

**Siva in Trouble:
Festivals and Rituals at the
Pasupatinatha Temple of
Deopatan (Nepal)**

AXEL MICHAELS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Śiva in Trouble

SOUTH ASIA RESEARCH

SERIES EDITOR

Patrick Olivelle

A Publication Series of
The University of Texas South Asia Institute
and
Oxford University Press

The Early Upaniṣads
Annotated Text and Translation
Patrick Olivelle

Indian Epigraphy
A Guide to the Study of Inscriptions in Sanskrit,
Prakrit, and the Other Indo-Aryan Languages
Richard Salomon

A Dictionary of Old Marathi
S. G. Tulpule and Anne Feldhaus

Donors, Devotees, and Daughters of God
Temple Women in Medieval Tamilnadu
Leslie C. Orr

Jīmūtavāhana's Dāyabhāga
The Hindu Law of Inheritance in Bengal
Edited and Translated with an Introduction
and Notes by Ludo Rocher

A Portrait of the Hindus
Balthazar Solvyns and the European Image of India 1740–1824
Robert L. Hardgrave

Manu's Code of Law
A Critical Edition and Translation of the Mānava-Dharmaśāstra
Patrick Olivelle

Nectar Gaze and Poison Breath
An Analysis and Translation of the Rajasthani Oral Narrative of Devnārāyan
Aditya Malik

Between the Empires
Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE
Patrick Olivelle

Managing Monks
Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism
Jonathan A. Silk

Śiva in Trouble

*Festivals and Rituals at the Paśúpatinātha
Temple of Deopatan (Nepal)*

AXEL MICHAELS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

2008

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press, Inc., publishes works that further
Oxford University's objective of excellence
in research, scholarship, and education.

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi
New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Copyright © 2008 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016
www.oup.com

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise,
without the prior permission of Oxford University Press.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Michaels, Axel.

Śiva in trouble : festivals and rituals at the Paśupatinātha Temple of Deopatan (Nepal) /
Axel Michaels.
p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-19-534302-1

1. Fasts and feasts—Hinduism. 2. Fasts and feasts—Nepal—Deopatan.
3. Hinduism—Nepal—Deopatan—Rituals. 4. Paśupatinātha (Temple : Deopatan,
Nepal) 5. Deopatan (Nepal)—Religion. I. Title.

BL1239.78.N352D466 2008

294.5095496—dc22 2007034722

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

Preface

Deopatan, the “City of (all) Gods,” and the Paśupatikṣetra, the “Field of Śiva or Paśupati,” have noticeably changed over the past decades. Not only have several temples been renovated and restored but many houses and monuments have also been destroyed, shifted, or displaced. The consequences of these urban and social alterations influence the ritual structure of the city and its festivals to an extent that many citizens and pilgrims, worried about the future of their deities and its processions, ask themselves: To whom does Paśupati and his vicinity belong?

All this happened during a period when Nepal also changed politically, socially, and economically. The very question of the identity of the people from Nepali parallels the debates about the Paśupatinātha Temple: What is the (religious) centre of Nepal? With whom one is to identify? Are federalism and democracy, decentralization and local autonomous forms of governance the best answer to Nepal’s religious and social diversity? Or are centralized and unitary models of governance to be favored? In a more general sense, these questions concern notions of socioreligious imagination and hybridity generated by modernization, especially the development of public spheres and their new media as well as the propaganda of democratic, nationalistic, and socialist ideals.

The conflicts that arose after the changes had been implemented at the Paśupatinātha Area reflect such public debates and concerns. Discussions revolved around whether priests from Nepal should

substitute for the Indian Bhaṭṭa priests, whether the income of the temple and other religious institutions should be put under supervision of a democratic government rather than being left to the uncontrolled rule of the Paśupati-nātha Temple and its priests, and whether the influence of the palace should be minimized or strengthened. Since Paśupati is regarded as the tutelary and protective deity of Nepal and his temple as a national sacred monument, such discussions reach far beyond the limits of Deopatan. At times, it is even alleged that the future of Nepal depends on the solution of these problems since the gods have to be pacified and live in peace if humanity also wants the same.

The present book reflects the situation before these radical political changes but also shows that the Paśupatinātha Temple has always been a touchstone of Nepal's identity. This book combines a translation of some relevant chapters of my German Habilitation thesis on the Paśupatinātha Temple and its vicinity (Michaels 1994) and articles on festivals in Deopatan that have been published elsewhere over the years.¹ All chapters have been revised. The epilogue gives an overview of the current situation in Deopatan and includes new data from fieldwork done in the autumn of 2006.

Besides fieldwork material, I have, to a great extent, used historical documents and inscriptions as well as Nepalese chronicles to describe and analyze festivals and rituals at Deopatan. In particular, I have used the so-called Wright's chronicle, of which I am preparing the *editio princeps* based on a *codex unicus* kept in the Cambridge University Library. It is a Buddhist recension which Daniel Wright, resident surgeon at the British Residency, translated into English with the help of two pandits. However, Wright's *History of Nepal* (1877), a text full of misreadings and wrong translations, is not a reliable source. (Even more corrupt is the 1966 Indian reprint). The same is true for the chronicles edited by Bikram Jit Hasrat, who used various *vaṃśāvalīs* (now kept in the India Office Library at the British Library, London) which were sent to London by Brian Hodgson, British Resident between 1821 and 1843, dividing them in Buddhist (Nevārī) and Brahmanical (Nepālī) versions. However, due to a lack of critical editions and the translation of other *vaṃśāvalīs* both chronicles remain important sources for the discussion of Nepalese history.

The following peculiarities should be noted:

If not evident or otherwise stated, all non-English words are Sanskrit (abbreviations: Nep. = Nepālī, Nev. = Nevārī).

Generally I differentiate between *-jātrā* (Newar city processions) and *-yātrā* (brahmanic processions) as well as between Nep. *guṭhī* and Nev. *guthi*.

The transliteration of Nepālī words follows mostly Turner's dictionary (see R. L. Turner 1931: xvi–xix) or the *Nepālī Bṛhat Śabdakośa* V.S. 2040. However, I transliterate the inherent *a* more often than Turner in order to indicate the

Sanskrit background of certain terms, e.g., Nep. *prasād* < Skr. *Prasāda*, etc. *Anusvāra* and *anunāsika* are generally transcribed with the circumflex sign over the preceding vowel; however, in Sanskrit loan words (*tatsama*) it is adjusted to the following consonant. The phoneme /*kh*/ often written in Old Nepālī with the “*ṣ*”-sign is always transcribed by *kh*. The transliteration of Nevārī texts follows the principles of Gutschow/Kölver/Shresthacarya (1987: xi–xii).

I generally differentiate between a) the deity Paśupati, b) the temple complex area (Paśupatinātha), c) the holy field of Paśupati (Paśupatikṣetra), and d) the city Deopatan, which also includes the Newar settlements.

If not otherwise indicated, all photos are mine, mostly taken between 1981 and 1984.

This page intentionally left blank

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgements are given separately for each of the chapters, but here I want to express my sincere gratefulness especially to my colleague and friend Govinda Tandan who shared with me his detailed knowledge of Deopatan. I am also grateful to Mrityunjaya Karmacarya and Madan Bhatta for all kind of background information, Nutan Sharma for his patience and help with many questions and for preparing the legend for the plates in chapter 7, my Nepālī teacher Laxmi Nath Srestha for his help in the early period of my fieldwork, Philip Pierce, Katja Ehrhardt, Katrina Kelsey, Anand Mishra and William “Bill” Templer for translating, or revising my English, and, as ever, Niels and Wau Gutschow for manifold advice and hospitality. I also thank Anand Mishra and Bao Do for their help in the editing process. In a special way I am grateful to Christiane Brosius for her constant encouragement to return to my studies on the Paśupatinātha Temple and for her criticism.

I thank the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (German Research Foundation) for support granted during the years 1981–1990 when the fieldwork was carried out. Last but not least, I owe many thanks to Patrick Olivelle and Oxford University Press for accepting this book for publication.

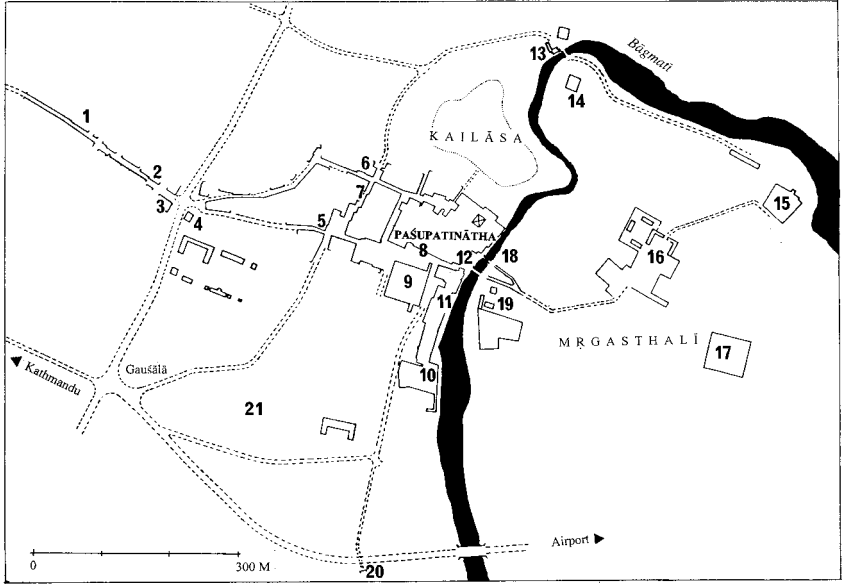


FIGURE I.I. Map of Deopatan: 1 Tāmreśvara Temple, 2 Lūhiti, 3 Jayavāgīśvarī, 4 Amālkoṭ Kacahari, 5 Bhuvaneśvarī Temple, 6 Dakṣiṇāmūrti Temple, 7 Śaṅkara Temple, 8 Vajraghar, 9 Pañcadevala Temple, 10 Rājarājeśvarī Temple, 11 Burning Ghāṭ, 12 Vatsalā Temple and Ārya Ghāṭ, 13 Gaurī Ghāṭ, 14 Kīrāteśvara Liṅga, 15 Guhyeśvarī Temple, 16 Gorakhnātha Temple, 17 Viśvarūpa Temple, 18 Pandra Śivālaya, 19 Viṣṇu Temple (known as Rāma Temple), 20 Vajreśvarī Shrine, 21 Vanakālī Temple (drawing by Harald Fritzenkoetter and Niels Gutschow, 1984 and 2007)

Contents

Figures, xiii

Tables, xvii

Abbreviations, xix

1. The Paśupatinātha Temple Area, 3
2. The Procession of Lamentation (Dūdūcyācyāñjātrā), 47
3. The Worship for the Salvation of the Country
(Deśoddhārapūjā), 55
4. The Festival of the Goddess Piḡāmāi, 69
5. The Festival of the Goddess Vatsalā, 79
6. The Procession with the Trident (Triśūljātrā), 107
7. The Goddess of the Secret and Her Procession
(Guhyeśvariñjātrā), 127
8. Bālā's Fourteenth (Bālācaturdaśī), 153
9. Śiva under Refuse and Goblin's Fourteenth
(Lukumahādyah, Piśācaturdaśī), 169
10. The Great Night of Śiva (Mahāśivarātri), 183
11. Paśupatinātha as a Place of Pilgrimage (Tīrthayātrās), 193

12. Deopatan Revisited, 209

13. Conclusion: Smārta and Newar Hinduism, 227

Notes, 237

Glossary, 253

References, 259

Index, 273

Figures

- I.1. Map of Deopatan (drawing by H. Fritzenkoetter and N. Gutschow), x
- I.1. Paśupatinātha area at dawn, 4
- I.2. City quarters of Deopatan (drawing by H. Fritzenkoetter and N. Gutschow), 5
- I.3. The Golden Well (Sūndhārā or Lūhiti), 7
- I.4. Paśupatinātha Temple complex seen from the east, 9
- I.5. Four-faced liṅga called Bhūteśvara (fifth century?), 12
- I.6. Votive liṅgas at the Rāma Temple, 13
- I.7. Nandī at the western door of the Paśupatinātha Temple, 14
- I.8. Virūpākṣa east of the Paśupatinātha Temple, 16
- I.9. Gaurighaṭ, 17
- I.10. Rājarājeśvarī Temple, 17
- I.11. Viṣṇu Temple known as Rāma Temple (fourteenth century), 18
- I.12. Buddha Śākyamuni north of Rajarājeśvarī Temple (tenth century), 19

- 1.13. Main priest (Mūlabhaṭṭa) of Paśupatinātha Temple, 22
- 1.14. Paśupatinātha Temple with burning ghāṭs, 28
- 1.15. Aghorī Pāgalānanda at Bhasmeśvaraghāt, 33
- 2.1. Map of Dūdūcyācyājātrā (drawing by H. Fritzenkoetter), 48
- 3.1. Deśoddhārapūjā: Karmācārya priests (right) with representatives of the four varṇas (left), 56
- 3.2. Deśoddhārapūjā: A varṇa representative with turban, 61
- 4.1. Pīgāmājātrā: seat (pīṭha) of the goddess Pīgāmāi with Navadurgā masks, 71
- 4.2. Pīgāmājātrā: Poḍes waiting for the processional litter of the goddess Pīgāmāi, 73
- 4.3. Pīgāmājātrā: The processional litter of Pīgāmāi is carried through the Bāgmatī River, 75
- 4.4. Pīgāmājātrā: The processional litter of Pīgāmāi is carried to the western entrance of the Paśupatinātha Temple, 76
- 5.1. Vatsalājātrā: Covering the seat of Vatsalā with flowers, 81
- 5.2. Vatsalājātrā: The garland (mālā) of Vatsalā during her procession, 84
- 5.3. Vatsalājātrā: The seat (pīṭha) of Vatsalā with the sieve containing the Dhvājuju or Jackal's deity, 86
- 5.4. Vatsalājātrā: Cremation fire for the "human sacrifice," 87
- 5.5. Vatsalājātrā: The feeding of the virgins (kumārīgaṇa), 89
- 5.6. Vatsalājātrā: Preparing for the Mohiṇīṭikā, 90
- 5.7. Vatsalājātrā: Pouring rice beer on the seat of Vatsalā, 91
- 5.8. Vatsalājātrā: Pilgrims bath in the rice beer flowing out of the Vatsalā Temple in the Bāgmatī River, 92
- 5.9. Vatsalājātrā: The procession litter of Vatsalā being carried through Deopatan, 95
- 5.10. Vatsalājātrā: The figure of Śaṅkara or Śiva fixed to the seat of Vatsalā, 98

- 5.11. Vatsalājātrā: The head of the buffalo nine days after it has been sacrificed and shortly before it is divided into eight pieces, 100
- 6.1. Triśūljātrā: Girls being bound on the top of the trident of the procession litter, 108
- 6.2. Triśūljātrā: A child being taken off the procession litter, 115
- 7.1. Guhyeśvarī Temple (drawing by Surendra Joshi, 4), 128
- 7.2. Guhyeśvarī Temple (photographer unknown, published by S. Lévi, 1905), 129
- 7.3. Groundplan of Guhyeśvarī Temple (drawing by Gyanendra Joshi, information by Nutan Sharma, 5), 131
- 7.4. Satīdvāra: The Gate of Widow Burning, 139
- 7.5. Old (Purāṇo) Guhyeśvarī worshipped in/as a flask and in/as a hole surrounded by a lotus-shaped plate, 144
- 7.6. Guhyeśvarījātrā: The procession litter of Guhyeśvarī at Hanumān Ḍhokā, 145
- 7.7. Guhyeśvarījātrā: A sword wrapped in brocade and stuck in the tahsī fruit, 149
- 8.1. Dogs warming up on a burning platform, 158
- 9.1. Lukumahādyah in a courtyard in Kathmandu, 174
- 10.1. Śivarātri: Rāmānandī ascetics at the Rāma Mandir, 185
- 10.2. The largest liṅga in Deopatan, 187
- 10.3. The Rāmānandī Rām Kṛṣṇa Dās who is living solely on milk products, 189
- 12.1. Deopatan 1982: The eastern lower town with dense settlement structures, Paśupatnātha Temple and Kailāsa Plateau, 211
- 12.2. Deopatan 2007: The eastern lower town cleared from settlement structures and the Kailāsa Plateau in the back, 211
- 12.3. Deopatan 2007: A new fountain well west side of the Paśupati, 213
- 12.4. Deopatan 2007: The new road toward the west gate of the Paśupatnātha Temple where all shops and street vendors have been removed (photographer: Bijaya Basukala), 220

- 12.5. Deopatan 2007: The former Nāsātvāḥ where almost all houses have been dismantled (photographer: Bijaya Basukala), 220
- 12.6. Deopatan 2006: The burnt and collapsed house (āgāghar) of a resident Bhaṭṭa priest, 223

Tables

- 1.1. Calendar of festivals in Deopatan, 34
- 3.1. Castes involved in the Deśoddhārapūjā, 56
- 4.1. A synopsis of the Vatsalā and Pīgāmāi rituals in the month of Caitra, 70
- 5.1. Composition of the Vatsalā Guthi, 80
- 7.1. Dates and events in the Guhyeśvarī Temple history, 135
- 13.1. Vegetarian and meat-eating deities, 232

This page intentionally left blank

Abbreviations

BhV	Bhāṣāvaṃśāvalī
DevM	Devamālā
Ep.Ind.	Epigraphia Indica
ERE	Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics
GopV	Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī
HKh	Himavatkhanda
H. M. G.	His Majesty's Government, Nepal
Mbh	Mahābhārata
Nep.	Nepālī
NepM	Nepālamāhātmya
Nev.	Nevārī
NGMPP	Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project
N.S.	Nepāla Saṃvat (N.S. 1, Kārttikaśuklapakṣa 1 = 20 October 879 CE)
PADT	Paśupati Area Development Trust
Par	Pariśiṣṭa
-Pur	-Purāṇa

RājBhV Rājabhogavaṃśāvalī

RājV Rājavaṃśāvalī

Skt. Sanskrit

Tss Tristhalīsetu

Tyās A Tyāsaphu A in: D.R. Regmi 1965–66/III

V.S. Vikrama Saṃvat (V.S. 1 = 56 respectively, 57 CE)

Quotation of Texts

I.I Paragraph.Vers

I:I Page:line

I:I Volume: page (RājBhV and RājV: Fascicle or part: page)

Śiva in Trouble

This page intentionally left blank

I

The Paśupatinātha Temple Area

The town of Deopatan, three kilometers northeast of Kathmandu, is above all famous for its main sanctum, the temple of Paśupati, “the lord of the animals,” a form of Śiva and the tutelary deity of the kings of Nepal since Licchavi times (c. fifth to seventh century). By its name alone, this temple attracts thousands of pilgrims each year and has made itself known far beyond the Kathmandu valley. However, for the dominant Newar population in Deopatan, the town is by no means merely the seat of Śiva or Paśupati. It is also a city of wild goddesses and other deities. Due to this tension between two strands of Hinduism—pure, vegetarian Smārta Hinduism and Newar Hinduism, which implies alcohol and blood sacrifices—Śiva/Paśupati has more than once been in trouble, as the many festivals and rituals of Deopatan described and analyzed in this book reveal.

In the eyes of many Hindus and Nepalis, Śiva, as the supreme being, can never be in trouble. For them, the following quotation from Padgagiri’s chronicle holds true: “First of all there was nothing in Nepal except Paśupatināth, whose beginning and end none can know or tell” (Hasrat 1970: 23). However, Deopatan, or the area around the Paśupatinātha Temple, the Paśupatikṣetra, is a historically and ritually complex field that is constantly contested. Different deities, agents, social groups, ritual specialists, and institutions are constantly seeking dominance, challenging and even fighting each other, thus contributing to the social and political dynamics and tensions that are indeed distinct in South Asia. I will concentrate on these

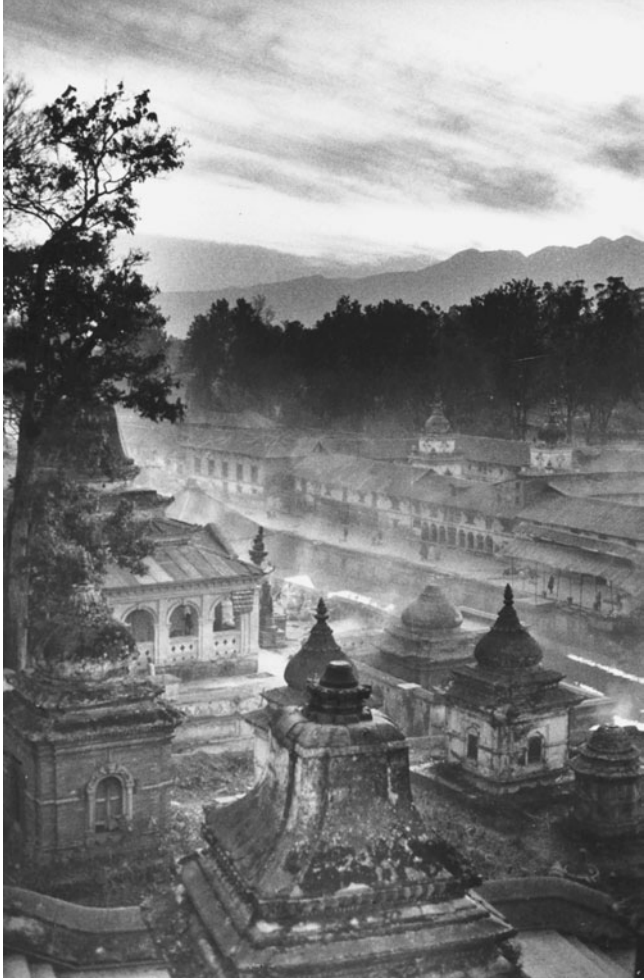


FIGURE 1.1. Paśupatinātha area at dawn

aspects in this book, leaving aside many spiritual and philosophical issues regarding Śiva and Śaivism that, if considered, would indeed lead to another book.

Topographical Structure

Deopatan is surrounded by large open spaces, fields, and formerly thick forests. In the east is Tribhuvan Airport, which used to be called Gauchar (“cow meadow”), and Mṛgasthalī (or Śleṣmāntaka) Forest; in the west, we find

Tapākhel, a large meadow that has been called the “goddesses’ romping grounds”; in the south are rice fields; and in the north is the Kailāsa Plateau, which always comes up in conversation as the site of the Licchavi palace.

The forested land, particularly Mrgasthalī, is important for Deopatan’s religious image. According to one myth of origin, Śiva/Paśupati and Pārvatī hid themselves in it in order to amuse themselves before being discovered by other gods. Thus the forest was, and continues to be, accorded special protection. Girvāṇayuddha Śāha (1799–1816 CE) went so far as to issue a royal order declaring the trees to be saintly persons (*ṛṣi*, *muni*) not to be desecrated under any circumstances.¹

The city itself has the structure of an elongated, one-street village, in which the old residential complexes and quarters, called *tvāḥ* in Nevārī and *ṭol* in Nepālī, are laid out along one of the roads coming from Kathmandu. This road leads downhill to the Paśupatinātha Temple. Deopatan was close to the old trading route from India to Tibet, and many travelers have left behind reminders of themselves at the site. From early days onwards, the Paśupatinātha Temple won a place for itself in the transregional topography of sacred places.

Paśupatinātha is a *tīrtha*,² a holy crossroads, and thus in a sense an *axis mundi*. Since no *tīrtha* (literally “ford”) is without water, the river Bāgmatī has always enjoyed great mythological and ritual status. At Paśupati there is said to

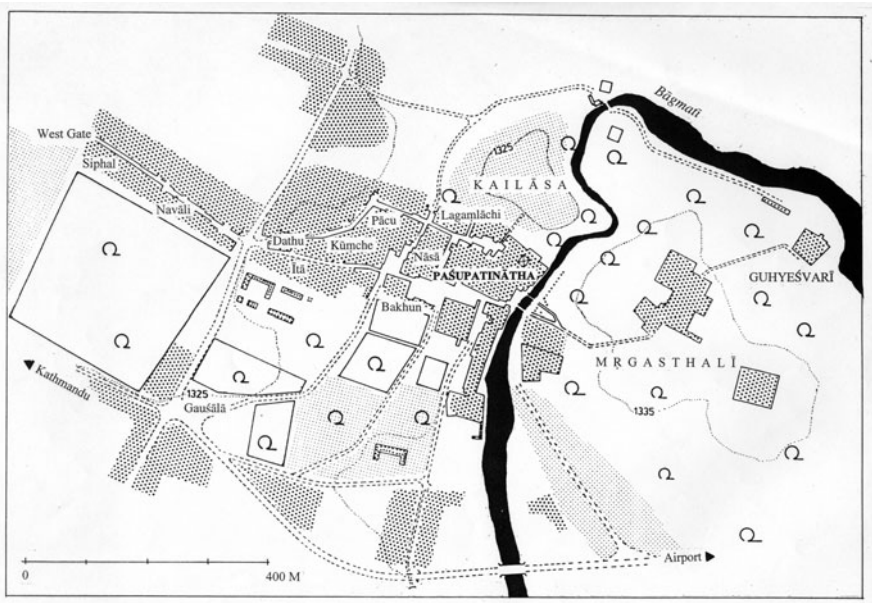


FIGURE 1.2. City quarters of Deopatan

be, for example, a *triveṇī*, a confluence of three holy rivers, like in Prayāga. Thus the approaches to the Bāgmatī are laid out with many bathing spots (*ghāt*) built for the comfort of pilgrims. Renovating such stepped sites, furnishing them with rest houses, or roofing them over has always been regarded as a meritorious deed. Ritually prominent are Āryaghāt, east of the main Paśupati-nātha Temple complex, which in its present form was largely laid out under Candra Śaṃśer (1901–1929). This is the only place where lustral water for Paśupati can be obtained and where members of the royal family can be cremated. In addition there is Bhasmeśvaraghāt, the main cremation site; in the north Gaurīghāt is the preferred bathing spot for women.

Apart from the Bāgmatī, artificially constructed bathing sites (*kuṇḍa*), particularly stepped fountains, serve an important function within temple ritual. One of the oldest such watering places is the Golden Well (Sūndhārā, or Lūhiti), which was renovated as early as 1388, at the latest, by Jayasthiti Malla (1367–1395). The bathing spot, containing many inscriptions and for the most part Vaiṣṇava statues, is located beneath a Kṛṣṇa temple. An eloquent example of a former well is the one located at Rājarājeśvarī Temple; on it stands the largest *liṅga* in Nepal, Virāṭeśvara. King Śaṅkaradeva is said to have filled it in because a person's future existence could be seen in it. And when he himself looked down into it he saw a rat swimming about far below.

Various gardens and parks interrupt the density of Deopatan's building scheme. They were generally endowed in order for worshippers to be able to provide the gods with flowers on a regular basis. One example is the park called Bhāṇḍarakhāla in the west, which was laid out during the reign of Pratāpa Malla (1641–1674) and enclosed by a wall during the rule of Raṇa Bahādur Śāha (1777–1799). The Vanakālī area and a new "garden for the gods" (Deva-Udyāna) north of the police station provide for relaxation and shade. Ritually more important are various enclosed spaces that sometimes serve as meeting points and at others as platforms (Nep. *dabū*, Nep. *ḍabali*) for the goddesses during festivals.

Deopatan was once presumably surrounded by a town wall. The only old city gate to survive, however, was the western one, even though its present form dates to the late nineteenth century. Still, within the city there are a number of gates that continue to draw ritual attention. This is particularly true of the Satīdvāra at the Rāma Temple, through which widows who were burnt to death, voluntarily or forcibly, used to pass. Prime Minister Candra Śaṃśer (1901–1929) had this gate covered with a heavy slab around 1920.

The space in Deopatan occupied by buildings has considerably expanded within the past two centuries. The Śāha kings, rulers in the Valley since 1769, and the Rāṇā family, occupants of the powerful post of prime minister from



FIGURE 1.3. The Golden Well (Sūndhārā or Lūhiti)

1846 to 1951, primarily contributed to the eastward shift of the city center. Among the endowments of these potentates are not only temples but also rest houses (Nep. *pāṭi*, *sattal*), such as the monumental Pāñcadevala Sattal, endowed by Raṇa Bahādur Śāha, and Chaugherā Sattal at Gaurīgḥāṭ. Some of these rest houses serve important functions during festivals and processions: During the Triśūlajātrā, for example, children are bound to a processional litter at Triśūla Sattal so as to make it appear that they have been run through with a spit. Furthermore, the Navadurgā dancers from Bhaktapur reside in Navadurgāpāṭi in Navālītvaḥ whenever they perform their ritual dances at various places in Deopatan.

The majority of Deopatan's population consists of Newars, who predominantly live in the old city center. The main castes represented are those of priests (Rājopādhya, Karmācārya), traders (Śreṣṭha) and farmers (Jyāpu, Maharjan, Daṅgol). Dispersed among these groups, as well as on the periphery, are Newar castes that previously, and to a certain extent even today, work as tailor-musicians (Gāine), washermen-musicians (Saṅghat), barbers (Nāu) or butchers (Kasāi), along with Indo-Nepalese castes (Bāhun-Chetri). The Poḍe (sweepers), who are regarded as impure, used to live in their own separate quarter, southeast of Ring Road.

As far as Deopatan's identity as a town is concerned, the tantrically worshipped goddesses and their festivals are of central importance. It is primarily

with the help of these goddesses that the town ensures its prosperity because it derives its origins from them; it is for their worship that the heterogeneous population groups come together, and it is to them that many local names of the city and city sections refer. Additional factors that contribute to the creation of a collective Newar identity are the clear antagonism that exists between town and forest (or surrounding land); the town boundaries, which are fixed in the consciousness of the Newar people by the presence of the seats (*pīṭha*) of the goddesses; an internal social organization centered on the town quarters; and a rejection of outside influence.

At first glance, to be sure, Deopatan is characterized by another sacred topography, one that issues forth from Paśupatinātha Temple or that is concerned with the latter. Paśupatinātha Temple opens the town out towards the outside world, connects it with the political center (Kathmandu), brings pilgrims to Deopatan, and places the town within the larger, superordinated mesh of the Great Tradition. In the town itself, this is primarily seen in the endowment-related activities and edifices centered around the old town's hub. Even though these buildings and shrines make up the larger share, they are less firmly rooted in Deopatan's population than the local goddesses.

The Contested Seats of the Gods

Deopatan is a city of gods and goddesses. Splendid pagoda-shaped temples are located next to easily missed small shrines or unroofed seats (*pīṭha*) of the goddesses. Most of the sacred sites are votive *liṅgas* (also called *śivālaya*), but gods and spirits also dwell in or around springs, fountains and trees, and at crossroads and thresholds, and they are often surrounded by bells, inscriptions, and divine attributes. Pre-Hindu deities intermingle with the great gods of the Indian subcontinent, Śaiva ones (naturally in the majority) with Vaiṣṇava and Buddhist ones. All this forms the religious heterotopia of Deopatan in which the tension between gods, especially between Śiva and the goddesses or "Indian" and autochthonous deities, are often seen and felt.

In the center, towering over all others, stands the Paśupatinātha Temple, in the middle of an open courtyard.³ It is a square shaped pagoda temple built on a single-tier platform measuring 23.6 meters from the ground. There are gilt, and richly ornamented silver-plated doors on all sides. Inside the temple there is a narrow walk engulfing the sanctum, a three-foot high *liṅga* with four faces and images of Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Devī, and Gaṇeśa.

On both sides of each door of Paśupatinātha Temple are niches of different sizes containing gold-painted images of various guardian deities. The struts

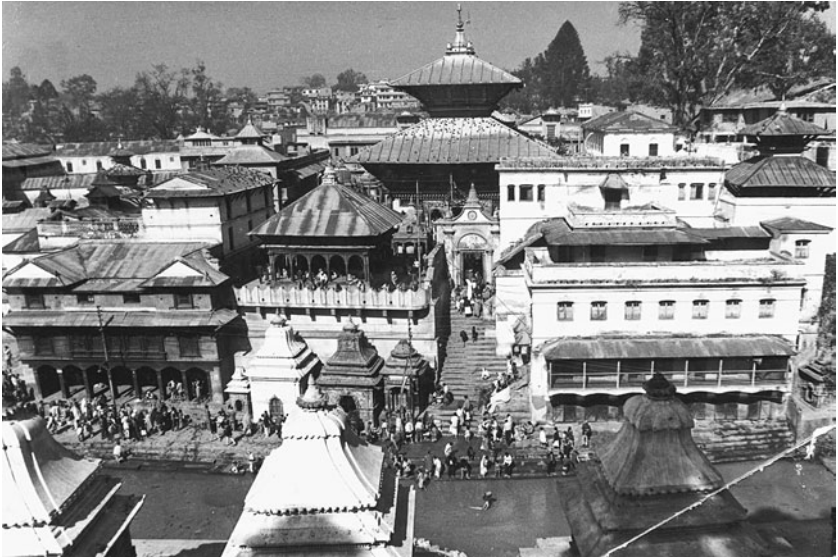


FIGURE 1.4. Paśupatinātha Temple complex seen from the east

under the roofs, dating from the late seventeenth century, depict wood-carved images of Śiva's "family" such as Pārvatī, Gaṇeśa, Kumāra, or the Yoginīs, as well as Hanumān, Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa, and other gods and goddesses from the epics.

Paśupatinātha Temple is surrounded by many old and important temples, shrines and statues. South of the Paśupatinātha Temple is, for example, Caṇḍeśvara, an inscribed Licchavi *līṅga* from the seventh century and in the north there is the temple of Brahmā, dating most probably from the ninth century. The temple of Vāsuki, the King of the Snakes, was built by Pratāpa Malla (1641–1674). Muktimaṇḍapa, a kind of ritual assembly hall, and the temples of Pārthiveśvara and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are dating from the period of Nṛpendra Malla (1674–1680).

South of Paśupatinātha Temple one also finds Dharmaśilā, a stone where sacred oaths are taken, and pillars with statues of various Śāha kings. Further to the south is a round temple, Koṭīlīṅgeśvara, erected by Pratāpa Malla in 1654. The temple is established in the center of many *līṅgas*, such as Caṇḍaśaṭṭhī which is a temple of 64 *līṅgas* and numerous votive *līṅgas* donated 1849 or 1864 by several Rāṇās and their wives.

Paśupatinātha Temple is barred to non-Hindus, but from Śleṣmāntaka Hill on the eastern bank of the Bāgmatī one can catch a glimpse of the compound's inner courtyard. It is uncertain when the shrine came into being. That

a pre-Hindu shrine stood at the site, as is constantly asserted, must be regarded as probable, but there is no proof of this. The influence of the Pāśupatas, a sect with a particularly radical form of ascetic practice, is also largely unknown. Pāśupati was from its early days onwards—this is a historical fact—a tutelary deity of almost all rulers of the Kathmandu Valley. As early as 605 CE, the Licchavi king Aṃśuvarman regarded himself as favored because he worshiped Pāśupati and touched the god's feet, as the subsequent formulaic inscriptions say.

As the local chronicles would have it, the temple was constructed by Paśuprekṣa of the Somadeva dynasty in the third century BCE or by Supuṣpadeva, a Licchavi king who lived thirty-nine generations before Mānadeva (ca. 464–505), as stated in an inscription erected by King Jayadeva II (713–733) in the Pāśupatinātha Temple's courtyard. It is only with the information in the Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī, Nepal's oldest chronicle, that Ananta Malla (1274–1307) had the temple renovated and the roof gilded, that matters are brought up to a historically better documented period. Pāśupati's preeminent position was quickly established and was enhanced by imitations of the temple, such as those in Bhaktapur (1460), Patan (1566) or Benares (early nineteenth century). Following a series of destructions, some wanton and others by the act of nature, Queen Gaṅgādevī had the temple renovated with three-tiered roofs during the reign of Śivasimha Malla, and in 1697 the temple acquired its present-day form under Bhūpālendra Malla (1687–1700).

Pāśupatinātha Temple has been the recurrent object of remarkable donations throughout the centuries. They range from small gifts up to the gilding and renovating of statues, extensive land grants, and valuable attributes and paraphernalia, including a rare “single-faced” *rudrākṣa* nut. Raṇa Bahādur and Girvāṇayuddha Śāha, in particular, donated more than two thousand *ropani* in lands to Pāśupatinātha Temple, and from their yields the lavish monthly Māhasnāna rituals and other expenses could be funded. Another favorite custom was to weigh out one's own weight in gold or silver for donation to the temple. Several pillars (*tulāstambha*) in the precincts of Pāśupatinātha Temple testify to this. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, land donations usually kept pace with the endowment of religious buildings, rest houses, fountains, and road paving.

Politically, Pāśupati came under the control of the Kāntipur Palace, that is, of the Kingdom of Kathmandu, but it was not drawn into the rivalries of the various Malla royal houses for venal gain. This is astonishing, given that the shrine was becoming a pilgrimage site increasingly known to India and thus economically attractive. To be sure, Pāśupatinātha is sought in vain in the standard lists of India's sacred places, but there is no lack of local panegyric,