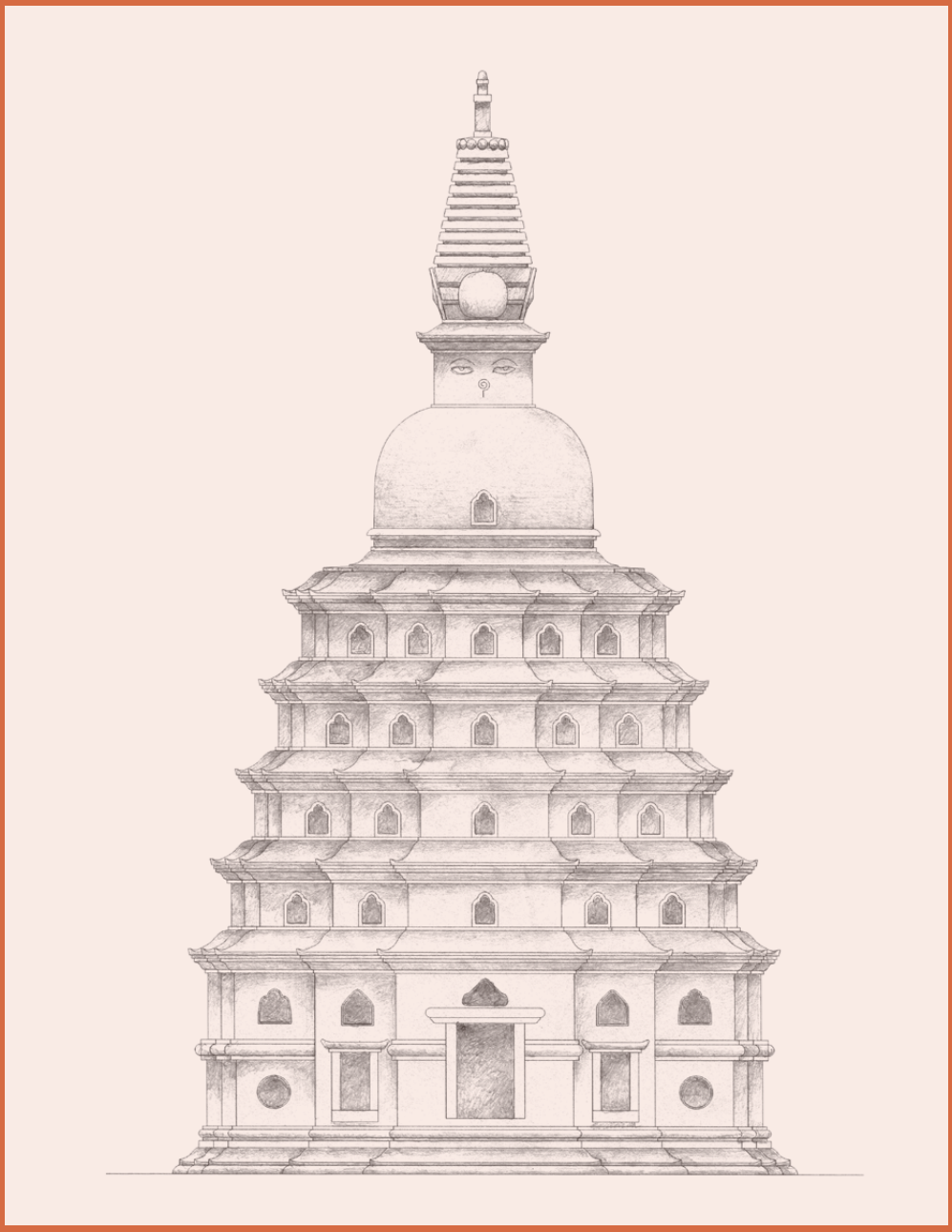
# The Restoration of Mangal Bahudvara Caitya. A Tashi Gomang Stupa

David Cornélius Andolfatto

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



# THE RESTORATION OF MANGAL BAHUDVARA CAITYA

## TASHI GOMANG STUPA

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## TASHI GOMANG STUPA

TASHI GOMANG, VIEW FROM THE SOUTH
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THE RESTORATION OF

# MANGAL BAHUDVARA CAITYA

## TASHI GOMANG STUPA

SVAYAMBHU, KATHMANDU VALLEY WORLD HERITAGE SITE

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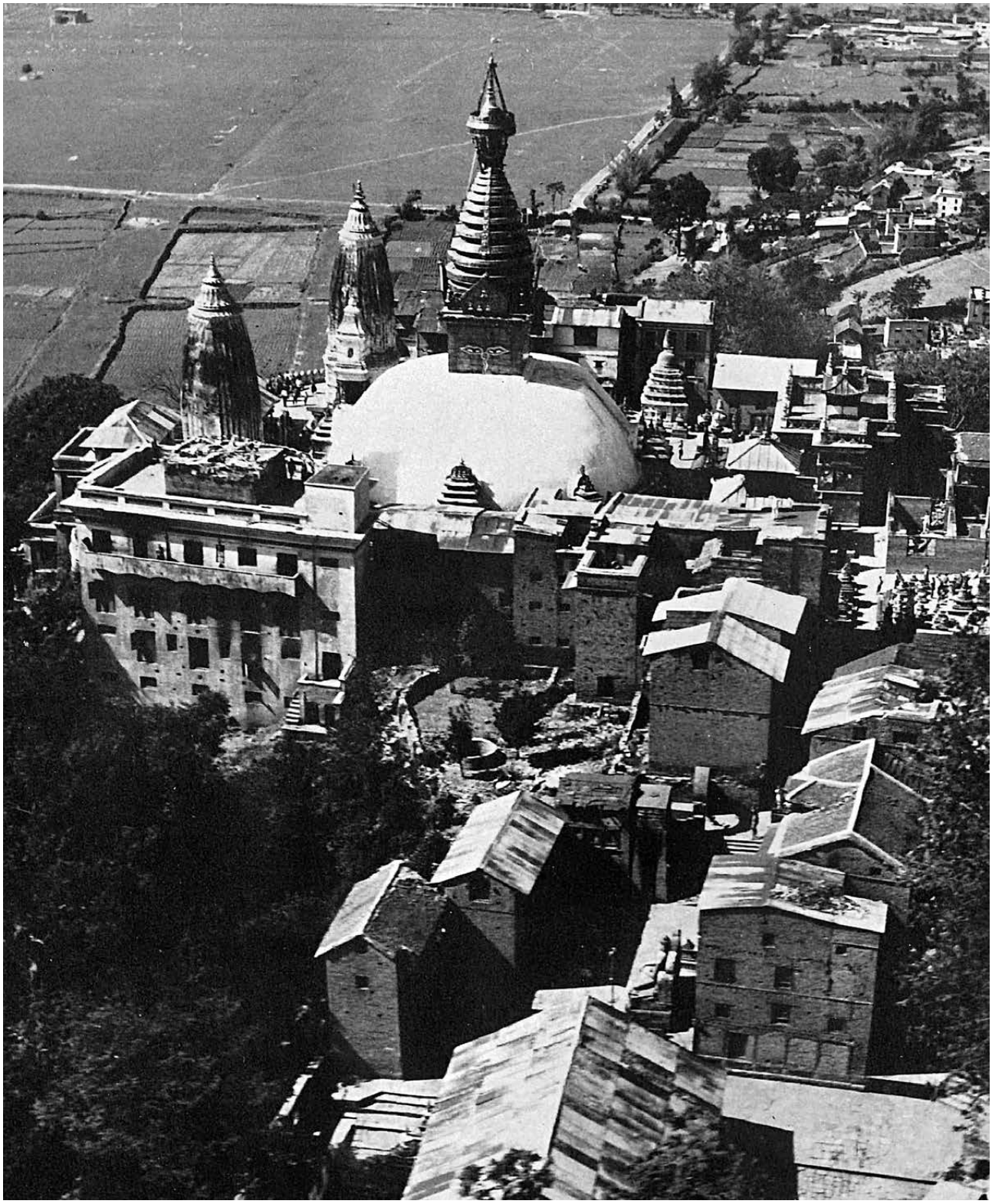
**SVAYAMBHU HILL (DETAIL)**
Anantapur and Pratapur temples can be clearly identified and the top tier of Hariti Temple is shown to the right of the main stupa (*Mahacaitya*). An abstract rendering of Tashi Gomang can be seen to the left of the stupa's dome.
Watercolour on paper, early 20th century
Courtesy of James Giambrone



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Tashi Gomang Stupa can be seen just to the right of the main stupa.
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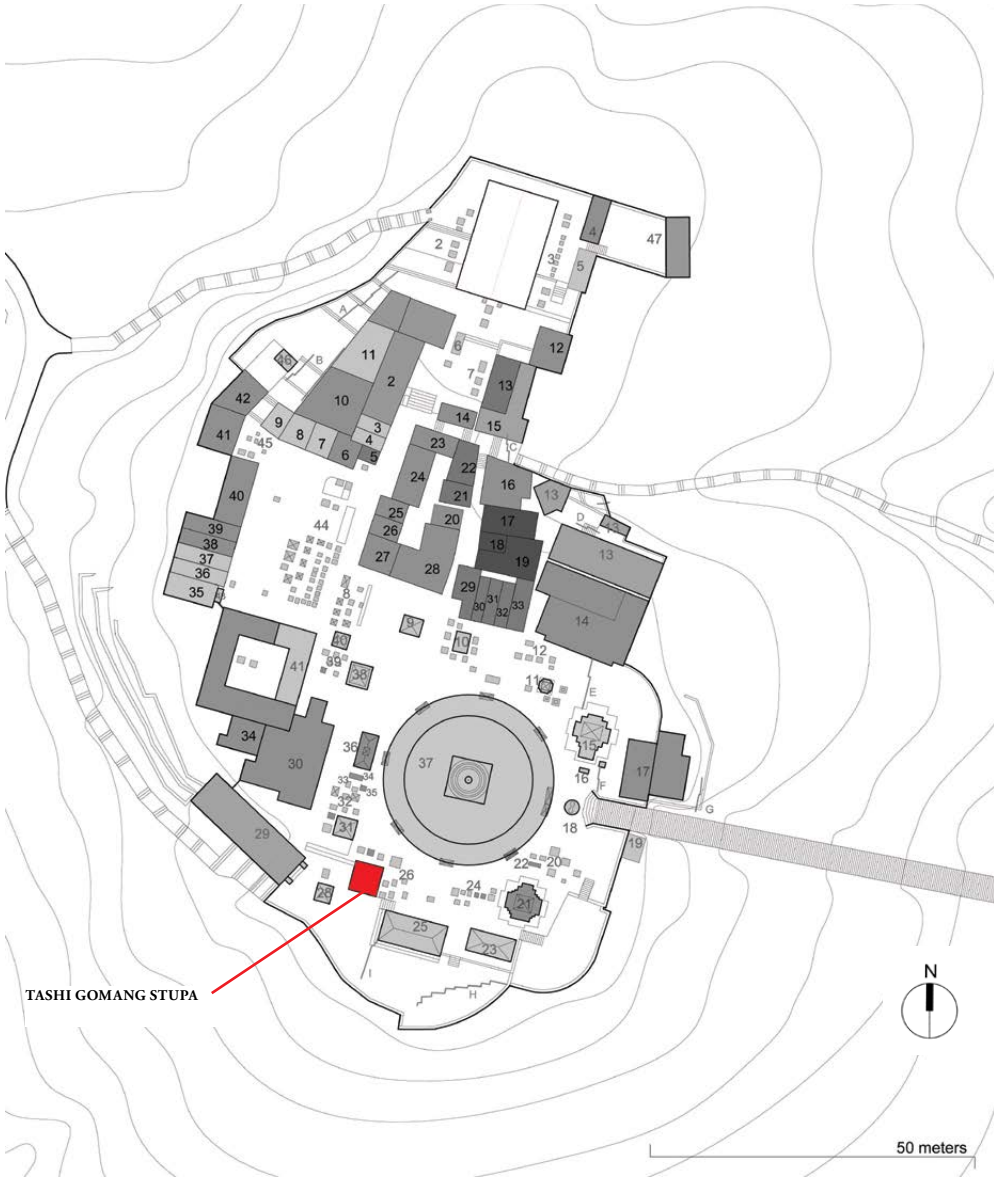
Courtesy of Carl Pruscha




**SVAYAMBHU HILL, SITE PLAN**
Tashi Gomang Stupa is located to the south-west of the main stupa (*mahācaitya*). This drawing was produced in the course of the UNESCO-led 2015 Earthquake Damage Mapping Project.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Lotus Research Centre
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Department of Archaeology (DoA), Government of Nepal

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Himalayan Consensus Institute

**AERIAL VIEW OF THE MAHACAITYA**
This photo was taken during the celebrations for Buddha Jayanti (Buddha's birthday). Anantapur and Pratapur (in the foreground) and other stupas are freshly whitewashed for the occasion.
Photograph by Kiran Man Chitrakar* | May 26, 2010

# FOREWORD

Just a few days after the April 2015 earthquake, I visited Svayambhu with David Andolfatto, an archaeologist from France working with us at UNESCO, and together we witnessed the distressing devastation the earthquake had caused. Many important buildings were damaged or completely levelled, from the total destruction of many of the local priests' houses to some big cracks on the main stupa itself. In the midst of all this, I was touched to note the solidarity of the local community, including the priests and members of the Federation of Swayambhu Management and Conservation, who all worked very hard to rescue the religious artefacts and architectural elements scattered around from damaged and collapsed monuments. The women had built a large tent roof under which they served *dal bhat* and water to everyone involved in the rescue.

The Mangal Bahudvara Caitya (or Tashi Gomang Stupa) had collapsed and numerous sculptures and artefacts previously enshrined inside were bulging out of the structure and were at imminent risk of being stolen or further damaged by monkeys. This needed immediate attention. As a first priority, we quickly safeguarded the many artefacts within the rubble. Each was scientifically documented and stored in a safe place. When the rubble was cleared, we saw that the caitya's base was also disintegrating and in need of archaeological excavation. Spectacular finds were made in this process, which are described in detail in this publication. They included a reliquary with an inscription, as well as a warning to those who would one day reconstruct this structure, to put all statues and votive gifts back in their place – if not they would be cursed. We respected this advice scrupulously during the reconstruction that followed.

My deep gratitude goes to our donors, the Chinese Hainan Province Cihang Foundation and the Hong Kong based Fok Ying Tung Foundation; without their generous support, this undertaking would not have been possible. I also wish to thank my colleagues Feng Jing and Roland Lin from the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, for their guidance.

These pages outline the reconstruction process as well as our finds; I hope you will enjoy following the journey with us as you read them.

Christian Manhart
UNESCO Representative to Nepal

**SVAYAMBHU HILL, VIEW FROM THE EAST**
The path from old Kathmandu leading up to
Svayambhu hill, which was densly forested at that time.
Watercolour on paper, 21 x 26 cm, early 20th century
Courtesy of James Giambrone

# PREFACE

Located in the foothills of the Himalayas, the Kathmandu Valley, with its seven Monument Zones, was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1979. These seven monument zones are the Durbar squares or urban centres of Kathmandu (Hanuman Dhoka), Patan and Bhaktapur with their palaces, temples and public spaces, and the religious ensembles of Svayambhu, Bauddhanath, Pashupati and Changu Narayan.

The current publication is focused on the recovery, rehabilitation and restoration of the Mangal Bahudvara Caitya (or Tashi Gomang Stupa) in Svayambhu Monument Zone, which was almost completely destroyed to the point where numerous sculptures and votive objects enshrined inside of it were protruding out of the structure.

Readers may know that in July 2003, the World Heritage Committee put Kathmandu Valley on the List of World Heritage in Danger. This was caused by uncontrolled urban developments which continuously altered the architectural fabric of the Kathmandu Valley; the lack of management mechanisms to adequately conserve the Outstanding Universal Value of the property; and the lack of legally defined boundaries for the property and its buffer zones. The Government of Nepal took significant mitigation measures to address these issues, particularly the establishment of an integrated management system and the redefinition of the boundaries for the property and its buffer zone; as a result, the property was removed from the List of World Heritage in Danger in July 2007.

Most recently, the Kathmandu Valley was threatened by the severe earthquakes of April and May 2015, which had devastating impacts on Nepal's unique cultural heritage: more than one thousand heritage structures were damaged and 133 totally collapsed. Of 170 structures affected within the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage property alone, 33 monuments completely collapsed.

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu, took immediate and urgent action to assist the Nepali authorities in their efforts to document, assess and respond to this situation. In addition to the Emergency Assistance (USD 74,940) granted from the World Heritage Fund, the then-Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, also pledged to mobilize further support from the international community to accompany the Government of Nepal

through the recovery process. During her visit to Qingdao, China, in the summer of 2015, Ms Bokova called and asked me to prepare a project for the Emergency Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage in the Kathmandu Valley, as she had received a promise of support from the leadership of China's Hainan Airlines. In August 2015, China's Hainan Province Cihang Foundation (Hainan Airlines) informed the World Heritage Centre that it would contribute an amount of USD 1 million to support the restoration of World Heritage monuments and sites in Nepal.

With the aid of this grant, the project was implemented in collaboration with the Department of Archaeology and the Federation of Swayambhu Management and Conservation. More than 100,000 small votive stupas, over 250 rare and valuable artefacts and 124 stone sculptures originally housed in the many niches around the stupas were unearthed from the rubble and systematically inventoried and cleaned. This was followed by detailed architectural documentation, supported through funding from UNESCO and the Fok Ying Tung Foundation Ltd. of Hong Kong. Within the framework of the UNESCO/Hainan Province Cihang Foundation Fund, restoration activities were carried out in close collaboration with the local communities. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them and the priestly families who actively took part in this restoration process.

The restoration of the stupa was completed in December 2017, and a ritual to restore the divinity of the stupa was organised on 23 August, 2018. In addition to the current publication, a video of this ceremony was also produced.

The story of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction of Tashi Gomang Stupa is the object of this publication, and we sincerely hope that this project can serve as a good practice for all stakeholders in Nepal to cope with the recovery of heritage in the post-earthquake period, which remains a significant challenge.

Finally, we wish to express our sincere thanks to our donors, the Chinese Hainan Province Cihang Foundation and the Hong Kong-based Fok Ying Tung Foundation, without whose generous support this undertaking would not have been possible. We also sincerely hope that this generous financial support will encourage greater mobilization of the international community, whose extensive network of expertise and resources could assist the Government of Nepal in providing the necessary care for the World Heritage property.

Feng Jing
Chief of Unit, Asia and the Pacific Region
UNESCO World Heritage Centre

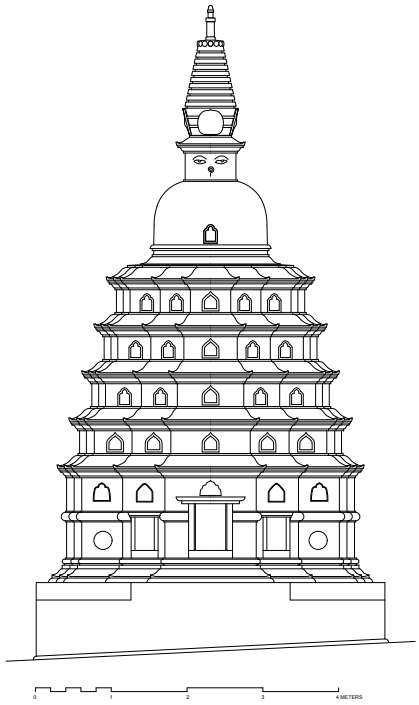
**TASHI GOMANG, VIEW FROM THE WEST**
Courtesy of Manik Bajracharya,
Lotus Research Center, Lalitpur | ca.1995

# INTRODUCTION

On April 25, 2015, the 8.1 magnitude Gorkha Earthquake caused severe destruction in Central Nepal. Thousands of historic monuments, particularly within Kathmandu Valley's seven World Heritage Monument Zones were affected. Svayambhu, a central place of devotion for Buddhists and Hindus, lost many priceless buildings, among them the Maṅgal Bahudvāra Caitya which collapsed completely.

This particular type of caitya originates from Tibet where it is known as a Tashi Gomang type of stupa. The Newari name is a direct translation of the Tibetan and may be translated as "caitya with many auspicious doors". Nevertheless, as will be shown here, there are no records attesting that the Newari name was used till the late 20th century.

On April 30, Christian Manhart, UNESCO Representative to Nepal, organized an emergency meeting with site managers from all seven World Heritage Monument Zones in the Kathmandu Valley. Rajesh Suwal, representing the Federation of Swayambhu Management and Conservation (FSMC) expressed the urgent need for support in safeguarding and protecting Svayambhu's badly affected cultural heritage. Hundreds of sculptures had spilled out of a collapsed stupa and were at risk of being taken away by visitors. Mr. Manhart deputised David Andolfatto, archaeologist and art historian, to assess the situation and help coordinate the required security and salvage activities, in order to prevent looting. From May 2 onwards, David Andolfatto and Debendra Bhattarai, Archaeological Officer from the Department of Archaeology (DoA), with support from the local community, coordinated protection activities in Svayambhu. They were joined by Dominique Baudais, an experienced French archaeologist from the National Institute of Preventive




**ELEVATION SOUTH**
© UNESCO | Drawing by T. Schrom

**TASHI GOMANG STUPA**
The countless layers of lime applied over time make the identification of many statues difficult.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | August 2012

**RUBBLE OF TASHI GOMANG STUPA**
Two fragments of the lower part of the stone finial are seen in the foreground. Partly obscured by the caitya in the center lies the upper part of the finial.
© UNESCO | L. Dusuzeau | May 18, 2015

**THE MAIN STUPA (MAHĀCAITYA)**
View from the north
© UNESCO | L. Dusuzeau | May 18, 2015

Archaeological Researches (INRAP, France) and Amrit Man Buddhacharya, member of the local community and knowledgeable student of Buddhism and history.

Hundreds of artefacts, such as sculptures and votive offerings that were scattered around the collapsed stupa, needed to be gathered and stored safely. This first phase of salvaging activities was carried out between May and July 2015 and primarily focused on protecting the shattered monument from the rain, fencing off the stupa's remains against the destructive activities of monkeys, the collecting of the loosely scattered artefacts and inventorying them by numbering and photographic documentation. During the fall of 2015 a shed roof was erected over the ruin to replace the initial plastic tarpaulins.

It took almost an entire year to negotiate a viable plan and receive all necessary authorization to continue with further excavations so the second phase of investigation and safeguarding of artefacts could commence. From August 10 to September 20, 2016, a team coordinated by Nepal's Department of Archaeology and UNESCO resumed the archaeological investigations of the remains of the stupa. The 2016 campaign entailed the excavation and dismantling of the monument to the base level, creation of a comprehensive inventory and bringing the artefacts to safe storage.

Necessary additional survey and restoration planning work was carried out simultaneously and the foundation laying pujā (ritual) commenced on Feb 14, 2017. Reconstruction work started in earnest a few weeks later.

It took the better part of a year to carefully rebuild the monument step by step, following the exact layout of niches and deposit voids as they were documented during the archaeological investigations. Every effort was made to return objects and *sha-tshas* to the exact locations where they had been found; however, this was not possible for items discovered in the rubble of the collapsed upper section.

On August 23, 2018, the stupa's inauguration was celebrated with an elaborate pujā called *Jivanyāsa Tayegu* or *pratiṣṭhā*. During this ritual the stupa's deity was ritually transferred back into the structure.

This volume presents the main steps involved in the stupa's archaeological investigation and reconstruction. It is not an archaeological report per se, but rather a descriptive guide and historical account illustrating the joint efforts of multiple actors in understanding and rebuilding a sacred monument.

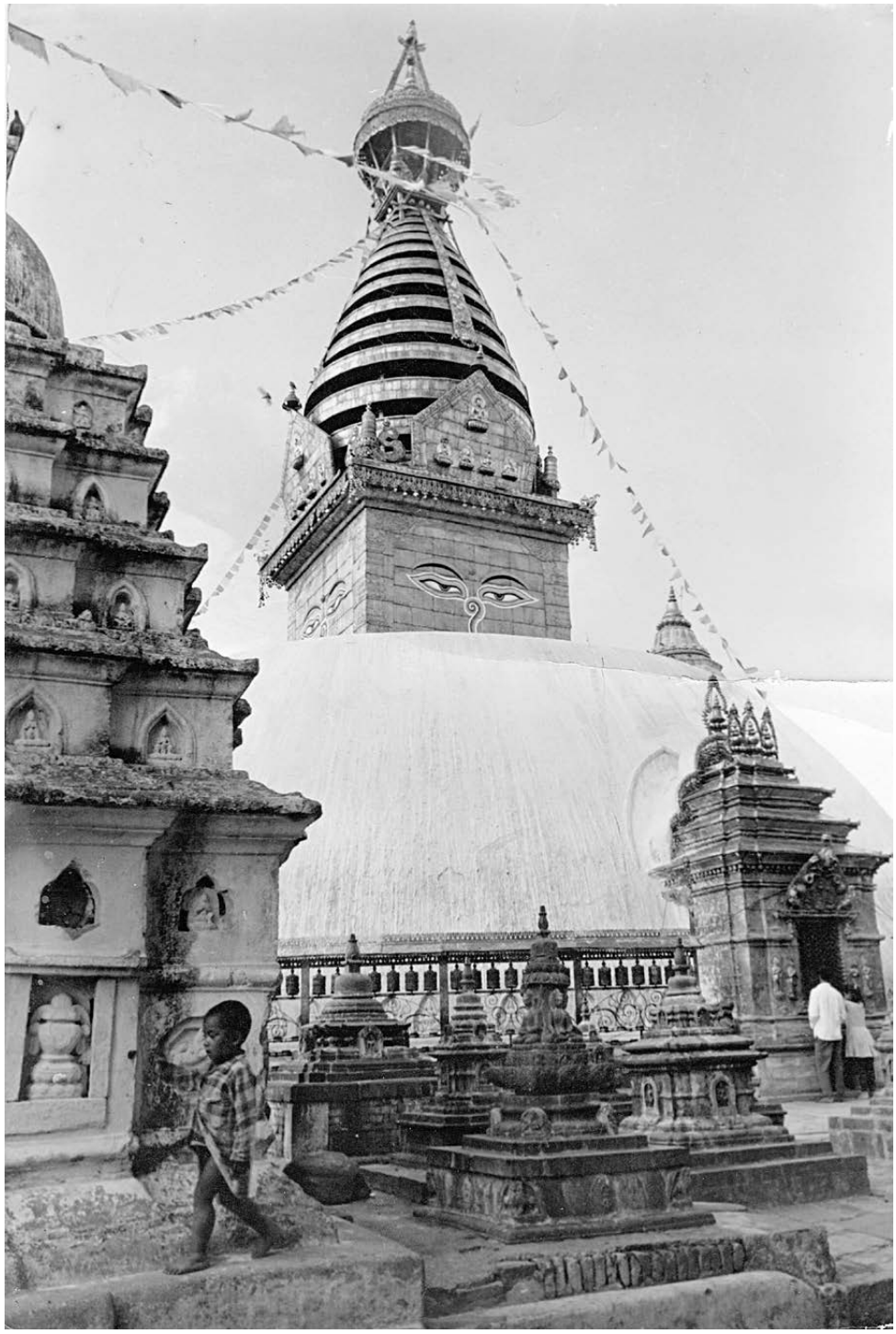
**BABURAJA BUDDHACHARYA AND ASHOK BUDDHACHARYA**
Two priests who were instrumental in providing the local history.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto

1 An archaeological report on the Tashi Gomang excavation is currently under preparation for publication (Andolfatto, forthcoming)

**TASHI GOMANG, VIEW FROM THE EAST**
Similar to the image on the right, the top section of the pinnacle is missing.
Photograph from the album of Major D.C. Monro | ca.1931
Courtesy of Galerie le Toit du Monde (Paris)

**COMPARATIVE VIEW**
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Apr 10, 2020

**TASHI GOMANG STUPA AND THE SOUTHERN SECTION OF THE MAIN STUPA**
This undated photo shows the main stupa's Shrine to Ratnasambhava on the right. Tashi Gomang is in a dilapidated state with the upper part of its pinnacle missing. The stupa had not been whitewashed for a while as indicated by heavy black mould on its dome and facade.
Unknown photographer | ca.1930s
Courtesy of Rohit Ranjitkar



**VIEW FROM THE SOUTH**
Only a small section of Tashi Gomang's south-east corner can be seen in this view.
Photograph by Götz Hagmüller | ca.1968

**VIEWS FROM THE EAST AND THE NORTH**
The buildings to the left and behind Tashi Gomang were damaged by a landslide in the late 1970s and have since been dismantled.

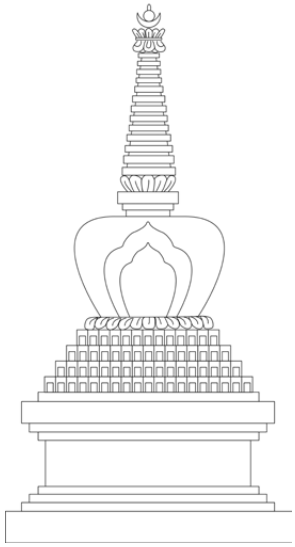
**TASHI GOMANG STUPA , VIEW FROM THE WEST**
Photograph by Rohit Ranjitkar | March 26, 2011

# THE HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TASHI GOMANG STUPA

## INTRODUCTION

One can easily identify Tashi Gomang Stupa, situated to the south-west of the great stupa of Svayambhu, Kathmandu Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Its form is unique, combining Tibetan and Newar architectural details. White with a square base, it features 124 niches containing stone statues of gods and goddesses. This unusual stupa (or *caitya* in Newari, *chörten* in Tibetan) remains almost unnoticed by scholars. Only Hem Raj Shakya wrote a few paragraphs about Tashi Gomang in his prolific book *Svayambhu Mahācaitya*.[1] He notes that the sculptures contained in its niches hold postures and gestures of *caryā* dances. He also mentions that: "while installing the various deities of this caitya, Buddhist Vajrācāryas and learned *geshes* and lamas of Tibet have consulted with one another".[2]

According to Baburaja Buddhacharya, member of a Svayambhu priest family, Tashi Gomang Caitya was originally built to house all the deities that participated in the great stupa's (*mahācaitya)* mythical consecration ceremony by King Pracaṇḍadeva.[3]



**TYPICAL TASHI GOMANG**
Drawing by D. Andolfatto based on Robert Beer, The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs.

## TYPES OF TASHI GOMANG STUPAS

Tibetan architecture distinguishes eight types of *stupas,* each commemorating one of the eight major events of the Buddha's life. The Tashi Gomang stupa is of the third type, commemorating the turning of the first wheel of Dharma by the Buddha in Saranath. As such, it is sometimes referred to as *dharmacakra caitya*, the Caitya of the Wheel of Law (*dharma*).[4] Saranath Stupa is believed to be the original Tashi Gomang stupa built by the first five disciples of the Buddha and consecrated with Shakyamuni Buddha's relics. The construction of a stupa is often part of a funerary rite but can also be dedicated to the welfare of the living. Tashi Gomang stupas became popular in Tibet, China and throughout the Himalayan region and can be found in many stylistic variations, often containing the relics of a Buddhist monk, guru or priest. Tashi Gomang in Svayambhu is the only historic Tashi Gomang stupa in the Kathmandu Valley.

The first Tashi Gomang stupa in Tibet is believed to have been built at Drigung Thil Monastery in Central Tibet between 1198 and 1202 CE, and included 2,200 statues

1 Shakya 2004, pp. 484-487
2 *Ibid*, p. 485
3 Interview on August 23, 2018
4 Shakya 1993, p. 14

**GYANTSE KUMBUM CHÖRTEN**
View from the south
The 15th century Gyantse Kumbum chörten (sku'bum, "one hundred thousand holy images") is also a Tashi Gomang. It has nine stories, 75 chapels and 108 cells. The number of *lhakangs* (chapels) decreases in the upper levels. They are structured according to the compendium of Sakya tantras called Drubthab Kuntu. Thus, each *lhakang* and each level creates a mandala, and the entire Kumbum represents a three-dimensional path to the Buddha's enlightenment in terms of increasingly subtle tantric mandalas.
Photograph by John Harrison | 1995

of deities. A Tibetan text identifies Guru Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen (1147–1216 CE) as the builder of this stupa who codified its architectural and religious details.[5]

Miniature Tashi Gomang stupas in the shape of portable shrines are popular in Bhutan. Such Tashi Gomangs are about two to three feet tall, less than two feet wide and come in many variations. They are often made of aromatic wood and richly decorated with silver repoussé. Small drawers hold paintings, manuscripts, mantras, and small deities made of metal or clay. In Bhutan, monks (*mani pa*) carry such miniature Tashi Gomangs on their backs from village to village and often visit religious festivals where they display the deities and recite Buddhist mantras, hymns and religious stories. In return, *mani pas* receive offerings of grain, money, and clothes from the lay devotees. It is said that Zhapdrung Ngakwang Namgyel (1592-1650 CE), the founder of Bhutan, commissioned the first movable Tashi Gomang shrine which used to be kept in Punakha Dzong.[6]

5 Jackson 2015, p. 51
6 Tsering 2016, p. 67

## NAMES AND MEANINGS OF TASHI GOMANG

Tashi Gomang stupas are known by different names in Sanskrit, Newari and Tibetan. In Sanskrit, Hemraj Shakya has called it Dharmacakracaitya[7]. whereas in his book Svayambhu Mahācaitya he uses the Newari name "Maṅgala Bahudvāra Caitya", meaning "caitya with many auspicious doors (or openings)". The Tibetan name, Tashi Gomang, (bkra shis sgo mang) has the same meaning. Local people also call the caitya in Svayambhu "Tāśī Golmā" or "Tāśī Gormā" which is a corruption of "Tashi Gomang".

The inscription on the metal casket found in the caitya refers to it as "Maṅgala Caitya", which means "auspicious caitya". The caption on the drawing by Raj Man Singh Chitrakar (see page 29) identifies the stupa as "A small Katagar Chaitya at Gopucch". The Devanagari caption पंचतला कुतागार चैत्य स्वयभू आस् पास् reads: paṃcatalā kutāgāra caitya svayabhū (corr. svayaṃbhū) ās pās: Five storey kutāgāra (corr. kūṭāgāra) caitya around Svayaṃbhū. Niels Gutschow translates kutāgāra as the "celestial palace".The exact meaning is somewhat elusive: *kūṭā* can be interpreted as "prominent" or "projection", e.g. a peak or mountain; *gāra* meaning "house".

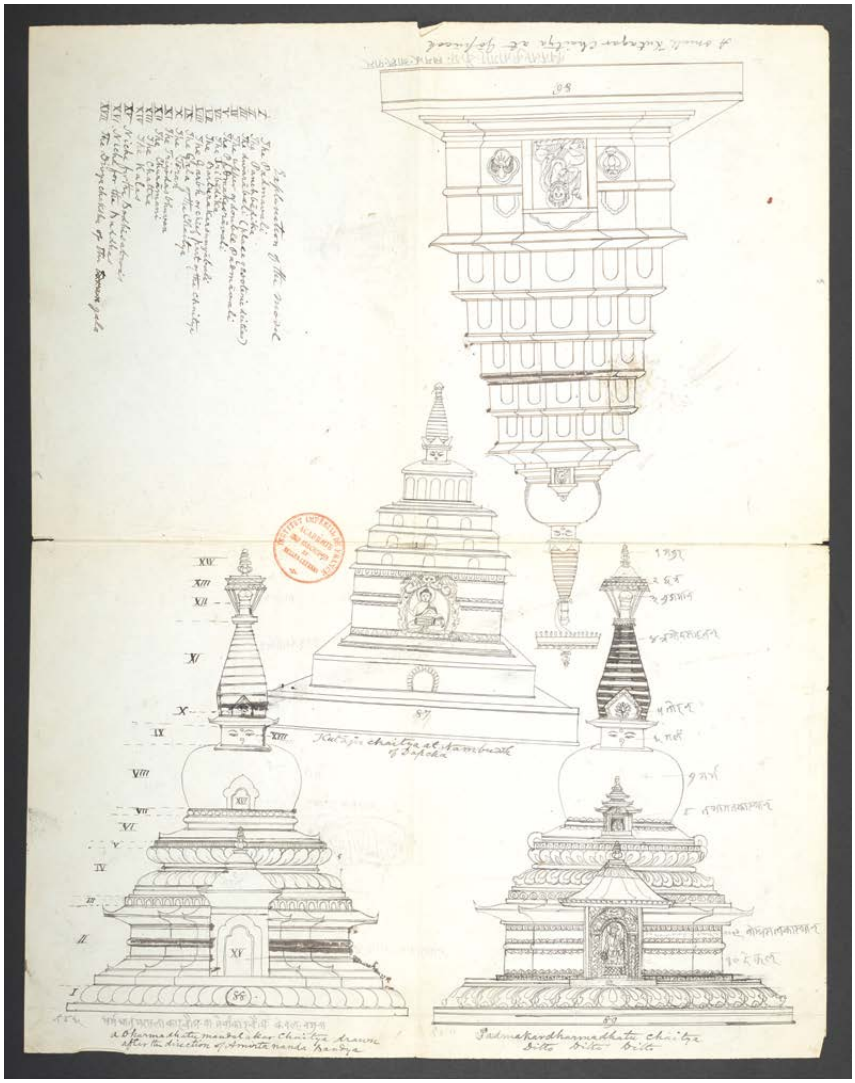
For the sake of simplicity the monument will be referred to as Tashi Gomang (from its local oral appellation) and as Maṅgal Bahudvāra Caitya, a literary name first recorded by Hem Raj Shakya.

## HISTORY OF THE TASHI GOMANG STUPA OF SVAYAMBHU HILL

While the origin of the caitya is not documented, its later history can be pieced together from various sources. An undated sketch of the stupa by Raj Man Singh Chitrakar (1797-1865 CE) preserved at the British Library is likely the earliest representation of Tashi Gomang. From a family of traditional artists, Raj Man Singh Chitrakar was in the services of the British resident Brian Houghton Hodgson who employed him from 1820 till 1843. Raj Man Singh created a large volume of work, mainly of natural history subjects and the Kathmandu Valley's architecture. Hundreds of his line drawings and watercolours were sent to Europe and many are today archived in the Hodgson collection at the British Library. Interestingly, the red stamp on the folio (see next page) identifies the drawing as initially in the possession of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres of the Institut Impérial de France. It is not known how it made its way into the Hodgson Collection.

The caption below the drawing that reads "A small Kutagar Chaitya at Gōpūcch" clearly identifies the location. Gopuchhagiri ("Mount Cow-Tail" in Nepali), is an alternate name for Svayambhu documented in historical sources. Despite the drawing's lack of detail, the basic features of the stupa are strikingly similar to the monument. The main central statue can be identified as Kubera but details such as the position of the legs differ from the presently installed statues and

7 Shakya 1993, p. 14



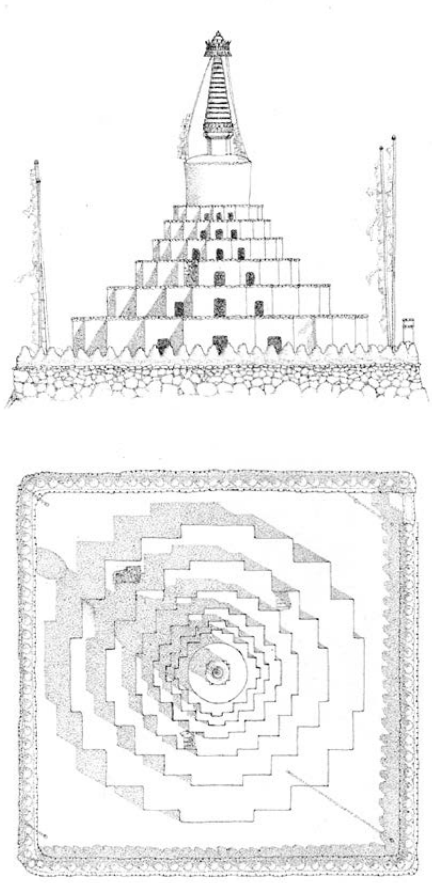
**SKETCHES OF STUPAS BY RAJ MAN SINGH CHITRAKAR**
This is just one of many sheets where the artist documented different types of stupas. The numbering and English annotations were likely added by Brian Hodgson. The red stamp identifies the drawing as once having been in the possession of Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres of the Institut Imperial de France. It is now part of the Hodgson Collection at the British Library.

ca. 1830s | Drawing by Raj Man Singh Chitrakar
Courtesy of the British Library, IO San 3976f, f.6v.*

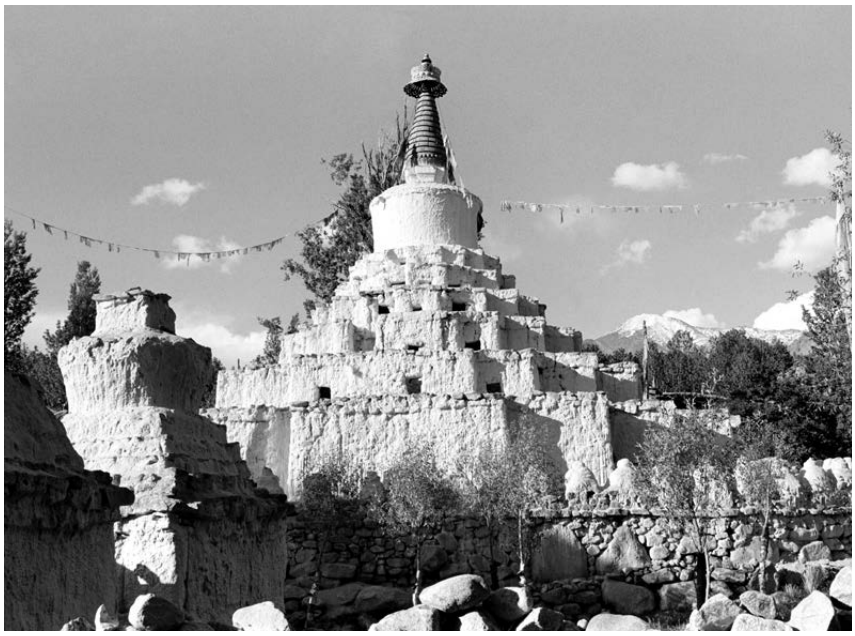
**"A SMALL KUTAGAR CHAITYA AT GŌPŪCCH", DETAIL**
The caption identifies the stupa to be at "Gopucch" which is an alternate name of Syayambhu. Today, Tashi Gomang has only five levels for niches rather than the six depicted in the sketch and although the central sculpture can be identified as Vaisravana/ Kubera, Chitrakar's drawing of the sculpture differs in several details. The two emblems on either side do not match with what we see today. This indicates that the stupa must have undergone at least one major rebuilding, possibly during the 1875 renovation when the reliquary was inserted. It is quite possible that at that time the stupa was rebuilt with one less level and that old sculptures were replaced with new ones.


A small Kutagar Chaitya at Gopucch

Explanation of the Mandal
The Padmavali



**CHANGSPA STUPA, LEH**
Plan and elevation
Drawing by Robert Powell | ca. 1985
Courtesy of Lieve Aerts



**CHANGSPA STUPA**
The stupa seen in 1970 before its renovation.
© John C. Huntington*, Courtesy of the John C. and Susan L. Huntington Photographic Archive of Buddhist and Asian Art

the two statues flanking Kubera do not match with today's representations. Most strikingly, the drawing documents six registers of niches, whereas only five levels are documented in photographs dating from the second half of the 20th century. This clearly indicates that the stupa was rebuilt at least once with one less level of niches which could have happened during the 1875 renovation when the reliquary was inserted.

The next dated record related to Tashi Gomang is the inscription on the reliquary of Dhanasiṃha Tāmrākāra, which was retrieved from the rubble following the collapse of the caitya in the 2015 earthquake. The inscription mentions that Harṣa Ratna Tāmrākāra, the son of Dhanasiṃha[9] (respected as) Venerable incarnation of Śrīmañju Vajrācārya[8], established a *yantra* in the name of his father in 995 Jyestha, waning moon 10, weekday 2 (June 28, 1875). The inscription does not specifically mention whether the caitya was newly built or renovated.

In an interview with Sarvagunratna Tamrakar of Yatkha Bahal, one of the descendants of Dhanasiṃha, he confirms the family's legacy that they were the "original builders" of Tashi Gomang and that they also contributed to the restoration of the *Mahacaitya*. This is confirmed by Hem Raj Shakya, who stated: "The Merchant Dhana Siṃha Renovates Svayambhū".[10]

Hem Raj Shakya describes Dhanasiṃha Tāmrākāra in his book *Svayambhu Mahācaitya* as a proficient diplomat and canny merchant from Yatkhā Bāhāḥ in

8 The descendants of Dhanasimha are now living in Yatakha Bahal in Kathmandu and their surname is Tamrakar.
9 This could be another name of Mañjuśrī. In *Svayambhū Purāṇa*, he is addressed as Mañjudevācārya.
10 Shakya 2004, pp. 296-297

Kathmandu. According to Shakya, Dhanasimha spent extended time in China where he held a high government post. He was also involved in trade and other business that allowed him to accumulate considerable wealth. It is said that Dhanasiṃha Tāmrākāra was trusted by King Surendra Vikram Shah of Nepal[11] and upon his return to Nepal, renovated the Svayambhu Caitya in NS 983 (1863 CE), employing many skilled artists and workers from China. He died in Svayambhu while he was turning prayer wheels circumambulating the stupa. A stone inscription in Yatkhā Bāhāḥ dated 1862 CE records that his wife Dayā Lakṣmī, son Harṣa Ratna and grandson Danavīra Siṃha dedicated their house to Vajrajogīnī and Svayambhu.

Five charred wooden pieces were discovered during the archaeological investigations of Tashi Gomang. It was suggested that those pieces could be remnants of the main caitya's old central axis (*yashim*). However, written references describe the tradition of the burning of the old *yashim* near Shantipur Temple and there are no records that such charred timber pieces were ever inserted into a stupa. A plausible explanation might be that Harṣa Ratna included wooden pieces from his father's funeral pyre along with his father's reliquary when reconstructing the caitya.

In early 2020, two historic photographs of Tashi Gomang surfaced, one from the collection of Major D.C. Monro, who visited Nepal in the early 1930s, and another from an unknown source in Nepal. It is interesting to note that in both photographs the top part of the pinnacle is missing and even the black mould stains on the exterior plaster look very similar.

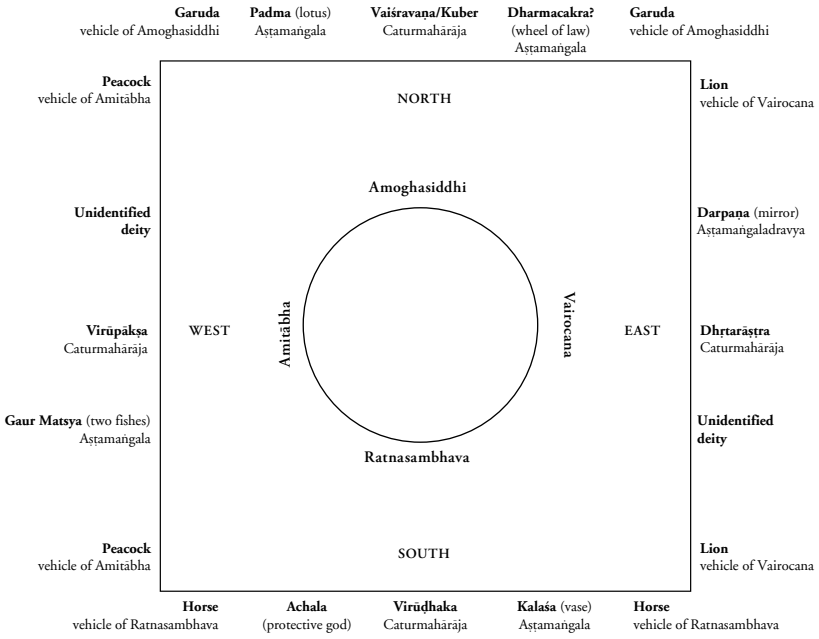
## THE NEWAR–TIBETAN CONNECTION

Keith Dowman, scholar and translator of Buddhist texts writes: "For the Tibetans, not only has the Valley been a destination of pilgrims but also a source of example, inspiration and knowledge since the 7th century".[12] He further states that a Nepali guru, Śīla Mañju, was the teacher of Srong-btsan sGam-po, the first Buddhist king of Tibet, who married the Nepali princess Bhrikuti. Dowman also mentions that the famous Tibetan master sNubs-rgyas Ye-shes came to study with the Nepali king Vasudhara.[13]

There is a long history of Newar-Tibetan cooperation in maintaining and restoring Svayambhu. After the Muslim ruler Shams Ud-din of Bengal attacked Nepal in 1349 CE and burnt down the Svayambhu Caitya, a minister named Rājaharṣa Bhallok of Kathmandu rebuilt the stupa in 1362 CE. He was assisted by Governor Śākya-bzang-po, a Tibetan scholar and Lama dbU-pa. At that time the central wooden pole or "axis" (*yeshe*) was replaced.[14]

11 Shakya 2004, pp. 296-297
12 Dowman 1981, p. 184

**STATUES OF FOUR BUDDHAS ARE PLACED IN THE NICHES OF THE DOME**
Vairocana (east), Ratnasambhava (south), Amitābha (west), Amoghasiddhi (north)
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto




**IDENTIFICATION OF STATUES ON THE LOWEST REGISTER AND IN THE DOME**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto

# THE ICONOGRAPHIC PROGRAMME

**AMITĀBHA**
The statue of Buddha Amitābha facing west.
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Dec 29, 2020

**FINDING THE ORIGINAL MANDALA**

Religious monuments of the Kathmandu Valley typically follow the layout and concept of a *mandala*. This is meticulously expressed in the rich iconography and architectural layouts of monasteries (New. *bāhāḥ, bāhī*) and tiered temples. As stated by Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann, iconography "... is always the reflection or the illustration of religious notions or philosophical concepts. Therefore no detail is useless: measurements, colors, gestures, attitudes, expressions of appearance, attributes, etc., all have a precise signification."[1]

Even though the Tashi Gomang Stupa is unique in the Kathmandu Valley there are examples of smaller caityas with many openings. Licchavi caityas dating from the 7th century onwards are made of stone and feature empty niches.[2] A small Licchavi caitya in Cāybahī is named by Hemraj Shakya as "Vahudvārayukta Aśoka Caitya", meaning "caitya with many doors built by King Ashok".[3]

The highly developed iconographic programme of the Tashi Gomang Caitya is a mandala that includes a total of 124 niches. The four largest sculptures located in the center of the lowest register represent the Four Great Kings (Caturmahārāja): Vaiśravaṇa/Kuber (north), Dhṛtarāstra (east), Virudhakā (south) and Virupakṣa (west). Next to the Four Great Kings are representations of Buddhist auspicious symbols (Aṣṭamaṅgala), such as the lotus or the vase, and sculptures of Buddha's four animal vehicles. Other niches house deities displaying movements and hand gestures (*mudrā*) of caryā dances according to the text Kriyāsaṃgraha of Vajrayāna Buddhism. In the niches of the dome are placed four of the Five Tathāgatas (or Jina Buddhas): Amoghasiddhi (north), Akṣobhya (east), Ratnasambhava (south) and Amitābha (west).

A comprehensive photographic survey of the monument carried out by Manik Bajracharya before the 2015 earthquake proved to be essential in identifying the original location of most of the images.

1 Mallmann 1986
2 Gutschow 1997
3 Shakya 2004, pp. 484-487

**MANUAL FOR RITUAL DANCES, 18TH CENTURY**
Opaque watercolour and ink on paper
7.6 x 29.7 cm, OBJ. NO. M.82.169.18.1-.18
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert S. Coles
Photos © Museum Associates/LACMA*

**THE ICONOGRAPHY OF RITUAL, FROM MANUSCRIPT TO STONE**

A manuscript from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art was helpful in identifying a number of Tashi Gomang's stone sculptures. The 18th century manuscript in the shape of a folded book (*thyāsaphū* in Newari) illustrates postures for a ritual of walking around a site to remove obstacles before constructing a mandala.[1] The figures represent ritual officiants (*ācāryas*) performing specific stances as they visualize deities during the ritual. This ritual has been described in the *Kriyāsaṃgraha* (*pañjikā*), a text by Kuladatta, who lived in Nepal in the eleventh century.

It is highly likely that the artisans at work on the Tashi Gomang Stupa used similar manuscripts as iconographic guides, a practice that is still used by Newari sculptors today.

1 Bühnemann 2008, p. 153

**VAJRAPĀṆI**
Detail, © Museum Associates/LACMA
SWM01-015, © UNESCO | D. Andolfatto

**VAJRATĪKṢṆA**
Detail, © Museum Associates/LACMA
SWM01-007, © UNESCO | D. Andolfatto

**DHRTARASTRA IN THE CENTRAL NICHE FACING EAST**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | 2013

**VIRUDHAKA IN THE CENTRAL NICHE FACING SOUTH**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | 2013

**DHRTARASTRA**
After the 2015 earthquake
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2015

**VIRUDHAKA**
After the 2015 earthquake
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2015

**VIRUPAKSA IN THE CENTRAL NICHE FACING WEST**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | 2013

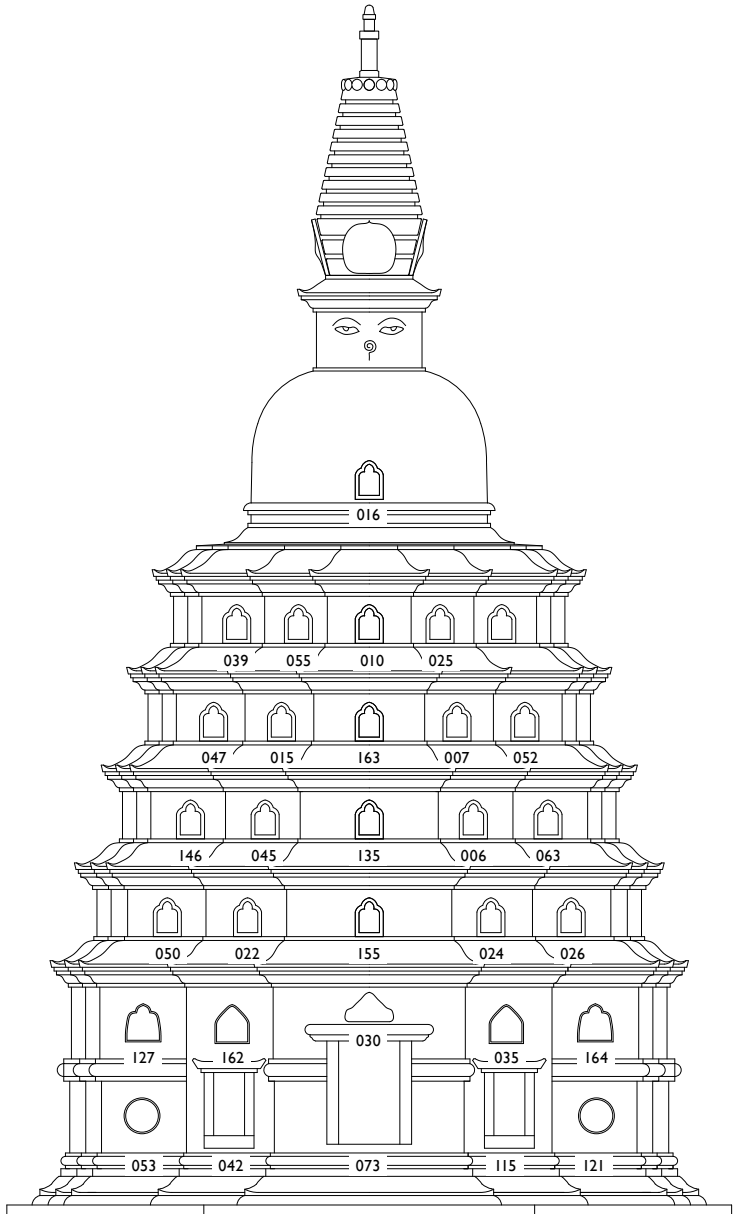
**VAISRAVANA/KUBERA IN THE CENTRAL NICHE FACING NORTH**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | 2013

**VIRUPAKSA**
After the 2015 earthquake in situ
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2015

**VAISRAVANA/KUBERA**
After the 2015 earthquake
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2015

# INVENTORY OF STONE SCULPTURES AND THEIR FINAL PLACEMENT IN THE NICHES






ELEVATION SOUTH

016

039

055

010

025

NEW SCULPTURE
Photograph by S. Munikar | 2020

047

015

163

007

052

146

045

135

006

063

050

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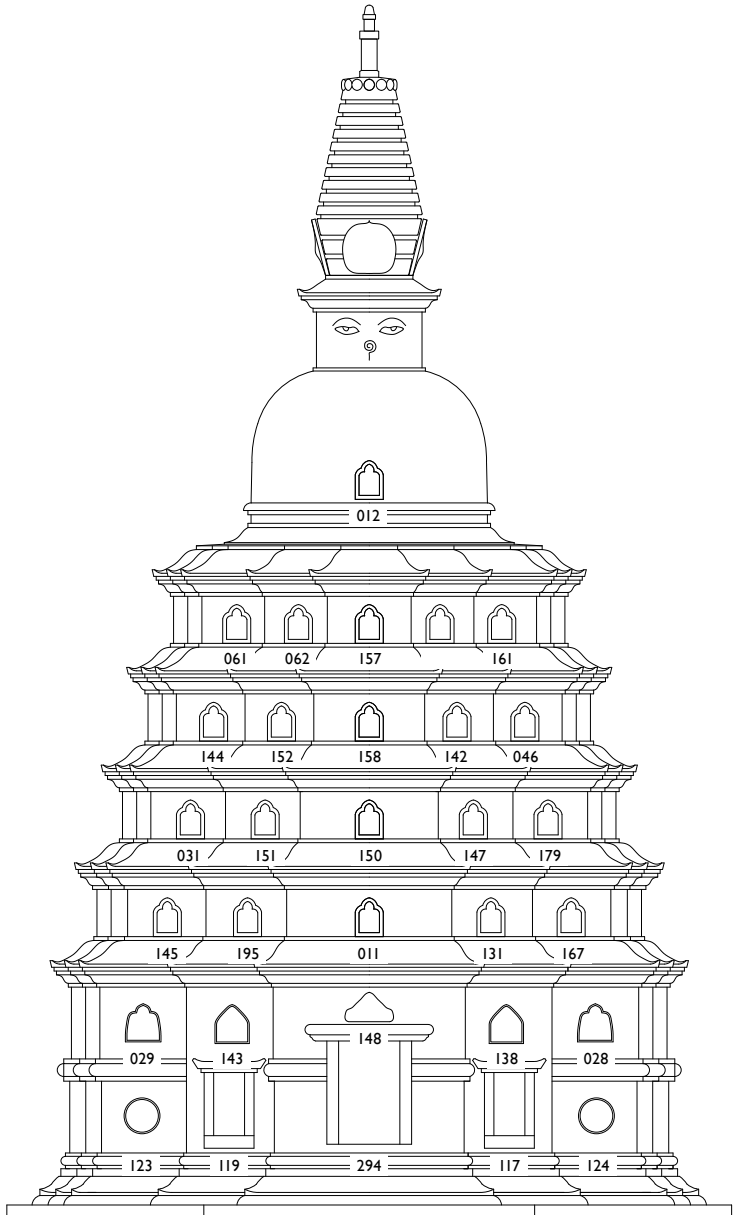


ELEVATION WEST

012

061

062

157

NEW SCULPTURE
Photograph by S. Munikar | 2020

161

144

152

158

142

046

031

151

150

147

179

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011

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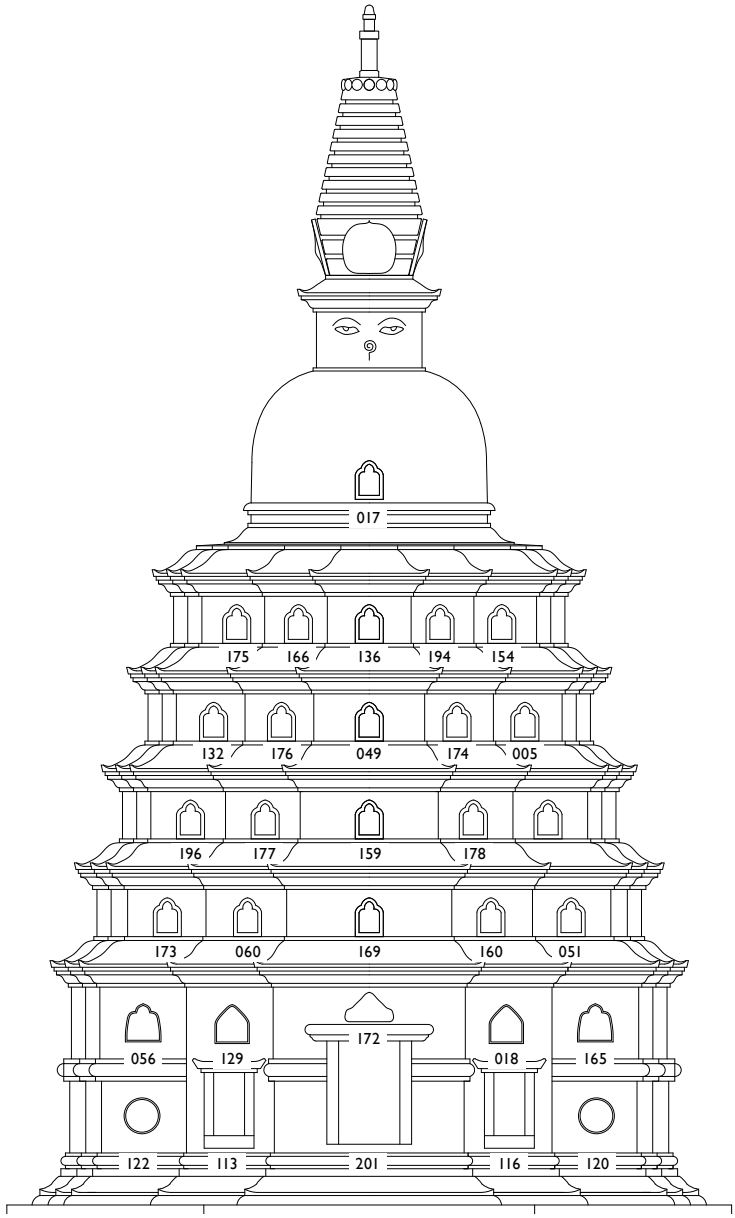



ELEVATION NORTH

017

175

166

136

194

154

132

176

049

174

005

196

177

159

178

**DAMAGED STATUE**
Origin not recorded

173

060

169

160

051

056

129

172

018

165

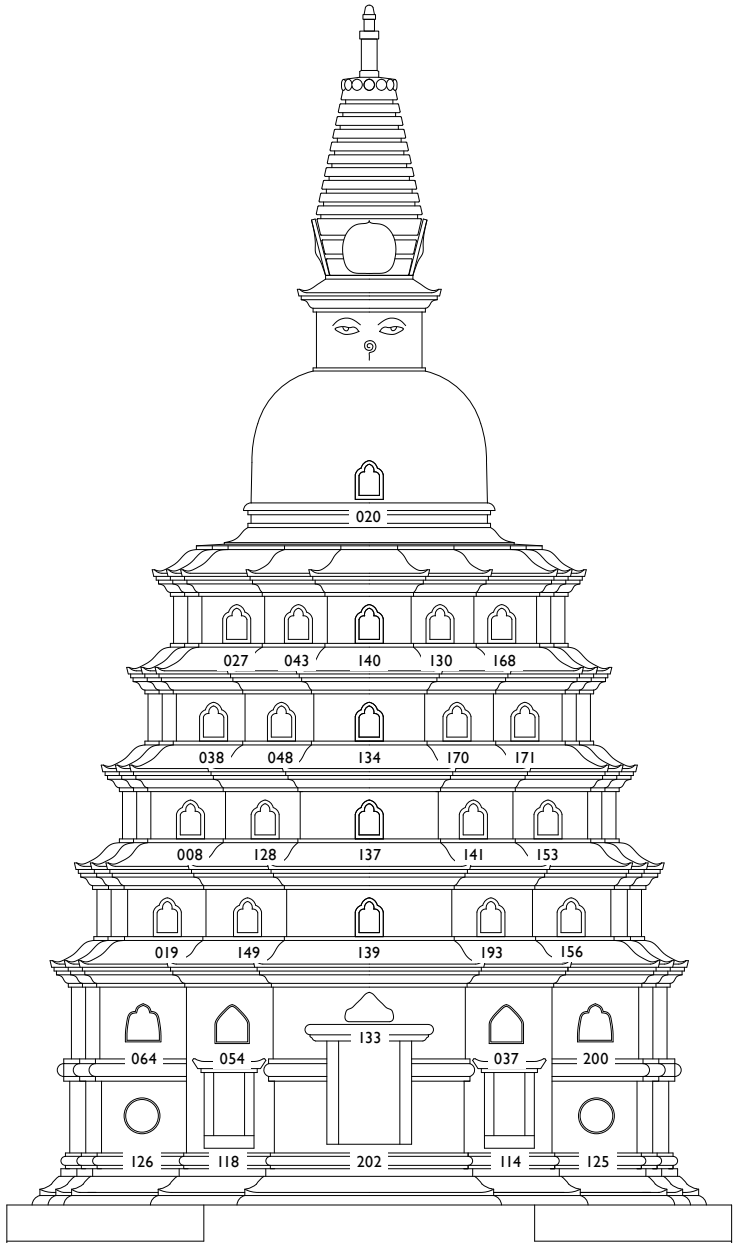
122

113

201

116

120




ELEVATION EAST

020

027

043

140

130

168

038

048

134

170

171

008

128

137

141

153

019

149

139

193

156

064

054

133

037

200

126

118

202

114

125

**RECORDING OF SCULPTURES**
Debendra Bhattarai records stone objects.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015

**SORTING OF CLAY OBJECTS**
Dominique Baudais and a Buddhacharya woman sorting out clay *tsha tshas* salvaged from the collapsed stupa.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015

# THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

**POST-2015 EARTHQUAKE ACTIVITIES**

Besides the salvaging of artefacts from Maṅgal Bahudvāra Caitya, the DoA-UNESCO team conducted a thorough cleaning of the site around the collapsed monument and initiated measures to protect and stabilize the remains of Tashi Gomang as much as possible before the impending monsoon.

Unusual rainfalls in May posed a serious threat to the many unfired miniature clay stupas (known as *tsha-tshas* in Tibetan) that had spilled out of the stupa. Monkeys were found digging the mound seeking for insects, and an unanticipated problem occured when visitors and devotees helped themselves to artefacts from the monument, taking them home as souvenirs.

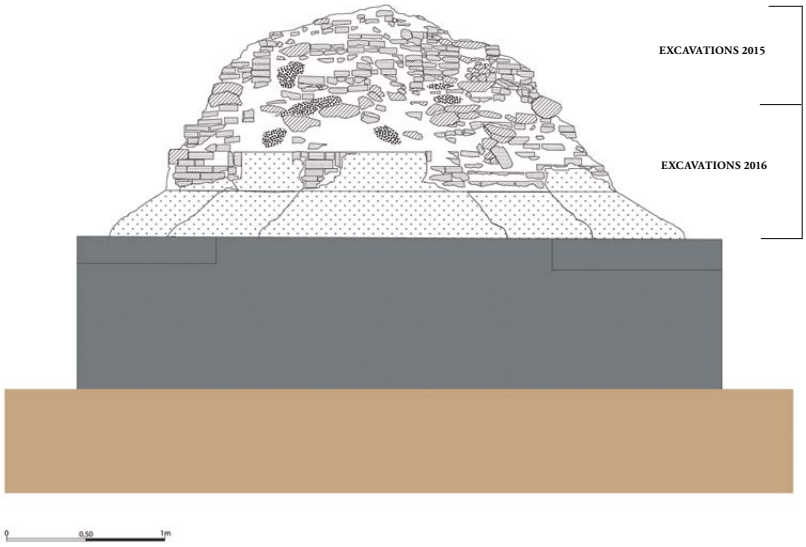
The debris scattered around the stupa was carefully searched and sifted by members of the priest community, volunteers from different organizations and students from Tribhuvan University. Through this process it was possible to rescue many valuable small objects such as coins and stone beads that would otherwise have been lost when removing building debris.

The unstable state of the stupa's remaining stump necessitated a very careful archaeological cleaning in order to remove weight from unstable parts and dismantle sections that were about to collapse further. Out of safety concerns only two people were allowed to work on the collapsed monument. They carefully removed the debris and handed it to team members who in turn sifted and examined it, thus carefully separating artefacts from reusable building materials and discarding the rest. At first, an approximately 15 cm thick layer of rubble consisting of earth, broken bricks, tiles and stones was removed, laying bare a 20 cm thick slab of uncarved stones. Below the stones the core of the stupa was discovered with its

**SOUTH ELEVATION**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 27, 2015

**EAST ELEVATION**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 27, 2015

**NORTH ELEVATION**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 27, 2015




**SOUTH ELEVATION DRAWING**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto

central part marked by nine cavities. Each cavity contained votive objects such as miniature metal vases and small sculptures. The investigations were stopped there for the time being.

The 2015 campaign resulted in an impressive collection of 284 artefacts, or groups of objects, which were numbered, photographed and documented. The Svayambhu Yuva Pariwar (Youth Club) and the FSMC provided a secure storeroom where the artefacts were stored till they could be reinstalled in the stupa during its reconstruction. Every effort was made to document the exact locations of where objects were found; however, where objects had spilled out of the collapsed monument their original locations remain unknown.

At the end of June 2015 the stupa was covered with tarpaulins and in September 2015 FSMC erected a corrugated metal fence and a shed roof was later added. It wasn't till almost 11 months later that Nepal's Department of Archaeology approved UNESCO Kathmandu Office's proposal to continue work on the stupa.

**WEST ELEVATION**
The statue of Virupaksa, King of the West, had remained in situ. The area around the stupa has already been cleaned and at the time this photo was taken bricks can be seen stacked in the background. Work on dismantling the "stump" is yet to be started.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 27, 2015

**VIEW FROM THE NORTH**
Two terracotta sculptures of Garuda and a *kalaśa* were found in the rubble.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 27, 2015

**VIEW FROM THE EAST**
A small opening indicates the access to one of the L-shaped cavities.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 27, 2015

**VIEW FROM THE SOUTH**
The poor quality of masonry is evident in this detail of the caitya's southern structure.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 27, 2015

**BROKEN FINIAL**
The finial was already damaged before the earthquake and had been mended with a metal strap. The barbed wire had been installed to deter monkeys from climbing on the finial. Fragments of the central timber post can be seen on the bottom.
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | May 5, 2016

**SOUTH-EAST CORNER**
This image illustrates the unstable condition of the monument. At the center is a cavity that held numerous *tsha-tshas*.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 28, 2015

**FINIAL, BOTTOM 3 RINGS**
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | May 5, 2016

**VIEW FROM THE NORTH**
This image illustrates the poor state of construction. The stupa was built with a mixture of broken brick and stone not properly connected with mortar.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 27, 2015

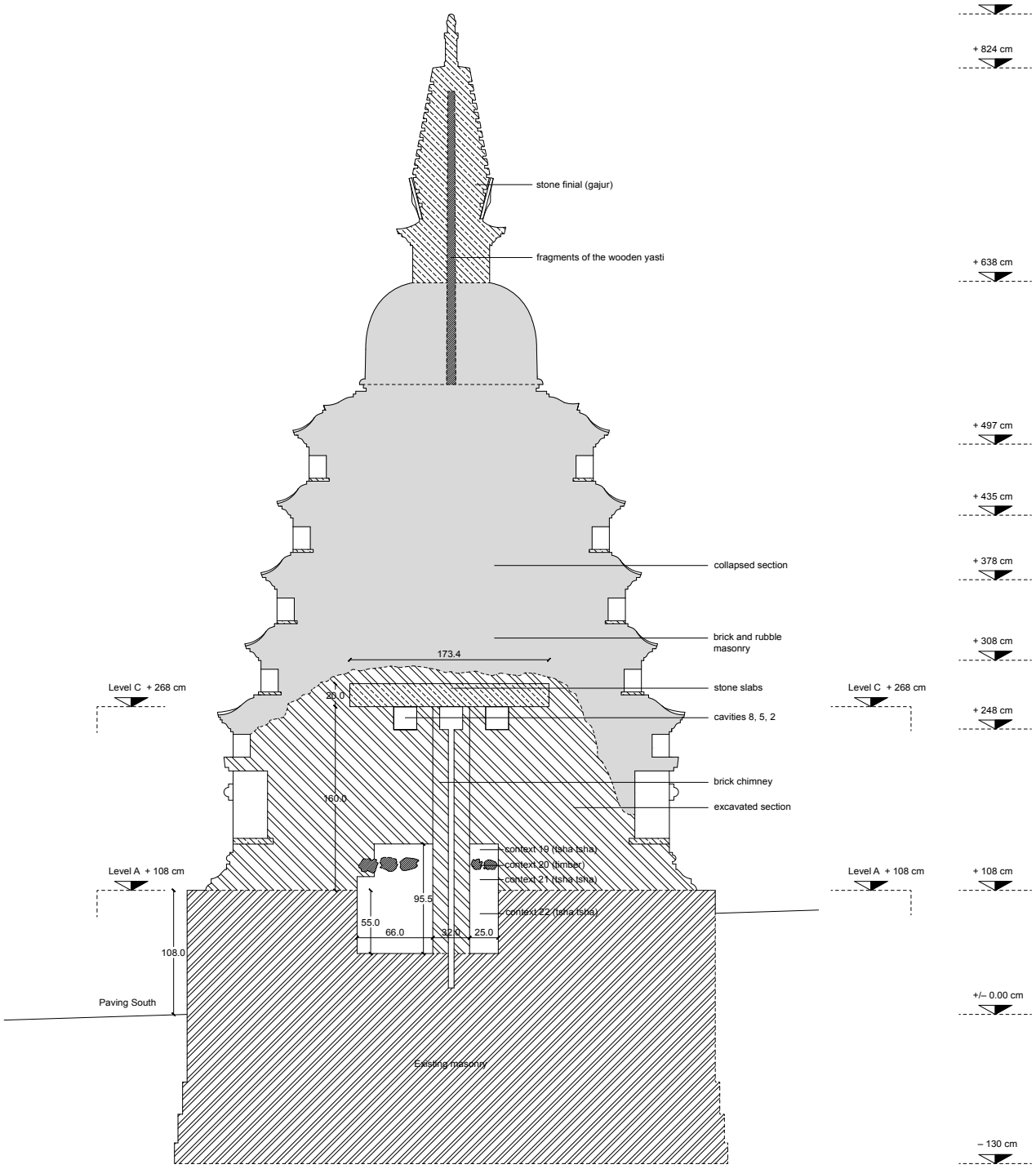
**A METAL CAITYA DISCOVERED BETWEEN BRICKS AND STONES**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 29, 2015

***TSHA TSHA* OFFERINGS IN CAVITY #4**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Jun 3, 2015

**STONE PILLAR**
This stone fragment was not part of one of the caitya's niches.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Jun 3, 2015

**DETAIL OF THE MASONRY**
Voids in the stupa were filled with *tsha-tshas* and sand.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Jun 3, 2015

**DEPOSIT STONE**
SWM01-274
43 x 44 x 18 cm
The stone was found next to a copper reliquary (SWM01-215) in the collapsed caitya's rubble. Nine square cavities are arranged in a cross pattern and four additional squares are carved on each corner. Such deposit stones are known to hold nine kinds of gems (Skt. *navaratna*), which represent the nine planets, or astral phenomena: a ruby represents the sun (Skt. Sūrya), an emerald Mercury (Skt. Budha), etc. However, no gems were found that could be connected to this deposit stone.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | March 8, 2016




**TASHI GOMANG STUPA** | 1876 | SWAYAMBHU | SECTION SOUTH–NORTH | EXISTING CONDITIONS

## 2016 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

On May 29, 2016, when the Department of Archaeology formally approved the continuation of work in Svayambhu, UNESCO Kathmandu Office pledged to financially support not only the archaeological investigations and salvaging work but also the full rebuilding of Tashi Gomang Stupa.

Between August 10 and September 20, 2016, UNESCO and the DOA led the archaeological excavation of Tashi Gomang's remains. David Andolfatto (UNESCO) and Ram Bahadur Kunwar (Head of Archaeology Section, DOA) directed the project with the close assistance of Bhaskar Gyawali (Archaeological Officer, DOA). The team of archaeologists was joined by eight Buddhacharya priests as it was deemed crucial that members of the religious community of Svayambhū were fully in control to observe and oversee every step of the work. Respecting the stupa as a "living" religious structure, age-old traditions had to be followed and rituals performed. Before any more dismantling work could commence, an "asking forgiveness" ceremony (*kṣema pūjā*) was conducted by a Vajracharya priest from Kathmandu.

The FSMC insisted that only priests or individuals affiliated with the religious community were allowed to work directly on the monument. In addition, it was agreed early on that the archaeological excavations should be limited to the structurally damaged sections of the stupa. Therefore, the "destructive investigation" stopped at a level where the stupa's remains were found structurally strong enough to support the reconstructed monument. This level was reached at the top of the plinth, approximately 108 centimeters above the southern paving level.

The scientific objectives of the archaeological investigations were:

– To understand the construction concept and layout of the monument.
– To record artefacts and building components in minute detail to ensure a faithful reconstruction of the stupa.
– To determine a solid base that would be stable enough to support the stupa's new upper structure.

In terms of methodology, the site was divided into four square zones and context numbers were assigned to specific areas of the structure. Buddhacharya priests were trained in basic excavation techniques such as the sieving of rubble, identification of artefacts and the cleaning of fragile objects. Samples of mud mortar were taken at different levels.

**SECTION (SOUTH–NORTH)**
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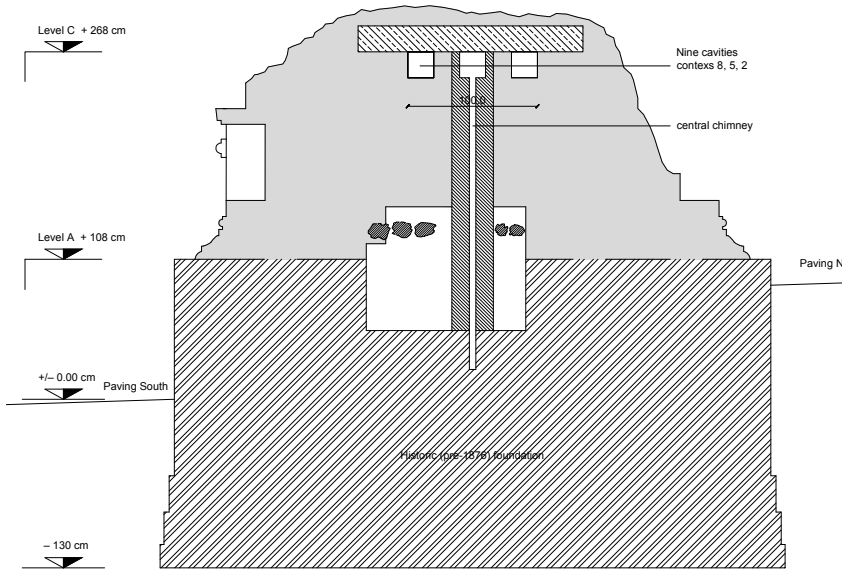


**PLAN AND SECTION (SOUTH–NORTH)**
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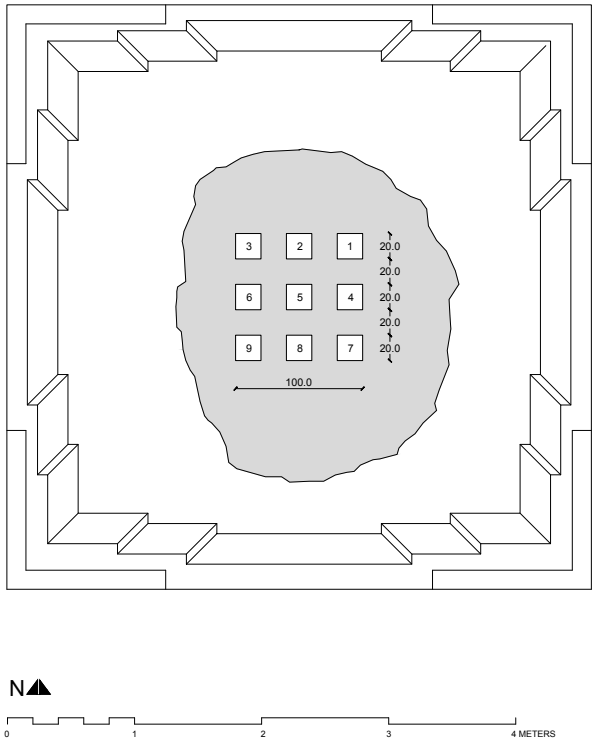
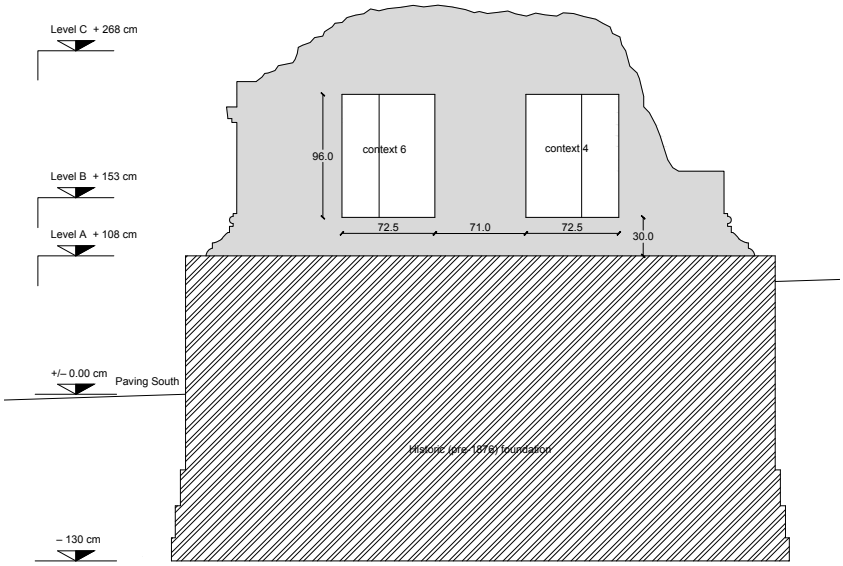



**LEVEL C, VIEW FROM ABOVE**
The nine cavities held numerous small objects including semi-precious stones and jewellery.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2015




**PLAN AND SECTION C–C (SOUTH–NORTH)**
The section shows two cavities that were filled with miniature clay caityas (*tsha tshas*).
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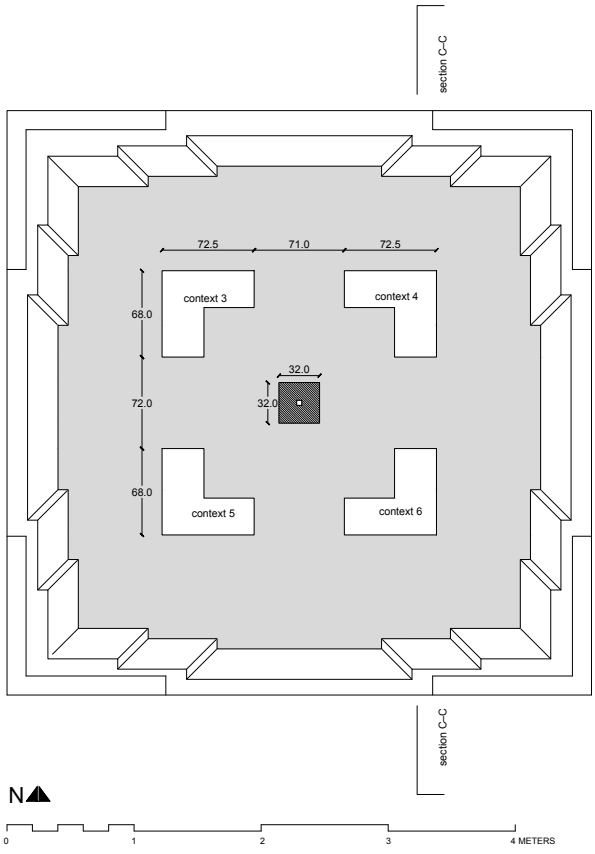



**LEVEL B, VIEW FROM ABOVE**
The shaft with its central opening can be clearly seen.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 13, 2016

**CENTRAL SHAFT AND L-SHAPED VOIDS**
This view from the south-east shows an L-shaped void that was filled with miniature clay stupas. Many different shapes and sizes of bricks can be observed with unusually wide mortar joints that often do not line up due to the different thicknesses of the bricks. In many places brick rubble was used to fill in the masonry. All this indicates that we do not see an original construction but rather the results of poor repairwork. It is quite possible that the caitya was rebuilt in haste with recycled materials after it was damaged by a previous earthquake.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Aug 28, 2016

Four L-shaped cavities with an average height of 100 cm were found near the four corners. The cavities were covered with large stone slabs and bricks. The north-west, south-east and south-west cavities were completely filled with *tsha-tshas*, while the one on the north-east had partly collapsed in the earthquake. At the centre, the square brick core has wall projections facing the cardinal direction. The arrangement thus creates an architectural mandala, enshrined within the stupa.

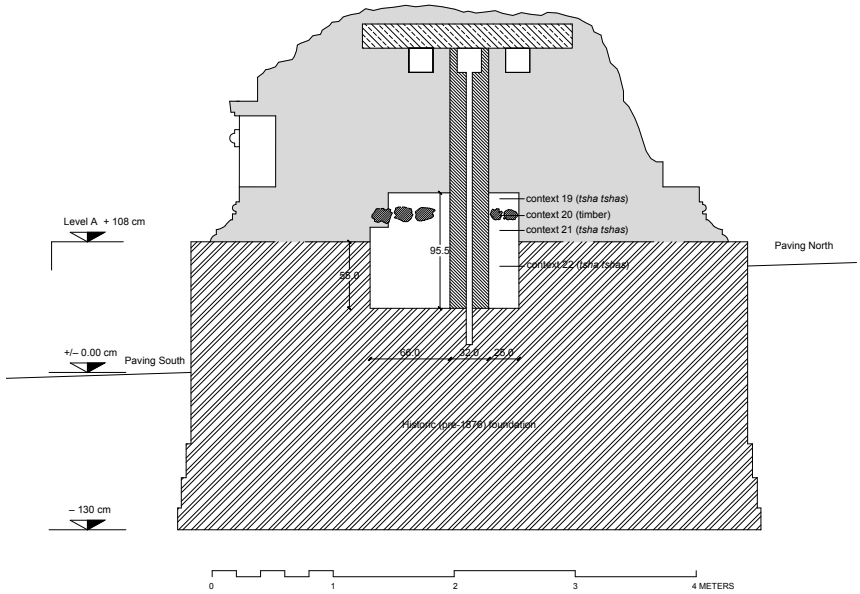
The core of the masonry contains a vertical shaft. This could be a merely symbolic structure or it might have had a practical application. Dominique Baudais of INRAP (France) suggests that the central shaft could have served as a measuring point, helping the masons to achieve the regular symmetrical shape of the caitya. A wooden stick could have been placed in the small hole with a string attached to it. Knots on the string would have allowed the measurement of uniform distances in all four directions.

**THE CENTRAL SHAFT AND L-SHAPED VOIDS**
View from the east
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Aug 29, 2016

**SORTING *TSHA TSHAS***
Following the removal of the miniature stupas from the rubble and the four L-shaped voids they were sorted according to size and type.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Aug 22, 2016

**THE CENTRAL BRICK COLUMN**
View from south
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Aug 28, 2016

**VIEW WITH THE CENTRAL SHAFT REMOVED**
View from the east
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Aug 30, 2016




**SECTION SOUTH–NORTH**
The large cavity at level A was almost completely filled with *tsha tshas*.
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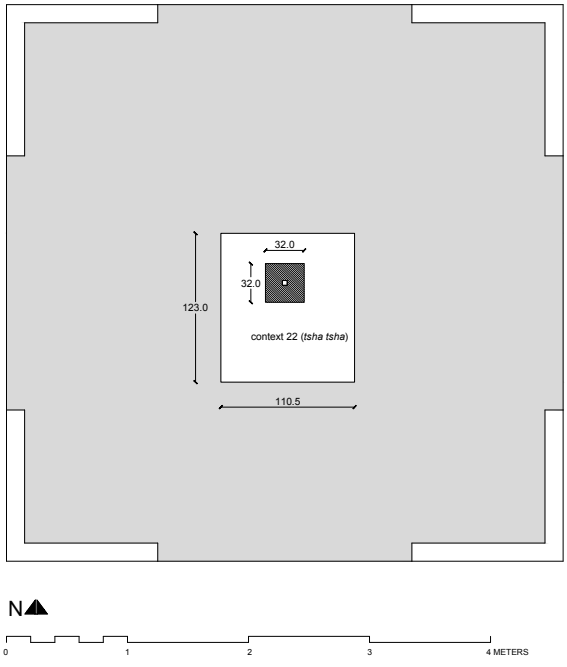


**LEVEL A, HORIZONTAL SECTION**
The large cavity is not centerered on the structure as would be expected for a mandala structure.
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**VIEW FROM THE EAST**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 2, 2016

**THE CORE OF THE STUPA**
View from the east. The ends of the charred wooden poles can be seen in the central square.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 2, 2016

**VIEW FROM THE WEST**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto
Sep 16, 2016

**A STRATA OF *TSHA TSHAS* CAN BE SEEN BELOW THE CHARRED POLES**
View from the south
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 16, 2016

Sixty centimetres above the base level, an 18 cm thick strata of *tsha-tshas* contained 28 kg of artefacts (context 19, MNI: 3111). Below this level five charred wooden beams were laid in a west–east direction (context 20) with beam No.1 (on the far south) showing traces of carvings. C14 dating of a sample from this hardwood beam (*shorea robusta*) indicated with a 95% probability that the tree was cut between 1445 and 1632 CE.

**THE CHARRED REMAINS OF FIVE WOODEN POLES**
View from the east
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 16, 2016

**VIEW FROM THE SOUTH**
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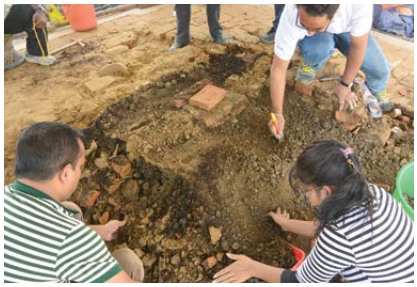
**THE FIVE CHARRED WOODEN BEAMS**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 16, 2016

**THE CENTRAL SHAFT EMBEDDED IN *TSHA TSHAS***
View towards the north-west.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 16, 2016



**VIEW FROM THE SOUTH–EAST**
Sep 16, 2016
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**THE CAREFUL REMOVAL OF *TSHA TSHAS***
View from the west
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 16, 2016

**VIEW OF LEVEL A**
View from the east
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Below the charred beams two more layers of *tsha-tshas* were excavated: context 21 contained a 32 cm thick layer and context 22 a 55 cm thick cavity filled with *tsha-tshas* accumulating to a total weight of 891,5 kg. Context 22 extended into the base of the stupa to a level of 53 cm above the south paving level. It was surprising to see that this largest void in the stupa extended quite a bit to the south, thus breaking with the otherwise symmetrical plan of the stupa. As was observed, the central shaft, the nine cavities and the L-shaped voids were all

**VIEW FROM THE NORTH**
The central shaft embedded in *tsha tshas*.
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**VIEW OF LEVEL A**
The central void after removal of the *tsha tshas*.
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**VIEW FROM THE EAST**
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**VIEW OF LEVEL A**
View from the east
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arranged in a typical symmetrical layout of a *mandala*. Why context 22 broke this rule will remain a mystery.

Dismantling was stopped at level A, 108 cm above the south paving level. It was determined that the brick masonry was reasonably strong enough to serve as a base for the stupa to be reconstructed.

0 1 2cm

**SILVER RUPEE OF SHAH ALAM II**
The coin is similar to the "Bengal Residency" type, dated 1781-82
Front and back views, SWM01-104.14
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Apr 4, 2016

**GOLD FOIL IN THE FORM OF A JASMINE FLOWER**
Represented in actual size
2,8 x 1,7 cm, SWM01-377
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 20, 2016

# THE ARTEFACTS

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This section provides an overview of the many different types of objects that were discovered during the 2015 salvage activities and the 2016 archaeological excavation.

**SILVER RUPEE OF AN INDIAN SULTANATE**
18th-19th century
SWM01-232.15
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Mar 15, 2016

### COINS, FOILS AND *PHUKI*

Altogether 94 coins of various geographical origins and spanning a time period from the Early Malla era to 2001 were found during the excavations. Most of the copper coins, issued in Nepal, were severely damaged by corrosion and hence could not be properly identified. Other coins were:

- 3 Chinese coins of Emperor Qianlong of the Qing dynasty (r. 1736-1795 CE)
- 13 silver coins from Indian Sultanates, ca. 18th century (often showing marks of cutting)
- 2 quarter annas from British India, dated 1862 CE
- 6 coins of King Surendra Bikram Śāha (r. 1829-1881 CE)
- 2 coins of King Mahendra Bikram Śāha (r. 1920-1972 CE), one dated 1970
- 4 coins of King Birendra Bikram Śāha (r.1944-2001 CE), dated 1977, 1990, 1997 and 2001

It is common practice in Nepal to place coins and metal foils in the foundations of newly constructed buildings. Robin Coningham recently found, directly below three of the four massive wooden pillars of Kāṣṭhamaṇḍap in Kathmandu, in the mortise's sockets, three gold foils with *yantras* (diagrams, Skt. "device, amulet, support") carved on them.[1] Similar consecration deposits (*garbhanyāsa* in Sanskrit) have been documented throughout the Indian sub-continent, for example in Taxila, where coins of different rulers dating back to the 2nd century CE were found in stupas.[2]

**GILT METAL FOIL WITH STUPA**
Represented in actual size
SWM01-223
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Apr 4, 2016

The coins discovered within Tashi Gomang do not indicate the time of its original construction but were certainly placed there much later in the course of restorations and reconstructions. It remains puzzling that no such activities were ever mentioned by the Svayambhū community that would explain the presence of very recent coins dating from 1970 to 2001. It is also worth noting that most of the silver coins from Indian Sultanates have been intentionally damaged.

*Phuki*, or *chuna*, is the Newari term for small metal "confetti" that are often adorned with floral motifs. Of the eight *phuki* rescued, one is made of gold and the others are made of silver. A collection of similar *phuki* can be seen in the Bungamati Culture Museum. Two gilt foils, slightly larger than the *phukis,* feature embossed images of stupas. Their original location in the stupa could not be determined.

1 Coningham 2015, fig 21
2 Behrendt 2004, p. 263

## VESSELS

Altogether, 16 vessel of different sizes and types were discovered; amongst them miniature terracotta alms bowls (New. *gulpa*, Skt. *pātra*), miniature vases (Skt. *kalaśa*), small receptacles and a metal plate. Some of the miniature vases were found placed in the nine pits. Made of copper, these vases sometimes still had their lid in place, welded on by corrosion. In other cases, the lid was gone, or the belly was partially broken, which allowed an assessment of the vases' contents, consisting of rough pebbles of coral, lapis lazuli, rubies and other unidentified precious or semi-precious stones.

**COPPER MINIATURE VASE (*KALAŚA*)**
Found in one of the nine cavities
Represented in actual size
SWM01-084
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Apr 4, 2016

**ALMS BOWLS**
Terracotta, DIA: 5,5 and 3 cm
SWM01-212
© Department of Archaeology/D. Bhattarai
Apr 4, 2016

**COPPER MINIATURE VASE**
DIA: 6 cm, SWM01-236
© Department of Archaeology/
D. Bhattarai | Apr 4, 2016

**COPPER VESSEL**
DIA: 28 cm, height: 10 cm
SWM01-82,
© Department of Archaeology/D. Bhattarai | Apr 4, 2016

Twenty individual pieces and groups of jewellery were found inside the stupa, including gold-plated Newar earrings, metal hair-clips, amber and stone beads and gems such as moonstone and jade. On September 20, the last day of excavation, a magnificent gold jasmine flower and a Dzi bead were discovered.

Dzi beads are known to have been used for over two millennia. They are especially important for Tibetan communities, who praise them for their apotropaic properties. Such beads are usually worn around the neck but are sometimes also ingested in powdered form. The Dzi bead found in the stupa is damaged and grinding marks can be seen on the broken end. This is probably the first time that a Dzi bead has been discovered in an archaeological excavation.

Jasmine flowers (New. *dāphsvā*) are an element used in many Newar rituals such as the *kṣamapūjā (or kṣema pūjā),* a special ritual of asking forgiveness which is described in the last section of this book. They can be real flowers, paper ornaments or replicas made of silver or gold. The gold jasmine flower was probably inserted in the course of a ritual carried out during the construction or renovation of Tashi Gomang.

**STONE BEADS EMBEDDED IN SOLIDIFIED MUD**
© Department of Archaeology/D. Bhattarai
Apr 4, 2016

**GILT EARRING**
Represented in actual size
Gilt copper, 3 x 1 cm
SWM01-101
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 20, 2016


**DZI BEAD**
Represented in actual size
© Department of Archaeology/D. Bhattarai
Apr 4, 2016

***TSHA-TSHAS* FOUND BELOW THE CHARRED POLES**
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**TYPE 1 AND TYPE 4 *TSHA-TSHAS***
These two types of miniature caityas were the most commonly found and are represented here in actual size. Imprinted mantras can be seen on the convex side of type 4.
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**AKṢOBHYA BUDDHA**
Only one *tsha-tsha* of this type (17) was found.
Represented in actual size
Unfired clay, 8.5 x 7.6 x 1.6 cm
SWM01-374
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 18, 2016

***TSHA-TSHAS***

*Tsha-tsha* is the Tibetan term for small votive offerings usually made of unfired clay that is sometimes mixed with ashes from funeral pyres. There are two distinct types of *tsha-tshas*: the "caitya-shaped *tsha-tsha*" and the "tablet *tsha-tsha*" in the shape of a flat relief depicting various deities. Both types are made by pressing the malleable clay mixture into a mould that can be made of wood, metal or clay. Sizes vary between 1 and 15 cm in height. *Tsha-tshas* are generally made in huge numbers and for specific occasions. The tradition originates from India where it has been practiced since at least the 5th century CE. The practice further developed with the spread of Buddhism in Asia and *tsha-tshas* are found throughout Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Mongolia.

Following the collapse of Tashi Gomang, large numbers of *tsha-tshas*, originating from the upper structure, were found in the rubble. Originally, it was thought that they were stored in large terracotta pots placed at the four corners of the stupa. However, since no sizable potsherds were found this theory was discarded. The large amount of *tsha-tshas* must have been placed into voids in the upper structure which added to the stupa's unstable condition and probably was the main reason for its collapse. During the 2016 excavations, undisturbed *tsha-tsha* deposits were documented in four L-shaped cavities, constituting an inner mandala. Further down, at the centre of the structure, above and below the charred wooden beams, more *tsha-tshas* were found. Altogether 1,415 kg of *tsha-tshas* were carefully collected, cleaned and documented.

In all, 58 different types of *tsha-tshas* were identified, some of them represented by only a single object. The majority of *tsha-tshas* were in the shape of a stupa with a small platform and a dome topped by the central umbrella. A smaller number of *tsha-tshas* represented Buddhist deities. Since counting the *tsha-tshas* would have been an impossible task the average weight of the most recurrent type of *tsha-tsha* was calculated at approximately 6.1 grams. Based on the combined weight of 1,415 kg it was estimated that Tashi Gomang contained more than 230,000 individual objects.

The majority of *tsha-tshas* are made of grey clay and others of a light yellow one. Often, the same moulds were used with different clay. In the central rectangular cavities (contexts 21 and 22), metal and clay moulds were discovered.

**GROUP OF *TSHA-TSHAS***
SWM01-240
© Department of Archaeology/D. Bhattarai
Apr 4, 2016

**NAMASANGITI**
Type 7 *tsha tsha* represented in actual size
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Mar 15, 2016

***LAKṢACAITYADEVA VRATA***
The ritual of making 100,000 miniature clay caityas called *lucidyaḥ* in Newari and *tsha tsha* in Tibetan. The painting depicts the main caitya of Svayambhu in the center, flanked by the *shikara* temples of Anantapur and Pratapur. Groups of people are seen engaged in the making of *tsha tshas*, the performance of rituals, playing of devotional music and paying homage to the deities.
Paubha, 1694 CE (NS 815)
Natural pigments on cloth
H: 104, W: 69 cm
National Museum, Kathmandu, Nepal
Inv. No. 17.76.180

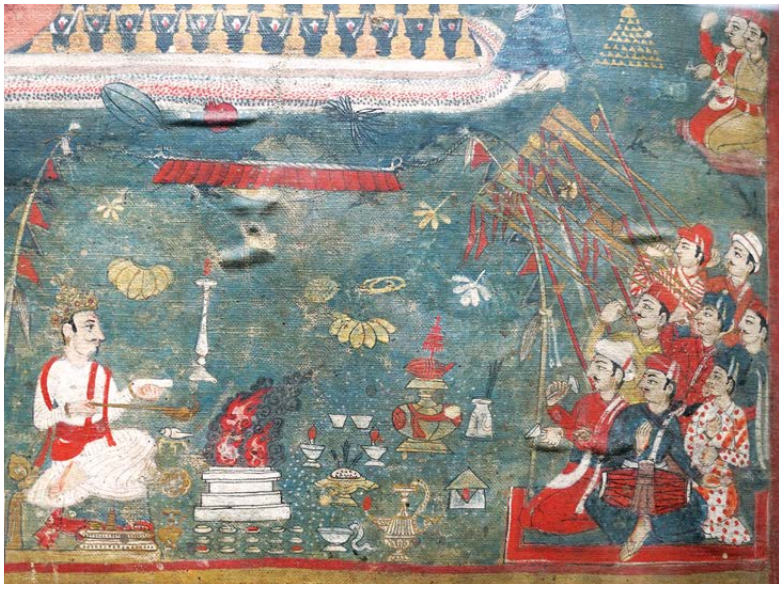

*top, right:*
The center of the painting depicts the Mahacaitya which is symbolically supported by a base of miniature caityas.

In Newar culture, the fabrication of large amounts of *tsha-tshas* is done on specific occasions, such as the building or restoration of a stupa, after the death of a family member and for the benefit of the deceased and that of all sentient beings. Such *tsha-tshas* find many different uses, but are predominantly interred in stupas or placed on altars. The making of *tsha-tshas* is often a community effort and done in a ritual setting called *lucidhyaḥ vrata*, or *dyaḥ thāyegu* ("making the deity").[3] In Sanskrit it is known as *lakṣacaityadeva vrata* ("one hundred thousand caityas"). Sometimes, a painting (*paubha*) is commissioned to commemorate the event. Nepal's National Museum features two *paubhas* depicting *lakṣacaityadeva vrata* rituals. The paubha pictured here was commissioned by a certain Thākurasiṃha Tulādhara and his family during the restoration of the Svayaṃbhucaitya in 1694 CE (NS 815).

Epigraphist and researcher Kashinath Tamot has suggested that the moulds discovered during the archaeological investigations, were intentionally left in the stupa in order to allow for the making of more *tsha-tshas* during future restorations.

3 Vaidya 1986, pp. 127-129 and personal communication with Kashinath Tamot.

This detail, rendered like a cartoon, illustrates the step-by-step process of making *tsha tshas*. The person on the left is seen cutting clay from a hillside using a typical Nepali hoe (*kodalo*). The black clay is transported in a *kharpan* (pole carrying baskets) to a worker who mixes the clay using a mallet (*khata muga*). The properly prepared clay is then pressed into a mould, in this case a bell-shaped stupa. Finally, the lady on the right removes the clay from the mould and stacks the fresh *tsha tshas* for drying.



This scene, depicting a fire puja (*homa*), is very similar to the rituals performed for the reconstrucion of Tashi Gomang. The priest is depicted with a crown which is still worn by Buddhist priests today. Using tongs, he moves sacrifices into the fire. As will be described in the last chapter of this book, sacrifices (such as 32 kinds of grains) are always kept in small containers as can be seen here in front of the fireplace. All essential ritual implements are depicted: an oil lamp (*sukunda*), holy vessel (*kalaśa*), incense burner and holders, a sindur container, ritual threads and a conch. The group of musicians are playing the drum, cymbals and long trumpets. The variety of headgears indicate members of different regions.

In this detail we see two couples making *tsha tshas*. They are likely the donors for the restoration of Svayambhu's main caitya.

**DAMAGED COPPER REPOUSSÉ CAITYA AND AN INSCRIBED PLAQUE WITH TWO DONOR FIGURES**
Early 19th century
SWM01-80
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015

**GILT BRONZE IMAGE**
Possibly Tsongkhapa
SWM01-88
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Mar 15, 2016

**METAL CAITYAS**
Metal caityas that could have served as moulds for *tsha-tshas*
Represented in actual size
SWM01-384
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 18, 2016

Several metal sculptures were found in the rubble and four bronze caityas were discovered in situ, between bricks directly above the nine cavities. The caityas are all similar in size and shape. A comparable group of bronze caityas was found during the renovation of Tukañ Bāhā in Kathmandu.[4] Besides the bronze caityas, a miniature gilt stupa stands out in terms of style and shape (SWM01-001). It exhibits different influences: the square base and the flattened dome evoke a Tibetan chörten while the upper part, with its square harmikā and series of parasols, are more typical of Newari stupas. Another Newari element is the serpents running around the base, a feature often found on the exterior walls of temples.

Metal sculptures of Tārā, Aksobhya and Dīpankara Buddha were also discovered. A large copper caitya (SWM01-080) that likely originated from the upper part of the stupa was found badly damaged. It appears that the poor condition of the object predates the earthquake of 2015. A small gilt plaque found in the rubble names two donors and bears an eroded inscription. It was nevertheless possible to read "savat 930 (or 931, or 939)" which likely refers to Nepāl Samvat and would therefore correlate to a date between 1808 and 1818 CE.

Of particular interest is a gilt bronze image of a Tibetan master (SWM01-088), possibly of Tibetan origin. The iconography strongly refers to Je Tsongkhapa, the 14th-15th century Tibetan founder of the Gelug school of Buddhism. It appears that the image was intentionally damaged, as indicated by the cut at the base and tool marks on the face.

**GILT MINIATURE BRONZE CHORTEN**
SWM01-001
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015

**GILT METAL UMBRELLA WITH RUBIES AND EMERALDS**
DIA: 6 CM, SWM01-091
This disc was likely once part of a gilt metal stupa.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 20, 2016

4 Shrestha, 2002

Another important dated artefact is the circular reliquary that was found on the deposit stone (SWM01-215 and 274). The centre of the lid is ornamented with a four-petal flower pattern. Four circular lines of text in devanāgarī bear the date NS 995 (1875 CE).

Devanāgarī transliteration of the inscription:

१. ? स्वस्ति श्री ३ मगलचेते,,या जंत श्रीश्री मंजुवज्राचार्य,,वतार ताम्रकार ग्वतस्य उत्पन्न:
२. धमसिं(.)से पुत्र हर्षरत्न थओ बबुया नामन दुता लिप(त)स शुनान थ्व जंत थ्व थासन घतिबह्रि या:
३. य मा(लसा) थोथ्यं तयमाल,, साछि श्री माहाकाल हारतिगन जुल शु(ना)नं घतिबह्रि यातसा श्रीया कुदिस्ति न्हापया:
४. थ्यं तम्यशीया शुदिस्ति,, फल प्रापति शुभ संवत् ९९५ म्ति जेस्त कृष्ण १० रोज २ शुभं ॥

Roman transliteration of the inscription:

1. ? svasti śrī 3 magalacete,,yā jaṃta śrīśrī maṃjuvajrācāryā,,vatāra,, tāmrakāra gvatasya utpanna:
2. dhamasiṃ(.)se putra harṣaratna thao babuyā nāmana dutā lipa(ta)sa śunāna thva jaṃta thva thāsana ghatibahri yā:
3. ya mā(lasā) thothyaṃ tayamāla,, sāchi śrī māhākāla hāratigana jula śu(nā)naṃ ghatibahri yātasā śrīyā kudisti hnāpayā:
4. thyaṃ tamyaśīyā śudisti,, phala prāpati śubha saṃvat 995 mti jesta kṛṣṇa 10 roja 2 śubhaṃ ॥

Translation by Kashinath Tamot:

[Siddhi symbol] (May it be) auspicious! The Yantra of Thrice Blessed Mangalacaitya has been established in the name of own's father by Harsha Ratna, the son of Dharmasimha (inscr. Dhamasim...), who was descended from the clan of Tamrakar (and) who is the incarnation of Manjuvajra Acarya. Later, if anybody has to make change ("ghatibarhi", lit. small-big/less-more) in this place, it should be kept like this. Witnesses are Blessed Mahakal (and) the family of Harati. If anyone makes different ("ghatibarhi"), he will be viewed with evil eyes by Blessed ones (Mahakal and Harati). One who builds it as previous (donor), he will be viewed with good eyes, he will get fruit (of it). (It was established in) the Good Era (Nepal Samvat) dated 995 Jyestha, waning moon 10, weekday 2 (Monday) (28 June, 1875). (Let it be) good!

**COPPER RELIQUARY**
Inscribed and dated NS 995
DIA: 14.9 cm, H: 5.4 cm, SWM01-215


**AKSOBHYA BUDDHA FOUND INSIDE THE STUPA**
Stone and lime, SWM01-21
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015


**UNIDENTIFIED DEITY ORIGINATING FROM A NICHE**
Stone and lime, SWM01-27
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015


**HORSE AND TRIPLE-JEWEL IN A MEDAILLION**
Found in the rubble and originating from the inside of the stupa.
Stone and lime, SWM01-32
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015

**HORSE AND TRIPLE-JEWEL IN A MEDAILLION**
Found in the rubble and originating from the inside of the stupa.
Stone and lime, SWM01-32
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Aug 23, 2016


**UNIDENTIFIED DEITY ORIGINATING FROM A NICHE**
Stone and lime, SWM48
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015

## STONE SCULPTURES

In all, 133 stone sculptures were salvaged from Tashi Gomang. As seen in historic photos, the stupa was adorned on each façade with 31 stone images set in niches which brings the number of outside sculptures to 124. However, only 122 statues originating from those niches could be identified and two statues are considered "lost". It is unclear if those statues were damaged beyond recognition by the earthquake or had already been missing before. Sculptures from the first level of niches represent the Four Great Kings (*caturmahārāja*), the Buddhas' vehicles (horse, lion, etc.) and the auspicious symbols of Buddhism (e.g. *pūrna kalaśa*, and others). According to Hem Raj Shakya some of the statues represent dance steps executed to worship the *lāsyā* goddesses.[5] Due to the thick layers of lime and sometimes also acrylic paints covering the images, their identification was difficult until their cleaning. Identification of the sculptures in the upper levels proved more problematic. Comparing them with line drawings from an 18th century manuscript associated with the Kriyāsaṃgraha (*pañjikā*) shows some similarities. The drawings are based on the sixth chapter of the *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, which is believed to have been written by Kuladatta, who probably lived in Nepal around the middle of the 11th century. A few sculptures could be satisfactorily matched with the line drawings and in some instances iconographic variations were noticed.

The style and quality of craftsmanship of the façade's sculptures indicates that they were likely made in the second half of the 19th century or early 20th century. This corroborates the theory that the stone images were most likely installed on the occasion of the 1875 renovation.

Nine stone sculptures originating from inside the stupa (SWM01-021, -034, -040, -075, -100, -192, -198, -199 and -261) exhibit a much finer carving style than the façade's statues. Two of these images were partially covered with lime, indicating that they might have once been installed in one of the stupa's niches or on another lime-washed monument.

**VAJRAVĀRĀHĪ**
Found in recess #5
Stone 4 x 3 cm, SWM01-261
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Jun 3, 2015

**NĀMASANGĪTI**
A statue found in the rubble. Its original location could not be verified.
19th century, stone, 25.5 x 14 x 5.3 cm
SWM01-075
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015

5 Shakya 2004, p. 485

UNIDENTIFIED IMAGE
Anjali mudra in *maharajalilasana* posture
Inv. # SWM01-009
© Department of Archaeology/R. Poudyal
May 24, 2015

WARRIOR HOLDING A SWORD AND SHIELD
Inv. # SWM01-014
© Department of Archaeology/R. Poudyal
May 24, 2015

## TERRACOTTAS FROM INSIDE THE STUPA

Thirty-six terracotta sculptures and architectural ornaments originated from within the stupa. A group of 14 sculptures between 14 and 21 cm in height included standing Buddhas, Vajramūkhi and unidentified images in various postures (SWM01-009, 023, 033, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185,186, 187, 188, 189 and 190). Some of these are very similar to the statues in the stupa's niches in both size and iconographic detail and were covered with thick layers of lime. This indicates that they might have once been installed in the niches but were later replaced with new statues in stone and deposited in the stupa during one of the restorations.

Another group of terracottas consists of four octolobes, each containing a finely carved animal (SWM01-32, 57, 58 and 59), two sculptures representing a horse with jewels on its back (SWM01-041) and a cakra disc (SWM01-036). These sculptures bear strong similarities to stone sculptures currently installed on the stupa's facades. It is quite possible that they were originally installed on the stupa's facade as well.

Four large images of the Four Great Kings (Caturmahārājas), the guardians of the cardinal directions (SWM01-066, 067, 077 and 191) were discovered in the rubble. Encrusted in mud and covered with thick layers of lime, their attributes were difficult to identify. The presence of tenons is a clear indication that they were once free-standing, possibly in the niches of the caitya. Comparing Vaiśravaṇa (SWM01-077), the protector of the northern direction, with Rajman Singh Chitrakar's drawing confirms a very close resemblence and in both cases Vaiśravaṇa is represented on a single-tiered lotus. This all strongly suggests that the recovered terracotta sculptures are the originals once installed in the caitya's four main central niches. It is possible that during the 1875 CE restoration the Tamrakar family sponsored the fabrication of new stone sculptuters and the old terracottas were placed inside the stupa with the reliquary.

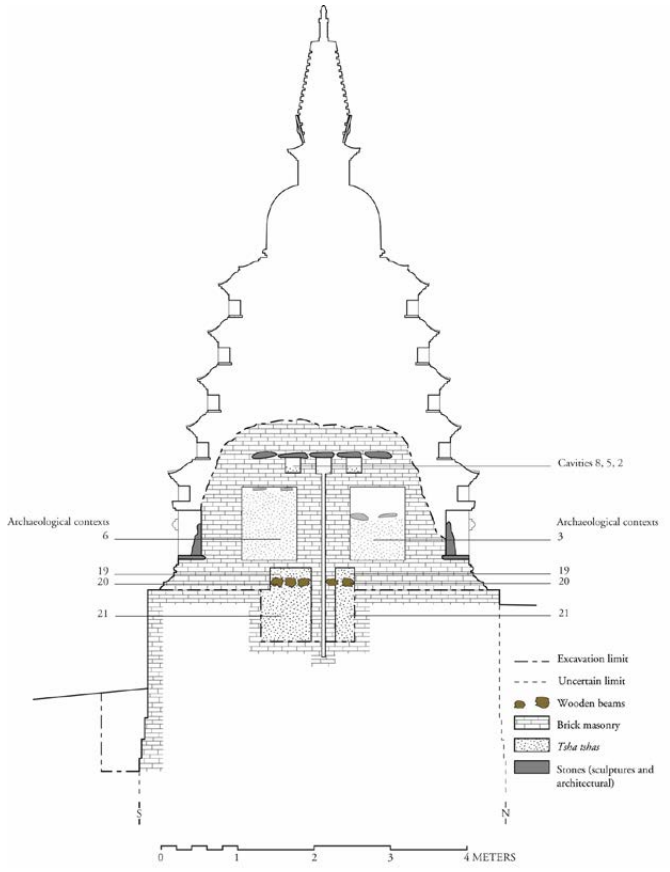
The terracottas represent a relatively rare and little-studied corpus of Newar images and are difficult to date. Well-known examples of similar sculptures can be found in the Mahābuddha Bāhā of Patan and the adjoining Māyādevi Temple which was built between 1565 and 1601. The temple is richly decorated with terracotta images and the armored guardians at the corners are similar to the ones of Tashi Gomang. However, the guardians of Mahābuddha's Māyādevi Temple differ stylistically from the ones of Tashi Gomang Stupa and their armour is not as finely depicted. Similar large terracottas can be found at the Śiva Temple next to the pond in Hanuman Dhoka and at Bunga Bāhā of Bungamati. All these sculptures show a great mastery of the medium and reveal the existence of a terracotta school active in the Kathmandu Valley since at least the 16$^{th}$ century.

Due to time pressure and the lack of professional expertise it was decided not to further clean the terracotta sculptures but put them back into the stupa as is during the rebuilding process.

**GUARDIAN KING**
Inv. # SWM01-066
© Department of Archaeology/R. Poudyal | May 24, 2015

**GUARDIAN KING**
Inv. # SWM01-067
© Department of Archaeology/R. Poudyal | May 24, 2015

**GUARDIAN KING OF THE NORTH**
There is a basic resemblance between the terracotta statue found inside the stupa and this drawing of the Northern King by Rajman Singh Chitrakar.
Inv. # SWM01-077
Drawing (detail) by Raj Man Singh Chitrakar | ca. 1830s
Courtesy of the British Library
Photograph: © UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 2, 2015




**CROSS-SECTION SOUTH–NORTH**
The charred wooden beams are embedded in *tsha-tshas* (contexts 19 and 21)
© UNESCO | Survey and drawing by D. Andolfatto and T. Schrom

**THE CHARRED WOODEN BEAMS**
View from the east
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Sep 16, 2016

## TIMBER ARTEFACTS

The central square of the mandala at level A was marked by five charred beams made of the tropical hardwood *shorea robusta*. The beams were found parallel to each other in an east–west direction, sandwiched between *tsha-tshas* (contexts 19 and 21) and covered by sand and charcoal. All beams were severely burnt and beam no. 2 exhibited traces of carvings evoking volute patterns of a pillar's base. Due to the extreme deterioration of the objects it is difficult to ascertain if the beams were cut. The fact that the beams were severely burnt suggests that they were part of a cremation ritual (*homa*). Such a practice is mentioned by von Rospatt during one of the *mahācaitya*'s renovations[1] when architectural remnants were taken out of the structure and ritually cremated by community members.

Considering the symbolic significance of the burnt beams having been deposited in the core of Tashi Gomang, one might expect that they originate from another religious monument, possibly even the main stupa. Radiocarbon dating of beam no. 2 provides a range between 1445-1632 CE with a 95% probability. Therefore, the beams may originate from one of the nine documented renovations of the Svayambhūcaitya as listed by von Rospatt:[2] 1504 CE renovation by gTsang smyon Heruka, 1530, 1591 to 1595 and 1601 to 1604 renovations by Jayarakṣa, 1636 to 1640 renovation, 1681 to 1683, 1710, 1751 to 1758, 1814 to 1817 and the renovation attributed to Dhanasiṃha Tāmrakār and his family in 1863-1866.[3]

It is conceivable that the six beams were retrieved during the renovation of Svayambhūcaitya in 1863-1866, ritually cremated and later inserted into Tashi Gomang Stupa, together with the reliquary.


Beam No. 1: 160 x Ø 8 cm
Beam No. 2: 160 x 10,5 x 10 cm
Beam No. 3: 70 x 10 x 8 cm
Beam No. 4: 140 x 10 x 8 cm
Beam No. 5: 48 x Ø 2 cm
Beam No. 6: 145 x 12 x 10 cm



1 von Rospatt 2011
2 *Ibid*
3 Shakya 2004, pp. 296-297

**TASHI GOMANG STUPA**
View from the east
© John C. Huntington*, Courtesy of the John C. and Susan L. Huntington Photographic Archive of Buddhist and Asian Art

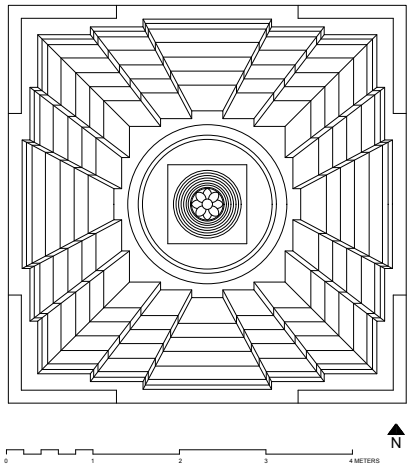
**TASHI GOMANG STUPA**
The collapsed stupa a few days after the earthquake.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 3, 2015

# THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE STUPA

The collapse of Tashi Gomang in the earthquake happened quickly and was a great surprise to all. Historically, stupas, due to their solid and squat shape have proven to be very resistant against seismic movements. Tashi Gomang was the only stupa that collapsed during the 2015 earthquake. As the archaeological excavations revealed, the main causes for the monument's collapse can be found in the poor quality of craftsmanship, the use of inferior building materials, and the fact that the design of the inner structure of the stupa did not follow traditional prescriptions and layout. Most surprisingly, the stupa was found to be missing its central wooden post (*axis mundi*) that should have extended from the base to the finial of the stupa. Such a central wooden pole not only serves an important spiritual purpose but also provides strength as a structural member. Over the past millennium the main Svayambhu caitya's central pole has been replaced on at least ten occasions. It is unclear why no such pole was present at Tashi Gomang.

Analysis of the rubble and remaining masonry revealed that the structure was built with recycled bricks of different sizes and laid with wide joints and inadequate sandy mud mortar, thus resulting in a very weak structural state. Large interior voids containing loosely placed *tsha tshas* further weakened the structural cohesion. The extremely top-heavy stone dome and stone finial, which were lacking the typical wooden post at their centre, toppled easily during the earthquake.

It is not known when the stupa was last repaired or reconstructed but it is quite evident that such repairs must have been done with little care, probably in a hurry, with little expertise in traditional construction methods and executed with extremely poor craftsmanship.



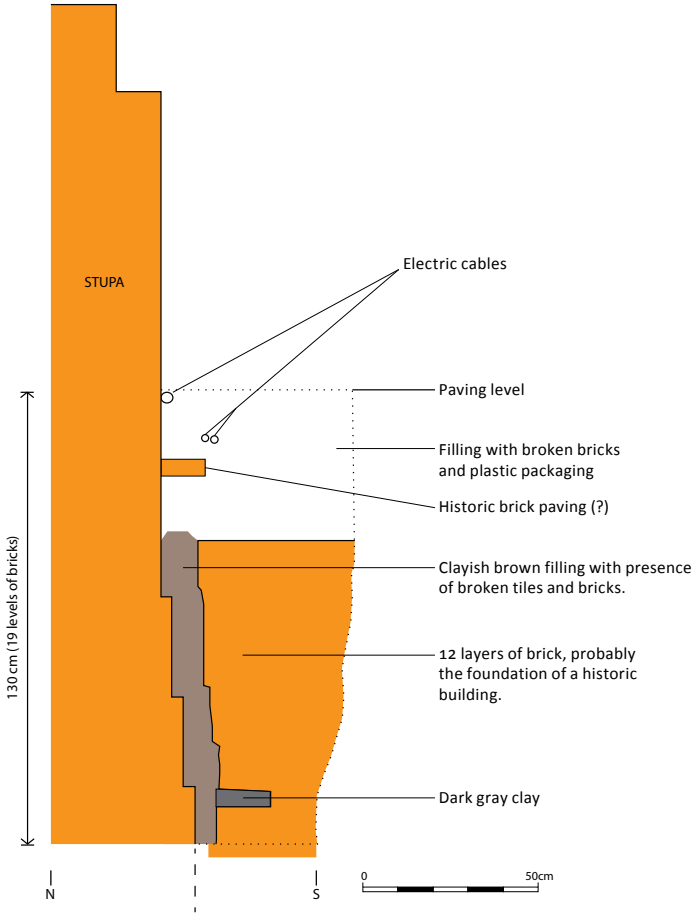

**PLAN VIEW OF THE STUPA**
© UNESCO | Drawing by R. Maharjan and T. Schrom | 2016

**VIEWS OF THE INSPECTION TRENCH**
The foundation, consisting of tightly laid brick in mud mortar, was found to be in very good condition.
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Nov 11, 2016

**STEPPED BRICK FOUNDATION**
The bricks' particular shapes and superior quality indicate that the caitya's foundation dates from at least the 17th century and could be even older.
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Nov 11, 2016

### REMOVAL OF MATERIALS TO THE BASE LEVEL

As described in detail in the chapter on archaeology, the remnants of the stupa were carefully disassembled and checked for finds, and materials not usable for the reconstruction were discarded. Brick rubble was removed down to the square base of the stupa, approximately 108 cm above the stupa's southern paving level. At this level, stable brick masonry was identified and deemed strong enough to support the weight of the reconstructed stupa. Less than 10% of the caitya's bricks were determined to be reusable for the reconstruction.




**CROSS-SECTION DRAWING AND VIEW OF THE INSPECTION TRENCH**
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto and T. Schrom | Nov 11, 2016

**INVESTIGATION OF FOUNDATIONS**

On November 11, 2016, a test pit was dug near the south-west corner of the monument in order to investigate the condition of the foundations. Representatives of the religious community requested that the excavation be stopped when the digging was at a depth of 130 cm, even though the bottom of the foundation had not been reached. The observed construction pattern shows the typical stepped foundation at regular intervals and tightly-laid courses of brick in mud mortar. The excellent quality of construction here was found to be completely different from what was seen in the upper structure. The small size of the hand-made bricks used is typical of structures dating to the 17th century or possibly even earlier.

Another foundation was discovered just 15 centimetres to the south of the stupa's foundation. We know from historic views of Svayambhū that houses used to be located there so these brick foundations likely belong to a dwelling now lost.

**HISTORIC BRICK PAVEMENT**
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Nov 11, 2016

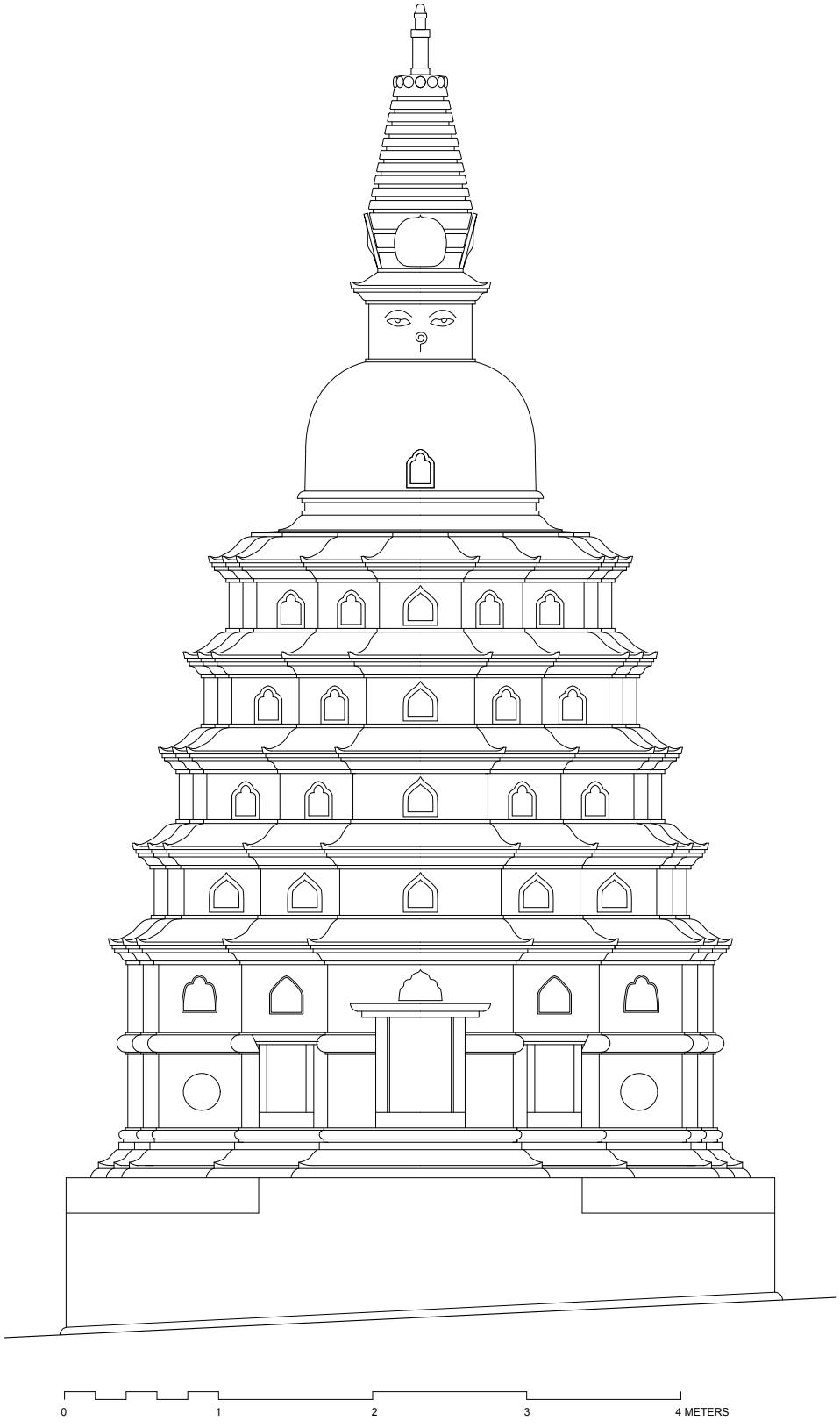
**RESTORATION PLANNING**

Unfortunately no original survey or drawings of the monument could be sourced. As already mentioned, the caitya did not attract the interest of architects or art historians and, with the exception of Hemraj Shakya's book, was never properly studied or documented. The Svayambhu Master Plan of 1991 barely mentioned it. It was even difficult to find good quality photographs of the caitya; despite the thousands of images available of the main Svayambhu Stupa relatively few show Tashi Gomang. Due to this lack of quality photographs the stone sculptures' original locations in their niches could not be identified.

Architects had to rely on the time-consuming process of comparing the few historic photographs with surviving objects that could be measured, such as the main statues and the finial. This made it possible to calculate dimensions and the proportions of the caitya and produce historically accurate drawings. It was not till 2020, long after the completion of the restoration, that a high-quality photograph showing the east elevation was found.

Since less than 10% of the original bricks were determined to be re-useable, 30,000 handmade bricks matching the quality and shape of the original bricks discovered in the foundations were ordered from a local brick maker. The question of the proper type of mortar to be used in the reconstruction resulted in a long and intense discussion among restoration experts, representatives of the Department of Archaeology, members of the Swayambhu Federation and UNESCO consultants. Even though mud mortar is the traditionally used material, lime-based mortars came into use in the early 20th century. Following the 2015 earthquakes, lime mortar has become more popular and has also been endorsed by Nepal's Department of Archaeology. Since no conclusive answer could be found, the decision was left up to the Swayambhu Federation which decided to use a lime-based mortar for its superior bonding strength.

**TASHI GOMANG ELEVATION SOUTH**
Proposed restoration
© UNESCO | R. Maharjan and T. Schrom


0
1
2
3
4 METERS

**THE BASE OF THE STUPA BEFORE RESTORATION**
The original base of the stupa was covered with a thick layer of cement plaster and oil paint. View from the south-west.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Nov 5 2017

**RESTORATION IMPLEMENTATION**

Early on it was decided to authorize the Swayambhu Federation of Management and Conservation (SFMC) with the overall responsibility of managing and implementing the project. The UNESCO Kathmandu Office contributed the architectural documentation, the detailed reconstruction design and provided technical supervision. Nepal's Department of Archaeology acted as the overall authority and was responsible for technical backstopping and ensuring that restoration guidelines for a World Heritage Site were followed.

In November 2017 SFMC identified a group of qualified craftsmen from Bhaktapur to take on the rebuilding of the masonry structure from the ground up. These masons had ample experience with similar restoration projects and work started in earnest in December. Interestingly, the masons did not trust the strength and stability of the stupa's brick base that had been left untouched since the conclusion of the archaeological excavations. In agreement with representatives of FSMC the brick base was further dismantled and a new perimeter wall was erected around the structure. This was followed by the pouring of a concrete pad foundation with the intent to provide an even stronger base to support the rebuilt superstructure.

Newly manufactured bricks were shaped by hand to achieve the necessary mouldings following historic examples. As mentioned, it was decided early on to not use the traditional mud mortar in the brick masonry. Despite the fact that mud has been

**THE RECONSTRUCTED BASE OF THE STUPA**
The base was completed with newly made brick laid in a lime and brick dust (*surkhe*) mortar. The central cavity was rebuilt at the center
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Jan 20, 2017


**INSTALLATION OF A PURNA *KALAŚA***
Two master craftsmen from Bhaktapur installing the sculptures and niches on the first register of the south facade. View from the south-west.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Feb 15, 2017

**INSTALLATION OF SCULPTURES AND NICHES**
Setting up of the first level of stone sculptures and the frames of niches. The base level of the four L-shaped cavities can be seen in the centre.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Feb 15, 2017

**THE RECONSTRUCTED BASE OF THE STUPA**
Two terracotta sculptures were inserted in a cavity exactly where they were found during the excavations.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Feb 21, 2017

**INSERTION OF *TSHA TSHAS***
Buddhacharya priests deposit *tsha-tshas* in the L-shaped cavities in their originally recorded positions.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Mar 2, 2017

**L-SHAPED CAVITIES**
New stone slabs are being cut to firmly cover the cavities.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Mar 2, 2017

used for thousands of years, it was felt that lime based mortars would add to the strength of the building and provide resilience against future earthquakes.

The lowest tier of the caitya was rebuilt according to the excavation drawings with one rectangular cavity and four L-shaped voids that were later filled with *tsha tshas* and terracotta statues placed in the same positions as they had been found in during the dismantling. It is interesting to note that the entire monument was rebuilt with new bricks as most of the original bricks which had been conserved for reuse had accidentally been used in another project.

**INSERTION OF OBJECTS INTO THE NINE CENTRAL CAVITIES**
Reconstruction of the nine cavities followed precisely the documented excavation drawings. The small objects salvaged earlier had been carefully numbered and were stored; they were reinserted exactly where they had been found.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Mar 9, 2017

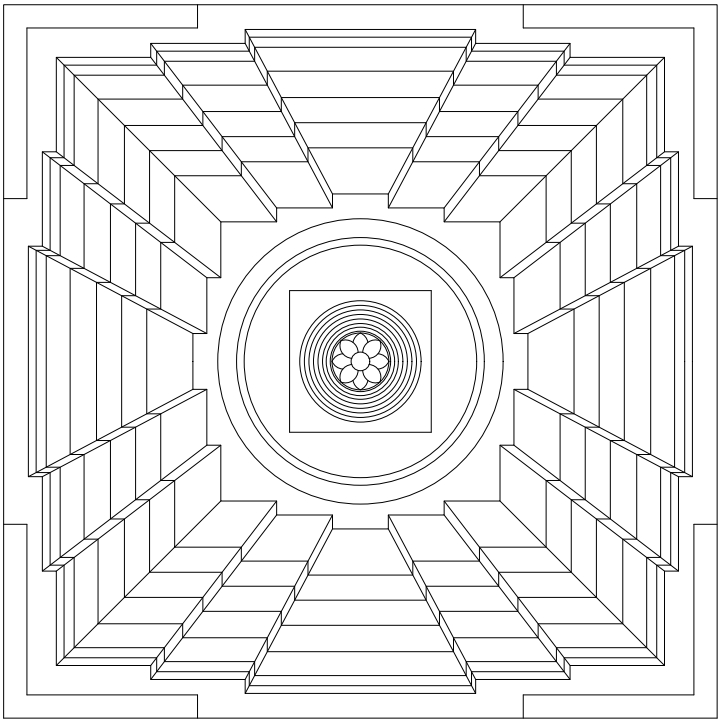
**NINE CAVITIES**
Closing of the nine cavities with stone slabs.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Mar 9, 2017

During this early phase of reconstruction, it was observed that the lime mortar did not reach the necessary hardness and strength. It was quickly determined that the poor quality was due to multiple issues: substandard quality lime had been procured that had been stored in unfavourable conditions and had lost its strength almost completely. As could also be seen in other restoration projects in Svayambhu, the lime used came in powdered form rather than the hard quicklime chunks that are necessary to produce a proper mortar. It turned out that the craftsmen lacked the basic skills and knowledge of how to properly slake and prepare non-hydraulic lime putty.

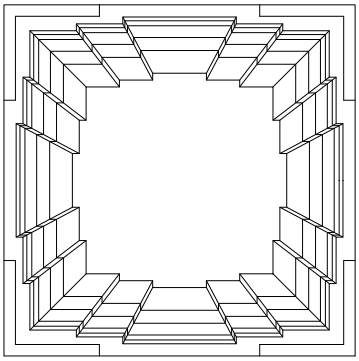
UNESCO Kathmandu quickly identified Shraddha Basnyat, an expert well versed in lime mortar construction techniques, and within a week an extensive training programme was initiated in Svayambhu. The contractor and craftsmen received detailed information on how to source good quality lime and ensure proper storage conditions. Practical training included the slaking and curing of lime putty and the proper mixing of lime, sand and brick dust for a superior quality mortar. This was followed with the introduction of various testing methods to ensure continuous quality control.

Over the following 15 months UNESCO organized six similar training programmes (at the World Heritage Sites of Patan Darbar, Pashupatinath and Bhaktapur, in the historic town of Khokana and at the Bagmati ghats at Teku) thus reaching more than 200 craftsmen, building supervisors and restoration managers. Subsequently, a manual, "Guidelines for Using Lime in Nepal's Post-Earthquake Reconstruction Work", was produced by UNESCO Kathmandu and distributed to a wide range of government and private agencies involved in historic preservation work.

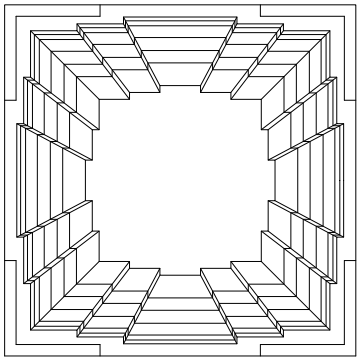
**LIME SLAKING SYSTEM**
This portable system, made of steel drums, was set up on site to demonstrate the proper process of slaking hydraulic limestone.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Mar 22, 2017



**PLAN VIEW, HORIZONTAL SECTIONS FOR ALL SIX LEVELS AND S–W SECTION**
Drawings for the proposed restoration
© UNESCO | R. Maharjan and T. Schrom | 2016



LEVEL 4



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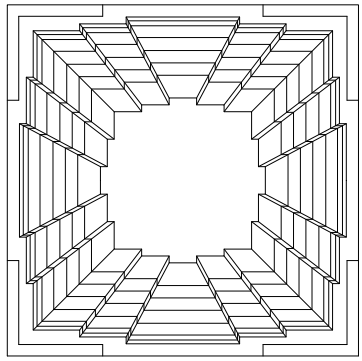

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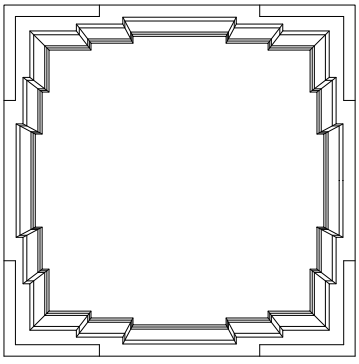
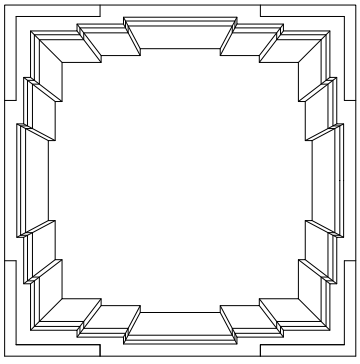


LEVEL 1



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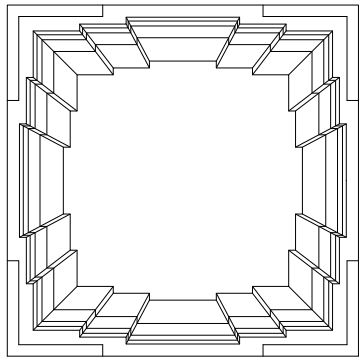

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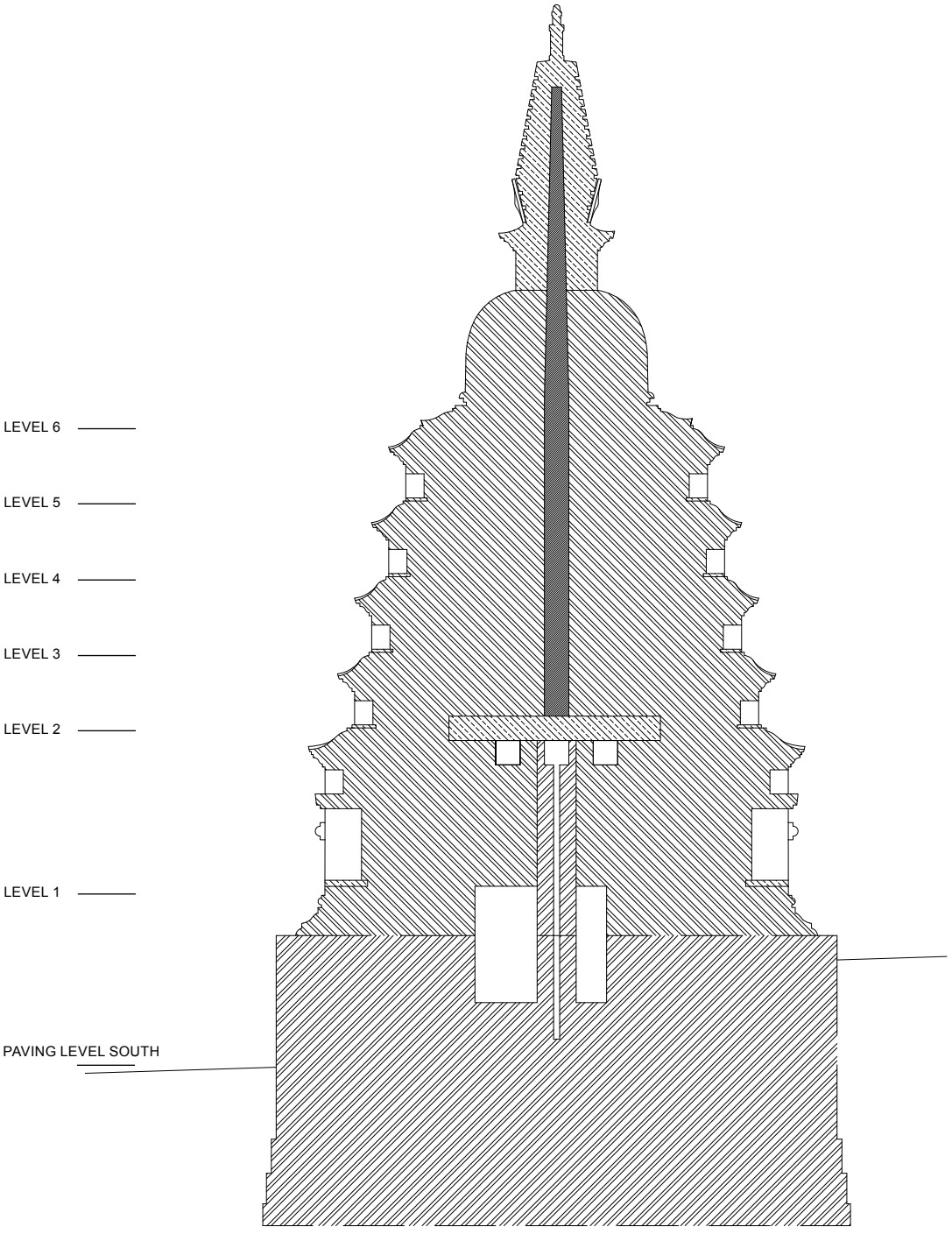



**TASHI GOMANG STUPA** | 1876 | SWAYAMBHU | SECTION SOUTH–NORTH | PROPOSED RESTORATION

Drawing by Thomas Schrom, November 2016

**MOVING UP *TSHA TSHAS***
Bags filled with miniature caityas are brought up to the top level where they will be installed in small cavities in the masonry.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Apr 11, 2017

**INSTALLATION OF VIRUPAKSA IN THE STUPA**
The terracotta sculpture of the King of the West that was found in the rubble was reinstalled inside the stupa.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Apr 11, 2017

**STONE MOULDING ABOVE THE HARMIKA (CUBE)**
The four sections of the original stone moulding were firmly connected by means of metal braces embedded in epoxy resin. The central wooden pole ("axis mundi", *yeshe*) will provide firm support to the heavy stone spire.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | May 31, 2017

Once the issues with the lime mortar's poor quality were resolved, fast progress was made. As level after level was added stone sculptures were immediately installed in their niches under the priests' supervision. A suitable, over 5 meters long hardwood pole was sourced at a local lumber mill and shaped into an octagonal cross section following traditional design patterns. The poorly crafted stone spire, which likely dates from the second half of the 20th century, was carefully reworked, achieving a more uniform shape and its central hole was enlarged to fit the new timber pole. The beam was protected with several coats of tar paint.

**TASHI GOMANG WEST ELEVATION**
The upper registers have already received a layer of plaster. The pink colour is the result of a mixture of brick dust and lime.
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Jul 3, 2017

**TASHI GOMANG, NORTH ELEVATION**
The pink-coloured plaster is a mixture of brick dust and lime, and the original stone finial was repaired and reinstalled.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Aug 11, 2017

**CLEANING OF THE DHRTARASTRA SCULPTURE**
Located in the central niche of level 1 facing south.
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Jul 3, 2017

**OBJECT 118 ON THE FIRST LEVEL, FACING EAST**
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Jul 3, 2017

**TASHI GOMANG UNDER CONSTRUCTION**
Application of the first coat of a lime and brick dust plaster.
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Jul 3, 2017

**OBJECT 166 ON LEVEL 6, FACING NORTH**
Detail of a typical niche after application of the first layer of lime and brick dust plaster.
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Jul 3, 2017

**FITTING OF THE COPPER RINGS**
The damaged stone was repaired with a composite material and then covered with gilt copper cladding.
© UNESCO | D.Andolfatto | Apr 18, 2018

**FITTING OF THE FINIAL**
© UNESCO | D.Andolfatto | Apr 28, 2018

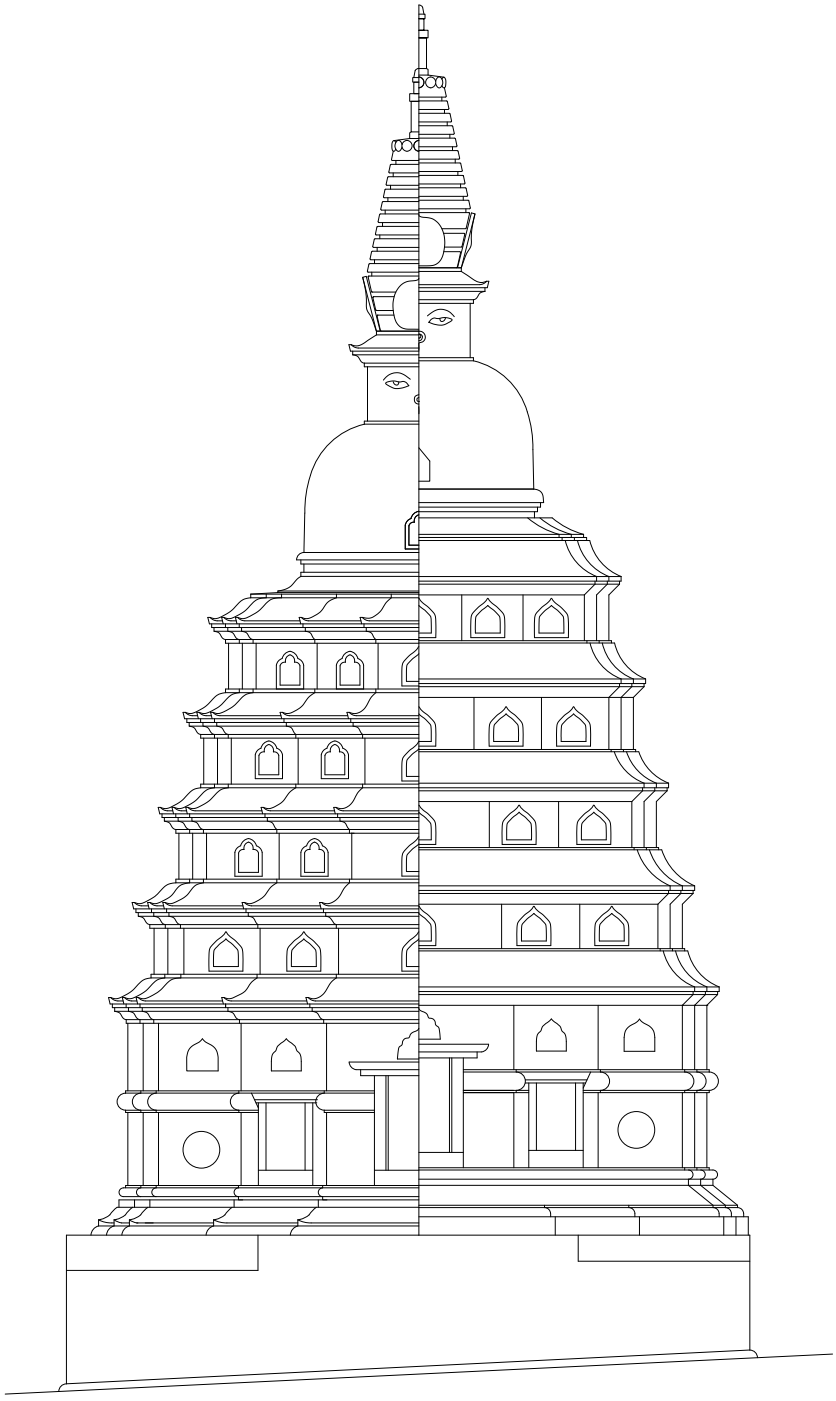
**FABRICATION OF THE COPPER FINIAL**
© UNESCO | D.Andolfatto | Apr 28, 2018

Originally, the finial was made of simple stone which had been whitewashed. During the reconstruction, the damage to the stone was filled in with a composite repairing material and then remounted. At this stage, a generous donor came forward, offering to pay for a new gilt-copper cladding for the finial; it is this that is now seen atop the restored Tashi Gomang.

**THE COMPLETED GILT-COPPER FINIAL**
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Dec 29, 2020

**THE FINIAL**
*top:* The original spire was poorly crafted, displaying unevenly shaped rings. At some point, probably in the 1934 earthquake, the finial had broken into two parts and was mended with iron clamps.
Photograph by Manik Bajracharya, courtesy of the Lotus Research Center | ca.1995

*above:* The original finial was mended and partly reshaped in order to achieve a more uniform and balanced appearance.
© UNESCO | D. Andolfatto | Aug 11, 2017



**TASHI GOMANG STUPA, SOUTH ELEVATION**
Comparison of the original drawing for reconstruction (left half) and the actually built stupa (right half).
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | 2018

**TASHI GOMANG STUPA, SOUTH ELEVATION**
The caitya was whitewashed and received a gilt metal clad finial, contributed by a private donor.
© UNESCO | T. Schrom | Jan 25, 2021

# NEWAR RITUALS RELATED TO THE RESTORATION OF A CAITYA

Nutandhar Sharma

Newars, the original inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, have, over centuries, developed a unique religious culture that combines Buddhism and Hinduism. They often worship deities from both religions and their rituals are modelled accordingly.[1] Rituals related to the construction and restoration of religious buildings are extremely important, with the date of the final ritual considered the official date of construction or restoration. According to *Jīrṇoddhāra Vimva Kathā*, a person who restores a caitya will be blessed with good health, prosperity, peace and purity in this life, and in the next shall receive a "kingly life" which ultimately will lead to Buddhahood.[2]

As the caitya embodies a deity, it is necessary to perform the prescribed rituals for any restoration work, otherwise the work is considered sinful. No performance of ritual means that no divinity resides in the caitya. Also important is that while a monument is under construction the deity residing in it needs to be removed for the duration of the work. The deity's life force has to be taken out before the renovation commences and only after the work is completed will it be put back in again. It is believed that the caitya is like a human body and that the rituals give it life-force. The Nepal law codex known as Muluki Ain (1854 CE) has even accepted temples and deities as living beings.[3]

It is a tradition in Nepal that the names of the donors and often the priests who perform the rituals are mentioned in a stele; these stone inscriptions can either be freestanding or embedded in the walls of the structure. For example, the inscription related to the renovation of the main caitya of Svayambhu, dated 1751 CE, mentions the glorious Brugpāthaṃceṣyaṃpā Lāmā and Vīraratna Lāmā who accomplished the ritual of consecration (*pratiṣṭhā*) according to the rules of *Pratiṣṭhā-maṅgala-prasādavāhinī* of Tibet.[4]

The inscription reads:
"The reason for doing this is not to gain fame and glory among the people, nor it is for the wish of making oneself superior in comparison to others. It has neither been done by plunging oneself into the eight *laukika-dharmas*, nor is it for the wish of obtaining the higher states such as *cakravartin*, Brahmā or Maheśvara in one's next lives. [...] It is for the purpose of obtaining the *dharmakāya* of Vajradhara for the people who have been involved in this task [of renovation] as well as of all the beings living as far as the sky pervades."[5]

**PŪJĀ MATERIALS**
Before the start of the rituals all necessary implements such as a water pot, *sindura* pot, *tika* powders and brass plates containing rice, flour, curd, insense and flowers are arranged near the altar.
© UNESCO | N. Sharma | Aug 23, 2019

*Opposite:*
**START OF THE FIRE RITUAL (*HOMA*)**
The priest lights the pyre made of special wood with the help of clarified butter. Offerings of grains and pulses are arranged in front of the altar which will later be immersed in the fire.
© UNESCO | R. Maharjan | Aug 4, 2016

1 Nepali 1965
2 Vajracharya 1984, pp. 23-24
3 Sharma 2019, pp. 41-46
4 Bajracharya and Axel Michaels 2016, p. 117
5 Ibid

**PREPARATION OF OFFERINGS**
It is the women's responsibility to arrange for all the ritual offerings during the pūjās. Such offerings include raw rice on leaf plates, water, flowers, and cloth.
© UNESCO | N. Sharma | Aug 23, 2019

**PREPARATION OF YOMARI**
Women preparing yomari, a special Newar delicacy, made of rice dough filled with sweetened molasses, condensed milk and coconut.
© UNESCO | N. Sharma | Aug 23, 2019

## RITUALS FOR THE RESTORATION OF A CAITYA

A caitya is built to ward off sorrows.[6] Newar rituals related to the restoration of religious buildings have been conducted from time immemorial and we are fortunate that many of the ritual practices have been meticulously recorded. Detailed descriptions of rituals conducted in Svayambhu date back to the 12th century.[7]

The core elements of these rituals,[8] such as *saṅkalpa*, *dāna* and *homa*, continue unchanged till today. There are dozens of specific rituals and types of worship (*pūjā* in Nepali) performed when restoring a religious monument. For example, Hem Raj Shakya provides a detailed account taken from a historic text describing the many rituals that were performed when King Bhaskar Malla restored the Svayambhu Caitya between 1710 and 1714 CE.[9] Due to the long period of restoration and the many obstacles encountered in the process, this particular restoration necessitated more ritual efforts than were recorded for other projects and more than twenty distinct religious ceremonies were carried out.

The size, importance, duration and complexities of a restoration project determine the number and elaboration of required rituals. Smaller and simpler restoration efforts carried out by laymen require fewer rituals, whereas royal and major monuments command more elaborate *pūjās*. A minimum of three *pūjās*, however, is mandatory. Before the start of work a ritual asking for forgiveness must be performed. For the duration of any repair work, the monument's deity has to be removed from its abode in an elegant procedure guiding the deity along a string into a vessel where it will live. Only after the conclusion of work may the deity be ritually reinserted into the caitya. Such rituals can be performed in different variations and are usually accompanied by community feasts.

6 Bijay Bilash Bajracharya, a senior priest explains when interviewed on 23 August 2018
7 Shakya 2004, pp. 125-126
8 Gutschow and Michaels 2005, pp. 179-180
9 Shakya 2004, pp. 208-220

***Kṣamāpūjā*** or the rite of pacification, also known as the worship for asking permission (lit. "excuse"), commences with a simple *pañcopacārapūjā* (fivefold offering substances ritual) and a *samay* (initiates' feast). If a caitya is destroyed by natural calamities, as Tashi Gomang was by the 2015 earthquake, the *kṣamāpūjā* has to be performed before the removal of rubble and start of the restoration process.[10] If a caitya is not destroyed naturally but has to be dismantled, a holy cow should be brought in to start the dismantling. In such a case, the cow is tied with a rope to the pinnacle and will pull it down, thus taking the first step towards the destruction of the caitya. This ritual is done in order to avoid a human being committing the sin of destroying a caitya. Only after the cow has initiated the destruction can the workmen continue with the dismantling. The cow is then gifted to a Brahman.[11]

***Jīvanyāsa likāyegu pūjā*** or the rite of temporarily moving the caitya's deity, or life force, into a sacred vessel for the duration of the restoration activities.

***Kalaśārcana***[12] is a vase worship that is performed after the deity (life force) has been moved into the vessel and is then followed by a purification ritual for the ritual paraphernalia (*layasevā jvalaṃ pūjā*). The vase pūjā should be performed every day till the divinity is restored back into the caitya. This ritual is also done before the laying of foundations commences and can include the placing of five vessels in the center and four corners of the foundation.

***Homa*** is a fire sacrifice offering of ghee and different grains asking for peace. Such sacrifices are also done in times of natural calamities such as earthquakes, droughts and floods.

***Bali pūjā*** is the sacrifice of cooked rice, beans and flowers[13] with the purpose of eliminating any future obstacles.

***Viśvakarmāpūjā*** is the worship of the divine architect, and includes paying respect to and blessing all the artisans, craftspeople and their tools.

***Sahasrāhūtihoma*** is a special fire ritual offering "one thousand sacrifices". This usually includes all participants of the ritual offering many handfuls of food grains mixed with ghee and sesame to the fire pit.

***Daśakarmapūjā***[14] is a set of ten life cycle rituals that in the context of the restoration of a religious monument is performed for the main deity. In normal life *daśakarmapūjā* covers ten rituals in a person's life from conception to marriage.

***Lakṣacaityavrata*** is the ritual process of making 100,000 miniature clay caityas called *lucidyaḥ* in Newari and *tsha tsha* in Tibetan. Such miniature caityas are about one inch tall. They are blessed and then permanently placed into the caitya.

**BUILDING OF THE ALTAR**
Adobe bricks are arranged in a special pattern on the pavement to the west of Tashi Gomang. The bricks are then sprinkled with water, covered with mudplaster and tied together with a thin rope.
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**THE ALTAR**
Decoration of the altar with red powder.
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10 There is a standardized process to perform a *pūjā*, see: Vajracharya and Vajracharya 1995, pp. 12-23
11 When the famous Ombhal stone caitya was renovated about 25 years ago, it was done so.
12 See: Vajracharya 1989, pp. 42-55
13 See: Vajracharya 1993
14 See: Vajracharya 2002

**OFFERINGS OF 32 GRAINS AND PULSES**
displayed on copper plates.
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**OFFERINGS DISPLAYED IN A BASKET**
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***Lohāgnirakṣā*** is a protection ritual. Literally *loh* translates to iron and *agni* to fire, meaning the building will be protected against attack and fire.

***Cākaḥpūjā*** [15] is the worship of the four directional deities

***Ratnanyāsa*** is the rite of depositing a gem in the caitya

***Pratiṣṭhā*** is the consecration ritual. Once construction is completed the vessel with the deity is brought to the site and a sacred tread is tied between the vase and the caitya in order to guide the deity back into the monument. This ritual concludes with a ten-life-cycle ritual and the pouring of sacred water from the vase over the monument.

**THREE PŪJĀS PERFORMED FOR TASHI GOMANG CAITYA**

When the caitya was dismantled, a reliquary was recovered from the rubble. It bears an inscription stating that Harṣa Ratna Tāmrākāra built (established) the *yantra* (in this case meaning the reliquary engraved with an auspicious diagram) for the caitya in 1875 CE in memory of his father, Dhanasiṃha.[16] It further states that any future renovation must be carried out correctly, otherwise great misfortune will prevail.
In late 2016, thirty Buddhacharya families from Svayambhu[17] jointly decided the

15 See: Vajracharya 1989, p. 67, fn no. 10
16 According to tradition, only important persons' funeral relics are taken from the cremation ground and interned in a caitya. In the Newar tradition this is called a sky burial (*ākāśasaṃskāra*).
17 Every male member of this community has to serve as a priest in turn, attending a specific shrine of the site.

**THE ALTAR IN FRONT OF THE CAITYA**
The altar and the priest's seat were set up to the west of the destroyed caitya.
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date and the types of rituals they would perform for the restoration. For this, they consulted their family priest, Vijay Vilash Vajracharya of Makhan Bahal in Kathmandu. He in turn relied on information from manuscripts that had been handed down through many generations and that described the rituals that were performed in the past.

**THE COMPLETED ALTAR**
Yellow and red powder is used to decorate the altar with religious diagrams.
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### *Kṣamāpūjā* and *jīvanyāsa likāyegu pūjā*

**TRANSFERRING THE DEITY OUT OF THE STUPA**

On August 4, 2016 the Buddhacharya families performed *kṣamāpūjā*, a ritual to appease the caitya's divinity. In Newar culture it is believed that disturbing the monument, the abode of the divinity, requires apology. The families "ask for forgiveness" so as to avoid any curse upon them from the divinity. This was followed on the same day by the *jīvanyāsa likayegu pūjā*, a ritual of transferring the divinity from the caitya into a holy vessel, where it will reside for the duration of the restoration work.

The site was purified by sprinkling pure water on it and an altar made of brick was constructed with diagrams of yellow and red powders for the performance of a fire sacrifice. The priest, Uttamvajra Vajracharya, conducted the ceremony with members of the Buddhacharya families, led by their elder, Birman Buddacharya. They prepared and displayed a variety of *pūjā* materials including 32 kinds of grains and beans.

**THE ALTAR**
A basket contains important implements such as the ritual thread, incense, sindur powder, pieces of fruit and puffed rice. The small, cone-shaped pieces are called *gojā*; they are miniature replicas of caityas and are made of rice powder and water.
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**DRAWING OF RITUAL DIAGRAMS WITH YELLOW POWDER**
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The many steps of these two rituals are described below.

1. At the start, Hāratī, the protector goddess of the area, was worshipped in order to appease her. Hāratī used to be a demoness known for eating children till the Buddha made her a protector of children and the *dharma*.

2. The participants gathered near Tashi Gomang Caitya and welcomed the Sun god (*Sūryārgha*) to witness the rituals.[18]

3. This was followed by s*aṅkalpa*, the "taking a vow ritual". This is usually done by the head of the religious community (*yajamāna* in Newari meaning "client") but since he could not attend, his family members performed the *saṅkalpa* on his behalf. They specified the exact extent of rituals, the locations, time and purposes.[19] *Saṅkalpa* was concluded by handing the plate of *pūjā* materials to the priest and taking the decision to conduct the *kṣamāpūjā* first and *jīvanyāsapūjā* later.

4. The priest worshipped the guru mandala (*gurumaṇḍalapūjā*) with *pañcopacāra* (fivefold offering substances ritual).[20] In this fundamental Newar *pūjā* the priest invited Vajrasattva, the guru of Newar Buddhist priests, into the mandala drawn in front of them.

5. For the rite of purification (*panchagavyasodhana*) the priest placed a mixture of milk, cow dung, cow urine, curd and ghee (five types of cow products or *pañcagavya*)

18 See: Vajracharya 1989, pp. 1-2, fn no. 10
19 A model of Saṃkalpavākya is given in Vajracharya 1989, pp. 3-4, fn no. 9
20 Ibid, pp. 3-25

**OFFERINGS OF BOILED RICE IN LEAF PLATES**
Fruits, flowers and incense are arranged around the altar. Gradually, all offerings of grains and pulses will be immersed into the fire.
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in a small vase while reciting a *mantra* and worshipping with *pañcopacāra*. Thereafter, the priest sprinkled the mixture onto deities, himself, the *yajamāna* and others present.[21]

6. The pot containing the red powder (*sindura*) was worshipped by the priest and then given to the wife of the head of the religious community. She offered *ṭikā* to the deities, the priest, other persons present and at last, she put it on her own forehead.[22] This ritual was performed to wish her husband a long life and to bring prosperity to the participants.

7. The *ratnamaṇḍalapūjā* [23] is the worship of a *mandala* drawn on the altar. The *yajamāna* made the *ratnamaṇḍala* (lit. "mandala of jewels") and performed *pañcopacārapūjā* on it. Thus, he gave respect to the priest who is also considered to be a guru, by offering water, rice and flowers.

8. The priest collected a handful of rice from each devotee, in this way giving them all the opportunity to participate in the ritual.

9. Pañcarakṣā and Dhāraṇī [24] texts were recited for protection.

10. The main priest drew a hexagram mandala (*trisamādhīmaṇḍala*) in front of the altar and worshipped it for the purpose of taming body, speech and mind.[25]

**CLARIFIED BUTTER IS POURED INTO THE FIRE**
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21 Ibid, p. 26
22 Ibid, pp. 27-32
23 Ibid, pp. 39-41
24 For major *dhāraṇīs*, see: Bajracharya 1995, pp. 11-28
25 Vajracharya 1989, p. 41, fn no. 10

**PREPARATION OF PUJA MATERIALS**
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**GANESH STATUE AND DOUGH FIGURINES**
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11. *Deśabali* (lit. "sacrifice to the country") was conducted[26] to 24 types of gods including Bhairava, demigods and also ghosts and spirits in order to appease them so that they would be satisfied and not create trouble.

12. For the fire sacrifice (*homa*) the main priest wore the ritual crown (*mukuṭābhiṣeka*) as a sign of his authority. A fire sacrifice of offerings "of thousand times" (*sahasrāhūtihoma*), requiring 32 kinds of grains and beans was performed to remove all obstacles and to fulfill *yajamāna's* desires. Buddhist scholar Shinobu Yamaguchi writes about the meditation performed in a *sahasrāhūti* fire sacrifice:

> "The priest meditates upon Samayagni (the fire god of promise), who is yellow-coloured with one face and four arms. He has a staff (*danda*) and a water jar (*kamandalu*) in his two left hands, and a rosary in one right hand. His other right hand shows a boon-giving gesture (*varadamudra*). He wears a yellow garment and, a crown decorated with the image of Vajrasattva. Having meditated, the priest invites Samayagni to the fireplace. Then he offers water, and flowers, etc., to the deity. Later, he draws Samayagni into the fire. Having done this, the priest pours clarified butter (*ghrta*) with a ladle into the fire one hundred eight times. The action is called *agnyahuti*. As soon as the butter is offered, eighteen kinds of fuel sticks (Nw. *homvi*), grains, beans, and milk are offered to Samayagni. Then the priest meditates upon Jnanagni (the fire god of knowledge). Later, the priest meditates that Samayagni and Jnanagni should be united as milk is mingled with water (*ksiraniram iva*)."[27]

During the *homa*, the priest offered fuel sticks, clarified butter and grains to the main deity (*devāhūti*). *Sahasrāhūtihoma* continued offering one thousand times the mixture of rice, ghee, milk and black sesame. Then, the offering "reminder of the oblations" (*śeṣāhūti*) was performed.[28] Yamaguchi further writes about the meditation of *śeṣāhūti*:

> "The priest meditates upon the *mandala* of Agni who was meditated in the Agnyahuti. He draws the mandala into his body, and meditates upon Agni again. Next, he offers the remainder of calcified butter and grains to Agni, reciting a prayer indicating that all the creatures should be happy."[29]

13. The priest worshipped a pot of curd (*dhaupati*), a vase (*kalaśa*) and an oil lamp (*sukundā*) symbolizing the Moon-god, the main deity, and Diwakar, the Sun god, respectively.[30] It is believed that the Sun and Moon are witnessing our everyday activities and recording our sins and virtues, which helps to decide whether a person will be rewarded or punished after this life.

14. The main part of this ritual was the transfer of the divinity from the caitya into the ritual vessel or vase (*kalaśa*) where it would reside during the restoration period. The vase was worshipped and the priest invoked the divinity by reciting *mantras*. A five-coloured ritual thread (*pancasūtra*) was then tied between the caitya

26 Vajracharya 2001, pp. 1-27
27 Yamaguchi 2001, p. 42
28 During every Buddhist or Hindu ritual, performing fire worship is considered auspicious. Unlike the common Hindu fire worship which follows the Vaśiṣṭhasūtra, the Newar Hindus follow the Kātyāyanasūtra. Buddhists also follow the same Kātyāyanasūtra for their fire rituals.
29 Yamaguchi 2001, p. 44
30 Vajracharya 1989, pp. 42-55

**GUIDIG THE DIVIITY ALONG A STRING**
The priest holds the string which will guide the divinity from the caitya to the sacred vessel where it will reside during the restoration.
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and the vessel, thus guiding the divinity towards the holy vase. The vase was then closed with a ball of the five-coloured thread. This concluded the ritual transfer of the divinity. The priest then offered sixteen kinds of substances (*ṣoḍaśopacāra*) and poured flowers and fruits from the household measuring pot (*siphaṃluyegu*) on the *kalaśa*. From this point onwards the workmen were allowed to start work on the caitya since the life-force of the divinity was no longer residing in it.

15. The directional deities were worshipped (*cākaḥpūjā*) followed by visits to the main stupa and the shrines of Dharmadhatumandala, Virupaksa, Mahakal and Shantipur to appease them also.[31]

16. After drawing a mandala offerings of rice and flowers were made (*kigatanegu*) and water poured on it.[32]

17. The dispersal ritual (*Visarjanapūjā*) was performed to send all gods and spirits back to their original residing places and to ask for forgiveness if any mistakes were made.[33]

31 Vajracharya 1989, p. 67
32 Ibid, pp. 68-70
33 Ibid, pp. 72-77

**FIRE PUJA**
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**BALI PŪJĀ**
During *balipūjā* milk and water are poured on a vessel representing Bhairava.
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18. After showing 16 kinds of *mudrā* (hand gestures), the priest performed curd worship (*dhaupati chāyekegu*) by placing a pot of curd on the pūjā plate and handing it to the wife of the *yajamāna* who in turn offered the curd to different deities. After this she bowed to her husband and returned the *pūjā* plate. The *yajamāna* then gave the *pūjā* plate to the priest and received *ṭikā* and flowers (blessings).

19. The ritual concluded when the priest received his fee (*dakṣiṇā*) for his services.[34] He also received donations (*dāna*) from the participants, which is one of the core elements of a ritual.

34 Vajracharya 1989, pp. 72-77

**WORSHIP OF THE DIVINITY**
The jar with the divinity (*nyāsa kalaśa*) is worshipped by five Vajracharya priests before the divinity is to be transferred into the renovated caitya.
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## *Jīvanyāsa Tayegu* or *pratiṣṭhā*

**TRANSFERRING THE DEITY BACK INTO THE STUPA**

Following the completion of the renovation work, the auspicious date of August 23, 2018, was chosen for the final rituals. Many well-wishers gathered to celebrate this grand event where members of the Buddhacharya families had prepared a great feast including Newari sweets of *yomari* and *catāmari.* The main priest, Vijay Vilash Bajracharya from Makhan, who bears the title of Śāntikarācārya,[35] and his assistant priests conducted the ceremonies. Also participating in the morning ritual were the five senior-most couples as *yajamānas* from Svayambhu: Birman Buddhacharya and his wife Tejmaya, Baburaja Buddhacharya and his wife Ratnamaya, Shantaraj Buddhacharya and his wife Maya, Mahendra Buddhacharya and his wife Nhuchemaya, and Nhuche Buddhacharya and his wife Sharan.

1. - 13. The rituals were almost identical to the ones performed when the deity was transferred out (*jīvanyāsa likayegu pūjā*). It is said that the repetition of the rituals makes the priest perfect and the deity more powerful.

14. Transferring the divinity back into the caitya (*jīvanyāsalikāyegupūjā*) was the reversed process of the transferring out ritual. The vase was worshipped and the priest invoked the divinity by reciting *mantras.* A five-coloured ritual thread (*pancasūtra*) was tied between the vase and the caitya to guide the divinity and thus ritually transfer it back into the newly renovated caitya. The offering of black soot to the divinity[36] marked the moment when the divinity took up residency in the caitya again and made it venerable. The water of the *mūlakalaśa* was poured on the

35 King Prachanda-deva, later known as Śāntikarācārya, consecrated Svayambhu during the Licchavi period. Two clans of Svayambhu priests and clients (*yajamāna*) claim descent from him.

36 See: Vajracharya 1989, pp. 33-38

**TRANSFER OF THE DIVINITY**
The priests wearing their crowns are holding the sacred thread that will guide the divinity towards the caitya.
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top of the caitya and a flag of white cloth (*patāḥ*) was installed. From the top of the caitya delicacies of y*omari* and *catāṃmari* were thrown to the crowd of well-wishers as a blessing. With wishes of auspiciousness in all directions, the caitya was adorned with a garland of eight auspicious symbols and five kinds of tree leaves (*aṣṭamaṅgal*).

15. The directional deities were worshipped (*cākaḥpūjā*), followed by visits to the main stupa and the shrines of Dharmadhatumandala, Virupaksa, Mahakal and Shantipur to appease them as well.

16. After drawing a mandala, offerings of rice and flowers were made (*kigatanegu*) and a stream of water poured on it.

17. The dispersal ritual (*Visarjanapūjā*) was performed to send all gods and spirits back to their original places of residence and to ask for forgiveness if any mistakes were made.

18. Offerings to the main deity (*purṇāhuti*) were put in the fire. These included *pañcapakavān* (ghee, betel, coins, sweets, and fruit), a sacred thread, bel-fruit, flowers, incense, sugarcane, sweets, medical plants and 32 kinds of grains and beans. Coconut was offered to the fire for the fulfilment of wishes.

19. The Queen of Basuki Nagaraj was worshipped at the pond located to the north of Svayambhu caitya.

20. The rituals concluded in the evening with the final fire sacrifice and the remains of the *bali* (ritual food including cooked rice, beans, etc.) were placed on a stone symbolizing the Goddess Kumari.

21. The devotees took back their statues that they had brought for receiving blessings.

**DAKSINA**
The priest gives tika to the participants and receives his fee.
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**YOMARIS AND CHATAMARIS ARE DISTRIBUTED FROM THE TOP OF THE CAITYA AS A BLESSING (*PRASAD*).**
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View of Svayambhu Hill | early 20th century | Courtesy of James Giambrone

**On April 25, 2015 the 8.1 magnitude Gorkha Earthquake caused severe destruction in Central Nepal. Thousands of historic monuments, particularly within Kathmandu Valley's seven World Heritage Monument Zones, were affected. Svayambhu, a central place of devotion for Buddhists and Hindus of Nepal, India and Tibet, lost many treasured buildings, among them the Mangal Bahudvara Caitya, which collapsed completely. This publication describes the tremendous joint effort of the religious community, Nepal's Department of Archaeology, UNESCO and numerous dedicated volunteers to realize the caitya's complete restoration.**

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