



Phyang

Phyang, a small village with fertile fields in the midst of a barren mountainous landscape, is situated about 23km in the west of Leh. Founded in the early 16th century, the entire settlement is dominated by the monastic site topping the neighbouring buildings.

The Guru Lhakhang is located on a steep precipice at the end of the valley.

The temple itself was erected as a part of the old settlement Mrijang and the castle, which is still surrounded by ruins and remains of the walls of the ancient buildings. Inside the sanctuary the edifice is decorated with extraordinary and well-preserved mural paintings, which account for the Guru Lhakhang's great significance in terms of art history.

At the foot of the mountain several Stupas, which are all situated along the path, emphasise the great sacral significance of the site. From the field of Stupas in the East of the ascending precipice, a narrow footpath crosses the mountain and leads straight to the edifice.

Approaching the edifice from the Eastern side, the footpath continues to the Southern side of the temple, which is the side facing the hillside.

On both sides of the entrance additions to the building can be found, which are made of stratified natural stones. The surrounding mural remains are merely an indicator for the fact that the temple used to be embedded in the settlement.

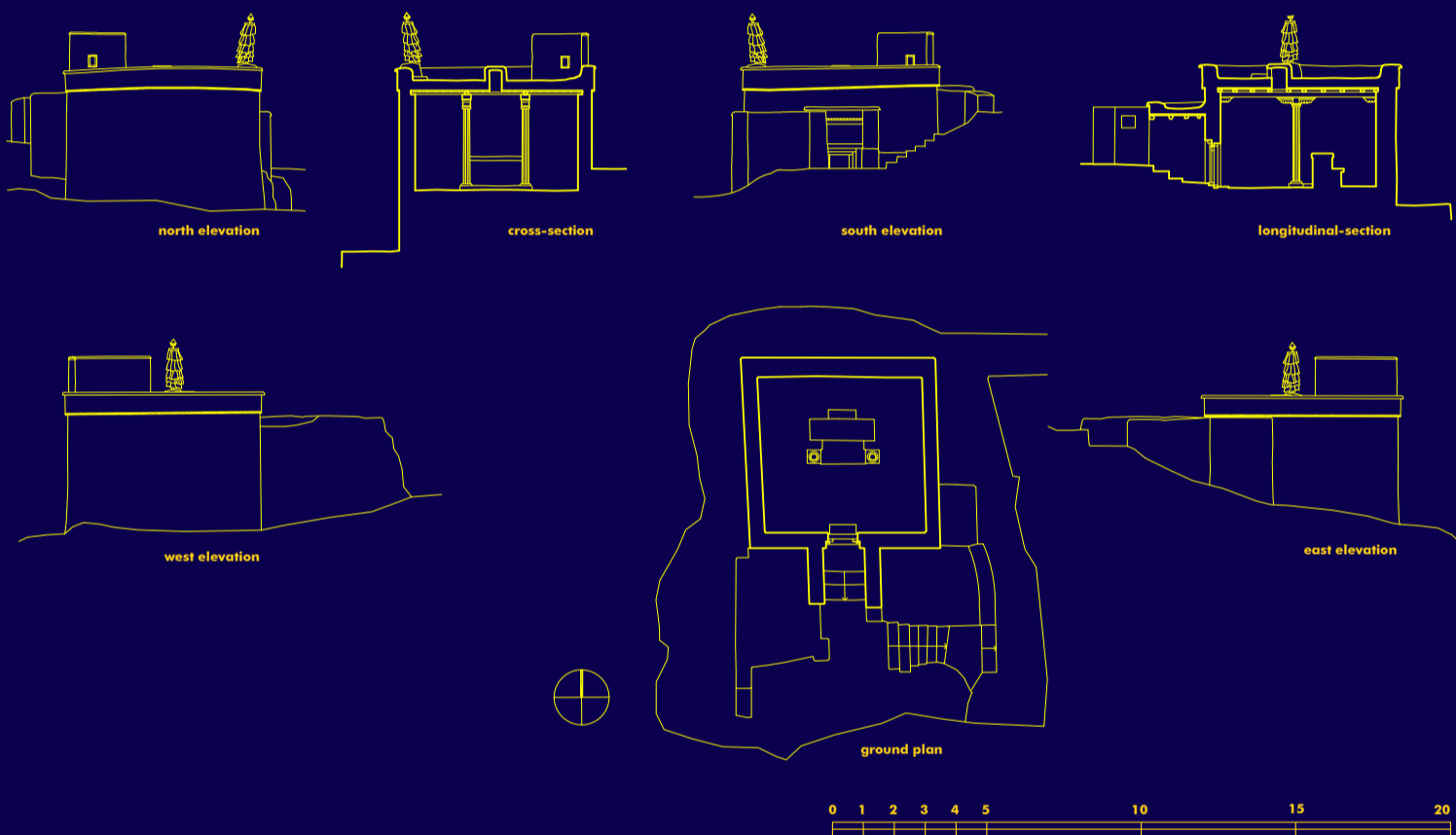
The outward appearance of the edifice with its simple cubic form is accentuated by the numerous mural fragments on the roof in the north-eastern corner and the red-coloured ridge. After crossing a roofed vestibule three steps then lead down the way to the interior of the sanctuary.

The temple is held in private property by the Gonja (holder of the key) family and comes under the liturgic authority of the Drigungpa Order in Phyang.

The temple's present outward appearance dates back to its renovation in the summer of 1998, which was executed by Shri Benoy K. Behl, an Indian photographer, under the aegis of Major General VS Budhwar.

Given that the present documentation was established shortly after the renovation, knowledge about the original appearance of the edifice can only be acquired through old photographs of the Gonja family.

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Fotos: Holger Neuwirth / Carmen Auer



Guru Lhakhang at Phyang

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