā*, a crystal (*sphuṭita*) and a staff surmounted by a gem (*ratnoṣṇisadaṇḍa*) and studded with every kind of jewel (*viśvamaṅkhaḥcīta*) were offered to the *caitya* (ll. 27f.). Moreover, a golden (that is, gold-plated) finial (*suvarṇakalaśa*), banners (*dhvaja*), and golden struts (*suvarṇadaṇḍa*) were provided (ll. 28f.). Apparently these donations became necessary because the jewels and gold parts of the previous structure had been plundered by the troops of Shams ud-dīn. Before these newly donated parts were installed atop the *caitya* together with the aforementioned *chattra*, they were taken around Kathmandu in a big festal procession that lasted likewise four days and nights (ll. 24–27).

Besides the donors and the king, the inscription also commemorates the names of two of the priests

28. The renovation coincided with the unification of the Nepal Valley by Jayasthitimalla (ruled 1382 to 1395) and the initiation of political stability after a long period of political turmoil, strife, and fragmentation. It thus may be seen as part of a cultural and religious revival. For instance, while little evidence has survived from the immediately preceding centuries, from this period onward there is a considerable number of inscriptions attesting to the establishment of new and the restoration of old temple structures. Similarly, the oldest surviving Nepalese scroll paintings (*paubhāh*) date from this era; and this was also a time of increased literary activity that gave rise to a new corpus of anonymous Buddhist narrative texts composed in Sanskrit, among them the Svayambhūpurāna, which renders the legendary history of the Svayambhūcaitya and other sacred places in the Valley.

29. Today this inscription stands northwest of the Svayambhūcaitya, where it is firmly secured in a wall together with other inscriptions, among them the inscription mentioned in fn. 54. It has been published under the title “Arjunamalla-Jayasthitimallasamayābhilekha” in *Samskṛta-sandēśa* (*āṅka* 10–12 [1953/54], pp. 13–17). It has also been reproduced as inscription 29 in D.R. Regmi's *Medieval Nepal*, vol. 3 (Calcutta 1966), pp. 21–24.

30. Lines 8 et seq.: *evam yavanadagdhas tu sa stūpo []pi tathā sthī²tah.*

31. Lines 14 et seq.: *ādāyājñāṃ dvayo rājñor indropendrasamāna¹syoh.* Though Jayasthiti Malla was in command of Kathmandu and hence of Svayambhū, he was nominally subordinate to King Jayārjunadeva of Bhaktapur. This explains the inscription's anomalous attribution of authority over Svayambhū to a king of Bhaktapur.

(Jñānakīrtisenapāda and Jayānanda),³² the astrologer (Ratnapati) who determined the auspicious moment for the consecration, the jeweller (Śrīmān Candra) who fabricated what probably served as the new *cūḍāmaṇi*, and two “woodworkers” (*dārukarmakara*) (commemorated as *sthāpit* Bhāro and his nephew Jayarāma Bhāro) who were apparently in charge of installing the *yaṣṭi* (line 23: *yaṣṭikāropanakṛte*)³³ and refashioning the other wooden parts of the *caitya* as a whole (ll. 30–34).³⁴

The renovation under King Jaya Jyotirmalla completed in 1413

The *yaṣṭi* was replaced again forty years later. This is attested by an inscription at Paśupatinātha,³⁵ part of which is reproduced in the colophon of a manuscript of the *Caturaṅka Rāmāyaṇa*.³⁶ The inscription and colophon commemorate the offering of a golden finial (*suvarṇakalāśāvarohana*) for Paśupatinātha by King Jyotirmalla in 1413 (NS 533), and add—without providing details—that in his reign (which had commenced four years earlier) the Svayambhūcaitya was repaired as well. The renovation is also attested in a *thyāsaphū* belonging to the private collection of the late Puṣparatna Bajracharya, one of the heirs of the *rājguruju* lineage of Kathmandu.³⁷ It provides a few more details, namely that the new *yaṣṭi* arrived at Svayambhū in *nepāla samvat* 532 on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of *māgha* (corresponding roughly to February 1412), that it was ritually received atop the hillock some twenty days later on the second day of the bright half of *phālguna*, and

32. Jayānanda is also mentioned in *Ratnadhana's chronicle*. His characterization as being of Svayambhū (11: *syaguyā vajrācāryya śrī jayānandanam ...*) indicates that he may have been their traditional *purohita* from Makhan Bāhāl.

33. The erection of a new *yaṣṭi* is also attested in *Ratnadhana's chronicle* (11: *yilasi thanā*).

34. Keith Dowman (“A Buddhist Guide to the Power Places of the Kathmandu Valley.” *Kailash: A Journal of Himalayan Studies*, vol. 8, 1-3 (1981), pp. 183-291: p. 212) writes that the aforementioned *dPon chen Śākya bzang po* assisted this renovation. However, as Franz-Karl Ehrhard (1991, *op.cit.*, p. 18, fn. 13) has shown, the renovation undertaken by this Śākya bzang po occurred some hundred years earlier (see above). Ehrhard’s result is in accordance with the inscription from 1372 inasmuch as it records that both the financing and the know-how for the renovation came from among the Newars. Though this does not preclude some Tibetan participation in the renovation, it is—in the light of other Newar sources—difficult to believe that the inscription could have ignored the involvement of Tibetans if they had initiated and carried out the renovation.

35. Lines 17 et seq.: *śrīpadmācalaśikharopari dharmālayasthānāsṛita śrīdharmadhātuvāgīśvaramūrttisvayambhūcaitya bhagnasthāpana*. The inscription has been published first in *The Indian Antiquary* (vol. 16, August 1880). It was later read and published anew by Yogī Naraharinātha, in *Saṃskṛta-sandēśa* (vol. 1, *aṅka* 10–12 [1953/54], pp. 69–71) and by D. R. Regmi (*Medieval Nepal*, vol. 3, pp. 47–50, inscription 47).

36. See Kāśinātha Tamotāś “*Caturaṅka rāmāyaṇa (ne.sam. 532) saṃskṛta pyākhanay chyahgu nepālabhāṣāyā nirdeśana khampu*” (*Kulām* 22 (13) (1995), p. 77). Tamot informs me that, in consultation with Diwakar Acharya, he arrived at a better reading of the colophon than the published one. He now proposes to read *svayambhucitamadheṣṭithāpana* instead of *svayambhuvitam dhiṣṭithāpana*. If we presume, in accordance with Newari phonology, a shortening of *yaya* to *e* so that *madhe*° stands for *madhya-ya*°, the colophon records “the setting up of the *yaṣṭi* in the middle of the Svayambhūcaitya.”

37. This *thyāsaphu* is dedicated to renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya. In addition to the present renovation, it also records the twin renovations performed at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries. The script of the *thyāsaphu* suggests that it was not written before the eighteenth century. In all likelihood it is based on an earlier source or sources from which the scribe copied.

finally that it was erected another ten days later on the twelfth day of the mentioned fortnight (i.e. roughly in March). The *thyāsaphū* adds that this happened during the reign of the glorious King Jaya Jyotirmalla (regal years 1408–1428), and credits the “glorious Śāriputra” with the erection of the *yaṣṭi* (... *yilasi thanā dina* || *rāja śrījayajotimalladeva* | *śrīśāliputrasyaṃ thanā śubha* ||).

The renovation under Jaya Jyotirmalla is also recorded in a Tibetan source, namely in the aforementioned *dkar chag* of five folios written and compiled on occasion of the then renovation. It records that the *yaṣṭi* broke and so prompted the renovation (Ehrhard 2007, *op.cit.*, pp. 118 and 126f). The renovation drew to a close when “the parasol together with the accompanying disks (and hence the renovation) was completed in a proper manner on the fifteenth day of the fourth [Tibetan] month in the serpent year [=1413].”³⁸ The *dkar chag* also relates that donations had come from various regional rulers in Tibet, but leaves no doubt that Jaya Jyotirmalla was in charge: “The King of Nepal, Śrī Jaya Jyotirmalladeva, acted as the main supervisor [of the renovation]. Having praised the assembled noblemen (*bhāro*) in an official writing, he called together the craftsmen under his charge” (*ibid.*). The same source adds—in accordance with the *thyāsaphū*—that “Mahāpaṇḍita Śāriputra set up” the *yaṣṭi* (*ibid.*). Śākya Śrī Śāriputra—to give his name in the form common in Tibetan sources—was one of the last Indian masters of great repute. He was abbot of Bodhgaya, then stayed in Tibet, and eventually followed an invitation of the Chinese Emperor to the capital city Beijing, where he lived until his death in 1426. Chinese written and epigraphical sources attest that Śāriputra was born in 1335,³⁹ so he must have been around 77 years old when the *yaṣṭi* was raised. This advanced age would suggest that his role was largely ceremonial and restricted to the performance of rituals accompanying the erection of the *yaṣṭi* and possibly the rites of consecration concluding the renovation. At any rate, Śāriputra’s fame must clearly have been such that his participation in the erection of the *yaṣṭi* (however marginal it may have been in reality) was deemed by both Tibetan and Newar chroniclers highly prestigious and worthy of particular mention.

Citing Franco Ricca and Erbetto Lo Bue,⁴⁰ Ehrhard (2007, *op.cit.*, p. 118) links funds provided by the Chinese emperor for whitewashing the Svayambhūcaitya with the renovation presently dealt with. However, the funds in question were only dispatched in 1413 and—as circumstantial evidence provided by McKeown bears out (personal communication)—must have arrived too late to be used for the renovation. Also, historical accounts and present-day practice suggest that the whitewashing of the rebuilt dome would hardly have been an elaborate affair, worthy of support from as far away as China. Hence I suspect that the funds sent from China must have been for a more special purpose than the simple and inexpensive application of a new coat of lime. One possibility would be the usage of a significant amount of gold in the process. This would accord with contemporary practice where traces of gold are often added to the lime, so that the application of

38. Ehrhard 2007, *op.cit.*, p. 118. The addition in parentheses has been provided by me.

39. I owe this information to Arthur McKeown of Harvard University, who recently concluded a dissertation (*Buried Alive: Śāriputra and Fifteenth Century Indian Buddhism*) in which he focuses on Śāriputra and the state of Indian Buddhism in his time.

40. *The Great Stupa of Gyantse: A Complete Tibetan Pantheon of the Fifteenth Century*. London: Serindia publications, 1993: p. 19.

a new whitewash becomes associated with the act of gilding. Whatever the details, it is worth noting that in the fifteenth century (and also towards the end of the preceding century when funds for whitewashing Svayambhū were likewise sent by the then Chinese emperor)⁴¹ the fame of Svayambhūcaitya in China was such that it elicited imperial gifts.

The renovation carried out by gTsang smyon Heruka in 1504

It was after an interval of seventy-three years that the *caitya* was again renovated extensively, though evidently without replacing the *yaṣṭi*. Nonetheless, I discuss this renovation here because of its impressive scale and the detailed accounts found in three religious biographies (*rnam thar*) of gTsang smyon Heruka (1452–1507),⁴² the celebrated *siddha* practitioner known for his antinomian behavior as the madman (*smyon*) of gTsang, who undertook this renovation (and was otherwise renown for his compilation and printing of the life story of Milarepa and his songs). However, I do so only briefly because Stefan Larsson’s learned contribution to the present volume already provides a lively description of this renovation that is based on these biographies and focuses on gTsang smyon’s role. My summary here is based on only one *rnam thar*, namely the one written in 1547 by rGod tshang ras pa sna tshogs rang grol.⁴³ This account (pp. 208–228) includes a detailed *dkar chag* of the renovation (pp. 220–226) and was used by Brag dkar rta so sprul sku Chos kyi dbang phyug for his previously mentioned synopsis of the Svayambhūcaitya’s renovations (*op. cit.*, 17a).

The account tells how in 1496, when gTsang smyon was visiting Nepal for the second time (his earlier visit, some twenty years before, already had been motivated by his wish to take *darśan* of the Svayambhūcaitya), the god Gaṇapati (that is, Gaṇeśa, the god who features at the beginning of all undertakings) manifested himself to the renowned Tibetan lama with the request to renovate Svayambhū (p. 174 and p. 228). The hesitant gTsang smyon complied with this request and vowed to take the renovation upon himself after Gaṇapati had promised to be at his side and assist him in this undertaking. More concretely, the god pledged to send to each worker an emanation of himself as an assistant and to provide materially whatever was needed (p. 175). Later,

41. The biographical account of bKra shis dpal brtsegs (1359–1429), the ninth throne-holder of the sTag lung seat in northern central Tibet, records that the Ming emperor Taizu Hongwu (alias Zhu Yuanzhang; reign 1368–98) sent funds to support the white-washing of the Svayambhūcaitya. I owe this reference to a personal communication by Per Sörensen of Leipzig University, who gave as source the *sTag lung chos 'byung* (371-72) and the *lHo rong chos 'byung* (576). For the latter work, cf. Dan Martin and Yael Bentor’s *Tibetan histories: a bibliography of Tibetan-language historical works* (London: Serindia Publ. 1997), pp. 69f.

42. The three *rnam thars* treating gTsang smyon Heruka’s renovation of the Svayambhūcaitya are by rGod tshang ras pa sna tshogs rang grol (written in 1547), Lha btsun rin chen rnam rgyal (written in 1543) and dNgos grub dpal 'bar (written in 1508). All three *rnam thars* have been studied in depth in Stefan Larsson’s dissertation *The Birth of a Heruka. How Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan became gTsang smyon Heruka: A Study of a Mad Yogi* (Stockholm University, 2009).

43. Unless otherwise stated, all references in parentheses in this section refer to Gene E. Smith’s facsimile edition of rGod tshang ras pa sna tshogs rang grol’s *rnam thar* (*The Life of the Saint of Gtsang*, New Delhi: Śata-piṭaka Series, vol. 69). I am again grateful to Hubert Decler who made available his draft translation of this text. For the twelfth chapter of rGod tshang ras pa’s *rnam thar* (pp. 172–176), which briefly refers to the renovation of the Svayambhūcaitya, there is also the translation by Todd Lewis and Lozang Jampal (“Newars and Tibetans in the Kathmandu Valley: Three New Translations from Tibetan Sources,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* [published by the Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa of the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies] 36 (1988), pp. 187–211).

just before the start of the renovation work, Viśvakarman also manifested himself to gTsang smyon to pledge his support (p. 216)—a pledge he kept, as we learn in the *dkar chag* (p. 225) where gTsang smyon credits Viśvakarman with the successful completion of the renovation.

After gTsang smyon had assented to the repeated requests of King Ratna Malla (reign 1484–1520) and others to renovate Svayambhū and been formally put in charge (p. 208), he and his disciples began to solicit contributions from all over Tibet. As explained by Larsson (*infra*), for this gTsang smyon could rely upon the extensive network he had built up over some three decades of traveling the length and breadth of the Tibetan plateau as an itinerant practitioner and learned bKa' brgyud pa monk of great repute. After some three years of raising funds and other preparations gTsang smyon finally arrived with his party in 1504 at the Nepal Valley, where he was ceremoniously received by the Malla king of Kathmandu and the people.

Reportedly, for the renovation of Svayambhū 800 people were requisitioned to fetch the “wood” (*shing*) (p. 216), which the king had committed to provide (p. 208). It is tempting to deduce from these high numbers, which are reported also by dNgos grub dpal 'bar (cf. Larsson *infra*), that they were employed for towing the *yaṣṭi* to Svayambhū and later pulling it into its upright position. However, rGod tshang ras pa's *rnam thar* only relates that the thirteen rings and the superstructure above were replaced, that the *caitya* was ornamented with bells etc., and that the immediately surrounding area with its shrines were renovated, but it does not mention the *yaṣṭi*. The same holds true for the two other *rnam thars* dealing with the early-sixteenth-century renovation as part of their portrayal of gTsang smyon Heruka. Accordingly, Brag dkar rta so, too, refers only to the rings and superstructure in his above mentioned account of the renovation. And this concurs with the sole Newar source on the renovation known to me, a note appended to the colophon of a manuscript of the *Kriyāsamgrahaṇīkā* kept in the Tokyo University Library, from the first half of the sixteenth century.⁴⁴ There it is merely related that the series of rings (*cakrāvalī*) was renovated, without any mention of the *yaṣṭi*. That only the upper part of the *caitya* was rebuilt is further indicated by the fact that—despite reported delays (see below)—the renovation was completed in the first half of 1504 within a couple of months,⁴⁵ much faster

44. The manuscript has been catalogued with number 116 by Seiren Matsunami (*A Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Tokyo University Library*. Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation. 1965). The pagination of the penultimate folio with the colophon seems to read 174 and not 176, as the catalogue has it when it refers to the first line as 176b1, and when it claims that there are 177 rather than 175 folios. The first date given in the colophon (on 174b3), viz. 624, records the deconsecration (*nyāsa pīmkāyā*) of the Svayambhūcaitya. It is not certain whether the date 624 also refers to the copying of the manuscript, as Seiren Matsunami assumes in his catalogue (*ibid.*). However, the copyist, Jinacandra of the Maṇisaṃgha vihāra, copied other manuscripts in nepāl samvat 625, 631 and 655 (see John Locke, *Buddhist Monasteries of Nepal: A Survey of the Bāhās and Bahīs of the Kathmandu Valley*. Kathmandu: Sahayogi Press. 1985: 328–30), which confirms that the manuscript dates from the first half of the sixteenth century. The record of the lunar eclipse at the end of the colophon (175a3) for nepāl samvat 677 may have been written in a different hand, so that the manuscript could predate 1557 CE. I am grateful to Ryugen Tanemura, who has critically edited and annotated parts of the *Kriyāsamgraha* (*Kuladatta's Kriyāsamgrahaṇījika: a critical edition and annotated translation of selected sections*, Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2004), for drawing my attention to the colophon and providing me with a facsimile of the manuscript pages in question.

45. The *rnam thar* by rGod tshang ras pa sna tshogs rang grol (p. 220) records two months and thirteen days as the duration of the renovation, while the Newar source gives the tenth day of the dark half of *māgha* as the day when the divine essence was extracted, and the fourth day of the bright half of *caitra*, not even six weeks later, as the day when

than documented for any of the renovations involving the establishment of a new *yaṣṭi*.⁴⁶

Though the workers were no doubt from the Valley, the renovation was clearly in the hands of Tibetans. Thus gTsang smyon's biography relates how the delays due to the slowness of the Nepalese workers were exacerbated by his dependence upon a translator named rJe btsun, who played an important role in the renovation. He drank liberal amounts of rice beer (*chang*) even in the daytime, and hence, it seems, was often not fit to communicate the commands of gTsang smyon and his disciples (p. 217). The lamas not only supervised the renovation work but also carried out the necessary rituals, including, notably, the reconsecration (*rab gnas*) of the Svayambhūcaitya (pp. 219f.). To be sure, they did so not instead of the Newars *vajrācārya* priests but in addition, with the principal rituals being performed separately in both the Tibetan and Newar tradition. This is stated explicitly for the pacification rituals preceding the dismantling of the *caitya*'s superstructure, which are said to have been performed by both gTsang smyon in person and by Newar priests (p. 217).

The Tibetan *nam thars* have it that gTsang smyon was so fully in charge of the renovation that he even enjoyed the freedom to redesign important details of the *caitya*' superstructure (p. 224). More specifically, they credit gTsang smyon with the introduction of an elaborate four pillar structure, ornamented with gilded copper, to support the honorific parasol above the rings. The *nam thar* presents this as an innovative act of inspiration born from deep meditation. The details given in the *nam thar* seem in basic accord with the structure still in place today, which allows for the employment of a particularly large and magnificent circular structure as honorific parasol. To be sure, the Tibetan sources cannot be taken at face value. They are clearly driven by the agenda to depict the renovation in terms that reinforce gTsang smyon's sanctity, and we have

the *caitya* was reconsecrated in the Tibetan tradition. (According to the indigenous calendar of Nepal (*nepāl samvat*) a lunar month starts with the waxing (bright) fortnight, rather than the waning (dark) one.)

46. It is impossible that fully 800 workers could have been employed for transporting the wood for the thirteen rings and the honorific parasol. Similarly, it is highly unlikely that 640 assemblers and 130 woodcutters could have participated in the renovation, as reported by dNgos grub dpal 'bar and rGod tshang ras pa. Though more moderate, the figures in Lhatsun's *nam thar* (viz. 340 assemblers, 200 wood carriers, 30 woodcutters, as kindly provided by Stefan Larsson) still seem implausibly high. They are also at odd with the much more realistic (but still impressive) figure of eighty people that the king had pledged to provide for the renovation, according to the *nam thars* of dNgos grub dpal 'bar (19a-19b) and rGod tshang ras pa. Note that the count of other participants is also clearly inflated. For instance, as we learn from Larsson's contribution, dNgos grub dpal 'bar's *nam thar* (20b-21a) has it that once the renovation was underway "only" 1,300 Tibetans stayed behind at Svayambhū, while the rest "lost courage" and returned home to Tibet. This is again an implausibly high number, particularly given that it is meant to capture "only the most faithful" of the many more Tibetans who had supposedly traveled to Nepal to be part of the renovation of Svayambhū. It seems to me that these inflated figures (and there are more such examples in the *nam thars*) have been provided in order to render gTsang smyon's renovation as grand an undertaking as possible.

Unlike the figures given for the participants, the figure provided for the total cost of the renovation, namely 2,751 measures (*zho*) of gold, may not be inflated. I have found conflicting information of the weight of one *zho*, ranging from a little more than the tenth of one ounce, to a little more than half a *tola* (= 31.1 grams), to 1.22 *tola*. Computing the weight of 2,751 *zho* on this basis yields respectively circa 8.5 kg, circa 17 kg or circa 38.5 kg. It is not easy to assess these figures, but note that at the most recent renovation commemorated in this volume a little under 22 kg of pure gold were spent for gilding alone. Hence, I suggest that the figure of 2,751 *zho* should not be dismissed and may indeed be accurate.

to be careful in crediting gTsang smyon with the mentioned design. However that may be, there can be little doubt that this renovation was largely a Tibetan undertaking. This is confirmed by the aforementioned Newar source. It relates that the “Tibetan guru” (*saṃjayā guru*), “who had come from the North,” reconsecrated the *caitya* “in the Tibetan tradition” (*saṃjayā guru*) before returning home. The source also mentions that before leaving he worshipped the “big Mahākāla” (*tao mahākāla*), presumably the massive statue housed in the temple at Tundikhel. This confirms the *rnam thar*’s report that gTsang smyon was renowned among the Newars for his special relationship with that deity. Already at the time of his visit in 1496, according to the *rnam thar* (p. 174), gTsang smyon had stirred the minds of the population when he was seen holding hands and dancing with the same Mahākāla statue.

The renovation begun in 1530 after a further raid of the Svayambhūcaitya

Only some twenty years after the renovation by gTsang smyon Heruka the Svayambhūcaitya was demolished by the Magar troops of Mukunda Sena, the king of Palpa. According to the Newar record included in a manuscript of the *Nāradasmṛti*,⁴⁷ in March 1526 Mukunda Sena’s troops went on a rampage through the Kathmandu Valley for some ten days (interrupted by a religious bath at Paśupati on the new moon day), burning and ravaging many villages, and also Svayambhū, Thām Bahil and Khusi Bahil. The Magars’ campaign through the Valley is also recorded in an unpublished *thyāsaphū* (kept in the Royal Library of Copenhagen; number WJ. 135, fol. 2v), dealing in the main with the history of Guṃ Bāhāl of Sako (= Sāṃkhu), a village located to the east of Kathmandu at the edge of the Valley (hence my designation of this text as “Sako chronicle” in the following). Here we learn that the Magars had already attacked Patan the year before (February 1525) and that they returned in April 1528. They then captured Kīrtipur from where they were, however, promptly (it seems one or two days later) driven away by the forces of Kathmandu.

Despite the slight discrepancy in the dates and notwithstanding the difference between “Magars” and “Turuṣkas” (“Turks,” that is, Muslim forces), it is very likely that Brag dkar rta so refers to these same events when he relates that in 1529 a “Turuṣka” army invaded the Valley and plundered the Svayambhūcaitya, taking away the gilded rings and *chattra*, and then tried to set fire to the remaining structure, thereby disfiguring but not seriously damaging it (*op. cit.*, 17a/b).⁴⁸ At any rate, the *caitya* had once again been damaged and hence

47. The record of Mukunda Sena’s attack on the Valley is transmitted as part of the Newar manuscript of the *Nāradasmṛti*, kept in the Keshar Library (no. 369), Kathmandu. It was written in a different hand on two blank pages. Mahes Raj Pant and Dinesh Raj Pant have published this record together with a Nepali translation (“*Nepālakhāḍomā pālpālī rājā mukunda senako hamalāko pramāṇavākya (anuvādasahita)*.” *Pūṛṇimā* 11,2 (= *pūṛṇāṅka* 42) 1980: 101f). See also their “*Nepālakhāḍomā pālpālī rājā mukunda senako hamalā*,” (published in in two parts in *Pūṛṇimā* 11,3 (= *pūṛṇāṅka* 43) 1980: 105, 152; and vol. 12,1 (= *pūṛṇāṅka* 45) 1980: 1-24) and Luciano Petech’s *Mediaeval History of Nepal* (second, thoroughly revised edition. Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1984) p. 210.

48. It is, to my knowledge, not recorded that Mukunda Sena destroyed Hindu shrines. This conveys the impression that he specifically targeted Buddhism. On the other hand, Mahes Raj Pant and Dinesh Raj Pant (1980, *op.cit.*, 16f, 19) have drawn attention to accounts that the Palpa king also made offerings to Buddhist deities. On this basis they suggest that Mukunda Sena may not have attacked Svayambhū as a sacred shrine but rather as a strategic fortification (*durga*) that stood at the western exit of the Valley. However, such a charitable interpretation of Mukunda Sena’s

needed to be rebuilt yet again. This time, too, the renovation was prompted by gTsang smyon Heruka. He appeared in a vision to his heart disciple lHa btsun Rin chen rNam rgyal (1473–1557), requesting him to have the Svayambhūcaitya renewed. As lHa btsun’s autobiography bears out,⁴⁹ he complied with his guru’s request. He began the renovation of the *caitya* in 1530, directing the erection of a new *yaṣṭi* and the rebuilding of the superstructure with the tiers, the *chattra* and the finial. Perhaps because of the scarcity of funds, the renovation went on for almost ten years, so that the *caitya* was only reconsecrated in 1539/40. During that time lHa btsun also met with the king of Kathmandu Amara Malla (reigned ≈ 1529–1560). It seems that lHa btsun’s funds were so meager that he only covered parts of the *harmikā* with gilded copper sheets and none of the rings. However that may be, the western and northern side of the *harmikā* and the thirteen tiers were covered with such sheets by his disciple sKyid grong gnas Rab ’byams pa Byams pa Phun tshogs (1503–1581) thirty years later in 1570—an event which was followed by another consecration of the Svayambhūcaitya in 1572. This is related in the autobiography of Rab ’byams pa,⁵⁰ and on that basis is also reported by Brag dkar rta so (*op. cit.*, 17b). To my knowledge, there are no Newar sources attesting to the renovation by lHa btsun Rin chen rNam rgyal and his disciple Rab ’byams pa. Accordingly, in Hemraj Shakyā’s *Mahācaitya* it goes unreported. However, the inscription commemorating the subsequent renovation carried out at the end of the sixteenth century (see below) refers to the (from its perspective) preceding renovation discussed here and specifies that it was carried out after the Turuṣkas’ occupation (*tiraskānā pariṣvaṅgāt*) (l. 6).⁵¹

attack on Svayambhū can hardly be upheld if the identification of the marauding Turuṣka army of Brag dkar rta so’s account—which plundered and burnt the *caitya*—as that of Mukunda Sena is true.

49. dPal ldan bla ma dam pa mkhas grub lha btsun chos kyi rgyal po’i rnam mgrur (54 fols., xylograph from the sixteenth century). I am indebted to Franz-Karl Ehrhard who has extracted for me the pertinent information from this as yet unpublished and little known *rnam thar*.

50. mKhas grub chen po byams pa phun tshogs kyi rnam thar (93 folios, xylograph from the 16th century). Again Franz-Karl Ehrhard was so kind as to check for me the relevant passages of this newly discovered *rnam thar*.

51. In this context reference has to be made to a Newar painting of Svayambhū which was first published by Theodore Riccardi (“Some Preliminary Remarks on a Newari Painting of Svayambhū,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 93 (3), 1973: 335-340. As Mary Slusser (*op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 43, fn. 7), has argued convincingly, Riccardi misread the date of the inscription in the painting as NS 715 or alternatively NS 725, no doubt because he based himself on the inscription recording the two renovations completed in the reign of Śivasimha Malla. The painting’s inscription records that in 1565 (NS 685) “the consecration of the thrice-blessed Svayambhū[caitya] of Syamgu was accomplished” (*thva dinakunhu śrīmatśrīśrī syamgu svayambhu . . . pratisthā sampūrṇa yānana*; the ellipsis marked by the sequence of three full stops is part of the quote adduced from Slusser (*ibid.*, p. 34, fn. 6). In light of the Tibetan sources, it is unlikely that the consecration in 1565 concluded a full-fledged renovation of the *caitya*. This is confirmed indirectly by the mentioned record that the renovation before 1595 had been accomplished after the occupation by the “Turuṣkas” in the 1520s. Possibly the painting refers instead to the donation (and subsequent consecration) of a new *chattra* (which, in this case, would have been offered only five years before part of the *harmikā* and the thirteen rings were—according to the Tibetan sources—covered with gilded copper). Such an interpretation, which is also advanced by Mary Slusser, would be in accordance with the painting itself, which depicts only the hoisting of the *chattra* and not a complete renovation.

The twin renovations sponsored by Jayaraksā of Kathmandu at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th century

Some sixty years after the installation of a new *yaṣṭi* by IHa btsun, “the *yaṣṭi* had become old,”⁵² so that an extensive renovation including the replacement of the *yaṣṭi* was carried out from 1591 to 1595 (NS 711–715). Only a few years later the Svayambhūcaitya was struck by lightning and had to be renovated all over again,⁵³ a task which was carried out from 1601 to 1604. These two renovations were performed in much the same way, largely with identical donors and participants (accordingly I refer to them as “twin renovations”), and are hence recorded together in an extensive bilingual (Sanskrit and Newari) inscription at Svayambhū⁵⁴ as well as in a *thyāsaphū* microfilmed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (Reel No. E 1874/2). This *thyāsaphū* recounts the performance of a variety of Buddhist rituals, the establishment and repair of *caityas* and divine images and other religious “events” spanning the period from 1591 to 1631. Among these records the twin renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya take the most prominent place. The account of the later renovation is considerably shorter than that of the earlier one, presumably because the chronicler felt no need to record the basically identical sequence of events in the same detail as he had for the renovation a decade before. In particular, the later account provides no details on the participation of wide circles of the population. This suggests that the later renovation was largely a repetition of the earlier one, so that not only the main sponsor Jayaraksā, but also the participating localities and their contribution stayed much the same. The *thyāsaphū* is the oldest of the Newar texts chronicling renovations, and I hence I refer to it here as chronicle 1 and, more specifically, as 1a and 1b with respect to the segments dealing with the earlier and later renovations.

The inscription provides for both renovations the dates of the erection of the *yaṣṭi*⁵⁵ and of the final consecration.⁵⁶ This account can be supplemented by the mentioned *thyāsaphū*, i.e. our chronicle 1. In the

52. *Thyāsaphū* microfilmed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (Reel No. E 1874/2), 8,7: *yirasi purāna juko*.

53. This is recorded in l. 16 (*vajraghātaiḥ surendrah punar atiśayajirṇṇaṃ stūpaṃ etañ cakāra/ /*) and ll. 30 et seq. (*thavanali vajraghāta juyāva śrī 2 śivasimha ādeśanaṃ hano jirṇṇoddhāra yāñā/ /*) of the inscription mentioned below.

54. The inscription has been published in *Samskṛta-sandēśa* (Dhanavajra Vajrācārya and Jñānamāṇi Nepāl: “Kāntipureśvarasya śrīśivasimhasya samayasya svayambhūsthaḥ śilālekhaḥ,” vol. 2, aṅka 4–6 [1954/55], pp. 46–49) and in Regmi (*Medieval Nepal*, vol. 4 (Patna 1966), inscription no. 29, pp. 46–51).

55. Lines 16 et seq.: *yilas thāñ samvat 714 māgha śukla pañcamī*; line 31: *samvat 724(!) māghaśukla pañcamī thvakuhnu yilasi thāñā//*

There are in the case of both renovations mistakes in the dates given. As for the earlier renovation, the month and day have been erroneously taken over from the erection of the *yaṣṭi* nine years later (see *thyāsaphū* 9,1f.). As for the later renovation, the dates given for the erection of the *yaṣṭi* and for the consecration of the *caitya* accord with the mentioned *thyāsaphū* (28,5) as far as the month and day are concerned but differ by one year. For a variety of reasons it is likely that the *thyāsaphū* records the correct year, viz. 723 and 724 respectively. This is confirmed by a further manuscript (NGMPP G 220/21: 5r3) attesting to the date given in the *thyāsaphū*. Possibly, the inscription mistakenly placed these events one year late in analogy with the years 714 and 715 of the renovation nine years before.

56. Lines 27 et seq.: *samvat 715 vaiśākha kṛṣṇa pañcamī śukravāra kṛṣṇa pañcamī mūlanakṣatra thvakuhnu jīmaninhu*

month of *caitra* NS 711 (\approx April 1591) the tree for the central post of the *caitya* (*yaṣṭi*) was felled somewhere along a tributary of the Triśūli in the area north of the Kathmandu Valley from where the *yaṣṭis* came as a rule. The following year in *jyēṣṭha* NS 712 (\approx June 1592) different neighborhoods of Kathmandu (see below) took turns towing the *yaṣṭi* to Svayambhū, presumably after it had already been transported part of the way. The *yaṣṭi* arrived some six weeks later at the top of Svayambhū. Work continued only after an interval of a year and a half, in *Mārgaśiras* NS 714 (\approx December 1593), with the fabrication of new rings up at Svayambhū. A further two months later, in *māgha* (\approx February 1594), the *caitya* was deconsecrated by extracting the divine essence (*nyāsa*) and then quickly dismantled, so that exactly two months later, on the eleventh day of the waxing fortnight of *caitra* (\approx April 1594), the new *yaṣṭi* could be raised. Within the next six months the *caitya* was rebuilt, and on the second day of the waxing fortnight of *āśvina* (\approx October 1594) the divine essence was transferred back into the *caitya* from its temporary abode in the vessel, where it had been kept since the deconsecration. Half a year later, in *caitra* NS 715 (\approx April 1595), the preparation for the consecration rituals began. These were performed the following month within the framework of an extended fire ritual lasting twelve days and eleven nights. The renovation was concluded in May 1595.

When the Svayambhūcaitya was struck by lightning shortly afterwards (the precise date is not recorded), the renovation of the *caitya* started all over again less than six years since the last renovation had been completed. For this, a new tree for the *yaṣṭi* was felled in the month of *caitra* NS 721 (\approx April 1601) in the vicinity of Kapilāsa, close to the confluence of the Tādī and Likhu rivers, and then hauled part of the way towards Svayambhū. Transport was resumed the following year in *māgha* (\approx February 1602) by people from Kathmandu recruited by neighbourhoods (see below). Only five months later, in *āṣāḍha* (\approx July 1602), the divine essence was extracted. The dismantling of the *caitya* and the subsequent raising of the new *yaṣṭi*, which was accomplished on the fifth day of the waxing fortnight (“bright half”) of *māgha* (\approx February 1603), took seven months, that is, five months longer than during the preceding renovation. The next entry records that the extended consecration was completed exactly one year later (i.e. \approx February 1604) with a fire ritual that lasted five days and four nights. The fifth day of the bright half of *māgha*, the so-called Śrīpañcamī day marking the start of spring, was chosen as a particularly auspicious day.⁵⁷ At the next renovation in 1640, the consecration rituals were timed in such a way that they, too, finished on that very day.

The main burden of the twin renovations was borne by a single sponsor of Kathmandu (and his family), a certain “*śākyabhikṣu Jayarakṣa*,” from Jāmbunadavana Vihāra (= Pinchem Bāhāl *alias* Khum Bāhāl) in Votu.

lakṣāhuti yajña pratiṣṭhā yānā/line 31 et seq.: *saṃvat 725(!) māgha śukla pañcamī vṛhaspativāra thvakuhnu, picā nanhu yajña sahitanam pratiṣṭhā yānā* . . .

As mentioned in the preceding footnote, the dating of the consecration of the later renovation is off by exactly one year. 57. Also in present times, this day is deemed to be particularly favourable for major rituals. Thus the consecration concluding the establishment of a *caitya* set up in 1998 in Kathmandu (a process which I have documented in my article “The Stūpa in Vajrayāna Buddhism,” published in JNRC 11 (1999), pp. 121–47) was completed on the *śrīpañcamī* day of the year 2000. (The consecration was delayed for this long because a member of the patrons’ family had passed away in autumn 1998, and as a result the family could not commission major rituals for one year.)

He was in charge of the renovations “on the orders” of King Śivasimha, of whom he was supposedly a friend.⁵⁸ Jayarakṣa must have been very affluent and active because he features in another extensive inscription⁵⁹ (under the name Jayaharṣa⁶⁰)—together with his wife, two sons and their families—as the donor who sponsored the entire construction of the Jāmbunadavana Vihāra at the end of the sixteenth century.

The inscription and *thyāsaphū* attest that in addition to Jayarakṣa and his family, large parts of the Buddhist population of Kathmandu became involved, contributing towards the twin renovations of Svayambhū, for example, by the sponsorship of specific parts of the *caitya*, by their labor—no doubt basically voluntary (*śramadāna*)—by acting as caretakers of certain rituals, and by providing the necessary materials. Without specifying which locality assumed responsibility for which task, the inscription (ll. 36–42) lists the contributing localities, arranging them into six groups according to their provenance within Kathmandu, viz. 1) Votu Bāhāl and Kel, 2) Asan and Nahghal, 3) Itum Bāhāl, Makhān, Vaṃgal (i.e. the locality of Indrachowk) and Yatkhā, 4) Sikhāmmugūḍi, Sārache,⁶¹ Gāvache⁶² and Gvārapasal,⁶³ 5) Vaṃ Bāhāl, and 6) Lagan.⁶⁴ The inscription spells out that the latter three localities are located in Vaṃgal,⁶⁵ that is lower Kathmandu, while the

58. So Dhanavajra Vajrācārya and Jñānamāṇi Nepāla note in their commentary (*op. cit.*) on the inscription.

59. This inscription is published in Regmi's *Medieval Nepal*, vol. 4, pp. 37–44.

60. The identity of Jayaharṣa and Jayarakṣa is borne out by the Svayambhū inscription and by the inscription commemorating the donation of Jāmbunadavana Vihāra. In these two inscriptions the wife, two sons, daughters-in-law and grandchildren of “Jayarakṣa” (Svayambhū inscription, l. 35f, 44f, Jāmbunadavana inscription, lines 11–14) and of “Jayaharṣa” (Jāmbunadavana inscription, ll. 20–22, 42–46) are variously listed under their personal names. As all names are identical, Jayaharṣa should be the same person as Jayarakṣa, a conclusion which John Locke (*op. cit.*, p. 505) shares.

61. Sārache (lit. ‘house of the mill for pressing oil’) is presumably located just south of Gāvache in the neighborhood behind the Kumāri Bāhāl where even now an oil-press is located.

62. Gāvache is presumably modern Gvāchemugal, located in the lane behind Kumāri Bāhāl.

63. Gvārapasal is located in the vicinity of Athako Nārāyaṇa in Sikhāmmugūḍi. Cf. the “address”

śrīyamgrakāṣṭhamāṇḍapanagare gvārapasra athako yaṃtāche of Rāmalakṣmaṇa Bhāro recorded in a document from A.D. 1650 which was published as document 50 (p. 39) by Mahes Raj Pant in a recent collection of seventy-five hitherto unpublished documents (“Tāḍapatramā lekhiēkā, vikramako pandhraūdekhi aṭhāhraū śatābdibhitrakā, ahile-samma prakāśamā naēeko 75 vaṭā likhitapatra.” Pūrṇimā 24,2 (= pūrṇāṅka 94), 1998: 1-60). In the same publication (p. 56) another document confirms that Gvārapasal is situated close to the Athako Nārāyaṇa of Sikhāmmugūḍi. This is, moreover, confirmed by a document (p. 47) which was published by Mahes Raj Pant in his essay on the “Nevarājya ra Brāhmaṇa” (Pūrṇimā 23,2 (= pūrṇāṅka 90), 1996: pp. 1-53).

64. This list of participants follows immediately upon the record of the consecration sealing the later renovation, and—as circumstantial evidence corroborates—refers, therefore, specifically to this rather than to the earlier renovation. However, at the end of the inscription (ll. 50–52) another list composed of largely the same localities is given. Presumably it summarizes the pattern of contributing localities that underlay the twin renovations as a whole. At any rate, the six groups of localities listed in the inscription (36–42) and adduced here not only contributed towards the later renovation, but—as the *thyāsaphū* bears out (see below)—were also instrumental in bringing about the earlier renovation.

65. I adopt Kashinath Tamot's correction (personal communication), which is based on a new reading of the original stone, and in line 41 read *yagala* (= Vaṃgal) instead of *vagala*, the published reading which I wrongly followed in the original version of this article (published in *JNRC* 12, 2001).

former three localities are located in the other half of town (*vādeśa*), i.e. in upper Kathmandu, that is Yambu.

The *thyāsaphū*, by contrast, provides detailed information about the way in which these localities contributed towards the twin renovations. To start with, it records that the *yaṣṭi* was pulled towards Svayambhū by the people of Kathmandu organized into groups by locality. In the earlier renovation there were five localities (“the area above the fish stone,”⁶⁶ Asan, Votu, Makhan and Maru), which each took a turn of six days and five nights during which their people went out and provided the manpower for the *yaṣṭi*’s transport. In the case of the later renovation there were seven (or possibly eight) localities—viz. Manasu Bāhāl (?), Jyātha Bāhāl, Tam̄mugali, Hnūgal, Kohiti, Mājhipāt and Yalākṣa—that took turns pulling the *yaṣṭi*.

While the transport of the *yaṣṭi* by the people of Kathmandu is recorded for both renovations, the *thyāsaphū* details the subsequent contribution of labor only for the earlier renovation, probably because (unlike the composition of the groups pulling the *yaṣṭi*) the pattern of participation at the renovation completed nine years later did not deviate significantly. It is related (for the earlier renovation) that not only the *yaṣṭi*, but also the wood for making thirty-two logs each five cubits in length (which were needed for the fabrication of the rings and possibly also the *chattrā*) was transported by the people of Kathmandu to the top of Svayambhū (presumably from the slopes of the hillock where the wood for the *chattrā* was routinely cut, according to the testimony of the other Newar chronicles). The text adds that as for the work for the *cakras*, half was done by Yambu, that is, by the people from upper Kathmandu, a quarter by the people of Vaṃ Bāhāl, and a further quarter by the people of Maru (8,2–4).

Not only the *cakrāvalī*, but also the other parts of the *caitya* were rebuilt by the united efforts of the inhabitants of Kathmandu. The *thyāsaphū* relates that for “building up the new dome, (the people from) Votu Bāhāl spent an entire day, then (those) from Maru spent an entire day, and then in cooperation (those from) Vaṃ Bāhāl, Lagan and Bhote Bāhāl (spent an entire day[?])” (9,7–10,1). Then when “building up the *harmikā*, (the people from) Votu Bāhāl, Itum Bāhāl, Maru, Lagan and Vaṃ Bāhāl built part by part” (10,2f.). The four niches set into the dome were reconstructed by individual sponsors: “The *śākya* Śrī Dharma-ju from Pitache of Votu Bāhāl had the niche of the main side made (= the eastern side with Amitābha)” (11,2), and “Bhona from Bhilāche had the niche of Vasigāl made (= the niche of Amoghasiddhi on the northern side with the *nāga* pool called Vasigāl)” (11,2f.). “Together with his nephew Jñānaju, the *śākya* Śrī Jinasiṃha-ju from Bhote Bāhāl of Yaṃgal had (the niche at the place) where one looks down made (i.e. the niche of Akṣobhya on the eastern side, atop the steep staircase, affording the look down on Kathmandu)” (11,3f.). Finally, “having had it manufactured in Bhaktapur, the *śākya* Śrī Jayaharṣa-ju from Vaṃ Bāhāl had (the niche) of Ratnasambhava made (on the southern side)” (11,4f.). Further below the text relates (14,7–15,1) that the statues of Amitābha, Akṣobhya and Ratnasambhava were gilded respectively by the people of Asan, by ethnic Tibetans (*saṃjapani*) from “Rarija” (?)⁶⁷ and by “the owner”⁶⁸ from Vaṃ Bāhāl, that is, possibly, by the aforementioned Jayaharṣa

66. The locality north of Asan, which is also called Thathu Puiṃ and is traditionally known by this name as one of the four parts of Kathmandu (cf. Locke 1985, *op. cit.*, 254).

67. I have not been able to identify the name of this place.

68. The term “owner” (*thuoāpanisem*) is also used in the chronicle by Cakrapāṇi (NGMPP Reel No. E 1874/2: 41v4).

who had already sponsored the niche for Ratnasambhava.

The text also records that gold and copper were donated by the people. It specifies that “inside the *garbha* a silver vessel was inserted which contained only gold. As for the (silver) vessel, it was made from the (silver) ornaments of the (Svayambhū) god (that were melted down for this purpose); as for the inserted gold it was (given) by all the people” (11,5f). Also inserted were copper vessels, one of which “was donated by the whole town (*deśa*), one by (the people from) Jhurachu⁶⁹ and one by (the people from) Yaulamṣu⁷⁰ (11,6f). Moreover, “as for the copper for covering the *yaṣṭi*, it was (given) by all” (11,7–12,1).

The extended consecration sealed the renovation with a *homa* ritual lasting for twelve days and eleven nights (*ahorātra*) that was again taken care of collectively by the people of Kathmandu. While the priests were the same *daśadiḡacāryas* throughout, the responsibility for providing the *pūjā* materials and “taking care” (*citā yāka*) of the organization of the exterior aspects of the rituals was assumed turn by turn by different groups of the population (this duty may have included the actual act of putting the various offerings into the fire by command of the priests). On the first day and night of the *homa* ritual, which coincided with the ritual birth of the deity (*jātakarman*), the caretaker from Votu Bāhāl, the *dānapati* Jayarakṣa, assumed responsibility on behalf of the king, who was formally in charge of this day (12,7–13,1).⁷¹ The people from Lagan took care of the next twenty-four hours when the rite of bestowing sight (*drṣṭidāna*) upon the deity was performed (13,1f). For the third day and night it was the turn of the people of Vaṃ Bāhāl to tend to the *homa* (New: *mi chuya*) (13,2f). On the fourth day, when the name-giving rite was performed, the people from Bhote Bāhāl took over; in the night the people from Sāracha looked after the *homa*. The people of Sikhammuguḡi served on the fifth day and night, when the rite of the first feeding of fruit (*phalaprāśana*) was performed. The sixth day, which saw the first feeding of rice (*annaprāśana*), was attended to by the people from Gvālapasala; that night Jina Bhāro of Gaṅṭhiche was in charge. The people from Makhan and Daṃdache⁷² functioned as caretakers on the seventh day and night, when the ritual tearing of the throat (*kaṅṭha khuya*), a little-known rite of passage, was performed (13,7). On the eighth day and night, featuring the rite of tonsure (*cūḡākaraṇa*), it was the turn of the people from Itum Bāhāl and the adjacent locality of Nyeta (13,7–14,1). The people of Votu Bāhāl were on duty on the ninth day and night during which the ritual of imposing the vows (*vratādeśa*) of the *upanayana* initiation was carried out for the deity (14,1f). On the tenth day and night in which the last rite of passage, namely the wedding (*pānigrahana*) fell, the people of Kel did duty (14,2f). For the next twenty-four hours of the *pratiṣṭhā* ritual for the firm establishment of the deity, the people of Asan and

69. Is Jhurachu identical with Jarunche in Asan?

70. Again, I have not been able to identify this locality.

71. The text does not specify here that it was Jayarakṣa who acted on behalf of the king. However, in line 50 of the inscription Jayarakṣa is explicitly identified as the king’s caretaker, and below in the *thyāsaphū* (17,2–4) it is specified that Jayahaṛṣa (= Jayarakṣa) provided the items for the *ahorātra yajña* on behalf of the king. The identification of Jayahaṛṣa as the caretaker of the king bears out that the donor generally functioned on the orders of the king, who was ultimately in charge.

72. Daṃdache (lit.: ‘house of punishment’) could refer to a neighborhood with a police station (daṃdachem). It may have been located close to Makhan Bāhāl, so that the police station then would have been in the same area as the present central police station in Hanumān Dhokā.

Nahghal rendered service (14,3f). Finally, on the last day, the people of Votu Bāhāl once again acted as caretakers, attending to the *abhiṣekas* bestowed upon the deity as well as to the concluding rituals (14,5). Thus, “the consecration of Svayambhū was accomplished by (all) these people collectively.”⁷³

Though the collective character of the renovation is attested in this way, the *thyāsaphū* does not fail to highlight the leading role in the consecration played by the principal sponsor of the renovation, namely Jayarakṣa (*alias* Jayahaṛṣa as he is referred to here). Thus it records that “the venerable Jayahaṛṣa bore the burden of whatever the people could not (provide) collectively” for the consecration ritual (17,2), and of the *pūjā* materials furnished in the name of the king (17,3f). As mentioned, it also stresses the personal engagement of Jayarakṣa in this context, relating that he observed a fast together with the priests throughout the *ahorātra* ritual (17,3).

In this way the *thyāsaphū* provides a lively picture of how the various localities and segments of the Buddhist population of Kathmandu, led by Jayarakṣa, accomplished the renovation at the end of the sixteenth century together, starting with the transport of the *yaṣṭi*, continuing with the rebuilding of the *caitya* and with fitting it with the niches, and concluding with the final, and from a ritual point of view most important part of the renovation, namely the extended consecration of the rebuilt *caitya*. The renovation was thus accomplished by the united efforts of a large segment of the people of Kathmandu, without any outside help, that is, except for the gilding of the Akṣobhya statue by ethnic Tibetans (*saṃjapani*). The absence of outside involvement is confirmed indirectly by the lack of any reference to the twin renovations in Tibetan sources

The four renovations (and to a lesser degree also the fifth renovation) following upon the twin renovations were organized according to the same pattern, with the king being formally in charge, and with the populace—organized according to localities—assuming responsibility for specific parts of the *caitya*, contributing labor, notably for the transport of the *yaṣṭi*, and taking care of certain rituals. However, only the renovations completed in 1638, 1683 and 1712 were, like the twin renovations, completed without direct participation by Tibetans (or Bhutanese). Moreover, unlike the twin renovations, the renovations completed in 1683, 1758 and 1817 were co-funded by Tibetans (and Bhutanese). Thus the twin renovations (and the renovations completed in 1638, 1683 and 1712) stand out as renovations that were largely, or even exclusively, Newar undertakings.

The renovation from 1636 to 1640

Just some 32 years later, in the reign of King Lakṣmīnaraṣiṃha Malla (\approx 1619–1641) the Svayambhūcaitya was yet again completely renovated.⁷⁴ There is a detailed account in a *thyāsaphū* kept in the private collection of Yagyamanpati Bajracharya (which the references in this section cite).⁷⁵ It attests to the same pattern of

73. *Thyāsaphū* (NGMPP Reel No. E 1874/2), 14,5f.: *thvatenā loka, samastasyaṃ, ... pratiṣṭhā sidhayakā juro.*

74. Hemraj Shakya reports in his *Mahācaitya* (1978/9, *op. cit.*, p. 180) that the caitya was renovated because the *yaṣṭi* had become seriously impaired by bad weather and was leaning to one side. However, in the absence of access to Shakya's source it is not possible to verify this account.

75. I am most grateful to Yagyamanpati Bajracharya, who graciously gave of his valuable time so that I could read at his residence this and the other relevant texts in his precious collection.

collective sponsorship by localities and groups from Kathmandu as the aforementioned *thyāsaphū* on the twin renovations, and furnishes interesting details on how the transport of the new *yaṣṭi* from the valleys north of Śivapuri ridge was organized by localities. The mentioned *thyāsaphū* also relates that the king welcomed the *yaṣṭi* when it reached the periphery of Kathmandu, and that on this occasion the “junior king” (*merahma juju*) joined the procession (1,4f). This refers to Lakṣmīnaraśiṃha Malla and his son Pratāpa Malla, who at that time had taken over much of the royal power from his father.⁷⁶

As the beginning of the *thyāsaphū* is missing, there are no dates on the felling and transport of the *yaṣṭi*. However, the preserved text (the first page of which I enumerate as “1,” ignoring the lost section) records the better part of how the *yaṣṭi* was brought to Svayambhū (1f). It furnishes interesting details on how transport was organized by localities. The first date provided in the preserved text is the tenth day of the bright half of Phālguna (≈ March) in 1637, when the *caitya* was deconsecrated after the new *yaṣṭi* had arrived atop Svayambhū (pp. 2,6–3,1). Two days after the deconsecration, the finial (*gajur*) and the crowning *chattra* were taken down (3,1). Then one began dismantling the rings, the cube above the dome (manuscript: *gala*; Sanskrit *harmikā*) and parts of the dome itself (3,1f). Less than a month after the deconsecration, on the fifth day of the waxing fortnight of Caitra (≈ April 1637), one started to erect the scaffold-like ramp for the raising of the new *yaṣṭi* (3,2f). Some ten days later the *yaṣṭi* protruding from the remaining structure was cut down (3,3) and — later still — burnt in a *homa* ritual (4,3f). A little more than a fortnight afterwards, on the third day of the bright half of *vaiśākha* NS 757 (≈ May 1637), the new *yaṣṭi* was erected (3,6-4,1).⁷⁷ Over the next

76. Though *merahma* may mean “younger brother,” it is unlikely that *merahma juju* refers to the younger half-brother of Lakṣmīnaraśiṃha Malla, namely Siddhīnaraśiṃha Malla, the famous king of Patan. The contemporaneous inscription of the Kṛṣṇa temple in Patan (≈ March 1637) records that Siddhīnaraśiṃha Malla had been engaged in battle. This refers presumably to attacks by Pratāpa Malla who, being the son of Lakṣmīnaraśiṃha Malla, had by that time become largely the de facto ruler of Kathmandu. Given these hostilities, it is unlikely that Siddhīnaraśiṃha Malla came to Kathmandu in order to participate in the celebrations for the newly arrived *yaṣṭi*. Besides, the sources I have studied show no evidence of the Patan rulers taking part in any of the renovations of Svayambhū. Hence, *merahma* should mean here not “younger brother,” but simply “younger one,” a meaning attested to in *A Dictionary of Classical Newari* (Malla 2000: s.v.). Accordingly, *merahma juju* should refer here to the “junior king,” who cannot have been anybody but Pratāpa Malla. D. R. Regmi (*Medieval Nepal*, vol. 2 (Calcutta 1966), 59f.) adduces further material to prove that by 1637 Pratāpa Malla was ruling jointly with his father.

77. This date is confirmed in *Ratnadhana’s chronicle*. For his account of the renovation treated here, Hemraj Shakya (1978/9, *op. cit.*, p.180) did not use the aforementioned chronicle belonging to Yagyamanpati Bajracharya. Instead, he cites as his source an inscription which reportedly used to stand at Pinche Bāhāl (= Jāmbunanda vihāra) in Wotu Ṭol in Kathmandu, but is no longer in situ (nor does its present whereabouts seem to be known). Without specifying volume or page number, Hemraj Shakya (*ibid.*) gives as further reference the journal *Samskṛta-sandēśa*. However, despite the best efforts of Dinesh Raj Pant (one of the editors of this magazine) and myself (we went through all the fascicles page by page), we could not find this inscription in *Samskṛta-sandēśa*. The inscription has also not been published in the above-mentioned *Kāntipura-Śilālekha-Sūci*. Whatever the precise details of Hemraj Shakya’s source, it is clearly closely related to the account in *Ratnadhana’s chronicle*. It records the same sponsor for the renovation (see below) and, again like the summary, only one date, namely the third day of the bright half of *vaiśākha*, NS 537. However, this date is not correlated with the erection of the *yaṣṭi*, but (an oversight?) with the final consecration of the renewed *caitya* (*ibid.*).

months the *caitya* was rebuilt (4,2-5). In Kārtika NS 758 (\approx November 1637), work on the two uppermost of the thirteen rings started (4,6-5,1). Only five months later, in April 1638, the installation of the rings of the spire began (5,3ff). It took nearly three fortnights until, on the second day of the waxing fortnight of Jyestha (\approx June 1638), the uppermost tier, sponsored by the king, was set up (7,3). Afterwards the superstructure above the tiers was installed (7,4f), until, on the full-moon day of the same month, the finial was offered (7,6-8,3). In this context the chronicle (pp. 5–7) specifies that each ring was sponsored by a specific group. With minor deviations the same allocation of rings is also attested for all subsequent renovations up to the renovation completed in 1817. In ascending order the rings were generally sponsored by 1) Votu Bāhāl, 2) Maru, 3) Makhan Bāhāl and Musum (and a certain Bherache), 4) Asan and Naḥghal, 5) Sikhaṃmugudi, 6) Vaṃ Bāhāl, 7) Itum Bāhāl, 8) Lagan, 9) again Asan and Naḥghal, 10) again Lagan, 11) again Votu Bāhāl, 12) Semgu and 13) the King of Kathmandu, who was—fittingly—responsible for the highest and hence most prestigious ring.

In July 1638, three weeks after work on the superstructure was concluded, the four Buddha statues and the finials of their niches were after due rituals (8,3-5) taken around town in a procession with lights and accompanied by music and dance. Upon their return to Svayambhū they were ritually welcomed. On the next day, the statues were set up in the niches and the *gajurs* installed above (8,5-9,5). Two days later, on the tenth day of the waxing fortnight of Āṣāḍha (\approx July 1638), the divine essence was transferred from its temporary abode in the vessel (*nyāsaghata*) back into the *caitya* (9,5-10,3). Exactly sixteen months earlier the *nyāsa* had been removed from the *caitya*. Surprisingly, another seventeen months elapsed before preparations began in Mārgasīras of NS 760 (\approx December 1639) for the extended consecration rites (pp. 11,1–12,3). These were completed, as during the preceding renovation, on the auspicious fifth day of the bright lunar half of *māgha* (\approx February 1640) with a fire ritual of one hundred thousand oblations (*lakṣāhuti*) lasting twelve days and eleven nights (pp. 12,4–14,3).

Like the other principal chronicles, the *thyāsaphū* does not record who sponsored the renovation. There is, however, a largely effaced inscription at Svayambhū commemorating the renovation being treated here.⁷⁸ It seems to record that the sponsors (*dānapati*) were three persons, namely King Lakṣmīnaraśiṃha Malla; his son, the aforementioned junior king Pratāpa Malla; and a certain °Candra Bhāro (the first part of the name is obliterated). In contrast, *Ratnadhana's chronicle* has it that the *dānapati* was a certain *śākyabhikṣu* Mañjudeva from Svayambhū, with his wife and son. This has been reproduced by Hemraj Shakya in his *Mahācaitya* (1978/9, *op. cit.*, p. 180). However, traditionally members of that community (i.e. the *bāres* from Svayambhū who are nowadays called *buddhācāryas*) are not among the affluent traders. Hence, it is unlikely that one member of their community could have been rich enough to shoulder the immense expense of a complete renovation of the *caitya*. It is, nevertheless, conceivable that Mañjudeva was one of possibly several sponsors beyond the three main *dānapatis*, who was singled out by Ratnadhana because he belonged to his own community, and possibly was even a direct forebear. At any rate, as follows from the traditional sponsorship of

78. The inscription has been published in *Kāntipura-Silālekha-Sūci* (ed. Śaṅkaramāna Rājavaṃśi. Kathmandu: Rāṣṭriya Abhilekhālaya, 1970) on pp. 65f.

parts of the *caitya* as well as of certain rituals by sections of the population of Kathmandu, not all of the costs and burden of the renovation were borne by the three main sponsors commemorated by the inscription. Note that as in the case of the preceding twin renovations, there is no trace of Tibetan involvement in the Newar sources, and there are to my knowledge no Tibetan sources bearing witness to this renovation. Thus the renovation dealt with here was an exclusively Newar undertaking in much the same way as the twin renovations some decades earlier.

Because of the prominence of the chronicle published by Wright, brief reference has to be made at this point to its record that in NS 770 (1649/50 CE) the “Syāmarpa Lāmā came from Bhot and renewed the *garbha-kāth* of Svayambhū (the main timber round which the mound is built) and gilt the images of the deities” (Wright: 215; p. 131 of the Cambridge manuscript, which confirms the term *garbhakāth*). If this were true, then the *caitya* would have undergone a further complete renovation barely ten years after the consecration in 1640. However, the chronicle of Wright is wrong here on two counts. Firstly, Gar dbang chos kyi dbang phyug (1584–1630), the Sixth Zhva dmar rin po che, did not come to Svayambhū in NS 770, but twenty years earlier in NS 750 (1629/30). Secondly, as Brag dkar rta so relates (*op. cit.*, 18a), the Zhva dmar pa did not renovate the Svayambhūcaitya in its entirety. Rather, he limited himself to the embellishment of the niches set in the cardinal directions in the dome. This report is confirmed by the aforementioned *thyāsaphū* with the reel no. E 1874/2 (22f.), which records that in 1630 (NS 750) the Zhva dmar pa donated golden (that must of course be gilt) shields (*torāna*) for the four niches.⁷⁹ If we follow Oldfields’ *Sketches from Nipal* (London: W.H. Allen. 1880: vol. 2, 222) he also “covered the ... spire with plates of copper-gilt, and crowned it with a gilt pinnacle and chattra.” Though Oldfield relates that the Zhva dmar pa “thoroughly repaired the whole temple” (*ibid.*), there is no mention of the replacement of the *yaṣṭi*. At any rate, the reliability of Oldfield’s report is variously subject to doubt.

The renovation from 1681 to 1683

For the next renovation we have the testimony of both Tibetan and Newar sources. To start with, there is the aforementioned *dkar chag* published by Turrell Wylie. Ehrhard (1991, *op.cit.*, pp. 11–13) has studied this text and provides the following details: Rang rig ras pa (d. 1683), a yogi of the ’Brug pa bka’ brgyud pa school who hailed from Spiti, had some funds left over when he finished his repair work of the *stūpa* of Bauddha. He offered the remaining thirty-two ounces of gold to King Pārthivendra Malla with the request to finance with this the renovation of Svayambhū which had become necessary in “connection with the statues of the four cardinal directions” (*ibid.*). In the following year, before the renovation had got underway, the *yaṣṭi* “broke and tilted to the left” (*ibid.*). The Newar sources known to me do not record that the *yaṣṭi* was impaired. However, various sources report that in February 1680 (NS 800 *phālguna kṛṣṇa* 5) “a mad man went up to the top of the *stūpa* at Syeṅgu ... at the night, and dismantling the pinnacle along with the *chudāmaṇi* (*sic*) let it down.”⁸⁰

79. See also Śākya 1978/79: 172.

80. The quote is taken from Regmi (*Medieval Nepal*, vol. 2, 114), who gives *thyāsaphū* A as his source. The same event is recorded, in what may be identical wording, in the Sako chronicle (fol. 14b). This incident is, moreover, with a

Though a rite of begging for forgiveness was performed nine days later, it is possible that this act of desecration had marred the *caitya* to such an extent that its renewal was considered desirable also on this count.

According to Wylie's *dkar chag* (see Ehrhard 1991, *op.cit.*, p. 12) the renovation could get under way only after the god Gaṇapati had communicated to the king the whereabouts of a gold treasure, which was duly unearthed. Thus Gaṇapati is credited with assuring the material means for this renovation just as he is for the earlier renovations carried out by gTsang smyon and the later one carried out by Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshedbang nor bu (see below). A closely related episode is recounted in Hemraj Shakya's *Mahācaitya* (1978/9, *op.cit.*, p. 217).⁸¹ During the renovation potters went to fetch clay for the repair work of Svayambhū. As they were digging for clay, they unearthed two golden pitchers, which were subsequently brought in a big procession to the palace where they were welcomed by the royal family. Though it is not said that these pitchers were later used for the renovation, it seems to be implied that—in accordance with the Tibetan version—they were not simply added to the royal coffers. The story suggests that funds of local origins were used for the renovation in addition to the gold donated by Rang rig ras pa. At any rate, the detailed account of the renovation, recorded in a further *thyāsaphū* kept in the private collection of Yagyamanpati Bajracharya, attests that, as during the three preceding renovations, the rings and other specific parts of the *caitya* were sponsored by certain neighborhoods from Kathmandu. Likewise, localities “took care” of rituals, notably at the final consecration, providing the necessary materials and helpers.

In 1681 the renovation of the Svayambhūcaitya got under way.⁸² The date is reported in the mentioned *thyāsaphū* (which I cite in the following), in the Sako chronicle and in yet another *thyāsaphū* (NGMPP Reel No. E 1744/2) which deals independently and very briefly, on two pages, with the renovation treated here, recording the dates of the repair work's major stages.⁸³ Some two and a half months after the felling, on the seventh day (according to the Sako chronicle (16b/17a) on the ninth day) of the waning fortnight (“dark half”) of Caitra (≈ April), the divine essence of the *caitya* was extracted (6,5f.). After the deconsecration, three weeks passed before the uppermost part of the *caitya* began to be dismantled. When the bowl-shaped crystal was taken down in May 1681 the two kings (*juju nihma*) came for *darśan* (7,2). Besides Pārthivendra Malla

slightly deviant date, attested to in Regmi's *thyāsaphū* D (*ibid.*, p. 117).

81. Regrettably, Hemraj Shakya does not specify which source he is drawing upon here.

82. According to the *dkar chag* published by Wylie (Ehrhard 1991, *op.cit.*, p. 12), the renovation was completed with the reconsecration in 1680. However, this date must be too early. Pārthivendra Malla came to the throne in 1680. By the logic of the account in the *dkar chag*, however, Pārthivendra Malla should already have been king in the year before the *yaṣṭi* broke, when he had—surely as king—received the thirty-two ounces of gold from Rang rig ras pa for the renovation. Hence the dating of the *dkar chag* has to be dismissed in favor of the Newar sources which unanimously record that the renovation took place between 1681 and 1683 (see below).

83. Hemraj Shakya also deals with this renovation in *Mahācaitya* (1978/9, *op.cit.*, p. 217). But his account comes across as a stereotypical description which does not refer to a particular renovation. Presumably, his source (to which I had no access), namely a *thyāsaphū* from the private collection of Jivaguru who was the *thakāli* at Svayambhū in the 1970s, provides no details of the renovation work, except one date (see below), so that Hemraj Shakya may have filled in the gap with a generic sketch.

this was presumably his younger brother Mahīpatendra.⁸⁴ At that time the two surviving sons of Pratāpa Malla were still so close to each other that two and a half months later in August they went together on pilgrimage to Siruthi (modern Gosāimkūṇḍa) and performed *śrāddha* rites there.⁸⁵

After the dismantling of the rings, which goes unrecorded, there was a gap of several months before work resumed, and the *harmikā* began to be taken apart on the second day of the New Year (NS 802 Kārtika *śukla* 2; ≈ November 1681) (7,6–8,1). It is not clear whether this unusual delay is due to the earthquake that shook the Valley according to the chronicle (7,3f.) in the night of the eighth day of the waxing fortnight of *jyeṣṭha* (≈ June 1681). After the *harmikā* had been dismantled and the *yaṣṭi* protruding from the dome had been cut, the dome began to be dismantled on the tenth day of the same fortnight. Surprisingly, already less than a week later, on the first day after full moon (i.e., NS 802, *kārtika kṛṣṇa* 1; ≈ November 1681), the new *yaṣṭi* was raised (17,1f.). This date is confirmed in the short account,⁸⁶ and apparently is also recorded in Hemraj Shakyā's source (albeit wrongly correlated to the consecration at the end).⁸⁷ If correct, the *yaṣṭi* was at this renovation erected much faster than at other times. This is all the more surprising because according to the chronicle work with the rebuilding of the dome and *harmikā* (17,6–18,1) resumed only in the dark fortnight of *mārgaśiras* (≈ December 1681), more than one month after the *yaṣṭi*'s establishment did work continue. Afterwards work on the *caitya* itself came to a halt for more than three months until, in the bright fortnight of *caitra* (≈ April 1682), work began on setting up the thirteen rings. This further disruption was apparently caused by the death of a *bare* and the self-immolation of his wife (*sati*) in the month of *pausa* (≈ January 1682) (17,2f.). Within the next four weeks all thirteen rings—and subsequently the superstructure above—were installed atop the *caitya* (18,2–20,5).

Some two weeks later, on the eight day of the dark half *vaiśākha* (≈ May 1682), the installation of the four Buddha statues began. First the king—apparently in the presence of his younger brother Mahīpatendra—put in place with his own hands the diagram with the *mantras* empowering the statues. On the next day, the statues were taken in palanquins in a procession around town (*deśayātrā*). On the following day (i.e. the tenth), the statues were established in their niches in the dome. The very next day, the *chattra* was affixed atop the *caitya* and duly consecrated in the presence of the king (14,2–16,6).⁸⁸ A little less than a month later, on

84. The form "Mahīpatendra" is not attested. Rather, other documents and even a coin (see Walsh 1908: iv, 1) confirm the spelling "Mahīpatendra."

85. See Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, vol. 2, 124.

86. The aforementioned *thyāsaphū* with the reel number E 1744/2, page 44 (pages are not paginated; my numbering of pages is in the sequence in which they were microfilmed).

87. In Hemraj Shakyā's account of the renovation here (1978/79, *op. cit.*, 217), only one date is reproduced, namely NS 802 *mārga(śiras) kṛṣṇa* 1. It is conceivable that Shakyā (or his source) renders *kacchalā* as *mārga* according to the *vikram saṃvat* system, where months have first a dark and then a bright fortnight. If so, *mārga* may be corrected to *kārtika* because the dating should follow the system of *nepāl saṃvat*, where months have first a bright and then a dark fortnight. This date could then refer to the erection of the *yaṣṭi* as attested in the shorter and longer account utilized by me. At any rate, in light of the Newar sources presented by me, the date given by Hemraj Shakyā can hardly relate to the final consecration of the rebuilt Svayambhūcaitya as his source apparently would have it.

88. As major events in the process of recreating the Svayambhūcaitya, both the establishment of the Buddha statues

the eighth day of the dark half of *jyeṣṭha* (≈ June 1682), after the finials had been installed atop the *caitya* and above the four niches in the dome, the divine essence was transferred from its temporary abode back into the newly rebuilt *caitya* (22,2–24,2). Nearly half a year later, on the fourth day of the month of *mārgaśīras*, NS 803 (≈ December 1682), the final consecration ceremonies were initiated with the entreaty of the gurus (*guru adhyeṣana*) to perform the necessary rituals. As the briefer account (E 1744/2: fol. 45) and the Sako chronicle (fol. 17a) record,⁸⁹ these rituals were, as is customary, performed in the framework of a *lakṣāhuti* lasting twelve days and eleven nights, from the seventh day of the dark half of *māgha* to the third day of the bright half of *phālguna* (February/March 1683).

The renovation commenced in 1710 during the reign of Bhāskara Malla

The Svayambhūcaitya was renovated again less than thirty years later, from 1710 onwards. Besides the previously mentioned drawing giving section by section the measurements of the *caitya* after the completion of the renovation in NS 832 (1712 CE) and in NS 937 (1817 CE), and besides a few other Newari sources that briefly refer to this renovation (see below), there is a Newari manuscript kept in the National Archives of Kathmandu (Acc. No. 3–270, NGMPP Reel No. B 100/22) with a lengthy account of this renovation that sheds light on many interesting details. (The citations in this section refer to this text.) However, neither this account nor the brief references deal with the background of the renovation. So it is not known why, and on whose initiative, the *caitya* was renovated again hardly thirty years later. The absence of references to this renovation in Tibetan sources suggests that this was again basically a Newar undertaking. This impression is also conveyed by the chronicle. To start with, it refers to Tibetans only once (158v4–159r2), namely when it tells how a group of lamas was fined because, disregarding the purity restrictions, they had gone inside the place where the *nyāsaghaṭa* of the Svayambhūcaitya was kept. Moreover, the chronicle testifies to the same pattern of collective participation and sponsorship that had been in place for the preceding four renovations. It also records how the queen mother Bhuvanalakṣmī and her adolescent son, King Bhāskara Malla, keenly took part in many stages of the renovation and sponsored five new Buddha statues for the niches in the dome (see below). In this light, it may be concluded that the burden of the renovation was borne collectively by the people of Kathmandu and the king and his mother. This does not preclude significant contributions by individual sponsors. However, given the absence of inscriptional or other supporting evidence to this effect, it seems unlikely that there was a principal donor in the way Jayarakṣa had been for the twin renovations.

The account of the chronicle begins in NS 830 in the month of *jyeṣṭha* (≈ June 1710) with the ritual begging for forgiveness (154r1–3) and the subsequent extraction of the divine essence from the *caitya* (154r3–v1). One week later, at the beginning of *āṣāḍha* (≈ July 1710), the *chattra* and crystal bowl were taken down (154v1f). Surprisingly, after this deconsecration, nothing happened for sixteen months, until the wooden structure above the rings was taken down in NS 832 in the month of Kārtika (≈ November 1711)

and the offering of the *chattra* are attested not only in the chronicle but also in the shorter account (E 1744/2: 44,4f).

89. The *thyāsaphū* of Yagyamanpati Bajracharya breaks off at the point of recording the preparations.

(155v8f.). Only after a further two-month break did work begin on the *caitya*, in the month of *pauṣa* (≈ January 1712), when the bulk of the structure was dismantled (155v9–156r4). Already a year before that, the tree for the *yaṣṭi* had been brought up to Svayambhū (arrival in *pauṣa* NS 831; ≈ January 1711). In *āṣāḍha* NS 831 (≈ July 1711), half a year after the tree had reached Svayambhū and half a year before real work on the *caitya* started, the fabrication of the new rings began (155r4–9).

It is startling that in the case of this renovation the divine essence was transferred a year and a half before work on the *caitya* itself started in earnest. As the other sources document, normally the *caitya* is deconsecrated only shortly before it is dismantled. This accords with concerns, as expressed in Hindu sources, that malevolent beings and forces may appropriate an empty shrine (as they may a dead corpse) and use it as a base to do harm. It is also unusual that an entire year elapsed after the arrival of the tree up at Svayambhū before the workers began to dismantle the solid structure of the *caitya* so as to replace the *yaṣṭi*. While this delay may have been due to a scarcity of funds or some other problems, I do not have an explanation for why the *caitya* was deconsecrated when building works were not about to start.

Once work began on the *caitya* in *pauṣa* NS 832 (≈ January 1712) progress was swift. Just a month later, on the twelfth day of the bright half of *māgha* (≈ February 1712), the new *yaṣṭi* was raised inside the largely dismantled dome (157r6–158r6). Within the next fortnight, the dome and *harmikā* were built up again (158r6–159r6). A month later the lowest ring was set up (159r6–v5). After a hiatus of six weeks, the remaining twelve rings were installed in the month of *vaiśākha* (≈ May 1712) (159v6–161r7). In the following month the *chattra*—together with the crystal bowl which had been taken in a procession around town—was established atop the *caitya* and consecrated (161v4–162r4, 162v2–4). Also in that month the four shields, one on each side above the *harmikā*, were put into place (162r4–162v2) and the finial fixed at the very top (162v4f.).

With the exception of the Buddha statues in the niches, the *caitya* was thus ready for reconsecration at the end of *jyeṣṭha* NS 832 (≈ late June 1712). Normally the statues are installed in the niches as the work on the *caitya* comes to a close, so that the divine essence can be transferred back into the newly rebuilt *caitya* without delay. If we ignore the year given in the chronicle, this is what happened in the present case as well. Four new statues sponsored by the king and the queen mother were cast in the course of *vaiśākha* and *jyeṣṭha* (162v7–163v3f.), and then set up in the *caitya* at the beginning of the next month (*āṣāḍha*) (163v9–164v3). Eight days later, as stated in the chronicle, the *caitya* was reconsecrated with the transference of the *nyāsa* (164v3–165r3). However, the chronicle dates the production of the statues and the reconsecration only to NS 833 (CE 1713), so that a gap of one year after the conclusion of the rebuilding of the *caitya* results. This dating cannot be checked by referring to the extended final reconsecration because this ceremony is not attested in any of my sources. But in a text published by Regmi as “*thyāsaphū I*” (*Medieval Nepal*, vol. 4, 350) and in *Ratnadhana’s chronicle* (p. 3,3–8) it is related in agreement with the account in our principal source (Reel No. B 100/22) that the new Buddha statues were installed at the beginning of *āṣāḍha* in NS 833. There is independent testimony to the fact that the *caitya* was renovated in the course of NS 832 (rather than 833), namely in the colophon of a text called *Kriyāsaṃgrahamata* (NGMPP E 1631/16, NA 1–1697). In other

words, the evidence available to me indicates that the fully rebuilt *caitya* was left standing empty for one year. As already mentioned, I also find it also implausible that the *caitya* was deconsecrated one and a half years before work really started. However, it is not easy to brush aside the evidence presented here.

A possible explanation for the apparent delay of one year in reconsecrating the *caitya* may have been the aforementioned casting of new Buddha statues. While the casting of new Buddha statues at the end of a renovation is not unusual, this time it involved a major innovation, namely the addition of Vairocana. Keeping with the logic of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala where Vairocana occupies the center, this Buddha had previously not been depicted in a niche. Accordingly, the records for the previous renovation of Svayambhū from 1681 to 1683 mention only four Buddha statues. Moreover, chronicle 2 specifies that after the production of the four *tathāgatas* of the cardinal directions, a Vairocana statue of smaller size was made (163v4f).⁹⁰ The text then goes on to describe how the *four* old statues in the niches were ritually removed, thereby indicating that there was no previous Vairocana statue that would have needed removal. It may then be that the mentioned delay of a year was caused by the innovative addition of Vairocana and the work on the dome required for the new niche housing him.

The renovation carried out from 1751 to 1758 on the initiative of Kah-thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu

Less than fifty years later, the Svayambhūcaitya was renovated once again. This renovation stands out because after a series of renovations that were essentially Newar undertakings it was jointly accomplished by Tibetans and Newars. It is also particularly well documented. The renovation was carried out on the initiative of the Tibetan rNying ma pa lama Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (1698–1755). This lama and his disciples (who assumed responsibility when he passed away) also supervised the renovation and apparently collected the necessary funds to pay for the gold, silver and copper for the superstructure of the *caitya*. This is recorded in the *nam thar* of Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu and, partly, in the closely related inscription standing at Svayambhū at the entrance of the Mūrtisaṅgrahālaya museum.⁹¹ Like other Tibetan sources, the biographer

90. I suspect that the smaller size of the Vairocana statue expresses a certain hesitation in representing this central Buddha of the standard pentade at the periphery of the dome, in a step that must have appeared to many as an anomalous and dubious break with the past pattern. At the renovation a hundred years later two sponsors from Kathmandu, Jujumuni of Oṃ Bāhāl and Manaju of Jhochem, stepped forward and replaced the original Vairocana statue with a larger version (cf. chr. 4, 48r2f). However, yet a further hundred years later at the renovation concluded in 1918, the Vairocana was still considered to be lacking in size, and another affluent trader, Rāmsundar Sāhu, replaced it with one that finally had the same dimensions as the other four Buddha images (Hemraj Shakya 1978/79, *op. cit.*, pp. 323f.). This new version (which is still in situ) also rectified a mistake in the hand gestures (apparently the hands were inverted) that had marred the image installed in 1817. It is not clear whether the image of 1817 had replicated a mistake of the originally installed image, or whether this was a newly introduced error. At any rate, this confusion, too, reflects the relative novelty of introducing a physical representation of Vairocana. The Svayambhūcaitya is the most sacred and iconic of all Newar *caityas* and hence it comes as no surprise that the addition of Vairocana has been copied at numerous other sites. However, it has by no means become the standard and many *caityas*, including the *caitya* of Pulām Seṅgu at Svayambhū preserve the older setup without a fifth niche for Vairocana.

91. The Newari portion of the bilingual inscription has been published by D. R. Regmi (*Medieval Nepal*, vol. 4,



Brag dkar rta so sprul sku Chos kyi dbang phyug (1775–1837) (whose teacher 'Phrin las bdud 'joms was a disciple of Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu) does not record the details of the rituals and building work. Instead, he draws a vivid picture of all the efforts undertaken by Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu, and in the process sheds light on the historical background of the renovation. The completion of the renovation by his disciples (after he had passed away) is also recorded. On the basis of this material Franz-Karl Ehrhard (1989) has given a useful summary of this renovation from the Tibetan perspective.

In addition to the *mam thar*, a number of Newar sources record this renovation. They attest that, despite the Tibetan involvement, it was carried out along the same lines as the other renovations from the end of the sixteenth century on (and presumably also before). To start with,

there is the aforementioned chronicle 3 that records the rituals performed in the course of the renovation. The ceremonies noted in chronicle 3 are also recorded in a text (kept in the collection of Yagyamanpati Bajracharya) that was written by Vimalaprabhānanda, who functioned as the main priest at that renovation (hence I refer to this text as Vimalaprabhānanda's chronicle). It supplements the more detailed anonymous account inasmuch as it records, unlike this latter text, the extended consecration at the end of the renovation. The third Newar text on this renovation was apparently written by a certain Svayambhūvajradeva (1736–1805) (hence I refer to it as Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle). He was the son of one of the priests involved, namely Ratnapatideva Bajracarya from Makhan Bāhāl, who was the royal priest when the new *yaṣṭi* was transported to Svayambhū, but who was then replaced by the above-mentioned Vimalaprabhānanda (who henceforth functioned as *rājgubhāju* for the renovation).⁹² The text may have been composed some considerable time after the events it describes, given that—alas!—they are all undated.

Svayambhūvajradeva's account stands out because, unlike the other Newar sources which confine themselves to keeping a record of the rituals, it provides in addition valuable information on the background

313–19). The Tibetan section has been published with a Nepali translation by Ramesh Dhungel (*"Svayambhūsthita syāmārapā lāmā daśaṃko tivvatī abhilekha ra tyasko nepālī anuvāda."* *Nepali Economist* no. 6 (1988), pp. 4–11). I am in the process of preparing a complete translation (Newari and Tibetan) for publication.

92. There is no colophon confirming the authorship of Svayambhūvajradeva. However, in parts of the text the author clearly assumes the perspective of Svayambhūvajradeva, using verbal forms indicative of the first person and referring to Ratnapatideva as "venerable father" (*abuju*) (e.g. 7,7).

Stone statue of Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (1698–1755) kept in the Murtisangrahalaya Museum at Svayambhū.

and circumstances under which the Svayambhūcaitya was renovated. Thus it recounts the threat posed by the troops of the Gorkha King Pṛthvinārāyaṇa Śāha and the repulsion of an attack by them during the renovation. Moreover, it portrays Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu's role and his dealings with the king of Kathmandu Jayaprakāśa Malla, who himself took direct control of the renovation. This point is of particular interest because in general the Newar and Tibetan sources on renovations of Svayambhū do not relate how the Tibetans and Newars interacted, and hardly make mention of each other. Rather, the Tibetan sources convey the impression that the Svayambhūcaitya is a Tibetan shrine, while in the Newar sources the involved Tibetan lamas feature marginally, if at all, as peripheral participants of little consequence.

The Tibetan and Newar sources, notably the *rnam thar* and Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle, illuminate the background and setting in which the renovation in the reign of Jayaprakāśa Malla was carried out. They provide the kind of circumstantial information that is not available for the other renovations. Therefore, I draw extensively on these sources in the following discussion, which is intended to illustrate the kinds of mechanisms, patterns and constellations of factors that can, to a varying degree, be presupposed also for other renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya.

After Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu had completed the renovation of the Khasa *caitya*, that is, of the big *caitya* at Bauddha (known nowadays as Bodhnāth) located at the northeastern outskirts of modern Kathmandu, he apparently resolved to renovate the Svayambhūcaitya as well (*rNam thar*, p. 261). A year later in 1748 he returned from Tibet to Kathmandu for the extended reconsecration rituals of Bodhnāth and met with the Eighth Situ Rinpoche Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1700–1774) (see Ehrhard 1989, *op.cit.*, p. 4). As Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle records (9,6–8), they went together to Svayambhū for *darśan*. There they saw that the *harmikā* above the dome had collapsed. They were told that the *caitya* had been for some time in this state of disrepair. Upon hearing this the two lamas went to see King Jayaprakāśa Malla. They urged that Svayambhū be renewed, because to leave it as it was would be inauspicious for the whole world (*samsāra*) (9,8–10,2). Though this is not spelled out, they themselves clearly requested permission to renovate Svayambhū. After the two lamas had retired to the enchanting hill of Kimḍol south of Svayambhū (10,4), the king summoned the leaders of the Buddhist community and presented them with the lamas' request. They pointed out that traditionally the different localities (*tol*) of Kathmandu had assumed responsibility (10,5), and that so far no renovation had been entrusted even to someone from Bhaktapur or Patan. Hence Tibetan lamas could, as before, only donate money, but not under any circumstances be given the right to renovate the *caitya* themselves (11,4f.). While it is true that at least the preceding five renovations were exclusively in the hands of the people of Kathmandu, this does not hold true for all times, and notably not for the renovation carried out by Heruka some two hundred fifty years before. The king conveyed the people's stance to the lamas, and it was settled that formally the king should be in charge and the populace should assume responsibility as before, while the lamas would be merely "helpers" (10,7–11,2). However, as follows not only from the Tibetan sources, but also from the account in Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle, Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu directed the renovation and was effectively in charge. But he kept in the background, while the Newar priests performed the rituals, the *bares* of Semḡu functioned as *jajmāns* and the various

localities of Kathmandu assumed responsibility for the *caitya*'s parts and the rituals they traditionally took care of.

Both the inscription and the *nam thar* (p. 258f.), but none of the Newar sources, report that “on an auspicious day (in 1751 [NS 871]) the *dharma* work (of renovating the *caitya*) was started. At that time the great gods Gaṇapati and Kumāra manifested themselves.⁹³ With the greatest devotion for the jewel-like abode (*sthānaratna*) of the blessed Tathāgata, they vowed to provide for gold and the other things required for carrying out the renovation of the Jewel that is the noble thrice-blessed Mahācaitya, so that it would not be necessary to seek (these required items elsewhere).⁹⁴ Thereafter, so the narrative continues, Viṣṇu appeared, too, though in the form of a Brahman priest, and vowed that a suitable *yaṣṭi* for the Mahācaitya would be brought.⁹⁵ The inscription goes on to relate that both Jayaprakāśa Malla and Pṛthvinārāyaṇa Śāha were moved by the appearance of the gods and their pledge to assist in the renovation. In turn the Malla king, somewhat vaguely, renewed his own resolve to support the project, while the Śāha Gorkha king vowed to provide the *yaṣṭi* and have it brought to Kathmandu.⁹⁶ In the *nam thar* and in Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle (22,5f.) it is recorded that Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu requested the Śāha king to provide the *yaṣṭi* for the Svayambhūcaitya.⁹⁷ He did so because this king held the area of Nuwākot (after his conquest of it in 1744), the only place where suitable trees could be found in the vicinity of the Valley. In his written reply the Gorkha king readily agreed to comply. In a letter to the Dalai Lama bsKal bzang rgya mtsho (1708–1757),⁹⁸ Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu reported that he also obtained the guarantee of the two kings to abstain from any fighting until the *yaṣṭi* had been procured. However, if there ever was such a promise it certainly did not stop the Gorkha and Malla kings from engaging in military conflict before and even during the renovation.

93. Gaṇeśa and Kumāra, the two sons of Śiva, are even now manifest in their respective shrines placed together along the staircase leading up to Svayambhū. There are other shrines of Gaṇeśa located on Svayambhū, but this Gaṇeśa is most important in the sense that it functions as the Gaṇeśa of the locality. As such it is also the place from which Gaṇeśa is “fetched” for all complex rituals performed at Svayambhū.

94. Inscription, lines 13 et seqq.: *sudinakuḥnu dharmmayā jyā ārambha yāñā verasa, mahādeva gaṇapati, kumāra, thvapani nihmasyenam, thao rupa, sadya kenāo, śrī tathāgatayā sthānaratnayāta, atibhaktisardhā, āryya śrī 3 mahācaitya ratnayā jīrṇoddhāra yāyayāta ru ityādi māraguri vastuka māle mu mārakaṃ saṃyukta yāñāo viyaguli bhārā kāyāo vacana vila*<.> As related above, at the outset of the renovation carried out some 250 years before, it was Gaṇapati and Viśvakarman (rather than Skandha) who manifested themselves to gTsang smyon Heruka and pledged their help and support for the renovation. According to Wylie's *dkar chag* (see Ehrhard 1991, *op.cit.*, p. 12) the renovation could get under way only after the god Gaṇapati had communicated to the king the whereabouts of a treasure of gold, which was duly unearthed. Thus Gaṇapati is credited with assuring the material means for the current renovation just as he is for the renovations carried out by gTsang smyon before and Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu afterwards (see below).

95. Inscription, line 14: *oguli kathanam, vṛṣṇa, vrāhmanayā rūpa kāyāo, mahācaityayā, māhika (?), yaosi thathe coṇagu likāo dhaka, vacana vira.*

96. Inscription, lines 15 et seqq.: *taodhaṇa devatāpanisena bhālā kāoyā nimirttana siddhayiogu rakṣana khañāo, mahārāja śrī śrī Jayaprakāśamalladevana niścayanam satya ājñā praśarnnam jura. gvaraṣāyā rājā śrīśrīśrī pṛthinārāmyaṇanam eosi nanānam sālāo viya dhaka satyadharmma vila.*

97. That the *yaṣṭi* was provided by the Gorkha king is also recorded in the inscription of a further architectural drawing (which gives, part by part, the measurements of the *caitya* after the renovation in 1757).

98. The letter is reproduced in the *nam thar* on pp. 259–263.

Shortly thereafter, Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu was ordered by the Dalai Lama to travel to Ladakh to mediate between warring factions in this region (*rNam thar*, p. 263). It seems that in his absence, in 1752, a tree was hewn for the *yaṣṭi*. According to the *rnam thar* (p. 306), he rejected this tree upon his return because it was too big and heavy for dragging and hence had to be abandoned. Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle, by contrast, reports that a party from Kathmandu had cut down a tree which Tshe dbang nor bu did not accept because he found it too small. Apparently the Newars were unhappy about this rejection and sent out a party to verify the measurements (23,2f). They were clearly upset when Tshe dbang nor bu insisted on taking a different tree even though the measurements supposedly confirmed the tree's suitability (23,4). One wonders whether the lama's insistence was also motivated by the wish to be present when the *yaṣṭi* was felled. This would be in accordance with the sentiments of the Newar who explained to me that when building a *caitya* the same priest should be in charge throughout, starting with the felling of the tree.

Tshe dbang nor bu got his way (which proves that he enjoyed considerable authority and was certainly more than a mere "helper"). A new tree that he had identified at Tsha ba Tsha shod (modern Devighāt where the Tādi River flows into the Triśuli) was finally cut down in 1753 in his presence. As attested in Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle (fol. 23) and as indirectly confirmed by the *rnam thar*, the woodcutters and the priests for the concomitant rituals were Newars who had travelled from Kathmandu to participate.

Afterwards Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu went to Svayambhū (*rNam thar*, p. 306), apparently in the belief that Pṛthvinārāyaṇa Śāha would subsequently arrange for the transport of the *yaṣṭi* to Svayambhū. To the great disappointment of Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu, this, however, did not happen. Finally in 1754 Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu lost patience and went yet again to Nuwākot to meet Pṛthvinārāyaṇa Śāha. According to his biographer, Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu gave the Śāha king a proper scolding when he finally met up with him, even throwing such items as a copper lamp and incense stand at him. This, the biography relates, made the desired impression upon the king, who then saw Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin assume the likeness of a wrathful deity, with bulging and inflamed eyes and ūṃṃā (the hair tuft well above the nose), and flames issuing from his mouth (311,5–312,1). As a result the king signed a promissory note that things would get moving (*rNam thar*, pp. 310f).

Accordingly, some time later in the same year, "innumerable" people from such far-flung places as Ladakh and Kham assembled in order to haul the *yaṣṭi* towards Kathmandu (*rNam thar*, p. 312).⁹⁹ After some progress had been made, the summer heat set in. Fearful of disease, the numerous Tibetans who had come to tow the *yaṣṭi* retired to Kyirong. Only in autumn of the same year (still 1754) did they return and resume the pulling of the tree was resumed (*rNam thar*, p. 313). Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu's biography does not record for how long and up to which point the *yaṣṭi* was transported in this way. Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle specifies (22,8) that it was the Gorkha king's responsibility to arrange for the transport within the area held by him. The same text complains that there were long delays until the tree finally arrived at a place called Sāsītāla,

99. It is out of the question that they came all the way from Ladakh or Kham in order to join hands in the transport of the *yaṣṭi*. Rather, they must have already been present in the region of sKyid grong (= Kyirong). The narrator manifestly capitalizes on their participation in order to aggrandize the *yaṣṭi* and its transport.

which must be somewhere on the Shivapuri ridge where the territories of the Gorkha and Malla kings converged. Indeed, since the start of the *yaṣṭi*'s transport in 1754 three years had passed, when, in the month of Phālguna (i.e. ≈ March 1757), the people of Kathmandu finally managed to pull the tree from this place to Svayambhū—an operation which lasted barely ten days (E 1743/3: 3r5–5r7, Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle 24,7–25,5).

It had clearly been anticipated that the *yaṣṭi* would arrive far more quickly and that thus the renovation could be accomplished much earlier. This follows from Vimalaprabhānanda's chronicle, which attests on a separate folio that the *caitya* was already deconsecrated in NS 874 (1753/54—the month is not given). The curious circumstances are recorded at greater length in Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle. It relates that after the transference of the divine essence into a water vessel (14,4–16,3), the pinnacle started to be taken down (17,1–3). On that occasion, Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu had a sample of the gold covering of the *harmikā* brought down in order to examine its quality. He found that a lot of additional gold was needed for gilding the rebuilt *caitya*. Accordingly, he asked the king for leave in order to travel to Tibet and raise the necessary funds. The king was obviously unhappy that in this way work on the *caitya* would be stalled (this shows the dependence upon Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu's presence) and extracted from the lama the promise to return quickly (17,3–18,1). The *rnam thar* does not relate this episode, but confirms that in 1754 Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu was not in Kathmandu, but in Nuwākot to see to the transport of the *yaṣṭi*, and also in Tibet.

As Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle records (p. 18), in Tshe dbang nor bu's absence the troops of Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha were advancing from the west towards Kathmandu. Even though a defence post was set up, this caused great alarm among “ministers, officials and the population” who were afraid that the Gorkha king might capture the Svayambhū deity, now that it was abiding in the *nyāsaghāṭa* and could easily be taken away. The king shared this concern and commanded that some nominal repairs be made instantly. Immediately afterwards the renovation was ritually declared to be complete, and the *caitya* reconsecrated by returning the divine essence to it.¹⁰⁰ This served to bar any designs to capture the deity which the Śāha king might have entertained—something for which there is no evidence. As Vimalaprabhānanda's chronicle records (*ibid.*), this happened in the year after the *nyāsa* had been extracted (i.e. in 1754/55). By that time the roof of the niche of Amitābha had been renewed (as a nominal renovation?).

The preventive reconsecration meant that renovation work on the *caitya* was put off for the time being. Only some years later, after the *yaṣṭi* had finally arrived at Svayambhū in 1757, was the *caitya* again deconsecrated. In the meantime Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu had apparently concentrated on the preparation of the gilded shields and the gilded copper plates covering other parts of the superstructure including the rings (*rNam thar*, pp. 262, 314f.). Then, in 1755, the lama from Kaḥ thog left Kathmandu for good. He took leave from the king and entrusted the renovation to his disciples, notably to bsTan 'dzin rdo rje, and the Newar priests and other members of the local Buddhist community. Possibly anticipating his death,

100. Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle 18,8–19,1: *jirṇnā'udhāra sampurṇnā yām dhaka dhāyā ntami kāyā jivamnyāsa ruṇā juro.*

he informed them that they would not meet again and requested them to see the renovation to its end (*rNam thar*, 319,3–6). Kaḥ thog Rig ’dzin Tshe dbang nor bu then travelled to Kyirong where, in the same year, he passed away (*rNam thar*, 324,3–5). Instead of him, dKar brgyud ’Phrin las shing rta (1718–1766), the Seventh ’Brug chen Rin po che, assumed responsibility for the renovation (328,5f.) and saw it to its successful completion. As vividly related in the *rnam thar* (pp. 312–26), he had spent the last months with Kaḥ thog Rig ’dzin Tshe dbang nor bu in Tibet and had become a close friend, a true *kalyānamitra*.

Once the *caitya* had again been deconsecrated in Phālguna NS 877 (≈ March 1757), work proceeded swiftly and the *caitya* was dismantled and rebuilt within the next seven months. The dramatic circumstances under which the *yaṣṭi* was erected are recorded in Vimalaprabhānanda’s (6r6–6v2)¹⁰¹ and Svayambhūvajradeva’s (30,2–31,5) chronicles, and hence will be recounted here.¹⁰² In the night following the *yaṣṭi*’s erection, on the 9th of the bright half of *jyeṣṭha* (May 27, 1757 CE),¹⁰³ the forces of the Gorkha king set out yet again to conquer the Valley from the west. Pṛthvīnārāyaṇa Śāha had been stationed with his troops at Dahachok, a hill some five miles west of Kathmandu. From there they were advancing towards Kīrtipur, putting up posts in its vicinity. Jayaprakāśa Malla arranged for a joint action with the forces of Patan and Kīrtipur, and called his own people to arms. He then took *darśan* of the royal goddess Tāleju and of the *yaṣṭi* which, as mentioned, had been erected on the day before. Thereupon he began the counterattack which was coordinated by him. The Gorkha troops, who were apparently encircled and outnumbered, were flushed out from their posts and fled. They were—in the words of Svayambhūvajradeva—pursued and three hundred men (Vimalaprabhānanda’s chronicle 6v1) were killed, among them the famous *kājī* Kālu Pāmḍe (Svayambhūvajradeva 31,1), the “right hand” of Pṛthvīnārāyaṇa Śāha.¹⁰⁴ The Śāha king himself managed to flee to Dahachok under cover of night. Svayambhūvajradeva specifies twice (31,1 and 31,6) that the troops from Kīrtipur did the killing, and one wonders whether it was partly in revenge for this that Pṛthvīnārāyaṇa Śāha later treated the people of Kīrtipur so brutally when he finally captured their town. After the Gorkha troops had thus been driven away to Dahachok, Jayaprakāśa Malla rejoiced in the victory and again took *darśan* of the *yaṣṭi* (Svayambhūvajradeva 31,4f.). Clearly, he worshipped the *yaṣṭi* as a source of his victory. Whether consciously or not, he thus seems to have associated the *yaṣṭi* with the Indra pole, which effects the renewal of royal power, and to this day is erected for this purpose once a year in Kathmandu (*indrayātrā*).¹⁰⁵

In light of this episode it is not surprising that Jayaprakāśa Malla jealously guarded access to the *caitya* at a later stage of the renovation when the *caitya* was rebuilt in the summer of 1757. The anonymous account (E

101. T. R. Vaidya (*Jaya Prakash Malla: The Brave Malla King of Kantipur*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications. 1996: 183–88) has used Vimalaprabhānanda’s, but not Svayambhūvajradeva’s, chronicle for his treatment of what he calls the “first battle of Kīrtipur.”

102. These circumstances are not related in the *rnam thar*. This is no surprise, given that this source (and in consequence also Ehrhard 1989, *op.cit.*, p. 7) wrongly dates the *yaṣṭi*’s erection to 1755, two years before this event—according to the Newar sources and circumstantial evidence bear out—really took place (314,1).

103. The Common Era date is according to Vaidya (1996, *op. cit.*, p.184).

104. Vaidya (*ibid.*) refers to another source that puts the combined death toll of both sides at 1,200.

105. Gérard Toffin has undertaken a detailed study of the *Indrayātrā* in Kathmandu. The results will reportedly be published in the near future.

1743/3: 25v2–4) reports that on behalf of Pṛthvinārāyaṇa Śāha thirty-two *mohars* were included in the packet of sacred items inserted in the *harmikā* (that is, the cube above the dome with the eyes painted on its four sides). Upon their discovery by Jayaprakāśa Malla's secretary they were removed on the king's orders and replaced with three *mohars*, from the Kathmandu king, from Patan and from Bhaktapur. It is also recorded in the same source (25v6f.) that on that occasion the *harmikā* was built up with bricks stamped, it seems, with the seal of the Malla king. Similarly, the copper platter containing the Piṇḍikrama-maṇḍala that was inserted in the *harmikā* in the name of Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu had been marked before with the seal of the king of Kathmandu (E 1743/3: 24v6). Clearly, given the unveiled ambitions and designs of the Śāha king to conquer the Valley, Jayaprakāśa (and his attendant) must have felt the need to bar any encroachment of his rival upon Svayambhū and, by contrast, to mark it as his own. This was not only a question of sovereignty, but also of access to the blessing and favor of this powerful shrine, which could translate into military success.

By the month of Āśvina (≈ October 1757) the *caitya* had been rebuilt, and the divine essence was transferred back. After this preliminary reconsecration, the *caitya* was twice consecrated extensively, first according to the Tibetan, and later according to the Newar, tradition. Shortly after the renovation had been completed with the preliminary reconsecration, 'Brug chen Rin po che took leave of the king. At the latter's insistence he promised to return in person, if possible, for the proper consecration, or, failing this, to send a fitting substitute.¹⁰⁶ As it turned out, the 'Brug pa lama stayed in Tibet because of his poor health. In his stead he asked the Seventh dPa' bo Rin po che, rDo rje gtsug lag dga' ba, who was on his way to Nepal on pilgrimage, to take care of the *rab gnas* ritual. The latter duly complied with this request and consecrated the Svayambhūcaitya according to the Tibetan tradition at the beginning of the new Tibetan year, a particularly auspicious time (329,4f.). The *rab gnas* lasted for three days and came to an end on the full moon day of Pauṣa (≈ January 1758) (inscription, l. 21). At the same time 'Brug chen Rin po che performed the identical ritual at his resting place in Mang yul. The *nam thar* relates that the objects which he offered in the process manifested themselves miraculously at Svayambhū (329,6–330,2). In this way the 'Brug pa lama participated in the renovation until its very conclusion and thus fulfilled the promise given to Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu and King Jayaprakāśa Malla.

In the next month the Newar priests began the preparation for the consecration according to their tradition. These rituals were performed in the customary manner in *vaiśākha* and *jyēṣṭha* (≈ May/June 1758) in the framework of a fire ritual that lasted for twelve days and nights.¹⁰⁷

106. See Svayambhūvajradeva's chronicle 5,1–7. In this passage the chronicle mistakenly gives the name of Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu. Apparently, the author was not aware that Kaḥ thog had passed away and been replaced by the 'Brug chen Rin po che.

107. See Vimalaprabhānanda's chronicle 10v-19r and Svayambhūvajradeva's, 36–38.

The renovation carried out with Bhutanese help from 1814 to 1817

The last comprehensive renovation of the Svayambhūcaitya with a replacement of the *yaṣṭi* was undertaken from 1814 to 1817. As Brag dkar rta so sprul sku records (*op. cit.*, fol. 19a), it became necessary after the *yaṣṭi* had started to lean to the left in 1812 and finally tumbled down in 1813. According to Oldfield (1880, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, 222f.), this happened only in 1816 when the *yaṣṭi* broke in a storm. However, the Newar chronicle of this renovation (chr. 4, 1v1-6) records that one began to search for a new *yaṣṭi* already in 1814. Therefore, it seems unlikely that Oldfield (who only came to settle in Nepal in 1850) rather than Brag-dkar rta-so (and the Newar source) got the date right.¹⁰⁸

The renovation got under way at the end of 1814 when a tree big enough to function as the new *yaṣṭi* was searched for in the area of Hetāudā, south-west of the Valley at the foothills of the Mahābhārat Range. Though a suitable tree was found, in the end it was not taken because of the difficulty of pulling the tree all the way to Kathmandu. Instead, at the beginning of 1815, a tree was felled on the banks of one of the tributaries of the Trisūli (the area where *yaṣṭis* are traditionally fetched from), namely the Phalānkhu, beyond Betrāvati. It took two years until the *yaṣṭi* arrived at Svayambhū at the beginning of 1817, on the first day of *māgha* (≈ January/February). Twelve days later the preparatory rituals of begging for forgiveness and empowerment for the extraction of the divine essence began (6v6–7r7). The deconsecration was accomplished on the fifth day of the dark half of *māgha* (≈ February 1817) (7r7–9r2). Within the next two weeks the *caitya* was dismantled (9r2–12r1). In the following three weeks the remainder of the old *yaṣṭi* was taken out and the new *yaṣṭi* raised (12r2–19r6). In the course of the next two and a half months the *caitya* was built up again. After the last ring had been fixed on the second day of the dark half of *jyēṣṭha* (≈ June), the pinnacle above the rings—including the honorific *chattra* but excluding the finial and the crest-jewel, which were only offered at the conclusion of the extended consecration—was installed and the Buddha statues were set up in their niches (40v6–41v4, 45r2–6). Thus four months after the deconsecration, the dismantling and subsequent rebuilding of the *caitya* were finished.

A mere couple of days afterwards, the divine essence was transferred back to the *caitya* and the abridged consecration rituals were performed (47v6–49v3). At that time the preparations for the extended consecration ritual had already begun (41v6–45r2, 45r6–47v5). Accordingly, after less than three weeks the priests were already starting the extended fire ritual, which lasted for nine days and eight nights, until the consecration was concluded on the ninth day of the bright half of *āṣāḍha* (≈ July 1817) (56v4–69r2). It is surprising that in a departure from normal practice, and contrary to what is attested for the other renovations, the extended consecration was performed straight after the divine essence had been reinserted, rather than waiting for the generally more auspicious winter months. However, the Bhutanese lamas reconsecrated the *caitya* according to their tradition at a later and, from their perspective, more auspicious, time.

108. Oldfield specifies that 1816 was also the date of the reestablishment of the British residency in Kathmandu, and that hence the collapse of the *yaṣṭi*, which supposedly occurred in that year, was taken as a bad omen. However, given the evidence of the Tibetan and Newar sources, this must be a mistaken identification of two events that were equally perceived as inauspicious.

Following the precedent established at the previous renovation in the middle of the eighteenth century, the renovation treated here was also carried out under the guidance of lamas of the Tibetan tradition. More precisely, they were, as Brag dkar rta so relates, 'Brug pa lamas with a certain Lho phyogs Nor 'dzin skyong ba'i dbang phyug in charge. As his appellation 'the Southerner, the Lord Protector of the Earth' reveals, he was clearly not a monk himself but rather a worldly ruler, most likely from Bhutan, given his qualification as "southern" and his cooperation with 'Brug pa lamas. I am not aware of a detailed Tibetan (or Bhutanese) source on this renovation that would shed light on the background of the Bhutanese involvement but there are two conditions one can point to. Firstly, as seen, the prior renovation was completed under the supervision of the Seventh 'Brug chen Rin po che. Secondly, and much more significantly, the 'Brug pa bKa' brgyud pa school of Bhutan had maintained close links with the house of Gorkha for a long time, even before the conquest of the Valley by Prthvinārāyaṇa Śāha.¹⁰⁹ Hence they had privileged access to the king (as they had to the late king Birendra even in our times). This translated not only into the permission to renovate Svayambhū, but also into the grant of land next to the *caitya* and the right to erect a temple for offerings there (which was duly built in 1819 under the guidance of the lama mTsham-pa Rin-po-che Sangs-rgyas rdo-rje).

Though Cakrapāṇi assumes the perspective of the participating Newar priests, he attests in his account that a "southern lama" (*hluvā lamāju*) guided much of the actual renovation work after the *yaṣṭi* had arrived at Svayambhū.¹¹⁰ Maybe the identification as lama should not be taken too seriously, and Cakrapāṇi refers with this appellation to the aforementioned Lho phyogs Nor 'dzin skyong ba'i dbang phyug. Alternatively, it could refer to the aforementioned mTsham-pa Rin po che Sangs rgyas rdo rje who most likely played an important role in the renovation. However that may be, it is clear that Cakrapāṇi confirms the leading role of a prominent Bhutanese in the present renovation, when he records the "southern lama's" participation in the erection of the new *yaṣṭi*, and refers to him in one passage as "the southern lama who had come for replacing the *yaṣṭi*" (32r2f). Cakrapāṇi also mentions that this person offered a brocade pennant to the erected *yaṣṭi* (19v4), in addition to the ones offered customarily by the king (19a,r5) and by the oil-pressers (*sāyimi*) who had been in charge of raising the *yaṣṭi* into its upright position. Subsequently, according to Cakrapāṇi's account, this "southern lama" took part in the building up of the *caitya*, depositing sacred objects, and performing rituals. Moreover, according to the same source, he financed the workers at least partially,¹¹¹ paid the ritual officiants (74v4–75r3, 76r2–5) (who surely received *dakṣiṇā* also from other parties), contributed towards the

109. A letter by the Devadharmā lama of Bhutan from 1867, kept in the archives of the Foreign Ministry of his Majesty's Government of Nepal (bundle number 57, accessioned in *vikrama samvat* [19]24), dwells on this special link. It claims that since the times of Rām Śāha, who lived in the first half of the seventeenth century, the Gorkha kings had been clients of the Bhutanese lamas. (I am grateful to Dinesh Raj Pant who drew my attention to this letter and read it with me.)

110. The first mention of the lama finds him setting out from Kathmandu to witness the transport of the *yaṣṭi*, which had not yet reached the Valley (5r5f). However, at this stage the lama had apparently only come then as an observer and was not yet in charge himself.

111. The extent to which he covered the expenses for the workers is not clear. All the chronicle records is that he paid the workers who were covering the *harmikā* with gilded copper sheets (33v7–34r1).



The Swayambhucaitya as captured in 1845, twenty-eight years after the renovation concluded in 1817. Lithograph by F. Bellermann. After Zur Erinnerung an die Reise des Prinzen Waldemar von Preußen nach Indien in den Jahren 1844-1846 (Berlin 1853, plate xviii.2).

expenses for the wood of the thirteen rings above the *harmikā* (41v4f.), and took charge when the traditional sponsors of the third tier did not appear, appointing three merchants (*sāhu*) from Nyeta in Kathmandu as caretakers in their stead (34v7).

These merchants, a certain Lahnasinju and a certain Śrīkṛṣṇa from Pasanani in Nyeta and one Visundhara from Tuṃche in Nyeta, emerged as the main donors from among the Newar community. Together with a *bare* from Lagan they acted as caretakers for the extended consecration rituals, assuming this responsibility instead of the localities traditionally in charge. Thus they provided the necessary materials, including the food for the festive meal afterwards (63v4) and the instruments for the priests officiating as musicians (*gītācārya*) (margin of 45r). They also rewarded the oil-pressers (20v7, 84v3) and the musicians (79v4f) in kind and with money. But their function as caretaker was not restricted to the consecration rituals. Thus Śrīkṛṣṇa had the aforementioned Piṇḍīkrama-maṇḍala (originally inserted into the *caitya* in the name of Kaḥ thog Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu during the preceding renovation) worshipped in his house (21v3–5), and—together with the two other traders—also assumed responsibility for having it (and the other sacred items previously deposited in the *harmikā*) reinserted into the *caitya* when it was built up again (21v2). Moreover, Śrīkṛṣṇa sponsored the copper covering for the upper part of the *yaṣṭi* (32v5),¹¹² while Visundhara had the statue of Ratnasambhava in the southern niche of the *caitya*'s dome gilded (46v7).

112. This donation is commemorated by an inscription on the copper cover of the *yaṣṭi* that is still in place and was discovered by Manish Shakya in 2009 in course of the renovation work carried out at that time. Interestingly, the inscription expressly states that at a future time the same donation does not need to be made by Śrīkṛṣṇa's heirs, but can be taken up by someone else who has generated the aspiration of *bodhicitta*. This statement expresses Śrī Kṛṣṇa's own experience of stepping in as a new donor in lieu of the constituencies who had been traditionally responsible for particular parts of the *caitya* and steps in its renovation.

The three *sāhus* were by caste *udāys* (81r6) and apparently actively involved in the hugely profitable trade with Tibet.¹¹³ To this trade they presumably owed the considerable wealth they must have possessed. They maintained a close relationship with the Newar trading posts in Lhasa and Shigatse, and accordingly asked ahead of the renovation for donations from the trader community and afterwards sent a blessed offering (*prasād*) from the rituals in return (80v1–5). The active participation and financial support of the *udāys* with a close trading connection to Tibet foreshadow the leading role played by Dhamām Sāhu during the last major renovation of the Svayambhūcaitya in 1918 and 2010.

Not only the Bhutanese lama and the Newar merchants but also the government played a significant role in the renovation. It requisitioned 2,100 men, seven hundred persons each from the towns of Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur—these figures are probably not to be taken literally—for pulling the *yaṣṭi* from Nuwākōṭ district to Svayambhū (3r3–5). A very high-ranking and prominent government official, namely the *kapardār* Bhoṭu Pāmḍe, organized this, and in the process spent many days and nights in the rugged wilderness between Nuwākōṭ and the Valley (3r2–4r6).¹¹⁴ After the procurement of the *yaṣṭi* and before the dismantling of the *caitya*, even as senior a figure as the minister (*kāji*) Bakhtabar Singh Basnyat (after the regent and the prime minister he along with a couple of other *kājis* was the most powerful man in the country) got involved and came up to Svayambhū in order to take counsel with the priests and the *semgubares* (9v5–10r1). Moreover, the king, that is, his government, took care not only of the uppermost ring, as he traditionally does, but also of the tenth and eleventh tiers when the traditional sponsors of these parts failed to carry out their obligation (40r3–6). Furthermore, when the gilded struts that are fashioned as flower garlands (MS.: *svāmāla*) and support the uppermost *gajur* were damaged shortly after the *caitya*'s renovation had been completed, the government assumed responsibility for the renewal of the finial, which entailed the replacement of the *chattrā*. Thus the necessary rituals were specifically carried out in the king's name, with no less a person than the minister Bakhtabar Singh Basnyat acting in his stead as *jajmān* (81v3–5). Moreover, at the consecration of the new *chattrā* the sword of the king (then only four years old) was present as his proxy (88v5).

The renovation dealt with here was carried out at a time when the Malla kingdom had already been conquered by the Śāhas, who were not only Hindus but also strangers to the Valley and its Newar culture. Their commitment to the Svayambhūcaitya reflects not only obvious political concerns, but also more generally the notion that the king is ultimately responsible for the shrines in his kingdom (cf chapter 10)

113. Maṇidhar Tulādhar from the *udāy* community of Kathmandu told me that Visundhara, of whom he is a descendant, and Śrīkṛṣṇa maintained trading posts (*kothi*) in Lhasa; my informant had no doubt that the same applied to Lahnasimju.

114. The *kapardār* was the comptroller of the royal household (see e.g. Kirkpatrick's *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*. London: p. 200). As a member of the Council of Elders his was a truly senior position. Accordingly, he drew a substantial salary, which in the mid-nineteenth century consisted of 2,500 rupees per annum (see Adrian Sever's *Nepal under the Ranas*. New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Publishing, 1993: p. 101). Bhoṭu Pāmḍe was a person of great wealth who made public and religious donations and established endowments, and is accordingly described as very pious (*atidharmātman*) by the chronicler of the Pāmḍe clan (see Kṣatri Pāmḍe and Bahādura Bhīma, *Rāṣṭrabhaktiko Jhalaka*, Kathmandu: Ratna Pustaka Bhaṇḍāra, 1977, p. 132).

because they have—be they Hindu or Buddhist—a bearing on his and the country’s well-being. In addition, the active involvement of the government is in line with a promise given by Pṛthvinārāyaṇa Śāha at the completion of the preceding renovation in 1758. According to the *rnam thar* (p. 330), the lamas in charge after the demise of Kaḥ thog Rig ’dzin Tshe dbang nor bu presented the Gorkha king with valuable gifts, and—anticipating, it seems, his imminent conquest of the Valley—requested his future protection for Svayambhū. The Gorkha king, the *rnam thar* states, was exceedingly pleased, and pledged to take care of the Svayambhūcaitya in the future.

The extent to which the government of Pṛthvinārāyaṇa Śāha’s great-grandson and also the lamas and the three sponsoring merchants had to involve themselves in the renovation followed from the need to compensate for the disintegration of the system of traditional sponsorship whereby sections of the Buddhist population of Kathmandu donated parts, volunteered labor and took care of rituals. This disintegration was itself a result of the impact of the Gorkha conquest upon the fabric of Newar society.

The penultimate major renovation of the Svayambhūcaitya in 1918

Since the renovation completed in 1817 the Svayambhūcaitya has been renovated twice in a comprehensive manner, albeit both times without the replacement of the *yaṣṭi* and the concomitant dismantling of all of the *caitya* but the main part of the dome. The first renovation happened in 1918, the second one was concluded in 2010 and is the subject of the present volume. Since the renovation of 1918 was a major undertaking sharing many features of a complete renewal of the *caitya*, I here provide a summary. For this renovation there is a fairly detailed account in the *rnam thar* of the Tibetan lama who initiated the renovation, namely rTogs ldan Śākyaśrī (1853-1919). Elio Guarisco’s annotated translation of this account, which was composed by Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho (1880–1925), is reproduced in full in a separate contribution below.¹¹⁵ As for Newar sources, indicative of the continuing erosion of the fabric of Newar Buddhist society since the end of the Malla era, this was the first major renovation in over three hundred years for which there is no priestly chronicle. However, Hemraj Shakya has—in addition to Śākyaśrī’s biography (which he has summarized in 1978/9, *op. cit.*, pp. 319–22)—made use of information he gathered some forty years ago from hearsay and, in particular, from eye witnesses to the renovation who were then, fifty years after the renovation, still alive (Shakya: 323–29).¹¹⁶ Besides Newar material, Shakya also collected data from the ’Brug pa lama Tshe bcu sku gzugs Rinpoche, who descends from the Bhutanese lamas involved in the renovation. The same Rinpoche (who resided until his death atop the blissful hillock of Kimdol, abode of saints and scholars just to the south of Svayambhū) gave me a brief oral account of the renovation, upon which I also draw here. It is clear that Shakya’s rendering of the renovation owes much to Tshe bcu sku gzugs’s oral account, and he gives much greater credit to the ’Brug pa lama dGe bshes Shes rab rdo rje than the *rnam thar* does, which only

115. When referencing the *rnam thar* by Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho in this section, I provide the page numbers of Elio Guarisco’s translation as published in 2009 (*Togden Shakya Shri: the Life and Liberation of a Tibetan yogin*. [Arcidosso] Italy: Shang Shung Publications).

116. All references to “Shakya” in this section refer to his 1978/9 monograph cited above.

mentions him once as the Bhutanese king's messenger who relayed the king's contribution of 40,000 English pounds for the renovation to rTogs ldan Śākyaśrī. While Shakya's account may overemphasize the Bhutanese role, it seems conversely that the *rnām thar* with its focus on Tibetan protagonists does not do it full justice.

Whatever the differences between our sources, it is clear that the aforementioned rTogs ldan Śākyaśrī, a renowned rNying ma pa lama from Kham with a large following, initiated the renovation. According to his biography, he was intent upon renovating what from the Tibetan perspective are the three principal *caityas* of Nepal, namely Svayambhū, the Khasa *caitya* at Bauddha and the *caitya* of Namo Buddha, some ten miles to the east of the Valley (*rnām thar*: 155). At that time the Svayambhūcaitya had fallen into disrepair, with the superstructure leaning towards the north. Śākyaśrī knew this through one of his devotees, the Newar merchant (*sāhu*) Dharmamānasim Tulādhar (*rnām thar*: 156f.). Dhamām Sāhu (as he was commonly known) had at that time returned home to Kathmandu from Tibet and China, where he had been looking after the trading interests of Nepal (Shakya: 302). During his stay there, he had not only acquired great riches as a merchant, but also become a devotee of Tibetan lamas, and in particular of Śākyaśrī. rTogs ldan Śākyaśrī was too advanced in age to travel the immense distance from East Tibet to Nepal in order to oversee the renovation himself. However, he was instrumental in raising the necessary funds and organizing the renovation from the distance. As mentioned above, the first Bhutanese king, O rgyan dbang phyug (1862–1926), who was likewise a devotee of Śākyaśrī, supported the project with the massive donation of 40,000 English pounds (or Indian rupees according to Shakya).¹¹⁷ In addition Śākyaśrī garnered support from the Thirteenth Dalai Lama Thub bstan rgya mtsho (1876-1933) (10,000 Nepalese rupees), the king of Sikkim (7,000 Indian rupees) and other devotees (supposedly some 75,000 Nepalese rupees). rTogs ldan Śākyaśrī, the 'Brug pa lama Shes rab rdo rje, and Dhamām Sāhu did not content themselves with raising funds and participating in the renovation, but were also major donors themselves. Thus Śākyaśrī contributed 20,000 Nepalese rupees (according to the *rnām thar*, p. 158, 10,000 Tibetan silver coins), and Shes rab rdo rje 15,000 Indian rupees. In addition the latter's family, relatives, and disciples raised a further 30,000 Indian rupees for the renovation. The contribution of 45,000 Indian rupees by Shes rab rdo rje and his kin and devotees goes unreported in the *rnām thar*. Instead, Kaḥ thog Si tu Chos kyi rgya mtsho reports that the king of Bhutan made further offerings beyond the 40,000 aforementioned silver coins, so that his contribution totaled more than 70,000 English pounds. Possibly the *rnām thar* conflates the contributions of Shes rab rdo rje and his associates with those of the Bhutanese king. According to Shakya (pp. 302f.), the biggest single donor was Dhamām Sāhu with the immense sum of 75,000 Nepalese rupees. However, the *rnām thar* (p. 159) records that Dhamām Sāhu only contributed only 5,000 English pounds himself. Doubts about the level of Dhamām Sāhu own contribution are also raised by the following popular rhyme mocking the renovations' participants:

117. The amounts given in the following have been taken from Shakya's account (1978/9: 328) and, if explicitly mentioned so, from the *rnām thar*. While they partially agree—that is, presuming that the denomination of English pound used in the *rnām thar*'s translation corresponds to the denomination of Indian rupee used in Shakya's account—they also differ in details.

(It happened thanks to) the Tibetans' money,
 but in Dhamāṃ Sāhu's name.
 The overseer Jogabira was blind,¹¹⁸
 the whitewashers morons.¹¹⁹

Following Shakyā's account, the Bhutanese King O rgyan dbang phyug not only supported the renovation financially, but also by sending the 'Brug pa lama dGe bshes Shes rab rdo rje to participate in the renovation at Svayambhū. However, the lama's participation is not mentioned in the *rnam thar*, and it remains unclear how important a role he played. At any rate, it seems that the rituals were largely in the hands of the lamas sent by Śākyaśrī—who included three of his sons, among them Tshe dbang jigs med who took the lead—and of further lamas sent by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.¹²⁰ Among these latter lamas was a leading figure from Ganden Monastery, whom the *rnam thar* identifies as Chos rje Rinpoche. As Śākyaśrī's trusted disciple, Dhamāṃ Sāhu was vital to the organization of the renovation in Kathmandu. According to his descendant Siddhārtha Mān Tulādhār (personal communication), Dhamāṃ Sāhu also obtained permission for the *caitya*'s renovation from the royal government and, by the same token, was obliged to see the renovation through to its successful end, lest his entire property and that of his dependents be confiscated. The *rnam thar* (p. 158), by contrast, has it that the Tibetan lamas sought an audience with the king and were granted permission to undertake the renovation.

The renovation work on the *caitya* was completed within less than four months in 1918, though preparatory work on the wood and copper for the new rings and other parts of the superstructure had already begun in August/September of the preceding year. The rituals were again carried out in the Tibetan and Newar traditions. First, Chos rje Rinpoche and the aforementioned sons of rTogs ldan Śākyaśrī transferred the divine essence (*nyāsa*) into a mirror in accordance with the Tibetan tradition (Shakya: 323; *rnam thar*: 159). Nearly a month later, on the third day of the bright half of *māgha* (\approx February 1918), the Newar priests transferred the *nyāsa* from the *caitya* into a water vessel (Shakya: 323). It seems that the original plan had been to transfer the *nyāsa* according to both traditions on the same day, but the extensive preparatory pacification and empowerment rituals required in the Newar tradition apparently made this impossible. Interestingly, the Newar priests were not willing to compromise on these preparatory rituals, whereas they agreed to extract the *nyāsa* even though it had been transferred already in the Tibetan tradition. This does not imply distrust in the efficacy of the Tibetan rituals. Rather, it shows that the *vajrācāryas* (like their Tibetan counterparts)

118. The "blindness" of the overseer refers to the slight tilt of the *yaṣṭi*. See the east-west section through the *caitya* drawn by Surendra Joshi (pl. 178 in Niels Gutschow 1997, *op. cit.*, p. 89). Note that Jogavīra's leading role in the refurbishing of the *caitya* is also mentioned in the *rnam thar* (p. 159).

119. This rhyme, which is still remembered by many people, was published in the following version by Pūrṇakāḷī Tāmraḷ (2000): *sayamṭaygu dāṃ | dharmā sāhuyā nāṃ | jogavīra nāyah kām | sākhyā yāhḥma dhvām ||* ("Svayambhūyā jīṇoddhāra sunāṃ sunāṃ?—2." The daily newspaper *Sandhya Times* (p. 2) of 4 September, 2000).

120. Indicative of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's serious investment in the present renovation, he commemorated this undertaking in a brief *dkar chag* that Christoph Cüppers is currently studying.



operate strictly within their own framework. Besides, duplication in the Newar ritual sphere—and, I suspect, most other South Asian ritual traditions—is considered an additional bonus rather than a sign of ritual incoherence.

Since the *yaṣṭi* was not replaced, the *harmikā* was not dismantled and the dome was left intact. However, the structure above was dismantled, the wood burnt according to precept, and the metal presumably melted down and recycled. Thus the rings, the crowning *chattra* and the remaining superstructure, except for the crest-jewel and crystal, were newly built. It seems that the new parts were made more lavishly than heretofore (Shakya: 322). This included the crowning parasol whose decorative rim was executed in gilded copper rather than, as before, in silk (*nam thar*: 160). Moreover, the niches were entirely renewed, and prayer-wheels added for the first time around the base of the dome. The *nam thar* attests (p. 162) that the two flanking *śikhara*-style temples dedicated to the cult of Cakrasaṃvara known as Pratāpapur and Anantapur were also renewed. Even so, the funds seem to have exceeded all needs, so that many donated items were simply inserted into the dome, which must have been opened for that purpose (Shakya: 322).

Given the abundance of funds—the *nam thar* (p. 161) records that a total of circa 157,800 (Tibetan?) silver coins were spent—the support by Tibetan and Bhutanese lamas and rulers, the backing of the Newar community, and the cooperation from the government, the question that leaps to the fore is *why* the *yaṣṭi* was not replaced, thereby renewing the *caitya* in its entirety, as in the case of the preceding renovations presented here. Though I have not found this spelled out anywhere, I suspect that there is a simple answer, namely

The five principal vajracarya priests in charge of the rituals of the renovation of 1918, framed by the main Newar donors.

The lamas who had come from Kham (recognizable by their long sleeves and other features of their attire), Bhutan and elsewhere to perform the renovation of 1918. The three sons of rTogs ldan Sakya Sri participating in the renovation stand in the center of the image, namely Ngag dbang (fifth counting from the left), 'Phags mchog (sixth from left) and Tshe dbang jigs med (fifth from right). The photo also depicts Gru gu Chos rgyal (third from left) and the Kinnauri Lama Tshe brtan rdo rje (third from right). The lay person (second from left) wearing a white hat is Dhama Sahu, the principal Newar supporter of the renovation. The lama seated on the far left is the famous slob dpon bSod nams bzang po from Bhutan, grandfather of the current rDzong gсар mKhyen brtse Rinpoche. I am grateful to Punya Prasad Parajuli who made these identifications with the help of the Brug pa bka' brgyud lama Chos dpal from Kathmandu.



that by the twentieth century it had become impossible to find a suitable tree in the district of Nuwākot or anywhere else in the vicinity of the Valley. I presume that in the future it will also be impossible to set up a new *yaṣṭi*, unless a tree is brought from far away and the principle is violated that it has to be hauled by men all the way to Svayambhū, or unless one compromises on the principle that the *yaṣṭi* has to be a single solid trunk of fixed dimensions.

Apart from the replacement of the *yaṣṭi* the renovation proceeded along the same lines as previous ones. Thus the wood for the support of the *chattrā* was ritually cut in the context of a journey to the forest (*vanayātrā*) on the slopes of Svayambhū, more precisely, below the Pulām Semgu caitya (Shakya: 324). Moreover, the crystal bowl was placed in a litter (though not taken around in a procession) so as to give *darśan* to all people (*ibid.*). Furthermore, as mentioned above, the Buddha statue of Vairocana newly installed a hundred years earlier was replaced because it displayed the *mudrā* incorrectly and was still lacking in size. As similarly attested for the renovation in 1721, the new Vairocana was taken around town in a procession that involved the participation of the town's Dipamkara statues, as in the *samyak* festival celebrated every twelve years (*ibid.*).

The caitya reconsecration was again performed separately in both the Newar and Tibetan traditions. It was first the turn of the Tibetans. While the mentioned Tibetan lamas who had overseen the renovation at Svayambhū performed these rituals in situ, Śākyaśrī himself performed the same rituals simultaneously in Tibet. With echoes of the renovation in the middle of the eighteenth century, the offerings he made manifested themselves at Svayambhū (Shakya: 322). The *rnam thar* (p. 160) records that in addition the

Dalai Lama “was requested to add his mind blessings for the consecration.” According to Shakya (p. 324), the work on the niches had at the time not yet been finished, and the lamas accordingly promised to return later for an extended consecration. However, neither the Tibetan nor Newar sources seem to record that a further *rab gnas* ritual was performed.

In the Newar tradition the *nyāsa* was “poured” back into the *caitya* some four months later. The subsequent extended consecration was likely also postponed because there were small shrines, *caityas*, rest-houses, etc. at Svayambhū that were still in disrepair (Shakya: 322). Only after the elapse of nearly three years, apparently after extensive further repairs were made around the *caitya*, did the Newar priests perform the comprehensive consecration rituals in the months of *vaiśākha* and *jyēṣṭha* (\approx May and June 1921). As follows from Shakya’s account (pp. 325f.), these rites were performed in at least as elaborate a form as in the case of previous renovations. Thus the *ahorātra* fire ritual providing the frame for the consecration rituals lasted reportedly thirteen days (and twelve nights).