

The Stupa of Bodhnath: A Preliminary Analysis of the Written Sources

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Written sources dealing with the stupa of Bodhnath are not as numerous as the host of Tibetan pilgrims that daily circle the large complex northeast of Pashupatinath from the early morning hours to late in the evening. L. A. Waddell, who devoted a short article to the stupa over 100 years ago, described it in the following words: 'It is the chief place of lamaist pilgrimage in Nepal, attracting far more votaries than the Sambhunath stupa, which is not far distant. Its special virtue is reputed to be its power of granting all prayers for worldly wealth, family and everything else asked for.' In the same breath, however, he is

forced to concede: 'But no description or account of the monument seems to be on record.'¹

What is available to Tibetan pilgrims, though, - and Waddell joins their ranks - is a 'printed booklet which is sold at the stupa.' This booklet is of interest to him, inasmuch as it details how the stupa is brought into direct connection with the most important legendary and historical personalities of 'early Lamaism.' The particulars Waddell gives concerning the printing of the text at hand are revealing: 'The print is a new revision by Punya Vajra and another disciple of the great Lama

1. L. A. Waddell, 'Note on the 'Ma-gu-ta' or Cha-rung kha-shar Stupa - a celebrated place of Lamaist pilgrimage in Nepal' in *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1882, pp. 186-189. Waddell included this 'Note' in his book *Buddhism and Lamaism of Tibet*, London 1895, pp. 315-317. Concerning the name Ma-gu-ta he writes (ibid, p. 189 = p. 317): 'The name 'Ma-gu-ta' - pronounced 'Makuta' - is doubtless a contraction for *Makuta bandhana*, the pre-Buddhist 'crested chaitya' such as existed at Buddha's death at Kusinagara.' According to Tibetan tradition it is a place name. See *mChod rten chen po bya rung kha shor gyi lo rgyus thos pas grol ba*, fol. 3a/2: *bal yul ma gu ta'i yul gru ru*, and the translation in K. Dowman, *The Legend of the Great Stupa*, Berkeley 1973, p. 24: 'in the country of Nepal in the district of Maguta.'

Zhab-dkar'. This latter Lama, I am informed, lived about fifty years ago, and gilded the short spire of the stupa and bailed the present investing wall.²²

This text, which bears the title *The History of the Great Stupa Bya-rung Kha-shor, the Hearing of Which Brings Liberation (mchod rten chen po bya rung kha shor gyi lo rgyus thos pa grol ba)*, is still the most important Tibetan source for speculation on the origin and development of the monumental site of Bodhnath. All other sources - and particularly the Nepalese documents - are for the most part brief references in the so-called 'chronicles' (*vamsavali*) and occasionally surviving oral traditions, the latter subject to manifold changes over the

centuries. A brief description of these sources and their adaptation by Western literature, therefore, would not appear to be inappropriate. Perhaps on this basis a comprehensive history of the stupa can later be formulated.

It was Sylvain Levi, in his wide-ranging cultural history of Nepal, who first undertook to date the construction of the stupa according to Nepalese tradition, and his result has held its claim to accuracy up to the present: 'Popular tradition associates its [= the chaitya of Budha-nath] construction with expiation of parricide; but the names of the personages vary from one tale to another. If the tradition which connects the name of Mana deva to this monument is exact the chaitya of Budh-nath

2. The guide for pilgrims to the stupa of Bodhnath is the text *mChod rten chen po bya rung kha-shor gyi lo rgyus thos pas grol ba*, 32 fols.; various editions are available. The edition mentioned by Waddell was made for the occasion of the stupa's renovation by Zhab-dkar Tshogs-drung rang-grol (1781-1851); on the biography of this Tibetan yogin from Amdo see F. K. Ehrhard, *Flugelschläge des Garuda* (= Tibetan and Indo-Tibetan Studies, Vol. 3) Stuttgart 1990, pp. 32-42. The first chapter of the text, known as an 'inventory' (Tib. *dkar-chag*), was translated by H. Hoffmann, *Marchen aus Tibet*, Munich 1965, pp. 42-46 ('Der Stupa der Cansehirtin'); a complete English rendition is provided by K. Dowman (as in fn 1). The text falls within the literary genre of 'treasure works' (Tib. *gter-ma*); it owes its final form to the 'treasure finder' (Tib. *gter-ston*) sNags-'chang shakya bzang-po (15th/16th cent.). The name Bya-rung kha-shor or Byar-rung kha-shor (Permission to Do What's Proper) is associated with the person of a woman keeper of geese and an unnamed king; this king grants the woman, who is without means in appearance only, permission to build a stupa, and does not reverse his decision when the people, envious of her, later protest on account of the building's size. Interesting parallel material relating to this legend and the construction of the stupa of bSam-yas is found in the 58th and 90th chapters of the biography of Padmasambhava; see *O rgyan gu ru padma 'byung gnas kyi skyes rabs nam par thar pa rgyos par bkod pa padma bka'i thang yig*, Delhi: Sherab Gyaltzen Lama and Archarya Shedup Tenzin, 1984, pp. 362-367 & pp. 552-557. For a translation cf. *The Life and Liberation of Padmasambhava*, part 2: Tibet, Berkeley 1978, pp. 360-363 & pp. 605-609; by an oversight on the part of the publisher, the stupa of Bodhnath was mistaken for the stupa of Svayambhunath. A revision of this comparative material would be a welcome contribution to the history of Bodhnath Stupa.

dates from the VIth century of the Christian era.³ According to this version, Prince Manadeva obeys the command of his father, King Vikmant, to kill a man lying concealed at a water source. This man is none other than the king himself. The reason for this self-sacrifice is the drying up of the source of 'Narayana lying on the water' (*jalasayana narayana*), at the foot of Sivapuri; this state of affairs calls for the sacrifice of a man who possesses the 32 traits of a 'universal ruler' (*cakravartin*). In order to spare his son, the father thus sacrifices himself. Since following the slaying the head of the victim will not come loose from the hand of the involuntary patricide, the latter seeks counsel from the goddess Mani-Yogini of Sankhu (another name for Vajrayogini, one of the four yoginis of the Kathmandu Valley). She directs Manadeva

to erect a temple in atonement for his act and personally watches over its construction. In gratitude Manadeva places her likeness at the temple's entrance.

That is not the end, however, of the story of the stupa's construction according to the Buddhist chronicle. We learn further that Manadeva composed a prayer, an exaltation of the Buddha, at the installation of the likeness.⁴ I do not rule out the possibility that the name of the stupa, the one familiar today to all pilgrims and tourists, may go back to this hymn (Buddha-Natha → Budh-Nath → Bodhnath). One last piece of information from the late *vamsavali* text has to do, interestingly enough, with a connection Prince Manadeva had with Tibet, and an additional name of the stupa of Bodhnath comes up: Khasa Chaitya.⁵

3. S. Levi, *Le Nepal: Etude historique d'un royaume hindou*, 2 vols., Paris 1905, Vol. 2, pp. 6-8 (= *Ancient Nepal: Journal of the Department of Archaeology*, no. 58 (1980) pp. 4-5). The tradition to which Levi here reverts is that of the Buddhist chronicles. Cf. the translation of the corresponding passage of one such chronicle in D. Wright, *History of Nepal*, Calcutta 1966 (reprint of Cambridge 1877), pp. 66-67; two different versions of the history of the founding are also found there. The enquiry becomes more complicated when, along with the later (Buddhist) chronicles, older ones are drawn upon, such as the *Gopalarajavamsavali*, see fn. 7. On the distinction between the earlier *vamsavalis*, composed around 1400, and the later examples of the genre (compiled in the first decades of Gorkha rule, i. e. around 1800) cf. L. Petch, *Mediaeval History of Nepal* (ca. 750-1482), 2nd rev. ed. (= Serie Orientale Rome, 54) Rome 1984, pp. 5-9.

4. See S. Levi (as in fn. 3), p. 7 (= *Ancient Nepal*, p. 4): "The hymn in honour of Buddha, composed by Manadeva on festivities of inauguration, is still popular with Nepalese Buddhists." Cf. in this connection D. Wright (as in fn. 3), p. 67: "The prince Manadeva on this occasion composed a special prayer, which is repeated by every Buddhist when performing puja in holy places. *The prayer*. Reverence to Ratna trayaya. I bow to thy lotus-like feet, O Lord! Thou art Buddha-thine asylum I seek. There are countless merits in worshipping Buddha. Thou art the master of religion, etc. (Footnote: The whole of the prayer is given in the original manuscript)."

5. D. Wright (as in fn. 3), p. 67: "According to Bhotiya (i. e. Tibetan) tradition, the Lama of Bhot, having died, became incarnate, and lived again as the Raja of Nepal, who built the Buddhist temple; and for this reason the Bhotiyas hold it in great veneration."

The motif of reincarnation in the case of the founding figure of the stupa of Bodhnath clearly reflects, in my opinion, the influence of Tibetan traditions in the historical writing of the 19th century; this motif in the form it takes in *The History of the Great Stupa Bya-rung Kha-shor* — was evidently adopted by the Nepalese Buddhists and projected on the stupa's Licchavi founder. In none of the Tibetan sources known to me, in any case, does a Tibetan lama with the name Khasa occur. But what is the explanation of the name Khasa, a name Nepalese folk etymology with its explanation of 'morning dew' (*khasti*) knew of? Fortunately, we have the record of a Tibetan author of the 18th century who addressed the topic.

The man in question was the 8th Si-tu-pa Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas (1700-1774), who visited the Kathmandu Valley during two trips in 1723 and 1748, and who evinced great

interest in the cultural traditions of the Late Malla-Period. In his notes on the second trip we find the following remark:

What is called by us (i.e. the Tibetans) *Bya-rung kha shor* the Nepalese designate *Kha-sa cai-ta*. As *kha-sa* appears to be a corrupt form of (the Sanskrit word) *kha-ta*, it is evidently the case that it means 'excavated stupa'. Is it not so, given the fact that the Yol-mo-ba Sakya bzang-po unearthed a mound, and consequently this stupa existed as something brought forth from a treasure?

(nged rang tshos bya rung kha shor zer ba
'di la|bal po rnam kyis/khasa cai tya ze|kha
sa zhes kha ta zur chag pa yin pa 'dra bas|
brkos pa'i mchod rten zer rgyu yin 'dra ste|
yol mo ba sakya bzang pos de'u 'bur zhiq
brkos nas mchod rten de gter nas drangs pa

S. Levi (as in fn. 3), p. 8 (= *Ancient Nepal*, p. 37), describes this situation in the following words: "Another Tibetan legend current in Nepal considers king Mana deva as the incarnation of a Tibetan lama named Khasa. Hence the origin of the name Khasa-chaitya often applied to the temple of Budh-nath." Finally, the details supplied by H. A. Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal*, 2 vols., London 1880; vol. 2, p. 261: "It is believed to have been built over the tomb, and probably to contain within its garbh some of the ashes or other relics of an eminent Thibetan Lama named Khasa, who, having come to Nipal on a pilgrimage from Lhasa, died, and was either burnt or interred at this spot." In his book *Buddhist Himalaya*, Oxford 1957, p. 288, fn. 22, D. L. Snellgrove distances himself from this etymology which enjoyed wide-spread favour: "Levi notes another name for this shrine, viz. *Khasachaitya*. The name in use, however, seems to be *khastichaitya*. This was explained as meaning the shrine of the Dew-Water (from *khasu*, dew; *ti*, water). While building was in progress, the water for mixing became exhausted owing to drought, but by spreading a cloth at night and squeezing the dew from it in the morning, sufficient water was obtained to finish the stupa." This interpretation too, the generally accepted one today among the inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley, is connected with the stupa's construction by Manadeva: see D. Wright (as in fn. 3): "When Mandeva began the work of building the temple there was a great drought, so that the workmen making the bricks could only get water by soaking cloths (in the beds of the streams) and wringing out the moisture."

yin pas yin nam).⁶

Abandoning for the time being the thread of enquiry represented by the Tibetan tradition, I should like to recapitulate the material presented thus far: according to the *vamsavali* text edited and translated by D. Wright and his assistants, and analysed by S. Levi, the original construction of the stupa of Bodhnath is ascribed to the Licchavi king Manadeva I (reigned ca. 464-505). The names Bodhnath and Khasti Chaitya can be connected with this act

of founding by Manadeva; the Tibetan tradition cited in sanction of this founding (through the status of the reincarnated Manadeva) is more likely to be secondary in nature. Of paramount importance for the Tibetan sources, rather, is the element of rediscovery, the unearthing of a buried edifice; this led to the name Excavated Stupa. What light do the older *vamsavali* texts shed on these matters? In the *Gopalatajavamsavali* it is said of Manadeva; "He killed his father unwittingly.

6. *The Autobiographies and Diaries of Si-tu Pan-chen* (=Sata Pitaka-Series, vol. 77), Delhi 1968, p. 267.5-6; cf. the somewhat misleading translation in T. T. Lewis and L. Jamspal, 'Newars and Tibetans in the Kathmandu Valley: Three New Translations from Tibetan Sources' in *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, no. 36 (1988), p. 207: "We then arrived at the place the Nepalese call Khasachaitya and we Tibetans call Jarung Kashor (i.e. Bauddha). The first name is a corrupted 'khata' and so the meaning should be 'dug-out stupa'. When Yornoba bZabo Shakya made a mound, the stupa came out. And so the name came into being." This citation is also reproduced in the biography of the sNgags-'chang Sakya bzang-po in *sNga' gyur chos 'byung ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mtsho*, Delhi; Lama Ngodrup and Sherab Drimed, Delhi 1986, vol. 3, p. 52.1-3. The etymology espoused by modern Western scholars deviates both from the Nepalese and from the Tibetan interpretation: the name *Khasti* is made to be connected with the relics of the Buddha Kashyapa. See U. Wiesner, *Nepal: Konigreich im Himalaya: Geschichte und Kultur im Kathmandu-Tal*, Schauenberg 1977, p. 218: 'Eine Tradition besagt, daß der Stupa Reliquien des Buddha Kashyapa enthält. Aus dieser Annahme wird auch der Name des Stupas, Khasti, erklärt'; and M. S. Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*, 2 vols., Princeton 1982, vol. 1, p. 277, fn. 46: "The name *Khasti* probably relates to the Manusi Buddha Kashyapa, whose relics are said to be enclosed in the stupa." On the relics of the Buddha Kashyapa see *mChod rten chen po bya rung kha shor gyi lo rgyus thos pas grol ba*, fol. 7a/2: *de bzhin gshegs pa 'od bsrungs kyi ring srel ma ga ta'i bre gang srog shing gi nang du bzhugs so gsol*, and the translation in H. Hoffmann (as in fn. 1), p. 46: "...und tatén unterhalb des holzernen Pfahles (*yashti*) ein Drona nach Art von Magadha Reliquien des Buddha Kashyapa hinein.' D. R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, part 1 (Early Medieval Period 750-1530 A.D.), Calcutta 1965, p. 571: "By the name Khasti Chaitya one is inclined to believe that this was associated with the Tibetans. Khasti identified with Khasa situated near Kerrong inside Tibetan territory lies on the main thoroughfare between Lhasa and Nepal.' This reference to the place name Khasa may at least provide an explanation for the name of the Tibetan lama whom H. A. Oldfield and S. Levi associate with the stupa. The place itself, however, is not located near Kyirong but on the second important trade route to Tibet, the one leading via Khasa to Nyalam, and than via Shigatse to Lhasa.

As he had committed such a monstrous crime, he wandered crying (in consternation). On reaching the hillock of Gumvihara he observed penances. By the merit of these penances, a great chaitya emerged (on the hillock). He consecrated the chaitya." Gum-vihara (Timber Mountain Monastery), east of Sankhu, is one of the oldest Licchavi monasteries of the Kathmandu Valley, a witness to Buddhism's early presence there. Here again then, as in the later chronicle, there is a connection with the patricide at Sankhu. The stupa that was erected in atonement, however, is now no longer a forerunner of Bodhnath, in view of the fact that today there still exists a stupa near the Vajrayogini temple in Sankhu associated with Manadeva's act of atonement.

Instead, it is written somewhat later in the *Gopalarajavamsavali*: 'King Sri Sivadeva (ruled for) 41 years and 6 months. A dome was built in the vihara he founded. He built a big khasau chaitya.'

These, then, are the most important Nepalese sources on the history of Bodhnath. I shall now supplement them with further material from the Tibetan tradition. A younger contemporary of the previously mentioned Si-tu Pan-chen is the Fourth Khams-sprul Rin-po-che Chos-kyi nyi-ma (1730-1780); he bequeathed to posterity a detailed 'description of the sacred abodes' (*gas-bshad*) of the Kathmandu Valley, and in it we find the following details concerning the stupa of Bodhnath:

7. Dhanavajra Vajracharya and Kamal P. Malla, *The Gopalarajavamsavali* (= Nepal Research Centre Publications, no. 9), Wiesbaden 1985, pp. 123 & 125. M. S. Slusser (as in fn. 6), p. 277, has previously looked into the contradictory traditions concerning the founding of the stupa of Bodhnath: 'Nepalese tradition and the chronicles credit its (i. e. Bodhnath) foundation to Licchavi royalty, the one ascribing it to Manadeva I as atonement for an unwitting patricide, the other to a successor, Sivadeva I (ca. A. D. 590-604).' She offers the following solution: 'It seems probable, however, that Manadeva was the builder, because of the persistent tradition that links his name to the Stupa, and that Sivadeva, the chronicler's choice, was its restorer. "Further elucidation will come, according to her, only by way of archaeological investigations; but as D. L. Snellgrove (as in fn. 5), p. 100, has previously noted: 'It would be most unwise to start digging into the side of Svayambhunath even with governmental permission. In the case of Bodhnath, such thoughts scarcely enter the mind, for the whole scene presents itself so firmly in terms of here and now.'" Cf. also in this connection Kamal P. Malla, "The Limits of Surface Archaeology" (book review) in *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1 (1983) p. 127. According to the Tibetan sources, in any case, it must be presumed that there were a number of mounds existing to the northeast of Pashupatinath, and that it would thus not have been so easy for sNgags-'chang Sakya bzang-po to locate the mound housing the stupa. What would prevent us, therefore, from assuming the presence of various constructions of the Licchavi kings in the area? Cf. the description of the 'archaeological' work of sNgags-'chang Sakya bzang-po in the work *rGyal ba yol mo ba chen po'i skyes rabs in Autobiography and Collected Writings of the Third Rig-'dzin Yol-mo-ba sprul-sku bsTan-'dzin nor-bu*, Dalhousie: Domcho Sangpo, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 30.4-31.1.

With regard to the stupa Bya-rung Kha-shor, in India and Nepal there are no new accounts when compared to those which are current in Tibet. The name is Kha-shva chaitya which is pronounced in a mixture of Newari and Tibetan. In several works of the great Vajracharya Mahavidyadhari, I have seen the spelling Bya-ri kam shva ma. Generally speaking, in ancient times, after demolitions and losses, this stupa was covered with dirt, sand, etc. to the point that it became invisible. When the moment for realizing the prophecies of Guru Rin-po-che arrived, the holy reincarnation, the Yol-mo-pa Rig-'dzin Sakya bzang-po, unearthed it, carried out with exactitude the repairs and restorations, and made known its true worth. The name of the great stupa became once more as famous as that of sun and moon.⁸

For the Tibetans, therefore, it is with the rediscovery of the stupa, the excavation of a buried site no longer recognized as such, that its reconstructible history commences. Rig-'dzin Sakya bzang-po, who bore the agnomen Yol-mo-ba, was responsible for the excava-

tion and repair work. Fortunately, biographical material is available on this Tantric master of the rNying-ma-pa school, and we can approximately determine his dates; according to the biography, which I draw on in the following, Rig-'dzin (or sNgags-'chang) Sakya bzang-po met personally with Padma gling-pa (1450-1521) and with 'Bri-gung Kun-dga' rin-chen (1475-1527), so that we may likewise set his dates between the second half of the 15th century and the first half of the 16th. In Nepalese historiography this would correspond to the beginning of the three Malla kingdoms in the Kathmandu Valley, which is assigned to the year 1482 with the death of King Yaksamalla.

We shall now, in conclusion, turn to the question of whether, during the excavations by Rig-'dzin Sakya bzang-po, anything is recorded reminiscent of the Licchavi Period and the kings Manadeva and Shivadeva, or of their stupa-building activities. The answer is no. Instead, another Licchavi king enters the picture, who is regarded as the successor of Shivadeva: Amsuvarman (ruled ca. 605-621). In a comment on the above citation of Si-tu

8. A. W. Macdonald and Dvags-po Rin-po-che, 'A Little-read Guide to the Holy Places of Nepal - Part II' in *Essays on the Ethnology of Nepal and South Asia*, vol. 2, Kathmandu 1987, p. 108. The "great Vajracharya Mahavidyadhari" referred to here is the rNying-ma-pa teacher Kah-thog Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu (1698-1755), an 18th-century Tibetan from East Tibet who left behind valuable documents on the culture of the Late Malla Period; see F.K. Ehrhard, "A Renovation of Svayambhunath-Stupa in the 18th Century and its History" in *Ancient Nepal: Journal of the Department of Archaeology*, no. 114 (1989), pp. 1-9. On the name Bya-ri kam sva-ma mentioned here for the stupa of Bodhnath cf., among other works, the biography of Rig-'dzin Tshe-dbang nor-bu: *Ngo mtshar dad pa'i rol mtsho* in *The Collected Works (Csung-'bum)*, Dalhousie: Damcho Snagpo, 1976, vol. 1, p. 209: *mchod rten bya tri kha sho'am | bya tri kam sho | dang bod phyir bya rung kha shor du grags pa'i mchod rten dir...* The forms *Bya-tri kha-sho | Bya-tri ka-sho | Bya-tri-kam-sho-ma* are obviously phonetic variations of the Tibetan expression *Bya-rung kha-shor*, in this case, too, the pronunciation approximates what the Fourth Khams-sprul Rin-po-che terms a 'mixture of Newari and Tibetan'.

Pan-chen it is written in the biography of Rig-'dzin Sakya bzang-po:

If that is the case, then evidently something was exposed by this great treasure that was not visible in the case of the earlier stupa. [And it is the case, as] bones of the Nepalese king Amsuvarman were brought to light [by Rig-'dzin Sakya

bzang-po] from the stupa's central axis (*yasti*) and distributed for creatures' well-being.

(*de lta na mchod rten sngar mi mngon pa la gter chen 'dis gsal bar byes pa yin pa 'dra'o | mchod rten gyi srog shing las bal po'i rgyal po' od zer go cha'i gdung gter nas bzhengs nas 'gro don la spel*)⁹

9. The biography of sNgags-'chang Sakya bzang-po in *sNga 'gyur chos 'byung ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mtsho* (as in fn. 6), p. 52 3-5. Cf. also the biography in *Bod du byung ba'i gsang sngags snga 'gyur gyi bstan 'dzin skyes mchog rim byon gyi rnam thar nor bu'i do shal* of Kun-bzang Nges-don klong-yangs (*1814), included in Khetsun Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 3, Dharamsala 1973, p. 525: '[Thus] the renovation of the stupa was carried out to the end; on this occasion bones of the Nepalese king Amsuvarman were brought to light' (*mchod rten zhig gsos mthar phyin 'grub | de skabs bal po'i rgyal po' od zer go cha'i gdung gter nas bzhes*). For a description of the circumstances surrounding the excavation work cf. the passage mentioned in fn. 7 from the pen of the Third Yol-mo-ba bsTan-'dzin nor-bu (1598-1644): 'When later he [i.e. sNgags-'chang Sakya bzang-po] was making his circumambulations on the top floor [of bSam-yas], he saw a paper scroll fall from above, and thus the command arose to repair the damage [to the stupa] Bya-rung kha-shor. Without the least doubt he [immediately] set off for Nepal. At the time [the stupa] Bya-rung kha-shor was something that couldn't be distinguished from the [other] mounds [of the region]. At first he paid worship to another mound, [thinking to himself] "This must be it." The mound, which thereupon said "Something has to be taken away at the other half [and not here], "is today still standing near the stupa. When [sNgags-'chang Sakya bzang-po] finally discovered the actual [mound] and subjected it to a thorough renovation, he said, "In spite of [the fact] that there is no water in the close vicinity, the possibility exists that there is some here." And when he had listened and dug at an empty spot that gave out a rhythmical sound, a water source arose that may still be seen today. In this way [his influence was] great and wonderful. Obviously [the memory] had arisen in his heart of how he earlier, [at the time] of the teaching of the Jina Kasyapa, had a birth as a helper [during the construction of the stupa]' (*de nas dbu (b)rtser zhabs skor mdzad pas thog las shog ril zhig babs pa gzigs pas | bya rung kha shor gyi zhig gso bar lung gi bstan te | tsham tshob med par bal yul la 'phebs | de'i bya rung kha shor kyang ri dang so sor mi phyed pa cig yod dā | thog mai 'di yin dgos te | ri gzhan zhig la phyag mdzad pas | phyed mar sang ba yin | zer ba'i ri de da lta yang mchod rten dang nye ba na yod do | star dngos rnyed de zhig gsos rgyas par mdzad tsho | nye sar chu med pa las | 'di na yod tshod yin gsungs nas der bsan las khrol khrol zer ba'i shul drus pas | chu thon pa yong da lta yod do | 'bi lta bu ni che ngo mtshar te | sngon rgyal 'od srungs gyi bsten pa [— bstan pa] la bran du 'khrungs pa de thugs lo shor 'du go*). For the dynastic history of Amsuvarman and its relation to Tibet see L. Petech, "The Chronology of the Early Inscriptions of Nepal" in *Selected Papers on Asian History* [= Serie Orientale Roma, 60] Rome 1988, pp. 156-159.

The association of the place where the stupa of Bodhnath stands in its present form with a cemetery was propagated in turn by Rig-'dzin Sakya bzang-po and his successors. In a religious and topographical description of the Kathmandu Valley from the year 1820 it is a matter of certainty for the author Chos-kyi bstan-'dzin 'phrin-las (1789-1838) that the stupa was erected over a cemetery:

This (*mchod-rten*) is also described as being one of the *mchod-rten* erected at each of the eight different cemeteries (*dur-khrod*) of the eight Ma-mo of the retinue of 'Jigs-byed at the time formerly when 'Jigs-byed Nag-po and his retinue

were defeated by 'Khor-lo sdom-pa.¹⁰

Against this background, then, the person of Rig-'dzin Sakya bzang-po and the representatives of the Lamaist priesthood following him who were responsible for the further upkeep of the stupa might be looked into more closely. This would go beyond the bounds of this preliminary survey of the written sources on the stupa of Bodhnath, but my intention is to pursue the line of enquiry on a later occasion. Nevertheless, reference may be made to the person of Zil-gnon dbang-rgyal rdo-rje (*1647), concerning whom we know, on the basis of two edited and translated documents, that he and his successors were appointed to be the Tibetan residents at the stupa.¹¹

10. T. Wylie, *A Tibetan Religious Geography of Nepal* [= Serie Orientale Roma, 42], p. 21; see also A. W. Macdonald and Dvags-po Rin-po-che (as in fn. 8): "Then Sakya bzang-po of Yol-mo and the third titular of the lineage, the Yo-mo-pa bsTan-'dzin nor-bu, explained that it is one of the group of eight Stupas, eight trees, and eight *smasana* as is the case of the Lhun-grub brtsegs pa'i *smasana*. It is thought that the protectress who is in front of the stupa, Puska dmar-ser, who takes intestines and eats them, is surely one of the eight Ma-mo. Lamas do not accept the tradition concerning their origin. However, if one consults a printed *gter-ma*, the *dkar-chag* of which is considered as containing the words pronounced by the great teacher (Padmasambhava), this is established; but I'm not going to go into this question here." Cf. also in this connection the details in K. Dowman, "A Buddhist Guide to the Power Places of the Kathmandu Valley" in *Kailash: A Journal of Himalayan Studies*, vol. 8, nos. 3/4 (1981), pp. 260-262.

11. D. Schuh, "Ein Rechtsbrief des 7. Dalai Lama für den tibetischen Residenten am Stupa von Bodhnath" in *Zentralasiatische Studien*, vol. 8 (1974, pp. 423-453, and id., "Eine Herrscherurkunde des 5. Dalai Lama aus dem Jahre 1676" in *Grundlagen tibetischer Siegelkunde* (= Monumenta Tibetica Historica, 3, 5), Bonn 1981, pp. 309-315. The addressee in both cases is Zil-gnon dbang-rgyal rdo-rje (*1647) or his successors; concerning him we know that he was regarded as the incarnation of the Third Yol-mo-ba sprul-sku bsTan-'dzin nor-bu (1598-1644), and that he likewise undertook a series of renovations of the stupa of Bodhnath; see *Rib 'dgin zil gnon dbang rgyal rdo rje'i rnam thar dang bka' bum*, Gangtok/Delhi: Gonpo Tseten, 1977, pp. 9.3-13.5, pp. 43.2-44.4 and pp. 78.2-82.3. The renovation described in the final section took place in 1707.