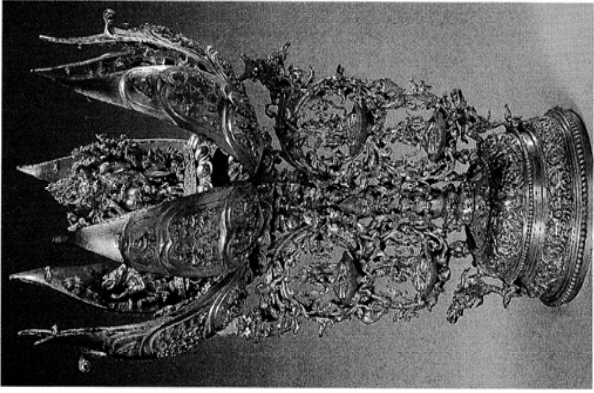




Lotus mandala of Vajrabhairava
China, Yongle period (1403-24)
Gilt bronze

Height 82 cm
(After *A Well-Selected Collection of Tibetan Cultural Relics*, Beijing, 1992, pl. 44)

seen in the small show-room of the Potala (see Nan Hui, *The Potala Palace of Lhasa*, Beijing, 1995, p. 143). Two others seem to have been made in Tibet after such imperial gifts: a Hevajra mandala in the Potala and a Yamantaka mandala in Sakya monastery (see *The Potala: Holy Palace in the Snow Land*, Beijing, 1996, p. 80 and Li Jichong, *The Realm of Tibetan Buddhism*, Hong Kong, 1984, pls 51-52). There is also a smaller 15th century Tibetan lotus mandala in the Gyantse Tsuglakhang.

Among the remaining exhibits in this gallery are a well-preserved 11th century stucco head of a *bodhi-sattva* with traces of what seems to be the original painting, from Yemar Lhakhang south of Gyantse; several engraved *mani* stones; religious and secular musical instruments; eleven medical *thangkas* from a complete set in the Norbulingka, copied around 1923 after the mostly lost original paintings of 1688; and astrological and cosmological paintings, such as the important 'Planet and Star Revolutions in Astronomy' (see *Xizang Tanka*, Beijing, 1985, pl. 4).

The earliest painting on display in the third gallery, 'The Art of Thangka Painting', is a large monk portrait of Phagpa dating to the late 13th century. Although according to the museum there are no earlier paintings, 12th and 13th century depictions of Tathagatas are well known. Other remarkable and so-far unseen painted scrolls are: an Achala with an unusual decoration of lotus; a beautiful Shakyamuni with two *bodhisattvas* amidst richly painted narrative scenes in the style of the Shalu wall paintings; and a mandala, all dating to the 14th century. A Hevajra *yidam* and a wrathful Vajrapani, both labelled 'Yuan dynasty', are in fact from the early 15th century. Of the many great later paintings once kept in the Potala Palace and then stored in the Norbulingka only very few are shown, such as a depiction of the Fifth Dalai Lama and a *siddha* in a delicately drawn landscape, both 18th century (see *Xizang Tanka*, op. cit., pls 77 and 58).

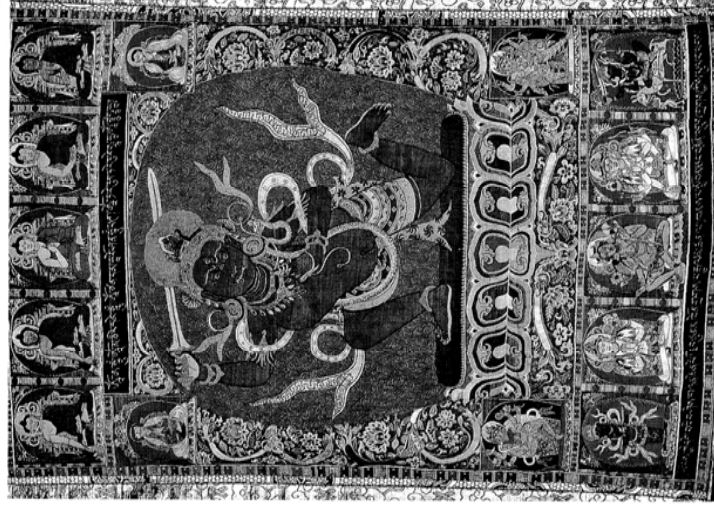
Fabric *thangkas* are represented by two masterpieces in *kesi*: an Achala which, according to its Tibetan inscription, was commissioned for the third Sakya patriarch Drakpa Gyaltsen by his disciple Changtson Dudrak and thus should date before 1216, and a portrait of the Gungthang Lama Zhang (as given in the inscription), who is probably identical with a Lhasa Jokhang Lama of the same name (see Heather Stoddard, 'Early Tibetan Paintings: Sources and Styles [Eleventh-Fourteenth Centuries A.D.]', in *Archives of Asian Art*, 1996, vol. XLIX, pp. 26-50, n. 116). Rather than 'Chinese ateliers', their provenance can more likely be traced to the Tibetan-style manufactories of the Tangut Xia kingdom, as has been suggested first by Anne E. Wardwell ('The Kesi Thangka of Vighnantaka', in *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 80, 1993, pp. 137-39; see

also *Xizang Tanka*, op. cit., nos 102 and 116). A tantric Guhyasamaja image on an almost black or very dark blue brocade ground (roughly 75 by 50 cm) is a masterful embroidery in the Xuande period style that is so far unknown.

The last gallery, 'Folklore and Culture', contains various ethnographic items, such as pottery, jewellery, dresses, furniture, a complete yak-skin boat and other objects for daily use. There were plans to shift the large throne of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, a unique masterpiece of traditional Tibetan metalwork (completed for the inauguration ceremony on 7 July 1957), from the Norbulingka to the museum, but fortunately this was prevented.

There is as yet no catalogue or any other documentation giving an overview of the Tibet Museum, although there are plans to publish an album or catalogue. However, according to museum staff, a more comprehensive presentation of the many other objects in storage and the pioneering task of 'cultural education' will have priority. Special exhibitions will be held on the upper storey in the future, but so far no details have been given. An atelier for restoration and conservation and a good reference library that includes Western publications may also be possibilities for the future. A multifunctional lecture hall with modern technology is already in place, which will facilitate the exchange of expertise with museums abroad. Outside the main building, a 'life-size' model of an old manor house has also been erected; it will be used to present various folk customs and can be rented for other cultural events.

May the new Tibet Museum be a challenge and a source of



Achala
Probably Tangut
Xia period,
before 1216
Kesi
Height 90 cm,
width 56 cm
(After *Xizang Tanka*, Beijing,
1985, pl. 102)

information and inspiration first for the Tibetans in Tibet, who are increasingly deprived of their own cultural traditions in the rapidly changing world of the Land of Snows. And may Tibetan culture, now impressively presented in the heart of Tibet, return from within the walls of a museum to life. One wishes the Tibet Museum a good beginning at the start of the new millennium.

Michael Henss

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Learning from Sulima: East Meets West in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley

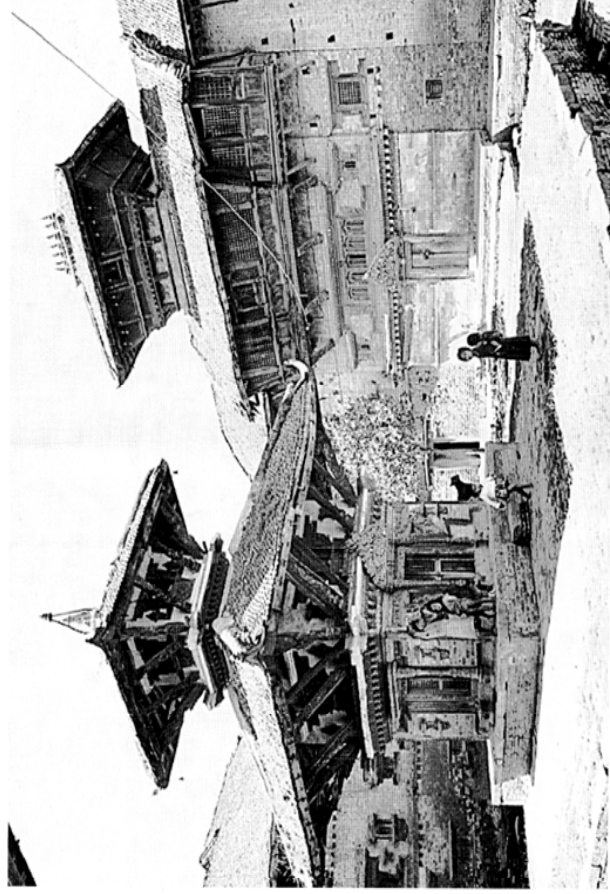
The need to assess the application of international historic preservation principles in the South Asian context has been much discussed in the last decade. Among other questions is a concern that the intellectual and modernist underpinnings of European approaches to historic buildings may not be appropriate to 'living cultures' – those where traditional values, building practices and craftsmen survive. The discussion has recently been greatly enriched by such documents as the Nara Charter on Authenticity (1994), in which recognition of indigenous cultural values becomes the paramount task of the preservationist. In application, however, uncomfortable inter-sections of value systems are unavoidable, unfortunately receiving less scholarly attention than the general proscriptions of international charters. The case is particularly topical in Nepal, where the ongoing loss of important historical structures and fabric at the seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites – together with the possibility of endangered listing – makes the reconciliation of local and international norms both urgent and controversial.

In this context, the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust recently organized a working mission of eight experts from around the world to discuss the meeting of East and West in Nepalese conservation practice, focusing on a review of its recently completed restoration project, the 13th century Sulima Ratnesvara temple in Patan. The temple, most likely the oldest surviving pagoda temple in the Kathmandu valley, is the twelfth achievement in the US-based trust's campaign to save twenty historical structures around Patan's Darbar Square World Heritage Site. The two-tiered pagoda is significant for its largely extant programme of original iconographic and decorative woodcarvings.

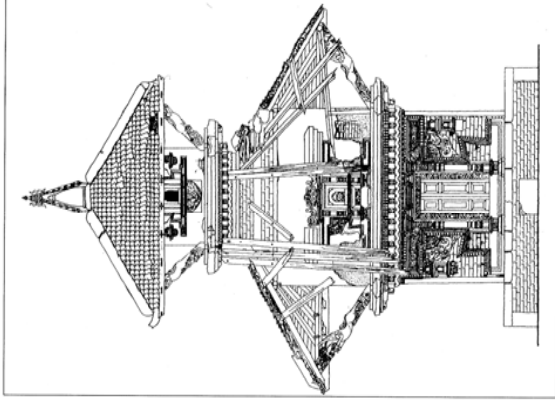
In particular, the question of recarving the temple's missing roof brackets or struts was examined as a spring-board for discussion. Should lost carvings be reproduced based on historical documentation? Should new and necessary replacements be left plain? Or where the records are unclear, should improvisation be encouraged among the surviving local craftsmen traditionally responsible for this task? In sum, how do approaches to such lacunae reflect theories of authen-



In situ comparative study of alternative solutions to the replacement of lost roof struts: plain timber props (right) and careful reproductions based on historical photographs (Photography by Mani Lama)



The 13th century Sulima Ratnesvara temple in Patan, defined by a 16th century esoteric shrine (right) and early residential structures (Photography by Mary Shepherd Slusser)



Documentation of the temple's condition before the comprehensive repair project was begun (Drawing by Asaram Twayna)

tivity in the built environment?

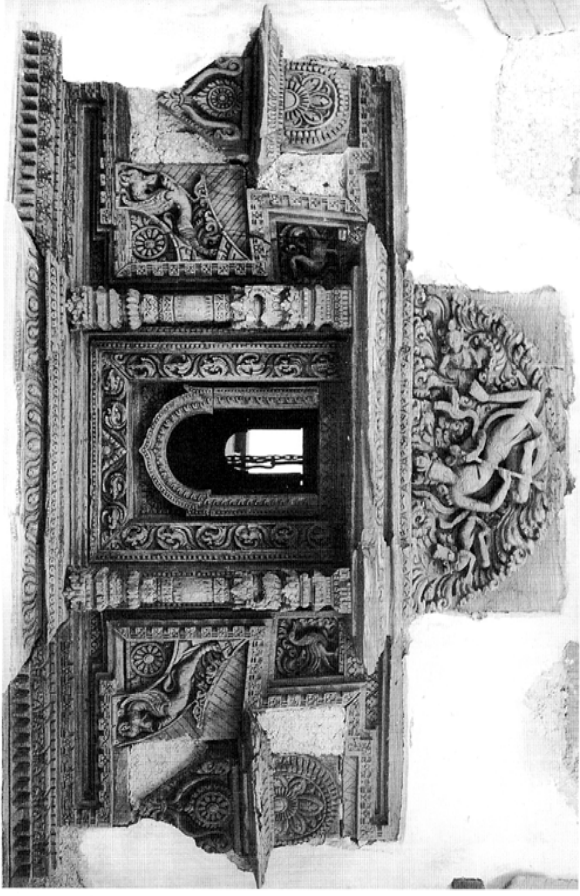
Possible solutions to this conservation problem reflect two fundamentally different relationships to history. Mission leader Niels Gutschow explained that international or Western practice advocates that 'freezing' a building in time is possible, whereas traditional societies, feeling no such distance from a building or its evolution, are willing to modify or even replace the building according to present needs or religious aspirations. 'The negotiation of a middle path must be the answer,' added project architect Rohit Ranjitkar. He had spent many months lobbying for replacement of the lost carvings with the trust's Chief Technical Adviser Eduard Sekler. Sekler recommended refraining from the reproduction of lost figurative carvings. He felt that 'what's lost is lost', applying the principles of the oft-cited 1964 Charter of Venice, which discourages reconstructions and reproductions. Two years earlier, however, Ranjitkar had fought a municipal proposal to rebuild the temple from scratch, a proposal which included the 'replacement of all the time-worn carvings with new reproductions'.

A number of nearby and comparable projects were also reviewed through the same lens. The still-impressive Darbar Square in Patan, for example, has become a virtual laboratory for comparative restoration approaches, having attracted at least a dozen local and international projects since 1987, with many a school and budget represented. Given the difficulties of implementing projects in a developing country, the need to compromise was identified as a prerequisite to success. 'Idealized goals can be destructive to young causes,' pointed out A.K.G. Menon, a leader of India's private sector preservation movement. Nepal's 'modern' preservation efforts are in fact still in young adulthood, the traditional builders of temples and palaces having encountered the notion of 'scientific' conservation only 25 years ago.

The mission, which was led by Gutschow and myself (both resident in Nepal but from Germany and the USA, respectively), also included Wim Denslagen from The Netherlands, Australian Sharon Sullivan, Americans John H. Stubbs and Michael F. Doyle, Menon, and Ranjitkar from Nepal. 'We are not aiming to formulate charters or guidelines, but rather to inject local and international discourse with thoughtful and specific examples, ever-cognizant of the gaps between theory and practice,' noted Gutschow. Menon praised the Nepalese situation, where in spite of growing development pressures and lack of political backing, an openness to international participation in



Indra Kaji Silpakar, master carver of the temple project, and a descendant of generations of woodcarvers



A fine 13th century *gahiyah* ('blind window') on the temple's upper level after cleaning. In situ survival of such early woodcarvings is rare in the Kathmandu valley (Photography by Mani Lama)

conservation planning, unusual in the Asian context, offers rich potential for growth.

The mission supported the project choice to replace lost woodcarvings: 'The reproduction of traditional detail, the design of new detail and/or the introduction of additional layers to a monument may not only be acceptable but even desirable in strategies to conserve living cultural heritage.' Sharon Sullivan, former Executive Director of the Australian Heritage Commission Trust, added that historical interpretations of authenticity in terms of a monument's historical fabric were 'only one piece of the puzzle...preservation of community, sense of place, ritual life and building craft must be part of the larger picture'.

Denslagen, author of *Architectural Restoration in Western Europe: Continuity and Change* (Amsterdam, 1994), criticized the reduction of the Nepalese debate into an East/West struggle. 'Comparable battles between antiquarians and revivalists and between theorists and practitioners have been a continuous feature of European intellectual history since the late 18th century... The case of the Sulima temple and the contemporary context in Nepal is deserving of study as a much later chapter whose ending has not yet been written.'

Mission findings, in the form of ten individual essays on authenticity and conservation practice, will be published later this year with support from the World Monuments Fund. The book, entitled *Learning from Sulima*, will also include extensive documentation of the temple project and a historical overview of modern conservation practice in Nepal. The publication will be the first in the series from the Nepal Architecture Archive, a documentation and publication scheme working in collaboration with the Frances Loeb Library, Harvard University.

Erich Theophile

Erich Theophile is the Executive Director of the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust.

For more information about the Kathmandu Valley Preservation Trust write to John G. Ford, Chairman, 2601 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Md. or see the website at www.asianart.com/kvpt.

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Book Reviews

Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East

By John Guy

Thames and Hudson, London, 1998

192 pages, 241 illustrations (145 in colour)

ISBN 0-500-01863-4

Price: £30 clothbound

In recent years, a growing number of Indian cotton textiles has appeared on the art market, having hitherto been kept as precious heirloom pieces in the clan or family treasure collections of various ethnic groups in Indonesia. The textiles show a huge variety of geometrical and floral designs, as well as complex scenes depicting humans and animals. The designs were mostly achieved by a combination of mordant dyeing and resist dyeing, applied either by painting or stamping, or both. Until recently, these textiles were not considered to be very old. Inspired by radiocarbon analyses conducted on Indian textile finds in Egypt, which yielded manufacture dates between the 9th and 17th centuries, Indian textiles exported to Indonesia were also tested. The results showed that they were manufactured between the 14th and 18th centuries, which came as a major surprise to scholars of Indian and Indonesian textile history. Suddenly there was tangible evidence from a focal point of textile trade history, the products of which had previously only been known from literary and documentary sources.

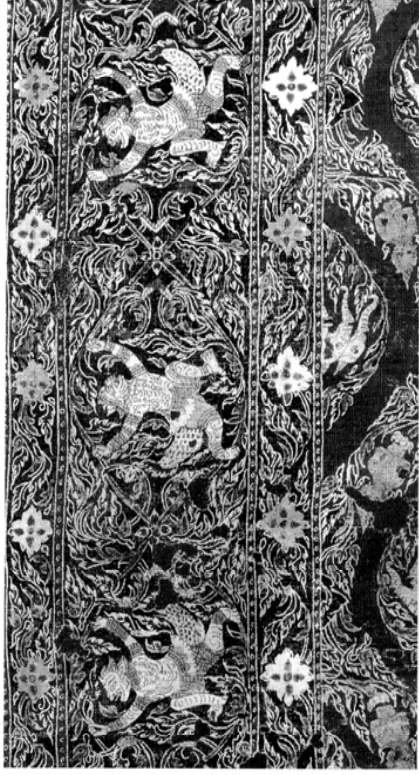
John Guy, Deputy Curator of the Indian and South-East Asian Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, which houses a magnificent textile collection, has now published the results of his years of research on these textiles and their trade history in an opulent and absorbing book, *Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East*.

With the exception, perhaps, of Chinese porcelain, there is probably no handicraft product that has had more cultural and economic significance over such a long period than Indian cotton textiles with their variety of design, brilliance of colour and advanced dyeing technology. Porcelain, though, was collected in Europe and Asia for several centuries. It is known to the public and has been a major research topic for at least a century. The very opposite applies to Indian cotton textiles. Only the Indian chintzes, made for export to Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, are well known; however, they play a minor and relatively late role in the vast trading emporium that connected India to Europe and the Arab world in the west, and to China and Japan in the east. Exports of diverse textile products to the east were of much greater importance. Dyed and patterned cotton fabrics as well as silk double-ikat textiles, called *patola*, accounted for the major share of these exports. For over a thousand years, Indian cloth was traded for the spices and forest and mineral wealth of the East by Asian, Arab and European merchants. Textiles were a key element in the development of international commerce. The desire for spices, which were chiefly acquired in exchange for these textiles, led directly to European maritime exploration and the formation of colonial empires.

Guy follows the history of the 'cloth-for-spice' trade chronologically, describes the techniques of textile production, and examines in detail the place of imported cloth in the Malay world, Indonesia,

Thailand, China and Japan, with the historical focus on the 17th and 18th centuries, when the trade was at its peak. In the middle of the 18th century, the warehouses owned by the Dutch East India Company in Batavia (Jakarta) stored between 500,000 and 1 million items of cloth, most of which originated in India. Guy points out clearly that Indian manufacturers worked to suit the specific requirements of the various markets, and traders had to be sensitive to demands regarding colour scheme and cloth size if they wanted to be successful.

Each major region is covered in a sequence of topics, starting with an outline of the textile trade, the parties and nations involved, and the economic and political consequences. Then there is a chapter investigating the part these textiles played in the culture of the region, after which the textiles themselves are discussed extensively. These two chapters show differences in regional functions most clearly. China offers some difficulties be-



Detail of a *pha nung* (skirt-cloth) from the 18th century, drawn resist dyed, and painted. Private collection, London.

Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East, p. 60, pl. 70

cause evidence for Indian textiles is only available in written sources and no actual textiles have appeared or been identified as yet. The influence of Indian textiles on local textile patterns and ornamentation in general in these major regions is also dealt with.

In Indonesia, Indian textiles had to satisfy a widespread popular demand: as clothing, both for everyday and ceremonial wear, as items of decoration on festive and ritual occasions, and as stored wealth and valued objects of inheritance. The most precious were *patola*. Some of the painted and printed cotton textiles imitate *patola* patterns, as well as some of the textiles manufactured locally by the many ethnic groups on the islands. Even today, carefully kept heirloom pieces from India play a vital role as ceremonial dress or decoration, which is the reason they have survived so long. It is exciting to compare dated Indian textiles found in Egypt with those from Indonesia, some of which have identical patterns. The surviving textiles display a multitude of motifs. Some of them are worked very carefully and delicately, while others are somewhat crude. On the whole, it seems that patterns tended to be rather eye-catching and rough, and that preference was given to durable cotton weaves.

In Thailand, the primary role of Indian textiles was to provide high-quality items which could be used on internal and international markets for gifts or trade. There were even trade links between the court city of Ayutthaya and a Japanese kingdom on the Ryukyu islands (Okinawa) in the 15th century, since Indian textiles were listed as trade items being shipped from Thailand to Japan. The textiles which have survived in Thailand are not as old as those from Indonesia. The oldest dates from the end of the 17th century, others from the 18th and 19th centuries. Their patterns echo typical Thai and Khmer designs, sporting centre fields with a variety of lattice-work and elaborate end panels, which display rows of drawn-out flame ornaments. According to their patterning and size, they were either used as dress for nobles and wealthy people or as floor coverings, column covers and wall hangings.

Indian textiles in Japan fulfilled a function unlike that in any other country in Asia. Their primary role was to satisfy the love of wealthy Japanese for the exotic. Novelty in design was of paramount interest. Historical collections of Indian cloth in Japan, not very well known outside an exclusive circle of connoisseurs, display the greatest variety seen anywhere outside the subcontinent. Some of the Indian trade cloths were used as paraphernalia by the Japanese Christian community. Others were incorporated into the outfits of warriors. The undergarment (*kosode*) of the traditional kimono was also sometimes made of Indian cotton, allowing only a restricted glimpse of the exotic