

the kuswar of chaithali (central nepal)

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Sarkiman has been our travelling companion for more than ten years. He is a native of Temal, an important village cluster, located in the district of Kavre-Palanchok, two days walk east of Kathmandu. Many of our porters are recruited from Temal, a majority of them Tamangs.

Even though he has always passed himself off as a Tamang and moreover speaks that language perfectly, we were not ignorant of the fact that Sarkiman is a Kuswar, a member of the caste of fishermen.

It was a song that prompted us to write this note. We were in Tukuhe in Thak Khola at the foot of Dauligiri after having completed a day's work with Mangal Singh, a lama and doctor and were sitting in a place reserved for us. Santa Bir Tamang was making the tea, with no idea of how much to put in, too much sugar or not enough tea. Sarkiman sang softly to himself. The song was not altogether Nepali and rather resembled a religious song or lament.

"We sing this song to call together the souls of those who have died during the year... It is the song of the pitr ritual," he told me.

It was then I remembered a place where we had been together in 1967, on the day of Dasain. It was near the ferry at Luphu, at the confluence at the Sun Kosi and the Rosi Khola, southeast of Kathmandu. Upon reaching Temal we would have to climb up into the Mahabharat Range, to the south of Temal Danda in order to find the settlements of the Hayu. When we reached the confluence of these two rivers, we stopped to eat at the house of a Tamang Lama who lived near his rice fields in the area during the winter months. The Lama had a text in his house which concerned the history of some local clans. Interested in those documents and assured that our destination was only a mere three hours walk away, I decided to return there with Ngawang Samten Sherpa.

The Kuswar of Lughat had to return us across the Sun Kosi very quickly, since they were in a great hurry. "We must make a sacrifice, a puja". We stopped in their small village and witnessed a dance which dramatized the battle between Rama and the demon Rahu. Intrigued, I questioned Sarkiman about this for a long time.



Since that time we have made many trips to Chaithali, the village of the dance and the village of Sarkiman's ancestors. The first questions led to other questions and Sarkiman has begun to take his own notes, in particular those concerning his own trips through the middle hills. He had gone to many ceremonies and so wished to observe the ghat puja at Dababaghat which took place in 1976, but he was driven out by the local Kuswar who said that any stranger, even if he is the King himself, cannot come to this puja. Sarkiman succeeded in gaining admission in spite of this, by demonstrating his relation to the ancestral line of the Kuswar of Rajatar.

The ethnographic data below has been taken essentially from areas to the east and southeast of the Kathmandu valley. K. Rimal, who has often worked in ethnological research with G. Toffin (CNRS), was associated with us in this project. He has worked with Sarkiman on the analysis of a number of local customs and has translated the most important elements of the ceremonial songs of the Kuswar (c.f. Appendix 1.).

Sarkiman was born in 1943, in Temal. His father died in 1975. His maternal grandfather, founder of the Kuswar village of Chaithali, had bought a plot of land in Temal, a half-day's walk toward the summit of Temal Danda. Sarkiman's father was born there and married a girl from Chaithali. Sarkiman built a new house there in 1974.

What are the origins of the Kuswar? Here are two accounts which Sarkiman heard from his father:

The Kuswar are the descendants of Ram and Sita. Sita brought a son, Laba, into the world. One day, while she was busy washing her clothes at the spring, she saw monkey nursing and fondling her young. Sita thought, "I've come to the spring and left my own baby by himself". She immediately returned to her house and picked up her child and brought him back to the spring. Her servants, an old man and woman who had been left in charge of the child were gone momentarily and on coming back discovered that the cradle was empty: What will happen if Sita finds out? The old man made an effigy out of type of grass called kus² tied with string and put it into the cradle. Both then called out to the gods. The effigy came to life and began to cry. When she returned, Sita saw the infant and demanded an

The dance of Ram at Lughaghat on the Sun Kosi during Dasain of 1967: The army of the monkeys.

explanation. The servant explained that he thought Laba had been kidnapped. "I replaced him with an effigy made out of kus grass and asked the gods to give him life..."

Thus, Sita nursed both infants and the child "born of the grass" was called Kus and was considered to be the twin brother of Laba. Laba became a scholar, while Kus continued to live in the forest and became the ancestor of the Kuswar³.

The second account relates to the existence of a Kuswar King:

The Kuswar had their own King for a long time who lived at Rajagaun on the Tama Kosi. His elephant used to be tied to a large iron post in the village, which can still be seen today. The Kuswar owned all the rice fields in the valley bottom, but they were dispossessed by the more powerful castes which came from the West.

In this area, the Kuswar are known as majhi which includes the Danuwar, as well as all fishermen and those who are in charge of the ferries (ghat), including Newars of the Pode caste, as well as Brahmans, Sarkis and Damais, members of Nepali castes for whom this is a secondary occupation⁴. Several other publications have signalled the presence of the majhi, but none have precisely mentioned which group is being discussed. We shall return to this point again further along in this paper.

In the course of various journeys throughout central Nepal, we have tried to make an effort to locate the permanent settlements of the Kuswar and Danuwar. These settlements have always been found to be located along a river, up to an altitude of around 1,000 m. (since at higher altitudes bridges tend to replace ferries).

A number of the settlements of the Danuwar and Kuswar are located along the Indrawati, the Bhote Kosi, the Sun Kosi and the Tama Kosi rivers⁵.

The Kuswar 5

River	Village Name	Chat Name	Ethnic group
Bhote Kosi	Bainse (near Balepi)		Kuswar
Bhote Kosi	Satimure	Kirabote	Kuswar
Jhiu Khola	Jhiu Khola (below Tinpipal)		Danuwar
Indrawati	Bewatar	Sipaghat	Kuswar / Danuwar
Indrawati	Jyarighat		Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Naule	Dolalghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Apghat Kolati	Apghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Khare	Khareghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Khare	Khareghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Chaithali (West)	Patswarghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Patswargaun (East)	Patswarghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Jakari	Jakarighat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Garboth		Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Doreni		Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Luphu	Luphughat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Kotape	Kotapeghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Jajuli	Kareghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Mulkot	Dobagaghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Mulkot	Sitkaghat	Kuswar
Sun Kosi	Pujeghat	pujeghat	Kuswar / Danuwar
Tama Kosi	Orare	Benighat	Kuswar / Danuwar
Tama Kosi	Rajagaun	Benighat	Kuswar / Danuwar
Tama Kosi	Batauli	Benighat	Kuswar / Danuwar
Tama Kosi	Mungitar	Benighat	Kuswar / Danuwar
Tama Kosi	Mantalitar	Mantalighat	Kuswar / Danuwar
Tama Kosi	Sukajor	Mantalighat	Kuswar / Danuwar
Tama Kosi	Karambot	Chisapanighat	Kuswar / Danuwar
Tama Kosi	Chisapani	Chisapanighat	Kuswar
Tama Kosi	Gorbari	Chisapanighat	Kuswar
Tama Kosi	Gaikura	Chisapanighat	Kuswar
Tama Kosi	Melungpari	Chaiteghat	Kuswar

In the following, we will place major emphasis on the Kuswar group. The Kuswar are Nepali speakers, but some of their expressions are the same as those heard in the eastern Tarai, as well as in Bihar. They live in settlements of their own, and their holdings are, as the saying goes, "both sides of the river for three kos and up to the place where the clouds begin" (wari tin kos pari tin kos goga bari, kuiro ko kath).

The Kuswar village of Chaithali consists of sixteen houses and lies at an altitude of 700 m, two-hundred meters above the valley bottom of the Sun Kosi. In addition to the Kuswar, the immediate area has several Newars engaged in commerce, some Tamangs and two Brahmin families. The Kuswar houses are clustered around forage trees and Euphorbes. A small Mahadev temple dominates the village landscape. The ninety

inhabitants of the village fall into three groups of houses (tol): mijhar tol, gaurung tol, and sakule tol. The inhabitants of mijhar tol came from the village of Patswar, while those living in gaurung tol come from Bewatar near the Sipaghat ferry.

Chaithali was founded by a man from Patswar who had three sons. Two of the sons settled in Patswar on the left bank of the river, the third came to live in Chaithali. For every eighteen days, the two Patswar brothers ran the ferry for twelve, while the brother in Chaithali ran it for six, using two boats. When making a new boat, twelve men from Patswar and six from Chaithali still participate in the work.

The head of the Kuswar community is called the mijhar⁶, who is responsible for collecting taxes and settling disputes within the group. The position can be hereditary. The mijhar is assisted in his work by the gaurung. Together they organize the shradda ceremonies held at Dassain and the dances which accompany it. They are also connected with the collection of the fees for use of the ferries.

The village head at one time had a document (lal mohar) which fixed the regulations for the operation of the ferry, but this document disappeared several years ago. The paper was supposed to have specified the duties of the boatmen of Chaithali saying that the ferry should make at least one round trip journey per day, even if there were no passengers. Also, each year a tax, payable in fish, was to be sent to the palace of the King.

The houses of the Kuswar are different from those of the neighbouring populations, and are built on a rectangular plan, covering about eighteen square meters. There is a second floor (above the ground floor), and the house has a two-sided thatched roof. The ground floor serves as a stable for cattle and goats, as well as for storage of agricultural implements. A ladder permits access to the storey above, where a partition divides the living area into two parts, with a fireplace and iron tripod (or three stones) in one of them.

A household inventory can be made quite easily: cooking utensils (aluminum pots), water containers, several straw mats, baskets and winnowing trays are the essential elements. A porch roof, built level with

the upper story, shelters the main facade and the place where the rice husker is installed. A storage area is erected on pilings along the side of the house and here animal fodder and wicker grain bins are kept.

Until 1967, the maintenance of the ferry service was the primary activity of the Kuswar in Chaithali. Since that time, however, a bridge has been installed over the Sun Kosi and the inhabitants had to find other occupations, some leaving for India and Bhutan to find employment while others went to work as porters out of Kathmandu.

The ferry was serviced by a boat (dunga) which was used only rarely for fishing. The single hulled boat is dug out of the trunk of the simal tree (Bombax malabaricum) which grows in the tropical zone (cut in the months on Mangsir or Chait). A single trunk can measure from 6 to 8 meters in length and can transport twelve people. The finished boat is maneuvered with an oar, with the boatman seated in the stern.

The ghat is located at a place where the current of the river is weak, After launching, the boatman paddles the boat a bit upstream, then allows the boat to drift back, using the force of the current to help him reach the other shore.

The boatman's occupation is closely connected with that of the fisherman. The techniques and tackle used in fishing differs according to seasonal variation in the volume of the river and the state of the water. Generally, the during monsoon river has nearly ten times the volume of the dry season. The following is a calendar of fishing techniques.

<u>Month</u>	<u>State of the water</u>	<u>Volume of water</u>	<u>Type of fish caught</u>	<u>Techniques</u>
Baisakh (April-May)	<u>Sanglo Pani</u> descent of fish melting of snows.	shallow	<u>asala</u> <u>sidhare</u>	<u>balsi</u> <u>kunga</u>
Jeth (May-June)	<u>damilo pani</u> muddy waters	mid-range	<u>gouch</u> <u>share</u> <u>katle</u>	<u>balsi</u> <u>tehari</u> <u>kunga</u>
Asar (June-July)	high, muddy waters	high, strong current	<u>kahre</u>	<u>jat-goleng</u> (epuisette)

Shrawan (July-Aug)	same	same	same	<u>goleng</u>
Bhadau	same	same	<u>sahare</u>	same
Asoj (Sept-Oct)	same	same	<u>sidhare</u> <u>palanga</u>	<u>jal</u>
Kartik (Oct-Nov)	<u>sanglo pani</u> receding, clear water	shallow	<u>asala</u> <u>sahale</u>	<u>tehari</u> <u>balsi</u> <u>kunga</u>
Mangsir (Nov-Dec)	same	same	<u>asala</u> <u>sahare</u> <u>sidhari</u>	<u>tehari</u> <u>kunga</u>
Poush (Dec-January)	same	same	same	same
Magh (Jan-Feb)	same	same	same	<u>gond</u> <u>cheta</u>
Phagun (Feb-March)	fish swim up- stream	same	same	<u>tehari</u> <u>balsi</u>
Chait (March-April)	same	same	<u>asala</u> <u>sidhare</u>	same

During the monsoon period (from June through September) when the waters are muddy, fishing is done during the daylight hours. Around the month of November, when the waters have receded and clear, the Kuswar fish at night, using a sweep-net (épervier: French) between 7 P.M. and 4 A.M. The fishermen build small huts out of grass and bamboo on a base of stones in the summer riverbed. This form of fishing is practiced from Kartik until Chait. In Phalgun, when the fish begin to swim upstream, the catch is quite good. The other good fishing period occurs in Baisak and Jeth, when the fish again return downstream, when the melting snows appreciably lower the temperature of the waters.

In autumn, the Kuswar build dams on an arm of the course of the river and introduce a fish poison, made from the pulverized flesh of a creeper (dudelahara, Hedyotis scandens) into the water. The asphixiated fish come to the surface and are scooped up into baskets⁷.

The types of fishing tackle are essentially limited. Fishing nets are made from nettle fiber, fashioned with the use of a netting needle. The leaves of the agave are also used and are boiled with ashes and woven after they dry⁸. The tehari is a rectangular net with a large mesh which is stretched from one bank of the river to the other. The jal (épervier) has a conical shape and is fitted with weights made of lead or small pieces of iron. The net has a length of about 120 cm. and is cast in such a way as to spread it out in a circle over the surface of the water, where it is drawn to the bottom by its lead weights. The takauli (épuisette) is a conical net mounted on an oval-shaped wooden frame. It is used by women and children. The large épuisette (goleng) has a frame with a diameter of 100 c.m. to which is fixed a conical net, with a handle four meters long.

Fish traps (kunga) are fashioned out of bamboo in the shape of a cone. In this type of fishing, an arm of the main river flow is blocked and the fish are forced to swim through passages which lead to the traps. Some fish traps of generally the same form (dharya) contain numerous small bamboo points which keep the fish from escaping once they enter the trap.

The Kuswar fish with a line from Kartik to Chait. A reed pole, fourteen to fifteen "cubits" in length is used with a nylon line and a fishhook (balsi) at the end.

Fish traps called garuwa are built in the bed of the Tamba Kosi. Small fish can go through the trap, but the Kuswar feed these small fish with cow-dung and a little beer malt. In five or six months the fish attain a respectable size and are too big to get through the traps, allowing them to be captured.

The following species of fish are caught:

asala
sidhare
sahar
kathej (katla)
gonch

Oreinus richardsonii⁹
Barbus puttitora
Catla catla

The fish in the Chaithali region (Dolaghat) are dried and lightly smoked. They are then sold to a middleman (most often a Newar), who takes it to Kathmandu.

The inhabitants of Chaithali, like all the groups of Kuswar along the Sun Kosi have certain rice fields "given in kipat by the King of Nepal". For the most part, their lands consist of unirrigated fields (bari)¹⁰. It is curious to note, however, that Kuswar fields most often resemble gardens where crops are quite diversified: corn, sorghum, millet, eleusine, sugar cane, numerous cucumbers, beans and lentils, mustard, fruit trees such as bananas and oranges as well as flowers. Tobacco (surti) is cultivated in appreciable quantities and part of that produce is sold. Animal husbandry is of little importance; only buffaloes, Nepali cattle and a few goats and pigs are kept.

Social Organization

Kuswar society is made up of several clans (thar), Mama Gaurung of Chaithali sets the number at ten, but could only remember nine of them.

<u>Clan</u>	<u>Location</u>
Khas Kuswar	
Dudh Kuswar	
Kumal	Buri Gandaki, Tama Kosi (Karombot)
Tharu Kuswar	Madesh
Barha Kuswar	Madesh
Bandar Kuswar	Madesh
Chutie Kuswar	Madesh
Rajbanshi Kuswar	Naulegaun - Indrawati
Botel Kuswar	

The Kuswar marry within their group and in the same line (exchange marriage) though there must be a separation of seven generations between ancestors, if a productive union takes place violating this seven generation principle, the violators are expelled from the community and are called kaccar ("bastards") or Kami (literally metalworkers, but in this case taken in the sense of outcaste).

Sarkiman described the following as the pattern of marriage for his group:

The proposal of marriage is made by the father of the boy, the girl is presented to the family generally when she is very young. At the presentation, the girl is accompanied with a gift of six pathi of beer, a chicken and 300 little cakes. The proposal must often be made two or three times before getting a positive response! From the

moment the marriage is fixed, the fiance goes to the house of the girl with his relatives and friends where they are given a feast. The next day, the girl is carried to the house of the bridegroom by her maternal uncle¹¹. The following items are laid out in the house: leaves from the bar - pipal, a vessel filled with water, a lit lamp, a container made of sal leaves carrying some sesame, rice and wheat grains, some dubo grass, some pālungā leaves, a fish, a container of curdled milk fastened to a stalk of sugar cane, a copper vessel, a copper coin, some vermillion powder, all arranged along a geometric figure (rekhi) drawn with rice flour¹².

They build a fire out of pinewood on the figure and light it and into the fire, toss the rice, wheat and sesame grains. Afterwards, they stretch a strip of white cotton cloth across the whole thing and anchor it to both sides of the figure. The white cotton symbolizes the river (kosi). The couple sits on one side of the "river", while a group of men representing the ferrymen sit on the other.

The couple say: "Come with your boat, come quickly".

The boat men reply: "Why should we do this, we only do official work"

Couple: "We want to cross the river".

Boatmen: "What will you give us if we help you?"

Couple: "We will give you "pasang - pusung".

Boatmen: "Give us "pasang - pusung" and we won't help you".

This exchange goes on three more times.

Boatmen: "What will you give?"

Couple: "We will give you a gold coin (sunko, thunko)

Boatmen: "We accept".

The cotton strip is then removed and a village elder gives the small fish and the curdled milk to the couple. Then the groom throws some vermillion on the bride. This act consecrates the union.

Later that day, everyone returns to the bride's house and offer the following to the bride's mother: some beer, a chicken, 100 small cakes, twenty coins and a petticoat. The maternal uncle is also given three pathi of beer, a chicken and 100 small cakes. Damai (the tailor's caste) musicians accompany the cortege throughout the entire ceremony¹³.

As we have already said, marriage is practiced at a very early age among the Kuswar. Often the boy is only 12 or 13 years old. Marriages take place during the months of Mangsir, Magh, Phagun and Baisakh.

Religious Beliefs.

Because the solar calendar is used for daily life and the lunar calendar is used for ceremonies, festivals may not necessarily fall in the month listed below. The key is the lunar phases.

The Kuswar are "Hindu" and observe a number of festivals similar to those of the high Nepali Castes. Sarkiman here contrasts the differences between the Kuswar celebrations and those of these Nepali castes:

<u>Month of Nepali Calendar</u>	<u>Day of Lunar Month</u>	<u>Kuswar</u>	<u>Nepali Castes</u>
Baisakh	New moon Full Moon	Mātāthirtha Bagwati <u>puja</u> (at Palanchok)	Mātāthirtha Bagwati <u>puja</u>
Jeth	Full moon		goth <u>puja</u> offerings to Mahadev, Gaura, Parvati, for the protection of livestock
Asar	Full moon	<u>ghat puja</u> , offerings at the bank of the river	
Shrawan	Full moon	<u>puja</u> at the Narayan temple (offerings of flowers and milk)	Janaipurnima, replacement of the sacred thread.
Bhadau	(c.f. above-according to the lunar calendar).		

Asoj	10th day of the new moon	Dasain-Shraddha ceremonial songs	Dasain
Kartik	Full moon (six days after <u>tika</u>) (Twenty-two days after <u>tika</u>)	Repair of roads Tihar Bhaitika	Tihar
Mangsir	Full moon 5th day after full moon	Offerings of lamps at Devi temple Pilgrimage to Daneswar-Mahadev	Offering to Devi
Poush	Full moon	Pilgrimage to Sailung Lamps offered to Mahadev	Pilgrimage to Sailung
Magh	Sankranti	Community feast	Ritual bathing for purification from the full moon of Poush to the full moon of Magh women's ritual - Swasthani.
Phagun		Ram Navmi ceremonial meal	
Chait	8th Day after full	Chait Dasain - family meal	Dasain - large feast

For the Kuswar, the most important religious festival is ghat puja, the ceremony which ensures the ferry. The boats of Chaithali and Patswar, however, have been taken out to dry since the suspension bridge across the Sun Kosi was built in 1967. Therefore this puja is no longer practiced in these two villages. Sarkiman, who had seen it, described it as follows.

The puja took place on the night of the day of the full moon in the month of Baisak, Jeth or Asar. All the villagers gathered at the ferry, where the mijhar of Patswar made an offering on the prow of a boat consisting of rice, vermillion, flowers and rice-cakes. This was followed by the sacrifice of a rooster, a goat and a pig; cutting the head off of each in turn and spilling the blood on both the boat and the riverbank. The pig, purchased by the whole community, was then divided into equal shares and distributed to the families of the village. The head of the pig was then taken to Patswar and placed in the house of the mijhar. The next day,

the head of the pig was placed on a pole for one day then the pole was taken out and in the hole one put an egg then the hole was covered with a slab. The following year at the same ceremony, the hole was uncovered for the next puja. If one found the egg to be cracked, the year which follows would be a bad one.

Sarkiman was travelling in the middle valley of the Sun Kosi in February of 1976, when he abserved ghat puja being held in Dobagaghat on the 12th of Phagun.

The ferryboats were brought up onto the bank. The mijhar drew a geometric figure with flour on the pro of the boat and laid out rice, vermillion and flowers. Three altars are built nearby: the first is built out of five dressed stones and some gayo branches ornamented with totola flowers. This is the altar of Jala Devi, the goddess of the rivers¹⁵. A stone forms the altar for the divinty, Shikari¹⁶. A stone next to the river is for the divinty, Devi. Each house sacrifices a rooster to Jala Devi, after which the mijhar sacrifices a pig and deposits an egg on the altar. Then a rooster is sacrificed to Shikari and a pigeon to Devi. Only the men who help in the sacrifice cook the rice alongside of the river, and eat it and afterwards return to the house of the mijhar.

The next day, the mijhar makes a new series of offerings. Then, everybody in the community gathers to attend a comic performance where a man disguised as an Indian from the plains is successively stripped of all his goods by two robbers. In the evening, men and women dance in front of the mijhar's house.

Chhyama (kshama) puja¹⁷ has replaced ghat puja as the most important religious period for the Kuswar of Chaithali. Chhyama puja takes place in the full moon of Baisakh or Jeth (Baisakh-purni). Five days before the ceremony, a man is put in charge of collecting two mana of coarse maize flour, chakla and a half mana of rice from each household in the village. On the eve of the full moon, at night, close to the river in the west, at a place where the trails cross, the mijhar cuts off a goat's head and sets out some rice, a flower, a coin, some vermillion and an areca nut as well as the head of the goat just sacrificed and the blood which has been caught in a leaf bowl. Then the villagers eat the meat of the goat. In the middle of the night, they then offer rice beer to Bhume (the local earth diety).

The morning of the day of the full moon, the villagers gather at the Devi temple, where two goats are sacrificed. They offer rice, once again, and the leaves of the lalpati. At noon, they make a sacrifice to Bhume: a goat, some eggs, some maize beer, some rice cakes, totola flowers. The internal organs of the goat are then cooked and eaten by those who have helped in the sacrifice. Those who are in charge of the ritual, the mijhar, the gaurung, as well as two aides have their meal and the meat is divided into equal parts.

The day after the full moon, the villagers again gather at the house of the mijhar carrying pottery vessels filled with beer. To the mijhar and gaurung go the heads of the two sacrificed goats.

Niyam puja (local: nim) offering to the Kuldeveta (ancestral divinities) are made on the ninth day (navami) of the month of Asoj or Kartik, at the time of Dasain, if there hasn't been a death in the family during the preceding year. It is the head of the household or his eldest son who makes this sacrifice. He builds an altar in the corner of the house on the first floor (the floor above the ground floor). Seven tools are utilized for this ceremony: a hoe, a large-bladed hoe, an axe, two khukri, a pair of firetongs and a sickle which are placed against the wall and encircled with stalks of artemesia (tithepati). Then the following is laid out: saipatri flowers, seven small rice cakes (naibedya), seven cakes made of clay (mato ko roti), seven cakes made of ashes (kharani ko roti), seven oil lamps, seven pieces of silver (beti) and seven handfuls of rice. He makes a geometric figure with seven divisions out of rice flour and places in each division an element of each offering. A rooster is sacrificed, then six others and a head is placed in each of the seven divisions. He then cuts the throat of a young male goat and the head is put in with the heads of the roosters.

A gunshot gives the signal for the beginning of the puja; the head of the household, alone, proceeds to sacrifice the animals. It is forbidden for anybody else to help him.



Members of the family light pine fires to guide the pitr and Bote to the house where the ceremony will take place.

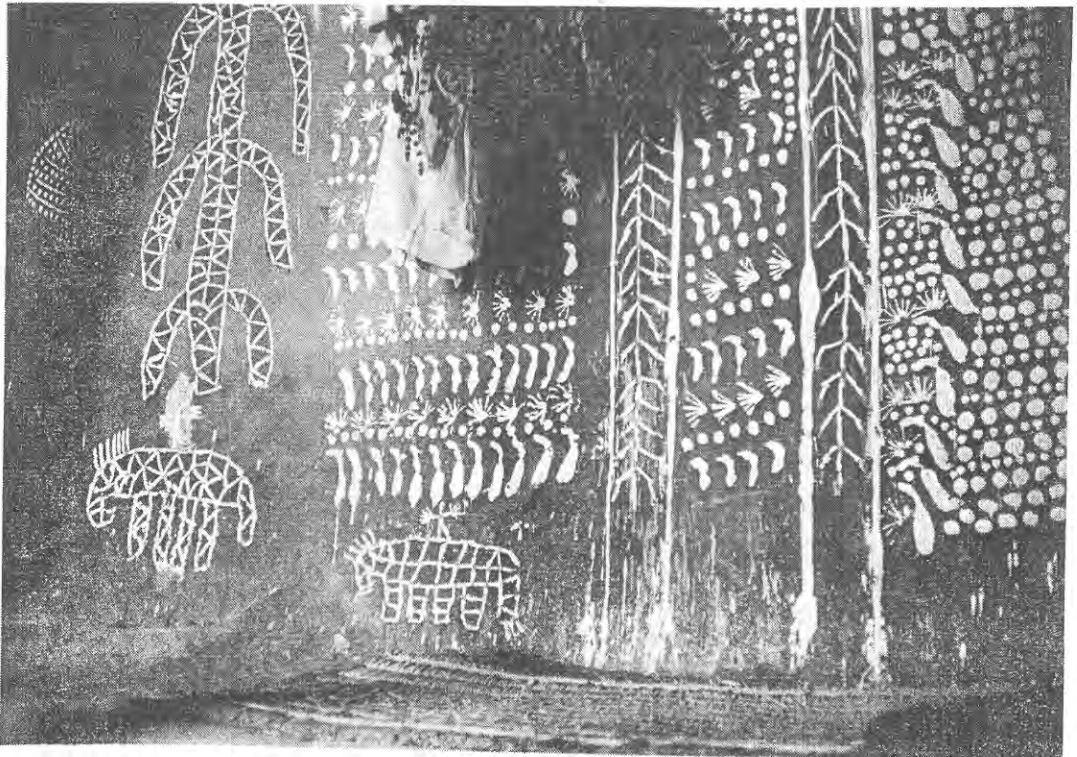
A particular devotion is made to the souls of the dead (pitr)¹⁸ who must return among the living in the year following their death, at the time of Dasain. It is in this period, for four days, that one does a set of rituals called shraddha (local: sarat). We attended the ceremony at Chaithali in 1969, what follows is a resume of the principle phases:

Astami: (18 October, 1969) preparations; production of the ceremonial beer.

Navami: (19 October, 1969) for families not mourning a death in the previous year, offerings given to ancestral divinities (niyam puja - see above).

Tika: (20 October, 1969) father places tika on the foreheads of his children and infants, preparations made for shraddha ceremony in families where there has been a death in the previous year. Men prepare the two ceremonial drums (dhol) with two laced skins¹⁹. Women prepare beer from rice and millet (kodo). When night falls, four groups of men go out, each group in one of the four cardinal directions to call the soul of the dead, the pitr²⁰. Each carries a leaf plate, with offerings of beaten

rice and bananas. Then relatives, allies and friends enter the house of the dead, the two drums beating without stopping, those present sing. A woman draws a number of motifs on the wall opposite the entrance of the house, which represent the milieu in which the deceased lived and his possessions; the horizontal and vertical lines represent the house, circles, dots, an elephant, silver coins, a water pipe, a pipal tree, a horse and a dog are also represented. The soul of the dead (pitr) must take possession of a woman in the gathering and must then be questioned by an elder in the group (one never knows who the pitr will speak through when it comes, but there are three women in Chaithali who have already been possessed and the possession seems to revolve around them). The pitr did not come that night.



The ceremony of the pitr: The wall opposite the entrance of the house is painted with representations of the pitr's belongings: left to right a tree, an elephant, money, chilims (smoking pipes), a house and the beams of a house. In the upper middle are the actual clothes of the pitr and the odoriferous plant barbari.

The day
after tika

(21 October 1969). The divinity Bote, the vehicle of the pitṛ must take possession of a young medium in the afternoon; the medium, legs smeared with kaolin, dances, holding a sword in his right hand and a babari branch (an odoriferous plant²¹) in his left hand. All his gestures are imitated by the four young men, who the evening before went to call the pitṛ from the four cardinal directions. All move to the sound of the dhol. They go to the south of the village and stop by a pipal tree, where thirteen stones have been erected and coated with vermilion; representing the ancestors.

While Bote calls the pitṛ, the elders offer the pinda, two plates of rice, beaten rice, banana, buffalo meat, fish, chichinda and beer at each sanctuary. Bote, his four assistants and the two dhol players return to the village, followed by a group of women carrying three torches and three mats (gundri) on which the pitṛ seat themselves. The mats are arranged at the foot of the decorated wall opposite the entrance of the house. When he arrives at the house of the deceased, Bote rolls on the ground barking like a dog and laps up the beer which is given to him in a bowl. "Bote has shown himself" said an elder, "the pitṛ will come tonight.

In the evening, relatives and friends are again reunited in the house of the deceased. The spectators call the pitṛ using a chant (abare) - "Pitṛ come". The group forms a circle and an old woman, possessed by the pitṛ, takes her place under the designs. She speaks very softly and an elder tries to interpret her words. The old woman then pours a little mustard oil on the heads of the relatives of the deceased, as well as several babari leaves: this signals the end of the mourning period. The relatives of the deceased can once again take up a normal life and dress normally. The songs and dances continue throughout the night.

Bote (right) with three assistants. Note the stones representing the thirteen ancestors (pitṛ).



Two days after tika (22 October, 1969). The men cut a pole (linga) on the left bank of the Sun Kosi. It is made of sal wood, and a small piece of wood which symbolizes the horse of Bote. Then two round vessels are made out of bhorla leaves, "the boats" (khala). Small models of objects associated with the dead man (a boat, an oar, fishing net), are placed in the khala. Pine splinters are also arranged in the center of the khala.

In the beginning of the afternoon, a boy wearing the deceased's clothing dances in front of the house of the dead, holding til flowers. In the evening, the elders fashion the "horse" of Bote out of a piece of wood, supplying a tuft of grass for the tail. This will lead the procession to the house of the dead. Then the dance of Bote mounted on his "wooden house" is done around the pole.

Bote again showed himself, this time the "pumpkin eating" manifestation. Later that night, the pitr spoke from the mouth of an old woman named Bhusuni, enjoining his relatives to take care of his children.

At four o'clock in the morning, the pitr again left. A little rice, an oil lamp and a chick wrapped in a bhola leaf were all placed on a winnowing tray and carried by three men to be placed in front of the linga after circumambulating it many times. Then an elder pretended to kill the chick with a pellet bow and extinguished the lamp. Then four men carried the two khala to the Sun Kosi and lit the pine splinters. When the dawn came, the two khala, the last evocation of the dead now gone forever, burned while they floated down the river.

All the decorations in the house were obliterated and the mistress of the house again smeared ochre on the walls, as it is customarily done, daily.

(23 October 1969) Two clowns wandered through the village in the afternoon, carrying fishing nets to capture the young girls.

(29 October, 1969) Seven days after the end of the shraddha ceremony and after the road going to the riverbank has been cleaned, the pitr returns to the house where, as a human being, he died, and where his belongings and clothes, have been kept on a shelve. Sometimes he takes possession of a member of the household, a child or an unmarried girl or an idiot...

After this last day, the relatives of the deceased give all his clothes to the married daughters and sons-in-law.

"The pitr have their abode in Gosain Kund, but those from Mungitar live in a cave at Dobantar Rato Oras"²².

The pitr also manifest themselves when a serious event takes place in the family (a sickness, destruction of livestock, a missing family member). One must then consult a member of the community who is able to contact the pitr. This person is called a dangre, because he trembles when in trance.

A small container with incense is placed before him and the pitr speaks through his mouth, indicating the cause of the misfortune.

Sarkiman fell ill in May, 1975 and the doctor could not cure him. He went back to his village and spent 500 rupees on jhankris and dhamis without success, in fact he got worse.. The family thought he was dying and even bought a shroud. That very day, Sarkiman's father had a manifestation of the pitr, his own younger brother who had died forty years earlier. The pitr complained:

Don't be worried about Sarkiman, he will recover in a few days. There is no need to sacrifice a chicken, but you have to make offerings of rice and incense. You have forgotten to worship me for fifteen years. The dangre, the kaka of Baneswar, spent eleven years in Delhi and he did not worship me..... Sarkiman will be all right, but do not forget to offer one mana of rice, one rupee and incense each year.....

When a Kuswar dies far from his home, a member of his family falls ill and goes into trance, a sign of misfortune. It is then necessary to recover the corpse.

If this is not possible, the soul (pitr) will disclose the reason for his disappearance at the time of Bote jatra.

It is the relatives of the dead that burn the body alongside the river (though sometimes the body is deposited on the bottom of the river). The Kuswar observe several rules in relation to the dead: for thirteen days, they eat neither salt nor spices, then neither oil nor spices until the following Dasain. The eldest son shaves his head and wears white cotton clothing until the following Dasain.

When a Kuswar loses his mother, he doesn't drink milk, eat chili nor eat food prepared with oil for a year. He doesn't eat out of plates made with leaves which contain a milky sap (which remind one of milk) and finally he doesn't attend festivals, especially when tika is given.

Bote, the Kuswar Divinity

Bote devata, the divinity Bote must manifest itself at the time of the ceremony consecrated to those who have died the previous year. This divinity, who can show himself in nine forms takes possession of a member of the community and in entering him, shows its manifestation according to which things it will eat: nettles (sisnu) pumpkin (pharsi), maize (makai) millet beer (kodo ko jar), maize flour, bananas, beaten rice (chyura), buffalo meat, fish..... there are nine Botes and each loves one of this products in particular.

"The divinity doesn't speak....at the very most, the grunt of a pig or the bark of a dog...."

Bote rides a horse and carries a sword (darbal) and a small bell, as well as a branch of babari. "Bote is the porter, the "coolie" of the pitr, the soul of the dead...the pitr says: "Carry my load"."

Since 1967, it has been Kansa of Chaithali (he was 22 years old in 1969) who has been possessed by Bote.

The Dance of Ram

When there is no ceremony to mark the end of mourning in the Kuswar villages, the fishermen celebrate the victory of Ram over the demon Ravana²³. The mijhar of the village plays Prince Rama and the young

men are the monkey army. All dance to the sound of the madal drum. An old man wearing a beard of corn leaves and hair made from peelings from a banana tree stalk, dressed in rags, symbolizes Ravana. The demon makes obscene gestures. A man imitates the gait of an old woman to represent Sita taken off by Ravana. Finally, the demon Ravenna, symbolized by an effigy (tusman), a pumpkin placed on four posts, is "killed" by Rama.

Kuswar and Danuwar

Although their way of life is identical to the Kuswar, we must distinguish the Danuwar, whom we have mentioned at the beginning of our study. The Danuwar live in the Bagmati River valley, at Duku, in the Kathmandu valley and further south, up to the basin of the Indrawati and the Sun Kosi²⁴. Bista states that there are about 11,000 Danuwar, distributed throughout the hills of Eastern Nepal and the Tarai, including those in the Kathmandu valley²⁵. There are very few west of Kathmandu. The Barha and Khumhale however, (related to the Danuwar) are even less numerous and live especially west of Kathmandu.

The Kuswar, the term which is used most often, take their distinction from their eating habits. They raise pigs, but the Danuwar, Kumale and Barha, in revenge, do not eat them.

In principle, there is no marriage between the different groups.

Comparison between the Kuswar and Danuwar

	<u>Kuswar</u>	<u>Danuwar</u>
Geographic location	Middle valley of Nepal near the rivers and ferries.	More in the Mahabharat Zone further away from the rivers.
Language	One notes minor differences in vocabulary.	
Subsistence	Subsistence agriculture the remaining ferries.	Subsistence agriculture

Animal Husbandry	Raising of Pigs	Do not eat pork.
Social organization	no cross-cousin marriage 7 generation rule.	Exogamous lines.
Community	<u>mijhar</u> and <u>gaurung</u>	<u>mijhar</u> and <u>gaurung</u>
Religion	do not call Brahman role of brother-in-law (<u>jawain</u>)	Pujari - Brahmin Shraddha - Brahmin

The Kuswar and Development

The traveller cannot mistake the Kuswar settlement, with its compact group of small houses, surrounded by gardens and trees of various species. This "ecological" unity can also be understood in terms of a social unity. The Kuswar are independent of their neighbouring castes and have their own system of values, their own social structure and religion. One of them, the mijhar, is responsible for ritual and purification, helped in this by the village elders.



The dance of Ram at Lumphughat (1967): Ram and the monkeys.

One can ask oneself, how much longer can these structures be maintained. If, for the moment, we do not notice the important changes in the communities we know, we must nevertheless keep in mind what D.B. Bista has observed in relation to the Tharu of the Tarai. He says,

As with all other societies in Nepal, the Tharu community is undergoing a tremendous change. There is a wave of reform among the educated Tharus. They have changed their food habits, adopted Hindu religion and introduced modern education. There is a Tharu organization known as the Tharu welfare society, which provides hostels in Birgunj for school children and students of both sexes...

There has been less education for the Kuswar, partly because of the distance from their settlements to the schools. In the administrative area, the Kuswar represent only a very small community, these are at the mercy of very powerful interests. But the most important factor is the disappearance of the ferries, replaced through modern technology by the bridges, and for the Kuswar, their activities have lost meaning. The men of Chaithali have taken the road to India for work now for more than ten years, to Bhutan for nine, all the young between 16 and 25 years of age have set out and never returned.....

One asks oneself what will become of these small and isolated communities in the near future, emptied of their young blood, threatened by technology and things built for the masses, not for the cult of the pitr.

Appendix 1

सरादको गीत दशमीको दिन

(translated by K. P. Rimal)

डांडा देखि घरसम्म गाएर आउने गीत.

उडी आयो मंगेरा वस्यो पातल
पुखै देखि चली आयो फ्याली मादल
बाबरीको फूली मकमक वासना
मखमली फूली मकमक वासना
तिसुर ह्यांगी फूली मकमक वासना
मकमक वासनालाई लै लै आवरे
स्वावालीला ह्याइला कुरी ह्याडी आवरे
भिंगटीला ह्याइला कुरी चारे आवरे
सातै डांडा उकाली सातै डांडा वराली
करांतीको लउरी टेकाउंदै २ चारे आवरे
कारेवाले वांसुरी ह्याडी आवरे
बासको वांसुरी बजाउंदै २ चारे आवरे
तामको ढोलके ह्याडी आवरे
काठको ढोलके बजाउंदै २ चारे आवरे
दशै हातको पगरी विसै हातको जामरी
लमक र भमक गरी लाई आवरे.....

घरमा गाउने गीत

पारि भित्ता पखेरीमा के के लेखेको
पित्र देउताको जिउंती लेखेको

Sarad Songs Dashami (First Day)

Song to the House of the Deceased

Came flying the sparrow, stopped in Hades¹.

Came in use from the ancestor, jhyali² and madal

Babari flower smells sweet,

Godovari flower smells sweet,

Makhamali³ flower smells sweet,

Titurchhangi flower smells sweet,

Come-come for fragrance here.

Come having left the abode thatched with leaves,

Come to the house roofed with tiles.

Seven hills ascend and seven hills descend.

Come leaning on a karanti-wood stick.

Come having left the flute of bone,

Come soon, playing the flute of bamboo.

Come having left the dhol of cooper,

Come soon, playing the dhol of wood.

With turban of ten cubits and jamari⁴ of twenty cubits

Come soon wearing them fast and smart.

Song in the House

What drawing is made across on the wall ?

A drawing of the pitr's figure is made.

1. Hades, Nepali patal, under the earth
2. Jhyali, small brass cymbals
3. Makhamali, small bush flowering in Asoj-Kartik, compulsory for Bai Tika on Tihar (Gomphrena globosa)
4. Jamari, cloth put around the waist.

एकादशीको दिन

घरै देखि डाँडा सम्म र डाँडा देखि घरसम्म
गाउने गीत

वावरीको फूली मकमक वासना
मकमक वासनालाई लै लै आवरे
सातै डाँडा उकाली सातै डाँडा वराली
कराँतीको लउरी टेकाउँदै र ल्याइ पु-याँए

वारी पनि दुधै कोशी पारी पनि दुधै कोशी
माफमा मफुवा ए अंवा विरुवा सारी ल्याउंला
इन्द्राँतीको तिर तिर मरलाको पात
पसकि देउन दिदै रानी मारसीको भात
सलाहरूको सिन्का गोगनाको पता
ढोना पतरी गांस गांस चारे आवरे
इन्द्राँतीको तिर तिर नागवेली लहरा
हाथमा जावी कांधमा वन्दुक गर्जाउला पहरा
बाबजीको गहिरी खेत पानी छिरिवा
हाथमा ल्याउं कि पातमा ल्याउं वावरी विरुवा
नेपालमा चोलो चुनरी तीन शहर
मित्र देउता आउने लाग्यो वक्याउ गुन्दरी
तीन शहर नेपालमा फ्लायो फ्लांस
पित्र देउता आइ सक्यो मन गर सलांस

Ekadashi (Second Day)

Song All the Way from the House to the Hill and all
the Way Back

Babari flower smells sweet,
Come-come for fragrance here.

Seven hills ascend and seven hills descend
Making Pitra, having been on bamboo stick support is
brought.

While Offering the Pinda

This side is Kosi and the other side is also Kosi,
In the middle is majhuwa⁴, we will plant a guava
seedling.

Along the side of the Indrawati, is a bhorla leaf
Put the Marshi rice into a plate, o sister,
With salahar needles and gogan⁵ leaf,
Sew the leaf plate, come soon.

Along the side of the Indrawati is a snake-like creeper.
Fish bag in hand and rifle on shoulder, echo the cliff,
The farmer of Babaji, has water bakage.

Should we bring babari seedlings in hand or in a leaf?
A blouse of chunari is in fashion in our three towns in
Nepal.

Pitra god is coming, stretch out the mat.

The palas⁶ is budding throughout three towns in Nepal,
Keep your mind clear, pitra god is coming.

4. majhuwa, sandy place between two river beds, also a
region where the Kuswar used to live in former times.
5. gogan, Turner p. 1476, "Kind of Saurauja".
6. palas, Turner p. 369 a. Butea frondosa.

घरभित्र गाउने गीत

पाने शहर नेपालमा चल्थो चुनरी
पित्र देउता आइ सक्यो वक्याउ गुन्दरी
वलेफीको काठे सांगु लगेछु कालेले
न बुढो मथ्यो न वाला मथ्यो लगेछु कालेले
इन्द्रातीको तिरै तिर नागवेली लहरा
पित्र देउता आइ सक्यो गर्जो पहरा
दोलाघाटको लामो हुंगा क्कोटो वहना
पित्र देउता आइ सक्यो टेकाउ वहना
वांगो पनि ल्याइ देउ बावे, टेरो पनि ल्याइ देउ बावे
वांगो र टेरो आफ सौफ्याउला

भित्रबाट वाहिर निस्कन गाउने गीत

उडी गयो भंगेरा वस्यो पातैमा
चलवाले चलवा संगै साथमा

Song Inside the House

Chunari⁷ is in fashion throughout five towns in Nepal,

God pitra already came, stretch out the mat.

The wave washed away the wooden plank bridge of Balephi.

It is for death to take away, otherwise neither the old
nor the child dies.

Serpent-like creeper along the bank of the Indrawati.

All ready is the god pitra, let us make the cliff echo.

Long is the boat of Dolalghat, but short is the paddle.

All ready is the god pitra, get him supported on the
paddle.

Do bring the crooked one, also the straight one,

I shall straighten myself the crooked and the straight.

Song When They Go Outside of the House

Went away, flying the sparrow, sat on a leaf

Let us proceed together (in company).

7. A Kind of multi-coloured cloth worn by women.

वाहिर गाउने गीत

वाहिर र मित्र घुमी नाचउंला
वांगो पनि ल्याइ दिउंला, टेरो पनि ल्याइ दिउंला
वांगो र टेरो आफैँ सोफ्याउनु
के को घोडा ल्याउंछौंवावे, लाटी काठको
अमलाको घोडा मेरो वहुलाइ रहेछ

Song Outside (at Night)

We will dance going round and round, inside-outside,
We bring the crooked one and the straight one.
Straighten the crooked and the straight one yourself.
What sort of horse do you bring? It is of lati wood.
Horse of amala⁸ wood is going mad.

8. amala: Phyllanthus emblica.

दुवादशीको दिन

वनमा काठ काट्न जाँदाको गीत

उडी गयो मंगेरा वस्यो पातैमा
चलो वारे चलोवा संगै साथमा
वांगो पनि ल्याउला वावै टेरो पनि ल्याउला वावै
वांगो र टेरो आफ् सोफ्याइ लैजानु

वनवाट घरमा काठ ल्याउदाको गीत

वांगो पनि ल्यायाँ वावै, टेरो पनि ल्यायाँ वावै
वांगो र टेरो आफ् सोफ्याइ लैजानु
के को घोडा ल्यायाँ वावै, लाटी काठको

घरमित्र गाउने गीत

आज मैले माक्का मारें माक्कै फकेटा
याफन किरियालाई नआइ नसित
याफन किरियालाई आउरै परसत
केरा, चिउरा सारै आवरे
पित्र देउता आइ सकेन चारै आवरे

सामल तुमल माग्दा गाउँ घुमी गाउने गीत

उडी गयो मंगेरा वस्यो पातैमा
चलवारे चलोवा संगै साथमा
सामला र तुमला हामी मागौला
पित्र देउतालाई भारी पु-याउंला
घुमी घुमी नाचौला धुली उडाउंला

Duwadashi (Third Day)

Song When They Go to Out Wood in the Forest

Went away flying the sparrow, sat on a leaf,
Let us proceed together (in company).
Straighten the crooked and the straight yourself.

Song While They Bring Wood Poles to the House

We have brought the crooked one and the straight one
Straighten the crooked and straight yourself.
What kind of horse have you brought? It is of lati wood.

Song Inside the House

It is a phageta fish that I fished for today.
Come without fail for your own kiriya
You must come for your own kiriya,
Come to eat banana, beaten rice.

Song While Asking for Foodstuffs in the Village

Went away flying the sparrow, sat on a leaf,
Let us proceed together (in company).
We beg foodstuffs for the pitra.
Let us make a load big enough for the pitra god.
Shall we dance going round and round and raise the dust.

राती घर वाहिर गाउने गीत (विदाइ को निमित्त)

मकमली फूली मकमक वासना लै लै जावरे
वावरी फूली मकमक वासना लै लै नावरे
फिंगटीला ह्वाउला कुरी ह्वाडी नावरे
स्यावालीला ह्वाइला कुरी चारै नावरे
वांगो पनि लैजानु वावै, टेरो पनि लैजानु वावै
वांगो र टेरो सोफ्याउ लैजाउ

विहान विदा गर्ने गीत

हाइ मेरी सुकुवा । हाइ मेरी सुकुवा ।
यमलाको गाज वाट लडी मरेछ
हाइ मेरी सुकुवा । हाइ मेरी सुकुवा ।
कौना डंकिनीले हानी मारेछ

Song Outside the House at Night for Send-Off.

Makhamali flower smells sweet, go away, go away.

Babari flower smells sweet, go away, go away.

Go away out of the tiled roof house.

Be away in the abode thatched with leaves.

Take away the crooked one and the straight one,

Straighten the crooked and the straight.

Song in the Morning for the Send-off.

O dear! O dear!

You died falling down from the amala tree.

O dear! O dear!

Which witch⁸ knocked (you) dead?.

8. Dankini: witch.

Appendix 2

Plants used for Fodder by the Kuswar and Tamang of the Temal Region Kavre-Palanchok District (identification by J.F. Dobremez).

Nepali/ Kuswar Name	Tamang Name	Latin Name	Type of Cultiva- tion	Fodder	Others utili- sations.
<u>aak</u>	<u>ak</u>	<u>Calotropis gigantea</u>		year round	
<u>ainjeru</u>	<u>prin</u>	<u>Loranthum. sp</u>	in the forest	year round very good fodder	
<u>anp</u>	<u>amba</u>	<u>Mangifera indica</u>	tree planted in Shrawan-Bhadau	"	
<u>badel pathe</u>	<u>kwarkwar guki</u>	<u>Dioscorea sp</u>	(creeper) forest	year round	
<u>bhohale</u>	?	<u>Solanum verbasci- folium</u>		Chait-Jeth	
<u>chiple</u>	<u>khari</u>	<u>Boehmeria sp</u>			
<u>chiuri</u>	<u>sinmar</u>	<u>Bassia butyracea</u>	tree planted in Jeth-Asar	fodder for buffaloes Chait-Baisakh	1.
<u>dhainyaro</u>	<u>byurgara</u>	<u>Woodfordia fruticosa</u>	Shrub	Poush-Baisakh	medicine. 2.
<u>dursil/ dhusre</u>	<u>busulsul</u>	<u>Colebrookia oppositi- folia</u>		Poush-Baisakh for goats	
<u>dudhe</u>	<u>niedor</u>	<u>Alstonia scholaris</u>		Chait-Baisakh for goats	3.
<u>gayo</u>	<u>maya</u>	<u>Bridelia retusa</u>		Poush-Magh	4.
<u>ginneu</u>	<u>gayo</u>	<u>Ficus lacor</u>	on the banks of the terracos (bari)	trees	
<u>jalma</u>	<u>makarparasa</u>	<u>Celtis tetrandia</u>	tree planted as a short in the fields	Mangsir to Jeth very good fodder	
<u>kayu</u>	<u>tanyurpan</u>	<u>Symplocos laurina</u>		Poush-Baisakh good fodder	

Nepali/ Kuswar Name	Tamang Name	Latin Name	Type of Cultiva- tion	Fodder	Others utili- sations.
<u>khaniu</u>	<u>kosin</u>	<u>Ficus</u> <u>semicordata</u>		Poush to Jeth good fodder	
<u>koiralo</u>		<u>Bauhinia</u> <u>variegata</u>		Flowers eaten in salad	
<u>Kukur- dahino</u>	<u>yolabde</u>	<u>Smilax aspera</u>	(creeper) forest	<u>Poush-Asar</u>	
<u>kutmero</u>	<u>tsalapte</u>	<u>Litsea</u> <u>polyantha</u>	planted	<u>Poush-Baisakh</u>	
<u>lato- timla</u>	<u>ramaku</u>	<u>Ficus hirta</u>		<u>Baisakh-Jeth.</u>	
<u>paiyun</u>	<u>biursin</u>	<u>Prunus</u> <u>cerasoides</u>			edible fruit
<u>pani- amala</u>	<u>kioambal</u>	<u>Nephrolepis</u> <u>cordifolia</u>		Chait-Baisakh	fruit medicine 5.
<u>pitaoli/ satibayer</u>	<u>satibir</u>	<u>Rhus parvi- flora</u>		for goats	edible seeds
<u>rukh katahar</u>	<u>katai</u>	<u>Artocarpus</u> <u>integri- folius</u>	planted	<u>Poush-Baisakh</u>	
<u>sindure</u>	<u>sindir</u>	<u>Mallotus</u> <u>philip- pinensis</u>		Chait-Jeth	
<u>tanki</u>	<u>taki</u>	<u>Bauhinia</u> <u>variegata</u>	in forest	year round	

1. If chickens eat the chiuri seeds, they will die.
2. The red flowers are used dried as a decoction against diarrhea.
3. Latex bearing plant, a very common name for all plants with this characteristic.
4. The young leaves are thought to be poisonous.
5. Crushed fruit is used in a decoction as a febrifuge.

Appendix 3Plants Utilized in Various Rituals (Identified byJ. F. Dobremez)

<u>amalā</u>	<u>Phyllanthus emblica</u>
<u>bābāri</u>	<u>Ocimum sp.</u>
<u>bar</u>	<u>Ficus bengalensis</u>
<u>bhorla</u>	<u>Bauhinia vahlii</u>
<u>dhubo</u>	<u>Cyanodon dactylon</u>
<u>gayo</u>	<u>Ficus lacor</u>
<u>godāvāri</u>	<u>Chrysanthemum sp.</u>
<u>gogan</u>	<u>Saurauja napaulensis</u>
<u>kus</u>	<u>Poa cynosuroides</u>
<u>lalpati</u>	<u>Poinsettia pulcherrima</u>
<u>lati</u>	<u>Symplocos sp.</u>
<u>makhamali</u>	<u>Gomphrena globosa</u>
<u>pālungā</u>	<u>Spinacea sp.</u>
<u>pipal</u>	<u>Ficus religiosa</u>
<u>seipatra</u>	<u>Tagetes sp.</u>
<u>til</u>	<u>Sesamum indicum</u>
<u>tithepati</u>	<u>Artemisia vulgaris</u>
<u>totola</u>	<u>Oroxylum indicum</u>

FOOTNOTES

1. This research is an offshoot of work done in another area and is presented in the hope that it will generate other ongoing research. This research is being done under the Himalaya Research Program of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris. The material was collected with the help of Sarkiman Kuswar and the villagers to whom I convey my thanks.

This article has been translated from the original in French by A Manzardo, INAS, Kathmandu.

2. kus, Turner 102 b, "Poa cynosuroides used in religious ceremonies".
3. The Chepang, an ethnic group with a Tibeto-Burman language have the same origin myth c.f. Bista, D.B. "Chepang", Nepal Digest, Dec. Jan. 1972, pp. 94-106.
4. In the census of 1961, the majhi population stood in the neighborhood of 6,000. The Kuswar have been placed under this more general term and counted. They are distributed as follows in Nepal:

Eastern Hills.	3,560
Eastern Inner Tarai	282
Eastern Tarai	1,582
Western Hills	100
Central Inner Tarai	269

5. The Kuswar are found in western Nepal at the Trisuli and its affluents such as the Dhare Khola (left affluent of the Trisuli) at Bashitar. South of the Kathmandu valley there is a Danuwar village close to the sanctuary at Dakshinkali.

The Danuwar of Naya Pauwa (in the Trisuli valley) on the Kathmandu - Pokhara road (km. 34) came from Sipaghat, nine generations ago. There are others in the hills of eastern Nepal, as well as in the Tarai.

6. Turner 507 b "mijhar: honorific name for an ironsmith (Kami) or Bhote". This term is given to the headman of a Damai community as well.
7. The juice of the following plants are used as poisons in Nepal:

<u>Ketuki</u>	<u>Euphorbia royliana</u>
<u>shiundi</u>	<u>Euphorbia splendens</u>
<u>khirla</u>	<u>Sapium baccatum</u>
<u>timur</u>	<u>Xanthoxylum armatum</u>

The latex of khirla is a "poison" and if any touches the eye, it is necessary to immediately treat it with the antidote, the milk of a woman or of a black goat.

8. Identification after D.D. Bhatt, Natural History and Economic Botany of Nepal. Nets are made with fibers from Boehmeria platyphylla or Gerardiana heterophylla.
9. Identification after D.D. Bhatt, op cit, pp. 147-150 Appendix B, list of the fish of Nepal.
10. For the kipat system c.f. Regmi (M.C.) Landownership in Nepal. Berkeley, California University Press, 1975. (translators note: See also N.K. Rai, The Economy of Pandrung, INAS, M.S. pp. 100-101 also footnote 19 and 21, pp 120-122, also "Notes on Kipat System II", Regmi Research Series, yr. 6, No. 6, p. 101-104 for a clear definition of kipat in this context.
11. Until 1945, the husband did not go after his wife. Only the friends of the husband brought her and after the ceremony accompanied her to the house of her parents.
12. rekhi, Turner p. 541a, "a line of flour drawn in the course of a religious ceremony".
13. Concerning the Damai c.f. Hellfer, M., "Fanfares villageoises au Nepal", Objets et Mondes IX, I, 1969 pp. 51-58.

14. The eve of the first day of the month of Magh, in the lunar calendar, they prepare sweet buckwheat cakes. The next day, they get up at sunrise and take a ritual bath, then they eat these cakes and meat. That day the sun is in the constellation Makara. Members of the Nepali castes and the Tamangs practice the same rituals. c.f. P. R. Bajracharya "Makara Sakranti, an Introduction", Nepal Digest V, Dec-Jan 1977. pp. 110-112.
15. Jala devi, the goddess of the rivers, there is no temple consecrated to her.
16. Shikari, divinity of the jungle and the hunt, we have heard him mentioned by the Hayu, G. Toffin has observed a series of rituals to Shikari among the Pahari.
17. This puja is done by the Nepali castes in the case of a cholera epidemic. It protects humans in general against all epidemics (information of K. Rimal).
18. Turner 381 a, "Pitr: the spirits of the dead, ancestors, manes".
19. The dhol is a drum with two skins like a madal of bigger size, always made in pairs from a single hollowed trunk of the kirra (Sapium insigne) with a head made from the stretched skin of an adult buffalo. They are always played together at certain ceremonies. The stick is held in the right hand. Ceremonies: the day of Sorasarat (full moon preceding Dasain); puja (in the month of Asar) for the maize harvest, accompanied by ritual songs; in Kartik, Kadasi for the work in the fields and finally for the festival of the pitr.
20. In 1969, the pitr showed itself through three women intermediaries: Bhusuni, Kanshi (mother of Subbah) and Mahili.
21. Turner p. 434 b Barbari: "The sweet smelling herb Ocimum racemosum". (actually Ocimum sanctum).

22. Among the Bahuns and Chhetris, the pitr are considered to be divinities and are given offerings. Sarkiman states that, "in the shraddha ceremony offerings (pinda) are made to the ancestors (pitr). Banana, honey, cow's milk, curd, ghee, (panchamrit) are mixed with cooked rice. It has been explained that by calling and feeding the ancestors, they do not become bayu that is malevolent spirits. Because of this ceremony, the Kuswar do not have bayu and their ancestors are benevolent.

"When a Bahun or Chhetri dies they perform kiriya, they burn the body and then it is finished but they do not call the ancestors and feed them, thus they are often plagued with bayu...."

c.f. also M. Gaborieau, "Les bayu du Nepal Central", Purusartha, Paris, 1975 pp 67-90 and V. Bouillier, op cit notes 134-138.

23. c.f. Thomas, P., Epics, Myths and Legends of India, Ramayana p. 28 and following. Plays about the Ramayana are also done among the Tharu.
24. Bista, D.B., People of Nepal p. 128.
25. We have found the following clans at Nargapawa; Rai Rajpur, Rai Lamtsane, Rai Dabari.

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