## A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF LALITPUR (PATAN) WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BUDDHISM

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Dhanavajra Vajracharya was a great historian of Nepal. This article is dedicated to his memory by an anthropologist who could only marvel at Dhanavajra's scholarship and epigraphical skills. In a so far as it presents historical materials, this paper is a humble synthesis based entirely on secondary sources, and by no means exhausts these. I had the good fortune to meet briefly with Dhanavajra in his home in September 1992 and receive his guidance on a small aspect of the present text (see below, footnote 23). In a larger sense, all those who work on the culture and history of Nepal are in Dhanavajra's debt. In particular, those who work on the Kathmandu Valley must hope that his *Mallakālin Abhilekh*, so long unpublished, will finally see the light of day. The interpretations and suggestions offered below will certainly need revision when it does, as well as in the light of further study of both published and unpublished primary materials from the Malla period.

## Introduction: Lalitpur's Three Names

The city of Lalitpur is today known by three equally common names: Patan, Lalitpur, and Yala. An investigation of these three will take us far into both the history and the mythology of the city.

'Pāṭan' is the name used by Nepali-speakers, except in formal contexts, and the name by which the city has become known to most foreigners and in English. 'Lalitpur' is the formal name of the city preferred by its own inhabitants and official name both of the city and of the district of which it is part. 'Lalitpur' means 'beautiful city', and this, or variants with the same meaning, such as Lalitapattana, Lalitakramā, or Lalitabrumā, was its formal name in the Malla period. 'Pāṭan', the Nepali name, is an abbreviation of 'Lalitapattana'. 'Yala', usually pronounced 'Yelay', is what the city is called by Newars, especially by the inhabitants of the city themselves. It is probably the Newari form of 'Yūpagrāma', meaning 'village of the sacred

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pillar'. In the Licchavi period this was the name of the largest of the villages that were later to coalesce into the city of Lalitpur; Yūpagrāma included what is now Mangah, Lalitpur's central area (Slusser 1982:97). Local people, in so far as they give an explanation of the name 'Yala' at all, say rather that it derives from a Kirati king called Yalambar.

Before proceeding to examine what we know of the history of Lalitpur, let us consider first the myths and stories told by local people and found in their historical chronicles (vamśāvalī). These stories mostly account for the origin of some aspect of the city, or in one case of the city as a whole. It is important to emphasize that there are a considerable number of such traditions, and they are not synthesized or coordinated in a systematic fashion. The point is that they explain the existence of a local holy site or legitimate a particular local custom, ritual, or festival. Although these stories may possibly also preserve a kernel of historical truth, it is in their relationship to present-day monuments and activities that their greatest significance lies.

### Local Myths

The main foundation myth: King Bir Deva and Lalita Jyāpu All the late chronicles, dating from the nineteenth century, ascribe the foundation of Lalitpur as a city to a king called Bir (Vīra) Deva, the father of King Narendra Deva who brought the famous god Karunamaya-Matsyendranath to Nepal from Assam.<sup>2</sup> In actual fact, although Narendra Deva certainly did exist, as did his Buddhist preceptor Bandhudatta Acarya who, according to the legends, helped to bring Karunamaya to Nepal, King Bir Deva is a fabrication of the myths. The stories about Narendra Deva. Bandhudatta, and Rathacakra Jyapu bringing Karunamaya to Lalitpur probably grew up around a real event: the establishment of Karuṇāmaya's annual chariot festival at some point between 644 and 680 C.E. by King Narendra Deva, who was described by a Chinese ambassador as wearing a Buddha on his belt (Locke 1980:297). Since the cult of Karunamaya-Matsendranath is so important to the city of Lalitpur, it can be understood why the chronicles postulated that the city itself had been founded in the generation just before the cult's establishment. (In fact, although the cult has always been important to Lalitpur, the divinity only began to spend half the year in the city of Lalitpur itself some time in the seventeenth century, as discussed below.)

There are several accounts of Bir Deva's foundation. Here, in translation from the Nepali, is one of the fullest of them (Lamshal 1966: 1-3, Ms. ka):

[Next came] his son, King Śrī Bir Deva, who ruled for sixteen years. He consulted Brahmans, astrologers, and Buddhist ācāryas, and

instructed his obedient subjects that he was extremely intent on founding several cities. In this connection he used to perform regular devotions to the supreme lord Sarveśvara [i.e. the shrine of Śiva called Kumbheśvar, in the northern part of present Lalitpur].

The king used to sit at the window of his palace, and he regularly saw a leprous grasscutter going to cut grass. One day he was astonished to see that very grasscutter going by with his leprosy all cured and looking very handsome. So he asked him how it was that he now looked so well, and the grasscutter, who was called Lalita, replied: "Great King! Yesterday I went to the southern side of the Bagmati river into the Lalita wood in order to cut grass. I became hot and went to a place where there was a pond, took off my clothes, stuck my carrying pole into the ground, and went to bathe. When I came out of the water my leprosy was all gone. The carrying pole was stuck and I could not pull it out. I thought it must be *siddha* (instantly established as a god)." The king was happy to hear this and said: "Show me this place."

He showed the king the place, and the king returned to his palace. Since Lalita had been entirely cured of leprosy through the Lord's compassion, even though he was a grass-cutter the king made him his minister. Still today, the carrying stick which became *siddha* can be seen at a place called Jhyatāpol to the south of Kumbheśvar.

Being devoted to Sarveśvara, the king had it in mind to establish a city, and some time later Sarveśvara appeared to him in dream. He said: "Oh King! To make the city, cut down Lalita wood. [Design it] in accordance with the 24 elements (tattva) and in the shape of a śrī yantra [i.e., a mandala], and make your minister Lalita the architect (arkhatayārī). Establish our three self-existent śivalingas³ within the city. You too will be saved (uddhār)."

Thus in the bright half of the month of Phālgun, in the year of Kaligat era [blank],<sup>4</sup> at the auspicious moment the minister Lalita inaugurated the building of the new city in accordance with the king's command. In this way the king spent much wealth. He made 24 tol [localities, twāḥ] representing the 24 elements, and established water fountains, wells, ponds, gods and goddesses. Since it was extremely beautiful, he called it Lalitapattana, and he made it into a city by joining it up with Matiligrāma.

He established the following goddesses [outside the city]: Bāl Kumārī in the east, Thache Mahālakṣmī in the south, Kasūti Kumār in the south-east, Yappā Vaiṣṇavī in the west, Nyekhukwā Rudrāyanī

in the west, Lohagal Indrayani in the north-west, Dhatila Varahi in the north, and Sikabahi Camunda in the north.5

This king left Sikharapur palace and came to live in the Lalitapattana palace. Being called Lalita, and made famous under that name, the resting house called Lalitapur to the south of Kumbheśvar is still there today. In this king's time chariots were made for the following gods and the custom was established of having the people celebrate their festivals in the various localities of Lalitpattana from Baisākh śukla 11 until the full moon: Matilinagar's Mīnnāth-Jatādhārī Lokeśvara, Dhālākṣa's Lokanāth, Matilinagar's Batuk Bhairay, Satha's Narayana, Calakse's Harisankar, Kolima's [Kulimha's] Maheśvara.6

The main elements of this story are known to most people in Lalitpur. The carrying stick of the peasant (Jyapu) Lalita is still pointed out, a tall, leaning stone column in Jhyatāpah twāh [1] (see map). Opposite it there is indeed a long, ancient, two-storeyed sattah known locally as Laltapur.7 According to Wright's chronicle Bir Deva placed 330 million gods in this dharmaśalā, "passed the rest of his life worshipping [them], and then obtained salvation." Some say, however, that the carrying stick of Lalita is the much shorter column inside the small temple-like structure built over the spring inside the compound of the Kumbhesvar temple [3]. The fact that the foundation story focuses on the site of the Kumbheśvar temple [4] is a reflection of the ancientness of the general area, which is rich in Licchaviperiod remains, and also a reflection of the fact that Kumbheśvar is the biggest and most important Siva temple in the city.

The idea that the city should consist of twenty-four twah persisted but is not so generally accepted or as important as in Bhaktapur. Many accounts say that Lalitpur has 24,000 houses, which is very likely an ideal number reflecting the importance of the number 24 (e.g., A. K. Vairacharva 1982:87). In 1717 leaders of each of the 24 twah went to welcome the new king, Mahindra Simha, from Kathmandu (D. Vajracharya and T. Shrestha 1978:191).

## Rathācakra Jyāpu and the Bringing of Karunāmaya

As noted above, the cult of Karunamaya-Matsyendranath is of particular importance to the city of Lalitpur. Of the three mythological figures who brought him there, the king, Narendra Deva, is supposed to have been from Bhaktapur, the Buddhist priest, Bandhudatta, from Kathmandu, and the humble porter, Rathãcakra Jyāpu, from Lalitpur. None the less, by a kind of trick, the divinity ended up in Lalitpur.8

There is in the popular mind an assimilation of the two peasant figures, Rathācakra and Lalita (e.g., Locke 1980:248, 252), the former responsible for bringing Karuṇāmaya to the city, the latter for founding the city itself. The founding of the city and the establishment of its most important god are thereby assimilated. As Toffin (1993: 119-22) has pointed out in a recent analysis, Newar, and indeed Asian, cities frequently begin, in myths at least, with the establishment of a presiding deity: in the mythical, Hindu version, this is Kumbheśvar whose importance in the daily lives of most of the city's inhabitants is certainly less than that of Karuṇāmaya. In fact, as mentioned already, during the Licchavi period when Narendra Deva probably inaugurated Karuṇāmaya's festival, Lalitpur as such did not yet exist. But it is certainly possible that the establishment of the festival was part of the process by which the older settlements grew into an important city.

### Associations with the Kirāti kings

Lalitpur has more associations with the pre-Licchavi, and pre-historical, Kirati period than either Bhaktapur or Kathmandu. There is a mound in Patuko twāh known to locals as 'the palace of the Kiratis' [5]. It is sited at a crossroads one block north and east of the present palace: could it have had some ritual, or even political, significance in the pre-Licchavi period? Archaeological excavations at this site might reveal much about the early history of the city.

The myths of origin of Kwā Bāhāḥ [6] refer to oppression by supposedly anti-Buddhist Kiratis. The god of Kwā Bāhāḥ instructed the young priest to throw boiled rice at the crossroads of Kwālakhu, just north of the so-called Kirati Darbar; this turned into hundreds of bees which chased the Kiratis away to Cyāsaḥ twāḥ [7] where eight hundred (cyā saḥ) of them died (hence the name). The survivors, the story concludes, became the present-day Vyañjankār (Tepay) caste, who live in Cyāsah.

Apparently there are still further connections with Kiratis, in that still today some Kiratis (i.e., Rais and Limbus) worship at temples in Lalitpur (Slusser 1982:96). The (relatively weak) tradition that the city's name 'Yala' derives from that of a famous Kirati king, Yalambar, has already been noted. Wright's chronicle (1972:109) makes him the first of the Kirati kings; but it also says that the Kiratis did not come to Lalitpur until the twenty-eighth king, Patuka, was forced to move his palace from Gokarna to Patuko (ibid.:112).

### The Visits of Lord Buddha and Emperor Aśoka

The chronicles include mentions of putative visits by both Sakyamuni Buddha and the Emperor Asoka to the Kathmandu Valley. It is highly

unlikely that either ever came there. Most make no specific connection with Lalitpur, although Padmagiri's chronicle (Hasrat 1970:21) does say that shortly afterwards Buddhists and Śaivites (followers of Lord Śiva) became distinguished from each other, and "the cities of Devapatan, Kantipur [Kathmandu], Lalitpur and Bhaktapur were built and peopled." Some claim that the city's circular shape is meant to recall the Buddha's wheel of the Dharma (Oldfield 1981 1:117), but this is not found in local sources, to the best of my knowledge.

Although Aśoka is not supposed to have visited Lalitpur, which even on the chronicles' account did not yet exist, he is thought to have constructed the four large stūpas which exist in each of the four directions of Lalitpur, three outside the city boundaries, the northern one just inside it. Although no documentary evidence supports it, their shape is certainly very archaic. Aśoka is also credited with establishing the numerous Licchavi-period caityas which are known locally as aśokacaitya. It is said that he left in hurry, before he had time to establish Buddhas in the niches, which is why they are so often empty.

## King Sarvānanda and Guita Twāh

In the first world age, the Satya Yuga, a king called Sarvānanda gave alms that he had earned by his own effort as a blacksmith's apprentice to the Buddha Dīpankara. His city, known as Dīpavatī, is supposed to be on the site of present-day Guita [8]. Sarvānanda's alms-giving is celebrated every year in Lalitpur with the festival of Pañcadān during the Buddhist holy month of  $G\bar{u}l\bar{a}$ . Alms are given to Śākya and Vajrācārya men and to children of both sexes who circulate from monastery to monastery and house to house.

## The Creation of Mangah (Mangal Bazaar) [9]

According to Wright's choronicle, Bir Deva established the various gods and a royal palace at the centre of the city:

... he built a chaitya and a dhārā [water fountain], and erected a Sivaling, a Ganesha, a Mahākāla, and a Mandapa, and built a Durbār for the Rāja, all of which he consecrated. Being a devotee of Mani Joginī, he named all these after that goddess as follows: Mani-talāva [i.e., Taleju in the royal palace], Mani-chaitya, Mani-dhārā, Manilinga, Mani-Ganesha, Mani-Kumāra, Mani-Mahākāla, Mani-Mandapa, and Mani-gal-bhatta (Wright 1972:136)

This is intended as an explanation of the name for the centre of the city.9

The Licchavi Period (5th-9th centuries)

Lalitpur is certainly one of the oldest inhabited areas of the Kathmandu Valley. We know this because of the abundance of remains, including inscriptions, Buddhist caityas, and sculptures, to be found there. There were three villages connected by an irrigation channel called Thambu, Gansul, and Mūlavātikā (D. Vajracharya 1973:401-4). Near the present Sundhārā/Lũhitī [10] was a village called Mātin where in 610 C.E. Amsuvarman rebuilt a crumbling temple and turned land that had previously been property of the crown over to the local corporate group (pāñcālī) for the temple's future upkeep (ibid.:339-41; Sharma 1983:32). The present locality of Guita was included in a village called Gullamtanga (of which 'Guita' is surely the abbreviated form). In 679 King Narendradeva assigned it and its lands to the upkeep of Śivadeva Vihāra (Buddhist monastery). 10 What is now Su Bāhāh twāh [11] was probably part of this village. Another village may well have been sited in what is now Cyāsaḥ twāḥ, since there are many Licchavi remains there also. The main areas of Licchavi settlement seem therefore to have been what are now the north, east, and south quadrants of the city. In subsequent centuries, as these villages began to form one city, the settlement spread westwards.

Largest of all in the Licchavi period was the settlement known as Yūpagrāma (Yūpa village). This seems to have stretched from present-day Mangah as far south as Tangah Bahah [12]. It is likely that the Newari name of Lalitpur, Yala, comes from yalasī, now usually pronounced yasī, the name of the tall poles erected during various festivals, but particularly during Yenyah (Indra Jatra) The Sanskrit yūpa refers to the sacrifical pole used during Vedic rituals, but could also be used for the poles erected in honour of Indra. 'Yūpagrāma' would then be an honorific and Sanskritized version of the local name. By 724 C.E. at the end of the Licchavi period, Yūpagrāma, like the settlement of Daksinakolīgrāma in the southern part of what is now Kathmandu, had been raised from the status of a village to that of town (dranga) because of its flourishing commerce (D. Vajracharya 1987:360). At this time the town was divided into several sections (pāñcālī). Some of their names are known: Gigvala, Jajje, Tegvala, and Yūgvala. Tegvala is the present-day Tangal. However, it now seems clear that, contrary to what some earlier historians believed, the capital of the Kathmandu valley in the Licchavi period was never in Lalitpur, but rather in Hadigaon, or, according to some, in Kathmandu.

The kings of the Licchavi period supported both Hinduism and Buddhism. Up till Amsuvarman, Vaisnavism was the favoured court cult, thereafter Śaivism. But Buddhism was always important, as can be clearly seen from Amśuvarman's Hadigaon inscription of 608. In this the important deities and personages of the kingdom are listed with the tribute due to each (table 1).

We do not know just how this tax, called the śrāvaṇikā, was paid. Presumably it would have been impossible for every household to pay such amounts to all these different recipients (Sharma 1983:46-7). What the inscription does tell us is that two parallel hierarchies were envisaged, one of gods and the other of men. What significance can be given to Brahmans being ranked so low in this particular revenue hierarchy is unclear, since they certainly were given high honour by the Licchavi kings, who described themselves as supporters of the caste system (varṇāśrama-vyavasthā). For present purposes what is really important is that the highest spiritual rank is given to two Hindu temples, Paśupati and Cāngu Nārāyaṇ, listed first, and to five Buddhist monasteries. In the second rank come all other Buddhist monasteries and ten Hindu temples (the five ending with '-eśvara' can be assumed to be Śiva temples). It is evident that Buddhism was of great importance at this time.

Four of these five top-ranking monasteries were situated in what is now Lalitpur, showing that the association of Lalitpur with Buddhism is very old. The fifth, Gū Vihāra, was at Vajrayoginī in Sankhu, a site still known by that name. Other lesser monasteries in Lalitpur were Abhayaruci Vihāra, Caturbhālaṭasana Vihāra, and Vārtakalyāṇagupta Vihāra (D. Vajracharya 1973:505). Of all these monasteries in Lalitpur, only one has a tenuous connection to a currently existing institution. Cuka Bāhāh [13] in the south of the city has as its formal name, Mānadeva-saṃskārita-Cakra-mahāvihāra, that is, the Cakra great monastery founded by Mānadeva. Wright's chronicle, which was written in Lalitpur, records the tradition that Mānadeva abdicated in favour of his son and become a monk in the monastery he had founded. However, no ancient remains at the present site confirm these accounts (Locke 1985:135).

# The Thakuri or Transitional Period (c. 879-1200) and the early Malla period (1200-1382)

The first time that we come across a form of the modern honorific name for the city is in 920 C.E., when it occurs as Lalitabrumā (Petech 1984:31). Thereafter it occurs frequently in inscriptions and in the colophons to manuscripts as Lalitabrumā, Lalitakramā, Lalitapur, Lalitapurī, or Lalitapattana. In ordinary speech we can be fairly sure that, then as now, the city was known as Yala, since it is almost always referred to as in the Gopāla Rāja chronicle Yahra written at the end of the fourteenth century.

Table 1: Recipients of taxes in Amsuvarman's Hadigaon inscription of 608.

Paśupati	6 purāṇa 2 paṇa
Dolasikharasvāmī [= Cāngu Nārāyan]	6 purāna 2 paņa
Gum Vihāra	6 purāna 2 paņa
Śrī Māna Vihāra	
,	6 purāna 2 paņa
Srī Rāja Vihāra	6 purāna 2 pana
Kharjūrikā Vihāra	6 purāna 2 pana
Madhyama Vihāra	6 purāna 2 pana
other ordinary vihāras	3 purāna 1 pana
Rāmeśvara	3 purāna 1 pana
Hamsagrha Deva	3 purāna 1 pana
Māneśvara	3 purāna 1 pana
Sāmbapur	3 purāna 1 pana
Vāgvatīpārikā Deva	3 purāna 1 pana
Dhārāmāneśvara	3 purāna 1 pana
Parvateśvara	3 purāņa 1 paņa
Narasimha Deva	3 purāna 1 pana
Kailāseśvara	3 purāna 1 pana
Bhumbhukkikā-jalaśayana	• • •
[= Bhuijasī/Budhanīlkantha]	3 purāna 1 pana
other temples of the gods	2 purāna 2 pana
to the King	6 purāna 2 pana
to sapelā pāñcālīs	6 purāna 2 pana
ordinary pāñcālīs	3 purāna 1 paña
people supported by palace	2 purāna 2 pana
gosthikā (gosthī members)	2 purāna 2 pana
people supported by king's favour	1 purāna
Brahmans	1 purāna
ordinary people	[inscription not clear]

Source: D. Vajracharya 1973:320ff.

It was in the tenth and eleventh centuries that the centre of Lalitpur came to be called Mānigwala, or Mānigala, which today has become Mangaḥ or Mangal. The name probably comes from the old Newari meaning 'central place (gvala)' (Slusser 1982:111), and it is called "Lalitakramā's central tolka [twāḥ], Mānīgvala" an inscription of 1114 (Petech 1984:53). This old meaning has been lost. The name is understood today either to mean mangal, an auspicious event, or to be a compound from maṇi-, jewel, as in the myth from Wright's chronicle quoted above.

The political history of this period is complicated and confusing. Power was much more decentralized than either before or after. The period after the Licchavi dynasty until 1200 is known as the Thakuri period because the late chronicles fill it with three Thakuri dynasties. Historically, the information they give is inaccurate, but the name has stuck. The dynastic links of the kings between 879 and 1200 are unclear. From 1200 to 1258 the early Malla dynasty ruled. Between 1258 and 1382 two separate dynasties, the Tipura and Bhonta families, based in Bhaktapur and Banepa respectively, shared power: sometimes they did so peacably, alternately providing the king, at other times they fought each other and invited in outsiders when they were out of power. During this period of wars and invasions, Lalitpur provided the capital of the valley for some of the time, according to Petech (1984:67, 188). Throughout the period it was important for those aspiring to power to hold Lalitpur's royal palace, Manigala, and they fought over it frequently.

Buddhism remained significant in Lalitpur. A large number of Buddhist manuscripts were copied there throughout this period, when other historical sources are scarce. One of the most important monasteries of this period was Uku Bāhāḥ, in the south-east of the city [14]. Formally it is known as Śivadeva-samskārita-Rudravarna-mahāvihāra, that is, the great Rudravarna monastery built by (or renovated by) King Sivadeva. Historians disagree whether this is the Licchavi king Śivadeva, who reigned 590-604 and is known to have founded monasteries, or the Thakuri period Śivadeva who reigned from 1098 to 1126 (Locke 1985:95), Kölver and Śakya 1985:14). It was noted above that Narendra Deva assigned lands in Guita to support a Sivadeva monastery in 679, but it is more likely that this monastery was in the environs of Paśupati (D. Vajracharya 1973:503). In any case Lalitpur's Uku Bāhāh was certainly flourishing on the present site by the eleventh century. For many centuries the monastery was known honorifically as the Rudravarma monastery, rather than the present Rudravarna moastery. 11 The name probably came from a local nobleman called Rudra Varman who made endowments to the monastery in 1065 (Kölver and Śākya 1985:14).

Other monasteries that we know to have existed already in the Thakuri and early Malla periods are Su Bāhāh, known then as Sālako Vihāra, and Ha Bāhāh, then known as Hatako Vihāra. At this time, Ha Bāhāh was probably located on the site of the southernmost courtyard of the royal palace, Sundarī Cok, built by King Siddhi Narasimha in 1647. The tradition that the monastery was moved to enable the palace to be expanded is well attested. 12 Two monasteries to the south of the city probably also existed at this time: Tanga Bāhāh [12] and Ta Bāhāh [17]. Tangal twāh, as noted above, is an old one. The Sanskritic name of Tanga Bāhāḥ, Jyeṣṭhavarṇa-mahāvihāra (jyeṣṭha means 'first-born'), is an indication of its seniority, which was acknowledged in the later Malla period. The first inscriptional evidence for Tanga Bāhāh comes from 1135. The site of Ta Bāhāh is possibly equally old, though it seems likely that the present membership came from elsewhere in the seventeenth century. Finally Kwā Bāhāh [6], the monastery with the largest membership today, may date from this period. Although the earliest inscriptional evidence dates only from 1399, a strong local tradition claims that it was founded by Bhaskara Deva; he reigned from 1045-7. The Thaku Juju ('Thakuri King') family, living in the nearby Nhū Bāhāh [18], are believed to be the descendants of the founder, and they still fulfil the important ritual role of sponsor for initiations in the monastery and for the five-yearly festival of Samyak. It is possible that at this early period Kwa Bāhāh was known as Yã Bāhāh; Wright's chronicle makes a reference to Yã Bāhāh (1972:237), and still today the members of Kwā Bāhāh are known colloquially, not as one might expect as kwābāhāsā, but as yambāhāsā.

Buddhism was of such importance in Lalitpur that the two halves of the city were occasionally called 'Northern Monastery' (uttara vihāra) and 'Southern Monastery' (dakṣin vihāra). 13 However, the greatest centre of Buddhism at this period seems not to have been Lalitpur but Svayambhū. It was there and at the famous Thã Bahī in Kathmandu, founded or reformed by Atīśa, that he and Dharmasvāmin stayed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The only other site mentioned in their biographies is the monastery of Būgadyaḥ (Karunāmaya) in Būga (Bungamati) (Petech 1984:41-3; Locke 1980:300; Locke 1980:410-12). There is also a reference to Sanskrit grammar and logic being taught to Tibetan Buddhists in Lalitpur (Roerich 1976:447); among several Nepalese paṇḍits mentioned in The Blue Annals was one Mahākarunā, "the great upāsaka [layman] of Ye-ran [Lalitpur]" (ibid.:361; cf. 382, 384).

## The later Malla period (1382-1768)

In 1382 Sthiti Malla became king, consolidating formally the supreme power he had held for some time. Under him, and under his grandson, Yaksa

Malla, who reigned from 1428 to 1482, Nepal was unified and generally peaceful. During this time the capital was in Bhaktapur, but both Kathmandu and Lalitpur were kept up as royal centres too. After Yaksa Malla the kingdom was divided, as had often happened before, between the king's sons. From 1516 (Petech 1984:182) until 1597 Lalitpur was effectively independent of the Mallas and was ruled by the important noblemen of the town, especially Visnu Simha (1546-56) and his son, Purandara Simha (1560-97). In 1597 King Śiva Simha of Kathmandu conquered Lalitpur, but after his death in 1619 his domain was divided. Lalitpur going to one grandson, Siddhi Narasimha, and Kathmandu to another, Laksmī Narasimha, father of the famous Pratāp Malla.

Lalitpur, as it is today, is essentially a creation of three kings, Siddhi Narasimha (reigned 1619 to 1660), his son Śrī Nivās (reigned 1660 to 1684), and his son, Yog Narendra (reigned 1684 to 1705). By 1641 Śrī Nivas was already sharing administrative responsibilities with his father, and he became joint king from 1649. Yog Narendra took a leaf from his father's book, and pushed him into religious retirement in 1684 or 1685. two years before his death. 14 Yog Narendra himself was poisoned at the age of 39; contemporary sources ascribe this to an agent of the people of Bhaktapur, whose city he was besieging. From 1705 to 1768, when the city was taken by the Gorkhalis under Prithvi Nārāyan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal and ancestor of the present king, Lalitpur was ruled by a succession of weak and short-lived monarchs. Real power reverted to the descendants of the noblemen who had dominated the city in the sixteenth century.

It will evident how much the city owes to the rulers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries if we examine the collection of monuments which make up Lalitpur's superb palace square. Two temples in the palace square date from the sixteenth century, both built by Purandara Simha: the Car Nārāyan temple [19] in 1566 in memory of his father, and the small Narasimha temple [20] in memory of a dead brother, in 1589. The palace in the centre of the city was built as it is today by Siddhi Narasimha and Śri Nivās. Siddhi Narasimha built the Viśveśvara [21] temple in 1627 and the famous Krsna temple [22] in 1637. Śrī Nivās built the small Nārāyan temple [23] in 1652, and the Bhimsen temple [24], which is so important for shopkeepers, artisans, and farmers of the city, in 1681. Śrī Nivās's minister, Bhagirath Bhaiyā built the Bhai Deval [25] in 1678 as a replica of the Viśvanath temple of Benares, destroyed by the iconoclastic Moghul emperor, Aurangzeb, in 1669. Of the two other main temples in the square, the Sankara-Narayan temple [26] was built in 1706 by Yog Narendra's

sister, Rudramatī, and the Cyāsī ('eight-sided') Deval [27] in 1723 by his daughter Yogamatī, in memory of her son, Lok Prakāś, who was king for less than a year and died of smallpox at the age of 8.

The rulers of Lalitpur in this period defined their position in predominantly Hindu terms, which can be seen by the fact they filled their palace and its square entirely with Hindu gods. They themselves traced their descent from Rāma, an incarnation of Visnu, and claimed to be partial incarnations of Visnu. They were usually very pious, performing numerous Hindu devotions and taking initiations from Hindu priests. Yet they found themselves ruling a predominantly Buddhist population.

While we do not know if this was so in the Licchavi period, it can be said with considerable certainty that the vast majority of the ordinary people of Lalitpur in the Malla period were more Buddhist than Hindu in orientation. As today, they mostly had Buddhist Vajrācārya priests, and their most important god, Karunāmaya (Būgadyah, later to be called Matsyendranāth), was Buddhist. The strength of Buddhism in the city can be measured by the number of Vajrācāryas and Śākyas, who together form the Buddhist clergy. Of the entire number in the Valley as a whole today, 46.5% live within Lalitpur, 32.3% in Kathmandu, and only 11.7% in Bhaktapur and surrounding villages. (The remainder live in villages in what used to be Lalitpur's kingdom, such as Buga, Barega, Way [Chapagaon], and Durukhyah.) These present-day proportions surely reflect the distribution of Buddhist clergy in the late Malla period also. Similarly, John Locke's survey of all the monasteries of the Valley found 166 monasteries of different sorts in Lalitpur, 113 in Kathmandu (including Cā Bahīl and Svayambhū), and 23 in Bhaktapur. The vast majority of these date back to the Malla period.

How did the Hindu Malla kings deal with this situation of a largely Buddhist populace? Essentially by two complementary strategies. In the first place they accepted the principal cult of the city, that of Karuṇāmaya or Būgadyah; in this and other contexts they occasionally made use of the services of Vajrācārya priests. But secondly, they propagated a Hindu interpretation of it and at the same time tried to mould their subjects' rituals and practices so that they would be in line with Hindu norms. In other words, Buddhism, with its priests, gods, and rituals, was given a valid place, but encapsulated within a broader Hindu framework. In this Hindu framework, Brahmans had ultimate spiritual authority, and Buddhist priests were considered lower, more specialized ritual technicians. There is some evidence that Buddhism was considered a suitable religion for people of low status, though Buddhists themselves usually reject such an association.

High-born kings and their courtiers were the only ones who could have Brahmans as their family priests and the only ones entitled to receive Hindu Tantric initiations (Regmi 1965 1:644).

Before considering the steps the Hindu kings took to Hinduize the practices of their Buddhist subjects, a brief sketch of Newar Buddhism must be provided. The most important point to note is that the Buddhist clergy in the Malla period, as today, did not consist of an order of celibate monks drawn from the lay population. Rather it consisted of a hereditary caste, like Brahmans in the Hindu caste system. This caste was and is formed from two intermarrying sections, called Vajrācārya (meaning 'Masters of the Diamond' i.e. of the Diamond Way, Vajrayāna) and Śākya (short for Śākyabhikṣu, 'Buddhist monk', or for Śākyavaṃśa, of the Buddha's lineage'). The short form was adopted only in this century, as its bearers became more ambivalent about the monastic claim being made by it. Until then 'Śākyabhikṣu' was always the most common form of the name in Kathmandu, whereas from about 1615 'Śākyavaṃśa' was most popular in Lalitpur. 15

Vajrācārya and Sākya men are, so to speak, married, householder monks. They become members of a monastery by going through a four-day Monastic Initiation in that monastery. Thereafter they have certain rights and duties there. They are responsible for the daily worship in the monastery according to a roster. With time and seniority they may become one of the elders of the monastery. Their sons may be initiated into the monastery only if they marry a Vajrācārya or a Śākya girl. Vajrācārya men, in addition, have a further right, to be priests for lay people as Brahmans are for lay Hindus. In the past those Vajrācāryas with a large number of parishioners (jajmān) could live from the priesthood alone, something not considered possible today. Other Newars, including the kings, treated the Vajrācāryas and Śākyas as Buddhist monks, giving them alms on various occasions, visiting their Buddhist monasteries, and showing by their use of respectful language that they considered them superior to all lay people. Though married, they maintained a religious style of life, keeping their heads shaved and spending much time on religious ritual and devotions.

By contrast, Buddhism in the Licchavi period was certainly of what is conventionally regarded as the more orthodox sort. There were monasteries inhabited by permanently celibate monks, who might be drawn from the local population or have come from India. It seems likely that married Vajrācārya priests first appeared in the Valley by the tenth or eleventh century, since parallel developments are documented for India as early as the fifth or sixth century. The present system was certainly in place by 1440,

when a document from Om Bāhāḥ specifies rules of the type in place today (Sakya and Vaidya 1970:29-31; Locke 1980:42 fn. 44). Between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries celibate monks and married practitioners probably coexisted, with celibates gradually dying out. The last recorded celibate monk resident in Lalitpur before the modern period was one Vanaratna, born in Bengal in 1384, who had studied in Tibet. He spent the last years of his life living in Pintu Bahī [28] in the north of the city, where he was greatly respected and performed three large alms-giving ceremonies; he died there, a few months after the last one, in 1468 (Roerich 1976:797-804; G.V. Vajracharya 1987).

Even after that time, however, Newars maintained contact with Tibetan Buddhsim, since many of them went to Tibet to trade or work as artisans (Macdonald and Vergati Stahl 1979; Lewis 1989). Tibetans continued to visit the holy sites of the Valley and beyond. Occasionally Newars even became monks in the Tibetan tradition.<sup>16</sup>

While the Vajrācāryas and Śākyas of the Malla period were in fact householders, their social and religious status was that of monks. They kept up the traditions of monks, rather than those of householders. In particular this meant that, as noted above, they went entirely shaven headed, without even the top-knot which is the symbol of the householder in Hinduism. Furthermore, some of them did not perform rituals considered necessary in Hinduism to remove the impurity of a birth or a death, since as monks, they were not subject to such impurity. Even today, if a member of Kwā Bāhāḥ is acting as  $b\bar{a}h\bar{a}$  or priest to its main deity, thereby observing monastic discipline, and a death occurs in his family, he is not affected by the death impurity until his term of officer is over.

The Hinduizing Measures of Siddhi Narasimha and Śrī Nivās (1) The Cult of Karuṇāmaya: The sponsoring role of the king in the festival of Karuṇāmaya survives to this day. Normally he is represented by a sword, but traditionally he is present in person at the end of the festival when there is the ceremony of 'showing the vest' in Jawalakhel. Until the mid-seventeenth century, Karuṇāmaya's temple was always in the village of Būga, part of Lalitpur's kingdom, and four miles to the south. The god was brought to Lalitpur once a year for the annual chariot festival. The cult was taken up with enthusiasm both by Siddhi Narasiṃha and by Śrī Nivās. Historical sources are silent on the matter, but historians have deduced that possibly as early as 1621, at any rate by 1652 when Kunu Sharma wrote his Kīrtipatākā eulogizing the city, one or other of the two kings had taken the decision to establish a second temple of Karuṇāmaya in Lalitpur itself.

Henceforth Karuṇāmaya was to spend six months in each temple, thus bringing him closer to the people of Lalitpur, who were his devotees, and no doubt increasing the popularity of the king. Ta Bāhāḥ was chosen as the site for his new temple. It seems that the membership of this ancient monastery had died out and some Vajrācāryas from a small monastery in Dau Bāhāḥ twāḥ called Bhelakhu Bāhāḥ [29] were assigned to it (Locke 1980:334; 1985:137). However, they have no connection with the cult of Karuṇāmaya, which is entirely in the hands of the pānjus, Vajrācāryas and Śākyas from Būga.

(A) Identification of Karuṇāmaya with Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu: According to local chronicles and myths (Locke 1980:303; Hasrat 1970:69; Owens 1989:171), King Siddhi Narasiṃha introduced the custom of having two Brahmans ride on the chariot of Karuṇāmaya. Although the rest of the cult is the responsibility of Buddhist priests, this provides a Hindu veneer, making Hindu participation in the festival acceptable. And indeed, the annual festival is to this today as important for the Hindu inhabitants of Lalitpur, including Brahmans, as it is for the Buddhists.

Furthermore, Siddhi Narasimha seems to have encouraged the identification of Karuṇāmaya with Kṛṣṇa, whose famous temple he had just built in front of his palace. According to Padmagiri's chronicle (Hasrat 1970:67), Siddhi Narasimha divided the garden of the palace into three parts, dedicating them to Degutale, Taleju, and "Matsyendranāth." Degutale and Taleju are two forms of the Malla kings' own tutelary deity; if we accept the chronicle's assertion that Karuṇāmaya was given an equivalent position, this suggests that he was the "national deity" of Lalitpur even in Siddhi Narasiṃha's time, and not only from the time of his son Śrī Nivās, as suggested by Locke (1980:341).<sup>17</sup>

At the same time the Buddha was recognized as an avatar of Viṣṇu, a classical Hindu doctrine evolved precisely for this purpose, to absorb Buddhist devotions into a Hindu framework; and the Buddha is depicted among the ten avatars placed around the verandah of the Kṛṣṇa temple. This policy of identification continued with the famous golden window of the palace, dating from the reign of Śrī Nivās. Here the Buddhist bodhisattva, Sṛṣṭikartṛ-lokeśvara, 'Lokeśvara emitting all the gods', a form of Karuṇāmaya, is depicted emitting the Hindu gods. In a Buddhist context this demonstrates the superority of Buddhism to Hinduism. But in this window the whole icon is framed by forms of Viṣṇu above, and by Viṣṇu's mount, Garuḍa, below, again indicating that the principal Buddhist bodhisattva is a form of Viṣṇu. When the king appeared at the window he

would, of course, be framed as Viṣṇu also. Thus the most popular divinity of the city (Karuṇāmaya, Bũgadyaḥ) and the king himself are both forms of the same high Hindu god, Viṣṇu.

Apparently the unpublished inscription on the window shows that it was given by a Śākya or Vajrācārya goldsmith to the king. <sup>19</sup> Thus the correspondence which the window postulates between king, *bodhisattva*, and Hindu god, could be encouraged by loyal Buddhist subjects. In a similar way, in 1667, a Śākya from Mahābaudha, Uku Bāhāḥ, called Jodhaju, presented King Śrī Nivās with a golden throne that is displayed every year in front of the Kṛṣṇa temple on the full moon of the month of Jyeṣṭh. <sup>20</sup>

(B) Identification with Matsyendranāth, a Form of Śiva: For most Nepalese, the identification of Karunāmaya as Matsyendranāth is better known than the stories about Kṛṣṇa. Indeed it is as Matsyendra or Macchindranāth that the god is known in the outside world, which for a long time remained ignorant of the essentially Buddhist nature of his cult.

Matsyendranāth was in origin probably a historical personage, a Tantric yogin who lived in the tenth or eleventh century (Ghurye 1953:146). He is claimed by both the Śaivite and the Buddhist Tantric tradition. Gorakhnāth, the spiritual forebear of the Śaivite Nāth or Kānphaṭā yogins, who became the patron saint of Gorkhā, and therefore of the Shah dynasty, was Matsyendranāth's disciple. From the fourteenth century at least, Nāth yogins were present in the Kathmandu Valley (Unbescheid 1980). They made Maru Sattaḥ, the famous Kāṣṭha Maṇḍap that gave Kathmandu its name, into a Gorkhanāth temple and stayed there until its 1966 renovation. It was probably they who first decided to identify Karuṇāmaya/Būgadyaḥ as Matsyendranāth (Locke 1980:431-42). It is likely that it was also they who first designated Cākwādyaḥ, the Lokeśvara of Tanga Bāhāḥ, as 'Mīnnāth', an alternative epithet of Matsyendranāth.

Śrī Nivās encouraged the identification with Matsyendranāth. Kunu Sharma's Kīrtipatākā describes the temples of Karunāmaya and Cākwāhdyaḥ at length, using only the names Matsyendranāth and Mīnnāth. In 1673 Srī Nivās instituted an annual feast in Būga for Nāth yogins, the principal worshippers of Matsyendranāth, as part of the god's annual festival (Locke 1980:311). Toffin (1993:154-6) has interpreted aspects of Karunāmaya's cult and myth as reflecting Siddhi Narasiṃha's and Śrī Nivās's attempts to have Lalitpur recognied as the foremost city of the Valley.

Another reason Śrī Nivās may have had for encouraging the identification of Karunāmaya with Matsyendranāth may have been precisely the link

between Matsyendranāth and Gorakhnāth. It was at this time that the kingdom of Gorkha began to be involved in the affairs of the Valley, and Śrī Nivās may have wished to express a paternalistic attitude to Gorkha through the guru-disciple relationship of the kingdoms' respective patron saints. He was not to know that it was to be the disciple who became all-powerful, and the myths would be turned around so that the guru legitimated the disciple's supremacy. It was in fact only after 1769 that the identification of Karuṇāmaya as Matsyendranāth became significant even for the people of Lalitpur, being then integrated into the mythological accounts of the god's origin in Assam.<sup>21</sup>

## (2) Regulation of Buddhist monasteries

(A) The Main Monasteries: Newars today recognize three types of monastery: main monasteries ( $m\bar{u}$   $b\bar{a}h\bar{a}h$ ),  $bah\bar{i}$ , and branch monasteries ( $kac\bar{a}$   $b\bar{a}h\bar{a}h$ ). There are in Lalitpur 18 main monasteries, 25  $bah\bar{i}$ , and 123 branch monasteries of various sorts. Main monasteries, though the least numerous, are the largest monuments and have the largest membership; in every way they are the dominant Buddhist force in Lalitpur, as indeed in Kathmandu. The  $bah\bar{i}$ , though there are more of them, are smaller, poorer institutions with many fewer members. The  $bah\bar{i}$  attempt, or used to attempt, to stand for a more meditative and monastic form of Buddhism in opposition to the dominant  $b\bar{a}h\bar{a}h$  (Gellner 1987). The differences between them are discussed below. What is important, for the moment, is the difference between the main monasteries and the  $bah\bar{i}$  taken together, on the one hand, and branch monasteries, on the other.

The principal distinction is that in main monasteries and in bahī, Monastic Initiation (cūḍākarma, bare chuyegu) may be performed, and when a boy passes through the initiation in that monastery he is ipso facto a member of that monastery. In branch monasteries, by contrast, such initiations are not normally perfomed. Most branch monasteries were founded by Śākyas or Vajrācāryas who were already members of a main monastery or, more rarely, a bahī during the Malla period. Many were founded since then, but it would be too expensive to found a new monastery of this sort today. Sometimes such branch monasteries were also founded by lay castes, such as Śreṣṭhas or Śilpakārs, and the regular ritual was entrusted to the Śākyas and/or Vajrācāryas of a given monastery.

These branch monasteries can be called, for convenience, lineage monasteries, though it should be remembered that this is not a translation of a local term. Such monasteries *belong to* a lineage or group of related households descended from the founder. They share the duties of performing

rituals there, and they share the income which the founder or subsequent donors have given to the monastery. It does not really make sense to say that these monasteries have a Monastic Community (samgha,  $s\tilde{a}$ ) as main monasteries and  $bah\bar{i}$  do. Whereas with main monasteries and  $bah\bar{i}$ , individual Śākyas and Vajrācāryas are members of them, but do not own them, lineage monasteries are treated as the collective property of a family or lineage, as the case may be. Thus, they are run like a guthi, the widespread Newar socio-religious institution for religious purposes. The land they previously held to fund their rituals, and which in some cases they still do hold, is held under guthi land tenure, that is to say, as tax-free religious land. As with guthis, members may drop out if they wish without stigma, and nowadays many people do so. What Śākyas and Vajrācāryas cannot do is drop out of their main monastery or  $bah\bar{i}$ , without losing their caste status altogether.

In short, the vast majority of branch monasteries are private institutions, built on the model of main monasteries, but without an initiated Monastic Community, They are not a focus of devotion from other Newars. None the less, the existence of these lineage monasteries in large numbers is a highly significant fact. They express the Buddhist allegiance of the majority of Lalitpur's inhabitants and are an essential part of its townscape, creating a warren of connected courtyards in which everyday life is placed in a pervasive Buddhist sacred framework.

There is one further type of monastery, usually called 'branch monastery'. These are monasteries which fit into none of the above categories. They do in fact have a Monastic Community of initiated members, but fall outside the recognized lists of main monasteries and bahī. Here the term 'branch monastery' is being used as a catch-all, residual category to refer to any monastery that falls outside the recognized system. There are just three of these in Lalitpur (Nah Bāhāḥ [41], Hyan Bāhāḥ [42], and Yoku Bāhāḥ [43], and a further six that are semi-independent branches of Kwā Bāhāḥ: see below). Such monasteries we can call independent monasteries. They are not very significant in Lalitpur; in Kathmandu, by contrast, there are more of them, of undoubted antiquity, with more members and an important role in Buddhist ritual in the city (e.g., in Samyak). One further category needs to be mentioned: monasteries-by-extension. These are residential courtyards (nani) with large numbers of Śākyas and Vajrācāryas, and numerous caityas that have come to be given monastery names, even though they were never established as monasteries and do not function as monasteries in any of the above senses. The two main examples here are the courtyards of Nyākhācuk [40] and Nag Bahah [45] (old name: Ilanhe).

Where does the dominant system of main monasteries and bahī come from? Wright's chronicle, which was written in Lalitpur, gives a detailed account of Siddhi Narasimha's regulations, which we are now in a position to understand.<sup>22</sup> He evidently attempted to systematize a previously existing situation. He probably wished to have a few specified leaders of his Buddhist subjects, whom he could deal with efficiently. Perhaps also he wished to make sure that the Śākyas and Vajrācāryas did indeed constitute a caste, like the rest of his subjects, and did not recruit or initiate members from other castes. An officially santioned list of monasteries entitled to perform Monastic Initiation would help to enforce such a rule.

At the time of Siddhi Narasimha there was already a recognized list of twelve main monasteries to which three newly founded monasteries were added, making fifteen, to these fifteen three further were then added, making a final list of eighteen. Though there have been eighteen since that time, they, are still known colloquially as 'the fifteen monasteries' (jhīnyāgu bihār). The original twelve were:

<u>Usual name</u>	Sanskritic title
Tangah Bāhāḥ [12]	Bālārcana-saṃskārita-Jyeşthavarņa-mahāvihāra
Ta Bāhāḥ [17]	Bhuvanākaravarma-s°-Dharmakīrti-m°
Bhīche Bāhāḥ [30]	Śańkaradeva-s°-Mayurvarna-m°
Guji Bāhāḥ [31]	Vaiśya-Śrī-Divākaravarma-s°-mahāvihāra
Uku Bāhāḥ [14]	Śivadeva-s°-Śrī-Rudradevavarna-m°
Ha Bāhāh [15]	Śrī-Lakṣmīkalyāṇavarma-s°-Ratnākara-m°
Kwā Bāhāḥ [16]	Bhāskaradeva-s°-Hiranyavarṇa-m°
Bu Bāhāḥ [32]	Vidyādharaśarma-s°-Yaśodhara-m°
Cuka Bāhāḥ [13]	Mānadeva-s°-Cakravarņa-m°
Su Bāhāḥ [33]	Indradeva-s°-Jayamanoharavarma-m°
Dau Bāhāḥ [34]	Rudradevagargagotravarma-s°-Śrī-Dattanāma-m°
Yachu Bāhāḥ [35]	Balādharagupta-s°-Balādhara-m°

The three new monasteries were supposedly:

Om Bāhāḥ [36]	Sūryavarma-s°-Vajrakīrti-m°
Jyo Bāhāḥ [37]	Rudradeva-Nangapāla-s°-Jyoti-m°
Dhum Bāhāḥ [38]	Gunalakşmī-s°-Gunalakşmī-m°

To these were added the monasteries of Cobhar and Kirtipur, other settlements within the kingdom of Lalitpur, and another new monastery, built after the king made the rules, namely, Si Bāhāḥ in the west of Lalitpur:

Co Bāhāḥ Cilãco Bāhāḥ Si Bāhāḥ [39] Indradeva-s°-Śrī-Asanalokeśvara-m° Jagatapālavarma-s°-Padmakāṣṭhagiri-m°

Śrī-Vatsa-m°

There is a problem with this account, in that we know that three of the four supposedly new monasteries—Dhum Bāhāḥ, Om Bāhāḥ, and Si Bāhāḥ—existed before the time of Siddhi Narasiṃha (Locke 1985:30, 68, 70, 174). However it may well be that their membership had died out and they were given to Śākyas and Vajrācāryas from elsewhere as part of the reorganization (in the case of Si Bāhāḥ it is possible that it was moved to its present site at this time, as happened to Ha Bāhāḥ). The chronicle does indeed record a reallocation because of defunct membership in the case of Cuka Bāhāḥ, which was given to a Vajrācārya Tantrik from Nyākhācuk [40], a member of Kwā Bāhāḥ; and indeed, still today, Cuka Bāhāḥ, though treated as a main monastery for ritual purposes, is owned and run by Vajrācārya members of Kwā Bāhāḥ. It has therefore become, in effect, a lineage monastery.

King Siddhi Narasimha created a new order of precedence among these monasteries and did away with the old one. Tanga Bāhām and Ta Bāhām remained first and second, in recognition of their antiquity. Thereafter the new list simply reflected the order in which they appeared at the meeting he had summoned them to. It is probably this order that is now used in the festival of Samyak, that is to say, this is the order in which the divinities representing the monasteries are set up when they come to Nāg Bāhāḥ. This runs as follows:

Tanga Bāhāḥ, Ta Bāhāḥ, Dhum Bāhāḥ, Cuka Bāhāḥ, Kwā Bāhāḥ, Om Bāhāḥ, Dau Bāhāḥ, Bu Bāhāḥ, Ha Bāhāḥ, Jyo Bāhāḥ, Guji Bāhāḥ, Bhīchẽ Bāhāḥ, Uku Bāhāḥ, Su Bāhāḥ, Yachu Bāhāḥ, Cilãco Bāhāḥ, Co Bāhāḥ, Si Bāhāḥ.

Siddhi Narasiṃha confirmed the tradition whereby five of the monasteries—Bhīchē Bāhāḥ, Uku Bāhāḥ, Guji Bāhāḥ, Su Bāhāḥ, and Yachu Bāhāḥ—shared a single elder. (This is no longer so today.) Each of the other of the original twelve, with the exception of Cuka Bāhāḥ (which had no members as noted above), had an elder each. Thus there were seven elders in all. This group of seven elders, so the chronicle tells us, was known as the Seven Tathāgatas (i.e., Buddhas), and they were respected as such by the people. Siddhi Narasiṃha required each elder to be initiated in the thapā twaye ritual and for them all to belong to a guthi. Five of them, the elders of Ta Bāhāḥ, Ha Bāhāḥ, Bu Bāhāḥ, Kwā Bāhāḥ, and Bhīchē Bāhāḥ, were made responsible for overseeing the purifications of Lalitpur merchants who had been in Tibet, and for passing on the fees to the king.

The three independent monasteries mentioned above are all small institutions which slipped through the net of Siddhi Narasimha's reforms Some say that the Vajrācāryas of Hyan Bāhāh were invited to Lalitpur from Kathmandu because they were experts in performing the ritual of  $n\bar{a}g$ sādhan, or summoning holy serpents, in order to bring rain. This might account for their position outside the main monasteries. It seems plausible to assume that the monasteries with an initiated Monastic Cummunity which are semi-independent branches of Kwa Bahah were amalgamated to Kwā Bāhāh at the time of Siddhi Narasimha's regulations: these monasteries are Atha Bāhāh [45], Mu Bāhāh [46], Yetā Bāhāh [47], Ikhāchē Bāhāh [48], Vaidya Bāhāh [49], and Michu Bāhāh [50]. Members of these monasteries perform part of their Monastic Initiation ritual in Kwā Bāhāh, but separately from Kwa Bahah members. On this occasion they may enter the shrine of Kwā Bāhāh's principal deity. But this gives them no rights in Kwā Bāhāh: they may not be the god-guardian in Kwā Bāhāh or become elders, nor may they participate in the annual feast. For outsiders, and thus for the Malla kings, they could claim to be members of Kwā Bāhāh, but at the same time they maintained their independence and were denied the once-lucrative right to be god-guardian in Kwā Bāhāh (Gellner 1987:400-1).

The chronicle does not say when Siddhi Narasimha undertook these reforms, but it is possible that it was early in his reign. Around 1615, before he was in fact crowned, Sakyas in Lalitpur stopped calling themselves Śākyabhikṣu' or 'Bhikṣu', i.e. 'Buddhist monk', and started calling themselves 'Śākyabhikṣu', i.e. 'of the Buddha's lineage'. Śākyas in Kathmandu did not do this. Perhaps the Lalitpur Śākyas felt that, in view of Siddhi Narasimha's Hinduizing tendencies, it was better to base their claim to monastic status on shared descent from the Buddha rather than on disparate caste origins and shared religious identity. Furthermore, there is evidence from the sixteenth century that becoming a Vajrācārya was to a degree optional: some men in the family would do so, others would remain Śākyas. This is certainly not so today: only the sons of Vajrācāryas may become Vajrācāryas, and all are considered so, although the thoretical possibility is admitted that a Vajrācārya young man who omits to take the required initiation will fall to the status of a Śākya. It may well be that this greater emphasis on descent was part of the same approximation to Hindu norms and occurred simultaneously with the Śākyas' adoption of the surname 'Śākyavamśa'.

(B) Regulation of the  $bah\bar{i}$ : At the time of Siddhi Narasimha, the members of the  $b\bar{a}h\bar{a}h$  did not deny that they were householders. They were

householder monks, that is to say, they maintained the religious role of monk, while in fact being married and having a household. They did this by following monastic rules while carrying out their duties and devotions inside the monastery, but laying them aside at home. Ideologically, they expressed this by following the path of Vajrayāna or Tantric Buddhism, which involved the use of fire sacrifices (homa) as in Hinduism.

The members of the  $bah\bar{\imath}$ , by contrast, though also in fact householders, and thus hereditary monks, did not, it seems, accept the ideology of Tantric Buddhism. They claimed, according to Wright's chronicole, to be the representatives of a purer, older Buddhism, one based on celibacy. They represented the meditational, forest-dwelling wing of the Buddhist clergy, disdaining ritual for the practice of celibacy and restraint. They expressed this claim in the names they adopted, continuing to call themselves 'Bhikṣu', or even 'Brahmacarya Bhikṣu' ('celibate monk'), in order to oppose themselves to the Śākyas of the  $b\bar{a}h\bar{a}h$ . Furthermore, the architecture of the  $bah\bar{\imath}$  was deliberately plain and archaic.

It was the members of the bahī, who did not perform purifications after a death on the grounds that they were monks, who particularly troubled Siddhi Narasiṃha.<sup>23</sup> To one of the bahī monasteries, Ī Bahī[51], he assigned a Vajrācārya priest from Dhum Bāhāḥ. He may have done this because of the strong tradition that this monastery was founded by a Brahman, Sunaya Śrī Miśra, who was supposedly converted to Buddhism in Tibet and had returned to Nepal. This is undoubtedly an ancient site, and it is likely that the monastery goes back to the twelfth century at least (Locke 1985:204).

Then Siddhi Narasimha grouped the  $bah\bar{\imath}$  monasteries into two, the Fifteen Bah $\bar{\imath}$  and the Ten Bah $\bar{\imath}$ , the former being those who were located in the northern half of Lalitpur, the latter in the southern half. (Subsequently  $\bar{I}$  Bah $\bar{\imath}$  was absorbed into the group of fifteen.) Each group was to have a single set of five elders between them, no doubt because there were so few members in these monasteries. The group of Ten split up about 70 years ago; the group of Fifteen split into two groups in the 1950s, and further splits have followed.

Siddhi Narasimha evidently wanted to assign to all the bahī, as he had done for Ī Bahī, a Vajīācārya priest to carry out the purifying fire sacrifice after death. This the members of the bahī said was impossible for them. So a man was appointed in each group who became the single hereditary priest responsible for performing all initiations and other life-cycle rituals for the members of the group. He was to be known as a bhikṣu ācārya, or 'monk master', thus differentiating him from the Vajīācārya priests of the bāhāḥ monasteries. In the group of Fifteen the priest comes from Naka Bahī [52], and the group of Ten from Jyābā Bahī [53].

These arangements of Siddhi Narasimha have lasted in many cases down to the present, or at least until within the memory of those alive today.<sup>24</sup>

The Early Shah (1769-1846) and Rana (1846-1951) Periods
The arrival of the new Shah dynasty, and the creation of the modern state of Nepal, led to a new situation for the Buddhists of Lalitpur. They were no longer the members of a small kingdom in which they were in the majority. Whereas the Malla kings had wanted to Hinduize their subjects, but at the same time were keen devotees of the principal Buddhist rituals, the new dynasty recognized only Karuṇāmaya, now ever more strongly identified as Matsyendranāth. Lalitpur as a whole lost much land, so that Wright could record in 1877 that "its general aspect is much the same as that of the capital. The streets are as narrow and dirty, the gutters as offensive, and the temples even more numerious; but it appears much more dilapidated than Kāthmāndū, many of the houses and temples being in ruins" (1972:16).

The pressures of Hinduization became even stronger under the Rana hereditary prime ministers. At this time Śākyas and Vajrācāryas regularly performed elaborate śrāddha, or Ancestor Worship, rituals that have been considerably pared down since 1951. In Kathmandu many caityas were constructed with a north-facing jaldroni, so that they could be taken as being in accordance with Hindu norms. It is interesting, however, that this syncretic Hindu-Buddhist form, so common in Kathmandu, was set up only once in Lalitpur, in Bhelāchē twāh [54].

At the same time, great respect was given to tradition, and the practices of tradition were supported by law and backed by the force of the state. Thus the Buddhist identity of the Śākyas and Vajrācāryas was perpetuated, albeit presented in increasingly Hindu terms. Many of the high-status lay castes, especially those classified as Śreṣṭha, were influenced more strongly by Hinduism. In Lalitpur, many Śreṣṭhas were traditionally Buddhist, either having Vajrācāryas as priests or, even if with Brahman family priests, traditionally taking Buddhist Tantric Initiation. These families began to move away from Buddhism, and consciously adopt Hindu practices. This meant that they did not sponsor Buddhist rituals, and they were less concerned to keep up and renovate the Buddhist temples and other endowments of their forebears.

As elsewhere in the Valley, the earthquake of 1934 caused great destruction. Many of Lalitpur's Buddhists were trading, or practising as gold and silversmiths, in Tibet. Some families made considerable amounts of money, and much of this went into religious activities. A rich Śākya trader called Lakṣmī Narasiṃha from Nyākhācuk, a member of Kwā Bāhāh,

renovated Naka Bahī [52], simply because he lived nearby. He also had the northern 'Aśokan' stūpa [55] covered with cement, endowing land for the annual whitewashing, and rebuilt the shelter (sattah) on the north side, replacing the broken gods inside. Other trading families, also members of Kwā Bāhāh, contributed repeated donations which have made it famous as 'The Golden Temple'.

In the Rana period, then, the traditional fabric of the town was maintained. Although the protective walls which encircled the city in the Malla period were allowed to decay, their position was remembered and retained ritual significance. No one attempted to build outside them. However, in the areas to the west and south-west of the city, the Ranas built palaces. Many wealthier Lalitpur residents imitated the styles imported by the Ranas, by plastering the fronts of their houses with imitation stucco Corinthian pillars, many of which can still be seen.

In 1860 Jagat Shamsher Rana, one of Jang Bahadur Rana's younger brothers, built the Hindu temple complex at Śankhamūl [56], Lalitpur's holy riverside bathing place and burning ghāt. There are two main temples, one each to Śiva and Viṣṇu, and one to Hanumān. Here, as at other riverside bathing places, such as at Paśupati and Gyaneshwar, the Ranas were setting out to emulate the most holy Hindu city of Kāśī (Benares) and to establish their own position as preeminent Hindu patrons.

#### Recent Trends

The period since 1951, the coming of 'democracy', as it is called, has ushered in many changes. There has been a considerable loosening of the caste structure and a decline of deference. This, while no doubt beneficial in many other ways, has had several deleterious effects on traditional Newar Buddhism. It has become less and less desirable to pursue a career as a Buddhist priest, both financially and in terms of status. Consequently a vicious circle has become entrenched whereby only those who are obliged by financial necessity and lack of aptitude for anything else take up the priesthood after their father dies. Lay people respect the priesthood even less, and so on.<sup>25</sup>

Another, even more tangible consequence of recent social change is that most of the land which provided income for the upkeep of Buddhist monuments has been lost, stolen, or sold. In the past the prestige of Śākyas and Vajrācāryas, as Buddhist monks and priests, was such that tenant farmers rarely failed to bring the crop that was due on land belonging to a monastery. Furthermore, since it was land owned collectively, no individual had the incentive to ensure it was properly registered, as was the case with individually owned land. In this way, much land has been registered in the

name of the tenant, or even in the name of an unscrupulous member of the monastery. Even where a monastery or other endowed temple still owns agricultural land, the yield is much less, because the law now stipulates that the tenant only owes  $23 \ pathis$  of paddy per year to the landowner. In the same way many of the other holdings of monasteries, especially images of the gods, have been lost, either stolen away at night when there was no one there to guard them, or embezzled by members themselves.

Not all monasteries have managed their inheritance so badly. He Bāhāḥ [15] has, by all accounts, invested its assets well in shops and bank accounts, so that it has a regular income to finance rituals and renovations. Kwā Bāhāḥ, which contains many historic icons of great value, has so far managed to guard them against most attempts at theft, thanks to the watchfulness of its members and its fortress-like construction.

In the last twenty-five years tourism has become a major economic factor in the life of the city. Many Śākyas and Vajrācāryas earn their living as artisans making statues, jewellery, and curios for sale to tourists, and many others have shops selling them. But for this demand from the tourist trade it is likely that the traditional arts of god-making and silverwork would have all but died out.

An important new development since the 1930s is the appearance of Theravada Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley.26 The first Newars to become Theravada mnonks were persecuted by the Rana authorities. Subsequently, Bhikshu Amritananda, originally from Tansen, established good relations with King Tribhuvan, and after 1951 the movement flourished. In Lalitpur there are two Theravada monasteries, Śakyasimha Vihāra, recently extensively rebuilt in Thaina, and Manimandapa Vihāra inside Dhapaga Bahi (which has taken the latter's Sanskrit title), as well as a nunnery near Śākyasimha Vihāra. For many Buddhist Newars, dissatisfied with traditional Newar Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism provides an alternative that seems more approachable, more modern, and more egalitarian. Its far simpler rituals, the greater role it gives to preaching, its stress on education, and its use of modern methods of communication, such as magazines, give it an increasing appeal. Even the majority who are not exclusive supporters of the Theravada, respect and make use of it, for instance, by sending their daughters to the nunnery for twelve days, instead of performing the traditional girls puberty ritual of bārā tayegu (Kunreuther 1995). The Theravada Buddhists' wide use of Nepali (the national language and the language of education), rather than Newari, may also make it seem more modern; the use of Nepali is certainly intended to spread their message beyond the Kathmandu Valley and the Newar community. Consequently, for

a considerable minority of upwardly mobile Newars Theravāda Buddhism represents a preferable form of Buddhism.<sup>27</sup>

### Conclusion

Lalitpur today is effectively part of the greater Kathmandu conurbation. There have been massive changes since it was the sacred centre of its own kingdom. None the less, its ancient core retains a considerable vitality and definite, though changing, Buddhist and Hindu identity.

This account has emphasized the Buddhist parts of Lalitpur's history; these, it has been shown, existed in a broadly Hindu context.<sup>28</sup> Even Śākyasimha Vihār, one of the centres of Theravāda activity in Lalitpur, was built on a site with a pre-existing śivalinga which has not been disturbed, even if it is generally ignored. The famous 'religious tolerance' or 'harmony' of Nepal – which Dhanavajra Vajracharya certainly approved of and exemplified – may perhaps have been overdrawn in many accounts. It would perhaps be better to refer instead to religious pluralism, mutual recognition, and contextual syncretism.

Thus it is surely right to draw attention to the underlying competition of interpretations between Buddhist and Hindu clergy (Brinkhaus 1980; Gellner 1992: ch. 3), a competition in which kings, Hindu ascetics, and ordinary peasants and artisans were all in their way active participants. This competition exists at all levels. The origin of Lalitpur is explained in Hindu and monarchical terms by the Bir Deva myth. But for most of the populace the city's identity is more closely linked to the coming of Karunāmaya, who brings the yearly rains on which their crops depend. But Karunāmaya himself is subject to competing interpretations. As one would expect in a complex, stratified society, there are numerous strategies available, stressing inclusion or exclusion according to context. It ought not therefore to be considered especially surprising if Buddhists are found at one period actively cooperating in cultural practices as a strategy of inclusion which at a different period they begin to abandon as unnecessary Hindu accretions.

The religious competition I have drawn attention to has played itself out in a context of generally shared assumptions about religion, power, and social space. These assumptions, under the impact of pan-Nepalese, and indeed global, change, no longer go without saying.

### Notes

1. An earlier version of this article appeared initially as part of a longer report on Buddhist monuments in Lalitpur for the Patan Conservation and Development Programme (1993). It is published here, by kind permission, in a more academic form, with a fuller discussion of some points. I am

grateful to Niels Gutschow and William Douglas for comments on previous drafts. I alone am responsible for any errors of fact, interpretation, or omission.

- 2. According to Wright's chronicle (1972:139) Narendra Deva was Bir Deva's grandson.
- 3. .....h āmrā 3 svayambhū śivalinga....
- 4. In this version no year is given. In Hasrat (1970:43-4) Bir Dev is said to have ascended the throne in Kaligat 3500, i.e., 399 C.E., and to have ruled for 95 years.
- 5. These are the eight Mother Goddesses who surround the city, here as in the other cities of the Valley. It will be seen that the list is not systematic, some of the directions being repeated. See Gutschow (1982:163) for the positions of most of those mentioned here. Unlike Bhaktapur, in Lalitpur only five of the set have temples and are worshipped regularly outside of those rare occasions when a pilgrimage around the set of eight is organized.
- 6. The chronicles say that these chariot festivals were discontinued, with the exception of Mīnnāth's, when that of Karun maya's was begun by Narendra Deva (Wright 1972:149-50; Lamshal 1966:17). The valī account continues with the story of a merchant called Ratn kara who became wealthy in Tibet, gave many gifts to Buddhist monks, and eventually become one himself at Naka Bahī [52] (Lamshal 1966:3).
- 7. Note that this is the spelling given in Wright (1972:136).
- 8. See Locke (1980:287) for details.
- 9. The Bhāṣā Vaṃśāvalī puts the creation of the palace 'Māṇigalbhaṭṭa' and the consecration of both Maṇi-Gaṇeśa and Maṇi-Kumāra some generations later in the time of Guṇakāma Deva (Lamshal 1966:21-2).
- 10. D. Vajracharya (1973:496-8, 505). D. R. Regmi (1983 3:213) places Gullamtanga near Paśupati, but this is surely takes a much too restricted interpretation of the phrase 'in the realm (kṣetra) of Paśupati'.
- 11. The popularity of the lexeme -varna- in the honorific monastery names of today can be explained by the influence of Kwā Bāhāḥ, which is known formally as Hiraṇyavarṇa Mahāvihāra. This is probably the only honorific monastery name that is widely known throughout the city.
- 12. Gutschow (1982:152), Locke (1985:151-2). A small Buddha is still displayed half-submerged in a square copper container outside the palace during the Buddhist holy month of Gūlā (roughly equivalent to August). This commemorates both the river which once passed the spot and the monastery moved from nearby (Sakya 1974:23-5).
- 13. The earliest and latest dates for the use of these terms are 1141 (Petech 1984:59) and 1524 (Rajvamshi 1983:82).
- 14. This, at any rate, is Dhanavajra's interpretation of the historical record (D. Vajracharya 1989:93).
- 15. A possible reason for this is discussed below. For further details, see Gellner (1989, 1992:164-6).

- 16. Sakya and Vaidya (1970:130-4) give an inscription from Bhaktapur dated 778 N.S. (1558) recording the building of a monastery called Muni Bāhāh in memory of a deceased Newar by his wife, daughter, and son, who was a Tibetan monk in Tashilunpo, Tibet. (The inscription is unclear as to whether Padmadhvaj is the monk's brother or simply the monk's Newar name.) Cf. Locke (1985:439), whose interpretation, however, is that the monk was unrelated to the donors.
- 17. Against the chronicle, it has to be said that the inscriptions from the palace gardens do not support it. Śrī Nivās's inscription of 1676 records that his father had established the garden in order to provide flowers for "śrī tin iṣṭadevatā", i.e., Taleju/Degutale. It says nothing about "Matsyendra" (Tewari et al. 1962:13). I have not been able to check the original manuscript of Padmagiri's chronicle.
- 18. According to Hemraj Sakya (1974:22), the icon was made following the Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha. He also argues, less plausibly, that the element 'Maṇi' derives from Avalokiteśvara's mantra (ibid.: 24-5).
- 19. I owe this information to Nutan Sharma. Documentation on the window is hard to come by. A.K. Vajracharya (1986:67) ascribes it to Siddhi Narasimha.
- 20. See Tewari *et al.* (1962:12). I am indebted to Bronwen Bledsoe for drawing my attention both to the custom and to the inscription.
- 21. Compare the most popular mythological telling of Karunāmaya's coming to Nepal by Asha Kaji Vajracharya (1980) with Malla period representations (Vergati 1985).
- 22. For original Nepali text, see Cambridge University MS. 1952A (folios 129-34). For approximate translation, see Wright (1972:234-7). For a retranslation of the passage on the  $b\bar{a}h\bar{i}$ , see Locke (1985:30-1) and Gellner (1987:396-7).
- 23. Burleigh (1976:40) has interpreted the 1675 proclamation by the kings of the three cities—Śrī Nivās of Lalitpur, Nṛpendra of Kathmandu, and Jitāmitra of Bhaktapur—in a similar vein, as an attempt regulate the mourning of their subjects in line with Hindu norms. But in fact, as pointed out to me by Dhanavajra Vajracharya in conversation in 1992, this is a misinterpretation based on lack of understanding of the Newari of the inscription. The three kings were attempting to regulate the degrees of closeness of royal relatives, in order to keep at arm's length possible rivals from outside the palace. Dhanavajra compared it to the classification of Ranas in the Rana period into A, B, and C classes.
- 24. For further details of Siddhi Narasimha's regulation of the *bahī*, see Gellner (1987:395-7).
- 25. On kinship among the Sākyas and Vajrācāryas, and for more on the sociological implications of their changing religious identity, see Gellner (1995).

- 26. A minority of other Newar Buddhists practise in the Tibetan tradition, as has long been the case. They do not proselytize in the same way as the Theravādins and have not established a specifically Newar form of Tibetan Buddhism.
- 27. On Theravada Buddhism in Nepal, see Kloppenberg (1977), Bechert and Hartmann (1987), and Gellner (1992:321-8).
- 28. On the problems of defining Hinduism in general, see Sontheimer and Kulke (1991). On the problems of assuming Hinduism to be monolithic or unchanging, when interpreting Newar society, see Gellner (1991).

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