

A NOTE ON THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VAJRAYOGINI OF SĀKHU

Dilli Raj Sharma
CNAS/TU

Sākhu, an ancient Newar town located in the east of the Kathmandu valley, stretches north to south on the foothills of Manichuda. Sākhu has long preserved its architectural and cultural heritage, thus, occupying a prominent status in economic and religious fields. As an important location of regular cultural and religious activities, it has served a *cause celebre*. This article tries to analyse the historical activities that have endured in distinct characters reflecting historical and cultural values.

The Name 'Sākhu'

Sākhu is known by several names. 'Sakva' and 'Sākhu' are used in the Newari and Nepali languages respectably. It is also known as 'Gūbāhā' that signifies the 'Vihara of the hill' or 'nine Viharas'. However, Gūbāhā is basically attributed to Vajrayogini, a deity's temple lying on the hill closeby. The following arguments exist for the name of the place.

1. Some narrate the name 'Sakva' that also means the 'crow' (in Newari) of hilly regions as it is considered the habitat of the crow.
2. It is also considered that 'Sākhu' in Nepali is the corrupt form of 'Saṅkha' or conch, as the town is believed to be in conch shape. It is also said that when Sankara Deva ruled over the area, the name of the town was called 'Saṅkarāpura' or 'Saṅkarāpurē' in Sanskrit writings.
3. The old site of Vajrayogini is still been said 'Gūbāhā'. The word 'Gūn' implies ambiguous meaning such as 'hill' and 'nine' respectively in Newari language. The late Dhanavajra Vajracharya defined it as the 'bāhā' or Vihāra of the hill or jungle side. However, there is also a strong belief that because of the nine Viharas in this area, it is also named as 'Gūbāhā'.

which corresponds to this region. Subsequently the shortened name 'Sakva' came to be used for Sākhu in Newari. In the earlier art of the fifth century A.D., Vajrayogini of Sākhu was indeed represented as 'Gūvihār', a popular residential place for the Buddhist monks on the sloppy hills of Manichuda. The Gopal Vamsavali, a chronicle of fourteenth century, described the names like 'Saṅkosa' and 'Saṅkha' for Sākhu, while in the Malla period some inscriptions offer words like 'Sakva' and 'Sankarapure' for this place.

The Builder of Sākhu Town

According to the legends of Nepal, King Sankar Deva of the early medieval period was the actual founder of the Sākhu town, Although we cannot trace the name of Sankara Deva in the inscriptions and coins. According to the Vamsavali and colophones, the king Sankara Deva ruled over the area. But, three Sankara Deva names are enumerated in different documents covering from the later Lichhavi to the medieval period as the prominent ruler of the Kathmandu Valley. The Gopal Vamsavali narrates that Sankara Deva had ruled the valley after Vardhaman Deva, while the chronicle collected by Wright and Kirkpatrick has mentioned Bala Deva as his predecessor. Wright Vamsavali further describes that Sankara Deva was the actual founder of Sankhu town (Wright 1993:153); however, this account is not found in other Vamsavali, nor has it been proven yet in archaeological sources.

It is also notable that in the earlier medieval period the literary records mention the names Sankara Deva in the Lichhavi and Thkuris dynasties. And in Thakuri dynasty two Sankara Deva names are found, one after Raghava Deva and another after Nagarjuna Deva (but the Gopal Vamsavali mentioned the name Vardhamana Deva in the place of Raghava Deva). Petech has mentioned that the first Sankara Deva had ruled over here after Raghava Deva in 63-82 N.S. (i.e. 943-962 A.D.) and second in 189-202 N.S. (1069-1082 A.D.) (Petech 1984:31-46). Regmi has put the chronological date to Sankara Deva in 40-60 N.S., immediately after Jaya Deva (Regmi 1965:112). Sankara Deva, who Wright mentioned as the builder of Sankhu, appears to have reigned at the beginning of the Nepal Sambat. He is also perhaps the first who is equally described by different vamsavalies as the ruler of the early medieval period. The vamsavali to Wright's collection also narrated that at the time of Bara Deva the orthodox Hindu ideology penetrated into the northern region with a group of orthodox Brahmins (Wright 1993:152). As a consequence, Hindu influences had taken their place over Buddhist ideology, and it had created a new ground for the idea of *tantrik* contemplation, regarding the emanation of various gods and goddesses. Thus, since the early medieval period Buddhist traditional religion was embedded in the perennially

changing stages by replacing the new Buddhist deities on the one hand and through the influence of the Hindu religion approaches on them on the other. In this regard, Sankhu had taken a vital role in expanding the new ideology of Buddhism in the northern region.

Sākhū as an ancient Buddhist Centre

On the steep hills of Manichuda there existed a Buddhist Vihara prior to the temple of Vajrayogini. Although there is a lack of inscriptional evidence, many Vamsavalies and colophones support this fact without doubt. One colophone in the possession of Chandraman Joshi reads '*Sambat 801 magha krishna pratipada maghā nachhatra sōma bara thwo kunhu sri 3 Gunbihara Vajrayogini*' (Vajracharya 2022:9). It strongly supports that Vajrayogini was also called by the name of 'Gūvihār'. Dhanavajra Vajracharya, a prominent historian says the word 'Gū' is originally derived from the Kirāti language meaning 'hill with jungle' (Vajracharya 2028 (v.S.):23). Moreover, the word 'Gū' also mean 'nine' in Newari numbers. The given word is being use in both ways. The above cited information and fragments of the structure lying in the vicinity of the Vajrayogini temple as well, support its existance back to the Kirat period. On the western side of the present temple of Vajrayogini, there are several rock-cut caves which visualised the ancient shelter for the Buddhist monks, more commonly, used at the time of *Barshavyash* or could be the religious practicing places for the initiation of the boy into monkhood. One of the caves is carved in a huge stone 1.80 meters high and having two rooms of 1.81x2.18 and 1.5x1.65 metre size respectably. These must be the dwelling place for the meditating person.

This evidence suggests that Sākhū has been an important Buddhist centre from the time of the advancement of Buddhism in Nepal. The rock-cut viharas are found in various places of India. Many such caves were built around 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. (Snellgrove 1957:43). In the context of Buddhist monumental history of India, the earlier caves were presumably used by monks for four months a year (1957:42). The rock-cut caves of Sākhū presumably indicate the residence of Hinyani monks at the time of the beginning of Christain era. Some ancient types of small Chaityas which are lying about the ground on the eastern edge of Vajrayogini, exhibit the ancient structural fragments of viharas. In the same manner the Gopal Vamsavali narrates that when King Mana Deva I chopped his father's head unknowingly, he expressed deep regret and underwent austere penance in Gū vihara. The words of Vamsavali '*tatradhyo bahutara viharasthan*' (Vajracharya and Malla 1985:28-29) denote that there were many such viharas before the time of Mana Deve I. According to Manishaila Mahābadān there was an ancient vihara named '*Padmamāla*' on the hills of Manichuda

(Vajracharya 1082 (N.S.):29). Its name could have been used synonymously to the Gūvihara as mentioned in Sanskrit, for there is a tradition of giving Sanskrit names to various viharas, thus suggesting its previous existance. The construction of the various viharas as undertaken when the Māhāsaṅgika tenet in Buddhism was popular in this area. In the eighth century A.D. Padmasambhava, one of the popular spiritual teachers of Buddhist *tantra*, also visited Sākhu and stayed in the cave with his *mudra* (consort) (Gyawali 2019 (V.S.):251). Padmasambhava is still regarded as Guru Rimpoche in Tibet. Consequently, Sākhu was regarded as the important educational centre and got popularity at that time in the advancement of Buddhism. Many such Viharas built in different corners of Sākhu town visualised the regular support of the people in the development of Buddhism. Manishaila Mahābadan, however, described nine Viharas as having been built in Sākhu town. Not a single Vihar remains now, except for their locality names being used by local people along with the Buddhist devotees who pay solemn offerings in the full moon day of Srawan month every year.

Manishaila Mahābadān narrated that there were Siddikula Māhāvihara (Thathu Bāhā) in Dhunla Tol, Vajrachakra Māhāvihara (Opi Bāhā) in Salkha Tol, Gyan Chakra Māhāvihara (Yam Bahi) in Durgahiti Tol, Dharmadhatu Māhāvihar (Sui Bāhā) in Dathunani, Gunākar Māhāvihar (Ko Bāhā) in Sun Tol, Jayanakar Māhāvihara (Mansu Bāhā) in Chalaku tol, Dharmachakra Māhāvihara (Om Bāhā) In Durgāhiti and Henākar Māhāvihar (Duchen Bāhā) in Dathu Chok. Some writers also narrated the name of Padmagiri Dharmadhātu Māhāvihara to Yogeswore Bāhā and Kirtipunya to Gūvihara (Vajracharya 2039 (V.S.):65). In this regard, the writers have listed Padmagiri and Kirtipunya names in a single number stating both Viharas were built side by side on the present temple complex of Vajrayogini. This information is based on legendary sources, however, Padmagiri seems closer to Padmamāla to whom the text described as an ancient Viharas located on the Manishaila hills. Among many Viharas cited above, Hēnākar, Gūnākar, Kirtipunya and Dharmachakra Māhāviharas had also been built in Kathmandu by the same name in the earlier phases of the medieval peeriod (Gyawali 2019 (V.S.):284). Similarly, in 954 (V.S.) the text entitled 'Lokesworā Satakayā Tikā' written by Ratnānanda Bajracharya of Dharmadhatu Māhāvihara, Sākhu, signifies its existance in the early medieval period (Vir Library 2021:21). In this context, Padmagiri Dharmadhatu Mahāvihara is perhaps indicated to Gūvihara. At that time it was quite common that various viharas and their sub-branches were established in official and private capacity (Lock 1985:17).

Thus, from Gūvihara nine Viharas were developed at various historical junctures. And Gūvihara had acquired an oldest and significant status from

long since. In the first half of the tenth century A.D. the Buddhist religion undregone a slow change into the *tantra* and *mantra* doctrine. As a result, many Buddhist viharas received renown as important centres for *tantrik* education. Many scholars at that time come and stayed in many such viharas of Kathmandu Valley. They also visited Tibet as a religious mission.

Gūvihar of Sākhu was popular from earlier stages of Buddhist religion. Gellner opined that in the monasteries of Nepal some of the practices have descended from that of the Buddhist Hinayana doctrine (Gellner 1993:221). In this same manner Guñvihar of Sākhu has many special traditions reflecting the ancient thērabāda Buddhis tradition. The serving priest of Vajrayogini, who functions on rotational basis now, must renounce his family and home throughtout the period of worshipping the deity. During this limited period he must stay in house near the temple entirely as a monk, reminisecent of ancient practices of Buddhist monkhood. Moreover, as Gellner inferred, the beating of the wooden gong is an ancient tradition of Buddhist monasteries (Gellner 1993:179). Vajrayogini of Sākhu has been following the tradition of beating the log of wood in three times a day, exhibiting more or less the continuity of old tradition.

Sākhu as an ancient Trade Centre

When the Nepal-Tibet trade opened during the time of the Lichhavis, Sākhu acquired an important commercial status as a trade route between Nepal and Tibet. From the time of King Amshuvarma, Buddhism penetrated into Tibet through Bhrikuti, a daughter of the royal family from Nepal (Evans 1957:74). This gave a new form to social and economic relations between the two countries. One inscription at the time of Siva Deva II gives some references about the trade relation in the Lichhavi period (Vajracharya 2030:515). The route that passed through Sākhu was perhaps the shortest one to Kuti from Kathmandu. This relation was nourished by the rulers throughout the medieval period. From Sākhu it took nearly seven days via Kuti to Tibet. From Kathmandu, the route passed by Siphali, Bhimal, Khursani Bari, Dachhi, Saranko Chaur, Sākhu, Jaharsimha Pauwa, Bharē Nagrē, Nawalpur, Chautara, Barabisē and lastly Kuti in Tibet. In the course of trade many merchants migrated to Tibet from Sākhu. Their dessendents still reside in Tibetan market centres and follow the same ancestral occupation. This trade relation fostered up the national economy in the earlier Malla period. At this time Nepalese currency circulated in Tibet as a part of vital trade links and activities.

During the late 18th century A.D. the Nepal-Tibet war took place on the ground of trade dispute. Later, a treaty was signed by both the countries in 1789 A.D. The second article of the treaty obliged Tibet to pay an annual

tribute of 300 *dotsed*¹ to Nepal (Upreti 1980:38). According to this treaty, Nepal received a large amount of silver from Tibet imported through the route of Sākhu. This is testified even by the oral tradition narrated by the old peoples of Sākhu. It is also said that the huge bags carrying silver were called 'Toda' made from sheep's leather. The *Todas* were carried by the people on their backs, and the carriers rested on the *pāti* (resting place) of Inla Tol, Sākhu. These bags were again lifted by the people of Sākhu up to Thali village, that is, west of Sākhu. Thus Sākhu was on the main point of Nepal-Tibet trade, benefiting it economically before the opening of Banepa-Tatopani route.

Sākhu as a Fortified Town

Although, the settlement of Sākhu evolved in the early period of Lichhavi dynasty, King Sankar Deva of the medieval period had planned and built it as a fortified town. What is unearthed from Manishaila Mahābadan is that King Sankar Deva as the first King of a planned town, combining seven villages around this area, justified the town, was built historically, on the earlier stage of medieval period. Since then, Sākhu also tried to preserve its skill in the distinct character of art and cultural heritage. It is also notable that during the writer's field visit to Sankhu in 1994, various kinds of bricks that were moved out of the ditches in the course of digging the sewage came to light. Three types of bricks were recorded at that time from a one metre deep ditch at Dhunla Tol, on the northwest edge of the town. The bricks measured 25 x 16 x 5 cm, 21 x 14 x 4 cm and 17 x 7 x 7 cm in different dimension and distinction respectively. The first one seems to be older than the rest. The first and second type were used for building purposes, while the third one was perhaps used for paving roads of the town. This strongly bolsters the evidence that the construction of the town was undertaken according to a proper plan. Similarly, some bricks of 35 x 29 x 11 cm size were also recovered on the surface of Inla Tol area which visualised the structure of an ancient palace of the town. In Newari the name *layaku* (royal palace) is still pronounced for the site, further stressing it as an ancient palace of a politically semi-independent king. The *Dabali* of Inla Tol, which is believed as the throne of the king, is 60 cm high from ground level and three metres square in plan. People mostly worshiped this place at the time of Dashian festival and Khata Yatra day. On the south edge of the town, there is a mound not above two metres from ground level. It is still considered as the *Kot* (Fort) and worship continues to be performed there on the occasion of the great Hindu festival, Dashain.

The religious text Manishaila Mahābadān carries a long story about the origin of the goddess Vajrayagini and Sākhu town. The original text,

however, was written in Sanskrit.² Varnavajra Vajracharya elaborated the story in the Newari language later. According to this text Sankara Deva ruled over Sākhu in accordance with the deity's suggestion. The text also elaborated that the town planning was first introduced by the *tantrik* teacher named Joge Deva Vajraharya. In this connection the formation of eight *tols* along with four *patis*, *dabalīs* and four entrance gates were also erected in different directions of the town. The Goddesses *astamatrika* (eight female powers) were installed for protection over the town. Therefore, the plan obviously visualised spiritual as well as physical proficiency of a fortified town. In the interior part of the town the management of drinking water, link roads and installation of many gods and goddesses were made on its suitable pattern. Zanen has opined that the fortification of the town was planned according to mandala design of Buddhist tradition (Zanen 1986:148-150). According to this text each of the *astamatrika* goddesses was installed in her appropriate location, namely Kumari in Inla Tol, Nilakali Chamunda in Khalsa gate corner, Nilabhairab Rudrayani in Sakhangal gate, Vaishnavi in Om Bahal, Mahesware in Chalakhu Tol, Indrayani in Sambaha, Swetbhairab Brahmayani in Salkha Tol and Ganesh Bhairabi in Bhairabi in Bhagu gate. It has also been described that the four different gates of the town were built for different purposes. For example, the gate of Salkha (northeast) was for sending the dead body to cremation, Sahaga gate (southeast) was for sending the married daughter, Bhagu gate (southwest) was for receiving the new bride and Dhunla gate (northwest) was for welcoming and sending the deities at the time of *Khata Yatra* day. It is also interesting to note that this tradition is still live and kicking in Sākhu. Thus, Sākhu has preserved its own traditional culture that developed in distinct character of a circumscribed or fortified town. As described by Gopal Vamsavali the fortified town was open by Jayarjun Deva and Jayasthiti Malla in 490 N.S. (1370 A.D.) (Vajracharya and Malla 1985:63). This has confirmed the view that this fortified town was constructed much before this date, likely for political safety.

Origin of Vajrayogini

The Vajrayogini site was famous for Buddhist vihara from the beginning of the Christian era. The vihara was called 'Gūvihar', and precisely this site was the main centre of 'Therabada' or 'Hinayana' Buddhism. Gradually, during the past days, it also came under the influence of the new tenet of Buddhism. This is confirmed from an inscription at Sākhu, where the word 'Mahāsaṅgika' is mentioned. The word virtually indicates the new concept of Buddhist religion that was introduced in eighth century A.D. precisely as a result of continuous reform. Later, when the new ideology was advanced, *tantra* was also became embedded in the Vajrayana concept of Buddhism,

which got immense popularity in Nepal.³ *Vajra* is virtually a symbol of *tantra* and it is considered as the source of *dharma*. This conceptual view was expounded at the time when Padmasambhava visited Nepal and stayed in Sākhu in the beginning of eighth century A.D. (Gyawali 2019 (V.S.):251). He had also visited Tibet and had introduced *tantrik* Buddhism in Tibet (Evanswetz 1957:72). Since then many Buddhist monasteries were built and have enshrined the *tantrik* gods and goddesses. In all the monasteries of Tibet the image of Dorje Naljworma (Vajrayogini) is being installed as a form of *Dakini*. She is being invoked at the moment of *Guru Sadhanā*. The Tibetan legends tell that at Terdium Sanctuary, 20 km west of Drikung Thil, a dangerous lake once existed. At that time Vajrayogini was manifested in the form of wisdom body of *karma Dakini* and helped to drain the lake (Loseries 1994:48). Furthermore, the cave nearby the lake is considered as the important place where Padmasambhava had spent seven years with his disciple and consort, Yeshe Tsogyal (1994:48). Sākhu, as the centre for Tibet, thus experienced a great deal of change in its *tantrik* system prior to the *tantrik* religion gaining influence over Tibet. As a result, many votives 'Chityas, as well as the image of Vajrayogini, were installed in the steep hills of Manichuda.

Manishaila mahābadān has mentioned a story about the origin of the goddess Vajrayogini. According to the story, King Asoka of Pataliputra had arranged a visit to Guru Upagupta in Kurkutāram Vihara in order to hear the spiritual discourse. In course of delivering the lecture, the guru told him that at the very beginning there was a vihara named 'Padma' in the northern Himalayan range where Buddha had delivered a lecture about the origin of Vajrayogini or Ugra Tara. Tathagat had told that the goddess had sprung from the lump of luminous flame which arose from the cliff of two stones and resided here as a famous goddess. It is also notable that in the Tibetan legend the cave Kiri Yongdzong's central channel of the roof is considered as the form of Goddess Vajrayogini (Loseries 1994:48). Thus, Vajrayogini as cited above, affiliated to the cave and stones make a strong point of her origin in steep or arid hilly regions. The Manishail Mahabadān text described its earlier story on the origin of the hill Manichuda that it was named after King Manichuda. The text itself mentioned that the story was virtually the description of the previous life of Buddha. The story, however, lacks historical proof. It also synthesizes the fact that many legendary traditions continue to cover Buddha's life in the medieval period of Kathmandu Valley.

The later Vamsāvalis, on the other hand, state that Surya Malla (1520-1530 A.D.) started to celebrate the Khata Yatra of goddess Vajrayogini along with Jogeswora, Simhini and Byaghrini (Sharma 1968:9). However, it is difficult to sketch out its architectural references prior to the time of Pratap Malla

(1641-1647 A.D.). At the time of King Pratap Malla, Vajrayogini temple was built in the *Grantha Kuta* devala style (i.e. sikhara style). It was Bhaskar Malla (1701-1715) who later made the Nepalese style in the place of *Grantha kuta* style (Vajracharya 2024 V.S.:378-379) in the steep hill of Manichuda.

The Iconography of Vajrayogini

The notable gilded image of Vajrayogini illustrates the representative forms of the *shakti* goddess of Buddhist *tantra*. According to Bhattacharya the image rather resembles Ugra Tara or Mahachin Tāra, which was being carried by a Bangali priest in 1315 A.D. (Bhattacharya 1987:157). But it is still difficult to testify the opinion expressed by the writer. Mahachin Tara, according to Buddhist text, should be represented in Pratyalidhāsana pose and stand on the corpse. She is visible in terrible face having *Khadga* and *karti* in right and *Kapala* and *utpala* in left hands, respectably. However, these iconographical features could not found with the metallic image of Vajrayogini. The figure of goddess Vajrayogini Sākhu has two hands with *khadga* in right and *nilotpala* in left hands. However, because of the inaccessibility to the shrine it is difficult to sketch out the features of the deity, the replica of the image kept inside the nearby house gives a strong support. The scholars have also accepted the same as a general conception (Sharma 1970:3, Slussar 1982:331). Buddhist texts also point out that the features of Vajrayogini should be illustrated in the terrible expression with *Vajra* in the right and *kapala* in left hands. And the *Khatavang* should be hung on her left shoulder. This form of Vajrayogini resembles with Nairatma, although Vajrayogini could be identified only in the form of her *Alidha* posture (Bhattachary 1987:57). These features, however, do not follow the image of Vajrayogini. Here she holds *Khadga* and *Nilotpala* inspite of *Vajra* and *kapala*. The Vajrayogini of Sākhu in peaceful appearance is undoubtedly dissimilar to the iconographical features of Vajrayogini mentioned by the texts. It is also reasonable to mention that the gilded image of tynpanum is also defferent from the above-cited images in its iconographical features. This image is with eight hands carrying *Khadga*, *Bindu*, *Karti* and *Vajra* in the right and *nilotpala*, *Dhanu*, *Parashu* and *Kapala* in the left hands respectably. The deity is standing on a corpse in *alidhāsana*⁴ pose with her terrible expression. However, the pose of the legs corresponds to the Vajrayogini described by text. The posture of protruding stomach and tongue does not meet with any more. In this context, the small gilded image of upper door jambs is rather identical to the features of Ugra Tara. It has four hands with *Khadga* and *kamala* in the right, while on the left there are *Patra* and *Bindu*. The small deity is also standing on a corpse in *Pratyalidhasana* posture.

The broze image of Vajrayogini is flanked by two guards—Simhini and Byagrini on her both sides. These are the popular protectors of the deity commonly found elsewhere in the form of animals. The Sākhu image, on the contrary, is being represented in human bodily forms, exhibit a notable characters of the Vajrayogini itself.

Patron Deity of Sākhu

For the people of Sākhu Vajrayogini is still considered as the patron deity. The legend joins the remote past in the derivation of the deity in Sākhu. According to the tradition, the town of Sākhu was brought into existence only by the deity's suggestion. When the Vajrayan tenet was popular in the valley, the image of Vajrayogini was placed for the wellbeing of the people in past succeeding generations on the sloppy hills of Manichuda. Later, she was equally incorporated in Hindu Pantheon and was known as one of the forms of *Dashamahabidhya*.

Vajrayogini patronised the people of Sākhu in different ways. The initiation ceremony of Buddhist Newar boys is being held in the premises of the temple, and on other occasions there is a compulsory representation of at least one person in the *Khatayātra* procession from each houses. On this occasion each participant must carry the lamps hands. The procession of the deity is managed by a group named *Chhewadi*.

People show their respect to the deity using the word “Mai” (Mother) to address her. It is done to justify the mother status or protector of the inhabitant of Sākhu. Also, there is tradition to regard her as the daughter of the inhabitant. On the first day of *Khatayātra* as it is also believed that she along with her husband and kids visit her natal home. And while the *yatra* is finalise she is being carried by the people in her original place. On the following day a group of women and men seperatly make a visit to the deity to find out whether she is in good condition.

Despite her spiritual compliments, the goddess Vajrayogini is also considered as the earthly guide to the people of Sākhu. This is testified by a big bell hung in front of the temple that is rung three times a day. The inhabitants of Sākhu, therefore, set their time and fix their working period according to the sound of the bell. If the bell rings out of its schedule, it alerts the inhabitants of some unforeseen activities. In this context, the goddess has being deserved to carry on as an important patron deity of Sākhu.

Vajrayogini and Jogeswora

The temples of Vajrayogini and Jogeswora are built side by side on a common courtyard in traditional Nepalese style. The two storeys temple of Jogeswora contained a Buddhist Chaitya inside the shrine. The stone Chaitya

is approximately two metres high from the ground level and has been decorated with metallic coverage. The temple has four cardinal doors with wooden tympanum in three sides and gilded in western side. Also the temple has four small niches above the door panel containing the four Dhyani Buddhas (meditating) sitting their respective postures. The Chaitya is also worshipped along with the main deity-Vajrayogini. The Chaitya is named 'Jogeswora' by the local people. In Manishaila Mahabadāna there is a story that interestingly elaborated. Jogadeo Vajracharya who had taken care of a child as mandated to him by the goddess in dream. The story further describes that the small child was later named as Sankar Deva, the first king of Sankhu town. From the legend it is suggested that Jogeswora Chaitya was named after Jogadeva Vajracharya. He as perhaps a *tantrik* teacher during that time when Vajrayan came into being in the Kathmandu Valley. Later, there had developed a tendency of worshipping the Chaitya as Jogadeo, who was considered as the form of the husband of goddess Vajrayogini. At the time of the *Khatyatra* procession the separate *Khata* of Jogeswora is carried by the people in a *Chaitya* form. The *Chaitya* housed in the near by temple is conceived as the prototype of the original one. The approach certainly carries an admixture of the traditions that considered the deity as the spiritual as well as bodily representation for commonality of Sākhū.

Conclusion

From many archaeological as well as oral traditions one can conclude that Sākhū has been preserving its religious, economic and political heritage as a whole since the beginning of our historical period. From the religious point of view, it has contributed a wide philosophical perspective to the advancement of Buddhist religion. While the trade route was opened via Sākhū, it also had acquired a religious prominence which then extended up to Tibet in the wake of eight century A.D. This ultimately made a great change in the development of art and architecture that ennoble the place of traditional practice. This is visible in the strong beliefs and the ways of expression. This ultimately makes a strong supposition that as it bears its past pristine glories in the unique features of the early medieval town of Nepal, it is a continuity of Nepalese heritage so far.

Notes

1. In this text it has not clarified the word *dotseds*. It is fact the right pronouncation is *rdo-tshed*, which denotes a silver bullion of one about four pounds of weight (i.e. $300 \times 4 = 1200$ pounds) of Silver.
2. Many Buddhist religious texts in Sankrit connected to King Asok Avadanas were preserved in Nepal (Rays Davids- *Buddhist India*, Sushil Gupta Pvt Ltd, Calcutta, 1959, p. 127).

3. The Sanskrit religious text named 'Yakalla Viranam Chandra Maharosana Tantram' (of Sambat 547) mentioned the various *Ganas* of Vajrayogini namely Swyetchala, Pitachala, Raktachala, Shyamachala, Mohavajrya, Pishunavajrya and Irshyavajrya Vajrayogini. (Brihat Suchi Patram, fist part, Bir Library, 2021 V.S. p. 86).
4. P.R. Sharma narrated the posture *ardhaparyankasana* to this deity, however, the poture seems resemble to the *alidhasana*. (P.R. Sharma, "A note on some bronzes at Vajrayogini." *Tribhuvan University Journal*, Vol. V, No. 1 (1970)

References

- Bir Library. vs 2021. Brihat Suchi Patram part I, Kathmandu.
- Evanswentz, W.Y. 1957. *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Oxford; Oxford University Press.
- Gellner, David. 1993. *Monk, Householder and Tantrik Priest*. U.K.; Cmridge University Press.
- Gyawali, Surya Bikram. vs 2019. *Nepal Upatyaka Ko madhya kalin Itihas*. Kathmandu:Royal Nepal Acadeemy.
- Jocke, John k. 1985. *Biddhist Monestaries of Nepal* Kathmandu:Sahayogi Press Pvt. Ltd.
- Loserries, Andrea. 1994. "Sacred Geograpgy and individual in Central Tibet Tardrum sanctuary, a Training Patha within the Drikung Mandala." *The Tibet Journal* 19(4).
- Petech, Luciano. 1984. *Medieval History of Nepal*. Rome: Istitutoitaliano per il medio ed estremo oriente.
- Regmi, D.R. 1965. *Medieval Nepal*. Part I. Calcutta:Firma K.L. Mukhopadhaya.
- Sharma, P.R. 1970. "A note on some bronzes at Vajrayogini." *Tribhuvan University Journal*, Vol. V, No. 1.
- Snellgrove. D.L. 1957. *Buddhist Himalayas*. Oxford:bruno cassire.
- Upreti, Prem R. 1980. *Nepal-Tibet Relation*. Kathmandu:Puga Nara.
- Vajrachaya, Dhanavajra. vs 2028. "Gun Vihar" *Madhuparka* 4(12).
- Vajracharya, Dhanavajra. vs 2030. *Lichhavi kal ka Abhilekh*. Kathmandu:INAS, T.U.
- Vajracharya, Dhanavajra and K.P. Malla. 1985. *The Gopalraj Vamsavali*. Kathmandu: Nepal Research Centre.

- Vajracharya, Gautam Vajra. vs 2023. "Lichhavi kala ka Panch wata abhilekh" *Purnima* 3(1).
- Vajrachaya, Ratna kaji, and Vijaya Ratna. vs 2039. *Nepal Deya Biharaya ta cha*. Kathmandu;Ratnakaji Vijayaratna.
- Vajracharya, Varnavajra. vs 1082. *Manishaila Mahabadan*. Parts 1&2. Banepa:Sagar Press.
- Wright, Daniel. 1993. *History of Nepal*. Second Reprint. New Delhi:Asian Educational Services.
- Zanen, Sj.M. 1986. "The Goddess Vajrayogini and the kingdom of Sankhu" *Purusartha* 10.