

Buddhist world's line and form. The *stupa* as a relative representation of the absolute reality

by Giuliana Ossola

Tutor : Paolo Bertalotti

Co-tutor : Stefano Piano (doc.Hindi, dip. orientalistica)

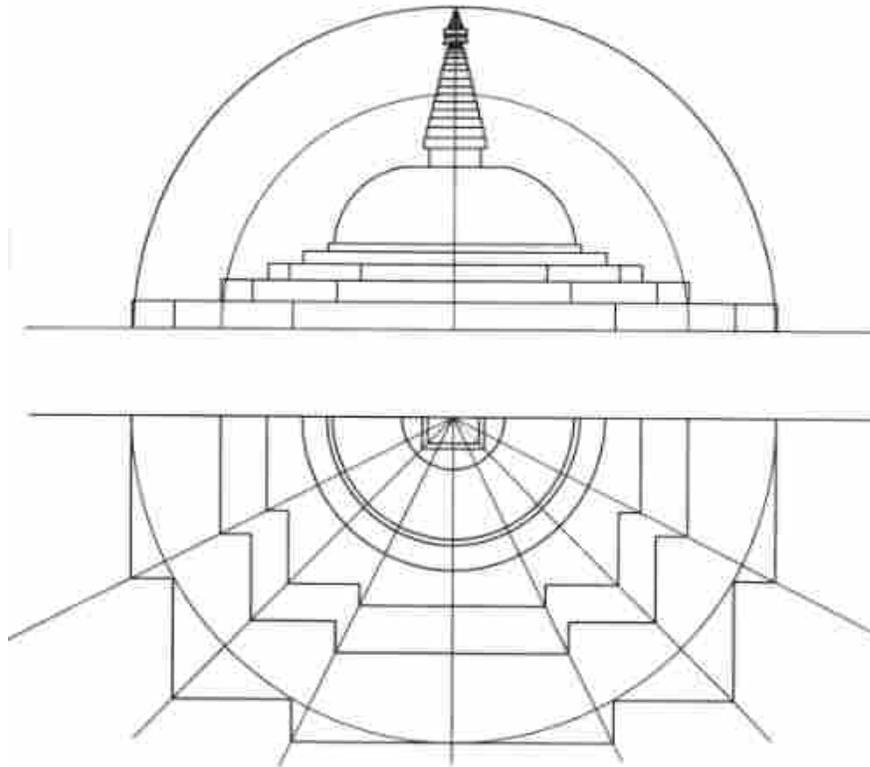
In this thesis with the geometrical analysis of the Tibetan and Nepalese *stupa* we've tried to run through the geometrical expression of the various and complex world of Himalayan populations, examining even if in a small part whether bi-dimensional drawings or that architectonic.



To be able to weave schemes on lines making up the *thankas*, *stupas* or the omnipresent *mandala*, has largely contributed to the comprehension of the common symbol and, as consequence to the geometry derived mostly from the common Vajrayana tradition known since the seventh century.

The apparent simplicity of shapes is a trace of the initiatic way towards the rediscovery of reality ; just how Wright said : " And I ascertained then, in last analysis, the reality structure is such super geometrical to throw a spell on each geometry, and to be on it's own magic.

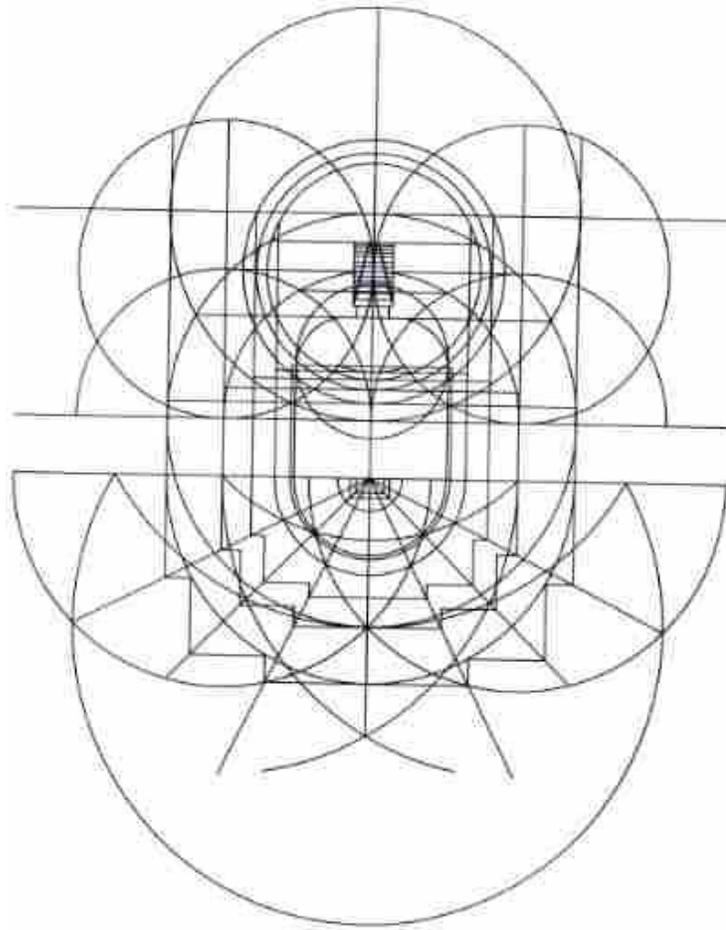
The circle which is the first translation for *mandala*, it's the one we could define "first principle" , that one from which all the phenomenon's have started, as well as the squares defined by cardinal principal and secondary directions to which Tantra assigns colours, shapes and detailed meanings.



The circle also symbolizes life as sufferance (*samsara*), what's never-ending except to the one who courageously take the way to it's centre being able to modify the rules or breaking the trace.

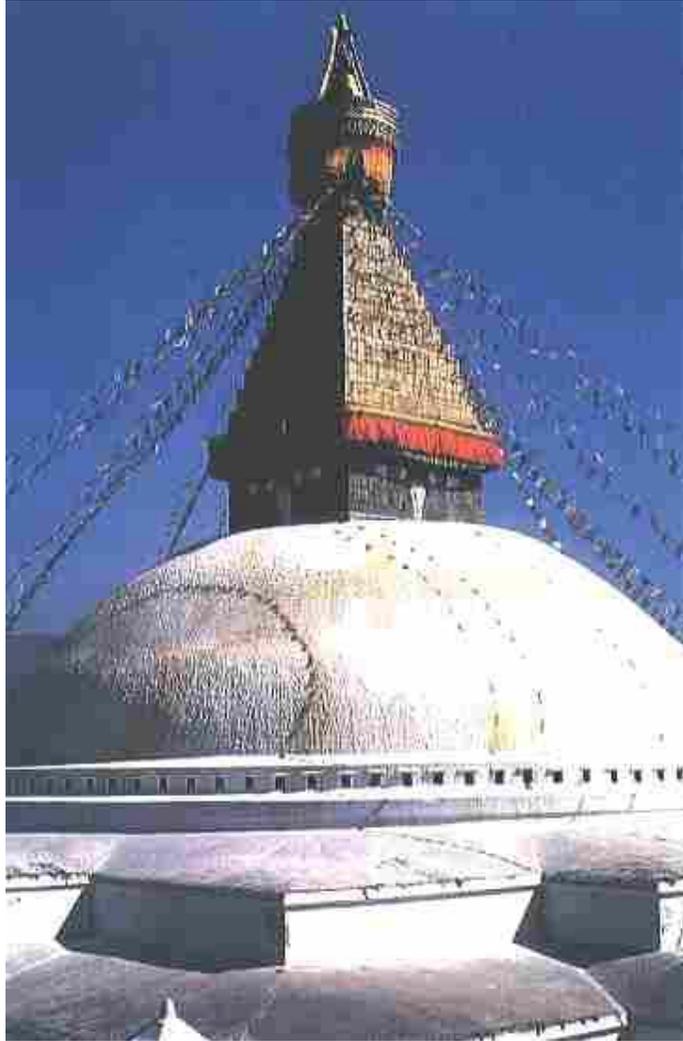
The draft of figure that constitute *thankas* is itself achievable from a series of following circle with the same radius, trough a simple direct way.

As well as the renaissance architect rediscovered the classical proportions and tried to reach perfection of the shape linking together the buildings different parts, also in the east the scheme is used to reach this kind of equilibrium.



Even for the shapes of *stupa* and *mandala* seemingly "simple and elementary" it has been possible the construction by linked circles in the full respect of the Buddha's doctrine according to which all the phenomenon are interdependently linked.

Further more there is a total agreement between the geometrical works with the linked circles and the oriental artist's principles telling about the necessity for the artist to know how to work but not to be the creator of it.



Pema Dorje, the author of "Stupa and it's Technology", propose some English translation from Kanjur (the sacred Tibetan text), summing up some of the rule and proportions that every *stupa* should maintain. The "terraces *stupa*", the Boudhanath in Kathmandu, after being surveyed in 1997, has been "rebuilt" according to the "simple circle's connection" obtaining as result a better surveying and a completely adherence to the sacred text rules.

Thanks to :

Paolo Bertalotti, Stefano Piano
Lama Gangchen Tulku Rimpoche
Claudio Cipullo