

THE JOURNAL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
BUDDHIST STUDIES

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Roger Jackson
Dept. of Religion
Carleton College
Northfield, MN 55057

EDITORS

Peter N. Gregory
University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA

Alexander W. Macdonald
Université de Paris X
Nanterre, France

Steven Collins
Concordia University
Montréal, Canada

Ernst Steinkellner
University of Vienna
Wien, Austria

Jikidō Takasaki
University of Tokyo
Tokyo, Japan

Robert Thurman
Amherst College
Amherst, Massachusetts, USA

Volume 12

1989

Number 1

CONTENTS

I. ARTICLES

1. Hodgson's Blind Alley? On the So-called Schools of Nepalese Buddhism *by David N. Gellner* 7
2. Truth, Contradiction and Harmony in Medieval Japan: Emperor Hanazono (1297–1348) and Buddhism *by Andrew Goble* 21
3. The Categories of *T'i*, *Hsiang*, and *Yung*: Evidence that Paramārtha Composed the *Awakening of Faith* *by William H. Grosnick* 65
4. Asaṅga's Understanding of Mādhyamika: Notes on the *Shung-chung-lun* *by John P. Keenan* 93
5. Mahāyāna *Vratas* in Newar Buddhism *by Todd L. Lewis* 109
6. The Kathāvatthu Niyāma Debates *by James P. McDermott* 139

II. SHORT PAPERS

1. A Verse from the *Bhadracarīprañidhāna* in a 10th Century Inscription found at Nālandā *by Gregory Schopen* 149
2. A Note on the Opening Formula of Buddhist *Sūtras* *by Jonathan A. Silk* 158

III. BOOK REVIEWS

1. *Die Frau im frühen Buddhismus*, by Renata Pitzer-Reyl (Vijitha Rajapakse) 165

2. *Ālayavijñāna: On the Origin and the Early Development of a Central Concept of Yogācāra Philosophy* by Lambert Schmithausen
(Paul J. Griffiths) 170

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS 178

Mahāyāna *Vratas* in Newar Buddhism

by Todd T. Lewis

This study is concerned with the Mahāyāna *vrata*, a particular type of devotional ritual that is still performed in the Newar Buddhist community of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal¹. Part I briefly traces the *vrata*'s Indic origins and history, introduces the Nepalese context, then outlines the most popular contemporary Newar observances. In Part II are case studies of *vratas* dedicated to Mahākāla and Tārā; a preliminary understanding of Mahāyāna *vratas* is developed both ethnographically and through translations from modern printed texts.

This article explores the role of ritual in this Buddhist community of Nepal. Although the Newar tradition represents a unique yet continuing survival of later Indian Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna Buddhism, it has received scant attention to date by scholars. This article is intended to begin the documentation and description necessary for an emerging and important field within Buddhist studies.

I. Background and Context

The term *vrata* dates back to Vedic times, where it has the meanings "will" and "law" (Monier-Williams 1899:1042; Kane 1974:5). In ancient India, the *vrata* was apparently an obligatory ritual prescribed for high caste individuals to atone for different misdeeds. By the time the *Purāṇas* were composed, it also referred to a religious vow or a voluntary ritual practice designed to please a particular deity. In these texts, and in the popular tracts produced by medieval Indian commentators (*nibandhakaras*), *vratas* dedicated to a divinity were highly elaborated,

occupying substantial portions of popular religious literature (Wadley 1983:148). Brāhman-led *vratas* are still an important part of modern Hinduism (Babb 1978) and are performed throughout the Indian sub-continent, including modern Nepal.

Vratas are one example of the many Indian religious practices that have been adapted into later Mahāyāna Buddhism. That *vratas* date back many centuries in the Newar tradition is attested to by the antiquity of manuscripts describing the proper forms of observance (Malla 1981). This genre of printed ritual text remains one of the most common in modern Kathmandu.

The stories recounted in these texts (*vratakathā*) provide important source materials for understanding Newar Buddhism and the layman's religious ethos characteristic of later Indian Buddhism. Because they are one of the simplest and most common genres of doctrinal explication, the *vratakathā* provide a focus of study that simplifies the often bewildering multiplicity of the Newar Buddhist tradition. Simply stated, *vratakathā* join the *avadāna* and *jātaka* texts as source materials that show what form Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna Buddhism takes on the popular level.

Newar Civilization

The fertility of valley soils, the riches from trans-Himalayan trade, and relative geographical isolation all endowed the Kathmandu Valley (until 1769, the defining area of all "Nepāl") with the ability to support a rich, artistic, and predominantly Indicized civilization. Many ancient Indian traditions endure in the distinctive urban society and culture of the Newars. In one of the most complex civilizations in Asia today, both Hindu and Buddhist religious traditions are observed in rich multiplicity.

Caste defines the social order and dominates socio-cultural discourse, with Hindu or Buddhist identity a boundary marker at the highest levels. The former city-states of the Valley—Bhaktapur, Patan, and Kathmandu—all evolved in parallel form according to the *caturvarṇa* model (Brāhman, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra), though differing in details of caste nomenclature.

The Newar Buddhist community consists entirely of householders (Locke 1986). The priestly elite, an endogamous caste of *vajrācāryas*, has for centuries married, though they still inhabit

dwellings referred to as *vihāra* (New. *bāhā*). Like married Tibetan lamas of the Nyingmapa order, they serve the community's ritual needs, with some among them specializing in textual study, medicine, astrology, and meditation. The spiritual elite still passes on *vajrayāna* initiations (Skt. *abhiṣeka*; New. *dekka*) through *guru-chela* ("teacher-disciple") lineages.

All born as *vajrācāryas* should take formal initiations that establish their caste and ritual status, empowering each man to be eligible to perform basic rituals for laymen (Gellner 1988). The traditional line of this *abhiṣeka* is in the main *vihāra* (*mū bāhā*) of the father's lineage. If a *vajrācārya* wants to perform special rituals for clients, however, he must seek further instruction. This, too, is often found in his *bāhā*, although connections with "outside" *vajrācārya* specialists have been common. Today, a school exists in Kathmandu for teaching young *vajrācārya* men in these and other priestly subjects.

The Newar Buddhist tradition is formally two-tiered, with access to ritual initiations an indexical determinant. At the top are those who take esoteric *vajrayāna* initiations (Skt.: *dikṣā*; New.: *dekka*) that direct meditation and ritual to tantric deities such as Saṃvara, Hevajra, and their consorts (*yoginīs*). In modern practice, only the highest castes—*Vajrācārya*, *Śākya*, and *Urāy*—and select artisans (*Chitrakārs*) are eligible for admission into this elite realm. The *Vajrayāna* Masters who pass on the *dikṣā* go on meditative retreats (New.: *puruṣan cvanegu*) to acquire their powers and insight (Lewis 1984: 446). Only about 15 percent of Newar Buddhists today can claim these initiation rights and only a small minority of them actually take *dikṣā*.

Most Newar Buddhists participate in the exoteric level of Mahāyāna devotionalism. They direct their devotions to *caityas* (especially the great *stūpas* such as Svayambhū) and make regular offerings at temples dedicated to the celestial Bodhisattvas (such as Avalokiteśvara) and Buddhist savioresses (such as Tārā). They also support the local *vajrācārya saṃgha* that helps them, in return, look after their spiritual destiny in this world and beyond. This exchange between laymen and the *saṃgha*—with ritual protection and merit accumulation gained in return for material patronage—is fundamental to all Buddhist societies. Indeed, despite the anomalies of caste and *saṃgha* in their community, Newar Buddhist laymen closely resemble co-religionists in other

countries. A vast and complex web of ritual relations link laymen to their *vajrācārya* priests.

As was common throughout Asia, local merchants are prominent among Buddhist laymen. Eligible for *dekka*, the Urāy and Śākya have been the major patrons of Buddhist shrines across the Kathmandu Valley and most active in performing special devotions. For them, the *vratas* are especially popular. Merchants also make the most conspicuous donations, such as those that paid for the publication of the ritual guidebooks presented in Part II.

Newar Vratas: Overview:

Vratas are special forms of priest-led, lay-sponsored worship that focus devotional attention on an individual deity. Groups of individuals devote one or more days to making offerings, while maintaining a high state of ritual purity and abstaining from certain foods. Tradition specifies a series of boons for each type of *vrata* and all are supposed to add appreciably to one's stock of *puṇya*. By so doing, the *vratas* here, as in India (Wadley 1983), are performed to improve the devotee's destiny.

In the Buddhist *vratas*, there is a standard structural order: led by a *vajrācārya* priest (who is often aided by several *vajrācārya* assistants), laymen worship a *guru-maṇḍala* that includes all major deities of the Mahāyāna Buddhist cosmos. They then participate in a *kalaśa pūjā* to the special *vrata* deity³, take refuge in the *triratna-maṇḍalas* (Buddha, Dharma, Saṃgha), and finally make offerings to the *vrata* deity, again on a *maṇḍala*. Most texts specify that the *vajrācārya* should explain the *maṇḍala* symbolism(s) and tell the story (*kathā*) (or stories) associated with the particular *vrata*. As the latter is done, all participants hold a special thread (New. *bartakā*; Skt. *vratasūtra*) unwound from the *kalaśa*. This symbolic act links the deity to each individual and binds the circle of devotees in worship. Broken up and tied around the neck, this thread is a special *prasād* laymen take away from all *vrata* ceremonies.

According to a recent Newar *pūjā* manual, there are texts specifying *vratas* for every deity in the Indic pantheon and for every special religious occasion (Vajracarya 1981: 135). We now survey the most important *vratas* still observed by Mahāyāna Buddhists in modern Nepal.

Dhalaṃ Danegu or Aṣṭamī Vrata

By far the most popular of the Buddhist *vratas*, *dhalaṃ danegu*, has ancient roots in Nepal (Gellner 1987: 347ff). A twelfth century Tibetan source mentions what was probably an early version of this rite (Roerich 1953: 1008) and notes its transmission from Nepal to Tibet (Lewis 1988). Locke (1987) has provided a long description of this observance, rightly noting that variant traditions for it exist in the Valley.

This *vrata* should be performed on one of the two *aṣṭamī* days, i.e. the eighth day of either lunar fortnight (Wilson 1828: 473). The deity is one of the forms of Avalokiteśvara, popularly called Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara or Karuṇāmaya. Groups may be organized to perform the *vrata* once, or monthly for one or more years (Macdonald and Stahl 1979: 129, 131).

The traditional day to start a year-long *vrata* series is *mukha aṣṭamī*,⁴ in the fall. Organizers for these longer programs arrange for the *vajrācāryas*' services and prepare for the main *pūjās*. In taking on this considerable task, they usually have a specific religious goal in mind. The group may do the *vrata* in one place, travel to different Avalokiteśvara temples in the Kathmandu Valley, or choose other landmarks in the religious geography. In whatever context, each person usually performs the *vrata* individually, although a woman may sometimes perform it for an absent husband, making two sets of offerings. This *vrata* is open to all laymen and nowadays women are by far in the majority.

Basundharā Vrata

Newar Buddhists regard Basundharā (Sanskrit: *Vasudharā*) as a goddess of fertility and prosperity. In a recent printed text, Kumārī, Lakṣmī, and Basundharā are all said to be forms (*rūpa*) of Pṛthivī, the Earth goddess (Vajracarya 1981: 81). If pleased, Basundharā can multiply the family's wealth and sustain the vitality of the lineage. Given these benefits, it is understandable that most Newar Buddhist merchants have done the Basundharā *vrata* at least once in their lifetimes (Lewis 1984: 242). Many do it yearly.

This *vrata* is most commonly observed on a regular basis in families with a *guthi* to underwrite the expenses. One time of the year is designated as best for starting this two day rite: the

dark thirteenth day of the month Bhādra.

As with *dhalam danegu*, a *vajrācārya* must direct the *pūjās*, with the family fasting. Because gold is the goddess' favorite color, all of the *pūjā* accessories, including the ritual thread and the women's shawls, are made with materials of this color. The most popular form of *Basundharā vrata* observed in modern Kathmandu is a two-day version: the first day proceeds according to the general order, but on the second day, all of the offering materials are gathered together, resanctified by the *vajrācārya*, then carried to the riverside and discarded. A large feast is held for the family afterwards.

Pūrṇimā Vrata (Dharmadhātu Vrata)

This *vrata* is done to worship Svayambhū as this was the favorite *vrata* of the stupa's mythological founder, Santikār Ācārya (Shakya 1977). The proper moment for this observance is relatively rare: it should be done on a day when there is a conjunction of a full moon and *samlhū*, the start of a new solar month. Performing *Pūrṇimā Vrata* is intended to awaken the desire for reaching complete enlightenment (Vajracarya 1981: 84).

Esoteric Observances

Those who have taken *dekka* form a closed community defined by the *vajrācārya guru-chela* lineage into which they have been initiated. On an occasional basis (typically alternate years), the *vajrācārya gurus* collect subscriptions and host ritualized gatherings that include *vrata*-styled devotions to the chief esoteric deities and special dances. (One popular venue for such gatherings is the Bijesvarī (or *Ākaśa Joginī*) temple west of Kathmandu.) These are, of course, closed to non-initiates and still largely unknown. We mention them to demonstrate that in the context of Newar Mahāyāna/Vajrayāna Buddhism, the *vrata* constitutes a recurring principle of ritual and community organization.

Satya Nārāyaṇa Vrata⁵

This *vrata* to the Indic deity Viṣṇu is done on *ekādaśī*, the

eleventh day of either lunar fortnight. The ritual specialist is usually a Newar Brāhman. Though the requirement of fasting and purification is the same in the Buddhist *vrata*, the ritual is simpler, a straightforward exoteric series of offerings to a Viṣṇu image placed in a small *ratha* located in the midst of the devotees. As it is done across the Nepalese hills, the Brāhman also tells stories about Viṣṇu. (Wadley includes a sample of these stories in her article on Hindu *vratas* (1983: 152–154).)

The Satya Nārāyaṇa *vrata* is common in modern Pahari Hindu practice and many Newar lay Buddhists still perform it.⁶ The reason commonly given for doing this *vrata* is the boon of securing good fortune in worldly matters such as finding a suitable husband, having a male child, and insuring business prosperity.⁷

Vratas and Hindu-Buddhist Relations

The Buddhist community's involvement with the Brāhman-led Satya Nārāyaṇa *vrata* raises the complex issue of Hindu-Buddhist relations. The *vrata* text for Ārya Tārā illustrates the great influence that Brahmanical ritual orthopraxy has exerted on Vajrayāna ritual practice. The priests use *pañcagavya* (the five cow products: milk, curd, ghee, dung, urine) for purification; pour oblations from conch shells (*argha*); chant *mantras* essential for the success of the ritual; and bestow *prasād* and *tika* marks on patrons' foreheads. In short, Newar *vajrācāryas* conform to most of the ritual procedures derived from ancient Brahmanical tradition⁸, although it is not completely correct to regard them as "Buddhist Brahmins"⁹.

Beyond the fact that their outward form is organized in ways congruent with Brahmanical ritual usages, the *vratas* presented in Part II clearly exemplify the Buddhist textual tradition's classical statements of spiritual superiority over Hinduism. First, the rites are always anchored in worshipping the *triratna*—Buddha, Dharma, Saṃgha—and the *guru maṇḍala* of the Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna pantheon. Second, the great gods of the Indian tradition are specifically proclaimed as converts to Buddhism, as in the case of Śiva-Mahānkāl, who "wears Akṣobhya Buddha on the crown." According to the later Buddhist texts, Viṣṇu is also a world guardian who emanated from and serves

the celestial Bodhisattva Śristikantha Avalokiteśvara (Lewis 1984: 474). For Mahāyāna Buddhists to worship Viṣṇu for worldly boons is not a “syncretic action”, as some observers have claimed: it is consistent with ancient Buddhist texts defining both orthodoxy and orthopraxy which allow laymen the choice of worshipping all gods for their worldly betterment (Robinson 1966).¹⁰ To perform a Mahāyāna *vrata* is to be reminded explicitly of this subordination of all “Hindu” deities, as the classical norms of Buddhist hierarchy are translated into popular devotional practice.

Summary: Vratas and Mahāyāna Buddhism

Vratas create one of the main religious constituencies within the Newar Buddhist community, uniting families and friends who regularly perform rites to a chosen deity¹¹. Most groups are not exclusive, have shifting memberships, and are relatively ephemeral. The esoteric rituals are important and recurring occasions of demarcation between Vajrayāna initiates and the rest of Newar Buddhist society.

Vratas underline the Mahāyāna Buddhist layman’s chief religious orientations. The most popular *vratas*, not surprisingly, are to deities with the most important temples in Kathmandu: Avalokiteśvara, Mahākāla, Svayambhū, Tārā. Relying on priests from the *saṃgha*, laymen make offerings (*dāna*) to these deities who, in return, are thought to grant specific boons, good fortune, heaven, or even supernormal powers and the possibility of enlightenment itself. As the stories in the accounts below proclaim, the *vrata* devotee’s underlying religious motivation is to make large quantities of *puṇya* that can unambiguously improve one’s destiny in *samsāra*.

It is important to highlight the *vratakathā*, the stories inserted in the ritual proceedings. Recounted by the officiant for the patron, these tales provide a doctrinal element in the performance of the *vrata*. Both translations in Part II provide examples of the literary style common in “popular” Buddhist texts: to illustrate a doctrinal point or explain a practice, the Buddha tells a story and often, as we see in the Tārā text, stories are embedded inside of stories. The plots are simple and the lessons clear, if simple-minded. All the *kathā* also assert linkages between

their accounts and the Buddhas, making explicit claims for their authority. These sorts of stories, thus, are important sources for articulating the Mahāyāna Buddhist layman's sense of world, religious ethics, and ethos.

Finally, we can comment on the structure of Indic Buddhist tradition from these *vratas* in their Nepalese setting. Newar Buddhist tradition is centered in the *vajrācārya saṃgha* whose members preserve the texts and serve as "masters of ritual ceremony". Tradition is outlined in the texts, but it must be "extracted" recurringly by those taking on the roles handed down through *guru-guru* lineages. Buddhism in every society is as dependent on *vihāra* institutions as on the lay patrons who provide a livelihood for the *saṃgha* specialists. The Newar *vrata* observances show that this inter-relatedness and synchronicity was fundamental to all Buddhist societies, including those adhering to Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna traditions.

II. Studies of Two Modern Vrata Texts

Notes on the Author and the Texts

Kathmandu *vajrācāryas* have long been known as the most skilled ritualists in the Valley (Locke 1985: 256); not surprisingly, the two modern *vrata* texts translated in this article were composed by a member of a Kathmandu *saṃgha*. For the past 30 years, Badri Bajrācārya has been a dominant figure working to revive the condition of Newar Buddhism. In 1977, he started a school for *vajrācārya* young men to teach them the proper ritual forms, *mantras*, and literary traditions that are at the foundation of their priestly role. These efforts have been supported by many laymen and Badri has a regular enrollment of over fifty students, ages 8 to 25, who come for instruction. He has succeeded in having other prominent elder *vajrācārya* pandits periodically participate in the teaching, including Sanskrit study.

The texts presented here are a product of his attempt to revive the modern Vajrayāna tradition. To reverse the decline in the ritual proficiency among many *vajrācāryas*, a trend that has accelerated since the conquest of the Valley in 1769, Badri and other leading *vajrācāryas* have written many ritual manuals.

These texts are similar in the way in which they outline and explain the chief *pūjās* of the Newar tradition. Both draw upon older Sanskrit manuscripts. Texts such as these are intended primarily for fellow priests and devout laymen (*upāsakas*). Besides providing a wealth of information on Newar Buddhism, these selections can also be read as examples of modern efforts to restore the older Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna tradition.¹²

In terms of general content, both texts present the same information: they specify the *vrata*'s ritual agenda, then recount the story (or stories) that explain the origin or proven efficacy of the observance. Our texts do differ in their depth of coverage: the *Tārā vrata* manual is more for *vajrācārya* priests, as it contains a detailed outline of each ritual, complete with *mantras*; the *Caturdaśī vrata* text is more for laymen: it is much shorter, giving only the most minimal ritual outline, and focuses on describing the supernormal powers (*siddhi*) that can be attained by performing the *vrata*.

In rendering the translations I have retained the author's terse shorthand style and insert minimal explanatory glosses parenthetically. The divisions in the guidebooks have also been retained. Further exploration of many subjects in these texts must be reserved for later publications.

The Tārā Vrata

Background

Tārā is the most popular goddess of the Northern Buddhist tradition (Beyer 1973; Sircar 1967): she is regarded as the embodiment of Avalokiteśvara's compassion and has 21 forms. In Nepal, Tārā is most often worshipped in her white and green incarnations (Vajrācārya 1972); *Saptalocanā Tārā*, the "Seven-eyed Tārā," is also common in Newar shrines.¹³ In the Kathmandu Valley, there are two especially popular places for performing this *vrata* nowadays: the Tārā temple in Itum Bāhā and the Tārā *tīrtha* north of Sānkhu, at Bāgduvāl. (The text translated below is to the green Tārā and describes an incident from the sacred history of the latter place.) We also should note that the old Newar Buddhist greeting, "Tāremām" (popularly

thought to be derived from "Tārā Sāraṇam": "I take refuge in Tārā"), indicates this deity's historical importance in the Nepalese setting.

According to the popular Newar understanding, the *Tārā vrata* should be done at least once early in one's lifetime, since performing the *vrata* can avert a person's premature death. For this reason it is also observed in the name of a person who is seriously ill.

This very detailed text alludes to several practices that merit special comment. The requirement of *toramā* offerings suggests connections with Tibetan Buddhist ritual traditions and is doubtless a marker of cultural history (Lewis 1988; Lewis 1989; Templeman 1981: 38). The guide also prescribes that the participants make clay *caityas*, a ritual called *dyaḥ thāyegu* in Newari. For this, householders use special molds to fashion *caityas* of various styles from black clay. Chanting *mantras* during every part of the process, they impart life ("jīva") to each *caitya* by inserting paddy grains into it. *Dyaḥ thāyegu* is usually done in the holy lunar month called Guṇlā, a time in the early summer monsoon for special Buddhist devotions (Lewis 1984: 349–368). In the Kathmandu Valley, this is also the period when the *Tārā vrata* is most commonly observed.

Translation

(Badri Bajracarya, *Śrī Āryya Tārā Devyaiḥ Vrata Vidhi Kathā* Kathmandu: Popular Art Printing Press, 1980.)

Rites and practices to be performed for the worship of Āryya Tārā

Construct a Tārā *maṇḍala*. Place in the centre of the *maṇḍala* an iron tripod (*mas*) for [holding the] *kalaśa*. Place on the tripod a big *kalaśa*. Arrange the following items in their proper place around the *kalaśa*: medicine powder (*kalaśavāsa*), five different kinds of grain (*pañcabihī*), jasmine flowers, grains of unpolished rice (*ākhe*), parched rice (*tāye*), buds of a kind of long lasting grass (*pañcapallava kosbum*), a jasmine branch, a tuft of *tuphi* (yellow flowering shrub that is usually used for making brooms), a ceremonial umbrella (*chatra*), feather of a pea-fowl, and a tiny earthen bowl filled with polished rice with a whole betel nut and a coin set on it (*kisalī*). Place grain powder symbolic of the

aṣṭamaṅgala on a traditional dish called *thāyebhu*.

Place on the four corners: ceremonial metal mirrors (*jolā nhāyekan*) and vermilion powder stands (*sinhaḥmū*). Pass the sacred green string of five strands five times round the *kalaśa* space. Place *aṣṭamaṅgala* and wind bells (*phayegan*) in their proper places. Also put up a canopy. Arrange around the *maṅḍala* of Ārya Tārā certain items: Buddhist begging bowls (*gulupā*), water bowls (*tiñcā*) and barley flour images (*toramā*). Place oblation pots (*baupā*), curd bowls (*pati*), a small *kalaśa*, a tiny earthen vessel with a serpent painted on it (*nagabhoñcā*), and a lamp (*mata*) in front of the *maṅḍala*. Consecrate the *pañcagavya* in a small earthen bown and an oval-shaped bowl of rice beer (*patra*), and perform the *gurumaṅḍala pūjā* on a *maṅḍala* with a lotus pattern and with an image of a deity at the center.

Do a ceremonial cleansing with water from a holy river. Perform *argha pūjā* (an offering of water to the Sun god). Consecrate the votive offerings. Perform *gurumaṅḍala pūjā*. Purify with *pañcagavya*. Sanctify the clay to be used for fashioning *caitya* shrines. Have the shrines fashioned from the sanctified clay that has been pressed into moulds. Sprinkle red power and holy water over them. Perform *samādhi* meditation. Offer *pūjā* to all of these: the small *kalaśa*, *pati*, *nāgabhoñcā*, lamp (*mata*), the large *kalaśa*, *aṣṭamaṅgala*, mirror, and the *sinhaḥmū*. Worship the image of the deity installed there. Offer *pūjā* to the *gulupā*, *devā*, *tiñcā*, and the *toramās*. Sanctify the big *maṅḍala* and place flower petals on it. Sanctify also the ball of thread by sprinkling water on it. Perform *pūjā* as prescribed in *saptabīdhāna* (i.e. with *mūdra* sequences accompanied by *mantra* recitations). Make a *bali* offering [for spirits] and perform *cākupūjā* [in honour of the guardians of the four quarters].

After this, all those who are undergoing the Āryā Tārā *vrata* may be asked to squat in an orderly row and to construct *maṅḍalas* before them. Have them receive *pañcagavya* and make votive offerings. Have them perform *gurumaṅḍala pūjā*. Make them worship the *mata* lamp and the clay *caityas* made with their own hands. Have them duly perform *maṅḍala pūjā* of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Have them take refuge in the *triratna* by repeating in chorus “*Ratna triyaṃ me* (Buddha/Dharma/Saṃgha) *sāraṇaṃ*” three times.

Method of Worshipping the Large Ārya Tārā Maṇḍala

Sprinkle on the *maṇḍala* holy drops of water from a conch shell while reciting these *mantras*:

OM TRUM KHAM HUM
OM MEDANĪ VAJRĪ BHAVA VAJRA BANDHAVAM
OM VAJRA RAKṢE HUM.

Keep touching the *maṇḍala* with your ring finger covered with yellow powder while reciting the following devotional couplet:

SARVA TATHĀGATA ŚĀNTAṆ SARVA TATHĀGATA
LAYAṆ
SARVADHARMĀ GANAIRĀTMĀ DEŚA MAṆḌALA
MUKTAM

Place a flower on the small wheat cake image (*gojā*) while reciting: “OM TĀRĀ MAṆḌALE SARVA BIGHNĀNUTSĀRE HUM.” Then sprinkle a drop of water on the *gojā* while reciting: “OM ŚRĪ ĀRYA TĀRĀ BHATTARASYĀGRE PADYĀRGHA ĀCAMANAṆ PRACCHAMANAN PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.”

Placing Flowers on the Maṇḍala

Recite: “OM ŚRADHARĀ TĀRĀYE VAJRA PUŚPAṆ PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ” [and place a flower] on the head [of the *maṇḍala*].

Recite: “OM TĀRE TUTĀRE TURE SVĀHĀ” [and place a flower] on the heart [of the *maṇḍala*].

Recite: “OM HRṆ TRĪṆ HUM PHAṬ SVĀHĀ” [and place a flower] on the navel [of the *maṇḍala*].

Placing Eight Lotus Flower Petals on the Maṇḍala

Recite: “OM PUŚPA TĀRĀYA VAJRAPUŚPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ” and place a lotus petal in front [of the *maṇḍala*].

Recite: “OM DHUPATĀRĀYA VAJRAPUŚPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ” and place a lotus petal on the right [of the *maṇḍala*].

Recite: “OM DĪPĀ TĀRĀYA VAJRAPUŚPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ” and place a lotus petal [behind the *maṇḍala*].

Recite: "OM GANDHATĀRĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ" and place a lotus petal on the left [of the *maṇḍala*].

Recite: "OM BRĀM VĪNĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ" and place a lotus petal [on the right down side corner of the *maṇḍala*].

Recite: "BAM VAMSĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ" and place a lotus [petal on the right upside corner of the *maṇḍala*.]

Recite: "MRṆ MRDANĠĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ" and place a lotus petal [on the left upside corner of the *maṇḍala*].

Recite: "MŪM MŪRUJĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ" and place a lotus petal [on the left down side corner of the *maṇḍala*].

Placing 21 Lotus Flower Petals on the Maṇḍala

[Recite:]

1. OM TĀM SIDDHIPHALA PUṢṬIMKURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
2. OM HRĪḤ SARVAKARMA SIDDHIPHALA PUṢṬIMKURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
3. OM TUMTĀḤ MAMA ĀYU PUṢṬIMKURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
4. OM TĀḤ SARVA BHAYAPĀDA SIDDHIKURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
5. OM HRIM BHAVALOKA TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
6. OM TUḤ SARVASYĀTUSU MAHĀNAYE TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
7. OM HRIḤ SARVALOKASIDDHI HĀSYĀKURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
8. OM SVAḤ SIDDHICITTĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
9. OM STĀḤ SARVA DUḤKA ŚĀNTI KURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
10. OM HĀḤ SARVA LOKAHASYA KURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.

11. OM ĀḤ SARVAMANGALA SIDDHI PHALAHE JYO TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
12. OM DUḤ MAMA ĀYUPUṢṬIN KURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
13. OM ĀḤ SARVA ITITĀMU SIDDHI KURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
14. OM NIḤ SARVASIDDHI PUṢṬIMKURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
15. OM AḤ SARVA ŚĀNTI KURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
16. OM SVĀḤ SARVAJŅĀNĀ PUṢṬIMKURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
17. OM KIḤ MAMA ĀYU PUṢṬIMKURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
18. OM JĀḤ SARVALOKA DUḤKHA ŚĀNTI KURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
19. OM CĪḤ DHANASIDDHA TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
20. OM HĀḤ SARVA KARMASIDDHI PUṢṬIMKURU TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
21. OM TĀḤ TĀRE TUTĀRE TURE SVĀHĀ TĀRE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.

Placing Flower Petals at the Four Corners of the Maṇḍala

Recite: OM VAJRA LĀŚYE HUM and place flower petals on the right up side corner.

Recite: OM VAJRA MĀLETRĀM and place flower petals on the right down side corner.

Recite: OM VAJRA GĪTYE HRĪM and place flower petals on the left up side corner.

Recite: OM VAJRA NRṬYE AḤ and place flower petals on the left down side corner.

Placing Ten Flowers on the Square-shaped Daśakrodha Patra

Recite the following *mantras* and place flower petals in the east, in the south, in the west, in the north, in the southeast, in the southwest, in the northwest, in the northeast and, for the last two, on the either sides.

OM HUM JAMĀNTAKĀYE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
 OM HUM PRAJÑĀNTAKĀYE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
 OM HUM PADMĀNTAKĀYE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
 OM HUM VIGHNĀNTAKĀYE VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
 OM HUM TAKKIRĀJĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
 OM HUM NĪLA DANḌĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
 OM HUM MAHĀBALĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
 OM HUM ACALĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA
 SVĀHĀ.
 OM HUM UṢNIṢA BĪJAYĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.
 OM HUM SUMBHARĀJĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ.

Placing Flowers on Four Entrances of the Maṇḍala

[Recite:] OM VAJRĀM KUŚĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ [and place flower petals] on the eastern entrance.

[Recite:] OM VAJRĀ PAŚĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRATĪCCHA
 SVĀHĀ [and place flower petals] on the southern entrance.

[Recite:] OM VAJRĀ SPHOTĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ [and place flower petals] on the western en-
 trance.

[Recite:] OM VAJRĀM BEŚĀYA VAJRAPUṢPAM PRA-
 TĪCCHA SVĀHĀ [and place flower petals] on the northern en-
 trance.

Placing Flowers for the Governors (Lokapāla) of the Ten Directions

Do *pūjā* with [offerings consisting of] wheat, maize, peas,
 rice, sweetmeats, fruits, betal leaf, betal nuts etc.

Sprinkle holy water on the sacred string from the conch shell. Apply a yellow *tika* mark to its knot. Have the worshippers bow twenty-one times to the sacred string with their palms, the right for males, the left for females. When bowing, the *mantra* for recitation is: "OM NĀMO ĀRYA TĀRĀ DEVĪ DHARMA SŪTRAM PRECCHĀMI VAJRADHARMA TĀM TĀM TĀM SVĀHĀ".

After this, the sacred string is placed round the *maṇḍala*. [The *mantra* recited is:] "OM ŚRĪ ŚRAGDHĀRĀRYATĀRĀ MAṆḌALE BODHYĀṄGA DR̥DHA KAVACA VAJRAVASTRĀ VĀSASYE SVĀHĀ". Now do *pañcopacāra pūjā*.¹⁴

Then twenty-one jasmine flowers are placed in the center of the sacred thread with the recitation of the *mantra*: "OM NĀMAḤ ŚRĪ ŚRAGDHĀRĀRYYA TĀRĀYAI SARVABHAYADHĀRAṆĪ SARVABIGHNA ŚĀNTĪ KARI PRAKṚTI PRABHĀSVARE SARVA DUḤKHA NĀSANĪ MAMA SARVASATVĀNĀNCA ŚĀNTĪ SVASTIM PUṢṬIM KURU RAKṢAMĀN HUM HUM PHAṬ PHAṬ SVĀHĀ".

Perform *pañcopacāra pūjā*.

Offer *argha* water. Recite the *daśā kuśala*¹⁵ and offer the [whole] *maṇḍala*.

OM SAMAMNVĀ HARAMTUMĀM BUDDHĀ DAŚADIGA LOKADHĀTU SANNIPATITĀ BUDDHĀ BHAGAVATO BODHISATVA MAṆJUŚRĪ UPĀDHYĀ YAŚCĀRYYA TĀRĀ, AHAM MEVANĀMĀ YATKIMCITA KĀYEVĀKA MANOBHI SARVABUDDHĀ BODHISATVEBHYO MĀTĀ PITARAU TADAMNYĀNI SAGAMYA YAHA JANMANI BHABĀNTAREṢU MAYĀ PĀPA KARMA KṚTA KĀRITA BHABET TATAḤ SARVA MEKAM PIṆḌAYITVĀ TARAYITVĀ SARVABUDDHA BODHISATVĀ NĀMĀCĀRYA ŚĀNTĪKE AGRAYĀ VARAVĀ PRAVALAYĀ STHĀNEMAHAM PRATIDESYĀMI MANASMṚTA PRATĪCCHĀ DAYĀMI ŚRĪ DHARMADHĀTU BĀGĪSVAR ŚRAGDHĀRĀRYYA TĀRĀSAGAṆA MAṆḌALE IDAM PUṢPAMAṆḌALAM NIRYYĀTAYĀMI.

Take rice and flowers dipped in water and let the liquid flow down to the *gojā*. [The *mantra* recited is:]

OM ŚRAGDHĀRĀTĀRĪṆA SARVADUḤKHA BHAYAHĀRAṆĪ CAṬURMĀ RAṆĪ VARANĪ SARVADEVĀSURA GARUḌA GANDHARVA KINNARA MAHORAGĀDI UPADRAVA PRAŚA-

MANĪ SARVABHŪTA PRETA PIŚĀCA YAKṢA RĀKṢAS ḌĀK
 ḌĀKINYĀDI BHAYABIDHVAMSANĪ PARAKṚTA JANTRA
 MANTRA PRAYOGĀDI BINĀSANĪ BHAGAVATĪ DURGĀTĀ-
 RAṆĪ ĀGACCHA IDAṂ BALI GR̥HNAGR̥HNA MAMA SARVA-
 SATRA HANAHAHA KHAKHA KHĀHIKHĀHI SARVABANDHA-
 NA BYĀDHI BIPRAHĀDI NĀSANĪ HUMHUM PHATPHAT
 SVĀHĀ.

[Chant:]

// STOTRA //

TĀRĀMĀRA BHAYAṆKARĪ SURAVARAIḤ SAMPŪJITĀ SA-
 RVADĀ
 LOKĀNĀṂ HITAKĀRIṆĪ JAYATISĀ MĀTEVAYĀRAKṢATI
 KĀRUṆYENA SAMĀHITĀ BAHUVIDHĀNSASĀRA BHĪRU-
 ŃJANĀN
 MĀTĀ BHAKTIMATĀM VIBHĀTĪ JAGATĀM NITYAMBHAYA
 DHVAMSINĪ.

Offer the *ratnamāṇḍala* and bow to it. Put the sacred string round the worshipper's neck. Read from the holy manuscripts the teaching of the *dharma* [i.e. the *vratākathā*]. Take a special fruit-scented bath (*phalābhīṣeka*). Construct [a small] *maṇḍala* and worship it with offerings of rice and sanctified food (*sagam*). Dispense the *tika* benediction. Then the *pūjā* is over. Gently rub the sacred string with sacred water from the *kalaśa*. Give out the *aṣṭamaṅgala* stuff from the special ritual plate (*thāyabhu*). Holy water from the *kalaśa* may not be distributed at this time: it is distributed only on the river bank.

Hand over the mirror and *sinhaḥmū* [ready for carrying]. Let the chief worshipper carry the *kalaśa* and other worshippers the *maṇḍala* to immerse them in the river.

Place at the river bank the *kalaśa*. Fashion a *caitya* and *nāga* from sanctified sand. Duly worship and circumambulate them. Take water in the cupped palm and splash gently on the *kalaśa*. Take consecrated water collected from the *kalaśa* as a blessing and return home and have a feast.

The *Vratākathā*:

The Sanctity of Tārā Tīrtha at Bāgduvāl

A Brāhman named Guṇākar dwelt in a village called Himavati Nagar near the Himalaya. He had only one son named Dhanākar. He was married to a lovely woman of high birth. Dhanākar was addicted to the habits of eating abhorred food, drinking alcohol, and visiting prostitutes. Guṇākar, his father, insisted on his total abstinence from such addictions, but was unable to deter him.

Ultimately, his father died. After the death of his father, Dhanākar became much more addicted to the habit of drinking alcohol and visiting prostitutes. His wife, on the other hand, was very kind and faithful to her husband. Although he had such a good wife, he did not abstain from visiting prostitutes, eating unclean food and drinking alcohol. Very much fed up with his bad habits, [one day] his wife implored him, "My lord, why have you taken up the harmful habit of drinking? Your father did all he could to prevent you from becoming an addict. He is no more and now there are none to tell you not to be given over to such bad and harmful habits. Since you have not [yet] given up your bad habits, I pray that you not be an addict."

Dhanākar grew very angry with his wife for all that she had said to him. He beat her and sent her away. She did not know where to go and so went to the forest with her heart broken. Finally she sat down to rest under a tree and sobbed to herself, "I might have acted sinfully in my previous life as a result of which I am now punished and married to such a cruel husband. I must be the most ill-fated woman in the world. Where am I to go? Who shall I stay with? I am distraught with my life. I wish I were taken away by death but death is not imminent. So I should kill myself."

Thinking in this way while roaming round the forest, one day she saw a sage living in a cave. She approached him and asked, "Why, saint, are you living alone in the forest?" The sage said that he would tell her something helpful. He said, "All those who are born must die. All in this present life must face the consequences of the actions that they performed in their previous lives. Similarly in our next lives we reap the results of the deeds that we do in our present life. If we do good deeds, we live a happy life. If we do evil deeds, we live an unhappy life. To be born, to be old, and to die are great sufferings. The cause of my

living in such a lonely place near the Himalayas is to get rid of all this suffering." He further went on to say, "Oh gentle lady! Whose wife are you? What is your name? Why have you come to this forest? Who is here escorting you? Who have you come here with? Tell me the truth."

Upon his asking these questions, the female Brāhman could not hold back her tears and sobbed out her story to the sage: "Close to this village lived a Brāhman named Guṇākar who had a bad-natured son called Dhanākar. He was addicted to drinking and prostitution. His father died without being able to correct his character, despite great exertions. After the death of his father he went from bad to worse and even stopped returning home. Once when he came home I begged him to give up his bad habits. But he beat me and sent me away. I am this wretched man's wife. I feel I am very unfortunate and roam this forest now with the intention of committing suicide."

After hearing what the female Brāhman said in her tearful words, the sage said, "O gentle lady! I am going to tell you something good. Listen! Human life, you know, is very precious. Only very fortunate beings can [ever] have a human life. You need to remember with reverence Ārya Tārā and pray to her for deliverance from your sufferings. Mind you, O gentle Lady! Those committing suicide become blemished with an evil destiny, as illustrated in the following story:

"Once there lived in a city a devout and pious merchant whose wife was arrogant, unfaithful, and ill-natured. No matter how well fed and nicely clad she was by her husband, she never acknowledged it gratefully. She always found fault with him and picked a quarrel. Dissatisfied with this wife, the merchant married a second wife. Upon doing this, his first wife committed suicide by throwing herself into a pond. Because of this suicide, she was doomed to hell and subjected to untold sufferings. For this reason, O gentle Lady, do not commit suicide! If you want to be liberated from your sufferings, pray to Goddess Ārya Tārā. To the east of this Śankhod Mountain is the bathing spot of the Goddess Ārya Tārā who, as instructed by Amitābha [Buddha], visited the holy spot to liberate suffering people from their miseries. Go to bathe at this holy *tīrtha* and offer sincere prayers to the goddess Ārya Tārā. Then you will be delivered from your sufferings."

Hearing this from the sage, the female Brāhman asked him how the Tārā *tīrtha* came into being. The sage replied, "O Gentle Lady, Listen, I'll tell you how it originated. Once when the de-

mons ousted Lord Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara and Indra from their thrones, these gods went to take resort in Ugra Tārā, a goddess who in turn asked them to pray and recite the *mantra* of Ārya Tārā. Straight away the gods went to the present site of the *Tāra Tīrtha* and recited the *mantra* of Ārya Tārā as directed. After the recitation of the *mantra* by the gods, the goddess Ārya Tārā made her appearance right at the *tīrtha* and liberated Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara and Indra from their miseries. O Gentle Lady! You also may perform *pūjā* to Ugra Tārā Bajrajoginī; go to bathe at *Tārā Tīrtha* where you should also meditate and offer prayers."

Hearing this [second story] from the sage, the female Brāhman climbed up the hill with enthusiasm to have a *darśan* of Ugra Tārā Bajrajoginī [of Sānkhu] and thereafter went to the *Tārā Tīrtha*. On reaching the *tīrtha*, she bathed and offered *pūjā*, and said heartfelt prayers.

In answer to her prayers, the goddess Ārya Tārā took pity on the female Brāhman and appeared before her in green complexion and in *abhaya mūdrā* holding a flower in one of her hands. The female Brāhman fell prostrate on the ground before the goddess and offered her *pūjā* while chanting devotional songs. The goddess blessed her and vanished out of sight. The female Brāhman spent the rest of her life at this *Tāra Tīrtha* living upon fruits and water nearby, meditating and observing the Ārya Tārā *vrata* and offering prayers to the *triratna*. When she finally died she was transported to *Sukhāvati bhuvana*.

The Caturdaśī Vrata

Background

Our second Mahāyāna *vrata* concerns Mahākāla (New. Mahāmkāl dya:), a very popular deity in Nepal who is found in many different settings. Opposite Gaṇesh or Hanumān, his images guard the entranceways of most Newar *vihāras* (Locke 1985: 8). Mahākāla is also commonly found alone as a protector inside the exterior niches of private homes. Moreover, a free-standing temple of Mahākāla is located just outside the former town boundaries of Kathmandu and this temple receives great atten-

tion from both Hindu and Buddhist devotees. The regular priests of this temple are *vajrācāryas*.

Mahākāla likely evolved from the Indic Śiva-Bhairava as later Buddhists incorporated this fierce deity into their pantheon. (One Newar Buddhist myth, in fact, recounts his coming to Nepal from Tibet (Lewis 1984: 75).) The deity's Buddhist identity is also shown iconographically: he is depicted with the eastern celestial Buddha, Akṣobhya, on his crown. There are also several later *tantras* dedicated to Mahākāla known in Sanskrit and Tibetan recensions found in the Kathmandu Valley.

The introduction to the *vrata* text states that the *Caturdaśī vrata* is also called the *Mahāṃkāl vrata* and that it has been popular in Nepal "from ancient times." The *vrata* should be observed only on the fourteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight, a time typically associated with dangerous, blood sacrifice-taking deities. The introduction also cites the textual source of the *vratakathā* as "the *Kanītabdāna*"¹⁷ in which Śākyamuni Buddha explains the rite to his famous disciple Śāriputra.

Translation

(Badri Bajracarya, *Mahāṃkāl*. Kathmandu, 1978. 16 pages.)

Bathe in a holy river. With the purity of mind and body, clad in clean clothes, display a scroll painting of Mahāṃkāl in a pleasant place. Decorate the site with flags, festoons, and a canopy. Get all of the materials required for the *vrata* ready and then begin the *pūjā*.

The *pūjā* may begin by invoking the great teacher for blessings. Seek refuge in the triple gems. Construct a *maṇḍala* of Mahāṃkāl, the guardian deity of the Buddhist Dharma, and worship it by making offerings of flowers, incense, lighted wick, and then make an *olibali* offering¹⁸. Look at Mahāṃkāl and pledge to observe the eight precepts.¹⁹ He who on this fourteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight performs this fast, pledging to observe the eight precepts wholeheartedly, will have full control over his enemies and can ascend to the status of head of state. The Emancipation that may result from this *caturdaśī vrata* is well illustrated in the following story:

In the remote past there dwelt in the city of Vārānasi a king named Brahmadata. Every month on the fourteenth day of the dark lunar fortnight he visited the Śiva temple located to the south of the city, bathed, worshipped Mahāṃkāl, fasted, and then pledged to observe the eight precepts. As a result of this meritorious act, his country never suffered from natural disasters and his reign was blessed.

One day, a foreign king came to attack Vārānasi with his army that was well equipped with weapons. At the sight of the enemy, the people of Vārānasi were panic-stricken. They approached the king, led by spokesmen. One of them said, "Your Majesty Brahmadata! Our country is about to be attacked by a foreign enemy. The country is in a panic. Oh Your Majesty! Command us as to what we should do!"

The king responded: "Countrymen! Pleasures are short-lived. They are as precarious and transitory as silvery water drops on lotus leaves. Do not panic because of this king's army. Be assured that they will be driven away through my meritorious action."

Upon hearing this, the spokesman replied, "Your Majesty! We have no knowledge of what powers you have by virtue of your meritorious actions. We want you to demonstrate this power by resisting and destroying the present enemy. It will be pointless to repent after our country has fallen into the hands of its enemies."

After hearing the request of his people, King Brahmadata immediately went to the holy river and bathed. Then he went to the Śiva temple that night, fasted, and worshipped Mahāṃkāl. He also meditated upon Mahāṃkāl constantly without diverting his attention from other things. As a result, the deity Mahāṃkāl in his terrifying form appeared before the king and asked in a kind manner: "Oh King! Why are you invoking me in meditation?" Once the king saw Mahāṃkāl, he bowed down to him and chanted a hymn of praise which is written here:

- [1] Hail to you Mahāṃkāl, destroyer of evildoers and bestower of boons!
- [2] Hail to you of the round red eyes, bright like a flaming light!
- [3] Hail to you with curly brown hair and rough skin!
- [4] Hail to you with a big and terrifying dark body that is surrounded by a halo!
- [5] Hail to you with shapely body and shapely limbs!

- [6] Hail to you with a fierce fanged face that loves flesh and blood!
- [7] Hail to you with the stamp of Akṣobhya Buddha on your crown and clothed in tigerskin!
- [8] Hail to you, the world in miniature, you with the thousand arms!

After chanting this hymn, the King then said, "O Lord Mahāṃkāl, the mightiest of the mighty, I am going to the battlefield. I pray to receive your boon of the *aṣṭasiddhi*, the eight powers that will enable me to vanquish my enemies."

Upon hearing this supplication, Mahāṃkāl granted him the *aṣṭasiddhi* powers and then vanished out of sight. These *siddhi* were as follows:

1. *añjanasiddhi*: power of being invisible to enemies;
2. *guṭhikasiddhi*: power of being invulnerable to enemies;
3. *padukasiddhi*: power of being able to fly in the sky;
4. *sidhausadhisiddhi*: power of being immune to diseases and for living a long life;
5. *manisiddhi*: power of being able to have inexhaustible wealth;
6. *mantrasiddhi*: power of being able to materialize one's desires;
7. *basyasiddhi*: power of being able to vanquish enemies;
8. *rajyasiddhi*: power of being able to rule over the country peacefully.

Armed with such precious powers, when King Brahmadata went like a lion to the battlefield with his hand raised high, his enemies were panic-stricken and ran to him for refuge.

Mahāṃkāl, who has been regarded as an effective ally in vanquishing enemies and who has acted as a guardian for the protection of the Buddhist Dharma and Saṃgha, deserves our veneration and invocation.

Buddha, the Enlightened One, narrated this story to Śāriputra on how the Mahāṃkāl *vrata* helped King Brahmadata single-handedly vanquish the enemy king and his army and peacefully rule over his country for many years. Therefore he

who observes the *caturdaśī vrata* invoking Mahāmkāl will succeed in his work and be free from dangers posed by enemies.

NOTES

1. Field work was conducted in Kathmandu from 1979–82 and in 1987. The author gratefully acknowledges grant support from the Fulbright Fellowship Program and assistance from the U.S. Educational Foundation in Kathmandu. Ratna Muni Bajracarya and Mani Gopal Jha merit special recognition for their most helpful critical readings of the translated texts.

Note that Newari and Sanskrit terms have been rendered according to the spellings in the texts, and except for rendering *vrata* consistently throughout the article, I have made no attempt to correct their spellings to conform to classical Sanskrit orthography. The problem is that as yet there is no authoritative, comprehensive dictionary for the Newari language (New.: Nevā: Bhāy), although Manandhar (1986) has been used where relevant. Readers will note the Newar author's inconsistency in rendering *b* and *v*, and *y* and *j*, among others. Although this may appear sloppy to the philological scholar, the Newar reader suffers no loss of understanding.

2. This overview aptly presents the hierarchy of Newar society (based upon Quigley 1986: 78 and Gellner 1986: 105):

	<u>Hindu</u>	<u>Buddhist</u>
Priestly castes	Deo Brāhman Karrācārya	Vajrācārya Śākya
High Castes	Śreṣṭha	Urāy
Agricultural Castes		Jyāpu
Service Castes		Painters, potters, oil pressers, barbers, etc.
Unclean Castes		Butchers, Tailors, Sweepers, etc.

Other important studies on Newar society have been made by Gerard Toffin (1975 and 1986), Colin Rosser (1964), and Hiroshi Ishii (1986 and 1987). Consult Toffin (1986) for the most complete bibliographical information. For an important study of a *vrata* performed predominantly by Hindu Newar layfolk, see Linda Iltis' monumental translation and analysis of the *Svastānī Vrata* (1985).

3. The *kalāśa* is a ceremonial vessel. As stated in a modern Newar commentary, "The main aim of the *Kalāśa pūjā* is to make the deity present in the *Kalāśa* by means of *Sādhana* and then through the *abhiṣeka* of the *Kalāśa* bring about a participation in *nirvana* itself." (Quoted in Locke 1979: 96).

4. According to the Newar Buddhists, this is the day when an image of Akṣobhya Buddha is placed on top of the *linga* at Paṣupati, the central

temple of modern Nepalese Buddhism.

5. This *vrata* is included because it is commonly done among non-*vajrācāryas*, ie. among the Mahāyāna laymen that constitute roughly 95% of Newar Buddhists.

6. Most Newar Buddhist laymen do not express embarrassment for their participation in a ritual guided by a Brāhman priest. This willingness to do so exemplifies the extent to which urban Buddhists feel free to utilize the extraordinarily broad spectrum of religious options in their midst. It is not surprising that business families would take to this *vrata*, just as they readily worship Lakṣmī during the Tihār festival.

7. According to my surveys, about 65% of the Kathmandu Urāy families have a member who once did *Satyā Nārāyaṇa Vrata*.

8. The proper assessment of later Buddhist ritualism must proceed from the following historical perspective: modern Newar Buddhist and Brahmanical ritualism represent two lineages originating from ancient Indian religious traditions. Both draw upon a common core of symbolism, ritual procedure norms, and basic cosmological assumptions.

Despite each being doctrinally diverse and institutionally acephalic, Hindu and Buddhist traditions have, at times, profoundly affected each other, as Hindu-Buddhist relations for 1700 years created the chief dialectic in Indian religious history. Both should be seen as totalizing cultural phenomena, with philosophical doctrines and myths that proclaim their spiritual domination in any religious environment, including over each other. (See Lewis 1984: 468–481 for a fuller treatment of this complex issue.)

9. To regard the Vajrācāryas as “Buddhist Brahmins” (Greenwold 1974) is more true is the social domain than in religious content: most Buddhist ritual implements differ from Hindu analogs, the *mantras* chanted are distinctly Vajrayāna, and later Buddhist doctrine is interwoven in a thoroughgoing manner. One must emphasize the transformations as well as continuities between the Vajrācāryas and Brāhmins to understand Newar religious history.

10. This accommodation is well-documented in Theravāda societies (Tambiah 1970; Gombrich 1971). It is noteworthy that there are also passages in the Mahāyāna literature that object to offerings made to non-converted deities. (See Snellgrove 1987: 76.)

11. The other main sources of Newar religious organization are the *guthis*, institutions created to facilitate members’ performing specific rituals (cremations, temple worship, pilgrimage, etc.), usually on a regular basis. Much has been written on the wide array of *guthis* in the Newar communities (Toffin 1975; Gellner 1987; Lewis 1984: 174–182). A few *guthis* in Kathmandu were formed to underwrite regular *vrata* performances.

12. Wadley’s comments on these manuals in India apply to the Newar context, as do several of her conclusions, “While an explanation for this growing popularity cannot be explicitly stated, several factors clearly are important. Increasing literacy allows thousands to use texts where once they had relied solely on oral traditions . . . Finally, texts are valued in Hinduism in part because of their traditional inaccessibility: to many newly literate persons, reading a pamphlet is more authentic and prestigious than reciting the stories

of their elders. The stories of the elders had themselves taken the place of the teaching of *gurus*, to whom people had little access. Currently, then, written texts are replacing the elders and act as a stand-in for the traditions of the *guru* (1983: 150)."

13. This pamphlet includes a sixty-verse Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* to Tārā called *Atha Aṣṭottaraśata (Tārāśata) Nāma Stotra Prārambha*. The first 27 verses describe the setting of Śākyamuni's revelation of this *dhāraṇī* on Mount Potalaka, Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva's request to preach, and a brief account of the boons won for reciting this *dhāraṇī*. The next fifteen verses give the 108 Names of Tārā, with each form's mantra. The final verses give rules concerning the recitation and again recount the fruits of recitation. The published text (Vajracarya 1972) also provides another Tārā *avadāna* different from the one translated in this study.

14. A common Indic ritual that consists of five kinds of offerings: flowers, incense, light, balm, food. See Lewis 1984: 192–198.

15. This *dhāraṇī* very commonly chanted by a *vajrācārya* priest for a patron. This recitation is said to absolve the hearer from 10 forms of *pāpa* ("demerit").

16. Amitābha Buddha's paradise.

17. This Sanskrit title for this text, the *Kanitāvadāna*, has not been mentioned in any published Nepali account. The only study of a Newari *avadāna* is that by Jorgensen (1931), the *Vicitrakārnīkāvadānoḍḍhṛta*; but in this work, there is no mention of the Mahākāla story.

18. In the Newar tradition, this *bali* can literally mean an animal sacrifice. While blood offerings are approved by some tantric Buddhist texts, some laymen prefer to offer substitutes that do not entail actual killing. See Owens (1988) for a discussion of the relationship between Newar Buddhist traditions and blood sacrifice.

19. This ancient Buddhist custom of laymen taking on extra precepts (beyond their usual five) during a special observance is also still common in Theravādā countries (Wells 1975).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Babb, Lawrence A.

1975 *The Divine Hierarchy: Popular Buddhism in Central India*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Beyer, Stephan

1973 *The Cult of Tara: Magic and Ritual in Tibet*. Berkeley: University of California.

Gellner, David N.

1986 "Language, Caste, Religion and Territory: Newar Identity Ancient and Modern," *European Journal of Sociology*, XXVII, 102–148.

1987 *Monk, Householder and Priest: Newar Buddhism and Its Hierarchy of Ritual*. Oxford University: Ph.D. Dissertation.

- 1988 "Monastic Initiation in Newar Buddhism" in R.F. Gombrich ed. *Oxford University Papers on India*, II (1), 42–112.
- Gombrich, Richard F.
1971 *Precept and Practice*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Greenwood, Stephen M.
1974 "Buddhist Brahmins," *Archives Europeennes de Sociologie* XV, 483–503.
- Iltis, Linda
1985 *The Svastani Vrata: Newar Women and Ritual in Nepal*. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International.
- Ishii, Hiroshi
1986 "Institutional Change and Local Response," in Ishii et al. *Anthropological and Linguistic Studies of the Gandaki Area and Kathmandu Valley in Nepal*. Tokyo: Monumenta Serindica.
1987 "Social Change in a Newar Village," in N. Gutschow and A. Michaels, eds. *Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley*, 333–354.
- Jorgensen, Hans
1931 *Vicitrakarnikavadanoddhrta: A Collection of Buddhist Legends*. London: Royal Asiatic Society.
- Kane, P.V.
1974 *History of the Dharma Sastra*. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.
- Lewis, Todd Thornton
1984 *The Tuladhars of Kathmandu: A Study of Buddhist Tradition in a Newar Merchant Community*. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International.
1988 "A Chronology of Newar-Tibetan Relations in the Kathmandu Valley" in Sigfried Lienhard ed. *Publicazioni del Centro Piemontese di Studi sul Medio ed Estremo Oriente* (Turin), forthcoming.
1989 "Newars and Tibetans in the Kathmandu Valley: Ethnic Boundaries and Religious History" *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 37 (2), 1989, forthcoming.
- Locke, John K., S.J.
1979 *Karuṇāmāya: The Cult of Avalokiteśvara-Matsyendranath in the Valley of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Sahayogi Press.
1985 *Buddhist Monasteries of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Sahayogi Press.
1986 "The Vajrayāna Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley," in *The Buddhist Heritage of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Dharmodaya Sabha.
1987 "Uposadha Vrata of Amoghapāśa Lokeśvara in Nepal," *l'Ethnographie*, 83 (100–101), 159–189.
- Macdonald, A.W. and A. Stahl
1979 *Newar Art*. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.
- Manandhar, Thakur Lal
1986 *Newari-English Dictionary*. Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan.
- Malla, Kamal P.
1981 *Classical Newari Literature: A Sketch*. Kathmandu: Nepal Study Centre.
- Monier-Williams, Sir Monier
1956 *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*. (2nd ed.) London: Oxford University Press.

- Mullin, Glen (translator)
1980 *Six Texts Related to the Tārā Tantra*. New Delhi: Tibet House.
- Owens, Bruce
1988 *The Politics of Divinity in the Kathmandu Valley: The Festival of Bunga Dya/Rato Matsyendranath*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Columbia University.
- Robinson, Richard H.
1966 "The Ethic of the Householder Bodhisattva," *Bharati*, 9 (2), 25–56.
- Roerich, G.N.
1953 *The Blue Annals of gZhon-nu-dpal* (Vol. 2). Calcutta.
- Rosser, Colin
1964 "Social Mobility in the Newar Caste System," in C. Furer-Haimendorf, ed. *Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon*. Bombay: Asian Publishing House.
- Sakya, Hemaraj
1977 *Śrī Svayambhū Mahācaitya*. Kathmandu: Vikas Mandal.
- Sircar, D.C.
1967 *The Śakti Cult and Tara*. University of Calcutta.
- Snellgrove, David
1987 *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*. (2 Vols.) Boston: Shambala.
- Stablein, William
1978 "A Descriptive Analysis of the Content of Nepalese Buddhist Pujas as a Medical-Cultural System, with References to Tibetan Parallels," in James Fisher, ed. *Himalayan Anthropology*. The Hague: Mouton, 403–411.
- Tambiah, Stanley J.
1970 *Buddhism and the Spirit Cults of Northeast Thailand*. Cambridge University Press.
- Templeman, David
1981 *The Origin of the Tara Tantra* by Jo-nan Taranatha. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
- Toffin, Gerard
1975 "Etudes sur les Newar de la Vallee Kathmandou: Guthi, Funerailles et Castes," *l'Ethnographie*, 2, 206–225.
1986 *Societe et Religion chez les Newar du Nepal*. Paris: CNRS.
- Vajracarya, Amoghavajra
1972 *Āryya Tārā Stotra*. Kathmandu: Nepal Printing Service.
- Vajracarya, Ratna Kaji
1981 *Yem Deyā Baudhha Pūjā Kriyāyā Halamjvalam*. Kathmandu: Sankata Printing Press.
- Wadley, Susan S.
1983 "Vrats: Transformers of Destiny," in Charles F. Keyes and E. Valentine Daniel, eds. *Karma: An Anthropological Inquiry*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 147–162.
- Wayman, Alex
1971 "Buddhism," *Historia Religionum*, II, 372–464.
- Wells, Kenneth

- 1975 *Thai Buddhism: Its Rites and Customs*. Bangkok: Suriyabun. (Second ed.)
Wilson, H.H.
- 1828 "Notices on Three Tracts Received from Nepal," *Asiatic Researches*,
16, 450–478.