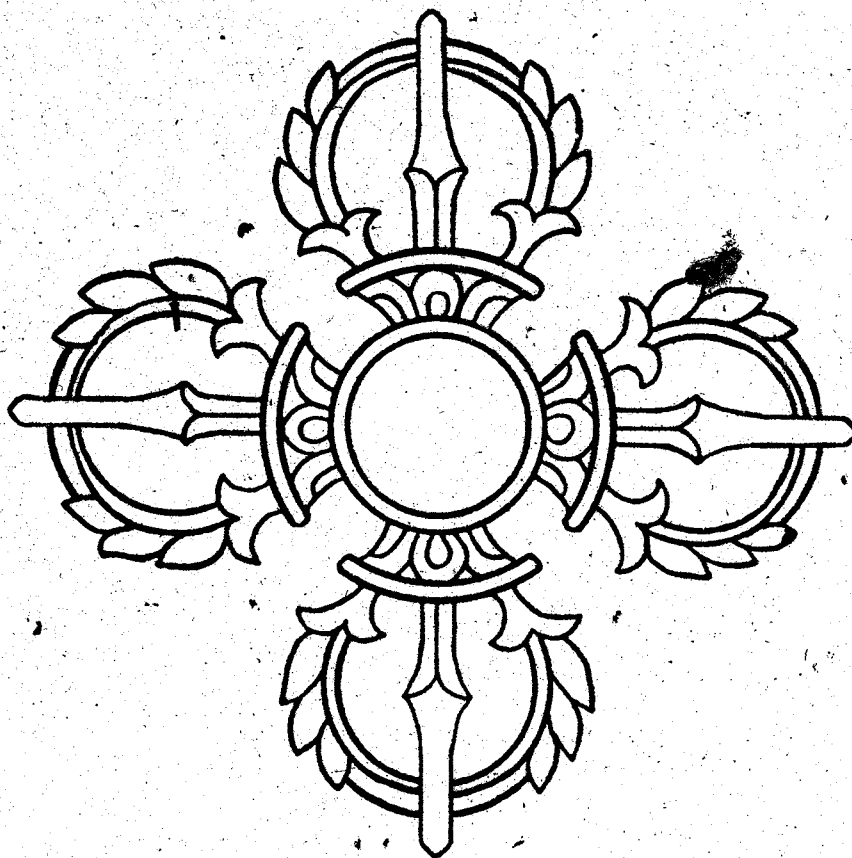


KAILASH

A JOURNAL OF HIMALAYAN STUDIES



VOLUME VI

1978

NUMBER 4

C O N T E N T S

1. Notes on Chusya–Bahāl in Kathmandu
Ronald M. Bernier.....233

2. Sewala Puja Bintila Puja: Notes on Thulung Ritual
Language
N. J. Allen.....237

3. The History of Janakpur
Richard Burghart257

4. SHORT REVIEWS285
Philip Denwood: The Tibetan Carpet
Per Kvarne An Anthology of Buddhist Tantric Songs, A Study
of the Caryagiti
Barbara Nimri Aziz: Tibetan Frontier Families
Ariane Macdonald and *Yoshiri Imaeda*, eds.: Essais Sur L'Art Du Tibet
Martin Brauen and *Per Kvarne*, eds.: TibeTen Studies
Loden Sherab Dagyab: Tibetan Religious Art

LIST OF ILLUSTRATION

	Following page
1. Exterior of Chusya-Bahāl in Kāṭhmāṇḍū.....	236
2. Courtyard area with inner shrine.....	236
3. <i>Toraṇa</i> of the street entrance to Chusya-Bahāl.....	236
4. Devotional images facing the inner shrine of Chusya-Bahāl.....	236
5. Domestic balcony within the courtyard.....	236
6. Deity and <i>kumsala</i> struts over the inner shrine.....	236
7. <i>Toraṇa</i> over the shrine door, dated N.S. 796 (A.D. 1675).....	236
8. Detail of domestic balcony showing Buddha, attendants, and Hindu deities.....	236
9. Guardian figure strut on the outer entrance wall of Chusya-Bahāl.....	236
10. The great entry <i>torāṇa</i>	236
11. Detail of the entry <i>torāṇa</i>	236
12. Detail of the entry <i>torāṇa</i>	236

NOTES ON CHUSYA-BAHĀL IN KATHMANDU

Ronald M. Bernier

Arlington, Texas

Less well known but equally as important as the free-standing *mandir* or pagoda temple of Nepal is the *bahāl* or *vihāra* monastery with open courtyard. This type of structure, made of brick, wood, tile, and stone, usually two storeys high, shows relatively plain walls to public streets around it but opens from within upon four enclosing walls of great beauty. The *vihāra* of Chusya-bahāl in Kāthmandu¹ is among the oldest and best preserved Buddhist monastery buildings in Nepal, dated by inscription to Nepal Samvat 783 (1662 A. D.) and the reign of Pratāpa Malla.² It shows some restoration and additions of later times, but on the whole it remains very traditional and remarkably well preserved, especially in its carved wood.

Like any *bahāl*, this structure presents the particularly Nepalese variation upon the *catuśāla* plan of ancient India. It is structurally stable and relatively simple of trabeated construction and it combines living and worship spaces absolutely. Part of a city that grows by multiplication of the domestic or sacred courtyard, the modular *catuśāla*, Chusya-bahāl stands apart only by the excellence of its carved detail.

The ritual focus of the open courtyard is a miniature *śikhara temple* of *pañcāyātana* plan with nearby votive *caitya* forms at the center of the court and the shrine room that is opened by a small but heavily carved doorway located opposite the porched entryway. The porch opens to the outside through the main entrance on the north side of the building, guarded at the street by large stone lions. Private access to the apartments of the building is available through ordinary doors on the east and west sides. A small plot behind the structure is under cultivation.

From within the courtyard or from behind the *bahāl*, ridges of up-ended tiles may be seen to demarcate the section of the sloping roof that covers the shrine proper and this section is topped by a small plaster *caitya* with an attached parasol of metal, but all inward walls and windows or balconies are carved with religious story. The same is true of the roof-supporting struts and the *torāṇa* over the street entrance. The complex and abundant woodwork preserves the best of the Newāri ethnic traditions for which Nepalese architecture and the Malla period³ are known. Fortunately for the researcher,

¹ The *bahāl* is located a short walk from King's Way and behind the National Theatre.

² For the foundation date of the complex as a whole as well as its important *torāṇa* carving over the shrine door, the author is indebted to Dr. Mary Slusser.

³ The Malla Period of the 13th–18th centuries saw the rivalry of separate kingdoms or city-states within Kathmandu Valley in art as well as politics. The adornment of Chusya-bahāl may be compared to that of Chaturvarṇa Mahāvihāra in Bhadgaon and Rudravārṇa Mahāvihāra in Pāṭan. The style is Newāri.

the carvings have not been whitewashed, “preserved” with black asphaltum coating, or polychromed with enamel paints, as with so many neighboring structures. The original painted natural pigments have faded away almost entirely and the wood grain and color may be seen.

The *vihāra* form of Chusya–bahāl is typical of the monastic structures that animate the sacred geography of the valley.⁴ It is a hollow square open to the sky with brick–paved court, screened verandahs for storage around its interior walls, many small windows punctuating the surface of the inner walls of both floors and the upper level of the outer walls, a balcony over the inner portal of the entry door, and open platforms on either side of the wide entry for storage and the playing of sacred music. It is typical also in having ribbon–like horizontal boundaries of wood that reveal the basic frame of the building, a frame that is filled with brick. Most prominent of these repeated horizontal divisions is the heavy cornice of wood and projecting bricks that juts out at the level of the second storey floor to brace the lower ends of wooden struts that support the overhanging roof. Together with the adjacent repeated rectangles of beam ends that project as part of floor supports from inside the building, the supporting surface lines of the cornice impart graphic clarity to the surfaces of the wall. Deep carving captures shadow so that the wooden wall elements, none of which are carved to a depth greater than two inches, seem both expressively sculptural and very precise of detail. None of the wooden divisions are given the likeness of meandering snakes, *nāga* forms, as in the horizontal beams of the palace at Gorkha and elsewhere,⁵ but they still flow easily across the slight projections of five or six inches that softly section the outer and inner walls in the pattern of the roof tiles over the shrine.

The outer doorway and the shrine door of Chusya–bahāl, like all supportive parts of the wooden frame, show an accordian–like compression of many “constructed” parts into an essentially non–functional but visually impressive totality. The incredible multiplication of miniature columns and lintels that make up any doorframe, window casing, or balcony is the result of letter–perfect reproduction of the complex parts of the structural *maṇḍala* that is a cosmic map of heaven and earth. The luxury of carved wood is in fact necessary in order to capture the essential detail of the three dimensional heavenly shrine, walled with crystal and roofed with gold, as it is brought down to earth in human scale. The materials and methods of the Nepalese builder artist are prosaic but the essential parts are all there; the temple is a model of perfection

4 The multiplicity of pagoda, *śikhara*, and *bahāl* monuments that establish the sacred geography of the cities and towns may be studied in the fine maps in His Majesty’s Government of Nepal, *The Physical Development Plan for the Kathmandu Valley*, Kathmandu, 1969.

5 The *śilpa Prakāśa* of Rāmachandra Kaulācāra (Leiden, 1966) interprets the use of *nāga* forms in architecture in part as a protection against lightning.

that awaits final assembly. Precise descriptions of the perfect *maṇḍala* shrine are taken from Tantric literature and translated into wood, tile, and brick with no loss of mystical meaning. Especially in the metal and wooden borders of the roof all of the preciousness (ropes of pearls, garlands of flowers, celestial bells) of the “necklace of the gods” in the *maṇḍala* is retained.⁶

Any number of details taken from Chusya-bahāl would serve to illustrate the very special skill of the Newārī artisan in wood,⁷ but the two *torāṇa* door coverings are perhaps most useful to this brief analysis. The *torāṇa* appears as roof over each of four porches that open to the cardinal directions in classic painted *maṇḍala* patterns while in *mandir* or bahāl it appears as tympanum forms of wood or metal that are mounted over the shrine door or doors, leaning forward slightly from the wall so as to be clearly seen from below. The *torāṇa* is the single most elaborate carving or metalwork on any shrine, being most complex in both form and meaning. At Chusya bahāl one is impressed by both quantity and quality.

The *torāṇa* over the inner shrine at this bahāl is approximately four feet wide and three feet tall, being constructed of six horizontally placed boards. Its carved elements project up to three inches from the background plane and there are pierced openings in around three centrally placed figures of Tantric guardians of the faith, possibly including the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Attendants bearing fly whisks stand as free-standing forms on either side of the work. The composition of the *torāṇa* is symmetrical yet sinuous of movement as it rests solidly on its supportive base of twenty-seven miniature lintels. It is typical in its semicircular section but also in its use of a central Garuḍa guardian with *nāga* attendants at the top, *makara* water monsters facing out at the lower corners, multiple attendant deities of *āvaraṇa devatā* in separate haloes, lotiform base border, and wish-fulfilling vine.⁸ The *torāṇa* is dated by inscription to N. S. 776 (1675 A. D.) This strongly three-dimensional work has provided a bold central element to the complex design of the shrine of Buddha for for three hundred years, but it is dominated aesthetically by its undated counterpart that occupies a less prestigious placement over the outer entry.

⁶ Part of the total complex of “ornament” that includes poetry, music, and the visual arts, these elements belong to the *alamkara* (Sanskrit.)

⁷ Special note should be made of the extravagant balcony of the porch with its border of delicate pendants and eave boards portraying Buddha receiving homage from Śiva, Brahma, and Viṣṇu (S. B. Deo, “Glimpses of Nepal woodwork,” *The Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, N. S. Vol. III, 1968–69, plate XXXVI–4), of the dramatic strut carvings of Bhairava and other fierce guardians as well as gods, and of the remarkable screen carvings including that of “biconvex mesh” pattern (*Ibid.*, plate XXXIV–6).

⁸ Among *torāṇas* in Kathmandu Valley examined in detail as part of major doorway

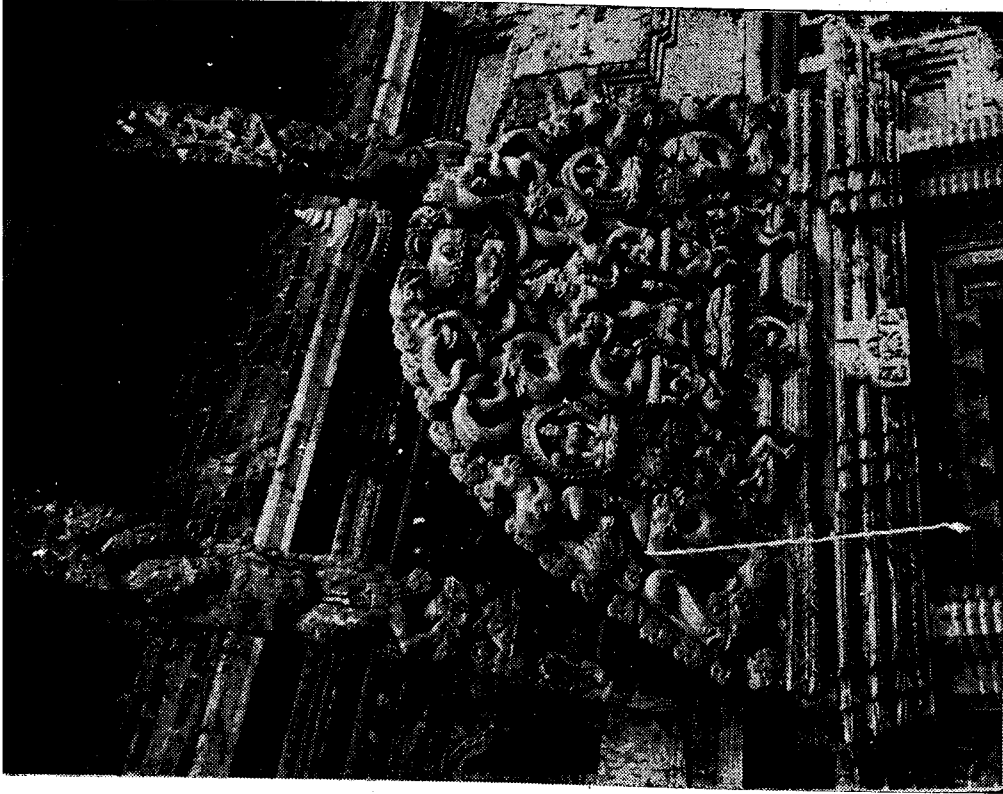
The street *torāṇa* of the monastery is of like size and construction to that of the carving within. But it surges with a different, more active life because of its more baroque curvilinear pattern and its greater expansion of *prāṇā*-filled body volumes. Amid convulsive, twisting symmetry the calm central figure of *Tārā*, goddess of wisdom and mercy, captures sublime repose. Even the grimacing visage of the monstrous *chimidra* (a creature with arms that is related to the *Kirttimukha* of India) at the top of the arch seems poised, thus eternal. Circles are repeated throughout, not only in the halo niches of attendant deities but in frontal lotus blooms and serpentine loops of *nāgas* and dragons. The carving is deep but rarely pierced so that shadow remains part of the sculpted surface. Smooth, rounded volumes are contrasted by sharp, flattened shapes in borders of petals and flames for an overall impact of tendril-like, organic growth. The parasol that honors the scene provides the only vertical point in the composition, like a pin holding down a writhing life form. The movement is exhausting and exciting, far too orderly to be explosive. At the entrance of Chusya-bahāl the Newārī artist⁹ is both theatrical and disciplined while his quietly feminine central figure, *Tārā* with lotus and rosary, draws the devotee toward the ultimate peace that dwells within.

complexes at 29 shrines—10 Buddhist and 19 Hindu—the frequency of the *Kirttimukha* and other motifs is as follows:

<i>Kirttimukha</i> :	5	Buddhist,	7	Hindu
<i>Nāgas</i> :	8	Buddhist,	17	Hindu
Parasol:	9	Buddhist,	16	Hindu
Floral Decoration:	10	Buddhist,	15	Hindu
<i>Makaras</i> :	7	Buddhist,	18	Hindu
<i>Kinnaras</i> :	1	Buddhist,	1	Hindu
<i>Garuḍa</i> :	3	Buddhist,	12	Hindu
Large central figure	10	Buddhist,	19	Hindu

While the sample is too small to be decisive in determining the frequency of motifs in general, it is apparent that there is no symbol within the complex of forms modelled upon *torāṇa* which may be called exclusively Buddhist or exclusively Hindu. Only one element of the *torāṇa*, the large central deity, with or without attendants, occurs on all examples. Its identity varies with the dedication of the temple.

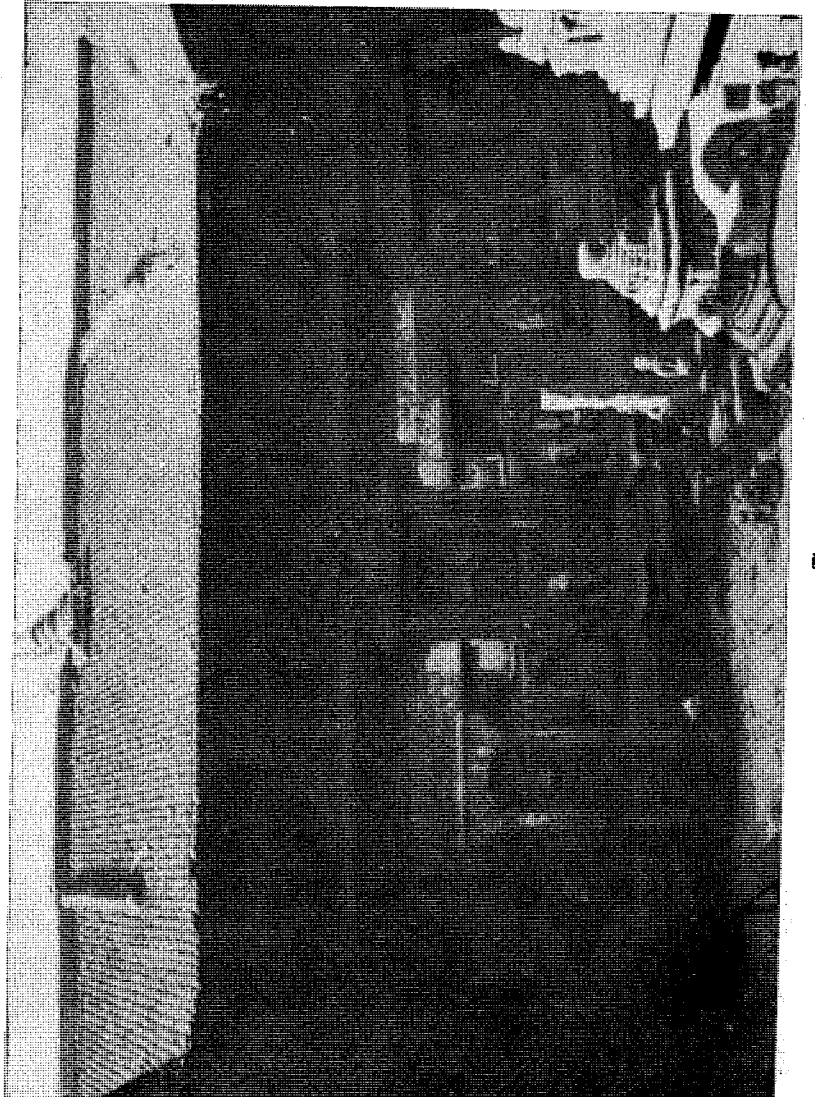
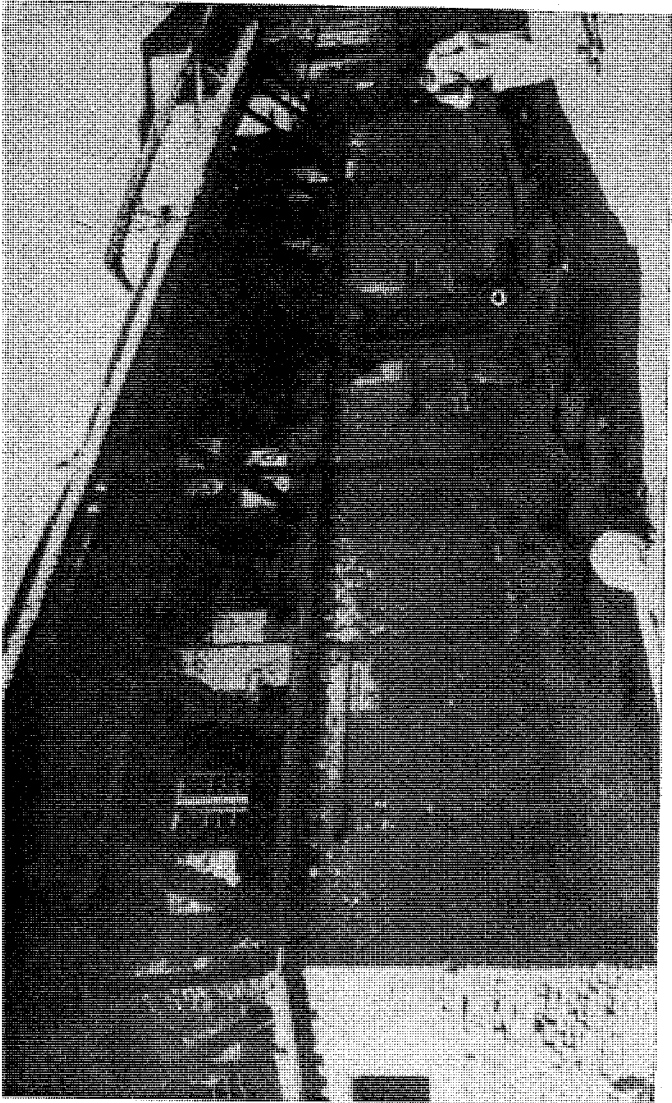
⁹ Within the caste of *Chitrakāra* four classes of artists are recognized in Nepal: the *sthapati* or architect, the *sūtragrāhin* as disciple or son of the *sthapati*, the *takaṣaka* who cuts and carves or models large pieces and detail in wood or clay, and the *vardhakīn* who puts together and paints that which is made by the *takaṣaka*.

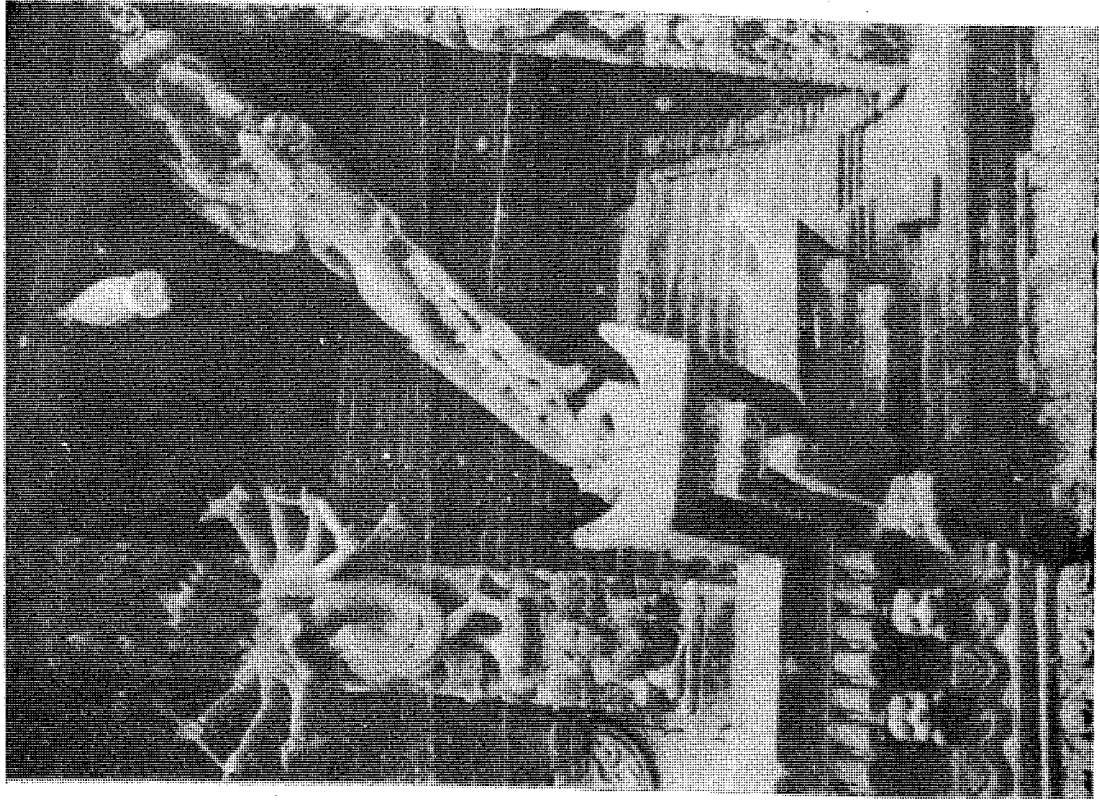


1. Above left: Exterior of Chusya-Bahāl in Kathmandu

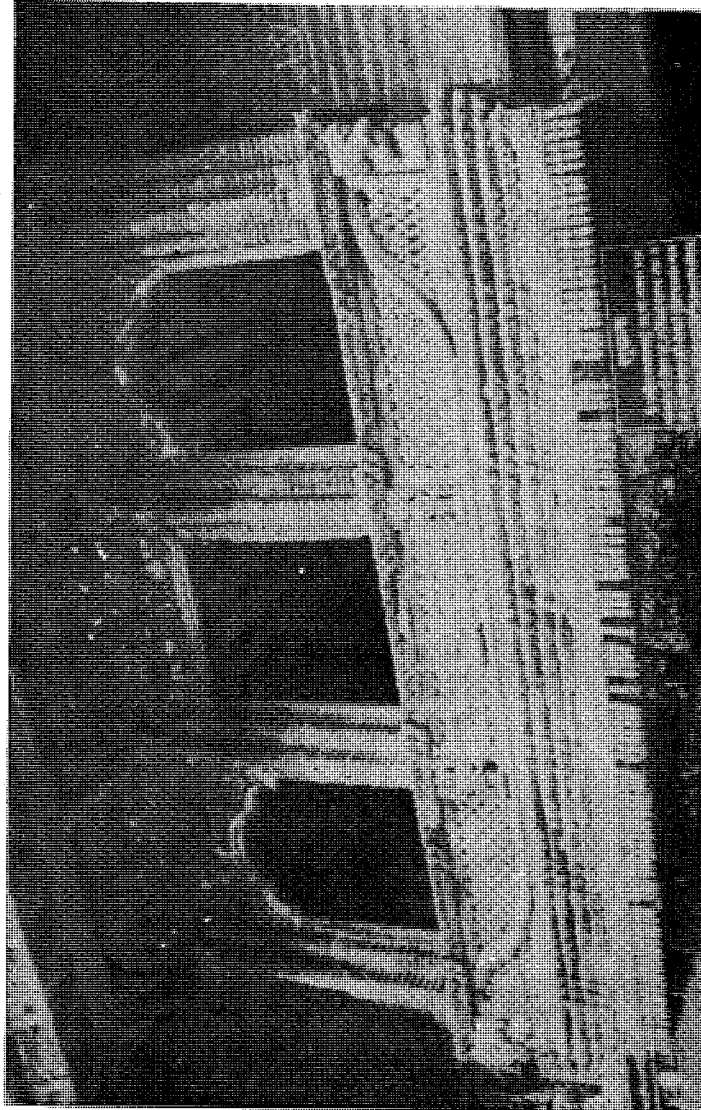
2. Below left: Courtyard area with inner shrine.

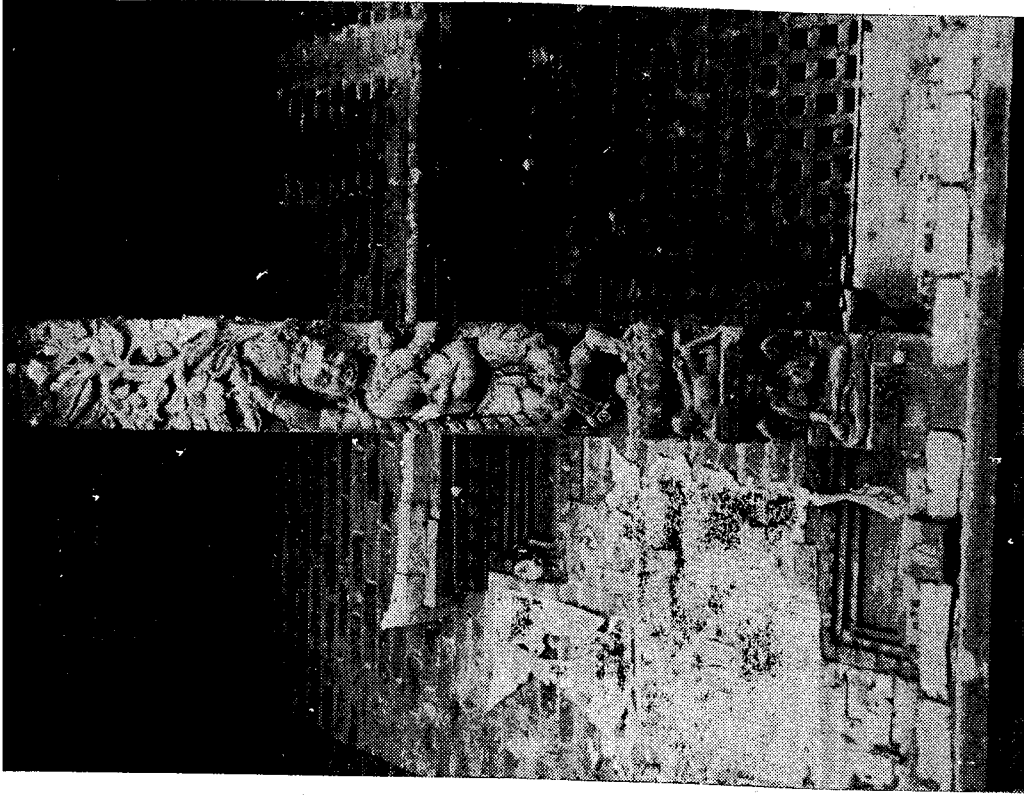
3. Above: *Toraṇa* of the street entrance to Chusya-Bahāl.





4. Above left: Devotional images facing the inner shrine of Chusya-Bahāl
5. Below left: Domestic balcony within the courtyard.
6. Above: Deity and *kumsala* struts over the inner shrine.

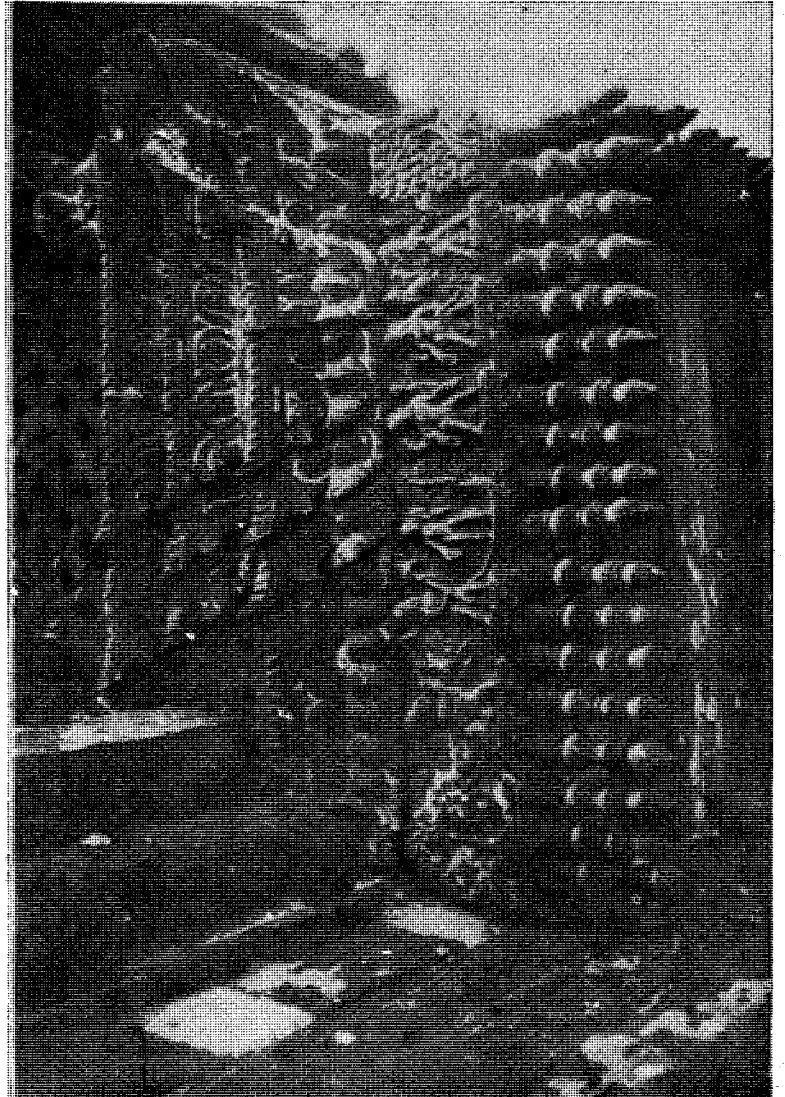
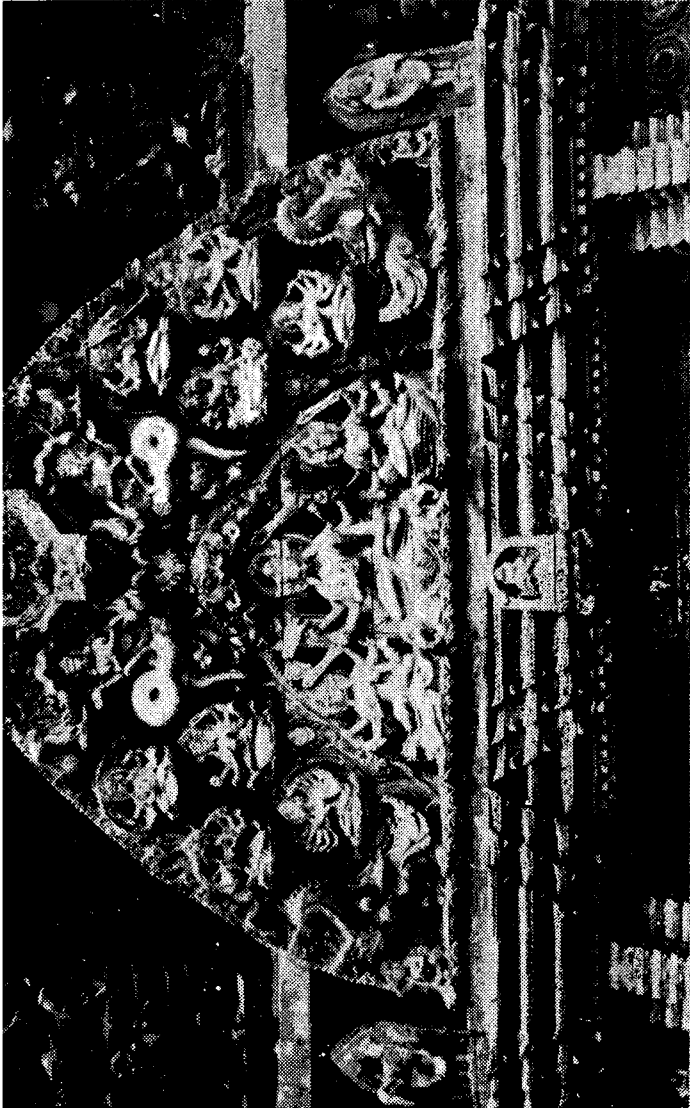


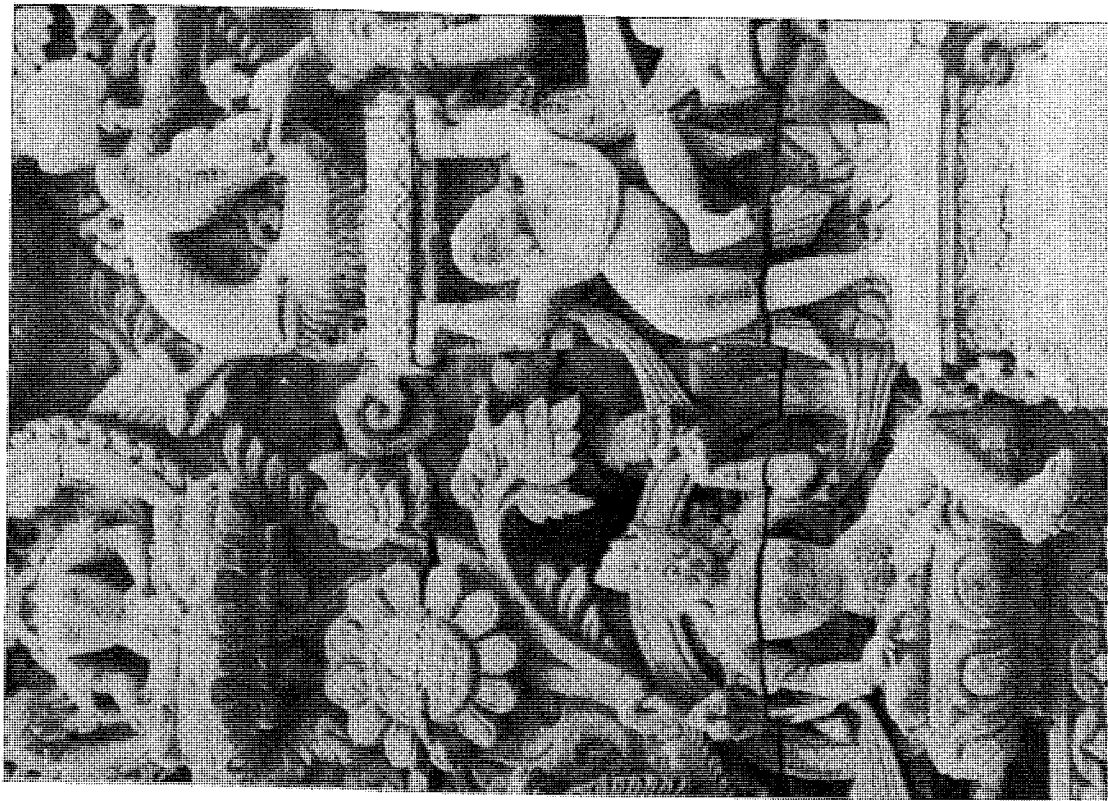


7. Above left: *Toraṇa* over the inner shrine door, dated N. S. 796 (A. D. 1675).

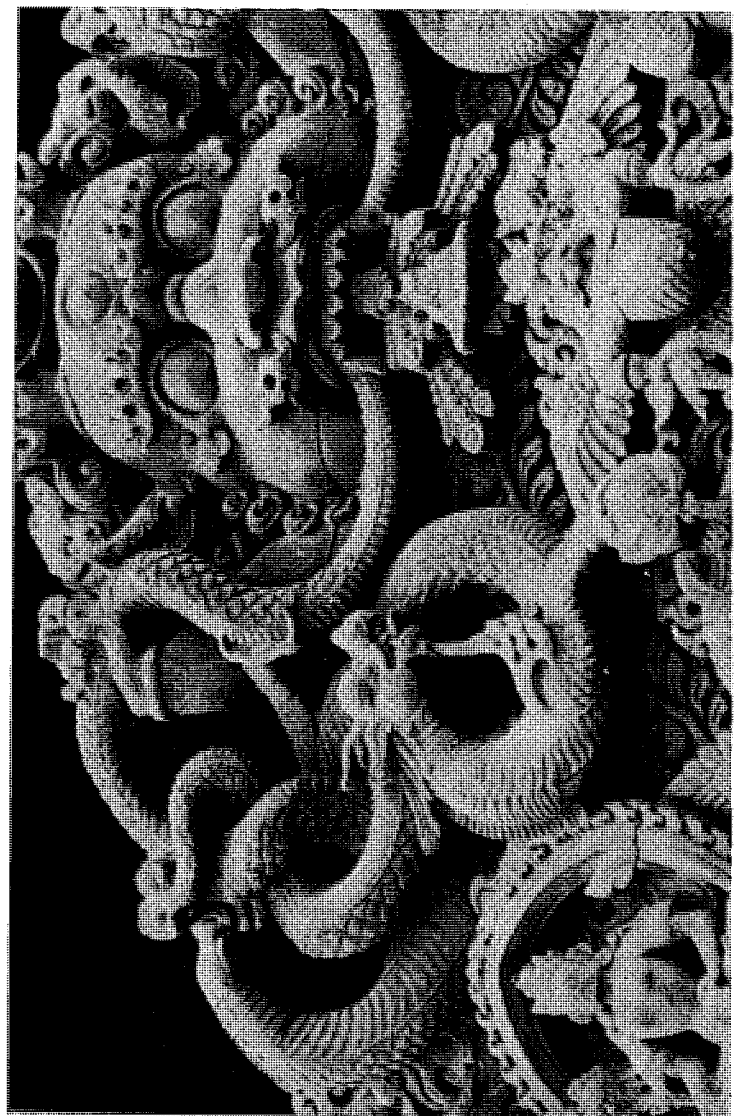
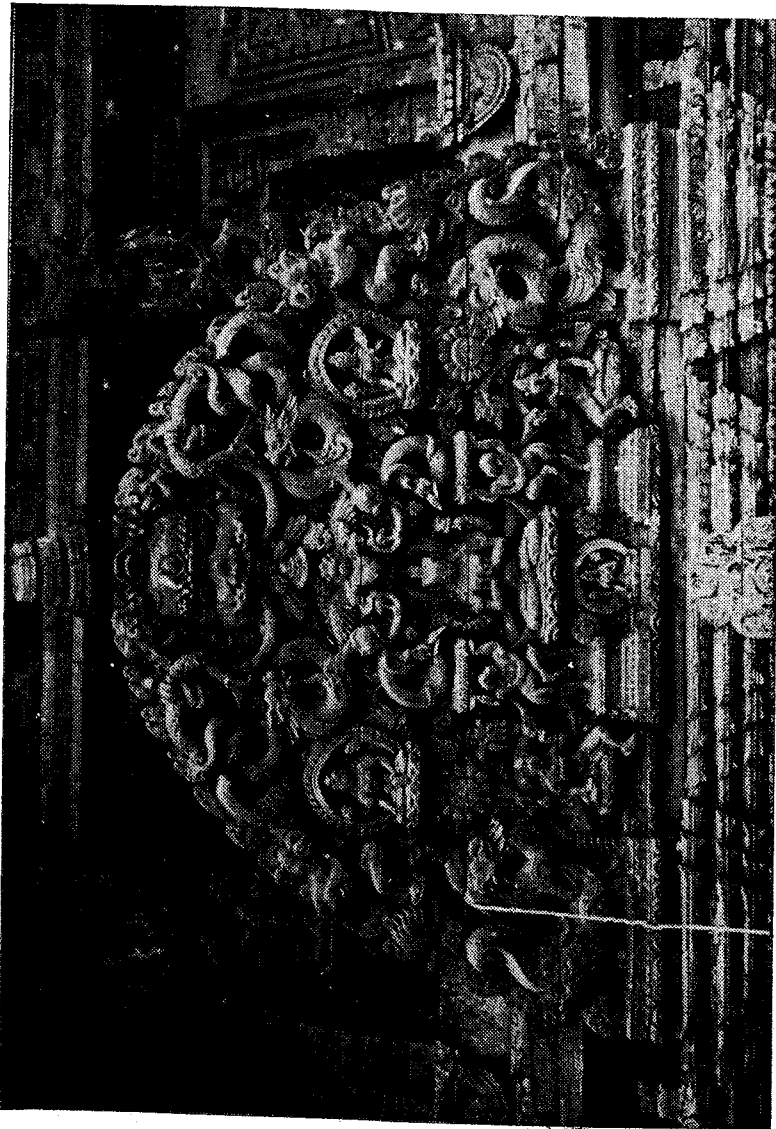
8. Below left: Detail of domestic balcony showing Buddha, attendants, and Hindu deities.

9. Above: Guardian figure strut on the outer entrance wall of Chusya-Bahāl.





10. Above left: The great entry *torana*.
11. Below left: Detail of the entry *torana*.
12. Above: Detail of the entry *torana*.



SEWALA PUJA BINTILA PUJA: NOTES ON THULUNG RITUAL LANGUAGE

N. J. ALLEN

Institute of Social Anthropology, Oxford

The Thulung Rai of East Nepal possess their own language and show a tendency towards endogamy, but if they themselves were asked what it was that made them a distinct social group, the more traditional among them would probably reply that it was possession of their own *Diwla*. The word could be roughly translated 'religion; lore and custom, especially as transmitted by the tribal priest'¹ The *Diwla* includes physical activities -- the coming together of certain types of people on certain occasions, the offering of sacrifices, the exchange of gifts, dancing -- but to a great extent it consists of language, of certain types of utterance. Thulung myths and legends are usually recounted (on the rare occasions when they are recounted) in more or less straightforward narrative prose, but the language used in rituals is altogether distinct from that of everyday speech.² No ethnographer interested in traditional Thulung culture could ignore the challenge of the ritual language, and I think it has some wider interest, both to the culture historian and to the linguist and student of oral literature.

Let us first situate ritual language within what one might call the 'collective linguistic competence' of the Thulung.

1. Speaking Nepali, they would render it *muddum* (= the *mundum* or *mundhum* of other areas). I shall as a rule mark Nepali words with a 'N'.

2. For examples of Thulung narrative texts see Allen (1975 Ch. VI), also my unpublished D. Phil. thesis (copies in Tribhuvan University Library, Nepal, and the Centre d'Etudes himalayennes, Paris, as well as Oxford).

1. Thulung
 - a. ritual
 - b. everyday
2. Nepali
3. Other
 - a. Rai
 - b. Asian
 - c. European

The category 'other' is included to avoid appearing to attribute to contemporary Thulung an unreal isolation. Occasionally a Thulung will take a wife from another Rai (or Kiranti) subgroup, and the children will learn their mother's language as well as their father's. Many Thulung have worked abroad, in Darjeeling ('Darling' as they call it, without humorous intent), elsewhere in India, with the British army in Malaysia or Hong-Kong, and have acquired a smattering or more of the languages spoken around them. With the spread of primary schools in the area since 1960, those of the younger generation who attend and persist are exposed to formal teaching of English, and one of my closest neighbours passed out first of his year from the military college at Sandhurst in the U.K. I was once hailed in a bazar in ex-prisoner-of-war Italian.

However the typical Thulung is simply bilingual in Thulung and Nepali. One cannot guess when the last monolingual Thulung died, but immigrants whose only language was Nepali have been arriving in the area for something like two centuries; and only some of the lowest castes among them learned any Thulung. The national language was useful also for dealings with the State and with other immigrants whose language was Bodic but not Rai. We need not here consider the varieties of Nepali, its degrees of politeness expressed by pronouns of address, its songs, the specialised languages

of the schoolmaster, of the local politician, of the Thulung who helps out with legal documents or with the astrological calendar.

Within Thulung the sensitive investigator could no doubt distinguish a number of functionally specific varieties ('diatypes'), for instance the style appropriate to joking relationships between affines. Ritual language would then be just one particularly divergent diatype, the one appropriate for addressing ancestors and spirits. The central and typical use of ritual language is in the priest's chanted invocations to the supernatural world, but two sorts of qualification must be made. Firstly, as regards the invoker, there are other types of officiant in the area, particularly the medium, who if he is a Thulung chants in ritual language (cf. Allen 1976). Informants occasionally said that such and such a ritual expression was used by the medium as opposed to the priest, and as the two have functions that overlap only in part, one would expect them actually to say different things; however the structure of the ritual language is the same and we need not here distinguish the priest's and medium's use of it. Occasionally the priest is accompanied, in would-be unison, by an assistant or by any members of the congregation who know the chant.

Secondly, ritual language invocations are sometimes enunciated without being chanted. In one instance a priest's voice became so monotonous as to lose any musical quality. More typically, an officiant stops chanting and starts to invoke in his speaking voice, though doubtless with a specific voice quality. A layman who had occasion to address the supernatural in Thulung would similarly use his ordinary voice, as

for instance when attempting a private exorcism, or when at a death ceremony the mourners ejaculate curt and uncoordinated instructions to the soul of the deceased. Finally, ritual language expressions are embedded in spoken prose in the stylised ceremonial dialogues that lead up to a traditional wedding, and also to some extent in the telling of creation mythology.

In retrospect, one can dream of the ideal conditions for the study of Thulung ritual language. One knowledgeable old officiant after another would have taken one through his repertoire in a leisurely and systematic fashion, expounding both the general orientation of the ritual and the meaning of each word, and telling one the dates and places when he would be performing. The realities of fieldwork were otherwise. It was not particularly difficult in most villages to collect tape-recordings of rituals, and given sufficient patience one can attempt to transcribe whatever is audible above drumming, coughing and background conversation. The problem lies in the analysis of transcripts; unfortunately, willing, persistent and knowledgeable exegetes were hard to find, and it is difficult now to estimate how many of the uncertainties in what follows might have been avoidable.

A simple rite, e.g. to the spirit Rangkime (Ban Deutā), may involve only a single chant lasting a few minutes; on grander occasions four or six different chants (these figures being from ceremonies that I observed) may occur interspersed with other ritual activities over the course of hours or on successive days. In all, something over two dozen different chants were recorded; I do not offer an exact figure since an ethnomusicologist might regard a few of the chants as variants

one of another. If the chants have names they are not widely known. A typical chant consists musically of a single melodic phrase repeated throughout essentially without variation; sometimes groups of phrases are separated by slight pauses, which may be reinforced by closing and opening textual or musical features.

The textual transcription can usually be divided straightforwardly into lines corresponding to the melodic phrases. The lines themselves can be divided into (i) an element which is constant throughout the chant or which changes only rather seldom, (ii) an element varying from line to line. The first of two chants at the Mukli HuTpa rite (see Allen 1974: 8) opens as follows:

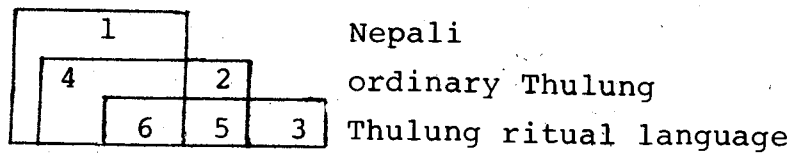
1. e mamasa marisa la onna
2. e yawalung tawalung a onna
3. e bichelung caurelung a onna...

Of the constant elements the line-opener, here *e*, probably never has a grammatical function; the final is often a verb, postposition or vocative particle, but here, as not uncommonly, I cannot translate it. The variable elements are nearly always binary in form as here, and they are the main subject of the paper. Sometimes the repeating melodic phrase covers only one half of the binary textual expression, sometimes it groups together two such expressions (though in that case the two halves of the melodic unit are closely similar).

The Thulung for 'binary ritual language expression' is *depcinəng* (cf. *dep* - 'invoke' and *nəng* 'name'). In line 1 above *mamasa marisa* is the ritual name for a certain sacred tree (the *simal* or silk-cotton tree at the major old village shrine)

while lines 2-3 refer to certain sacred stones (*lung* = stone). Classes of entity, as well as individual ones, can have ritual names, and in addition to building up a collection from transcripts of rituals one can always try asking a Thulung, preferably an elderly one, whether such and such an object or activity has a ritual name. It proved useful to record the vocabulary on cards together with other information: the location on transcripts (unless the item was excessively common), whether the form had been checked with an informant, and if so with whom (early unaided attempts at transcribing faster chants were highly unreliable), and available glosses or comments (usually in Nepali), or an indication of the inability of the particular informant to give one. Since the transcripts are apt to be highly repetitive, the cards make it much easier to collect variants and glosses and to make comparisons between villages. In this way upwards of 450 cards were collected. Even if one ignores the problem of variants, it is difficult to estimate how closely this figure approaches the total which would be collected in a more prolonged investigation covering all the Thulung villages; judging from the gradually decreasing increments obtained from attending new ceremonies or visiting new villages, one might hazard the guess of about half, though a proportion of the new accessions would be rarities.

In general, everything mentioned in a ritual must be mentioned by its ritual name, and there would be no point in a thing having a ritual name unless it was mentioned in a ritual. It is interesting to look, if only roughly, at the overlaps between what can be named in the three languages we are primarily concerned with.



1. Many important features of present-day Thulung life can only be named in Nepali (or in the course of a Thulung utterance, can only be named by means of Nepali loan-words). Examples are the plough and the associated technology of irrigated terrace agriculture.
2. It is difficult to be sure of negative results, but I doubt if there are either simple Nepali equivalents or ritual names for some of the rarer Thulung words, e.g. *dabel* 'the six or eight concentric rectangles drawn in the earth on top of graves, the outermost being made of bamboo'.
3. Certain types of evil spirit exist in Thulung culture only insofar as they are mentioned in ritual chants.
4. Some of the rarer and more insignificant fauna and flora make no appearance in ritual.
5. Certain ritual prestations such as *jiun*, or the ancestors' *chorseo*, have no Nepali equivalents.
6. Very many common traditional objects have all three sorts of label.

There is of course a further possibility 7 viz. that an entity with a ritual name could only be referred to in Thulung by a Nepali loan word. This has been omitted from the diagram because of its relative rarity. One example is maize (*makai*, no indigenous term): in one village (Lokhim) I was given the ritual name *rucela griuliuma* or *grindili grilimo*, but I never heard it used in a chant. There is no native Thulung word for worship (*pūjā* N), the ritual name for which appears in the title of this article. The rarity of category 7 has an obvious explanation. The vast majority

of category 1 words refer to innovations derived from contact with Nepali speakers; thus it is highly likely that before this contact the Thulung practised the slash-and-burn agriculture that is described in one of their myths. The innovations and loan-words were just one aspect of the process of Hinduisation, and the concomitant decline in the vitality of the local religion meant that few of the innovations such as the plough were incorporated in the chants. Instances of category 7 could of course arise from Nepali loan-words displacing native Thulung vocabulary, but although this displacement is certainly taking place it seldom seems to provide an obvious explanation.

To illustrate the problems and rewards of studying ritual language let us consider the parts of the house. It would be impossible here to give the original data in full, but rather than going to the other extreme of giving only a list of ritual names I distinguish between material from different villages and contexts; this will give some idea of the dimensions and degrees of variability encountered (Table I).³ The three main sources used differ in numerous respects (e.g. Karma's and DB's melodies are quite different), but all can be described as including a verbal journey which starts by listing parts of the house where the ritual is taking place, then leaves the house via the courtyard and village shrines. After visiting surrounding hamlets or villages (the Tingla version even takes a great leap as far as Bara Chatra near Dharan), the chant returns via the

3. Some of the more significant variants are: Col. I, 1-2 *lichiri khumori*; 3 *jāri goldori*; 4 *c. girburi*; 5 *s. bandamri*; 13 *tirisiungkhra*; 14 *w. thongkolma*; 15 *delphuri kharidelphu*; Col II *saksali* for *yachali*; 12 *ciuciama hayungma*; 15 *kharidelphu patelkhom*; Col. III 7 1. *thomunem*; 8 *k. prāmunem*.

courtyard and reverses part of the list of house parts, viz. those items marked with R in Table 1. In Col. I the terminus of the return journey is *seorelung kokolung*, in Col. II it is *pramalung chamalung*, in Col. III *burkhali saksalichiT*. But this paper deals with the language, not with the ritual as such, and we must plunge into detail. Where I have no information or confident suggestions, I pass by without comment. I ignore minor variants, which may be dialectal, idiolectal, or simply my own recording errors.

Group A of Fig. 1 concerns the whole house and its roof. *Lichiri* (*bātā* N) = strip shaved from surface of bamboo, used e.g. to tie thatch to roofing timbers (but no doubt also in the old-fashioned wattle construction?). *Koksiuriu* (*kok* - = to strip) is a species of tree whose bark is said also to have been used as a tie. Final *-ri*, occasionally *-riu*, is often found in words connected with tying (cf. *riya* = rope, fibre). The infinitives *pramu* and *thomu* (roots *prəng-* and *thok-*) mean respectively 'found, originate' and 'sew (without needle)' but there is also an obsolescent expression *nem thok-* or *ghareri* N *thok-* 'build or found a house' which may be more relevant. *Bābiyo* N is a variety of grass used for thatching and distinct from *khar* N.⁴ For *khumori* cf. *khumsi-* 'put on or over one's head'. *Nebdi khibdi* is a well-known ritual name meaning house; cf. *nebDa* 'at home', TB **kim* 'house';⁵ the *-ya* is meaningless and for rhythm only.

B must deal with the wooden framework of the house.

4. Has the species spread to the area recently? I think this is true of certain other category 1 species, viz. the house sparrow (*bhangero*), the pigeon (*parewā*), and the destructive herb called *bamāre*. Thuling *liusiu* now seems to cover both *khar* and *bābiyo*, but on the basis of a 1944 world-list the former meaning may be primary.

5. I take this and other Tibeto-Burman reconstructions from Benedict(1972).

Goldo, *khisa*, *thəsa*, *æksi* and *əsa* are species of tree (Nepali equivalents are given in Allen 1975:246-9); *cuksiu* = *gobare* *sallā* N, *girbal* = *cimal*.N. The myth of the Building of the First House implies that the *seolam* (*sāl* N) is a reference to the Central Pillar, but the latter seems to have lost any importance in contemporary Thulung ritual.

C goes through the interior of the house (cf. Allen 1972:84-6). *H. chayongma* was said to mean 'niche' (*khopi* N). *Burkha* = back end of house furthest from main door, mainly used by women and for storage; final *-kha* (as in II 17) may mean 'earth' cf. TB **-rka* and *burkhum* 'cave'. *Cəngma* certainly means 'earth', as when Earth opens and men emerge in a creation myth, and there is perhaps a connotation of the womb-like; anyway *-chiT* (=bone marrow) was explained by the 'interior' location of the *burkha*. Suffixed *-khom* = place; the *mosium* is the area uphill of the fire and associated with the ancestors. *Yuyu* means something like 'agnatic descent'. If a man's father or paternal ancestor was a medium and he in turn becomes one, he does so *u yayu baTpa* 'it being his y., it being in the family line'. *Sakha* is from *sākh* N 'one's own (e.g. kin or lineage)'; I do not know if *yayukhom sakhakhom* denotes a distinct area or object. *Dape* = shelf projecting from wall uphill of fire and used for offerings to ancestors. The *-ma* is semantically empty, as it often is; the *-həp.li* literally means 'master' but like Gurung *kleh* or Tib. *bdag* is much used of spiritual beings. The *chəkkər* (*sarāng* N) is a drying frame for holding e.g. trays (*rembu*, cf. *riyambu*) of grain etc. over the fire. It may once have been supported from beneath but is now suspended by four ropes from the rafters; *polong* is an adverb describing the motion of something that swings freely. The *dakar* is a smaller shelf sometimes found above the *chakar*.

D deals with hearth stones (*lung* = stone). *Seor* is a complex notion related to good fortune and family continuity; *dewa* = priest; for *prama* see A above; *chama* is from *chas*- 'become numerous, thrive'. *Hadi* is obscure but may relate to what is prodigious in magical or physical power; *hadilung baralung* can be used of the hearth-stones collectively, *madilung seorelung* of the downhill of the three stones (Lokhim). The hearth-stone triad is found very widely in Nepal and elsewhere (Stein 1970), and was no doubt once very important in ritual. I found now little but confusion on the topic, and I cannot confirm the obvious suggestion that the well demarcated unit II 1-3 consists of the names for particular members of the triad. *Pakhalung makhalung* are the four stones bounding the hearth (*pakha* = outside); one informant thought they once had four separate names.

E starts in the downhill part of the house (*ciupciu*; *hayu* = down) and moves out to the courtyard. The *cokcolung* is a flat circular stone let into the floor here on which to thresh grain with the wooden hammer I 11 (for *-si* cf. TB **sing* 'tree, wood'). The *jaskelo* is the side door, a category 7 object which, like maize, only has a ritual name from one village. The *lančiuka* is the main or front door which leads to the *pindi* (^o*piDhi* N), another category 7 word. I was told that *ribdung* (cf. II 17 *ritung*) was for *ribjung* 'shade'. The *siungkhra*, the standard two-foot high wooden mortar, serves for husking rice (*song-* = pound, pack down); it cannot be used on a verandah because the roof is too low, and one could speculate on why the chant appears to locate it there. The *dengkuli* was said to be the stone at the base of a ladder (*kokhrem* = notched pole for climbing), and like the Lokhim

walemdangkhu,⁶ here refers to the bottom step on which one treads (*dem-*) when descending from the level of the house, which is raised on a stone platform, and entering the courtyard (*delphu*). *Khari* = unirrigated field, so perhaps once 'clearing, open space'.

It is most unlikely that one could achieve complete elucidation of every item in a corpus of Thulung ritual language. Though it must be easier to memorise when it is understood, it is not a language whose effectiveness depends on its being fully intelligible to humans. Although my informants in general expected ritual names to have a specific global meaning, whether or not they as individuals knew it, they were not particularly interested in the analysis of its parts, and were not much given to folk-etymologising. Here and there one finds obvious confusions, e.g. the fusion of I 1-2 cited in footnote 3; I 9 similarly looks very doubtful. In II 12-13 the officiant's departure from binarism was facilitated because the repeating melodic unit in this chant separates one half of a ritual name from its fellow; in other chants he doubles the *ciuciuma*. The layman's repetition of *hayuma* is no more plausible and an element is surely missing. One suspects a certain amount of garbling in the transmission of unintelligible units of lower level, e.g. *dare*, *dili* and *tiri* with *siungkhra*. No doubt some of the lexical material is simply archaic and obsolete (*khib* - in II 11?), but it would be quite wrong to assume that this explained everything that is now uninterpretable. In III 4 *makha* may well simply echo or rhyme with *pakha* and some forms may have been originally coined without even this degree of

6. The *-khop* in the chant is odd, since this suffix usually refers to an instrument with which one does something.

motivation.

On the other hand, ritual language is far from mumbo jumbo. The more one learns, the more makes sense. Certainly more field work in the villages studied and others would fill some gaps, and comparative knowledge of related languages would help. Possibly something would be gained from more intensive comparison of this particular domain of ritual vocabulary with the rest of my corpus. Even with my present data, in a good half of the items I can with reasonable confidence identify more than one of the lexical elements, not counting suffixes.

It is probably clear already that study of the ritual language could contribute a good deal to the understanding of Thulung domestic architecture, particularly in its historical dimension; of course it would have to be supplemented by an account of the present-day house, ideally in the same detail as Sagant (1976) provides for the Limbu. Briefly, it is interesting to note not only what is mentioned in the ritual but also what is omitted--no reference to the upper storey, to windows, to the cot on the verandah, all of them category 1 entities. One notes in passing that the fire normally smouldering in the hearth is never listed. To my ear there is a hint of poetry in the references to bone-marrow, to the pendulous motion of the drying frame, to the welcome shade of the verandah, and even for the prosaic it is surely instructive to see how objects or areas are qualified or associated with each other. For good measure, here are a couple more domestic objects with ritual names of ethnohistorical interest. A pot (*lip*) is *kumalip timalip* from the Kumhale, the Newar potter caste. The metal plates often beaten during rituals are *neware kanchare* or *nepale k.*, again

indicating their traditional origin (*kāso* N=bronze; Nepal formerly meant only the Central Valley).

Ritual names evidently have a variety of structures. Let us carve them up into morphological elements represented by letters of the alphabet, each half or 'limb' of the item being separated by a period. Elements identical with, or 'closely resembling, known or probable free-standing words in ordinary Thulung will be represented by capitals (A B C). The remaining elements, those which cannot stand freely, can be divided into suffixes (s t), which occur as such in the ordinary language, and others (a b c). I ignore possible segmentation below the level of the free-standing word (as perhaps in *burkha* or *delphu*). As for the semantics, the ritual name normally has a global meaning, and I underline the symbol for the element or elements that come closest to representing it. The notion of closeness needs refining and there are many difficulties in applying this particular analysis; but I hope that it is better than nothing.

The simplest types would be A.B, two coordinate elements contributing equally to the global meaning, and A. B, where the second element qualifies or is in apposition to the first. Possible examples of one or other are the ritual names for clans; in Lokhim the Charipa clan is *minali harita*, the Muypa clan *congdisē coyongma*. In prose invocations ritual names often have the form A.b, e.g. *dewa mata* 'priest', or *seor reor* 'good fortune etc.'; in chants the simplest common forms are As. Bs (I 8) or As. bs (II 6). In these examples the semantic significance of the suffix is zero all the 'weight' lying on the other elements. One can recognise a continuum in which this relative weighting is gradually reversed. In

mosiukhom murikhom (As.bs) the suffix meaning 'place' adds little since the *mosium* is already a place; in *yayukhom sakhakhom* it adds more and one might rather hesitantly write As. Bs. There is a similar problem of what to underline in *seolamri thasari* (As.Bs). The notation becomes less problematic in items like *seorlung reorlung* (AB.cB), but one has to make some arbitrary decisions on what constitutes a free-standing form: is *kuma* sufficiently close to *Kumhale* to count? In the ritual language as a whole the commonest general class is undoubtedly a/AB.c/CB where the slant line separates alternatives. There is a considerable range of other types and I cannot attempt exhaustive treatment even of the examples in this paper. Here are a few suggested analyses: *lamciuka phalema* A.bst, *dilisiungkhra songlema* aB.Cst (representing a verb root as if it were a free-standing element), *burkhalichiT yachalichiT* AsB.csB, *lichiri thomunem* A.BC (the BC being, uncharacteristically for Thulung, exocentric).

Phonologically, the two limbs of a ritual name often show similarities which are not due to their containing the same morphemes. There are rather few examples in this paper, but a wider treatment would show a significant incidence of various types of rhyme and assonance.

Typologically, Thulung ritual language seems to be intermediate between two phenomena. On the one hand stands 'canonical parallelism' (Fox 1977). *Khlamyami toeyami* (As.bs, *-mi* being a pluraliser) is the ritual name for curses, but in one chant each limb is followed by *hepto* 'I have warded off', the result being two parallel five-syllable statements. On the other hand stands what Malkiel (1959) writing on European languages calls 'irreversible binomials'; to explore the phenomenon in Asian languages one could well

start with Emeneau (1978). Nepali examples are *dāju-bhāi* = brothers, *bhut-pret* = ghosts, *riti-sthiti* = customs, and I mention a few Thulung examples in my grammar (p.97) under the heading of 'augmentatives'. One could speculate on the historical movement of Thulung lexical material between the two types of expression. Mauss (1968:135) once emphasised the influence of ritual languages on ordinary ones, and he may well be right here.

As for regional comparison, it is highly likely that the other Rai subgroups, with their distinct but related languages, possess or once possessed, ritual languages comparable to that of the Thulung; MacDougal (1973:211) mentions the Kulung clan as having 'not only a popular name, but also a magical name, or *daphning*, used only in ritual contexts'. Very little has been done so far to publish texts of invocations by nonliterate ritual specialists in Nepal, but Höfer (1971) analyses a spoken Tamang invocation to the spirits of the soil and inhabited space (*gzhi-bdag gnas-bdag* (Tib)) residing in a certain territory (*gyülsang tāsang*), who are to ward off evil spirits (*shindre sandre*); the AB.C/cB pattern is clear. I have a few other isolated instances of the pattern in the names of spirits or mythological beings from elsewhere in the Himalayas, and Thulung may turn out to be quite typical.⁷

The relative neglect of non-literate ritual languages is understandable. There are other urgent tasks of a more obvious and practical nature, and the outside investigator interested in the bilingual Himalayan peoples may well feel

7. Cf. Watters (1975:132) on the Kham Magar: 'There is also a ritualized language which includes many terms, phrases, and jingles unintelligible to the layman.' Their First Shaman officiated at 'Rāni Gāon, Māni Gāon' (ibid: 151, 154).

that two languages are already more than enough. At first, Thulung ritual language appeared to present a totally confused tangle of obsolete forms and corrupt variants, and one could easily despair. But suppose that the texts had been scratched on scapulae a millennium or two ago: what a lot of scholarly attention they would receive! I hope that if little more has been achieved, the deficiencies of the present paper will encourage others to collect fuller material. It would be sad indeed if, with the advance of the literate religions, this aspect of the cultural richness and creativity of the Nepalese peoples were allowed to perish without fuller record.

TABLE I

I. <u>Lokhim</u>	II. <u>Mukli</u>	III. <u>Tingla</u>
A. 1. lichiri pramunem	9. lichiri thomunem	7. liucheri pramunem
		8. koksiuriu thomunem
2. babiyo khumori	10. babiyo khaytanem	1. babiya khayeta.
	11. nebdiya khibdiya	2. nebdi khebdi
B. 3. goldori jariri		
4. cuksiuriu khisari.	8. cuksiuri goldori.	
5. seolamri bundamri	7. seolamri thəsari	6. thəsari seolamri
6. səksiuri cəsari.		
C. hayongma chayongma		
burikha cəngmakha	burkhalichiT	burkhali saksalichiT R
geguchem masikhom	yachalichiT	
	4. mosiukhom murikhom	
	5. yayukhom sakhakhom	
7. dapekhom gujekhom	6. dapema gujema	5. dapehəp gujehəp
8. dakarma chakarma.	chakarma polongma	chəkkərma riyambu
D. 9. chakarma seorelung	1. kokolung seorelung	3. seorlung reorlung
madilung seorelung	2. dewalung matalung R	4. pakhalung makhalung
10. kokolung hadilung	3. pramalung chamalung	
E. 11. tongkolma	12. hayuma ciuciuma	9. jaskelo kinglema R
tongkolsi R		
cokcolung murilung	13. (hayuma) ceblema. R	10. cokcolung bandilung R
12. lamciuka phanglema R	14. lamcəka phanglema R	11. lamciuka phəlema R
wacipindi	pindima ribdungkha	12. pindima demciuli R
13. deresiungkhra	15. dilisiungkhra	
songlema	songlema R	
14. walemdangkhop	16. dengkuli kokhremco R	
dakhopsi R		
15. kharidelphu	17. kharidelphu	13. kharidelphu
yukhreda. R	ritungkha. R	liphuridor. R

Legend; table I

Ritual vocabulary concerning the house collected from three villages. Arabic numerals indicate the order in which items occur in the three main sources. Col. I comes mainly from a chant by the priest Karma at a *chorseo camu* rite preceding the arrival of the bride's wedding party. Un-numbered items were added by one Karbari in a dictated list which, though shorter than his co-villager's, never controverted its order. Col. II is mainly from three virtually identical *chorseo* rites chanted by the priest DB between 18.2.70 and 10.10.70, unnumbered items being isolated data supplied by Mukli laymen. Col. III all comes from the dictation of the priest's assistant CP; numbered items are from a ritual whose nature was not satisfactorily ascertained. Full stops break up the lists into strings of consecutive items which in the original are separated from other strings by ritual expressions unconnected with parts of the house. The division into groups A-E is my own. The symbol R is explained in the text.

REFERENCES

- ALLEN N.J.--"The vertical dimension in Thulung classification" in *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Oxford*, 1972, Vol. 3.
- ALLEN N.J.--"The ritual journey: a pattern underlying certain Nepalese rituals" in *Contributions to the Anthropology of Nepal*, C. von Fürer Haimendorf, ed., Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1974.
- ALLEN N.J.-- *Sketch of Thulung Grammar, with Three Texts and a Glossary*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University (Cornell East Asia Papers 6), 1975.
- ALLEN N.J.--"Approaches to Illness in the Nepalese Hills" in *Social Anthropology and Medicine*, J.B. Loudon ed., London: Academic Press, 1976.
- BENEDICT Paul K.-- *Sino-Tibetan: a Conspectus*, Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- EMENEAU M.B.-- "Review of C.P. Masica *Defining a Linguistic Area: South Asia*" in *Language*, Vol. 54, 1978.
- FOX James J.--"Roman Jakobson and the Comparative Study of Parallelism" in *Roman Jakobson: Echoes of his Scholarship*, Lisse: Peter de Ridder Press, 1977.
- HOFER Andreas.--"Notes sur le culte du terroir chez les Tamang du Népal" in *Langues et Techniques, Nature et Société*, (Festschrift for A. Haudricourt), Paris: Klincksieck, 1971.
- MCDUGAL Charles.--"Structure and Division in Kulunge Rai Society" in *Kailash*, Vol. 1, 1973.
- MALKIEL Y.--"Studies in Irreversible Binomials" in *Lingua*, Vol. 8, 1959.
- MAUSS Marcel.--"Review of J.G. Frazer *The Golden Bough*" in *Oeuvres, prés. V. Karady*, Paris: Editions de Minuit, Vol. 1, 1968.
- SAGANT Philippe.-- *Le Paysan Limbu: sa Maison et ses Champs*, Paris: Mouton, 1976.
- STEIN R.--"La Légende du Foyer dans le Monde Chinois" in *Echanges et Communications: Mélanges Offerts à Claude Lévi-Strauss*, eds. J. Pouillon and P. Maranda, The Hague: Mouton, 1970.
- WATTERS David.--"Siberian shamanistic traditions among the Kham Magars of Nepal" in *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 2 (1), 1975.

THE DISAPPEARANCE AND REAPPEARANCE OF JANAKPUR

Richard Burghart

INTRODUCTION

In the Brahmanical literature there is mention of an ancient kingdom, known as Mithila, which was bounded on the north by the Himalayas, on the south by the Ganges, on the east by the Kosi river, and on the west by the Gandaki river. Ancient Mithila was ruled by the Vaidehi dynasty, the kings of which held the title of Janak, and hence the capital of Mithila was called Janakpur. According to the *Ramayana* in the twenty-third generation of the Vaidehi dynasty, a great drought afflicted Mithila. So that Indra might bless the parched kingdom with rain, Janak and his family priest went to a field southwest of the palace where they performed a great sacrifice. In the course of the sacrifice, while turning the soil with a golden plough, Janak found a baby girl lying in a furrow. King Janak called the baby girl Sita and brought her back to his place where he raised her as his daughter.

When Sita became a maiden, Janak decided to offer his daughter in marriage to anyone who was able to lift and to string the Bow of Siva. This was a bow which Siva himself had left in Janakpur thousands of years earlier and which was so powerful that whoever wielded it could even cause the gods to tremble with fear. This was not a weapon for mere mortals, for when Janak had the Bow of Siva carried from its resting place to the parade ground, fifty thousand men were required to lift it. Kings and princes, proud of their exploits in battle, strode upon the parade ground, but they lacked the strength to lift the Bow. One by one they returned humbly to their kingdoms. One day Ram Candra, the Crown Prince of Ayodhya and the seventh incarnation of the god Visnu, arrived in Janakpur. With his soft-spoken manner and skin the colour of

the blue lotus he quickly won the hearts of all the people of Mithila including the heart of Sita who had seen him by chance one day in the garden of the temple of Girija. When Janak showed to Ram the Bow of Siva, Ram lifted it up without any difficulty. As he was stringing it, however, the Bow broke into three pieces. One piece ascended to heaven; a second piece sank to hell; and a third piece remained upon the face of the earth in Mithila. Everyone that day, who witnessed the breaking of the Bow, knew that Ram was the King of the Three Worlds. Ram was married to Sita in Janakpur and several days after their marriage the divine couple set out on their homeward journey to Ayodhya.

Some years later Ram, deprived of his right to succeed to the throne of Ayodhya, was exiled to the jungles of the Vindhya mountains where he lived with Sita and his younger brother Laksman. The demon king Ravana abducted Sita from her jungle hermitage and kept her under guard in his palace garden at Lanka. Ram and his younger brother together with the aid of Hanuman and an army of monkeys defeated Ravana in battle, rescued Sita from the palace garden, and returned to Ayodhya where Ram's throne was restored to him. As for the Kingdom of Mithila, for many years afterward the Vaidehi dynasty continued to occupy the throne. In the Dvapara Yuga, however, a dispute broke out between the Pandavas and the Kauravas and all of the kings in the lands between the Vindhya and Himalaya mountains found themselves engulfed in a terrible conflict. In the course of that war Janakpur was destroyed and the Vaidehi dyansty became extinct. What the opposing army did not destroy, the jungle covered over. Janakpur disappeared without a trace.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the present age, as the worship of Ram and the discipline of devotion spread throughout the Ganges basin, Hindu ascetics of the Ramanandi sect began to search for the places which during the Treta Yuga had been purified by the lotus feet of their Lord and Saviour, Ram Candra. Chitrakut, where Lord Ram passed his period of exile in the Vindhya mountains, was discovered by ascetics and by the sixteenth century had become an important Vaisnavite pilgrimage centre. Ayodhya, the site of Ram's birthplace and capital, had been visited by Hindu ascetics for many centuries, but during the Mughal period the town became the capital of the Suba of Ayodhya. It was not until 1754, when Sujauddaul transferred the capital of the Suba from Ayodhya to Faizabad, that Vaisnavite ascetics were able to establish their monasteries at the birthplace of their Lord (Sinha 1957: 132-33). Until the end of the seventeenth century, however, the site of Janakpur had not been discovered, For the Vaisnavite devotees Janakpur existed in their minds as an object of devotion and meditation, but *janakpur dham*, or the "site of Janakpur", remained unknown.

In this essay I shall reconstruct the reappearance of Janakpur and the events which led to the founding of the modern town of Janakpurdham in the early eighteenth century. I shall begin with the oral testimony of the ascetics, bards, and pandits, for our sole source of information on the reappearance of Janakpur in the Kali Age are the stories which are told today about the forebears of the incumbent abbots of the Janakpurdham monasteries. In the second section of the essay I shall corroborate, wherever possible, the oral testimony by the evidence from archeological and documentary sources. There are, in fact, certain themes in the oral testimony which do not accord with the archeological and documentary evidence, and after noting these themes, I shall conclude the essay by analyzing the testimony from oral sources on the founding of Janakpurdham.

ORAL TESTIMONY OF THE ASCETICS

Let us turn now to the stories which are told by ascetics, pandits, and bards about the reappearance of Janakpur in the eastern Tarai during the early eighteenth century. Be it remembered, of course, that in these stories the time element is vaguely conceived and the events are thought to have occurred at an earlier time of the Kali Yuga. According to many ascetics, pandits, and bards the first Hindu ascetic to arrive at the site of ancient Janakpur was Caturbhuj Giri. Caturbhuj Giri was initiated into the Dasnami sect by Durganath Giri of the famous Jyotir monastery at Badrinath and, it is said, that he travelled to the wilderness of northern Mithila seeking a place of solitude in order to discipline his body, speech, and mind. One day, in the course of his journey through the jungle, he stopped and slept at the base of an old banyan tree. In his sleep Lord Ram appeared saying, "Here, where you lie sleeping, is buried the ancient city of Janakpur, capital of the Vaidehis. After my marriage, while Sita and I prepared for our departure for Ayodhya, I gave to my father-in-law four images of myself so that he might, by gazing upon them, ease the pain of our separation. These very images, made by Visvakrama himself, lie buried in this ground. Raise them up and let the people of Mithila behold them so that they may obtain release from this transient world." At first when he heard the voice of Lord Ram and his divine form, Caturbhuj Giri was overwhelmed with joy. In reconsidering the words of Lord Ram, however, Caturbhuj Giri became very dejected. "In this lonely jungle how can I find the means to serve you, my Lord?" asked Caturbhuj Giri. "Saints come to this wilderness seeking solitude. They sleep under trees and eat jungle fruits. I cannot build you a palace, nor offer you meals befitting your exalted rank. Saints, hearing of your presence, will come from afar to behold you. When they see how poorly you live, I will lower my eyes

in shame.” Lord Ram replied, “The fruits of this jungle and some water, a handful of uncooked rice and a lump of crude sugar brought by a devotee – whatever you are able to offer me will be sufficient for my contentment.” The words of Lord Ram brought peace to the troubled mind of Caturbhuj Giri. When he awoke from his sleep, Chaturbhuj Giri dug into the earth where he had lain sleeping and there, entangled in the roots of the banyan tree, he found the four statues—Laksmi Narayan, Sesavatar, Dasavatar, and a Pancamuriti in which figured Ram, his three younger brothers, and Sita. Caturbhuj Giri erected the statues in the shade of the banyan tree and began to worship them.¹

About this time an ascetic by the name of Sur Kisor also came to northern Mithila. It cannot be certain from the oral tradition whether Sur Kisor’s arrival preceded or followed that of Caturbhuj Giri. Sur Kisor was initiated into the Ramandi sect by Khem Das at the Galata monastery near Jaipur. Some time after his initiation, however, Sur Kisor took up residence at the Ramani monastery at Lohargal Sikar in western India. Sur Kisor worshipped the goddess Sita as if she were a young maiden and he were her father’s brother. Wherever Sur Kisor went, he carried with him, a small statue of the maiden Sita. He accompanied her to the temple garden to pick flowers and to weave them into garlands. He invited her to the bazaar and standing in front of a sweet shop, he asked her if she wanted this sweet or that. Sur Kisor was not content in his devotion, however, for how could he worship the maiden Sita as her father’s brother anywhere but in Janakpur? Yet how could he go to Janakpur since no one knew where the ancient city lay? One day, while muttering these thoughts aloud, the image of the maiden Sita replied to him saying, “Father, leave me here. Go to the land bounded by the Himalayas and the Ganges, the Kosi and the Gandaki, and wherever you find me, that place will be the fulfillment of all your hope and desire – the site of King Janak’s palace.” Sur Kisor left the idol of Sita at Lohargal Sikar and set out alone on foot for Mithila. Sometime later, while walking in the jungles of northern Mithila, he stopped to rest under a margosa tree. From out of the ground emerged the very same image of the maiden Sita which he had left behind in western India. He knew then that this was his blissful destination, the site of ancient Janakpur. He built a thatched hut by the margosa tree and sang of his contentment to his darling daughter.²

-
1. The story of Caturbhuj Giri and the founding of the Ram Candra monastery has been recounted in two locally published pilgrimage guides: Pandit Jibnath Jha, *Sri Mithila Mahatmyam* and Ram Swarup Prasad Nepali, *Janakpur Mahima*. I have relied on *Janakpur Mahima* for the dialogue of Lord Ram and Caturbhuj Giri at the site of Janakpur.
 2. The story of the arrival of Sur Kisor at the site of Janakpur and of the founding of the Janaki monastery has been recounted by Ram Snehi Das in his introduction to Sur Kisor, *Sri Mithila Bilas*. See also Avadh Kisor Das ‘Paremanidhi’,

According to one of these songs, which have been collected and published under the title of *Sri Mithila Bilas*, Sur Kisor also discovered the piece of the Bow of Siva which for Vaisnavite devotees has remained on the face of the earth in Mithila since the time of Ram and Sita.³

Twelve miles north of Janakpur,
where lies a forest,
Shines a Bow which was offered by Siva, held in trust
by Janak, and touched by the hand of Ram !
Oppressed by the torments of the Kali age,
to see the earth of Mithila at this very time,
Is like seeing the bodily presence
of Sita and Ram, says Sur Kisor.

At the present day village of Dhanusa (literally, the "Bow") situated twelve miles northeast of Janakpurdham lies a long narrow seam of rock which is guarded by the spiritual descendants of Sur Kisor and is worshipped by Vaisnavite devotees as a piece of the Bow of Siva.

Some time after the discovery of the site of Janakpur by Caturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor, other ascetics travelled to Janakpurdham to behold the images which were found in the earth by the banyan and margosa trees. On the festival of the birthday of Lord Ram Raghunath Das, a Ramanandi ascetic who was the disciple of Oliya Ji, arrived from Maksudabad in Bengal and made his camp by Dhanusa Sar east of the hut and temple where lived the disciples of Caturbhuj Giri. One day while wandering in the dense forest about two furlongs northwest of Dhanusa Sar, Raghunath Das saw a fabulous jewel glittering by an abandoned pond. As he approached the jewel, tigers growled menacingly from the underbrush. Raghunath Das, however, was not afraid. As he looked about him, he knew that this was the site of King Janak's treasury. He called the pond Ratna Sagar (literally "Sea of Jewels") and built a thatched hut on its banks where he spent the remainder of his days.⁴

Another Ramanandi ascetic who contributed to the establishment of Janakpurdham was Pritam Das. Pritam Das came from the Muriya Rampur monastery near Gorakhpur but later he left the monastery to go on a pilgrimage to the Ganges. One

Janakpur ki Jhanki, pp. 51-55 and Yugal Priya Saran, *Sri Rasik Prakasa Bhakta Mala*, quatrains 105-12.

3. Sur Kisor, *Sri Mithila Bilas*, octave 29.

4. I heard this story from Ram Sevak Das who is the Pujari of Pipra Kutti and a spiritual descendant of Raghunath Das.

morning at first light Pritam Das rose from his camp-site near the Ganges and walked to the river bank to perform his ablutions. After evacuating, he reached with his left hand to scrape some dirt with which to purify himself. His fingers felt something hard and smooth and in the dim light he saw that it was a large stone embedded in the earth. Beside the stone, however, he found some loose soil which he scooped with his hand and applied to its purpose. He then clambered down the embankment to the river's edge and bathed in the purifying water. That night in his sleep Hanuman, the monkey God, appeared to Pritam Das, saying "You found me by the banks of the Ganges and then you ignored me. Dig me up and worship me and I shall be pleased." When Pritam Das awoke the following morning, he returned to the banks of the Ganges and scraped the earth from the stone. As he freed the stone from the embankment, he saw that the stone had the form of Hanuman. Pritam Das put Hanuman in a bullock cart and together they drove northward across Mithila to Janakpurdham so that they might behold the land where Sita passed her childhood and where she was married to Ram Candra. The journey lasted several weeks. When Hanuman and Pritam Das were only about one mile from their destination, however, the cart stopped in its tracks. Pritam Das pushed the cart and goaded the bulls, but still the cart did not advance further along the trail. Pritam Das then concluded that this was the place where Hanuman wanted to dwell. He took Hanuman down from the cart, erected a small temple, and began to worship the Monkey God there.⁵

By this time Ramanandi and Ramanuji ascetics had also discovered the place where King Janak performed the sacrifice with the golden plough and where Sita emerged from a furrow in the earth. The birthplace of Sita was called Sitamarhi (situated 32 miles southwest of Janakpurdham in the present day Muzaffarpur district of Bihar) and several ascetics built their hermitages there.⁶ One such ascetic was Ram Das who was initiated at Sitamarhi and subsequently travelled to Janakpurdham in order to live at the site of King Janak's palace. One day, while walking on the western side of the site of Janak's palace, Ram Das discovered an abandoned pond which was half-filled with silt and whose banks were overgrown with bushes and vines. He saw that this was the place where the child Sita used to bathe every morning before going to the hermitage of Rajapurohit Satanand for her Sanskrit lessons. Ram Das built a hut on the sou-

-
5. This story was told to me by Ram Bihari Das, the present abbot of the Hanuman Nagar monastery and the spiritual descendant of Pritam Das.
 6. It is possible that Sitamarhi is as old as, if not older than, Janakpurdham. According to Yugal Priya Saran (*Sri Rasik Prakasa Bhakta Mala*, quattrain 187) Kripa Nivas visited Sitamarhi and in the hagiographical literature both Sur Kisor and Kripa Nivas are said to have been doctrinal disciples of Madhvacharya at the Galata monastery near Jaipur.

thern bank and called the pond Sita Kund. Ram Das, however, soon discovered that he did not live alone at Sita Kund. Many years earlier a *jinn* had come across the neglected pond and had also made it his home. The *jinn* resented the arrival of the holy man to his pond and seized every opportunity to disrupt Ram Das' meditation. Ram Das had brought from Sitamarhi the *Srimad Mithila Mahatmyam*, a sacred book in which is recounted the glory of Janakpur, the birth of Sita and her marriage with Ram, the procedure for worshipping Sita, and the fruits of that worship both in the present and in future lives. From his little hut Ram Das sang aloud passages from the *Srimad Mithila Mahatmyam*. The *jinn* overheard the story of Sita and when Ram Das said that Sita herself used to bathe in the pond, the *jinn* refrained from disturbing Ram Das' meditation and offered to look for a home elsewhere. Shortly thereafter the *jinn* moved to a large tree by a mound which is located in the present day village of Ranipatti about one mile outside the circumambulation road of Janakpurdham.⁷

The ascetics, pandits, and bards who live in Janakpurdham today further relate that it was only after the arrival of the ascetics to this jungle region that Hindu householders began to dwell at the site of ancient Janakpur. It is said that at that time shepherds and cowherds used to lead their flocks and herds during the dry spring month northward along the Tarai river banks in search of green pasture. Some of them, by chance, happened upon the ascetics who had come to the site of ancient Janakpur in order to serve their Lord. The shepherds and cowherds prostrated themselves before the images of Ram and Sita and humbly presented their offerings. Returning southwards, they told the people of their villages about the discovery of Janakpur. Soon peasants as well made the journey, offering to Ram and Sita and to the ascetics who served them rice, crude sugar, salt, and ghee. Word eventually reached distant Makwanpur (situated to the west of the Bagmati river approximately equidistant

7. A *jinn* is a kind of being who possesses human form but who is much stronger than any human being. They normally dwell outside villages, along the banks of rivers and ponds, either in cultivated areas or jungles. The story of the discovery of Sita Kund was told to me by Ram Swarup Das who is the present abbot of Sita Kund Kuti and a spiritual descendant of Ram Das. According to Yugal Priya Saran (*Sri Rasik Prakasa Bhakta Mala*, quatrains 442-43) a saint by the name of Sita Prasad brought the *Srimad Mithila Mahatmyam* from Citrakut, dwelled for some time at Sitamarhi, and then travelled to Janakpurdham where he discovered Gyan Kup ('Well of Wisdom') where it is said that Royal Pandit Satanand instructed Sita in Sanskrit. Ram Das was initiated at a monastery at Sitamarhi and Gyan Kup is located no more than one hundred and fifty yards northwest of Sita Kund. It is possible that the ascetics of Sita Kund Kuti have appropriated certain themes from the story of Sita Prasad in order to glorify their spiritual ancestor, Ram Das. At present there is no hermitage at Gyan Kup and the memory of Sita Prasad has completely lapsed from the oral tradition.

between Kathmandu and the Tarai) whose king was the ruler of this jungle. The king left his palace in the hills and travelled to Janakpurdham where he worshipped Ram, Sita, and Hanuman. In the course of several visits the king bestowed rights over land in alms in favour of those deities and assigned to the ascetics the right to manage the income from the land on behalf of the deity. Soon peasants arrived to clear the jungle and to cultivate the land owned by the deities. Rents from this land enabled the ascetics to build temples and hostels and to offer hospitality to pilgrims. Some of the pilgrims who had come to behold Ram and Sita were reluctant to leave the holy place, and instead they built their homes near the monasteries. Other immigrants arrived and turned to trade. A bazaar was established. And thus was founded the modern town of Janakpurdham.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

Our sole source of information on the founding of Janakpurdham are the stories which are told today by Hindu ascetics, pandits, and bards. In the first section of this essay I have recounted five such stories. There are additional stories as well as different versions of the stories which I have recounted. Regardless of this diversity of oral testimony, the ascetics, pandits, and bards who live in Janakpurdham today are agreed on one fundamental point. In the Dvapara Yuga ancient Janakpur disappeared (*lupt*) and in the Kali Yuga, by the grace of Ram and Sita, Janakpur appeared (*pragat*) again. Between the time of the city's disappearance and its later reappearance the land was covered by jungle. The jungle is a discontinuity in the chronology of human events. Where no human beings live, nothing ever 'happens'. Such, at least, is the conclusion which could be drawn from the oral testimony and at first the scenario of these stories, in which Janakpur reappeared in a desolate jungle, appears plausible. Until the 1950's the land only seven miles north of Janakpurdham was forested and even today thirty miles to the northwest and to the northeast of Janakpurdham one may traverse large areas of hardwood forest which are more the home of wild boar and deer than of man.

We are fortunate, however, in that we need not rely solely on the oral tradition for information with which to reconstruct the founding of Janakpurdham. Scattered temple ruins and land documents extend back five hundred years or more and provide us with some evidence with which to corroborate the oral tradition. Although this evidence does not comment directly on the reappearance of Janakpur, still it is useful in that it does enable us to date the arrival of Caturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor in the eastern

Tarai and to call into question certain themes in the stories of the reappearance of Janakpur. In particular, the archeological evidence reveals that the so-called jungle into which the early ascetics wandered had already been settled by Hindus who were organized politically into petty kingdoms or chieftaincies and who derived their livelihood by tilling the soil. Moreover, from Hamilton's sources (1819: 128-50) we know that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries neighbouring rulers from the plains and the hills competed for possession of these Tarai chieftaincies. In the second section of this essay I shall present the evidence from the land and revenue sources of the king and propose the means by which the hill kings secured the blessings of the ascetics and the deities in their conquest or defence of the revenue rich eastern Tarai.

Let me begin my corroboration of the oral testimony by establishing the approximate date of the arrival of the Ramanandi and Dasnami ascetics in the eastern Tarai. It is commonly agreed by the local ascetics, pandits, and bards that the ascetics who discovered the site of ancient Janakpur were Caturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor. There is no agreement, however, on the question of which of these two ascetics arrived first in the region.⁸ Unfortunately this disagreement in the oral tradition is compounded by lapses and confusion in the documentary sources. The original land grants from the kings of Makwanpur to Caturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor have not survived to the present day.

8. This enigma has apparently bothered the bards, for according to one version of the reappearance of Janakpur, Caturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor were uterine brothers who were born in western India, were initiated separately into different sects, and who later met one another at the site of Janakpur. Thus the original land grant from the King of Makwanpur is seen to have been awarded to both these ascetics for the purpose of providing for the worship of both Ram and the maiden Sita. Subsequently the land was divided into a Ram *patti* and a Janaki *patti*, the Ram *patti* being assigned to the Ram Candra monastery founded by Caturbhuj Giri and the Janaki *patti* being assigned to the Janki monastery founded by Sur Kisor. According to one version this division occurred amicably in the seventh generation of Sur Kisor's spiritual descendants. In another version the division occurred violently. A battle was fought for the control of Janakpur-dham between the militant orders (akhara) of the Ramanandi and Dasnami sects. At the end of the battle the Janakpur *mauja* was divided between the Ram Candra and the Janki monasteries. I have not found any documentary evidence in denial or support of this story, but it is well known that during the eighteenth century itinerant bands of militant ascetics frequented the Tarai (Ghosh 1930; Cohn 1964) and it is said by the incumbent Pujari of the Ram Candra monastery that the eighteen burial shrines (samadhi) located on the northern side of the Hanuman temple in the Ram Candra monastery contain the bodies of eighteen Dasnami ascetics who died in the battle of Janakpur-dham. Unfortunately the original land grant or grants from the Kings of Makwanpur to Caturbhuj Giri and/or Sur Kisor have not survived and the relationship, if any, between these two saints and the monasteries which they founded will remain a mystery.

Between 1810 and 1812, however, King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah confirmed the earlier gifts of *kusa birta* rights over land in the Mahottari district from the Sen rulers. In the 1811 confirmation of the land rights which were inherited by the spiritual descendants of Sur Kisor it is written that in 1727 King Manik Sen bestowed *kusa birta* rights in the name of the goddess Janaki.⁹ Similarly a copper plate inscription in the Ram Candra monastery dated 1810 indicates that in that year King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah confirmed an earlier gift of *kusa birta* rights on the Janakpur *mauja* from King Indra Vidhata Sen of Makwanpur in favour of Caturbhuj Giri. According to this copper inscription King Indra Vidhata Sen had given the land on "samwat 1118 *sal sravan sudi 3*", or the third day of the bright fortnight of the month of Sravan in the year 1118 V.S. The year 1118 Vikram Sambat, or 1061 A.D., is obviously a misprint, for Manik Sen ruled in 1727 and Manik Sen and Indra Vidhata Sen were both grandsons (but by different wives) of Harihar Sen. Perhaps the land grant to Caturbhuj Giri was made in 1778 V. S. (1721 A.D.) or possibly even as early as 1718 V.S. (1661 A. D.). Alternatively the year was correct, but the calendar was wrong. In the former Tihut Sarkar south of the Mahottari district the calendar Fussily was used. One converts Fussily to the Roman calendar by adding 593. If the grant had been made in the year 1118 Fussily (1711 A. D.) this also would accord with what is known about Indra Vidhata's reign and the Sen chronology. At any rate we can be certain that Caturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor arrived at the site of Janakpur and established the Ram Candra and Janaki monasteries some time at or shortly after the turn of the eighteenth century.

Having dated the arrival of Caturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor in the eastern Tarai, we can now call into question the claim made by the ascetics today that formerly the northern limit of Mithila was a desolate jungle. Of course, it is true that much of the region at that time was forested; in the midst of that forest, however, there were a number of chieftaincies and petty kingdoms of local importance. No documentary evidence has survived from this time because the chieftaincies were located along or beyond the territorial limits of the Karnatak (1097–1324) and Oinavara (1353–1526) dynasties which ruled Mithila during the medieval period.

A number of mounds in the present day Nepalese Tarai, however, offer sufficient archeological evidence to rescue these chieftaincies and petty kingdoms from total oblivion.¹⁰ One such mound lies in the village of Banauli six miles southwest of Janakpur-

9. The particular land and revenue documents to which I refer in this article have been listed in the references. Some of these documents have been published by Devi Prasad Lansal and Radhesyam Bhattari in *Pracin Nepal*, 26, 1974, pp. 23–35.

10. I am indebted to Professor Dharendra Jha of Tribhuvan University for my information on the petty kingdoms and chieftaincies in the region prior to the arri-

dham. Tradition links Banauli with the capital of King Puroditya. It is said that when the Oinavara king, Siva Simha, abrogated his treaty relationship with the Sultan of Delhi, the enraged Sultan invaded Mithila and defeated the army of Siva Simha. Siva Simha was lost in battle, and the Queen Lakhimi Devi together with the court poet Vidyapati fled northward where they sought refuge from King Puroditya. Lakhimi Devi lived in Banauli waiting for news from her husband. When no news came after the customary twelve years, she mounted the funeral pyre.¹¹ About one hundred yards west of the village of Banauli lies a ruined brick foundation which is referred to by villagers as the house of Vidyapati and south of the brick foundation is a pond in which an image of Laksmi Narayan was found about one hundred and fifty years ago.¹² Other evidence of Hindu settlement in the region of Janakpurdham is the mound in the village of Duhabi. A partial excavation of this mound by villagers in the late 1960's yielded a circular brick foundation, several vehicles of tantric symbols, an inscription "ma", and a statue of Ganesa. The vehicles of the tantric symbols are fashioned in the *kailasa* motif and resemble in miniature the famous temples at Bhuvaneswar in Orissa. Their style suggests the possible cultural influence of the Sen dynasty which ruled Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa from the eleventh century. The "ma" inscription which was found in the mound probably means *mai*, or mother, a common epithet of the goddess Durga. Inscriptions have also been found in the nearby village of Jogiyara.

Finally there is the temple of Silanath on the Kamala river, the mound at Ranipatti, and the mound at Ksireswarnath north of Sakhuwa Bazar where a *lingam* and *yoni* of Siva and Parvati were found. Laksmi Narayan, Durga, and the *lingam* and *yoni* of Siva and Parvati are often objects of worship in tantric cults. Such religious predilections accord with the traditions of the priestly Brahmans of Mithila and their former Oinavara patrons. Both were known as tantric devotees of Siva and Sakti. In sum, we know that prior to the arrival of the Vaisnavite devotional ascetics and their discovery of Janakpur, the region was settled by Hindu agriculturists who were organi-

val of the Vaisnavite ascetics. Descriptions and photographs of some of the archaeological remains in the region may be found in Janak Lal Sarma, "Citavandekhi Janakpursammaka Kehi Puratatvik Sthal," *Pracin Nepal*, 2, 1968.

11. Other legends say that Lakhimi Devi did not commit *sati* but instead returned to Mithila where she ruled as a queen for twelve years. See Upendra Thakur, *History of Mithila*, pp. 317, 320-21.
12. The image of Laksmi Narayan was removed to the Ramanandi monastery at Matihani where it was worshipped in the monastery temple. When Abbot Lakhani Narayan Das fled from Matihani in 1910, he took the image with him and installed it in the Ramanandi monastery at Caraut in the Muzaffarpur district of Bihar where it remains to this day.

zed politically into chieftaincies or petty kingdoms and who possessed a sufficiently large agricultural surplus to build large brick temples (the mounds measure approximately 40 feet square at the base) and presumably to patronize the activities in these temples. Moreover, when the early ascetics arrived in the region, they found that previously the local religious benefactors had been devotees of tantric sectarian deities, such as Laksmi Narayan, Durga, and Siva, rather than devotees of devotional sectarian deities, such as Ram and Krishna.

Given the habitation of the region, could there also have been a settlement at Janakpurdham prior to the arrival of Caturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor ? Unfortunately I was unable to uncover any evidence which would allow us to answer this question. There are no visible ruins in Janakpurdham today and we have already noted that according to oral testimony the site of ancient Janakpur had become overgrown with forest.¹³ Let me note in passing, however, a few intriguing observations. The earliest land grant which has survived the vicissitudes of climate and politics dates from 1740 and refers to the "*janakpur mauja*". The King of Makwanpur did not ordinarily create the names of his local administrative units; rather he adopted the traditional names used by his subjects in each locality. Did the Sen kings, after hearing of the appearance of Janakpur, rename the *mauja* Janakpur or did there already exist at that time a place known as Janakpur which was associated locally with the ancient Janakpur of the Treta Yuga ? Several images which were found in the sediment of Ganga Sagar and Argaja Sar at the turn of the twentieth century are now worshipped in the Janak temple at Janak Cauk and in the Sunayana temple in Janki monastery. The image at Janak Cauk has been sculptured in a tantric style (the image is encircled by a wreath of flame) and could be evidence of a tantric cult at Janakpurdham prior to the arrival of the Vaisnavite ascetics. Alternatively the images could be mere copies of pre-eighteenth century art, or if they date prior to the eighteenth century, it could be possible that they were worshipped elsewhere and brought to Janakpurdham after 1700.

Another enigma in Janakpurdham today is provided by the rows of great trees along the banks of certain ponds (see, for example, the trees on the southern bank of Ganga Sagar). Accurate dating techniques would enable us to determine the age of the

13. It is often written in both travel guides to Nepal as well as in the social science literature that Janakpurdham is the site of "extensive ruins" (see, for example, Gaige 1975: 58). Such 'observations' are completely baseless; there are *no* visible ruins in Janakpurdham which date prior to the mid-nineteenth century. Occasionally one finds patches of brick rubble of a temple which was destroyed in the earthquake of 1934, but these ruins do not even extend into the eighteenth century.

trees and from this we might deduce the age of the pond. If such a deduction is justified then it is likely that the ponds were dug prior to 1700. In sum, the lack of evidence obliges one merely to note the possibility that Janakpur was already inhabited by the eighteenth century and that there might have been a local tradition associating the site with ancient Janakpur. Rather than actually discovering the site of ancient Janakpur, Caturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor might have only confirmed a local tradition associating the site with Janakpur and then spread the renown of this sacred place to other pilgrimage centres in the Ganges basin.

According to the oral tradition, Janakpur was founded by Caturbhuj Giri and/or Sur Kisor who dwelled by the banyan and margosa trees at whose base their respective idols lay. Shepherds came upon these two saints and later told villagers about Janakpur. The oral testimony implies a theme which is also found in the notion of *ram rajya*, namely that purity (*pavitrata*) brings reputation and wealth. Thus the good reputation of Janakpur eventually reached Makwanpur whose ruler undertook a pilgrimage to this sacred place within his kingdom and offered land to the ascetics so that they might provide for the worship of Ram and Sita. A perusal of the early land grants from the Sen and Shah dynasties of Makwanpur and Nepal reveals, however, that these rulers had other motives besides piety in bestowing *kusa birta* rights over land to ascetics at Janakpur. Although the performance of religious activities was the condition under which the king offered the land and the ascetics accepted it, still the main purpose of the grant from the point of view of the king appears to have been to secure the favour of a deity in the territorial expansion or defence of the kingdom. In brief, conquest was a sacred duty of the king (*Manu* 7.99–101) and the king gave land to a deity in order to gain land or retain land for himself. These land grants to ascetics in Janakpur appear to have been an item of the king's military expenditure and our understanding of the founding of permanent local monasteries at Janakpur during the eighteenth century cannot be divorced from a consideration of the protracted dissolution of the Kingdom of Makwanpur and the rise of the Shah dynasty of Gorkha at that time.

Let me briefly summarize the chronology of events on the southern flank of the Himalayas and the eastern Tarai during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁴ The geopolitical location of the petty kingdoms and chieftaincies of the Tarai and the relative isolation imposed upon them by the forest enabled these chiefs to remain somewhat autonomous of the Oinavara kings who ruled Mithila in the plains from 1353 to

14. Unless otherwise stated, my sources of information on these political events are Dr. Francis Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, pp. 128–50 and Ludwig Stiller, *The Rise of the House of Gorkha*.

1526 A. D. During the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, however, Lohangga, King of Makwanpur, took an interest in the eastern Tarai as a source of revenue for his hill kingdom and led his troops southward into the Tarai where he defeated a certain Mohan Thakur, a local chief of Aniwar Brahman caste. Moving eastward, Lohangga captured the chieftaincy of Mahottari (where later Janakpur would reappear) which was ruled by an Aniwar Brahman. Then crossing the Kamala river, he invaded the region of Saptari and conquered their chiefs. East of Saptari he joined in alliance with tribal chiefs and defeated Vijaya Narayan thereby adding the Morang Tarai to his realm. By the end of his reign Lohangga had pushed the boundaries of his realm outward from the Adiya river on the west to the Mahananda river on the east, from the Mahabharat range of the Himalayas in the north to the Tirhut Sarkar and Purnea on the south and southeast, thereby making Makwanpur the largest hill kingdom of his time.

The territorial integrity of Lohangga's conquests, however, was subsequently jeopardized by the ambition of neighbouring rulers and by internal dissension among the descendants of Lohangga. In the fifth generation of the Sen dynasty of Makwanpur we find that the kingdom was divided into three sections and each section was assigned to a different descendant of Lohangga. Indra Vidhata Sen ruled the Morang Tarai; Mahapati Sen ruled the land between the Kosi and Kamala rivers and Manik Sen ruled Makwanpur west of the Kamala river. The division of the kingdom occurred at a very unfavourable time, for shortly thereafter Isfundiyar Khan, Nawab of Purnea, invaded the Morang Tarai, captured Indra Vidhata and his uncle Subbha Sen, and seized Indra Vidhata's territory. According to another account around 1700 A. D. Naripatti Thakur, King of Darbhanga, armed his zamindars and travelled north into the Tarai where he surprised an unnamed King of Makwanpur and exacted from him an annual tribute of 1200 rupees from the Tauter *praganaa* (Ahmad 1958: 23, 28).

At the same time that a weakened Makwanpur was defending its Tarai districts from the Nawab of Purnea and the King of Darbhanga, two more foes loomed in the distance. From the northwest came Prithivi Narayan Shah, King of Gorkha, who conquered Makwanpur and its Tarai districts in 1762 and from the southeast came the East India Company which in 1765 received the Diwani for the civil administration of the provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa from the Sultan of Bengal. The King of Gorkha and the Board of Directors of the East India Company now found that they shared a common border and mutually antagonistic expansionary aims. Prithivi Narayan Shah and his successors who founded the modern kingdom of Nepal pushed their troops onward until they had conquered all the hill kingdoms on the southern flank of the Himalayas from Sikkim in the east to Kangra in the west; meanwhile the East India Company extended its political influence and administrative authority throughout the

Ganges basin. Numerous complaints concerning the administration of border villages and restrictions on trade with Tibet led to armed conflict between the Gorkha army and Company militia. On the 8th December 1814 Company troops led by Major Roughsedge swept across the eastern Tarai and occupied Janakpurdham (Datta 1058: 4). In 1816 representatives of the King of Gorkha and the East India Company met at Sagauli and negotiated a truce. Company troops withdrew from Mahottari and in the following year the border between these two powers was drawn and demarcated by pillars (M. Regmi 1971: 174). Janakpurdham, situated in the south-central part of the Mahottari district, was included within the Kingdom of Nepal only seven miles north of Company territory.

A review of the early land grants in the Janakpur *mauja* suggests convincingly that the *kusa birta* rights over land which enabled the ascetics to establish permanent local monasteries at Janakpurdham were an aspect of the king's defence of the realm. More particularly, I suspect that the *kusa birta* rights were given on the auspicious occasion of the departure of the king's regiments for the war front. Sen chronicles refer to border disputes with the Muslim Nawab of Purnea and the Afghan Commander in the service of the King of Darbhanga in 1663, 1707, 1726, and 1752 (D. Regmi 1961: 37). The land grant from Hem Karna Sen of Makwanpur to Sital Giri, abbot of Kuwa monastery, is dated 1753 and closes with the words, the "vow of the Hindu-Muslim dispute". The land grants inscribed on a copper plate are dated from the time of their inscription which may occur several months or even a year after their ritual bestowal.¹⁵ Hence it is quite possible that the grant of land to the Kuwa monastery and the reference to the dispute between the Hindus and Muslims refers to the events of 1752. In that very same year King Hem Karna Sen also granted *kusa birta* rights to Jay Krisna Das who founded the Laksman monastery. The grant of land to Janki monastery occurred in 1727 which is one year after the battle between Manik Sen's deputy in the Tarai and the King of Darbhanga (Ahmad 1958: 23). Unfortunately neither the date of Indra Vidhata's grant to the Ram Candra monastery nor the date of his battle with Isfundiyar Khan can be known, but apart from this gap in the records the dates of the grants of the major monasteries on the Janakpur *majua* correlate with dates of battles between the kings of Makwanpur and the rulers of neighbouring kingdoms.

15. In a copper inscription in the Ram Candra monastery which is dated 1807 it is mentioned that the ritual bestowal of the land occurred in 1806. A lapse of one year between the bestowal of the land and the inscription of the bestowal on a copper plate appears to be normal. See "Land grant from King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah to abbot Amar Giri of Ram Candra monastery in fulfillment of a vow made to Hanuman by Kaji Amar Singha Thapa in 1806, Vaisakh Sudi 14, 1864 V. S. (April 1807)".

This correlation between the gifts of land to Hindu ascetics and the military campaigns of the Sen kings does not necessarily prove a relationship between the two events. Evidence from the early Shah period of Nepalese history, however, is more convincing. In a royal order from King Rana Bahadur Shah appointing Paramanand Das to the abbotship of Janki monastery in 1792, the king closes the order with the injunction, "Worship especially the Bow of Siva at Dhanusa". The Bow of Siva was thought to be so powerful that when Siva wielded it, the other gods trembled with fear. Siva entrusted the Bow to King Janak and it was in breaking this Bow that Lord Ram gained the hand of Sita in marriage. The piece of the Bow which remained on the face of the earth lies in the village of Dhanusa twelve miles northeast of Janakpurdham. The abbot of the Janaki monastery has been traditionally the overseer of the shrine at Dhanusa, and apparently an abbot of the Janaki monastery made known to King Rana Bahadur Shah the virtues of the Bow of Siva and the blessings which might be obtained by worshipping it.

In addition to the Bow of Siva the Gorkha rulers also sought the blessings of Hanuman, the Monkey God. The largest grants of *kusa birta* rights in land to local ascetics on behalf of the Shah kings were the grant from King Rana Bahadur Shah to Pritam Das of Hanuman Nagar monastery in 1781 and the grant from King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah to the Abbot of the Ram Candra monastery in 1807. In both cases the recipient of the fruits of the land was Hanuman. Given the military ambitions and martial values of the Gorkha rulers, their interest in obtaining the blessings of Hanuman is not very surprising. Hanuman was the scout who discovered that Sita was being held prisoner in the demon King Ravana's palace garden. Hanuman was the spy who acquired strategic information concerning the plan of Ravana's capital at Lanka. He was the indefatigable messenger who flew to the Himalayas to procure the life-giving herb for Laksman. He was the military engineer who supervised the construction of the land bridge between the southern peninsula of India and the island of Lanka. Finally he was the general who led his army of monkeys into battle and defeated Ravana's army of demons. The copper inscription of the 1807 grant to the Ram Candra monastery reveals that the *kusa birta* rights had been offered in 1806 by Kaji Amar Singha Thapa in fulfillment of a vow. Kaji Amar Singha Thapa was the brilliant Nepalese commander who planned and led the Gorkha conquests in the far western regions. His visit to Janakpurdham could only have been a hasty interlude in his military campaign, for in 1804-1805 he had led the successful Gorkha counter-attack on Garhwal and in late 1806 he had returned to the far west in order to lead the assault against Kangra. The copper inscription at the Ram Candra monastery does not reveal the exact vow which Kaji Amar Singha Thapa made to Hanuman in Janakpurdham, but it was

probably related either to his recent campaign in Garhwal or to his impending campaign in Kangra. Later in 1815, when Kaji Amar Singha Thapa had engaged the East India Company in combat, he wrote to the King from the western front:

When the Chinese army invaded Nepal [in 1792], we implored the mercy of Heaven by offerings to the Brahmans and the performance of religious ceremonies; and through the favour of one and the intercession of the other we succeeded in repulsing the enemy... by these means [alms-giving] many thousands of respectable Brahmans will put up their prayers for your protection, and the enemy will be driven forth. By the practice of charity the territory acquired in your generation may be preserved and through the favour of God, our power and dominion may be still further extended (quoted in Sanwal 1965: 170-71).

In sum, the evidence from documentary sources suggests that in most cases the king bestowed *kusa birta* rights over land in favour of Hindu ascetics on or near the Janakpur *mauja* as part of a more general policy to extend or defend his realm. Moreover one finds that after 1816 when the boundary of the modern kingdom of Nepal attained nearly its present form and further expansion of the kingdom was blocked by the Chinese Emperor and the East India Company, the period of royal largesse to ascetics in Janakpurdham also ceased. To be sure ascetics continued to receive royal gifts of land on auspicious occasions of royal rejoicing such as the birth of the Crown Prince or the coronation of the king but these grants did not normally exceed 25 *bighas* in area and hence were significantly less munificent than the earlier gifts.¹⁶ Thus by relating the land which was given to the ascetics in Janakpurdham to the expansion and defence of Makwanpur and Nepal, one can explain not only the commencement of the period of royal gifts of land to ascetics but also the end of that period.

For the ascetics who travelled to the site of ancient Janakpur during the eighteenth century the importance of such land grants cannot be overstated. At that time in the eastern Tarai of Nepal there was no market in rights over crown land; instead the ruler exercised proprietary authority over his kingdom by assigning rights over land on an annually renewable basis to his tenants and to his civil and military officers. Only the king (or a noble who had obtained the consent of the king) could irrevocably offer

16. King Rajendra Vikram Shah endowed the Sita Kund Kuti (1833), Ratna Sagar monastery (1834), and the Agni Kund monastery (circa 1840) with *kusa birta* plots of between five and twenty *bigha*. There is no record of any royal land grants to ascetics in Janakpurdham after the abdication of King Rajendra in 1847. The Shah kings and the Rana prime ministers did, however, use the *guthi* category of tenure to endow several Sanskrit colleges, poorhouses, and charity kitchens in the region of Janakpurdham.

revenue-exempt land to an ascetic. Without such gifts the ascetic would have enjoyed neither the tenurial security nor the surplus income necessary to establish a permanent monastery and a pilgrims' hostel at Janakpurdham.

With regard to the early history of Janakpurdham, therefore, I would propose that the endowment and subsequent development of the site of ancient Janakpur during the eighteenth century was an indirect consequence of the political instability on the southern flank of the Himalaya as two different hill kingdoms sought to gain and retain the revenue rich Tarai from neighbouring plains kingdoms. Assuming the dependence of the ascetic on the king for access to productive resources and given the knowledge that the king gave land in alms on the auspicious occasion of sending troops into battle, might one further propose that the political instability on the southern flank of the Himalaya and the hope of obtaining alms from the king led Hindu ascetics to the site of ancient Janakpur? Although such thoughts of gain might have passed through the minds of some ascetics during the eighteenth century, still such a proposition does not seem valid in the light of other evidence. The flowering of the devotional discipline (*rasik sadhana*) occurred in the Ganges basin during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries as Vaisnavite ascetics began to dwell in the places which in previous ages had been sanctified by the actual presence of their tutelary deity. These places, such as Ayodhya, Chitrakut, and Vrindaban, were conceived and developed by the ascetics as esoteric cities or villages, the entrance into which was gained by virtue of a secondary initiation of the sect. Thus the discovery of the site of ancient Janakpur and the migration of ascetics to this sacred place was a continuation of certain developments in north Indian Vaisnavism and was not motivated or generated by political instability in the Himalayan kingdoms. Nevertheless it would be valid to conclude that the early endowment of Janakpurdham as a Hindu pilgrimage centre was a consequence of two unrelated but contemporaneous events: the flowering of the Vaisnavite movement in the Ganges basin and the politico-economic competition of hill kings for control of the eastern Tarai.

ANALYSIS OF THE TESTIMONY OF ORAL SOURCES

Historians who have taken an interest in the origins of Janakpurdham have either been bemused or bewildered by the stories about the reappearance of Janakpur in the Kali Age, for the oral testimony of the ascetics not only tests the limits of their credulity but also is at odds with the documentary and archeological evidence. Yet the ascetics do assert that Janakpurdham is built on the site of ancient Janakpur and furthermore

ascetics who are respected for their learning claim that they have evidence which proves the validity of their assertion. Because the ascetics do not see themselves as speaking falsely, we should ask ourselves why these stories are true for those who tell them. There are two problems here. First, what is the criterion of evidence for the ascetic in his claim that Janakpur is built at the site of ancient Janakpur, and second, what is the purpose for which the ascetic organizes the evidence into a coherent narrative about the past? Let us begin the final section of this essay by considering what the ascetics mean by evidence and then we shall turn to the purpose of the stories about the reappearance of Janakpur in the Kali Age.

Respected ascetics in Janakpur today explain their criterion of evidence (praman) in terms of the Sankhya doctrine of the four states of selfhood: wakefulness (jagrit) which is ruled by the sense perceptions (indriya), dream-sleep (svapna) which is ruled by the mind (man), deep-sleep (susupti) which is ruled by consciousness (cit), and the "fourth state" (turiya) which is ruled by the soul (atman). Each state of selfhood abides in a different body. Wakefulness abides in the gross body, dream-sleep in the subtle body, and deep-sleep in the causal body. The soul, however, does not abide in a body because it is not subject to death or decay. Each state of selfhood is born from and depends upon each successively higher state of selfhood. Sense perceptions depend on the mind which depends on the consciousness which depends on the soul. When the soul departs from the human organism, the sense perceptions, mind, and consciousness die in their respective bodies. The soul, however, is self-existent and dependent upon no other. It is unconditioned and hence eternal. For the Hindu ascetic this unconditioned state is real; the other three states of selfhood – wakefulness, dream-sleep, and deep-sleep – are lower states of illusion in which consciousness veils the self from its true nature. The so-called evidence of the historian which is drawn from his observations of the transient world prove for the ascetic nothing but the transience of that world. For the ascetic evidence of the location of Janakpur graced by the eternal presence of Ram must have its source in the unconditioned reality. Herein lies the riddle. Janakpur reappeared to several ascetics in the Kali Age, but what the ascetics saw was not necessarily an object of perception.

The story of Chaturbhuj Giri's discovery of Janakpur illustrates the difference between the historian's and the ascetic's criteria of evidence. In this story Lord Ram appeared in a dream and explained to Chaturbhuj Giri that where he lay sleeping was the site of ancient Janakpur and that entangled in the roots of the banyan tree were four statues of Lord Ram. For the historian the images are evidence by which one might prove or disprove the claim that Janakpur is built at the site of ancient Janakpur. An examination of the style in which the images were fashioned and a chemical-analy-

sis of the kind of stone from which they were made would enable the scholar to date the idols according to an historical period and perhaps to locate the region from where the stones were quarried. For the ascetic, however, the proof cannot be established by an analysis of the four stones which lie visibly before him; rather the proof lies with the vision which Lord Ram bestowed upon Chaturbhuj Giri. The sleep of Chaturbhuj Giri was the dream-sleep of the second state of selfhood in which the mind directed his awareness. Chaturbhuj Giri had reined in his sense perceptions and was dead to the transient world. With his mind, not his eyes, he "saw" Lord Ram dwelling in his soul and with his mind, not his ears, he "heard" Lord Ram calling from his soul. That experience was caused by the contact of the mind with the eternal unconditioned soul and hence that vision has authenticity (praman). Chaturbhuj Giri knew that he had arrived at the site of ancient Janakpur.

In addition to revelatory knowledge the ascetics also have a second criterion of evidence which resembles the criterion of the historian in that it is based on empirical observation of the transient world. The ascetic, however, does not resolve the potential contradiction between revelatory knowledge and empirical knowledge in the same manner as the historian. Whereas the historian resolves the contradiction by rejecting facts which cannot be empirically observed or corroborated, the ascetic resolves the contradiction by ranking hierarchically the different modes of knowing. Revelation is superior to empirical observation as a mode of knowing because the transient world is historically and physically dependent upon eternal forces. Thus at some, albeit lower, level of perception ascetics consider their stories about the reappearance of Janakpur to be accounts of how the past actually happened, and as such, these stories should lend themselves to corroboration by the archeological and documentary sources. This presents us with a problem, for the evidence from archeological sources, which lies visibly before the local ascetic, calls into question a major theme of the ascetic's oral testimony, namely that prior to the arrival of Chaturbhuj Giri and Sur Kisor the site of ancient Janakpur was lost in the midst of a desolate jungle. I have already mentioned the mounds at Ksireswar, Duhabi, Ranipatti, and Banauli and I have described the images which were found therein. Also on the periphery of Janakpur are the temples of Siva at Kalyaneswar and Jaleswar, both of which date from at least 1700, and at the village of Mithileswar on the banks of Janak Sarovar there used to be a temple of Siva whose existence was noted in nineteenth century pilgrimage guides but of which no trace has remained in living memory. How then do the ascetics deal with this evidence which proves the prior settlement of the region? According to the sacred texts the god Siva was the lineage deity of the Vaidehi dynasty of Mithila and hence Siva was also the guardian deity of ancient Janakpur. For the early ascetics of Janakpur-

dham the scattered temples and mounds were thought to date from the time of King Janak himself. The four temples of Siva at Kalyaneswar, Jaleswar, Ksireswar, and Mithileswar are situated approximately ten miles distant from Janakpurdham to the south, southwest, north, and northeast respectively. *Panc kosa*, or approximately ten miles, is an auspicious distance for Hindus and these four temples of Siva were taken by the Vaisnavite ascetics to be the remains of the south, west, north, and east gates of ancient Janakpur. By the early nineteenth century Sita Prasad of Sitamarhi and Sur Das of Pipra (Muzaffarpur district) "had brought to light" the circumambulation of Janakpur (Saranf1961: quatrains 442; 449-50). The route which the ascetics followed lay at a ten mile radius from the Janaki monastery in Janakpurdham and lasted five days beginning and ending at Kalyaneswar and passing by way of Jaleswar, Ksireswar, and Mithileswar where the ascetics offered *bel* leaves and water to Siva, the guardian deity of Janakpur. Thus these ruins, which the historian sees as evidence of a former tantric cult and prior settlement of the region, were seen by the ascetics as evidence of the gates of ancient Janakpur where King Janak used to worship the guardian deity of his capital. By taking the ruins of the medieval chieftaincies to be ruins of ancient Janakpur, the local ascetics failed to see the contradictory importance of this evidence and at the same time incorporated within their devotional cult the remains of the former tantric cult thereby leaving the surrounding jungle as the *tabula rasa* of modern Janakpurdham.

In so far as the ascetic recounts past events as he thinks they actually occurred he is performing a role which is comparable to that of the historian. The ascetic, however, does not tell his stories to an academy of scholars nor to an "informed public". Except for several university-educated teachers at a local college, Janakpurdham does not yet have any historians; rather it has its ascetics, pandits, bards, genealogists, and so forth. The ascetic's oral testimony is an act of devotion in which he glorifies his spiritual ancestry and his tutelary deity. In this glorification the ascetic may ornament or exaggerate his narrative with a view to invigourate the power and majesty of the worshipped and to express his own devotion to the tutelary deity. This extrinsic purpose of the ascetic oral tradition influences both the information which is presented in the story as well as the social context in which the story is told. Thus the oral testimony presents how Janakpur reappeared and Janakpurdham was established but the particular emphasis of the testimony is the auspicious origins of Janakpurdham, that is to say, the way in which both the tutelary deity and great ascetics sanctified a territory in the Kali Age so that Hindus might find release from the transient world.

Given this purpose of the oral testimony then one should not only query, as I

have done, whether the site of ancient Janakpur was found in a desolate jungle but also one should examine the significance of the jungle in the discovery of Janakpur. In the folklore of the south Asian subcontinent one does not usually encounter stories of Hindus living in the jungle. The jungle shelters and nourishes aboriginal peoples, but such people were thought by Hindus to be uncivilized. For Hindus jungle life is fraught with confusion and danger. Tigers slip silently through the tall waving grass. Leopards spring from overhanging limbs and seize their startled prey. In abandoned ponds and desolate watercourses dwell *jinn* who possess human form but who are violent by nature and more powerful than any human being. Where the vegetation has covered over abandoned villages and towns, the ghosts of people who died in battle or in sickness and who were not properly cremated roam in discontent. Deprived of their passage to the ancestor world, they seek their vengeance among the living on earth. In brief, the jungle is not a place where nature exists in a pristine state; rather it is a place of disorder and as such, jungle life is opposed to civilized life as disorder is opposed to order. For the Hindu, civilization is brought into existence with the social order and this order is, in turn, sustained by the cosmic energy in the universe. Thus in the Kali Age the spiritual energy which generated the mind-born cosmos of Brahma is thought to be running down; and in the gloomy visions of the Kali Age, which are found in the Puranic literature, the description of Hindu social life resembles the Hindu vision of aboriginal social life in the jungle.¹⁷ according to the sacred texts the Hindu king, whose temporal power had been quickened by the Brahman priest at the time of coronation, was the source of authority in the social world. The king's duty was to protect the subjects on his territory. The king, however, was ill-trained for chastising *jinn* and ghosts in the jungle. In order to deal with such subtle creatures subtle methods were required. The person who knew those methods was the ascetic. Armed with the *mantra* of his tutelary deity, he sallied forth into battle with these subtle beings and banished them from the territory. In the stories concerning the founding of Janakpurdham the town prospered under the benevolent protection of the kings of Makwanpur and later the kings of Nepal but it was the spiritual kings such as Ram Das of Sita Kunda Kutti who rid the jungle of the *jinn* and ghosts thereby favouring immigration to the site of ancient Janakpur. As the terrestrial intermediary between mundane and subtle creatures the Hindu ascetic was the spiritual midwife of nascent Janakpurdham. By

17. For example, in the *Visnu Purana* (6. 1) it is written: "Marriages in the age [of Kali] will not be conformable to ritual.....All gods will be gods to them that worship them and all orders of life will be common alike to all persons..... Gold, jewels, diamonds, and clothes will have perished..... The people will all live like anchorites upon leaves, and roots, and fruit....."

virtue of his spiritual energy acquired through self-discipline the ascetic banished the elements of disorder from the jungle thereby rendering the territory fit for civilisation.¹⁸

The other stories which I recounted in the first section of this essay express in a similar way the theme of the auspicious founding of Janakpurdham by Ram and Sita and their celibate devotees. The early ascetics are said to have travelled to the jungle of northern Mithila in order to discipline their body, speech, and mind. The jungle, however, has a double meaning for the actual place where the ascetic established his powers of self-rule was the esoteric jungle of his sense perceptions in which stalked the tigers of his unfulfilled desires. Hence in the story of Raghunath Das' discovery of King Janak's Treasury the tigers who growled from the undergrowth tell us more about the state of mind of Raghunath Das than of the *fauna* of the Nepalese Tarai. That Raghunath Das was not afraid of these tigers should come as no surprise, for he followed the path of desirelessness (*bairagya*). The fabulous jewel which he found in the jungle was more likely a 'thought gem' (*cintamani*) than some bauble which glitters on the finger of an indolent prince. Since King Janak (*Sirdhwaj*) was a great patron of sages and was himself an ascetic king (*rajarsi*) we might expect that he had a predilection for accumulating 'thought gems' in his royal treasury. The Rantan Sagar monastery which Raghunath Das founded at the site of King Janak's Treasury was known throughout the region as a place of power (*siddha sthan*) because of the austerities which Raghunath Das and his disciples performed there, and householders on pilgrimage to Janakpurdham often went to Ratna Sagar monastery to seek the blessings of the resident ascetics. As for the founding of the Ram Candra monastery, I have already analyzed the significance of the story in which Lord Ram Himself told Caturbhuj Giri that where he lay sleeping was the site of ancient Janakpur. In the account of Pritam Das' founding of the Janki monastery Hanuman travelled by bullock cart northward across Mithila to Janakpurdham. One mile south of Janakpurdham, however, the cart stopped in its tracks and Pritam Das was unable to advance the cart further. Hanuman is the servant *par excellence* of Ram and Sita and as such, he is represented by Vaisnavite ascetics as a red pennant on a bamboo pole guarding the

18. Although this relationship between the king and the ascetic is in some sense traditional, it is interesting to note that during the Vedic period land was rendered fit for civilization not by the ascetic battling with subtle creatures of the jungle, but by the Brahman priest causing Agni to taste the fruits of the land in sacrifice. So consecrated the land became fit for habitation by Hindus. In the *Satapatha Brahmana*, 1.4.1.14-17 there is an account of the role of Brahmans in the original settlement of Hindus in ancient Mithila.

entrance to the temple of Ram and Sita. When Hanuman stopped Pritam Das' cart on the outskirts of Janakpurdham, he knew exactly where lay his destination – not in Janakpurdham itself with Ram and Sita but instead just beyond the centre on the main pilgrimage route from the south at which place he guards the entrance to Janakpurdham. Finally there is the account of the founding of the Janki monastery in which Sur Kisor's image of the maiden Sita located the site of king Janak's palace. This particular image of Sita is thought to contain the inner essence (adi sakti) of Sita herself and hence her emerging from the ground at Janakpurdham in the Kali Age recalls her earlier emergence as a baby from a furrow in the earth during the Treta Yuga.

The earliest description of Janakpurdham as a Vaisnavite pilgrimage centre occurs in *Sri Maharaja Charitra* which was written by Raghunath Prasad of Bara Sthan, Ayodhya and was completed in the year 1805. From Raghunath Prasad's description of Janakpurdham we may conclude that by 1805 most of the ancient city of Janakpur had already 'reappeared'. In this pilgrimage guide the pilgrim is urged to begin his homage in Janakpurdham at King Janak's palace (the present Janaki monastery) and then to continue to the other sites associated with the marriage of Ram and Sita:¹⁹

From Janak's palace proceed to the east; there the parade ground can be seen
Where the Lord of the Raghus broke the Bow and everyone sang the virtues of
Ram.

One piece of the Bow flew to heaven; one piece sank and lodged in hell.
He threw the massive piece in his fist and it fell twelve miles to the north.

The pilgrimage to Dhanusa twelve miles northeast of Janakpurdham to behold the piece of the Bow of Siva is recommended, but the pilgrim is duly warned:

Elephants, tigers, rhinoceros, and wild buffalo; words cannot describe the journey through that impenetrable jungle.

Several ponds are mentioned in the text: Dhanusa Sar where the Bow of Siva was kept prior to its removal to the parade ground (the present Ranga Bhumi) and Ganga Sagar where Mithi, the first of the Janak kings, was born from the body of Nimi. Also mentioned are Dasrath Kund, Ratna Sagar, and Laksman Kund where Ram's younger brother Laksman bathed and where by bathing there, the "heart overflows

19. The passages relating to Janakpurdham are found on pages 69–72 of the 1930 edition of *Sri Maharaja Carita* which was published by Cintamani Das of Bara Sthan, Ayodhya.

with affection". Particular emphasis is given to Argaja Kund where occurred Sita's *ubatan*, a ceremony prior to marriage in which the bride's body is annointed with a paste of turmeric and curds:

—And there shines Argaja Kund, a pure and incomparable place which is pleasing to behold

Where Sita's limbs were annointed with the *ubatan* paste at the time of her marriage to Raghu Rai.

Steps of white stucco lead down the embankment to the bathing water, bestower of joy.

In *Sri maharaja Carita* we also find mention of several villages outside Janakpur-dham which are pilgrimage sites for Vaisnavite devotees. Sitamarhi, situated thirty-two miles southwest of Janakpur-dham is the place where King Janak found the baby Sita lying in a furrow. Bisaul, ten miles south of Janakpur-dham, is the site of Viswamitra's hermitage. Before arriving in Janakpur, Ram and Laksman passed the night at the hermitage:

And the dwelling at Bisaul is pleasant; the name of Viswamita dear and pure.

The following morning Ram and Laksman walked several miles westward to visit the temple of Girija. Girija is the pale-complexioned Parvati the consort of Siva. It was in the garden of this temple, located in the village of Phulwar ten miles southwest of Janakpur-dham, that Ram and Sita beheld one another for the first time:

Two (?) miles south of the parade ground and turning a little west

Lies Sri Girija's rare and beautiful pond where is the image of the pale complexioned one.

The maiden Sita went full of affection and prayed to Girija who showed her exceedingly great love.

And so the garden of Girija shined causing love to swell at the time of meditation.

In 1800 Janakpur-dham was not a town; rather it was a pilgrimage field (*ksetra*) at which were located the monasteries founded by Chaturbhuj Giri, Sur Kisor, Raghunath Das, and the other devotional saints. Near the monasteries were situated the thatched huts of the peasants who tilled the monastery land plus the ponds and pastures, orchards, fields, and tracts of forest which the Sen rulers of Makwanpur and the Shah kings of modern Nepal had gifted to the ascetics. A customs shed sheltered goods in transit on a minor trade route linking Sindhuli in the mountains to Darbhanga on

the plains. A bi-weekly bazaar in an open field provided a market for the peasant farmers from the neighbouring villages (Hamilton 1819: 161). Yet in those rude surroundings in which the rough outlines of the future town of Janakpur were rarely visible, lay an esoteric Janakpur which owed its origin to a state of mind. An entire town which had disappeared in the Dwapar Yuga reappeared in the Kali Yuga as an object of devotion so that man might cross over the sea of conditioned existence and find eternal refuge at the lotus feet of Lord Ram.

In this essay I have presented some of the stories which ascetics, pandits, and bards tell of the discovery of Janakpur and the founding of the pilgrimage centre. Archeological evidence and the land and revenue documents reveal, however, that these stories told by the ascetics, pandits, and bards do not necessarily recount how the past actually happened. We have then considered these stories as a source of information not on the content of the past but on the intent of the past. In particular, we noted the significance of the jungle as a place of disorder and the role of the Hindu ascetic who banishes from the jungle the subtle predatory creatures thereby rendering the territory fit for civilization. Second, we noted the role of the ascetics and the deities in consecrating Janakpur so that Hindus who undertake a pilgrimage to the sacred town might find release from the transient world. Thus in learning from the ascetics about the reappearance of Janakpur in the Kali Age, we must remember that the purpose of their oral testimony is not so much to tell us about the history of a place but rather to tell us about a place which releases man from history.

REFERENCES AND SOURCE MATERIALS

This article is based on field work carried out at the Vaisnavite pilgrimage centre of Janakpur in the eastern Tarai of Nepal in 1973–1975 with a grant from the School of Oriental & African Studies and the Central Research Fund of the University of London. I wish to thank the Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies at Tribhuvan University, the Guthisanshthan, Mahesh Regmi of the Regmi Research Institute, and ascetics, pandits, and bards of Janakpur for their cooperation in my research on the history of Janakpur.

A. *Documentary sources from the Janakpur monasteries.*

Royal order from Sujagat Sen of Makwanpur bestowing *kusa birta* rights over land in the Janakpur *mauja* and the Barah Kati *mauja* to abbot Sital Giri of Kuwa monastery, 1797 V. S. (1740).

Royal order from King Hem Karna Sen of Makwanpur confirming the bestowal of *kusa birta* rights over land on the Janakpur *mauja* and the Barah Kati *mauja* to Abbot Sital Giri of Kuwa monastery, 1810 V. S. (1753).

- Letter of appointment from King Rana Bahadur Shah confirming the accession of Abbot Paramanand Das to the throne of the Janaki monastery, Marg Sudi 15, 1849 V. S. (December 1792).
- Royal order from King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah confirming the bestowal of *kusa birta* rights over land in the Manipatti *mauja* by Kaji Amar Singha Thapa in fulfillment of a vow to Hanuman at the Ram Candra monastery in 1806, Vaisakh Sudi, 14, 1864 (April 1807).
- Royal order from King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah to Abbot Amar Giri of the Ram Candra monastery confirming a previous bestowal of *kusa birta* rights over land on the Janakpur *mauja* on Sravan Sudi 3, 1118 by King Indra Vidhata Sen of Makwanpur to Caturbhuj Giri, Phalgun Sudi, 1, 1867 (February 1811)
- Royal order from King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah to Abbot Pritam Das of Hanuman Nagar monastery confirming a previous bestowal of *kusa birta* rights over land in the Barah Kati *mauja* in 1838 V. S. (1781) to Pritam Das, Bhadra Sudi, 5, 1867 V. S. (August 1810).
- Royal order from King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah to Abbot Pati Ram Das of Laksman monastery confirming a previous bestowal of *kusa birta* rights over land in the Rajaur *mauja* on Phalgun Badi 9, 1810 V. S. (1754) from King Hem Karna Sen of Makwanpur to Jay Krisna Das, Bhadra Sudi 5, 1867 (August 1810).
- Royal order from King Girvan Yuddha Vikram Shah to Abbot Visambhar Das of Janki monastery confirming a previous bestowal of *kusa birta* rights over land on the Janakpur *mauja* on Kartik Sudi 7, 1784 V. S. (1727) from King Manik Sen of Makwanpur in the name of the goddess Janki, Phalgun Sudi 10, 1867 V. S. (February 1811).
- Royal order from Prime Minister Jang Bahadur Rana confirming the accession of Kamala Das to the abbotship of Sita Kund Kuti, Kartik Badi, 5, 1920 V. S. (November 1863).
- Royal order from King Surendra Vikram Shah to Abbot Narayan Das of Ratna Sagar monastery confirming a previous bestowal of *kusa birta* rights over land in the Mujeliya *mauja* on Jyestha Badi 7, 1891 V. S. (1834) from King Rajendra Vikram Shah to Abbot Bitthal Das, Magh Badi 6, 1933 (January 1877).

B. *Books and articles.*

- Ahmad, Q. 1958. "Early Anglo-Nepalese Relations with Particular Reference to the Principality of the Raja of Makwanpur." *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission* (Trivandrum), 34.

- Cohn, Bernard 1964. "The Role of the Gosains in the Economy of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Upper India." *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 1.
- Das, Avadh Kisor 1974. *Janakpur ki Jhanki*. Janakpur: the author.
- Datta, K. K. 1958. "Correspondence of Edward Roughsedge Relating to the Nepal War, 1814-1816." *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission* (Trivandrum), 34.
- Gaige, Frederick 1975. *Regionalism and National Unity in Nepal*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Ghosh, Rai Sahi Jamini Mohan 1930. *Sannyasi and Fakir Raiders in Bengal*. Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Book Dept.
- Hamilton, Francis 1819. *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal, and of the Territories annexed to this Dominion by the House of Gorkha*. Edinburgh : Archibald Co.
- Jha, Pandit Jibnath n. d. *Sri Mithila Mahatmyam*. Janakpur: the author.
- Kisor, Sur 1958. *Sri Mithila Bilas*. Faizabad: Sri Amla Devi.
- The Law of Manu*. 1886. Trans. from Sanskrit into English by George Buhler. Sacred Books of the East Series, 25. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Nepali, Ram Swarup Prasad n. d. *Janakpur Mahima*. Jaleswar: the author.
- Prasad, Raghunath 1930, *Sri Maharaja Caritra*. Ayodhya: Sri Cintamani Das of Bara Stan.
- Regmi, D. 1961. *Modern Nepal*. Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyaya.
- Regmi, M. 1971. *A Study in Nepali Economic History: 1768-1846*. New Delhi: Manjusri Publishing House.
- Sanwal, B. D. 1965. *Nepal and the East India Company*. London: Asia Publishing House.
- Saran, Yugal Priya 1961. *Sri Rasik Prakasa Bhakta Mala*. Commentary by Janaki Rasik Saran. Ayodhya: Laksman Kila.
- Sarma, Janak Lal 1968. "Citavandekhi Janakpursammaka Kehi Puratatvik Sthal." *Pracin Nepal*, 2.
- Satapatha Brahmana*. 1892. Trans. from Sanskrit into English by Julius Eggeling. Sacred Books of the East Series, 12. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Sinha, Bhagawati Prasad 1957. *Ram Bhakti men Rasik Sampradaya*. Balrampur: Avadha Sahitya Mandir.
- Stiller, Ludwig 1973. *The Rise of the House of Gorkha*. New Delhi: Manjusri Publishing House.
- Thakur, Upendra 1956. *History of Mithila*. Darbhanga: Mithila Institute.
- Vishnu Purana*. Trans. from Sanskrit into English with notes by H. H. Wilson. 6 vols. London: Turbner and Co., 1864.

SHORT REVIEWS

THE TIBETAN CARPET by Philip Denwood. ix, 101 pages; frontispiece, 83 illustrations, 24 colour plates. Published by Aris and Phillips, Ltd., Warminster, 1974.

Literature on the Tibetan carpet is scant. In spite of the fact that many traditional techniques of spinning, dyeing, and weaving are used to the present day, making first-hand accounts possible, authors have a tendency to prefix or suffix their remarks on the subject with an apology that little or nothing is known of the Tibetan carpet. Philip Denwood has broken new ground in this book. It is the first thorough investigation thus far and includes a detailed account of weaving techniques employed among Tibetan refugees as well as a historical survey into the origins of the craft. The historical survey is especially valuable and worthy of attention.

Prior to H. A. Lorentz's authoritative work, *A View of Chinese Rugs* (London and Boston, 1973), Tibet was virtually ignored in the field of oriental rugs. Lorentz verified that there was clear difference in knotting techniques between Tibetan and Chinese samples, but he still maintained that Tibetan carpets inevitably betrayed an original Chinese influence. The opinion that carpet weaving in Tibet was a direct offshoot of Chinese centers of manufacture, with its origin no earlier than the mid-18th century is one that is shared by most writers. The complete exposition of this view is given by Blanch Olschak in her article "Tibetan Carpets" (*Palette* 27, 1967). Tibetan carpets are referred to by other authors as fundamentally Chinese yet "characteristically Tibetanized" (to quote Marco Pallis). This, as Denwood points out, is not the whole story; still, it represents an advance over the older, widely-held view expressed as late as 1965 by the eminent authority Reinhard Hubel (*The Book of Carpets*, English translation, New York, 1970): "Examples of knotted carpet production from Tibet are lacking. What knotted carpets have come out of Tibet were all made in Khotan, and the provinces of Kansu, Ninghsia and Suiyan".

Denwood has filled this gap with his scholarly research; his book surfaces in the midst of conjectures and sheds light on the historical background of the art. He concludes from extant, if circumstantial, evidence that by 1000 A. D. carpet weaving was already introduced from Central Asia and practised in Tibet. He cites the text of *The Life of Mila Repa* which confirms the use of pile carpeting in southern Tibet by the year 1200. Denwood's critics will contend, as Murray Eiland does in a forthcoming book which contains a chapter on Tibetan rugs, that there is "enough ambiguity in the *Tibetan* words so that we cannot be at all certain that pile carpets rather than felts or other fabrics are mentioned". However, Denwood's reference

contains two separate Tibetan words for rug: *gdan*, a general term for cushions of all sorts, and *grum tse*, interpreted as specifically referring to pile carpets.

Denwood supports his argument with five observations, of which the most important is the difference in knotting techniques and looms between China and Tibet. His hypothesis points to Central Asia as the common ancestor of both techniques, but at entirely different periods of history. Tibet must have taken the "Senna loop" before the advent of "true knotting systems" in the area of Khotan and Kashgar. The "Senna loop" has since become extinct in all but peripheral regions such as southern Tibet. It was supplanted by the "true knot" (technically, I would prefer the term "dead knot"), which found its way to China via the silk route 400 years ago. This is entirely plausible and consistent with the author's assertion that carpet weaving has a thousand year history in Tibet. In contrast, the argument from negative evidence that since no extant Tibetan rug can be dated before the 18th century, rug weaving did not exist before that time appears weak and proves nothing at all.

It is in this area of historical conjecture that the author is at his best. The first and last chapters of his book give solid footing to his view that "The role of China was to provide the already entrenched Tibetan carpet industry with a wide and highly popular range of visual design, pattern, and motif which dominate its repertoire to this day".

In the remaining five chapters of the book we leave the museum and library, the traditional home of carpet books, and delve into the weaver's craft. Here the finely honed tools of the historian and scholar are clearly at a loss to convey the legitimate worth of the Tibetan tradition. In this respect it is unfortunate that *The Tibetan Carpet* belongs to the same category as the half-dozen other manuscripts, articles and books I have been seen, beginning with A. Messinesi's "Rug Weaving in Tibet" (*Quarterly Journal of the Guilds of Weavers, Spinners, and Dyers*, June- and September, 1956, reprinted in Lorentz, 1973), which have attempted descriptions of tools and weaving practices found in Tibet. When not totally inaccurate (this Denwood is not), these accounts are indecipherable. Were they to be deciphered, still they would remain incoherent to those practicing the art, and useless to those studying it seriously. It is a case of misplaced accent and emphasis, an alien's reduction of the technique to a cut and dried linear sequence mixing essentials and non-essentials and thus distorting the tradition. It is important and necessary for an author hoping to present an authoritative description of weaving techniques to be rooted in the tradition and to have already mastered the techniques he intends to describe.

Traditionally, then, we can speak of a texture peculiar to Tibetan rugs and certainly outside the sphere of standardization nearly universal in the Tibetan carpet industry today. Wool warp, hand-spun and plied, in conjunction with a wool weft (unplied) were used in Tibet and varied greatly in thickness and strength among weaving houses and districts. Perhaps it is because Denwood never saw wool warp in use that

he failed to ascertain the full importance of this diversity. Furthermore, the texture was individualistic to the extreme: the unique method of mounting the loom and tensioning the warp led to more irregularities that were peculiar to each weaver's tension. It is in this connection that we hear statements from weavers that for two or more people to work together on the same loom they must be of the same mind, the same tension. Essentially what this means is that, within the limits of his materials and individual tension, the weaver chooses a ratio in which to work. The ratio can be said to be the actual size of the knot (the smallest unit of design). Knots were seldom square and by ratio is meant the number of rows and the number of knots that effect a square. In the present day the standard ratio is 3:5 (sometimes 4: 7), meaning three rows to five knots, prevalent among refugee weavers. It yields approximately 55 knots to the square inch and has been, for the most part, determined by the given thickness of machine-spun, cotton string found in India and used as warp. The ratio plays a definite role in the type of design to be woven as well as its execution, and it is just the standardization of materials, tensions and ratios that signals the loss of traditional texture.

Natural dyestuffs also belong to this textural tradition. Here again we assume that Denwood did not encounter a practicing Tibetan dyer for the recipe listed for indigo is incomplete while that for lac is simply a bad guess. These two dyes, together with rhubarb, were the most fast, and therefore, the most important of Tibetan dyestuffs. Secondly, there is traditional design with regard to Tibetan rugs. Here the question of "original influence" does not enjoy the same relevance it does when concerned with technique. Whether China influenced Tibet (probable) or vice versa (also possible) is not pertinent to the fact that these two traditions, though unrelated technically, are mutually intelligible aesthetically. Motifs may be borrowed among cultures for instance the cloud-band found in Turkish carpets is indeed related to the ribbon found in Tibetan ones—but it is the particular expression of that motif, its stylization, that is significant to any in-depth study. Symbolic interpretation of design is merely an aspect of the tradition; nevertheless, it has become such a temptation among panpan-eclectics on the one hand (I am referring to S. V. R. Camman's "Symbolic Meanings in Oriental Rug Patterns", a series of articles published in 1971), and a sanctuary for simplistics on the other (see Fritz Hermann's article "Design and Pattern in Oriental Knotted Rugs" as an example: "Many Chinese carpets . . . are closer to the European way of thinking than to the Oriental.") that it is impossible to say anything further without specific examples. In this respect Denwood has remained silent and so it is H. A. Lorentz who provides some necessary background material for perceiving this really tight stylistic tradition. Lorentz has taken up where his predecessor Adolf Hackmack left off (*Chinese Carpets and Rugs*, tr. Tientzin 1924) and their accounts can serve as a bridge between these two traditions.

Philip Denwood has provided the first wide selection of color plates on Tibetan carpets to date. They are representative of the general order though decidedly (with the exception of two) mediocre when compared with some of the great rugs that have emerged from Tibet. Murray Eiland intends to publish at least one wonderful rug of this class in his forthcoming book and we can assume that more authors of rug books will follow suit as appreciation of these rugs increases. Tibet, after all, not only was the last practitioner of this ancient knotting system but also acted as a store house for many lost and forgotten motifs from all over Asia. When more examples are "discovered" in the wool many aspects of this tradition of rug weaving in Tibet will be explained to the discriminating eye and perhaps more eloquently than in any book yet written.

There is also much to learn from carpets produced in the present day by Tibetans. The carpet weaving industry is developing at a rapid pace among refugees. Kathmandu, Nepal has undoubtedly become the most important center of manufacture both in quantity as well as quality. Here there is a trend toward small private enterprise, of weavers who are independent of larger factories. Tibetan wool is trucked down from the Tibetan border and its use is becoming more widespread. At present there are four separate weaving houses which employ vegetable dyes in Kathmandu and one that uses it exclusively so on looms strung in wool warp and weft. The tradition of weaving is experiencing a revival and there is evidence of other knot ratios apart from the standard six to ten. This was unheard of only four years ago. If this trend continues and standardization is brought down to the family level it is very possible that carpet weaving will survive as it has for centuries—as a well-practiced folk art.

THOMAS L. GUTA

* * *

AN ANTHOLOGY OF BUDDHIST TANTRIC SONGS: *A Study of Cāryāgīti*. By Per Kvaerne. Det Norske Videnskaps-Akademi; II. Hist.—Filos. Klasse; Skrifter, Ny Serie No 14. Universitetsforlaget, Oslo; 1977. 275 pages. Price not stated.

The present work is a revised version of a dissertation defended at the Historical Philosophical Faculty of the University of Oslo in 1973. The study concerns a small collection of songs known as the *Caryāgīti*—in the author's translation "Songs of the mystic path" which was first published at Calcutta by Haraprasād Śāstri in 1916. Per Kvaerne's primary intention was to elucidate a very difficult text. He has therefore restored as far as possible the corrupt original text and given an English translation of it "which is as correct as the material admits". Kvaerne has not only battled with the *Caryāgīti*; he has also read the Sanskrit commentary by Munidatta; and he has carefully studied the Tibetan translations of both the *Caryāgīti* and Munidatta's commentary. By concentrating on Munidatta's interpretation of the songs, Kvaerne

has shown that the Tibetan translations frequently depend directly on Mundatta's commentary and that the Tibetan translation of the latter is "remarkably poor".

Kvaerne's study is divided into two parts. In the first, the introduction passes in review the text, the Tibetan translations, the title, the language, the authors to whom the songs are attributed in the text, the date of composition (prior to the 12th century), and the genre. A useful critical summary of previous studies follows. Munidatta's commentary and its Tibetan translation are then examined; and the three following chapters concern the religious background, the imagery of the *Caryāgīti*, and the concept of *sahaja*. Attention should be drawn at this point to a recent article by Kvaerne 'On the concept of *sahaja* in Indian Buddhist Tantric Literature' published in *Temenos*, vol. II, 1975, p. 87-135. The second part of the volume under review contains the English translation of the *Caryāgīti* which is accompanied by the old Bengali text (also in romanization), philological notes in which Shadhidullah's and Sen's previous translations are often discussed, and the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts of Munidatta (these also in romanization). For some reason, the notes to Part I have been printed after Part II.

Kvaerne appears to me to have given us the best edition and translation of these songs to have appeared to date. His study is a very thorough and painstaking job work; and he has undoubtedly fulfilled what was required of him by his university in an admirable manner. However, despite the respect which his philological competence inspires, this reader cannot help regretting that more attention was not devoted to the context in which these "texts" have come down to us. For they are not just dusty texts long laid in scholarly libraries, apt matter for learned dispute. They are primarily songs which vehicle a tradition of devotion which is still alive. *Caryā* songs were collected in Nepal in recent times by both Rāhul Sāṃkr̥tyāyan and Shashibhusan Dasgupta. Unfortunately, as far as I know, they have not yet been published. Surely it should be possible to record such songs on tape, question the singers, investigate the conditions in which the songs are sung, observe the dances, analyse the musical accompaniment, in a word: study them in an anthropological perspective, before it is too late ?

A. W. M.

* * *

TIBETAN FRONTIER FAMILIES. Reflections of three generations from D'ing-ri. By Barbara Nimri Aziz. xv+292 pages with 9 maps, 20 b/w illustrations. Published by Vikas, New Delhi, 1978. I. Rs. 75

This excellent study is described by its author as a "social biography" of the D'ing-ri region of Tibet, located just to the north of Mt. Everest. It is a lively and readable account, firmly based on an anthropological study of the lives and ideology of the peasantry, the hitherto silent majority of a country which we all know to be

populated by saints, lamas, nobles, monks, and brigands. The result is a new and challenging perspective on Tibetan society.

The research was carried out mainly in a refugee settlement in Solu Khumbu, Nepal, where some 2000 of D'ing-ri's 12,000 population, the great majority peasants, have installed themselves since 1960, some 100 km. from their former homes. This unique situation, a dense community of refugees all from the same small area, representing "all economic levels and social spheres formerly extant in D'ing-ri", has enabled the author to draw a convincing portrait; she clearly got to know the 'Ding-ri-wa well from first-hand contact and observation and could check their memories against their neighbors'. Running through the book are 43 capsule biographies of individual D'ing-ri-wa.

D'ing-ri society is presented as divided into four hereditary categories. Ninety per cent are "commoners", among whom the author recognizes three economic classes: tenant farmers (roughly half of rural 'Ding-ri-wa), traders, confined to the bazaar town of Gang-gar, and sharecroppers and itinerant laborers (40 per cent of all D'ing-ri-wa). The commoner category is defined socially by contrast with the two higher, landowning groups, hereditary priests (*ngag-pa*) and nobles who form one per cent of the population, and the hereditary outcastes (*ya-wa*), 9 per cent, a previously little described category of which the author gives a very interesting account. But it is the tenant-farming class of commoners who form the backbone of rural D'ing-ri; their social ideology dominates the rural society and the present study.

The author's analysis of the household and family, illustrated by many case histories and mind-boggling kin-diagrams is most convincing and is the most important part of the book. "In D'ing-ri the household is the primary economic unit, it is the unit of production, the unit of taxation, the landholding unit and the unit for political representation." The observation applies to the tenant-farmer household bound to a plot of land by rent and service obligations which outlive its members. For the household to be economically viable, it must be large enough to cultivate its holding to pay its rent or taxes in kind and in service and to meet its obligations for cooperative labor and the conscription of soldiers or monks, and still have manpower left for the more profitable activities of herding and petty trade. In this context the author shows that family and kinship organization is based on residence (i.e. the household, including adopted members) rather than on lineage. Tenant farmers are named after their household, and many kinship terms are shown to be used as houseranks, with only one of each category in any household. There is a household shrine but no equivalent of the Nepali lineage *kul devata*. The joint family is rather similar to the Chinese but with the added institution of polyandry which has long fascinated observers of Tibetan society. Although polygamy of all types accounts for only 30 per cent of all marriages (i. e. 50 per cent of married people) fraternal polyandry (two-thirds

of polygamous marriages) is universally idealized by rural D'ing-ri-wa who see it as increasing the size of the household by keeping brothers together, even if they eventually produce fewer sons. (Brothers who take separate wives do not remain in the same household.) The author shows that in such households, the daughter-in-law plays the central role, and that D'ing-ri-wa commonly attribute the success or failure of the household to her. Polyandry is practised mainly by the tenant-farming class (and by the landowning classes), not by urban D'ing-ri-wa or by the other large class of commoners, the sharecroppers and itinerant laborers, whose generally nuclear households (*d'ü-ch'ung* 'small smoke') are not bound to the land and do not have permanent tax or rent obligations.

The village is described, in less detail, as a corporate unit of tenant-farming households paying rent to a single landlord. But the author asserts that there is no larger unit within which villages cooperate; they face a common landlord or governor individually.

"Religion in the home, in the temple, or in the minds of its practitioners does not constitute a central force in the social structure." Instead the D'ing-ri-wa responds to religion and chooses his guru individually from among the ten or so active teachers in the region. (Incidentally, the author notes that the D'ing-ri-wa does not care what sect his teacher belongs to.) These teachers are generally the heads of small *gön-pa* established by themselves or a recent predecessor on the strength of personal followings.

Among other religious establishments, the author introduces an old and little-known type of establishment, agricultural hamlets called *ser-ky'im* ('commoner') *gön-pa* which serve set parishes by performing routine domestic rituals. The large government monastery at Shel-kar is presented as irrelevant to the religious life of the people, having no pastoral function.

Throughout the book the author insists on the variety of religious, social, and economic options among which individual D'ing-ri-wa could choose and her method of using case histories is well chosen to bring this out. She criticizes previous students of Tibetan society for presenting an "administrative monolith" and for following the Tibetans themselves in describing social relations in narrowly economic terms; their accounts are "inconsistent with our sense of the robust Tibetan character and religion". The author herself slights economic data, with the result that outside the family circle her account seems incomplete. For example the landless *d'üch'ung* are presented (one hears the D'ing-ri-wa taxpayers speaking here) as "free of the constraints of land taxes and the social obligations of other classes" but there is no serious discussion of economic obligations, sharecropping and indebtedness.

The book is well printed and produced. However more professional editing would have removed a number of clumsy expressions and malapropisms e. g. "runagate" (p. 39) conflating "runaway" and "renegade", "malingering" for sexual misbehavior

by a celibate (pp. 247–8), and the description of Shel–kar as a “forboding centre” (p. 235). The book is well provided with maps.

B. M.

* * *

ESSAIS SUR L'ART DU TIBET edited by Ariane Macdonald and Yoshiro Imaeda. Librairie d'Amerique et d'orient, Adrien Maisonneuve, Paris, 1977. 188 pages, Price: n. a.

The book offers a collection of seven scholarly essays, four in French and three in English, by upcoming as well as well-established Tibetologists on aspects concerning Tibet. The foreword tells us that its publication was timed with the occasion of the exhibition arranged in the Grand Palais, Paris in 1977 which, one guesses, was devoted to the exposition of Tibetan art. All the essays included in the collection do not strictly pertain to the domain of art as the title of the book would imply. This departure may have been allowed by the editors in recognition of a very broad meaning of art and thus laying down no strict parameters of it. A. M. Blondeau has rendered a short review of Tibet's geography and history up to 1959; Y. Imaeda discusses some Chinese editions of the Tibetan Kanjur and Tanjur; R. A. Stein delves into the significance of the mouth of the *makara* (crocodile) head as it is found depicted in some ritual objects; Heather Karmay studies the Tibetan costume between the 7th and the 11th centuries; John Lowry describes a fifteenth-century sketchbook belonging to an artist; Ariane Macdonald, in the longest article of the collection, studies a bronze-statue depicting the fifth Dalai-Lama; and finally H. E. Richardson, the British official, who has the double distinction of being a renowned Tibetologist and living in Tibet for many years before the Chinese take-over has contributed a write-up reconstructing the architectural description of the Jokhang, “Cathedral” of Lhasa.

The essays in the collection are all written by scholars specialized in Tibetan literary and textual studies. Naturally, therefore, in all of them the central focus is on a search for and collation of their material proofs in the scattered literary sources of diverse forms rather than in the direct observation of art. But this methodology has more than proved its merit in the study of Tibetan art history as two essays in the collection show. For example Imaeda has shown the danger of a sweeping generalisation that an art historian, inexpert in handling relevant texts, can make by pointing out the error of Heather Karmay (p. 23). Much in the same manner, but through a far more formidable research, Madame Macdonald has enlarged upon a bronze-statue of the Boston Museum described in the museum's catalogue by the art-historian, Pratapaditya Pal. Her research has led to the accurate identification of the said statue with the fifth Dalai-Lama and helped to fix its date in a most convincing manner. In the course of it, she has made a further find of a terracotta figure of the fifth

Dalai-Lama, which has increased our information on the portrait-making art of Tibet even more.

One essay in this collection, that of J. Lowry on a fifteenth century sketch-book, has a subject matter that intimately concerns Nepal. It describes an illuminating instance of a Nepali artist who had gone to Tibet in order to learn the art there in the fifteenth century. Lowry discovered this sketch-book consisting of forty folios of Nepali paper joined in a folding manner in a private collection in Calcutta. It is all filled with line drawings in black ink of ornamental foliage, dragons and figures of mythical kings, arhats, kinnars and kinnaris gods and goddesses of the Mahayana-Vajrayana pantheon. In all probability it was an iconographical note-book of the artist which he had preserved for consultation before undertaking any artistic commissions. The value of the sketch book is greatly increased by its colophon written in Newari script and dated in the Nepala Samvat 555. The colophon has been excellently reproduced in the essay and a tentative translation of it given, but no reading of the colophon itself has been included. In view of its importance, and the ambiguity which still surrounds its full meaning, I thought it useful to give its reading here so that others may also attempt its full interpretation. I have taken the help of Dhanavajra Vajracharya in this task.

1. Om Samvat 555 vesasa vaddhi 12 jivaramana thavavona: se (ge) yochona bhotaneñā samphūrhi saklabu thama doyakā juro:praticitaṃna vava
2. lālācūnavāyoke ñeñā juro:viseṣa chyāna hayā vāhiri: nyara dvaṃsa jyā yāna hayā jurom jivarāmayā prateṣana doyakā kha
3. Śubha.
4. Om Śhubha: agurikutavakhana juro netāpari juro:

The sketch-book, thus reaffirms not only Nepal's close artistic links with Tibet continuing since the days of A-ni-ko in the 13th century, it also sheds new light on the working methods of the artists in those days. It looks almost certain that rendering styles (such as the Chinese, Tibetan, Nepalese and Indian as modern art historians would call them) had become an inseparable part of art like its iconographic prescriptions. An artist like Jivaram needed to master all these styles in order to enable him to work for all kinds of commissions without disadvantage in these parts. There is no doubt about the interest the volume will generate among scholars of art of Asia despite the highly specialized nature of treatment given to the subject-matter in these essays. The printing and photographic reproductions are of high quality.

P. R. S.

* * *

TIBETAN STUDIES presented at the Seminar of Young Tibetologists, Zurich, June 26–July 1, 1977. Edited by Martin Brauen and Per Kvaerne. Published by Volkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich, Ramistrasse 71, CH 8006 Zürich, 1978. 232 pages. Price: Fr. 22.

The most useful seminars seem to be small ones. The volume edited by Martin Brauen and Per Kvaerne is a good example of a successful, small seminar. Twenty five young Tibetologists met for five days at Zurich in the summer of 1977; and eighteen of the papers presented at the seminar are published here in a format and at a price which are most acceptable. The papers concern a variety of aspects of Tibetan culture history, literature, religion—and vary in length from 3 to 24 pages. All concerned are to be heartily congratulated on the success of the enterprise. After reading this volume one wonders whether an age-limit should not be set for participants in international seminars.

A. W. M.

* * *

TIBETAN RELIGIOUS ART. By Loden Sherab Dagyab. Asiatische Forschungen, Band 52. Otto Harrassowitz, Wiesbaden, 1977. 2 volumes, 173, 66 pages. Price: 280 DM.

These two well-printed volumes in impeccable English constitute a serious contribution to the study of Tibetan art. The first volume contains the text and the second colour and black-and-white plates with explanatory captions which do not date the pieces illustrated. The text is divided into four sections. The first contains a general introduction on Buddhism, dealing with such matters as the Refuges, Hinayāna, Mahāyāna, and Tantrayāna. The second deals with early representations of the Buddha, the functions of religious statues and paintings, the artist and his training, the dimensions and symbolical adornments of statues and paintings, their consecration, their worship and the offerings made to them, and has some interesting pages on the main schools of art in Tibet—which to some extent complement Gene Smith's recent researches on the same subject. The third section is concerned with different kinds of *than-ka*, the preparation of painted *than-ka*, and the materials used in painting. Clay sculpture, metal sculpture, metal casting, metals and alloys, as well as stone and wood carving are passed in review. The fourth and longest section (p. 60–118) deals with the sixteen *gnas-brtan* (sk. *sthāvira*), *ša-ri'i bu* and *Mo'u gal gyi bu* the *dge-bśnen* Dharma Tal-la, Hva-šan and the Four Guardian Kings. Useful legendary and textual explanations about all of these personages are provided. There is a copious and extremely useful bibliography of Tibetan sources (p. 119–133.) This is followed by an index of Tibetan authors included in the bibliography, a list of Indian authors as well as a list of those more commonly known by their Tibetan names. The volume ends with Tibetan and Sanskrit indexes.

This is a painstaking and useful study. The author is to be commended when he follows western rather than Tibetan practice by indicating in his notes references to pages and not just titles and authors. Unfortunately in his text he pays little attention to the dates of his sources and their inter-relationship; so much undoubtedly legendary material tends to get mixed up with historical facts in the course of the exposition. The photographs are good and clearly printed; but the artistic quality of the objects represented is perhaps not always of a high order. Indeed one of the interesting aspects of this book is the absence of an aesthetic perspective, the author's viewpoint is religious and technological. Quite apart from the information distilled in these pages, we learn by reading them how a Tibetan, who has adapted himself in a remarkable manner to western culture, sees the art of his homeland. It is unfortunate that the enormous price of this book will limit its readers to those who frequent specialised institutes and libraries. Mr. Dagyabs book deserves a much wider public; and it is to be hoped that some enterprising publisher will contemplate a paper-backed edition.

A. W. M.

* * *