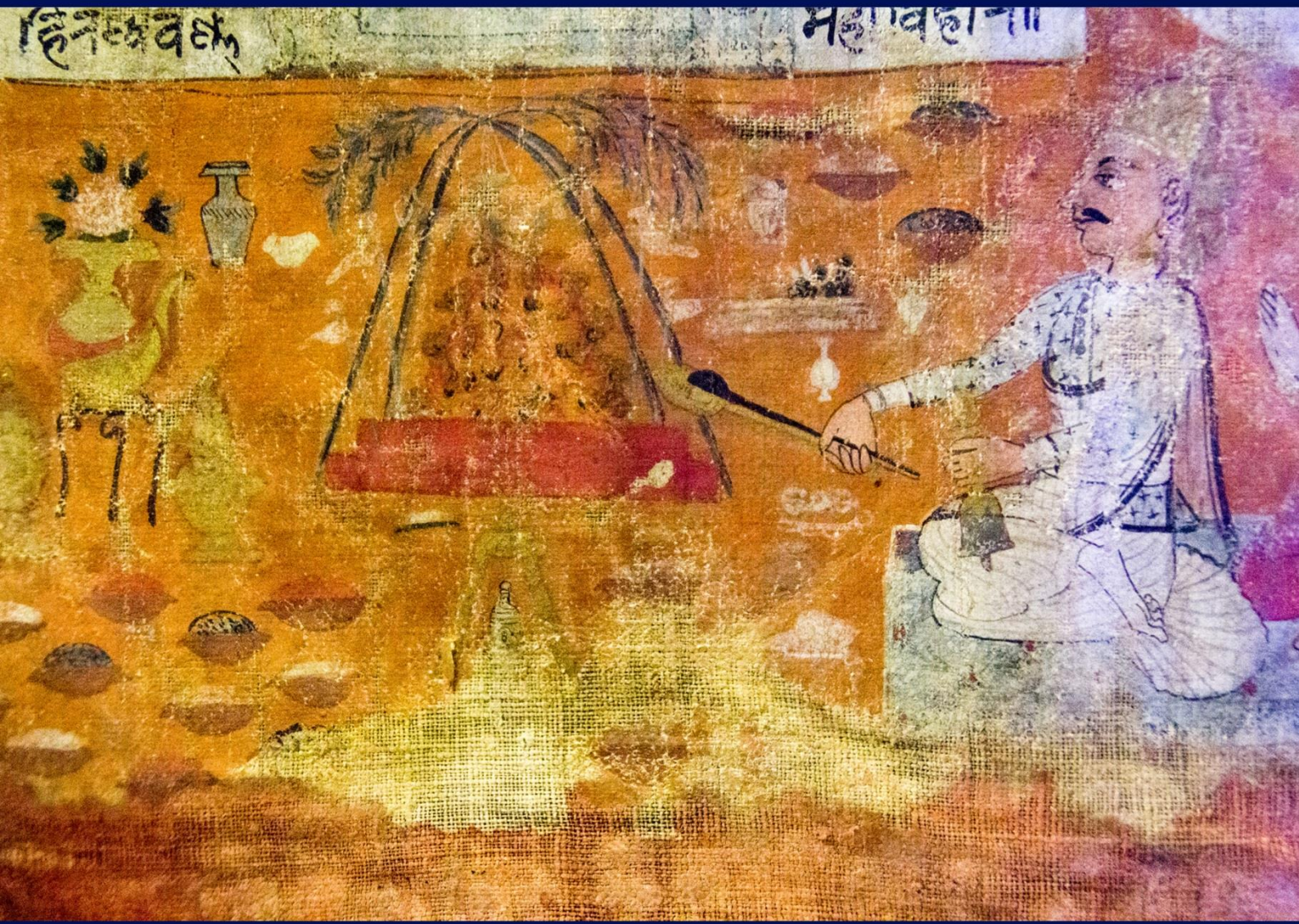




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Between artistic rules and ritual realities: *Homa* in Nepalese paintings



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Chapter 1

Introduction

The Kathmandu Valley (Nepal) has been hosting a unique painting tradition with testimonies being preserved up until today, such as scroll-paintings on cloth (Skt.: *paṭa*; New.: *paubhā*).¹ These paintings contain a unique image, that does not seem to be present in the more popularly known, Tibetan scroll-painting, the *thangka*. Nepalese *paubhās* display a lower register in which several motifs appear, such as the donors of the artwork. Another pattern recurring in these registers is *homa*, the fire sacrifice. The images of fire rituals in the lower registers of *paubhās* are the object of study of this thesis.

1.1. Research questions, aims and methods

Many Nepalese paintings have been studied in the later half of the 20th century up until today, but only a few scholars have paid attention to the iconography of the *homa* images.² These paintings, minor though they are, appear to show us the performance of a fire ritual in a specific South Asian cultural context. The study of rituals tends to focus on textual sources, and to ignore the material culture attached to a religious tradition. David Morgan, Professor of Religious Studies and Art History at Duke University (North Carolina, USA), argues that both texts and images make a religion manifest to its followers. A priority of one medium over the other in the study of religion is therefore not desirable. A much richer picture on belief emerges out of a study of the interaction between the two media, as they are closely intertwined and nourish one another (Morgan 2005, 21). In the case of the material culture of the Kathmandu Valley, scholars have equally signalled the tendency to study only the iconography of Buddhist and Hindu images, without taking into account the ritual context in which these functioned and of which they are testimonies.³

¹ In this thesis, I use the Newari term *paubhā* instead of the Sanskrit *paṭa* as these paintings were made by Newars. According to Margriet Blom, painters in the Kathmandu Valley “were always Newars” and “invariably Buddhists” (1989, 5). They belong to the hereditary group (*jāti*) of the Citrakārs (New. Pū) and are responsible for religious paintings in particular (Toffin 1995, 240-242).

² Detailed studies of the iconography of *homa* scenes in the lower registers of *paubhās* are included in the following publications: Monod-Bruhl 1959, Huntington and Bangdel 2003, and Bühnemann 2008.

³ Macdonald and Vergati-Stahl 1979, 2; von Rospatt, *A Survival of Mahāyāna Buddhism in Nepal: A Fresh Appraisal*, 173: <https://www.buddhismuskunde.uni-hamburg.de/pdf/4-publikationen/buddhismus-in-geschichte-und-gegenwart/bd6-k10rospatt.pdf>.

Accessed June 27, 2017.

When studying the *homa* images, scholars have related them either to the rituals of consecrating the *paubhā*, or to specific rituals performed for the deities or sacred events in the central section of the painting. Pratapaditya Pal for instance, relates the *homa* scene in a *Candra-maṇḍala paubhā* to rituals of consecration,⁴ while Dina Bangdel states that the painted fire sacrifice in the lower register of a *Vasundharā-maṇḍala* scroll can be related to the performance of a ritual dedicated to the central goddess.⁵ This information is primarily gained from a reading of the inscriptions found in the *paubhās* themselves.⁶

No systematic study has been made of this motif of the fire ritual. The aim of this thesis is therefore, to explore patterns and alterations in the iconography of the *homa* images of a selected set of *paubhās*. A representative sample of paintings was taken from a dataset consisting of forty-four different artworks from various museum and private collections.⁷ The criteria for this selection were based on the composition of the *homa* scene in relation to the type of lower register as outlined in Chapter 3. Practical concerns, such as the visibility of the images also played a role in this selection.

Next to a systematic examination of the motif, other issues related to these images are explored in this thesis. What is the nature of these *homa* images? Are they artistic motifs or eyewitness accounts? Is it possible to relate them to a specific ritual? And, what is their value as historical evidence on Newar fire rituals for historians of religion?

In order to deal with these issues, we will at first examine the nature and key aspects of the fire sacrifice in a Newar Buddhist context. In Chapter 2, textual sources on *homa*, primary as well as secondary, will be presented. These sources are discussed in Section 1.2. I will pay specific attention to Newar Buddhist fire rituals, as most of the *paubhās* preserved bear images of Buddhist deities, while only a few show Brahmanical divinities in the centre

⁴ Pal 1967, 26. This *paubhā* dates to 1525 CE and is preserved in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. The *Candra-maṇḍala* painting measures 74 x 59 cm. The materials consist of watercolours on cloth (Pal 1967, 5-9; 26-27; 33-34; Plate 1). For a link with rituals of consecration, see also: Pal 1978, 86; Bühnemann 2008, 19-20.

⁵ 2003, 412; This *paubhā* dates to 1495 CE and is preserved in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Nasli and Alice Heeramanek Collection, M.77.19.7). The materials consist of water colours on cotton cloth, and the painting measures 110 x 84,2 cm. Odette Monod-Bruhl also relates *homa* to a ritual directed to the central deity, in her article on a Vajradhara painting from the Musée Guimet Paris (1959, 302).

⁶ I wish to thank Prof. Gudrun Bühnemann for drawing my attention to the importance of the inscriptions as sources of information on the specific function of *paubhās* (pers. comm. February 16, 2017).

⁷ Only three *paubhās* that were collected for this analysis are currently in Indian (Indian Museum of Kolkata) or Nepalese museum collections (National Gallery Bhaktapur). I wish to thank Nathalie Bazin (Musée Guimet Paris), Anna Ślaczka (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam), Gudrun Bühnemann (University of Wisconsin-Madison), and Chris De Lauwer (MAS Antwerp) for their assistance in finding detailed images of the *homa* scenes for this study.

(Pal 1978, 88-89). Moreover, no systematic study has yet been undertaken of the performance of *homa* by Newar Hindus (Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 306), while detailed anthropological accounts exist on the fire ritual as performed by Newar Buddhists. Where the sources allow it, I will refer to the Hindu Newar context of the fire sacrifice, as we will also study one exceptional painting illustrating a Brahmanical priest in its *homa* image. A study of these key aspects will facilitate our interpretation of the particular constituents of a *homa* image.

In Chapter 3, I present a systematic analysis of the composition, iconography and position of the elements that constitute a painted fire sacrifice. This is preceded by a typology of the ways in which the lower register of a *paubhā* can be composed and the specific position of the motif of the fire ritual in relation to other motifs in these registers. In this chapter, we will in particular pay attention to the nature of the fire rituals as an artistic motif and the possibility to relate these to a specific ritual on the basis of a study of the iconography of the images. I will test the hypothesis of rituals of consecration, as such a context was suggested frequently by previous scholars. I was also able to trace more textual sources, ancient as well as contemporary, on specific features of the fire ritual in the context of Newar rituals of consecration.

In Chapter 4, the question of the value of Nepalese *paubhās* as historical evidence on rituals is the central subject. In order to determine this value, the Newar painting tradition will be placed in its art-historical, social and ritual contexts. First, I will examine the Nepalese art of painting within the framework of the Inner Asian International Style. Subsequently, rules on iconography determining the form of a *paubhā*, which can be related to the ritual usage of the painting, are analysed. At the end of the chapter, I will reflect on the double nature of *homa* images as being subject to artistic rules as well as ritual reality.

Two approaches are thus employed in this thesis to study the *homa* images: iconographic⁸ as well as textual-historical. By combining these two methods, I hope to draw the attention, not only of art historians, but also of scholars of religion, to this unique and fascinating field of study. It is extraordinary that so many testimonies of the exquisite painting tradition of the Newars have been preserved up until our times. The *homa* paintings provide us with a window into the ritual past of Newar society, and they demonstrate gloriously the mastery of their painters, the Citrakārs.

⁸ In this thesis, I will abstain from the iconological interpretation, which is concerned with the “intrinsic meaning” of an artwork (Panofsky 1939, 3-31; quoted in Burke 2001, 35-36). As the materials presented have not yet been studied systematically, a general orientation is at first required, followed by an analysis of the specific iconography of the *homa* images.

1.2. Sources: Visual materials

The primary, visual sources for this study are the *homa* images from a selection of *paubhās*, dating between the 14th and 18th century CE. This period is designated as the Malla period, which was a time of cultural prosperity in the history of the Kathmandu Valley, especially during the later Malla period (1482-1769 CE).⁹ As mentioned earlier, considerably more *paubhās* with a central Buddhist image survive than scrolls featuring a Brahmanical deity or scene. Those Brahmanical paintings that have been preserved mostly illustrate the god Viṣṇu. One such a *paubhā* illustrating a Viṣṇu-*maṇḍala*, dated 1420 CE, and currently preserved in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, was included in the selected artworks. Comparisons were also made with elements of *homa* images of other *paubhās* from the dataset, some of which are dated later than the Malla period. More visual sources, such as Nepalese ritual objects from various museum collections, and photographs by Mary Slusser (1982) and John K. Locke (1980) were employed as well.

1.3. Sources: The *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* and a priest's manual

The *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*

The first primary textual source used, is the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*,¹⁰ composed in Sanskrit and attributed to Kuladatta. The *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* is a Buddhist tantric manual on the rituals accompanying the construction and consecration of a monastery (*vihāra*). The text consists of eight chapters and the *homa* section is part of the sixth.¹¹ We do not know much about the author. The Tibetan scholar Bu Ston (13th- 14th century CE) only mentions his name and his Nepalese descent.¹² Scholars do not agree on the date of Kuladatta, with suggestions ranging from the 8th to the 13th century CE.¹³ The oldest manuscript is dated between 1216 and 1235 CE, based on a reading of its colophon. It is preserved in the Cambridge University Library (Manuscript no. Add. 1646). It seems that the section on *homa* in this text has not yet been translated (Ryugen Tanemura pers. comm., March 31, 2017).

My choice of this text conforms to the hypothesis that the *homa* images are supposed to represent rituals of consecration. The text prescribes the ten life-cycle rites (*daśa kriyāḥ*) for the images being consecrated, which is a specific feature of consecration rituals in the Kathmandu Valley. Paintings are explicitly mentioned in the text among the images for which the prescribed rituals have to be performed (Tanemura 2004, 10; 255-258).

⁹ Regmi 1965 (2), 862; Slusser 1982, 54; 61.

¹⁰ Several titles refer to the same text, such as *Kriyāsaṃgraha*, *Kriyāsaṃgraha-nāma-pañjikā*, and *Kriyāsaṃgrahaśāstra* (Tanemura 2004, 3-5).

¹¹ Tanemura 2004, 37-38; Bühnemann 2008, 154.

¹² Sakurai 1996, 34; quoted in Tanemura 2004, 5.

¹³ Tanemura 2004, 6-10; Bühnemann 2008, 157.

Moreover, the text served as a foundational work for later ritual handbooks on tantric exoteric rites among the Newars (von Rospatt forthcoming, 15). Another, more practical reason for the choice of this text is that it was composed in Sanskrit, in contrast to later ritual manuals in the Kathmandu Valley which were composed in mixed Sanskrit and Newari, the latter of which I am not able to read.¹⁴ In this thesis, the text is employed to gain a better understanding of the fire ritual in an early medieval, Newar Buddhist context, rather than for comparisons with the iconography of the *homa* images.

A priest's manual

The second, primary textual source employed in this thesis is a priest's manual, currently in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. I studied a folio containing the image of a *maṇḍala* with accompanying instructions in Sanskrit and Newari. This folio was probably part of the sections of the manuscript dated to the second half of the 16th century CE. Only the verses in Sanskrit have been translated for this thesis. A transcription and annotated translation of both the selections of Chapter 6 of the *Kriyāsamgrahapañjikā*, and the folio of the priest's manual are attached in Appendix 1.¹⁵

1.4. Sources: Anthropological accounts

For this study, I examined descriptions of *homa* in a Newar Buddhist context by the following scholars: Sylvain Lévi (1905), John K. Locke (1980), David Gellner (1992), Yael Bentor (1996), Bal Gopal Shrestha (2012), and Todd Lewis and Naresh Bajracharya (2016). The use of modern accounts on the performance of *homa* by Newar Buddhists for understanding paintings that are centuries older is slightly problematic, as rituals, like most cultural phenomena, are subject to change. However, unlike most other South Asian countries, Nepal was not submitted to British colonialism, and the country remained sheltered from outside influences until its opening up in 1950. Hence, Newar Buddhism was allowed to persist and preserve most of its traditional features, some acquired even before the Malla period, up until the present. Still, the political and social consequences of globalisation and modernity have also affected the Newar Buddhist tradition in the last decennia (von Rospatt forthcoming, 5).

¹⁴ In these later ritual manuals, the *mantras* are usually composed in Sanskrit, while the instructions for the rituals are in Newari (von Rospatt 2015, 823).

¹⁵ I wish to offer special thanks to Dr. Nirajan Kafle (Leiden University) for his assistance in reading the script of the manuscripts, translating parts from the Sanskrit, and composing an annotated translation of the selected sections. The use of these Sanskrit sources for this thesis would not have been possible without his help.

1.5. Terminology

Sanskrit equivalents of terms are presented in italics, between brackets. When both the Sanskrit and Newari terms are offered, they are designated by the abbreviations 'Skt.' and 'New.' respectively. When no abbreviation has been offered, the term is in Sanskrit. The transcription of Sanskrit terms follows the I.A.S.T. scheme.¹⁶ Newari terms are only employed when they were offered in secondary literature and may facilitate an understanding of the ritual context.

¹⁶ In 1894 the Transliteration Committee of the Geneva Oriental Congress institutionalised the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (I.A.S.T.; Monier-Williams 2012 [1899], xxx). This system is widely used by scholars in Europe and the United States of America.

Chapter 2

The fire ritual in a Newar Buddhist context

The act of offering oblations into a fire, designated by the Sanskrit terms *homa* or *yajña* (New. *mi chuya*), originated in Indo-Iranian and Vedic ritual cultures. In the course of its extensive history, ranging over four millennia, the fire sacrifice¹⁷ spread over various regions in Asia, and more recently even beyond, due to migrations of people on a global scale (Payne 2016, 1-2). Everywhere it went, the fire ritual underwent changes and adaptations to the local cultures in which it was incorporated, but at the same time ritual continuity was ensured. One of the key aspects of *homa*, maintained in local ritual settings, was the link with the fire god Agni as the consumer of the offerings, who then transported them to the other deities in heaven. There was also considerable continuity in the types of offerings and the implements used during the performance. The shapes of the altars as reflecting different purposes of the ritual, were another central element of *homa*, although the specific forms and attributed meanings could differ according to the religious tradition. The function of a fire ritual was concomitant with the forms and positions of the fire pits, the colours of the garments of the attendants involved, and the specific time and place of the performance (Payne 2016, 2; 31). These continuities persist even in contemporary fire rites, such as in the ones performed by the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley.

One of the earliest texts to record the performance of a fire ritual in a Buddhist context in the Indian Subcontinent is the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, roughly dated to the 8th century CE.¹⁸ It can be considered as the earliest testimony of Buddhist fire rituals in Pāla India (8th to 12th century CE). Scholars assume that the Buddhist tantric tradition of the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley was influenced by forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism prevalent in the Pāla cultural milieu.¹⁹ Nevertheless, from an early time onwards, the Newars developed a religious culture that cherished its indigenous features. Newar Buddhism was thus established as a local manifestation of tantric forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism from the

¹⁷ The *homa* ritual is often referred to as a fire sacrifice, as offerings are demolished in the fire. Richard Payne convincingly argues that it is more appropriate to call the fire ritual a 'votive' instead of a 'sacrificial' ritual. The central underlying motive for a *homa* ritual is indeed the conveying of offerings to the deities with the expectation of receiving worldly or spiritual benefits in return (2016, 2).

¹⁸ Prescriptions for the performance of *homa*, the construction of the fire pit, the proper places for the performance of the ritual, preliminary rituals of pacification, the types of wood, etc. are found in Chapter 13 of the text (*trayodaśamaṭāḷavisarāḥ*), according to Glenn Wallis (2002, 174). As far as I know, this part of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* has not yet been translated.

¹⁹ Slusser 1982, 46; Huntington and Huntington 1990, 256-259; Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 291-292.

northeastern regions of the present states of India and Bangladesh, where it disappeared in ca. the 14th century CE (von Rospatt forthcoming, 2).

The Newar fire sacrifice is foremost a ‘tantric’ ritual,²⁰ which can take a variety of forms in its execution. In the present chapter, we will first look at possible ways of classifying the ‘many *homas*’ that were – and still continue to be – performed in a Newar Buddhist context in the Kathmandu Valley. In particular, several characteristics of the fire rites in rituals of consecration will be explained. Subsequently, I will give an overview of key aspects of *homa* in a Newar Buddhist setting. With a clear understanding of the central features of a Newar fire ritual, we may then turn to the iconography of images of *homa* in the Nepalese *paubhās* in Chapter 3.

2.1. *Homa* as a tantric ritual and its place in Newar Buddhist practice

The fire ritual in a Newar Buddhist context can be employed in various ways in larger religious ceremonies. In this section we will first examine the specific nature of *homa* as a ritual in a Newar Buddhist context, and I will propose different ways of classifying the fire rite. In the second part of this section, we will look at specific applications of *homa* in Newar Buddhist ceremonies for consecrating images.

2.1.1. Tantric *homa*

The fire rituals performed by Buddhist Vajrācārya priests are in essence tantric, as they are related to specific *sādhana* and visualisation practices associated with the deities involved in the ritual.²¹ According to the instructions in the *Kriyāsamgrahapañjikā*, for example, Agni has to be visualised by the priest as follows:

One should visualise the *Samaya-Agni*, who is born from the seed-syllable “rūṃ”, yellow in colour; [he has] one face [and] four arms. On his left, [he] is holding a staff and a water-pot; on the right [he is showing] the boon-granting gesture and holding a rosary. [He is] decorated with a yellow

²⁰ The performance of *homa* in a Newar setting is accompanied by the recitation of *mantras*, the visualisation of the specific deities involved in the ritual, and the drawing of a *maṇḍala*, prescriptions of which can be found in ritual texts such as the *Kriyāsamgrahapañjikā*. These are specific tantric features of the ritual, related to the *sādhana* practices, which will be explained in more details in this chapter.

²¹ A *sādhana* or “means of accomplishment” consists of an evocation and visualisation of a deity out of his or her seed-syllable (*bīja*). It is a central technique in tantric rituals and a means for the worshipper to identify him- or herself with emptiness (*śūnyatā*), the ultimate goal of the practice (Locke 1980, 115).

cloth [and he wears] a sacred thread. [Agni has] three eyes [and he is] wearing the crown of matted hair locks, the top of which is adorned by Vajrasattva.²²

These types of visualisations of the fire god Agni and other deities, such as the principal deity for whom the sacrifice is performed, generally accompany the offering of oblations (Gellner 1992, 157-158). Recitations of specified *mantras* are also prescribed (Locke 1980, 103-114), and the *Kriyāsamgrahapañjikā* contains several of those sacred formulas in its *homa* section.²³

Although all fire rituals in a Newar Buddhist context can be defined as tantric, this does not mean that they are all esoteric or ‘secret’. Exoteric forms of *homa* usually consist of the offerings of *ghee* and grains to Agni (*caru āhuti homa*). These are performed during the daytime and can be attended by everyone, either as a patron or as an observer. These exoteric *homās* especially generate worldly benefits for the patrons and observers, hence they are also referred to as ‘worldly’ (*laukika*) *homa*. The esoteric types of *homa* are only performed for – and attended by – male Buddhists from the highest birth-groups (*jāti*),²⁴ that have undergone tantric initiation. Esoteric fire rites can be distinguished by the specific kinds of substances that are sacrificed, such as meat (*māṃsa āhuti*), eggs and wine.²⁵ Next to this exoteric-esoteric distinction, other ways of classifying *homa* in Newar Buddhism are proposed in the next section.

2.1.2. Classifying *homa*

In the course of its history, the fire ritual has been adapted to various local settings in which it was performed, either as a stand-alone ritual, or as part of a larger and more complex series of rituals (Payne 2016, 4). In a Newar context, *homa* generally seems to function within a more extensive, religious activity. David Gellner describes *homa* as a “basic ritual” in Newar Buddhism, together with the “flask worship” (*kalaśa pūjā*) and the offering of the

²² For a transcription of the Sanskrit text and annotated translation, see Appendix 1.

²³ I was not able to trace a translation of this part of the text. Preparing an annotated translation of this section surpassed the scope of the thesis. Translating and editing the part on *homa* in Kuladatta’s *Kriyāsamgrahapañjikā* are thus necessary for further research.

²⁴ Scholars usually refer to the endogamous groups in Newar society as ‘castes’. In order to prevent negative associations with this English term, I will use the original Sanskrit *jāti* or the more neutral term ‘group’ or ‘birth-group’.

²⁵ Regmi 1965 (2), 723-725. Other types of esoteric *homās* in a Newar context are the *śira āhuti* (“head oblation”), *nara āhuti* (“man oblation”), and the *lokottara homa*, which is part of the *ahorātra homa* (“day and night *homa*”) done at night. The sacrifice of, for example, a head in the *śira āhuti* is a symbolic designation for the offering of the sense organs of the practitioner. This practice is a confirmation of the Buddhist doctrine of non-self (*anātman*) and its extension to the notion of emptiness (Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 303-304).

guru-maṇḍala.²⁶ From these three basic rituals more complex performances are constructed, such as life-cycle rituals and observances (*vratas*; Gellner 1992, 148). John K. Locke likewise refers to *homa* as a “principal ritual” of the Vajrācārya priests, together with certain kinds of offerings, the *guru-maṇḍala* worship and the *kalaśa pūjā* (1980, 67-121).²⁷ In rituals related to death, for instance, *homa* is compulsory. In other cases, the fire sacrifice is optional, for example, in the case of protection rituals (Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 296-297). The addition of *homa* to a specific religious ceremony renders the ritual activities more efficient (von Rospatt forthcoming, 13). Next to the religious ceremony in which *homa* functions, the ritual can be classified according to the number of oblations (*āhuti*) and the substances to be offered. These specific types of substances are related to either the esoteric or the exoteric nature of the ritual, which constitutes yet another way of classifying *homa*. Finally, a last way of categorising *homa* in a Newar Buddhist context is on the basis of the duration of the performance, which varies from a few hours up to several days (Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 294; 303).

Homa as a tantric ritual performed by Newar Buddhists can thus be classified in many ways. For our analysis, we need to focus on *homa* in the context of a specific kind of ceremony, namely in rituals of consecration.

2.1.3. *Homa* in Newar rituals of consecration

Previous scholars have primarily linked the paintings of *homa* in Nepalese *paubhās* to rituals of consecration, based on a reading of the inscriptions in the paintings. Some inscriptions report that both the consecration of the *paubhā* as well as the successful celebration of a particular observance (*vrata*) was commemorated with the commissioning of the painting. Part of the translation of the inscription in a Vajradhara *paubhā* from the National Gallery in Bhaktapur, dated to 1513 CE, is paraphrased by Gudrun Bühnemann as follows:

According to this inscription, (the consecration of) the gold-adorned *paṭa* of Vajradhara (and the performance of) the *vrata* of Vasundharā was completed on the third lunar day of the dark half of the month of

²⁶ The *guru-maṇḍala* worship is carried out at the beginning of every complex ritual in a Newar context and works as a kind of framework for those rituals. It is generally performed by the patron or sponsor of the ritual (Skt. *yajamāna*; New. *jajmān*) with the guidance of a Vajrācārya priest. The *guru* in question is usually the buddha Vajrasattva, who is considered to be the *guru* of Vajrācārya priests (Gellner 1991, 163). During the *kalaśa pūjā* one or more deities are invoked into one or more water vessels or *kalaśas*, serving as a temporary abode for the deity during the ritual. The vessel-worship always precedes *homa* (Gellner 1992, 151; 157).

²⁷ Todd Lewis and Naresh Bajracharya enumerate seven preliminary rituals preceding a Newar Buddhist *homa* in the most complex ceremonies, of which the *guru-maṇḍala* offering, and the *kalaśa pūjā* are only two examples (298; 309, fn. 22).

bhārdava (i.e., *bhādrapada*) in N.S. 633 (= 1513 CE) during the rule of Jayaratnamalla. The day specified is the day dedicated to the observance of the Vasundharāvratā (Bühnemann 2008, 17).²⁸

Gudrun Bühnemann remarks that the inscription could refer to the completion on the same day of a painting of “Vajradhara (and) Vasundharā”. However, more likely the inscription indicates the completion of a Vajradhara painting on the day that the patron completed the *vratā* of Vasundharā (Bühnemann 2008, 20). A similar kind of inscription appears in a painting of a Viṣṇu-*maṇḍala* in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, dated 1420 CE.²⁹ This inscription reports that the painting, a book and an image were consecrated on the same day that the Anantavrata ritual was concluded by the donors. In view of the link between the *homa* images and consecration rituals, however, we need to look more closely to the Newar Buddhist consecration context in this section.

Buddhist tantric rituals of consecration

Consecration rituals (*pratiṣṭhā*) ensure that a material object will serve as an abode for the divine or Buddhahood.³⁰ The specific purpose of consecrating images, *caityas*, paintings, and manuscripts in a Buddhist tantric context is to ensure the presence of the Buddha essence in these receptacles. During the consecration process, the *mantras* of the Buddhist divinities in question are ‘infused’ into the substrata. Thus, the divine essence is referred to as *nyāsa*, or *mantra* “deposit”.³¹ The tantric priest invokes the deity or buddha in question and invites him or her to use the receptacle, usually an image, as his or her abode.³² Thereafter, the priest generates the deity out of emptiness by means of a visualisation of his or her seed-syllable (*bīja*), and projects him or her into the substratum in order to make him or her enter.³³

²⁸ For a transcription of the inscription, see Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 6.

²⁹ For a transcription and translation of this inscription, see Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 4.

³⁰ Among its many meanings, the Sanskrit word *pratiṣṭhā* can mean “to place a definite power in an object”, or “to endow an object with divine faculties” (Gonda 1975, 371).

³¹ Von Rospatt 2013, 278. The Sanskrit term *nyāsa* refers to the act of “inserting” as well as to what has been inserted, so the “deposit” (Monier Williams 2012 [1899], 572).

³² Next to a scroll-painting, the following receptacles are mentioned in the *Kriyāsamgrahapañjikā*: a statue, a manuscript, a monastery, a *caitya* and “a hall of fragrances” (Tanemura 2004, 255; fn. 92).

³³ I have shortly summarised the complex tantric practices accompanying rituals of consecration, based on an excellent summary by Alexander von Rospatt (2010, 201). His account is primarily based on a reading of the rituals as described in the *Kriyāsamgrahapañjikā*, and as translated by Ryugen Tanemura (2004). For a detailed description of tantric rituals of consecration, especially in a Tibetan context, see also Yael Bentor (1996, 1-49).

Rites of passage for images

A description of consecration rituals in a Buddhist tantric setting can be found in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*. In this text a scroll-painting is explicitly referred to as a substratum for receiving Buddhahood.³⁴ Moreover, the performance of the ten life-cycle rituals (*daśa saṃskāra*) for the receptacle are prescribed. These are the purification of the womb of the mother (*yonisodhana*), the *pūṃsavana* to generate a male embryo, the parting of the hair of the mother (*sīmantonayana*), the birth ritual (*jātakarman*), the ceremony of name-giving (*nāmakarman*), the initiation ceremony of the infant accompanied by the first feeding of fruits (*phalaprāśana*) and rice (*annaprāśana*) and the throat-clearing ceremony (*kaṇṭhasodhana*), the ritual of tonsure (*cūḍākaraṇa*), taking the vows of a disciple (*vratādeśa*), the release of the vows (*vratamokṣana*), and the wedding rites (*pāṇigrahaṇa*).³⁵ The *Bauddhadaśakriyāsādhana* and the *Hiraṇyamālādaśakriyāvidhi*³⁶ prescribe the worship of a form of the fire god Agni to accompany each *saṃskāra*, and the performance of fire rituals at the end of the wedding rite.³⁷ Such specific fire rituals to accompany the ten *saṃskāras* seem to be lacking in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, but are still practiced today (von Rospatt 2010, 206). The performance of the ten life-cycle rituals for images is a typical feature of Newar rituals of consecration. It is an additional witness to the influence of Brahmanical, and especially Śaiva ritual practices, on the Buddhist tradition in the Kathmandu Valley (von Rospatt forthcoming, 4).

An enactment of the ten *saṃskāras* during the consecration of a scroll-painting is still part of the Newar Buddhist celebration of the Bhīmarathārohaṇa, a typical old-age ritual (New. *gyā jamko*).³⁸ *Paubhās* are commissioned as the “central icon for the ritual” (von Rospatt 2014, 105). Especially among the Newar Buddhists in Kathmandu, the *daśa saṃskāra* are performed for the icons in conjunction with other rituals related to a *jamko* (von Rospatt 2014, 111-114). A photo of a *paubhā* which was consecrated during such a modern performance of an old-age ritual, was taken by Alexander von Rospatt (fig. 1). The painting is displayed in a frame and embellished with flower garlands in order to serve as a sacred icon (von Rospatt 2014, 113).

³⁴ For a transcription and annotated translation of this section of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, see Tanemura 2004, 157-210; 255-306.

³⁵ This summary is based on von Rospatt 2010, 202. For a transcription and annotated translation of this section of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, see Tanemura 2004, 156-197; 255-295.

³⁶ These texts belong to the group of ritual texts composed entirely in Sanskrit in the Kathmandu Valley before the 14th century CE, as they lack the mix of Sanskrit and Newari that characterises Nepalese ritual texts dated after the 15th century CE (von Rospatt 2015, 823).

³⁷ Tanemura 2004, 72-78; von Rospatt 2010, 206-207.

³⁸ This Newar old age ritual is celebrated at 77 years, 7 months and 7 days (von Rospatt 2014, 111).

The functions of *homa* in consecrating a *paubhā*

In order to get familiarised with the functions of the fire sacrifice in Newar rituals of consecrating a painting, we could turn to the *Hiraṇyamālādaśakriyāvidhi*. This text reports the following, four different purposes for the consecration of scroll-paintings: 1. pacifying (*śānti*); 2. increasing (*puṣṭi*); 3. subduing (*vaśya*); and 4. destroying (*abhicāra*; Tanemura 2004, 255; fn. 93). These four different aims follow an accepted system for categorising rituals. During consecration rites, *homa* is performed with the first two aims in mind, namely the increasing and peaceful purposes. Increasing fire sacrifices (*puṣṭi*) are generally enacted on the principal day of the ritual sequence for “increasing life, wealth, courage, strength, harvests, merit, wisdom, study and practice of religion, and so forth” (Bentor 1996, 270). They also serve to increase the effect of tying firmly the divine into the consecrated object, in order to make sure that the deity or Buddha will reside into the image.³⁹ Although Yael Bentor relies on Tibetan sources, the wish for an increasing life span, a good health and prosperity recurs almost invariably in the inscriptions in Nepalese *paubhās* as well. The pacifying (*śānti*) type of *homa* is performed during the concluding rituals on the last day of the consecration ceremony (Bentor 1996, 270).⁴⁰ The specific purpose of the religious ceremony in which the fire ritual functions, affects the shape and colour of the fire pit, to which we will turn in Section 2.2.2.

Now that we have become familiarised with the role of a fire sacrifice as part of a specific tantric Buddhist ritual, we will next examine key features of *homa* and their specific forms in a Newar environment. An understanding of these characterising aspects will enable us to interpret the images studied in Chapter 3.

³⁹ For her description of *homa*, Yael Bentor relies on a Tibetan ritual manual by the Second Panchen Lama, Blo-bzang-ye-shes (1663-1737 CE). It was used during the annual re-consecration of the Bodhnāth *stūpa* in the Tibetan Dga'-ldan Chos-'phel-gling monastery in Kathmandu, an establishment in the Gelukpa tradition. The rituals were observed by Yael Bentor in 1988 (1996, 71-72).

⁴⁰ It is precarious to jump here from Sanskrit sources to Tibetan ritual manuals that are still in use today among Tibetan communities in Kathmandu. An in-depth study of the issue of the function of Newar fire rites within in a specific ritual ceremony, and their connection to the schemes outlined in the traditional Sanskrit sources, will prove invaluable for future research.



Fig. 1: *Paubhā* consecrated during a modern Bhīmarathārohaṇa celebration, painted by Sarvajña Ratna Vajracharya, 21st century, Kathmandu, photo by Alexander von Rospatt.

2.2. Key aspects of *homa* in Newar fire rituals

Several key aspects of *homa* help us to identify the ritual as such in a Newar Buddhist context. These include 1) a person who is in charge to perform the oblations (usually a Vajrācārya priest) and the patron of the ritual (Skt. *yajamāna*; New. *jajmān*); 2) the shape of the fire pit(s); 3) the ritual implements; and 4) the substances used as offerings. In what follows, I present these central features of the Newar Buddhist fire sacrifice under the labels ‘actors’, ‘place’, ‘attributes’, and ‘actions’. At times, I will refer to the specific forms of these characterising elements in a Newar Brahmanical context, as we will also examine a *homa* image in a painting illustrating a Viṣṇu-*maṇḍala*, in Chapter 3.

2.2.1. Actors: Priest and patron

Only a Vajrācārya priest is legitimated to perform the fire sacrifice in a Newar Buddhist context. In the Kathmandu Valley there has been a shift from a celibate, monastic Buddhist community (*saṃgha*) towards a *saṃgha* consisting of groups of married householders. The date of the appearance of a community of monks, simultaneously being married householders, is hard to determine. Such an environment of married, Buddhist ‘monks’ appears to be reflected in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* as early as the 11th century CE (von Rospatt forthcoming, 8). Both the married monks and a celibate community continued to exist side by side in the Kathmandu Valley, but it is uncertain exactly when the latter eventually disappeared from the Newar Buddhist scene.⁴¹ Being a Buddhist monk in a Newar context thus became synonymous with birth into an endogamous group called ‘Bare’ in Newari.⁴² The Bare consists of two groups, designated by the names Śākyabhikṣu and Vajrācārya.⁴³ All male members of the *saṃgha* born in these groups become a Śākya and receive the Buddhist ordination ritual (Skt. *pravajya*; New. *bare chuyegu*). Boys born into a Vajrācārya family receive an additional initiation after the *pravajya*, namely the *dīkṣā* or *ācārya-abhiṣeka* (New. *ācāluyegu*). This initiation is performed in the home monastery of the father (Skt. *vihāra*; New. *bahā*).⁴⁴ After this second initiation, the Vajrācārya boy is

⁴¹ Alexander von Rospatt maintains that the loss of Newar celibate Buddhism already happened long before the 17th century CE, as it is at times suggested (forthcoming, 10).

⁴² Bare is derived from the Sanskrit word *vandya*, meaning “worthy one” (Slusser 1982, 288).

⁴³ Differences between the Śākyabhikṣus and Vajrācāryas can be attested as early as the mid-12th century CE. D. R. Regmi refers to two manuscripts from this period, in which the copyists are named as either Śākyabhikṣu or Vajrācārya. The first manuscript is an *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript (N.S. 285) referring to Śākyabhikṣu as its writer. The second manuscript is of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* (N.S. 273), attributed to a scribe bearing the name Vajrācārya (1965 [1], 654).

⁴⁴ *Bahā* denotes the prevailing type of Newar monastery hosting married Vajrācāryas and tantric cults, for the performance of which these priests are responsible. The Newari term *bahī* indicates the – now lost – type of Newar monastery hosting a celibate monastic community (Gellner 2001, 134-178; quoted in von Rospatt forthcoming, 8). *Bahā* and *bahī* also denote differences in the architectural construction of the monasteries (Slusser 1982, 137-139). Both types of Newar monasteries are referred to in Sanskrit by the term *vihāra* (von Rospatt forthcoming, 8).

entitled to perform tantric initiations and rituals, such as *homa*, and he can act as a family priest (*purohita*).⁴⁵ In a Newar Hindu context, the role of *purohita* is fulfilled by a Brahmin priest. The relationship between a *purohita* and his client family, which includes the *yajamāna* or patron of the ritual, can persist over several generations (Slusser 1982, 217). One or more patrons may assist the priest during ceremonies. They are expected to arrange the necessary offerings for the ritual (Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 297). The priest is also entitled to work at a temple or shrine as a *pūjāri*. Depending on the deity housed in the temple or shrine, the *pūjāri* is a Vajrācārya, a Brahmin or a Karmācārya, the latter of them being a Newar Hindu priest involved specifically in tantric rituals.⁴⁶

Nowadays, a fire ritual can only be performed by a Vajrācārya, a Brahmin or a Karmācārya priest. In the past, male members of the nobility could perform *homa* on a regular basis as well, especially sacrifices of the *koṭyāhuti* type, consisting of ten million oblations (Slusser 1982, 217). In Nepalese *homa* paintings, we may indeed see a king performing the ritual. Shyamalkanti Chakravarti, for example, identifies the figure pouring offerings into the fire, as depicted in a *paubhā* with central image of Viṣṇu-Kamalā, as King Jayamukunda Malla (fig. 2; 1969, 132).⁴⁷

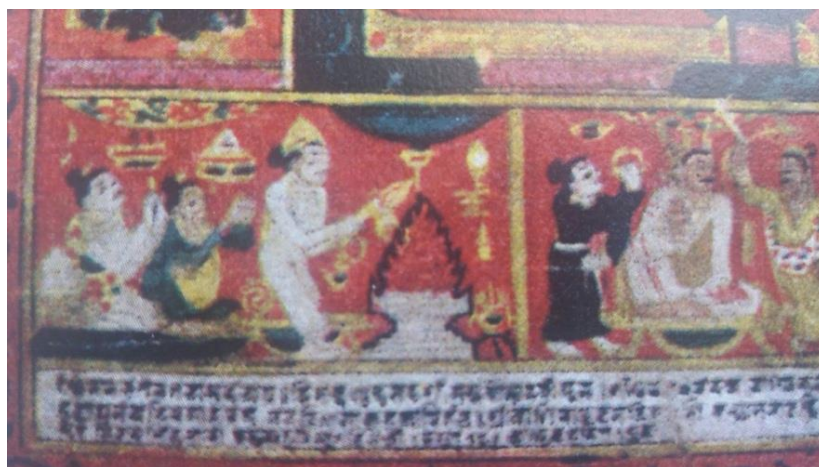


Fig. 2: *Homa* in a *paubhā* displaying Viṣṇu-Kamalā, 1566 CE, Nepal, Indian Museum Kolkatta (At/68/25).

⁴⁵ Locke 1980, 20-21; Slusser 1982, 217; Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 292-293.

⁴⁶ Slusser 1982, 217; Regmi 1965 (2), 745.

⁴⁷ This painting is dated 1566 CE and is currently preserved in the Indian Museum Kolkatta. It is rendered with water colours on cotton cloth and measures 92 x 66 cm (Chakravarti 1969, 129-132; Plate 3).

2.2.2. Place: Establishing the fire pit

Now that we know who is entitled to perform *homa* and who is expected to arrange for the ritual, we may examine where the fire sacrifice takes place. The position of the fire pit (*yajña-kunḍa* or *agni-kunḍa*), as the centre on which the ritual actions are focussed, is instructive in this regard. It represents the mouth of the Vedic god Agni, who is in charge of carrying the offerings to the other deities in heaven (Slusser 1982, 217). *Homa* can be performed at various locations, such as a Buddhist *vihāra* or in front of a temple, where the fire pit is usually a fixed architectural element. The ceremony may be performed at other locations, such as the bank of a river, where it is installed temporarily.⁴⁸ Before the installation of a *kunḍa*, the site has to be ritually purified to make it suitable for the performance of *homa* (Regmi 1965 [2], 716-717). The fire pit is usually built of bricks, and its establishment is accompanied by a range of ritual actions, such as the recitation of *mantras*, as prescribed for a Buddhist context in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*.

The shape, colour and position of a fire pit are traditionally determined by the function of the ritual. In the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, Kuladatta describes the shape of the *kunḍa* as follows:

And one should make that fire pit quadrangular, resembling an eight-limbed jewel, lotus-shaped or wheel-shaped.⁴⁹

According to the fourfold categorisation of a ritual based on its purpose as described in Section 2.1.3, the square form mentioned by Kuladatta indicates an increasing function of the oblations. This classification in four purposes is also outlined by Abhayākaragupta (ca. 11th century CE).⁵⁰ This Indian tantric master prescribes four principal shapes for the hearths. The fire pit for appeasing sacrifices should be round with a white colour and a position to the east of the *maṇḍala*;⁵¹ the hearth for enriching sacrifices should be square, yellow and positioned in the southern direction; the hearth for subduing should have a shape resembling a half-moon, with a red colour and a western position; and the fire pit for fierce sacrifices should be triangular, with a black or dark blue colour and positioned in the

⁴⁸ Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 305; Bal Gopal Shrestha, pers. comm., May 11, 2017.

⁴⁹ For a transcription and annotated translation of the Sanskrit, see Appendix 1.

⁵⁰ Ryugen Tanemura indicates that the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* shares several sections with Abhayākaragupta's *Vajrāvalī* in the part on *pratiṣṭhā*. Although the dates of the lives of both Kuladatta and Abhayākaragupta are uncertain and subject of scholarly debates, Ryugen Tanemura suggests, on the basis of textual comparisons, that Kuladatta predates Abhayākaragupta (2004, 9-10).

⁵¹ I could not trace the specific *maṇḍala* referred to by Abhayākaragupta.

northern direction of the *maṇḍala*.⁵² This fourfold classification follows the established categorising of rituals as pacifying (*śānti*), increasing (*puṣṭi*), subduing (*vaśya*), or destroying (*abhicāra*). Although he does not prescribe its colour, Kuladatta's description of the fire pit as square matches the increasing purpose of the ritual, which Yael Bentor reports as one of the functions of *homa* in rituals of consecration (1996, 270). With the fire pit installed as the centre of the ritual actions, we can now turn the implements employed to perform a *homa*.

2.2.3. Attributes: The ritual implements

Which objects does the priest need to enact the fire ritual? When a Vajrācārya priest goes to a patron family to perform *homa*, he generally brings along ritual attributes such as a 'five-buddha' crown (Skt. *mukūṭa*; New. *mukhaḥ*), a *sulāpā* (*sruc*; a long ladle with square cup attached to the handle), a *dhova* (*sruva*; a spoon ladle), a bell with a *vajra* handle (*vajra-ghanṭā*), and a *vajra*. Other implements, such as a water vessel (*kalaśa*), *kuśa* grass, incense, lamps, and several bundles of specific kinds of wood, are usually supplied by the patron family (Lewis and Bhajracharya 2016, 297). A discussion of all the possible types of implements used during a Newar fire ritual would surpass the scope of this chapter. Therefore, I will focus on those ritual attributes that help us to better understand the paintings of *homa* as examined in Chapter 3. These are the 'five-buddha' crown, two different types of ladles, and the *kalaśa*.

The crown

The 'five-buddha' crown, called after the images of the five cosmic buddhas that adorn the surface of the headdress, is an attribute specific to a Buddhist Vajrācārya priest. It is usually made of gold with a *vajra* at the top, as can be seen in a crown currently in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (fig. 3). The *mukhaḥ* is a pivotal attribute of a Buddhist priest in a Newar ritual context. The Vajrācārya boy receives this crown during his tantric initiation (Skt. *ācārya-abhiṣeka*; New. *ācālyegu*) and wears it during ceremonies and the performance of rituals, such as *homa* (Gellner 1992, 268). When wearing this crown, the priest "temporarily incarnates the divinity" (Juramie and Meahl-Blöndal 2005, 463). The necessity for the priest to be transformed into a god in order to perform the fire sacrifice can be traced back to the Vedic *homa*. Nawarai Chaulagain explains that "according to traditional conceptions regarding Vedic ritual, only a god can offer to the gods or deities" (2016, 321). In a Newar Buddhist context, the priest is probably supposed to incarnate specifically the buddha Vajrasattva. A. C. Juramie and K. Meahl-Blöndal offer the following arguments for the identification of the priest with this buddha when he is wearing the crown. First, they rely on their observance that, when a priest wears this headdress, he holds the bell (*vajra-ghanṭā*) and *vajra* as attributes. A priest performing the fire ritual, as

⁵² The original work of Abhayākara Gupta referred to by Tadeusz Skorupski is the *Jyotirmañjarī* (Skorupski 2001, 188-189; quoted in Skorupski 2016, 92).

photographed by Mary Slusser (fig. 4), carries a bell in his left hand, while a *vajra* rests on – what appears to me as – a *maṇḍala*-stone in front of him.⁵³ The bell and *vajra* are the typical symbols of Vajrasattva (de Mallman 1975, 420). Secondly, in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, Vajrasattva is described as wearing a crown adorned by the five cosmic buddhas, with a *vajra* at the top.⁵⁴

The ladles

During the performance of *homa* in a Newar context, two types of ladles are generally employed for pouring the oblations into the fire, namely a *sulāpā* and a *dhova*. The *sulāpā* (*sruc*) has a long handle with a rectangular cup attached at one end (Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 297). This ladle is used to pour a liquid, such as *ghee*, into the fire. The *dhova* (*sruva*) resembles a spoon with a long handle. It can be used to scoop liquid into the *sulāpā*.⁵⁵ In the enactment of *homa*, the two ladles can be held with the right hand, but never with the left (Nirajan Kafle pers. comm.).

The water vessel

Another pivotal implement in the performance of a Newar fire sacrifice is the *kalaśa* or water vessel. It is used to invoke the gods and goddesses for whom the substances are offered, and thus functions as a temporal abode for these deities during the ritual.⁵⁶ During the *kalaśa pūjā*, which always precedes *homa*, the deities are requested to reside in the water vessel.⁵⁷ The size of the *kalaśa* may vary, but usually it has a spout (Locke 1980, 95). The liquid contained in the vessel is made sacred by the deity invoked into it. The holy water from a *kalaśa* can be sprinkled over the devotees or distributed among them at the conclusion of a fire ritual.⁵⁸

The implements described here, and many others, enable a correct performance of a Newar fire sacrifice within a specific religious ceremony. The basic action of the priest – and at times also of the *yajamāna* – during *homa* is the offering of substances into the flames, which is the subject of the last section of this chapter.

2.2.4. Actions: The offerings

The Vedic fire ritual originally consisted of the offering of grains and *ghee* into the flames. Although this basic set of offerings has been preserved in a tantric context, it was

⁵³ I will examine these *maṇḍala*-stones further in Section 3.6.2.

⁵⁴ de Mallmann 1975, 419-420; Juramie and Meahl-Blöndal 2005, 463.

⁵⁵ Voegeli 2015. This movie shows the performance of the vedic Agnihotra ritual by Rām Prasād Gautam, in an agnīśala to the south of the Paśupatināth temple in Kathmandu, in April - May 2014.

⁵⁶ Locke 1980, 95; Gellner 1992, 151.

⁵⁷ Locke 1980, 106; Gellner 1992, 157.

⁵⁸ Shrestha 2012, 454; Lewis and Bajracharya 2016, 302.

elaborated extensively.⁵⁹ The types of offerings depend on the exoteric or esoteric character of the ritual in which *homa* functions. Vegetarian substances, such as grains mixed with *ghee* (*caru*), milk, sesame seeds, curd, betel nuts, specific kinds of herbs, flowers, and fruits,⁶⁰ are usually employed in exoteric fire rites. In the esoteric variants, non-vegetarian offerings such as buffalo meat, wine and eggs may be employed (Regmi 1965 [2], 723-724). Particular substances in various amounts are offered at precise moments during the fire sacrifice. A complete description of this ritual procedure would, however, surpass the scope of this thesis.⁶¹

In sum, we have seen how characterising features of *homa*, such as a priest legitimated to perform the ritual, specific shapes of the fire pits, particular ritual implements and suitable substances to be offered, have been preserved in Newar fire rituals. We have also briefly explored how these key aspects were adapted to their local tantric setting in a medieval and early modern Newar society. These observations stem largely from textual sources and anthropological observations. These include medieval ritual manuals composed in Sanskrit, such as the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, and more recent anthropological studies by John K. Locke, David Gellner and Todd Lewis and Naresh Bajracharya. In Chapter 3, I propose an altogether new source for investigating *homa*, namely Nepalese *paubhās*.

⁵⁹ Regmi 1965 (2), 719; Locke 1980, 106.

⁶⁰ The *homa* section of the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* also includes an elaborate list of various types of substances that have to be arranged for the sacrifice.

⁶¹ For more details on this complete ritual operation, see Locke 1980, 103-114.



Fig. 3: Five-buddha, ritual crown, 12th century CE, Nepal,
Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.81.67).



Fig. 4: A Vajrācārya priest performing *homa* in Bu-Bahā, Patan, photo by Mary Slusser.

Chapter 3

The iconography of *homa* in Nepalese *paubhās*

The recent book *Homa Variations*, edited by Richard Payne and Michael Witzel (2016), offers an excellent collection of *homa* studies in Asian contexts, based on a wide variety of textual sources and anthropological studies with different scholarly approaches. Nevertheless, Richard Payne indicates in the introduction that there is still a need for other perspectives and methods in the study of the fire ritual. These approaches could come from art history, archaeology and epigraphy (2016, 19). Chapter 3 aims to explore the paintings of *homa* in Nepalese *paubhās* from an iconographical perspective. What information on fire rituals in a Newar milieu can be derived from these unique visual testimonies?

3.1. Selection of materials

In a few instances, a fire sacrifice appears in the centre of a Nepalese *paubhā*. For example, in a painting illustrating a renovation of the Svayambhūnātha *stūpa* dated 1565 CE, the *homa* scene is part of a re-consecration ritual in progress.⁶² I am aware of only one more *paubhā* from the Malla period containing such an image of *homa* in its central panel. This painting shows a renovation of a *stūpa* enclosing the goddess *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* in its upper section. In its lower half, it displays a couple celebrating the Bhīmarathārohaṇa ceremony, while facing the Buddha Amitābha. The painting was created for the first time in 1433 CE and was reworked in 1666 CE in Kathmandu.⁶³ The *homa* scene belongs to the upper section, but the *paubhā* contains a lower register in which presumably a fire ritual was depicted as well. Due to damage, however, this image has become hardly visible. Apparently, this type of central placement of the fire sacrifice is rare. In the present study, I will focus on *homa* in the lower registers of *paubhās*, as their appearance is much more common, providing an elaborate set of source materials for analysis.

⁶² Slusser 1985, 10; Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 112. See Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 1 for an image and more details.

⁶³ The painting is part of the private collection of Madame Sumitra Charat Ram in New Delhi. It consists of water colours on cotton cloth and measures 152 cm in height (Pal 1978, 24; 80-81; Plate 9; Vergati 1999, 36).

3.2. The composition of the lower register

Two ways of composing the lower register can be identified.⁶⁴ The first way consists of a lower register divided into several panels, whereas the second form of construction is continuous. After a brief discussion of some particularities of these two ways to arrange the lower register, we will examine the iconography of the scenes, using the key aspects of *homa* as identified in Chapter 2: ‘actors’, ‘place’, ‘attributes’ and ‘actions’. In the images of the fire ritual, we encounter a priest, an assistant to the priest and donors as actors. Several ritual attributes, surround the sacrificial fire which is the virtual centre of the performance of actions, and which indicates the place of the ceremony by its location.

For this visual analysis, the following categories, with relevant paintings, could be identified:

Category 1: The lower register is divided into panels. The priest is seated, for example in a *Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala* painting dated to 1490 CE, currently in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 2). The priest can also stand, for example in a *Sūrya-maṇḍala paubhā* dated to 1379 CE in the Zimmerman collection (Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 3).

Category 2: The lower register is continuous and the priest stands, as seen in a *Viṣṇu-maṇḍala* painting dated to 1420 CE in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 4). The priest sits in a *Vasundharā-maṇḍala paubhā*, dated 1777 CE, formerly in the Jucker collection (Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 5).

Four *paubhās* were thus selected on the basis of the composition of the *homa* scene in relation to the type of lower register. Of course this categorisation of the paintings based on the arrangement of the registers may seem arbitrary and subjective. However, I chose to adopt this method in order to discover expected, systematic patterns in the iconography of *homa* scenes. This method enabled me to make a reasoned selection from a wider corpus, as a first step in what deserves a much larger study project. Practical concerns, such as the visibility of details in the images, also played a role in this selection. In the iconographic analysis, I will at times refer to other paintings that were collected for this research, details of which are then offered in footnotes. I pay specific attention to individual features of these masterpieces in the last section of Chapter 4, as we are primarily concerned in this chapter with tracing general patterns in the iconography of the painted fire rituals. To start

⁶⁴ This categorisation is based on the study of the *homa* scenes of forty-four *paubhās*. The details of the selected *paubhās* have been catalogued in tables in Appendix 2. In these tables, I offer general information and iconographic details of the artworks, and included an image of the complete painting.

us off, an overview of the possible arrangements within the lower register may serve to situate the *homa* images among the remaining scenes in these registers.

3.2.1. Category 1: A lower register divided into panels

When depicted in a lower register divided into several panels, the *homa* scene is mostly situated in the lower left corner.⁶⁵ The number of panels into which a register is divided, ranges from three up to seven. The rightmost panel usually bears images of donors, arranged in one or more rows.⁶⁶ The subjects of the panels in between vary. The most commonly encountered motifs are:

- The treasures of the universal monarch (*cakravartin*), which are a queen, a wheel (*cakra*), a horse, an elephant, a minister, an adviser, and a jewel;⁶⁷
- Dancers, flanked by musicians playing musical instruments such as flutes, cymbals or drums;⁶⁸
- Guardian or protector deities, such as Mahākāla, Acala and Gaṇeśa;
- Other deities popular in the Kathmandu Valley, such as Mañjuśrī, the Pañcarakṣās, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, and Śiva, who is usually depicted in a dancing posture.

Exceptionally, other themes are encountered in these central panels, such as:

- The main donor, seated on a lotus and surrounded by musicians; for example, in the *Sūrya-maṇḍala* painting from the Zimmerman collection (see fig. 50);

⁶⁵ Twenty-five of the forty-four *paubhās* studied, follow this pattern.

⁶⁶ An exception to this pattern is the *paubhā* with a depiction of Vajradhara from the National Gallery in Bhaktapur (Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 6). The outer panels of the lower register bear images of the guardian deities Virūdhaka and Virūpākṣa.

⁶⁷ Gonda 1966, 60. Jan Gonda offers only one of the various lists of these seven treasures, based on a reading of the Buddhist *Divyāvadāna*. It is common in Nepalese paintings that the seven treasures are depicted in the two panels flanking the central one. In some cases, such as the Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara *paubhā*, dated to the 15th century CE, from the Lionel-Fournier collection (in usufruct to Musée Guimet, MA5168), there is only a depiction of a king and a queen, seated on a throne and flanked by two attendants each, waving fans and holding small lamps. Gilles Béguin describes these panels as containing potential images of the then-reigning king and queen (2010, 64). Whether or not these images are supposed to represent real kings and queens, their portraits are idealised, without a distinction of individual characteristics, and conforming to a stereotyped 'regal type'. It is only in the late Malla period (from the middle of the 17th century CE onwards) that portraits of recognisable, individual kings are included in the lower registers of *paubhās* (Pal 1978, 126-127).

⁶⁸ Dancing and playing musical instruments have been attested by Mary Slusser in the *paubhā* illustrating a renovation of the Svayambhūnātha *stūpa* (Appendix 2, no. 1). She links these kinds of depictions to the playing of music and singing devotional songs to the deities. This practice is an essential part of religious gatherings in a Newar context, as observed by her (1985, 26).

- Miniature *caityas* on a pedestal flanked by banners and *pūrṇakalaśas*. This is seen, for example, in the Avalokiteśvara Lakṣaicaitya *paubhā* from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art;⁶⁹
- A *pūrṇakalaśa* flanked by dancers, for example in a Vasundharā *paubhā* from the Zimmerman collection;⁷⁰
- A row of liturgical instruments displayed on pedestals, for example in an Avalokiteśvara *paubhā* (fig. 5);⁷¹
- Manifestations of Cakraṣṃvara, depicted in union with his consort. This is the case in *paubhās* meant to be exposed in a secret *āgaṃ* shrine, such as the Cakraṣṃvara-*maṇḍala* painting selected for this study.⁷²

Paubhās with a lower register of this format date from the early 14th to the 16th century CE. A *homa* scene, when found in a lower register compartmentalised in this way, reveals a regular pattern in the spatial arrangement of its basic elements. This composition can be schematised, from the viewer's left to right:

(at times) one or more attendants → assistant or main donor → priest → sacrificial fire

3.2.2. Category 2: A continuous lower register

When the lower register is continuous, so not divided into box-like panels, the *homa* scene is placed either in the centre of the register, or near the centre to the left or to the right.⁷³ In the latter case, the centre may be occupied by one of the following motifs: a) a manifestation of Śiva in a dancing posture; b) a *stūpa*;⁷⁴ or c) Mahākāla or Acala.

In some paintings, several continuous registers have been included along the lower border, for instance, in the Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara *paubhā* from the Indian Museum Kolkata

⁶⁹ This *paubhā* is dated to the late 14th century CE, and measures 60 x 50,7 cm. It consists of water colours on cotton cloth, and is part of the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck collection (M.77.19-4; Pal 1978, 70-71; Plate 77; 1985, 204; Plate 8).

⁷⁰ This *paubhā* is dated 1403 CE, and consists of watercolours on cotton cloth. It measures 86,4 x 73,7 cm (Pal 1978, 76-77; Plate 85; 1996, 80; Plate 34).

⁷¹ This *paubhā* is dated ca. 1300 CE, and is made of watercolours on cloth, measuring 65 x 53 cm. It is part of the Lionel Fournier collection, in usufruct to Musée Guimet Paris (Béguin 1990, 172-175; Plate D).

⁷² Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 262. See Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 2.

⁷³ Thirteen of the forty-four *paubhās* studied, follow this pattern.

⁷⁴ In some cases, the *stūpa* is identifiable with the Svayaṃbhūnātha *stūpa*, for example in a Vasundharā *paubhā* from the former Jucker collection (fig. 13; Kreijger 1999, 72).

(fig. 6).⁷⁵ *Paubhās* in which the lower register has a continuous format date from the 14th to the 18th century CE. The composition of the *homa* scenes resembles that of the compartmentalised category:

attendants → assistant or main donor → priest → sacrificial fire ← attendants

Or:

attendants → priest → sacrificial fire ← assistant or main donor ← attendants

In sum, *homa* scenes in the lower register of Nepalese *paubhās* appear either in the leftmost panel of a compartmentalised register, or, in or near the centre in the continuous form. Now that we know where to locate the painted fire ritual, we can move to the iconography of the motif. Keeping in mind the aspects of actors, place, attributes and actions, used in Chapter 2 for the analysis of textual information, we come across a parallel iconographic set of actors (the priest, his assistant to the ritual, and the *yajamāna* and his family), attributes (specific ritual implements marking a *homa*), place, and action (the act of offering into the fire as the virtual centre of the ritual).

3.3. Actors and actions: The priest offering oblations into the fire

The chief actor in the performance of a fire ritual is the priest. We see him seated in the lotus position (*padmāsana*) on a low, golden platform covered by a dark piece of cloth, in the *Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala paubhā* from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (fig. 7). He sits to the left of the fire from the viewer's perspective. Our priest is attired by of a long-sleeved, white garment reaching to his ankles, held at the waist with a red belt, while a red piece of cloth covers his shoulders. He also wears a golden crown (Skt. *mukuṭa*; New. *mukhaḥ*), which resembles the 'five-buddha' crown described in Chapter 2. Its two-tiered structure and the large lobe at the front of the diadem are remarkably similar to the crown worn by the Newar Buddhist priest in Mary Slusser's photograph (fig. 4). This allows us to identify the priest as a Vajrācārya. Although the five cosmic buddhas are not visible in the painted crown (perhaps due to a necessary degree of abstraction), the *vajra* at the top confirms this identification. Wearing golden rings as earrings and a golden necklace, the Vajrācārya priest holds a golden ladle in his right hand and a golden bell, with a *vajra* on the

⁷⁵ This *paubhā* is dated 1430 CE, and consists of water colours on cloth. It measures 67 x 51 cm (Chakravarti 1969, 132-133; Plate 4).

handle (*vajra-ghaṇṭā*), in his left hand. The ladle has a long handle with a square cup attached to the end, and resembles a *sulāpā* (*sruc*) described in Section 2.2.3.⁷⁶ Two more ladles lie on the ground, in front of the platform of the officiating priest. One resembles a *sulāpā* with an oval cup, while a *dhova* lies next to it. These two types of ladles and their employment by the priest, can be seen more clearly in a *paubhā* displaying the story of Sumanā (dated 1859-60 CE) in the collection of MAS Antwerp (fig. 8; Hinzler and Schoterman 1980, 23). The way in which the Vajrācārya priest has been executed in the Cakrasaṃvara-*maṇḍala* painting exemplifies the most commonly found form of iconography for a priest as encountered in the studied *paubhās*. This supports Pratapaditya Pal's observation that the painter used a stereotyped figure to depict the priest (1978, 124).

The priest can also stand bare-foot on a low platform with a dark piece of cloth over it, placed to the left of the fire from our point of view (fig. 9). This can be seen in a Sūrya-*maṇḍala* painting from the Zimmerman collection. The priest wears a white, long-sleeved, double-breasted, gown reaching almost to his ankles, with a V-shaped neck. This garment is held at the waist by a red belt, and a yellow shawl falls loosely over the left shoulder. The priest wears a high, golden crown resembling the five-buddha *mukhaḥ*; hence also this priest can be identified as a Buddhist Vajrācārya. A white, circular mark (*tilaka*) appears on his forehead and he wears golden earrings. Our Vajrācārya extends here the *sulāpā* and the *dhova* with both hands towards the fire, as if he is about to pour an oblation into the flames. Another golden *sulāpā* appears in front of his platform.

In the Viṣṇu-*maṇḍala paubhā*, the priest also stands, in this case to the right of the sacrificial fire (fig. 10), instead of to left, as was the case in the Cakrasaṃvara- and Sūrya-*maṇḍala* paintings. He stands, bare-foot, in front of a low platform with a blue piece of cloth over it. Respectively attired by a long-sleeved, white garment reaching to the ankles with a V-shaped neck, held by a red belt at the waist, he additionally wears orange earrings and a long, orange necklace that almost reaches his knees, resembling a *vanamālā*. A white mark consisting of two vertical strokes, adorns the forehead of our priest, indicating his Vaiṣṇava affiliation. Hence, we can identify this figure as a brahmanical priest instead of a Vajrācārya. The absence of a five-buddha crown supports this assumption.⁷⁷ With two ladles held by

⁷⁶ The *sruc* exists in two varieties in the Vedic tradition: the *juhu* and the *dhruva*. The difference between the two forms of *sruc* is recognisable in the shape of the depression of the rectangular vessel (*puṣkara*) attached at the handle. In the case of the *juhu*, the interior of the vessel is rectangular with one side ending towards a point from which the liquid is poured. The interior of the vessel of a *dhruva* is oval-shaped. Both ladles are identifiable by marks engraved in the handle of the ladle (Staal e.a. 1983, 207). In Nepalese paintings, both the rectangular and oval-shaped *puṣkara* appear.

⁷⁷ Given the central image of Viṣṇu in this painting, we expect a brahmanical priest. Nevertheless, there are several paintings in which a Buddhist priest has been painted with a central brahmanical

both hands, the upper one a *dhova*, the lower one a *sulāpā*, our Brahmin priest pours offerings into the flames, just like his fellow actors described above.

These ways to depict a priest performing *homa* are maintained in later *paubhās* (17th to 18th century CE), but the garments are subject to change. In both types of lower registers, either divided into panels or continuous, the priest either stands or sits, but the latter posture is encountered more often.⁷⁸ Curiously, all priests that I could identify in this study as Brahmanical are shown standing, while the Vajrācāryas either sit or stand. Another pivotal actor in the performance of *homa*, is the priest's assistant, to whom we turn in the next section.

3.4. Actors and actions: The assistant to the priest

Our Vajrācārya priest in the *Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala paubhā* is accompanied by a male assistant (fig. 7).⁷⁹ He sits on a dark-blue, low cushion or carpet. His costume resembles that of the priest: a long-sleeved, white garment, held at the waist by a red belt, with a red piece of cloth over the shoulders. A red, pointed hat with a rectangular piece of gold at the front appears on the head of our assistant. The *yajamāna* of this *Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala paubhā*, whom we can identify by name as Vajrācārya Jayarāja⁸⁰ appears in the rightmost panel with a similar type of headdress. The golden piece at the front of Jayarāja's headdress seems to

deity, such as in the *Sūrya-maṇḍala* painting from the Zimmerman collection. In contemporary Newar communities Hindu families ask Buddhist Vajrācārya priests to perform certain *homās* on the seventh or twelfth day after the death of a family member, as this particular *homa* is no longer done by Brahmins and Karmācāryas. According to Todd Lewis and Naresh Bajracharya, it is likely that this has been the case for at least a century and probably even longer (2016, 306). More paintings show a Vajrācārya priest performing the *homa*, while the central deity is Brahmanical; for example, in a *paubhā* with a central depiction of a Viṣṇu shrine from the former Jucker collection (Kreijger 1999, 62-63; Plate 18). Pratapaditya Pal interprets this appearance of a Buddhist priest in a painting with a central Brahmanical image as a habit by the Newar Citrakār, who was more familiar with rendering Buddhist scenes (1996, 78). However, exchanges of ritual specialists do not appear to be unusual in a Newar context today. It is therefore worth considering in the case of the paintings with central Brahmanical deity, combined with a Buddhist priest in the lower register, that this was not a result of the application of a standardised format by the painter. Perhaps, it was how he perceived it in real life?

⁷⁸ Thirty-four of the forty-four *paubhās* that were studied, display a seated priest.

⁷⁹ At times the assistant appears at the opposite side of the sacrificial fire, as for example in the *Vasundharā-maṇḍala paubhā*, dated 1777 CE, from former Jucker collection (fig. 13).

⁸⁰ I am not sure about the correct application of diacritics in the name of this donor, as these are not offered by Dina Bangdel in her description of the *paubhā* (2003, 262-263). The identification of the patron of this painting as Jayarāja is based on a re-reading of the inscription by Kashinath Tamot (Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 263; fn. 11). Pratapaditya Pal appears to read the name as "Jitaraja" (1985, 215). As a transcription of the inscription was not published by Pal (1985), neither by Huntington and Bangdel (2003), I was not able to verify the names. In this thesis, I employ the most recent reading of the name as Jayarāja.

have the shape of a *vajra* (fig. 11). The golden mark on the hat of the assistant may, likewise, represent a *vajra*. The priest's companion, moreover, holds with both hands a golden palm-leaf manuscript (*tālapatra*) with black characters inscribed on it. Mary Slusser describes a similar attribute, held by the attendant in a *homa* scene in the *paubhā* illustrating the renovation of the Svayambhūnātha *stūpa*, as a "palm-leaf manuscript", from which the monk⁸¹ is reading during the performance of the oblations by the priest (fig. 12; 1985, 14). In a contemporary Newar context, the reading from manuscripts during the performance of the fire ritual has been attested by scholars as well. Bal Gopal Shrestha for example, reports the recitation of Sanskrit hymns of praise (*śloka*s), read from a manuscript during a fire sacrifice in Sankhu.⁸² A manuscript of the shape outlined above, with or without characters painted on it, is frequently held by assistants in *paubhās* dating between 14th and mid - 17th century CE. From the late 17th century CE onwards, the form of these manuscripts changes from that of a long object carried with both hands to a smaller, rectangular one, presented by the attendant on the palm of his hand, as seen, for example, in a Vasundharā-*maṇḍala* painting (fig. 13).

Previous scholars identified the assistant either as a monk or as the main donor of the painting. Odette Monod-Bruhl describes the companion to the Vajrācārya priest in a Vajradhara *paubhā* from the Musée Guimet as a monk (1959, 304),⁸³ relying on the account by Sylvain Lévi (1905 [2], 32). The kind of monk Lévi refers to is a Bhikṣu, whom he describes as lower in rank to and assisting the Buddhist priest.⁸⁴ Hugo Kreijger occasionally refers to the figure seated just behind the Vajrācārya as the main donor (1999, 32). As the assistant described by Kreijger also holds a manuscript, it is unlikely that he represents the *yajamāna*. As Bal Gopal Shrestha explained to me in a personal conversation (May 11, 2017), in a contemporary ritual context, the *yajamāna* is not supposed or even authorised to read or recite from manuscripts.⁸⁵ This is an act reserved for the priestly groups. It is of course possible that the patron of this *paubhā* belonged to the Bare *jāti*, in which case the assistant in this painting could indeed be the *yajamāna* as well.

⁸¹ Mary Slusser does not specify which monk could have been depicted here.

⁸² His account is based on an observation of a fire ritual, performed during the annual festival of Vajrayoginī in the town of Sankhu in the Kathmandu Valley, in 1996 and 1997 (2012, 453).

⁸³ This painting is dated 1488 CE, based on a reading of the inscription. It belongs to the collection of the Musée Guimet in Paris (M.G. 22800). The materials consist of water colours on cotton cloth, and it measures 100 x 75 cm (Monod-Bruhl 1959, Plate 1).

⁸⁴ "Le Bhikṣu est, ..., un prêtre de rang inférieur qui sert d'auxiliaire au Vajrācārya" (1905 [1], 240).

⁸⁵ I would like to thank Dr. Bal Gopal Shrestha for explaining me details of Newar fire rituals in our personal conversation (pers. comm., May 11, 2017).

3.5. Actors and actions: The *yajamāna* and his family

Nepalese paintings almost invariably bear an image of the patron or *yajamāna* who commissioned the painting, accompanied by family members. Their names are often meticulously enumerated in the inscriptions of the paintings. Donors can be depicted behind the assistant to the priest, as is seen in the *Sūrya-maṇḍala* painting from the Zimmerman collection (fig. 14), but more often they appear in the rightmost panel of the lower register. Here, they usually sit in one or more rows, kneeling or seated with their hands in the *añjali mudrā* (fig. 11). This is a typical hand gesture for attendants of a superior deity or divine event, as it symbolises adoration, homage or worship (Liebert 1976, 17). In a few cases, some of the attendants are standing and display the *añjali mudrā* with a flower clasped between their hands. They all face either the central scene of the lower register, or the fire sacrifice, depending on the panel in which they appear. Men as well as women and children are present, distinguishable by different hairstyles and garments (fig. 15). The women, for example, wear dark, long-sleeved blouses, typical in paintings from the Kathmandu Valley (Pal 1967, 16). The costumes shift over time, following contemporary, regional fashions. From the mid - 17th century CE onwards, the style of the donors' attire changes from a local Newar to an Indian-influenced style, as can be deduced from a comparison with miniatures from Mughal circles and from Rajasthan.⁸⁶ Especially the long, double-breasted gown of the male figures, appearing already in the earliest paintings, seems to have been modified in later times by Rajput and Mughal influences.⁸⁷

Some inscriptions refer to a king as the main patron of the artwork. In a Viṣṇu-shrine *paubhā*, dated to 1681 CE, the kings Ugramalla and Jitāmitramalla are named as the sponsors of the ritual, and probably they also commissioned the *paubhā*.⁸⁸ Vajrācārya priests can also act as a *yajamāna*, as can be read, for example, in the inscription of our *Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala* painting. The patron of this painting is identified as Vajrācārya Jayarāja from the Manasu monastery (Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 263).

Although the names of the donors are frequently mentioned in the inscriptions of Nepalese paintings, it is usually not possible to relate the names to specific figures in the *paubhā*. In a few cases, the names of the attendants have been inscribed as labels with the images, facilitating their identification. This is, for example, seen in a later *paubhā* (1850 CE) illustrating a Padmapāṇi shrine, formerly in the Jucker collection (fig. 16). The portraits of

⁸⁶ Pal 1978, 101-103; Kreijger 1999, 56.

⁸⁷ Pal 1967, 16. Pratapaditya Pal does not specify what exactly changed in these garments from the mid - 17th century CE onwards. I was not able to study enough materials to corroborate his observation myself.

⁸⁸ This information appears in the inscription of the *paubhā*. The painting is part of the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.73.2.2) and measures 166 x 128,4 cm. It is executed in water colours on cotton cloth (Pal 1985, 221; Plate 26).

the donors are generally idealised, making it impossible to recognise individual characteristics (Pal 1978, 123-124). The primary purpose of these images was to express devotion, which is also visualised by their acts of worship (Vajracharya 2003, 43). Having your portrait immortalized in a *paubhā* also enhances status and prestige. The donors literally show how pious they are, aspiring the worldly and spiritual benefits that are reported in the accompanying inscriptions. The commissioning of a *paubhā* was indeed believed to accumulate spiritual and material prosperity for the donor and his family (Pal 1978, 18-19).

The actions of offering oblations, reading from manuscripts and worship during a *homa* by the actors previously outlined, are enabled by a set of ritual attributes, to which we turn in the following sections.

3.6. Attributes: Ritual implements in the fire sacrifice

A whole range of ritual attributes (New. *thāpā*) appears in the *homa* scenes of *paubhās*, such as a vase of abundance (*pūrṇakalaśa*), a water vessel (*kalaśa*), a *maṇḍala*, a *vajra*, a mirror (*darpaṇa*), a lamp (*dīpa*), a parasol (*chattra*), a conch shell (*śaṅkha*), and plates with ritual offerings. The painter did not always depict each and every one of these objects. Some *homa* scenes are crowded with ritual implements, while in others hardly any attribute is present. A particular type of ritual object can have various forms, as in the case of lamps. In the *Sūrya-maṇḍala* painting (fig. 9), two lamps flank a lotus-*maṇḍala* to the left of the priest's platform. Their form resembles that of a Nepalese lamp stand from the 19th century CE, in the collection of the Fowler Museum Los Angeles (fig. 17). Another type of lamp appears behind the fire pit from the viewer's perspective. It rests on a tripod and resembles an elegant, 19th century, Nepalese lamp base, likewise, preserved in the Fowler Museum (fig. 18).

Other ritual attributes appear to have only one, standardised shape. Mirrors (*darpaṇa*) consist of a white circle, resting on a cylindrical handle with a rectangular base. In the *Sūrya-maṇḍala* painting, this object stands to the left of the priest's assistant (fig. 14). A conch shell (*śaṅkha*) is white and supported by a tripod, as seen in the *Vasundharā-maṇḍala* painting from the former Jucker collection (fig. 19). A *vajra* and golden and white plates, perhaps containing substances to be offered into the fire, likewise lie in front of the priest. In the *Sūrya-maṇḍala* painting, our Vajrācārya priest is covered by a parasol (*chattra*), resting on the platform on which he stands (fig. 9). This attribute probably marks his high status. Mary Slusser observed that permanent fire pits as part of the architectural structure of Newar monasteries can be protected with a baldachin (1982, 160). Such a function could also explain the appearance of this object here. Three objects in particular prevail in the

homa scenes, and their occurrence follows a certain pattern. These are a vase of abundance (*pūrṇakalāśa*), a water vessel (*kalāśa*), and a *maṇḍala*.

3.6.1. Offering a seat to the deities: The *pūrṇakalāśa* and *kalāśa*

In Nepalese *paubhās*, the *pūrṇakalāśa*, or vase of abundance, usually takes the shape of a golden pot with a globular belly and a constricted neck, from which flower buds and leaves pour out (fig. 7). The vessel is often placed on a tripod indicated by thin, black lines. In many cases the *pūrṇakalāśa* stands at the opposite side of the fire pit from the priest's point of view, sometimes slightly to his left. The vase of plenty is ubiquitously present in Nepalese scroll-paintings, not only in the lower register, but also as a decorative motif in the central scenes of the artworks.

The motif of the *pūrṇakalāśa* is not a Newar invention. From earliest times onwards, we encounter it as an ornamental pattern and a symbol of auspiciousness in ancient Indian architectural structures, such as the Sanchi and Bharhut *stūpas*, the oldest sculptures of which date to the 2nd century BCE (Agrawala 1965, 10-13). The vase of plenty is first and foremost a Pan-Indian symbol of prosperity. It is also a symbol of life and its offering expresses the wish for health, wealth and long life.⁸⁹ In a parallel fashion, this wish for good health, prosperity and a long life often concludes the inscriptions in *paubhās*. The inscription in the Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara *paubhā* from the collection of the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden,⁹⁰ for example, ends with the following words:

... that he [the donor Bhikṣuśrī] may live his life without illness, with children and riches, fortune and have an uninterrupted offspring, that he may become old, and receive all the fruits predicted in the Śāstra (Pott 1971, 64).

The images of the *pūrṇakalāśa*, so persistently present as a motif in the lower registers of *paubhās*, appear to enhance this desire for material and spiritual blessings as expressed in the inscriptions.

Moreover, the vase of plenty has a central ritual value, which can be traced back to the *Ṛg Veda*.⁹¹ Down from Vedic times up until today, it has maintained its central position in religious ceremonies in India and culturally related regions, such as the Kathmandu Valley

⁸⁹ Coomaraswamy 1931 [1971], 62-63; quoted in Agrawala 1965, 5.

⁹⁰ This *paubhā* is dated to 1533-34 CE, and originated in Bhaktapur. It consists of water colours on cotton cloth and measures 91 x 58 cm (Kramrisch 1964, 145; Pal 1967, 21-28; Pott 1971, 63-65).

⁹¹ It is described for example, in *Ṛg Veda* III.32.15 as the container of the *soma* drink or the elixir of life (Jamison and Brereton 2014, 513).

(Agrawala 1965, 1-2). The *pūrṇakalaśa* – or *kalaśa*, when no leaves and flowers are contained in the vessel – is still used in Newar *pūjā*-rituals, with the liquid functioning as a temporary abode for the deity during the ritual, as we saw in Chapter 2.⁹²

In the *paubhā* illustrating the renovation of the Svayaṃbhūnātha *stūpa*, two men carry an, apparently heavy, *kalaśa* on a single pole resting on their shoulders up the stairs to the famous, Newar Buddhist monument (fig. 20). The red vessel has a vertically elongated, globular belly, with a small neck opening at the top. Mary Slusser relates this scene to a re-consecration ritual, which is a necessary accompaniment to the renovation of a religious building in a South Asian context. During the ritual a deity, residing in the water of the vessel, is evoked to take back its seat in the religious monument (Slusser 1985, 12). Similarly, Pratapaditya Pal links the *kalaśa* noticed in the *homa* scene of the Amsterdam Candra-*maṇḍala* painting to the invocation of the deity into the vase in the process of a consecration ritual (1967, 26). The flask worship is, however, not only performed during consecration rituals. As a basic rite, it constitutes a framework, just like *homa*, for more elaborate services, such as a consecration or life-cycle rituals (Gellner 1992, 148).

At times, an object with the spouted shape of a tea-pot, a globular belly and a small neck, appears in *homa* images as well. It can take the position of the *pūrṇakalaśa*, when this object is absent (fig. 8), but mostly, it appears to the left of the fire from the priest's perspective (fig. 7). In some examples, leaves and flower buds pour out at the top of this spouted vessel, as in the case of a *pūrṇakalaśa* (fig 8). Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer describes a pot with this form as a *kamaṇḍalu*, that is "... a ritual vessel for holy water, which is poured from the small opening at the tip of the neck" (2001, 257-258). This type of water vessel is essentially different in its shape from a *kalaśa*, she continues, as the latter is characterised by a single opening at the top and the absence of a spout. It is this type of flask, namely the *kalaśa*, that served as a seat for a deity in ancient Indian *pūjā*-rituals (2001, 260). However, John K. Locke describes the vessel in which the deity is invoked during a Newar *kalaśa pūjā* as "a small water pot or flask, usually with a spout, into which the deity is summoned and then worshipped" (1980, 95). One may wonder therefore, whether the function of the *kamaṇḍalu* conflated over time with that of a *kalaśa*, or whether a shift in the ritual usage of the two types of water vessels took place in a Newar context. In a *paubhā* with central image of a Padmapāṇi shrine, a spouted vessel with leaves and a flower stands on a tripod to the right of the sacrificial fire (fig. 21). In the flanking scene, a lady pours water into the hands of the young Siddhārtha Gautama. The flask handled by this charming lady is, likewise, spouted with similar kinds of leaves and a flower emerging at the top.⁹³ This 19th century image seems to serve as a visual testimony of the

⁹² Lunsingh Scheurleer 2001, 260; Locke 1980, 95-103; Gellner 1992, 151-157.

⁹³ This scene is part of the central images of the painting, displaying events in the life of the Buddha, surrounding a shrine enclosing Padmapāṇi. The scene described here shows, according to Hugo

usage of a spouted water vessel as an abode for deities during the *kalaśa pūjā* accompanying fire rituals, as well as an attribute for the distribution of sacred water.

The *pūrṇakalaśa*, then, functions both as an auspicious symbol and as a ritual object. Perhaps, the painter wished to evoke this double meaning, judging from the ubiquitous depiction of the vase of plenty, not only in the lower register but also in the central parts of Nepalese paintings. The *kalaśa* or *kamaṇḍalu*, without leaves and flower buds pouring out at the top, does not seem to bear this double meaning. It is a faithful depiction of a pivotal ritual implement in Newar fire rituals. One other, essential object in the performance of a fire sacrifice is a *maṇḍala*, which at times appears to be executed by the Newar painters in an equally reliable fashion.

3.6.2. Worshipping the deities through a *maṇḍala*

Another ritual implement appears as an intriguing motif in the *homa* images. A square object, sometimes with elongated points in the corners, lies at times in front of the platform on which the Vajrācārya priest sits (fig. 22).⁹⁴ The circular section of the attribute is red, while the enclosing square is yellow. In this section, I will argue that this object represents a *maṇḍala*.

The term *maṇḍala* as used here, refers to a circular image “containing a geometric disposition of mystic figures and diagrams of symbolic attributes, germ syllables (*bīja*) and figures of gods and goddesses” (Liebert 1976, 168). It is believed to be endowed with supernatural powers, and it can be produced by means of various techniques and materials. It is thus a kind of ritual attribute (*yantra*) that may serve as an object of concentration, as a visual equal to a *mantra*, or as a representation of a particular deity (Liebert 1976, 168; 352). Divine beings can be invited by means of *mantras* to take their seat in the sacred space enclosed by the *maṇḍala* (Bühnemann 2003, 13). After a description of the iconographies and positions of *maṇḍalas* in the *homa* scenes, we will turn to the possible links of these images with forms of *maṇḍala* worship accompanying Newar fire rituals.

Maṇḍalas in the *homa* images: Iconographies and positions

I encountered two types of *maṇḍalas* in the *homa* scenes. One has a circular or lotus-shape, enclosed by a square (fig. 22), while the second is circular, usually filled with dots (fig. 10). In

Kreijger “offerings and prophecies of the greatness of Buddha Śākyamuni” when he had not yet abandoned his royal life. A similar type of spouted *kalaśa* appears in the *homa* image in the uppermost of the five lower registers of the painting. It is one of the few paintings illustrating a *homa* image both in the central scene, and in the lower register. The *paubhā* is dated 1850 CE, is painted with watercolours on cloth, measures 160 x 143 cm, and was part of the Jucker collection (Kreijger 1999, 86-87; Plate 30).

⁹⁴ I encountered this object in nine of the forty-four paintings studied.

a *paubhā* showing a Vasundharā-*maṇḍala* from the former Jucker collection, the Vajrācārya's assistant faces a lotus-*maṇḍala* within a square (fig. 23). It has been executed by thin black lines against a red background. The pericarp is circular, with petals attached to it in the four cardinal directions. Smaller-sized petals appear in the intermediate directions. A similar kind of *maṇḍala* occurs in a three-dimensional form in the later Lakṣacaitya *paubhā* from the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.⁹⁵ A white, square object, with a blue circle and a white dot inside, lies on the ground in front of the priest, at his right side (fig. 24). Perhaps, the *maṇḍalas* in the Bhaktapur and Jucker *paubhās* offer a two-dimensional rendering of such a square, 3D-*maṇḍala* as seen in the later Lakṣacaitya *paubhā*. From the early 19th century onwards, three-dimensional depictions and the use of perspective are encountered more often in Nepalese paintings (Pal 1978, 110).

Rather than a square *maṇḍala*, more frequently a circular object, filled with a dot in the centre and in the cardinal and intermediate directions appears in the *homa* images.⁹⁶ When the first donor in the rightmost panel employs such a circular *maṇḍala*, the square *maṇḍala* has been depicted in front of the priest, as for example in the Avalokiteśvara *paubhā* from the Lionel-Fournier collection (fig. 5).⁹⁷ In a few instances, only the priest employs a *maṇḍala*. Such is the case in the Viṣṇu-*maṇḍala paubhā* from Los Angeles (fig. 10). Here, a white *maṇḍala* has red dots in the centre, in the cardinal and in the intermediate directions. These circular *maṇḍalas* appear in the same location as the square ones, namely between the priest and the fire. The identical position suggests a similar function of the object. Hence it seems to support my identification of these circular attributes as *maṇḍalas*, rendered here in an abstracted form.

Instead of the many-dotted, circular *maṇḍala*, a round, golden object, with one dot in the centre, at times appears in front of the priest at his left side (fig. 25). Odette Monod-Bruhl identifies such an attribute in a Vajradhara *paubhā* from the collection of the Musée Guimet as a *cakra* (1959, 309). This identification is convenient if the term *cakra* is used by Monod-Bruhl as an equivalent of *maṇḍala*, which she does not specify in her article.⁹⁸ A painting on a folio of a Nepalese manuscript, dated between the 14th and 16th centuries CE, appears instructive in this regard. It bears an image of a lotus-*maṇḍala*, accompanied by

⁹⁵ The painting is dated 1809 CE and consists of water colours on cotton cloth, and is part of The Avery Brundage Collection (B61 D10+). It measures 96,5 x 61 cm (Huntington and Bangdel 2003, Plate 20).

⁹⁶ I encountered this object in thirteen of the forty-four selected paintings.

⁹⁷ This *paubhā* is dated ca. 1300 CE, is made of watercolours on cloth, and measures 65 x 53 cm (Béguin 1990, 172-175; Plate D). In one instance, I encountered both the square and the circular *maṇḍala* in front of the priest in a *homa* scene, namely in the Vasundharā-*maṇḍala* painting, dated 1376 CE, in a private collection (Pal 1978, Plate 72).

⁹⁸ For a discussion of the various scholarly usages and definitions of the terms *maṇḍala*, *cakra* and *yantra* as equivalents, see Bühnemann 2003, 15-19.

prescriptions in mixed Sanskrit and Newari on how to draw it (fig. 26; Pal 1985, 206). In these guidelines, the lotus is at one point called a *cakra*, perhaps indicating a conflation of the terms lotus-*maṇḍala* and *cakra*.⁹⁹ The *cakra* in the Vajradhara and Candra-*maṇḍala* paintings also appear at the exact same position where usually a *maṇḍala* is depicted. I assume that also these objects represent *maṇḍalas* employed by the priest for worship accompanying the fire sacrifice.

Mandala worship in Newar fire rituals

Why would a painter depict a *maṇḍala* in a *homa* scene? Some remarks on *maṇḍala* worship in Newar fire rituals might provide us with the answer. In Chapter 2, I mentioned that the *kalaśa pūjā* and *guru-maṇḍala* worship are, next to *homa*, basic rituals within more elaborate Newar religious ceremonies. The offering of the *guru-maṇḍala* is carried out at the beginning of all complex, Newar rituals and functions as a ‘framework’ for those rites. The *guru-maṇḍala* worship is generally performed by the *yajamāna*, with the guidance of a Vajrācārya priest (Gellner 1991, 163). The circular *maṇḍalas* described in the present chapter, at times, indeed appear in front of the first figure in the row of donors, raising the suggestion that this donor represents the *yajamāna*.

The *guru-maṇḍala* worship is a typically Newar Buddhist ritual, but as we saw in this section, also a Brahmin priest employs a *maṇḍala* in one of our paintings (fig. 10). I was not able to trace sources on *maṇḍala* worship accompanying fire rituals in a Newar Brahmanical context. In our personal conversation, Bal Gopal Shrestha explained that contemporary Newar Hindus also create *maṇḍalas* for worship during *homa*, but they do not call these ‘*guru-maṇḍalas*’ (pers. comm., May 11, 2017). The usage of *maṇḍalas* for worship as a part of more complex rituals, is a well-known phenomenon in South Asian religions such as the Śaiva and Buddhist tantric traditions (Bühnemann 2003, 1-4). Tantric forms of ‘Śaivism’ appear to have influenced the development of Indian tantric Buddhism which was later introduced to the Kathmandu Valley.¹⁰⁰ Also in later times, because of their isolation in the Valley, Newar Buddhists became ever more exposed to tantric types of the Śaiva and Śākta traditions (von Rospatt forthcoming, 4). The appearance of *maṇḍalas* in the *homa* scenes visually situates the continuity of this central element for worship, shared by many South Asian, religious traditions, in a Newar environment.

In a Buddhist context, *maṇḍalas* can be made of various materials. In contemporary *guru-maṇḍala* worship, they are usually drawn with rice flour (Shrestha pers. comm.,

⁹⁹ For a transcription and annotated translation of the Sanskrit sections in this manuscript, see Appendix 1.

¹⁰⁰ Harunaga Isaacson and Francesco Sferra propose that tantric scriptures first developed within branches of ‘Śaivism’, which probably influenced the development of later forms of ‘tantrism’, such as the Buddhist esoteric tradition in India (2015, 307).

May 11, 2017). John K. Locke describes how, in the performance of the Aṣṭamīvrata, a *maṇḍala* is drawn with sand, after which several substances, such as *ghee*, milk and curd, are offered to it.¹⁰¹ Besides rice flour and sand, *maṇḍalas* are also made of stone. These *maṇḍala*-stones often appear in the pavement of the courtyards of Buddhist monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley (figs. 27 and 28),¹⁰² serving as plates for the temporary invocation of deities (Slusser 1982, 128). Our Vajrācārya priest, photographed by Mary Slusser, seems to employ a similar type of *maṇḍala*-stone in the performance of the fire sacrifice (fig. 4). The circular shapes of the painted *maṇḍalas* discussed in this section, recall the forms of these stones.

In sum, *maṇḍala* worship is a major component of Newar ritual ceremonies and observances in the Kathmandu Valley, in many cases accompanying a fire sacrifice. Its depiction in the *homa* scenes of *paubhās* must have been familiar to the audience of the artworks. *Maṇḍalas* establish the fire ritual within the framework of the worship of a particular deity. Their painted variants in the *homa* scenes visually enact the roles of the *yajamāna* and his family priest in the performance of the fire rite, as only those two actors appear to employ a *maṇḍala* in the paintings studied. Having examined the aspects of ‘actors’, ‘actions’ and ‘attributes’ in the constitution of a fire sacrifice, we will turn in the remaining sections of this chapter to motifs indicating the ‘place’ of the ritual performance.

3.7. Place: The sacrificial fire as the virtual centre of action

It is time to turn to a major element in the performance of a *homa*, namely the sacrificial fire itself. We will examine in particular the fire pit (*yajña-kuṇḍa* or *agni-kuṇḍa*) and the flames. I will not use the selected *paubhās*, because of the large variety in the forms of the hearths. So far, I could not recognise a typological pattern. That is why I studied each fire pit in the forty-four *paubhās* and selected three of these for further discussion. The criterion for my selection was size. All fire pits are layered structures, but some are considerably higher than others. Most of the *kuṇḍas* show a detailed execution, while in a few cases they are rendered in an abstracted fashion. Nevertheless, even in these latter cases, indications of multiple levels are maintained, as seen in the *Sūrya-maṇḍala* painting from the Zimmerman collection (fig. 9). A higher *kuṇḍa* appears in the Los Angeles Viṣṇu-*maṇḍala paubhā* (fig. 10), while a lower fire pit can be seen in a *Candra-maṇḍala* painting from the former

¹⁰¹ Locke 1987, 166. John K. Locke does not describe a *homa* as following the *kalaśa pūjā* and *guru-maṇḍala* worship that he observed in the Aṣṭamīvrata performed December 23, 1982, in Guhyeśvarī, near the Paśupatināth Temple. Nevertheless, the fire sacrifice can be part of the Aṣṭamīvrata rites as well, as described by A.W. McDonald and Anne Vergati-Stahl, in their observation of the ritual in October 1977 (1979, 129).

¹⁰² I would like to thank Dr. Berthe Janssen (Leiden University) to draw my attention to these *maṇḍala*-stones in front of temples and monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley.

Jucker collection (fig. 29).¹⁰³ Both such hearths occur in an Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara *paubhā*, likewise collected by Jucker (fig. 30).¹⁰⁴ As outlined in Section 2.2.2., the shape and colour of the *kuṇḍa* indicate the specific function of the ritual, hence these features of form and colour will be analysed in particular.

The fire pit as seen in the *Viṣṇu-maṇḍala paubhā*, consists of five rectangular layers, building a profile constricted in the centre (fig. 10). The base, painted in white-beige, has been embellished with lotus-petals set against a red background. The petals are white-beige at the edges and carry red, blue and yellow colours in the centre. On top of this plinth, another layer with petals appears, executed in a much smaller size. Three undecorated plinths crown this foundational structure. These culminate into two rectangular pieces, from which yellow flames rise. These uppermost plinths resemble the lowermost two in construction and colour.

The fire pit in the Jucker *Candra-maṇḍala* painting is less complex in its composition (fig. 29). Three layers of white-greyish, rectangular plinths decrease in size towards the top, hence the *kuṇḍa* appears as a stepped, pyramidal structure. The foundational shaft contains a rectangular element, enclosed by black lines, perhaps indicating that it has a projection. This projecting piece suggests that the fire pit has a square plan. In this aspect, it resembles the fire pit that was photographed by Mary Slusser in the *Uku-bahā* in Patan (fig. 31). The *kuṇḍa* in her picture is sunken into the pavement of the monastery, with rectangular stones attached at the four sides.

Both the high, structurally more complex fire pit, and the lower *kuṇḍa* appear in the Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara *paubhā* from the former Jucker collection (fig. 30). It is the only instance in which I encountered two fire pits rather than the usual single one. The priest sits in front of a lower *kuṇḍa*, with a yellow-beige colour. The foundational plinth has a rectangular base narrowing in size towards the top, crowned by another rectangular piece, from which red flames rise. The larger *kuṇḍa* appears to the right of the smaller one, from the viewer's perspective, and consists of five layers of greyish bricks. A red flame emerges at the top.

The flames of the sacrificial fires occur in various shapes, mostly one-pointed, at times three-pointed. They are usually painted red, sometimes yellow, and sporadically white. At times, the painter used a mixture of yellow and red. The details of the flames have been indicated by scroll-like motifs. The three-pointed type of flame, encountered rarely in seven

¹⁰³ This painting is dated ca. 1400 CE, consists of water colours on cotton cloth, and measures 62 x 53 cm (Kreijger 1999, 34-35; Plate 4).

¹⁰⁴ This *paubhā* is dated to the mid - 15th century CE and was rendered with water colours on cotton cloth. It measures 91 x 73 cm (Kreijger 1999, 38-39; Plate 6).

of the forty-four *paubhās*, only recurs in paintings that date before the end of the 16th century CE. Moreover, these three-fold flames appear especially between the end of the 15th century CE until the end of the 16th century CE.¹⁰⁵ There seems to be no relation between a certain rendering of the flame and the shape of a fire pit.

Most of the fire pits encountered in the *homa* scenes have a light colour, ranging from pure white to beige or a darker tint of yellow, orange or grey. Although it is not possible to determine in all instances the shape of the *kuṇḍa*, due to their two-dimensional side-view, in some cases, like the Jucker Candra-*maṇḍala* painting, we do recognise a square form of the hearth. The square *kuṇḍa* also recalls Kuladatta's description in the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā* for rituals of consecration. In the *Jyotirmañjarī* Abhayākaragupta prescribes a yellow colour for the hearths functioning in rituals with increasing purposes. The white colour matches the round fire pit, acting in rites of pacification (Skorupski 2001, 188-189; quoted in Skorupski 2016, 92). Following the later Tibetan ritual manual employed in a recent performance of a *homa* during the annual re-consecration of the Bodhnāth *stūpa* in Kathmandu, the fire ritual is performed with increasing and pacifying purposes in mind (Bentor 1996, 270). Nevertheless, it remains for further research on which specific sources the Newar painters, who were probably assisted by ritual specialists in their work (see Section 4.2), relied for their rendering of the fire pits.

In sum, the *kuṇḍa* may act as a visual indication that the *homa* depicted in the lower register of a *paubhā* is part of a consecration ceremony. The *kuṇḍa* could not only reveal the purpose of the ritual of which the fire sacrifice is a part, it also visually marks the centre of the ritual performance. One other motif acts as a marker of a sacred space, to which we turn in the last section.

3.8. A canopy covering a sacred space

In the Cakrasaṃvara-*maṇḍala* painting from Los Angeles, a red canopy hangs down from the upper border of the panel, covering the area where our priest sits (fig. 7). It is decorated with scrolls and flower motifs in white, light and dark blue. Two objects are tied at the sides, reminding us of the complex knots with which the baldachin in a unique *paubhā* displaying Gaganasim Bharo and his two wives, is held up (fig. 32). A similar type of canopy covers the donors in the rightmost panel as well (fig. 11). In a few paintings, more than one such overhanging covering appears, and their shapes may vary (figs. 22; 10). In other instances,

¹⁰⁵ One exception is the three-pointed flame in a *paubhā* showing a *stūpa* enclosing Uṣṇīṣavijayā in the centre. This painting is dated to the second half of the 14th century CE. It is part of the Lionel Fournier Collection (Musée Guimet, MA 5165).

the canopy is absent, for example in the *Sūrya-maṇḍala paubhā* from the Zimmerman collection (fig. 9).¹⁰⁶

According to Gautama Vajracharya, such a canopy in Nepalese paintings indicates an interior space.¹⁰⁷ The central image of the *Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala paubhā*, displays an esoteric tantric scene, namely the deity Cakrasaṃvara in union with his consort Vajravārāhī.¹⁰⁸ Such an image is only supposed to be seen by initiated Buddhists. Only they are allowed to enter the secret *āgaṃ* shrine at the first floor of a Newar *bahā*, where this *paubhā* was probably stored (Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 260). This suggests that the painting was used within an esoteric, tantric ceremony, which is usually performed at a secluded place (von Rospatt forthcoming, 13). I am, however, not aware of the indoor-enactment of *homa* in a Newar tantric setting.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the canopies also appear in scroll-paintings with a central exoteric deity, for example in the *Viṣṇu-maṇḍala paubhā* (fig. 10).

The canopy bears another, more symbolic meaning that appears to explain the occurrence of the object in our *homa* images more conveniently. The baldachin in the *paubhā* displaying Gaganasim Bharo also indicates the high status and luxurious life of this military officer (Vajracharya 2004, 16). In a parallel way, the overhangings in the *homa* paintings may indicate the high status of the donor and his family. Moreover, the canopy is perhaps also a marker endowing the space in the lower register with an aura of sacrality.

We opened this chapter with possible ways of composing the lower register of a *paubhā*, which revealed that the position of the *homa* scenes in these registers follows a pattern. Moreover, the iconography and arrangement of the elements of a *homa* image, likewise shows several patterns. The priest sits to the left, or occasionally to the right, of a sacrificial fire, and mostly wears a five-buddha crown, indicating his Buddhist, Vajrācārya affiliation. In one example, the performer of the sacrifice was identified as a Brahmin belonging to a Vaiṣṇava faction (fig. 10). Our priests handle specific types of ladles, such as a *sulāpā* and a *dhova*, and they are usually assisted by a figure displaying a manuscript, who is seated on a carpet behind them. The fire pits appear as low or high, layered structures, showing a

¹⁰⁶ The *Sūrya-maṇḍala paubhā* is one of the very few paintings in which a parasol (*chattra*) rests on the platform on which the priest stands. Further research may take into account the appearance of these parasols in relation to the presence of canopies.

¹⁰⁷ 2004, 15. The canopy under study by Gautama Vajracharya does not cover a *homa* scene, but the portrait of Gaganasim Bharo, who was a military ruler of the town of Dolakha, accompanied by his first and second wives (fig. 32; 2004, 14). It is exceptional that the central scene of a Nepalese scroll-painting is occupied by a portrait of an eminent Newar man.

¹⁰⁸ See Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 2 for an image of the complete painting.

¹⁰⁹ For details of an esoteric, tantric fire sacrifice, performed in front of the temple of Vajrayoginī in Sankhu, see Shrestha 2012, 452-454. The fire ritual is performed in the evening, in front of the temple complex, which is closed by the Vajrācārya priests for the general public.

stepped, pyramidal form or a constriction in the centre. At the opposite side of the *kuṇḍa* from the priest's perspective, a *pūrṇakalāśa* is often installed. Between the priest and the fire pit, a *maṇḍala* can be situated. This arrangement of the basic elements of a *homa* scene was encountered most often in the paintings under study. Lamps in various forms, additional *kalāśas*, plates with substances for offering, mirrors and other ritual implements may furnish the scenes as well. These recurring patterns in the iconography and positioning of the elements of a *homa* scene suggest that the fire sacrifice had developed into an artistic motif, rendering the ritual visually recognisable for its audience.

In Section 2.2, I described key aspects of a fire ritual and their specific forms in a Newar Buddhist context. These characteristics converge with the elements constituting the *homa* scenes. Hence, the paintings show us which specific elements constitute a Newar – mainly Buddhist – fire ritual, and their positioning. The images at times even recall the descriptions of the arrangement of the elements marking a *homa*, offered in modern anthropological accounts. Especially the positioning of the *pūrṇakalāśa*, at the opposite side of the fire from the priest's perspective, reminds us of the exact same placement of the *kalāśa* as described and photographed by John K. Locke (fig. 33; 1980, 106). In John Locke's photo, we see how a priest, who is curiously not wearing the five-buddha crown, sits in front of a fire surrounded by small plates. Although the photo is of a poor quality, we recognise in the lower right corner a water vessel, filled with twigs or blades of grass, which reminds us of the position of the painted *pūrṇakalāśas*. The aspects of actors, attributes, place, and actions, defined in Chapter 2 for the analysis of textual sources, are thus traceable in a parallel iconography of the priest with his assistant, the *yajamāna* and his family, particular ritual attributes marking a fire ritual, and the fire itself as the virtual centre of action.

3.9. Images



Fig. 5: Lower register of an Avalokiteśvara *paubhā*, ca. 1300 CE, Nepal, Lionel Fournier collection.



Fig. 6: Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara *paubhā*, 1430 CE, Nepal, Indian Museum Kolkata (At/69/32).

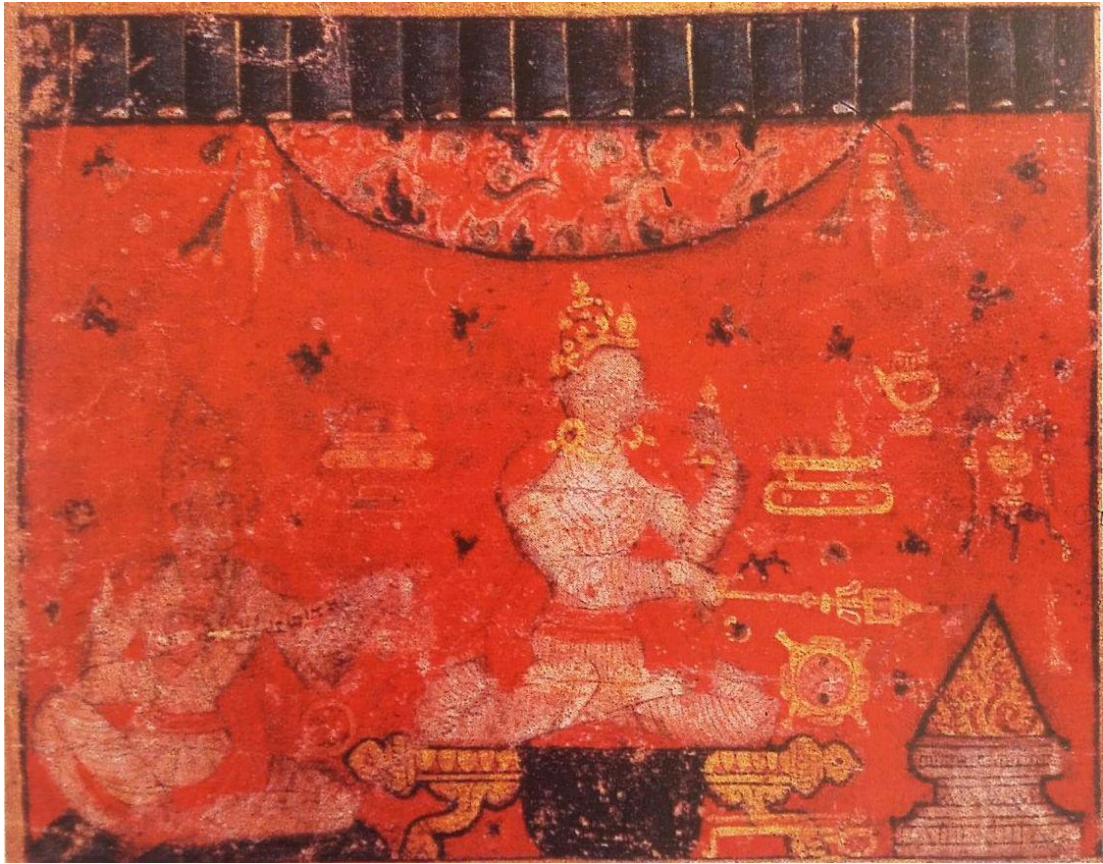


Fig. 7: *Homa* in a *Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1490 CE, Manasu monastery (Nepal), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.73.2.1).

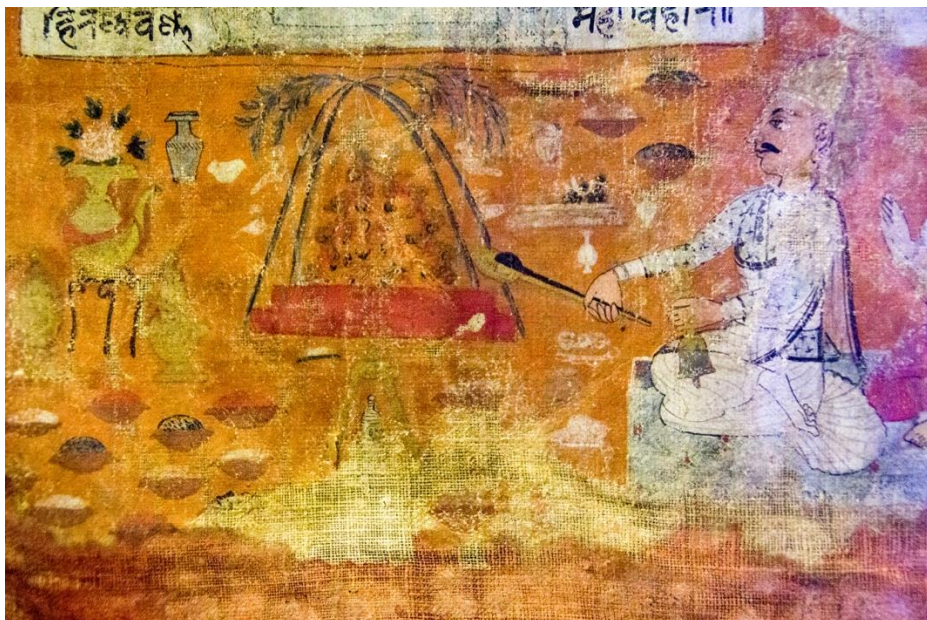


Fig. 8: *Homa* in a *paubhā* displaying the story of Sumanā, 1859-60 CE, Kwa-Bahā (Patan), MAS Antwerp (AE.1953.0005.0017).



Fig. 9: *Homa* in a *Sūrya-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1379 CE, Nepal, Zimmerman collection.



Fig. 10: *Homa* in a *Viṣṇu-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1420 CE, Lohalanimha (Nepal), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.77.19.5).



Fig. 11: Donors in a Cakrasaṃvara-*maṇḍala paubhā*, 1490 CE, Manasu monastery (Nepal), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.73.2.1).



Fig. 12: *Homa* in a *paubhā* showing a restoration of the Svayambhūnātha *stūpa*, 1565 CE, Yampi monastery Patan, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (2000.15).



Fig. 13: *Homa* in a *Vasundharā-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1777 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection.



Fig. 14: *Homa* in a *Sūrya-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1379 CE, Nepal, Zimmerman collection.



Fig. 15: Lower register of a *Viṣṇu-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1420 CE, Lohalanimha (Nepal), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.77.19.5).



Fig. 16: Lower register of a *paubhā* showing a *Padmapāṇi* shrine, 1850 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection. Each donor has a name inscribed under his or her image.



Figs. 17 (left) and 18 (right): Lamp stands, 19th century CE, Nepal,
UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History Los Angeles
(left: X2001.11.85; right: X2001.11.80).



Fig. 19: Vajracarya priest and main donor in a Vasundharā-*maṇḍala paubhā*,
1777 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection.



Fig. 20: Carrying the *kalaśa* in a *paubhā* showing a restoration of the Svayambhūnātha *stūpa*, 1565 CE, Yampi monastery Patan, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (2000.15).



Fig. 21: Pouring water from the *kalaśa* on the hands of Siddhārtha Gautama in a *paubhā* showing a Padmapāṇi shrine, 1850 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection.



Fig. 22: *Homa* in a *Vajradhara paubhā*, 1513 CE, Yothalācha Jhyālahāliche (Kathmandu), National Gallery Bhaktapur.

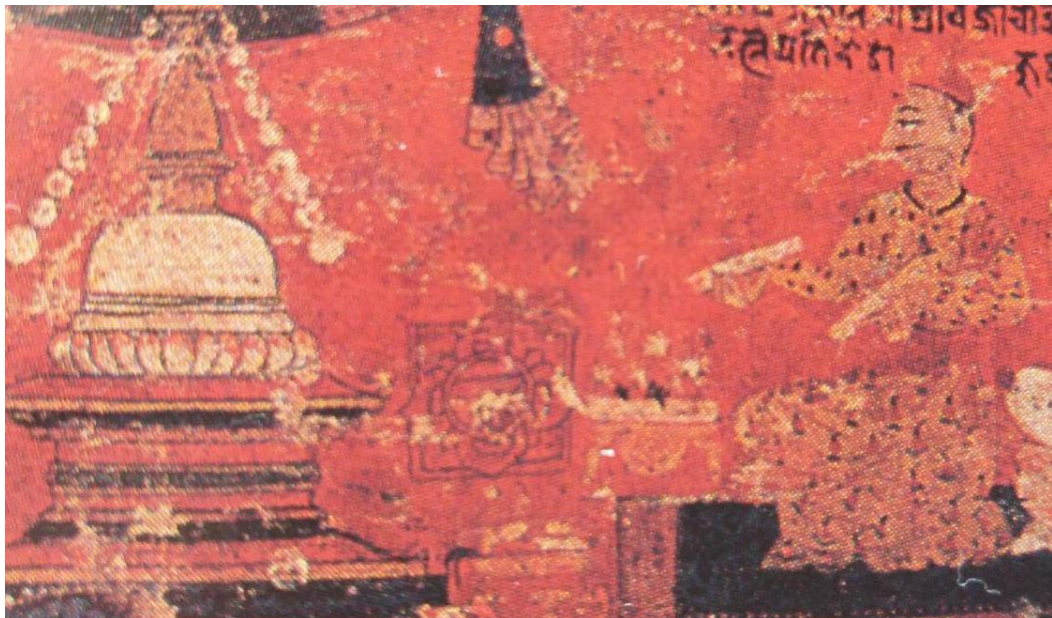


Fig. 23: *Maṇḍala* in a *Vasundharā-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1777 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection.



Fig. 24: *Homa* in a Lakṣacaitya *paubhā*, 1809 CE, Nepal, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (B61 D10+).



Fig. 25: *Homa* in a Candra-*maṇḍala paubhā*, 1525 CE, Nepal, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (AK-MAK-325).



Fig. 26: Folio carrying an image of a *maṇḍala* and accompanying instructions, 16th century CE, Nepal, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.82.169.9).



Figs. 27 (left) and 28 (right): *maṇḍala* stones, left: Pulchok-*bahī* Patan; right: Itum-*bahā* Kathmandu, photos by Mary Slusser.

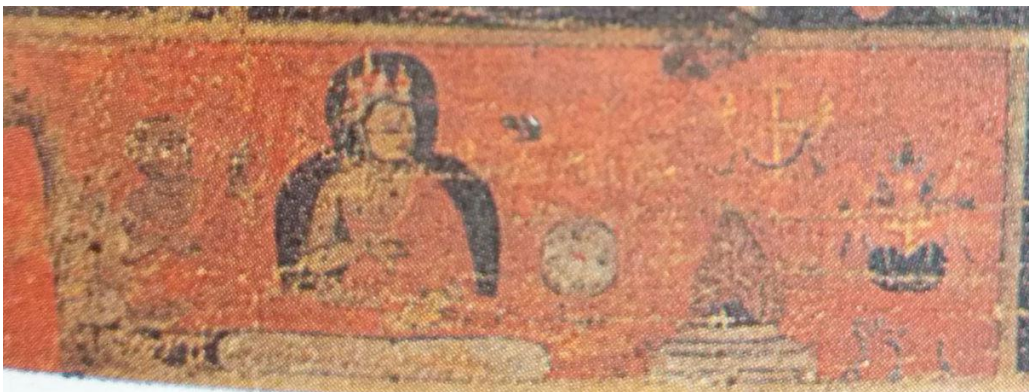


Fig. 29: *Homa* in a Candra-*maṇḍala paubhā*, ca. 1400 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection.

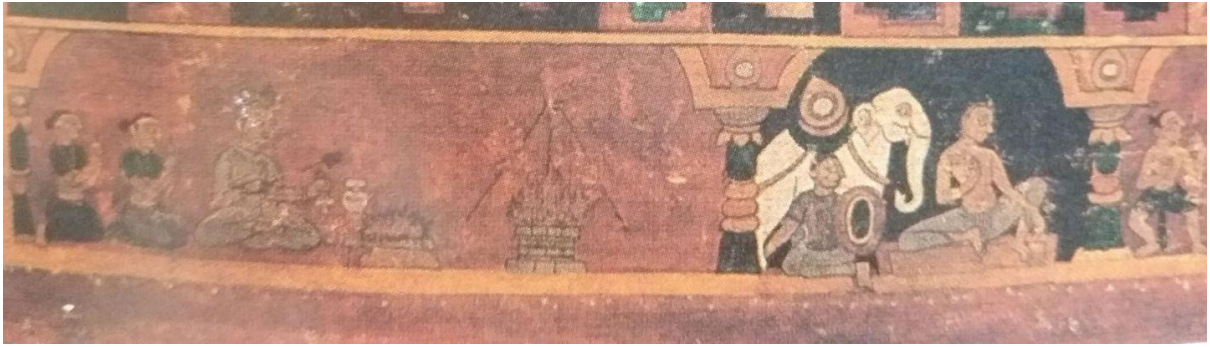


Fig. 30: *Homa* in an Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara *paubhā*, mid-15th century CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection.

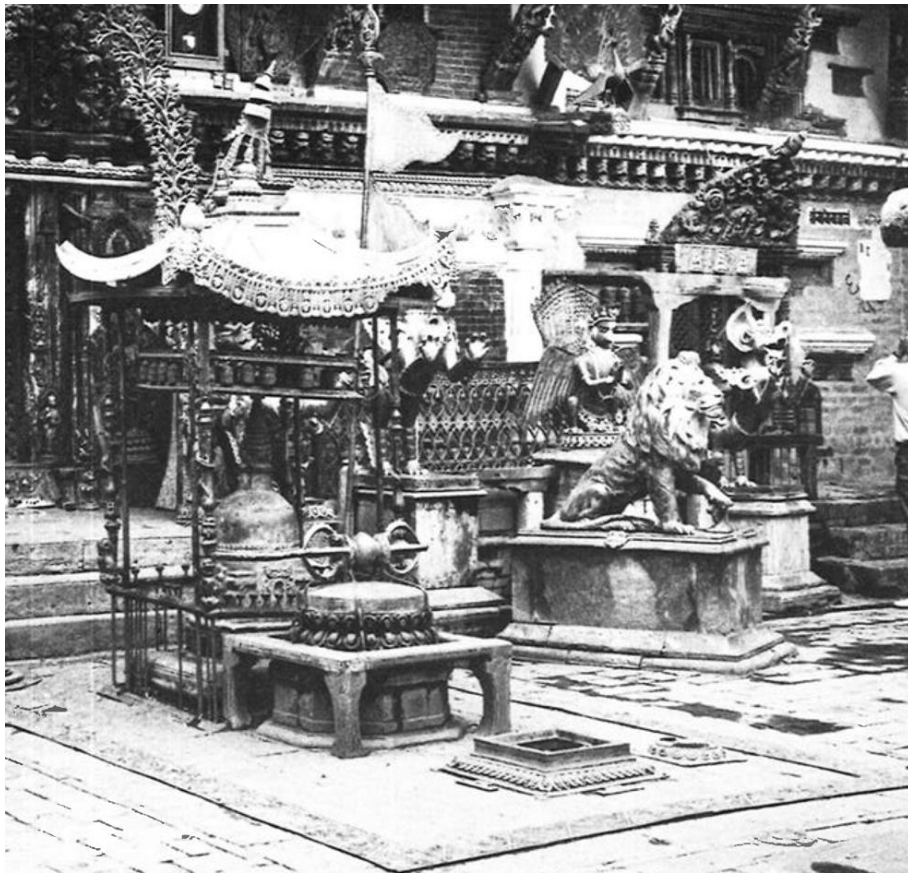


Fig. 31: Courtyard with a fire pit in Uku-*bahā*, Patan, photo by Mary Slusser.



Fig. 32: Gaganasim Bhara and his two wives in the central scene of a *paubhā*, ca. 1470 CE, Kathmandu, Private collection.



Fig. 33: The performance of a *homa* and *kalaśa pūjā*, Patan (?), photo by John K. Locke.

Chapter 4

Nepalese *paubhās* as historical evidence on fire rituals

“To what extent, and in what ways, do images provide reliable evidence of the past” (Burke 2001, 16)? According to Peter Burke there is no general answer to this question, but a first step is to examine the iconography of an artwork (Burke 2001, 34-35). In Chapter 3 of this thesis, we have studied the *homa* images of *paubhās* from such an iconographical perspective. This provided us with information with regard to the arrangement of the compositional elements such as a priest, his assistant, the *yajamāna* and his family, and a fire pit. It also informed us on the specific forms of these constituents, and it revealed patterns in the composition and execution of the *homa* images. In some cases, we went further than describing the iconography and traced possible meanings and functions of a certain motif within the *homa* scenes. A circular object filled with dots in the centre and the cardinal and intermediate directions, for example, was interpreted as an abstracted image of a *maṇḍala*, which was then linked to forms of *maṇḍala* worship accompanying Newar fire rituals, such as the offering of the *guru-maṇḍala*.

In order to “read” an image as historical evidence, in this case as a testimony of a specific ritual, we also need to be familiarised with the cultural context of a work of art (Burke 2001, 36). The aim of Chapter 4 is to examine the artistic, social, and ritual contexts of the creation of Nepalese *paubhās*. At first, we will turn to the larger artistic tradition in which the Nepalese art of painting was embedded. This will help us to understand possible external influences in the iconography and composition of the lower registers of *paubhās*, in which our *homa* images are almost invariably present. We will in particular analyse painted manuscript covers, a stone slab and pedestals from the northeastern regions of present day India and Bangladesh, dating roughly from the 10th to 12th century CE. A *paubhā* was created in a specific social environment in the Kathmandu Valley. Within this social context, artistic conventions and rules on iconography which are related to a Buddhist or Brahmanical tradition, lead the Newar Citrakārs in their work. This is the subject of Section 4.2. A *paubhā* could serve in various ways in different ritual environments. In Section 4.3, we will look at such a specific usage of a scroll-painting in the celebration of Newar old-age rituals, and how this religious context may influence the iconography. Finally, we will move to the central issue of this chapter. How can historians of religion employ the *homa* images as historical evidence?

4.1. The artistic tradition

Before the Malla period (ca. 1200 - 1769 CE), to which most of the *paubhās* studied in this thesis date, the Kathmandu Valley already maintained cultural contacts with the northern plains of the Indian Subcontinent for many centuries (Slusser 1982, 31-32; 46). Artistic motifs from Northeastern India predating the Malla period, are still traceable in its painted artworks. Specific examples of such motifs are the subject of Sections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3. At first, we will examine issues in the definition of an 'Inner Asian International style' in which the Nepalese painting tradition participated.

4.1.1. Composing the artworks: An Inner Asian International Style

The idea of the adoption of motifs, styles and iconographies within various regions of South and Central Asia has been framed by scholars in previous decennia by the term Inner Asian International Style.¹¹⁰ Increased cultural interaction in these regions appeared between ca. the 12th and 14th centuries CE, although regional relationships predate this period. Recently, scholars have come to the conclusion that the idea of an Inner Asian International Style is problematic. Although there are identifiable common features with regard to style, composition and iconography between the artworks of South and Central Asia, there are also clear local differences (Klimburg-Salter 1998, 2). A characteristic that remains consistent in all the variants of this International Style is a specific composition, and in particular the way in which the central deity is depicted in sculptures and paintings. The central god or goddess for example, mostly appears as a single figure on the axis of the artwork. He or she is larger than the surrounding figures, and is flanked by two or more attendants. Their identity depends on the religious tradition to which the image belongs. In a Buddhist context, these attendants are often bodhisattvas (Klimburg-Salter 1998, 4). This compositional idiom was especially determined on the basis of comparative studies between artworks, mainly sculptures, from Pāla India (ca. 8th - 12th century CE) and Tibetan *thangkas*. In Section 4.1.3, however, we will examine a compositional pattern and motifs in pedestals and a stone slab from the later Pāla period (ca. 10th - 12th century CE), that can be traced in the lower registers of the Nepalese *paubhās* studied in this thesis. I will argue that a compositional idiom which occurs in the organisation of several motifs in the foundational pieces of Pāla steles and slabs, was adopted in the lower registers of Nepalese scroll-paintings.

In a study of decorative motifs in Tibetan *thangkas* dating from the 11th to the 13th century CE, Claudine Bautze-Picron states that "it is evident that these paintings introduce iconographic aspects which can be directly related to stone sculptures of Bihar

¹¹⁰ A revision of the term with related problems and advantages was undertaken during a conference in 1995, in Graz (Austria). The papers presented during this forum (published in 1998) served as the main source for this discussion.

and Bengal (1998, 16).” She proposes that the Tibetan paintings are structurally identical to Pāla sculptures, hence raising the suggestion that compositional idioms can shift from one medium to another, in this case from sculpture to painting. Nevertheless, the medium also affects the forms in which motifs are presented. Therefore, it is preferable to compare the Nepalese *paubhās* with artworks of the same medium (Allinger 1998, 112). The only paintings that remain from Pāla India are manuscript illuminations and painted manuscript covers. John C. Huntington suggests that there was a clear indigenous Nepalese painting tradition already developing in the 9th to 10th centuries CE, that started to exist side by side with a more Pāla-inspired tradition (1990, 258). For this thesis, I was not yet able to analyse a representative number of Indian and Nepalese manuscript illuminations and covers to compare their iconography, composition and styles to those of the lower registers of *paubhās*. Therefore, I will restrict myself in Section 4.1.2 to some preliminary remarks on the composition and execution of motifs in Indian and Nepalese painted manuscript covers. It is in such covers that we encounter images of donors, occasionally – in a few Nepalese manuscripts – participating in a fire sacrifice.

4.1.2. Composition and motifs in Indian and Nepalese manuscript covers

The only paintings preserved from Pāla India are manuscript illuminations and painted covers, the oldest of which date to the early 11th century CE (Kramrisch 1933, 129). In the Kathmandu Valley, paintings on the folios and covers of manuscripts, as well as scroll-paintings survived. The oldest known, illuminated palm-leaf manuscripts from the Valley date to the late 10th or 11th century CE.¹¹¹ Painted divinities, buddhas, bodhisattvas, and sacred places appear mostly in the covers of manuscripts, but at times also in between the text on the folios.¹¹² From Pāla India, only Buddhist manuscript paintings were preserved, while both Buddhist and Brahmanical images appear in manuscript illuminations and covers from the Kathmandu Valley. Compositional features and motifs in the Nepalese art of manuscript illuminations and painted covers may have influenced the arrangement and choice of motifs in the lower registers of *paubhās*. In the modern town of Bhaktapur, traditional Newar painters are responsible for many different types of paintings, such as *paubhās*, masks, woodblocks, door-lintels, and even bodies (Blom 1989, 5-9). It is imaginable that they were also responsible for the illumination of manuscripts.

In Indian manuscript covers, the surface can be divided into panels, as can be seen in the cover of an *Aṣṭasahāsrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript, dated to the 12th or 13th century CE (fig. 34).¹¹³ In a similar fashion, the surface of a Nepalese manuscript cover can be divided

¹¹¹ Kramrisch 1933, 129; 1964, 43; Pal 1978, 36.

¹¹² Pal 1978, 36; Slusser 1982, 50.

¹¹³ As the miniatures and characters of the script in the folios show mixed Nepalese and eastern Indian features, it is not completely clear whether this manuscript is derived from Eastern India or the Kathmandu Valley (Zwalf 1985, 117).

into panels, but it can also be continuous (Allinger 1998, 110), just like the lower registers of *paubhās*. In a *Śivadharma* manuscript cover, dated to the 12th century CE and preserved in the National Library of Kathmandu (fig. 35), the figures are enclosed by niches separated by ornamented pillars supporting images of a *kīrttimukha*, with snakes protruding from its mouth. The panels of a lower register of a *paubhā* can also be indicated by such ornamented pillars (fig. 30). Eva Allinger and Gudrun Melzer observed that the framing of figures in architectural structures, such as arches, already developed as a trend in eastern Indian manuscript illuminations from the time of King Rāmapāla onwards (late 11th century CE; 2010, 407).

The same *Śivadharma* manuscript cover shows ritual attributes, such as a spouted water vessel and high lamp stands, also encountered in the *homa* images discussed in Chapter 3. In front of the donor, appearing as an old man seated on a red cushion with his hands in the *añjali mudrā* and accompanied by his wife, appears a circular object, identified earlier as a *maṇḍala*. It is red with orange and white dots in the centre, the cardinal directions and intermediate directions. Eight dark dots surround the central one. Not only the form, but also the position of the object, right in front of the donor, recalls the *maṇḍalas* as presented in the lower registers of *paubhās*.

Homa scenes start to appear in Nepalese manuscript covers, to the best of my knowledge, from the 15th century CE onwards. The fire ritual is, for example, part of a compartmentalised cover of a manuscript containing five protective hymns, dated 1532 CE (fig. 36). It is, likewise, contained in a manuscript cover, dated 1659 CE (fig. 37). The arrangement and execution of the iconographic elements reminds us of the way in which *homa* images appear in the *paubhās*. The Vajrācārya priests, wearing their five-buddha crowns, sit in lotus-position to the viewer's left of the sacrificial fires. Both the higher fire pit, constricted in the centre and crowned by a red, three-pointed flame (fig. 36), as well as the lower, stepped form of *kuṇḍa* with a red, one-pointed flame (fig. 37), recur in these painted covers. The Vajrācāryas are accompanied by their assistants, seated behind them and carrying manuscripts. The priest in the earliest dated cover does not hold the ladles to pour oblations into the flames. Instead, these appear just behind him. In his left hand, he holds a bell, while he seems to show the *abhaya mudrā* with his right hand. The priest in the later cover extends the two ladles towards the fire. Also in this later cover, a spouted *pūrṇakalāśa* flanks the fire to the viewer's right. Canopies cover the priest, assistant and donors in the first cover, while such a baldachin only appears above the fire in the second one. The priests with their assistants, and the *yajamāna* and his family appear at the edges of the covers with a *stūpa* in the centre, in the earliest manuscript flanked by two bodhisattvas. Undoubtedly, *homa* as an artistic motif as recognised in the scroll-paintings, was at times applied in manuscript covers as well, accompanying the pious likeness of the commissioners of these artworks.

These manuscript covers illustrate that images of the donors were included in this type of Nepalese painting as well (Vajracharya 2003, 43). They appear in the act of worship, in some cases attending a *homa*. Not only in painted artworks, but also in sculptures from Pāla India, we encounter the donors in this attitude.

4.1.3. Composition and motifs in pedestals and a stone slab from Pāla India

We continue our exploration of compositional idioms and motifs shared by the Pāla and Malla artworks with an investigation of pedestals (fig. 38; 40) and a stone slab (fig. 39), dated between the 10th and 12th centuries CE.¹¹⁴ The pedestals function as supports for images of larger divinities, buddhas, and bodhisattvas, but the precise function of the rectangular slab is not clear (Bautze-Picron 1995, 59). Its inscription records the donation of a *caitya* by a *vajra*-teacher (*ācārya vajrinaḥ*)¹¹⁵ with the name Rahulabhadrā, so perhaps the slab was part of a *caitya*. One pedestal was found in Lakhi Sarai (Bihar; fig. 38), while the slab originates in Bodh Gaya (Bihar; fig. 39). We will examine the motifs of the seven jewels (*saptaratna*) of the universal monarch (*cakravartin*), monks and lay people, and some ritual attributes. Most of the slabs and pedestals displaying these motifs come from Bodh Gaya, and appear especially in the Buddhist art from the region (Bautze-Picron 1995, 59-60). The support of a stele showing Lokeśvara Khasarpaṇa in the centre, flanked by his four attendants Tārā, Sudhanakumāra, Bhṛkuṭī and Hayagrīva (fig. 40; de Mallmann 1975, 107), shows another motif to which I turn in this section, namely a dancer flanked by musicians. The stele is currently preserved in the Bangladesh National Museum, and is dated to the 8th or 9th century CE.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ The pedestals and slabs studied for this section were described and analysed by Claudine Bautze-Picron (1995). In this study she pays specific attention to the evolution of these motifs in the pre-Pāla and Pāla art in the present states of India and Bangladesh.

¹¹⁵ I am not sure about the correct transliteration of the Sanskrit here, as I was not able to access the original script or a transcription of the inscription following the I.A.S.T. scheme. The transcription offered on the website of the Victoria and Albert Museum does not include diacritical marks. A transcription of the section recording the donation of the *caitya* made by Gouriswar Bhattacharya reads: *siddham* (symbol) *śrīmad-rahula-bhadrasya paṇḍita-acārya-vajrinaḥ // kṛta[m pu]nyena satva[r]tham caitya-bhattacharako mahān*. Bhattacharya translates this section as “the great, venerable *caitya* made by the illustrious Rahulabhadrā, the learned teacher belonging to Vajrayāna with religious merit for the living beings.” This transcription and translation were published on the website of the Victoria and Albert Museum on July 13, 2006 (Victoria and Albert Search the Collections, 2006).

¹¹⁶ According to Claudine Bautze-Picron images of dancers and musicians appear in various pedestals and slabs from East Bihar and Southeast Bangladesh. They can all be dated between the 11th and 12th centuries CE. The date proposed by Odette Monod-Bruhl for the stele under study is earlier (8th to 9th century CE). I therefore suspect that the stele may be of a later date than she assumed.

A pedestal showing the seven jewels of the universal monarch (fig. 38):

The first pedestal under discussion appears as a stepped structure, with protruding plinths, dividing the surface into seven panels. Each of these panels bears an image, carved in high relief, displaying one of the seven jewels of the *cakravartin*. From the viewer's left to right, the images show an elephant, a wheel (*cakra*) supported by a double lotus, a minister,¹¹⁷ Jambhala, a queen, a three-pointed jewel (*maṇiratna*), and a horse. Jambhala in the centre represents the "chief of treasures" and appears at times instead of the general in these types of pedestals (Bautze-Picron 1998, 44). His identification is facilitated by the flanking jars, turned upside down to indicate a distribution of material wealth by this god (Bautze-Picron 1995, 60). Although I did not encounter an image of Jambhala among the seven treasures in the lower registers of *paubhās*, the position of the horse and the elephant recalls the arrangement of these motifs in the registers. Both these animals flank the other treasures, while facing them. Furthermore, the division of this pedestal into panels reminds us of the compartmentalised category of lower registers. In the *paubhās* studied, however, the seven jewels never appear separately in individual panels, and the jewels of the *cakra* and *maṇiratna* are always carried by an elephant and a horse. According to my knowledge, these jewels never appear independently in a Nepalese lower register.

Monks and lay people in a Bodh Gaya slab (fig. 39):

The seven treasures also appear in the centre of a slab from Bodh Gaya. They are flanked by a row of four devotees at the viewer's left and a manuscript presented on a stand to the right. The elephant and the horse, flanking and facing the other treasures, each carry an object on their back, which is difficult to identify in this slab.¹¹⁸ Between the queen and the horse, a monk is seated in *padmāsana* on a low cushion.¹¹⁹ He is identifiable as such from

¹¹⁷ Following Claudine Bautze-Picron's suggestion that in some lists of the seven treasures of the *cakravartin*, the "chief of the army" is replaced by the "chief of treasures" (*koṣādhyakṣaratna*; 1998, 44), I identify this image here as a minister, instead of a general. However, the object carried by this figure, which resembles a sword, seems more appropriate for a general than for a minister. It remains for further research whether a minister can also bear a sword in images of the seven treasures.

¹¹⁸ In other Pāla slabs and pedestals, such an object has a more outspoken, trefoil-shape, recalling the form of the *maṇiratna*. This precious jewel also occurs independently in the slab. Claudine Bautze-Picron suggests, in the case of a similarly executed pedestal from Bodh Gaya, that the objects carried on the back refer to the three jewels of Buddhism (*triratna*), namely the Buddha, the *dharma* and the *saṃgha* (1998, 67; Plate 160). This suggestion is in my view a bit too far-fetched. The bearing of an additional jewel on the back, with or without further symbolic meanings, appears appropriate for these animals as the carriers of wealth.

¹¹⁹ A monk replacing the chief of the army or Jambhala is another variation within the theme of the seven treasures found in Pāla slabs and pedestals (Bautze-Picron 1995, 62). Gouriswar Bhattacharya indeed identifies this monk as one of the seven jewels, namely as the *mantri-ratna* (Victoria and Albert Search the Collections, 2006). The Sanskrit term *mantrin*, which can mean "minister", refers in a more literal sense to "knowing sacred texts or spells" (Monier-Williams 2012 [1899], 786). Hence, a monk as someone who knows sacred texts, seems plausible as a representative of this jewel.

his pointed cap and his attributes. He holds a *vajra* in his right hand in front of his chest, and a bell (*ghaṇṭā*) in his left hand, resting on his lap. These attributes recall the iconography of the buddha Vajrasattva (de Mallman 1975, 420). Claudine Bautze-Picron relates this image of a monk to an initiation ritual, in particular that of the *vajrācāryābhīṣeka*, as recorded in the *Yoga* and *Anuttara Yoga Tantras*. In these texts, the initiate has to meditate on the buddha Vajrasattva and permanently hold the *vajra* and the bell as attributes as long as the ritual lasts.¹²⁰

Also our Vajrācārya priests from Nepal are ritually identified with the buddha Vajrasattva during the performance of a fire sacrifice, through their attributes of the crown, the *vajra* and the bell. The iconography of the monk in the Bodh Gaya slab reminds us of the image of the Vajrācārya priest in seated position in the *homa* scenes. In the Los Angeles Cakrasaṃvara-*maṇḍala* painting for example, the priest's body is shown frontally, like our monk in the Pāla slab, but his face is fixed on the fire (fig. 7). The five-buddha crown replaces the pointed hat, but this headdress is still part of the attire of Vajrācārya Jayarāja in the rightmost panel (fig. 11). The Vajrācārya priest in most cases holds one or two ladles in his right hand, but the *ghaṇṭā* remains an invariable attribute in the left hand, except when the ladles are carried by both hands. The *vajra* and *ghaṇṭā* can also flank the throne of the priest as ritual attributes (fig. 8; 9).

Claudine Bautze-Picron argues that another monk appears in the rightmost corner of this slab (fig. 41). His both hands rest in his lap and he holds the *vajra* in his right hand and the bell in his left.¹²¹ He is taller than the other images, perhaps referring to his higher status. He sits in the *padmāsana*, next to a stand with the shape of a pillar, supporting a manuscript, covered by a piece of cloth (Bautze-Picron 1995, 62). The iconography of this figure conflates with the rendering of Jambhala in the pedestal from Lakhi Sarai (fig. 38). He wears a similar type of pointed cap and his pot-bellied appearance is even more outspoken

¹²⁰ For this interpretation, Claudine Bautze-Picron relies on a section, quoted by Ariane Macdonald from a Tibetan treatise by Mkhas-grub-rje (1385-1438 CE). This disciple of Tsongkhapa offers an analysis of several rituals from the *Kriyā, Yoga* and *Anuttara Yoga Tantras* in folios 1 to 94 of a Tibetan manuscript, kept at Tohoku University Japan (n. 5489; Macdonald 1962, 52). Due to a lack of knowledge of Tibetan, I was not able to access the transcription offered by Ariane Macdonald. Having pointed out that the initiate needs to take three vows, Mkhas-grub-rje continues, in translation by Ariane Macdonald: "Pour le vœu du *vajra*, le disciple doit se méditer en tant que Vajrasattva, puis après lui avoir expliqué la nature réelle du *vajra*, on le lui fait tenir. Pour le vœu de la clochette, on lui explique la nature réelle de la clochette et on la lui fait tenir" (1962, 69). The ritual outlined in this section prescribes the meditation by the initiate on the buddha Vajrasattva, combined by an explication of the real nature of the attributes of the *vajra* and the bell. After this explanation, the initiate needs to hold the *vajra* and the bell, just like the monks in the Pāla slabs and pedestals studied by Claudine Bautze-Picron (1995).

¹²¹ I was not able to confirm this identification of the attributes (Bautze-Picron 1995, 62), as I did not have an image showing enough details to study this. It seems however, that the right hand of the figure was broken and lost.

than in the case of the Jambhala image. He is likewise, adorned with round earrings. However, the lotus-position of the figure in the slab, immediately flanking the manuscript on a stand, supports Bautze-Picron's identification as a monk, as this is a pattern frequently encountered by her in Pāla sculptures. She suggests a confusion between the iconographies of the pot-bellied figures of Jambhala and the monk in the Bodh Gaya slab. This labelling of a monk is supported by Gouriswar Bhattacharya, who suggests that this large figure in the rightmost corner represents the donor Rahulabhadrā, as recorded in the inscription (Victoria and Albert Search the Collections, 2006). This proposition seems plausible because of the rightmost position of the figure in the slab, which is usually reserved for the donors of the artworks (Bautze-Picron 1995, 63).

Another fascinating feature of this slab is the small image of a kneeling devotee, with hands raised in the *añjali mudrā*, just beneath the stand with the manuscript (fig. 41). The figure is sculpted in a niche, facing a circle enclosed by a square, identified by Claudine Bautze-Picron as a *maṇḍala* (1995, 64). The first type of *maṇḍala* studied in Chapter 3 recalls the form as well as the position of the object in front of the devotee. In the leftmost corner of the slab, four devotees are shown kneeling, the three largest figures with their left knee raised, while the smallest devotee rests with both knees on the ground (fig. 42). They face the seven treasures and present flower garlands, except for the smallest figure, who displays the *añjali mudrā*. Claudine Bautze-Picron suggests that these images of donors portray particular groups of families, but in an idealised rendering (1995, 63). In the inscription, four names are indeed mentioned, matching the number of figures kneeling in the leftmost corner of the artwork. Gouriswar Bhattacharya reads their names as Valo, Mujja, Tingala and Sumati. He also proposes that the figure worshipping the *maṇḍala* represents Valo, whom he identifies as the *pater familias*, depicted twice in the slab (Victoria and Albert Search the Collections, 2006). However, there does not seem to be textual evidence in the slab to support this last suggestion.

As seen in Section 3.5, kneeling donors with their hands in the *añjali mudrā* are also a recurring motif in the lower registers of *paubhās*. Monks as well as particular groups of lay people most often appear at the edges of the slabs and pedestals (Bautze-Picron 1995, 63). Likewise, groups of donor figures with idealised portraits, and positioning of monks and lay people in the corners, characterise the lower registers of *paubhās*. This particular arrangement of the donors of an artwork, accompanied by a ritual specialist at the lower border of the object, is a compositional idiom suggesting influences of the Pāla tradition as remaining in the later Malla artworks.

Pedestal showing a dancer with musicians (fig. 40):

The final motif in pedestals from the later Pāla period to be considered here, is a dancing scene, consisting of a dancer, flanked by two musicians (Bautze-Picron 1995, 63-64). An

example of such a scene is described by Odette Monod-Bruhl in an article on a *paubhā* illustrating Vajradhara with his consort Vajradhātṽśvarī.¹²² She relates the image of a female dancer flanked by two musicians, one playing the drums and the other the cymbals, in the central panel of the *paubhā*'s lower register (fig. 43), to sculpted dancers in the base of a Pāla stele showing Lokeśvara Khasarpaṇa and his four attendants (fig. 40). The pedestal is composed of four protruding, rectangular plinths, erecting seven planes for relief sculpture. The dancing scene appears in the centre. Four images of donors, in a kneeling position with their hands in the *añjali mudrā*, appear at the right- and leftmost corners of the pedestal (1959, 306-309). Furthermore, a water vessel (*kalaśa*) with a globular belly and decorated by a ribbon around the neck, and an elephant flank this dancing scene to the viewer's left and right.

Other specific motifs that appear in Pāla pedestals, with a ritual bearing, are a conch-shell on a tripod (fig. 44), a miniature *caitya*, a mirror, and a lamp stand (fig. 45). The conch shell (*śaṅkha*) on the tripod recalls in a remarkably similar way a *śaṅkha* on a stand in a Vasundharā-*maṇḍala* painting from the former Jucker collection (fig. 19). Miniature *caityas*, mirrors and lamp stands appear in the lower registers of *paubhās* as well, as we saw in Section 3.6. A stand supporting a manuscript, flanked by two plates with a cone cake, is a recurring motif in most Pāla slabs and pedestals examined by Claudine Bautze-Picron (1995). Nowhere however, did I encounter it in a Nepalese *paubhā*.

Pāla pedestals and stone slabs can be divided into panels or have a continuous relief. We encountered both this compartmentalised and the continuous way of composing the lower register in Nepalese *paubhās* as well. Equally familiar are the seven treasures of the *cakravartin*, the donors of the image, ritual objects, and dancers flanked by musicians. Other motifs that occur in the Pāla images, no longer play a role in the Nepalese set up, such as the stand supporting a manuscript. The monk in the Pāla sculptures seems to have given his position over to the Vajrācārya priest. So far, I did not encounter a *homa* image among the Pāla period motifs.¹²³ This suggests that the fire ritual developed as a motif unique to the painting tradition of the Kathmandu Valley. Of course we can not fully exclude the remote possibility that Pāla period depictions of *homa* were lost. The compositional idiom and motifs thus illustrate that there probably was an influence of a Pāla idiom, as one of many sources of inspiration, in the development of the iconography of the lower registers of *paubhās*. Nevertheless, the Newar art of painting developed as a strong independent tradition, in particular in the Malla period.¹²⁴ In the next section, we will analyse the social

¹²² This painting is dated 1488 CE, based on a reading of the inscription. It is part of the collection of the Musée Guimet in Paris (M.G. 22800).

¹²³ This observation was confirmed by Claudine Bautze-Picron, who is not aware of any *homa* image in Pāla sculptures (pers. comm. via Dr. Ellen Raven; April 3, 2017).

¹²⁴ Slusser 1982, 46; Pal 1978, 135.

context in which traditional Newar painters worked, and the conventions in which this process of creating a *paubhā* was embedded.

4.2. Artistic conventions: Rules on iconography and idealisation

Religious art is considered to be conservative and the painter, whether of a scroll-painting or a manuscript illumination or cover, is guided by rules on the composition and iconography of the deities or sacred events that are to be depicted.¹²⁵ How did instructions on the iconography of a *paubhā* reach the Newar artists? In her study of Nepalese sketchbooks, based on fieldwork in the ateliers of traditional Citrakārs in Bhaktapur, Margriet Blom (1989) describes that Buddhist and Brahmanical priests assist the Newar painters in the creation of sacred icons. These religious specialists not only perform the rituals accompanying the creation of a *paubhā*, but they also inform the painters on the correct iconography of the deities. The priests usually interpret the iconographies from their ancient manuscripts or recall these by heart. In many cases the Citrakārs make sketches during these instructions, in which they may include short abbreviations serving as clues to specific colours (Blom 1989, 5). Sketchbooks from the Kathmandu Valley have been preserved in various museums, such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. The oldest among these manuscripts dates back to the early 15th century CE. They are a valuable source for the study of the evolution of the iconography of Newar deities and motifs, such as architectural structures, decorative scroll-patterns, but also *maṇḍalas* (fig. 46; Blom 1989, 10). So far, I did not come across a drawing of a *homa* image, but many sketchbooks still await further scrutiny.

A few, exceptional inscriptions of *paubhās* inform us on the name of the painter, such as in the Los Angeles Viṣṇu-*maṇḍala* painting. It records the his name as Jayateja Puna, who completed the artwork in ten days.¹²⁶ Furthermore, also Vajrācārya priests have been attested by Pratapaditya Pal as painters of manuscript illuminations and scrolls, raising the suggestion that they have been engaged in this profession from earlier times onwards (Pal 1978, 17-18).

The lower registers of *paubhās* display events that are associated with religious ceremonies, providing them with a historical value. Hence, rules on iconography do not apply to these “insignificant borders”, as Gautama Vajracharya holds (2003, 51). Still, one may wonder to what an extent the *homa* images were subject to artistic and religious conventions. How free was the painter in his rendering? The patterns in the iconography of the *homa* scenes

¹²⁵ Pal 1978, 88; Bautze-Picron 1998, 39.

¹²⁶ In transcription, this section reads: *idaṃ paṭa lekṣita jayateja punena daśabhiḥ dine likṣitamiti*. For a transcription and translation of the complete inscription by Ian Alsop e.a., see Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 4.

indicate the existence of an artistic tradition – adapting where or when required – that lives on, elements of which I have shown previously in the part on Pāla versus Malla art. Nevertheless, in the specific execution of the image, we can and do trace individual choices by the creators, which involve the painter, but may also include priests or the donors themselves (Pal 1978, 19), taken up in Section 4.4.

Besides rules on the iconography of divine beings and sacred events, idealisation, especially in portraits, is another convention dominating the Newar painting tradition. As described in Chapter 3, the donor portraits are idealised, rendering it impossible to recognise individual characteristics (Pal 1978, 123-124). There are, however, exceptions where personal traits are traceable to a certain degree, such as in the likeness of King Bhūpatīndramalla in a *paubhā* showing a Viṣṇu shrine, dated 1716 CE (fig. 47).¹²⁷ Our emperor has quite an explicit nose and wears a black beard and moustache. These characteristics recur in several other images of this monarch, such as a portrait in a mural from the Bhadgaon palace in Bhaktapur (fig. 48).¹²⁸ Apart from these more naturalistic features in the portraits, Pratapaditya Pal convincingly argues that a considerable degree of idealisation was maintained as well, especially in the image in the *paubhā*.¹²⁹ One can indeed wonder whether all the Malla kings had a beard, as we find it in most royal portraits dating before the conquest of the Kathmandu Valley by Prithivi Narayan Shah in 1769 CE, or whether it was an artistic convention. A beard does not seem to be part anymore of the artistic vocabulary of royal portraits displaying the later Shah kings (Pal 1978, 129; Plates 120, 159, 195). Given that Newar painters, especially in the Malla period, tended to create idealised images of people involved in the rituals in the lower registers, we may wonder what role this idealising tendency could have played in the rendering of the *homa* scenes in general. Do the *homa* images provide us with faithful representations of the ritual or are they an idealised representation of how a fire sacrifice was supposed to look like? We will return to this issue in Section 4.4.

In sum, a Nepalese *paubhā* was created in an environment in which rules on iconography and idealisation acted as artistic conventions shaping the appearance of the artworks. If we want to study the *homa* images as historical evidence, we need to be aware of these conventions, as they provide us with a lens through which we see a modified picture of the ritual. Not only artistic conventions and rules may have influenced the iconography of a *paubhā*, but also the specific ritual in which the painting had to function as an icon.

¹²⁷ This painting was part of the former Jucker collection. It is rendered in water colours and gold on cloth and measures 165 x 155 cm (Kreijger 1999, 62; Plate 18).

¹²⁸ Pal 1978; Plate 193; Kreijger 1999, 62.

¹²⁹ Pratapaditya Pal suggests that the painter of the mural probably had the opportunity to study the facial features of the monarch, who was responsible for the building of the palace, while the artist of the *paubhā* had to rely on secondary representations (1978, 129).

4.3. *Paubhās* as sacred icons

The iconography of a *paubhā* may have been affected by the ritual for which it was created, and specific iconographies may have existed for particular events. A study by Alexander von Rospatt (2014) shows how a *paubhā* serves as a primary icon during Newar old-age rituals.

As outlined in Chapter 2, scroll-paintings are still commissioned for the celebration of old-age rituals (New. *gyā jamko*), such as the Bhīmarathārohaṇa (von Rospatt 2014, 105). These paintings have a unique iconography. The central subject is usually a *stūpa* enclosing an image of the goddess Uṣṇīṣavijayā. There are two lower registers at the bottom of the *paubhā*. One of them contains images of the main rituals performed during the *jamko*, such as the procession of carrying the elders in a chariot (*rathayātrā*) and a fire sacrifice (*homa*). The register underneath shows images of the sponsors of the ritual (*yajamāna*), who are usually the sons and grandsons of the celebrant, and their family members. Below these lower registers, there is often a dedicatory inscription (fig. 49). I was not able to trace a *paubhā* with this specific iconography dating back before the mid - 19th century CE, but according to Alexander von Rospatt they can be traced back to the Malla period (2014, 112).

Paintings commissioned for the celebration of this ritual with different iconographies date back as early as the 14th century CE. The *Sūrya-maṇḍala* painting from the Zimmerman collection was made, according to a reading of its inscription by Pratapaditya Pal, as an icon for the celebration of a Bhīmarathārohaṇa for Bhisnudeśvara.¹³⁰ This assumption is supported by the central image of the Sun god, to whom the Bhīmarathārohaṇa is dedicated (von Rospatt 2014, 114). The image in the central panel of the lower register seems to portray the celebrant, Bhisnudeśvara (fig. 50). He sits on a white, double lotus and holds two lotus-flowers in his hands, while showing the *añjali mudrā*. Red halos surround his head and body. These iconographic features recall the image of Sūrya in the centre of this *paubhā*, and visualise the symbolic “deification” of the celebrant during the performance of the old-age ritual.¹³¹

Alexander von Rospatt thus offers one example of a modern, ritual usage of a *paubhā*, and its link to the specific iconography of the painting. The *homa* scene as part of this iconographic program seems to be an exception. I was not able to relate images of fire rites in the lower registers of *paubhās* to particular central scenes. This suggests that the lower registers were not necessarily conceived as being part of the correct iconography of a painting related to a religious ceremony. Nevertheless, as this previous example on the

¹³⁰ Pal 1978, 76. The reading of this inscription by Pal cannot be confirmed anymore, as the inscription – unusually positioned at the back of the *paubhā* – has been partly concealed in the process of conservation (von Rospatt 2014, 114; fn. 14).

¹³¹ von Rospatt 2014, 109-110; For a full image of the painting, see Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 3.

ritual usage of *paubhās* illustrated, the iconography of the *homa* scenes can be treated as part of the religious icons that support the construction of an experience of a religious event. But what is the specific role of the *homa* images in the creation of this experience?

4.4. The nature of *homa* images: Eyewitness accounts or artistic motifs?

Now that we have looked at artistic, social and ritual contexts that may affect the iconography and composition of a Nepalese scroll-painting, we need to move back to the issue of the nature of *homa* scenes. A religious image provides us with a view on the supernatural in a specific period of time and cultural context. It not only shows, but also creates a view of the divine, acting as a mediator between the material and the heavenly worlds (Burke 2001, 46). The lower registers of *paubhās* seem to form such a bridge between the material and divine realms. In the case of the Pāla pedestals, Claudine Bautze-Picron points out that the depiction of donors in a separate pedestal creates a distance between them and the central divine image. It also creates a clear hierarchy, by the smaller size of the images, as well as by their position, literally “under” the deity. Nevertheless, the donors are still part of the very same image (Bautze-Picron 1995, 63). The pedestal – and this can be extended to the lower registers of *paubhās* as well – seems to represent a liminal space, where the material world meets the divine.¹³²

As *homa* is an artistic motif, its appearance shows patterns, as analysed in Chapter 3. A chronological series of images depicting a single theme is a particularly valuable source for art history and religious studies, as it enables us to study continuities, transformations and alterations in the pattern.¹³³ To illustrate this, we can turn to a feature of our *homa* images, namely the manuscript held by the assistant to the priest. In *paubhās* dating from the 14th to the mid - 17th century CE, the assistant carries a long palm-leaf manuscript (*tālapatra*) with both hands. After the mid - 17th century CE however, the manuscript changes to a smaller, rectangular object, displayed by the assistant on the palm of his right or left hand. From the 14th century CE onwards, palm-leaf was gradually replaced by paper

¹³² This appears to be a more convincing explanation of the relationship between the lower register and the central image than the one proposed by Odette Monod-Bruhl. She describes this lower register as “la zone terrestre” (1959, 302), as an earthly zone placed under the central section illustrating a divine zone. I am not convinced by her suggestion. As we discussed in Chapter 2, the Vajrācārya priest is ritually identified with a divine being – the buddha Vajrasattva – when he wears his five-buddha crown to perform the fire rituals. This is supported in some paintings by the occurrence of a halo around the head (and body) of the priest (fig. 12, 25, 29). This symbolic equation of figures in the lower register with divine beings indicates that the register is not just a representation of the human realm. The sacred atmosphere of the lower register may also be enhanced by the presence of the canopies, at times covering the figures of the priest and the donors, as argued in Chapter 3.

¹³³ Burke 2001, 46; Bautze-Picron 1998, 39.

in the Kathmandu Valley.¹³⁴ A detailed study of the evolution of the shape of the manuscript in a larger sample of *paubhās* could be an additional, visual source on this historical process of turning to another writing material.

There are a few instances in which the painter seems to offer indications for a specific ritual in the iconography of the images. In the *homa* scene of a Vajradhara *paubhā* from the National Gallery Bhaktapur, for example, the priest and the women – the queen in the panel of the seven treasures of the universal monarch included – wear a yellow ribbon around their neck, marking the completion of the Vasundharā *vrata* (fig. 22; Bühnemann 2008, 20). Another example of such a more precise ritual reference appears in a *paubhā* with an image of the three Mother Goddesses, Cāmuṇḍā, Mahālakṣmī, and Kaumarī, dated 1679 CE, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (fig. 51). On the ladle of the Vajrācārya priest lie three pieces of red cloth. The priest extends the ladle towards the fire, as if he is about to pour the red ribbons into the flames.¹³⁵ It is however, unclear with which specific ritual(s) these red pieces of cloth can be associated. Nevertheless, such individualities are interesting for a historian of religion who wants to study the ‘ritual reality’ of *homa* in a Medieval and Early Modern Newar context, as such elements do not seem to have been guided by an artistic pattern. This raises the suggestion that the painter relied to a certain extent on his own observation when he painted the *homa* image. There are, however, several problems related to the historical reliability of such an ‘eyewitness account’ as well. Did the painter faithfully represent an observation of the ritual? How long ago was the ritual witnessed by him before he painted it? And, did he witness it directly or indirectly? Also the issue of idealisation needs to be considered in this regard. It remains a scholarly issue to what an extent a ritual manual is a reliable source on actual performance, or whether it offers an ideal model of how a ritual should be carried out.¹³⁶ In a similar way, we may wonder how reliable the *homa* scenes are as a source on the enactment of the Newar fire rite. Do they show us how the fire sacrifice was performed in reality or how it ideally had to look like?

To conclude, a historian of religion, when studying *homa* images as evidence on fire rituals, needs to take into account several considerations. The Nepalese art of painting developed in interaction with the artistic traditions of external regions, in which Pāla India appeared as a major source of influence. We do not know yet where the motif of *homa* in the Newar *paubhā* art originated. The painted fire ritual appears on the covers of Nepalese manuscripts from the 15th century CE onwards. I did not encounter it in the covers of eastern Indian manuscripts, although the Indian manuscript illuminations did influence the

¹³⁴ Blom 1989, 10; Nirajan Kafle pers. comm., May 8, 2017.

¹³⁵ In the *homa* scene of a Vasundharā-*maṇḍala paubhā* from the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, dated 1495 CE, a yellow ribbon appears in a similar fashion on the ladle of the Vajrācārya priest. This painting is part of the Nasli and Alice Heeramanek collection (M.77.19.7). It is rendered in water colours on cloth and measures 110 x 84,2 cm (Pal 1985, 213-214; Plate 17).

¹³⁶ Ślącza 2007, 2; Szántó 2015, 660.

composition and stylistic execution of the figures and motifs in the Nepalese tradition. A detailed study of several pedestals and a stone slab from the later Pāla period, from the region of Bihar, revealed a shared set of motifs and ways of bringing these together in the lower sections of *paubhās*. This tradition played a considerable role in the development of the Nepalese lower register. Testimonies of *homa* images in the Indian Pāla tradition, however, either seem to be lost, are not yet discovered, or were non-existent. This situation raises the suggestion that the motif of *homa* was a local invention in the Kathmandu Valley, or that we need to search for its origins somewhere else. Even though the Indian Pāla tradition considerably influenced the art of *paubhā* painting, it was not the only source of inspiration for the Newars. The material heritage, and especially the *thangkas*, of their Tibetan neighbours, with whom the Newar artists maintained close contacts,¹³⁷ may enclose additional clues to the development of the motif of the fire ritual.

We know from textual sources, such as the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (ca. 8th century CE), that the fire sacrifice was already performed by Buddhists in Pāla India. The wide-spread representation of *homa* in the visual art of painting appears to be a development unique to the Kathmandu Valley. Of course, we do not know if the motif was present in the eventual scroll-paintings from Northeastern India, as these were not preserved. It is more likely that such painted scrolls were carried by travelling monks on their way to the Himalayan regions, while sculptures were probably studied in situ. Does the material culture represent here different social and ritual circumstances of the Buddhist communities in Northeastern India and the Kathmandu Valley? Did *homa* become a more important part of the ritual repertoire of Newar Buddhism, due to its isolation in the Valley and increased interaction with Brahmanical cultures? We may recall in this regard that, as far as I know, only in the Kathmandu Valley, the ten life-cycle rituals accompany the consecration of an image. Vajrācārya priests monopolise the performance of these life-cycle rites in Newar Buddhist ceremonies, of which *homa* forms an integral part (Locke 1980, 20). Further research of the different ritual dynamics within the Buddhist communities from the Kathmandu Valley and Northeastern India, may offer further explanations regarding the different choices in the visualisation of rituals in the artworks from these regions.

Newar painters were subject to specific local, artistic conventions and rules on iconography. It is unclear to what an extent the *homa* images were indeed guided by such rules. A Newar painter probably had more room for 'art' in the rendering of these lower registers than in that of the central scenes of the painting. In an analysis of a ritual context in which a *paubhā* may function, we saw that iconographies could be informed by the religious ceremonies. In most cases studied in this thesis, however, the *homa* scene seems to be no part of such a specific iconography. Finally, the lower register of a *paubhā* appears to function as a liminal space, where the divine and material worlds meet each other. They are both an artistic

¹³⁷ Kramrisch 1964, 43-44; Pal 1978, 145-147; Huntington 1990, 258-259.

motif and a visual account of a ritual reality, with the dynamics between these two aspects depending on the social and ritual context in which an image was created.

4.5. Images



Fig. 34: Manuscript cover showing scenes from the life of the Buddha, *Aṣṭasahāsrīkā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript, 12th or 13th century CE, Eastern India or Nepal, OMPB (Or. 14203).



Fig. 35: *Śīvadharma* manuscript cover, 12th century CE, Nepal, National Library Kathmandu.



Fig. 36: Manuscript cover with a *homa* scene (leftmost panel) for a manuscript containing five protective hymns, 1532 CE, Nepal, OMPB (Or. 2205).

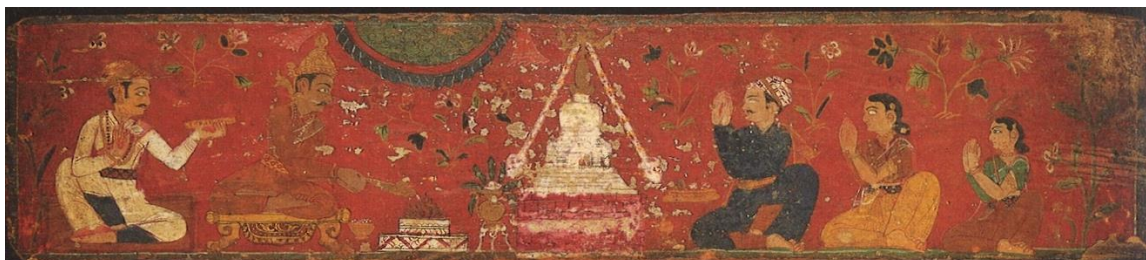


Fig. 37: Manuscript cover with *homa* scene for a manuscript containing five protective hymns, 1659 CE, Tarumūla Monastery Kathmandu, OMPB (Or. 13852).



Fig. 38: Pedestal showing the seven treasures of the universal monarch, 10th to 12th century CE, Lakhi Sarai (Bihar, India), Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin (I 580).



Fig. 39: Slab showing the seven treasures of the universal monarch, 10th to 12th century CE, Bodh Gaya (Bihar, India), Victoria and Albert Museum London (IS699-1883).



Fig. 40: Stele showing Lokeshvara Khasarpaṇa and his four attendants Tārā, Sudhanakumāra, Bhṛkuṭī and Hayagrīva, 8th to 9th century CE (?), Eastern India, Bangladesh National Museum.



Fig. 41: Detail fig. 39: Monk (Rahulabhadrā?) and devotee with *maṇḍala*.

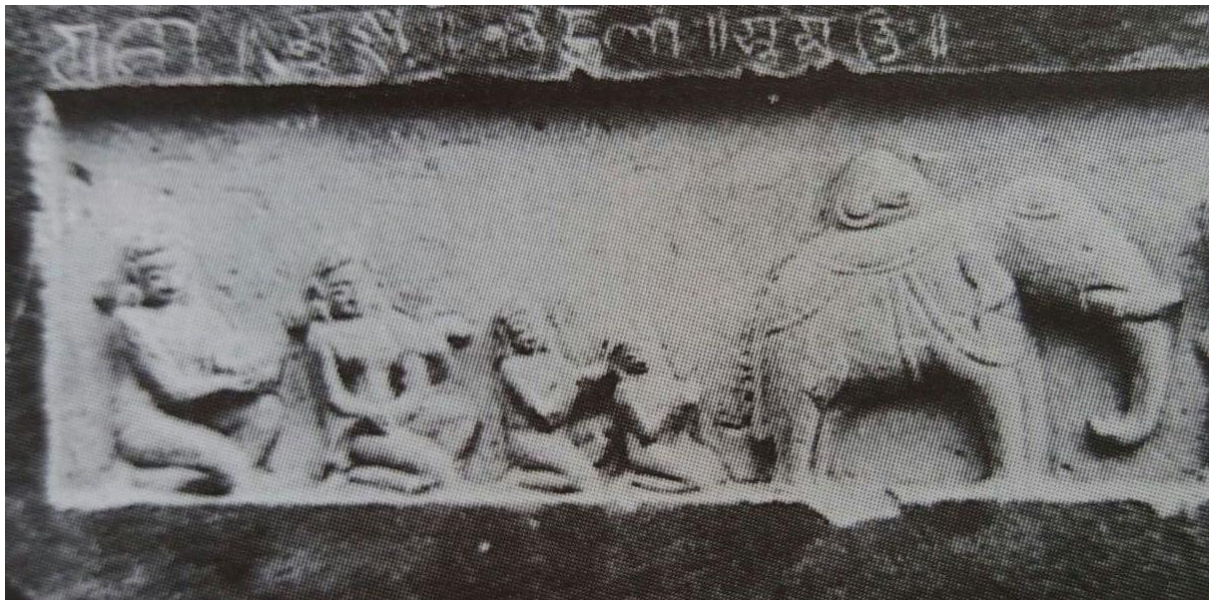


Fig. 42: Detail of fig. 39: Four donors and an elephant as one of the seven treasures of the *cakravartin*.



Fig. 43: Dancer flanked by two musicians in a *paubhā* showing Vajradhara with his consort Vajradhātviśvarī, 1488 CE, Nepal, Musée Guimet Paris (M.G. 22800).



Fig. 44: A conch shell in a pedestal of a Tārā image, Itkhauri (India); photo by J. Bautze.



Fig. 45: A *caitya*, a mirror, a cone cake, an incense burner and a lamp stand in the lower left part of the pedestal of a Buddha image, Betagi (Chittagong, Bangladesh). Photo by J. Bautze.

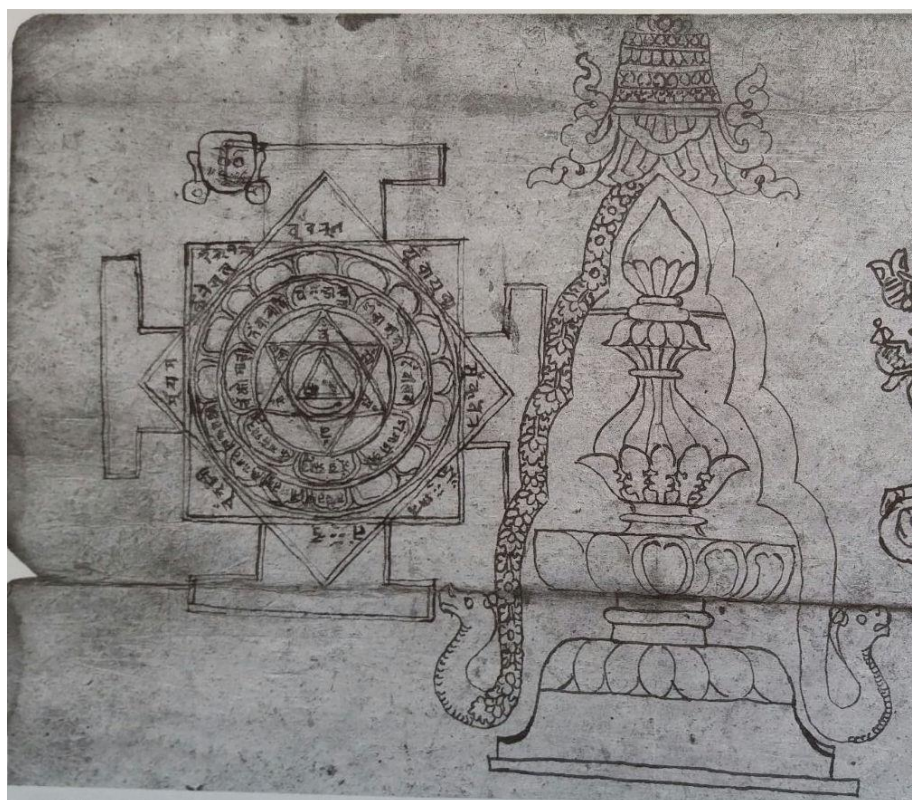


Fig. 46: *Maṇḍala* in a sketchbook in *thyāsaphū* form consisting of 29 pages, 19th century CE, Nepal, private collection.



Fig. 47: Portrait of King Bhūpatīndramalla and his son in a *paubhā* showing a Viṣṇu shrine, 1716 CE, Bhaktapur (Nepal), former Jucker collection.



Fig. 48: Portrait of King Bhūpatīndramalla in a mural of the Bhadgaon Palace, 1696-1721 CE, Bhaktapur.



Fig. 49: *Paubhā* showing a *stūpa* with Uṣṇīṣavijayā and Bhīmarathārohaṇa ritual, 1830 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection.



Fig. 50: Bhisnudeśvara in a Sūrya-maṇḍala paubhā, 1379 CE, Nepal, Zimmerman collection.



Fig. 51: Homa in a paubhā showing the three Mother Goddesses, Cāmuṇḍā, Mahālakṣmī, and Kaumarī, 1679 CE, Bhaktapur, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.81.271.1).

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The central issue approached in this thesis is the nature of the *homa* scenes that appear almost invariably in the lower registers of Nepalese *paubhās*. Are these painted fire rites artistic motifs or eyewitness accounts of ritual realities? Moreover, we wondered if it is possible to relate these *homa* images to specific rituals on the basis of a study of their iconography. Finally, we examined the value of these *homa* scenes as historical evidence for scholars of religion. A systematic analysis of the iconography of the painted fire rituals from a selected set of *paubhās*, revealed that the images in the first place function as artistic motifs in the lower sections of the artworks.

5.1. *Homa* as an artistic motif

A study of the position of *homa* images in the lower sections of *paubhās* revealed patterns in the location of these scenes in relation to the other motifs in the lower register. Furthermore, I was able to recognise patterns in the composition and iconographic execution of the elements constituting a *homa*. These constituents converge with the key aspects of Newar fire rituals, determined in Chapter 2 on the basis of textual sources.

5.1.1. Positioning and composing the *homa* image

The lower registers of the *paubhās* studied, can either be compartmentalised into several panels or continuous. In the first category, the *homa* scene appears especially in the leftmost panel, and the priest can stand, but more often sits to the viewer's left of the fire. A Los Angeles Cakrasaṃvara-*maṇḍala paubhā* (fig. 7; Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 2), and a Sūrya-*maṇḍala* painting from the Zimmerman collection (fig. 9; Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 3) illustrate this type of composition. The priests are attended by an assistant, who shows a manuscript. The *yajamāna* and his family members mostly kneel in the rightmost panel. The subjects of the central panels may vary, and display for example, the seven treasures of the universal king.

In the continuous type of register, the fire ritual appears in the centre or near the centre to the left or to the right. The priest may, likewise, stand or sit, although the standing pose was seen more often. A Vasundharā-*maṇḍala paubhā*, from the former Jucker collection (fig. 13; Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 5), shows such an arrangement. The donors kneel or stand behind the priest or at the opposite side of the fire. An exceptional image of a Brahmin priest

performing *homa* was encountered in a Viṣṇu-*maṇḍala* painting from Los Angeles (fig. 10; Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 4), which likewise follows this second category of constructing the lower register.

The *homa* scenes are thus part of a standardised set of motifs appearing in fixed positions in the lower registers. Also the composition of the elements constituting the images of the fire sacrifice themselves show patterns. The most commonly encountered arrangement is the one as we see it in the Cakrasaṃvara-*maṇḍala paubhā*, commissioned by Vajrācārya Jayarāja (fig. 7).

5.1.2. Central features of Newar *homa* and parallel iconographies

Before analysing the iconography of the *homa* scenes, I examined the nature and key aspects of a fire sacrifice in a Newar Buddhist context on the basis of medieval, ritual manuals composed in Sanskrit, and anthropological accounts of modern performances of the rite. Together with the flask- and *guru-maṇḍala* worship, Newar *homa* is a basic ritual functioning as a component of larger religious ceremonies. Hence this tantric ritual appears in many varieties in the Kathmandu Valley. We may classify a Newar *homa* on the basis of several factors, such as the types of substances offered, the obligatory or optional nature of the performance, or the specific ceremony in which it functions.

In order to analyse this textual evidence, I proposed four categories to study the key aspects of *homa*. These categories included the ‘actors’ in the ritual, using specific ‘attributes’ to perform ‘actions’ at a specific ‘place’, indicated by the installation of the fire pit. Buddhist Vajrācārya priests, accompanied by the patron of the ritual, the *yajamāna*, handle specific types of ladles, such as a *sulāpā*, to pour offerings into the fire. The oblations, basically consisting of *ghee* mixed with certain types of grains, are accompanied by visualisations of specific deities and the recitations of *mantras*, in accordance with the tantric nature of the ritual. The Vajrācārya wears his five-buddha crown, displaying his authority to perform the sacrifice. One other implement of high importance during a Newar *homa* is a water vessel (*kalaśa*), in which one or more deities are invoked and worshipped. The fire is kindled in a fire pit, which can be permanently or temporarily built. Its form and colour are determined by the purpose of the ritual.

This categorisation proved to be useful in the analysis of the visual materials. The key aspects of Newar Buddhist fire rites converge with the basic elements constituting the painted *homa*, such as the image of a fire sacrifice in the Cakrasaṃvara-*maṇḍala paubhā* (fig. 7). A Vajrācārya priest, wearing his five-buddha crown, pours offerings into the flames with a *sulāpā*, while holding a bell with *vajra*-handle (*vajra-ghanṭā*) in his left hand. He is accompanied by an assistant, seated behind him on a carpet and carrying a long, palm-leaf

manuscript (*tālapatra*). Between the priest and the fire pit is situated a *maṇḍala*, while a *pūrṇakalaśa* appears to the left of the *kuṇḍa* from the priest's perspective. The officiating Vajrācārya is covered by an exquisite canopy, while other ritual implements, such as a spouted *kalaśa* and plates with offerings, further complement this *homa* scene. The main donor of the *paubhā*, Vajrācārya Jayarāja, appears in the rightmost panel of the painting, accompanied by his family members.

The paintings thus illustrate which specific elements constitute a Newar – mainly Buddhist – fire ritual. They also show us the specific position of these constituents in the arrangements of the scenes. Hence, the aspects of actors, place, attributes and actions are traceable in the parallel iconographic elements of the priest with his assistant to the ritual, the *yajamāna* and his family, particular ritual attributes marking a fire ritual, and the fire itself as the virtual centre of action. The iconographic analysis revealed that *homa* is a recurrent artistic motif in the lower registers of Nepalese *paubhās*, and that patterns can be traced in its composition, position and the iconographic rendering of the composing elements.

5.2. Rituals of consecration?

The particular forms these key aspects of a Newar *homa* may take, are determined by the religious ceremony in which the fire ritual functions. In particular, we examined how *homa* works in tantric rituals of consecration performed by Newar Buddhists, according to the hypothesis put forward by previous scholars that the *homa* images in the lower registers of *paubhās* are supposed to portray such consecration rituals.

Only the colour or shape of the fire pit (*yajña-kuṇḍa* or *agni-kuṇḍa*) may support this hypothesis. Most of the *kuṇḍas* bear a light colour, such as white, beige or yellow, occasionally inclining towards a more greyish tint. In most instances, it is not possible to determine the shape of the hearth, due to their two-dimensional side-view. However, we did come across one painted *kuṇḍa* suggesting a square form, in the Jucker Candra-*maṇḍala* painting (fig. 29). In the *Kriyāsamgrahapañjikā*, Kuladatta prescribes such a square form for the fire pit. The Indian tantric master Abhayākaragupta describes in his *Jyotirmañjarī* a yellow colour for the hearths functioning in rituals with increasing purposes. The white colour in the Candra-*maṇḍala* painting matches the round fire pit, employed in rites of pacification, while its square shape rather indicates an increasing function, as outlined by Abhayākaragupta.¹³⁸ Both the increasing and pacifying aims prevail in contemporary rituals of consecration performed by Tibetans in the annual re-consecration of the Bodhnāth *stūpa* in Kathmandu (Bentor 1996, 270).

¹³⁸ Skorupski 2001, 188-189; quoted in Skorupski 2016, 92.

The iconography as encountered in the *homa* scene from this *Candra-maṇḍala paubhā* does not completely match the textual sources presented in this thesis. Many other textual accounts on *homa*, however, still await further examination to contribute to the analysis presented here. Leaving this need for further research aside, it is uncertain on what sources the Newar painters relied for their rendering of the images of the fire ritual, an issue to which I return in the next section. Moreover, we may wonder whether the creators of the paintings wanted to depict a specific fire ritual at all, or whether the presence of a motif recognisable as *homa* was their primary concern.

5.3. Ritual realities: *Homa* as an eyewitness account

That the images of the fire sacrifice function as artistic motifs, does not necessarily exclude that they provide us with tribute accounts of the elements involved in a Newar *homa* and their possible arrangements. In this regard, the Newar *homa* scenes may be treated as historical sources on a fire sacrifice, which is unique in South Asia in its sort. In Chapter 4, we turned to the value of these painted fire rites as evidence for historians of religion. In order to use the paintings as such, the iconographic analysis was complemented by a study of the artistic tradition underlying the motif of *homa*, as well as the social and religious contexts in which the paintings were created and supposed to function.

5.3.1. A unique Newar development?

The painting tradition of the Newars developed in interaction with external artistic traditions, with the material heritage from Pāla India (8th - 12th century CE) acting as a major source of influence. An analysis of the paintings in manuscript covers from Northeastern India and the Kathmandu Valley, the earliest of which date to 11th century CE, shows elements in the composition of the surface and the choice and execution of certain motifs, that recur in the *paubhās*. In the cover of a Nepalese *Śivadharmā* manuscript (fig. 35), for example, a *maṇḍala* appears in front of the donor, which is also a pivotal motif in the composition of a *homa* scene in the later *paubhās*. The fire ritual itself occurs in the covers of Nepalese manuscripts, as far as I know, from the 15th century CE onwards. Its arrangement and iconographic execution follows faithfully the motif as it was rendered in the scroll-paintings. I did not yet encounter *homa* in the covers of eastern Indian manuscripts. Nevertheless, scholars, such as John C. Huntington, maintain that the Indian manuscript illuminations did influence the composition and stylistic rendering of the figures and motifs in the Nepalese tradition.

A detailed study of several pedestals and a stone slab from the later Pāla period (10th to 12th century CE), all originating in the region of Bihar, revealed a shared set of motifs and ways of composing these with the lower registers of *paubhās*. Particularly intriguing

similarities with these Nepalese registers were discovered in the arrangement and iconographic rendering of the donors in a stone slab from Bodh Gaya (fig. 39). The donor-figures in this slab are probably supposed to represent a particular group of people. This assumption is supported by a reading of the inscription, which records four names, corresponding with the number of four, idealised figures in the artwork. The donors appear at the edges of the slab, while facing the centrally depicted, seven treasures of the *cakravartin*. They show flower garlands or the *añjali mudrā*, and they are accompanied by a monk, who appears in the rightmost corner of the slab. We may identify him as active within the Vajrayāna branch Buddhism on the basis of the inscription. In our Nepalese *paubhās*, the *yajamāna* and his family also appear at the extremities of the lower registers, facing the centre, and showing the gesture of worship. They are equally accompanied by a monk, in this case a Newar Vajrācārya who acts as a priest performing the fire sacrifice.

As this example illustrates, artworks from the Indian Pāla tradition played a considerable role in the development of the Nepalese lower register. However, among all the motifs in the Pāla images studied for this thesis, painted as well as sculpted, no *homa* image appears. Although textual sources, such as the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (ca. 8th century CE), inform us that the fire sacrifice was already performed by Buddhists in Pāla India, *homa* scenes seem to be a development unique to the painting tradition of the Kathmandu Valley. We may not exclude here the possibility that *homa* images are not yet discovered, or that these were lost in the art from Pāla India. We do not know, for example, if the motif was present in scroll-paintings from Northeastern India, as these were not preserved. Do the visual materials represent here different social and ritual circumstances of the Buddhist communities in Northeastern India and the Kathmandu Valley? Did *homa* become a more important part of the ritual repertoire of Newar Buddhism, which became ever more exposed to Brahmanical cultures in its geographically isolated state?

5.3.2. Between artistic rules and ritual realities

A historian studying the *homa* images also needs to take into account that a Nepalese *paubhā* is created in an environment in which rules on iconography and artistic conventions, such as idealisation, determine the appearance of the work of art. It remains unclear to what an extent such rules were applied in the images of *homa* and how free the painter was in their rendering. When a *paubhā* was commissioned as the central icon for a religious ceremony, this could determine its specific iconography. In a contemporary Newar context, paintings commissioned for the Bhīmarathārohaṇa celebration, still display a unique iconography which is centuries old, and in which the *homa* scenes appear as a part of the iconographic program of the central images. The painted fire rituals in the lower registers analysed in this thesis, however, appear in most cases not to have been influenced by the central subject of the *paubhā*.

As historians studying these images, we need to be familiar with these conventions and ritual contexts, as they act as a lens through which we are allowed to see a modified picture of a ritual reality. The lower register, as a liminal space where the divine realm meets the material, also informs this way of looking at the image. It is both part of a divine experience by the viewers, but it also shows how a ritual was – or ideally had to be – enacted by the donors.

Are *homa* images then artistic motifs or testimonies of ritual realities? They are both. The painted fire rituals can indeed be considered as tribute accounts on the constituents of the ritual in a Newar – especially Buddhist – context, and the possible arrangements of these. As artistic motifs, they allow us to reconstruct chronologies for the images, informing us on the development of shapes, compositions, and styles over time. Their nature as testimonies on rituals is especially revealed in those cases where the painter felt free to add marks of a specific ceremony. For example, in the lower register of the Vajradhara *paubhā* from Bhaktapur, the priest and the women wear yellow ribbons around their neck to indicate a completion of the Vasundharā *vrata* (fig. 22).¹³⁹ The *homa* paintings provide us with a unique set of data for artistic chronologies, but they also allow a look into the past to observe aspects of the performance of the Newar fire ritual.

5.4. Further research

This study included a systematic overview of a selection of *paubhās*, but many paintings remained unexplored. In follow-up research, this dataset needs to be expanded in order to extend the compositional and iconographic observations, and their application to the Nepalese art of *paubhā* painting. Next to examinations of the general patterns outlined in this study, further research needs to pay attention to the specific social and ritual contexts in which a painting was created. A study of an individual *homa* image in relation to the central scene of the *paubhā*, and its social and religious contexts of creation, may reveal in which ways the image conforms to the iconography prescribed for a certain ritual. An examination of the individual elaborations by a painter of a *homa* scene may serve to explore the ‘ritual reality’ enclosed within the image. In order to better understand the local context in which a *paubhā* was created and functioned ritually, more sketchbooks and ritual manuals need to be examined. Many texts in Newari, preserved in Nepalese archives, still await analysis (von Rospatt 2015, 819). Moreover, it remains for further research on which specific sources the Newar painters, who were probably assisted by ritual specialists in their work, relied for their rendering of the *homa* scenes.

¹³⁹ Bühnemann 2008, 20; Appendix 2, *paubhā* no. 6.

With regard to the influence of north Indian, artistic traditions in which the Nepalese art of painting was embedded and by which it was influenced regarding compositions, iconography and styles, follow-up research needs to focus on manuscript illuminations from Pāla India as codifying the lay-out and motifs in the lower registers of *paubhās*. Many materials of necessity remained unexplored, from Indian as well as Nepalese origins.

We noticed how certain motifs appearing in the pedestals and stone slabs from Northeastern India, were preserved in the Nepalese, painted lower register, while others were not. A monk seated next to a stand supporting a manuscript may serve as an example of such a motif in the Pāla artworks, that was not taken over by the Newar painters. Instead, it seems, the Newars chose to portray a type of monk that was familiar to them, performing a ritual over which only these monks had the monopoly. The choice to take over a certain motif, or to adapt or to exclude it, seems to be embedded in social and ritual contexts. These specific religious environments deserve further attention. Was the presentation of a manuscript on a stand, perhaps as an object of worship, a common practice among the Buddhists in the regions of Bihar? In a similar fashion, we may extend this question to the situation in the medieval Kathmandu Valley. Does the almost invariable appearance of *homa* in the *paubhās* mirror the prevalence and the visibility of this ritual in Newar society? The Indian Pāla tradition was however, not the only source of inspiration for the Newars. A study of the motifs enclosed in Tibetan *thangkas* for example, may reveal additional clues to the development of the motif of the fire sacrifice.

Finally, the inscriptions of two *paubhās* under study confirmed the relation with consecration rituals. However, they also specifically mention the completion of an observance (*vrata*). In follow-up research, the specific features of *homa* within a *vrata* and the effects on the iconography of a painting consecrated for this celebration, need to be taken into account. Finally, we have wondered whether it was always the intention of the painter to portray a specific type of *homa*. This issue deserves due attention in order to fully appreciate the nature and original function of these *homa* images.

6. Glossary

The translation of Sanskrit terms is based on the Monier-Williams dictionary 2012 [1899]. The meaning of Newari terms is derived from the secondary sources used in this thesis. When the term is in Newari, the abbreviation 'New.' precedes the explanation or translation of the term.

abhaya mudrā. The hand gesture of fearlessness, reassurance and safety.

abhicāra. Destroying, as one of the four purposes of a ritual according to the scheme outlined in the *Hiraṇyamālādaśakriyāvidhi*, and prescribed by Abhayākaragupta (ca. 11th century CE) in the *Jyotirmañjarī*.

ācālyegu. New. See **ācārya-abhiṣeka**.

ācārya-abhiṣeka. Additional initiation after the **pravajya** for Vajrācārya boys. In this way the Vajrācārya becomes entitled to perform the fire sacrifice.

āgaṃ. New. A 'secret' shrine at the first floor of a Newar **bahā** where **tantric** rituals are performed. Only initiated members of the community of a **bahā** and their wives may enter this room.

Agnihotra. An oblation to the fire god Agni, mainly consisting of milk, oil, or **caru**.

agniśala. A building for keeping a sacrificial fire.

ahorātra homa. "Day and night **homa**". This fire sacrifice is performed for a whole day and night. It usually accompanies the re-consecration rituals of major monuments such as the Svayambhūnātha **stūpa**.

anātman. Literally this term means "non-self". It is one of the basic doctrines of Buddhism.

añjali mudrā. The hand gesture of adoration or worship.

annaprāsana. The ritual of the first feeding of rice to the infant, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

āhuti. Literally, this term means "calling" or "invoking". Here, it denotes the offering of oblations into the fire for deities.

bahā. New. A type of Newar Buddhist monastery, hosting married **Vajrācārya** priests and **tantric** cults. It is different from a **bahī**, which indicates the – now lost – type of Newar monastery hosting a celibate monastic community. There are also architectural differences in the construction of these monasteries.

Bare. New. Endogamous birth-group within Newar Buddhism. It consists of two subdivisions, the **Śākyabhikṣu** and **Vajrācārya**.

bare chuyegu. New. See **pravajya**.

Bhikṣu. A Buddhist monk. In Newar Buddhism, it denotes a member of a **bahā** or **bahī**.

Bhīmarathārohaṇa. Old-age ritual celebrated at the age of 77 years, 7 months and 7 days.

bīja. Seed-syllable. It is a mystical syllable that is part of the **mantra** of a specific deity, e.g. "rūṃ" for the fire god Agni.

bodhisattva. A being that postpones its own attainment of the enlightenment in order to strive for the liberation of all sentient beings. This bodhisattva-vow is a central idea in **Mahāyāna** forms of Buddhism.

caitya. A miniature temple or **stūpa**, which can be used as a votive gift. It is also used as an equivalent term for **stūpa**.

cakra. A “wheel” or “disk”. A symbol of power. It may also denote the wheel of law (*dharmacakra*) in Buddhist and Jain traditions. It serves as an equivalent term for **maṇḍala**.

cakravartin. Literally, this term means “wheel-turner” or “a ruler the wheels of whose chariot roll everywhere without obstruction”. It designates an ideal, universal monarch, or sovereign of the world. He is the owner of the seven jewels (*saptaratna*).

caru. An oblation, prepared from rice, barley and pulses, cooked in butter and milk.

chattra. A parasol.

Citrakār. A surname denoting affiliation with the hereditary group (*jāti*) of painters in Newar society.

cūḍākaraṇa. The ritual of tonsure, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

darpaṇa. A mirror.

daśa saṃskāra. The ten life-cycle rituals. In the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, these life-cycle rituals are referred to as *daśa kriyāḥ*.

dīkṣā. Initiation ritual.

dīpa. A lamp.

dhova. New. See *sruva*.

dhruva. A type of ladle (*sruc*) from the Vedic tradition. It consists of a long handle with a vessel attached at one end. The depression (*puṣkara*) of this vessel is oval-shaped.

Gelukpa. One of the major monastic orders of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Its foundation is attributed to Tsongkhapa (1357 - 1419 CE). The Dalai Lama is traditionally affiliated with this order.

ghee. Clarified butter.

guru. Literally the term means “heavy”, hence it may designate someone who is venerable or respectable, such as a spiritual master or teacher.

guru-maṇḍala worship. One of the basic rituals of Newar Buddhism. It is performed at the beginning of every complex, Newar ritual. It is usually performed by the *yajamāna* under the guidance of a **Vajrācārya** priest. The *guru* in question is the buddha Vajrasattva, who is considered to be the *guru* of **Vajrācārya** priests.

homa. A fire sacrifice.

yajmān. New. See *yajamāna*.

jātakarman. The birth ritual, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

jāti. An endogamous birth-group.

juhu. A type of ladle (*sruc*) from the Vedic tradition. It consists of a long handle with a vessel attached at one end. The depression (*puṣkara*) of this vessel is rectangular-shaped.

gyā jamko. New. An old-age ritual, such as the **Bhīmarathārohaṇa**.

kalaśa. A water vessel in which deities are invoked and subsequently worshipped.

kalaśa pūjā. The flask worship. One of the basic rituals of Newar Buddhism, as preceding a fire sacrifice.

kamaṇḍalu. In an ancient and early medieval, Indian context, a **kamaṇḍalu** denotes a spouted water vessel, used for pouring holy water.

kaṇṭhasodhana. The throat-clearing ceremony, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

Karmācārya. A Newar Hindu priest involved in tantric rituals.

kīrttimukha. “Face of glory”. A typical decorative motive in Nepalese paintings, usually appearing at the top of an arched structure.

koṭyāhuti. A type of *homa*, consisting of ten million oblations.

kuṇḍa. A fire pit, also denoted by the terms *yajña-kuṇḍa* or *agni-kuṇḍa*.

kuśa grass. A kind of grass with long, pointed stalks, used for religious ceremonies.

laukika homa. “Worldly *homa*”. Exoteric forms of the fire sacrifice as performed during the daytime. These can be attended by everyone, either as a patron or as an observer, and these especially generate worldly benefits for them.

lokottara homa. Part of the **ahorātra homa**, performed during the night.

māṃsa. Meat.

maṇḍala. A ritual attribute (**yantra**) that serves as an object of concentration, a visual equal to a **mantra**, or a representation of a deity. It contains a geometric composition of mystic figures and diagrams of symbolic attributes, seed-syllables (**bīja**), and gods and goddesses. It is believed to be endowed with supernatural powers. It can be created by means of various techniques and materials, such as sand, rice flour and stone.

mantra. A sacred formula or prayer, directed towards a particular deity. The recitation of **mantras** forms a pivotal part of most **tantric** rituals.

Mahāyāna. “Great Vehicle”. A branch of Buddhism, that developed in the northern part of the Indian Subcontinent around the 1st century BCE. Central ideas in **Mahāyāna** Buddhism are the ideal of the **bodhisattva**, related to the bodhisattva vow, and the recognition of emptiness (**śūnyatā**) as the highest goal of the practice.

mi chuya. New. See **homa**.

mukhaḥ. New. See **mukuṭa**.

mukuṭa. A crown.

nāmakarman. The name-giving ceremony, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

nara āhuti. “Man oblation”. A type of esoteric **homa** performed by Newar Buddhists.

nyāsa. The act of “inserting”, or “that what has been inserted”, so the “deposit”. It denotes the divine essence that is infused into a receptacle during **tantric** rituals of consecration.

padmāsana. The seated lotus-position.

pāṇigrahaṇa. The wedding ritual, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

paṭa. A painted piece of cloth, or a scroll-painting.

paubhā. New. Scroll-painting.

phalaprāśana. The first feeding of fruits to the infant, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

pratiṣṭhā. In this thesis, the term refers to rituals of consecration, ensuring the placement of “a definite power in an object”, or the endowment of “an object with divine faculties.”

pravajya. The Buddhist ordination ritual. It is the first initiation ritual of a man who enters a Buddhist monastery.

Pū. New. See **Citrakār.**

pūjā. Worship.

pūjāri. A temple priest.

pumṣavana. The ritual for ensuring the generating of a male embryo, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

pūrṇakalāśa. A vase of plenty.

purohita. A family priest.

puṣkara. A depression in a vessel attached at the handle of a ladle (**sruc**).

puṣṭi. Increasing, as one of the four purposes of a ritual according to the scheme outlined in the *Hiraṇyamālādaśakriyāvidhi*, and by Abhayākaragupta (ca. 11th century CE) in the *Jyotirmañjarī*.

rathayātrā. A procession in which the deity or celebrant is carried in a wheeled chariot through the city.

sādhana. “Means of accomplishment”. An evocation and visualisation of a deity out of his or her seed-syllable (**bīja**). It is a central technique in **tantric** rituals and a means for the worshipper to identify him- or herself with emptiness (**śūnyatā**), the ultimate goal of the practice.

Śaiva. A follower or worshipper of a manifestation of the god Śiva. **Śaiva** devotees recognise Śiva, rather than Brahma or Viṣṇu as the supreme being and source of the universe. There are several branches within the **Śaiva** tradition, e.g. the Pāśupatas, who are especially influential in Nepal.

Śākta. A worshipper of the divine energy (**śakti**) which can be personalised as a female goddess, such as Durgā.

Śākyabhikṣu. One of the two endogamous groups within the **Bare**.

Samaya. A *samayasattva* is a “conventional being”. It is the first form of a deity to be visualised out of its seed-syllable (**bīja**) by a practitioner during meditation. It has to be united consciously with a *jñāsattva* or “knowledge being” to realise the full identity of a deity. In **tantric** rituals of consecration, these visualisations also accompany the rites to make the deity enter into the receptacle.

saṃgha. The Buddhist community.

śaṅkha. A conch-shell.

śānti. Pacifying, as one of the four purposes of a ritual according to the scheme outlined in the *Hiraṇyamālādaśakriyāvidhi*, and by Abhayākaragupta (ca. 11th century CE) in the *Jyotirmañjarī*.

saptaratna. The seven jewels or treasures of the universal monarch (*cakravartin*). Various lists on the seven treasures exist. According to a reading of the Buddhist *Divyāvadāna* by Jan Gonda (1966), these are a wheel, an elephant, a horse, a jewel, a wife, an adviser, and a minister.

sīmantonayana. The ritual of parting the hair of the mother, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

śira āhuti. “Head oblation”. A type of esoteric *homa* performed by Newar Buddhists.

śloka. A hymn of praise.

sruc. A type of ladle, consisting of a long handle with a vessel attached at one end. The depression of this vessel (*puṣkara*) can be rectangular (*juhu*) or oval-shaped (*dhruva*). The vessel ends in a point, from which a liquid can be poured into the flames during a fire sacrifice.

sruva. A type of ladle with a long handle ending in a spoon. It is used to scoop a liquid into the *sruc*.

stūpa. A dome-shaped, Buddhist monument, originally erected over the relics of the Buddha or Buddhist saints. In miniature form, it may serve as a votive gift. See *caitya*.

sulāpā. New. See *sruc*.

śūnyatā. “Emptiness”. one of the basic doctrines and highest goal of **Mahāyāna** Buddhist practice. It can be considered as an extension of the doctrine of *ānātman*.

tālapatra. A palm-leaf manuscript.

tantric. Related to texts from the scriptural corpus of *Tantra*. Specific features of **tantric** rituals, related to *sādhana* practices, are the recitation of *mantras*, the visualisation of specific deities, and the drawing of *maṇḍalas*. Prescriptions of these practices are offered in ritual texts, such as the *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*.

tilaka. A mark on the forehead, made of coloured earth or sandalwood, which may indicate a religious affiliation.

thangka. A Tibetan term for scroll-painting.

thāpā. New. Ritual attributes.

thyāsaphū. A type of manuscript or book, of which the paper sections are folded. It opens like an accordion.

triratna. The three jewels of Buddhism, consisting of the Buddha, the *dharma* (the teachings), and the *saṃgha*.

vajra. Literally, this term means “thunderbolt” or “diamond”. Here it designates a particular ritual object.

Vajrācārya. A “Vajra-master”. A Newar priest authorised to perform a fire sacrifice. It is an endogamous group within the **Bare**. Boys born into this group undergo an additional initiation ritual, the *ācārya-abhiṣeka*.

vajra-ghanṭā. A bell with *vajra* at the handle. It is a pivotal, ritual attribute of a **Vajrācārya** in the performance of rituals, such as *homa*.

Vajrayāna. “Diamond Way”. A branch within **Mahāyāna** Buddhism, developing in the northern part of the Indian Subcontinent in the early medieval period. Practitioners of this form of Buddhism especially engage in rituals to attain fast liberation.

vaśya. Subduing, as one of the four purposes of a ritual according to the scheme outlined in the *Hiraṇyamālādaśakriyāvidhi*, and by Abhayākaragupta (ca. 11th century CE) in the *Jyotirmañjarī*.

vihāra. A Buddhist monastery.

vrata A religious vow or practice, usually accompanied by fasting. A **vrata** may be directed towards a particular deity, such as the Vasundharāvratā – to the goddess Vasundharā – or the Anantavrata – to the god Viṣṇu.

vratādeśa. The ritual of taking the vows of a disciple, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

vratamokṣana. The ritual of the release of the vows of a disciple, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

yajamāna. The master of sacrifice, who arranges for a ritual. It is often a hereditary function within a family.

yajña. A sacrifice. See **homa**.

yantra. A “mystical diagram”. It can denote a ritual attribute, such as a **maṇḍala**.

yonisodhana. The ritual of the purification of the womb of the mother, as one of the ten life-cycle rituals.

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8. Images

Front page: *Homa* in a *paubhā* displaying the story of Sumanā, 1859-60 CE, Kwa-Bahā Patan (Nepal), MAS Antwerp (AE.1953.0005.0017), water colours on cotton cloth, 85 x 317 cm, photo by the author; design by Michiel Desmedt.

Fig. 1: *Paubhā* consecrated during a Bhīmarathārohaṇa celebration, painted by Sarvajña Ratna Vajracharya, 21st century, Kathmandu, photo by Alexander von Rospatt (2014, Plate 4).

Fig. 2: *Homa* in a *paubhā* displaying Viṣṇu-Kamalā, 1566 CE, Nepal, Indian Museum Kolkatta (At/68/25), water colours on cotton cloth, 92 x 66 cm (Chakravarti 1969, Plate 3).

Fig. 3: Five-buddha, ritual crown, 12th century CE, Nepal, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of The Ahmanson Foundation (M.81.67), copper with gilt and precious stones, 27,94 x 26,5113 x 21,2725 cm. <https://collections.lacma.org/node/246464>. Accessed June 26, 2017.

Fig. 4: A Vajrācārya priest performing *homa* in Bu-Bahā, Patan, photo by Mary Slusser (1982, Plate 493).

Fig. 5: Lower register of an Avalokiteśvara *paubhā*, ca. 1300 CE, Nepal, Lionel Fournier collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 0,65 x 0,53 cm (Béguin 1990, Plate D).

Fig. 6: Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara *paubhā*, 1430 CE, Nepal, Indian Museum Kolkatta (At/69/32), water colours on cotton cloth, 67 x 51 cm (Chakravarti 1969, Plate 4).

Fig. 7: *Homa* in a Cakrasaṃvara-*maṇḍala paubhā*, 1490 CE, Manasu monastery (Nepal), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.73.2.1), water colours on cotton cloth, 116,8 x 88 cm (Huntington and Bangdel 2003, Plate 70).

Fig. 8: *Homa* in a *paubhā* displaying the story of Sumanā, 1859-60 CE, Kwa-Bahā Patan, MAS Antwerp (AE.1953.0005.0017), water colours on cotton cloth, 85 x 317 cm, photo by the author.

Fig. 9: *Homa* in a Sūrya-*maṇḍala paubhā*, 1379 CE, Nepal, Zimmerman collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 92 x 53,3 cm (Leidy and Thurman 1997, Plate 14).

Fig. 10: *Homa* in a Viṣṇu-*maṇḍala paubhā*, 1420 CE, Lohalanimha (Nepal), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.77.19.5), water colours on cotton cloth, 74,2 x 61,4 cm. <https://collections.lacma.org/node/238795>. Accessed June 26, 2017.

Fig. 11: Donors in a Cakrasaṃvara-*maṇḍala paubhā*, 1490 CE, Manasu monastery (Nepal), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.73.2.1), water colours on cotton cloth, 116,8 x 88 cm (Huntington and Bangdel 2003, Plate 70).

Fig. 12: *Homa* in a *paubhā* showing restoration of the Svayaṃbhūnātha *stūpa*, 1565 CE, Yampi monastery Patan, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (2000.15), The Robert A. and Ruth W. Fisher Fund, water colours on cotton cloth, 114,3 x 91,4 cm (Slusser 1985, 14).

- Fig. 13:** *Homa* in a *Vasundharā-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1777 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 88 x 73 cm, photo by Mischa Jucker (Kreijger 1999, Plate 23).
- Fig. 14:** *Homa* in a *Sūrya-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1379 CE, Nepal, Zimmerman collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 92 x 53,3 cm (Leidy and Thurman 1997, Plate 14).
- Fig. 15:** Lower register of a *Viṣṇu-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1420 CE, Lohalanimha (Nepal), Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.77.19.5), water colours on cotton cloth, 74,2 x 61,4 cm. <https://collections.lacma.org/node/238795>. Accessed June 26, 2017.
- Fig. 16:** Lower register of a *paubhā* showing a Padmapāṇi shrine, 1850 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 160 x 143 cm, photo by Mischa Jucker (Kreijger 1999, Plate 30).
- Fig. 17:** Nepalese lamp stand, 19th century CE, UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History Los Angeles (X2001.11.85), brass and bronze (Anderson 2006, 84; Cat. No. 12).
- Fig. 18:** Nepalese lamp stand, 19th century CE, UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History Los Angeles (X2001.11.80), brass and bronze (Anderson 2006, Plate 13).
- Fig. 19:** Vajrācārya priest and main donor in a *Vasundharā-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1777 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 88 x 73 cm, photo by Mischa Jucker (Kreijger 1999, Plate 23).
- Fig. 20:** Carrying the *kalaśa* in a *paubhā* showing restoration of the Svayaṃbhūnātha *stūpa*, 1565 CE, Yampi monastery Patan, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (2000.15), The Robert A. and Ruth W. Fisher Fund, water colours on cotton cloth, 114,3 x 91,4 cm (Slusser 1985, 14).
- Fig. 21:** Pouring water from the *kalaśa* on the hands of Siddhārtha Gautama in a *paubhā* showing a Padmapāṇi shrine, 1850 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 160 x 143 cm, photo by Mischa Jucker (Kreijger 1999, Plate 30).
- Fig. 22:** *Homa* in a *Vajradhara paubhā*, 1513 CE, Yothalācha Jhyālahāliche (Kathmandu), National Gallery Bhaktapur, water colours on cotton cloth, 66 x 92 cm, photo by Dina Bangdel (Gudrun Bühnemann pers. comm., February 16, 2017).
- Fig. 23:** *Maṇḍala* in a *Vasundharā-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1777 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 88 x 73 cm, photo by Mischa Jucker (Kreijger 1999, Plate 23).
- Fig. 24:** *Homa* in a *Lakṣacaitya paubhā*, 1809 CE, Nepal, Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, The Avery Brundage Collection (B61 D10+), water colours on cotton cloth, 96,5 x 61 cm (Huntington and Bangdel 2003, Plate 20).
- Fig. 25:** *Homa* in a *Candra-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1525 CE, Nepal, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam (AK-MAK-325), water colours on cotton cloth, 74 x 59 cm; <http://hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.2241>. Accessed June 26, 2017.
- Fig. 26:** Folio containing an image of a *maṇḍala* and accompanying instructions, 16th century CE, Nepal, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.82.169.9), water colours on paper, 8,9 x 23,8 cm (Pal 1985, Plate 10b).

- Fig. 27:** *Maṇḍala* stone, Pulchok-*bahī* Patan, photo by Mary Slusser (1982, Plate 179).
- Fig. 28:** *Maṇḍala* stone, Itum-*bahā* Kathmandu, photo by Mary Slusser (1982, Plate 178).
- Fig. 29:** *Homa* in a Candra-*maṇḍala paubhā*, ca. 1400 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 62 x 53 cm, photo by Mischa Jucker (Kreijger 1999, Plate 4).
- Fig. 30:** *Homa* in an Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara *paubhā*, mid-15th century CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 91 x 73 cm, photo by Mischa Jucker (Kreijger 1999, Plate 6).
- Fig. 31:** Courtyard with fire pit in Uku-*bahā*, Patan, photo by Mary Slusser (1982, Plate 161).
- Fig. 32:** Gaganasim Bharo and his two wives in the central scene of a *paubhā*, ca. 1470 CE, Kathmandu, Private collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 191,8 x 161,9 cm (Vajracharya 2004, Plate 1).
- Fig. 33:** The performance of a *homa* and *kalaśa pūjā*, Patan (?), photo by John K. Locke (1980, Plate 20).
- Fig. 34:** Manuscript cover showing scenes from the life of the Buddha, *Aṣṭasahāsrikā Prajñāpāramitā* manuscript, 12th or 13th century CE, Eastern India or Nepal, OMPB (Or. 14203), 339 folios, gouache on wood, 6,25 x 33 cm (Zwalf 1985, 117; Plate 159).
- Fig. 35:** Śivadharmā manuscript cover, 12th century CE, Nepal, National Library Kathmandu, water colours on wood, 9,8 x 53,8 cm (Vajracharya 2003, Plate 5).
- Fig. 36:** Manuscript cover with *homa* scene (leftmost panel) for a manuscript containing five protective hymns, 1532 CE, Nepal, OMPB (Or. 2205), 132 folios, gouache on wood, 5 x 32,5 cm (Zwalf 1985, Plate 179).
- Fig. 37:** Manuscript cover with *homa* scene for a manuscript containing five protective hymns, 1659 CE, Tarumūla Monastery Kathmandu, OMPB (Or. 13852), 127 folios, gouache on wood, 8 x 36 cm (Zwalf 1985, Plate 180).
- Fig. 38:** Pedestal showing the seven treasures of the universal monarch, 10th to 12th century CE, Lakhi Sarai (Bihar, India), Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin (I 580), stone, 13 x 46 x 17 cm (Bautze-Picron 1995, Plate 2).
- Fig. 39:** Slab showing the seven treasures of the universal monarch, 10th to 12th century CE, Bodh Gaya (Bihar, India), Victoria and Albert Museum London (IS699-1883), sandstone, 15,24 x 63,5 cm (Bautze-Picron 1995, Plate 6).
- Fig. 40:** Stele showing Lokeśvara Khasarpaṇa and his four attendants Tārā, Sudhanakumāra, Bhṛkuṭī and Hayagrīva, 8th to 9th century CE (?), Eastern India, Bangladesh National Museum (Monod-Bruhl 1959, Plate 11).
- Fig. 41:** Detail fig. 39: Monk (Rahulabhadra?) and devotee with *maṇḍala*.
- Fig. 42:** Detail fig. 39: Four donors and an elephant as one of the seven treasures of the *cakravartin*.
- Fig. 43:** Dancer flanked by two musicians in a *paubhā* showing Vajradhara with his consort Vajradhātviśvarī, 1488 CE, Nepal, Musée Guimet Paris (M.G. 22800), water colours on cotton cloth, 100 x 75 cm (Monod-Bruhl 1959, Plate 7).

- Fig. 44:** A conch shell in a pedestal of a Tārā image, Itkhauri (India), photo by J. Bautze (Bautze-Picron 1995, Plate 8).
- Fig. 45:** A *caitya*, a mirror, a cone cake, an incense burner and a lamp stand in the lower left part of the pedestal of a Buddha image, Betagi (Chittagong, Bangladesh), photo by J. Bautze (Bautze-Picron 1995, Plate 19).
- Fig. 46:** *Maṇḍala* in a sketchbook in *thyāsaphū* form consisting of 29 pages, 19th century CE, Nepal, private collection, black ink on paper (Blom 1989, Plate 50).
- Fig. 47:** Portrait of King Bhūpatīndramalla and his son in a *paubhā* showing a Viṣṇu shrine, 1716 CE, Bhaktapur (Nepal), former Jucker collection, water colours on cotton cloth, 165 x 115 cm, photo by Mischa Jucker (Kreijger 1999, Plate 18).
- Fig. 48:** Portrait of King Bhūpatīndramalla in a mural of the Bhadgaon Palace, 1696-1721 CE, Bhaktapur (Pal 1978, Plate 193).
- Fig. 49:** *Paubhā* showing *stūpa* with Uṣṇīṣavijayā and Bhīmarathārohaṇa ritual, 1830 CE, Nepal, former Jucker collection, water colours and gold on cotton cloth, 89 x 58,5 cm, photo by Mischa Jucker (Kreijger 1999, Plate 28).
- Fig. 50:** Bhisnudeśvara in a *Sūrya-maṇḍala paubhā*, 1379 CE, Nepal, Zimmerman collection, 92 x 53,3 cm, water colours on cotton cloth (Leidy and Thurman 1997, Plate 14).
- Fig. 51:** *Homa* in a *paubhā* showing the three Mother Goddesses Cāmuṇḍā, Mahālakṣmī, and Kaumarī, 1679 CE, Bhaktapur, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.81.271.1), water colours on cotton cloth, 59,6 x 50 cm (Pal 1985, Plate 25).

Appendix 1: Sanskrit texts

1. The *Kriyāsaṃgrahapañjikā*, by Kuladatta

I consulted two palm-leaf manuscripts (M₁ and M₂) and one Devanāgarī facsimile (M₃) for the chosen sections. The first manuscript is preserved in the Cambridge University Library (Manuscript no. Add. 1646; hereafter M₁). It is written in Nepālākṣara (Bhujimol) script with five lines at each side of the palm-leaf. The manuscript is dated between 1216 and 1235 CE, based on a reading of the colophon. Each folio measures 5 x 31 cm. The section on *homa* starts on folio no. 115, line 3 (115r:3).

The second manuscript is likewise preserved in the Cambridge University Library (Manuscript no. Add. 1697.1; hereafter M₂). It is written in Nepālākṣara script and dated to the 13th to 14th centuries CE. Each folio measures 5 x 31 cm. The *homa* section starts a folio no. 109, line 6 (109v:6).

The third source is an apograph, transcribed in 1965 and published by Sharada Rani in *Kriya-sangraha: A Sanskrit Manuscript from Nepal Containing a Collection of Tantric Ritual by Kuladatta* (New Delhi 1977). The facsimile was transcribed from a Nepalese manuscript, dated 1217 CE, currently preserved in the National Archives of Kathmandu (accession no. 4/318; NGMPP, no. reel A 59/1; hereafter M₃). The *homa* section starts at folio no. 89, line 5 (89v:5).

All translations of the following sections are primarily based on preliminary critical readings of the Sanskrit texts. Our guiding manuscript was M₁ as it contains a grammatically correct reading, as far as we were able to determine, and it is the oldest among the sources.

2.1. The square-shaped fire pit

The section on the shape of the fire pit starts at folio no. 155, line 1 (155v:1). In M₂, this section starts at folio no. 110, line 4 (110r:4). In M₃ the section on the shape of the *kuṇḍa* starts at folio no. 90, line 3 (90v:3).

Transcription

tac ca kuṇḍaṃ caturasram aṣṭāṃga¹⁴⁰ratnasadṛśaṃ¹⁴¹ padmākāraṃ vā cakrākāraṃ vā kuryāt |

Translation

Moreover, one should make that fire pit quadrangular, resembling an eight-limbed jewel, lotus-shaped or wheel-shaped.

¹⁴⁰ *aṣṭāṃga°*] M₁, M₃; *aṣṭāṃśa°* M₂

¹⁴¹ *sadṛśaṃ°*] M₁, M₂; *sadṛśa°* M₃

2.2. The iconography of Agni

In M₁, this section starts at folio no. 156, line 1 (156v:1). In M₂, it starts at folio no. 110, line 6 (110v:6). In M₃, it starts at folio no. 91, line 6 (91r:6).

Transcription

*rūṃkārodbhavam*¹⁴² *pītavarṇam* *ekamukhaṃ* *caturbhujam* *vāme*
*daṇḍakamaṇḍaludharam*¹⁴³ || *savye*¹⁴⁴ *varadākṣamālādharam* | *pītāṃbarābharaṇam*¹⁴⁵
yajñopavitinam | *trinetrām* *jaṭāmakuṭadhāriṇam*¹⁴⁶ *vajrasattvālamkṛtamaulinam*
*samayāgniṃ*¹⁴⁷ *vibhāvya* |

Translation

One should visualise the *Samaya-Agni*, who is born from the seed-syllable “*rūṃ*”, yellow in colour; [he has] one face [and] four arms. On his left, [he] is holding a staff and a water-pot; on the right [he is showing] the boon-granting gesture and holding a rosary. [He is] decorated with a yellow cloth [and he wears] a sacred thread. [Agni has] three eyes [and he is] wearing the crown of matted hair locks, the top of which is adorned by *Vajrasattva*.

2. A manuscript folio with instructions for drawing a *maṇḍala*

The complete manuscript is preserved in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.82.169.9). It consists of forty-eight folios and is dated between the 14th and 16th century CE. For this thesis, I studied the folio containing the image of a *maṇḍala* and accompanying instructions. This folio is probably part of the sections of the manuscript dated to the second half of the 16th century CE. Dr. Nirajan Kafle indeed suspects that the date of this folio cannot be earlier than the 16th century CE, due to the paper material and the shape of the characters. Two leaves of the manuscript were published by Pratapaditya Pal (1985, 206; Plate 10b). The folio bears an image accompanied by fourteen lines of verses in Sanskrit and Newari. The image is painted with watercolours. Each folio of the manuscript has an average measurement of 8,9 x 23,8 cm.

2.1. Transcription and translation

Transcription

oṃ [|] *ālikhet padmasaṃkāśam aṣṭapatraṃ sakarṇikam* |
*karṇikā caturaśrāsya*¹⁴⁸ *vijñeyā surasundari* [|]

¹⁴² °*bhavam*] *em.*; °*bhava* M₁, M₂, M₃

¹⁴³ °*kamaṇḍalu*°] M₁, M₃; °*kamaṇ..lu*° M₂

¹⁴⁴ *savye*] M₁, M₂; *savya* M₃

¹⁴⁵ °*bharaṇam*] *em.*; °*bharaṇa* M₁, M₂, M₃

¹⁴⁶ °*makuṭa*°] M₁, M₃; °*mukuṭa*° M₂

¹⁴⁷ °*yāgniṃ*] M₁, M₂; °*yāgni* M₃

¹⁴⁸ °*aśra*°] *em.*; °*asra*° MS

[...] ¹⁴⁹

*pūrvatārā*¹⁵⁰ *catuṣkaṃ tu praviśantaṃ samālikhet |*
nirgamo vāmamārgeṇa pūrveṇa dakṣiṇe punaḥ | |

*nairṛte nirgamaṃ*¹⁵¹ *tasya praveśo vāruṇe punaḥ |*
*nirgamo vāyukoṇeṣu*¹⁵² *saumyenaiva viśet punaḥ | |*

aiśāne nirgamas tasya cakrasya varavarṇini |
dinarkṣam āditaḥ kṛtvā dikṣu catvāri saṃlikhet | |

Translation

Oṃ; one should draw [a *maṇḍala*] resembling a lotus, [having] eight petals [and] a pericarp. One should know that the pericarp of this [lotus-*maṇḍala* should be] square, oh beautiful goddess.¹⁵³

[...]

One should indeed draw, [starting] from the east, four spokes¹⁵⁴ [of this lotus-*maṇḍala*] as if [they are] entering [the centre]. At first, [one should draw a spoke] going out by the left track [and entering] again in the right.

In the southwestern direction of this [lotus-*maṇḍala*, at first one should draw the petal] going out [and] entering again in the west. In the northwestern direction [at first, one should draw the petal] going out [and] entering again, indeed, through the north.

In the northeastern direction of this wheel¹⁵⁵ [one should draw the petal] going out [and entering again in the east]¹⁵⁶, oh fair-faced one! In the four directions, one should write the day of the star and the like, having first determined [them].

¹⁴⁹ The Newari section explaining the Sanskrit verse has been omitted.

¹⁵⁰ °*tārā*°] MS_{pci}; °*tārā*°] MS_{oc}. There is a double *sandhi* between *pūrvataḥ* and *āra*.

¹⁵¹ We have standardised the *sandhi* from *nirgaman* to *nirgamaṃ*, and the neuter *nirgamaṃ* stands for the masculine *nirgamaḥ*.

¹⁵² This plural is probably meant to be singular.

¹⁵³ The goddess referred to in this verse might be Śiva's consort Pārvatī, according to Dr. Nirajan Kafle. The invocation of this goddess indicates a potential Śaiva affiliation of the manuscript. D. R. Regmi remarks that there is a close association between Śaivite and Buddhist practices in a tantric ritual context in the Kathmandu Valley (1965 [2], 719-720).

¹⁵⁴ It seems that *āra*, meaning spoke, refers to a petal of the lotus-*maṇḍala* in this verse. We see already a conflation of the elements of a wheel and a lotus-*maṇḍala*. Furthermore, *āra* cannot refer to the lines inside the petals, seen in the accompanying painting, as only three of these are recognisable in the image and four spokes are described.

¹⁵⁵ *cakrasya* seems to refer to the lotus-*maṇḍala*.

¹⁵⁶ This section is assumed, otherwise the petal would not be complete, as seen in the drawing. In the Sanskrit we are missing at least a section saying *praveśo aindre/pūrve punaḥ*.

Appendix 2: Selected *paubhās*

No.	1
Central subject	<i>Svayambhūnātha stūpa</i>
Date	1565 CE (N.S. 685)
Place of origin	Patan, Yampi <i>vihāra</i>
Museum/collection of current preservation	Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, The Robert A. and Ruth W. Fisher Fund (2000.15)
Size	114,3 x 91,4 cm
Materials	Cotton cloth, water colours
Condition	Scratched and colours faded, borders eaten away
Inscription	
Position in the <i>paubhā</i>	Centrally positioned at the bottom
Script	Nepalākṣara
Language	Mixed Sanskrit and Newari
Transcription	<p>“śreyostu saṃvat 685 ā...disi ādityavāra thva dina kunhu śrīmat śrīśrīyaṃgu svayambhū ... pratisthā sampūrṇa yāṇaṇa thva dina kunhu ... śrīśrījayanarasimhadeva śrīśrījayapulandalasimhadeva tribhaya thākulasa prajyāyasa maṇigla pūrvottara ... śrīyampivihāra ... bhavantu ”</p> <p>By Gautamvajra Vajracharya and A. Peter Burleigh (Slusser 1985, 34).</p>
Contents/translation	<p>“Good fortune. Samvat 685, the tenth day of Ā[ṣāḍha ?], Sunday. On this day the reconsecration ceremony of śrī Syaṃgu [or] Svayambhū was completed. On this date at Yampi-vihara ... which lies in the northeast corner of Maṇigla [Patan], in the reign of the three nobles śrī śrī Jayanarasimhadeva, śrī śrī Jayapurandarasiṃhadeva, and śrī śrī Jayaudhasiṃhadeva, may [something ?] be” (Slusser 1985, 7).</p>
Lower register (Left → right)	x
Homa	Part of central scene
Figures	- Assistant - Priest
Ritual objects	None identifiable
Fire pit and flame	White, high levelled fire pit – red, one-pointed flame
Publications	- Pal 1978, Plate 108. - Slusser 1985. - Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 111-114; Plate 19.
Image source	Huntington and Bangdel 2003, Plate 19
Short characterisation	The <i>paubhā</i> consists of an upper and a lower section, distinguished from each other by a different background colour. It displays a ‘map’ of the river systems and the sacred shrines and towns alongside them in the Kathmandu Valley (Slusser 1985, 16). The <i>homa</i> scene appears to the left of the <i>stūpa</i> from the viewer’s perspective, and is related to the re-consecration of the monument.



No.	2
Central subject	<i>Cakrasaṃvara-maṇḍala</i>
Date	1490 CE (N.S. 610) ¹⁵⁷
Place of origin	Kathmandu Valley (Manasu monastery, not identifiable anymore; Pal 1985, 215)
Museum/collection of current preservation	Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.73.2.1)
Size	116,8 x 88 cm
Materials	Water colours, cotton cloth
Condition	Good
Inscription	
Position in the paubhā	Under lower register
Script	Nepalākṣara
Language	Mixed Sanskrit and Newari
Transcription	Not available
Contents/translation	The painting was dedicated in N.S. 610 by the Vajrācārya Jayarāja of the Manasu monastery, in memory of his father Uhlasa. ¹⁵⁸ A second date is inscribed in the second line of the inscription, perhaps referring to the year of the death of Uhlasa. This second line also mentions that the death of Uhlasa took place on the 7 th day of the bright half of the month of Mansir (Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 263).
Lower register (Left → right)	
Panel 1	<i>Homa</i>
Panel 2	Mahākāla, flanked at each side by 3 manifestations of Cakrasaṃvara
Panel 3	- Niche with deceased family member Uhlasa - Main donor Vajrācārya Jayarāja - 3 family members
Homa	
Figures	- Assistant - Vajrācārya priest
Ritual objects	- <i>Pūrṇakalaśa</i> - Circular <i>maṇḍala</i> - Plate with ritual implements - <i>Kalaśa</i>
Fire pit and flame	High, levelled fire pit – Yellow and red, one-pointed flame
Publications	- Pal 1985, 215; Plate 19 - Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 260-263; Plate 70
Image source	LACMA– URL: https://collections.lacma.org/node/239857 . Accessed June 27, 2017.
Short characterisation	The central image of this <i>paubhā</i> shows the esoteric deity Cakrasaṃvara, in union with Vajravārāhī, enclosed by a <i>maṇḍala</i> . The upper register contains images of

¹⁵⁷ Pratapaditya Pal reads the date as N.S. 510 (Pal 1985, 215).

¹⁵⁸ Dina Bangdel specifies that the painting was consecrated, according to the inscription, “during the one-year anniversary death-rite ceremony” (2003, 262).

manifestations of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 260). A particular feature of this painting occurs in the lower register (the lower right panel), in which the first figure of the row of donors has been isolated from the rest in a niche, probably referring to the deceased Uhlasa. He holds two lotuses in his hands, as it is likewise seen in depictions of Candra and Sūrya.



No.	3
Central subject	<i>Sūrya-maṇḍala</i>
Date	1379 (N.S. 4...) ¹⁵⁹
Place of origin	Kathmandu Valley (specific location unknown)
Museum/collection of current preservation	Zimmerman collection
Size	92 x 53,3 cm
Materials	Cotton cloth, water colours
Condition	Good
Inscription	
Position in the paubhā	Upper section of the back of the painting
Script	Nepalākṣara
Language	Mixed Sanskrit and Newari
Transcription	"... saṃvat 4xx ... śukle pacamy āti ... śvare ... (citrakāra?) kitaharasa li[khi]taṃ śubha" (Pal 1996, 202).
Contents/translation	"The fifth day of the lunar forth night ..., in the year 4xx ... painted by Kitaharasa ... May it be auspicious." ¹⁶⁰
Lower register (Left → right)	
Panel 1	<i>Homa</i>
Panel 2	Bhishṇudeśvara
Panel 3	Two horizontal rows of seven female family members each
Homa	
Figures	- 3 donors - Assistant - Vajrācārya priest
Ritual objects	- <i>Pūrṇakalāśa</i> - Bell with <i>vajra</i> handle - <i>kalāśa</i> - Parasol - Mirror - lamps - Plate with ritual implements
Fire pit and flame	High, levelled fire pit – yellow, one-pointed flame
Publications	- Pal 1978, 75-76; 78; Plate 82 - Pal 1991, 70-71; Plate 33 - Pal 1996, 78-79; Plate 33 - Leidy and Thurman 1997, 74-75; Plate 14 - Huntington and Bangdel 2003, 76-77; Plate 6 - von Rospatt 2014, 114
Image source	Leidy and Thurman 1997, Plate 14
Short characterisation	The central figure in this painting is the sun-god Sūrya, flanked by four attendants. He is seated on a chariot pulled by seven dark horses. The central scene is

¹⁵⁹ The date is barely visible in the inscription. The first number of the date, however, seems to be '4', indicating a date in the 14th century CE (Pal 1991, 70).

¹⁶⁰ Translated from French: "Le cinquième jour de la lune claire de ..., en l'année 4xx (XIV^e siècle) ... peint par Kitaharasa (Chitrakāra?). Qu'il soit auspiceux." Due to a restoration of the painting, the inscription is difficult to read (Pal 1996, 202).

surrounded by cartouches with many deities, not all of them identifiable. The *paubhā* not only shows an exceptional image of the Sun god in the centre, it also records the name of the painter in the inscription (Pal 1978, 76).



No.	4
Central subject	<i>Viṣṇu-maṇḍala</i>
Date	1420 CE (N.S. 540)
Place of origin	Lohalanimha ¹⁶¹
Museum/collection of current preservation	Los Angeles County Museum of Art (M.77.19.5); Nasli and Alice Heeramanek collection
Size	74,2 x 61,4 cm
Materials	Cotton cloth, water colours
Condition	Colours faded
Inscription	
Position in the paubhā	Under lower register
Script	Nepalākṣara
Language	Mixed Sanskrit and Newari
Transcription	<p>“[1] <i>om śreyo’stuḥ saṃvat 540 bhādra śukla caturdāśyāntithau dhanīṣṭha nakṣatre śukrama yoge bṛhaspati vāsare siṃharāsi gate savitariḥ kumbha rāsi gate candramasiḥ ananta patta pvaṣṭaka pratimā trya vidhi kṛtam ananta vrata udyāpana sampunedam yojyamāna Śrī lohalanimha dvijavara Śrī tejarāma soma[śarmma]na</i></p> <p>[2] <i>[sya] bhājya saha bhātr Śrī jayatarāma Somaśarmanasya bhājya saha udyāpana sampunedam anena udyāpanena [ja]na dhanavṛddhi māra ananta sukha prāpti tadutare viṣṇu loka [nivā]sa kāmā ananta vrata pratiṣṭā sampurnṇamiti idam paṭa lekṣita jayateja punena daśabhiḥ dine likṣitamiti śubha”</i></p> <p>By Ian Alsop e.a. (Pal 1985, 236)</p>
Contents/translation	<p>“In the year 540 (A.D. 1420), on Thursday, the fourteenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādra, during the <i>dhanishṭha nakshatra</i> and <i>sukarman yoga</i>, while the sun was in Leo and moon in Aquarius, (on this day) the Ananta painting, book, and image, the ritual (consecrations of all) three were performed. The Anantavrata was concluded. The donors were the twice-born Śrītejarāma Somaśarman of Śrīlohalanimha together with his wife and younger brother Śrījayatarāma Somaśarman together with his wife.</p> <p>The conclusion (of the ritual) was performed. From (the merit of) this bringing to conclusion, may (the donors’) family and wealth increase; form the desire to obtain endless happiness, and in the next world residence in Viṣṇu’s paradise, the Anantavrata was (performed and) consecrated. This painting was painted by Jayateja Puna in ten days. May it be good for all time!”</p> <p>By Ian Alsop e.a. (Pal 1985, 236)</p>

¹⁶¹ This dwelling place of the donors, mentioned in inscription, is not identifiable anymore with a contemporary place (Pal 1985, 236).

Lower register (Left → right)	
Continuous	- Row of five donors - <i>Homa</i> - Row of three donors
Homa	
Figures	- Tejarāma with his brother and other family members (Pal 1985, 207) - Brahmanical priest
Ritual objects	- Centre: 2 <i>Pūrṇakalāśas</i> on tripod - Conch shell - Circular <i>maṇḍala</i> - Plate with ritual implements - Low pedestal with white and black pieces of cloth
Fire pit and flame	High, levelled fire pit – Yellow, one-pointed flame
Publications	- Pal 1966, 110-111 - Pal 1975, 131-132; Plate 80 - Pal 1978, 19-20; 93; Plate 1 - Pal 1985, 207; Plate 11
Image source	LACMA; URL: https://collections.lacma.org/node/238795 . Accessed June 27, 2017.
Short characterisation	The central image of this painting is Viṣṇu, placed within a <i>maṇḍala</i> . It is the earliest known Vaiṣṇava painting from the Kathmandu Valley. The upper register, which is heavily damaged in the centre, bears images of Brahmanical deities, flanked by Sūrya and Candra (Pal 1985, 207).



No.	5
Central subject	Vasundharā- <i>maṇḍala</i>
Date	1777 CE
Place of origin	Kathmandu Valley (specific location unknown)
Museum/collection of current preservation	Former Jucker collection
Size	88 x 73 cm
Materials	Water colours, cotton cloth
Condition	Good
Inscription	
Position in the <i>paubhā</i>	Between central section and lower register
Script	Probably Nepalākṣara
Language	Probably mixed Sanskrit and Newari
Transcription	Not available
Contents/translation	Not available
Lower register (Left → right)	
Continuous	- <i>Homa</i> + donor and family members - Central: representation of <i>Svyambhunātha stūpa</i>
<i>Homa</i>	
Figures	- 5 donors - Assistant or main donor - Vajrācārya priest - Assistant or main donor - 7 donors
Ritual objects	- Basket - <i>Vajra</i> - Conch shell - Four plates - <i>Pūrṇakalāśa</i> - Square <i>maṇḍala</i>
Fire pit and flame	Red, one-pointed flame – high, levelled fire pit
Publications	- Kreijger 1999, 72; Plate 23
Image source	Photo by Mischa Jucker –Kreijger 1999, Plate 23.
Short characterisation	In the centre, the goddess Vasundharā is seated, flanked by Avalokiteśvara and Vajrapāṇi (Kreijger 1999, 72). They are seated on a lion throne carrying lotuses within a three-lobed <i>mandorla</i> . The upper register contains depictions of the five cosmic buddhas, flanked by two bodhisattvas.



No.	6
Central subject	Vajradhara with 48 <i>siddhas</i>
Date	1513 CE (N.S. 633)
Place of origin	Yothalācha Jhyālahāliche, Kathmandu
Museum/collection of current preservation	National Gallery Bhaktapur
Size	66 x 92 cm
Materials	Water colours, cotton cloth
Condition	Scratches over complete surface
Inscription	
Position in the <i>paubhā</i>	Under lower register
Script	Nepalākṣara
Language	Mixed Sanskrit and Newari
Transcription	“(line 1) (<i>siddham</i> symbol) <i>svastiḥ</i> <i>śrīnepālayindreya, rājā[d]dhirājaparameśvaraparamabhaṭṭāraka śrīśrījayaratnamalladevasya vijayarājye</i> o <i>dānapate śrikāṣṭamandapanagare tatraiva tolake yothalācha jhyālahāliche grh<āddivāsī> (tāmrakāra?) ... sīhāsya bhāryā hrdayalakṣmī tasyātmaśaktirājasimhasya bhāryā luṃgu ḍilakṣmīsyā tasyātma rāsīmhasya rakṣyasīmhaṇa eteṣāṃ dānapatīnāṃ yadattapuṇyaṃ tat bhavatācāryopādhyāyamātāpṛṭpūrvvaṃgamam sakalāsatvarāse nanuttara</i> (line 2) <i>jñānaphalāpta<ya> itiḥ</i> o < <i>siddham</i> > <i>śreyo ‘stu</i> <i>saṃvat 633 bhārdavakṣṇatṛtīyāyāṃ tīthau etatdivasa bhagavān śrīśrīśrīvajradharapaṭṭa śuvarṇṇālamkṛta bhagavati śrīvasundhārāb<r>atta saṃpūrṇa śubha</i> o <i>thvati śaktirājana babumāmayāta dayakā juro ... (santāna?) santadidhanavṛddhir astu ... śubhaḥ</i> o ” (Bühnemann 2008, 16-17)
Contents/translation	“..., (the consecration of) the gold-adorned <i>paṭa</i> of Vajradhara (and the performance of) the <i>vrata</i> of Vasundharā was completed on the third lunar day of the dark half of the month of bhārdava (i.e. <i>bhādrapada</i>) in N.S. 633 (= 1513 CE) during the rule of Jayaratnamalla. The day specified is the day dedicated to the observance of the Vasundharāvratā. The name of the patron (<i>dānapati</i>) is specified as Śaktirājasīmha, resident of the quarter (<i>tolaka</i>) Yothalācha Jhyālahāliche in Kathmandu. As stated in the inscription, he dedicates the painting to his parents whom he includes in the list of patrons, along with other members of his family” (Bühnemann 2008, 17).
Lower register (Left → right)	
Panel 1	Guardian deity (Virūḍhaka)
Panel 2	<i>Homa</i>
Panel 3	Part of the treasures of universal monarch: - White elephant with <i>cakra</i> on back

	- General - Minister
Panel 4	Mahākāla
Panel 5	Part of the treasures of universal monarch: - Queen with female attendants - Red horse with <i>maṇiratna</i> on back
Panel 6	Row donor and family members
Panel 7	Guardian deity (Virūpākṣa)
Homa	
Figures	- Donor - Assistant - Vajrācārya priest
Ritual objects	- Lamps - Square <i>maṇḍala</i> - <i>Pūrṇakalāśa</i> - <i>Kalāśa</i>
Fire pit and flame	High, levelled fire pit - Red, one-pointed flame
Publications	- Macdonald and Vergati-Stahl 1979, 129; Plate VI (detail) - Bühnemann 2008, 16-23
Image source	Bühnemann 2008, 23
Short characterisation	The central theme of this <i>paubhā</i> is Vajradhara, seated on a lion throne. He is flanked by a white and red attendant, probably depictions of Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya. The central scenes are surrounded by portraits of eighty-four <i>siddhas</i> . The upper register contains depictions of the five cosmic buddhas in the centre, flanked by a bodhisattva and two guardians (Bühnemann 2008, 17-20).



No.	7
Central subject	<i>Candra-maṇḍala</i>
Date	Ca. 1400 CE
Place of origin	Kathmandu Valley (specific location unknown)
Museum/collection of current preservation	Former Jucker collection
Size	62 x 53 cm
Materials	Cotton cloth, water colours
Condition	Scratched in upper and lower registers
Inscription	Not visible or described in literature
Position in the <i>paubhā</i>	x
Script	x
Language	x
Transcription	x
Contents/translation	x
Lower register (Left → right)	
Panel 1	<i>Homa</i>
Panel 2	5 Pañcarakṣās with treasures of universal monarch between them (Kreijger 1999, 34)
Panel 3	Row of 4 donors and family members
<i>Homa</i>	
Figures	- Assistant - Vajrācārya priest
Ritual objects	- <i>Pūrṇakalāśa</i> - Parasol or banner - Circular <i>maṇḍala</i> - Circular <i>maṇḍala</i> in front of the first figure in panel 3
Fire pit and flame	Low, levelled fire pit – red, one-pointed flame
Publications	- Kreijger 1999, 34-35; Plate 4
Image source	Photo by Mischa Jucker - Kreijger 1999, Plate 4
Short characterisation	The central image of the <i>paubhā</i> is the moon god Candra, flanked by Kānti and Śobhā. They are seated on a chariot pulled by seven geese. The upper register contains depictions of the seven buddhas of the past, flanked by Mañjuśrī and Padmapāṇi (Kreijger 1999, 34).



No.	8
Central subject	Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara
Date	Mid-15 th century CE
Place of origin	Kathmandu Valley (specific location unknown)
Museum/collection of current preservation	Former Jucker collection
Size	91 x 73 cm
Materials	Cotton cloth, water colours
Condition	Good
Inscription	No inscription visible or described in literature
Position in the <i>paubhā</i>	X
Script	X
Language	X
Transcription	X
Contents/translation	X
Lower register (Left → right)	
Panel 1	<i>Homa</i>
Panel 2	Part of the treasures of universal monarch: - White elephant with <i>cakra</i> on back - General or attendant - King
Panel 3	Dancing scene - Central: dancer - Flanked by three figures at each side, dancing and playing flutes
Panel 4	Part of the treasures of universal monarch: - Queen - Red horse with <i>maṇiratna</i> on back - Minister or attendant
Panel 5	Row with 9 female donors and family members
<i>Homa</i>	
Figures	- Two female donors - Vajrācārya priest
Ritual objects	<i>kalaśa</i>
Fire pit and flame	Two fires with spiky flames - Low fire pit - High, levelled fire pit with triangular structure placed above the flame
Publications	- Kreijger 1999, 38-39; Plate 6
Image source	Photo by Mischa Jucker – Kreijger 1999, Plate 6
Short characterisation	The central image of this <i>paubhā</i> is Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara with four attendants: Sudhanakumāra, Tārā, Bhṛkuṭī, and Hayagrīva. This central scene is surrounded by medallions containing unidentifiable images. Between the central scene and the upper register, there are seven niches, containing images of the five Pañcarakṣās, Prajñāpāramitā, and Vasundharā. The upper register contains images of nine unidentifiable buddhas, probably with Amitabhā in the centre (Kreijger 1999, 38).



