
Preface

Research on the Himalaya is increasing to an extent that can not be overviewed any more. The following is an incomplete attempt to summarize some areas of research to which the present volume intends to contribute.

Over twenty-five years ago the first architectural-anthropological analysis in Nepal (Bhaktapur) and India (Suchindram) emerged from a close co-operation of Indologists and architectural historians. This collaboration was followed by a multi-disciplinary research programme entitled *Great and Little Traditions in Nepal* which focused on the Kathmandu Valley: see the volumes edited by Kölver 1986, N. Gutschow/Michaels 1987, Kölver 1992, Toffin 1993 and Lienhard 1996. The results of this programme included studies concerning the Svayambhūnātha-Stūpa (Niels Gutschow, Bernhard Kölver), Kīrtipur (Reinhard Herdick), the Paśupatinātha temple (Axel Michaels and Govinda Tandan) and the northern Magars (Michael Oppitz, Anne de Sales) - to name only the projects on which the participants of the conference *Sacred Landscape of the Himalayas* worked. The built environment was being viewed beyond its material aspect, and thanks to intensive case-studies and field research new sacred dimensions of architecture and space opened up. Literary sources were made accessible and microfilmed, especially by the DFG-funded *Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project*, in which Franz-Karl Ehrhard and Axel Michaels temporarily acted as directors.

Extended field research in the northern Himalaya began only at the end of the eighties. Before that time many regions were inaccessible

to foreigners. Since then an attempt has been made to reconstruct the historical topography of the northern Himalayan region, especially that of the Tibetan cultural area. Sacred places, so-called “Hidden Lands” and “Power Places” are being localized, mapped and analysed, pilgrimage routes are being cartographically mapped, and for the first time patterns of sacralization at a village level are being discerned. There are fields which, until now, have been the subject of very little research. From 1992 to 1997 the German Research Council (DFG) supported the programme *Processes of Settlement and Nation-Building in the Tibetan Himalaya*, which provided an opportunity for numerous disciplines to devote themselves to the cultural history, archaeology and morphology of settlements in Mustang/Nepal and Ladakh/India. A few projects of this programme were carried out by architectural historians (Niels Gutschow, John Harrison, Amandus Vanquaille) who mapped settlement patterns (Lamayuru and Rinam in Ladakh, and Kag, Khyinga, and Te in Mustang) as a base from which to comprehend the elements which sacralize a given territory: the settlement area, the arable land, the extended cultivated area and the wilderness beyond. Social anthropologists (Kim Gutschow, Charles Ramble), geographers (Willibald Haffner, Christian Seeber) and Tibetologists (Franz-Karl Ehrhard) contributed on further levels to relate the mythic appropriation of landscape to archetypes which must be sought in Tibet itself.

Besides the DFG programmes, researchers in Humla/Nepal (Ada Gansach), Rukubji/Bhutan (Marc Dujardin) and Rinam (Kim and

Niels Gutschow) created, on the basis of their own measurements, maps of villages in order to show exact patterns of spatial order. Using this method, architecturally-oriented historians and architects have contributed immensely to our understanding of sacred landscape in the past few years. Tibetologists have also dedicated themselves to this area of research, mainly on the basis of literary sources (Brauen/Ramble 1993).

Within a Franco-Austrian research programme, works (by Anne-Marie Blondeau, Hildegard Diemberger, Guntram Hazod, and Samten Karmay among others) which examine the sacralization of landscape from the Tibetological-anthropological point of view were presented at a symposium, held in 1994, entitled *Sacred Mountain cults in the Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman Area* (Blondeau/Steinkeller 1996, Blondeau 1998). The book *Maṅḍala and Landscape*, edited by Macdonald (1997) which included contributions by Hildegard Diemberger, Franz-Karl Ehrhard and Charles Ramble, also falls within this spectrum of research.

More recently, the possible influence of the perception of environment on language has been examined from a linguistic and anthropological angle; an attempt was made to determine the relationship between semantic and cognitive structures. The results of these researches have been edited by Martin Gaenszle and Balthasar Bickel (Gaenszle/Bickel 1999).

Within the orbit of the Himalaya, Yunnan in South China, the Karakorum and Kumaon have also received a certain amount of scholarly attention. In addition to his extensive work on the Northern Magars of Nepal, Michael Oppitz has more recently turned his attention to the culture of the Naxi in Yunnan. His research has resulted in several publications as well as an exhibition at the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Zurich in 1998. Another exhibition about Bhutan, to which Marc Dujardin – amongst others – contributed (Schicklgruber/Pommaret 1997, cf. Aris/Hutt 1994) was held in Vienna, in Basel and in other cities.

Mention must also be made of the DFG-supported programme *Cultural Area Karakorum* which focussed primarily on the economic and geographical aspects of settlement development. The programme ended in 1995 with a conference in Islamabad, the proceedings of which have recently been published (Hermann Berger, Eckardt Ehlers, Karl Jettmar, Hermann Kreutzmann, Irmtraud Stellrecht, Hugh van Skyhawk; see Stellrecht 1998 and 1998a).

Last but not least, a programme of research concerned with the sacralization of space in Kumaon has been developed in the past few years (Monika Krengel, William Sax, and Claus-Peter Zoller).

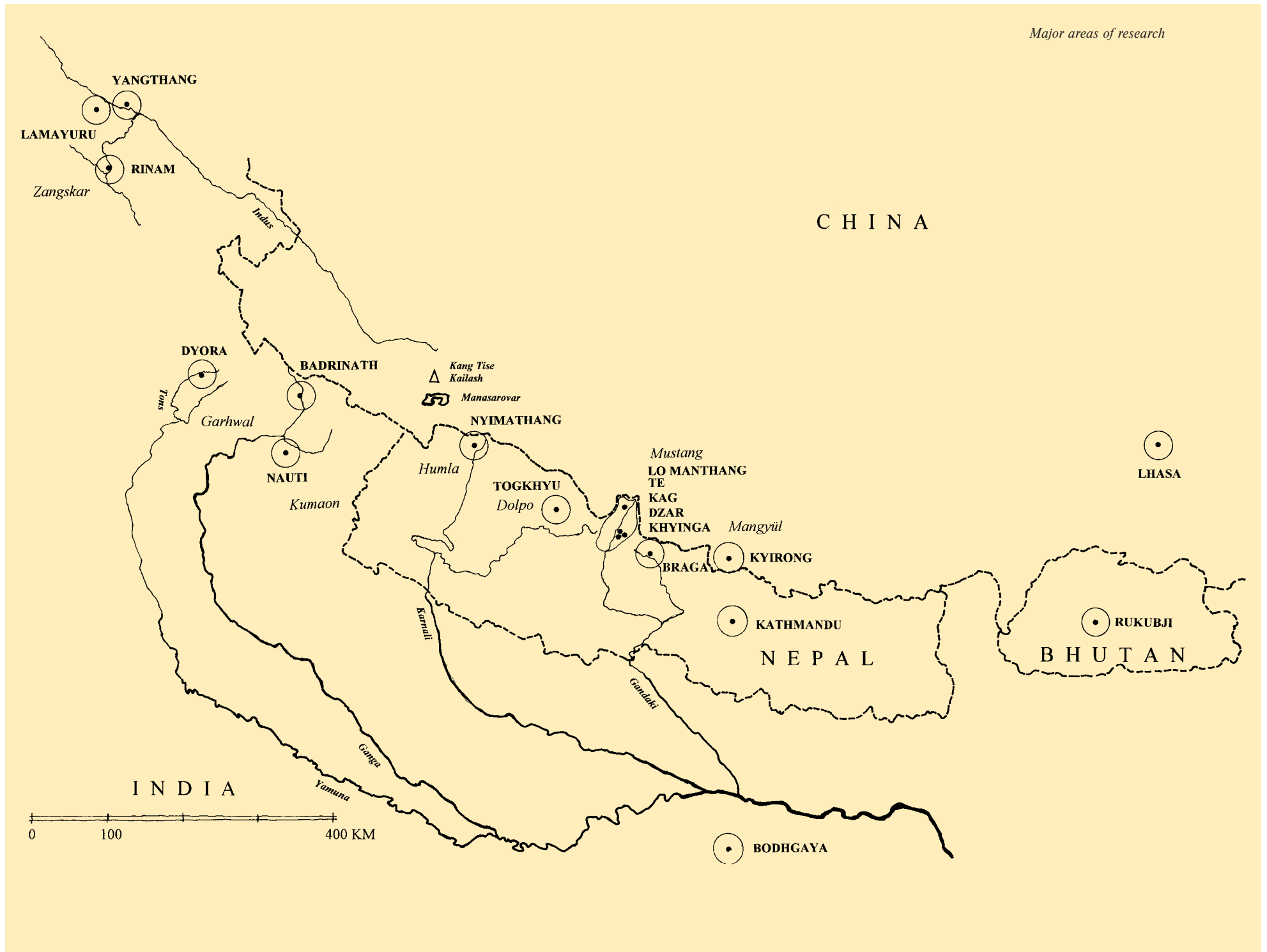
An arc following the northern Himalaya from Baltistan in Pakistan along Ladakh, Humla, Mustang and Bhutan to Yunnan provided the geographical scope for a conference on the *Sacred Landscape of the Tibetan Himalaya* organized by the editors and held 25–27 May 1998 at the Internationales Wissenschaftsforum der Universität Heidelberg. Among the scholars invited were anthropologists (Hildegard Diemberger, Martin Gaenszle, Kim Gutschow, András Höfer, Monika Krengel, Adam Nayyar, Michael Oppitz, William Sax), architectural historians and architects (Marc Dujardin, Ada Gansach, Niels Gutschow, Reinhard Herdick, John Harrison, Amandus Vanquaille, Hilde Vets), Indologists (Aditya Malik, Axel Michaels, Claus-Peter Zoller), geographers (Hermann Kreutzmann) and Tibetologists (Franz-Karl Ehrhard, Charles Ramble).

The present volume, which is primarily concerned with spatial and architectural studies, includes selected contributions and papers that were presented at the conference.

In his introductory paper, Axel Michaels focusses on theoretical and philosophical concepts regarding the sacredness of space, landscape and nature. He is concerned with how sacred space differs from “ordinary” or “scientific” concepts of space. In an example of the distinction between “up” and “down”, he proposes a sacred potency of direction or directional valency (German *Richtungspotenz*). Whereas in a scientific perception of space, “up” is basically regarded as an indication of direction *within* a space, in a religious sense of space UP forms a sacred *Richtungspotenz* which embraces various spaces; in a profane space, “up” determines the direction within a space, which consists of a continuous, homogeneous, isotropic diversity of place; in a religious space, UP belongs to sacred power which is felt rather than perceived so that different directions can have the same sacred *Richtungspotenz*.

Marc Dujardin’s quest is to read and write Bhutan’s traditional definition of space from the viewpoint of architectural anthropology. His essay focuses on the way concepts of ordered space and built form are dealt with in the Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan, and the way they relate to a larger spatial and ritual whole: the ‘sacred’ landscape of the Himalaya. From a religio-cultural perspective, the Buddhist doctrine of the ‘impermanent’ character and condition of all modes of existence has never associated buildings with eternity. Like other aspects of material culture, architecture too does not escape from this same wheel of existence – the cycle of life, death and rebirth (*saṃsāra*); and is subjected to a continuous process of demolition and re-erection. Like various comparable Buddhist cultures, Bhutanese culture celebrates a continuous process of cultural renewal as its very tradition.

Major areas of research



By presenting two distinct cases of demolition and re-erection, observed in Rukubji, a clustered village settlement in central Bhutan, a first attempt is made to shed some light on the culture-integrating and culture generating force of Bhutan's 'living' architecture.

Ada Gansach examines the spatial dimensions of ritual as inscribed in three villages in North-west Nepal. Her study is an example of the extended conception of cultural studies insofar as it shows how such apparently different levels as village layout, local legends and rituals reflect not only common spatial models but also social relations.

John Harrison traces the prototypes of the formal layout and fortification of Lo Monthang – the 15th century capital of Mustang – and its outer defences in Tibet and Mongolia. The monumental temples and the palace suggest that the place was never meant to be a "city" but a ceremonial centre and a symbol of power, complete with a palace and a monastery.

Reinhard Herdick resolves Yangthang – a small village of Ladakh – into aspects of spatial ordering on horizontal as well as vertical levels. Universal means of orientation of space referring to the cardinal directions and the solstices are found adapted to the topography of Yangthang.

Amandus Vanquaille and Hilde Vets shed light – literally – on the sacred architecture of Ladakh's Lamayuru monastery. The most conspicuous feature of Lamayuru's Buddhist persona is the disposition of its main components in the form of a *maṇḍala* centred on Vairocana; but tantric imagery and pious tales do not entirely conceal the strata of archaic belief and practice associated with the site. Several contributions in this volume deal with oppositions in the social transformation of the land: settled vs. uninhabited land and cultivated land vs. wilderness are the two examples that recur most frequently. But the built landscape of Lamayuru introduces another dialectic: that of light and shadow. The elements of the sacred complex and the adjacent village are features of an elaborately choreographed architecture of light that displays the totality through the serial illumination of its constituent parts. The significance that the organization of the site evidently accords to the play of light on the terrain may itself, the authors suggest, derive from an early tradition of solar worship in the region.

Franz-Karl Ehrhard's contribution concentrates on the development of a sacred Buddhist landscape in the region of Mustang from the eighteenth century onwards. As his main source for the development of this tradition, Ehrhard bypasses the pilgrimage "guidebook" literature concerning the area to focus on the biographies of two Tibetan lamas, Orgyen Chöphel (b. 1755) and Sangye Sangpo (b. 1891), re-

spectively from the far west and east of Tibet. Like so many other Tibetan religious figures, these individuals covered vast distances on the plateau, across the Himalayas and, in the case of the latter, the plains of India. And although the ostensible aim of these travels was, according to the travellers' own testimony, the quest for sacred lands, it is clear from Ehrhard's analysis that their achievement lay as much in the perpetuation – and even the creation – of sanctity as in its rediscovery.

Kim Gutschow and Niels Gutschow dissolve the landscape of Rinam, a small village of five households in Zangskar. Here, the irrigation and ownership pattern of fields represents a universe of its own. The role of village gods and theriomorphic rock formations is presented in order to explain the need for ritual protectedness of inhabited landscape.

Niels Gutschow and Charles Ramble's contribution explores the dialectic relationship between two sets of oppositions – up and down, inside and out – in an enclave of South Mustang, Nepal. A historical-architectural approach to the settlements in question reveals the shifting identity of built environments that are conceived as variously "interior" or "exterior", as communities turn themselves inside-out over the course of time. While such transitions may be captured in a toponymy that distinguishes the "inner" from the "outer" part of a settlement, the demarcation is never absolute; according to circumstances, an outside can always be an inside, and vice-versa, with a boundary that slides all the way from the frontier of a given individual's body to the perimeter of a political enclave, with many stages in between. The article examines the ritual procedures whereby a range of such boundaries may be established and thus, by implication, bring about the temporary dissolution of divisions that previously lay within the orbit of the space so defined. In all the examples considered, the ritual act of definition-by recitation or circumambulation-raises a virtual wall that may be supplemented by the construction or revitalization of protective edifices. While the most obvious effect of this barricade is to block the intrusion of harmful entities, it also serves to prevent the leakage of prosperity and vitality to the outside. This aspect is evident in the evocation of the vertical axis: certain rituals for the propitiation of territorial gods as a collectivity imply the opening of a channel between the sky and the earth. The axis provides a conduit for celestial benefits which are then gathered and contained within the enclosed receptacle of the community.

For William S. Sax sacred places are not only defined by the journeys of human pilgrims, but also by the processions of gods and goddesses through the landscape. In his essay he describes several such divine

processions from Garhwal in the central Himalayas. They form a series, from the limited journey of Bhairava and Gaṇḍhvalnāl in eastern Garhwal and adjacent areas of Kumaon, through the quasi-royal processions of Karṇa and Duryodhana in their divine kingdoms at the headwaters of the Tons River. Sax suggests a hypothesis about why divine kingdoms have flourished in some parts of Garhwal but not others, and argues that none of these processions can be adequately understood without employing concepts and methods from anthropology, history, and religious studies.

Literature on space and landscape in the Himalaya cited and used in the contributions to this volume is often based on volumes that appeared after conferences and symposiums that have been mentioned below. The bibliography lists major proceedings to which the present, we hope is a contribution.

Niels Gutschow *Abtsteinach/Bhaktapur*

Axel Michaels *Heidelberg*

Charles Ramble *Oxford*

Erwin Steinkellner *Vienna*

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*Tangye in Mustang:
house entrance framed by colours that indicate the presence of the Three Protectors (rigsum gönpo).
Watercolour Robert Powell, 1997.*