Society of Nepalese Architects
Policy Committee Activity

Urban Planning & Building Bye-Laws

A Case of
Towns in History of
Kathmandu Valley

Planning … Bye-Law… ?

- Prior organization of land use, infrastructure and structure to guarantee optimal
  - Economic Outcomes
  - Social Stability and Harmony Outcomes
  - Aesthetic and Cultural Outcomes
  - Environmental/Ecological Outcomes
  - One, some, all and in that order of objectivity?
- Bye-Laws
  - Seek APPROPRIATE SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR/ACTION in the town (from private citizen, private corporative and public bodies) so that they
    - Conform to a order, cause sought outcomes and not hamper these.

Were they planned?

- We find land use and networks enduring over centuries!
  - Regulated to obtain outcomes
    - Process: Social behavior, public rituals and festivals
    - Product: land use, public goods and network
  - Regularity in plan and pattern of streets?
    - Urbanism is not 'an orthogonal state of mind'?
  - Intentionality of arrangement, not a coincidence
    - Repeated outcomes, processes and social institutions
    - Socially organized space with stability and harmony
    - Quality of urban public life

Some Peculiarities

- What is interesting about traditional Towns of Kathmandu Valley?
  - Climb up to it: location on high ground
  - Pond at almost the highest level and the Gah-hiti
  - The cross-road markers

while we know the Lichchhavi came from Ganga plains: Vaisali

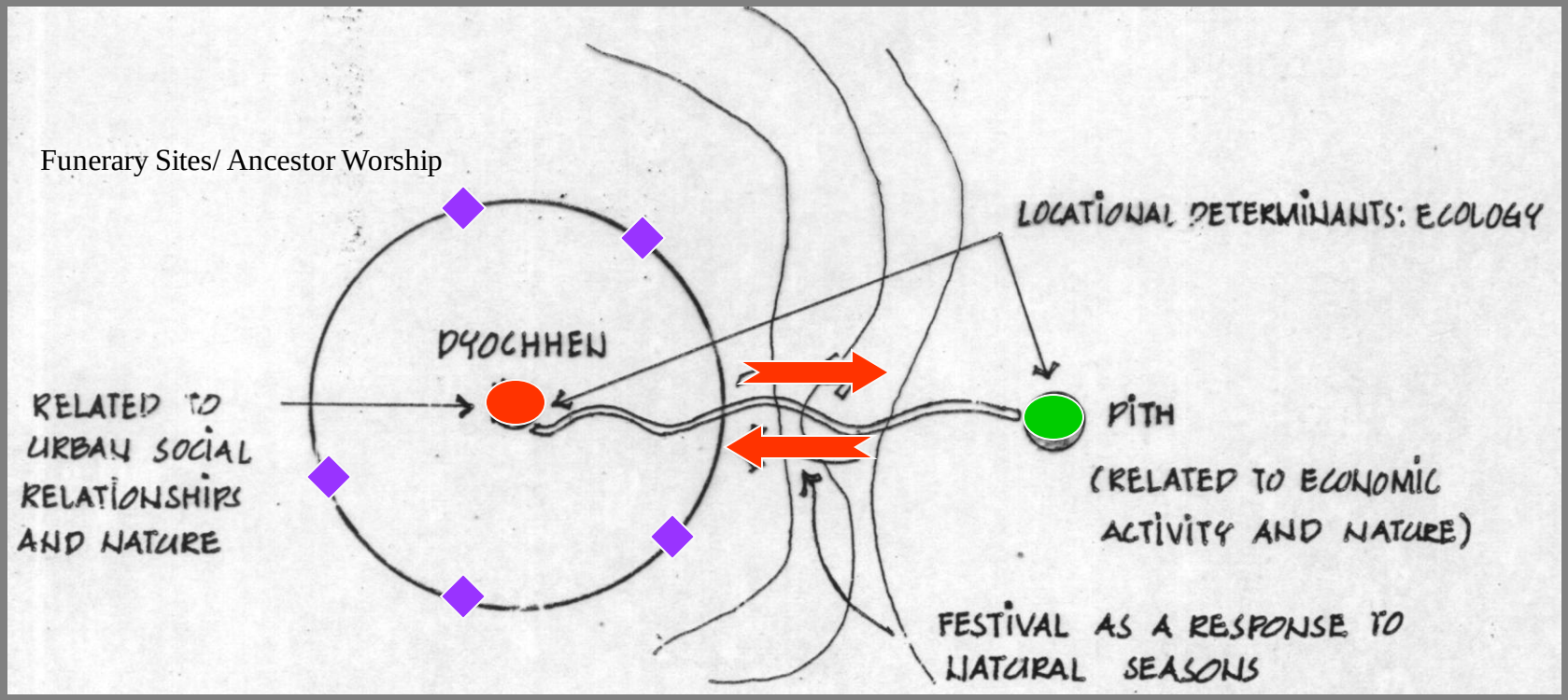
- River banks civilization and Hindu/Buddhist Knowledge System
- Classical flatland pattern: Towns as Images
- Well system

The Kirat Settlement

- Dense/Bounded settlements on high ground: Preservation of economic base/agricultural land
- Integration of ecology, society and economy
  - Balanced Ecological, Social and Economic Gains
  - Dyochhe, pith and norms of social behavior
- Pith located at ecologically sensitive spot such as Water holes, Springs, Land humps, Clump of trees
  - Divine presence = ecological variance
  - Preservation
- Festivals – sharing resources and recognizing the urban/rural continuum.

The Kirat Settlement

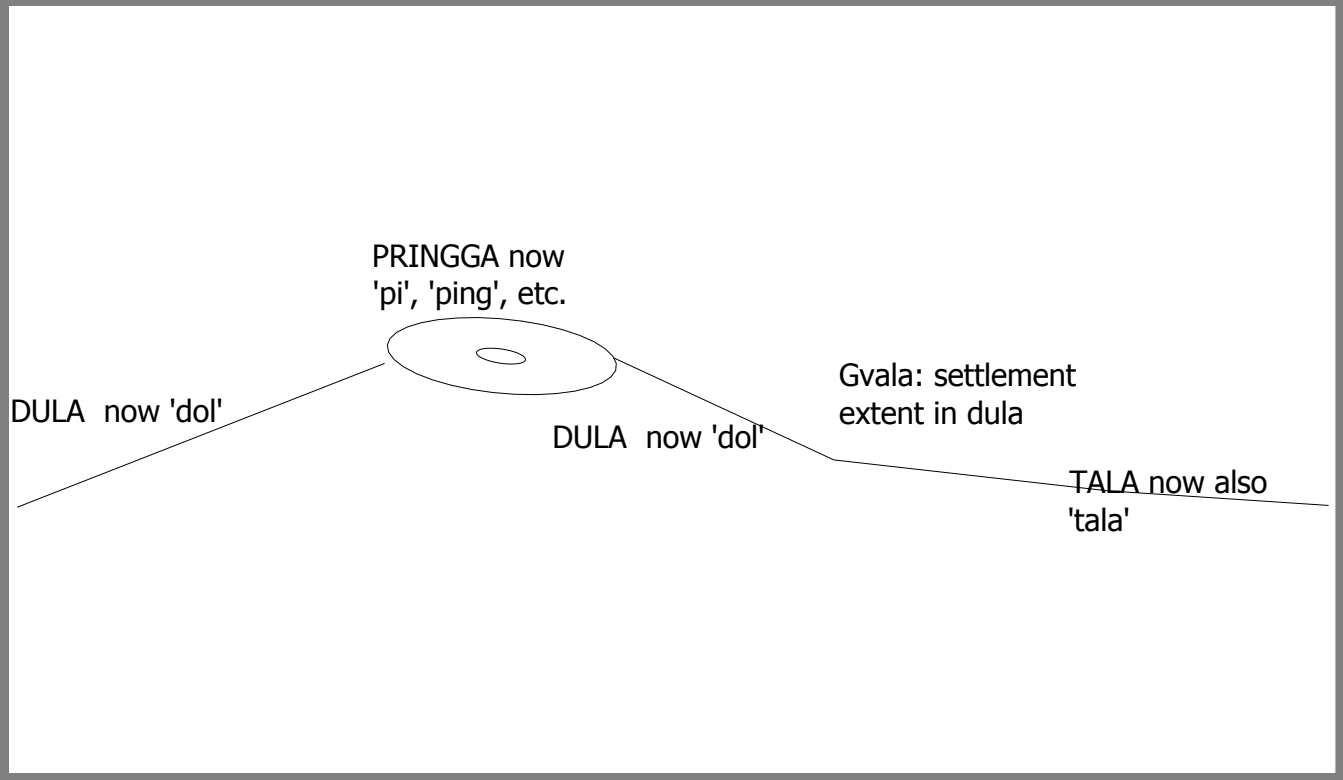
- Compact, bounded, culturally/ritually mediated relation between society, economy and ecology across space and generations – Pi-gan Festivals



Numinous Stones: Family of Siva

Terms: Topography & Land Use

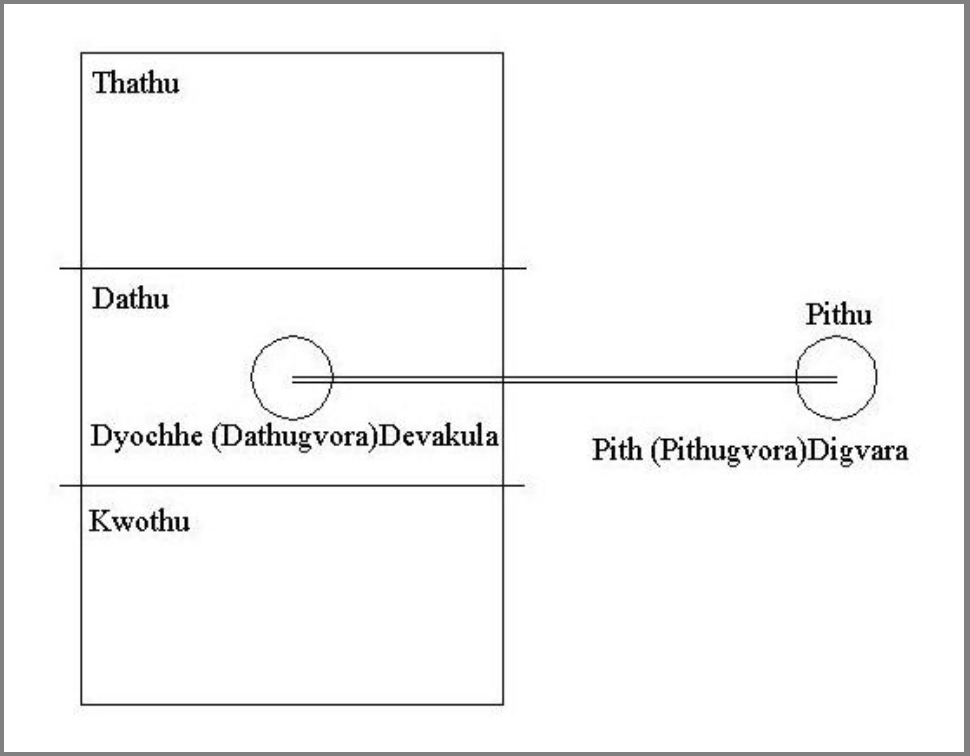
- Cho
- Gung
- Pringga
- Bru
- Dula
- Gvala
- Tala



JAISIDEVAL: Memories of Tegvala

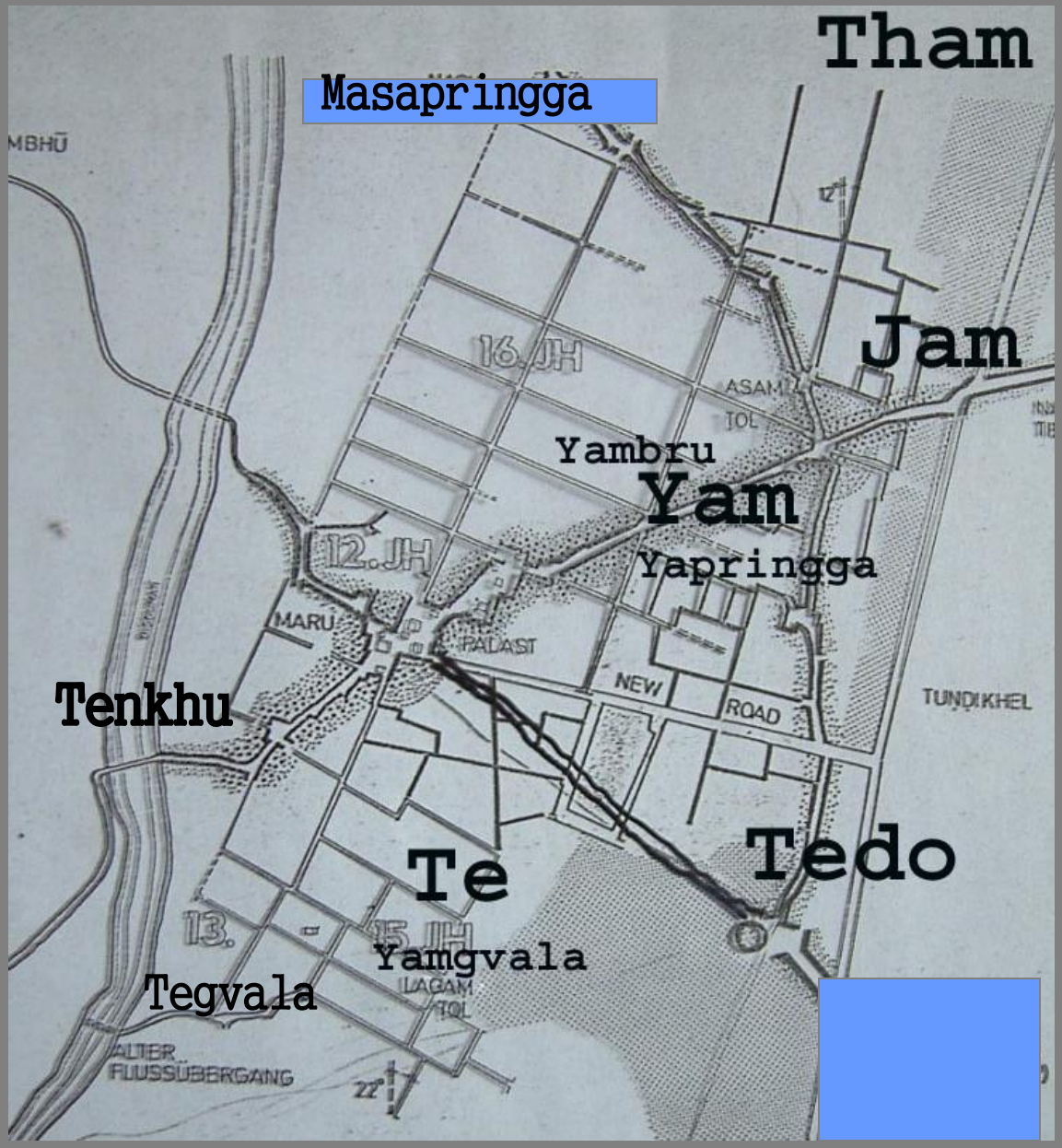
Terms: Topography & Urban Planning

- Thu
- Da-Thu (for the god in settlement)
- Tha-Thu (for the ruler)
- Kwo-Thu (for the citizen)
- Pi-Thu (for the god in nature)



To go on, this is what we find…

- **Kirat's Settlements - Praxis**
  - **Eco-sensitivity and topographic harmony**
  - **Bounded settlements**
- **Lichchhavi's City building to an Image - Idealism**
  - **Following the Arthasashtra of Kautilya**
  - **Mirroring the Cosmos**
  - **Universe as earth, heavens and time (desh rupa, uvaya rupa, kala rupa!)**
  - **Geometry/Mathematics > astrology, religion and cosmology**
- **Malla's Town: Kirat Praxis + Lichchhavi Idealism**
  - **Hierarchical Public Spaces**
  - **Toles – Social neighborhoods/Economic neighborhoods**
  - **Social Harmony and Aesthetics**

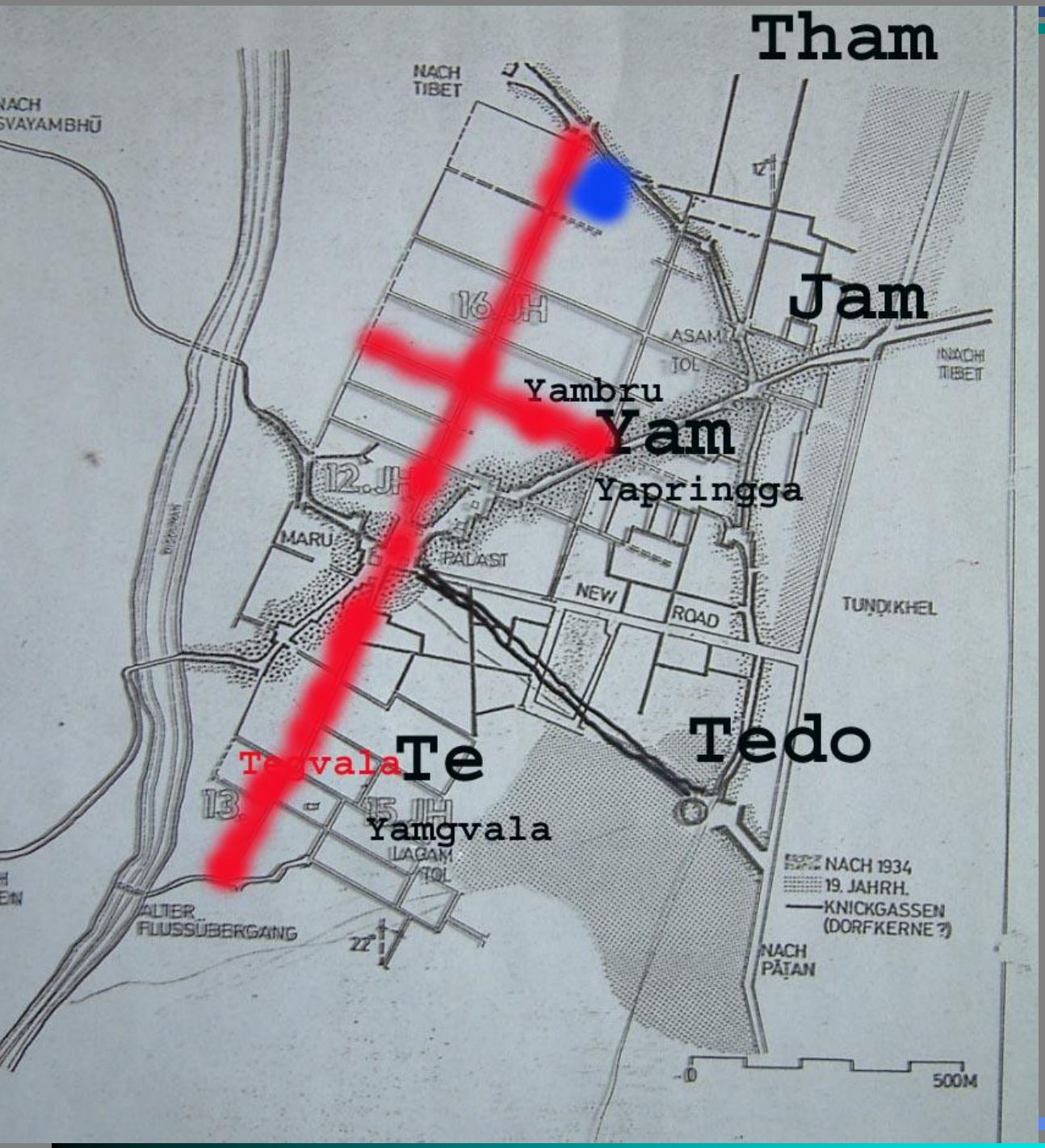


Yam

- Kathmandu Before the Lichchavi Laid out Daxinkoli -grama

Lichchhavi Town

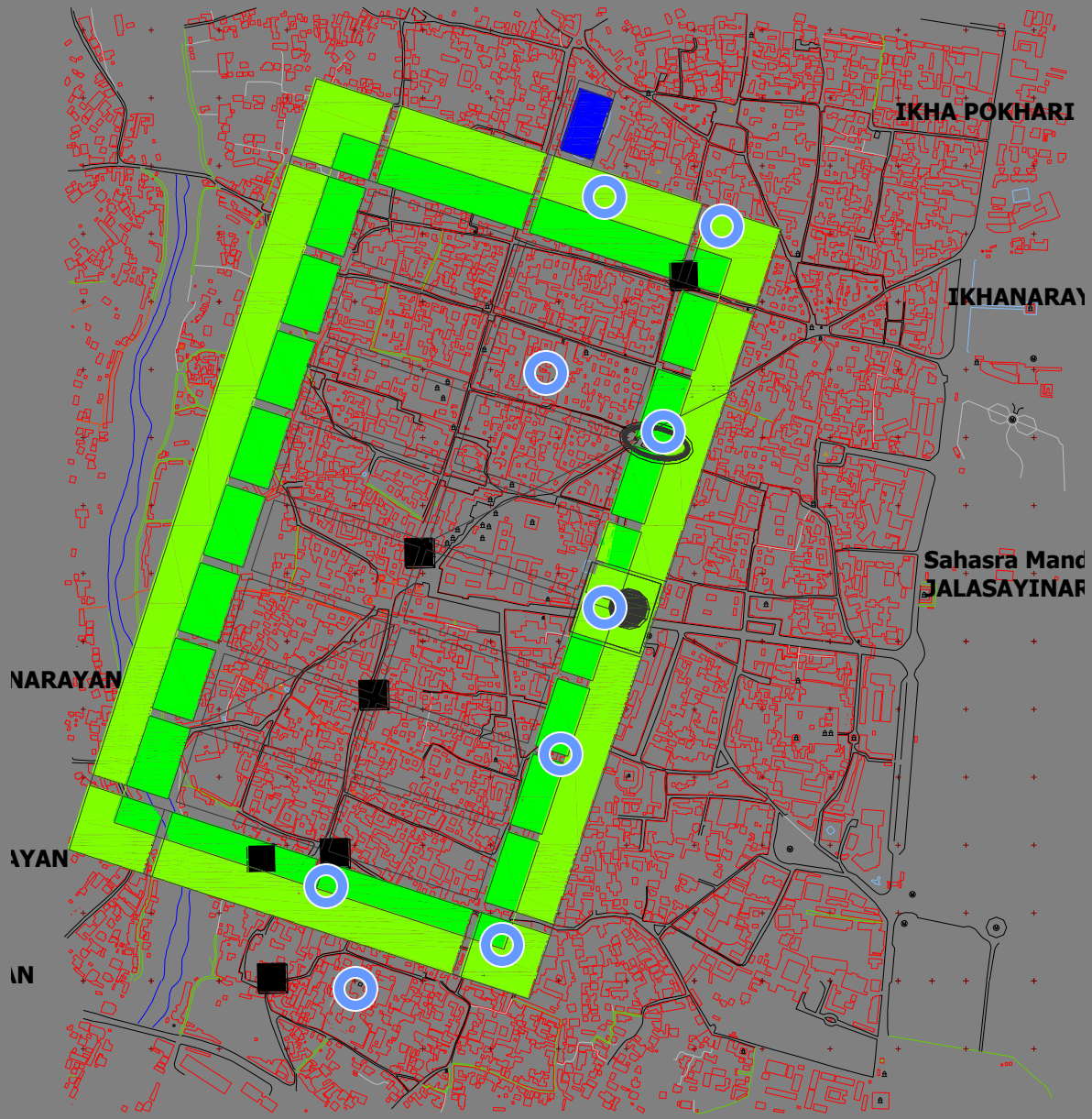
- Capital, BishalNagar, built by expanding Kirata town of Andi-pringga (Hadigaon)
- The Godly town at Deupatan settled
- Kathmandu: DaxinaKoliGrama settled
  - Riverbank settlement
  - Standard Vedic Town Patterns
  - Ritual Protection: Cosmic Image
  - Stone Water Conduits
  - Larger Towns: wider resource base



Lichchhavi Pattern

- Daxinakoligram
- Dandaka pattern
- Ikhapokhari Jalasayanarayan?
- Onde Narayan
- Ikha Narayan
- Chikanmugal N
- Makhan N

Nughah: Memories of Transition



Lichchhavi Pattern

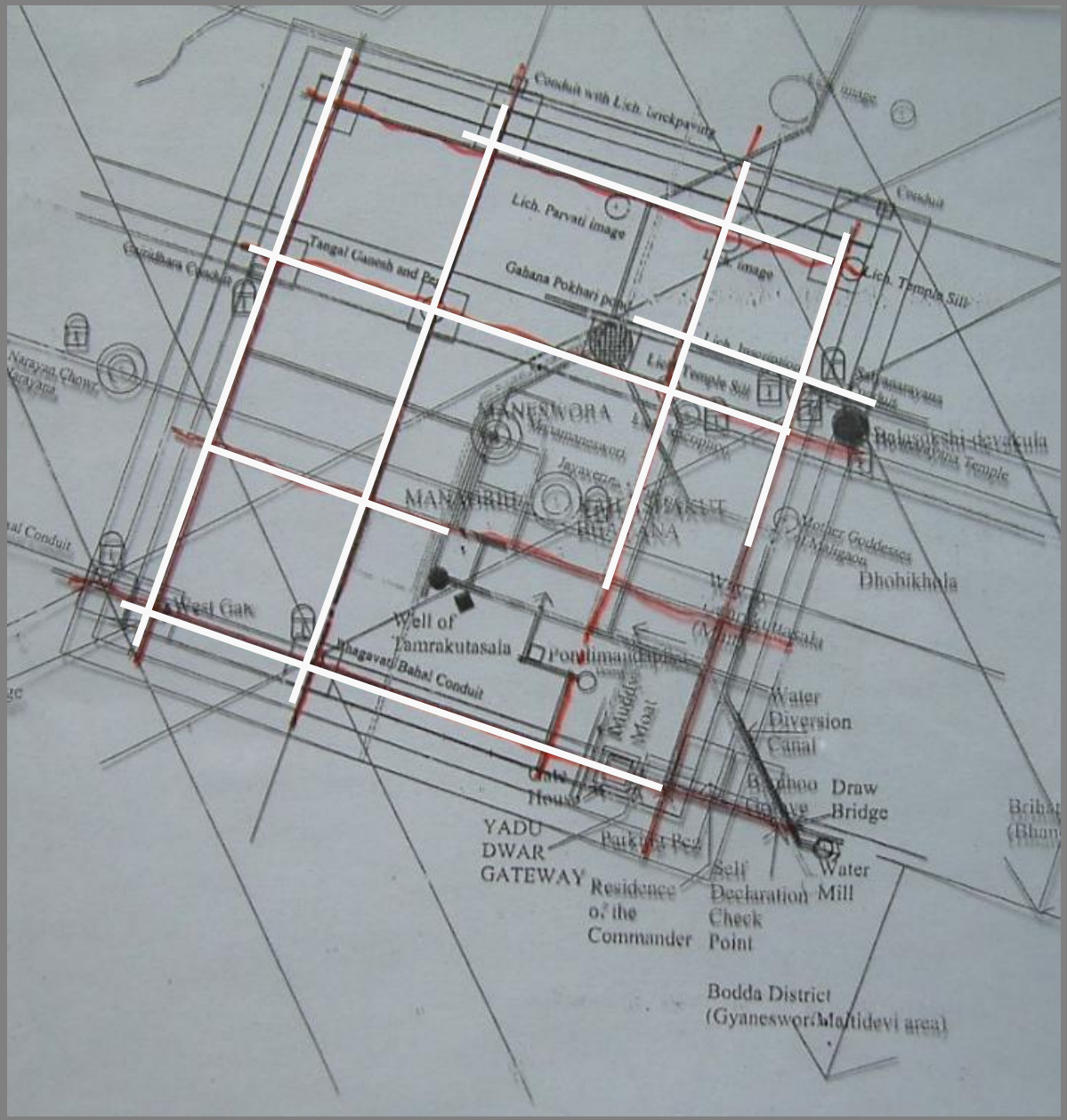
Daxinakoligram

Dandaka pattern

- Ikhapokhari
- Ikha Narayan
- Makhan N
- Chikanmugal N
- Jaisidewal
- Onde N
- GREENS AND STREETS AND SITES

The Lichchhavi Town Planning

- CAPITAL: PRASTARA Plan
  - Ritual Protection: Formal Cosmic Image
  - Physical Protection: Moats
    - Sukha Parikha, Kachchham, Parikha
  - Palace in the Center
  - Larger Town, wider resource base, extended Festival – Satyanarayan festival to Bansbari



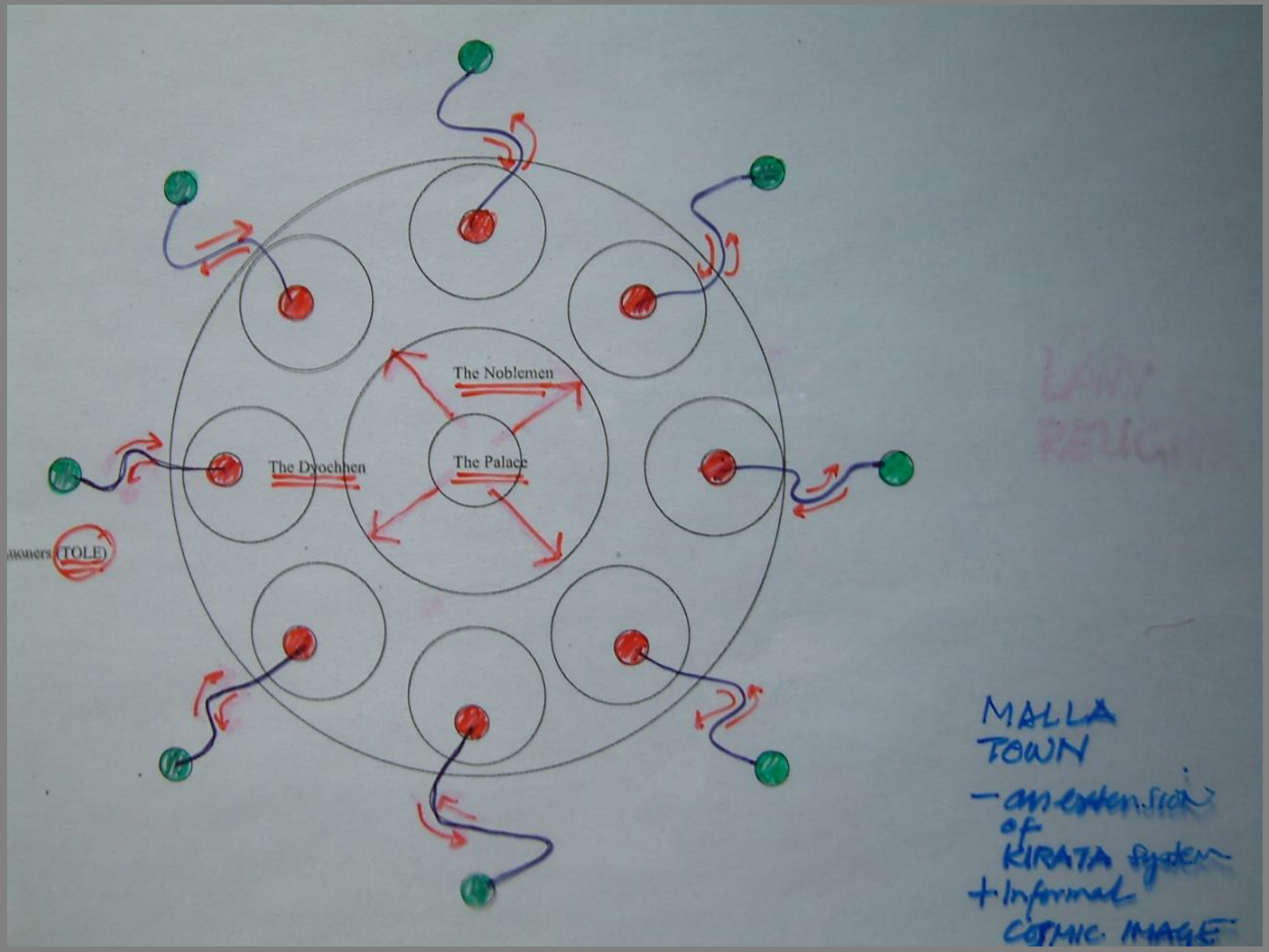
- Andipringga
- Bishalnagar
- Maneswora
- Andigrama
- Nara
- Hadigaun

Urban Management

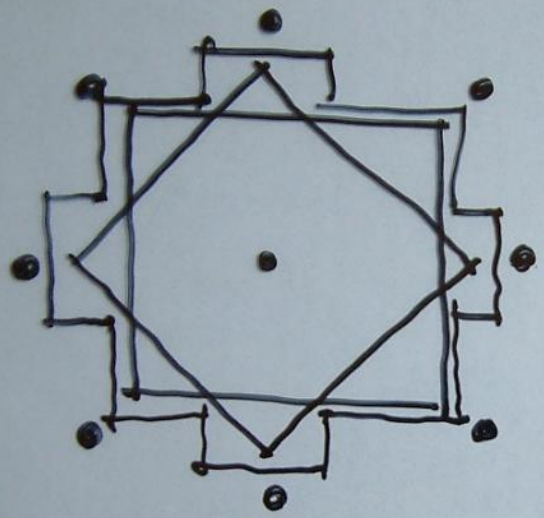
- Guthi: a community based management
  - Private wealth as "Public Endowment"
  - Community ownership and operation of land
  - Maintenance of services
- Ritual Mediation of Urban actions
  - Festivals trigger agenda of public urban action
- Recognition of water supply as key urban infrastructure
- Festive routes as Main Streets
- Harmony in architecture
  - Building bye-laws through Vastusastra?
  - Practical neighborliness?

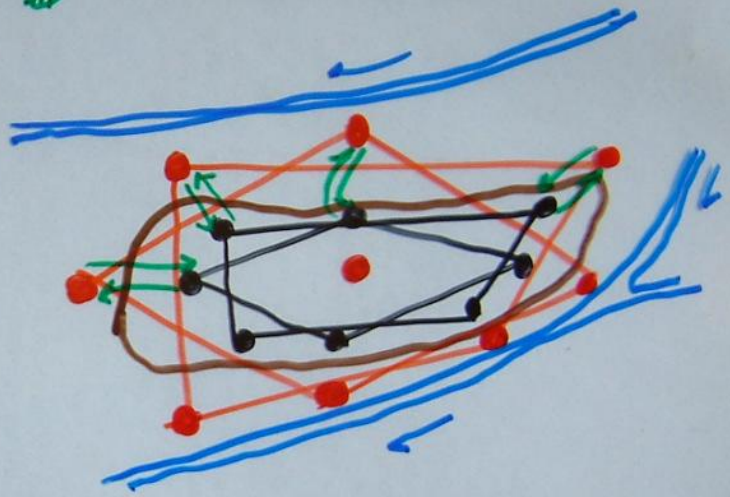
Malla Towns

- Development through a Mix of
  - Kirat ecological prototype +
  - Lichchhavi's urban planning principles
- Eco-sensitive ritual bounding and structure
  - Bounded urban development, Dune and Pine
  - Ritual/Social mediation of Wider urban-rural continuum (resource base)
  - Tole sectorization, homogeneous neighborhoods
  - Change mediation through rituals


The Noblemen
The Dyochhen
The Palace
(TOLE)
MALLA
TOWN
- an extension
of
KIRATA system
+ Informal
COSMIC IMAGE

INDEPENDENCE ← RURAL DEPENDENCE — URBAN INTERDEPENDENCE



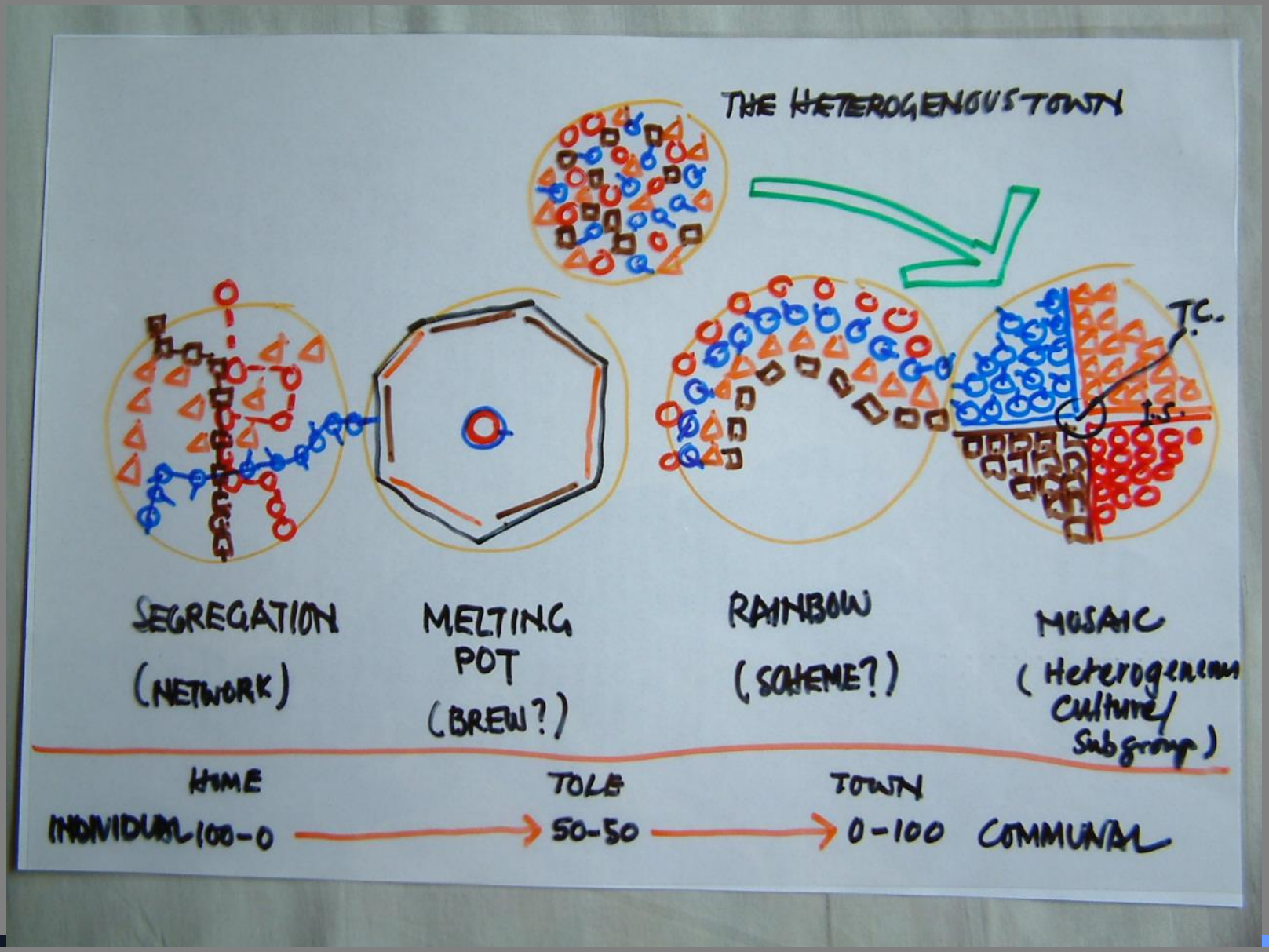


PERIMETER GODDESSES: YANTRA - ECOLOGY - ECONOMY
BOUNDED GROWTH

FESTIVALS : PLAYING OUT INTERDEPENDENCIES

cycles : EVERY YEAR / FOUR YEARS / 12 YEARS

PROTECTING SOURCE / ENERGY / WATER / MATS.
HARMONY OF PEOPLE
SECULARIZATION


THE HETEROGENOUS TOWN
T.C.
I.S.
SEGREGATION
(NETWORK)
MELTING
POT
(BREW?)
RAINBOW
(SCHEME?)
MOSAIC
(Heterogeneous
Culture/
Subgroup)
HOME
TOLE
TOWN
INDIVIDUAL 100-0
50-50
0-100
COMMUNAL

- *Setting up motives and evolving ethical behavior : ritually mediated plan*
- Cities planned and patterned after a perceived image of cosmos – a mental construct
- Use mediated by rituals
- Accommodating growth but remaining complete and balanced at all times as a mental construct
- Plan in the mind of the user
- Exploiting human ethics, individual faithfulness and emotionally guided *inner discipline*

Bye-Laws

- Ritual: sustained implementation of an idea through a process that is built around the fondest faiths of the urban society (process seeking pre-defined actions in a pre-defined sequence in an exacting way and followed without question)

Ritual Planning

- Image of Cosmos
- Form understood by all who used it
- Orientation to God and cosmic laws
- Assurance of welfare and peace of the living
- Gods' 'need' as public good
- Ritual activity, movements characterize organization of streets, squares and other spaces

Well, that's it

- We had the town planned and its implementation ritually mediated through generations
- So well enduring were these that they made a world heritage in 20th century!

… but then, ???