

Report on the Monuments of Northern Nepal

(Continued)

-Corneille Jest

Monuments Of Dolakha District

Temple Of Dharpa (Dharka Gyang)

Barabhise Panchayat

The temple of Dharpa can be considered as the model of the Dolakha district.

Dharpa is a Tamang settlement at an altitude of 1700 m, in the Barabhise panchayat.

The temple is part of a series of five houses built along a contour line on a steep slope.

Externally the building follows the domestic scale and design; the plan is rectangular (13, 20 m x 6, 80 m), two storeys and a pitched roof. It is built of rubble stone bedded in mud mortar. The exterior is plastered over and white-washed.

The structure stands on a low platform serving as a pathway and is protected by the overhanging roof.

The roof is covered with slates.

The assembly hall (4, 40 m X 6, 80 m) is accessible from the West.

Four pillars support the ceiling. The floor is made of planks.

On a wooden altar, images of Opame, Chenresi, Guru Rinpoche, Dorje Sempa, Maha Guru,

The murals representing the Tranquil and Fierce Divinities have been painted by Yolmo *Khepa* in 1936.

On a series of shelves there are 19 volumes of religious texts (among them the Yum).

The entrance porch has a finely carved door frame; on the wall paintings of the Four Guardian deities.

Present condition

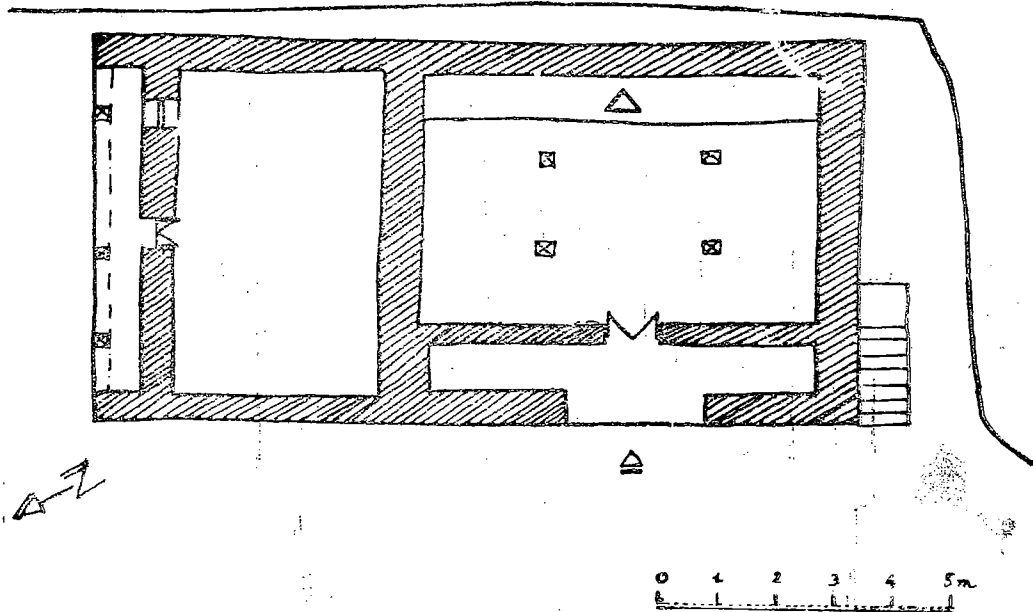
Some damage occurred during the 1934 earthquake. More recently the roof was repaired.

In 1955 a building was added to the northern side of the temple.

The Tika Lama is Lila Bahadur Lama, member of the Pakrin clan, and the benefactors of the temple are the villagers of Dharpa, Palati, Sanu Palati, Thulo Palati, Kosing Dharpa, Yarsa Kuna, Okreni.

altitude of 2250 m on a mountain slope South in the Danda Bartak range, in the district of Dolakha.

The different buildings are erected on a series of levels, the main temple occupying the



Dolakha District. temple of Dharpa.

temple extern. dim.: 13,20 X 6,80 m; includes houses of keeper.

Chapel: 4,40 X 6,80 m.

The keeper lives on the upper floor.

The temple owns 5 ropani of land (*Birtha*) (3 irrigated land, 2 dry land).

Religious ceremonies

Full moon of Baisakh (dance in honour of Padmasambhava)

Full moon of Bhadau

Full moon of Kartik

Full moon of Munsir (main festival, three days).

Monastery of Bigu

The monastery of Bigu is located at an

upper one, with a building housing a *Mani Dungyur*.

On a second level: the house of the head lama, a big *chorten* house with kitchen used during important ceremonies.

The lowest level is occupied by two long houses, the dwellings of the nuns (13 and 14 cells).

A few houses belonging to parents of the nuns are located above the settlement.

External dimensions of the important buildings

Temple: 17,50 m X 13,50 m

Mani-dungyur: 7,70 m X 8,50 m

Residence of head lama: 7,50 m X 6,80 m

Common kitchen: 8,10 m X 5,00 m

Guest house: 3,30 m X 5,90 m

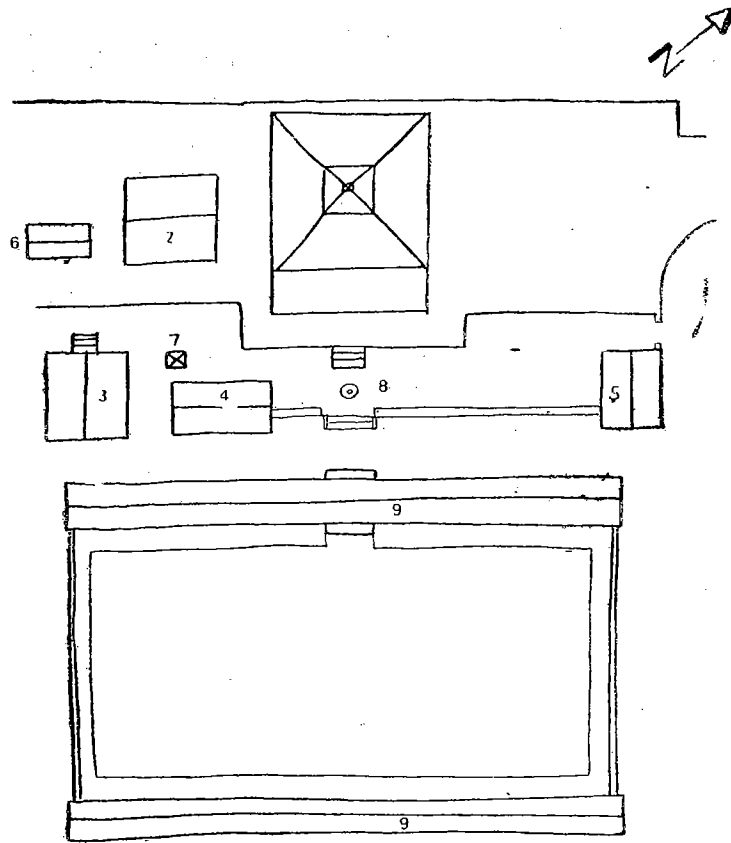
Nuns' quarters: 3,30 m X 45,00 m

Nuns' quarters: 3,30 m X 46,00 m

The main temple

The temple is an important single storeyed free standing building (extern. dim.: 17,50 X 13,50 m).

The walls are of stone bedded in mortar and the exterior is plastered over and white—



Dolakha district. Monastery of Bigu.

Plan of the site.

1. Main temple
2. Mani dungyur
3. House of the Head lama
4. Guest house
5. Communal kitchen
6. Shelter
7. Chorten
8. Paved courtyard
9. Nuns' quarters

washed, with a red parapet. It has only one small window on the East and West sides.

The building stands on its own plinth about 0,70 m in height, serving as a pathway for the devotees; it is protected by the overhanging roof.

A tiered roof system, with two tiers, has been introduced in 1959.

A flight of steps leads up to the entrance porch or lobby (10,20 m X 3,75 m-H: 3,20 m) and is open to the South. The ceiling is supported by four posts.

The walls of the porch are decorated with paintings (on cloth) representing the Wheel of Life and the Guardians of the Four Quarters. An inscription gives the details of the foundation.

Hanging from the first storey a curtain of yak hair protects from the wind and rain.

The assembly hall (11,50 m X 11,90 m-H: 3,00 m) is square in plan. The ceiling is supported by 6 pillars upon which rests a grid of beams and joists.

The floor is boarded with planks.

The altar, directly opposite the entrance porch, occupies the entire north wall. Set in painted frames, images of Chenresi, Padmasambhava, Sakyamuni, Avalokitesvara, Tonpa, Drolma.

The table of offerings supports a series of vases and butter lamps.

On the Eastern side there is a finely carved cupboard (*torgam*).

On the Eastern and Western walls terracotta images of the Eleven Headed Avalokitesvara are inserted on shelves.

On the southern wall a series of murals are painted.

Within the courtyard on the eastern side there is small one storey building serving as the communal kitchen and caretaker's quarter.

The house of the head lama (two storeyed), the Mani Dungyur, the kitchen and guest house are all built in the traditional local "Sherpa" style.

The roof is covered with slates. The craftsmanship is excellent.

Two long houses built on a platform contain the cells of the nuns.

Each quarter consists of a small room and a kitchen.

A fruit and vegetable garden separates the two houses.

Present condition

The foundations and walls are structurally sound.

The roof of the temple, a two tiered structure, has been built in 1959 and covered with tin sheets. The wooden structure has been adapted to accommodate new material, but the pitch is slightly too low and the whole structure is becoming instable.

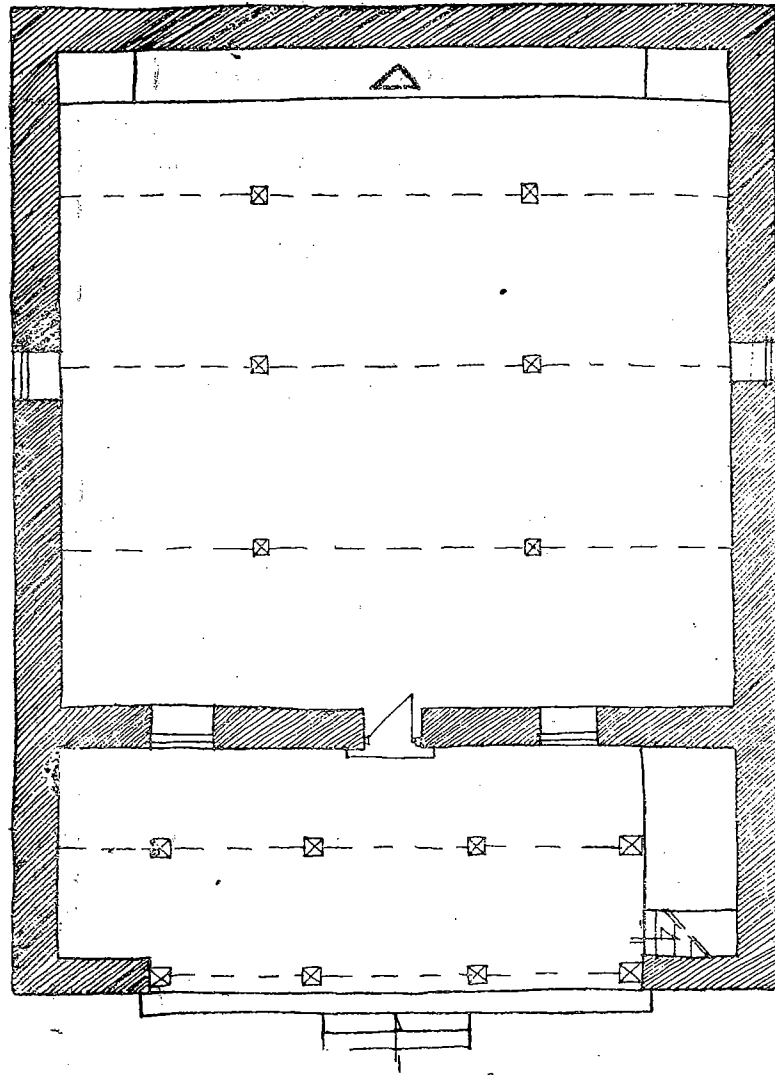
The roofs of the nuns (shingles) quarters are in bad condition.

The monastery is exclusively occupied by *Ani* or nuns, and a few old women who devote their time to religious practice and work in the fields. They are called *Zur-wa*, lit.: "The ones on the side".

The 30 nuns are natives from Bigu or surrounding areas, mostly Sherpa (from Dungle) and Tamang (Charikot, Sailung). They rely on financial support in kind from their families. They fulfill almost the same religious obligations as the monks.

The head of the community in a lama of the founder of the monastery.
the Drugpa Kagyu order.

Also living in Bigu from time to time : The monastery owns a few fields in
Lama Ngawang Khenrab Dorje, incarnation Alamphu, 17 cows and a water mill.



Dolakha district. Monastery of Bi, u, main temple
temple extern. div.: 17,50 X 13,50 m., Chapel: 12,50 X 11,90 m.

History of the foundation

Sherab Dorje, a lama of the Drugpa Kagyu sect founded the monastery in 1934 (year Wood-Dog). The place was given by a wealthy inhabitant of Alamphu: Nyima Pasang Sherpa (of the Ngonba clan). A few monks started to build a temple which was finished after one year.

The roof was covered with shingles. In 1959 Kusho Tsechu bought corrugated iron sheets from an old Rana palace in Kathmandu in order to replace the shingle roof.

The religious settlement is called : Tashi Chime Gatsal. It serves a vast area as a ritual and educational center, playing an important role in maintaining the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism.

Bigu is not very far from Lapchi, a famous site where Milarepa has meditated. Temples and shrines have been for eight centuries important places of pilgrimage.

The village temple of Bigu

There is also a village temple in Bigu, on a contour line, 100 m below the monastery (alt. 2480 m).

The temple (8,85 m X 8,10 m) is a single storeyed building. The entrance porch opens to the South-East.

Two posts support the ceiling. The upper part of the walls are covered with wooden pannels decorated with images of deities.

Old Mani Wall form a compound around the temple and a building containing a Mani Dungyur.

In the valley there are two other small temples, one in CHAGU, a Sherpa village, one in BULUGPA on the left bank of the Alamphu Khola.

Temple of Puri

Lhundrup Dechen-Ling

The temple of Puri is located in the Dolakha district, Tamjet Dudh-Pokhari village panchayat.

The building crowns an elevation at an altitude of 1400 m. The entrance and easy access is from eastern side, on the other sides the slopes are very steep, with a series of *chorten* and small shrines around the upper platform.

The building is of rectangular size (extern dim. : 6,60 m X 7,45 m). The walls are in random stones bedded in mortar. The pitched roof is covered with slates.

The entrance porch (1,00 m X 6,00 m) extends along the eastern facade.

The chapel (4,05mX6,50m-H: 2,40m): on the altar clay images of Mahakala, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, Palden Drugpa, Sangye Chomden, Dorje-Chang, Chenresi, Guru Rinpoche and small images of smaller size in wood or stone of Marpha, Shiva and Parvati, Shiva.

On the three walls a series of murals representing : Heruka, Avalokitesvara, Guru Dragmar, Dechog, Mindrugpa, Guru Rinpoche, Dorje Sempa, Kuntuzangpo.

The painter: Chandra Siddhi Lama from Rishingo.

Present conditions

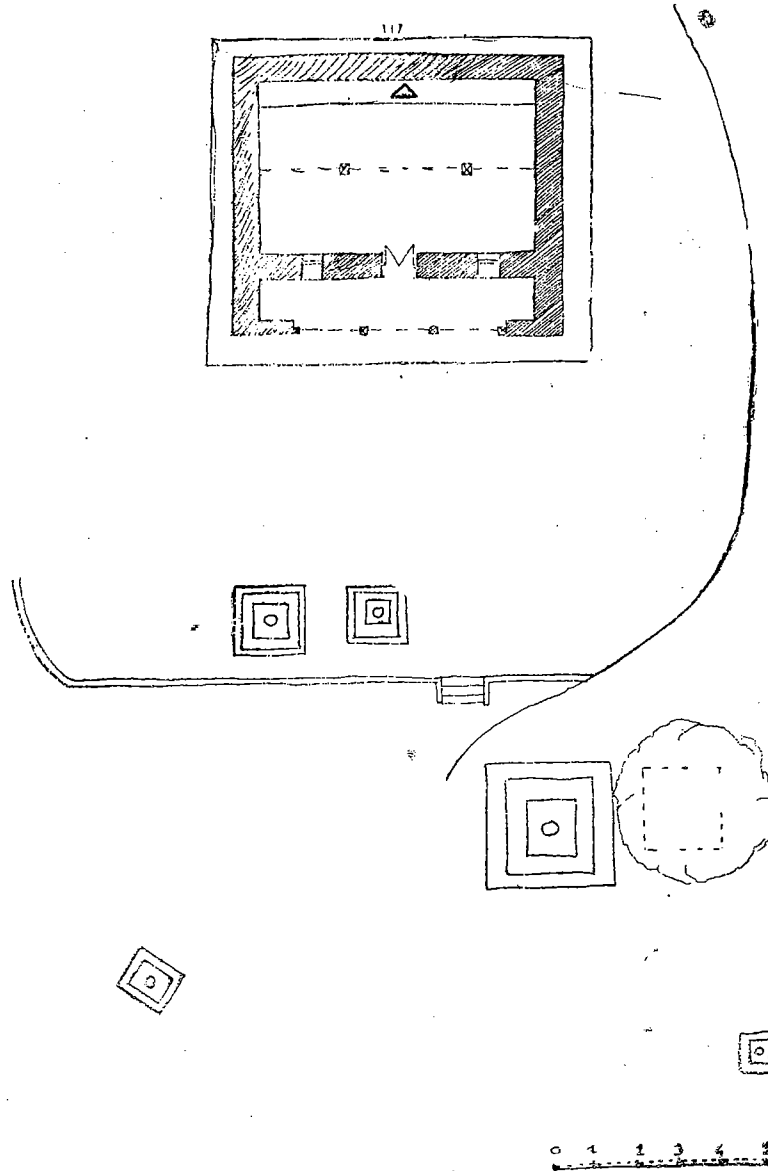
The timber is eaten by wood worms.

On the eastern side of the temple stand two *chorten* and lower down, two *chorten* containing the ashes of Lama Karma Wangyal, close to it the shrine of the Yidam.

The cultural and religious history of Puri needs to be related to the founder of the state of Bhutan, Ngawang Namgyal. A copper plate,

tama—patra, in Newari, dated 837 Nepal S. (1715 A.D.) by Raja Rajendraj Malla attributes a property to Lama Deo Dharma (a Bhutanese, in fact: Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal).

In a *Lalmohar* dated 1931 B. S., Jangabhadur Rana sanctioned a *Guthi* to Lama Labsum Palden Gelong, the document indicates the boundaries of the land. Another *Lalmohar* dated 1936 B. S. modifies slightly these limits.



Dolakha district. temple of Puri
temple extern. dim.: 6,60 X 7,75 m.
Chapel: 4,05 X 6,50 m.

In an official letter, *Kashog*, the head lama of Bhutan, S. Ngawang Namgyal gives his blessing to the religious community.

The temple has been rebuilt several times. It was destroyed by the 1934 earthquake.

The present building was rebuilt in 2030 B. S.—1973 A. D.

The head lama, Ngawang Gyamtso Yonzan, is a member of the Drugpa sect.

There are more than 90 religious members attached to the temple (40 of the Yonzan clan, 20 Muktan, 1 Ghising); half of them are painters and earn their living in selling tangkas to tourists in Kathmandu.

The temple has a *guthi* consisting of the revenue of rice fields (the size of 10 *pathi* of rice) and 13 *ropani* of dry fields.

The religious books have been destroyed in 1934.

Festivals

Full moon of Push.

Full moon of Chait.

Full moon of Saun/Janai Purni.

10th day of the festival of Dasain.

The religious dances, *cham*, are only performed during the after death ceremonies and special rituals such as Rabne.

Pilgrimage of Sailung

Sailung is a mountain ridge culminating at an altitude of 3100 m.

The devotees, mainly Tamang and members of Nepali castes, who come from three to four days journey around the mountain, offer milk, vermilion, rice, corn and butter lamps.

The cave is located at an altitude of 2020 m in a deep gorge on a tributary of the Chauri-Khola, three hours walk from Puri. The entrance faces South and is 8 m in height, 10 m in depth.)

It is a shrine dedicated to Shiva-Mahadev for the Hindus, and to Padmasambhava for the Buddhists.

Tridents (Trisul) and bells ornate the place. The main worship occurs on the full moon on the month of Push (in winter)

Another pilgrimage place, THULO SAILUNG, is also dedicated to Mahadev and located at an altitude of 3000 m, near the summit of the ridge (yearly festival at Chadradashi).

(To be continued)