NHDP not only documents individual sites of endangered heritage in the Kathmandu Valley or West Nepal, but also the usage of the sites and how they contribute to ritual practices – which is central in keeping the heritage alive. Sites are often related to each other, for instance, through processions. In fact, in places like the royal city of Patan processions still play an important role for communities. We have selected a few procession routes for you to come along. These will be shared over the next months.

The NHDP [team](https://danam.cats.uni-heidelberg.de/team/) invites you to join us in exploring the fascinating patterns of temples, monasteries and shrines, wells and fountains or arcaded platforms and rest houses.

The maps were designed by Elias Michaels, who georeferenced the historic base maps and aerial pictures and integrated them in the interactive framework, allowing a multimedia perspective on the heritage walks and its locations.

[**Phudyaḥ (Dīpaṅkara) Jātrā of the Pañcadāna Festival in Patan**](https://danam.cats.uni-heidelberg.de/phuydah-dipankara/)

[Photograph of the Buddha, photo by Nutandhar Sharma; 2020](https://danam.cats.uni-heidelberg.de/media/img/heritage_walks/Panchadana%20Yatra.webp" \o "Panchadana Yatra)

The public and religious life in Nepal was terribly hit by the Covid-19 pandemic in the years 2020 and 2021, in a dramatic way. It restricted many ritual activities and altered them in interesting ways. Our research fellow Dr. Nutandhar Sharma, accompanied by photographer Nashib Kafle (2020) and architect Bijay Basukala (2021) documented some of the rituals performed during the Dīpaṅkara procession, connecting them to selected sites of cultural heritage that can be found on DANAM. Prof. Dr. Christiane Brosius edited the material and selected the photographs.

**Following the Buddha: the festival for the Buddha of Light**

The Dīpaṅkara Buddha, or ‘Maker of Light’, is said to predate the historical Gautama Buddha, and is often equated with the first Buddha (Michaels 2013: 2). Pañcadāna (literally, ‘five offerings’) is a festival in which the initiated Śākya and Vajrācārya males have to manifest their monastic status by collecting alms from at least seven houses. In the historic city of Patan, this festival is known as Yala (Patan) Pañcadāna. It is celebrated on the eighth lunar day of the bright fortnight of the Śrāvaṇa month according to the lunar calendar; in 2020, that day fell on July 28.

On the day of Pañcadāna, initiated male devotees offer alms to the Vajracārya priests and Sākya householder monks. Of central importance is Phudyaḥ, an approximately 60 cm high gold-plated copper icon of Dīpaṅkara Buddha. The icon of the deity is carried from house to house and, from monastery to monastery, by the Śākyas of Ukubahāl monastery. When the deity visits the selected places, it is worshipped with gifts (*dāna*). Offerings are mainly rice grains, wheat grains, salt, fruits, money and the likes.

**The procession route**

The Phudyaḥ *jātrā* (procession) begins in the morning and continues until late evening. The icon of Phudyaḥ, usually kept in the Ukubaha monastery is cleaned one day before and it is displayed in the northern wing of the monastery with its ornaments and full decorations on the next day morning, the very day of the *jātrā*, it. During this time, local residents, mainly Śākyas of the locality, come to offer their *pūjā* and alms to the deity. The *jātrā* begins its traditional route (see the route map) after.

The route can be divided into several parts. The first circumambulation in the morning starts from Ukubahā and follows the localities accordingly: (1) Sundhara, (2) Guita, (3) Subaha, (4) Bhinchebaha, (5) Tyāga, (6) Tvaybaha, (7) Yacchubaha, (8) Yanamugal, (9) Gujibaha, (10) Jyobabahi, (11) Naudobaha, (12) Jyothabaha, (13) Sikuncabaha, (14) Hitiphusabaha, (15) Nagubaha, (16) Kanibaha, (17) Ubabahi, (18) Dunebaha, (19) Mahabauddha, (20) Ukubaha. Even upon returning to its home-monastery, the icon of the deity does not enter the *vihāra* (monastery). It remains outside while human participants are allowed to enter the monastery to have lunch. The second circumambulation – from noon to evening – starts form Ukubahā and follows these localities: (1) Gangabaha, (2) Dhandyabaha, (3) Dyanani (4) Bakunani, (5) Darbar, (6) Tangabaha, (7) Cukabaha, (8) Tabaha, (9) Jombaha, (10) Nhaykanbahi, (11) Talache, (12) Kvache, (13) Bahalukha, (14) Kaygunani, (15) Daubaha, (16) Vanabaha, (17) Habaha, (18) Nabaha, (19) Kalanche, (20) Mikhabaha, (21) Nyakhacuka, (22) Nakabahi, (23) Khache, (24) Nagbaha, (25) Sasunani, (26) Kontibahi, (27) Mesahiti and comes back to Ukubaha.

**Effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the festival:**

The Phudyaḥ *jātrā*, like all festivals of the Kathmandu Valley were affected by COVID-19 pandemic in 2020- either canceled, delayed or celebrated in smaller versions. This *jātrā* was nearly put on halt. The executive members of the Organization of Buddhist Monasteries of Patan, representatives of all Buddhist monasteries of Patan, the Committee for the study on Vajrācārya Pūjā and Rituals (Vajrācārya Pūjā Vidhi Addhyayan Samiti), and the Organization of Traditional Buddhadharma of Nepal (Nepala Paramparāgata Bauddhadharma Saṃgha) had an important discussion about organizing the Pañcadāna festival on July 20, 2020. They unanimously decided to celebrate the Pañcadāna festival only inside the limits of the boundaries of their own monasteries to prevent the spread of COVID-19. According to a senior member of the *vihāra*, the members of Ukubahā monastery decided to continue the Phudyaḥ Jātrā because several devotees would not consume their own food without offering ritual gifts (*dāna*) to Phudyaḥ on that day. They also decided that without invitation, the *jātrā*members would not enter any *vihāra* or house.

[Michaels, Axel. “From Syncretism to Transculturality: The Dīpaṅkara Procession in the Kathmandu Valley.” In South Asian Festivals on the Move, edited by Ute Hüsken and Axel Michaels, 317–42. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2013.](https://danam.cats.uni-heidelberg.de/media/articles/Oslo-dipankarayatra.pdf" \t "_blank)