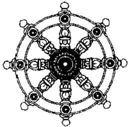
Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place:

ASIAN RELIGIONS AND SOCIETY SERIES



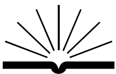
A Buddha Dharma Kyokai Foundation Book on Buddhism and Comparative Religion

General Editor: Neil McMullin

Edited by Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara

Editorial Assistant: Jack Laughlin

Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place: Localizing Sanctity in Asian Religions



UBCPress · Vancouver · Toronto

© UBC Press 2003

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without prior written permission of the publisher, or, in Canada, in the case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, a licence from Access Copyright (Canadian), www.accesscopyright.ca.

09 08 07 06 05 04 03 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in Canada on acid-free paper

National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Pilgrims, patrons, and place : localizing sanctity in Asian religions / Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara, editors.

(Asian religions and society series, ISSN 1705-4761)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-7748-1038-6

1. Sacred space – Asia. 2. Asia – Religious life and customs. I. Granoff, P.E. (Phyllis Emily), 1947- II. Shinohara, Koichi, 1941- III. Series.

BL1033.P54 2003 291.3'5'095 C2003-910156-8

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Buddha Dharma Kyokai Foundation of Canada.

UBC Press gratefully acknowledges the financial support for our publishing program of the Government of Canada through the Book Publishing Industry Development Program (BPIDP), and of the Canada Council for the Arts, and the British Columbia Arts Council.

Book layout and production by Kaleidoscope
Toronto, Canada, www.kveinc.com

All photographs are by the authors unless otherwise indicated.

UBC Press
The University of British Columbia
2029 West Mall
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2
604-822-5959 / Fax: 604-822-6083
www.ubcpress.ca

Contents

Contributors vii

Acknowledgements viii

Introduction – Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place: Localizing
Sanctity in Asian Religions 1
PHYLLIS GRANOFF AND KOICHI SHINOHARA

1 The Twenty-four Dioceses and Zhang Daoling: The Spatio-Liturgical Organization of Early Heavenly Master Taoism . . 15
FRANCISCUS VERELLEN

2 The Story of the Buddha's Begging Bowl: Imagining a Biography and Sacred Places 68
KOICHI SHINOHARA

3 Where Ascetics Get Comfort and Recluses Go Public: Museums for Buddhist Saints in Thailand 108
LOUIS GABAUDE

4 Paradise Found, Paradise Lost: Harirām Vyās's Love for Vrindāban and What Hagiographers Made of It 124
HEIDI PAUWELS

5 Pilgrimage as Revelation: Śaṅkaradeva's Journey to Jagannātha Purī 181
PHYLLIS GRANOFF

6 The 'Early Hindi' Hagiographies by Anantadās 203
WINAND M. CALLEWAERT

7 Dvārakā: The Making of a Sacred Place 224
ANDRÉ COUTURE

8 Place in the Sacred Biography at Borobudur 249
ROBERT L. BROWN

9 Ratannāth's Travels 264
VÉRONIQUE BOUILLIER

10 The Interweave of Place, Space, and Biographical Discourse at a South Indian Religious Centre 279
K.I. KOPPEDRAYER

11 Portraiture and Jain Sacred Place: The Patronage of the Ministers Vastupāla and Tejaḥpāla 297
JACK C. LAUGHLIN

12 Saints and Sacred Places in Saurashtra and Kutch: The Cases of the Naklaṃki Cult and the Jakhs 332
FRANÇOISE MALLISON

Bibliography 350

Index 370

Contributors

Véronique Bouillier, Directeur de recherches, CNRS, Paris

Robert L. Brown, Department of Art History, University of California at Los Angeles

Winand M. Callewaert, Department of Oriental Studies, University of Leuven

André Couture, Faculté de Théologie, Université Laval

Louis Gabaude, École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Thailand

Phyllis Granoff, Department of Religious Studies, McMaster University

K.I. Koppedrayer, Department of Religion and Culture, Wilfrid Laurier University

Jack Laughlin, Department of Religious Studies, University of Sudbury

Françoise Mallison, Directeur d'Études, École pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne

Heidi Pauwels, Department of Asian Languages and Literatures, University of Washington

Koichi Shinohara, Department of Religious Studies, McMaster University

Franciscus Verellen, École Française d'Extrême-Orient and Institute of Chinese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Acknowledgements

The editors thank the BDK Foundation, Canada, for their generous support towards the preparation of this volume for publication and for the conference at which these essays were originally presented. We also thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Canada for their support of the conference.

All photographs are by the authors unless otherwise indicated.

Introduction

Pilgrims, Patrons, and Place: Localizing Sanctity in Asian Religions

PHYLLIS GRANOFF AND KOICHI SHINOHARA

The essays in this volume were originally presented at a conference, Sacred Space and Sacred Biography in Asian Religious Traditions, held in June 1998 at McMaster University and the University of Toronto. The conference was funded by a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Yehan Numata Foundation. A quick perusal of the table of contents makes immediately clear what was one of the most challenging and rewarding features of the conference: its intellectual range and diversity. The essays span a broad geographical area that includes India, Nepal, Thailand, Indonesia, and China. They discuss Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, and Taoism, and they explore issues from the classical and medieval periods and the contemporary world. Several examine Asian religions that have been little studied either in Europe or in North America – the Nath Yogīs of Nepal, the Jakhs of Saurashtra, and the sixteenth-century Vaiṣṇava movement of Assam – and which are not often represented in standard works on South Asian religions. The contributors' perspectives are as diverse as their subject matter – anthropologist, art historian, Sinologist, Indologist, or Buddhologist – we each bring to our essays a particular way of seeing and thinking about our material. Nonetheless, from our intensive discussions together we became aware of many common concerns.

Many essays emphasize that sacred places may have a plurality of meanings in a religious community; holy sites may be sanctified in a number of ways – by the presence of certain marvellous natural features thought to yield substances conducive to salvation; by the presence of certain man-made or divinely made objects, things that a saint has used, for example. They may also be sanctified by the deeds

of a saint, and it is here that most obviously sacred place and sacred biography intersect. Such multiple layers of meaning may not always be immediately obvious; in one case, we learn how the description of the construction of a sacred city shows remarkable parallels to rituals for the construction of a much earlier sacred space, an impermanent sacrificial altar. This understanding adds layers of meaning to the sacred city, meanings that might have otherwise remained undetected.

A number of essays reveal that sacred places often transcended the immediate and the local and were situated in a time that is cosmic in scale and in realms that lie beyond the terrestrial. In some cases, we note a tension between the strictly local and that which lay beyond it, as a local group in its hagiographies recounted miracles done outside the local territory and sought its legitimation not from local rulers but from the outside world. Sacred sites and the cults associated with them often seemed to be precariously balanced between the specific and the denial of that specificity, whether that was done by situating the sacred place in a cosmic framework, or as we see in one essay, by the enactment of rituals in which a local group must move outside its territory to worship at another sacred place.

Other essays highlight the visionary aspects of sacred place. Access to sacred space is often gained through a religious vision; a revelation may also initiate the recognition of a system of sacred places. The visionary nature may well be related to the paradoxical nature that we noted above; sacred place is both fixed on the ordinary map and beyond all time and space, existing in some heavenly or other-worldly sphere. This, in turn, could have practical repercussions for religious groups who sought to legitimate themselves by reference to sacred place and who argued with each other over the control of holy sites. If they failed to win, a group could deny that a particular holy site was indeed rooted in a specific geographical place and tied to that place. Instead, the holy site could become a visionary place reached by those unable to dominate the place in reality, but who could see it vividly in meditation.

Visions were not limited to cases in which holy places had become contested space. As they spread out from their homeland, missionary religions were faced with the challenge of creating new sacred places. One strategy they used was to deny the specificity of the place that had been the original homeland by creating elaborate visionary geographies in which the new homeland had as much a claim as did the original one. In more than one case, visionary sacred place was associated with other religious concerns – for example, the

preservation of the true beliefs in a time of declining virtue. As a cosmic rather than a local site, the sacred place became a shrine to the preserved teaching even at the moment when the world is destroyed. Such eschatological concerns were apparent in early medieval China and in early and medieval India.

Religious groups were not the only ones interested in sacred sites. Political leaders could use patronage of a sacred site to legitimate their much more secular concerns. Of the many dramas enacted on the stage of sacred place, the contests between secular and religious authority, between the erudite learning of the established upper classes and the deep faith of the dispossessed, are discussed in several of the essays.

We would like to introduce the reader to the essays in this collection by highlighting their treatment of some of these general themes.

In his essay, "The Twenty-four Dioceses and Zhang Daoling: The Spatio-Liturgical Organization of Early Heavenly Master Taoism," Franciscus Verellen presents a detailed study of a remarkable use of 'sacred space' in early Taoism. Heavenly Master Taoism developed a system of Twenty-four Dioceses, which as Verellen states, provided the 'basic framework for ordering the spiritual space administered' by the community. The area of these Twenty-four Dioceses corresponds to Sichuan in present-day China. These dioceses were at once specific places on earth and projections of astrological phenomena on earth. They were thus local sites and heavenly sites at the same time. Verellen carefully describes the multiple meanings that the dioceses had for the religious group. They were the seats of administration and the sanctuaries where the rituals of the group were carried out, and they were imbued with sanctity in a number of different ways. Some of them were thought to contain the magical substances, the metals and minerals required for Taoist cultivation. Others were associated with events in the biography of the founder. Still others had been connected with earlier cults. A diocese was thus at once an administrative centre, an earthly counterpart of cosmological entities, a source of wonder-working substances, and the locus of important events in the biography of the important figures of the sect. Verellen also discusses the ways in which the dioceses, by keeping census records of the local population, encroached on civil authority.

This study of the Twenty-four Dioceses highlights one of the common themes in this collection: The dioceses are said to have been created in heaven and then transmitted to Zhang Daoling in a

revelation that took place in AD 142 or 143. Finite sacred space thus exists beyond its terrestrial boundaries; the recognition of its earthly counterpart depends upon supernatural revelation. The Twenty-four Dioceses are also connected with eschatological beliefs. Those who participated in the liturgical agenda of the dioceses were to be the survivors of the great cataclysm that would end the world. The power of the dioceses to ensure survival at the end of the world was intimately related not to their nature as earthly sites, but to their many correspondences with heavenly phenomena. Another issue that emerges is the problem that a religious community encountered when it moved from its central location. Verellen discusses how the dioceses, though rooted in a given locale, could be transplanted elsewhere; 'movable' and 'adjunct' dioceses were created to cope with new conditions. The rootedness of sacred space and the necessity to uproot it reappear as a theme in many of the essays.

Koichi Shinohara, in 'The Story of the Buddha's Begging Bowl: Imagining a Biography and Sacred Places,' considers many of these themes. This essay, in particular, discusses the dilemma that Buddhists outside the homeland of Buddhism faced. If holy sites were primarily sanctified by the presence of the Buddha himself, did that mean that as the religion spread there were to be no easily accessible holy places for the new believers? Shinohara describes how Chinese Buddhists coped with this problem. Drawing on strategies that had probably been developed within India in regions like Gandhāra, which was also far from Buddhism's original seat, Chinese Buddhists constructed new holy sites. They did so in a number of ways; instead of sanctifying a site by the presence of the historical Buddha, the new Buddhists relied on an expanded Buddha biography, which told of past Buddhas or past lives of the historical Buddha. They were one step into a process of transcending the local and the here and now; time was now cosmic time, and Shinohara shows how local holy sites became transformed into cosmic space. He reviews a number of accounts that reveal yet another strategy used to create new holy places – the use of portable objects sanctified by the touch of the Buddha that could be taken to Buddhism's new territories. The bowl of the Buddha was one such important cultic object in Gandhāra, as is evidenced by the accounts of Chinese pilgrims to the region and by its depiction in extant sculpted reliefs from Gandhāra.

In addition, Shinohara discusses a remarkable vision of an early medieval Chinese monk. At the end of his life, the *vinaya* master

Daoxuan had a vision in which gods revealed to him a number of extraordinary things. One of their revelations involved the bowl of the Buddha. But this was no ordinary bowl. It replicated itself, levitated, and emitted light. It was no longer just the bowl of the historical Buddha; it was now the bowl of all the Buddhas in the entire universe. In addition, this sacred object was transported from its location on earth and enshrined in a *stūpa* or relic mound in the heavenly realm. Transcending both time and space, it became associated with the preservation of the true religion at a time of declining virtue and increasing chaos. 'Relocalization' of the sacred by means of a portable sacred object in Daoxuan's vision turned into something we might call the 'translocalization' of a sacred object. The specifics of time and place no longer mattered. The bowl of the historical Buddha had become the bowl used by all of the past Buddhas in the universe; it would also be used by the future Buddha. It was no longer in India, nor even in Gandhāra or China. It existed in heaven in elaborate structures created for it by gods and other supernatural beings. Sacred place became increasingly an imagined realm, made known by visions and supernatural revelations. The problem of creating new sacred space was solved by denying the specificity of place. Sacred space was no longer any place on earth, and all terrestrial places could share equally in the vision of the new cosmic place.

Louis Gabaude, in his essay 'Where Ascetics Get Comfort and Recluses Go Public: Museums for Buddhist Saints in Thailand,' looks at a striking modern transformation of the cult of objects connected with saints in Buddhism. Based on his visit to some twenty-five sites in northeastern and northern Thailand, which contain some kind of building dedicated to a saint, Gabaude introduces us to a new kind of *stūpa* or reliquary mound. This is the museum, in which are housed objects connected with the saint during his lifetime. These museums usually contain an image of the saint, either of bronze or wax or resin; the saint's relics; objects that he used; and occasionally books written by the saint or amulets either produced or consecrated by the saint. Gabaude describes for us the transformation of the traditional relic mound, from a closed structure housing relics kept away from the public into a museum where the relics are on constant public display. Gabaude's 'museums' are indeed the opposite of Daoxuan's *stūpas*, located in far-off heavenly realms, accessible now only to religious visions. The tourism they attract, however, suggests the power to draw the faithful of objects that were associated with a saint. The

attraction of the Buddha's bowl at Gandhāra and the logic behind the emphasis on portable objects as bearers of sanctity are undeniably clear. Gabaude's analysis of the growth of saints' 'museums' in Thailand today also alerts us to the complexity of monastic politics in the spread of saints' cults and the making of holy sites.

In 'Paradise Found, Paradise Lost: Harirām Vyās's Love for Vrindāban and What Hagiographers Made of It,' Heidi Pauwels studies the 'intersection of sacred biography, sacred place, and community formation' in the Braj area of North India in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Vaiṣṇava groups in this period were preoccupied with 'rediscovering' the sites associated with the life of Kṛṣṇa. Pauwels discusses the ways in which Harirām Vyās, one of the pioneer 'discoverers,' sang of Vrindāban, and examines later sectarian appropriations of both Harirām Vyās and the Vrindāban he loved. For Harirām Vyās, sacred space transcended the strictly local and mundane. Vyās discovers in Vrindāban the heavenly abode of Kṛṣṇa and the divine sites of his play, his līlā. Vrindāban exists in a cosmic time for Vyās; it is the source of all creation, prior to and constitutive of both time and place. Vrindāban's essence is captured in religious visions. Despite this emphasis on the transcendent nature of Vrindāban as sacred space, Vyās is aware of Vrindāban as a contested space that is very much the focus of worldly desires. Vyās repeatedly decries the despoliation of his sacred land; he cries out against those who would use Vrindāban for worldly gain. Vrindāban is also the focus of intense competition; Vyās is aware of these competing claims but his response transcends immediate sectarian rivalries. To Vyās, anyone who has absolute devotion to Kṛṣṇa and to Vrindāban, regardless of sectarian affiliation, belongs to the community of true believers. Pauwels traces the appropriation of Vyās by later sectarian authors and the growing interest in their writings in Vrindāban as contested space. Vrindāban is increasingly the stage for sectarian debates. Nonetheless, Vrindāban remains throughout these changes and for all these writers both the local site for which rival groups may compete, and the heavenly realm, to which all may have access in a special kind of seeing gained through devotion.

In 'Pilgrimage as Revelation: Śaṅkaradeva's Journey to Jagannātha Purī,' Phyllis Granoff addresses the themes of sectarian competition for terrestrial sacred space and visionary seeing. Śaṅkaradeva (AD 1449–1568) was the founder of a Vaiṣṇava movement in Assam. As we see in Pauwels' essay, the sixteenth century was a fertile period for the

growth of Vaiṣṇava sects. Numerous Vaiṣṇava groups were in the process of settling in the reclaimed holy site of Vrindāban. An equally important Vaiṣṇava place of pilgrimage, at least for Northeastern India, was the temple of Jagannātha at Purī in Orissa. The temple, probably of the twelfth century, had become intimately associated with royal power in Orissa, but it nonetheless remained a religious centre for Vaiṣṇavas from all over the northeast, and indeed elsewhere in India. Like Vrindāban, its religious and economic importance made it a stage for sectarian competition.

Vaiṣṇavism in Northeastern India for the period can be roughly divided into three groups. In addition to Śaṅkaradeva's Vaiṣṇavism in Assam, there was an indigenous Vaiṣṇava movement within Orissa itself, which was an esoteric religious movement greatly influenced by Tantric practices. But the main Vaiṣṇava sect was the ecstatic religion of the Bengali saint Caitanya (AD 1485–1533), which quickly spread throughout North India. The followers of Caitanya competed for control of holy places in Vrindāban and at Purī. Biographies of the Oriya Vaiṣṇava poet-saints confirm the evidence of the Assamese biographies of Śaṅkaradeva, which depict Caitanya and his followers as well-established at Purī and somewhat jealous of their control over the site. Nonetheless, so great was the lure of Purī and so important the legitimization to be gained from Lord Jagannātha, that we find Śaṅkaradeva in his biographies setting out on a pilgrimage from his native Assam to the temple in Orissa.

At first glance it might seem that Śaṅkaradeva faced the opposite problem from that faced by the medieval Chinese Buddhists discussed by Shinohara. For the Chinese Buddhist, the problem was to make China, so far from the original homeland of Buddhism, into a legitimate Buddhist land with specially sanctified sites. The biographies of Śaṅkaradeva concede that the temple of Jagannātha in Orissa was the centre of Vaiṣṇava religious activity; their challenge was to find a role for Śaṅkaradeva at the temple where the Bengalis were already entrenched. Granoff discusses the strategy they used; it is a strategy we have in fact seen the medieval Chinese Buddhists employ. The sacred site is displaced from its actual physical location and transported into a visionary world. Śaṅkaradeva does reach Purī, but the gods in the temple, in fact, come to him. It requires dreams and visionary sight, however, for Śaṅkaradeva and his devotees to see them. The presence of the gods in Śaṅkaradeva's lodging turns the lodging into the true temple. Śaṅkaradeva and his followers make

other ‘visionary’ pilgrimages; they see the holy city of Dvārakā, which had been submerged in the ocean, rise from the sea and Śaṅkaradeva enthroned there as Lord Kṛṣṇa. Granoff also discusses a problem that was perhaps unique to the Hindu context, and that is the problem of the god as pilgrim. Śaṅkaradeva, like Caitanya, was regarded by his followers as a divine incarnation. Why would God ever need to travel to find God? This question, too, is answered by displacement and visionary transposition of the holy site.

Śaṅkaradeva was not the only medieval Indian saint to visit Dvārakā. In ‘The “Early Hindi” Hagiographies of Anantadās,’ Winand Callewaert introduces us to Pīpā, whose unusual career was recounted in verses by another devotee, Anantadās, probably around 1600. Like the visit of Śaṅkaradeva, Pīpā’s visit is to more than just the physical city of Dvārakā. As Callewaert tells us, Pīpā’s visit to Dvārakā is also the occasion for him to reveal himself as divine to the people. Callewaert fleshes out our understanding of the religious conditions in sixteenth-century North India. Harirām Vyās and those who later appropriated him as their own were only a sample of the many saints who journeyed across the Indian sacred landscape, often from pilgrimage centre to pilgrimage centre, or from city to city, where they gathered their followers and engaged in debates with their rivals. Callewaert has led the scholarly efforts in editing the texts that are attributed to these poet-saints and in reconstructing their history by closely examining the manuscript evidence – essentially oral texts, the study of which raises many issues, as Pauwels also notes. After a brief selection of verses dealing with other saints, Callewaert discusses in some detail the *parcāi* of Pīpā.

The holy city of Dvārakā, site of one of Śaṅkaradeva’s visions and of the revelation of Pīpā’s divinity, is the subject of André Couture’s essay, ‘Dvārakā: The Making of a Sacred Place.’ He begins by asking us to broaden our definition of sacred place. We have seen the dioceses of Heavenly Master Taoism, administrative units, magical landscapes, and temples; the supernatural *stūpas* or reliquaries housing the Buddha’s begging bowl; the heavenly gardens of Vrindāban, where Kṛṣṇa had sported; and the great temple of Jagannāth at Purī. These are all places that are eternal, either because they correspond to eternal entities in heaven, or because they are indeed the supramundane world that has somehow descended onto the terrestrial place. Dvārakā seems to be the unthinkable: as a holy site that is temporary, it is doomed to perish. Couture gives us a

detailed description of Dvārakā in the *Harivaṃśa*, which is regarded as a supplement to the great Sanskrit epic, the *Mahābhārata*. He explains the genesis of the notion of an impermanent sacred space in the Vedic fire altar of earliest Indian ritual. The fire altar has the shape of a bird, and when the city of Dvārakā is fully formed, it comes down to earth as a bird.

Couture argues that Dvārakā should be understood as an extension of the divine body. According to the doctrine of *avatāras* or incarnation, Kṛṣṇa comes to earth to complete a designated task. When the task is done, he must return to heaven. Dvārakā, the locus of the exercise of his divine power, similarly has a limited duration on earth. Couture addresses themes that come up in the other essays, such as the heavenly origins of the holy site. Even more intriguing, perhaps, is the fact that its main architectural structure, the *sabhā* or assembly hall, can be regarded as the eternal presence of the true religion, *dharma*. Eschatological themes such as the destruction of the holy site and the notion of a holy place in which the true religion may be embodied in a physical object cannot fail to remind us of the Heavenly Master Dioceses or Daoxuan's *stūpas*.

In 'Place in the Sacred Biography at Borobudur,' Robert Brown asks us to re-examine our understanding of the concept of 'sacred place.' Borobudur in Central Java is the site of a massive stone Buddhist monument, which scholars have called a *stūpa*, but which is more like a terraced mountain. It was built in the ninth century. The terraces are covered with stone-carved reliefs, some of which illustrate the *Karmavibhaṅga*, a Buddhist text on the law of karma. Other reliefs depict the biography of the Buddha, both from the *jātakas*, which are stories of his past lives, and from the *Lalitavistara*, which describes his historical life. Still other reliefs depict the pilgrimage of Sudhana, in search of transcendent wisdom, a journey described in vivid and visionary language in the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. Borobudur itself is a sacred space; as a *stūpa*, it embodies the presence of the Buddha. It is a unique monument, and scholars have long debated its many possible layers of meaning. But this is not the 'sacred space' that Brown describes; Brown looks at the individual reliefs to see how the artist created a space within a given scene that was different from other narrative space. He suggests that artists had a number of means at their disposal and that the artists at Borobudur used several key techniques. They relied on hierarchy, for example, to indicate the importance of a personage. In the relief, an important individual is placed higher than

subsidiary figures; seating the figure on a raised platform thus marks the space around it as sacred space, space occupied by a figure worthy of devotion. Similarly, the presence of retainers and of special architectural structures creates and marks the 'sacred space' of the relief. If Verellen had listed for us the ways in which geographical space can be 'marked' as sacred through 'recognizable objects, structures, activities, and sensations,' Brown does the same for the reliefs at Borobudur. He also raises another important issue that formed a leitmotif of the conference, how sacred space is treated by religions that have left their original homeland. He argues that the sacred space created by the Borobudur reliefs reflects a local understanding of society and human activity that is not simply derived from a rote understanding of imported Indian texts.

Differing patterns of sacred space, created this time not by art but by ritual performance, is one of the themes of Véronique Bouillier's essay, 'Ratannāth's Travels.' The Kānphaṭā Yogīs, followers of yogic practices attributed to the eleventh- or twelfth-century Nāth Yogī Gorakhnāth, established one of their monasteries in the Dang Valley in Nepal. They credit the founding of their monastic establishment to a saint named Ratannāth. As Bouillier tells us, 'Ratannāth's presence in the Caughera monastery today is not only in its narrative. The ritual makes him come to life in the person of the head of the monastery.' The ritual to which she refers is the annual pilgrimage that takes the *pīr*, as he is called, away from the monastery and to the Indian town of Devi Patan, to visit a goddess temple there. This is also the occasion of the annual installation of the new *pīr*. Much like Couture's Dvārakā, the holy man as locus of sanctity is a temporary entity. Every year a new *pīr* must be chosen and entrusted with the sacred duty of worshipping the main cult object in the monastery, the *amritapātra* or 'vessel of the nectar of immortality.' This centrifugal pull, as she describes it, has its parallel in the local legends told of Ratannāth. While Ratannāth is above all a son of the soil, deeply 'rooted in the landscape of Dang and even involved in the rise of the Dang kingdom as a poltical entity,' it is curious that the miracle stories that are told of him all take place outside of Dang. Indeed, Ratannāth receives his legitimation not from local leaders, but from the distant 'Badshah,' as he is called, the Muslim sovereign.

In the Nāth legends, Ratannāth is, paradoxically, a local saint, who is rarely mentioned outside the local tradition, at the same time as he earns his credentials to sainthood in his travels outside the area.

Bouillier describes how the pilgrimage to Devi Patan can also be understood as a confirmation from outside, this time by the goddess there, of the new *pīr*, the human embodiment of Ratannāth. The travels of the saint, in his legends and in his contemporary embodiment, raise now familiar questions about the dialectic between 'local and foreign' sacred space. Bouillier asks how precise historical circumstances, some of which remain obscure to us today, might have led religious groups to formulate notions of 'local' and 'foreign' that are more flexible than we might have otherwise suspected.

Kay Koppedrayer's essay, 'The Interweave of Place, Space, and Biographical Discourse at a South Indian Religious Centre,' unravels the complex skeins out of which a particular sacred site, in this case the distant Mt Kailāsa in the Himalayan mountains, is woven. Koppedrayer examines a south Indian religious institution, the monastery at Dharmapuram. Observation of contemporary ritual is also central to her investigation. Once a year, on the occasion of the new moon day of the month of Āṭi (July to August), the monastery holds a festival to celebrate Mt Kailāsa. This is curious in and of itself; Mt Kailāsa, regarded as the home of the god Śiva, is far from the world of Dharmapuram, if we are speaking in terms of terrestrial distance. However, there is no physical pilgrimage involved in this celebration for most of the celebrants, although the festival does commemorate the pilgrimage in 1959 to Mt Kailāsa by the twenty-fifth head of the centre. The distance to the holy site, a problem we have seen many times, is transversed during the festival by means of an icon, a painting of the mountain that is worshipped by the head of the monastery.

As a sacred site, Mt Kailāsa has multiple meanings for the members of the community, which Koppedrayer carefully unravels for us. It was at Mt Kailāsa that Śiva first taught the doctrine that eventually was transmitted to the group, and thus the group associates it with their legitimation. Members of the Dharmapuram monastery, in fact, call themselves the Kailāsaparamparai, 'the lineage of Kailāsa.' As Koppedrayer explains, 'For the members of the Dharmapuram Adhinam, the seat of their guru is Mt Kailāsa; the wisdom that animates their guru, embodied in the present Gurumahāsannidhānam, is descended from Śiva himself.' The icon of Mt Kailāsa that is displayed is also a special image, a painting that was made from the photograph taken at the time of the 1959 pilgrimage. It thus freezes and removes from the transitory realm of ordinary time both the act and the object of worship. Koppedrayer links the worship of Mt

Kailāsa by the Dharmapuram monastery today to earlier religious practices in Tamil Śaivism. As we follow her readings of this ritual and its multiple layers of significance, we see sacred space, historical process, biography, and ritual intersect to create a complex web of religious meanings.

The use of art to freeze a moment of worship and lift the sacred site and its rituals out of ordinary time into the timeless is also a theme in Jack Laughlin's essay, 'Portraiture and Jain Sacred Place: The Patronage of the Ministers Vastupāla and Tejaḥpāla.' Laughlin explores in detail the records of the donations made by the two brothers, Vastupāla and Tejaḥpāla, in thirteenth-century Gujarat. The brothers, who served as ministers under the local Vāghelā kings, were ardent Jains, although some of their donations were made to Hindu temples. Laughlin focuses on a particular kind of donation that these brothers seemed particularly eager to make: the donation of portraits of themselves, of members of their immediate family, and of the local rulers. He shows concretely something that other essays have suggested from a reading of the texts, namely, that the sacred site had intimate ties to the other world. He argues that the Jain temple was the *samavasaraṇa*, the heavenly assembly hall made by the gods for the Jina who had reached Enlightenment, and that the portraits of themselves and their relatives that the ministers erected, were meant to display them as gods, either as protectors of the quarters, or as the god Indra, the archetypical worshipper of the Jina in Jain mythology. Laughlin also suggests that by placing themselves in stone as perpetual worshippers, the brothers were able to perpetuate the merits of their worship long beyond the merits they might have gained from the simple physical act of worship accomplished by going to the temple, praying, and then departing.

The need somehow to lift the sacred site out of the mundane world of the transitory is here accomplished by fixing the worshipper in stone and by the arrangement of statues, which suggests that the worshipper himself is not mortal, but is one of the gods, if not in eternal submission, still engaged in devotion that far outlasts what the ordinary mortal can offer. The sacred site is transformed into heaven not by religious vision but by carefully articulated and, as Laughlin demonstrates, often politically motivated patronage. Laughlin's study clearly illustrates the role of politics and secular concerns in the patronage of holy sites, a theme we have seen in other essays.

Françoise Mallison, in 'Saints and Sacred Places in Saurashtra and Kutch: The Cases of the Naklaṃki Cult and the Jakhs,' provides us with

a glimpse of these two poorly studied and poorly understood religious groups in late medieval India. She raises issues of the purely local versus outside concerns and of sectarian identity, issues that we have seen in other essays. The worship of Naklaṃki is associated with messianic beliefs in the coming of the tenth incarnation of Viṣṇu, whose more familiar name is Kalkin. The cult of Naklaṃki was confined to a few regions in India; Saurashtra may have been its centre, although messianic texts also exist from Orissa in the east. Mallison raises the issue of sectarian boundaries and local cults, and argues persuasively that the cult of Naklaṃki transcended sectarian boundaries. Indeed, she points out that the corpus of hymns known as the *Sant Vāṇī* was itself largely shared between different religious groups. Mallison discusses the founding of three Naklaṃki sanctuaries located in Pancal, in Saurashtra, all of which date from the nineteenth century. She suggests that the cult developed originally among the Isma'īlīs Khojas, perhaps even among Hindu converts. It used the language of *avatāras* or incarnations and borrowed some of its stories from the *purāṇas*. She proposes that the cult then became a Hindu cult.

The case of the Jakhs is equally complicated. The worship of the Jakhs seems, in fact, to have been confined to the area of Kutch. Sanctuaries of the Jakhs contain statues of seventy-two horseback riders who are said to have come from overseas to help the sick. Mallison discusses the competing theories about the origins of this cult and comments on how local religion in Saurashtra has had the ability to absorb and transform new cults with succeeding waves of immigration into the region.

As diverse as these essays are, it should be clear that they also have much in common. They examine how sacred place is created and understood by a religious group and the role that religious visions and imagination play in creating sacred space. Although the conference began with religious biography as an important component of its subject matter, as the conversation across traditions and disciplines progressed, it became clear that many of the issues raised centred on sacred place. These essays explore the role of sacred place in creating a specific local religious identity. Some of them examine the relationship between religious authority and secular authority and how that relationship crystallizes around a sacred place and sacred life; others explore issues of legitimation of religious authority and the role of biography and place in that process. Their topics reach across time and geographical boundaries and raise similar points for

discussion. The diversity of the solutions and strategies that emerge suggests the complexity of the phenomena under study and points to the importance of engaging in ongoing discussions framed in a broad cross-cultural context, with scholars from different disciplines contributing their unique perspectives.