

A contribution about the Buddha statue project (2)

The entire structure embodies a collection of Buddhist symbols and meanings. The base is set in a pedestal with five concentric rings representing the five elements - earth, water, fire, wind and space. The design of the base is modelled after the Kalachakra mandala, the last system of mandalas introduced to Tibet from India. (In addition to their profound spiritual message, the Kalachakra teachings were a historical response to the various threats, such as internal turmoil and external aggression, that threatened the unity of the various communities of India at the time).

The canopy has a three-tiered base on each of its four sides, which together symbolize the twelve meridians (nāḍis). Its four pillars represent the four energy points (bindus), apart from supporting the dome and the upper parts of the canopy. The ten directions of the canopy represent the ten vitalities (prāṇas). The nāḍis, bindus, and prāṇas are the vital components of the human body in the Kalachakra system of Tantra. The parapet and the upper part of the canopy are decorated with intricate Tibetan patterns, while the dome symbolizes the vital factors of enlightenment. Above the dome, a square and conical structure represents the components of the Noble Path, while thirteen rings on the core are symbols of the ten strengths and three mindfulness's of an enlightened person. The chakra represents the Buddha's all-pervading compassion (mahakuṇḍā) and the topmost spire the nobility of his attainment. Overall, the six parts of the canopy - base, pillars, dome, cone chakra, and top - correspond to the six chakras, which are the centres of subtle energy in the human body; however, the design of the top section of the canopy follows that of the historic Gyantse Stupa, Palkhor Choten - in Tibet.

The canopy is about forty feet high at its highest point and was constructed of sandstone quarried and transported from Bansi Paharpur in the Sikar district of Rajasthan. The artisans who transformed the stone into a beautiful structure are also from Rajasthan and belong to communities of traditional temple builders. Kazuhiro Nakahari of Thangka Architects and his team created an initial design for the canopy, but it called for a larger structure and site than was ultimately feasible. M. N. Ashish Ganju and Mark Warner of Rajiv Narain Architects designed the beautiful structure now completed, from where construction and landscaping were also coordinated.