

3. *Kāśīyātrā*–Maps and Processions in Banaras

The following section provides a case study that brings into focus the characteristics of pilgrimage practice as related to the textual sources on pilgrimage that have been examined in the previous chapter.¹ The example from the second half of the 19th century will show that the making of religious maps is embedded in cultural practice as well as local discourse that, as in the given case, reflects debates and contestations of pilgrimage practice. Textual evidence is only one of the authorities referred to in order to alter contemporary practice. The authority or the agency of local elites like the assembly of Hindu religious experts of Banaras (*dharmasabhā*) and the Mahārāja Kāśīnareśa Īśvarī Nārāyaṇa Singh is needed as well. In this case, the map-making process in 19th century Banaras is aptly described as a “joint Indo-British venture” (Raj 2003: 53) as is evidenced by the involvement of the British administration.

The making of maps is linked to this case study in multiple ways: (1) the written document that arises from the debate on the *Pañcakrośīyātrā* is supplemented by a small cartographic drawing in order to visualize the area under discussion. (2) The content of the relevant scriptural authorities is projected onto physical space by introducing the techniques of surveying and measurement with the help of staff that was trained by the British administration. (3) Direct references or allusions to the conflict regarding the processional route are found on printed religious maps beginning with the second half of the 19th century. (4) Modern topographical maps of the Survey of India can be used to identify the section of the *Pañcakrośīyātrā* and the different routes under discussion. (5) Finally, the present research concerning the events in the nineteenth century has led to a new map that was prepared by Niels Gutschow according to my own findings along the procession route under discussion. Each single map has evolved out of a different context and it will be the task of the following pages to give an overview of the different agents and their interaction with physical space as well as the sacred topography and sacred places of Banaras.

3.1 The Debate Concerning the *Pañcakrośīyātrā*

Although the *Pañcakrośīyātrā* is the procession in Banaras that has received by far the most attention, references to a conflict concerning the correct path of the *Pañca-*

1 A version of this chapter has been published as Gengnagel (2006).

crośīyātrā are rarely found in written sources. The conflict does not form part of the cultural memory linked to this procession.² It was Shashank Singh, art collector at Asī Ghāt in Banaras, who first referred me to a document on a correction of a procession (*yātrāsuddhi*) which, apparently, includes a small map that depicts the “corrected” section of the procession. Despite repeated efforts, I did not succeed in tracking down this document; however references to a conflict do, indeed, exist. Kubernātha Sukula (1900–1983), grandson of Kailāsanātha Sukula who produced the map *Kāśīdarpaṇa*, provides in his monograph *Vārāṇasī Vaibhava* (1977) a brief and ambiguous hint by referring to a conflict in Banaras in the mid-19th century concerning the route of the Pañcakrośīyātrā:

Preceding the seventies or eighties there was confusion about the route north of Bhīmacaṇḍī. Through the efforts of the late Paṇḍit Bāpūdeva Śāstrī it was resolved. Even today, however, there is still some confusion in the region about the route of the procession.³

Sukula shows awareness of a certain “confusion” about the section of the Pañcakrośī route north of Bhīmacaṇḍī, but considers it unnecessary to go into further detail and describe the causes for the uncertainty.

More explicit still is a printed source published exactly one hundred years earlier. The aforementioned map *Kāśīdarpaṇapūrti*, which was appended by Kṛṣṇacandra Dharmādhikārī to his book *Kāśīdarpaṇam*, in 1877, provides us with a very significant reference. This map, which is divided into three parts, depicts in its first section, *aṅka* 1, the Pañcakrośīyātrā in the upper left corner.⁴ The sacred territory of Kāśī is encompassed within a full circle which contains a grid, and purports to represent both the small and large versions of the Pañcakrośīyātrā.⁵ For our purposes, the upper western section of the map is of primary importance (Fig. 4). The following inscription is linked to a curved line drawn inside the outer circular double line:

*yaha rekhā vartamāna mārḡa kī
hai so yaha mārḡa aśuddha hai kā-
raṇa kī isa mārḡa ke anusā-
ra sūtra ghumāvane se kṣetrasīmā-
devatā bhīmacaṇḍī kṣetra se bāha-
ra ho jātī haiṃ isa liye pāṭhaka svā-*

2 See chapter 2.2 for a discussion of the textual sources of the Pañcakrośīyātrā.

3 *sattara yā assī varṣa pahale bhīmacaṇḍī ke utara bhī kuch mārḡa kī gaṛabaṛī hone laḡī thī, parantu svarḡya mahāmahopādhyāya paṇḍita bāpūdeva śāstrī ke prayatna se vaha ṭhika ho gaī thī, parantu yātrāmārḡa is sthāna para ab bhī kuch gaṛabaṛa hai* (Sukula 1977: 217).

4 See Michaels (2005) for a complete reading of the legends of the map and a short description of its structure. Singh (1988: 6, Fig. 2) has reproduced a drawing of one version of this map.

5 The large Pañcakrośīyātrā is directly mentioned on the map. At Rāmeśvara an inscription indicates that at this point the path of the longer version diverges from the path of the shorter version: *ihaṃ se vaḍe pañcakrośī kā mārḡa chūṭatā hai*.

*mī ne nāpake jo mārṅa nikālā hai va-
hī śuddha hai vahī ūpara likhā hai va-
hī madhyameśvara se pāñcakosa ṭhika
milatā hai vartamāna mārṅa kama
hotā hai mahādeva bhaṭṭa ne aṭa-
kal se calāyā thā iskā
khulāsā svāmī ne nāpau
śāstrārthasahita chapavā-
yā hai so dekha lenā.*

This is the line of the present route. This route is incorrect because by moving a rope according to [the position of] this route the goddess of the border of the sacred field (*kṣetrasīmadevatā*) Bhīmacaṇḍī would remain outside the sacred field itself. Therefore, the route that Pāṭhaka Svāmī has deduced (*nikālā*) by measurement is correct. This [route] was drawn above. There [a distance of] exactly five *kosa* from Madhyameśvara is obtained. The present route is less [distant from Madhyameśvara]. Mahādeva Bhaṭṭa has introduced it by conjecture (*aṭakala*). Svāmī took measurements (*nāpau*) and published this fact (*khulāsā*) together with [the document concerning the outcome] of the debate (*śāstrārtha*). Consult it.⁶

This short caption links this section of the Pañcakrośīyātrā, located north of Bhīmacaṇḍī, which is represented by two different lines, to a discussion of an “impure” (*aśuddha*) and “pure” (*śuddha*) route. A Pāṭhaka Svāmī was involved in the endeavour of measurement with a view toward preventing the goddess Bhīmacaṇḍī from being placed outside the limits of the sacred field of Banaras. Since the given information regarding this conflict is rather condensed, the reader of the map is asked to consult a publication about the results of a religious debate (*śāstrārtha*) for more information. The content of this religious debate will be discussed in the following section.

6 A transcription and draft of a translation of this passage was produced by Birgit Mayer-König and Nutan Dhar Sharma in September, 2000. It has subsequently been revised according to the digitalized reproduction of the map *Kāśīdarpaṇapūrti*.



Fig. 4: Detail view of the *Kāśīdarpaṇapūrti* (1877) with section of the *Pañcakrośīyātrā* north of *Bhīmacaṇḍī*. Source: British Library, No. 53345-4.

The Booklet *Pañcakrośī ke Mārg kā Vicār*

The religious debate and related events are closely linked to the royal family of Banaras, and especially to the period of the reign of Īśvarī Prasāda Nārāyaṇa Singh, Mahārāja of Banaras from 1835 to 1889. His reign is important for our purpose in more than one respect. The Mahārāja founded the Dharma Sabhā in Vārāṇasī around 1870, which included among its members the famous Bhāratendu Hariścandra, who was in close contact with Īśvarī Nārāyaṇa Singh.⁷ It was Bhāratendu

⁷ See Upādhyāya: *inko darbār me bhāratendu hasriścandra prāyaḥ āyā-jāyā karate the aur mahārājā inko apne putra ke samān mānate the*. (1994: 122). For an excellent study of Bhāratendu Hariścandra's role in the latter half of the 19th century in Banaras see Dalmia (1997).

Hariścandra who published, in 1872, the short booklet *Pañcakrośī ke mārg kā vicār* (“The examination of the Pañcakrośī road”) which deals, over the course of eighteen pages, with the discussion of the correct path of a section of the Pañcakrośīyātrā (Hariścandra 1872). The booklet was reprinted at Rāmnagar in 1997, and appended to the publication of the poem *Pañcakrośa Sudhā*, a metrical description of the Pañcakrośīyātrā composed in 1842 by Kāṣṭhahijhva Svāmī, the *guru* of Rājā Īśvarī Prasāda Nārāyaṇa Singh. Kāṣṭhahijhva Svāmī was also known as Anantaśrīcaraṇa, Deva Tīrtha as well as Deva Kavi.⁸

In 1872, Hariścandra raised an issue that, in fact, dated back to 1853, when the actual measurement of the Pañcakrośīyātrā took place. Hence, the beginning of the whole debate occurred almost 20 years previously when an assembly of religious specialists signed a document which sanctioned the recently constructed road as the correct path concerning the performance of the procession in question. The entire issue was elucidated by Hariścandra in 1872 in his booklet which included the text of the original document. Finally, in 1997 the Purāṇa department of the library in the Rāmnagar palace drew attention once again to the events of the past by reprinting Hariścandra’s booklet in the appendix of a book that praises the Pañcakrośīyātrā and was, subsequently, distributed to pilgrims.⁹ The controversy surrounding the route of the Pañcakrośīyātrā was a complex affair that, in spite of repeated efforts to alter existing pilgrimage practice, has passed almost unnoticed.

What then was the key issue of the debate that Hariścandra raised anew in 1872? One basic aspect of the discussion arose from the attempt to apply the statements of spatial texts directly to the city’s topography. This was accomplished through the use of modern techniques such as surveying, measurement and the creation of topographical maps. In the case of the Pañcakrośīyātrā, verses attributed to the *Pātālakhaṇḍa* of the *Padmapurāṇa* are quoted as the fundamental scriptural authority. These verses already quoted and translated in chapter 2. 2, are significant because they introduce the section on “the dimension of the sacred field of Kāśī and others” (*kāśyādikṣetraparimāṇam*) in Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa’s digest *Tristhalīsetu*.¹⁰

8 See Upādhyāya 1994: 122, 791–806 and Dalmia 1997: 79–80 on Kāṣṭhahijhva Svāmī. Upādhyāya gives Viśveśvara Datta Miśra as his worldly name (*grhasthāśrama kā nāma*), and names his *dīkṣāguru* as Vidyāraṇya Tīrtha (Upādhyāya 1994: 793). This might well be the name of the author of the *Pañcakrośa Sudhā*. The colophon of the printed text reads as follows: *iti vidyāraṇyatīrthakṛtā pañcakrośasudhā* (Pañcakrośa Sudhā: 111). Both the publisher of the *Pañcakrośa Sudhā* as well as Upādhyāya (1994: 800), however, give Kāṣṭhahijhva Svāmī as the author of the text.

9 The editor Satyanārāyaṇa Śāstrī Khaṇḍūḍī wrote the introduction in the reprint of 1997 and took the same position that Hariścandra did when he introduced the document of the *śāstrārtha* in 1872.

10 The verses are quoted in the *Pañcakrośī ke mārga kā vicār* introduced by the words *tathā ca tristhalīsetudhṛtapātālakhaṇḍīyaṃ pādmaṃ vacanam* (Hariścandra 1872: 11).



Fig. 5: The circular structure of the *kāśīkṣetra* with the radius between Madhyameśvara and Dehalivīnāyaka as well as the “old” and “new” borderlines (drawing by Niels Gutschow).

This description of the circular structure of the *kāśīkṣetra*, with the distance between Madhyameśvara and Dehalivīnāyaka defining the radius and extension of the circular field, was then directly applied to the physical space. The distance between the two temples was measured, the length was taken as radius and a circle with the corresponding radius was projected onto the space of Banaras through the use of topographical maps (Fig. 5).¹¹ This took place in 1853 and an error was discovered with regard to the circular route and, consequently, the route of the Pañcakrośī procession as it was performed at the time. In the terminology of the text: the “real” (*vāstava*) route based on the “reality” of textual evidence and surveying was in

11 The Madhyameśvara temple is situated in Dārānagar to the North of Maidāgin. For photos of this small temple and a plan of the temple area see Gutschow (2006).

conflict with the contemporary or actually used (*pracarita*, *vartamāna*, *sāmprata*) path in a small section north of Bhīmacaṇḍī.¹² The ensuing task of identifying the “incorrect” route and reconstructing the “real” route was a complicated process in which many were involved.

Hariścandra’s introduction (*bhūmikā*) to the *śāstrārtha* document begins with the remark that the Pañcakrośī procession was neglected, or actually forgotten, under Muslim rule. The procession was re-established when Kāśī was once again ruled by Hindus, but there was uncertainty about the correct path and people had to guess where to go.¹³ The Brahmin Mahādeva Bhaṭṭa collected money for repairing the road and the construction of bridges etc. In the 1850’s, Pāṭhaka Svāmī, who was a pupil of Ketakara Svāmī,¹⁴ undertook a survey of the whole Pañcakrośī road and realized that the road between Bhīmacaṇḍī and Rāmeśvara had been moved and was situated within the *kṣetra*.¹⁵ He considered the location of this section of the road constructed by Mahādeva Bhaṭṭa improper and, in order to rectify this, a fund-raising committee with six members including the District Magistrate of Banaras, F. B. Gavins, was established.¹⁶ A map of the western section of the Pañcakrośīyātrā was prepared by the members of the committee along with government surveyors, based on research at the location in question.¹⁷ It was discovered that the land needed to construct the new and proper road was owned by the Mahārāja of Banaras, Īsvarī Prasāda Nārāyaṇa Singh. This fact was made known to yet another assembly of influential Banarsī Pandits.¹⁸ They wrote a letter to the Mahārāja, with a document (*śāstrārtha*) presenting the facts.

The donation of land was granted by the Mahārājā and the road was ultimately constructed in accordance with scriptural sources and measurements taken from

12 *saṃvat 1910 meṃ arthāt īsavī san 1853 meṃ vah vāstava pañcakrośī kā mārg baṛe-baṛe paṛīśram se nirmāṇ karake prasiddha kiya hai aur vah mārg bahut saral aur pracarit mārg se lambāi meṃ kuch choṭa hai.* (Hariścandra 1872: 3–4).

13 The term applied for the basis of his corrections is *aṭkal* se “by conjecture” which is also used in the legend of the map *Kāśīdarpaṇapūrti* by Kṛṣṇacandra Dharmādhikārī.

14 The full names of these two Svāmīs are Paramahaṃsa Parivrājaka Svayaṃprakāśāśrama Svāmī and Paramahaṃsa Parivrājaka Sureśvarāśrama Svāmī.

15 *tab jāna paṛā ki bhīmacaṇḍī aur rāmeśvara ke bīc meṃ mārg bahut bhītar se banā hai.* (Hariścandra 1872: 5).

16 The following names are given: Devanārāyaṇa Siṃha Bahādura, Bābū Phatahanārāyaṇa Siṃha, Bābū Gurudāsa Mitra, Rāya Nārāyaṇa Dāsa and Bābū Vrajadāsa. Together with F. B. Gavins, a certain Amānī Sāhib Bahādur is also mentioned as having raised funds (Hariścandra 1872: 6). The introduction to the *śāstrārtha* stresses the importance of Gavins’ role: *vah vāstava mārg śrīyuta gabins sāhiba bahādura jī kī kṛpā drṣṭi se ban gayā hai* (p. 10). For a reference to F. B. Gavins see Motīcandra (1985: 352).

17 These surveyors are called *sarkāra kā bhūmī nāpanevalā* (Hariścandra 1872: 6).

18 *tab pāṭhaśālā ke kāśīnātha śāstrī ādi sab paṇḍita log aur sakhārām bhaṭṭa bhaṭṭa ādi bhaṭṭa log kākārāma paṇḍita gaṅgādhara śāstrī bhāṭṭavadekara ādi nagar ke baṛe-baṛe paṇḍita in sabhoṃ ne dharma kārya samajha ke pañcakrośī ke vāstava mārg ke bhūmī ke liye us mārg ke śāstrārtha ke sameta ek prārthanā patra śrīkāśīrāja ko likhā* (Hariścandra 1872: 7).

topographical maps. Along with the construction of the new road, the deities that needed to be moved were installed in their respective places alongside the road.¹⁹ In order to modify the practice of the pilgrims the document of the *śāstrārtha*, which was undersigned by 51 members of the Dharma Sabhā of Banaras, was distributed in Sanskrit as well as in Hindi.²⁰ In the introduction to this document the reader is reminded that every pilgrim should strictly follow the processional route without the slightest deviation. This point is reinforced by a quotation of the verse *Kāśī-rahasya* 10.25: “While performing the circumambulation one should not abandon the *kṣetra* by even one sesame seed”.²¹ The text of the *śāstrārtha* provided a definition regarding the size of the *kāśīkṣetra* and its geometrical structure. The argument is based on the quotation of the above given verses ascribed to the *Padmapurāṇa*. Since the distance between Madhyameśvara and the contemporary Dehalivīnāyaka is too short, a circle with this radius would not include the temple of the goddess Bhīmacaṇḍī in the *kāśīkṣetra*. Textual evidence, however, revealed that Bhīmacaṇḍī was one of the deities situated on the border of Vārāṇasī (*vārāṇasīsīmādevatā*). Consequently, it would have been a grave mistake were the goddess to be situated outside the limits of the *kṣetra*.²² In light of this, the Dehalivīnāyaka temple had to be moved to the west so that the circular field did not exclude Bhīmacaṇḍī.

Together with this text, a small and simple map (*nakṣā*) of the area between Bhīmacaṇḍī and Rāmeśvara is given (Fig. 6).²³ This sketch shows the corrected

19 *phir vah śāstra siddha atiprāktana mārg śuddha prakār se ban gayā aur us par yathāsthān meṃ devatāon kī bhī sthāpanā huī* (Hariścandra 1872: 8).

20 The *śāstrārtha* is undersigned by the following names: Bhaṭṭopākhyā Jayarāma Śarmā, Kāśīnātha Śāstrī, Sukulopāhvomārāvaśarma Paṇḍita, Caturveda Paṇḍita, Hirānanda Śarmā Paṇḍita, Durgādatta Śarmā, Devadatta Śarmā, Gulajāra Śarmā, Bhaṭṭa Prabhākara Śarmā, Bhaṭṭa Vaijanātha Śarmā, Abhayācaraṇadeva Śarmā, Śivanātha Miśra, Pāṇḍeya Īśvaradatta Śarmā, Harinārāyaṇa Śarmā, Kālīprasāda Śarmā, Lajjāśaṅkara Śarmā, Nandarāma Śarmā, Pañcānana Śarmā, Bāpūdeva Śāstrī, Nirupaplava Vecana Śarmā, Nārāyaṇa Śāstrī, Viṭṭhala Śāstrī, Veṅkaṭarāma Śarmā, Gaṅgādhara Śāstrī Thatthe, Nārāyaṇa Meghamkara, Bhaṭṭa Rāma Śāstrī, Rāmajasana Paṇḍita, Sevarāma Śarmā, Gopālakṛṣṇayājñika, Śākadvīpiya Rāmanātha Pāthaka, Ramāpati Śarmā Tripāthī, Kārttika Rāma, Draviḍa Śaṅkara Śāstrī, Jīvanātha Rājaguru, Bhaṭṭa Kamalākarabhaṭṭa Śarmā, Śālagrāma Upādhyāya, Lakṣmaṇa, Chātīrāma Śāstrī, Śītala Miśra, Pāthaka Vaidyanātha Śarmā, Nāgeśvara Śāstrī, Sundaradīkṣita, Jyotirvid Rāmanātha Śarmā, Paṇḍita Jāgeśvara Upādhyāya, Hanumad Ācārya, Gāḍagila Kṛṣṇarāma Śarmā, Gaṅgārāma Śarmā Tripāthī, Gāḍagila Kṛṣṇa Śarmā, Karlikara Rājārāma Śāstrī, Devakṛṣṇa Śarmā, and Śidhora Dādā Śāstrī.

21 *kṣetram pradakṣiṇkurvaṃs tilamātran na santyajet* (KR 10.25).

22 The *śāstrārtha* quotes: *tathā ca tāni vacanāni. vārāṇasīsīmādevatā upakramya. nairṛte tu tato vidyād bhīmacaṇḍīvināyakam/ āśāpuram iti khyātam yatra tannagaram mahat/ kṣetrasya paścime bhāge śrīdehalivīnāyaka/ avatārāḥ sa vijñeyaḥ sāksaḍ dhuṇḍhe svayam prabho/* (Hariścandra 1872: 12).

23 The map is introduced by the following line: *ab sāmprat kāla kā pracarita mārga aur vāstava mārga inkā nakṣā nīce likhate haiṃ*. In between Bhīmacaṇḍī and Rāmeśvara the pond

route on the outer circle, the path that was actually used which moves inside of the *kṣetra*, and a dotted circular line representing the smaller circle which was calculated by taking the distance between the actual Dehalivīnāyaka and Madhyameśvara as radius.²⁴

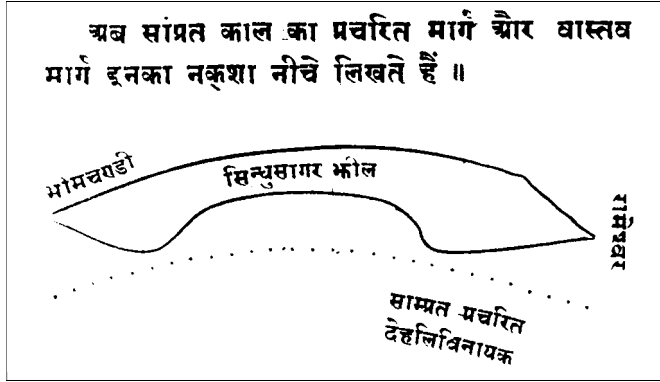


Fig. 6: Map of the section between Bhīmacaṇḍī and Rāmeśvara from the booklet *Pañcakrośī ke mārg kā vicāra* (Hariścandra 1872: 9).

Almost 20 years had passed when Bhāratendu Hariścandra raised the matter again in 1872. He expressed his discontent and astonishment that the pilgrims continued to follow the same route although the corrected route had been constructed in accordance with textual evidence (*śāstra*), logical inference (*yukti*), and correct measurements (*śuddha nāpa*). The pilgrims, however, continued to follow the incorrect route as the corrected route was not sufficiently well-known. Hariścandra complained that the “stubborn people” acted according to the saying “It is better to do something in a deficient way than to do nothing” (*akaraṇān mandakaraṇam*

sindhusāgara jhīla is shown. Below the dotted line *sāmprata pracarita dehalivināyaka* is inscribed.

- 24 The map is described with the following words: *yahām jo ūpar kī rekhā hai us ke ākār kā vāstava mārga hai. jo bīc ko ḍeḍhī rekhā hai us ke ākāra kā pracarita mārga hai. aur madhyameśvara se sāmprata prasiddha jo dehalivināyaka kā sthāna hai vahām tak sūtra dhar ke ghumāne se jo mārga ho yah nīce jo tīsārī bīmduom kī rekhā likhī hai us ke ākāra kā hogā. is nakṣe ko dekhane se spaṣṭa hotā hai ki sāmprata jo dehalivināyaka kā sthāna prasiddha hai us ko vāstava sthāna samajhane se bhīmacaṇḍī, caṇḍagaṇeśa, rāmeśvara ādi sab devatā kṣetra ke bāhar paḍatī haiṁ is liye vah sthāna vāstava mārga ke bhītar hai. arthāt śuddhā nahīm hai. is kāraṇa jo vāstava mārga prasiddha kiyā hai usī mārga se log pradakṣiṇā kareṁ nahīm to un kī pradakṣiṇā khaṇḍita hogī* (Hariścandra 1872: 9). A more detailed map was probably attached to the original document, and this is most likely the map Shashank Singh referred me to, as mentioned previously, but I was not able to locate it.

śreyah).²⁵ Hariścandra strongly objected to this point of view and cited the established practice of circumambulations: if a procession road splits and one is uncertain about the correct path, one should always follow the path to the left in order to avoid walking inside the field.²⁶ He maintained that the common practice followed an incorrect, “impure” (*aśuddha*) route and that the whole procession was therefore imperfect or “destroyed” (*khaṇḍita*).

Several basic questions remain unanswered. Did Hariścandra succeed in this second effort to remind the pilgrims of their duty to take the new path? Is the route in the section of the Pañcakrośīyātrā north of Bhīmacaṇḍī, as it is performed today, based on the revised route? Are there still traces left of both routes? Field research has indeed demonstrated that traces of the efforts of Hariścandra and others can still be found. Nevertheless, their attempts to alter pilgrimage practice “on the ground” were unsuccessful.

The Search for the “old” and “new” Pañcakrośī Route

If alternative routes existed one would expect to find corresponding evidence in physical space. And there are, in fact, parts of an optional route to be found on topographical maps of the region. One road depicted by a red double line is visible on the 1: 50.000 topographical map dated 1975 (Fig. 7). It runs from south to north, and bends slightly eastward in two places. This section of the route starts at Aswāri Gobindpur in the south—the place where Bhīmacaṇḍī is situated—then cuts across the Grand Trunk Road in Rājātālāb, and passes through the villages Harpur, Harsos, Naibasti, and Jansa. The road then crosses the Northern Railway Main Line at Chaukhandi Railway Station, and moves on to the villages Dayāpur and Bareman. It finally reaches the village Karaunān (Rāmeśvara) in the north. To the west of this road fragments of another path are indeed noticeable. A thin, straight red line starts at Rājātālāb and crosses the village Mehdīganj. The line is then interrupted, and only once again visible at the village Jalālpur where it crosses the Northern Railway Main Line, and extends in a direct line to the villages of Chaukhandi, Amrīpur, Jagāpatti, Parsīpur; before finally reuniting in the north at Karaunān (Rāmeśvara) with the larger road.

25 *aisī sthiti par bhī jo sāstra se, yukti se aur śuddha nāpa se siddha kiyā hai kī bhīmacaṇḍī aur rāmeśvara ke bīca meṃ pañcakrośī kā pracarita bahut bhūtar se hai aur isī liye us mārga se pradakṣiṇā karāne se vah pañcakrośī khaṇḍita hotī hai is bāt par koi dhyāna nahīṃ dete aur usī aśuddha mārga se pañcakrośī karate haiṃ yah baṛe hī āścarya aur kheda kī bāt hai jo kaho kī pracarita mārga bhūtar se hai aur yātrā khaṇḍita hotī hai yah sab thīk hai parantu śuddha mārga prasiddha hī nahīṃ hai tab ānāyatyā lok isī aśuddha mārga se pradakṣiṇā karate hoṃge kyomki akaraṇān mandakaraṇaṃ śreyah (Hariścandra 1872: 3).*

26 *isī liye jahāṃ pradakṣiṇā meṃ do pagdaṇḍī mārga mileṃ aur un meṃ vāstava mārga kā saṃśaya ho to binā pūche niḥsandeha log bāṃhe bhāga ke mārga se jāte haiṃ (Hariścandra 1872: 3).*

Investigation on the spot has revealed that the larger road, which moves somewhat to the east, depicts the Pañcakrośī road that is taken to this day by the pilgrims. The hypothesis that the smaller road was the newly constructed one was confirmed at once when people living along this road were questioned. The fragmentary cartographic rendering of the road proved to be correct. Interviews with elderly inhabitants of the villages Parsipur, Jagāpatti, and Chaukhandi made clear that this very road was, according to their perception, the “old Pañcakrośī Road”. Older inhabitants of the village Chaukhandi still retained the memory that the road was used by “holy men and Sants” (*sādhū-sant log*) in their parents’ time, and even as recently as their own childhood. In the words of the interviewed persons this small road, along which they live, was the old (*prācīna, purāṇa*) one, whereas the road to the east, which the pilgrims actually use, is the new (*navā, adhūnik*) road. For the villagers, the “old” road was the one that was no longer in use while, from the perspective of the ritual and religious experts, the construction of the “new” road merely reestablished what was, in fact, age-old practice. This seemingly paradoxical, and often confusing usage reflects, on a local level, an approach by the religious elites that has been described as “New Antiquarianism” (Dalmia 2001). For convenience sake I will call the route and places along the road constructed in the 1850’s “new”, while the other road and its respective temples will be referred to as “old”. What remained lacking as final confirmation of this oral identification of the road were the temples which had been reinstalled along the way. In 2001 I found a Dehalīvināyaka temple on the new road, at a crossing just outside the village of Chaukhandi (Fig. 7). It is situated to the west of the well-known Dehalīvināyaka temple located near the villages of Bhatauli and Dayāpur. In addition, a few hundred meters to the south of the “new” Dehalīvināyaka temple, I located a very small shrine with an image of Vīrabhadra (Fig. 11). In the following year, the ruins of a small rest house for pilgrims (*dharmaśālā*) were discovered in the village Mehdiganj, in the southern section of the “new” road. With respect to the images and temples of Rudrāṇī Devī in Parsipur, which will be discussed later in detail, identification is somewhat ambiguous as they are located in an area where the “old” and “new” roads are almost reunited (Fig. 12). The results of the above findings were incorporated in the drawing of a map of the area between Bhīmacanḍī and Rāmeśvara (Fig. 8). The map shows the two roads clearly, and the relocation of the temples Dehalīvināyaka, Vīrabhadra, and Rudrāṇī Devī is indicated as well.

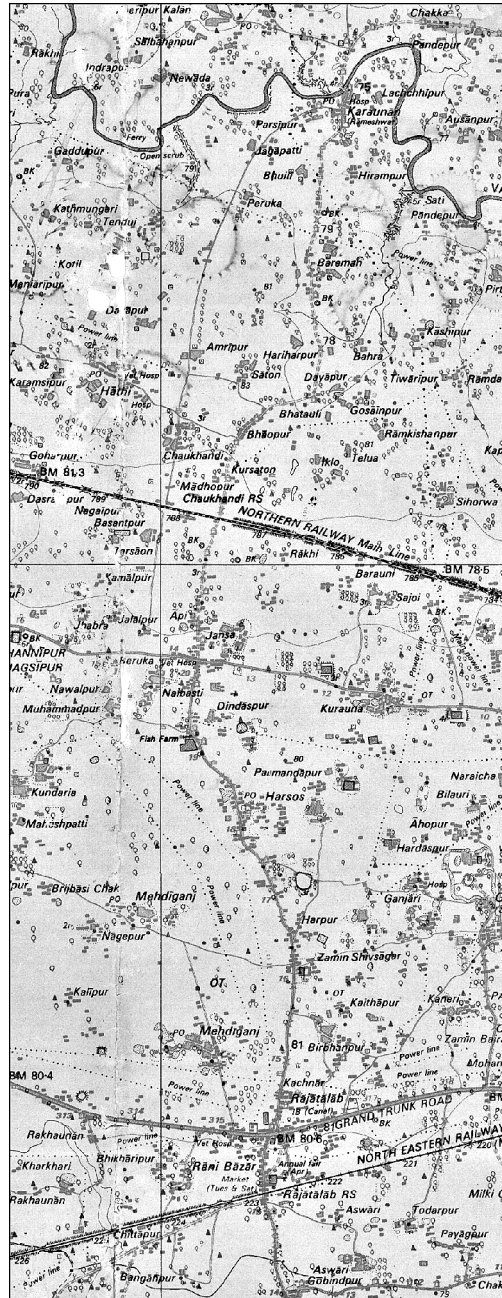


Fig. 7: Route north of Bhīmacaṇḍī (Gobindpur) with the villages Rājatālāb, Harpur, Harsos, Jansa, Bhatauli, Bareman and Karaunān (Rāmeśvara). Fragments of the “new road” are visible at Mehdiganj and from Chaukhandi onwards. Sheet 63 K/15, Survey of India, 1975, 1:50,000.

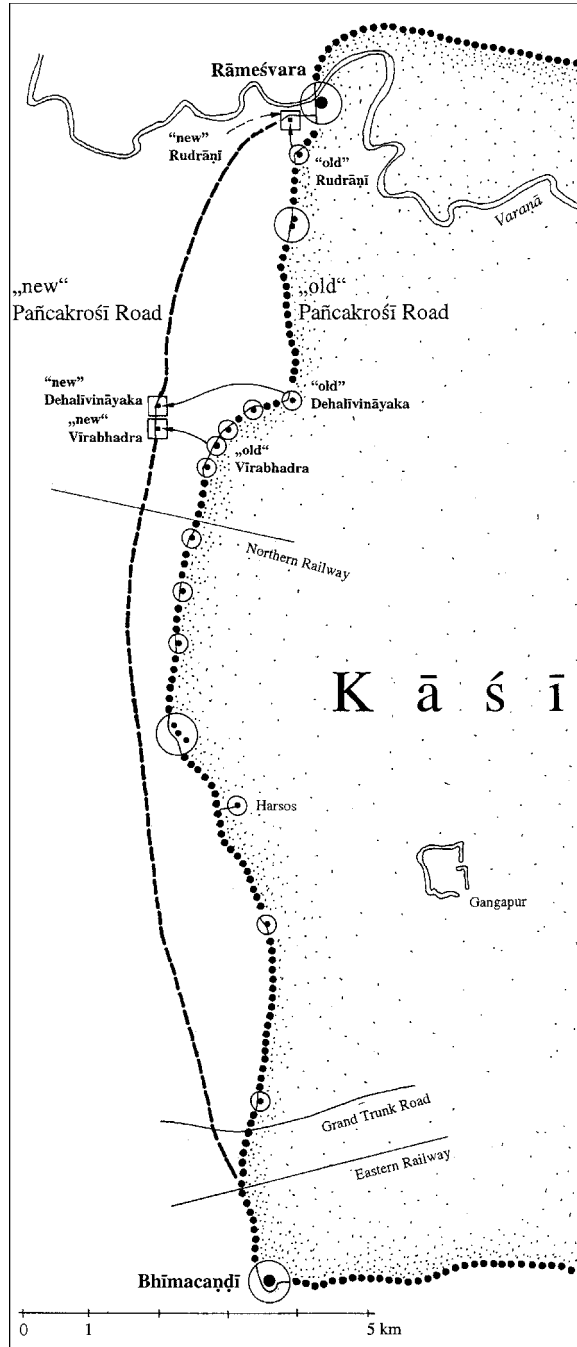


Fig. 8: The section between Bhīmacaṇḍī and Rāmeśvara showing the "new" and "old" Pañcakrośī roads, along with the reinstated temples. Drawing by Niels Gutschow.

The two Dehalīvināyakas



Fig. 9: The “old” (left) and “new” (right) Dehalīvināyaka temples located in the village Chaukhandi. On the right, the straight road constructed in the 19th century.

According to inscriptions found at the “old” Dehalīvināyaka temple, the present building was constructed around 1790, and the adjacent well was built a few years later (Singh 2002: 101–103). The *pūjārī*, Raghunātha Dūbe, and his son, Umā-śamkar Dūbe, live with their family in a building near the temple. According to their statements they have been the Pūjārīs of the Dehalīvināyaka temple for 50 years. Neither of them was aware of a “second” Dehalīvināyaka, nor had they ever heard of a debate concerning the location of the “old” Dehalīvināyaka temple.

The “new” Dehalīvināyaka temple in the village Chaukhandi is relatively small, and the standing, four-armed image is less refined than the one in the “old” temple (Fig. 10). This “new” Dehalīvināyaka shrine shows no signs of regular veneration, and there appears to be no close relationship between the villagers in Chaukhandi and the temple. On the walls of the “new” temple the following inscription was found:

śrī dehalīvināyaka // prācīna sthāna śāstra // pramāṇa se bhī milā hai //

Dehalīvināyaka. The ancient place located through the use of scriptural authority.

This inscription is crucial regarding the identification of the temple and the statue. In addition, by referring to the scriptural authority (*śāstrapramāṇa*) it relates directly to the quoted verses of the *Padmapurāṇa*, as well as to further textual evidence given in the document of the *śāstrārtha*. The arguments put forth by the members of the Dharma Sabhā were directly inscribed on the walls in order to provide the authority needed for the shifting of the Dehalīvināyaka temple to its “new”

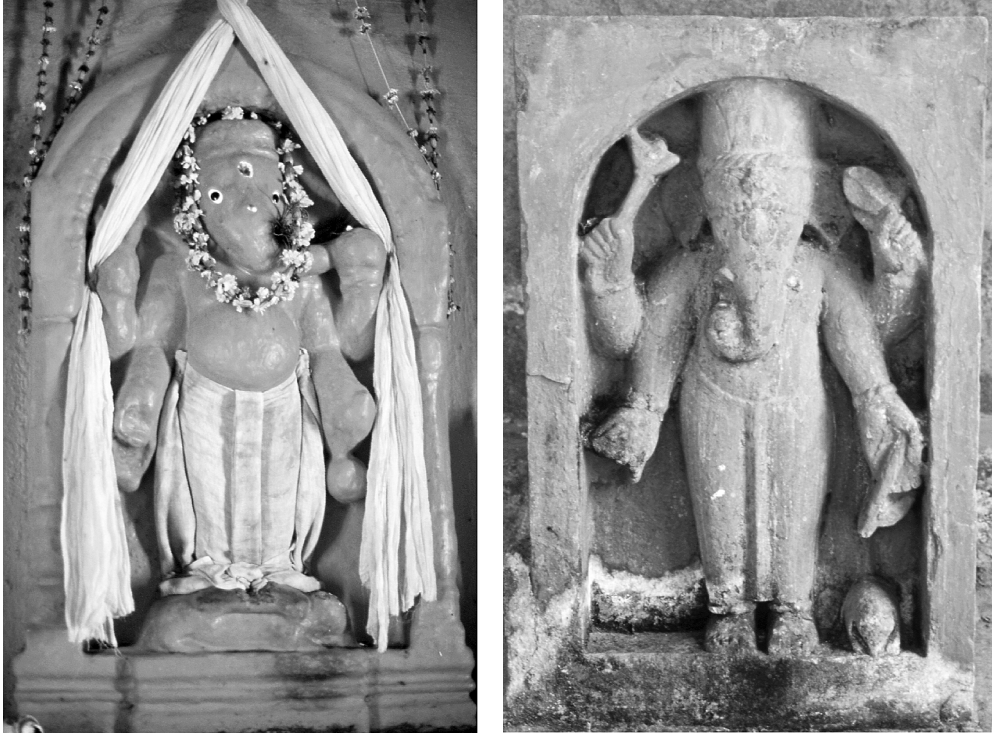


Fig. 10: Images in the Dehalivināyaka temples: to the left the “old” image, to the right the image installed in the mid-19th century.

location. The inscription confirms that the effort in the 19th century, as described above, did not intend to establish something “new”. Rather, it reestablished or reinvented an “ancient” (*prācīna*) spatial reality. In the words of the *śāstrārtha*: the actual pilgrimage practice was an impure (*aśuddha*) deviation and the real (*vāstava*) practice had to be restored.

The Two Shrines of Vīrabhadra

A very small shrine with an image of Vīrabhadra is situated along the “new” Pañcakrośī road in the village of Chaukhandi. Its size and the domination of the small structure by a much higher pile of bricks illustrate the perishable nature of these types of small images installed in the 1900’s. An unquestionable identification of this simple shrine with its standing, two-armed white image was only possible because of an inscription on the outer western wall:

pañcakrośī meṃ śrīvārāṇasī sīmaga // vīrabhadrāya namaḥ //

On the Pañcakrośī [road], moved to the border of Vārāṇasī. Veneration to Vīrabhadra!

This inscription deals with the issue of the gods situated on the border of Vārāṇasī (*vārāṇasīsīmadevatā*). They define and delineate the borders of the sacred territory of the *kāśīkṣetra*. Their exact location is crucial in terms of the course of the processional road, and therefore decisive in the debate concerning the proper location of this road.



Fig. 11: The images of Vīrabhadra on the “old” (left) and the “new” (right) Pañcakrośī roads.

The Two Rudrāṇī Devīs

The matter of the location of Rudrāṇī Devī is somewhat more complicated since the two possible locations are situated in an area near Rāmeśvara where the “old” and “new” roads merge. Both places are known to the pilgrims, and it is impossible to unequivocally prove that the “new” Rudrāṇī was installed in the mid-19th century. No inscriptions whatsoever were found at the two locations. The image that I would identify as the “old” image is located in a shrine along the “old” route. The place is referred to as *tapobhūmi*, i.e. “site of religious of religious austerity”. The “new” image is located on the road constructed in the 1900’s.

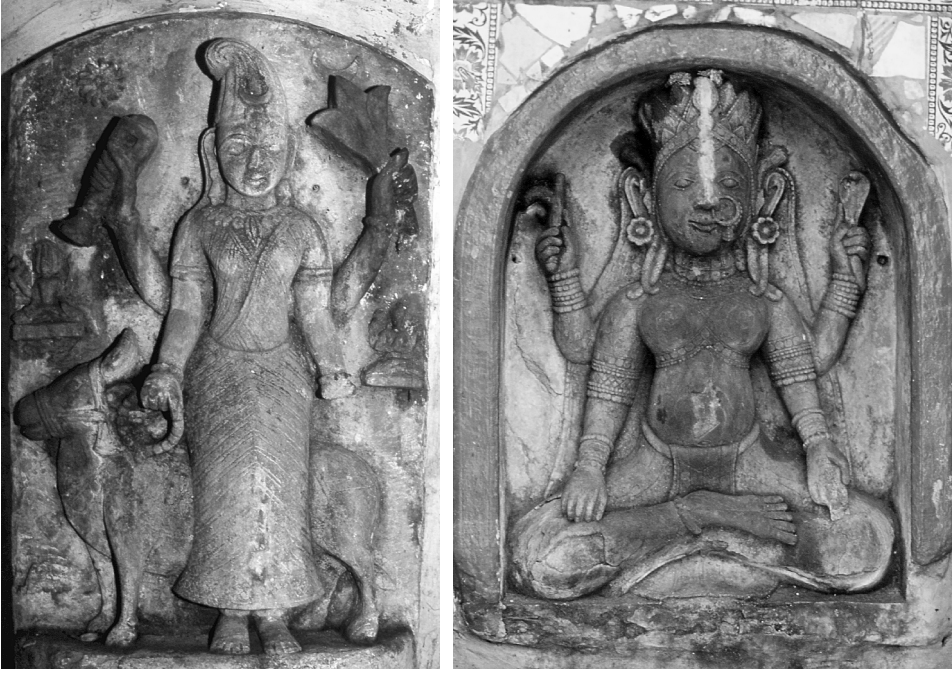


Fig. 12: Images of the two Rudrāṇī Devīs in the village Karaunān/Rāmeśvara (left), and Parsipur.

Right or Wrong? Spatial Texts and Pilgrimage Practice

In the presented case study, references to authoritative spatial texts, as well as the utilization of modern surveying techniques and topographical mapping were important tools used by the local elite in their attempt to change the route of the Pañcakrośīyātrā. In spite of the above and, in addition to the combined efforts of various others including a group of Banarsī Pandits, the Mahārājā of Banaras, the District Magistrate, and, finally, the famous playwright and journalist Bhāratendu Hariścandra; their endeavour did not succeed. The pilgrims follow the same route today as they did prior to when the issue was initially raised in 1853.

The discrepancy between this final result, and the time and energy invested by so many people regarding the shifting of roads, as well as gods, is substantial. Various reasons exist for this evident failure. The construction of a new road and, especially, the relocation of several shrines and temples would have required wide acceptance by both the villagers living along the road, as well as the pilgrims. To this end, a pilgrimage infrastructure with *pūjārīs* for the newly established main temples, such as Dehalīvināyaka, along with caretakers for the smaller shrines and facilities for the pilgrims along the road would certainly be necessary. Such facilities were at least partially provided—ruins of a small rest house were found along the new road—but it seems probable that they catered only to the well-

informed, pious religious elite. This appears to be consistent with the memory of the villagers, as they spoke of the “*guru-sant log*” that made use of this road.

Another decision had to be made just a few years after Hariścandra raised the issue again. The *Northern Railway Main Line* was constructed in the 1880’s (Köckmann 1982: 34) and traversed the area in question near the village Chaukhandi where, together with a small station, a railway crossing had to be constructed (see Fig. 7). The railway authorities decided to link both places to the “old” road. The new road shows no signs of a crossing and use of the “new” Pañcakrośī road was discontinued at the time of the construction of the railway line. Without further evidence it is impossible to determine the reasons for the decision on the part of the authorities to construct the crossing at the “old” road. It certainly does not, however, suggest that there was broad acceptance of the “new” road at the time of the railway construction, and it has, for practical reasons, contributed to the lack of acceptance of this alternative route.²⁷

In the given case, map-making and cartography were extensively utilized in an effort to alter existing pilgrimage practice. As will be shown in the following section, traces of the dispute regarding the correct route of the Pañcakrośīyātrā can also be detected on printed maps published shortly after the activities of Hariścandra. The fact that we know of three maps of Banaras that were lithographed in the 1870’s in Banaras is an indication that the debate concerning the correct performance of the Pañcakrośīyātrā increased the interest in promoting pilgrimage practice through the use of maps. In addition to the available spatial texts, the medium of cartography was utilized to plot the corrected route of the Pañcakrośīyātrā. The fact that this cartographic effort was in vain may suggest that map-making is not an effective instrument for changing existing pilgrimage practice. Negotiation and contestation of ritual practice is rarely documented, but occurs frequently. The attempt to reconstruct an ideal practice based on textual evidence, as well as the outcome of surveying and mapping of physical space, has to be reconciled with the reality of the persistence of everyday practice. Based on the analysis of the religious specialists of the 19th century, the present day performance of the Pañcakrośīyātrā would still have to be considered “impure” or “wrong” (*aśuddha*) and “broken” (*khaṇḍita*). This contrasts starkly with the fact that this procession is one of the most famous and popular in Banaras. The spiritual merit one acquires by performing this procession is not questioned. As this example illustrates, sacred spaces are not generated by maps, in spatial texts, or defined by surveying physical space. Rather, they are stamped out by the very feet of the pilgrims over the course of their circumambulations. It is the pilgrims’ spatial practice that creates and defines sacred spaces.

27 A striking example of changes in the sacred topography of Banaras is the shifting of the course of the Aśī rivulet by the City administration during the last decade of the 20th century. As a result, the confluence of Aśī and Gaṅgā (*aśīsaṃgama*), one of the important landmarks defining the sacred territory of Banaras, was moved southward.