



Chittadhar Hridaya's *Sugata Saurabha*: The Known and Unknown in the Composition of the Epic Todd Lewis and Subarna Man Tuladhar

1. The poet's experience:

"I am a Buddhist by birth. So I need not explain why I revere the Lord Buddha. I was quite a young boy when I began to learn the devanāgarī alphabet and it so happened this was about the time when the Reverend Nisthananda published his Newari translation of the Lalitavistara that recounts the life of the Buddha. Our Buddhist priests used to come to our house and recite a few pages of it and they left each installment with us so I could read it. As it was in devanāgarī and printed, I had no trouble reading it smoothly. Indeed, as I had just learned the characters, I loved reading it. Children derive a lot of satisfaction from reading books in their own native language. Each time I would quickly work through what the priest had brought and I waited eagerly for the next visit and the next installment. By the end of the year I had made it through the whole book. When I grew older I also learned to read Hindi and started to read books such as the *Dhammapada*, the life story of the Buddha, and others which had been translated into that language."



2. Chapters in *Sugata Saurabha*

1 Lumbinī	8 The Great Renunciation	15 Twelve Years of Itinerant Preaching
2 Family Tree	9 Yashodharā	16 A Dispute over Water
3 Nativity	10 Attaining Enlightenment	17 The Monastery Built by Visakha
4 Mother	11 Basic Teachings	18 Devadatta's Sacrilege
5 A Pleasant Childhood	12 The Blessed One in Kapilavastu	19 Entry into Nirvana
6 Education	13 Handsome Nanda	
7 Marriage	14 The Great Lay Disciple	

3. Examples of Rhyme in *Sugata Saurabha*

Surrounded by maids attending, the palanquin's decor could not be seen.
But the situation was clear: inside must be the queen. (pg. 13)

The stars they saw here and there one after another sparkled *phili phili*
As the ladies raised their arms to count them, gold bangles jingled *chili chili*. [35]

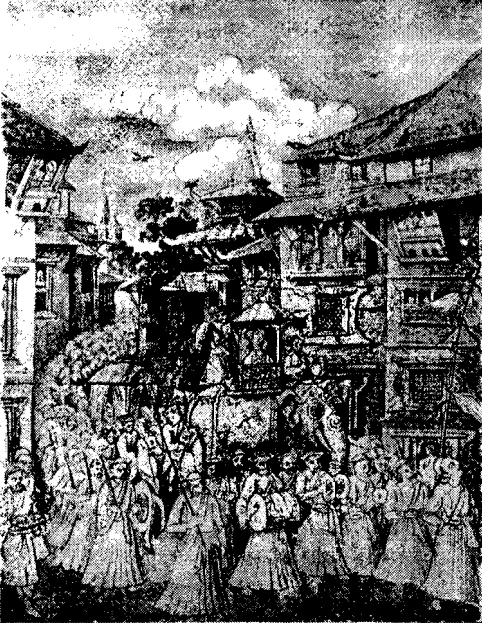
Instructed in Ayurvedic medicine and the physiology of the human
He was taught sexology to enlighten him on the ways of man with a woman. [85]

The infantry of powerful, valiant soldiers marched in rows through the streets
Stamping their feet in unison in tune with the battle drums beats. [291]

In spite of his best efforts, not one useless grass did he find anywhere,
As a mystic sees supreme spirit pervading all, he saw medicinal herbs everywhere—[327]

4. Indic Aesthetic Ideals in *Sugata Saurabha*

<u>Rasa</u>	<u>Incidents in the Text</u>
erotic love (<i>sringāra</i>)	Courtship and Marriage of Siddhārtha-Yashodharā; Yashodharā's recollection of married life; Siddhārtha's encounter with Gotamī; Nanda's marriage
heroism (<i>vīra</i>)	Siddhārtha confronts the brahmin ritualists; Shākya princes in competition for Yashodharā; Shākya war preparations in the chapter "Dispute over Water"
disgust (<i>bībhatsa</i>)	Siddhārtha sees women departing palace; Incident of Brahmin Marriage Proposal to the Buddha
anger, fury (<i>raudra</i>)	Women angry at men during Gopā's lament; Queen's lament over King Bimbisara's death; Shākyas and Koliyas in chapter "Dispute over Water"; Young Devadatta-Siddhārtha duck dispute; Buddha reacting to Devadatta's proposal to lead <i>sangha</i>
mirth (<i>hāsya</i>)	Moments in contest over Yashodharā, especially 7 trees and pig impaled by arrow; a brahmin responds to Siddhārtha's request for straw; king encounters Aṅgulimālā, now a monk (316); Visakhā encounters the naked ascetics
terror (<i>bhayānaka</i>)	Aṅgulimalla's reign of terror; Elephant attack of Buddha; Battle preparations in Shākya dispute over water; drought following Queen Māyā's death
compassion (<i>karuna</i>)	Prince Siddhārtha's reaction to duck shot by Devadatta; Buddha's actions and reactions throughout poem; Jivaka's Physician teacher
wonder (<i>adbhuta</i>)	The gods greeting Prince Siddhārtha as child; Natural events surrounding Prince Siddhārtha's Great Renunciation; Anathapiṇḍika's first meeting the Buddha; the episode of Nanda's journey
peace (<i>shanta</i>)	King Suddhodana observes children of kingdom; parents observe Siddhārtha as young child
paternal fondness (<i>vātsalya</i>)	King Suddhodana's relations with son in youth, and also after enlightenment



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5. Newar Life Domesticated in *Sugata Saurabha*

TABLE OF SPECIFIC DETAILS OF NEWAR LIFE IN SUGATA SAURABHA	
<p><u>Clothes and Jewelry:</u> Protective garland for child (<i>nakshatra</i>, 33) Barley powder makeup of young girls Child's shirt (<i>tabalan</i>, 73) Dye for women's feet (<i>ala</i>: 160)</p> <p><u>Newar Urban Life:</u> City gates (44) Rest houses for travelers Public water taps and cisterns Shop selling interrupted by procession Packed crowds at big events</p> <p><u>Foods:</u> Nepalese raspberries (<i>ishi</i>, 63) Himalayan fruit (<i>āmati</i>, 248) Steamed pastry (<i>yomari</i>, 74)</p> <p><u>Temples:</u> Decorative motifs include eight auspicious things (<i>astamangala</i>, 47), images of 16 "offering goddesses" (<i>pūjādevī</i>, 47) and "eight mother goddesses" (<i>astamaṭṭka</i>, 52) Lifelike divine human images (48) Elephant and lion guardians (49) Refers to Vishnu temple in Budanilakantha (252) Festival displays of religious pictures (50)</p> <p><u>Home Life:</u> Women spinning and weaving (46-48) Baby/toddler childrearing practices (71-74) Women looking down to street life, men flirting (45-46) Home entranceway decorations (70) Homes with bay windows, carved struts (44) <i>Agam</i> shrine with family & tantric deities (69)</p> <p><u>Rituals:</u> Welcoming to home (<i>lasakus</i>, 90) Child <i>tika</i> with lampblack (65) ritual meals on auspicious occasions (egg and yogurt <i>sagan</i>, 12 incidents) bowl of rice, with betel nuts, coin, offered to teacher, (<i>Kisli</i> 78) Throwing rice (263) Five-part Offering (<i>pañcopacara puja</i>, 264) White cloth rug for image procession (263) <i>Pañca Dāna</i>, festival of great donation, including monastic buildings (264-5) <i>Nāga</i> healing rituals (313) Mantra blowing healing rite (<i>phu-phu</i>, 313)</p>	<p><u>Life Cycle Rituals:</u> Release from birth pollution (55, 136) Rice Feeding (67) Presenting Objects to Predict Child's Career (67) <i>Keita Puja</i>, departure to study with guru (78) Death Wailing (58) Shroud, Death Procession, and Cremation (58-59); Buddha lights fa's pyre (267)</p> <p><u>Marriage Rites:</u> Betel nuts and gifts sent to finalize proposal (106) Pastry gifts (<i>lakha</i>) sent to fix wedding date (107) Bride opening lakha bowl (107) Men's procession to fetch bride at home (108-9) Bride's ritual farewell, offering betel (110) Procession fetches bride in palanquin (110) Bride's family priest's oration (111) Groom's priest's oration, declares "victory" (112-3) Dowry recounted (114) Bride's first entry to new home, holding key (117) Betel nut greeting to groom's kin (118) Bride/groom eat from common plate/cups (118) Groom applying make-up, hair part <i>tika</i> to bride (120) Pair worships at Ganesh temple (121) Bride's kin visit to "see her face" (121)</p> <p><u>Festivals Alluded to:</u> <i>Svāyāpunhi</i>, spring full moon, Buddha's birthday (37) <i>Mohini (Dassain)</i> (162) <i>Saunti (Tihar)</i> (90, 162) <i>Gabalwa dyah</i> worship (167) Māgh Sankranti processions (292) Māgh Pañcami Sarasvatī worship (78)</p> <p><u>Religious Music Ensembles</u> Farmers' pole twirling group with band (<i>Duṅjyā and dhime bājan</i>, 41) <i>Gumla bājan</i> (41) <i>Dhāpa bājan</i> (42) <i>Painta bājan</i> (47, 54) <i>Pañca bājan</i> (90)</p> <p><u>Misc.</u> Months of the year (219) Astrology (219) Farmer practices (64-6) Pollution and purity practices (119)</p>

6. Reformist Sentiments in *Sugata Saurabha*

6.1 Buddhism as "Altruistic Tradition."

In the "Four Passing Sights," Siddhartha's charioteer's explains a renunciant's work thus:

‘This monk living by begging his food
Is dedicated to doing good for others.’

At that instant he resolved to live the life of an ascetic
And his mind fixed itself on humanitarian service. (Chapter 8)

6.2 Nothing Supernatural: Siddhārtha's Birth & Renunciation and Devadatta's Death

The chief of the army was ordered in to be shown him, then
The baby was turned over for seven attendants to hold.

Passing the newborn between their delicate, lotus-like hands
Seemed to the Shākya general like a baby crawling over
lotus blossoms! (Chapter 2)



On the other hand, Devadatta, whose schism failed utterly
Was agonized with grief and became sick with tuberculosis.

He felt this was the effect of his improper conduct; so
having repented
And after finally making a firm resolve based upon a
good thought—

“I will go to where the great teacher is and ask his pardon.”
He came from that place carried on a stretcher, accompanied by all his followers.

But as he stopped at a pond to bathe before going to the monastery,
While it is uncertain whether he was cast into hell, he never rose from the swamp! (Chapter 18)



7. The Spell of Idealization

7.1 Kirātas

They met *kirātas* crossing a slope, the men's loins wrapped in skin garments,
Bows on their shoulders, quivers on their backs, and spears with pointed metal tips.

Together with them were their wives clad in their skin cloaks;
With heads decorated with bird feathers, they came hand in hand in pairs. (Chapter 13)

7.2. Excursion with Nanda: Encountering a Himalayan Valley

While traveling in the area they reached a country surrounded by mountains,
A playground where civilization, culture, and literature had reached their apex.

It proudly boasted an impressive social order and most beautiful
Were its examples of well-rendered divine statues, houses, and temples.

Lyrics were composed in their own melodious language and
Birds on long-limbed willows lining the river filled the air with sweet melodies.

They met there various hawkers unloading sacks of husked and unhusked rice,
Who at a banyan tree resting place bargained over the price for their grain.

All shops, rest-houses and public stages were full of crafts, food grains, and the like.
There were crowds of people and as many buyers as there were sellers.

By going around that fully prosperous city comparable to Amarapura,
They obtained alms and thereafter proceeded beyond it. (Chapter 15)

7.3 Kapilavastu's Developed Urban Environment

The workmanship of the able artists dazzled the eyes wherever they rested:
On the temples or houses decorated with fancy artwork made of brick or stone.

There was no trace of epidemic diseases, as the courtyards were clean,
Still, the settlements all had health clinics that dispensed free medicines!

The gutters in the alleyways and courtyards were clean and free from filth,
Clean drinking water flowed in public wells, ponds, and taps scattered everywhere ...

The whole country was crisscrossed with roadways that were paved and smooth... (Chapter 2)

7.4 Yomari Full Moon in Kapilavastu

He saw attractive children with skirts weighed down carrying *yomari* cakes and fruits,
Gorging themselves with mouthfuls of curds mixed with rice, holding handfuls of coins.

Crowding about here and there, to and fro,
He discerned in them a beautiful simplicity and straightforward glory—

‘The country's future will certainly brighten’
With this idea in mind, the king reached the palace again. (Chapter 4)

8. Cultural Nationalism and the Reform in Newar Cultural Practices

8.1 Literature and Education.

No obstacles impeded the enlivened literary activities of the country:
Freedom to write what one wanted was guaranteed.

If their writings conveyed distinct emotions that were novel, pure, and dignified,
Writers were awarded gold earrings and shawls of honor from the national treasury.

Politics, administration, philosophy, Vedic ritual were also studied
As were grammar, astrology, etymology, meter,

Sacred texts, divine legends, mathematics, music, etc.

Were taught to those with aptitude who wished to learn, including Ayurveda (Chapter 2)

8.2. Caste and Occupation: Buddha as Caste Reformer



When the bodhisattva said, “Give me some more milk.”
He replied, “As I am untouchable, how can I give you milk
from my pot?”

As these words, “I am an untouchable,” resonated in his ears,
He mumbled, “Untouchable one!” under his breath.

“Untouchable!” Having heard this word, his heart answered,
“Why untouchable!

If this compassionate boy is not worthy for touching,
Who else on this earth is worthy?” (Chapter 10)

8.3. Martial Qualities and Ethnic Character.

As gallant soldiers were needed to safeguard the country,
Youths were recruited into the national army.

Since the Shākyas were widely renowned for their valor and courage,
Given the might of their throne and their great army with horses and elephants, other
countries held them in high esteem...

Their youth looked healthy and stout, and child marriage was forbidden.
Physical exercise kept them upright, strong, and sturdy. (Chapter 2)

8.4. Religious Pluralism and Tolerance.

People of different paths, Shaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, or Shāktas, lived in harmony
Since citizens were at liberty to follow any faith that pleased them. (Chapter 2)

8.5. The Status of Women I: Shakya Queens.

To embellish the intimacy of his rule, he had two queens, Māyā and Gautamī,
Who were faithful and dutiful to their honored spouse.

The two like twin moons sailing in the sky above the royal house,
Suffused it with radiant smiles, purity of heart, sweet natures, and serene conduct. (Chapter 2)

8.5. The Status of Women II: Visākhā.

This monastery is symbolic of the faith and devotion of that lady merchant.
To those who assert ‘Women are only hindrances to the *dharma*,’ this provides an answer. (17)

8.5. The poet’s direct Address to his Male Readers.

O fellow men! Let us look at the “forest” in our midst and
Not let jeering remarks pass from our lips, lest the brain be choked with thorns.

Observe decency, politeness, courtesy:
Our duty is to honor the soft and fairer sex. (Chapter 1)

8.6. A Utopian Vision for Nepal.

The foreign policy of the Shākyas was certainly liberal and amicable,
With no restrictions on travel, carrying on trade, or other activities.

The valiant Shākyas had fortress-like feelings for their country.
They worked in unity like bees.

Once decided on a course of action, they worked at their tasks in unison,
Accomplishing them with all their heart and soul.

As all were treated equally, none felt malice.
“We are Shākyas and ours is a Shākya state” – all knew this...

The people's well-being could be ascertained just looking at the beautiful buildings
That seemed to touch the nearby translucent white clouds in the sky. (Chapter 2)