

Śiva and Avalokiteśvara: On the iconography and date of the Golden Window and Golden Door of Patan's Royal Palace¹

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Abstract

The Golden Window above the Golden Door of Caukoṭ Darbār, a building on the western side of the (former) Royal Palace complex, is a major attraction in the city of Patan (Nepal). The gilt window panel features a representation of Avalokiteśvara in his form as Sṛṣṭikartā (“creator”) emanating Hindu divinities from his body. The sides, base and tympanum of the window likewise display Hindu divinities. The construction of the window has been ascribed to different kings of the late Malla period (1483–1768) and is said to illustrate their support for the Buddhist practices of their subjects, while providing a Hindu interpretative framework for such practices. In this paper I identify the divinities on the window and examine textual and visual sources that shed light on the date of the window's construction, including the inscriptions above and at the sides of the Golden Door. I show that there is no evidence for such an early dating of the window and that the Golden Window was probably constructed sometime in the nineteenth century in either the Śāh period (1769–1846) or, more likely, the Rāṇā period (1846–1951). I conclude with some thoughts on the possible significance of the peculiar configuration of divinities surrounding the Bodhisattva on the window.

Keywords: Golden Window, Golden Door, Caukoṭ Darbār, Patan, Nepal, Avalokiteśvara, Sṛṣṭikartā Lokeśvara, Malla period

Introduction

One of the major attractions in the city of Patan (Nepal) is the Golden Window (*lumjhyāḥ*, Newari) above the Golden Door (known as *sundhokā* in Nepali) of Caukoṭ Darbār, a building on the western side of the (former) Royal Palace complex, the Patan Darbār (Figure 1). The window is an important work because of its prestigious location and its unique design. The gilt window panel, which is

1 This is a version of a paper, originally published in *Orientalia* (Bühnemann 2010), expanded to take into account the iconography of the Golden Door of Patan's Royal Palace. The earlier paper, which includes high-quality colour photographs, addresses a broader readership and does not use footnotes or diacritical marks. I would like to thank Kashinath Tamot, Gerd Mevissen, Niels Gutschow, Horst Brinkhaus, Iain Sinclair, Michael Meister, Philip Pierce and Adalbert Gail for valuable suggestions on drafts of this paper. For their kindly providing photographs, I am indebted to Niels Gutschow, Manik Bajracharya and Rupert Steiner.



Figure 1. (Colour online) Front view of Caukoṭ Darbār with the Golden Window above the Golden Door, Royal Palace, Patan (Photo courtesy of Rupert Steiner)

hinged horizontally along the top and swings back inside vertically (*dhīkhāpā*, New.), features a representation of a Bodhisattva flanked on two sides by miniature images of Hindu divinities (Figure 2). The sides, base and tympanum of the window likewise display Hindu divinities.



Figure 2. (Colour online) The Golden Window of Caukoṭ Darbār (Photo courtesy of Manik Bajracharya)



Figure 2a. (Colour online) Detail of the Golden Window, showing Avalokiteśvara, with Amitābha above, Hindu divinities at the sides and Buddhist attendants next to his feet (Photo courtesy of Niels Gutschow)



Figure 2b. (Colour online) Detail of the Golden Window, showing the divinities on the tympanum (Photo courtesy of Manik Bajracharya)

The construction of the window and its complex configuration of divinities has been ascribed to different kings of the late Malla period (1483–1768). However, as I hope to show, there is no evidence for such an early dating of

the window. In the first part of this paper, I will deal with the identification of the divinities on the window. I will then examine textual and visual sources that shed light on the date of the window's construction, including the inscriptions above and at the sides of the Golden Door. I will conclude with some thoughts on the possible significance of the peculiar configuration of divinities surrounding the Bodhisattva on the window.

The divinities of the Golden Window and the window's design

The centre of the window features a two-armed standing figure holding a lotus in his left hand and displaying the wish-granting gesture with his right (Figure 2a). The iconography corresponds to that of Padmapāṇi, a form of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. Above his head is a miniature of Amitābha, to whose Buddha family he belongs. The figures on both sides of the Bodhisattva are hard to identify, not only because they are small but also because the artist did not make much effort to differentiate between some of them; three look almost identical. Fourteen seated Hindu divinities flank the Bodhisattva, some arranged in double columns. In addition, there are two smaller figures close to the Bodhisattva's feet. Mainly on the basis of comparable iconographic representations in Newar art, I take them to be divine Buddhist attendants.

The pair of Hindu gods flanking but slightly below Amitābha, from the viewer's left to right, are seen to be a four-armed Maheśvara seated on a bull and a four-armed Agni on a ram. The row below features Candra on a goose and Sūrya on a horse. In the next row, on the left, is a four-armed Sarasvatī on a goose and a four-headed, four-armed Brahmā, also seated on a goose. The bearded figure on the right who has joined both hands in the gesture of reverence (*añjalimudrā*) may be Kubera. He is without an animal mount and has just two arms, and is regularly included in similar iconographic representations. Next to him is a four-armed Vāyu on a gazelle. The row below features, on the left, a four-armed Varuṇa – adorned with a snake's five hoods seated on a mythological sea monster (*makara*) – and a four-armed Viṣṇu on Garuḍa. To the right are a four-armed Lakṣmī on a lion and a four-armed Indra mounted on an elephant. The iconography of Lakṣmī, whose mount is often a tortoise in Nepal, appears here to be inspired by that of the mother goddess (*mātrikā*) Mahālakṣmī, who rides a lion.² In the row below, to the far left, appears a goddess who has joined both hands in the *añjali* gesture. She can be identified as the Earth Goddess only on the basis of comparable iconographic representations in which she occupies the same position. On the far right is a serpent deity (*nāga*) whose features are half-serpent and half-human, and who is very probably the serpent king Śeṣanāga.

The Buddhist attendant close to the Avalokiteśvara's right foot is smaller in size than the figure of the Earth Goddess but of somewhat similar appearance. He can be identified as the Bodhisattva Sudhanakumāra, but again only on

2 I would like to thank A. Gail for this suggestion (email message, 29 April 2010). For a description of Mahālakṣmī on a lion mount, see Gail 1988: 61.

the basis of comparable iconographic representations where he appears in this position as an attendant next to Avalokiteśvara's right foot, and with both hands in *añjalimudrā*. Near the Bodhisattva's left foot is Hayagrīva. He is recognizable by the small head of a horse on his own head and the characteristic gesture of veneration he displays with his right hand. Sudhanakumāra and Hayagrīva are common attendants of Avalokiteśvara. The arrangement of the figures on the gilt window panel is shown in Figure 3.

The representation of this form of Avalokiteśvara with Hindu divinities – elsewhere called *Sṛṣṭikartā*³ (creator) *Lokeśvara* – corresponds with descriptions in two Sanskrit texts. The account of the creation of the Hindu divinities from Avalokiteśvara's body appears in chapter 4 of recensions of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, a *Mahāyāna Sūtra* with a complex textual history.⁴ It next appears in the *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha*, a Nepalese reworking of a version of the text, perhaps from the fifteenth century. According to the description (p. 265, 1–3) in chapter 4, titled *Candrādyutpatti*, in the version of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* published by Vaidya, Avalokiteśvara emanated nine divinities from different parts of his body, in the following sequence:

From his eyes: the Sun God and the Moon God
 From his forehead: Maheśvara
 From his shoulders: Brahmā
 From his heart: Nārāyaṇa
 From his two (rows of) teeth: Sarasvatī
 From his mouth: the Vāyus
 From both feet: Dharaṇī, the Earth Goddess
 From his belly: Varuṇa

According to the *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha*, whose “creation account” reached a wider public through translations into Newari from the middle of the nineteenth century (Tuladhar-Douglas 2006: 12), Avalokiteśvara emanated twelve Hindu divinities. Chapter 4 (entitled *Śrīmaheśvarādidevasamutpādana*) of the metrical

- 3 One frequently encounters the form *Sṛṣṭikāntā* instead. This is probably an erroneous form, developed from the word *Sṛṣṭikartā*, which is harder to pronounce. (Chandra 1997: 55 takes it as a misreading of *Sṛṣṭikartā*.) The name *Sṛṣṭikartā Lokeśvara* marks *Lokeśvara* out as the creator. The erroneous form *Sṛṣṭikānta Lokeśvara* (with the final “a” shortened to remove the undesirable grammatical feminine gender of the word) is sometimes interpreted as “the *Lokeśvara* who is dear to creation” (see, for example, Liebert 1986: 281). Gellner (1992: 95) uses the (grammatically correct) compound *Sṛṣṭikartṛlokeśvara*, and Tuladhar-Douglas (2006: 56, 174) the name *Sarvaśṛṣṭi Lokeśvara*, neither of which I have so far encountered in Sanskrit texts.
- 4 The *Sūtra* is usually dated to the fifth or sixth century, but this is too simplistic, since one needs to distinguish carefully between different versions of the text and their respective dates. The so-called “Nepalese” recension of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* is commonly accessed in the edition published by Vaidya, which builds on an older (1873) edition by Samasrami. The “creation account” does not appear in the Gilgit fragments of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* edited by A. Mette. The textual situation is complicated by the confusion of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* with the *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha*, as reflected, for example, in titles of printed texts. Tuladhar-Douglas (2006: 26–8, 69–71 and 77–9) discusses the different versions of the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* and their relationship to the *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha*. On the textual situation, see also Ruegg 2008: 31–4.

		Amitābha		
	Maheśvara		Agni	
	Candra			Sūrya
		Avalokiteśvara		
Sarasvatī	Brahmā		Kubera	Vāyu
Varuṇa	Viṣṇu		Lakṣmī	Indra
Earth Goddess	Sudhanakumāra		Hayagrīva	Nāga

Figure 3. The arrangement of the figures on the gilt window panel

version of this text⁵ lists the emanations in the same sequence as the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, with the addition of the following three (p. 40, 1–10):

From his navel: Agni
 From his left knee: Lakṣmī
 From his right knee: Kubera

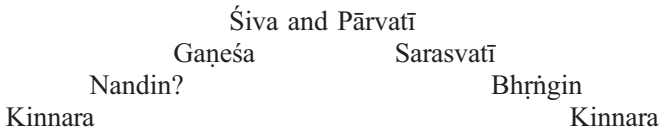
The text continues with the remark that “in this way other (unspecified) divinities also emanated”. This statement leaves open the number of possible emanations. The Golden Window features Indra and the serpent king in addition to the twelve divinities listed in the *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha*. I will discuss later the significance of the fact that the window features fourteen emanations.

Let us now examine the remaining parts of the window. On the window panel, Avalokiteśvara appears in a frame consisting of the body of a twisted nine-headed snake. The snake’s hoods protrude from behind its head. The window is flanked on either side by a pillar, each resting on a crouching elephant and featuring two dragons along its length, the whole supporting a tympanum (Figure 2). Each pillar is in turn flanked by two further pillars. On the lower part of the middle pillars, the river goddesses Gaṅgā, on a mythological sea monster (*makara*) (to the viewer’s left), and Yamunā, on a tortoise (to the viewer’s right), are visible. The outer pillars, much taller than the inner ones, are crowned by oval-shaped symbols. The Golden Window is the centre of a row of three windows that share a common frame (*svapājhyāḥ*, New.). The two side windows are simple wooden windows. Their tympanums feature a form of Kālī/Cāmuṇḍā seated on seven skulls. The decorative base, shared by the Golden Window and the two adjacent wooden windows, displays the Garuḍa bird in the centre flanked on either side by a figure on a lion, a winged figure wearing a hat mounted on an elephant and a lion standing upright on two legs. Again, the tympanum features Hindu divinities (Figure 2b). Apparently misled by the Garuḍa figure, David Gellner took the group of divinities on the tympanum for forms of Viṣṇu and assumed that their presence was intended to suggest “that the principal Buddhist *bodhisattva* is a form of Viṣṇu” (Gellner 1996: 140).

5 This text was published by Lokesh Chandra under the title *Kāraṇḍa-Vyūha-Sūtra* but is actually a version of the *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha*. Tuladhar-Douglas (2006: 28, 38, note 36) addresses the shortcomings of this edition.

A decade before Gellner's publication, Heimo Rau suggested that the tympanum shows Śiva with Pārvatī, Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya (Rau 1984: 256). I agree that the centre more likely features Śiva with his consort seated on his left thigh, both supported by their bull and lion mounts. Below and to the viewer's left is Gaṇeśa, seated on a rat. To the viewer's right is a figure playing a lute, who is seated on a bird that resembles a peacock. Rau identified the figure as Kārttikeya, but the lute indicates that we have here a representation of the goddess Sarasvatī, whose vehicle, the goose, in later iconography often resembles a peacock. Further below, to the viewer's right, is perhaps Śiva's attendant Bhr̥ṅgin, clothed in a tiger skin and playing a drum. The dancing figure to the left is unidentified, but it could be Śiva's devotee, Nandin. At the very bottom, atop each of the pillars which flank the window, appears a celestial being, half human and half bird (*kinnara*, also known to Newars as an "aquatic man", *jalamānuṣa*).

The arrangement of the deities on the tympanum is thus:



Interpreting the configuration of divinities

Gellner notes a similarity between the representation of the Bodhisattva flanked by the Hindu divinities on the Golden Window and "Nārāyaṇa or Ardhanārīśvara surrounded by the ten *avatāras*", and suggests that the representation of the Bodhisattva is "a clear copy" of the latter and "deliberately ambivalent" (1992: 94). I am not convinced that this is actually the case. Texts specify the body parts of the Lokeśvara from which the Hindu deities emanate. In art, the divinities are therefore often depicted as attached to the body parts by thin threads. It is only to be expected that an artist would show the emanated Hindu divinities on both sides of the Bodhisattva. Grouping emanations or subordinate deities as miniature images around a main figure is a familiar artistic convention in Nepal. Artists, who commonly worked for both Buddhist and Śaiva patrons, followed it frequently. Examples of a main figure surrounded by subordinate ones include the statue of Nārāyaṇa encircled by miniature images of the *avatāras* in the small Nārāyaṇa shrine in Asan (Kathmandu) and the stone sculpture of Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa surrounded by Hindu deities in Nakabahī (Patan).⁶ One could easily imagine that, from afar and without thorough knowledge of the iconography, the sculptures could be mistaken for representations of Sṛṣṭikartā Lokeśvara emanating Hindu divinities. As an example of supposedly deliberate ambiguity Gellner refers to the statue of Sṛṣṭikartā Lokeśvara at Śaṅkhamūl Ghat (Patan), which his informant identified as Nārāyaṇa. However, such misidentifications are simply based on ignorance of the religious iconography and do not prove the intention of the artist.

6 See Bangdel 1995: 256, sec. 19/7, where the statue is erroneously identified as Ardhanārīśvara.

The complex configuration of divinities surrounding the Avalokiteśvara on the Golden Window has been said to illustrate the Malla kings' tolerant attitude towards Buddhism and their support for the Buddhist practices of their subjects, while providing a Hindu interpretative framework for such practices. Gellner notes that “[t]he central figure [of the Lokeśvara] is thus an expression of Buddhist superiority to Hinduism; but this is encapsulated in a frame which suggests that Buddhism is a form of Hinduism. This complex iconography is to be related to the Malla kings' policy (and especially to Shri Nivasa's policy) of supporting the predominantly Buddhist cults of their subjects in Lalitpur, while simultaneously encouraging a Hindu interpretation of those cults and requiring their subjects to conform to Hindu social norms” (Gellner 1994: 150).

To those looking up from outside, an individual standing inside the open window would appear as if he were just below Avalokiteśvara's head. Scholars assume that the peculiar configuration of divinities on and around the window was meant to suggest an identification of a (Malla) king (who, they say, appeared at the window on special occasions) with Avalokiteśvara (in his form as *Sṛṣṭikartā Lokeśvara*) and Viṣṇu (Wiesner 1976: 89; Rau 1984: 256) or with either of the two (Gellner 1996: 140–41; Tuladhar-Douglas 2006: 174). Obviously, when the window was open the individual appearing at the window would take the place otherwise occupied by the Buddhist image of Avalokiteśvara. The Śiva group would be visible on the tympanum above his head, along with Gaṅgā and Yamunā respectively to his right and left. The individual would also be framed as Viṣṇu by the Garuḍa throne below and the nine hoods of a snake appearing above his head. A similar identification with Viṣṇu is suggested by the throne of the kings of Patan (Figure 4). The throne, presented to King Śrīnivāsamalla of Patan (r. 1661–84) and dating from 1666, features Viṣṇu's Garuḍa bird beneath the seat and the twisted body of a snake with



Figure 4. (Colour online) The throne of the kings of Patan, Nepal, 1666. Gilt copper, wood, modern upholstery. Size 188 cm. The Patan Museum (Photo courtesy of Gudrun Bühnemann)

nine hoods as the seat's backrest. This imagery reinforces the common Nepalese belief that the kings of Nepal are incarnations of Viṣṇu. But for all that, it is unlikely that the individual appearing at the Golden Window on special occasions was ever a Malla king.

Speculations on the date of construction of the Golden Window

It is often said that the Golden Window was made at the time of Śrīnivāsamalla of Patan. Thus Gellner 1996: 141 (crediting Nutan Sharma in note 19, p. 153) specifies that “[a]pparently the unpublished inscription on the window shows that it was given by a Śākya or Vajrācārya goldsmith to the king [i.e. Śrīnivāsamalla]”.⁷ This reference has turned out to be baseless since such an inscription does not exist. Nutandhar Sharma (Patan), who is cited in Gellner 1996, could not provide any information about it when requested⁸ and does not refer to it in his MA dissertation. Inscriptional evidence shows merely a general connection between Śrīnivāsamalla and Avalokiteśvara's worship. Several legends associate the king with Avalokiteśvara, and even make him his son. According to one such legend, recorded in Dīp 1977: 67, Śrīnivāsamalla used the proceeds from selling the ornaments of one of his younger queens (who wished to return the jewellery the king had given her upon her request) for the construction of the Golden Window. The construction of the window has also been ascribed to other Malla kings, such as Siddhinarasiṅhamalla (r. 1619–61) (A.K. Vajracharya, referred to in Gellner 1996: 153, note 19), Śrīnivāsamalla's son Yoganarendramalla (r. 1684–1705) (Hemarāj Śākya, referred to in Shrestha 2005: 59) and Jayaprakāśamalla (r. 1760–62) (Ācārya 1967: 377). Guṇānanda's Vaṃśāvalī (Wright 1972: 249) reports that Viṣṇumalla of Patan (r. 1729–1745) had the Golden Window installed. This version of events is reiterated in Wiesner 1976: 87. However, there is no reliable record specifying the date of construction, and all the evidence we possess suggests that the window is not likely to date back to the Malla period. There have been considerable renovations and additions to the Patan Royal Palace over the centuries. It seems that Caukoṭ Darbār last underwent major restoration in 1734, but the date of its original construction is not known. The chronicle *Bhāṣāvamśāvalī* (part 2, p. 76, 3–4) states that the palace was dismantled and rebuilt in 1734 within a period of three months. This text, written in the nineteenth century, chronicles events up to 1768. It was very probably compiled before the installation of the Golden Window, since it does not mention the Golden Window at all. Slusser (1982, vol. 2, caption to plate 140) notes that the Golden Door (with its tympanum) and the Golden Window were added to the original palace design in the nineteenth century, but she does not provide any evidence, or indeed discuss the matter further. We know that Prime Minister Jaṅg Bahādūr Kuṃbara Rāṇā visited England between 1850 and 1851. A chronicle on the history of Nepal,⁹ compiled

7 See also Gellner 1994: 150 for this information.

8 Email message, dated 4 May 2009.

9 The chronicle, “Nepāla deśako itihās”, was published in volumes 12–27 (July 1970–April 1974) of the journal *Ancient Nepal* from a manuscript preserved in the Keshar Library, Kathmandu. The compiler's name is not known. The passage I refer to appears in the last fascicle, *Ancient Nepal* 27 (April 1974, pp. 1–32), on pp. 5–6.

in the late nineteenth century in Nepali, reports that he realized the need to renovate the royal palaces of Patan and Bhaktapur, and in 1853 requested his brothers, General Jagatśamśer and General Dhīrśamśer respectively, to oversee the work in these two cities.

Evidence provided by the Golden Door

I would now like to consider evidence provided by the Golden Door (Figure 5), which is located below the window and now serves as the entrance to the Patan Museum. A copperplate inscription above the door (Figure 5a) specifies its date of construction but makes no mention of the Golden Window. However, the door and the window are the same colour and appear to be a match, suggesting that they were created around the same time. According to this inscription, which is transcribed and translated in the Appendix, the door was made and installed by General Jagatśamśer Jaṅg Kuṃbara Rāṇā following instructions from Prime Minister Jaṅg Bahādur Kuṃbara Rāṇā, on Wednesday, the eighth day of the bright half of the month of Pauṣa in V.S. 1911. This date corresponds to 27 December 1854.¹⁰ A second inscription on the far left (Figure 5b) and right sides (Figure 5c) of the door records that the project was financed from the proceeds of the sale of unused metals found in the palace, and mentions the names of the three individuals involved in the construction. The inscriptions call the door the Māṅglabhaṭṭa Door (*darvājā*) and Golden Door (*sundhokā*).

The predominantly Śaiva imagery above the Golden Door matches that of the Golden Window. The tympanum of the Golden Door features a five-headed ten-armed bisexual (*ardhanārī*) form of Śiva, with one foot on a bull and the other on a lion, flanked by Gaṇeśa and Kumāra (Figure 6). In this late work of art the deity's bisexual form can only be inferred from the two animal mounts. The unidentified androgynous form of Śiva is similar to a gold-plated bronze statue in a fountain (*hiti*) in Mohancok in Kathmandu's Hanumāṅdhokā Royal Palace (Figure 7). There one hand-held attribute is lost and some attributes have been placed in different hands. They are only loosely inserted in the hands. The fountain, which houses mostly stone sculptures, was built under King Pratāpamalla in 1652, but the statue (without attendants) might have come from a tympanum in the palace and been placed in the fountain at a later time. The attributes in the hands of the two Śiva statues are shown in Table 1. The statue in Mohancok is less refined and could possibly predate the one on the tympanum of the Golden Window by 200 years.

Below the Śiva image on the tympanum of the Golden Door we find three small plaques, featuring the flute-playing Kṛṣṇa in the centre, flanked by a *cāmara*-bearing female and a woman holding a fan in her hand. Further below are five gold-plated plaques, apparently forming a group of five deities with Śiva at the centre (*śivapañcāyatana*). The deities, from left to right (as seen by the observer), are Sūrya (on a chariot), a standing figure – possibly Devī – and the seated figures of Śiva, Gaṇeśa and Viṣṇu. Śiva, in the centre,

10 The Devamālā Vaṃśāvalī (p. 106, 6), a collection of legends compiled only after the year 1940, erroneously reports that King Siddhinarasiṃhamalla of Patan built the palace with the Golden Door (*sunko dhokā*) in 1627.



Figure 5. (Colour online) The Golden Door of Caukoṭ Darbār (Photo courtesy of Gudrun Bühnemann)



Figure 5a. (Colour online) Inscription 1, located above the Golden Door (Photo courtesy of Gudrun Bühnemann)

appears just beneath the seven hoods of a snake whose twisted body frames the door. Just over the door is the above-mentioned inscription containing the date of construction, and at the sides there are gold-plated plaques featuring a



Figure 5b. (Colour online) Inscription 2, on the far left side of the Golden Door (Photo courtesy of Gudrun Bühnemann)



Figure 5c. (Colour online) Inscription 2, on the far right side of the Golden Door (Photo courtesy of Gudrun Bühnemann)



Figure 6. (Colour online) The divinities on the tympanum of the Golden Door (Photo courtesy of Rajan Shrestha)



Figure 7. (Colour online) A form of Śiva; the fountain in Mohancok of the Hanumāṅdhokā Royal Palace, Kathmandu (Photo courtesy of the Department of Archaeology, Kathmandu)

Table 1. The attributes in the hands of the Śiva statues

Right hands		Left hands	
Golden Door	Mohancok	Golden Door	Mohancok
trident staff	lost	snake	rattle-drum
<i>vajra</i>	<i>vajra?</i>	bell with <i>vajra</i> handle	snake
short sword	banner or trident ¹¹	rattle-drum	rosary
axe	axe?	goad	water-lily
wish-granting	wish-granting	fearlessness	(lowered) fearlessness

standing four-armed Gaṇeśa, who has one foot placed on a mouse, and a four-armed Kumāra accompanied by a peacock. To the sides of the door are the eight auspicious symbols (*maṅgala*): to the viewer's left appear four *maṅgala* symbols plus the sun, and to the right, the moon plus the remaining four *maṅgala* symbols. To the far left we find the first part of the other inscription and to the far right, its second part.

Additional sources bearing on the date of the Golden Window

Extracts from an undated document in manuscript form, in the Newari language, which describes a series of events (*ghaṭanāvalī*) pertaining to the Red Matsyendranātha of Patan, contain a brief note that the eaves over the Golden Window were damaged in a major earthquake in Patan in 1833.¹² It is possible that this note is a later insertion by another hand, however; or the reference may be to the original wooden window. It conflicts with a drawing of Patan's Royal Palace executed *c.* 1843–46 by an anonymous Nepalese artist,¹³ in which the Golden Window is not visible at all. We will examine this drawing later. The chronicle compiled by Amṛtānanda's relative Guṇānanda, published by Wright, which dates from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, is the only other textual source that refers to the Golden Window (see Wright 1972: 249); other chronicles make no mention of it. The chronicle attributes the construction of the window to King Viṣṇumalla in the first part of the eighteenth century.

The myth of Avalokiteśvara emanating Hindu divinities in the Kāraṇḍavyūha and Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha predates the artistic representations by several centuries. The earliest representation of this form of Avalokiteśvara is as a subsidiary figure, on a *paubhā* showing the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara accompanied by several

- 11 This attribute is either a banner with a trident at the top or a trident with a banner affixed to it.
- 12 See Khanāl 1999: 13, extracts from the text being provided in note 4. Khanāl gave the document written in the Newari language the Nepali title Rāto Machindranāthako tātkaḷika ghaṭanāvalī ("A series of contemporary events pertaining to the Red Matsyendranāth").
- 13 See Henry Lawrence Collection 5243 of the British Library; <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/addorimss/t/019addor0005243u00000000.html>; see also Theophile and Gutschow 2006, no. 4, and Bühnemann 2010: 28, Fig. 4.

other Lokeśvaras. The *paubhā*'s date corresponds to 22 August 1779.¹⁴ Avalokiteśvara emanates eleven divinities. One of the earliest *paubhās* that shows this form of Avalokiteśvara as an independent main figure is found in the collection of the Rubin Museum of Art (no. 100038) and dates from 1818. There Avalokiteśvara emanates thirteen divinities. Artistic representations did not become popular until the nineteenth century and may have been based on summaries or translations of the Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha's account in the Newari language – mixed with legendary material from other sources – which appear from the nineteenth century on. Such representations regularly show the serpent deity (often specified as Śeṣanāga) as one of the Bodhisattva's emanations, although there is no textual basis for this in the Kāraṇḍavyūha or Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha. The earliest extant representations of Avalokiteśvara emanating Hindu divinities in art date only from the end of the eighteenth century. They include a painting from 1837, preserved in the National Museum of Nepal in Kathmandu, which shows Avalokiteśvara emanating eleven deities, including the serpent king (Figure 8). Like the Bodhisattva on the Golden Window, Avalokiteśvara is here accompanied by Sudhanakumāra (to the viewer's far left) and Hayagrīva (to the viewer's far right). Other representations of this form of Avalokiteśvara are in the Tibetan style, created by Newar artists in Tibet. In inscribed paintings from the earlier part of the nineteenth century, such as the one in the National Museum, the Bodhisattva is merely identified as Avalokiteśvara. The earliest dated mention of the name Sṛṣṭikartā Lokeśvara, by which this specific form of Avalokiteśvara is now commonly known, is in a painting dating from 1871, now in the collection of the Rubin Museum of Art (no. 65564). In the last quarter of the nineteenth century or at the latest at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Bodhisattva began to be included as a member of various groups of 108 Lokeśvaras. At the present state of research it is difficult to say whether the name Sṛṣṭikartā Lokeśvara, which usually appears in the corrupt form Sṛṣṭikāntā Lokeśvara or variants of it, circulated prior to the Lokeśvara's inclusion in groups. If the name was not already used earlier, one can assume that the inclusion of this form of Avalokiteśvara as one member of groups of Lokeśvaras made a specific designation necessary, to distinguish him from the other Lokeśvaras.

In early-to-mid-nineteenth-century paintings, the number of emanated Hindu divinities was not fixed and ranged from eleven to thirteen. In later paintings and line drawings, however, the number became standardized at fourteen. The Avalokiteśvara on the Golden Window is of the type that emanates fourteen Hindu divinities, including the serpent king. This suggests a later date for the representation, but there is more evidence to consider first.

The drawing of Patan's Royal Palace mentioned above shows a row of three simple windows in the place where we now find the Golden Window with its gilded tympanum and a wooden window at each side. There is of course some

14 The painting was sold at Christie's New York, lot 53, sale 9608, sale date 21 March 2001 (http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?from=searchresults&pos=6&intObjectID=2007014&sid=ce7bf8b4-bf84-46a6-9cea-8d07d2101174). Its size is specified as 35½ × 28½ in. (90.1 × 72.3 cm).



Figure 8. (Colour online) Avalokiteśvara (attended by Sudhanakumāra and Hayagrīva) emanating eleven Hindu divinities, 1837. Paubhā, painting on cloth. Height 79 cm, width 55 cm. The National Museum, Kathmandu (S. No. 327) (Photo courtesy of Manik Bajracharya)

doubt about the accuracy of the drawing, and its usefulness is limited, since all the windows are depicted in an open position. One cannot discern tympana above the three windows in the drawing because the roof hides these details. As noted above, this drawing also contradicts the above-mentioned manuscript, which briefly states that the eaves over the Golden Window were damaged in the major earthquake of 1833. Prince Waldemar of Prussia, who visited Patan's Royal Palace on 10 February 1845, reported that it was already dilapidated. In the vicinity of the palace he noticed destroyed homes and reported that after the Gorkhas' invasion the rich



Figure 9. (Colour online) Front view of Caukoṭ Darbār with the Golden Window above the Golden Door. Royal Palace, Patan, c. 1885–87. Lithograph (After Le Bon, frontispiece)

families had been killed and exterminated.¹⁵ The Golden Window and the Golden Door are discernible in a photograph taken *c.* 1862–65,¹⁶ although the details are not clear. A photograph taken by Johnston and Hoffmann in 1880 or 1894¹⁷ also shows the Golden Window and the tympanum above the door, but the details are blurred. The oldest photograph of the Golden Window and the Golden Door to show their details clearly dates from 1885 and was taken by Gustave Le Bon (1841–1931). A lithograph published in 1887 after the photograph, and a water-colour by Gustave Le Bon, is reproduced in Figure 9 (see Le Bon 1887, frontispiece). A comparison of the lithograph with the current condition of the door shows that after 1885 further renovations were made to the pillars to the side of it.¹⁸ Considering the extant textual and visual material, it seems likely that the Golden Window was constructed some time in the nineteenth century. Prime Minister Jaṅg Bahādur Kuṃbara Rāṇā, according to whose instructions the Golden Door was installed in 1854, may have been involved in the project. Given its late date of execution, which falls in either the Śāh period (1769–1846) or, more likely, the Rāṇā period (1846–1951), the representation of the Avalokiteśvara on the Golden Window cannot be taken as an example illustrative of the Malla kings' religious policy. In fact, the idea of a Malla king or another major king appearing at the Golden Window and being framed as a deity is anachronistic. After Pṛthvīnārāyaṇa Śāh conquered Patan and the last Malla king vacated the palace in 1768, it was inhabited mostly by regional administrators.

Conclusion

The suggested nineteenth-century date of the representation of the Bodhisattva on the Golden Window coincides with the rise in popularity of this form of Avalokiteśvara in Newar art. But while the paintings simply show Avalokiteśvara with emanated Hindu divinities, the unique feature of the representation on the Golden Window is that it is embedded in an elaborate framework of Hindu divinities. One might interpret their function as that of devotees who enhance the status of the Bodhisattva on the window. But it is more likely that this framework, which visually integrates the Bodhisattva into a Hindu context, illustrates a phenomenon that Paul Hacker has termed “inclusivism”,¹⁹ here

- 15 *Zur Erinnerung an die Reise des Prinzen Waldemar von Preussen nach Indien in den Jahren 1844–1846. Erster Band.* Berlin: Deckersche Geheime Ober- und Hofbuchdruckerei, 1853, Band I, Zweiter Abschnitt: Die Reise durch Hindostan, p. 16. An English translation of the passage is published in Kvaerne 1979: 39.
- 16 The photograph, taken by Clarence Comyn Taylor, is in the collection of the Royal Geographical Society, S0003077; <http://images.rgs.org/>; see also Theophile and Gutschow 2006, no. 10, and Bühnemann 2010: 29, Fig.1.
- 17 See the Royal Geographical Society, S0012133; <http://images.rgs.org/>; see also Theophile and Gutschow 2006, no. 15.
- 18 These include small details such as the divinities and animals. Originally, the eight auspicious symbols were only painted on wood.
- 19 Hacker defined the term inclusivism as follows (Hacker 1983: 12): “Inklusivismus bedeutet, daß man erklärt, eine zentrale Vorstellung einer fremden religiösen oder weltanschaulichen Gruppe sei identisch mit dieser oder jener zentralen Vorstellung einer Gruppe, zu der man selber gehört. Meistens gehört zum Inklusivismus ausgesprochen oder unausgesprochen die Behauptung, daß das Fremde, das mit dem Eigenen als

seen from a Hindu perspective, and was an attempt to appropriate a Buddhist image: rather than an indication of religious tolerance, the configuration of divinities may have been a nineteenth-century Hindu response to representations of Avalokiteśvara emanating Hindu divinities that were popularized by Newar Buddhists at that time, possibly to counter what they saw as threats from an encroaching Hinduism. The latter explanation is more convincing, since a straightforward representation of the Buddhist Śṛṣṭikartā Lokeśvara emanating Hindu divinities would hardly have been placed in such a prominent location on the outer façade of a building of the royal palace of Hindu rulers. There are no Buddhist monuments to be found anywhere on the Patan Darbār Square.

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(Despite the title *Kāraṇḍavyūha*, the text is actually a version of the *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha*.)

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identisch erklärt wird, in irgendeiner Weise ihm untergeordnet oder unterlegen sei”. “Inclusivism means declaring that the central conception of an alien religious or Weltanschaulich group is identical with this or that central conception of the group to which one belongs oneself. To inclusivism there mostly belongs, explicitly or implicitly, the assertion that the alien declared to be identical with one’s own is in some way subordinate or inferior to the latter” (translation quoted from Ruegg 2008: 97).

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Appendix: Text and translation of the two inscriptions above and at the sides of the Golden Door by Kashinath Tamot²⁰

Inscription 1 (located above the Golden Door) (See Figure 5a)

- Line 1: [*siddhi* sign] *svasti śrī3śivaśaktiprītyartha[m] śrīvikramasamvat 1911 pauṣa sudi 8 roja 4 śrīmadrājakumārakumārātmaja śrīprāimmiṣṭara yān kamyāṃḍar in cīpha jānarala jaṃga bahādura ku-*
 Line 2: *vara rāṇājībāta pharmāi śrījanarala jagatsamsera jaṃga kuvara rāṇāji mārpata śrīmā[ṇiglabhaṭṭada]rbājā banāi sthāpanā bhayo yas kāmkā taiyāri garnyā kaptān samsersim | subā dhansu[n]dar subham*

‘(*Siddhi* sign) Hail! For the propitiation of the thrice-venerable Śiva and Śakti, on Wednesday, the 8th of the bright half of the month of Pauṣa in 1911 V.S. [1854 CE], as instructed by the Rājakumārakumārātmaja, Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, General Jaṃga Bahādura Ku[m]vara Rāṇā, the illustrious Mā[ṇiglabhaṭṭa] door was made and installed by the honourable General Jagatsamsera Jaṃga Ku[m]vara Rāṇā. Preparations for this work were made by Captain Samsersim [and] Subā Dhansu[n]dar. Auspiciousness.’

Inscription 2 (located on the left and right sides of the Golden Door)
 (Text on the far left side) (See Figure 5b)

- Line 1: [*siddhi* sign] *śrayo stu || yo sunḍhokā banaudā sahara pātankā darvā-*
 Line 2: *ramā jagerā rahyākā sunkā jalap saryākā gajura chāni*
 Line 3: *ghaṃṭa kasantamankā bhāḍābarttan gairaha vastu vikri*
 Line 4: *kā āmdāni jmām moharrū 3212 || śarca jmām moharrū 3212 || le banāi pra-*
 Line 5: *tiṣṭita bhayāko ho yasa ḍhokāmā lobhāni pāpānī garī*

(Text continuing on the far right side) (See Figure 5c)

- Line 1: *bigārnyālāi paṃca mahāpātaka lāgalā saṃcitā garnyā*
 Line 2: *lāi uttarottaravṛddhi holā || yasa śrīmāṇiglabhaṭṭada-*
 Line 3: *rbājāko kāma gardā dīḥā rahanyā suvedāra kāśirāma ku-*
 Line 4: *vara rāṇāji tahabīladāra candravīra udāsa tamraṭa nāi-*
 Line 5: *kyā rāmasundara śubhaṃ bhūyāt || ||*

‘(*Siddhi* sign) May there be welfare. There were some extra pinnacles (*gajura*), whose gilt had deteriorated, bells, [unused] pots and pans and other materials in the palace of Patan city. This Golden Door was installed, after being made from the total amount (collected) from their sale, Mohar Rs. 3,212, [the same amount of] Mohar Rs. 3,212 having been spent. If this door is damaged out of greed or with [other] evil [intent], [the

20 The text and translation of the two inscriptions were first published in Sharma 1998: 102–03, an unpublished MA dissertation submitted to Tribhuvan University. A new improved reading and translation by Kashinath Tamot is presented here.

perpetrator] will be held guilty of the five great offences, while [he] who takes care [of the door] will prosper day by day. The persons working on this blessed Māṅgīlabhaṭṭa door were the judge (*diṭhā*) Suvedāra Kāśirām Ku[m]vara Rāṇā, the cashier (*tahabīladāra*) Candravīra Udāsa and head coppersmith Rāmasundara. May it be auspicious.’