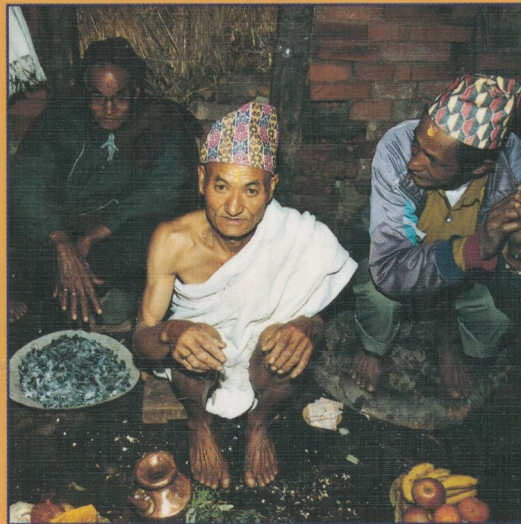


Niels Gutschow
Axel Michaels

Handling Death

The Dynamics of Death and Ancestor Rituals
Among the Newars of Bhaktapur, Nepal



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With Contributions by
Johanna Buss and Nutan Sharma
and a Film on DVD by
Christian Bau

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DVD Handling Death

FOREWORD

The genesis of this book

This account of death rituals in Bhaktapur brings together an architectural historian who essentially localizes households and events, defines spatial entities, and maps movements in space, and an indologist who knows the canonical texts which prescribe the ritual involved.

The architectural historian, Niels Gutschow, commenced his initial research in Bhaktapur in 1971 and by spring 1974 had established a social topography of the city (Gutschow/Kölver 1975), followed by a network of death processions. The first death ritual (*dākilā*), performed by Gaṇeś Mān Bāsukala on Gokarṇa aūsī, was observed in October 1983, one year after the death of Bāsukala's father. In spring 1986, all of the *chvāsah* stones (which absorb the polluting qualities of ritual waste in cases of death) were mapped with the help of Chandranāth Kusle and Gaṇeś Mān Bāsukala. Interviews with purity and ritual specialists such as Cālā (torch bearers), Nau (barbers), Jugī, Danyā (tailors), Nāy (butchers) and Pvaḥ (untouchables) in spring 1987 gave for the first time an overview of how unclean castes participate in death rituals. On 10th April 1987 the offering on the 7th day after the death of Langtugu Bāsukala was observed in detail.

Under the auspices of the *Sonderforschungsbereich* (Collaborative Research Centre) 619 "Dynamics of Ritual" of the German Research Council, these studies were resumed in July 2002 with a specific emphasis on death rituals and ancestor worship in Bhaktapur. The rituals performed for Rabi Svāgamikha, who died on 9th July 2002,

formed an important basis for the research presented here. *Latyā* (or *sapinḍikarāṇa*), performed on the 45th day after his death on 22nd August was documented by Christian Bau with a video camera and is presented as an appendix to this publication.

Parallel to these rituals, the monthly water offerings (*jaladāna*) by Bikhu Bahadur Suvāl (Bijay Bāsukala's *pāju*, i.e. mother's brother) in memory of his deceased father were likewise recorded, as was the offering of a cow (*godāna*) on the occasion of Bisketjātrā on 23rd August and the offering of grains across the holy field (*kṣetra*) of Paśupatināth on the occasion of Bālacaturdaśī on 10th December 2002.

In early May 1987, 129 lineage gods (*du-gudyah*) were mapped for the first time – a survey that was substantially enlarged in May 2003. The ritual of worshipping the lineage god was documented on 22nd April 1999 for the Bāsukala *phukī* headed by Rām Bāsukala (the great-uncle of Bijay Bāsukala), whose cremation could be witnessed on 21st October 2003.

The indologist Axel Michaels started to work in Nepal as the Director of the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP) and the Nepal Research Centre. His research was focussed on the history and rituals of the Paśupatinātha temple and its vicinity (Michaels 1994), which involved studies of the cremation grounds and the Bālacaturdaśī festival (Michaels 1999). He also observed several death and ancestor rituals (e.g. *nhenumhā*, *latyā*, *du byēkegu*) in Bhaktapur in 2003/04.

Outline of the book

The present volume deals with death rituals among the farmer community of the Newars of Bhaktapur. It starts with an introduction to the study of South Asian, especially Hindu life-cycle rituals in general, and more specifically death rituals and ancestor rituals in Nepal, based on textual and ethnographic material from various sources. It can be seen that death rituals mostly concern impurity among the closer relatives, embodiment of the “soul” of the deceased, its deification and pacification, memory and mourning. These notions, which are however widely discussed in studies on Hindu death rituals, are by no means adequate for grasping the death and ancestor rituals in a specific social and regional setting.

The first part of the book, therefore, shifts to such a specific setting, to the ancient city of Bhaktapur in Nepal and more particularly to the farmer Newars who have shaped a specific urban culture over the past two thousand years. A short introduction to the urban fabric and spatial conditions as well as to the places of the spirits of Bhaktapur is followed by descriptions of the specialists involved in the death and ancestor rituals. It can be seen that the duties of the Brahmin are assisted by a great number of members of other sub-castes.

The description of the various death and ancestor rituals – many of them have previously never been described – is divided into two categories: calendric rituals of death and renewal, in which mostly a generalized group of ancestors or ghosts is worshipped, and personal death and ancestor rituals which are more or less directly related to the deceased and his family.

In the second part we present as a model a more detailed description of one of the most important death rituals: the union of the deceased with the forefathers (*latiyā*, Skt.

sapinḍikaraṇa), which is also documented on the DVD included in this book. Moreover, we have edited and translated the texts used by the Brahmin priest during this particular ritual. This combination of textual and contextual approaches – which we call the ethno-indological method – has been theoretically elaborated elsewhere (Michaels 2004a and 2005a). We try to show that the used texts are not liturgical and normative texts that restrict action, but that on the contrary they leave space for many variations and alterations or even ad hoc inventions which make for the dynamics of the ritual.

From the indological point of view, special attention has been paid to local handbooks and manuals of the following categories:

Personal handbooks belonging to priests, normally not published, but occasionally microfilmed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project; such texts are written in a mixture of Sanskrit, Nevārī and Nepālī.

Printed manuals in Sanskrit, often published with a commentary or translation in Nepālī; such texts are used by many *pūjārīs* during their rituals.

Elaborate ritual texts in Sanskrit, written by learned scholars of renown and published locally by the Mahendra-Saṃskṛta-Viśvavidyālaya, Tribhuvan Viśvavidyālaya, Nepāla Rājakiya Prajñā-Pratiṣṭhāna, or private publishers.

Ritual texts in Sanskrit belonging to the great tradition, with a pan-Indian distribution.

Documents from private persons or from the Guṭhī Saṃsthāna related to the rituals performed.

Grey literature (pamphlets etc.) from ritual organisations.

However, the main intention is to try to understand both the agency in rituals and the function of the texts in contexts. We hold that the agency is not only with the priest (*pūjārī*) but also with the sacrificer (*yajamāna*) and



Khulā: ritual “six months” after the death of Jagat Mān Suvāl, 21st July 2002 in Taha-mala (Talakva), Bhaktapur. The Brahmin, Prajal Śarmā, prepares the ritual ground on ground floor level (chēḍi), to his left the lamp sukunḍā, to his right the container for vermilion, sinhamhu.

his family, the spectators of the ritual, and even trans-human agents. From this point of view, we find rituals as well as ritual texts much less formal than they appear *prima facie* to be.

By way of conclusion we try in the third part to strengthen our point that death and ancestor rituals, if not rituals in general, have to be seen in a new light, because they offer much more freedom than has been generally accepted. Although it is true that such rituals are formalized, they are by no means strict, stereotypical and unchangeable. Moreover, Newar death and ancestor rituals follow their own dynamics, they are – in Don Handelman’s term, “rituals in their own right” (see the introduction to the 2nd edition of Handelman 1998 and 2004). We have tried to develop similar ideas by focussing on aspects of pollution and purification, continuity and change, modernity and anti-ritualism.

This book is intended as the first part of a trilogy of studies on life-cycle rituals in Nepal. It will, hopefully, be supplemented by a volume on child and youth rituals as well as one on marriage rituals. In addition, the research on the ageing rituals of the Newars in Kathmandu and Patan – which has been undertaken by Alexander von Rospatt (Berkeley) in close cooperation with the authors and within the research project “The Dynamics of Rituals” – will present additional material for the study of the ritual passages of life.

Actors and places

Death rituals are enacted not by “somebody”, “somewhere” at “any time”. A range of actors come to the fore: family members, and ritual specialists whose services are based on a long time relationship with the clients, the *jajmān*. In any single action one comes across a predefined group. The chief mourner is assisted by a married daughter, sister or aunt, the *mhaymacā*, and her husband, the *jicā-bhāju*. It is clear from the beginning who will be polluted within the patrilineage and which funeral association will assist at the pyre. Moreover, the processional path of the bier is predefined, as are the place of cremation and the place of the ensuing death rituals for twelve months to come.

This uniqueness of the actors, places and time has prompted us to name the places involved in town and on its periphery. Almost every action is exactly dated and the actor named. The actors relate to a deceased member of the family. His or her name is repeated by the Brahmin after being uttered by the client. On the occasion of *soraśrāddha* after the full moon in September the naming extends beyond the usual three generations and may include over a hundred names, including the names of friends, kings and saints. It might be argued that a deceased enters an any-

mous world of *pitr*. The naming of those in whose name a death ritual is enacted would individualize the dead in an unjustified manner. But there are also places dedicated to the deceased among the fields surrounding Bhaktapur. Their names are remembered for at least two generations before their places come to be known anonymously as haunted by spirits that need to be pacified.

Ethnographic research has tended to anonymize places and persons, allegedly out of respect for the people who were involved and whose actions were documented to support a more general analysis. In our case the observed ritual stands in its own right. It is the example *par excellence* in time and space, which in the second part of the book is compared with written documents of various origin. The dynamics of ritual are discussed from the perspective of this identified case, the prescriptions of the Brahmins, and the textbooks of the high culture.

Methodologically, we thus focus on a unique ritual and then try to understand it by using the texts of the priests and locally used or distributed texts of the so-called great tradition. Our method is therefore inductive rather than deductive. Our starting point is the ritual practice, and we do not consider the actual rituals or “corrupt” texts as deviant, but as authentic. What happens *in situ* is for us not a more or less apt realization or enactment of what is textually prescribed, but a ritual performance in its own right. This also means that we do not regard the ritual texts as secondary or corrupt categories of material simply because their Sanskrit or Nevārī does not follow certain rules of spelling and grammar.

At the same time we do not feel we are prying into a realm of privacy that should be left untouched. The families concerned agreed to be filmed and close-up photographs were only ever taken after an affirmative gesture was given. Niels Gutschow has main-

tained a long-standing relationship with the families whose cases are documented in this volume. He feels that the identification of an actor and his or her place in time, space and society is an overt expression of respect. The actors have actively to be freed from a veil of anonymity in order to underline that they are not simply objects of research and victims of theory, but subjects and agents.

Spelling and transcription rules

If not otherwise indicated or evident from the context, all terms and place names presented throughout the first and in much of the third part of the book are based on Nevārī (Nev.) spoken by farmers (Jyāpu) in Byāsi, from whose community most of our informants came. The majority of these terms are also listed in the glossary.

We are aware that there is no standard Nevārī language. Varieties are commonly found among the different communities and especially in the dialects of the towns and villages of Kathmandu Valley. This variety is also reflected in the way rituals are performed. Some of the problems of spelling and transcription are grounded in the language itself, others stem from the various techniques for reducing the language to writing, whether Devanāgarī or Roman script, whether old or new.

Few of these issues were solved for the dictionary of architectural terms presented in 1987 by Niels Gutschow, Bernhard Kölver and Ishwaranand Shresthacarya. For example, the question of the high vowels, the *ie/ya-* and the *u/0/va-* series: alternations within the series are a characteristic of Classical Nevārī manuscripts and persist to the present day. More worrying, because inevitably cutting across a phonemic opposition, are alterations between the low front and the low back vowels *ā/a/* and *a/a*. Additionally come the

effects resulting from the loss of certain consonants at the ends of words, which leads to compensatory lengthening – a process which apparently some words underwent repeatedly, producing chains such as *cākala-* (obl.): *cākaḥ*, *cāka*, *cāḥ*, all of them the renderings of Skt. *cakra*. Rules about which stem to select in compounds have yet to be discovered.

Sanskrit (Skt.) terms are transcribed according to the standard conventions. However, the Sanskrit text given infra is often “corrupt.” Since it was written for the personal use of the priest and not meant for publication or translation, we have left the text “uncorrected”.

As for Nepālī (Nep.), the transcription mostly follows the *Bṛhad Nepālī Śabdakoṣa* or Turner’s Dictionary.

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We are also grateful to Johanna Buss for her cooperation in preparing the edition and translation of the texts, the detailed description of the *latyā* ritual according to the more than two-hour video documentation, and for her help in the bibliographical parts of the work. To Nutan Śarmā we owe special thanks for his help in editing the texts and his constant readiness to help us with terminological and other problems. However, it goes without saying that we alone are responsible for any

mistakes that have occurred in the present volume.

We also wish to thank Don Handelman for his critical and insightful comments. Our colleagues in the Collaborative Research Centre “The Dynamics of Ritual” have always been of immense value to us, not least in the form of stimulating discussions and critiques. Special thanks are due to Malcolm Green for revising our English.

Finally we wish to thank the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Council) for generously supporting the research project and the printing of the book.

INTRODUCTION

Life-cycle rituals in South Asia

South Asia offers an almost unparalleled wealth of textual and ethnographic material on rituals. This extends not only to life-cycle rituals (Skt. *saṃskāra*) but also to other Brahmanic-Sanskritic domestic rituals (*karma*, *kriyā*), sacrifices (*homa*, *yajña*, *iṣṭi*, *bali*), celebrations and festivals (*utsava*), pilgrimages (*tīrthayātrā*), religious services (*pūjā*, *upacāra*, *sevā*), oaths (*vrata*), meditations (*yoga*, *dhyāna*), heroic acts (*vīrya*), esoteric initiations (*dīkṣā*) and much more. Moreover, South Asia has not only a long ritual tradition preserved in normative texts since Vedic times, but also a great diversity of local and regional practices.

However, most of the theories of ritual that have been developed from Indian material – e.g. *inter alia* George Dumézil, Edward B. Tylor, Marcel Mauss, Henri Hubert, Louis Dumont, Max Weber or Arthur M. Hocart – have concentrated on textual sources. Only since the middle of the past century has the perspective on Indian rituals shifted from the macro level of the so-called “Great Tradition” to the micro level of the villages and the small cities. It is fruitful to test and revise the old theories of sacrifice, myth, kingship or ritual with this new material, as has already been done by several scholars e.g. Jan Heesterman (1993), Frits Staal (1979, 1983 and 1989), Bruce Kapferer (1979), Richard Schechner (1988) or Stanley Tambiah (1979), Gloria G. Raheja (1988), or Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw (1994) – to mention just a few.

Life-cycle rituals are often regarded as paradigmatic in ritual theory. This is partly due to Arnold Van Gennep’s (1909) and more particularly Victor Turner’s (1969) pioneering studies. Both scholars have introduced key terms for the discussion of rituals: “rites de passage”, “rites de séparation, marge and agrégation”, or “liminality”, “communitas”, “social drama”, and “anti-structure”. However, life-cycle rituals have mostly been understood as hierophantic events (Mircea Eliade), or as events that help either to overcome life crises (e.g. Bronislaw Malinowski, Sigmund Freud or Erik Erikson), or to strengthen the solidarity of a social group (Emile Durkheim, Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown, Ewald Richard Thurnwald).

In our view, such functionalistic theories are not adequate to grasp the specific elements of rituals. Instead we propose to concentrate on the following polyvalent and polythetic aspects and components of rituals.¹

A formal, usually spoken decision is required to carry out the ritual: an oath, vow, or ritual declaration (*saṃkalpa*). Almost any life-cycle ritual and most sub-rites will have no efficacy without a *saṃkalpa* (see Bühnemann 1988: 114, Michaels 2005). Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw (1994: 120) insist that ritual acts are “non-intentional” (even if not “unintentional”). But only the *intentio solemnis* makes an everyday or customary act into a ritual act. It singles out certain segments of acts and evokes awareness of the change, thus also usually bringing about a change in the level of language. In ritual, water becomes ritual water, rice becomes ritual rice, a stone becomes the seat of the gods. All

¹The following is based partly on Michaels 2004: 131ff. (see also Michaels 1999a).

this is usually designated in language. Thus, water is named by the Sanskrit word *jala*, instead of the everyday (Nep.) *pāni*; *mīṭhai* (“sweets”) becomes *naivedya*, *phul* (“flowers”) becomes *puṣpa*, *bati* (“light”) becomes *dīpa*, and *camal* (“rice”) becomes *akṣata*.

Ritual acts are mostly also a) formal, stereotypical, and repetitive (therefore imitable); b) public; and c) irrevocable; in many cases they are also d) liminal (see below). So they may not be spontaneous, private, revocable, singular or optional for everyone. Ritual acts are not deliberately rational, they cannot simply be revised to achieve a better or more economical goal. Therefore, formalism constitutes a central criterion in most definitions of ritual (see, however, Michaels/Buss forthc.). Rituals cannot be private functions; they can be imitated. Publicity in the sense of inter-subjectivity – even if it concerns only a small secret circle of initiated specialists – is thus another formal criterion. Moreover, especially life-cycle rituals are effective independent of their meaning: *ex opere operato* (see Michaels 2000). This means that they cannot be reverted, for that requires a new ritual.

Along with these three strict, formal criteria, many rituals also contain another that Victor Turner has described as “liminality” (from the Latin, *limen*, “threshold”). In this he refers to the non-everyday and yet reversible, paradoxical, sometimes absurd and playful parts of rituals (see Michaels 2004c), especially in life-cycle threshold situations.

Almost every ritual act also takes place in an everyday context. But whether the act of “pouring water” is performed to clean or to consecrate a statue cannot be decided solely on the basis of these external, formal criteria, but also depends on “internal” criteria regarding intentions, which can relate to social aspects (solidarity, hierarchy, control, or establishment of norms), psychological and more individual aspects like alleviating anxiety, experiences or enthusiasm, desire,

or transcendental aspects concerning the other, higher, sacred world. In this last case, everyday acts acquire sublimity and the immutable, non-individual, non-everyday is staged. Although this criterion is particularly controversial, because it links religion with ritual, we hold that the majority at least of life-cycle rituals cannot do without it. Thus, we follow Emile Durkheim’s (1912: 50) dictum that “the ritual can be defined only after defining the belief”.

Finally, life-cycle rituals involve temporal or spatial changes, they refer to biological, physical, or age-related alterations or changes. Thus, a tangible change takes place through the ritual. For example, the participants in the ritual must acquire an ability they did not previously have, or a new social status with new social consequences: the initiate becomes a marriageable Twice-Born, the deceased a “departed one” (*preta*) or a forefather (*pitṛ*).

Life-cycle rituals in South Asia have mostly been studied by indologists: see, for instance, Bhattacharya 1968, Kane 1968ff., Pandey 1969, Gonda 1980, Gonda 1965, Olivelle 1993. What, however, is lacking are studies which include the actual practice of such rituals with its combination of texts and contexts. A positive exception to this is to be found in the study of Vedic rituals (see, for example, Gonda 1980, Staal 1983, Tachikawa 1993, Einoo 1996) or the Hindu service (*pūjā*, e.g., Bühnemann 1988, Einoo 1996, Tachikawa 1983, Tripathi 2004).

Similarly, death and ancestor rituals have also mostly been studied from a textual perspective, as for instance by Caland 1893, Abegg 1921, Shastri 1963, Kane 1991/IV, Knipe 1976, Huntington/Metcalf 1979, Müller 1992, or Oberhammer 1995. The practice of such rituals, however, has only rarely or marginally been touched on (e.g., Stevenson 1920, Parry 1985, Evison 1989, Filippi 1996, Saindon 2000). Basically, the same holds true

for Nepal: for a short and somehow superficial description of Hindu death rites in Nepal see Ghimire/Ghimire 1998; for Hindu Newar death rituals see Nepali 1965, Kölver 1977, Toffin 1979, 1984: 117-182 and 1987, Lewis 1984, Levy 1990; for Buddhist Newar death rituals see Lienhard 1986, Pradhan 1986, Gellner 1992, Ishii 1996.*

Hindu death and ancestor rituals

Hindu rituals of dying and death do not basically differ from what can also be found in the death ceremonies of other cultures: although death is feared, the dying person should accept death, should not resist, and should be ritually prepared. Often there is a special path of death for the corpse, almost a kind of secret path, so that the deceased cannot find his way back; the path of the dead after cremation is uncertain and dangerous; the deceased is dependent on the help and nourishment provided by the survivors; there are thus provisions for his journey, accompanied by prayers and blessings, laying out, a kind of wake, a funeral procession, special clothing for the dead and for the survivors, a gathering for the dead, death knells, a funeral meal, and a period of mourning.

However, the differences between the Brahmanical-Sanskritic death ritual and Christian blessings are also clear: the former entail no confession, no written obituaries (only recently has this appeared among the urban middle class), no charitable acts (donations to the needy), no funeral meals immediately after the burial, no dirges, and no ceremony like the Eucharist with a funeral sermon and an eulogy on the deceased. Generally there is no grave, no memorial ritual, no votives. The deceased disappear from the field of vision as individual persons: almost no picture, no tombstone is left to recall them. And yet they are constantly present as

forefathers and ancestors. It is these distinctions which deserve special attention because they explain why descent and ancestor worship in South Asia have such a great significance for ideas of salvation and thus for Hindu religions in general.

Death in Hindu religions is not a sudden event, but a process and a transformation which has to be prepared for. The deceased must be ritually immortalized. Thus the deceased become ancestors, forefathers, heroes, ghosts, or demons, but not dead, not without “life”. What they become depends on the manner of death, the relationship between the deceased and the survivors, as well as on kinship and the temporal and spatial distance to the deceased. But the dead do not “live” forever; their memory fades, they die through the *damnatio memoriae* of the living. Yet they are kept living by a number of death and ancestor rituals.

Death and ancestor rituals can be classified into two groups:

Firstly, rituals for the deceased person, i.e. rituals of dying, death rituals and ancestor worship. The death rituals (*antyeṣṭi*, *daśakriyā*), which are performed during the first ten to thirteen days, the individual death offering (*ekoddiṣṭāśrāddha*) on the eleventh day or so after the death, and the death transformation ritual (*sapinḍikaraṇa*) on the thirteenth or forty-fifth day, or one year after the death, which transforms the deceased into a forefather. To this group also belong memorial rituals (*pārvaṇaśrāddha*, *aṣṭakāśrāddha*) carried out monthly and above all annually on the anniversary of the death of the father or mother. These rituals are directed to the fate of a known and named deceased individual. During most of these rituals, the Sacred Thread is worn on the right shoulder and the water (*tarpaṇa*) is offered from the palm of the hand by letting it flow to the right from the thumb.

Secondly, ancestor rituals for the forefathers and foremothers in general – i.e.

* See also van den Hoek 2004, which, unfortunately, was published after our manuscript's completion only.

rituals of periodic (daily, monthly or yearly – etc.) ancestor worship for those who died in the preceding year(s), usually the three forebears on the father's side (and sometimes on the mother's side) – are mostly offered by the male offspring, especially in the domestic rituals, particularly on joyful occasions such as marriages or the birth of a son, or on determined junction days (the *parvans*), such as the new or full moon (e.g. Mātātīrtha aūsi, Gokarṇa aūsi), or on the occasion of an eclipse or on certain calendric days. These rituals constitute the worship of a specific, named group of deceased persons or ancestors (e.g. *dugudyaḥpūjā*, *pitṛpakṣa* or *soraśrāddha*, i.e. the New Moon of the month of Bhādrapāda, Sāpāru/Gājātrā). To this group may be added calendric rituals of death and renewal performed for all ancestors or demons, such as Bālācahṛe/Bālācaturdaśī, Pasacahṛe/Piśācaturdaśī or Mvaḥni/Dasaī. These are collective rituals or festivals for a generalized, “anonymous” class of ancestors, the *viśvedevāḥ* and other gods or semi-gods or demons (*bhūta*, *preta*, *piśāca* etc.).

The course of Hindu death rituals

To be sure, there is great regional variation in the practice of life-cycle rituals in South Asia. Even within the small territory of Kathmandu Valley rituals differ considerably depending on the city, the caste, the priests and the religion. However, some aspects are common to most death and ancestor rituals throughout South Asia. In the following we present an outline of such rites before we turn to specific death rites among the Newars of Bhaktapur.

Ceremonies of dying

During the days preceding an anticipated death, the dying person is laid down on the

floor and cared for. Often oil lamps are lit and a priest is called to perform ceremonies of expiation (*prāyaścitta*). A local physician (Nep. *ghāṭe vaidya*) may also be called in order to determine the approximate time of death. Occasionally gifts (*dāna*) are given to Brahmins or poor people. The gift of a cow (*godāna*) may also be made, although nowadays this rite is usually substituted by the gift of money to a Brahmin. This sub-rite is also called *vaitaraṇīdāna* on account of the river Vaitaraṇī that the deceased has to cross on his way to the realm of Yama (*yamaloka*). It is believed that the departed will hold on to the tail of the cow which will help him to cross the river.

After death, Ganges water or other substances are sprinkled into the mouth of the dead before he or she is washed, anointed and decorated, and his clothes and bedding are taken out and either given away or thrown into the river, where certain castes have the right to take possession of them. The dead body is wrapped in cloths made of white unsewn cotton and yellow silk, sometimes with the name “Rāma” printed on it. Additionally, the thumbs and toes of the corpse are tied together. News of the death circulates quickly, and a first set of sacrificial balls (*pinḍa*) are offered. The deceased (Skt. *preta*, literally: “the one who is gone away”) is mostly seen as a restless soul that has to be freed from its liminal state in order to reach the world of heaven. Thus, many death rituals are a kind of death convoy. Offerings are given which support the deceased in the next world. The corpse, immediately placed on the floor which is coated with cow dung, should be weighted with a black stone or ammonite (*śālagrāma*) or a weapon, e.g. a knife, so that the deceased will not rise again and the soul will not fly away before he or she is ritually prepared for the journey and can defend his – or herself against the evil spirits.

Funeral Procession

After a while the procession sets off to the cremation grounds, accompanied by recitations at the house or during the procession itself. The corpse is carried out of the house feet first. The procession should be headed by the firstborn carrying the domestic fire, followed by the corpse and the (*sapinda*) relatives. It should comprise an odd number of people wearing neither headdress nor shoes. Sometimes the procession is led by musicians playing instruments in a special tuning. Often women do not join the procession or, at least, the cremation. At the cremation ground, the feet of the corpse are placed in the river, often on a special platform called *brahmanāla*. The domestic fire is often relit. A leaf from the *tulsī* plant is kept in the dead person's mouth in order to prevent the messengers of Yama (*yamadūta*) from dragging the departed to hell.

Rites at the cremation grounds

The dead person is generally placed on a green bamboo bier and carried to the cremation grounds along a special death path through special city gates, usually in the south. Among the Newars, funeral associations (Nev. *siguthī*) carry out all the necessary work at the cremation grounds. There the corpse is put with his feet in the water, which is considered to be Ganges water and thus liberating. The corpse is burned on the same day on a pyre made of wood without any thorns. The number of timbers should be odd; it is believed that odd numbers are incomplete and thus a reminder to the bereaved to continue the death rites. The fire is lit by the chief mourner, who then wears the Sacred Thread on his right shoulder instead of the left. The corpse must burn completely, except the few bones which are afterwards collected. Generally dry hay and straw are used to in-

tensify the fire. The ashes should be swept into the water. Sometimes an effigy is made from the ashes representing the deceased, which is then cast into the river. Some parts of the ashes and bones may be kept aside in earthenware vessels. These may then be taken to places of pilgrimage such as Gayā or Benares, or hung on long bamboo poles at the cremation grounds. The individual soul must be cared for by offerings of jugs filled with food or water. Clay jugs are a recurring ritual element in the death cult; sometimes they are shattered like the skull, even though they are understood as the location of the deceased; and sometimes they are set out on the ground, filled with water, and then hung up for the support of the deceased.

The dead person is a sacrifice to the fire (*agni*) and the god Agni, who – according to a widespread notion – burns impurities and carries him (as with all offerings) off to heaven and the world of the forefathers (*pitṛloka*) in the smoke. The funeral pyre is circumambulated by the chief mourner and other mourners, sometimes bearing a pierced water pot which is then smashed. Ritually speaking, cracking or smashing the skull is the most important moment of death. Once the skull has cracked or shattered, the thumb-sized individual soul (*puruṣa*) can escape the body. Escape is effected through a place along the hairline (*śikhā*) on the fontanel, the so-called “Brahmā hole” (*brahmarandhra*), which also has a central significance in the initiation of a Twice-Born as a sign of the paternal line and the father-son-identification. In popular belief, it is held that the soul of bad people escapes through other bodily orifices, such as the anus.

The chief mourner performs ablutions in the river and sometimes his hair is shaved. Other members of the patrilineage may do the same, but mostly they purify themselves by taking a bath – more or less symbolically – and offering water (*pitṛtarpana*) to the de-



*Vārāmasī, pipal tree above
Brahmaghāt.
The pots receive water, dedi-
cated to the deceased, during
the first ten days after death.
In completion of the ritual the
chief mourner smashes the
pot under the direction of the
Mahābrahmaṇa, an act called
pitrvisarjana.
Photo 25th February 2000*

ceased. Other, additional forms of mourning are chewing *nimba* leaves, ingesting five substances from a cow (*pañcagavya*), and taking an oil bath. Mostly a stone or other object representing the deceased is worshipped, and food is given to dogs, crows or cows. The funeral party leaves the cremation grounds without looking back, silently and without any music.

Should the dead person's body be missing a puppet representing the dead person can be burnt in its place, along with the natal horoscope. Some ascetics, very young children, and people who have died from a snake bite are buried. Since 1920 widow burning is legally forbidden in Nepal (see Michaels 1993). In case of an untimely death a special rite (*nārāyaṇabali*) is performed, mostly on the eleventh day.

Rites on the first ten (to twelve days)
after death

During the first ten to twelve days, food and more *piṇḍas* are offered in order to restitute

the body of the deceased. Food and personal possessions of the deceased are given to Brahmins, funerary priests or barbers. Thirteen days is the legal period of mourning in Nepal. During this period the chief mourner (Nep. *kriyāputra*) often lives separate from the rest of the family, sleeps on the ground, cooks his own food, eats only once a day and uses no salt. During the first ten days (*daśakriyā*) after death, the chief mourner is supposed to go to the river and offer rice balls (*piṇḍa*) in order to create a new body for the deceased, who is then sometimes represented by a small mound of clay or sand. These balls are frequently offered shortly before the ritual of joining the ancestors (*sapiṇḍīkaraṇa*: see below). There should also be an offering of monthly *piṇḍas* as food for the one year journey of the deceased (*māsikapīṇḍa*, *pañcadaśapiṇḍadāna*[*śrāddha*]).

Additionally, the family might arrange for a recitation of the *Garuḍapurāṇa* during this period or the first month after death. On the eleventh day, a bull is to be released and branded with the *triśūla* weapon of Śiva, but this rite is seldom practised.

Joining the ancestors (*sapiṇḍīkaraṇa*,
Nep. *latyā*)

Between the tenth and thirteenth day, mostly on the twelfth day but sometimes on the 45th after the death, *piṇḍas* are again offered to celebrate the deceased's joining with his (or her) forefathers (*pitarah*). It is believed that the messengers of Yama will lead the deceased on his one-year-long journey. During this he will receive no water or food, so the mourners have to supply him with it. Along with this rite a bed (*śayyadāna*), water (*jaladāna*), cooking utensils, and food are offered to a Brahmin, after which the chief mourner and other mourners bathe and are ritually purified. On the thirteenth day relatives, members of the sub-caste and neigh-



hours are invited and fed to mark the conclusion of the intensive period of impurity. New clothes or simply a new cap are given to the chief mourner after one year.

Memorial and mourning rites

The chief mourner arranges further rites (*śrāddha*) during the first year after death and on the anniversary of death, which mostly include making gifts to Brahmins. The mourner has to wear white clothes, shoes and cap, and should avoid wearing leather and the colour red. He should also not attend festivals. Sometimes he will abstain from garlic or onions. Marriages or initiations may not take

place for one year. It is believed that after one year the deceased reaches the court of Yama where Citragupta, Yama's scribe, opens the book in which every good and bad deed is recorded. On the basis of this, Yama decides whether the deceased will go to heaven or one of several hells from where he or she will be reborn.

Cremation of a member of a sub-caste of butchers (Nāy) along the ring-road on the periphery of Deopatan. Photo 3rd December 2002

BHAKTAPUR - A NEW TOWN IN THE SALEMUNDU VALLEY

Part I

BHAKTAPUR THE URBAN FABRIC, RITUALS AND RITUAL SPECIALISTS

BHAKTAPUR – A NEWAR TOWN IN THE KATHMANDU VALLEY

Introduction

The origin of the Newars, the inhabitants of Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Patan and a few smaller towns and villages of the Valley, still remains obscure. Consequently we know little about the background from which their specific urban life-style and their clustered settlement pattern developed. The structure of their language points to Tibeto-Burman origins, but since they settled in the Valley roughly two millennia ago, the urban culture of the Newars has also been strongly exposed to southern influences. Buddha Śākyamuni was born at the foothills of the Himalaya. His religion and the Brahmanic culture travelled up from the Gangetic plains, and represented the Great Tradition. From the 7th century AD on, the Newars brought in turn ideas and crafts to the Tibetan Plateau, to the court of Kubilai Khan, and to Mongolia.

By the end of the first millennium AD, three urban centres had developed around royal courts – as centres of small, independent, and since at least the 14th century competing kingdoms with little hinterland but a strong agrarian base. A specific townscape with a host of public squares, temples and shrines developed. Complex urban rituals were sponsored by the kings and enacted to observe the cyclic character of time: chaos and renewal of the social order, the death and birth of the gods.

A specific townscape dotted with imposing temples dedicated to the personal gods and goddesses of the kings and many open, small shrines housing the non-iconic Lords of Place – preferably named Gaṇeśa or Bhai-

rava – produced an intensive dialogue or even discrepancy between the narrow private courtyards and the extended public spaces that served as the stage necessary for urban rituals (see Auer/Gutschow 1974). According to the annual calendar, at times these rituals involve the entire population – children being carried on their parents' shoulders. In the early 18th century the calendar of such events probably reached its apogee under the much-remembered King Bhūpatindra Malla. That time saw the extension of the palace and the construction of a towering, five-storied pagoda that was to become the built symbol of an extended Nepal which was shaped, in its present boundaries, at the beginning of the 19th century.

No other imposing landmark has been added since then to the townscape, but the intensity of the annual festivals has kept increasing since the early 1970s, when a German-funded urban development project financed the renovation and reconstruction of some two hundred religious and public structures and ensured sustainability by modernizing the technical infrastructure and renewing the traditional brick pavement throughout the entire town. The character of the urban rituals has changed because the centralized religious trust lacks the necessary resources and sometimes is even unable to supply the required sacrificial animals. This shortcoming is, however, compensated for by an ever-increasing number of participants who celebrate the various New Years (in April and November) and the birth of the city's tutelary gods in October. Almost every year new gods are installed and incorporated into

the circumambulatory procession after New Year; new processions have been inaugurated in which the individual quarters of the city attain an hitherto unknown prominence (see Gutschow 1982).

Finally, even political demonstrations of power or protest are named “processions”, and follow the age-old processional route as its accepted stage. In March 1990 agitated masses moved along this route in Bhaktapur calling for free elections, and in June 2001 thousands of young boys followed this route – shaved, as it were – to express a rare kind of collective mourning after King Birendra and his family were murdered.

Although essentially urban in character, more than half of Bhaktapur’s population is still engaged in agriculture. Public space turns red when pepper is dried in August, it is used as a winnowing ground when the rice comes from the threshing ground in the fields, and it becomes full of dust when the wheat is dried in May. Not only farmers work in the fields; craftsmen also farm fields which also came into their ownership after the land reform of 1962. The use of fertilizers has led to higher yields of ever new varieties of vegetable crops which are marketed in Kathmandu.

Although we do not know much about the economy in historic times, the rise of the small kingdom of Bhaktapur and its affluence in the 18th century may have been based on trade along the route between the Gangetic Plains and Tibet. Specialized crafts and even the export of oil products must have provided enough income for the king and his nobility to donate temples and wells: at that time probably the only way to ensure and demonstrate status.

Today, Bhaktapur has a thriving construction industry, providing fifty percent of the fired bricks that are needed for the present dynamics of urbanization (see Gutschow/Kreutzmann 2002). Surplus income seems to be invested in hotels in the expectation of

a growing tourist industry, as well as in private schools in response to the government’s failure to ensure basic education. Thousands of commuters travel daily to Kathmandu to work in government offices, attend schools and to trade. The express dream of the leader of Bhaktapur’s unique Peasants and Workers Party is to turn Bhaktapur into a centre of learning, science and education (Bijukche 2002).

Probably by the 6th century AD Buddhism had been widely adopted in the Valley of Kathmandu, while divine kingship was patterned by a Hindu High Culture that had fanned out from the plains to reach even the remotest valleys of the Himalayas. Apart from very few fragments and a couple of *śivaliṅgas*, hundreds of 7th to 8th century Buddhist votive structures (*stūpas* or Nev. *cibhaḥ* or *caitya*) have survived as the only remaining material manifestation of the early urban development. Both of these structures are not only representations of Śiva or Buddha but also monuments dedicated to the dead. A *śivaliṅga* receives offerings in the course of the *śrāddha* death rituals, while a *cibhaḥ* in most cases was dedicated by a donor or group of donors to a deceased family member – all of them depicted on reliefs fixed to the plinth of the structure.

To this day priests from both religions perform death rituals in an almost identical fashion. Sometimes certain groups such as the brick-makers engage a Buddhist priest for death rituals and a Brahmin for the remaining rituals of passage. In the ritual dedicated to the lineage deities, priests from both religions even join forces in a concerted performance.

The promulgation of a stratified society beginning in the 14th century resulted in a caste system which designated ritual specialists engaged in death rituals as “unclean”. Only since the 1970s have these specialists started to discontinue their ritual obligations. Within a decade or two these rituals will either disap-



The urban fabric, map on the basis of a survey in 1979

Clusters of houses around courtyards form extremely dense quarters for farmers (Jyāpu) and potters (Kumah) along the periphery, while the quarters of the Brahmin and former courtiers around the palace square with its many temples tied to the royal cult incorporate gardens.

pear, or vital functions like the preparation of the ritual ground on the 10th day after death and purification of the polluted house on the 12th day will be performed by the in-laws of the chief mourner, the *jicābhāju*.

The urban fabric

The spatial pattern of Bhaktapur mirrors to a large extent a hierarchic principle of order that centuries earlier had grown into a theory that found expression in diagrams: ideal cities are ordered around a centre with the status of the inhabitants diminishing towards the periphery. Often, reality mirrors only traces of this theory. In Bhaktapur, the palace is

placed along the periphery, unfolding on the plateau of a ridge. The settlement extends some 1600 metres along a southern slope towards a river that flows from east to west. The idea of the palace as the centre becomes manifest through the social topography. Opposite the palace is the quarter of the Brahmin priests, surrounded by the spacious three-storied residences of former courtiers which were developed around large courtyards. Based on both sides of the main road – which in a way turns the classical street cross into a linear pattern – are the farmers and craftsmen (carpenters, brick-makers, potters, copper-smiths). The periphery is marked by clusters of “unclean” butchers who as owners of buf-falos were also the main suppliers of milk. At



the periphery of the urban space, but clearly beyond it in ritual terms, are the settlements of the untouchables, who collect the leftovers at the cremation site, traditionally cleaned the latrines, weave baskets (also needed in death ceremonies), raise ducks (needed as sacrificial animals), and engage in fishing (a mandatory item in ritual feasts).

Not clearly confined in clusters but scattered rather across the entire city are members of other low status castes with ritual obligations, such as painters (Pū), or purity specialists such as barbers (Nau), torch bearers (Cālā), washermen (Pasi) and auxiliary priests (Bhā and Jugi).

Until the 1970s urban space could clearly be experienced as a created and essentially ordered world, in opposition to the unordered and potentially chaotic continuum of fields. The inner, urban world is felt to be protected by the eight shrines of the powerful Mother Goddesses, the Aṣṭamātrkā, while the outer

world is without protection, and thus easy prey to demons and ghosts.

Newar cities were never walled, for the encircling deities were regarded as forming an immaterial wall that would be even more effective in warding off immaterial enemies, unidentifiable evil influences, and spirits for which no death rituals had been enacted.

The division of urban space

As in many cultures developing in a landscape amid mountains, the basic classification of place distinguishes between “up” and “down”. Bhaktapur too is divided into an upper town and a lower town along a ritually defined and annually reaffirmed borderline. The opposition of the two entities attains an antagonistic touch on the occasion of New Year. A fight ensues between the two halves of the city, thus demonstrating the crisis that erupts when ritual time is on the verge of

The quarter of the untouchables (Pvaḥ).

Until the early seventies single storied houses with straw roofs formed a separate settlement, and with that demonstrated their stigmatised status. In the upper left the five-storied pagoda and the Bhairavnāth temple dominate the city skyline.

Photo 8th April 1974

Opposite Taumādhi, the central square and ritual arena of the lower town.

The ritual chariot is seen collapsed on the main road (lower left of the picture).

Photo 18th April 1973



coming to an end. Only with the erection of the World Tree on New Year's Eve and the rebirth of those deities who accept blood offerings is the accepted order reinstalled. A new cycle of time is set in motion, time is made to continue. The entire urban ritual extends over seven days – a by all means meaningful span of time. On the last day, iconic representations of all the non-iconic gods that accept blood sacrifices are worshipped by each and every family in a procession that leads through urban territory. The processional path neither defines a centre nor does it enclose a spatial entity. Instead, it stands for an integration of deities and inhabitants, urban space and its quarters.

Clusters and quarters

If we define a quarter as an entity different from the quadrant of a square city based on a street crossing, it is clear that Bhaktapur has 24 of such quarters (*tvah*). As a multiple of four the number alone justifies the use of the term “quarter”. Being also three times eight and two times twelve it reflects a complex notion of time and space of universal validity. Every quarter constitutes a part of a meaningful whole. In itself, each quarter develops as a microcosm, with temples and shrines that are needed for the daily rituals. Invariably the quarters are centred around a public square. Many of these squares are hemmed in by arcaded public buildings: to shelter the old or to be used as playgrounds by children; to shelter travellers or mendicants or to house a temporary butcher shop in the early morning. Here, music groups convene at night or priests read out sacred texts according to the season.

A shrine of Gaṇedyāḥ – the dominant guardian deity in a non-iconic form in the shape of an unhewn stone that once was “found” – represents ideally the concept of “place”. As such it forms the focal point of the quarter and is worshipped every morning

and at the beginning of almost every ritual. Visually unimposing, but none the less powerful, is the level of chthonic guardian deities, various classes of ghosts and demons which are pinned down by stones. Only recognizable by the offerings that are made in cases of death or sickness, these stones absorb ritual waste and propitiate evil spirits.

The essential clue to the delineation of the boundaries of the quarters is provided by the processional routes to the three cremation grounds beyond the river in the south. Only unclean castes have their cremation grounds north of the river. Specific rules govern the passage of the corpses, which are carried on biers along prescribed lanes and streets. Every household is very aware of the direction the procession must take. There is no institution there to ensure that the procession's movements adhere to the rules. The rules are inscribed rather in the memory of a static society based on social and subsequently topographical immobility.

The processions of the “living” Mother Goddesses, the Navadurgā, to the 24 quarters – a sequence of elaborate rituals enacted between Māgh Samkranti (winter solstice) and some time in June – further help identify the territory of the quarters. Acting from the central square of the quarter in question, the mask bearers visit the people at its threshold, at times marking the imagined border to the neighbouring entity with an oleander twig.

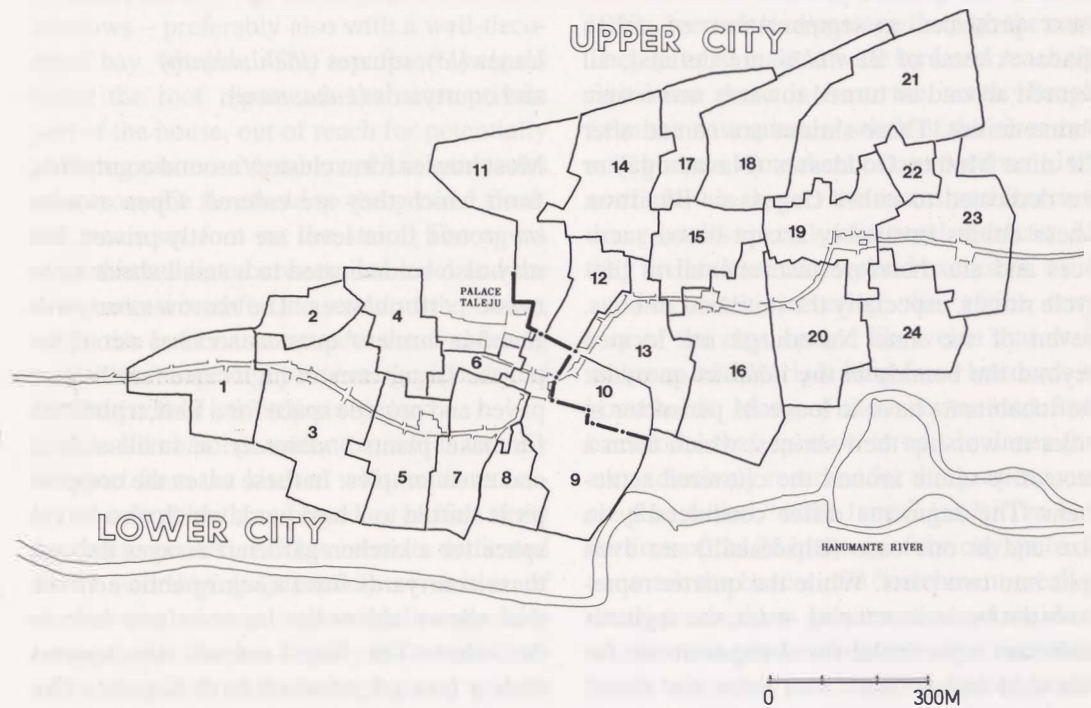
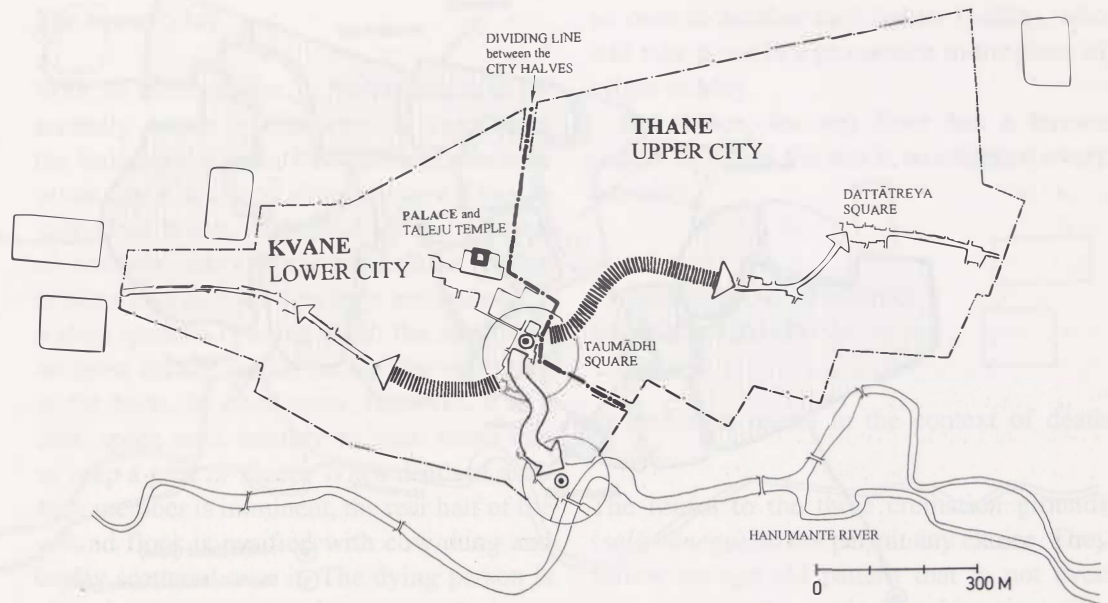
Few ritual specialists in Bhaktapur perceive the complex territorial network, which mirrors a hidden cosmic order and reveals itself in sacred diagrams. This order remains unknown to the individual, whose ritual needs and roles are tied to the infrastructure of his respective quarter.

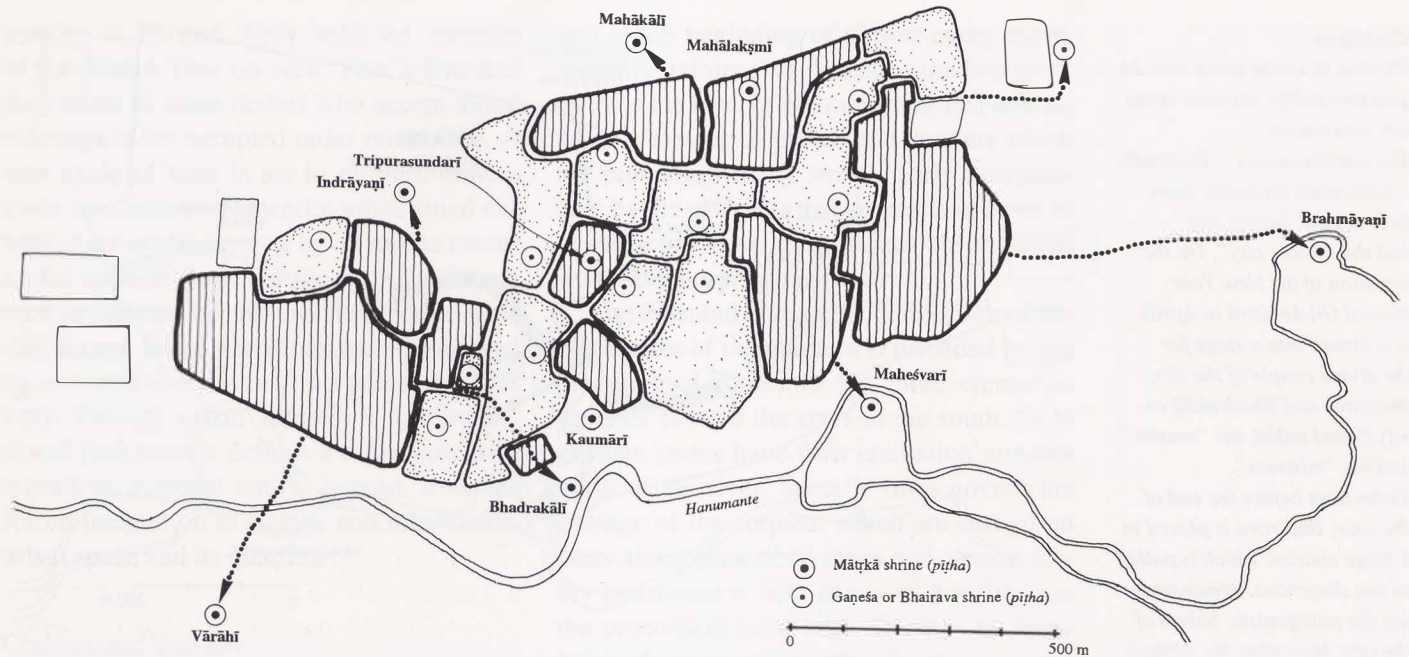
It is largely the mind of the western scholar – architect or anthropologist – that transcends the narrow boundaries of time and space, society and ritual as experienced by the individual.

Bhaktapur,
 division of urban space into 24
 quarters (*tvāh*), division of the
 city into halves.

The central square – *Taumādhi*
 – represents the nodal point
 between the “upper city”
 and the “lower city”. On the
 occasion of the New Year
 festival (*Bisketjātrā* in April)
 it is turned into a stage for
 the divine couple of the city,
Bhairava and *Bhadrakālī* or
nāyaḥ and *nakhī*, the “master”
 and his “mistress”.

Three days before the end of
 the year, *Bhairava* is placed in
 a large chariot, which is pulled
 in two directions, demonstrat-
 ing the antagonistic halves of
 the city. Mirroring the critical
 event of the end of time, this
 competition turns into a battle
 of stone-throwing, regularly
 resulting in casualties. On New
 Year’s Eve the chariot of the
 divine couple has to reach the
 ritual ground on the southern
 periphery, *Yaḥśikhyah*, to
 witness the erection of a long
 pole, which stands for the
 world tree.





Segments of urban territory (*ilākā*)

Beyond the quarter, another territorial element produces a segmentation of urban space. A total of 21 *ilākās* are defined, all centred around or turned towards non-iconic shrine deities. These shrines are named after the nine Mother Goddesses (Navadurgā) or are dedicated to either Gaṇeśa or Bhairava. These deities invariably accept blood sacrifices and are therefore instrumental in life-cycle rituals, especially the initiation of boys. Seven of the nine Navadurgā are located beyond the bounds of the *ilākā* in question: the inhabitants have to leave its perimeter in order to worship their shrines, which form a protective circle around the clustered settlement. The segments differ considerably in size and in one case (Bhadrakālī) are even split into two parts. While the quarter represents the basic structuring order, the segment addresses a particular ritual requirement. As was said before: the order does not reveal itself visually, but every ritual actor (*nāyaḥ*) or actress (*nakhī*) of the household knows his or her own ritual sense of belonging, based

on experiences that start with the rice feeding ceremony, for which the child is placed in front of the deity at the age of six months.

Lanes (*lā*), squares (*lāchi*, *khyah*) and courtyards (*cuka*, *nani*)

Most houses form clusters around courtyards, from which they are entered. Open arcades on ground floor level are mostly private, but may also be dedicated to a small shrine or to music performances. The narrow courtyards found in farmers' quarters serve as a compost pit, the larger ones of high caste families are paved and provide space for a well, a platform for basil plants (*tulsivedī*) or small shrines and even temples. In these cases the compost pit is shifted to a backyard, which also leaves space for a kitchen garden. Passages through these courtyards form a semi-public network that allows short-cuts between one lane to the other. The lanes extend into squares with a host of infrastructural elements like step-wells (*hiti*), drinking water fountains (*jaḥdhū*), and platforms (*dabu*) for the performance of dramas or annual rituals.

Division of urban space into segments (ilāka) centering around or referring to essential shrines dedicated to non-iconic representations of the Mother Goddesses (mātṛkā), Gaṇeśa, or Bhairava, which receive blood sacrifices on the occasion of life-cycle rituals.

The house (*chē*)

With its three storeys, a Newar house is essentially urban in character. In rare cases the buildings will be free-standing, because urban space develops along clusters. Thus an individual house is defined by the number of window axes. The ground floor (*chēḍi*) is often less than six feet high and may have a shop (*pasah*) opening on to the street and an open arcade (*dalā*) facing the courtyard at the back. In most cases, however, it is a dark space used entirely to store straw and to keep a goat or sheep. When death of a family member is imminent, the rear half of the ground floor is purified with cow dung and barley scattered over it. The dying person is placed on this area, head facing south. Since the ground floor is always damp, it is never part of the living area, which consists of the first (*mātā*) and second floors (*cvatā*), and which open up with increasing numbers of windows – preferably also with a well-decorated bay window. The top floor (*baigaḥ*) under the roof represents the most private part of the house, out of reach for potentially polluting visitors. Members of unclean castes may cross the threshold to the ground floor, but never set foot on the stairs. The seven steps that mediate between one level and the next are reserved for the world of the living, while the ladder that attracts the wandering soul in the shape of a *preta* on the 10th day of the death ritual has only six steps.

A small chamber under the roof is usually set apart from the kitchen with (until recently) its open hearth and bundles of rice straw needed to cook rice. This room is dedicated to the worship (*pūjākvathā*) of deities of one's own choice, as well as the lineage deity (*dugudyah*), which is kept by the annual caretaker, the *pālāḥ* of the lineage group (*phukī*) for the term of one year. On the occasion of full moon in December (Yaḥmāripunhi) the deity, symbolized by a silver crown, is hand-

ed over to another turn-holder (*pālāḥ*), who will take it out in a procession to the place of origin in May.

By choice, the top floor has a terrace (*atāli*) on which the sun is worshipped every morning.

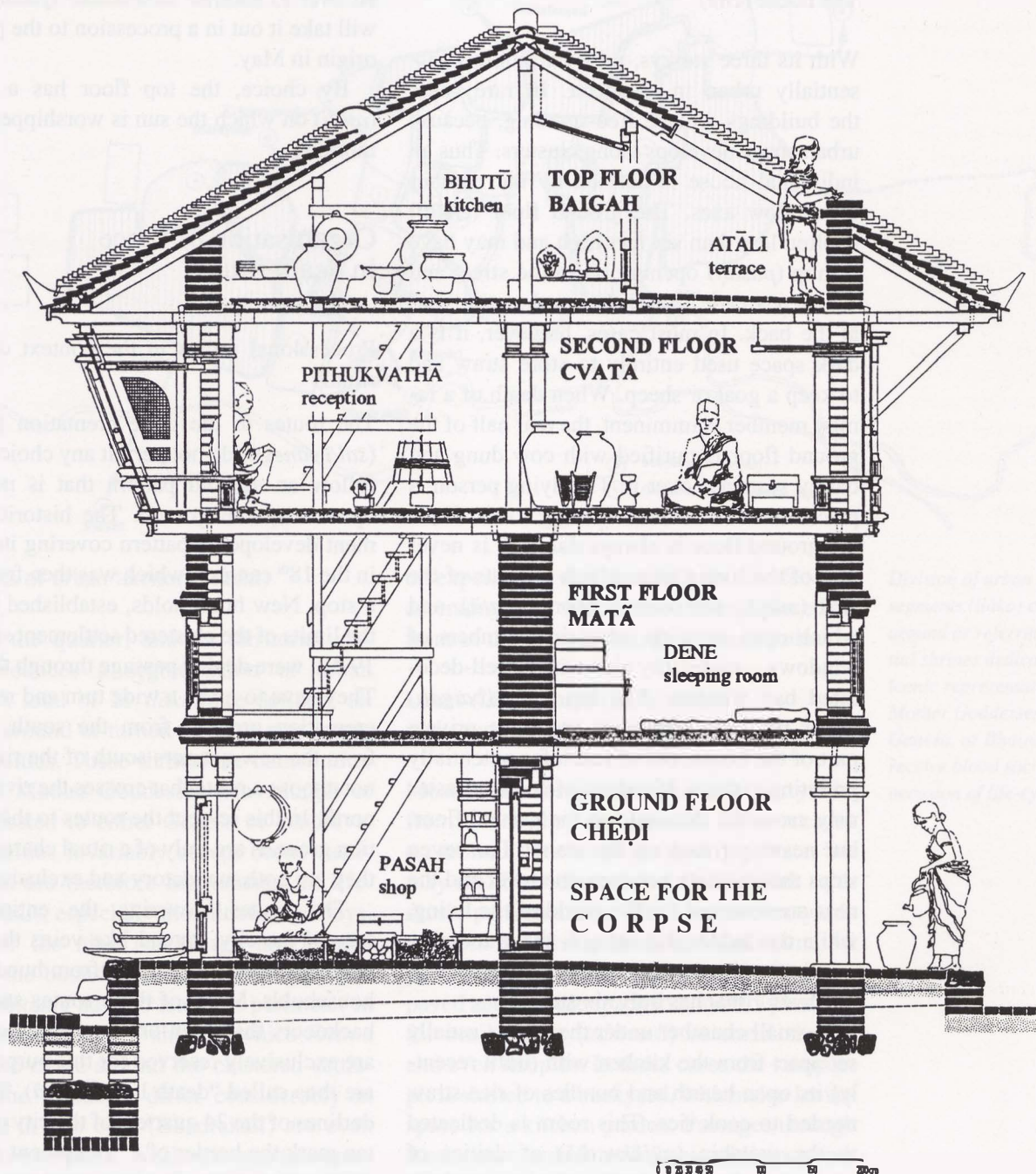
Organisation of space in death rituals

Processional routes in the context of death rituals

The routes to the three cremation grounds (*salā vānegu*) do not permit any choice. They follow an age-old pattern that is not even open to spatial growth. The historic settlement developed a pattern covering its extent in the 18th century, which was then frozen to a stop. New households, established beyond the limits of the clustered settlement since the 1970s, were denied passage through the core. They have to make a wide turn and reach the cremation grounds from the south. People from the new quarters south of the river cannot choose a route that crosses the river to the north. In this respect the routes to the cremation grounds are truly of a ritual character, for they are both mandatory and exclusive.

The routes, covering the entire territory of the city, spread like veins that drain a human body, originating from hundreds of households. Many of these routes start from backdoors that open on to narrow lanes that are exclusively reserved for this purpose, and are thus called “death lanes” (*silā*). The borderlines of the 24 quarters of the city quite often mark the border of a “catchment area” of death processions. In some cases one side of a lane turns north, while the other side turns south to meet a few hundred metres further down, merging into a main route.

Three quarters of the city faces the main cremation site, the *mūdip*, at Cupīghāṭ, close



*The Newar house (chē), section drawing (after Auer and Gutschow 1974: 73)
The damp ground floor is usually reserved for storing straw and agricultural implements.*

When death is imminent, the body of the dying person is placed on purified ground. The first (mātā) and second (cvatā) floors are dedicated to sleeping and storing valuables

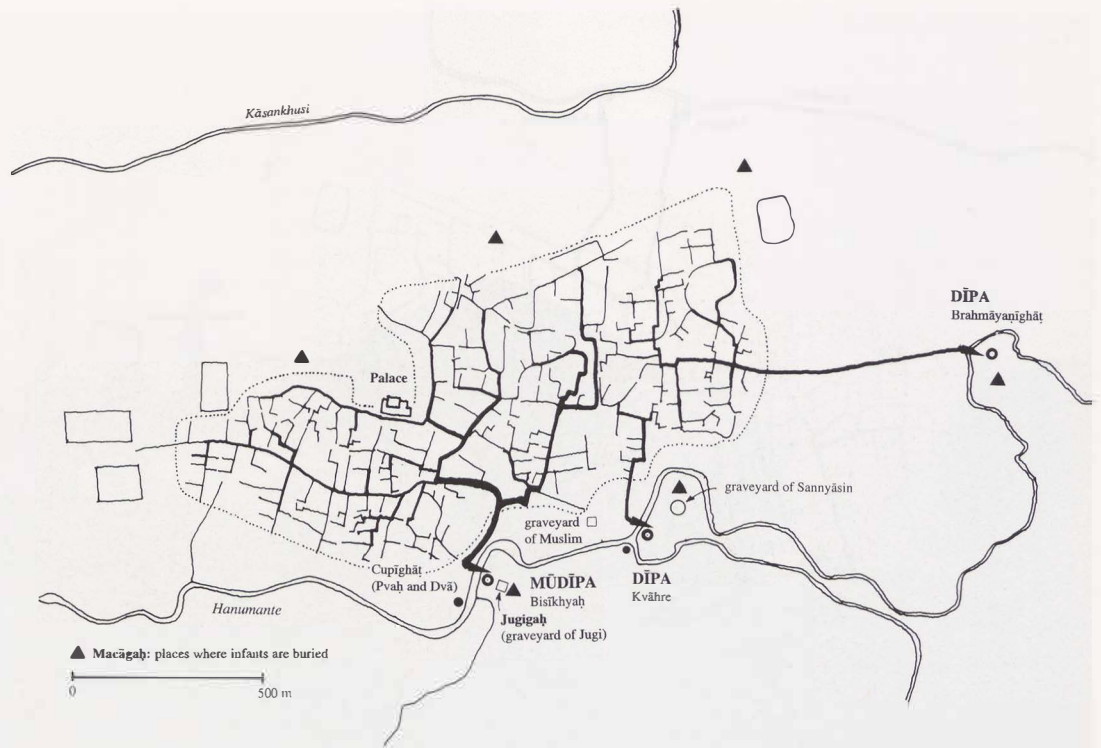
in boxes, while the top floor (baigah) with the kitchen and the room of worship represents the most private and ritually pure part of the house.

Processional routes to the cremation grounds (*salā vāneḡu*). All funeral associations follow a compulsory route carrying the corpse to one of the three cremation grounds across the river: Cupīghāt and Bisikhyah attract more than two-thirds of all households, in disregard of the otherwise decisive border between the lower and the upper town. Kvaḡre has a small catchment area that is confined to only one of the 24 quarters, Inācva. People who die in the hospital or directly at the ghāt are also cremated here. Members of unclean sub-castes are cremated at Cupīghāt before crossing the river. The eastern part of the upper town faces Brahmāyāñghāt in the east.

The burial place of the Jugi (*jugigaḡ* or *dīpa*) is located at Cupīghāt beyond the cremation place, while Sannyāsin or members of Mahantā families are buried along the ghāts, preferably at Kvaḡre.

Five other burial grounds (*macāpvāgaḡ*) are designated for children who have died prematurely before the age of three months.

A small graveyard behind the mosque serves the small Muslim community of bangle makers.



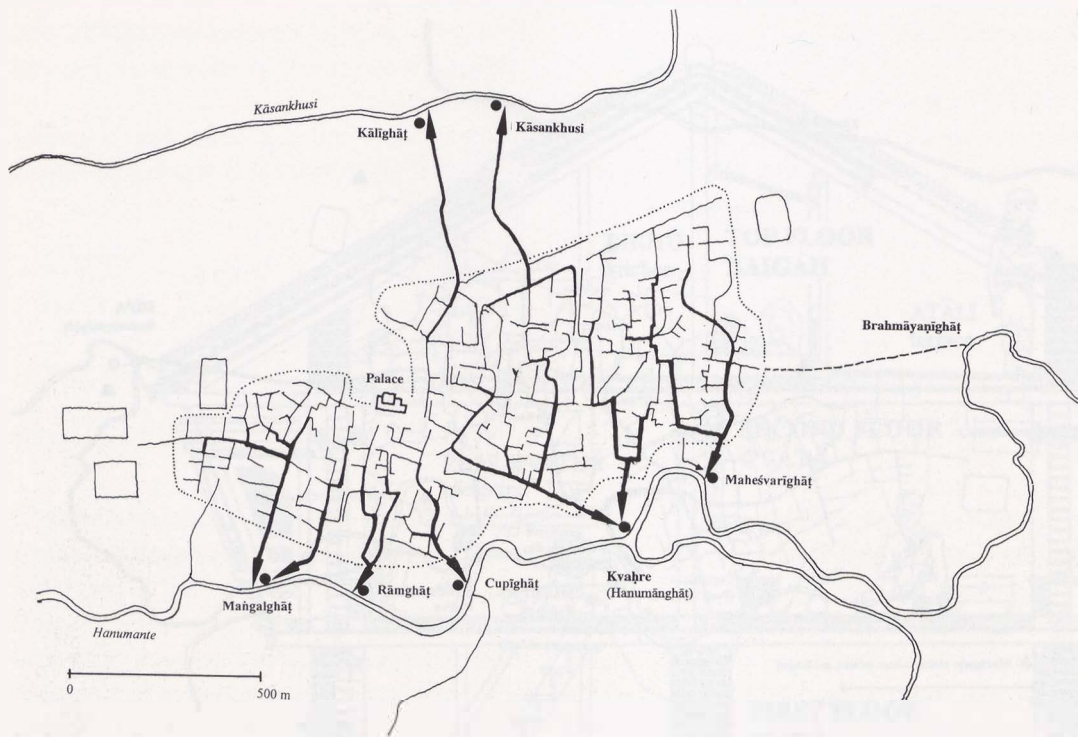
to which the Jugi – purity technicians for death rituals – are buried (*jugigaḡ*). Only the households of the five easternmost quarters face the cremation ground at Brahmāyañī, half a kilometre beyond the city limits to the east. One of the 24 quarters, namely Inācva, enjoys for unknown reasons the privilege of facing onto the most sacred site along the river at a confluence. Located there at Hanumāñghāt or Kvaḡre, is the plot where ascetics and *mahantās*, the priests of the 12 *maḡhas* of the city are buried.

Six more places for the burial of children (*macāgaḡ*) who died before having undergone the rice feeding ceremony (*cip tikeḡu*) at the age of three months are located beyond the city limits, in close neighbourhood of the shrines of various Mother Goddesses (NW: Indrāyañī, N: Mahākālī, NE: Mahālakḡmī, E: Brahmāyañī, SE: Maheśvarī and SW: Bhadrakālī). These children are named *mī mapumhā*, literally “bodies (*mhā*) that are not exposed to the fire (*mi*)” of the pyre. They are

buried hurriedly without any ritual and in the absence of the parents.

Children who have not been initiated (*ihī* for girls and *kaytāpūjā* for boys) are cremated, but with no other rituals being performed. On the 5th day, however, a Brahmin boy of the same age is brought to the parents of the deceased child to receive an offering of fruits. On the occasion of *soraśrāddha* a small *piṇḡa* is dedicated to the child, but no other *śrāddha* is performed.

The designation of cremation places according to the location of households is overlapped by a second order which concerns all members of what Robert Levy called “marginally pure” (1992, 361) and unclean castes, such as Gāthā, Bhā, Cālā, Nau, Kau, Pū, Sāymi, Chipā, Nāy, and untouchables like Dvā and Pvā. Constituting more than ten percent of Bhaktapur’s population, their deceased family members are cremated opposite the main cremation ground – either just below the shrine of Bhadrakālī or, in the case



of the untouchables, 100 metres down the river beyond the two 19th century Śivālayas. The butchers (Nāy) and barbers (Nau) of the eastern periphery do follow the route of the eastern quarters to be cremated at Brahmāyaṇīghāṭ. Three groups enjoy the privilege of facing onto the cremation site of Kvaḥre: the drum-makers (Kulu), those who cut the umbilical cord (Kataḥ), and those who carry the torch at the head of death processions (Cālā).

In order to discard the *piṇḍa* (Nev. *pekhi*), which are made in the context of death rituals (any *śrāddha* for an individual or *soraśrāddha* by the *nāyaḥ* of the *phukī*), a small procession heads out to what could be called the nearest place along the two rivers running parallel to the settlement to the north and the south. This activity is called *pekhi vāygu* (lit. “to cast the sacrificial balls”). Seven places are defined for this purpose and these are also the places where the purificatory rituals are performed on the 10th day. The locations of the main cremation grounds beyond the river to the south

allow an association with the world of Yama, the Lord of Death. The *piṇḍas*, however, are cast away at paved *ghāṭs* along the embankment of the two rivers, five at Hanumante in the south and two at Kāsankhusi in the north. Surprisingly, Brahmāyaṇīghāṭ is not visited for this purpose. Roughly speaking the households of the five eastern quarters all face Maheśvarīghāṭ. Hanumānghāṭ attracts by far the largest number of households, while only the households of Taumādhi and Lākulāchē face towards Cupīghāṭ. A further, separate area of households faces a small and in fact unnamed *ghāṭ* at Kāsankhusi river. The small path leading to this *ghāṭ* is called *pekhilācā*, literally “the path along which the rice balls of death rituals are carried”. The catchment area of these households is not defined along the borders of the 24 quarters but overlaps them to establish yet another kind of territorial division.

Pekhi vāygu – routes to cast away the offerings of balls (Nev. *pekhi*; Skt. *piṇḍa*) made for the forefathers (*pitarah*). Located around the town are eight places where the offerings are cast into the river: two in the north along the Kāsankhusi, and five to the south along the Hanumante. While the three cremation grounds are located across the river to the south – in association with the realm of death – the casting of the balls is enacted before crossing the river. The north-eastern embankment with a relatively small catchment area of households is not even named, but the path leading there is known as *pekhilācā*, the “ball-offering-lane”.

The route is compulsory and preconceived for every household. In some cases an invisible borderline runs down the middle of the road. *Kvaḥre*, which in case of cremation has a small regular catchment area, attracts more than half of the households of the upper town when it comes to casting the offerings to the dead.



Mūdip, the main cremation ground at Cupīghāt.
Photo 7th December 1971

The crematorium is a traditional wooden structure with a tiled roof, situated on a raised platform. A large group of people, many wearing white shrouds, are gathered around the structure, likely participating in a cremation ceremony. The site is elevated on a brick wall, and a brick-lined canal or stream flows in the foreground. The background shows other buildings and utility poles under a hazy sky.

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Absorbing ritual waste – the *chvāsaḥ* stones

Beyond their active participation in death rituals, the Jugi are responsible for removing, using or absorbing the polluting qualities of ritual waste that is discarded on specially designed places within the city. These places are identifiable by stones with clearly defined functions. Their general function is to mark and protect the boundaries of a realm that allows people to be safe. The boundary markers “keep things out, rather than in”, as Robert Levy (1990: 263) said. The settlement is guarded against a potentially chaotic continuum by a group of Mother Goddesses. The other boundary is between below and above, in this case referring to the paved ground of the urban space. Hundreds of boundary stones can be found with a variety of functions.

A *pikhālākhu* in front of each house guards its threshold, and marks the borderline between inside and outside as well as between above and below. Its ambiguous powers are propitiated each day by an offering of flowers, vermilion and food. In return it absorbs impurity in cases of death and all other life-cycle rituals.

A second class of stones is named *kṣetra-pāla*, literally the guardians of space (Skt. *kṣetra*, “field”). These stones may be carved as lotus flowers, especially when they are located in the courtyards of Buddhist monasteries – and every monastery has to have one to absorb the impurity of the sacrificial balls on the occasion of death rituals. But they are also identified as Bhairava, inevitably so in those cases where they complement a non-iconic representation of a Mother Goddess.

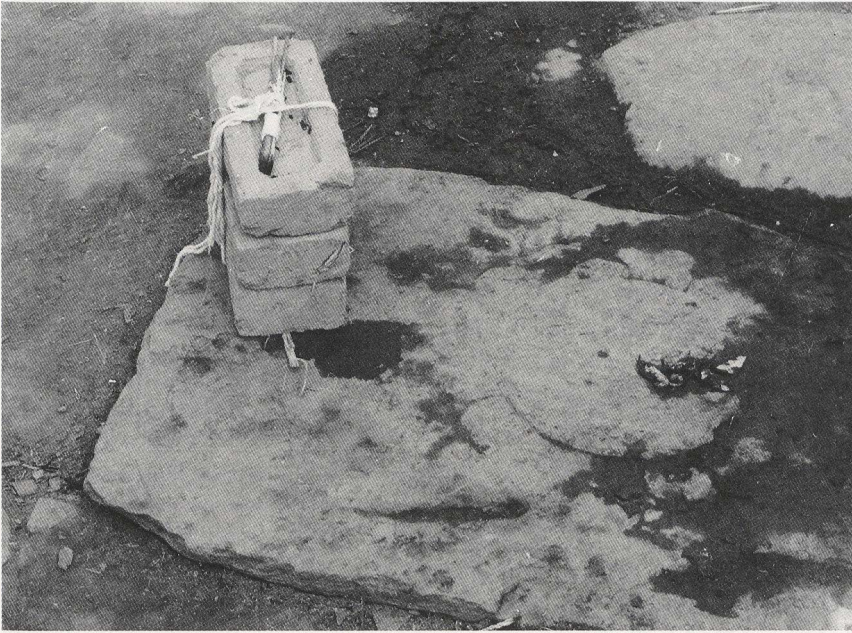
All other stones are called *chvāsaḥ*, but in some neighbourhoods they may have different names according to their specific function. The *chvāsaḥ* that “absorbs” the umbilical cord and the afterbirth (*pi vāy yēkegu*) is called *cvakiajimā*, referring to the legendary grandmother *ajimā*, who has the power of a

witch. When identified as *kalāhajimā*, the stone absorbs the polluting qualities of offerings like *bibau* (beaten rice, black soy beans and fish) in cases of sickness, and the inevitable last plate on the occasion of a feast. In the latter case the plate is offered to the ancestors of the family collectively. The act of such an offering is invariably called *kalāḥ vāygu*. This occurs after a feast on the occasion of a regular annual *śrāddha*, but also at the end of a day that was devoted to the worship of the ancestor deities (*dugudyaḥpūjā*). The same offering is also made on the occasion of life-cycle rituals, like the menarche ritual for girls, the initiation of boys, and marriage (on the occasion of *gvēsabhvay* – celebrating the distribution of betel nuts).

At the conclusion of a *śrāddha*, all attending male lineage members place small morsels of each dish to one side. All of the leaf plates are placed on top of the meal that has been reserved from the outset for the *pitṛ* in a brass container (*batāḥ*). After offering light and *pūjā*, this mass of food – two to ten kilograms – will collectively be discarded at the *chvāsaḥ* concerned.

In the case when a bereaved family is still polluted during the first year, relatives from the in-laws’ side will bring food on the occasion of the New Year (*bisket*) and Dasāi (Nev. *mvaḥni*). Part of this food is set aside for the *pitṛ* and deposited on the *chvāsaḥ* the next morning. It should be noted that food for the *pitṛ* can only be cooked and handled by persons who no longer have any parents.

Sickness is often said to be caused by unpacified *preta*, for whom the death ritual has not been performed in all its necessary detail. Hence they turn into evil ghosts, *piśācas*, to trouble the family of the deceased, causing stomach ache and nausea. While the *preta* leave the *chvāsaḥ* after they have turned into a *pitṛ*, the *piśācas* are destined to remain there forever and are collectively propitiated by an offering of cooked rice on the occasion of



Discarding three unbaked bricks (*kāciapā vāygu*) on a *chvāsaḥ* stone, offered immediately after death to the spirit of the deceased in the form of a hearth.

Photo 29th December 1971

Piśācacaturdaśī (Nev. Pasacahre), new moon in March. It is the same day that the hidden Śiva (called Lukumahāyaḥ) absorbs waste in the Buddhist courtyards of Kathmandu (see Michaels 1992).

Finally there are those stones on which the wife of the chief mourner, the *mitamhā*, places the three unfired bricks (*kāciapā vāygu*) which the *preta* and later the *pitṛ* will use for a hearth. Some people also argue that these bricks could serve as the house of the *pitṛ*. At the same time the wife of the chief mourner or a daughter-in-law will discard there the clothes of the deceased, together with a small mat symbolising the bed. In most cases the *chvāsaḥ* also represents the *kalāḥajimā* (absorbing the food dedicated to the *pitṛ*) and the *cvakiajimā* (absorbing the umbilical cords). 134 of such stones have been identified in Bhaktapur, each having different sized catchment areas of households.

Before we look in detail at the organisation of the removal of ritual waste by the Jugī, a number of explanations should be given here in order to convey the potential power with which these places are imbued. It has else-

where been noted that the ground below the pavement is considered to be the realm of pollution and also death. Occasionally a ghost appears from underground at a *chvāsaḥ*. For instance, people in Gvaḥmādhi agree that an emaciated face of the size of a child regularly emerges. This is a well-known apparition that is classified as *kavācā*, the motif of which is widely used for apotropaic purposes in architecture. Likewise tall ghosts clad in white and almost touching the sky are a recognisable form of spirit.

Another class of ghosts, the *bhūt* – an unknown power that inhabits the corpse until cremation – creates strange noises and is said to inhabit another class of stones, the *dhvākhā* that are found at crossroads.

The *chvāsaḥ* awaken a variety of associations, which necessarily reflect the status of the person. The general user of the *chvāsaḥ* has no associations whatsoever. Those who fulfil their duty perform the required action without any afterthought. The person involved simply does what has to be done. An experienced midwife who also advises in case of sickness, an *aji* of Byāsi, integrates the *chvāsaḥ* into a wider worldview and recalls that a trinity of deities reside on or in a *chvāsaḥ* stone: to the right she identifies Pūcvanakhī, at the centre Gurumahārāj, and to the left Dhanacva. Surprisingly, the landscape of the entire valley of Kathmandu is formed by this trinity. The Pūcvanakhī is the main tutelary goddess, the Mūajimā of the Valley on top of the mountain that dominates the southern rim of the valley. Gurumahārāj is identical with a powerful protector near Bungamatī, Siddhiganeśa. Dhanacva is another mountain to the southwest, inhabited by a powerful goddess, Campadevī. The *aji* is of the opinion that this trinity is successful in controlling *bhūt*, *pret* and *piśāca*. They are pinned down and made immobile in order to prevent their harmful journeys through the city's streets and lanes.

Ratnarāj Rājupadhyaya, a learned and much respected Brahmin of Bhaktapur, maintains however that the *chvāsaḥ* represents Śiva in the form of Bhūtanātha and Mātaṅgī. As “Lord of the *bhūtas*” Śiva haunts cremation grounds while Mātaṅgī, one of the Ten Mahāvīdyas (the ten forms of transcendent knowledge and magical power), represents all-powerfulness. The *chvāsaḥ* attracts all those offerings the greedy spirits expect and really need: “Who else than Bhūtnāth could absorb these offerings”, comments the Brahmin.

The spatial unit of a *chvāsaḥ* – the Jugi and his clients

In marked contrast to the Brahmin, a Jugi² expresses utter disgust with his obligations. He would rather leave his duties and stop receiving what his wife collects from the *chvāsaḥ* and the respective clients on the occasion of deaths. But he feels compelled to continue doing so in fear of the revenge the *piśācas* would inflict upon him. He has no doubt about the consequences.

Every *chvāsaḥ* stone has a defined catchment area comprising a definite number of households that will come to discard unbaked bricks and clothes for the deceased during their state of *preta*, and food on all those occasions described above during their state of *pitṛ* or as a potential *piśāca* – the wandering soul of a person for whom the death rituals have not been performed or not in the prescribed order.

Some catchment areas are large, like the one in Bāsagopal, some comprise less than a dozen households like those in Tibukchē or Kvathāda. The *chvāsaḥ* of Bāsagopal is a large, prominent stone at the centre of a street crossing. Others are represented by inconspicuous stones set in the pavement, recognizable only when a *bau* or *kalāḥ* *vāygu* offering has just been made. Some clearly

embody an ambivalence: the large stone a few steps west of Mahālakṣmī’s *pīṭha* is identified as the consort of the goddess in the form of Bhairava; but at the same time the stone functions as a *chvāsaḥ* to absorb the offerings of more than a hundred households. Strangely enough, in two cases the stone is located inside the neighbouring unit. The stone in Kvāchē is set beside the cluster of associated houses, in the middle of the road that is used by death processions as they move towards the town’s main cremation place.

The seat of the spirits

On the 7th day of the death rituals, which is dedicated extensively to feeding the *preta* (*nhenumhā*), the chief mourner may dedicate a small piece of agricultural land to the spirit of the deceased who, after cremation, has attained the form of *preta*. Immediately after death, the chief mourner will take a cotton strip representing the *preta* and measure the length of the corpse seven times. The resulting measurement dictates the size of the plot that is dedicated to the spirit.

An unpolluted relative (preferably the *jicābhāju*) takes a short-handled spade, marks the boundaries of the small plot and offers *bibau* to it. The act is similar to that when offerings are made over the area of the Śleṣmāntaka forest and Kailāsa mountain on either side of the Bāgmatī at Deopatan on the occasion of Bālācahre in early December. The short handle (*kūcū*) of the spade has to be left behind. The plot is dedicated once and forever to the deceased and may never be touched again by a spade or appropriated for other purposes. It is believed that the *pitṛ* uses this plot to grow grains and vegetable.

More than one thousand such plots may be found around Bhaktapur, clearly “beyond” the urban realm marked by the protective Mother Goddesses. A recent survey located

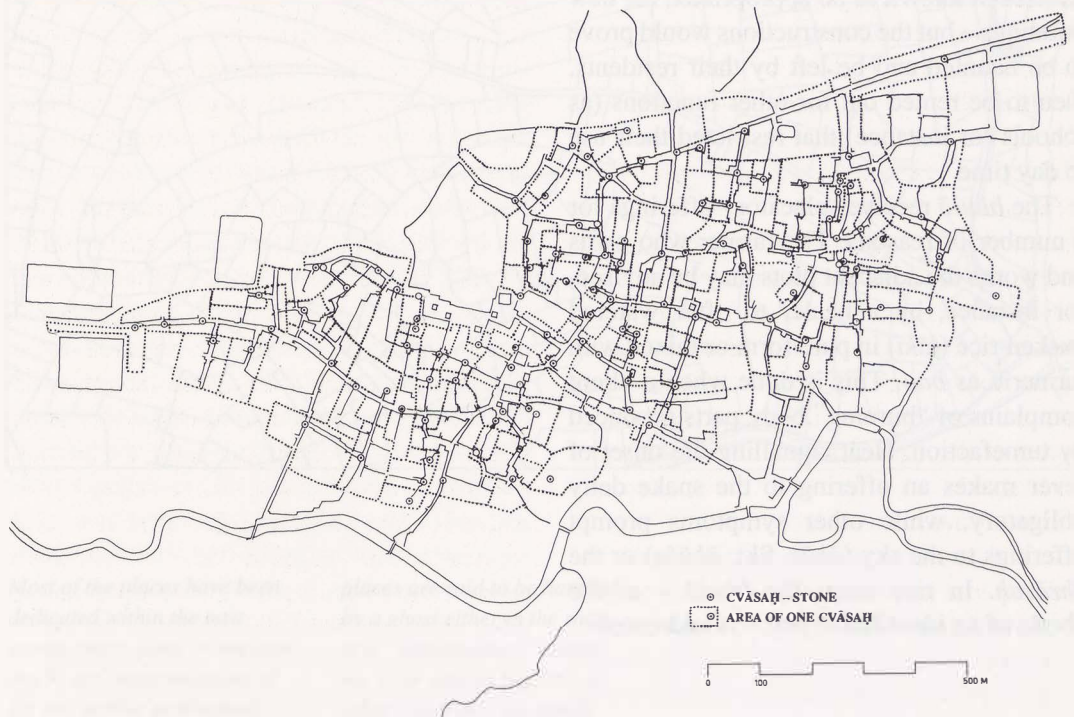
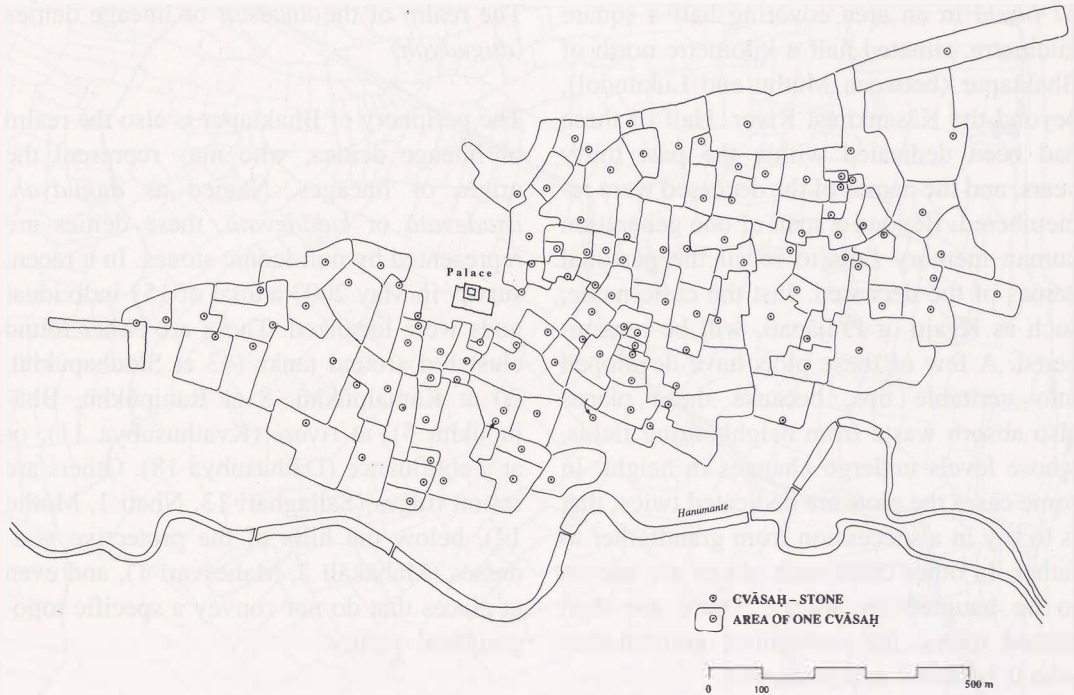
² In November 1987 Bishnu Prasad Shrestha conducted an interview with Chandranath Kusle, who died in September 2003.

*Territorial units of 134
chvāsaḥ stones.*

*Territorial units of varying size
are identifiable throughout
the town by stones which sym-
bolically absorb ritual waste
– especially three unbaked
bricks, and the mattress and
clothes of the deceased which
are discarded immediately
after death.*

*Most of these stones are found
in the middle of streets and
lanes, on squares or – most
characteristically –
on crossroads where unpaci-
fied souls – bhūt and pret –
haunt these places as ghosts
with often a well-defined
shape.*

*Representing a catchment
area with a definite number
of households, the stones are
located in the middle of these
units, at the periphery or –
in two cases – even beyond.
Survey spring 1987.*



27 *bhulā* in an area covering half a square kilometre, situated half a kilometre north of Bhaktapur (between Mūthu and Lukundol), beyond the Kāsankhusi River. Half of these had been dedicated within the past thirty years, and the names of the deceased were remembered. Beyond a span of one generation human memory fails to recall the personal names of the deceased. Just the caste name, such as Kvaju or Prajāpati, will be remembered. A few of these plots have developed into veritable tips, because these places also absorb waste from neighbouring fields, whose levels undergo changes in height. In some cases the plots are dedicated twice, that is to say in a succession from grandfather to father. In other cases such places are known to be haunted by spirits. These are then named *ajimā*, the ambiguous grandmother who is both evil and protective.

Some of these seemingly “vacant” sites have been known to be appropriated for new buildings – but the constructions would prove to be haunted and be left by their residents, then to be rented out for other functions (as schools for instance) that restricted their use to day time.

The *bhulā* receives placatory offerings for a number of reasons. The farmer who owns and works the adjacent plots may be advised, for instance, by a healer to offer watered husked rice (*jāki*) in pure form or mixed with turmeric as *bau*. This is done when a client complains of “burning” body parts produced by tumefaction. Heat signalling the onset of fever makes an offering to the snake deity obligatory, while other symptoms prompt offerings to the sky (*ākās*, Skt. *ākāśa*) or the *chrāsah*. In rare cases the *bhulā* – as the abode of an identifiable *pitṛ* – is addressed.

The realm of the ancestor or lineage deities (*dugudyah*)

The periphery of Bhaktapur is also the realm of lineage deities, who may represent the origin of lineages. Named as *dugudyah*, *iṣṭadevatā* or *kulādevatā*, these deities are represented by non-iconic stones. In a recent survey in May 2003 a total of 151 individual gods were localized. These are either found clustered around tanks (43 at Siddhapūkhū, 20 at Kamalpūkhū, 8 at Raṇipūkhū, Bhājupūkhū 5), at rivers (Kvathusubya 11), or at a confluence (Dāthusubya 18). Others are set on ridges (Sallaghari 13, Nhati 1, Mūthu 12), below the hills of the protective goddesses (Mahākālī 2, Maheśvarī 1), and even at places that do not convey a specific topographical quality.

Bhulā – places for the spirits (preta) of deceased.

Between Mūthu and Lukunḍol north of Bhaktapur is an area measuring 730 by 820 metres (600 hectares or 1,500 acres), in which 27 small plots of two to five square metres can be identified:

- 1 Ajimābhulā
- 2 Chvāsahkhvasa
- 3 Mukti Bāsukala
- 4 Kvajubhulā
- 5 Bhakti Maya Bāsukala, 1992
- 6 Hira Devī Bāsukala, 1991
- 7 Sankha Bahadur Suvāl, 1988
- 8 Krishna Bāsukala, 1976
- 9 Lura Duvāl, 1983 and Sirman Duvāl, 1962 father and grandfather of Ram Prasad Duvāl
- 10 Śanta Maya Duvāl, 1998
- 11 Lavante's father
- 12 Kiskuvar Duvāl, 1973
- 13 Avah
- 14 Purna Kesari Duvāl, 1995
- 15 Latan Bir Rājcal, 1994
- 16 Tulsi Bhakta Suvāl, 1995
- 17 Punya Suvāl, 1999
- 18 Nhuche Maya Rājcal, 1999
- 19 Kisan Suvāl, 2000
- 20 Latan Bahadur Lasiva, c. 1985
- 21 Prajāpatibhulā
- 22 Bhairav Bahadur Bāsukala, January 2003 (husband of 5 and 6)
- 23 Laita Lasiva, 1999
- 24 Tej Maya Lasiva, 1995
- 25 Nhuche Bahādur Bāsukala, 2002
- 26 Apsarabhulā
- 27 Bāsukalabhulā

Map based on the cadastral survey of 1966 of Jaukhel (ward no. 8, areas kha, ga, cha), survey of places by Mohan Yakami, January-May 2003.



Most of the places have been dedicated within the past twenty years. Only in one case (no.9) are representatives of the two earlier generations remembered, who reside at the same place. In other cases the memory vanishes and the

places are said to be haunted by a ghost either in the shape of a "grandmother" (ajimā, no. 1) or apsara (no. 26). In other cases only the family names are remembered, such as Kvaju (no. 4) or Prajāpati (no. 21).

PRIESTS AND PURITY SPECIALISTS IN DEATH RITUALS

Bhaktapur's society is, as Robert Levy (1990: 363) puts it, "ordered through the idiom of purity". The Brahmin occupies the supreme position while others whom Levy terms "covert para-priests" protect the Brahmin's position. They perform the polluting actions that "the civic ritual requires". Other historians of religion have termed these ritual specialists "contra-priests". Dumont and Pocock made a point of saying that "by virtue of their specialized ritual functions, [they] live permanently in the state of impurity which they help others to abandon as rapidly as possible" (1959: 18). The following account presents many of the para-priests of Bhaktapur, who unlike the Brahmins live in a permanent state of impurity.

Brahmin – Hindu priests

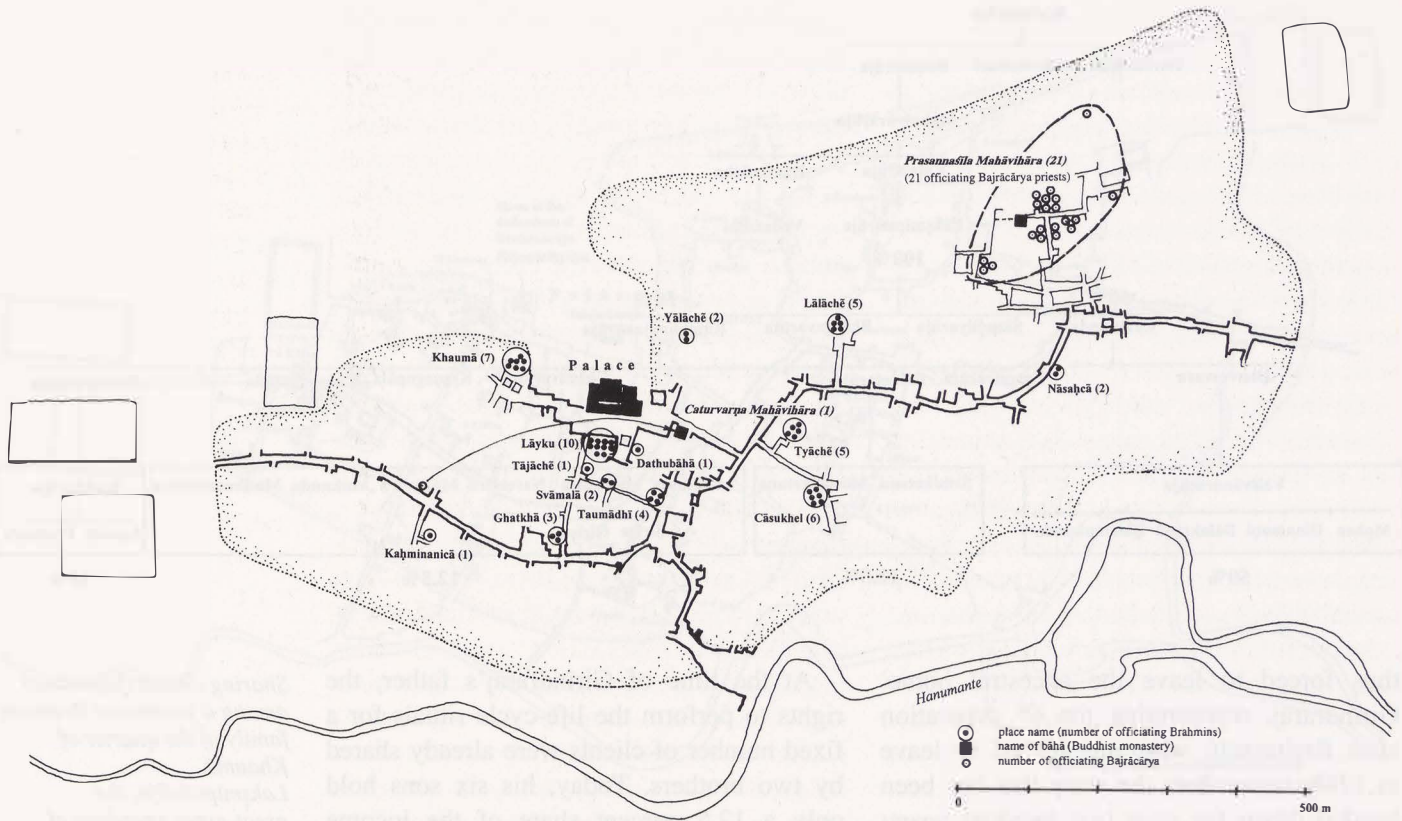
Until recently, death rituals for the Newar sub-castes of Bhaktapur were the exclusive domain of Rājopādhyāyas (Witzel 1976, Toffin 1996). These are Newar-Brahmins, also called *Deobhāju*, who immigrated from India to the remote valley of Nepal with its non-Aryan population. It is not known when the Brahmins migrated to Nepal: inscriptions testify to their presence since the beginning of the second millennium AD, but Brahmins must also have performed the necessary royal rituals since the beginning of the first millennium AD. By the 14th century these Brahmins must have been assimilated to such an extent that they can be considered Newars.

Other groups of Brahmins migrated to Nepal from neighbouring areas as well as from

South India: the Kumāi-Brahmins came from Kumaon, Bhaṭṭa-Brahmins, who officiate at the Paśupatināth temple, still come from Karṇāṭaka in South India, the Pūrbīya-Brahmins came from Bengal, and the Tirhutya-Brahmins from Tirhut, an area on the other side of the present south-eastern border of Nepal. The Tirhutya-Brahmins (Jhā or Mīśra) migrated first to Bhaktapur, bringing with them the tutelary goddess of their King Harisimha in 1327 AD. Like the assimilated Mahantā, they speak Nevārī, but they do not act as hereditary family priests.

Only recently, with the growing unavailability of Rājopādhyāya priests in Bhaktapur, the Tirhutya-Brahmins have started to be called on ad hoc to perform the necessary rites. Since there is only one Śivācārya left in Bhaktapur to perform the purificatory ritual (*ghāsu*) on the 12th day after death, these Jhā and Mīśra have largely taken over the task. As an alternative, the purificatory rituals of the 10th and 12th days are performed by the *jicābhāju* – either the son-in-law or husband of the sister of the chief mourner.

Today, a total of 43 Brahmins officiate over the death rituals for some 10,000 households or 90 percent of the entire population of Bhaktapur. They are either called to the houses of the deceased or, in the case of a regular annual *śrāddha*, to the respective *ghāṭ* at one of the two rivers on the occasion of the *nhenumhā* offering on the 7th day to instruct the chief mourner in the offering of water, rice and *kuśa* grass, and on the occasion of *du byēkegu* on the 10th day to guide the offering of 10 *pinḍas*, which constitute the body of the *preta*. The Brahmin appears



Location of 43 Brahmin priests (*Rājopādhyāya*) and 23 Buddhist priests (*Bajrācārya*) who officiate over death rituals.

Brahmins (in Khaumā for example seven Brahmins as descendants of the same great-grandfather) living in thirteen localities that form a crescent around the palace perform death rituals for almost 90 per cent of the population.

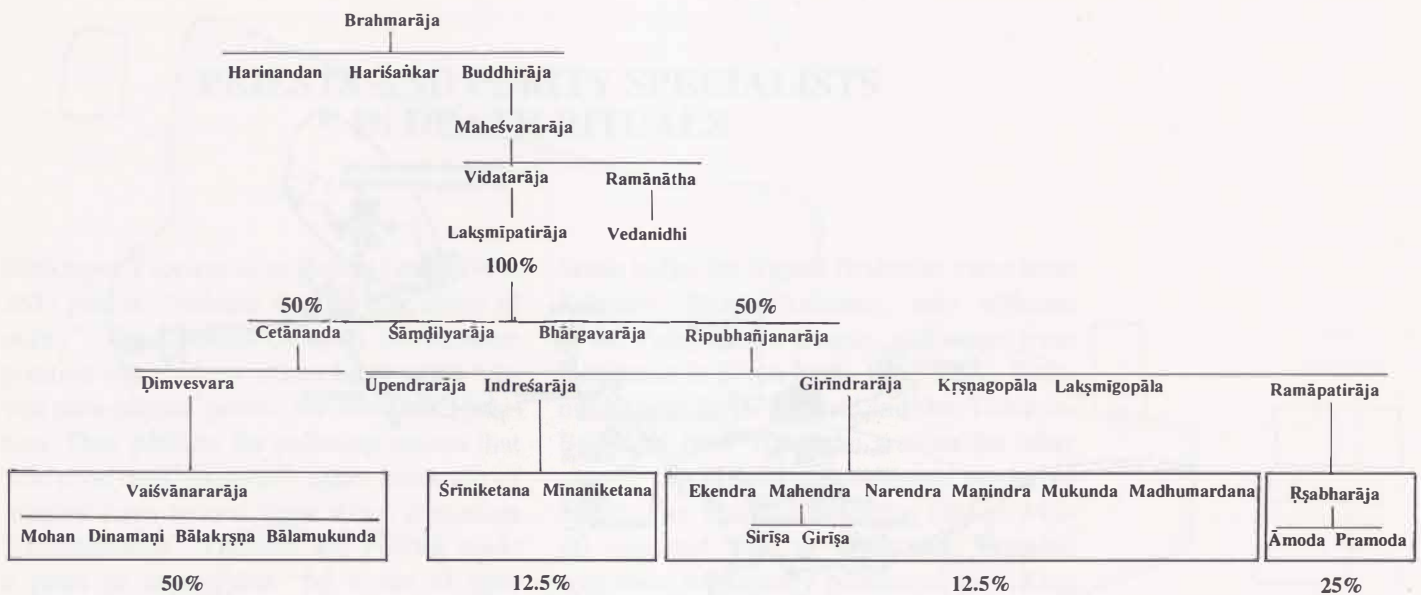
The Bajrācārya priests, who are attached to only two Buddhist monasteries, perform death rituals for Bajrācāryas, Śākya and members of the various sub-castes related to crafts (dyers – Chipā, painters – Pū, torch bearers – Cālā, brick makers – Avaḥ), constituting one tenth of the entire population.

again on the 45th day on the occasion of the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*, the merging of the *pitṛ* with the ancestors, and on 13 more occasions up until the end of the mourning period. Twelve of these 13 occasions are often avoided by the clients and replaced by an offering of water and wheat flour (*nislā biyegu*), which is taken to the house of the Brahmin. In less than three minutes the client is free again for his worldly pursuits. Such offerings are brought by the clients to their respective house priest on three particular occasions: Māgha Saṃkranti (15th January, the day marking the winter solstice), Mātātīrtha aūsī, new moon in April/May, in memory of the deceased mother, and Gokarṇa aūsī, new moon in August/September, in memory of the deceased father. Only a few people join the annual pilgrimages to Mātātīrtha and Gokarṇa, substituting the ritual journey by the offering to their house priest.

In the year 2003, the 43 officiating Brahmins lived in 13 different locations, with between one and seven brothers and cousins – all descendants of the same great-grandfather – living together in a single household or house.

A group of 10 officiating Brahmins in Lāyku, who live in a block just opposite the palace of the Malla kings, trace their origins to a common progenitor, Uhlāsarāja, who – according to a document kept by the family – died in 1576 AD (Witzel 1976: 158) during the reign of Tribhuvana Malla (1561-1610). Currently officiating are the members of the 21st generation after Uhlāsarāja. Until the defeat of Raṇajīt Malla in 1768, when the Śāha dynasty took over and established a greater Himalayan kingdom, Uhlāsarāja's descendants acted as the royal mentors (*rājguru*) of the king.

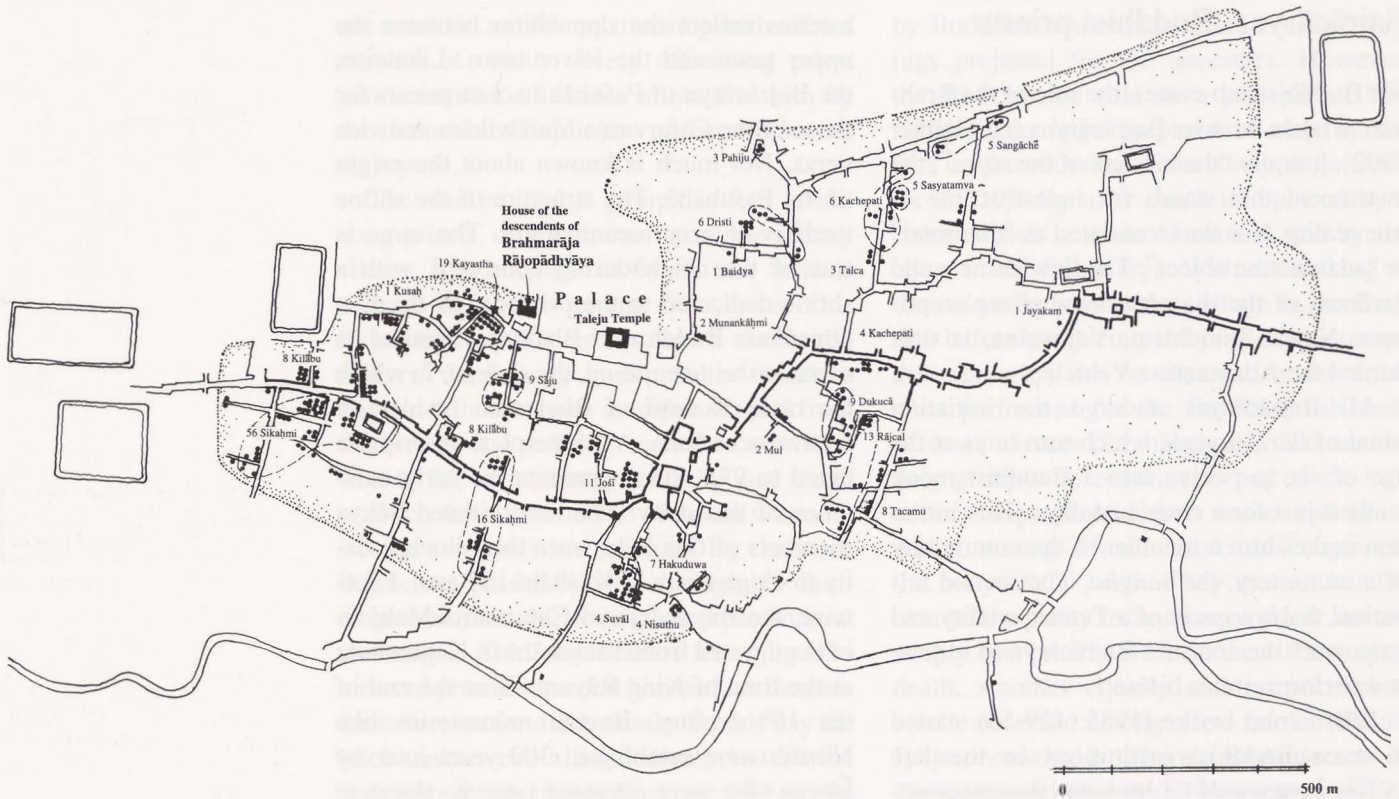
A branch (*kavaḥ*) of this family was deprived of its property by the new rulers and



thus forced to leave the ancestral home. Girīndrarāj, representing the 6th generation after Brahmarāj, who was forced to leave in 1768, remembers the story that has been handed down for over two hundred years: Buddhirāj, son of Brahmarāj, is said to have been the devotee of Sarasvatī, whose shrine is located just two hundred yards east of the former residence. By the grace of the goddess he is said to have been able to buy the humble house of a butcher right at the periphery of the city. Within a generation the family was well established, and in such a way that King Girvāṇayuddha Bikrama Śāha, who ascended the throne in 1799 as a two-year-old infant, granted the family the right to organise the annual *jātrā* in honour of Indrāyaṇī, the 6th of the eight Mother Goddesses who guards the north-western sector of space. Girīndrarāj keeps and regularly worships the iconic, portable version of the deity in his house, where he also acts as the caretaker of a Tantric deity entrusted to him by a community who had given up the esoteric shrine house (*āgāchē*), where such deities are usually kept.

At the time of Girīndrarāj's father, the rights to perform the life-cycle rituals for a fixed number of clients were already shared by two brothers. Today, his six sons hold only a 12.5 percent share of the income from the clients, like his brother Indreśarāja. Rṣabharāja, the son of his youngest brother holds 25 percent, because Kṛṣṇagopāla gave his share to him when he had no male issue. Only three of Girīndrarāja's six sons officiate as priests, serving more than 350 clients, most of them located in the lower town. Almost 25 percent of the clients, mostly Kayastha, Jośi, Kacepati and Munakaḥmi, belong to the upper levels of the social hierarchy, labelled Chathariyā and Pañchthariyā; 45 percent are farmers (Jyāpu) and 30 per cent carpenters (Sīkaḥmi and Kilābu). Only one client belongs to the traditionally underprivileged sub-caste of Kusaḥ, carriers of ceremonial umbrellas who used to officiate as priests for the unclean sub-caste of butchers (Nāy). Quite a number of clients have moved to new residential quarters in Thimi, Kathmandu and Patan. This keeps the Brahmins on the move, because people will not stop being their cli-

Sharing clients (jajamāna) among a prominent Brahmin family of the quarter of Khaumā. Lakṣmīpatirāja, the great-great-grandson of Brahmarāja who lived in the middle of the 18th century, owned an unknown number of clients who in the course of 250 years represent more than 1200 households. While two of Lakṣmīpatirāja's four sons divided the number of clients into two, today one share of 50% is owned by four brothers, while the second half is divided up into two equal shares of 12.5% and one share of 25% because, being with a male issue, Kṛṣṇagopāla, one of the six sons of Ripubhañjanarāja gave his share to his nephew Rṣabharāja. The three sons of Girīndrarāja (born in 1917 AD), Mahendra, Mukunda and Madhumardana, who officiate in their ritual capacity, regularly respond to the call of 343 clients – as counted and mapped under the guidance of Mahendra in November 2001.



Bhaktapur: 323 jajmānas of a Rājupadhya family

Location of 343 clients (jajmān) of the sons of Girīndrarāja Śarmā. Almost half of these belong to the sub-caste of farmers, while one quarter follows the trade of carpentry and one quarter belongs to upper status groups, including astrologers. Dense clusters of clients are located in the western quarters of the lower town, within easy reach of the officiating priests, and none is located in the eastern quarters.

ents and make an alliance with a new priest. Those who have migrated elsewhere from Bhaktapur will only return to the town for the worship of the unnamed ancestors on the occasion of *dugadyahpūjā* in May or June.

The relationship between family priest and client is hereditary. The priests do not keep a list of their clients because they can be sure that they will be called upon. Clients enjoy a certain freedom to choose between the branches of an extended family, for their favourite priest will not necessarily be available.

Bajrācārya – Buddhist priests

For Buddhist sub-castes, the role of the Brahmin is taken over by Bajrācāryas (cf. Gellner 1992), literally “the masters of the *vajra*”, the instrument that stands for indestructible or true reality. It is thus translated as “diamond” or “adamantine object”. The flawlessness and hardness of the diamond symbolizes emptiness. Newar Buddhism, Vajrayāna, is thus termed the Adamantine Vehicle.

All Bajrācāryas undergo the initiation ritual of *bāre cuyegu*, which turn boys at the age of six to twelve into a Buddhist monk – albeit just for a couple of days. This initiation makes him a member of the community of a monastery, the *saṅgha*. The second initiation, *ācālyegu*, is of a Tantric quality and empowers the son of a Bajrācārya to initiate and perform rituals himself.

When John Locke (1985: 429-55) started to trace Buddhist institutions in the late 1970s, he counted 23 monasteries and courtyards (*bāhā, bahi, cuka*) with Buddhist associations in Bhaktapur. A few of these were only known by name, others had become defunct long ago. Locke was not able to clearly define the hierarchy that ties so-called branch monasteries to the main ones.

The *saṅghas* were no longer functioning because their members moved away from Bhaktapur in the middle of the 20th century. The Bajrācāryas kept on performing the initiation rites in their respective monasteries, but only a few of them kept performing life-cycle rituals. The Bajrācāryas of the Lokeśvara Mahāvihāra and Akhaṇḍaśīla Mahāvihāra withdrew from their duties in the early 1990s.

The situation has become even more fragmented a generation later. In 2003 only 21 Bajrācāryas of the Prasannaśīla Mahāvihāra (or Paśubāhā), as well as one from the Caturvarṇa Mahāvihāra (or Tadhichē), still officiated in death rituals. These two mon-

asteries reflect the opposition between the upper town and the lower town. Likewise, the Bajrācārya of Paśubāhā act as priests for those of the Caturvarṇa Mahāvihāra and vice versa. Not much is known about the origin of the Paśubāhā. The structure of the shrine itself is of very recent origin. The same is true of the neighbouring courtyard, with a shrine dedicated to the principal of the five Dīpaṅkara Buddhas of Bhaktapur, and of an esoteric shrine building, the *āgāchē*, in which the main Kumārī of Bhaktapur resides on festive occasions. A copperplate inscription dated to 978 AD documents the early existence of this deity. The non-initiated Śākya members of this *bāhā* trace their lineage deity to Yogambara in Kvābāhā in Patan. Likewise, the Bajrācārya of Caturvarṇa Mahāvihāra migrated from Takṣebāhā in Kathmandu at the time of King Rāyamalla at the end of the 15th century. Branch monasteries like Nibāhā were established 300 years later by Śākya who were attracted from Kvābāhā in Patan by King Raṇajīt Malla for their skills in metalwork.

At Paśubāhā, two sections (*kavaḥ*) of a common lineage perform death rituals. The Yātā-āgā group performs for some 50 Bajrācārya (from Caturvarṇa Mahāvihāra), 290 Śākya, 60 Buddhācārya (said to be Bajrācārya descendants without *ācālyegu* initiation), 518 farmers (Jyāpu), 15 carpenters (Sikaḥmi), 62 brick-makers (Avaḥ, only from the upper town), 370 potters (Kumhaḥ), 20 oil-pressers (Sāymi), 132 dyers (Chipā), 18 painters (Pū), 21 funeral torch bearers (Cālā), 15 purity technicians (Bhā), and 24 blacksmiths (Kau) – altogether more than 1500 clients. The largest numbers of more than 400 clients are shared by four brothers and their cousin, as well as by three sons of the Yātā-āgā group. It is not really clear how the acting priests share the clients on a rotational basis on the occasion of the December full moon (Yaḥmārhipunhi). The priests do

not entertain a stable relationship with a fixed number of clients. Every officiating priest gets a number of clients allotted to him by the senior-most Bajrācārya of the *saṅgha*, the *thāyapaju*.

The smaller Itā-āgā group has four officiating priests, of whom one has no hereditary clients. It is emphasized by all that there is a sense of choice among the clients. One Bajrācārya of this group serves the brick-makers' community in a peculiar tradition. Legend tells that once a corpse slipped from the bier as it was being carried in a procession to the cremation ground. No one dared to touch the corpse as the occasion was considered extremely inauspicious. By chance, a Bajrācārya passed by who through his Tantric powers was able to lift the corpse without touching it. The brick-makers felt obliged to him and promised to call him and his descendants forever for death rituals. To this day the brick-makers call a Bajrācārya priest for the necessary death rituals from the 10th day to the 12 months (*dākilā*) ritual. For all other annual *śrāddhas* a Brahmin is called.

Until a generation or two ago the caretaker-ship of the main deity of the Caturvarṇa Mahāvihāra, the *kvāpāhdyah*, rotated among the six lineages of the *saṅgha*, for which John Locke noted 82 households and five to six hundred initiated members (Locke 1985: 449). In the 1960s only four Bajrācārya households continued to officiate at death rituals. One of these gave up in the late 1990s. The only remaining officiating priest is Hira-candra Bajrācārya, who now has a monopoly on over 150 clients, more than half of them oil-pressers but also stone carvers (Lvahākaḥmi) and Nibāḥ, those metal workers who migrated from Patan in the early 18th century.

The sequence of death rituals to be performed for Bajrācāryas follows essentially the same sequence performed by Brahmins. Throughout the year, the Jugi is also called

by Buddhist households to collect the offerings prepared for the ancestors. However, the Bhā has no role as a para-priest. The Hātakeśvara *liṅga* prepared of clay by the Bhā on the occasion of the *du byēkegu* ritual on the 10th day after death is replaced by a *caitya* which is made of cooked rice by the client of the Bajrācārya. With the making of the *caitya* the client takes refuge in the Buddha before producing the *piṇḍas*. A strange differentiation can be observed in the *śrāddhas* performed for the Buddhist sub-caste of stone carvers (Lvahākaḥmi), who are the only group who continue to put on the two cotton strips around their waist and head, which among Hindu sub-castes represent the body of the *preta*. They are not handed over to the purity technician or priest but are simply cast into the river on the 10th day after death. Another equally striking peculiarity can be observed among a few farmer (Suvāl-Jyāpu) households. There a Brahmin acts as the regular priest, but the Bajrācārya acts as the Ghāsu-ācāju on the 12th day to complete the purification by a sacred fire of all the lineage members – who in this context are called *dumhā* – polluted bodies. The house of the deceased is also purified on this occasion.

For Buddhist sub-castes, the annual ritual of *soraśrāddha* has to be performed by the eldest (*nāyah*) of the lineage (*phukī*) during the dark moon in the month of Āśvin (in September). It is usually enacted on one of the embankments of the two rivers south and north of the town. The client casts the *piṇḍas* directly into the water. *Piṇḍas* of regular *śrāddhas*, however, are brought to the nearest *bāhā* and cast onto the protective stone representing *kṣetrapāla*, the guardian of the courtyard.

Death rituals performed by Buddhists largely follows the sequence of Hindu death rituals. But every detail discloses a decisive Buddhist context.

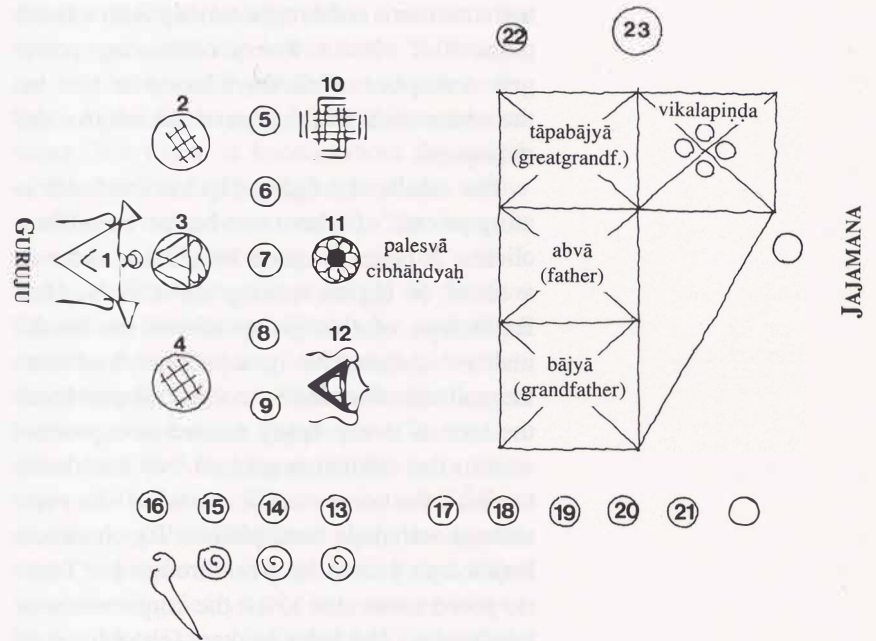
Thus, the *kalaśapūjā* at the beginning is dedicated to the Pañcabuddha. The priest identifies himself with Vajrasattva and equates the central unnamed deity with emptiness (*śūnyatā*), reflecting the basic concept of the absolute in Vajrayāna Buddhism, which is characterized as transcending duality and being without empirical forms. The priest prepares the *gurumaṇḍala* to initiate the ritual.

In a second step a miniature *caitya* is made from the dough that has been kneaded by the client's wife.

Prior to forming the *caitya*, the priest invokes Vairocana, the transcendent Buddha of the centre. Later he places five grains of rice and five popped rice grains into the base of the *caitya* while uttering the *mantra* "om supraṭiṣṭhita vajre svadhā". The *caitya* is then consecrated while invoking the four remaining transcendent Buddhas. From now on the *caitya* is addressed as *dharmadhātucāitya*, which stands for the *sarvadurgatipariśoḍanarāja*. The further ritual identifies the *caitya* with Mahāvairocana, who in turn is equated with the *durgapariśoḍanacāitya*.

The priest arranges in front of him small heaps of rice, leaves and clay cups in a special configuration, representing a universe of its own. First comes the *ratnamaṇḍala*, then on three leaves *pañcagavya* (the five products of the cow), *mandahpatra* and *indrabali*, then a row of five cones of dough (*gvaḥja*) representing (from left to right) Āyurvṛddhi, Gaṇeśa, *kalaśa*, Mahākāla and Gomāta. Then come *svastika*, *palesvā* (lotus leaves/*cibhaḥdyah*) and Bālkumārī. To his left are placed four cones representing (from top to bottom) the trinity of *dharma* (identified as Svastidevatā or *kvāpāḥdyah*), Buddha (*kuladevatā* or *āgādyah*) and *saṅgha* (*iṣṭadevatā* or *duḡdyah*). Finally, Vaiśvānara is added in the shape of a lamp (*sukunḍā*, representing Sūrya).

The client produces three *piṇḍas* representing the three generations preceding him.



A fourth one, called *vikalapīṇḍa* (also short "bikva"), is placed in the lower right. Literally, the *piṇḍa* for those who are "deprived of something" is dedicated to the known and unknown miscarriages of the family of the client (*kula*). In a wider context, this *piṇḍa* is dedicated to the unknown deceased for whom a proper death ritual had not been performed.

After the *piṇḍas* have been made, the priest invokes the transcendent Buddhas through offerings made to the *piṇḍas*, for example Akṣobhya by means of milk, Amītabha by means of water offered from a conch shell; and a number of the group of twelve philosophical deities who represent cardinal human virtues carried to perfection in one birth, for example Kṣāntipāramitā by clothes, Prajñāpāramitā by flowers and Praṇidhāna by light.

All these offerings are made to reduce the karmic impurities and to reduce the impact of sins (*pāp*). Obviously the offerings are intended to help the *pitṛ* attain a better status, and bring them nearer to ultimate liberation. The *piṇḍa* not only represent food offered to

Opposite
 Configuration of a Buddhist
 death ritual (*śrāddha*) ac-
 cording to the tradition of
 Hiraṇyaka Bājracārya from
 Bhaktapur.
 To the left the priest (*guruju*)
 takes his seat, to the right his
 client (*jajmān*). The client first
 prepares a *cibhāḥḍyaḥ* (*stūpa*,
 11) from dough and places
 it on a symbolic lotus flower
 (*palesvā*). He then forms balls
 (*piṇḍas*) for his
 father, grandfather and great-
 grandfather and places them
 on large leaves (*kuṣā lapte*).
 The final *vikalapiṇḍa* is dedi-
 cated to unknown deceased.
 1 *ratnamanḍala*, 2 *pañcaga-*
vya, 3 *mandahpatra*,
 4 *indradibali*, 5 *Āyurvṛddhi*,
 6 *Gaṇeśa*, 7 *kalaśa*,
 8 *Mahākāla*, 9 *Gomāta*,
 10 *svastika*, 11 *palesvā*
 (*cibhāḥḍyaḥ*), 12 *Bālkumārī*,
 13 *dharma*, 14 *Buddha*,
 15 *saṅgha*, 16 *Vaiśvānara*
 (represented by *sukunḍā*/
Sūrya), 17 *butter and honey*
 (*gyaḥ-kasti*), 18 *milk* (*duru*),
 19 *curds* (*dau*), 20 *beer* (*tvā*),
 21 *spirits* (*eila*), 22 *light*
 (*māta*), 23 *incense* (*mi sali*).

the ancestors but also represent the ancestors
 in bodily form.

Jośi and Karmācārya – Assistant priests

Astrologers (Jośi) and Tantric priests (Karmācārya) are “overt auxiliary priests” (as termed by Levy 1990: 353) and perform preparatory functions in a number of rituals. While the status (*thar*) of Jośi is of the highest level of the Chathariyā, Karmācārya belong to the next highest group, the Pāñchthariyā. Often considered as “kinds of Brahmins” (Levy 1990, 354), their powers and skills are considered to have been passed on to them by the Rājopādhyāya Brahmins some time ago.

The astrologers prepare a written chart (*jātaḥ*) that records everybody’s time of birth and the related position of the planets. Thus they refer to the macrocosm which represents an order “beyond Bhaktapur’s civic mesocosmic systems” (Levy 1990: 355). On the basis of this chart, the Jośi determines the auspicious time span for life-cycle rituals and other important events, such as laying the foundations of a new building. He also acts as a healer, advising his clients on the colour of the wick to be used for light offerings to the Mother Goddesses, or the type of precious stone to be worn in a ring on a certain finger of the right hand. After death, the *jātaḥ* is placed on the forehead of the corpse on the pyre.

In death rituals, a Jośi appears simply as an assistant to the officiating Brahmin when preparing the necessary *yantra* on the ground and when worshipping a small double-cupped stand (*dhaupatu*) containing curds and rice grains. Nowadays, only four Jośi continue to be engaged in the preparatory work for death rituals. One of these serves only families of the Malla sub-caste. Similar to the function of the Jośi, the Karmācārya “pre-

pares the ground work for the actual rite” (Regmi 1965-66/II: 715). He acts as an assistant priest to the Brahmin and is responsible for the “Tantric and sacrificial components” (Levy 1990: 357) of elaborate rituals. For example, as priests of Taleju, the tutelary goddess of the former Malla kings, it is their obligation to prepare the offering of cooked rice on every Dark Fourteenth (*cahre*), which is then distributed (*bau hālegu*) on as many crossroads of the town as possible in order to propitiate *bhūt*, *pret* and *piśāca* – a host of evil spirits haunting the town. On the occasion of Pasacahre (new moon in the month of Phāgun) in March this ritual is performed in a grand manner: rice is cooked at the golden gate of the temple and a black goat is sacrificed. It is said that in particular the spirits of those who committed suicide and of those who had died without any offspring are propitiated by this.

Karmācārya are also needed for other rituals that require cooked rice, like the ritual after the completion of the construction (*chēbau biyegu*) of a house.

Like the Jośi, the Karmācārya serve as clients (*jajmāns*) of Chathariyā level: these are Malla, but also Rajbhandari, Jośi, Kayastha, Hada, Timilā, Baidyā and Munankaḥmi. In death rituals they act ideally together with a Jośi as assistant to the Brahmin. In this case they prepare the *yantra* and perform the *pūjā* that is dedicated to the *pañcāyatana* deities, namely Sūrya, Nārāyaṇa, Gaṇeśa, Kumārī and Sadāśiva.

Nowadays, only 20 Karmācārya continue to assist in death rituals. Most of them belong to the privileged group of members who have been initiated at the Tripuravidyāpīṭh – in the only group in town that has not a lineage god located beyond (*pine*) the city’s limit. Instead, they consider their esoteric god, the *āgāḍyaḥ*, as their lineage god, which they worship as such only in the context of the *bel*-fruit marriage of girls (*ihi*).

Tinī – Priests in death rituals

Also called Śivācārya (lit. “the master of Śiva”) or Ghāsuācāju (lit. “the master of the fire”), the Tinī has been termed “a kind of Brahmin” by Robert Levy (1992: 358). From the perspective of the “true” Brahmins, the Tinī ranks below other sub-castes with priestly obligations, such as Karmācārya and Jośi.

The purificatory and thus potentially polluting character of the Tinī’s engagement in death rituals must at one time in history have caused the formation of a separate, specialized sub-caste. The Tinī is called in by the chief mourner on the 12th day after death to tend to the purification of all *phukī* members as well as of the house. To this end he keeps a fire (*homa*) burning that is supposed to reach up to the outstretched hands of the lineage members (*lhā panegu*). An alternative term (*suddha vākegu*) stresses the return to the state of purity (*suddha*).

Of the two Tinī households that could be located in 1974, only one continues to officiate. A regular *jajmān* relationship has long since ceased to exist. Many families in Bhaktapur do not even know the exemplary role of the Tinī in the *lhā panegu* ritual. Either a non-Newar Jhā Brahmin is called to perform, or an in-law of the chief mourner fills the position – proof of an ongoing process of “privatisation” of death rituals.

Cyaḥ – Attendants to the pyre

Brahmin families and those who belong to the sub-castes (*thars*) of Chathariyā status – former courtiers like Malla, Kayastha etc. – used to call a helper from the farmers community to take care of the pyre at the cremation place. The designation “Cyaḥ” (lit. “slave” or “servant”) hints at their original obligation to offer their services at cremation places. However, this is only remembered as a duty

that their great-grandfathers had to carry out. They were given the name Phasikaḥ (lit. “the hard remainder of a cooked pumpkin”) or Phasikavā (lit. “pumpkin-faced”), but at present they call themselves Suvāl in an effort to escape their stigma and attain the highest status level among farmers.

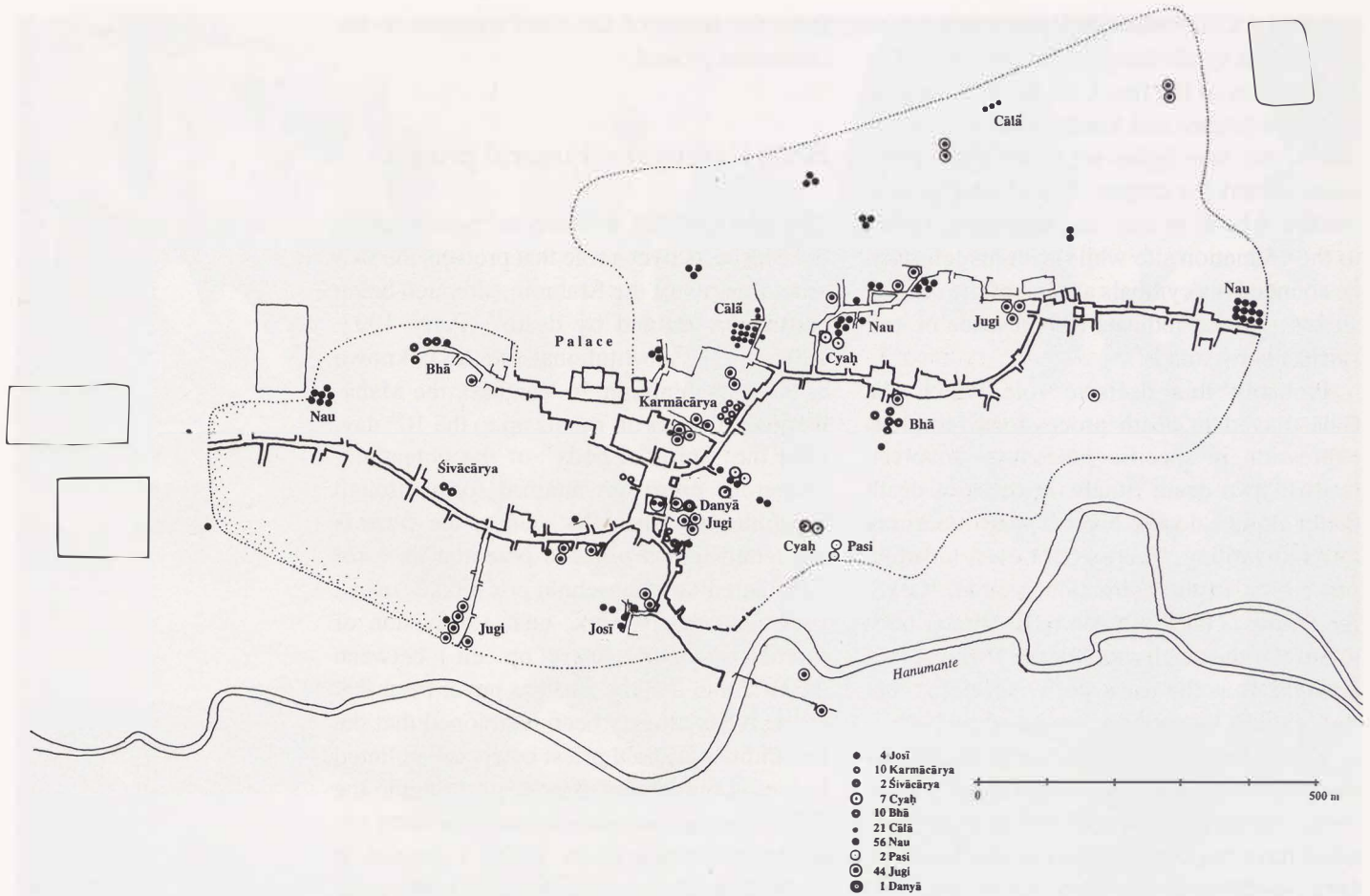
There are two lineages (*kavaḥ*) of Cyaḥ with altogether eight families in Kvāchē, Casukhyaḥ and Lālāchē.

Cālā (Divakār) – Funeral torch bearers

Until recently the Cālā headed the processions to the cremation ground, carrying a torch and cymbals.

A total of 21 Cālā households can be identified in Bhaktapur, clustered around the *āgāchē*, the “house” with the esoteric deity of the community, in the quarter of Tulāchē. An additional, though small cluster of three Cālā households is to be found on the northern perimeter. The community is organized around two funeral associations (with 14 and 7 members), but all male members have access to the esoteric deity without any formal initiation (*dekhā*). The caretaker (*pālāḥ*) of the deity rotates with each *cahre* (the night before new moon), and on the ninth day of the Durgāpūjā ritual the newly-born male members of the community are granted formal access to the deity. The community is exogamous – a fact that forces them to marry the daughters of Pulu or Pulpulu (Toffin 1987: 222) who observe similar obligations in Patan and Kathmandu.

A legend, told by Hari Govinda Rañjitkār (December 2003), says that “in old times” the Malla kings use to head all the death processions to the cremation site. With the growth of Bhaktapur, taking part in the growing number of processions proved to be a great burden. Subsequently, the king



Locality and distribution of para-priests and purity specialists engaged in death rituals, as surveyed in 2003.

Four Joṣī and about ten Karmācārya officiate as assistants to Brahmin priests in the sapinḍikaraṇa ritual. Two Tini / Śivācārya / Ghāsuācāju (father and son) continue to perform the purificatory fire (ghāsu) on the 12th day after death. The Cyah do not provide any more assistance at the pyre to families of Chathariyā status.

Only two persons of the ten Bhā households are still engaged in the purificatory ritual on the 10th day.

Only one person of the twenty-one Cālā households still leads the procession to the cremation ground, carrying a torch and a cymbal.

The spreading of 56 barbers (Nau), whose male members tonsure the heads of their clients and whose female members cut the toenails of their clients on the occasion of a death ritual and any other life cycle ritual, demonstrates the

frequency with which their services are needed.

Two Pasi families, who had to wash the clothes of the polluted family members and the cotton strips representing the preta on the 10th day, do not perform their duty any more. The 44 households of Jugi, who perform the cakrapūjā for the nhenumhā offering on the 7th day, are more or less scattered along the main road. A single household of Danyā serves the Jugi community for the 7th day nhenumhā ritual.

assigned a Cālā to head the processions with the cymbal symbolizing royal presence. The descendants of the first Cālā had to appear at bereaved houses and kindle a torch (*divā*) at one of the four lights set in the four directions around the corpse. After fastening this torch to a bowl of clay, he led the procession to the cremation site while with his left hand he sounded his cymbals at each of the *dhvākā* stones – which indicate the presence of evil spirits at crossroads.

Probably this decisive role which the Cālā played in death processions found its expression in specific procedures involved in their own death rituals. In cases of death their families do not express their mourning through wailing. There is not even a formal procession to the cremation ground. Rather the corpse is taken unseen to Kvaḥre at midnight. For the death ritual of the 7th day a Jugi is engaged as the usual purity specialist, but the people's toenails are not pared by Nau.

This secretiveness gave rise to the rumour that the corpses of this community are secretly buried in their *āgāchē*. If at all, this must have happened many generations ago because up until the early 1970s the Cālā used wood for their cremations, which was supplied by one of the funeral associations of Chipā, the dyers of Bhaktapur. Instead of the obligatory annual rice offering to the Cālā, the Chipā made wood available in a jointly used storehouse, a *gusīpakva* along the road to the cremation ground.

Some Cālā remember that it was the duty of their community to provide seven torches for Taleju, the tutelary goddess of the former kings, on the eve of the rebirth of the Mother Goddesses, the ninth day of the Durgāpūjā in October.

Since the late 1980s, the Cālā are no longer seen heading death processions. Considered a “low prestige” activity with a potential of pollution, it has been given up. Now, a member of the funeral association carries a torch

from the house of the chief mourner to the cremation ground.

Bhā (Kārāñjit) – Funeral priests

Similar to the Tinī, who acts as “para-priests”, the Bhā takes over a role that protects the sacerdotal purity of the Brahmin, although being constantly “tainted by death” (Parry 1993, 180). In this substitutional role he is known as the Mahābrahmin. In Vārāṇasī, the Mahābrahmin handles all rituals up to the 10th day, until the “spiritual body” of the potentially dangerous *preta* has attained form through a definite sequence. As soon as the *preta* is converted into a *pitṛ* – a potential ancestor – the hereditary household priest takes over.

Among the Newars, such a “division of mortuary labour” (Parry op. cit.) between the Brahmin and the Bhā has never been that strict. It has already been mentioned that the Brahmin household priest enters the polluted house on the 7th day after death to guide the chief mourner in worshipping the food offerings dedicated to the *preta*. Likewise, it is the Brahmin who has the lead role on the 10th day when purifying the members of the *phukī*. The “mortuary labour” of the Bhā supports rather the Brahmin. In this role he prepares the ritual ground at the *ghāṭ* and supplies a miniature *liṅga* of clay representing Hātakeśvara, the Lord of Vitāla, one of the seven nether regions (Skt. *pātāla*). Three cups of clay containing cow milk and water are placed to the sides and on top of the configuration. The Bhā then marks the spots on which the *piṇḍa* offerings are to be made by the chief mourner by means of three circles of rice powder.

The most challenging and polluting task the Bhā had to perform until a few decades ago occurred on the following night. He had to appear in the house of the chief mourner to accept substantial gifts – such as clothes

Opposite
A Cālā, the caretaker of the Kvathusubya temple at Cupīghāt, cuts off the right feet of the sacrificial goat as his fee on the occasion of dugudyaḥpūjā.
Photo 21st April 1988 – taḥdī, “the great day”, on a Thursday or Sunday after akṣaya tṛtīyā.



and household items, as well as food that included cooked rice – a highly polluting activity indeed. These days a *jicābhāju* (the son-in-law or the brother-in-law of the chief mourner) takes a large leaf plate with cooked rice, clothes and eleven small cups filled with milk, water, liquor and beer to the house of the Bhā at around midnight. He will also hand over the *nāḥkāpaḥ*, the strip of cotton which the chief mourner has worn around his waist since the cremation of the deceased. As only very few Bhās continue to act as auxiliary priests, this offering – prepared by the *mhāymacā* – is now often cast into the river in the early morning, before starting the purificatory ritual of the 10th day.

Other obligations of the Bhā are often named, but it remains unclear whether these were ever performed in actual practice. It may suffice to cite associations that have stigmatised the Bhā. It is said that the food offered to the Bhā contained a piece of the brain of the deceased, similar to the piece that a Brahmin has to digest when the king dies (Kropf 2002). Other sources tell us that the food had at least touched a fragment of a bone of the deceased corpse. Robert Levy quotes his informants as saying that this ingestion by the Bhā was “to ensure the *preta*’s eventual reincarnation in a human rather than an animal form”, or that “the spirit itself has completed its change from *preta* to human-like form” (Levy 1990: 361).

Gerard Toffin adds another version from his informants in neighbouring Panauti, saying that the Bhā is engaged for the ritual feast in order “to evict the spirit of the dead ... chasing it from the house by ‘identifying’ it with the Bhā” (Toffin 1984: 290).

A survey of Bhā households spotted a cluster of four in the lower town (in Itāchē) and a second cluster of five in the upper town (in Gvamādhi). In 2003 only one Bhā from each cluster still performed in his ritual capacity. Similar to the association of the

Jugi with the non-iconic seats of the Mother Goddesses and ancestor shrines, the Bhā also acted as *dyahpālāḥ*, and as guardians (*pālāḥ*) of the ancestor deities (*dugudyah*). Especially at those shrines where the deity has its seat in a built structure, the Bhā sacrifices the goats on behalf of his clients and receives in turn the two right feet and bits of the intestines.

Pasi – Washermen

Pasi once formed the sub-caste of washermen, whose ritual duty was to wash the clothes of the chief mourner and the members of the lineage on the 10th day after death, before these were handed over to the barber as a gift in exchange for having tonsured them all on that occasion.

The Pasi’s highly polluting obligation, however, was to wash the *nāḥkāpaḥ*, the two strips of cotton in which the *preta* had taken refuge after a symbolic piece of the cremated bones of the deceased had been cast into the water. The chief mourner wore these strips around his waist and head on the day of death and on the 7th day. On the 10th day one strip is absorbed by the Bhā and the second one by the Brahmin on the occasion of the union of the *pitr* with the forefathers.

Nowadays the clothes of the chief mourner are simply discarded and the strips of cotton are washed by the chief mourner. Two Pasi households have been found at a location named after them, Pasikhyaḥ, but only a faint memory persists of their former duties.



Sarasvatī Nāpit pares the toenails (lhusi jeneu) of a hereditary client with a chisel-like tool as a purificatory act performed prior to participating in any death ritual. A small bowl with water is set aside to wet the tool.

Photo 27th October 1988

Nau (Nāpit) – Barbers

Classified as para-priests by Robert Levy (1990: 355), barbers purify people in a non-sacred procedure. In death rituals they enable their clients to overcome their liminal status as bereaved members of the wider clan, transcending the narrow confines of the *phukī*. Paring their toenails and shaving them either on the 4th or on 10th day represents the first decisive step. For two more days *phukī* members are no more *dumhā*, but they remain impure (*aśuddha*) for they are not supposed to touch the gods in temples or to take food from others. Apart from the chief mourner, they only return to the realm of purity after having received *samay*, the ritual food of egg, fish, ginger, soy beans, beaten rice and fried rice from the Ghāṅṣu-ācāju on the 12th day.

Male and female Nau have to trim the hair of their male clients and pare their toenails, while only females (Naunī) pare the toenails of women. Mostly the toes are simply touched by the chisel-like cutting instrument in a waving gesture. The actual paring is done on other occasions.

On the occasion of *du byēkegu* on the 10th day after death, the barber plays an important role because he brings along the mirror (*javā-lānhāykā*) that the Brahmin holds up, asking every polluted male member of the *phukī* to look into it as a concluding gesture to the purificatory rite. After the chief mourner has received new white clothes from the hands of the Brahmin he immediately puts them on, offering his used and potentially polluted clothes to the barber. Since the 1970s, the barber refuses to absorb the pollution of his clients by receiving their clothes. Instead, he receives some cash as compensation.

Barbers pare the toenails of those considered higher status, while those considered “below” the latter – mostly Buddhist sub-castes engaged in death rituals like Bhā and Cālā as well as Pū, Sāymi and Kau – have their toenails pared by members of the sub-caste of butchers (Nāy).

Altogether 67 barbers are organized into four funeral associations with 12, 15, and in two cases 20 members. Some *guthīs* count all (initiated) male members of a household as members, others refer to the hearth as the decisive entity, because in the barbers sub-caste brothers do not separate as often as members of other professional groups. In recent decades quite a few barber families have moved to the rural periphery. Significant clusters of barbers remain though in Yāchē (13), Sujāmādhī (11) and Itāchē (7). The remaining 25 households are evenly scattered across the urban space without demonstrating any pattern.

Barbers were and still are frequently needed in cases of pollution by death. However, no obvious pattern of spatial relationship between a barber and his clients is recognizable. Turning to the example of Kṛṣṇa Gopāl Nāpit and his three brothers from Yāchē (see map), their 90 clients live within a perimeter of 400 metres in significant clusters. More than 100 clients live beyond the city’s limits in sur-

rounding villages. Every client used to offer five *pati* (17 kg) of unhusked rice at the time of harvesting, not merely to the barber but to all those who act as purity technicians in cases of death. For Kṛṣṇa Gopāl and his brothers it means that some 350 kg would make up the demand of almost an entire year.

Kṛṣṇa Gopāl runs a rented barber's shop at nearby Lālāchē Square and turns up at Kālīghāt north of Bhaktapur whenever he is called for a *du byēkegu* ritual on the 10th day after death. Most clients come to his shop to be shaved for the annual *śrāddha* rituals. One brother works in a barber's shop in Kathmandu on a daily basis: 40 percent of his income remains with the shop owner. The youngest brother joined the traffic police. Their father, Bakhat Mān, had served for many years as barber to the Royal Guards, a service that provided him with the opportunity to see much of the country. A faint memory survives that their ancestor was once called to Bhaktapur from Palpa by a Malla king to cure the broken leg of a horse. To this day barbers are famous for handling fractures and sprains. They also act as healers and usually advise offerings of *bau* (rice husk) or even *samay-baji* to the Ākāśabhairava or a Kṣetrapāla, guardians of space in the neighbourhood of the patient.

Until recently, Kṛṣṇa Gopāl's *phukī* had nine members from three families. The inevitable process of fragmentation resulted in a split from his cousins, who live next door. Together with his brothers he worships the lineage god at Siddhapūkhū on the day after Bhailaḍyaḥ's annual *pūjā*. On the occasion of life-cycle rituals, sacrifices are performed at the *pīṭha* of Mahākālī, while his funeral association meets at the non-iconic seat, the *pīṭha* of Kaumārī three times a year. The family's cremation site is at Yaḥsikhyaḥ while *pekhi vāygu*, the disposal of the *piṇḍas*, is performed at Kvaḥre.



Only recently has an association of barbers (*nāpit saṅgha*) been founded to identify and defend the interests of their trade and unify the tariffs for their services. They also demanded that their members should stop going to their clients' fields to receive their annual share in a way that they considered humiliating. Instead, they now demand unhusked rice or cash. Since the late 1990s barbers visit their clients' houses after harvest to collect 340 rupees (in 2003 equal to 4 Euro).

Bakat Mān Nāpit (1934 – 2001) from the quarter of Yāchē, receiving the annual gift of unhusked rice from a Bāsukala client on a field north of the Kāsankhusi river. The client pushes the grain onto a white cloth spread out by the barber.

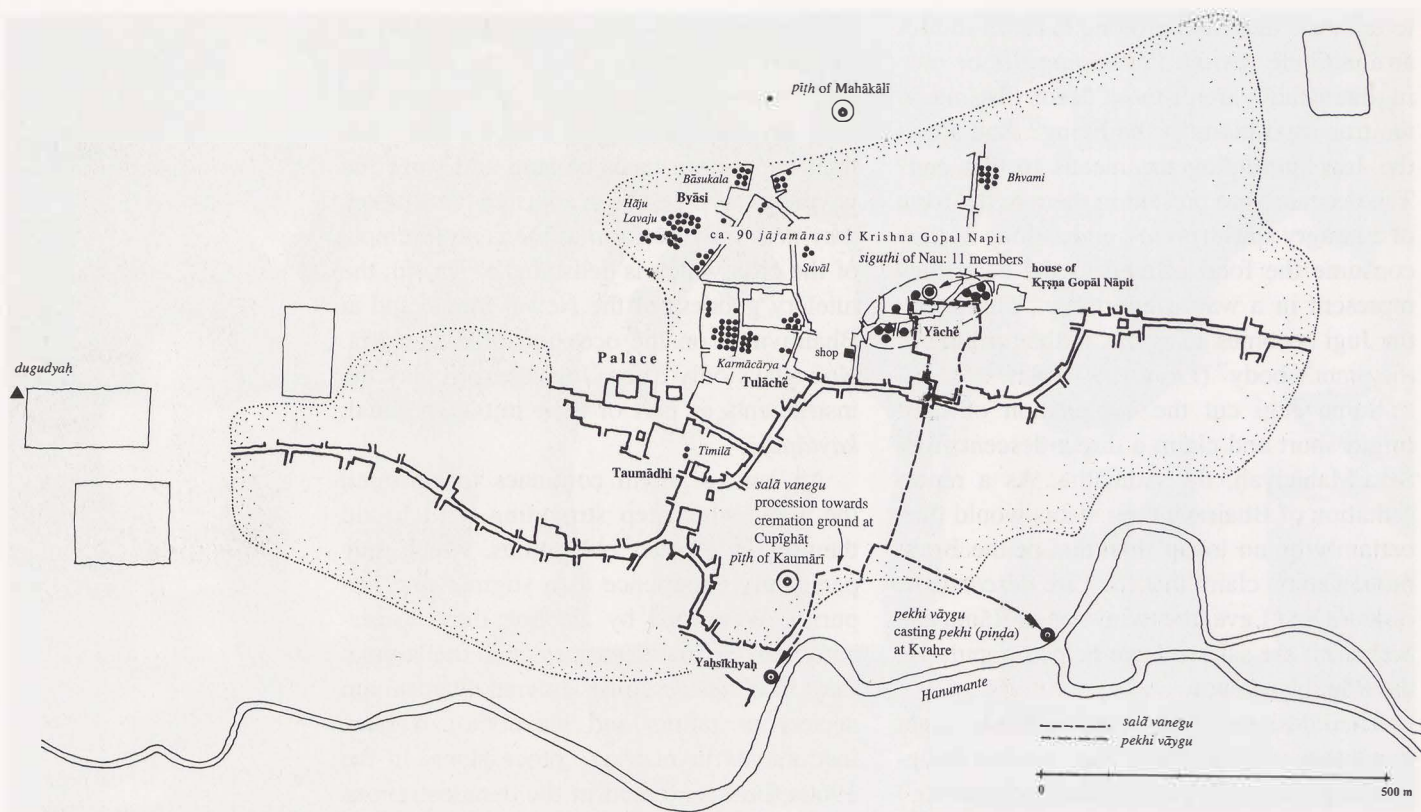
In 1987 Bakat Mān had 104 clients.

Photo, 4th November 1987

Opposite

The urban world of a barber: Kṛṣṇa Gopāl Nāpit from Yāchē.

Krishna shares the inherited house with three brothers. From their father they inherited c. 90 client-families (jajmāns) in the northern sector of the upper town and close to a hundred in villages north (Jaukhel), east (Bageśwori), south (Chaling, Katunje) and west (Thimi) of Bhaktapur. Apart from two Timilā, two Baidye and 20 Karmācārya, all clients are farmers.



The eleven members of his funeral association (*siguṭhi*) live close to each other in *Yāchē*. Three times a year the *guthipūjā* is performed at the seat (*pīṭh*) of the goddess *Kaumārī*. The processional route in cases of death leads through *Lālāchē* to the cremation ground at *Yaḥsīkhyah*, while the ball offerings (*pinḍa*) of the subsequent death rituals are discarded at *Kvaḥre*. *Kṛṣṇa Gopāl Nāpīt* runs a rented shop in nearby *Lālāchē*. The lineage god is located at the western end of *Siddha-pūkhū*. *Mahākālī* is the goddess who receives blood sacrifices on the occasion of life cycle rituals.

Jugi (Kusle, Kapālī, Darśandhārī) – Tailors and musicians

The origin of the Jugi

The Jugi play an important role in death rituals – so much so that it might be argued that they represent the deceased in the shape of *preta* as well as *pitṛ*. They literally absorb the food that is offered to the *preta* on the seventh day after death. They also participate in the annual offerings to the dead because each family is tied to a set number of clients, *jajmāns*, from whom they collect the *jugibvaḥ* – the share for the ancestors that is kept aside on the occasion of formal feasts (*bvaḥ*).

The origin of the Jugi remains obscure. A number of the explanations that are given upon questioning opens up, however, a wealth of associations. The most frequent explanation is that the Jugi have descended

from *Kānphaṭa Yogīs*, an order of ascetics founded by *Gorakhnāth*, a *yogin* of the *Nātha* cult who lived between the 9th and 12th centuries AD. This order considered *Śiva* as the *Ādinātha*, the Supreme Divine Source of Perfection, while *Gorakhnātha* appears as a direct descendant of the *Ādinātha*. Not only might the designation as “Jugi” (or *Yogī*) suggest that there is some historical truth in such claims. Among the urban society of *Newars* Jugi are, like *yogīs* (and *Mahantās*, who are also considered to be *yogīs*), the only ones who are not cremated but buried. *Gorakhnātha* is worshipped as their tutelary and ancestor god. Moreover, the rite on the 7th day after death requires a *cakrapūjā*, which usually is only performed by *Kānphaṭas*. What is even more striking are the abilities that are traditionally attributed to *Gorakhnāth*. His yogic powers not only enabled him to withhold rain, but he is also said to have been able

to raise the dead and prolong his own life for an indefinite period. Prolonging life or raising the dead – aren't these deeds that mirror the true aspirations of the living? And aren't the Jugi presenting the means to that end? The deceased are present in them in the form of a hungry spirit (*preta*), and as long as they consume the food offered to the dead they represent in a way immortality. Ultimately, the Jugi becomes an agent “in the forming of the *preta*'s body” (Levy 1990: 682).

Some Jugi cut the explanation of their origin short and claim a direct descent from Śiva/Mahāyaḥ, the Ādinātha. As a representation of Bhairava their status would then certainly be no lower than that of the Brahmins. Others claim that they are descendants of Kuśa and Lava, the twin sons of Rāma and Sītā, who are said to have helped popularise the Rāmāyaṇa epos.

Their designation in Nepālī as Kusle might recall this version, while their present designation as Kapāli (lit. “adorned with skulls”) refers once again to Śiva-Mahādeva, who at the destruction of the universe will wear a garland with skulls “symbolizing the endless evolution and devolution of the universes, and indicating the inseparability of life and death” (Stutley/Stutley 1986: 141).

Profane and ritual duties and rights

As tailors, the Jugi also acquire the name Darśandhāri. Ritually speaking, the most important task of the male members of the community, however, was – and for very few still is – to play a kind of shawm named *mahalī*, which music historians identify as having been imported from Gujarat as late as the 17th century. Whether the players came along with the instruments or whether the kings of Nepal felt inclined to add to the variety of instruments played at their court cannot be said with certainty. Since the early 17th century, dedicatory inscriptions on religious build-

ings mention how many Jugi had to play in the early morning to wake up the deity, and they mention the payment that was due for their service. Since most temples have lost their supporting basis of land and since the payment has never been adjusted to inflation, they now only perform at the central temple of the city, which is dedicated to Taleju, the tutelary goddess of the Newar kings, and at Bhairavnāth on the occasion of Bisketjātrā. Nowadays only a few Jugi learn to play the instruments as part of their initiation ritual, *kaytāpūjā*.

An aura of myth continues to surround the Jugi, who keep struggling hard to rid themselves of their obligations, which they personally experience as a stigmatising impurity. Weakened by alcohol, they desperately seek a final departure from the stigma: they have successfully entered mainstream society as tailors and players of western instruments in marriage processions. In the 1960s the Jugi joined in the demonstrations to enforce access to temples, and today their leading figures have studied abroad and serve as ministers.

In order to convey the complexity of the life of a Jugi, it is worth looking here at the fate of Chandranāth Kusle, who was interviewed on 31st October 1988.

Shortly before the great earthquake of 1934 his father came to Bhaktapur to marry the sister of a deceased Jugi. Thus he inherited the obligations and rights of his brother-in-law. This act had to be confirmed by adding a handful of sand with a coin to the deceased's grave and offering food to him for the following four days. Chandranāth was born in 1944 and at the age of sixteen he married a fourteen-year-old girl from Maṅgalāchē (at the south-western periphery of Bhaktapur). His four elder sisters were married in Kathmandu. The rights of his father were divided between two brothers: Chandranāth received the right of guardianship of the south-eastern



Four Jugi performing on their shawm at the quarter of Yāchē. The third from left is Chandranāth Kusle.
Photo 17th April 1986

Mother Goddess, Maheśvarī, his brother of the north-eastern one, Mahālakṣmī, whose seat is located next to the arcaded residence house, the first floor of which is to this day occupied by his entire family.

Chandranāth played the shawm in a *dhalcā* musical group on various occasions: on the eighth day of *mvaḥṇi* in honour of Mahālakṣmī, who is worshipped on this day by thousands of devotees; on the tenth day in Sujamādhi on the large eastern square to welcome the newly born gods of the Navadurgā dance troupe; and on the following two days when an auspicious *taḥsi* fruit is offered by the Navadurgā. For this service, the performance's donors presented him with a very symbolical reward of slightly less than 500 grams of *vākijāki*, a mixture of husked and unhusked rice.

During the sacred month of the Buddhists, Gūlā (in August), Chandranāth used to play

each day as a member of a group of Śākya from Inācva. Until the seventies he also played early each morning in the company of eight other Jugi in front of the Golden Gate, the *lūdhvākhā* of the Taleju temple. For this service the donor's descendants offered almost 150 kg of paddy, which had to be collected on the field after harvest in November. In the seventies he also had the duty of cleaning the so-called "pumpkin temple" (Phasidegaḥ) on Darbār Square three times a year – a service for which he received a nominal fee from a Rāṇa family in Kathmandu.

The most rewarding activity were the engagements to play in wedding processions. Each spring Chandranāth had up to twelve engagements. As a tailor he would earn cash in a short season lasting three weeks between Indrajātrā and *mvaḥṇi* in October. And in June he worked as a day-labourer in the fields transplanting rice.

Moreover, Chandranāth owns the right to collect the offerings made to nine lineage gods in Mūthu (north of Bhaktapur), and the full rights at the lower *chvāsah* stone in Vacutvaḥ. Another Jugi shares the rights to the upper stone in Vacutvaḥ with three families, while sharing the stone at Inācva with two other Jugis. His wife or his daughters have the right and duty to collect the offerings made to the *chvāsah* stones and to perform the *nhenumhā* ritual on the 7th day after death for the related households.

Chandranāth's three sons had nothing to share, for the reward or return from collecting coins was nominal. They work as tailors, play the trumpet at marriage processions, and their wives collect *nhenumhā* offerings. Chandranāth was paralysed for years before he died in early September 2003.

Death rituals for Jugi

A more than legendary association with *yogis* is revealed by their designation in the local idiom as Jugi, as well as in the practice of burial instead of cremation – a practice normally reserved for ascetics. In the context of Hindu society the *yogi* is socially already dead. The separation from the parental household has serious consequences. When he cuts the tuft of hair that had remained after shaving (Nev. *āgusā*, Nep. *tuppī*) he breaks the symbolic tie to his lineage and ancestors. Being already “dead”, Newar society identified the Jugi with the death of identifiable persons whose food the Jugi have regularly to absorb. But they also have to absorb the food dedicated to the ancestors during the annual urban rituals. So they became identified with death and ancestors in general.

The social organisation of the Jugi

In 1987 a total of 44 Jugi households were counted, which were organised into six dif-



ferent funeral associations (*siguthī*). Each household (identified by a separate hearth) has to deputise at least one active member to such an association in order to ensure the necessary help to any of its members should death strike the house. The process of carrying the corpse and burying it at a defined ground called *jugigah* (*gah*=literally “hole”) is performed by members of the associations, who in that particular case are not polluted. The size of the *guthīs* varies considerably, from four to 16 members.

The settlement pattern of the Jugi is complex in nature. Although members of an unclean sub-caste, they do not mark the edges of the city in the way that butchers or sweepers do, but are scattered across the urban space, being little represented in the east and even less so in the far western quarters.

Chandranāth Kusle, officiating as caretaker (dyahpālāḥ) at the seat of the goddess Maheśvarī on the second day of the Dasāī festival.

Photo 12th October 1988



Ancestor worship (*dugudyaḥ-pūjā*) in the middle of a field north of Bhaktapur where the non-iconic seat of the deity is not dug up but simply surmised. The son of Chandranāth Kusle on the left is waiting to collect the offerings.

Photo 3rd May 1987, on the occasion of *taḥdhī*, “the great day” on Sunday following the third day of the bright moon in April/May (*akṣaya tṛtīyā*).

Until recently most of them lived in one-storied huts under a straw roof, very similar to the huts of the sweepers, and they even raised pigs like them. But what is important to note is a concentration right at the centre around the temple dedicated to Bhairava, the master (*nāyaḥ*) of the city who came to Bhaktapur as Kāśī Viśvanāth. In recent times the Jugi were able to construct a few three-storied houses at Taumādhi Square, which became valuable property. Bought by affluent merchants, these plots have been redeveloped to serve the growing tourist industry.

Reflecting the Jugi’s role as purity specialists, their tutelary god Gorakhnātha – represented by his footsteps – is located near Taumādhi Square on a small hilltop. There, ancestor worship is performed on the occasion of Bālacaturdaśī, the night before the new moon of December. While all other inhabitants of Bhaktapur perform their ancestor

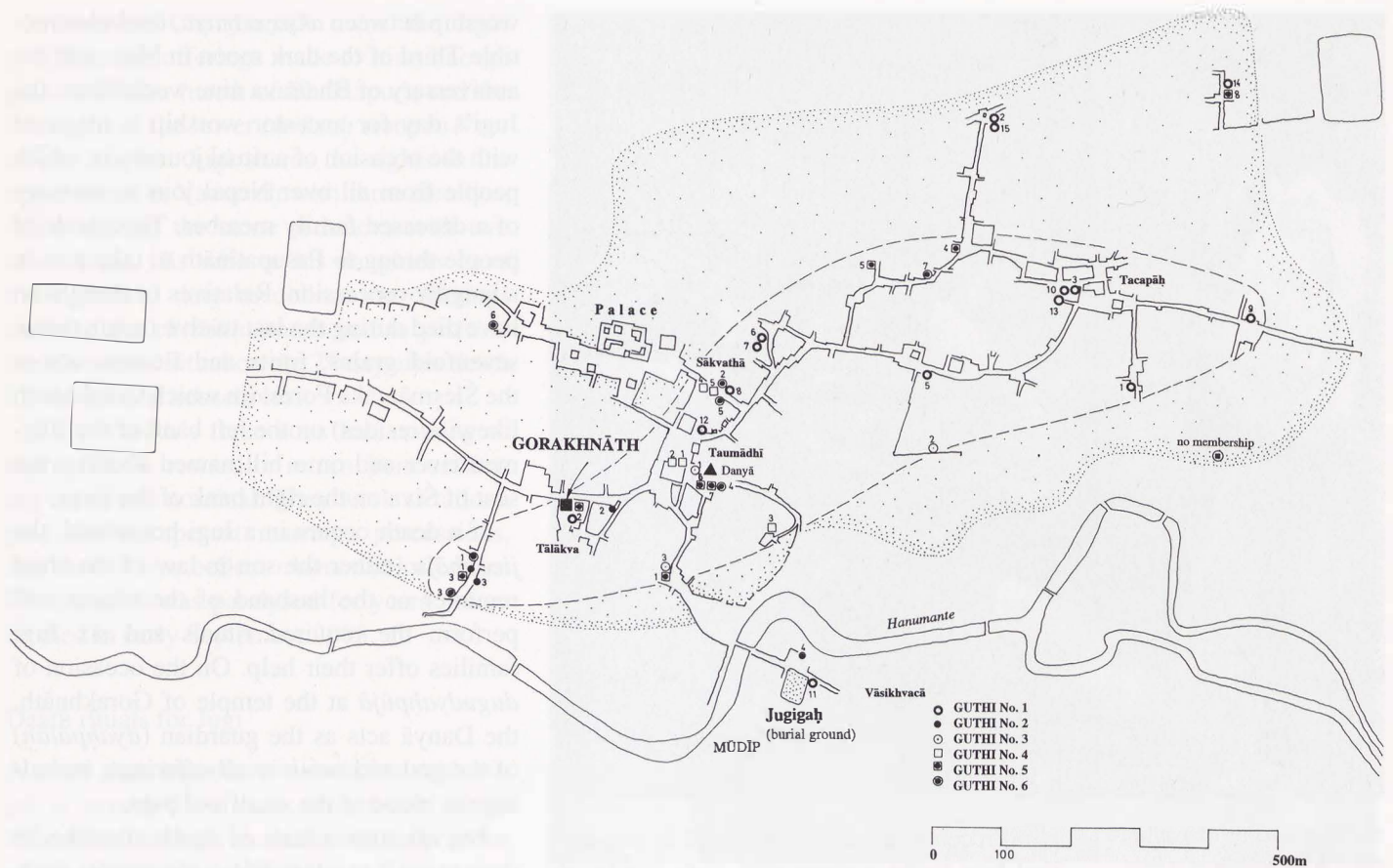
worship between *akṣaya tṛtīyā*, the Indestructible Third of the dark moon in May, and the anniversary of Bhairava nine weeks later, the Jugi’s day for ancestor worship is identical with the occasion of a ritual journey in which people from all over Nepal join in memory of a deceased family member. Thousands of people throng to Paśupatināth to take part in a lengthy procession. Relatives of those who have died during the last twelve month throw sevenfold grains, fruits and flowers across the Śleṣmāntaka Forest (in which Gorakhnāth likewise resides) on the left bank of the Bāgmatī river and on a hill named Kailāsa, the seat of Śiva on the right bank of the river.

If a death occurs in a Jugi household, the *jicābhāju* (either the son-in-law of the chief mourner or the husband of the sister) will perform the required rituals and six Jugi families offer their help. On the occasion of *dugudyaḥpūjā* at the temple of Gorakhnāth, the Danyā acts as the guardian (*dyahpālāḥ*) of the god and receives all offerings, including the blood of the sacrificed pigs.

For all other rituals of death after the 7th day, as well as other life-cycle rituals, there are two Jugi called either Bramhu or Gubhāju who act as priests. For several years now the Bramhu is even called to guide the performance of *soraśrāddha*, which until recently was unknown for Jugi. This adoption of new rituals can certainly be seen as demonstrating a transcendence of the narrow confines and stigma of the Jugi community. One Bramhu serves members of the groups from the upper town (*thanekavaḥ*), the other the groups from the lower town (*kvanekavaḥ*).

Obligations in death rituals

The duties or rights of the Jugi – he in fact “owns” the offerings which he is obliged to collect – in cases of death start immediately with a death in a family that qualifies as his



hereditary client. Before the corpse is carried to the cremation ground, the wife of the chief mourner (who is called in this role *chvāsahvāimhā*) discards a woven bamboo mat symbolizing the bed of the deceased and some clothes, in recent times also the left-over medicine, on a particular *chvāsah* stone. Until recently this polluted waste was collected from the stone by the wives or daughters of the Jugi, who had previously to be informed by the bereaved family.

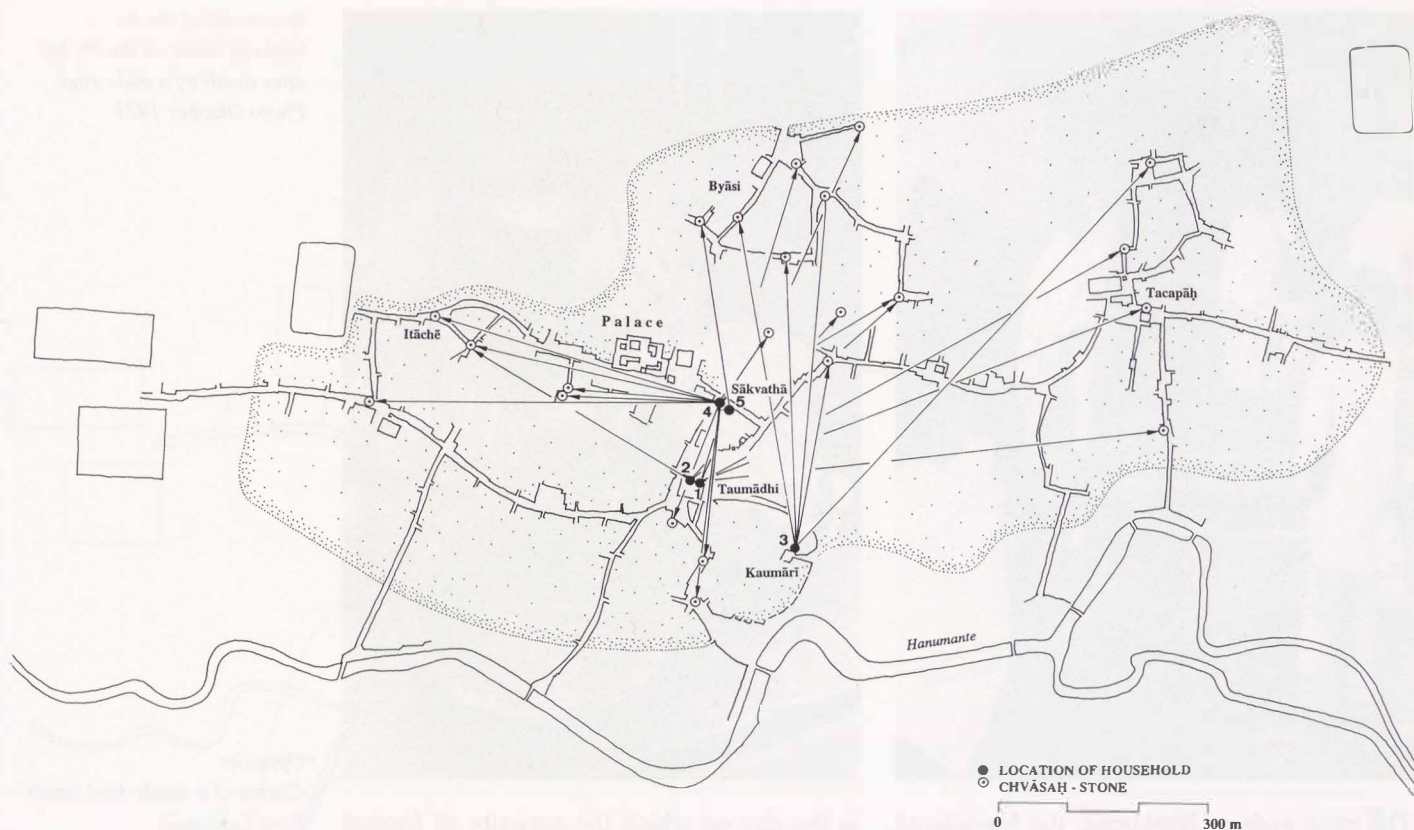
Since every household is aware of the location of the associated *chvāsah*, the Jugi in turn are aware of what kind of rights they own at which stone. In “old times” the discarded objects and food offered to the ancestors constituted an income for the families concerned; it literally fed them. Nowadays, the clothes and the mattress of the deceased are no longer

collected by the Jugi, but cleared away by the waste department of the recently established municipality.

The principal duty of the Jugi is to appear on the 7th day after death at the threshold of the deceased to perform the *nhenumhā* rite, literally the offerings to “the body (*mhā*) on the seventh day (*nhenū*)”. The Juginī (since two decades always a woman) receives the food from the temporary hearth on the ground floor and carries it outside. She places seven small baskets of cooked rice on seven bundles of rice straw. The principal plate of food, the *nhenumhā bvaḥ* itself, will remain on the threshold to be eaten by the dogs, but all raw food (like salt and turmeric), the cooked rice from the seven small baskets, and a special plate with meat, vegetables and alcohol, the *jugibvaḥ*, will be taken home by her.

Location of 42 Jugi households, designated according to their membership in six different funeral associations with four (guthi no. 3) to sixteen (guthi number 1) members. Only a few of them live on the periphery. Most of them own modest houses located along the main road and at ritually important squares. The temple of the lineage deity, Gorakhnāth, is located on a small hill south of the main road, the burial ground, Jugigāh, across the river behind the main cremation ground.

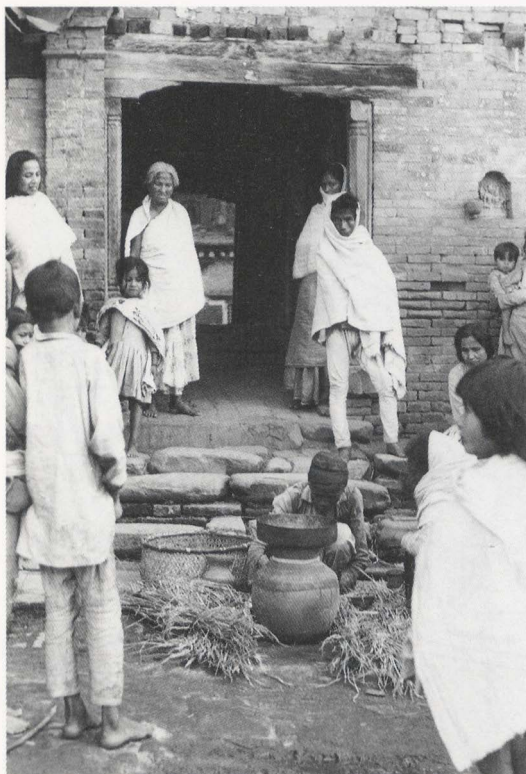
Survey spring 1987



Distribution of shares in 19 *chvāsaḥ* stones owned by five members of a *jugiguthī* (no. 4, see map on the opposite page). Household 1 has rights on fire stones in the upper town, household 2 on two in the upper town and two in the lower town – two of which are shared with household 4. Household 3 has exclusive rights on five stones in the upper town, household 4 on nine stones, of which only two are located in the upper town. Household 5 owns rights on one stone in Byāsi. Survey spring 1987

This is the first meal (*bvaḥ*) that the *Jugi* receives in the name of the deceased. The second one on the 13th (or 45th) day (*latyā*) and those on fifteen subsequent occasions follow within the mourning period of one year. The *pitṛ* needs this period to reach the realm of Yama, the Lord of Death. From that time onwards a *jugibvaḥ* will have to be collected on the performance of the annual death ritual, *śrāddha*. Another death ritual is enacted by the elder (*nāyaḥ*) of a group of two to six or sometimes more families that form a lineage, presenting a patrilineal group in a fragmented form. The intention is to offer *piṇḍas* not only to the past three generations, but also to all other ancestors that are remembered. *Jugibvaḥ* is also due at all life-cycle rituals such as birth, initiation, marriage and old-age celebrations (*jākva*). More *jugibvaḥ* are due on a calendar basis, punctuated by important

events that mirror the agricultural year and by rituals of renewal. This starts with the end of the lunisolar calendar on Caitra Masanta, the 13th April. By that day, most movable representations of those gods that demand blood sacrifices have returned to their place of origin, marked by a non-iconic stone and the erection of a large pole on the ritual ground to herald the advent of another year. A similar event is marked by the winter solstice on 14th January, Makar Saṃkranti, locally known as *gyaḥcāku saṃkranti*, the day butter and raw sugar are served to overcome the hardships of winter. On the 8th day of *mvaḥni*, the Durgāpūjā festival in October (Āśvina), the *Jugi* is offered part of the *kuchibvay* – named after the container that is used: the contents of a *kuchi* is equal to two *mana*, which is equivalent to almost one litre. This occasion is likewise associated with death and rebirth.



Enactment of the du byēkegu ritual on the 7th day after death by a male Jugi. Photo Oktober 1971

The main gods of Bhaktapur, the Navadurgā Mother Goddesses, have been absent or “dead” for a period of exactly four months during the rains. On the night of the 9th day of Durgāpūjā – the Jugi are supposed to collect their share in the early morning of that day – the gods are reborn, and the next day they are paraded into the city. Six weeks later it is Lakṣmī who graces the households and promises affluence. An occasion on which on consecutive days the messengers of death, the crow, the dog and the liberating cow are worshipped. In the presence of a Yama figure moulded from rice flour, sisters worship the bodies of their brothers in a ritual called Kijāpūjā. The Juginī come to receive the offering dedicated to the ancestors the following morning. Finally, on full moon in November (Maṅsir) when the new rice harvest is celebrated and small figures, *yaḥmārhi*, are moulded from rice flour, the Jugi pick up their share the following day. It

is the day on which the majority of funeral associations, the *siguthī*, convene for their annual meeting.

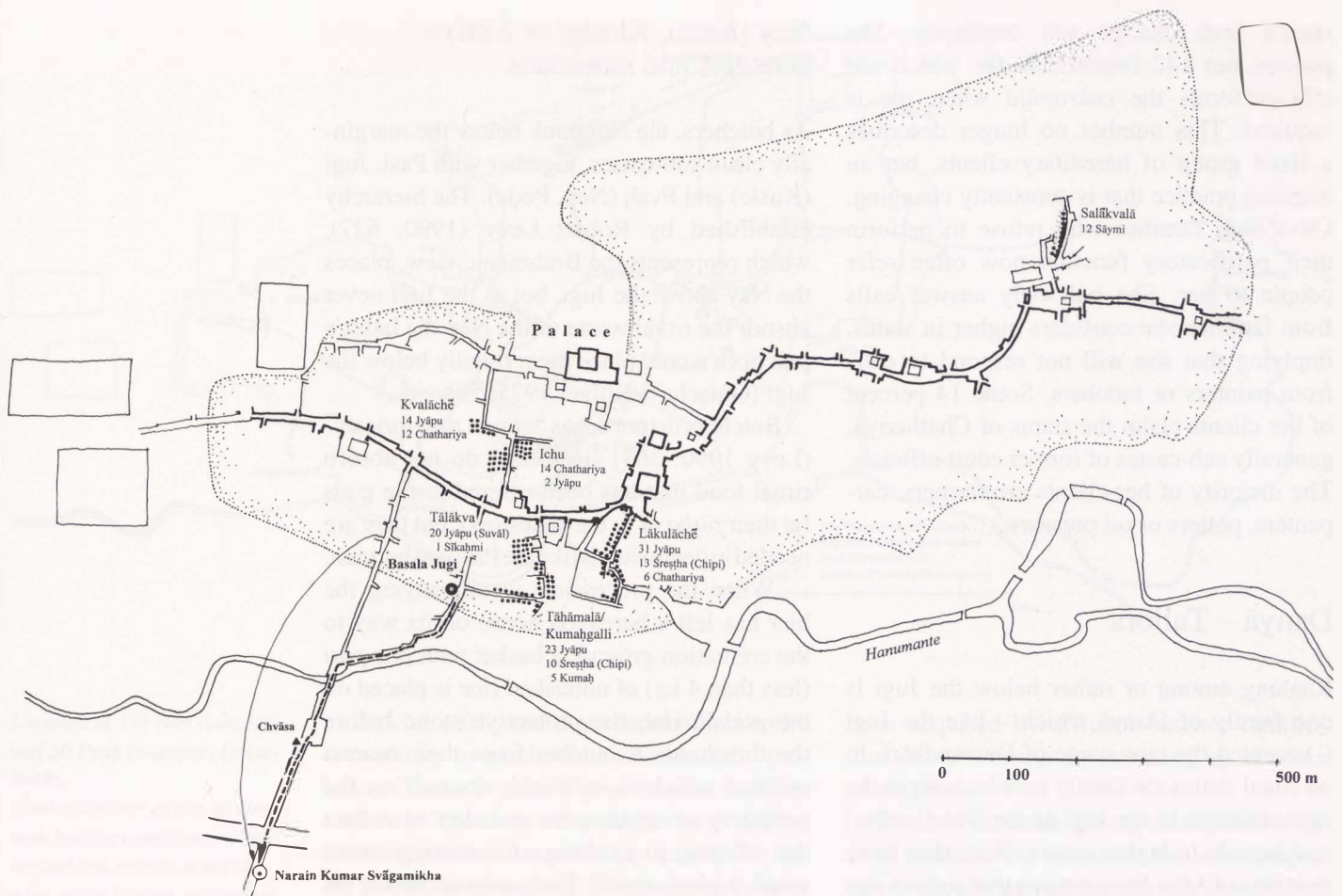
If one counts 200 *jajmāns* (clients) for every Jugi household, one would end up with some 1200 *jugibvaḥ* per annum – enough to feed the entire family.

However, the *jugibvaḥ* offerings to the ancestors and the offerings made to the *chvāsaḥ* stone (*kalāḥ vāygu*) are no longer collected. Only on rare occasions is this food collected to feed the pigs, chickens and ducks. Since the Jugi have given up raising pigs over the last two decades because it has considerably added to their social stigma, the food offerings have now attained the status of waste.

The sense of rights and obligations at the *chvāsaḥ* stones already faded away in the 1970s. In the course of a detailed survey in 1987 it was almost impossible to establish a reliable “ownership” pattern. The map for one *guthī* discloses that one household might hold

Opposite
Clients of a single Jugi family from Tahāmalā.

The Juginī who performed the cakrapūjā and received the offering to the preta on the seventh day (nhenumhā kāygu) after the death of Rabi Svāgamikha, has 142 clients (survey in July 2002), whose houses are scattered all over the town, with a concentration of houses in Tālākva, Lākulāchē, Kvalāchē and Icchu. A group of 12 Sāyimi (oil presser) households alone is located in the upper town. Of these clients, 14% are from families of high status (Chathariyā), almost 63% are from the community of farmers (such as Svāgamikha, Suvāl or Gora), 14% are carpenters, potters or oil pressers, while the remaining 9% are Chipi or Śreṣṭhas who claim high status.



exclusive rights at five stones while another household had to share the rights with others. Such rights were also negotiable. Prem Nāth Jugi, for example, bought the rights of 80 households from the member of another funeral association in 1984 for 500 rupees (at that time equal to 20 Euro).

The ongoing loss of the *chvāsaḥ*'s function to mediate between clients and purity specialists reveals a powerful process that is transforming the social and ritual dimension of purity into a profane dimension that is guided by hygiene and cleanliness. Within a few years, the offerings made to the deceased on the 7th day at the threshold of the house will also disappear in a move to privatise the "handling of death".

For the time being, the increasing sums of money being paid by the clients, along with beer for the husband and sweets for the children, almost force a few female Jugi to collect the offerings of the 7th day after death, as well as the regular food offerings (*jugibvaḥ*) made on four festive occasions and on the occasion of the annual *śrāddhas* in memory of the deceased father and mother. Before long the in-laws of the bereaved families will replace the Jugi in the performance of the *cakrapūjā* on the 7th day, and all offerings dedicated to the ancestors will be cast into the river.

The practice of Basala Jugi, the women who performed the *cakrapūjā* for Rabindra Svāgamikha, whose *sapinḍikaraṇa* ritual is documented in a following chapter, demon-

strates both change and continuity. She pointed out 142 households for which she still performs the *cakrapūjā* when she is required. This number no longer describes a fixed group of hereditary clients, but an ongoing practice that is constantly changing. Other Jugi families who refuse to perform their purificatory function now often refer people to her. She will only answer calls from families she considers higher in status, implying that she will not respond to calls from painters or butchers. Some 14 percent of her clients claim the status of Chathariyā, generally sub-castes of former court officials. The majority of her clients are farmers, carpenters, potters or oil pressers.

Danyā – Tailors

Ranking among or rather below the Jugi is one family of Danyā which – like the Jugi – accepted the new name of Darśandhārī. In all ritual duties the family members act in the same relation to the Jugi as the Nau (barber) and Jugi do to higher castes. First, they have to inform all the Jugi in town that a death has occurred (*cvaykaḥ vanegu*). The Danyā heads the procession to the graveyard (*jugigaḥ*) with a basket containing wheat flour, cooked rice, a small bag (*mhecā*) with beaten rice and a pumpkin (*laukā*). The corpse is buried in the position of meditation (*samādhi*). For the following four days food offerings are brought to the burial ground, while the Danyā holds a torch of straw.

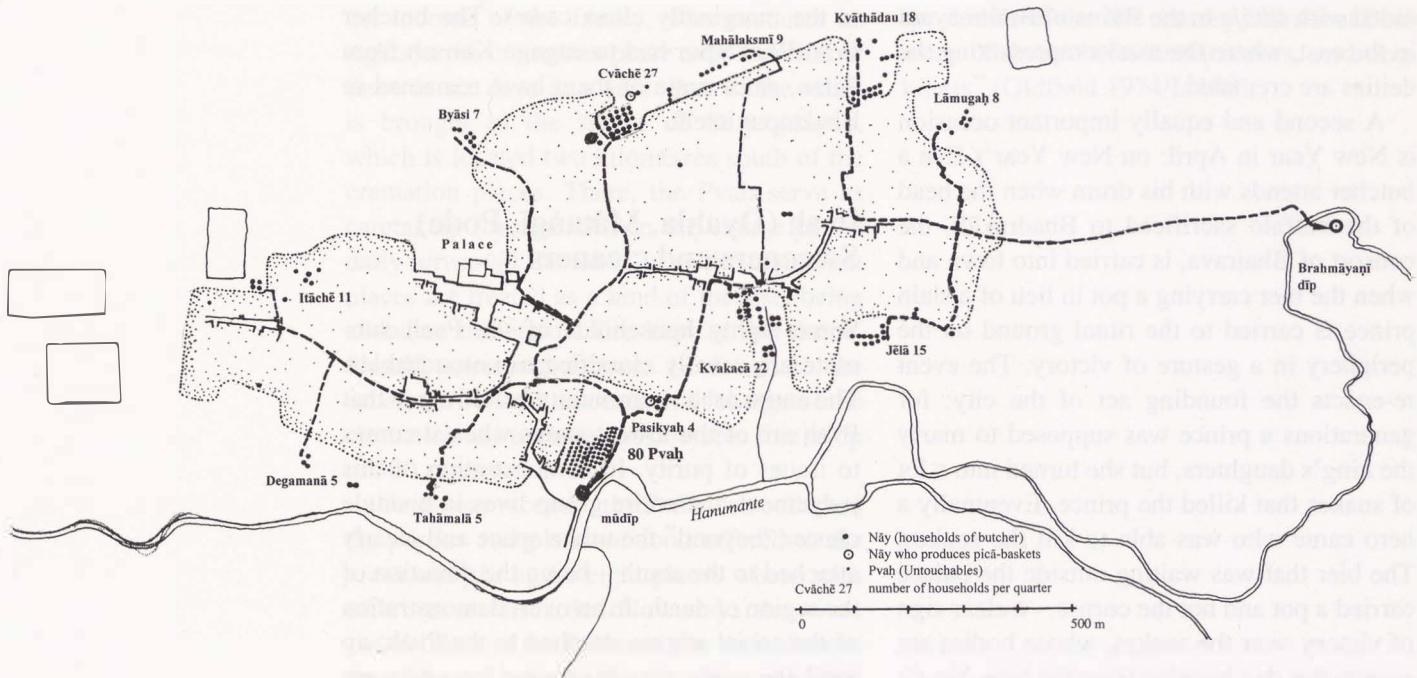
The Danyā shaves the Jugi's hair, pares his toenails and worships and collects the *nhenumhā* offering to the hungry spirit of the deceased. Similarly the Danyā is the only ritual specialist involved in the rituals of the 10th (*du byēkegu*) and 12th day (*lhā panegu*), during which he sprinkles purifying milk and feeds the purificatory fire.

Nāy (Kasāi, Khadgī or Śāhī) – Butchers and musicians

As butchers, the Nāy rank below the marginally clean sub-castes, together with Pasi, Jugi (Kusle) and Pvaḥ (Nep. Poḍe). The hierarchy established by Robert Levy (1990: 627), which represents the Brahmanic view, places the Nāy above the Jugi, but as the Jugi never absorb the ritual waste of the Nāy the latter's practices would place them ritually below the Jugi (Gutschow/Kölver 1975: 58).

Butchers do not act as “covert para-priests” (Levy 1990: 363) since they do not absorb ritual food that has been offered to the gods (at their *pīṭha* or to the ancestors), but they are needed in death rituals like the Pasi washermen.

When the procession accompanying the bier has left a bereaved house on its way to the cremation ground, a basket with one *pati* (less than 4 kg) of unhusked rice is placed on the *pikhālākhu*, the protective stone before the threshold. A butcher from their nearest quarter, which is invariably located on the periphery of urban space, is called to collect the offering in exchange for making seven small baskets (*picā*) from a local variety of reed (*napaḥ*). On the 6th day he is reminded that he should prepare the baskets that are needed for the following day. Cooked rice will be placed in the baskets and offered to the wandering and hungry spirit of the deceased. Similarly, beer is offered to the spirit on the same occasion in a pot of a specific shape, the *nhenumhā kvācā*. But while the pot has not to be ordered, being readily available from any of the potters who produce all the many plates and cups that are used only one time in rituals, the *picā* has to be ordered on the basis of a *jajmāna* relationship. The butcher has to fulfil a duty assigned to him as part of a death ritual. Nowadays, only two poor butchers from the Cvāchē quarter and one from Pasikhyaḥ continue to produce these baskets.



Location of 135 Nāy (butcher) and 80 Pvaḥ (sweeper) households.

Twelve clusters of two to nineteen butchers are situated not beyond but clearly along the edge of the historic settlement. These clusters are organised into ten musical groups (*nāykhībājā*). The eastern three clusters turn for cremation to the shrine of Brahmāyaṇī in the east, while all others turn to their specific cremation place at the southern end of the Yaḥṣikhyaḥ square.

The households of Pvaḥ form a single cluster which is separated from the urban space.

Butchers kill, and that renders their entire community untouchable and essentially polluting. These days only poor butcher families undertake the duty of making these special baskets because the polluting quality of this act is clearly perceived. The present generation of butchers has ceased to raise and eat pigs in a move to avoid being associated with essentially unclean animals that will eat faeces. Instead they run modern cold stores and sell chicken meat.

Some twelve clusters with two to 18 households are found on the periphery of the urban space, but within the protective circle defined by the seats of the Mother Goddesses. A survey conducted in 1974 located 104 households, a number that rose to 135 in a recent survey in November 2003. The Nāy live in eleven clusters which still mark the periphery of urban space, where inner and outer space meets. In the western quarter of Itāchē and along the low lying drain of Kvakacā a few houses have occupied space “within” the urban space, and four houses in the east have

been acquired by affluent butcher families, thus demonstrating the breaking up of social constraints.

These households are organized into 14 funeral associations (*siguthī*), but more important is their organization into ten *nāykhībājā* groups: butchers (Nāy) whose music (*bājā*) is based on playing a specific double-headed drum (*khī*) of varying shape with a stick and the flat left hand. Others join in with flat cymbals (*sichyāḥ*). This alone may not be of importance in the present context, but the butcher’s drum accompanies the death processions of butchers to the cremation ground with a special tune (*sibājā*, lit. “the music of death”) (Wegner 1996).

Nowadays, *sibājā* is played only in rare cases to accompany the corpse of a Brahmin or Buddhist monk (as happened in 2002 in Kirtipur). Moreover, on two occasions the butcher’s drum was heard during urban rituals of renewal. On the eighth day after full moon in June (Bhagaṣṭi) the protective goddesses of Bhaktapur, the Navadurgā, are pa-

raded with *sibāja* to the shrine of Brahmāyaṇī in the east, where the masks representing the deities are cremated.

A second and equally important occasion is New Year in April: on New Year's Eve a butcher attends with his drum when the head of the buffalo sacrificed to Bhadrakālī, the consort of Bhairava, is carried into town and when the bier carrying a pot in lieu of a slain prince is carried to the ritual ground on the periphery in a gesture of victory. The event re-enacts the founding act of the city: for generations a prince was supposed to marry the king's daughters, but she turned into a lot of snakes that killed the prince. Eventually a hero came who was able to kill the snakes. The bier that was waiting outside the palace carried a pot and not the corpse – a clear sign of victory over the snakes, whose bodies are seen to this day hanging from the New Year's pole that is erected the moment the bier has arrived.

By killing the demon-serpents, the foreign prince conquered a territory symbolized by the unmarried princess. Facing and overcoming imminent death presents the ultimate crisis. The erection of the World Tree demonstrates the renewal of the cosmos. The annual re-enactment ensures the continuity of time.

The death ritual of the butchers reveals their status far more clearly than any self-categorization might do. They go to a barber's shop to be shaved, but they themselves pare their toenails for purificatory purposes. The *nhenumhā* offering is absorbed by Pvaḥ, who mark the bottom end of the hierarchy ever since scavengers have ceased to be found in Bhaktapur. The purificatory ritual of the 10th day and the merging of the *preta* with the ancestors (*sapinḍikaraṇa*) on the 12th day is performed by Buddhist priests from Patan – not by a Bajrācārya, who is instrumental in these rituals for marginally unclean castes, but by a Khusaḥ. This community of ceremonial umbrella-bearers belongs, like the Bhā and Nau,

to the marginally clean castes. The butcher from Bhaktapur had to engage Khusaḥ from Patan, since none of them have remained in Bhaktapur itself.

Pvaḥ (Dyaḥla, Mātaṅgī, Poḍe) – Sweepers and cleaners

Some eighty households of the Pvaḥ sub-caste are usually classified as untouchables. The entire urban community would agree that Pvaḥ are of the lowest status when it comes to issues of purity. In demonstration of this judgement, the entire group lives in a single cluster “beyond” the urban space and clearly attached to the south – being the direction of the region of death. In an overt demonstration of the social stigma attached to the Pvaḥ, up until the early seventies most houses were still one-storied, covered by a thatched roof, and had a pigsty at the front.

Being associated with the opposite world, the cremation places of all of the marginally clean and pollution-accumulating sub-castes are found directly below the settlement of the Pvaḥ along the embankment of the river. The cremation place of the Pvaḥ is located some 200 metres to the south. In marked contrast, the cremation place across the river serves all the “clean” sub-castes from two-thirds of the town's quarters.

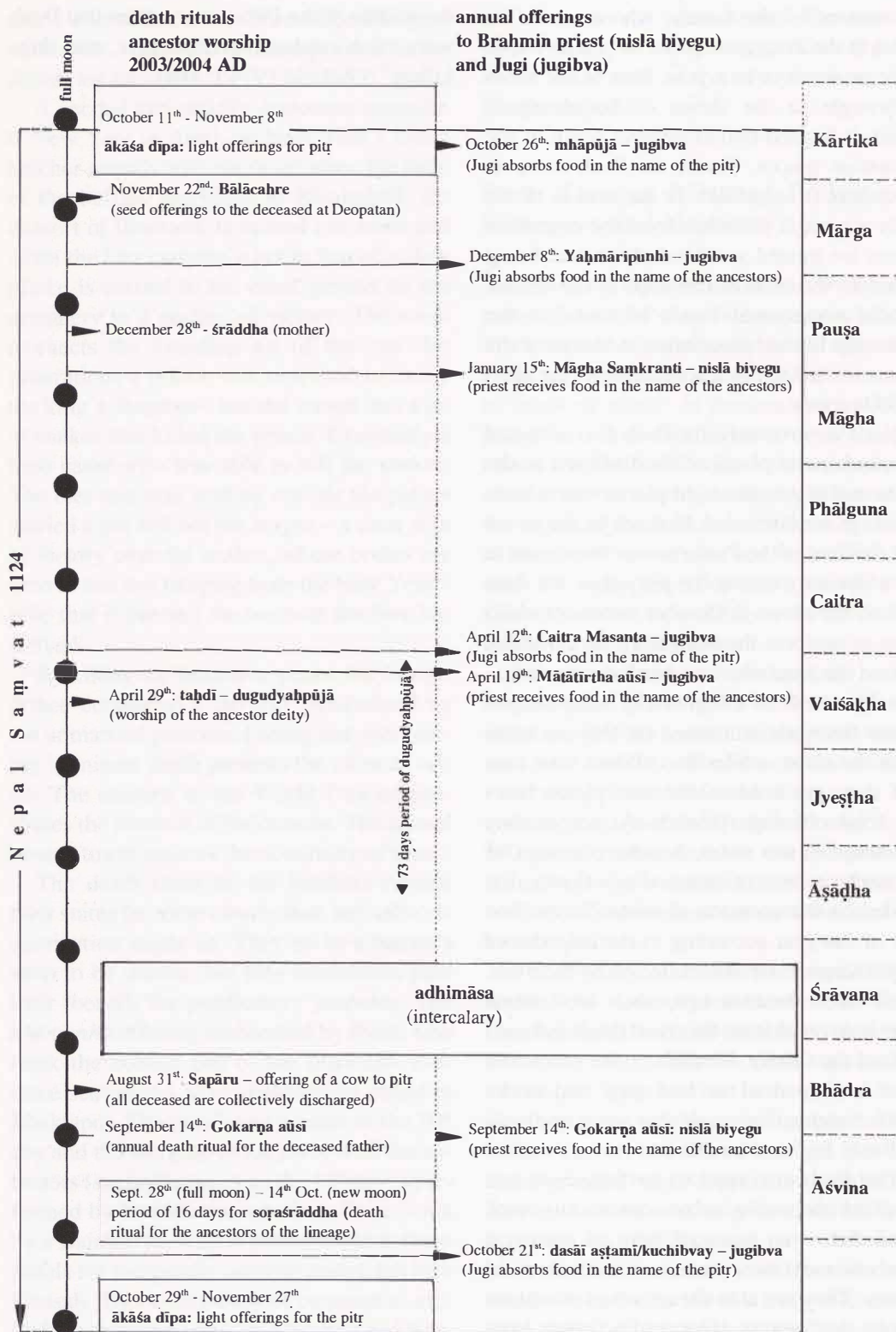
The impurity of the Pvaḥ is based on two notions. As sweepers and cleaners of the latrines of high status sub-castes they deal with waste and faeces. What is more important in this respect is the fact that in their ritual function they are tied to the cremation place. They collect the bier and the white cloth in which the corpse had been wrapped; the half-burned firewood and unused cudgels are left to them because once the firewood has reached the cremation site, it can only cross the river back into town in the hands of a Pvaḥ. Moreover, coins found in the ashes of the pyre add to

the income of the family, who executes its rights at the cremation place over a period of three to six days in a year. Part of the ashes is brought to the shrine of Surjebināyak, which is located two kilometres south of the cremation places. There, the Pvaḥ serve as caretakers (*dyahpālāḥ*). In the course of the daily *nityapūjā* the ashes from the cremation places are treated as a kind of incense, being added to the eternal fire kept at the shrine. Should uncremated bones be found in the ashes, the funeral association in charge of the cremation has to pay a considerable fine of up to 500 rupees.

Until very recently, the Pvaḥ also collected the *piṇḍas* and plates of food offered to the *preta* and *pitṛ* at the eight places where such offerings are discarded. Nowadays, the wives and children of the Pvaḥ recover their share at the *ghāṭs* only during the *pitṛpakṣa*, the dark half on the moon in October, when all *phukī* have to perform the obligatory *soraśrāddha* to feed the forefathers and half divine ancestors. Hundreds of kilograms of lump-shaped wheat flour are recovered on that occasion from the river, while the children take care that they get hold of the leaf plates bearing food offerings (*khusibvaḥ*) before they submerge in the water. Similar offerings of *mutumāri* (cones of steamed rice flour), discarded on the occasion of *mhāpūjā*, the first day of the year according to the calendar of Nepāl Saṃvat, are also collected by the Pvaḥ. Until three decades ago, such food items were recovered from the river, dried and used to feed the family. Nowadays, the recovered food is only used to feed pigs and ducks – two “unclean” animals that are raised only by Pvaḥ, Jugi and butchers.

The Pvaḥ also used to be fishermen and supplied the entire urban community with small fish – an essential item of *samay*, a symbolic meal that concludes most household rituals. They are also the only basket makers among the Newars. Historical accounts from

the middle of the 19th century claim that Pvaḥ were “fish-catchers, executioners, and dog-killers” (Oldfield 1974/I: 188).



*Overview of death rituals
Bijay Bāsukala observed in
Bhaktapur from 26th October
2003 to 12th November 2004
(Nepal Saṃvat 1024).
On three occasions he of-
fered food (nislā biyegu) to
his Brāhmin house priest, and
four times a purity specialist,
the Jugi, came to his house
to collect the food (jugibvaḥ)
dedicated to the ancestors.
For his deceased grandmother
he visited Deopatan on the
occasion of Bālācahre, and a
symbolic cow was offered to
her on the occasion of Sāpāru
in August. For his deceased
father he visited Gokaṛṇa
and for his deceased mother
Mātātīrtha. The ancestor de-
ity was worshipped in April,
offerings were dedicated to
the ancestors on new moon
in October. Lights had been
offered to the forefathers in the
month of Kārtika in autumn.*

CALENDRIC RITUALS OF DEATH AND RENEWAL

Introduction

The calendar of urban festivals is punctuated by a number of rituals of renewal which are closely related to death. On these occasions regular offerings to the Brahmin or the Jugi are prescribed for every household and dedicated to the ancestors.

Five of these occasions follow the lunar calendar, and two the Indian lunisolar calendar. The most important ones transcend the limits of the individual households and address an urban dimension: the urban space serves as a stage for the enactment of rituals. Robert Levy described the pattern of events that are tied to a temporal system as “the civic performance” (Levy 1990: 401).

The great rituals of renewal are tied to the vernal equinox and the full moon in autumn. The remaining five address the level of lineage and family and are tied to the new moon in October (Kārtika), full moon in December (Yaḥmārhipunhi in Mārga), the winter solstice (14th January), the new moon in May (Vaiśākha), and the new moon in September (Āśvina).

In four cases the ancestors, the *pitaraḥ*, receive a full dish of food. Set aside before the family engages in the obligatory feast, this dish will be collected by the Jugi. His family enjoys a hereditary client-relationship and thus “owns” the offerings (*jugibvaḥ*) made by the respective household to the ancestors.

On these occasions not only the ancestors but also the “living ancestors” (Nev. *māmhā pitr*) are invited to the house and fed in order to satisfy them and renew the ties to their place of origin. These are the married daughters,

sisters, aunts and great aunts who had left the house. Having changed their social status and having been introduced to the ancestor deity of their husbands, they are in a way “dead”, but they are still tied to their place of origin. The head of the household, the *nāyaḥ* has the duty of issuing a formal invitation. Beside the occasions mentioned, the “living ancestors” are also invited for *Sithīnakaḥ*, which falls on the eighth day of the waxing moon in June. This is the day the Navadurgā troupe dies and for most lineage groups the last possible day to perform the *pūjā* dedicated to the deity representing the ancestors (*dugudyaḥpūjā*). It is also the day that heralds the advent of the rice-sowing period. Six months and one week later the “living ancestors” become the first to be offered the newly harvested rice on the occasion of Yaḥmārhipunhi.

These women assume another important role in the context of certain death rituals, because their offerings add to the raw material that constitutes the body of the *piṇḍa*.

In three cases the offerings (*nislā*) dedicated to the ancestors are not collected by the purity specialist, the Jugi, but carried to the house priest, the Brahmin. The new moons in May and September are dedicated to deceased mothers and fathers in general. The chief mourner and his family may opt to perform a full death ritual (*śrāddha*) at certain designated places (Mātātūrtha and Gokarṇa), but as a substitute for the ritual journey to these places the head of the household can fulfil the annual duty by visiting his house priest.

Svāti – The lunar New Year

The term Svāti refers to a five-day sequence which frames the beginning of the Newar lunar year. The first three days of the festival, which is also called Tihar, are dedicated to three animals that are closely linked to death. First the crows are worshipped (*kvapūjā*), then the dogs (*khicāpūjā*) and finally, on the day of new moon as the last day of the lunar year, the cows (*sāpūjā*). As messengers of death, the crows receive a portion of every meal on every day, but in this context the offering precludes a formal *pūjā*. Similarly the dogs are believed to represent the spirit of the deceased and as such are fed. Cows are believed to lead the spirits of the deceased across the dangerous river Vaitaraṇī on their twelve-months journey to the city of Yama, the Lord of Death. On this day the thread which had provided protection against evil forces since the August full moon are tied to the tails of cows. New Year's Eve is also dedicated to Lakṣmī, the goddess of wealth: she is invited to visit the house and grace the store-room.

On the first day of the new year the mistress of the household (*nakhī*) worships the basic tools of the household: broom, circular bamboo tray, water jar, hearth and pots are all worshipped with water, oil, vermilion, flowers, cones of steamed rice flour, rice powder, unbroken ritual rice, popped rice, black soy beans, husk and cotton thread. Occupational groups also worship their implements – such as the potters their wheel. Then the mistress “worships the bodies” (*mhāpūjā*) of all members of the household and offers citrus fruits. Among these a peculiar Himalayan citrus fruit, the *taḥsi*, is of eminent importance. It is this fruit which in other ritual contexts – for example as an offering from the Navadurgā – promises fertility to the recipient.

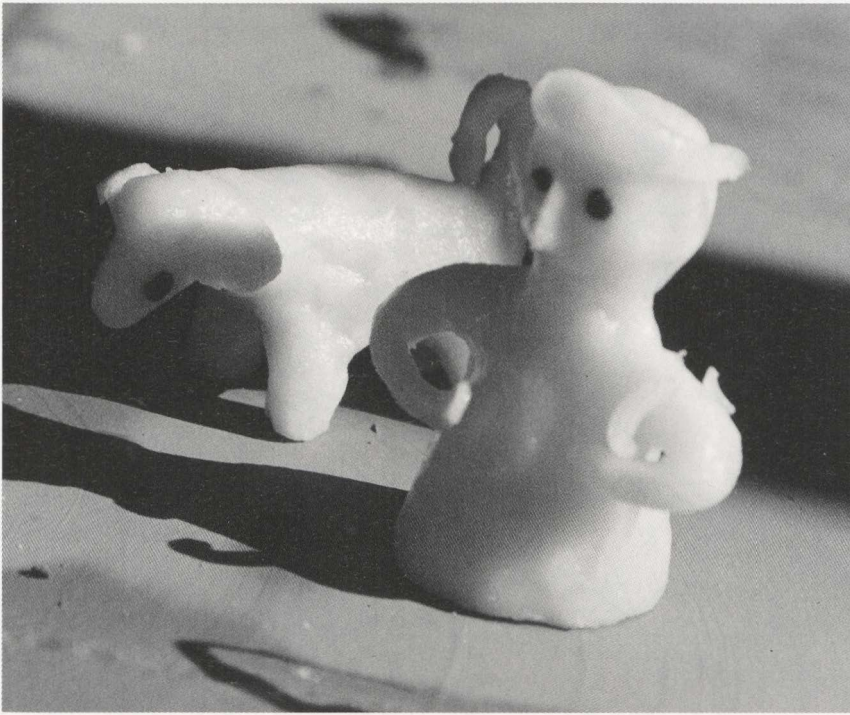
Apart from the fruits, all of the offerings are swept up and cast into the river the fol-



lowing morning at one of the seven places where the ritual balls of death are cast. The Pvaḥ will have taken up their positions there in time to recover the valuable items. The same morning a Jugī will turn up to collect the offering of food set aside for the ancestors.

The final, fifth day of Svāti is dedicated to the worship of brothers – *kijāpūjā*. The ritual is performed by unmarried and married sisters, and aunts or great aunts from the father's side in a manner similar to the way *mhāpūjā* was performed the preceding day. A garland of flowers (*svā*), purple in colour and shaped like a betel nut (*gvē*) (thus called *gvēcāsvāma*), is presented as a vital offering. The flower signifies longevity because it does not fade in colour when dried. The scene is presided over by figures formed from steamed rice flour: to the right Gaṇeśa and to the left Yamadyaḥ, the Lord of Death in the company of a dog. Coloured block prints, produced by the sub-caste of painters (Pū), are bought by every household. They depict brothers being served by sisters in the presence of two messengers of Yama, called

Block-print displayed in the house on the occasion of kijāpūjā, the worship of the “body” (mhā) of the brothers by sisters and aunts (depicted in the centre of the picture). The scene is framed by the messengers of the Lord of Death, Yamadūt and Simhadūt. Printed in Bhaktapur in 1974.



*Yama, the Lord of Death, in the company of a dog, shaped in steamed rice flour by Bijay Bāsukala on the occasion of Yamapañcaka, “Yama’s Fifth” for the performance of kijāpūjā.
Photo 5th November 2002*

Yamadūt and Simhadūt, both carrying a club and lasso to capture their victims. Because of Yama’s presence, this fifth day of the festival is also called Yamapañcaka, “Yama’s Fifth”.

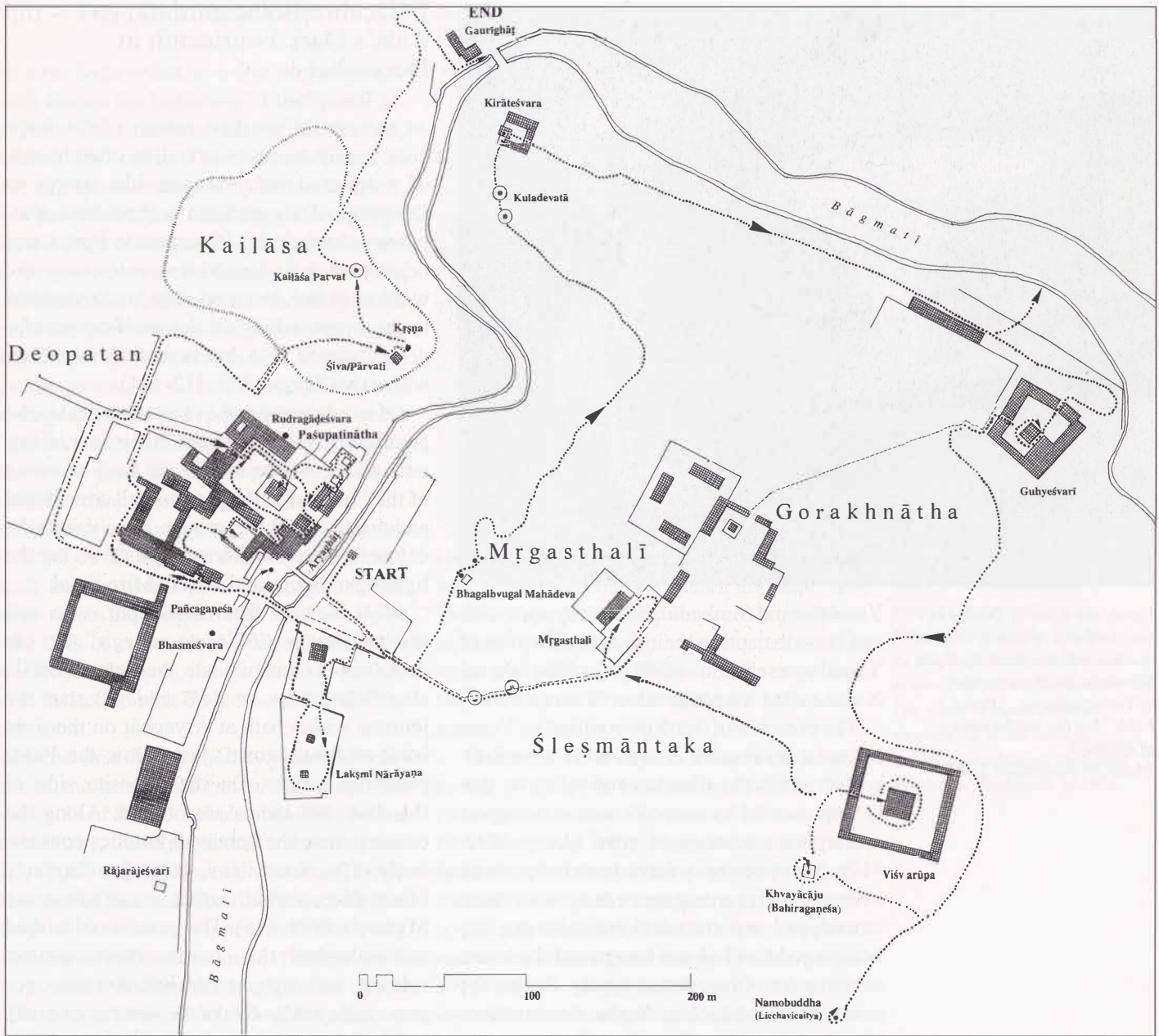
The presence of death personified by Yama has to be understood in contrast to what Robert Levy calls the affection and solidarity that is “represented by sororal emotional support and by the exchange of gifts” (Levy 1990: 417). Yama seems to have been temporarily overcome. His messengers have duly been worshipped and the ideal housekeeper, the benign goddess Lakṣmī has graced the house as the realm of hearth and family. Facing the remover of obstacles, Yama demonstrates moral agency. The New Year is given birth by Lakṣmī, as it were, while Yama already stands for its end. The beginning and the end classifies cyclic renewal.

Bālācahre/Bālācaturdaśī – Bālā’s Dark Fourteenth in December

At the end of the first month of the lunar year, family members as well as often friends of a departed visit Paśupati-nātha temple in Deopatan. They perform a three-hour procession through the Śleṣmāntaka Forest and neighbouring Kailāsa Mountain to ensure the welfare of the deceased. The myth attached to the event, telling of the pacification of a demon named Bālā, has been dealt with elsewhere (Michaels 1999: 112-134).

Of sole interest in the present context is the practice of pilgrims from Bhaktapur. They only arrive at Deopatan in the early morning of the fourteenth. People from all over Nepal and from all ethnic groups have come the day before for a nocturnal vigil involving the lighting of lamps and a sacred fire ritual.

Most Newars from Bhaktapur, who call this pilgrimage “*Bālā mu vanegu*” (lit. “to visit and circumambulate the demon Bālā”, also *Bālā hilegu* or *Bālā mulegu*) start the journey with a bath at Āryaghāt on the right bank of the Bāgmātī, just below the Paśupati-nātha temple. On the opposite side of the river 108 lamps are offered. Along the ensuing route the bereaved families continuously offer seven items, termed collectively *bibau* (Nep. *sadbhī, satbiu* or *sat(a)byū*, see Michaels 1999: 116). This consists of husked and unhusked rice, barley, black sesame, spinach and rape seeds (*ikā, Brassica napus*, and *pakā, Brassica juncea rogusa*), and *svāvā*, a variety of rice (*Oryza sativa*, Nep. *jungadhān*) that is used exclusively in ritual contexts. Representing the essential food items, *bibau* is also offered on the 7th day after death to small plots of agricultural land dedicated to the deceased. Coins and many other fruits (such as guava and citrus fruits), foodstuffs (such as black lentils, wheat flour, sweet potato, radish, maize, tur-

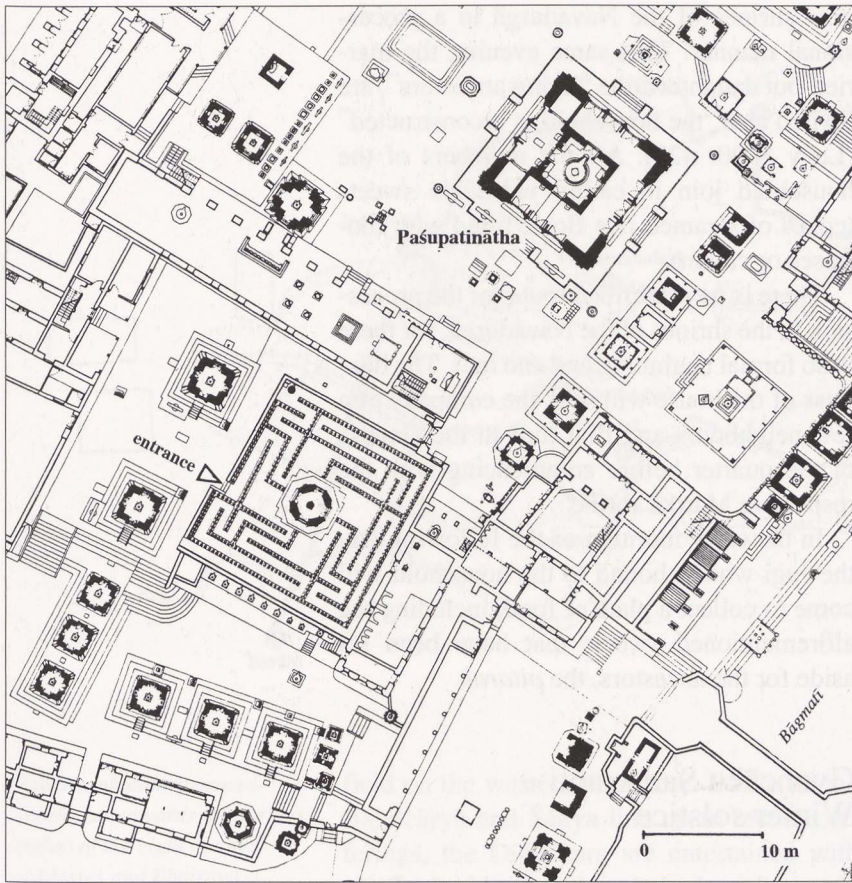


meric) and flowers are also scattered across the hill.

The procession then climbs the hill from the embankment of the Bāgmatī, visiting the Bhāgalbhuḡal Mahādeva (where the following night the Bālāgūthīpūjā is performed, see Michaels 1999: 123) and a “hidden” Mahādeva under the name of Gupteśvara. Passing a

few ancestor deities, the path leads up to the western top of the forest and Kirāṭeśvara and down towards Gaurīghāt. From Guhyeśvari the crowd has to climb the hill again in order to turn to a 7th century *licchavicaitya* (a *stūpa* of the period of the Licchavi dynasty) which is addressed as “Nāmobuddha”. This designation refers to a Buddhist pilgrimage site

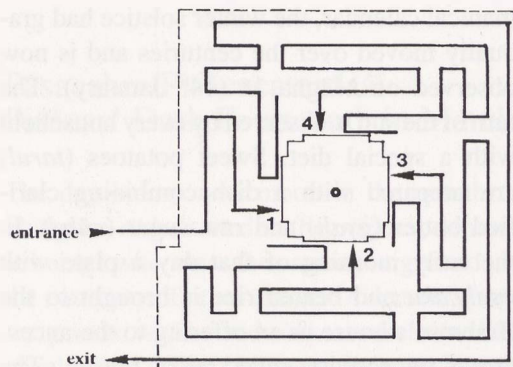
Deopatan: map documenting the processional route, performed by Narain Prasad Svāgamikha and Bikhu Bahādur Suvāl from Bhaktapur on the occasion of Bālācahre, on 3rd December 2002.



Abhimanyu Yantra or Causaṭṭhī Sthāna, the labyrinth-like structure with 525 liṅgas within the compound of the Paśupatiṅgā temple at Deopatan, to be passed through on the occasion of the Bālācāhṛe procession.

*Above
Site plan*

*Below
Diagrammatic representation of the fourfold anti-clockwise movement within the labyrinth towards the central temple of Koṭiṅga, followed by a clock-wise movement towards the exit.*



east of Kathmandu Valley which stands for the place where the Buddha offered himself to a lioness who could not feed her cubs. The remaining path leads through the deer forest, Mṛgasthalī, and passes by a loose stone which is addressed as the “deaf grandfather” (*khvayāju*). Shaking the stone is meant to let the deceased, the *pitṛ*, know, that their relatives have come. Returning down to the Bāgmatī, the path leads through the 20th century temples dedicated to Rāmacandra and Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa.

Finally, people have to queue up at the eastern entrance to the temple compound of Paśupatiṅgā temple. An hour of waiting is needed as the narrow path through Causaṭṭhī Sthāna (for location see Michaels 1994/II: no. III.1.114), a labyrinth-like structure with 525 *śivaliṅgas*, can only be entered singly.

The structure is also known as Abhimanyu Yantra in remembrance of the story of the Mahābhārata, according to which Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna and Subhadṛā, entered a labyrinthine structure called Cakravayūha. Following a meandering but continuous path that is directed four times to the central temple of Koṭiṅga, the pilgrim walks past 525 *liṅgas*. The officiating priest assures the pilgrims that they will be free from another cycle of 84 *lakh* (8.4 million) births and certainly from being reborn as an animal.

The classical Cretan type of labyrinth creates a sevenfold motion and symbolizes a rite of passage as the initiated renunciate enters a separate world. The path from normal existence into the isolated space of the labyrinth signifies death and return through rebirth. In the Christian context the path through the labyrinth became a valid metaphor for the purification of the soul. The labyrinth which pilgrims from Bhaktapur labour through is oriented towards the four cardinal points and offers a fourfold movement of almost identical pattern. Each movement is first clockwise and then anticlockwise, while the overall

movement is anticlockwise. The straight path returning to the exit along a bordering wall is on the other hand clockwise. This constant alternation between a clockwise (“life”) and anticlockwise motion (“death”) is meant to remind the pilgrims of the frailty of existence.

Freed, almost spewed out of the narrow confines of the labyrinth, the pilgrim climbs onto the Kailāsa, a high plateau beyond the temple. In a final move a rock outcropping is worshipped as a replica of “Kailāsa Parvat” as the seat of Śiva. As everywhere else along the processional path, offerings are collected by members of the Pvaḥ sub-caste.

Yahmāripunhi – Full moon in December

Around full moon in Maṅśīr (November/December) almost all funeral associations (*siguthī*) entertain their members with a sumptuous feast. On the days preceding full moon the active members engage in feasts after worshipping their respective Ganedyah (Gaṇeśa) and Matrka.

On *cahre* (the 14th day) these associations feed their non-active members and receive the annual obligatory offering of three *pati* of rice (some 12 kilograms or 340 Rs or approx. 4 Euro in cash). Only male members are entertained; a second dish is carried home for the remaining members of the family.

On the day of the full moon every family prepares sweet dishes of rice flour to celebrate the end of the rice harvest. Farmers worship the rice that is kept in their storeroom with offerings of sweets. The room is then kept closed for two weeks and re-opened on the day of new moon to repeat the worship.

There is an air of joy in the city for the harvest, heralded by the rebirth of the Mother Goddesses, is now definitely complete. Women will now make their round visiting the

nine shrines of the Navadurgā in a processional manner. That same evening the married-out daughters, the “living ancestors”, are invited and “the household is reconstructed” (Levy 1990: 423). All the members of the household join in eating *yahmārhi* sweets (cones of steamed rice flour, filled with molasses or cream).

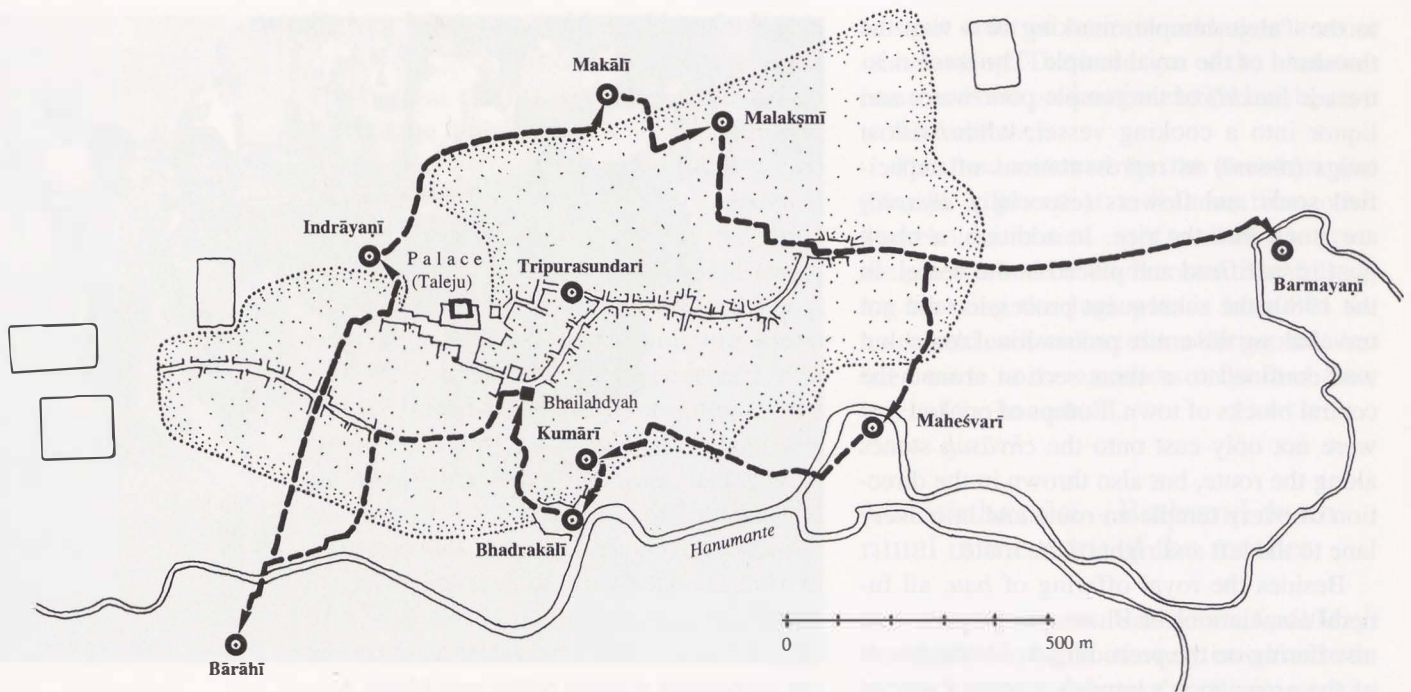
There is no prescribed route for the procession to the shrines of the Navadurgā, for there is no formal beginning and end to it. The mistress of the house will seek the company of a few neighbours and first turn to the Gaṇeśa of the quarter before commencing with the respective Matrka shrine.

In the early morning of the following day the Jugi who is bound to the household will come to collect a plate of food, including the aforementioned sweets that have been set aside for the ancestors, the *pitarah*.

Gyaḥcāku Saṃkranti – Winter solstice

Due to the calculations involved in the Brahmanical calendar, the winter solstice had gradually moved over the centuries and is now observed on Māgha 1st (14th January). The turn of the sun is observed by every household with a special diet. Sweet potatoes (*tarul*) are prepared with a dish combining clarified butter (*gyah*) and raw sugar (*cāku*). In the early morning of that day a plate with *gyahcāku* and beaten rice is brought to the Brahmin’s house as an offering to the ancestors – an activity called *nislā biyegu*. The Brahmin utters the necessary ritual decision (*saṃkalpa*) and asks for the names of the male and female ancestors of three generations past. This short ritual is completed by him handing out a blessed offering (*prasāda*) and receiving a bank note as *dakṣiṇā*.

On the same day the five Dīpaṅkara Buddhas of Bhaktapur are carried to an open



Circumambulatory processional path towards the shrines (pīṭha) of the eight mother-goddesses and Bhairava (Bhailahdyah), the “master” of the city, on the occasion Yaḥmāripunhi (full moon), to celebrate the annual reconstitution of the funeral associations (siguthī).

field on the western periphery. While all the Bajrācārya and Śākya line up to receive offerings, the Dīpaṅkara are entertained with a feast.

Pasacahre/Piśācaturdaśī – Piśācas’ Dark Fourteenth in March

The day before new moon in the month of Phālguna is dedicated to the *piśācas*, demonic beings who roam the cremation grounds in the company of other classes of demons, *bhūtas*, *pretas*, *vetālas* and *rākṣasas* (see also Michaels 1992). They frequent deserted houses and block the crossroads, where the *chvāsaḥ* stones represent their visible abodes.

Similar to the class of demons collectively addressed as *bhūt-pret*, the *piśācas* are believed to represent those deceased for whom the necessary death rituals were not performed, or not in the prescribed way. These departed have not joined the ancestors,

so their existence as a *preta* is not confined to the period of 45 days or twelve months. Not having had the chance to enter into the state of a *pitṛ*, they are condemned to remain in a condition of restlessness. In order to avert their harmful intentions, the *piśācas* have constantly to be propitiated with offerings of cooked rice (*bau*) and meat.

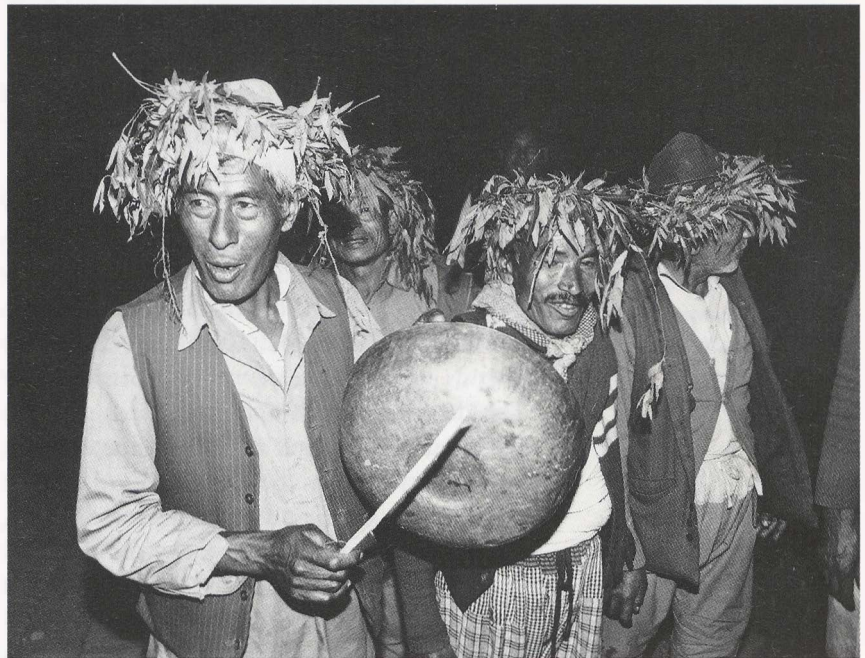
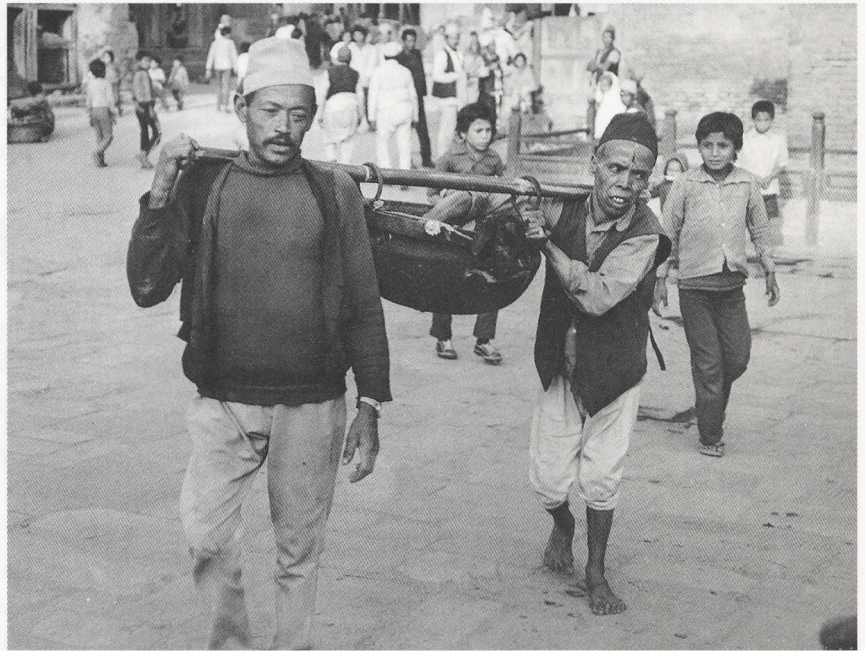
Two generations ago, butchers (Nāy) serving in the temple of Taleju, Bhaktapur’s royal goddess, would make their way along the regular processional route on every Dark Fourteenth to cast rice (an action called *bau hālegu*) on all the *chvāsaḥ* stones to feed and thus propitiate the hungry ghosts. In recent decades, this monthly processional offering is done only on the Dark Fourteenth in March – an occasion on which offerings of cooked rice can be seen on most *chvāsaḥ* stones in town.

The most prominent *bau* offering of the day is prepared by a Karmācārya priest just behind the Golden Gate, the outer access

to the Taleju temple, marking in a way the threshold of the royal temple. The three mistresses (*nakhī*) of the temple pour water and liquor into a cooking vessel, while willow twigs (*tisimā*) as representations of unpacified souls and flowers (especially *sinasvā*) are stuck into the rice. In addition, a black goat is sacrificed and placed in the vessel. In the 1980s the subsequent procession did not travel along the entire processional route, but was confined to a short section around the central blocks of town. Lumps of cooked rice were not only cast onto the *chvāsah* stones along the route, but also thrown in the direction of every temple en route and into every lane to the left and right of the route.

Besides the royal offering of *bau*, all funeral associations of Bhaktapur prepare such an offering on the preceding day in the house of the association's caretaker or in a special building (*guthichē*) that serves the association. The active members of the association leave the house late that night in a jolly mood, carrying straw torches and wearing turbans woven from willow twigs. Fresh willow twigs are collected from trees along the irrigation channels. These fast-growing trees are regularly pruned in February or March and the twigs stored away by the funeral associations for use in cremations. More than one hundred funeral associations are engaged that night in casting the *bau* offerings onto the specific *chvāsah*-stone to which the house of the respective association is ritually bound.

The fact that the funeral associations and not the individual households make the ritual offerings to the unpacified dead gives grounds for the assumption that incomplete cremations would produce a special class of demons that need to be propitiated.



Above
Procession to offer cooked rice (*bau halegu*) to the unpacified spirits of town on the occasion of Pasacahre.
Photo 28th March 1987

Below
Members of the *Bāsukala* funeral association wear turbans of willow twigs on the occasion of Pasacahre.
Photo March 1986

Caitra Masanta – New Year’s Eve

The festival of Bisketjātrā frames the New Year of the lunisolar calendar. In a sequence of nine days (Caitra 27 to Vaiśākha 5, see Gutschow 1996: 287) the theme of death and rebirth dominates urban space as the ritual arena and is also reflected in the individual household. Due to the nature of the calculations of the Brahmanical calendar, the vernal equinox has moved over the centuries to the 13th April. In almost all cultures of the northern hemisphere the vernal equinox was the ideal occasion to perform festivals of renewal. In Bhaktapur the aspect of renewal finds expression in a variety of ritual acts. In the context of death, we confine ourselves to the reference to a murder that served as the precondition for liberation and creation.

A world tree called *yaḥsī* is erected on the last day of the year, with two banners in the shape of serpents demonstrating the victory over those demonic forces that made ruling impossible. A foreign prince had to receive a sword from the mistress of Bhaktapur, Bhadrakālī, to kill the serpents and liberate an unmarried princess. In memory of those many unsuccessful princes who died, a bier without a corpse is carried to the ritual ground the same night, to the sound of the butcher’s death music (Wegner 1996). A pot is carried instead of the expected corpse of another prince. The erected pole demonstrates creation. The founding of the town required a murder: “The prince killed the serpents and liberated the princess, who, in return, provided him with a kingdom” (Vergati 1996: 335).

Every household in Bhaktapur celebrates the victory at home and invites the ancestors to participate in this happy occasion. Chickens or goats are sacrificed at a nearby non-iconic shrine that acts as the place of reference within a section (*ilākā*) of the town. The distribution of the sacrificed animal among the members of the lineage according

to strict order of seniority addresses a sense of belonging. The inclusion of the ancestors transcends the present generation and binds it to the forefathers.

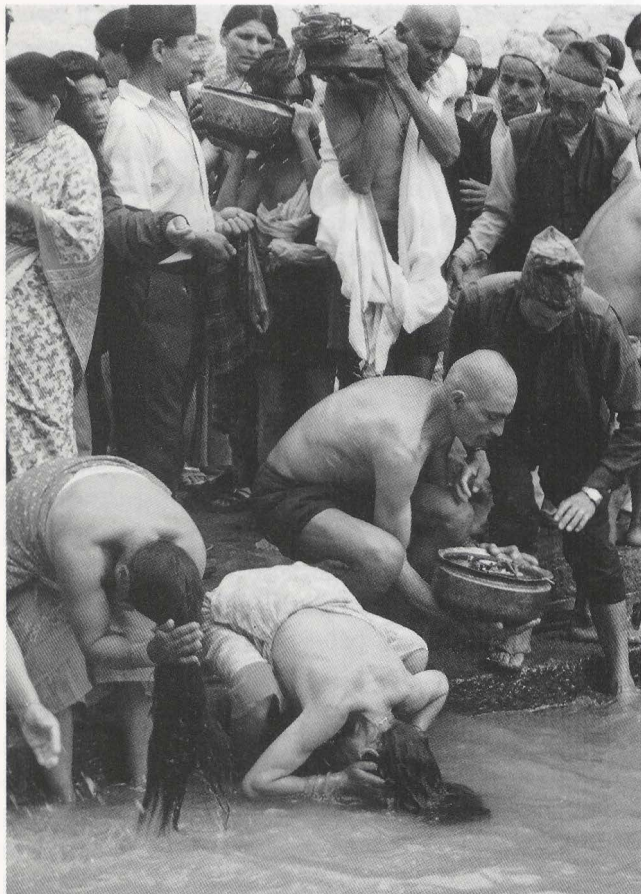
The food reserved for the ancestors (*jugibvah*) is placed at a distance from other household activities – as if to allow it to grace the place unseen and unharmed. The following morning the Jugi who is bound to the household will collect the offering that has been made to the ancestors on ground floor level of the household.

Mātātīrtha aṁsī – Bath and death ritual in memory of the mother

On new moon in Vaiśākha (April/May) thousands of people of every creed and ethnic background undertake a pilgrimage to a water source in the south-western section of the Kathmandu Valley called Mātātīrtha. The name of the place indicates that it is a “crossing place” (*tīrtha*), where one may cross over “to the far shore of the worlds of heaven” (Eck 1981: 323). Diana Eck aptly explains that “in this locative form of religiousness, the place itself is the primary locus of devotion” (*ibid.*).

Situated at Mātātīrtha is a small, architecturally framed tank (Skt. *kunḍa*) in the waters of which the pilgrim is supposed to see the face of his or her mother (*mātā*). The reflecting water is experienced as a mirror: it is the mother who returns the gaze into the tank. Or is the pilgrim looking through a window and beyond, into the realm of heaven, the surface of the water marking the borderline of the “crossing”?

The visit to the place is not compulsory for Newars, unlike the visit to Deopatan is in December. But for many it is an annual observance. People choose between three different kinds of rituals. Many people place a simple leaf plate with flowers and incense

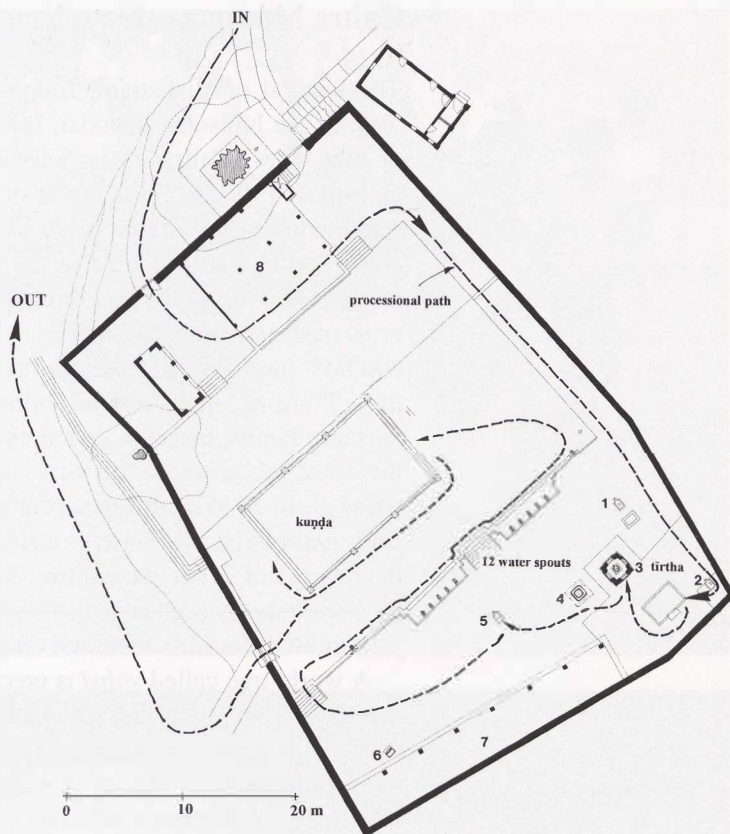


somewhere along the frame of the large tank, without taking advantage of the services of a Brahmin.

Other visitors carry a plate, complete with husked rice, wheat flour, salt, turmeric, lentils and ginger – the usual *nislā* offering. This plate is offered to one of the many Brahmins who provide their services. In exchange, the priest recites some *stotras*, asks for the name of the deceased mother, hands out a ring of *dūrvā* grass and performs the symbolical offering of a cow to the deceased (*godāna*). For an offering of a few rupees he marks the client's forehead with yellow paste – the colour of death. The minority of visitors perform a full *tīrthaśrāddha*, the regular death ritual at this specific place. The large balls made of wheat or barley flour are dedicated to the

three preceding generations, along with many small ones for unknown ancestors. Finally all of the balls are cast into the large tank, where all of the visitors perform their ablutions.

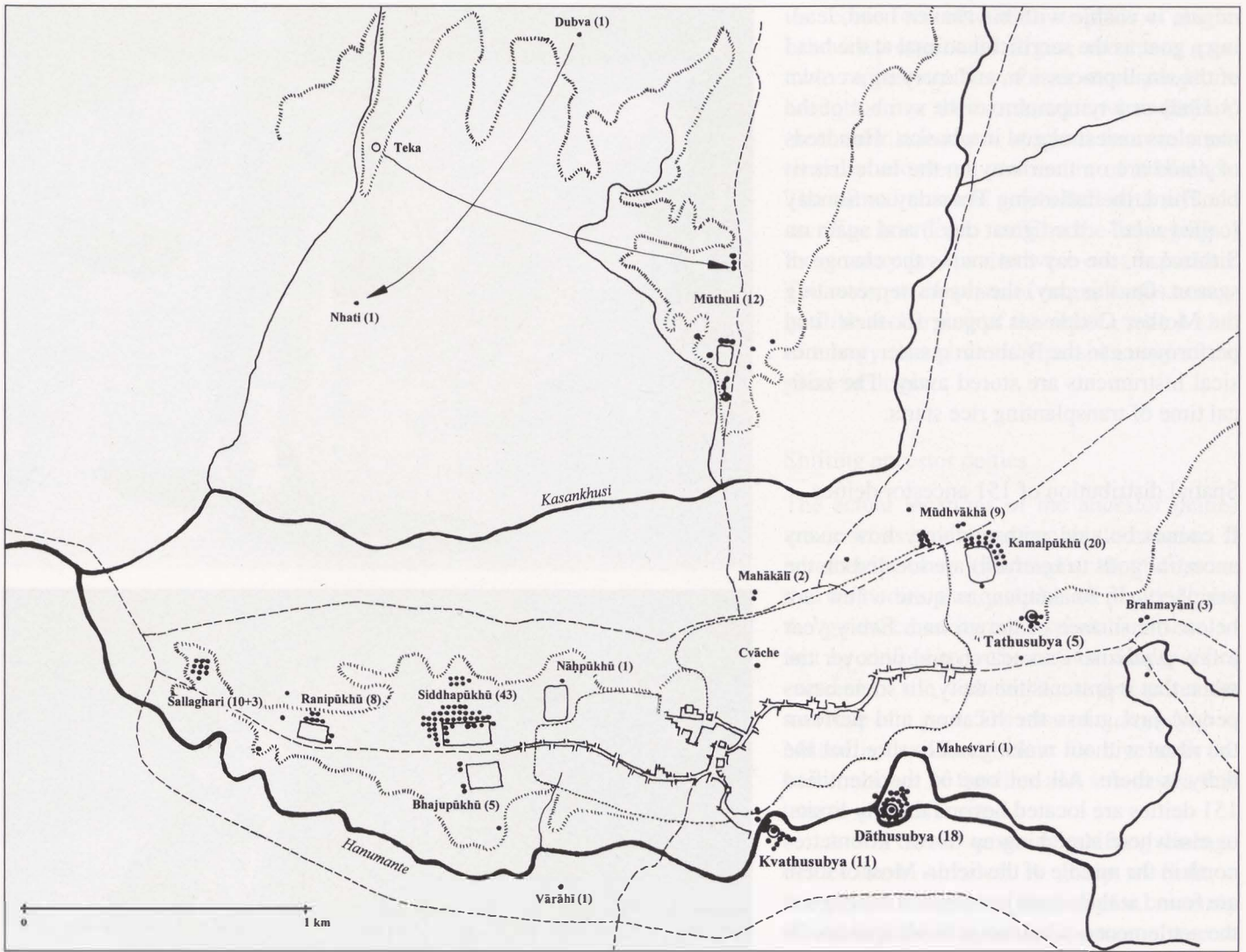
Inscriptions tell us that in order to channel the gushing water, Queen Viṣṇumatī Devī installed ten spouts in the year 1739 AD. Since the bath enjoys growing popularity, a few shelters (*pāṭi*) have recently been added together with a compound wall. Visitors are carefully guided along a prescribed path.



Left
Offerings made in the context of an ancestor ritual dedicated to the deceased mother are immersed in the kuṇḍa at Mātātīrtha.

Photo 1st May 2003

Right
Site plan of Mātātīrtha



Location of 151 sites of ancestor deities (*dugudyaḥ* in the company of *Nārāyaṇa*) near water bodies, shrines of the mother goddesses, and on ridges. A few (see above left) have been relocated in recent times.

Dugudyaḥpūjā – Ancestor worship in May/June

The time frame

A period of 73 days in early summer is designated for the performance of ancestor worship. The sequence of appropriate days for the enactment of the ritual appears to be complex: the first group of farmers (Tvāyṇa from Ghatka) start on the second Thursday after full moon in Vaiśākha; the tenth day after full moon is designated as the second day;

then comes the Indestructible Third (*akṣaya tṛtīyā*) after new moon and then all the Thursdays and Sundays until Sithīnakaḥ, the sixth day of the bright moon in June. A full month later one further day is reserved for thirteen lineages of barbers from Gvaḥmādhī, Yāchē and Taulāchē. Thus, in 2003, a total of fourteen days qualified for the performance of ancestor worship.

Very few members of the farmers' lineages can be seen on the first two days heading out to their designated places beyond the city's limits. The head of the patrilineage, the

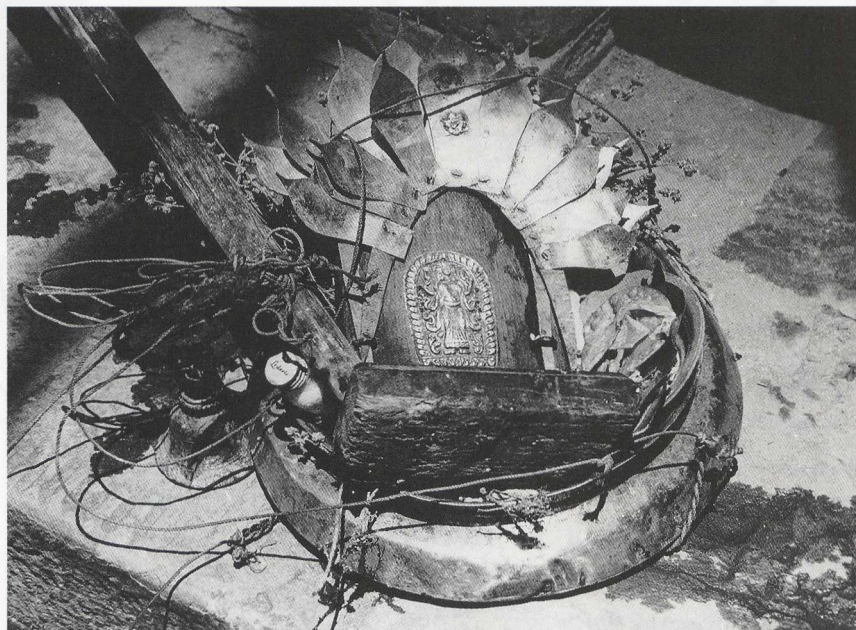
nāyaḥ, is visible with his shaven head, leading a goat as the sacrificial animal at the head of the small procession, and carrying a crown (*kikīpā*) or a tympanum as the symbol of the nameless ancestral god in a basket. Hundreds of *phukī* are on their way on the Indestructible Third, the following Thursday or Sunday (called *taḥdī* – the “great day”) and again on Sithīnakaḥ, the day that marks the change of season. On this day, the masks representing the Mother Goddesses appear for their final performance in the Brahmin quarter, and musical instruments are stored away. The critical time of transplanting rice starts.

Spatial distribution of 151 ancestor deities

It cannot be said with certainty how many ancestral gods (*dugudyah*) are located on the periphery of Bhaktapur, as quite a few are below the surface of the ground. Every year a few *phukī* have to search and uncover the stone that represents the deity. In some cases people just guess the location and perform the ritual without making really sure that the deity is there. All but one of the identified 151 deities are located beyond the city limits, or elsewhere stretching up to two kilometres north in the middle of the fields. Most of them are found at the ponds just beyond the edge of the settlement – 43 alone at Siddhapūkhū, 20 at Kamalpūkhū – and beyond the river Hanumante, 11 at Kvathusubya and 18 at Dāthusubya. Only one *dugudyah* is located in town, in Cvāchē, in the middle of the road.

Neither the specific places nor the nature of the ritual provides any clue as to why they are scattered with a marked predilection for bodies of water – rivers and ponds.

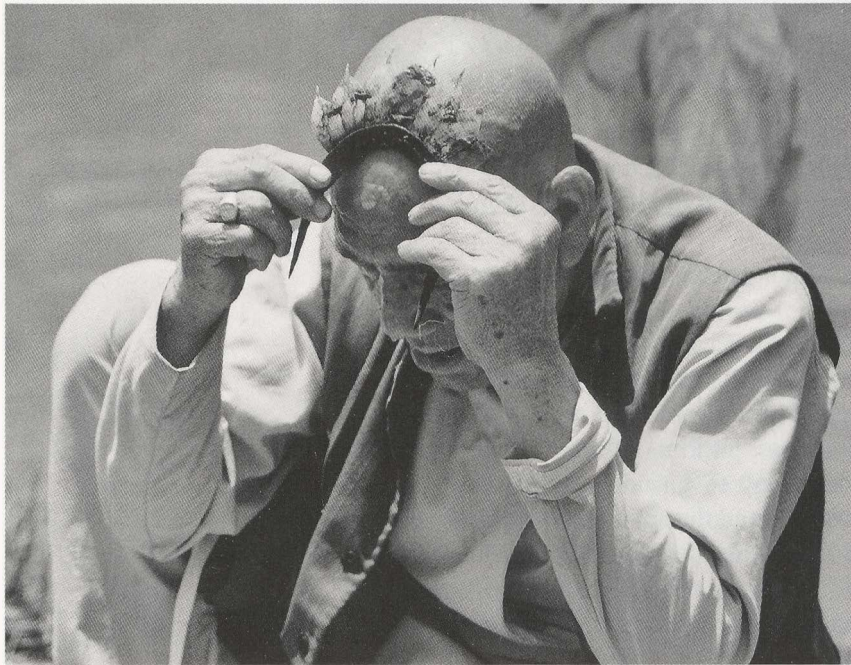
The opposition of outside (the non-iconic stones) and inside (the portable symbol kept by the *nāyaḥ* of the lineage) reflects the dual representation of the divine, which is also known in the case of the Mother Goddesses and all those deities who are propiti-



ated with blood sacrifices. Their non-iconic form protects the settlement on the periphery while their iconic form is kept in a god-house (*dyahchē*) within the settlement. The iconic form is carried in a procession to the non-iconic stone on the eve of the New Year in celebration of a ritual of renewal. In a way

The head of a farmer's patrilineage (phukī), carrying the crown of his ancestor deity (below Nārāyaṇa can be seen) in the company of the sacrificial goat to the site beyond the city's limits.

Photo 1st May 1987



Above
Members of a sub-caste of farmers (Bāti), have prepared to worship their ancestor deity at a pair of stones in Mūthu.
Photo 3rd May 1987

Below
A potter (Kumaḥ) worshipping his ancestor deity, represented by a crown worked in silver at Raṇipūkhū.
Photo 4th May 2003

the iconic form returns to its place of origin. Likewise, one could argue, the many portable representations of ever more *phukī* are brought from their ordered environment to meet their non-iconic original form in a potentially unordered continuum of landscape. The annual union is celebrated with a blood sacrifice in order to reaffirm the belonging of those many groups that were once separated. The return to the place of origin seems to suggest the recharging of the replica with a kind of energy that obviously persists only at the place of origin.

Shifting ancestor deities

The actual locations of the ancestor deities are never as binding as one might imagine. It is rather the once-identified or “found” stone that embodies the qualities of place. Under the guidance of a ritual specialist it can in fact be shifted to a “better” or simply more convenient site – a ritual act that requires the sacrifice of a goat. The case of a *dugudyaḥ* at Mūthu is described below for it reveals the exact number of families and sub-castes that turn to a specific site.

A few more cases of shifting lineage deities have surfaced. A group of Sulu, a sub-caste of farmers from Byāsi, recently abandoned the original location on a narrow ridge to shift the stones to a place along the road north of the former pond of Mūthuli. It cannot be said with certainty whether the group involved sought a more comfortable location or whether the original place was really under threat from the expanding construction industry, which was exploiting the hill for sand.

In a similar case a group of Suvāl, another sub-caste of farmers from Byāsi, shifted their lineage deity to a small cluster of houses that had developed in the previous generation.

Another case of a *phukī* of Ācājus, para-priests of farmer status, demonstrates how

critical such an intervention can be. It is said that the Ācāju shifted the stone after having duly consulted with an astrologer, but the moment he offered an egg at the new location, a crow – considered to be a messenger of Yama, the Lord of Death – took the egg and returned it to the house of the Ācāju. From that time on the lineage abandoned the “outer” location of the lineage god and now performs the annual ritual on the terrace of the house.

In a rare case a shift of focus was achieved by a group of Rājopādhyāya without any material intervention. Since their lineage god was located in an increasingly militarised zone on the ridge west of Bhaktapur, they decided to perform their ritual at the non-iconic representation of one of the tutelary goddesses of the Malla kings, Duimāju, in the garden behind the former palace. The Rājopādhyāya from Khauma, however, continued to turn to the original place.

The architectural framing of stones

The shape of the non-iconic lineage gods varies greatly. In few cases a single horizontal flag-stone serves the purpose. A row of up to 12 carved lotus flowers indicates its non-secular context. Other stones are upright field stones, rammed into the earth. Often, the configuration of stones is oriented merely by an arch or a U-shaped wall, serving as a kind of backdrop. The scene depicted on the arch follows the standard formula of a Kīrtimukha at the apex devouring two snake bodies, while a pair of aquatic animals (*makara*) are guarding the bottom ends. Should this architectural element also have a rear wall, a triangular hole ensures the unhindered circulation of the spirits that are supposed to haunt the site. In many cases the lineage god is unidentifiable because a number of stones are kept in a row. But at least three of them are named as *dugudyah*, Bhairava and Nārāy-

ṇa. More often, the stone facing west or east is identified as Bhairava, while a second stone – either upright, or more frequently just a carved horizontal lotus stone – is positioned at a distance of one to five metres at a right angle facing south.

Until recently, three lineage gods were kept under a roofed temple or shrine-like structure, all of them beyond Cupīghāṭ. A new temple was being constructed in 2003 to house the most important of the 18 *dugudyahs* on and at the mound at Dāthusubya, while a simple cemented shrine was constructed below Bhājupūkhū in the 1990s to house the lineage deity of the Nyaichyei sub-caste of farmers. More roofs were under construction in 2003, indicating that the process of architectural framing will accelerate. The Hādā of Chathariyā status even constructed a high wall to delineate a courtyard around their lineage god north of Nāhpūkhū, to which only initiated members are allowed access.

Sāpāru/Gājātrā – Cow worship in August

Celebrating procreation

Full moon in August, Gunipunhi (Nep. Janaipūrṇimā), is one of the most festive days of the year. Across the entire range of the Himalayas, pilgrims of all ethnic groups make their way to glacial lakes as the source of water – and thus of life.

In Bhaktapur such a pilgrimage is performed in miniature form. In the early morning, a replica of Śiva is worshipped as Silumahādev at a water tank named Kaludaha on the periphery of Bhaktapur. The tank serves as a substitute for Gosainkuṇḍa, the glacial lake high up in the Himalaya where the blue throated Śiva (Nīlakaṇṭha) found relief after swallowing poison. Śiva’s survival is celebrated and those who cannot undertake

The site of an ancestor deity survives in the middle of an area at Mūthu. The surface clay in this area is used for brick making.

Photo 11th May 2003



the arduous pilgrimage worship the replica. Brahmanical priests preside over the place, and tie a protective thread around the wrists of their clients.

In the late afternoon, the first procession sets out in anticipation of the Sāpāru festivities on the following day, during which one representation of a cow is carried for each of the deceased of the past twelve months along the regular processional path. Two members of the Cyah sub-caste – those who used to attend the pyre of the Brahmins and members of high status groups – head the procession with drums and cymbals, accompanied by two Jugi playing the shawm. Two persons personifying Khyaḥ-ghosts in black attire and two demons with red hair make obscene gestures to the music produced by 30 youngsters in a stick dance to the onomatopoeic sound of *gē-tā-gi-si*. Obscene slogans are shouted, as if to conjure up an opposite world and break the bounds of social conduct. Upon

return, the participants of this first procession are served a soup made of nine ingredients, including peas and beans. Nine is the number of the day: one's clothes should be changed nine times, and unmarried boys and girls as well as couples who seek progeny visit Svayambhūnāth in Kathmandu and return home to visit nine step-wells (*gupuhiti*) that same night. With full-moon, a festive period of nine days is initiated.

The number seven permeates the death rituals, referring as it does to the seven generations that are remembered and whose descendants form an exogamous group. "Nine" stands rather for the representation of an oriented space, of which Bhaktapur can be seen as a replica: space within which a procreative world unfolds.

The collective dismissal of the dead

The day following full moon is dedicated to the collective dismissal of the dead, represented in the form of cows, which are instrumental in leading the departed across the dangerous river of the underworld, Vaitaraṇī. The dead are believed to reach Yama, the lord of the underworld within 12 months, passing a terrifying forest, two rivers and 16 cities. After six months the deceased is offered a boat, complete with paddles, during an elaborate death ritual which also involves the offering of water and balls of wheat flour – the dead is in need of cooling water and nourishing food. Notwithstanding this supportive offer to cross the Vaitaraṇī safely, all of the town's deceased are offered a cow to the same end in a collective effort to dispel the potentially dangerous souls from the civic realm of the living. Clinging to the tail of the cow, the helpless soul will be able to cross the river.

Types of cows representing the dead

The cows dedicated to children who have died prematurely before the initiation ritual of *kaytāpūjā* (for boys) and *ihi* (for girls) are of simple design. Called “the little cow” (*sācā*), it is a simple basket of Nepalese style, wrapped in a piece of cloth and decorated with a coloured block print depicting the face of a cow (*sāpākvah*) and a pair of horns on top made of braided straw. The brother of the dead child carries the basket over his head, accompanied by another brother or the father. The accompanying person carries a bag to collect offerings of sweet bread, sugar cane, fruits and coins. All of the bereaved families have prepared such food, which they share with similarly bereaved families. In 1986 almost forty percent (in 2002 only 15 percent) of all 500 deceased (in 2002 we counted 464) were in fact children.

There are four more alternatives for representing the cow. In all cases the Brahmanical



Block print depicting a decorated cow, to be fixed to a bamboo scaffold to form a symbolic cow that leads the deceased across Vaitaraṇī, the dangerous river of the underworld.

Printed in Bhaktapur in 1975.

house priest, who represents the deceased in all death rituals, is called to receive the gift of a cow (*godāna*). He places himself in front of the client's house beside the guardian of the threshold, the *pikhālākhū* stone. Opposite squats the chief mourner, either below or beside a cow or a structure representing a cow. He performs the *pūjā* to the instructions of the priest and presents the usual offerings of food, fruits and sweets (*sira* and *nislā*) dedicated to the deceased. The *mhāymacā* again assumes an important role, for she offers flowers and *ṭikā* to both the cow and the pictures of the deceased. She also presents sweets (*svāri* and *malpa*), cucumber and peas as well as *dakabaji*, a mixture of curd and beaten rice to all those who do not belong to the bereaved family. Special care is taken of the helpers who will carry the structure for a day's pay. They are offered food before setting out on the procession, and the offerings (*mari dān yagu*, lit. “to provide offerings of sweet bread”) add to their income. The women of the house will wail as soon as the cow is about to leave the threshold. The



A “little cow”, carried along the processional path on the occasion of *Sāpāru*, the day after full moon in August. The cow is represented by a basket which is carried by the brother of a child that died before having been initiated into the patrilineage. Another brother carries a bag to receive offerings presented by all of the mourning families in town.

Photo 31st August 1985

chief mourner and his brothers accompany the scaffold-cow without performing in any further actions.

The second most frequent structure is a seven-ells (*nhayku*) high (some three metres) bamboo scaffold wrapped in white cloth if a man has died, or in black cloth if a woman has died. In 1986 half of all cows (in 2002 two-thirds) appeared in this shape (*rāhāsa*). For several decades, probably since photographs have become readily available, pictures of the deceased are fixed to the structure along with colourful prints of deities, preferably depicting Śiva (often in the company of his wife Pārvatī), Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa. The individualization of the dead probably reflects a dynamic trend to transcend the anonymity of death.

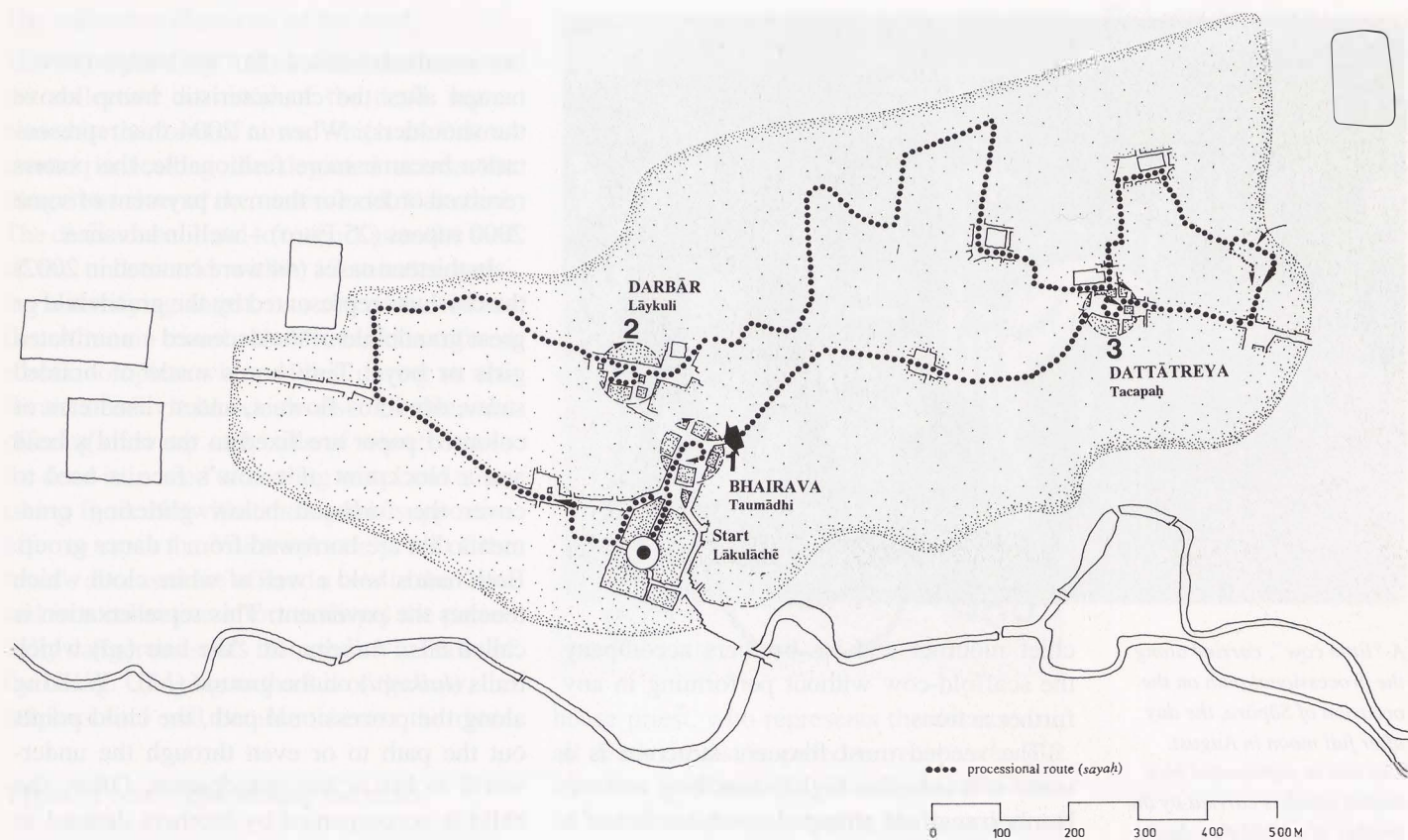
In 1986, twenty-four families decided to hire a living cow for this day from a villager or a Brahmin, thus representing a “real” vehicle for the deceased to transcend the dangerous river of the underworld, the *Vaitaraṇī*. In the same year sixteen potter families shaped a bull in black mud with horns rendered in gold, and placed on a wooden platform that was either carried on people’s shoulders, on a cart, or on a three-wheeler. This representa-

tion is called *dvāsācā* (lit. “the humped cow”, named after the characteristic hump above the shoulders). When in 2004 this representation became more fashionable, the potters received orders for them on payment of some 2000 rupees (25 Euro) – well in advance.

In thirteen cases (44 were counted in 2002) the cow was represented by the grandchild or great grandchild of the deceased – uninitiated girls or boys. Tiny horns made of braided straw, dry lotus flowers, and stylised ears of coloured paper are fixed to the child’s head and a blockprint of a cow’s face is used to cover the forehead below glittering ornaments that are borrowed from a dance group. Both hands hold a web of white cloth which touches the pavement. This representation is called *bāsā luikegu*, lit. “the hair (*sā*) which trails (*luikegu*) on the ground (*bā*).” Walking along the processional path, the child points out the path to or even through the underworld to his or her grandparent. Often, the child is accompanied by brothers dressed as the couple Śiva and Pārvatī, or as the brothers Rām and Lakṣman.

Few cases can be seen of mothers who died in childbed (in 1986 only four were observed). In such cases a small cow is attached to the large cow representing the mother.

Buddhist priests, goldsmiths, painters, oil pressers, stone carvers, dyers – members of all the Buddhist occupational groups – worship *caityas* instead of offering a cow to their deceased. The *caitya* (or *stūpa*) not only represents the historical Buddha Śākyamuni, but also the *dharmakāya*, his transcendental form. Representing the manifestation of the timeless and permanent, the *caitya* stands for non-duality, the exact opposite of a funerary monument whose very existence bespeaks duality (see Gutschow 1997: 31). All of the *caityas* of Bhaktapur are visited in a continuous procession. Just recently, the oil pressers (*Sāymi*) have started to shape large *caityas*



of black clay which are carried along the processional route in the company of the cows. By joining the mainstream, the Buddhist community seems to be succumbing to a social dynamism.

In the neighbouring town of Patan the Buddhist majority dominates the urban rituals. There is a procession of cows that is joined by the Hindu community, but thousands of people join the *matayaḥ* procession on the following day. More than five hundred Buddhist places – *caityas* and temples – are visited in the course of a continuous circumambulation of the urban space.

The unfolding procession

The procession of cows along the processional path (*sayah*) starts shortly after midnight.

By nine in the morning most of the cows representing deceased children have passed, while the bamboo scaffolds dance in continuous motion through the town to the accompaniment of stick dancers and musicians. In the afternoon the path is crowded, ever more groups arrive and almost produce jams in the stream of cows. Sometimes an infant is carried in a basket to represent Kṛṣṇa.

Cows from a particular quarter, Lākulāchē, leave in a formal group, headed by the divine couple of the town, Bhairava (as the *nāyaḥ*, the “master” of town) and Bhadrakālī (as *ajimā*, his mistress, lit. “grand-mother”). The entire group performs a threefold round of the town’s three main squares. The presence of the divine couple can be understood as another demonstration of the continuity of the urban realm of the living. By bringing up

Procession of all cows, representing the deceased of the past twelve months on the occasion of Sāpāru, the day following full moon in August. The end of the procession is formed by two large cows representing the divine couple of the town, Bhairava (Suyāma Bhailadyaḥ) and Bhadrakālī. They are accompanied by the cows originating from the quarter of Lākulāchē. The three main squares of the town are honoured with a threefold processional round.



The "offering of a cow" (*godāna*), performed by the chief mourner under the guidance of his Brahmin house priest on the occasion of *Sāpāru*.

Photo 23rd August 2002

the rear of the procession, the divine couple has obviously succeeded in dispelling the deceased.

In the early evening political and satirical groups (22 in 1986) do the rounds. Before the uprising in spring 1990, *Sāpāru* was the only day of the year which was free of restrictions. Hundreds of satirical papers were

published making fun of political leaders. At the beginning of the 21st century the scene has radically changed. In 2002 only five groups joined the procession, wearing simple caps of paper inscribed "Deuba" or "Koirala" (two of the leaders of Nepal's Congress Party) in the company of "Hitler" or simply "USA" or "India", the two countries which are always brandished as being "imperialistic". The local communist party paraded Lenin, Marx, Engels and Mao through the town. In 1986 11,025 people were counted accompanying cows and satirical groups, in 2002 only 8,679.

Gokaṛṇa aūṣī – Bath in memory of the father

Similar to the pilgrimage on the day of the new moon in May, which is dedicated to deceased mothers, a second pilgrimage is undertaken on the occasion of the new moon in September. A regular death ritual (*śrāddha*) is dedicated to deceased fathers in Gokaṛṇa on the banks of the Bāgmatī river. The place replicates a sacred place in the far north of Kerala, which is known as one of the abodes of Śiva. It is named after a sage who was born of a cow and with the ears of a cow (*gokaṛṇa*). Despite performing the death ritual for his brother at Gayā (in Bihar), the spirit of the departed would not be pacified. The sage was advised to read the *Bhāgavata* to the departed, unpacified soul. After hearing the text, the departed attained liberation, and the place where this happened was named after the sage (Mani 2002: 293-294).

Pilgrims from Bhaktapur set out either the preceding evening or in the very early hours of the morning on the three hour walk. Most people perform the pilgrimage once, but some do it repeatedly. People from Bhaktapur separate from the other groups and perform the *śrāddha* collectively, according

to the instructions of a Rājopadhyāya priest. The sacrificial balls of the death ritual are cast into the Bāgmatī. Members of the butchers' sub-caste from all of the Newar settlements in the valley line up in a long row to follow the instructions of a Khusaḥ priest from Patan.

After completing the ritual, people worship Śiva in the form of Gokaṛṇeśvara in a temple high above the river, and then join others gambling and drinking at hot food stalls. The long line of begging Pvaḥ (Untouchables) is a typical sight at a place of pilgrimage. Gambling and begging are two contrasting activities at the conclusion of a ritual that aims at pacifying the dead. The ritual grounds of the dead are always linked to the world of food and fortune.

Mvaḥni / Dasañ

The great festival Mvaḥni (Nev.) or Dasañ (Nep.) on the 1st to 10th day after new moon in October recalls the victory of the goddess Durgā over the evil demon Maḥiṣāsura in the shape of a buffalo. This demon is also the vehicle of Yama, the Lord of Death – which in this context seems significant. Durgā's victory is celebrated all over the subcontinent in great variety of festivities. Among the Newars of Bhaktapur, the festival extends over the fifteen days of the waxing moon in October, and assumes not only an urban dimension but also an intimate one that fills the individual household. The designation *mvaḥni* refers to the black stroke on the forehead that establishes a link among those who share a blood sacrifice made to Durgā on the *viḥayadaśamī*, the Victorious Tenth Day of the festival. It is taken from the lamp-black that was collected while the animal – a duck, a goat or a buffalo – was sacrificed to the vessel in which barley shoots had been growing, as explained below.



To start with, the festival begins the day after the annual period of 16 days designated for death rituals (*soraśrāddha*) that runs during the dark half of the moon in the month of Āsvin. On the first day of the waxing moon barley and maize are sown in black earth kept in a new earthenware pot reserved specially for this purpose. While the barley sprouts over a period of nine days, the vast majority of Bhaktapur's population joins in the processions to the places where the nine representations of Durgā, the Navadurgā, are represented in non-iconic form. In the morning of these days the people take a purificatory bath by the river banks or at ponds that are connected with the seats or *pīṭhas* of the goddesses, and in the evening they turn to the respective shrine itself. On the ninth day the masks of an extended troupe of gods and goddesses (among them the Navadurgā) are ritually stolen, taken beyond the city's limits to the east, to be reborn or reinstated after a period of death that had lasted for two dreadful months. The sacrifice of a full-grown buffalo,

Gokaṛṇa.

Farmers from Bhaktapur engaged in a death ritual dedicated to their father on the occasion of new moon in September (Gokaṛṇa aūsi)
Photo September 1987

named *khāme*, is instrumental in providing life (Skt. *prāṇa*) to the gods. In the evening of that same day the masks are donned by ritual specialists, the *Gāthā*, and paraded around town. Over the following five days the gods undergo all the necessary rites of passage to become ritually fully empowered for a period of 10 months, until they die. This process is terminated by the cremation of the masks at the eastern cremation ground.

The sacrifice of the buffalo and the birth of the gods are reflected in household rituals that involve making an offering to the *pitṛ*. On the eighth day of the waxing moon, all of the funeral associations kill a buffalo on the squares of the town and offer mixed portions of meat to their members. In cases of associations with many members, the group of active members buys one buffalo and the group of non-active members buys a second. Three days beforehand all of the members have to submit their demands, for which they are charged. On 3rd October 2003 one portion – which had no specifically determined weight but is weighed in order to produce equal portions of three to five kilogram – cost 200 rupees (in 2004 equal to 2.5 Euro). Slaughtering, distributing the meat and carrying it home into the house (*lā dukaygu*, lit “to bring meat inside”) is an activity reserved for males. The meat is welcomed at the threshold of the house by the mistress of the household, the eldest woman. Rice husk is offered to the *pikhālākhu* and small bits of meat are placed on top as an offering to the evil spirits (called *bhūt* and *pret*), who are supposed to dwell there, and constantly threaten the house.

It is ritual meat that is associated with Durgā’s victory, and must undergo a purificatory process before it enters the kitchen to be consumed.

On the same day part of the concluding feast – *kuchibhvay* – is offered. It is named after the container that is used. The contents of a *kuchi* is equal to two *mana*, which is al-

most one litre. A dish of the food that is to be consumed is put aside at a safe distance from the rest as an invitation to the ancestors. In the early morning of the following day the *Jugi* who is associated with the household will come and collect his share.

The above-mentioned calendric rituals of death and renewal not only address the family of the deceased, but also the city in general. They are collective rituals in which meeting one another, extending invitations and eating common meals, or even – as in the *Gājātrā* – competition between the castes and households, all have a significant part. The rituals take place in a public space, visible for all to see; they are related to specific days of the festival calendar; and not only are ancestors worshipped, but also demons are warded off.

In contradistinction to these rituals, the following chapter looks at death and ancestor rituals relating to a specific deceased person. The dates of these rituals mostly depend on the day of the death, and the majority of the rituals are carried out by the family inside or by the house or at the cremation ground.

DEATH AND ANCESTOR RITUALS

In the following we shall describe various death and ancestor rituals that are primarily related to a deceased person and his family. However, one of these rituals, the union of the deceased with his or her ancestors (*latyā*, i.e. Skt. *sapindikarāṇa*) is described in more detail in the second part of this book. The present chapter opens with some remarks on the funeral associations (*siguthī*), which are essential in many of the death and ancestor rituals.

Funeral associations (*siguthī*)

Funeral associations are called *siguthī* (*si* = “death”, *guthī* = “association”) in Nevārī, and the occasions these *guthīs* meet to discuss the budget and membership issues and join for a feast are simply called “*guthī*”, reflecting the habit of the Newars to reduce a complex meaning to a simplified term. Often the names of funeral associations refer to such occasions, like *śrīpañcamī guthī* (in this case: the beginning of spring in early February). In recent years these associations have also assumed the Nepālī name *murdāguthī* (*murdā*, “corpse, death”). Farmers in Kathmandu are similarly organized into *sanāḥgu* (Toffin 1994: 449), whose members will attend the death procession. The cremation itself is performed by members of a *siguthī*, which Toffin names “cremation society”. Among Newar villages the term *sanāguthī* is also widely used (Ishii 1996). In 1984 the first funeral association deliberately ignoring the traditional status hierarchy was established in Satungal under the name *murdāsamsthā* (Ishii 1996: 50).

Membership

Each individual family – centred on a hearth – belongs to a funeral association, a *siguthī*. Membership is hereditary and is handed down without any question. The daughters automatically join the funeral association of their husbands – as long as they marry within well-defined sub-castes. Should they marry somebody from a sub-caste whose members consider themselves to be of higher status or from another ethnic group, the annual congregation of the husband’s funeral association will discuss the issue and postpone making a decision for many years. For many families this inability or unwillingness on the part of the congregation of elders under the leadership of the eldest, the *nāyaḥ*, is experienced virtually as torture. Should the wife suddenly die the family is rendered helpless. If a woman marries somebody from a group lower in status, she is accepted without any argument. Quarrels over the proper use of the resources of the association or doubtful memberships often lead to the fragmentation of a group. A growing number of marriages across accepted alliances actually forced the affected families in the 1990s to establish new funeral associations.

The *siguthī* is neither an endogamous nor an exogamous group. Matrimonial prohibitions are identified in a way that cuts across locality (unlike Kathmandu, see Toffin 1994: 447), sub-caste (in the case of farmers) and funeral association. It is not permissible to marry into the paternal line inside of six generations and into the maternal line inside of three.

In some cases all members of a sub-caste are members of a single funeral association,

while in others sub-castes whose members consider themselves to be of the same status will join parallel associations. Among the farmers, for example, the Bāsukala sub-caste mixes with Suvāl and Yakami, the association of 36 Suvāl incorporates five Duvāl members. The painters (Citrakāra) split into two groups of 12 and six members, the funeral torch bearers (Cālā) into two groups of 14 and 7 members, 67 families of barbers (Nau) are organized into four funeral associations, and 42 families of Jugi into six.

Quite a number of farmers' funeral associations have over 100 members. In those cases, up to 30 "active" members bear ritual responsibility while the other, "non-active" members pay a higher annual fee. In return for this fee, each family member receives a share of the annual feast and a share of the meat from the buffalo killed the day before the Victorious Tenth during the Dasāī festival in October.

The duties of the "active members"

The elder of the association, the *nāyaḥ*, is not involved in the management of the association for it is his privilege to worship the gods on the occasion of the annual meetings. He also presents the city's major deities with the animals that are to be sacrificed. To take the *siguthī* of Bāsukala in Byāsi as an example: the *nāyaḥ* leads the active members of the association out to worship three important Hindu as well as several Buddhist deities. The first visit of the lunisolar year is dedicated to Surjebināyak (Skt. Sūryavināyaka), the important Gaṇeśa shrine south of the city on the occasion of "subyā", the second Thursday after full moon in Vaiśākha (in April/May). The day marks the beginning of the season of ancestor worship. The second *pūjā* addresses Bhairava on the occasion of his birthday (*bhusadhā*) in June/July – not in his prominent temple at Taumādhi Square, but in the

form of *bhailaḥthvāpi*, an earthenware pot for the making of beer which is kept in the house of the *siguthī*. The third *pūjā* is offered to the Dīpaṅkara Buddhas on the day before new moon in September (*pañcadānacahre*), the day that concludes the month of Gūlā which is sacred to the Buddhist community.

The annual caretaker (*pālāḥ*) has the duty of informing all of the members the moment a death occurs. While doing his round he carries the "treasure box" of the *guthī* as a token of death. Later, the caretaker will appear at the house of the bereaved with a torch (*musy-āpvā*) and a knife (*khukuri*), the two insignia of his duty. The caretaker also has to make sure that all members receive their share of the annual feasts. The day before full moon in December he collects the annual fees and presents the accounts.

The foremost duty of the funeral association's members is to rush to the bereaved house as soon as the news of the death has spread. A few members attend to the preparation of the bier and carry the corpse as well as the firewood for the pyre, which is either kept at the association's house (*guthichē*), or in a special one-storied shelter called *gusīpakva*. The *guthī* also has to bring a torch doused in mustard oil and a torch of straw. The annual caretaker, the *pālāḥ*, carries the treasure box (*dyaḥpālīcā*) containing a shroud of saffron or red colour that is used to cover the corpse when it leaves the house. The name alone (*dyaḥ*, "deity") suggests the presence of a deity, often identified as Bhairava. In Kathmandu the shroud is either identified with Bhairava or a mother goddess, Bhadrakālī or Indrāyaṇī, and it is said that the annual caretaker is possessed by the divinity during the annual meetings (Toffin 1994: 449). In the case of the Jugi, the annual caretaker of the funeral association keeps the treasure box at home; this box has the feet of Gorakhnāth, the lineage deity of all Jugi, worked into its outer face. In addition, he keeps a small

shrine with the replica of the lineage deity and a beer pot moulded in clay with a representation of Bhairava's face. All of these items are brought to the enshrined lineage deity on the occasion of the deity's annual celebration on the day before new moon in December (Bālācahre).

All active members of a funeral association have to congregate at the cremation site. Only a few of them in fact play an active role, but despite this, failure to appear results in a fine of a couple of hundred rupees. Their presence alone demonstrates solidarity among the group, for the members of the bereaved household and close agnates are not at all actively involved in the process of cremation. Only those four members of the association who carry the corpse are allowed to leave the site immediately.

Every funeral association congregates once or twice a year for a meeting which extends over three days, punctuated by a small feast, a sacrifice to a major deity, preferably Bhairava or one of the Navadurgā, and then a sumptuous feast. This is scheduled preferably for the days preceding Yaḥmāripunhi, full moon in December, but it can also be the preceding or the following full moon, as well as full moon in April (Lhutipunhi), the Spring's Fifth (*basantpañcamī* in February), or Sitīnakaḥ, the day in June on which the Mother Goddesses appear in town for the last time. The day before new moon in March, Pasacahre, is equally important for almost every funeral association. Cooked rice (*bau*) and willow twigs are deposited on the *chvāsah*-stone nearest to the place where the association meets. Thus the unpacified spirits of the unknown deceased are propitiated collectively.



Examples of funeral associations

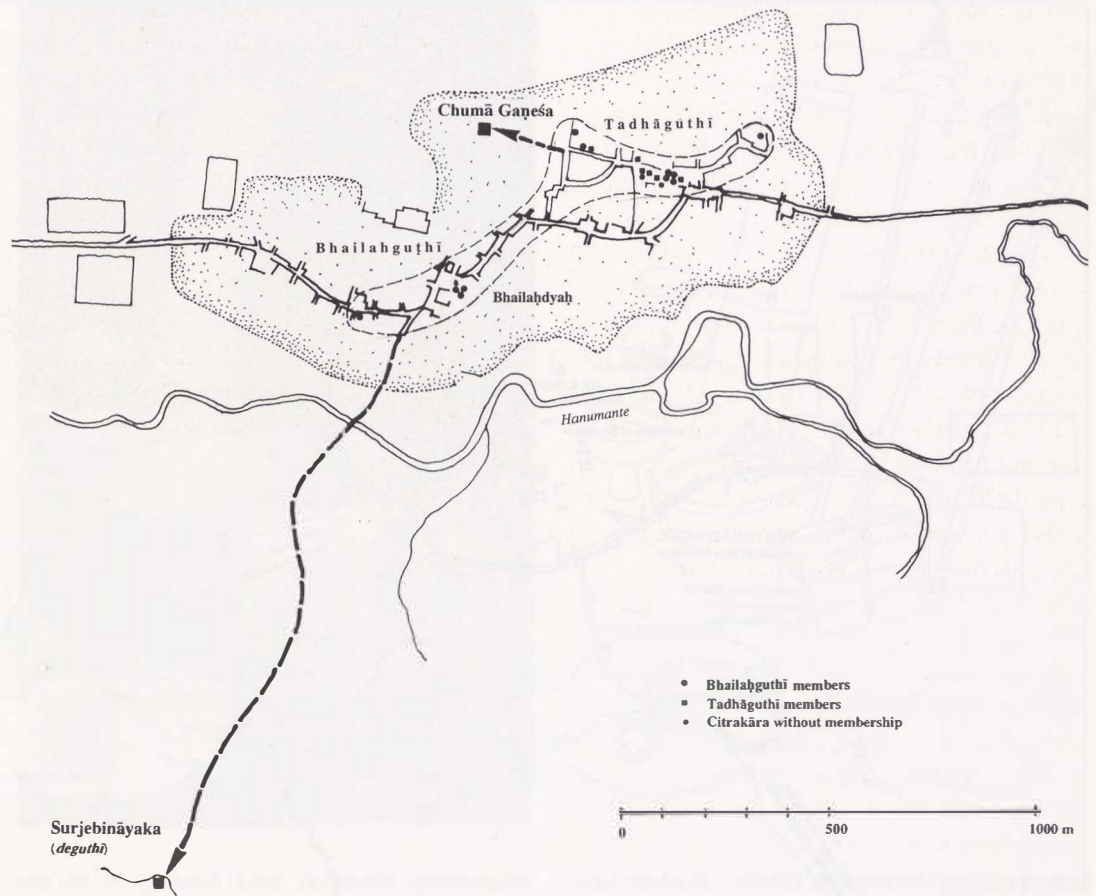
The painters of Bhaktapur have already been the focus of research (Gutschow 1979, Toffin 1995). Painters call a Buddhist house priest for all their life-cycle rituals. Their main duty is to renew the masks of the Navadurgā and a number of other paintings in the context of rituals of renewal. Five times a year they produce coloured blockprints which are needed by every family for the enactment of the major household rituals.

We shall confine ourselves here to a look at the two funeral associations of the Cītrakār (Nev. Pū). The memory prevails that there were originally five *siguthīs* of painters in Bhaktapur. But for at least three generations the painters have been organized in only two funeral associations, the *bhailaḥguthī* with 12 members from the lower town, and the *taḥdhāguthī* covering the upper town with six members. Two members of the *taḥdhāguthī* left their association over a serious dispute in 1996. At that time the wife of a new member gave birth to a child only six months after marriage. The other members were so enraged that the stigmatised family was expelled and subsequently accepted by the second association.

Ritual objects kept by Chandra-nāth Kusle, the caretaker of a funeral association (siguthī no. 1 of Jugi): left the "treasure box" (pālīhēcā) with the footprints of Gorakhnātha, right a beer pot bearing a face of Bhairava and a shrine with the footprints of Gorakhnātha, the lineage deity of the Jugi.
Photo 10th March 1983

The two funeral associations of the Citrakār, the sub-caste of painters:

a total of 18 members live along the main street. The annual meeting of the *deśaguthī*, in which all Citrakār are members, convenes at Surjebināyak. The *bisvokarmaguthī* worships Chumā Gaṇeśa in March.

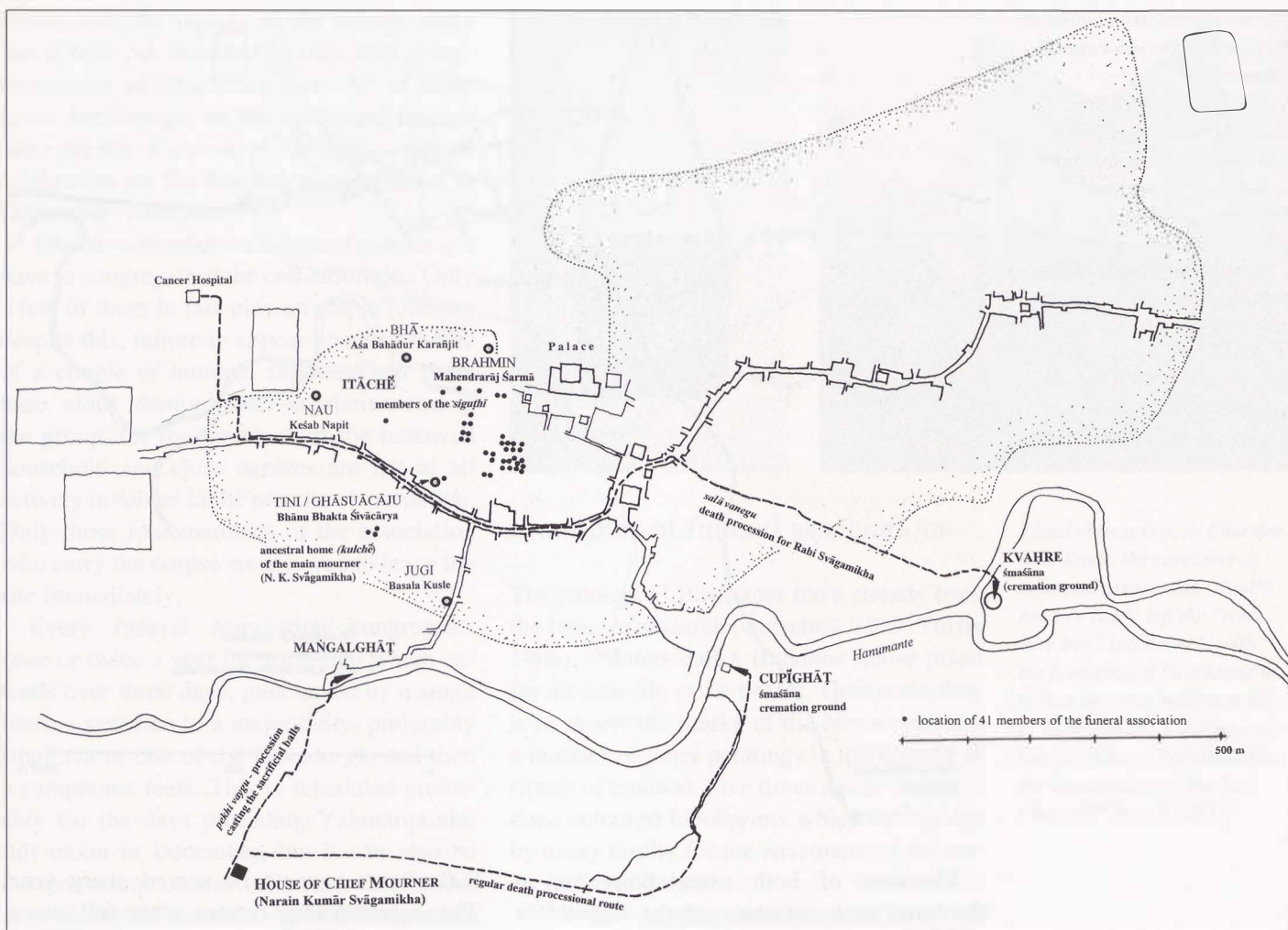


Members of both associations are at the same time members of the *deguthī* or *deśaguthī* – from *deśa*, a spatial denomination covering a range of scales, from country to the quarter of a town or village: in this case the *deśa* is Bhaktapur. Lead by the five seniormost painters, this *guthī* regulates the sharing out of clients among the members. The *guthī* meets annually on the day preceding full moon in December, Pvaylāpunhi. The meeting takes place at Surjebināyak, one of the four prominent Gaṇeśa shrines of the Valley.

All members of the *deśaguthī* are also members of the *bisvokarmaguthī*, whose annual caretaker is entitled to paint a few clay pots and the bowl that contains the *bel* fruit for the girls' mock marriage (*ihī*). Some

800 clients have to be served every year. The caretakership rotates after full moon in March on the occasion of the worship of Chumā Gaṇeśa as Viśvakarman, the universal architect and personification of creative power.

To refer to another example, a small funeral association with fourteen members centres on the seat of the ninth Mother Goddess in the quarter of Tulāchē. Seven Karmācārya form the largest faction, besides 4 Jośi, 2 Baidya and one Munankarmi. The annual meetings of this *guthī* take place at full moon in December (Yaḥmāripunhi), full moon in April (Lhutipunhi), and the day after Kṛṣṇa's birthday in September.



The funeral association of Narain Kumār Svāgamikha

The funeral association of Narain Kumār Svāgamikha, who performed the death rituals described in detail below, has 41 members. Besides 8 families of Svāgamikha, seven other sub-castes of farmers provide members who consider themselves on the same status level. All of them are located in clusters within the lower town. Narain Kumār left his ancestral home and shifted his residence to a new site at Pandau Bazar some twenty years ago. This shift did not affect his client relationship to his family priest, the para-

priest and purity specialists, but the dead of his house cannot be carried through urban territory to the cremation place. In terms of space, he has become an outsider. As such he is forced to approach the cremation ground from the south.

Murdā utayagu – Death, funeral procession and cremation

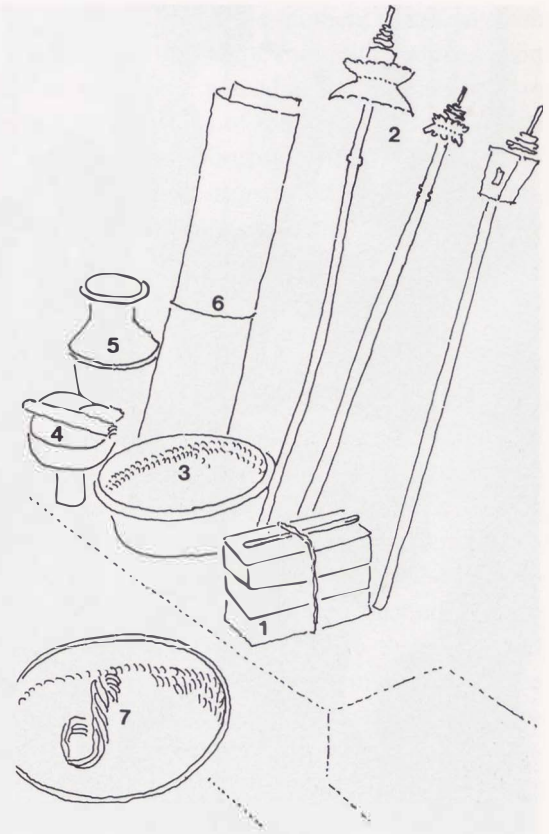
At the time of death the corpse is immediately taken down to the ground floor (*chēḍi*) of the house and placed in such a way that the body faces south. It is best, however, to

The funeral association of Svāgamikha: all 41 members live in a cluster. Also mapped is the death procession of Rabi Svāgamikha on 8th July 2002 and the location of the Brahmin priest, para-priests (Tinī, Bhā,) and purity specialists (Jugi) who were involved in the subsequent death rituals.

The funeral procession to the cremation ground is being prepared in front of a house in Cāsukhel:

1 Three unfired bricks with split bamboo, tied by raw cotton strips – symbolizing the hearth for the deceased; 2 three torches, brought from the households of the daughters of the deceased; 3 earthen bowl with popped rice, to be scattered along the procession; 4 plate with the horoscope of the deceased; 5 container for pouring water at the cremation site; 6 bamboo mat to be placed on the bier; 7 basket with popped rice, on top two cotton strips (*nāḥkāpaḥ*) which represent the deceased until the 10th and 45th day.

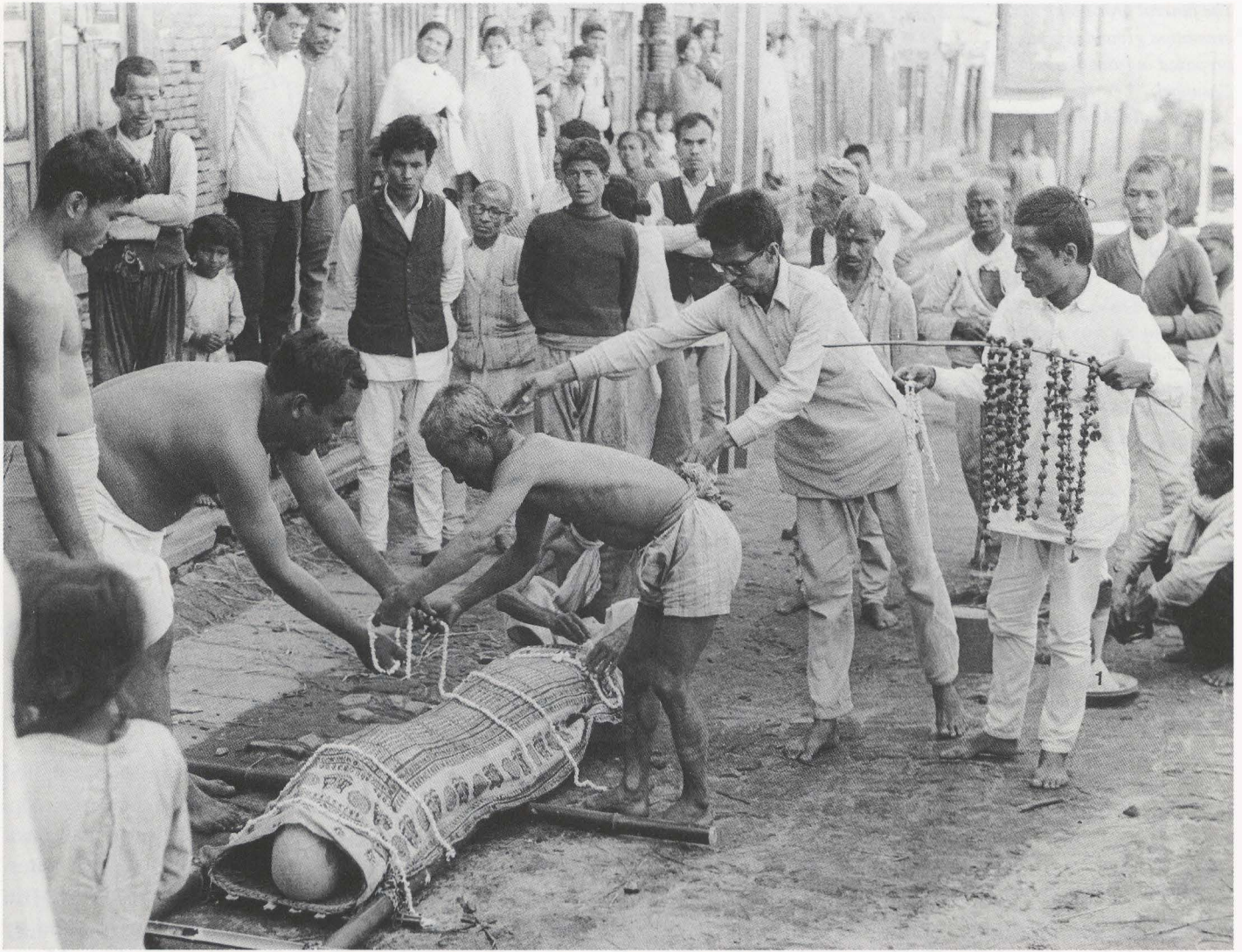
Photo 17th January 1986



die on the ground floor. As death approaches a Baidya is to be called, a local physician of the Ayurvedic tradition who is said to be able to predict the exact time of death. His advice would ensure that the dying person will reach the ground floor in time. In case the dying person is brought to Hanumānghāṭ at Kvaḥre, a Ghāṭbaidya predicts exactly the time when *prāṇavāyu*, i.e. the wind that signifies the soul, will leave the body. Nobody knows where the *prāṇavāyu* leaves the body, but it is believed that experienced people can hear the sound. The most favourite opening is certainly the Brahmaṇdra, the uppermost of the seven openings of the body. And it is certainly inauspicious if the *prāṇavāyu* leaves through the anus.

The corpse is rubbed down with mustard oil, and a layer of rice flour is added later. The eyes are outlined in black with a mixture of

soot and oil (*añjaḥ*) and vermilion is applied to the forehead, and then a coin placed on top. A lotus flower is put into the left hand, basil (*tulsi*) into the right. The feet rest in water. The entire process is called *mhā gekegu* (lit. “to prepare the body”), and is performed by members of the funeral association. Meanwhile the remaining active members of the death association (*siguthī*) arrive to provide help. They carry with them a torch (*musyāpvā*) and the “treasure box” (*dyahpālīcā* or *pālimhecā*) which represents the treasure of the association and is kept permanently in the house of the annual caretaker. This box also contains the yellow or red cotton cloth (*dyahbā*) that is used as the shroud to cover the corpse. Wood is also brought from the association’s house. Years ago wood for the cremations was stored in small, specially designed huts.



The chief mourner – the *mitamhā* (Skt. *kriyāputra*) – who will light the pyre, has few obligations in this initial preparatory phase. Members of the funeral association as well as neighbours will take care of a number of necessary acts. The bier (*kutva*) is constructed from bamboo sticks bound with raw cotton (*kācīkā*), and a torch of rice straw is tied around a stick of sugar cane in a sevenfold manner. The corpse is placed on a bamboo mat that has been procured by the chief mourner. Others bring three unfired bricks (*kāciapā*) to serve as the hearth in which a

symbolic fire of three small bamboo sticks is lit to pacify the deceased (Skt. *pretaśāntihoma*, Nev. *kulehoma*). An earthenware pot (*baja*) is taken and the semblance is made of popping rice. Neighbours bring popped rice (*tāy*) in large quantities, for it has to be scattered while walking to the cremation ground – which for members of higher sub-castes, farmers and craftsmen is always located across the river to the south. More torches are brought by the daughters of the deceased.

Before the procession starts, the wife of the chief mourner or the mistress of the lineage

Preparation of the bier with the deceased on Dattātreya square. Placed on a bamboo mat, the corpse is covered by the shroud of the funeral association, and decorated with garlands of popped rice. Behind the man with the garlands is the torch (I = divā), brought by the Cālā. Photo October 1971

Fabrication of a bier with bamboo for the death procession at Cāsukhel.
Photo 17th January 1986



will carry a symbolic mat that represents the bed of the deceased, together with a mattress and some clothes to a stone (*chvāsaḥ*) in the pavement of the neighbourhood where ritual waste is regularly discarded. She is joined by other female members of the household, and all of them keep up an incessant wailing. Every item that the deceased had used in his last hours has to be discarded. In recent times this has also come to include unused medicines. Then the chief mourner joins and carries the pot and the bricks to the ritual stone. At that time he wears the two strips of cotton (*nāḥkāpaḥ*) – one around his waist and one around his head and jaws – which in all probability symbolize the clothes of the deceased, who has now attained the form of a spirit, a *preta*. He waits at the stone marker for the procession to head off along a prescribed route to the cremation ground. Regardless of whether the deceased is male or female, both male and female mourners join the procession.

The procession used to be headed by two Divakār (Nev. Cālā), one with cymbals, and one with a torch (*divā*) stuck into a pot of curds. This practice disappeared a generation ago, because performances in the context of death rituals have increasingly come to be regarded as injurious to personal prestige.

The torch is lit the moment the procession starts from one of the four small cups of light that have been placed at the top and bottom and on the sides of the corpse. The cymbals sound when the corpse is lifted, when it passes the *chvāsaḥ* stone, and at every *dhvākā*, the stones at crossroads that are haunted by ghosts, namely the *bhūt* and *pret*. Finally, the cymbals sound when the corpse reaches the cremation ground, when the chief mourner circles round the pyre, and when he sets fire to the corpse.

This is now rarely done by a Cālā. Nowadays a member of the *siguthī* ignites the *guthī*'s torch (*musyāpvā*). The torch will be used in turn to ignite a torch of straw (*mipunāli*). This torch accompanies the procession down to the cremation ground; its fire constitutes a reserve in case the *musyāpvā* torch goes out. A *guthī* member carries the *mipunāli* over his right shoulder, while a second torch of straw (*dāg*), with seven distinctive knots around the core, a stick of sugar cane, together with a spill of dwarf bamboo, is later used by the chief mourner to set fire to the pyre.

The chief mourner leans back and wails. He expresses his grief in standard expressions while being guided by members of the funeral association. Wailing women also come and join the procession, but they return as soon as the group reaches the bridge crossing the river.

As the group arrives at the cremation ground, the corpse is placed on a stone (called *gayālvahā*) that is named after Gayā, the famous place for the enactment of death rituals in Bihar, North India. In some cases a knife from the household of the chief mourner is placed on the chest of the corpse as a threat. An undefined *vāyu* (wind) is believed to still dwell in the body, so a weapon is needed as a threat to prevent it from rising up again. Then water is brought from the river. A container (*kalaśa*) that had once served in the context



At *Kvaḥre* cremation ground: The chief mourner, Julum Bāsukala, offers a libation from the right end of the cotton strip (*nāḥkāpaḥ*) he is wearing round his head to three sacrificial balls of rice husk, placed in front of the feet of his deceased father. The corpse rests on a stone that bears the name *Gayā*, the place in Bihar famous for death rituals. Photo 21st October 2003

of a sacred fire at home is filled by a member of the *guthī*. Mourning lineage members and members of the *siguthī* hold their hands in such a way that the water runs along their outstretched fingers onto a small earthenware bowl that is placed upside down onto the mouth of the corpse. Wearing the *nāḥkāpaḥ*, the chief mourner finally brings water from the river in his hands, wailing loudly. Having poured the water over the corpse he is led to its feet, where he prepares three times three *piṇḍa* (Nev. *pekhi*) from wet rice husk (*bajimā*), which had been brought in an earthenware cooking pot by the funeral association. The formed *piṇḍas* immediately fall apart because husk is not sticky. According to the Brahmin Girīndrarāj Śarmā, the first is dedicated to the spirit of the deceased (*pretabali*), the second to the dogs (*svānabali*) and the third to the crows (*kva-* or *kakabali*). In a concluding act, the chief mourner dips the right end of the cotton strip around his head in the pot to wet it. Turning around he squeezes the cotton to offer a drop or two to the *piṇḍas*

in an act of libation. He finally takes a few threads from the cotton strip and offers them to the three *piṇḍas* individually.

The corpse is now carried by four members of the funeral association who symbolically wear white cloth around their waists, indicating a *dhoti*. They perform three circumambulations of the pyre, which in the meantime has been prepared by other members. The four corpse bearers are appointed *ad hoc* for this task by the head of the funeral association, the *nāyaḥ*. The advantage of this duty is that they may leave the site immediately, while all the others have to remain until the cremation is completed.

The shroud (*dyaḥbā* or *debā*) is removed and the naked corpse placed onto a length of cotton on top of the pyre.

The bier and the lower white cotton cloth are discarded and collected by a member of the sub-caste of *Pvaḥ*, the Untouchables who live near the river bank, not within the confines of the city but clearly beyond. The right to collect coins, cloth and remaining firewood

Opposite
At *Kvaḥre* cremation ground: Four members of the Bāsukala funeral association carry the corpse of Rām Bāsukala three times around the pyre. The caretaker of the association, Mohan Bahādur Lagu (right), carries the torch of straw which will ignite a spill of dried dwarf bamboo in his left hand. In his right he holds the pot from which the deceased received water, and in his cotton belt he keeps the knife of the association, which is meant to intimidate the spirit of the deceased. Photo 21st October 2003



rotates among the Pvaḥ every three days. Every piece of half-burned wood is collected, as are the large cudgels which cannot be taken back across the river into town except if they are carried by an Untouchable.

The shroud is spread out to dry in the sun, then folded and stored in the funeral association's treasure box. Ornaments and watches, items that had remained on the body of the corpse, are removed by the funeral organisation and stored in the same box.

The horoscope (*jātaḥ*) of the deceased is placed on his or her forehead. The chief mourner circumambulates the pyre three times, takes fire from the *divā* or one of the *musyāpvā* torches and ignites a torch of straw (the *dāg*) to which a spill of split dry dwarf bamboo (*tipvay*) is held. A member of the *siguthī* will hand over the blazing spill to the chief mourner, who will then light some camphor, clarified butter and a few sticks of sandalwood that had been placed on the corpse's forehead. It is said that if the Cālā's torch goes out, new fire has to be brought from the temple of Vajrayoginī near Sankhu, several hours walk northeast of Bhaktapur. The chief mourner finally touches the feet of the corpse three times (*tuti bagya yāgu*, i.e. to observe *darśana* of the feet) and is taken away in a gesture of force by a member of the *siguthī*. Only then is the corpse covered with wet straw, which produces thick smoke.

All of the mourning lineage members and members of the funeral association then bathe (or symbolically touch their forehead with water) on the opposite side of the river at Hanumāngḥāt.

Now the chief mourner also turns to the river, unbinds the *nāḥkāpaḥ*, washes it and takes it home. It is widely believed that as soon as the *nāḥkāpaḥ* touches the river the *vāyu* of the deceased – the “wind” which represents the soul – clings to the cotton strip.

For the coming 13 or 45 days the *preta* is embodied in the strips of cotton, one of

which is handed over to a purity specialist, a member of the sub-caste of Bhā, on the 10th day, and the second one (worn by the chief mourner around his head) to the Brahmin on the occasion of the ritual of *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*, the union of the *preta* with the ancestors on the 13th or 45th day.

The chief mourner will turn to one side and wait patiently for two or three hours until the cremation is completed.

It is the obligation of the members of the funeral association to tend the fire. Quite often the corpse is dismembered to allow a more economical cremation. An experienced member of the association removes the corpse from the fire and renews the pyre with fresh wood to ensure the cremation is performed with as little wood as possible. If, however, the chief mourner wishes that the corpse is not touched he will have to pay a certain compensation to the association.

It is said that when almost nothing of the body remains, the heart and the kidneys (*jalasi*) can be identified as the parts of the body that resist the fire. They are taken out, beaten with sticks and returned to the fire. In reality, the pelvis lasts longest. Traces of bones together with a handful of other ashes are put aside, doused with water and placed on the bamboo mat, the *pulu*, on which the corpse had been borne. One corner of the mat has first to catch fire before immediately being extinguished. The mat is dragged into the river and allowed to float slowly downstream. The aforementioned “wind”, which represents the soul, is said to be embodied in the ashes and while floating down the river on the mat it clings to the cotton strips as the chief mourner washes them on the opposite bank.

The pyre is covered once again with straw and left alone, in the hope that the last traces of the corpse will burn. It is the job of the Pvaḥ woman in charge to scrutinize the ashes. In case bones are found the *guthī* has to pay a

Opposite
At Kvaḥre cremation ground:
The corpse of the deceased, Rām Bāsukala, is placed on the pyre with his head facing south, the direction of death. The horoscope is placed on the corpse's forehead, the spill of bamboo has already been offered by the chief mourner, and members of the funeral association will now ignite an initial straw fire. In the background can be seen Kancā Bāsukala, the 78-year-old elder of the association. Photo 21st October 2003



fine of up to 500 rupees. Parts of the ashes are brought to the shrine of Surjebināyak, two kilometres south of Bhaktapur, where the Pvaḥ serve as caretakers (*dyahpālāḥ*).

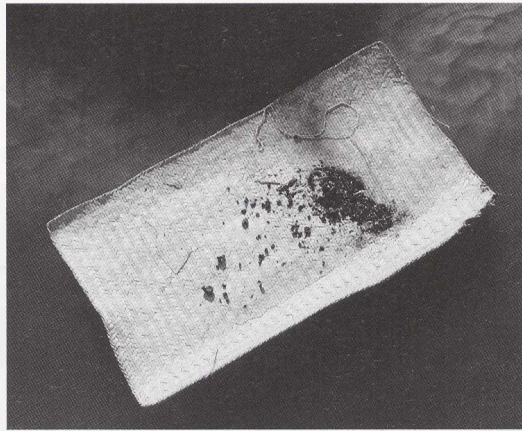
All of the mourners and members of the funeral association touch the water on the opposite river bank again and wave their hands above a fire made of rice straw in a gesture of purification. Headed by the chief mourner, the entire group moves to the house of the deceased.

Upon arrival, the women of the house start wailing again in a formal expression of grief. When the chief mourner arrives in front of the door at the threshold stone, the *pikhālākhu*, he is welcomed by his wife with husk in order to pacify any evil spirits that might be clinging to his body. In order to enter the house he has to step over three small earthenware dishes containing charcoal, raw cotton and an oil wick and producing fire and smoke that is believed to veil the entrance of the house and thus make it invisible to the *preta*, which wishes to return to the house.

Once inside the house the chief mourner is welcomed with raw sugar and water. The two cotton strips are carefully stored away in a hidden place because nobody is supposed to touch them.

All those of the lineage who had been to the cremation ground are offered food that has been cooked in the house. Over the next ten days members of the *phukī* bring food, because members of the house are not supposed to work in the kitchen. From the second day neighbours likewise bring food (*bica vanegu*), which cannot however be consumed in the house but must be reserved for the *nhenumhā* offering to the deceased on the 7th day.

At the end of the fourth day a basket (such as a *dalū*) containing one *pati* of unhusked rice will be placed on the *pikhālākhu* and a nearby butcher (Nāy) will be told to collect it in exchange for the seven flat baskets (*picā*)



At Kvaḥre cremation ground: The mat in which the corpse of Rām Bāsukala had been wrapped had to touch the fire of the pyre shortly before ashes and apparent fragments of bones could be placed onto it, and before it is then sent floating down the river.

Photo 21st October 2003

made of local reed (*napah*) that are needed three days later for the ritual of the 7th day.

The same night the son-in-law or the brother-in-law (both are called *jicābhāju*) of the chief mourner has to inform both close and distant relatives (*bhvaḥ pāhā* and *yākā pāhā*) that the death has occurred in the household. This is not expressed directly but with the request or even order to purify themselves with oilcake (*khau*) while taking a bath on the following morning. The messenger takes care to go on his rounds late in the evening because such a message would not allow the recipient to take any food on the same day.

One set of the deceased's clothes will be washed by a married daughter on that same day and kept in a corner of the ground floor of the house. It will be put out to dry in the house and is not supposed to be exposed to the sun. Only on the 10th day, after the chief mourner and the house have undergone purification, will these clothes be either deposited on the *chvāsaḥ* or given away.

After the cremation, food is brought to the polluted house of the chief mourner by a member of the lineage. Other members join in during the mornings and evenings of the following days, but each member of the lineage does this only once.

Daśakriyā – The “ten works” of the 1st to 10th day

Upon his personal wish the chief mourner and his brothers or a near relative may decide to stay for the first ten days in a secluded chamber on the ground floor of his house. He will wear only a loincloth and cook for himself, and never touch any other person. He will leave the chamber only to circumambulate the *nhenumhā* food three times on the 7th day. He may also decide to leave the house on the 7th and the following days to offer water and milk to a *bhulā*, a small patch of land set apart for the deceased. In the evening, water, milk and fire are offered to the *pikhālākhu* in front of the threshold which signifies the realm of the deceased.

In former times three *piṇḍas* had to be made every day for the first ten days, but nowadays many find it difficult to move through the city’s lanes without touching and thus polluting other people. Therefore, the ritual “work of ten (days)” is mostly confined to the *du byēkegu* ritual on the tenth day (see below).

Lakca – Overt mourning and wailing on the 4th day

The late afternoon of the 4th day after death is reserved for mourning, for which relatives gather at the house. Relatives are all those who belong to the extended lineage, transgressing the narrow confines of the close agnates up to the third generation. Only agnates of this extended group share the same ancestor deity (*dugudyaḥ*). In the case of the death of Rabi Svāgamikha (who will be introduced in detail below), the sons of the chief mourner’s great aunt did not come because as followers of the reformed Hindu sect “Om Śānti”, they no longer attend rituals. Mourning in front and inside of the house starts

only after the female relatives, daughters and aunts have arrived with *lakcabaji*, an offering of beaten rice made to the mourners.

Men arrive at the house quietly and join a group of 50 to 100 people who squat on long mats spread out on both sides of the road by the neighbours. Even the *dumhā*, the polluted members of the household join the group. Small fires are lit on both sides adding to the serene atmosphere of the scene. There is no overt expression of sorrow but a sense of sincerity – of time and space set apart to remember the deceased who is believed to be in the vicinity of the house in the shape of a *preta*. The road or lane is not blocked. People and vehicles pass by without taking notice of those who mourn and without disturbing them. The simultaneity of everyday life and ritual mourning is striking: urban space is indeed ambiguous, being both public and intimate.

After some time all of the women except the wife and/or mother and daughters of the deceased leave the house, walking a few paces down the road. All of a sudden, as if answering a signal, there is a virtual eruption of wailing as an expression of mourning. The group moves slowly towards the house (the decisive action called *lakca vanegu*), clinging to and leaning on each other in groups of two or three. One woman acts more or less as the guide while the other turns her head away and covers her face with a shawl. All of them enter the house and join the womenfolk there in wailing. After a short period of a few minutes they leave the house again, still crying. They stop at a nearby step-well or public tap, wash their faces, stop crying and return to the house.

Less than an hour later, one of the group of men in front of the house rises, slowly followed by the others; they form groups, whisper, and thus return to daily life. The loosely connected community of mourners quietly comes to an end.

Starting on the 4th day female relatives (*bhvaḥ pāhā* as well as *yākā pāhā*), both patrilinear as well as matrilinear, come to offer food to the mourning family on three successive days. Potatoes, vegetables, beaten rice, fruits and sweets are offered in an activity called *byāḥ yēkegu*. All those who join the mourning family will have to share this food before returning home. Some of the food is set aside and offered to the *preta* on the 7th day, while the remainder is consumed by the family of the chief mourner.

Distant relatives like those who define their common descent beyond the great grandfather and who have long since established their own lineage group (*phukī*) already undertake their purification on the 4th day. They do not do so on the basis of choice. Rather they have an established relationship with the respective family because they have received a couple of betel nuts (*putugvē*) on the occasion of the marriage of a daughter or sister of the chief mourner, and they had joined in the feast of that day (*gvēsabhvay*) which brought people of the same category together. Once invited, they may refuse to accept betel nuts, but once they have accepted them they will also assume the status of *ḍumhā* (polluted persons) for four days in cases of death.

Among those who undergo purification on the 4th day are the married daughters, sisters or aunts, the *mhāymacā* who will prepare the *nhenumhā*, and her husband, the necessary helper in all rituals, the *jicābhāju*. The observation of four days of mourning is called *penhu ḍukha cvanegu*. This is the only context in which the term *ḍukha* (Nep.), “sorrow, grief”, appears.

At the end of the 4th day discussions focus on what is needed for the ritual on the 7th day.

Nhenumhā – The ritual of feeding the deceased on the 7th day

In the early morning of the 7th day the same female relatives (from families of *bhvaḥ pāhā* and *yākā pāhā* status) come to bring unprocessed food items as an extended offering dedicated to the deceased – *nhenumhā yēkegu*, the ritual of feeding the body (*mhā*) of the deceased on the 7th day (*nhenu*). These items include curds, beaten rice, sweets and small bread made of pea-flour (*kasuvā*).

The food for the ghost body of the deceased, the *preta*, has to be elaborately prepared by the *mhāymacā*, who in this context is invariably also called *nhenumhā thumhā*, literally “the cook of the food of the 7th day”. Her husband (*jicābhāju*) will act as the indispensable helper (*pāsā*) throughout the day. An important precondition, however, is that the *jicābhāju*’s parents have died and thus are already united with the ancestors. It may thus happen that while the married daughter of the chief mourner prepares the *nhenumhā* offering, his brother-in-law has to act as the helper.

The helper brings seven sods of grass (*capu*) in the early morning, from which the *mhāymacā* builds a hearth on ground floor level to cook rice. On payment of extra cash the butcher (Nāy) brings the seven small baskets which were ordered by the chief mourner immediately after the cremation. The cooked rice is distributed among the seven baskets on large leaves, *kusā lapte* – a delicate action that requires utter silence. Using hand gestures, the *mhāymacā* instructs a woman helper to add soy beans, curd, meat and bread (*vā*). Two slightly larger leaf plates are filled with a variety of food, including cooked rice, vegetables, fruits and sweets, meat, fish, milk, water, beer and liquor. One of these offerings (called *khusibvaḥ* or *kvajā*) is taken by the *mhāymacā* to the river (*khusi*) to be offered to the crows (*kva*) as the messengers of Yama, the Lord of Death. The *mhāymacā*

Opposite

The seventh day offering (nhenumhā) for the deceased. Basala Jugi spreads seven bundles of straw in front of the house of the chief mourner, Narain Kumār Svāgamikha. A large beer container with a ritual plate bearing seven cups with milk is placed on the guardian stone of the thresh-old. Seven baskets with cooked rice can be seen to the left, various food offerings to the right.

Photo 15th July 2003



is followed by the *jicābhāju*, who casts the seven sods of grass into the river.

The second leaf plate, *pākhājā*, is placed below the eaves (*pākhā*) of the house before midnight, for it is believed that the *preta* constantly roams around the house. Since the *pikhālākhu* stone guards the threshold of the house, the *preta* can only reach the space below the eaves.

Once all the food is prepared, the chief mourner enters the room, wearing the two cotton strips (*nāḥkāpaḥ*) around his waist and head. While making a declaration of ritual intent (*saṃkalpa*) he offers water, rice and *kuśa* grass to the two large plates, according to the instructions given by a Brahmin who has just come for that specific purpose. Finally, the chief mourner circumambulates the entire arrangement three times and performs basic worship with the usual offerings while pouring water (*gaṅgājāl*).

After the chief mourner has fulfilled his ritual duty, the Juginī is called, who places seven bundles of straw in front of the house on which to place the food. She arranges the latter on both sides of a large clay pot, the *nhenumhā kvācā*, which is used only once for this specific purpose. To the right she places the seven baskets with cooked rice, on her left ten plates with pumpkin, spinach, beans, potatoes, cucumber, peas, soy beans, buffalo meat, fish, egg, milk, water, beer, liquor, banana, mango, pomegranate and betel nuts. Ginger is offered but not tomato, onion or aubergine.

An earthenware pot filled with beer (albeit represented symbolically by just the ingredients, a mixture of water and some popped rice) is placed on the *pikhālākhu*, the guardian of the threshold which the *preta* is unable to cross. On top of this is placed a copper vessel, *kvālā*, with beaten rice, seven dishes of milk, a handful of biscuits (*svāri*), and a nominal gift of eight rupees. A leaf plate on which the Juginī first places the contents of

the first basket is set in front of the pot. She then takes a lump of rice and bread from the remaining six baskets. On top of this she then adds parts of all the food items dedicated to the deceased. Then while performing a *cakrapūjā*, the Juginī places a sevenfold cotton thread around the copper vessel, and offers *śivaśvā* leaves and incense. *Dakṣiṇā* is placed between the upper vessel and the lower pot and beneath the lower pot in the form of banknotes. She marks the lower pot and the upper vessel with a trident in vermilion, and sprinkles the beer of the lower pot across the offerings in the upper vessel. According to Basala Jugi, the straw ring (*pecā*) below the earthenware pot represents the snake king (*nāgarāja*), the pot itself Bhairavnāth (since it is filled with yeast, rice and water – the ingredients of beer), and the plate on top Śiva. Complaining that the *nhenumhā* offering is no longer prepared as elaborately it used to be, she explains that “in the old days” 108 varieties of flowers had to accompany the food offering.

The moment the Juginī completes the performance, she gathers whatever she considers usable into a basket: salt, turmeric, potatoes, vegetables, sweets, meat, fish and even the contents of the six small baskets with cooked rice, although in the case of all other *jugibvāḥ* (offerings to the ancestors to be collected by Jugi) she refuses to accept cooked rice. At times large bundles of clothes from the deceased are given to the Juginī, who appears with a woman assistant who helps carry the load.

In a final act the Juginī has to wash all the copper, brass or plastic plates and pots that were used for cooking and the offering. After finishing, the *mhāymācā* and other women of the household repeat the act of cleaning. On returning home, the Juginī performs a purificatory ritual at the threshold of her house (*lukhāpūjā*) before going inside with the food that was dedicated to the deceased.

Opposite
The seventh day offering (*nhenumhā*) for the deceased. Basala Jugi performs the *cakrapūjā* for the deceased, Rabi Svāgamikha. The container and the plate on top are marked with a trident symbol in vermilion.

Photo 15th July 2003



The plate dedicated to the *preta* and the seven dishes with milk are left at the site for a dog, also considered to be a messenger of the Lord of Death. If no dog is to be seen, somebody must go and find one. A dog will even be carried to the site because it is believed that the spirit of the deceased takes the form of a dog in this moment.

It is seen as a good sign if the dog at the *pikhālākhu* and the crow at the river take yoghurt first, and if the dog first eats the deceased's favorite food the bereaved feel happy and satisfied that the deceased has accepted the offering.

Until recently the *nhenumhā kvācā* was always taken home by the Juginī. This is no longer done since the shape of the earthenware pot alone would bear witness to a ritual activity that allegedly has been given up. Meat and sweets, however, and additional money – above all the traditional, nominal gift (*ḍakṣiṇā*) – are attractive enough for poor families to engage in this ritual on condition they remain unrecognised. Nowadays the pot, the seven bundles of straw and all the other earthenware dishes are simply dumped at a nearby rubbish tip.

At night all of the lineage members are invited for a feast that is prepared by the *mhāy-macā*. She has first to offer food to the chief mourner and his wife, and then to all the lineage members and their wives. Until recently it was absolutely mandatory to join this feast. But with the diversification of lifestyles, in which one lineage member serves in the Gulf, another in an office in Kathmandu and his wife is somehow “busy” or even reluctant to join such a feast because she adheres to a modern Hindu sect, it is almost impossible to have everybody present. The chief mourner's family shows mild embarrassment and keeps asking why some member or other has not turned up. Within the next decade or two the scene will change considerably. For an immobile society, rules of attendance were easy

to follow. A changing world brings about mobility which breaks the bonds of the lineage. This mechanism is already inherent in the atomisation of the lineage. It splits up as soon as matrimonial prescriptions are overruled by a generation that meets marriage partners at the university or at work.

Late in the night of the 7th day new clothes have to be sewn for the chief mourner. This can only be done by a person whose parents are already united with the ancestors.

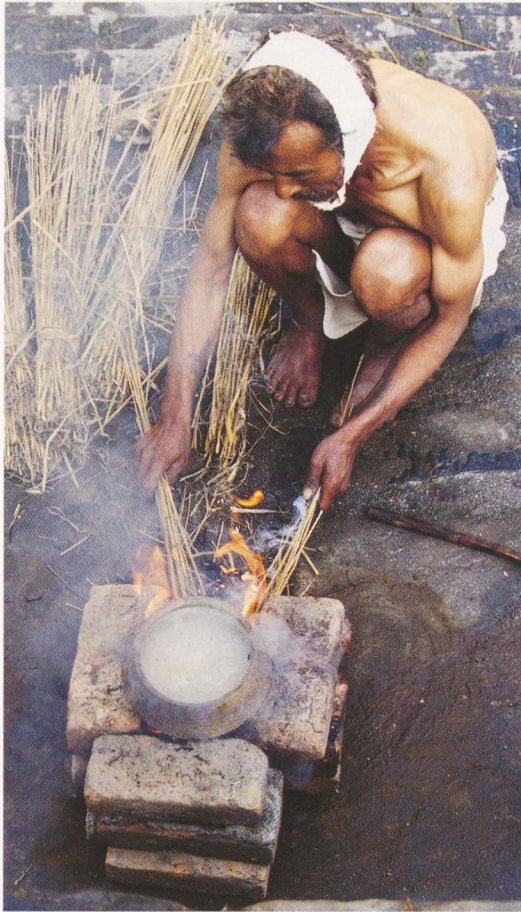
Du byēkegu – Removal of death pollution on the 10th day

Range of participants

All male members (who have passed the initiatory rites) of the lineage, close agnates up to the third generation, have to undergo the process of purification on the 10th day. Beyond the narrow confines of the lineage, others may join who are distant relatives, such as descendants of the great grandfather's brothers. In theory they belong to the same funeral association and the same ancestor deity.

Quite often, even close agnates will have established their own lineage as a result of quarrels, or have moved to Kathmandu and started to deal with cremation as a more technical event. It may sound contradictory, but the nuclear family as a lineage group has not become a rare exception. As a result, the number of people appearing on the 10th day for the purificatory ritual cannot be anticipated. A certain pressure may exist among the neighbours to appear, but it is by no means compulsory. All those who join the purificatory ritual are *ḍumhā*, representing “bodies” (*mhā*) polluted by death. Distant relatives and matrilineal male descendants have already terminated their period of pollution by being shaved on the fourth day (*penhu ḍukha cva-negu*, lit. “to express grief on the 4th day”).

Purificatory rituals on the
10th day (*du byēkegu*):
Āśa Bahādur Sītikhu from
Cvāchē prepares rice at
Kālīghāṭ to make three times
ten sacrificial balls, *piṇḍas*.
Photo 8th May 2003



The making of *piṇḍas*

The first ritual sequence involves a Bhā, a member of a sub-caste of funerary priests. He moulds a *liṅga* from black clay and winds *kuśa* grass around it. Quite often hard grey clay (*pācā*) is used – carving the *liṅga* with a knife. He also marks three circles on the top and on the two sides of the *liṅga* with white wheat flour, and three more in front of him.

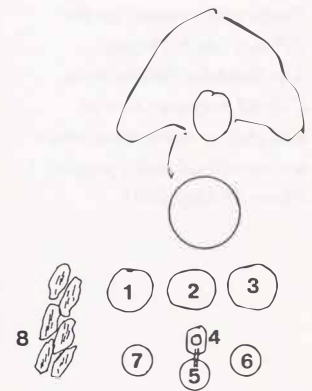
In the meantime the chief mourner cooks rice on a makeshift hearth in an unpolluted, recently fired earthenware pot. He wears the two strips of cotton (*nāḥkāpaḥ*) in which the *preta* is supposed to have taken refuge around his waist and head. The moment the rice is cooked, the pot is taken to the side and the rice emptied onto the ritual copper plate

(*kvalā*). One of the bricks of the hearth has to be moved at once as a signal of its deconstruction.

The chief mourner take the rice and prepares three times ten *piṇḍas* which constitute the body of the *preta*. On top of each *piṇḍa* he places a larger lump which is called “the remainder” (*ses*, Skt. *śeṣa*) – a dedication to earlier generations. As mentioned earlier, it is said that in older times three *piṇḍas* had to be made every day, but nowadays the chief mourner finds it difficult to move through the city’s lanes without touching and thus polluting other people. Therefore, the ritual “work of ten (days)” (*daśakriyā*) is confined to one single day.

The Bhā completes his work by sprinkling black sesame (*hāku hāmvaḥ*) over the rice balls. Now the chief mourner turns to the *liṅga*, which represents Hātakeśvara, the Lord of Vitala, one of the seven nether regions (Skt. *pātāla*). This is a form of Śiva who guides the deceased through the nether-world where its spirit will unite with the *pitṛ*, the departed’s ancestors. Small clay dishes containing cow milk (*duru*) and water (*jal*) with *kuśa* grass on top are placed inside the three circles marked above and beside the *liṅga*. The *kuśa* grass connects the top dish of water (or water mixed with milk) with the *liṅga* in such a way that it is supposed to cool it, as the *preta* permanently suffers from the heat caused by the cremation. The grass connection is called *yamadhārā*, the water spout of Yama, the Lord of Death. Obviously the spirit of the deceased appears as *preta* in a number of forms: it resides in the *liṅga*, in the cotton strip, in the dog and in the crow.

The Brahmanical house priest now appears at the embankment of the river to instruct his client, the chief mourner. He follows the instructions of the *Pretakriyāpaddhati*, written down in a notebook which he carries along. When at home the Brahmin should only study these instructions if and when he him-



Purificatory rituals on the 10th day (*du byēkegu*):

The chief mourner places in front of him or to his right a copper plate with three times ten sacrificial balls (0), and spreads out three large leaves (*kusā lapte*) on which the balls are dedicated to the crow (1), the dog (2) and the deceased (3). Placed at the centre of the arrangement is the *Hāṭakeśvara liṅga* (4), framed by clay cups with milk (6) and water (7); the cup on top (5) is filled with water and connected with the *liṅga* by *kuśa* grass. Placed to his right are four small leaf plates with rice and small sweet breads, to be offered to the three piles of *piṇḍa* and the *liṅga*.

self is a *dumhā*. In that case he will put his Sacred Thread that identifies him as twice-born across his right ear – which symbolizes the ocean.

While placing the three large leaves (*kusā lapte*) upside down onto the three designated circles, they are identified as being dedicated to “grandfather” on the left, to “great-grandfather” on the right, and to “father” in the middle. The first *pūjā* is done using a mixture of barley, black sesame and *kuśa* grass. The *liṅga* receives offerings of milk, water, and a strip of cotton which stands for clothes. When the sacrificial balls are finally placed on the large leaves, the set of ten on the left is dedicated to the crow (*kvabali*), those to the right

to the dog (*svānabali*), and those in the centre to the spirit of the deceased (*pretabali*).

In an exceptional case it was observed that the Brahmin advised his client to prepare a single large *piṇḍa* from the remaining rice, representing the first of the second set of 16 *piṇḍas*, which are usually prepared on the 11th day. The client followed the instructions but asked the Brahmin nevertheless to turn up the following day to guide the making of the “real” *piṇḍa* of the 11th day.

Three kinds of leaves are placed on their tops: *talāy*, *bhyalāy* and *sinasvā* (*Buddleja asiatica*). The *liṅga* as well as the three lots of balls finally receive a special leaf plate of food with beaten rice, peas and tiny

Satya Narain Hyāju from Jaukhel prepares the ritual arena at Kālīghāṭ after three times ten sacrificial balls have been shaped and put on a copper plate before being placed on three large leaves.
Photo 22nd December 2003

sweet bread (*māricā*). These items of food have been prepared by the *mhāymacā* and are brought to the river by her husband, the *jicābhāju*.

Finally the chief mourner removes the *nāḥkāpaḥ* strips from his body and puts a mixture of barley and black sesame (*hāmvaḥ-techva*) into the right end of the one he wears around his head. He worships it with offerings of barley, black sesame, *kuśā* grass and vermilion, dips it into the two plates of milk and water, and libates the *piṇḍas* and the *liṅga* which is addressed by the general term *mahādyah*.

The chief mourner now puts the sacrificial balls in three separate lots on the copper plate and casts them into the river: the *kva-bali* is placed on the opposite side, then the *svānabali* on this side of the river, and finally the *pretabali* and all the other offerings also on this side after the *liṅga* has been placed on the steps adjoining the embankment. Then he places the two cotton strips on the copper plate or throws them into the river to be immediately recovered by the Bhā or unpolluted male helper, the *jicābhāju*. In “old times” this would have been the obligation of a member of the sub-caste of Pasi, washermen who until two generations ago were engaged as purity specialists. The Pasi would also have had to appear at the chief mourner’s house to wash the entire family’s clothes as part of the effort to purify the house. At that time the Pasi had to do this for a nominal gift, a *dakṣiṇā* of two *paisā*. As in so many other cases where ritual obligations have been discontinued, the *jicābhāju* has taken over these tasks. He recovers the cotton strips, places them on the copper plate and takes them home.

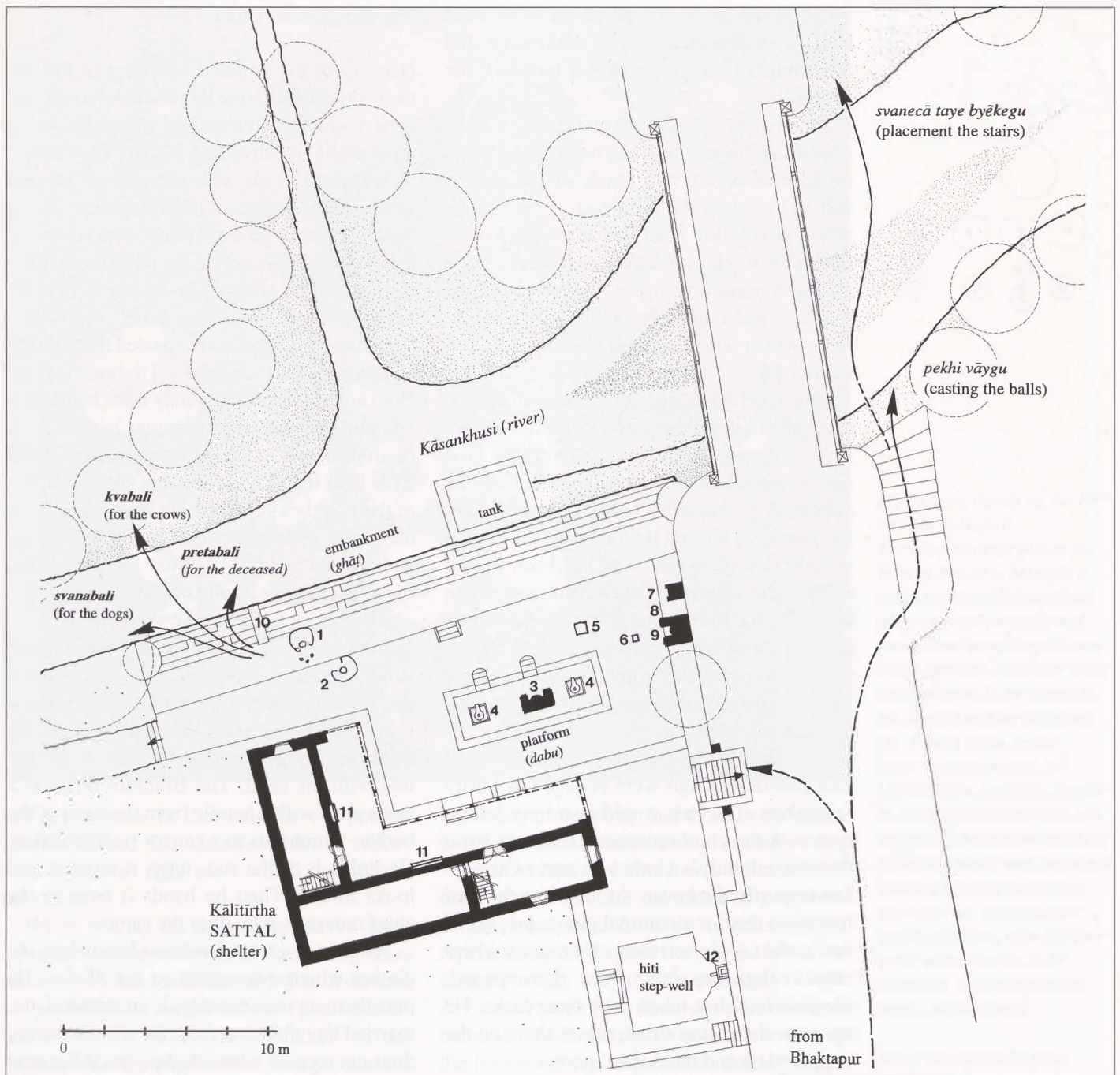
The strip from around the head will be brought to the Bhā late at night, while the one from the waist is stored away, ready to be offered to the Brahmin after the *preta* has turned into a *pitr* on the occasion of the *sapindikarāṇa* ritual on the 45th day (*latyā*).

The purificatory ritual

Now all of the polluted members of the lineage, the *dumhā*, have their heads shaved, and their toenails symbolically pared by being touched by the attending barber. They smear their shaven heads with particles of oil cake (*khau*) before taking a purifying bath. In addition, a plate with dried myrobalan and black sesame (*āmvaḥ-hāmvaḥ*) is placed on the river bank. Everybody touches the seeds, spreads them on their heads and takes a symbolic bath – an exercise that is repeated three times. Both ingredients are believed to free the body from any impurities that may have had a negative effect. The chief mourner is the last to be shaved, and in the meantime all the others have held their hands above a straw fire. All of their clothes get sprinkled with water; even the barber goes to the river, sprinkles himself and takes a handful of water to sprinkle his tools in a gesture of purification.

At the conclusion of the ritual on the river embankment the chief mourner takes water from a copper container, circumambulates the Brahmin three times, takes fresh *dūrvā* grass, sprinkles water onto the feet of the Brahmin using this grass, and touches his feet with his head. The Brahmin receives a brass plate with a handle from the hand of the barber, which acts as a mirror (*javālānhāykā*). He holds it to the sun, turns it around, and looks into it. Then he hands it over to the chief mourner, who does the same.

As a final act the Brahmin hands him the clothes which were made on the 7th day. He puts them on immediately. If an initiated, unmarried daughter has died, the chief mourner does not receive white clothes, but if his wife has died he will wear a white cap. He should, however, have washed his clothes on the ninth day and appear in fresh attire. Often the chief mourner forgets to adhere to the proper conduct. In that case the priest admonishes him and beats him symbolically with a stick.



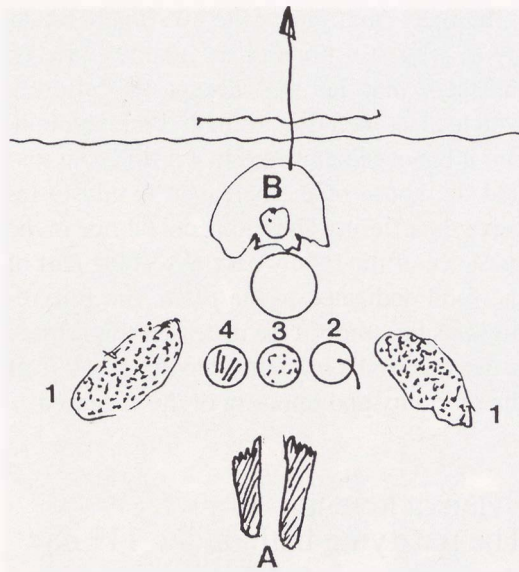
Kālighāṭ at Kāsankhusi, one of the seven places for casting the sacrificial balls and performing the 10th day purificatory rituals:
 1 position of the chief mourner

2 position of the officiating priest
 3 Viṣṇu/Yamunā
 4 śivaliṅga
 5 Viṣṇupādukā
 6 Hanumān

7 Gaṇeśa
 8 śālagrāma
 9 Sitā/Rām
 10 Brahmanāla
 11 inscriptions
 12 Umāmaheśvara

The inscriptions date to 1925 and 1946 AD, and list land donations whose revenue is meant to cover the expenses of regular recitations, of tobacco, of oil for lamps, as well as of cleaning and repairing the embankment and the building.

Purificatory rituals on the 10th day (*du byēkegu*): Purification of the chief mourner (A) by the mistress of the house (B) upon his return from the purificatory ritual at the river embankment. To pacify and ward off the deceased, she spreads husk (1) on both sides, while three earthen cups with light (2 = *mātā*), cotton seeds (3 = *kapāyṣu*) and fire from charcoal (4 = *mi*) are placed in front of him. The smoke produced is supposed to effectively obscure the entrance of the house and make it invisible for the deceased.



Apart from the chief mourner, his brothers are also handed new white clothes. All the other *dumhā* likewise use the mirror to achieve complete purification. Throughout the previous ten days all of the mirrors have been veiled in their houses. A polluted individual should avoid looking into the mirror.

After being purified on the 10th day, all of the lineage members are reintegrated into society after looking into the mirror.

The symbolism of the mirror prompts a number of thoughts. Remarkably, the priest has the power to handle it, but the instrument itself seems to be pollutant and is thus stored away by the barber. Since his knives remove polluted elements of the body, hair and nails, so the mirror seems to absorb pollution accumulated by the organs of perception – sight, taste and hearing. The mirror reflects the purificatory power of the sun and reinstates the totality of the person.

The used clothes are given to the barber. Nowadays the barber refuses to accept polluted clothes and demands cash as compensation.

The return to the chief mourner's house

Upon his return the chief mourner is welcomed by the mistress of the household, the *nakhī*. Wailing in a ritualized way to express her sorrow, she pours water onto his feet. He stands on the guardian stone in front of the house (*pikhālākhu*) while the mistress places husk on either side of it to pacify and ward off any evil spirits in his company. To this she adds three small earthenware cups containing fire, cotton and charcoal as another means of warding off evil spirits. The knife that had been placed on the corpse prior to cremation to prevent the deceased from rising up is purified in the flames. Finally, the chief mourner takes two pitchers in his hands and enters the house while pouring water to both sides.

Svanecā taye byēkegu – The trap for the deceased on the 10th day

A particular ritual on the evening of the 10th day, *Svanecā ta vanegu* or “the placement of stairs”, is designed to hurt the hungry deceased, the *preta*. A kind of trap is constructed in which the spirit of the deceased is inevitably caught. This experience should teach the spirit a painful lesson so that it will not try to return to the realm of the living.

A basket normally used to sieve beer (*thvāpicā*) is filled with husks from beaten rice (*bajimā*), the favourite food of ghosts. A long needle without an eye (*mulu*) is hidden among the husks in order to hurt the *preta*.

The *preta* is essentially curious, but in this situation its curiosity is further aroused by three small sacks of which two contain a mixture of wheat flour, husked rice and beaten rice, the favourite food of *pretas*. The third one contains *khalu* (Skt. *kirātatikta*, *Agathes chirayta*), an extremely bitter herb that is usually prescribed in cases of diabetes or ma-

laria. Also prepared for this purpose are: five small sticks of a local variety of reed (*napah*), four of which filled with water and cow milk, and the fifth filled with the bitter herb and a sharp needle. In order to satisfy his curiosity, the *preta* climbs a tiny ladder prepared from the same reed; this treacherous ladder has only six rungs, whereas the *preta* is absolutely used to the seven-runged ladders found in every Newar household. Attracted by the promising reed containers and the sacks, the spirit of the deceased climbs the ladder and stepping up for the seventh rung inevitably falls into the basket and is seriously hurt by the hidden needle.

In the twilight of the evening the *jicābhāju*, who acts again as a helper, lights a lamp in the basket and carries it to the riverbank, the entire set-up hidden behind a shawl in order to avoid the attention of other people. The chief mourner and other members of the lineage follow him as he crosses the river. A forked twig with the basket on top is rammed into the earth and left there. The mourners offer ritual rice (*akṣata*) to the basket and return across the river. From the far side *akṣata* is offered once again.

Ekādasīcā bvaṃyegu – Offering food to the deceased on the 11th day

Late in the evening of the 10th day a plate of cooked food with eleven cups containing milk, beer and spirits, cooked food as well as offerings of cloth (called the *ekādasīcā*, lit. The Little Eleventh) is placed in a remote corner of the house as an offering to the *preta*, who is still believed to be haunting the house and its neighbourhood in search for food. Early in the morning of the 11th day, before the sun rises, the plate is taken to the river by an unpolluted female relative (preferably the *mhāyamacā*) and discarded without crossing the river.

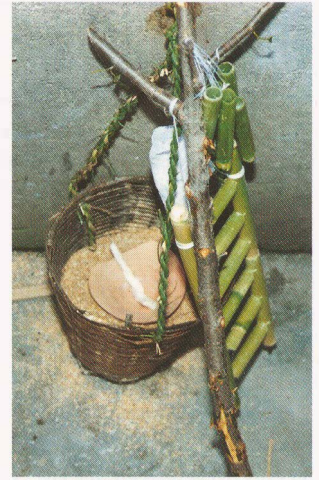
In many cases one of the two Bhā in Bhaktapur, who still practice as funerary priests, indicates that he will accept the offering which also includes a small remuneration. But it is not remembered that a Bhā ever visited the house of the bereaved family to receive the offering and took cooked rice in the presence of the family³. By absorbing part of the food dedicated to the *preta*, the Bhā represents the spirit of the deceased. He is more or less chased away after having taken over the mortality and impurity of the deceased.

Svamva luyegu – The purifying bath on the 11th day

Early in the morning of the 11th day all of the polluted lineage members (*dumhā*) and the *jicābhāju* arrive at one of the seven places of Bhaktapur set aside for purificatory rituals. The chief mourner is guided by his Brahmanical or Buddhist house priest as he produces a single *piṇḍa* made of wheat flour. He places it on the ritual copper plate (*kvalā*), goes down to the river and casts it away. To conclude, all of the people attending take a purifying bath (*mva luyegu*). The entire rite takes no more than 45 minutes.

The *jicābhāju* fills a brass container (*nāḥbatāḥ*) with water and places it before the priest, who mixes it with milk and sprinkles the chief mourner and all the other *dumhā* using sprigs of green *dūrvā* grass. The chief mourner sprinkles water along the entire route back to his home. Likewise the entire house is purified and the still marginally polluted lineage members perform the same purificatory rite in their own homes. They have received for this purpose a small container of purifying water from the priest.

The food on this day is still prepared by the married daughters, who return to their maternal home (*thaḥchē*, Nep. *maiti ghar*) to fulfil this obligation.



Purificatory rituals on the 10th day (*du byēkegu*):

The day's rituals are concluded by setting up a treacherous ladder to expel the spirit of the deceased. A beer sieve filled with husk and a hidden needle is suspended from a forked twig. Four tiny cotton bags and five bamboo sticks contain good and bad food and drinks to annoy the deceased.

Photo 18th July 2002

³ Toffin reports that the food includes a piece of the skull of the deceased, *kāṭṭo*. According to him, this offering is called *kāṭṭo nakegu* or *pret śayyā*, the Bhā himself is known by the nickname *khappar* (Toffin 1987: 228-229). Neither this nickname nor the offering of *kāṭṭo* is remembered in Bhaktapur.

Purificatory rituals on the 12th day (*lhā panegu*) – exposing the hands to a sacred fire:
Jagat Lakṣmī Svāgamikha, the grandmother of the deceased (*Rabi*) and acting mistress of the household, exposes her hands to the fire in a final act of purification.
 Photo 20th July 2002



Lhā panegu – Exposing ones hands to the purifying fire on the 12th day

On the morning of the 12th day another purificatory ritual is performed in the house of the chief mourner. A *Tinī* (also called *Śivācārya* or *Ghāsuācāju*, literally the “master of the fire”) is called in, “a kind of Brahmin” (Levy 1990: 358) whose status within the hierarchy of Bhaktapur’s stratified society is considered considerably lower than that of a genuine Brahmin. A true Brahmin would argue that the purificatory character of such a ritual would affect their status and virtually degrade them. In other Newar cities the fire ritual is performed by *Karmācārya*. As only one *Tinī* continues to offer his services in Bhaktapur, non-Newar Brahmins or the son-in-law of the chief mourner (the *jicābhāju*) now usually perform this ritual.

An alternative term for this ritual, *suddha vākegu*, is widely used, and expresses the return to the state of purity (Skt. *śuddha*).

The fire is usually set between two unfired bricks. The acting priest continuously adds unhusked rice (*vā*), barley (*techva*), rice (*svāvā*, *oryza sativa*), mustard and rape seeds (*ikā-pakā*), black lentils (*māy*), lentils (*mu*), peas (*kegu*), soy beans (*musyā*), chick peas (*canā*), white beans (*bhuti*) and finally a mixture of purified butter and honey (*gyaḥ-kasti*). The priest places himself on the axis of the arrangement, opposite the *kalaśa*, a spouted vessel containing water mixed with cow milk, curd and honey. Arranged to his right are five offerings, the *pañcabali* which represent the Five Bhairavas. On the same side is the inevitable ritual lamp (*sukumḍā*) with Gaṇeśa who presides over the ritual, and a brass vessel with water covered by flowers (*daphvasvā*). Placed to his left are offerings to Gaṇeśa, Kumār and Bhairava and a plate of rice (*svagāki*) that is used for *akṣata* and *ṭikā*. The twin arrangement of mirror and vermilion container is also found on that side. To his left are the offerings made to the priest:

one container with unhusked rice and four plates with beaten rice and wheat flour.

Purificatory gestures prior to exposing the hands to the fire include taking water from the *kalaśa* and butter-honey three times with the right hand, which is used to touch the head. Finally a yellow mark (*mhāsusinhaḥ*) is put on the forehead and for the first time after the twelve days of mourning a mark in red (*hyāūsinhaḥ*). This mark precludes taking the usual auspicious *samay* food, which includes egg and fish. This is first offered to the fire and then distributed among all those who have been polluted by the death. From now on the consumption of meat, eggs, onions and garlic is permitted.

The eldest woman of the household is the last to undergo purification. She waves a plate and the knife that had been placed upon the corpse across the fire. Finally she waves her palms through the fire and presents *da-kṣiṇā* to the priest.

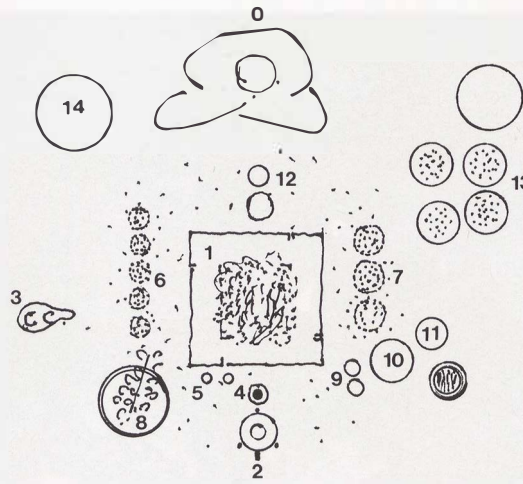
The *jicābhāju* serves once again as the person who clears the site. He collects the unbaked bricks into the brass vessel, adds the leftovers from the ground, carries it all to the river and discards everything from the bridge across the Hanumante while facing west.

Latyā – The union with the ancestors on the 45th day

The ritual of the union of the deceased with the ancestors, *sapiṇḍīkaraṇa*, is dealt with extensively in the second part of the present book.

Khulā and Dākilā – Rituals after six and twelve months

The spirit of the deceased goes on a one-year long journey through the netherworld to reach the Lord of Death for final judgment.



On 15 occasions cooling water is offered to the spirit as well as gifts such as umbrellas, shoes, sticks and clothes to facilitate the journey. For a full ritual the house priest will have to come to the house of the chief mourner to receive the offerings of water. The two first offerings on the 30th and 45th day are usually performed as part of the *sapiṇḍīkaraṇa* ritual of the 45th day. After six months and after twelve months sacrificial balls are prepared and dedicated to the father, grandfather and great-grandfather, similar to the offering made in the course of a regular *śrāddha*. The way all the relatives are involved in procuring the foodstuffs used to make the sacrificial balls, as well as the offerings to the crows and the Jugi, follows the scheme observed and described for the occasion of *latyā*.

The offering on the occasion of *khulā* involves a tiny representation of a boat, no more than three centimetres long and worked in silver, with two small paddles made of gold. The priest puts the boat and paddles in a large receptacle filled with water. This offering is meant to support the deceased while crossing the fetid river *Vaitaraṇī* in order to reach *Yama's* realm. Boat and paddles do not have to be ordered in advance because the local goldsmith will always have a stock

Purificatory rituals on the 12th day (lhā panegu) – exposing the hands to a sacred fire:

The officiating para-priest, a Tinī, places himself (1) on the axis of the fire, facing north. Arranged on both sides of the fire are offerings and ritual instruments:

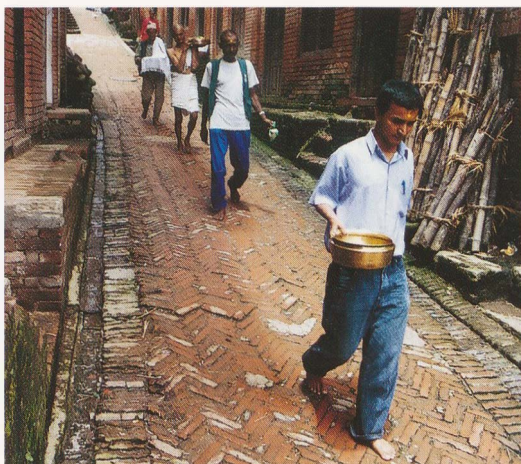
- 2 water pot (*kalaśa*)
- 3 oil lamp (*sukunḍā*)
- 4 butter and honey (*ghyaḥ-kasti*)
- 5 yellow paste and vermilion
- 6 five kinds of offerings (*pañcabali*)
- 7 three offerings for *Gaṇeśa Kumār* and *Bhairava*
- 8 container with water and *daphaḥsvā*-flower
- 9 container with vermilion and mirror
- 10 unbroken ritual rice
- 11 sweets
- 12 *arghyapatra*
- 13 food offerings for the officiating priest
- 14 basket with *samaybaji*, which the priest hands out to all the participants

Khulā, dākilā and nyedātithi – the making of sacrificial balls after 6 months, 12 months and 24 months:

The procession to the river embankment is headed by a married male member from the matrilineage with the first sacrificial ball (*vikalapiṇḍa*, see below).

Then follows a member of the lineage with *pūjā* material, the chief mourner with the sacrificial balls representing three generations, and brought up at the rear by the married sister or her husband carrying the food plate (*khusibvaḥ*) offered to the river.

Photo 21st July 2002, Bikhu Bahādur Suvāl performing the ritual for his deceased father on the occasion of *khulā*.



of them. The offerings to the dead are in fact constantly rotated. Since the priest represents the deceased, all the offerings are brought to his house. Food items will be consumed by his family, boat and paddle returned to the goldsmith against a small remuneration, while other items like clogs and umbrellas are deemed worthless and thus discarded.

By way of completion of the rituals, the chief mourner worships those nephews (*bēcā-pūjā*) who are the sons of his sisters, and who are called the “living ancestors” (*māmhā pitṛ*) because they have left the lineage. For the sister’s sons he acts in the meaningful role of *pāju*. He places a yellow mark on their foreheads, hands over a bank note as *dakṣiṇā* and

scatters unbroken ritual rice. The involvement of the nephews can be understood as a symbolic action addressing those of the following generation who do not belong to the lineage of the deceased. Their existence ensures that the daughters of the deceased will one day join the wider community of ancestors.

The procession to the river in order to cast away the sacrificial balls (*pekhi vāygu*) follows the scheme described in the chapter devoted to the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* ritual. Ideally, a nephew whose parents have already joined the ancestors heads the procession with the *bikalapiṇḍa*, a sacrificial ball dedicated to the unknown deceased, followed by the chief mourner with the three *piṇḍas* and the *jicā-bhāju* carrying the plate with food dedicated to the crows. At the river the chief mourner worships a *śivaliṅga* with water, flowers, unbroken rice and fruits.

The day is completed by a feast, attended by those who brought the raw material for making the *piṇḍas*. One plate is kept aside as an offering to the deceased (*kalāḥbvaḥ*) and in the end the leftovers of the close agnates (exclusively members of the *phukī* of the deceased) and the food from the *pūjā*-plate are added and deposited on the *chvāsah*-stone by the mistress of the household in an act called *kalāḥ vāygu*.

After twelve months (*dākilā*), the final offering of *piṇḍas* is made using three lumps of dough. The first lump is used to make the *bikalapiṇḍa*, the second to make the *piṇḍa* dedicated to the deceased father, and the third to make the *piṇḍas* dedicated to the grandfather and great-grandfather, while the remainder is used for three unshaped lumps which demarcate the arena of sacrificial balls in the form of a triangle. The scheduled gifts include clothes and two symbolic beds (*śayyadāna*). It is said that the second bed is offered with the wish to make up for any shortcomings that might have occurred in course of the year. The chief mourner hands over a special



Dākilā – the making of sacrificial balls after 12 months: on completing the period of pollution, the chief mourner receives new clothes and a colourful cap from the priest. Photo 27th December 2002, Bikhu Bahādur Suvāl performing the ritual for his deceased father Jagat Bahādur.

daḥṣiṇā representing the symbolic offering of a cow (*godāna*).

To complete the ritual, the priest marks the forehead of the chief mourner with yellow paste using his little finger. Then he offers – for the first time in 12 months – curds and *pan* (betel quid with spices). The chief mourner tastes a bit before offering it to the *piṇḍas*. Not until the following day will he consume the curds. To testify to the end of the mourning period, the priest hands over a colourful cap and new clothes, which the chief mourner only puts on after having cast the sacrificial balls into the river. The clothes are brought from the house of the wife of the chief mourner. In case he is unmarried,

it comes from the house of his mother's brother, the *pāju*.

In case the ritual is performed for a son, a coloured cap had already been handed over on the completion of the *sapīṇḍīkaraṇa* ritual on the 45th day, which marks the union of the deceased with his ancestors. The obvious contradiction between the union with the ancestors and the journey the deceased still has to undertake does not disturb the participants in the ritual. The offerings which conclude the one-year period of mourning and pollution seem to confirm the previously achieved union. The first cap is never used but treated like a symbol, a message reserved for the ancestors.

Cikã taygu – The offering of oil on the 361st day

Some mustard oil, one *pati* of beaten rice (*baji*) and a certain number of green peas (*kasu*) have to be offered to the household of the chief mourner by those households which have been classified as *bhvaḥ pāhā*. Fourteen peas are offered if the departed was an initiated family member, but only twelve peas if the departed was an uninitiated child.

In addition they bring cooked food like spinach, vegetables, fermented vegetable (*sike*), pease pudding (*kāgasa*), curd, rice flour (*kva*), beer (*thvā*) and mustard oil (*tu cikā*). It is mandatory to avoid using red pepper for this food.

The person who had prepared the food for the deceased on the 7th day, the *nhenumhā thuihmā*, receives the food offerings and puts a little of each item to one side to be stored away for the deceased who has successfully joined the realm of the ancestors. She then presents the oil to everybody with her right hand: first to the chief mourner, the *mitamhā*, then to his wife (or mother), who had earlier acted as *chvāsaḥvāimhā* and taken the three unfired bricks to the *chvāsaḥ* stone before the corpse was carried off to the cremation ground. Then oil is offered to the members of the lineage, and to all those of the *bhvaḥ pāhā* who had expressed their solidarity by allowing themselves to be shaved on the 10th day after death. Those who had been polluted by the death had not taken oil for the entire year. The only exception to this is that the *mitamhā* and the *chvāsaḥvāimhā* might have been offered oil by the officiating house priest on the 12th or 45th day.

As soon as the oil has been handed out and smeared into the hair, the female members of the household begin wailing for the last time. A female member of the lineage then comes with a plate offering water for them to wash their faces. Only then will the *nhenumhā*

thuihmā herself receive oil from her husband, the *jicābhāju*.

After offering the oil, food is presented first to the chief mourner, then to his wife, and finally to the *mhāymacā*.

As a powerful symbol of the completion of the one-year-long period of mourning and pollution, the chief mourner is now allowed to put vermilion on his forehead.

The following morning, the *mhāymhacā* carries the food put aside for the ancestors to the house of the Jugi. This is the only occasion when the Jugi (or his wife) does not come to collect the offering for the ancestor, but receives it at the threshold of his house.

Nyedātithi – Death ritual after twenty-four months

The final death ritual is enacted after twenty-four months. Following the sequence described for *khulā* and *ākilā*, three sacrificial balls are dedicated to the father of the chief mourner, his grandfather and great-grandfather. The day concludes with a feast in which distant and close relatives, all *bhvaḥ pāhā* and *yākā pāhā*, join in.

Soraśrāddha – The sixteen-days death ritual following full moon in September

The dark half of the moon in September/October is called *pitṛpakṣa* because these sixteen days are reserved for the performance of death rituals. The seventh and ninth days are considered auspicious, but it is the day of the new moon (*aūsi*) that sets the stage for more than one thousand such rituals in Bhaktapur. In case the lineage has been polluted by a death, the ritual has to be postponed and scheduled for any other day before worshipping the lineage deity (*ḍugudyaḥpūjā*) in May.

Soraśrāddha, the death ritual performed by the head (*nāyah*) of the lineage (*phukī*) within a period of sixteen days following full moon in September, not only addresses the ancestors up to three generations, but all forefathers (*pitaraḥ*), half-divine forefathers (*viśvedevāḥ*), friends, neighbours, and even kings and prominent figures of society. Many people keep lists in order not to forget an ancestor or a friend. In Bhaktapur, miniature *piṇḍas* are dedicated to the famous king of the early 18th century, Bhūpatindra Malla and his wife Viśvalakṣmī, and recently also to King Birendra Bir Bikram Śaha and his wife Aiśvarya.

The elder of the close agnates up to three generations (the *phukī*) has to perform the ritual in the house of the annual caretaker (*pālāḥ*), who keeps a representation of the lineage deity there.

Offerings for preparing the sacrificial balls are brought by the wives of all close agnates. The chief mourner's close female relatives give constant help in kneading the dough and preparing up to 150 *piṇḍas*.

Members of Buddhist sub-castes first shape a *caitya* from the first lump of dough. This is a miniature version of a Buddhist votive structure which represents the Buddha and his teachings. The second lump is used to make the *bikalapiṇḍa*, which is often cast directly into the river since most *soraśrāddhas* are performed on an embankment. There follow six large *piṇḍas* for the males and females of the last three generations, and usually more than one hundred miniature *piṇḍas* for relatives and friends.

In the case of Narain Kumār Svāgamikha (the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* ritual for his son Rabi is described in detail in the following chapter), who performed the *soraśrāddha* on 26th September 2003 at Maṅgaltīrtha, the following sequence was observed: the first *piṇḍa* was dedicated to his father, the second to his grandfather, the third to his great-grandfather,

the fourth to his grandmother (as his mother was still acting as the mistress of the household), and the fifth to his great-grandmother. The six slightly smaller *piṇḍas* were made for the male and female members of the last three generations on his mother's side. Then all of the agnates up to six generations were served. Only then was it possible to prepare a small *piṇḍa* dedicated to his deceased son, Rabi. After all the other friends and neighbours had been served, three small balls were separated from the rest and dedicated collectively – without any further definition – to the Śudra, the untouchables.

After all the *piṇḍas* have been placed in the ritual copper container, the priest draws the number 74 on the ground and asks the client to place the container on top. The number 7 resembles the conch shell, the number 4 is identified as the disc – two symbolic objects which are identified with Viṣṇu, who is believed to preside over the entire ritual.

The food that will be cast into the river is now prepared on a separate leaf plate and kept aside while observing silence. At the river bank a female member of the sub-caste of Pvaḥ takes care that the plate does not submerge under the water. She also retrieves all of the *piṇḍas*, which will serve as feed for the pigs. At all seven embankments of Bhaktapur, Pvaḥ take watch on this day to harvest *piṇḍas* from the water.

In some cases up to 100 clients (elders of lineages as *jajmān*) from various sub-castes will have lined up at Kvaḥre to perform *soraśrāddha* under the instruction of a Brahmanical priest, who uses a loudspeaker to address the crowd.

Many priests find it difficult to meet the calls of their clients, for many have moved to Kathmandu while keeping their hereditary relationship. A general strike (*bandh*) lasting three successive days considerably hampered the proper performance of the rituals in September 2003, prompting the newspaper to an-

nounce: “The dead too suffer from bandhs” (*Kathmandu Post*, 19th September). Many rituals had to be directed by phone.

The day of *soraśrāddha* ends with the usual feast, which has to be prepared by the annual caretaker of the lineage. All of the lineage members, male and female, take part. Being tied to the ancestors of their husbands, the married daughters, who are called “living ancestors” (*māmhā pitṛ*) are not only not invited to this feast, they are even not supposed to watch it. A special plate, the *kalāḥbvaḥ*, is set aside for the ancestors and later discarded on the nearest *chvāsaḥ* stone by the wife of the elder.

Dugudyahpūjā – Worship of the ancestor deities

Nature and designation of ancestor deities

Every lineage, a group of close agnates up to three generations, the *phukī*, entertains a relationship with a “lineage” or “ancestor” deity, the *dugudyah* (in neighbouring cities called *digudyah* or *degudyah*). In a non-iconic form, the deity, being neither male nor female, resides in a stone located outside of urban space (the spatial distribution has been dealt with in an earlier chapter). The occupation of prominent places in the landscape mirrors what Diana Eck has called “the ‘locative’ strand of Hindu piety”, as its “traditions of ritual and reverence are linked primarily to place” (1981: 323). A replica, often worked in silver in the shape of a petalled crown, is kept by the annual caretaker (*pālāḥ*) of the lineage in the worship room of his house and worshipped daily.

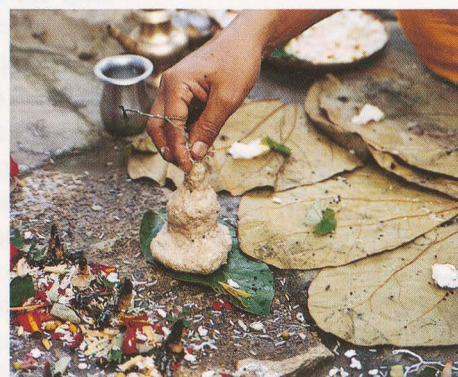
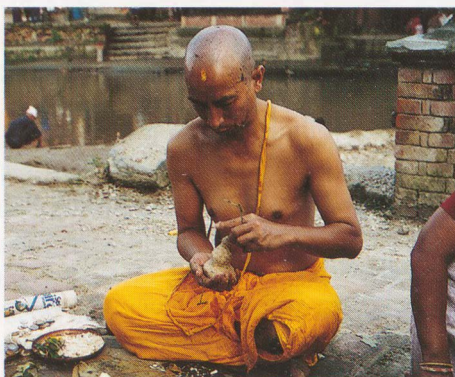
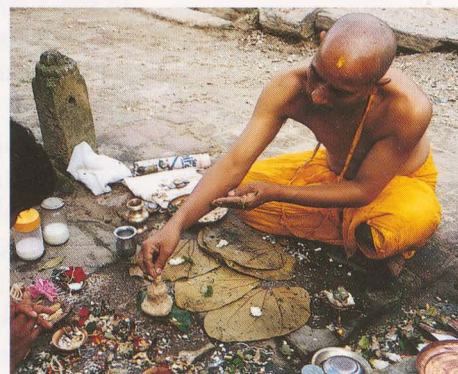
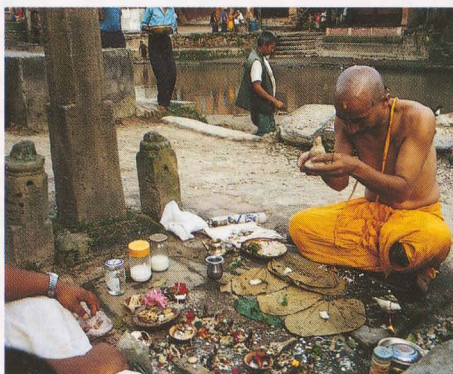
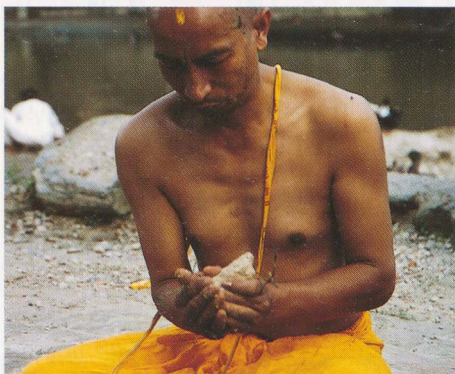
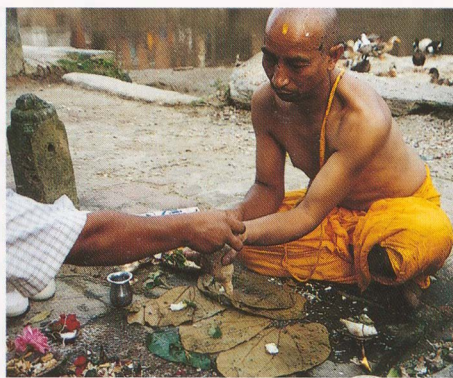
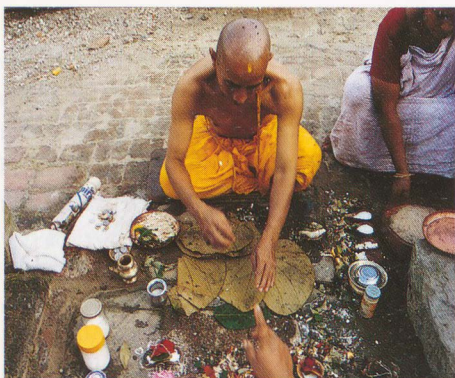
The stone identified as *dugudyah* is always found in the company of a second stone representing Nārāyaṇa, often in the shape of a lotus flower. Nārāyaṇa is never offered sacrificial blood, but flowers, fruits and *akṣata* instead.

The fact that the lineage addresses the ancestral deity arouses a sense of belonging. Girls who have completed the *bel*-fruit marriage (*ihi*) and boys are first admitted to the lineage deity at the age of four or five with the sacrifice of a duck – a ritual called *dupā taygu* (“to put or be admitted inside”; *du*-inside). After the initiation (*kaytāpūjā*) at the age of between 6 and 12, boys are allowed to appear a second time to attain the status of full members of the lineage. As ritually independent beings they participate in the sacrifices. They are exposed to pollution by death and have to undergo the usual purification rituals (*byēkegu*). To mark their admission on that day they have to have their head shaved the day before.

Either Buddhist Bajrācārya or Hindu Karmācārya priests may be called to guide the worship of the deity (Vergati 1991: 55). In the case of the potters from eastern Bhaktapur, more than one hundred *nāyah* line up to perform the ritual while a Bajrācārya presides over the worship of the *dugudyah* and a Brahmin over that of Nārāyaṇa. This ambivalent structure does not prompt any reasoning about the nature of the *dugudyah*.

Inscriptions as well as comments from officiating ritual specialists suggest that the *dugudyah* may be identical with the clan deity in Brahmanical contexts. In the latter case the deity is called *kuladevatā*, or *iṣṭadevatā*, “the deity chosen (by the worshipper himself)”.

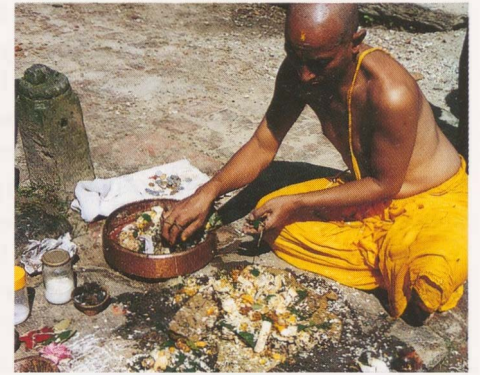
Inscriptions found on stone arches above the deity *in situ* or on portable crowns (*kikīpā*), tympana (*tvalā*), ritual brass containers or bells, offer a variety of designations that hint at the same background. The oldest known inscription is on a crown of a potter’s lineage and consists of the words “*śrī 3 degudeva*”. It is dated to 1579 AD. The bell of a Jhvāchē lineage recalls the donation by one Govinda in 1770 AD and its dedication to “*śrī 3 iṣṭadeguli*” and to a crown – albeit



Soraśrāddha – the “period of sixteen days for performing ancestor rituals”:
Madhu Citrakār performs the ritual on 19th September 2003 according to the instructions of his Buddhist house priest, Karṇa Bajrācārya at Kvaḥre. Phase 1: the making of a caitya. The elder of the lineage pre-

pares the ground with three large leaves (1), while his wife kneads the dough. He takes a lump of dough and prepares the rough shape of a caitya (2, 3); his priest inserts a few grains of unbroken rice into the womb of the caitya in an effort to present life (jivan nyās) (4). The elder raises the caitya in a gesture of offering

(5) and places it beyond the leaves (6). He lustrates the top of the caitya from a conch shell (7) and performs pūjā in all four directions and to the pinnacle, while the priest utters the name of the four Tathāgatas (8). Finally, the four sides are marked with yellow paste (9).



Soraśrāddha – the “period of sixteen days for performing ancestor rituals”:

Madhu Citrakār performs the ritual on 19th September 2003 according to the instructions of his Buddhist house priest, *Kaṛṇa Bajrācārya* at *Kvaḥre*. Phase 2: the making of the sacrificial balls.

Mādhu produces first three large piṇḍas (1 – 4), representing three generations of ancestors, while the priest adds black sesame. Then he prepares some 120 small piṇḍas according to a list of deceased relatives which is read out by the priest (5). The final piṇḍa named *bikva* is again of large

size and placed in the lower right corner as a guardian. Finally all of the piṇḍas are offered food, milk, fruits, sweets and flowers before they are placed on the ritual copper plate (7, 8) and cast into the river (9), where a member of the sub-caste of *Pvaḥ* waits to recover the piṇḍas.

1 4 7
2 5 8
3 6 9

in the short form *īdevatā* – dated 1791. More inscriptions, dated to the 19th and early 20th centuries, refer to an *iṣṭadevatā* (dated 1833, 1849, 1924, 1967 and 1987) and *digudeva* (1944). One vessel is known with a dedication inscribed on its rim to the *devaliguthī* and the date 1943, while another one is dedicated to “*śrī 3 Viṣṇuvi*” and dated 1840. This turned out to be the name of one of the eight protective Mother Goddesses. One hundred years later, a Bajrācārya constructed an arch behind his “*kuladevatā*” at Tathusubya and named it after a Tantric Buddhist deity, Candramahāroṣana. Another arch, constructed in 2003 at Kamalpūkhū, also refers to the lineage deity as “*kuladevatā*”. And when the Pvaḥ recently decided to encircle one of their lineage deities with a tiled wall they decided to call it the “*kuladevatā*” of “*dyah-pālāḥ*” (literally “the clan deity of the gods’ caretakers”). Only one inscription, roughly carved into the stone that represents a lineage god, refers to “*śrīdugudyaḥ*” – the most common designation of ancestor deities used in town.

Lineages and their deities

Most *dugudyaḥ* are visited by lineages of a number of different sub-castes. None of the lineages is aware of that variety as the visits to the site stretch over a period of ten weeks. There is a sense of belonging within each individual sub-caste, but no questions arise as to why lineages of other sub-castes come to worship the deity at the same stone. For example, some 40 lineages of Bāsukala from Byāsi worship the same stone in a small temple beyond Cupīghāt. At the same time lineages of high status groups, like Hādā and Kasa, offer their goats at the same place. Since on the day of *taḥdī*, the first Thursday or Sunday after the Indestructible Third after full moon in April, hundreds of lineages

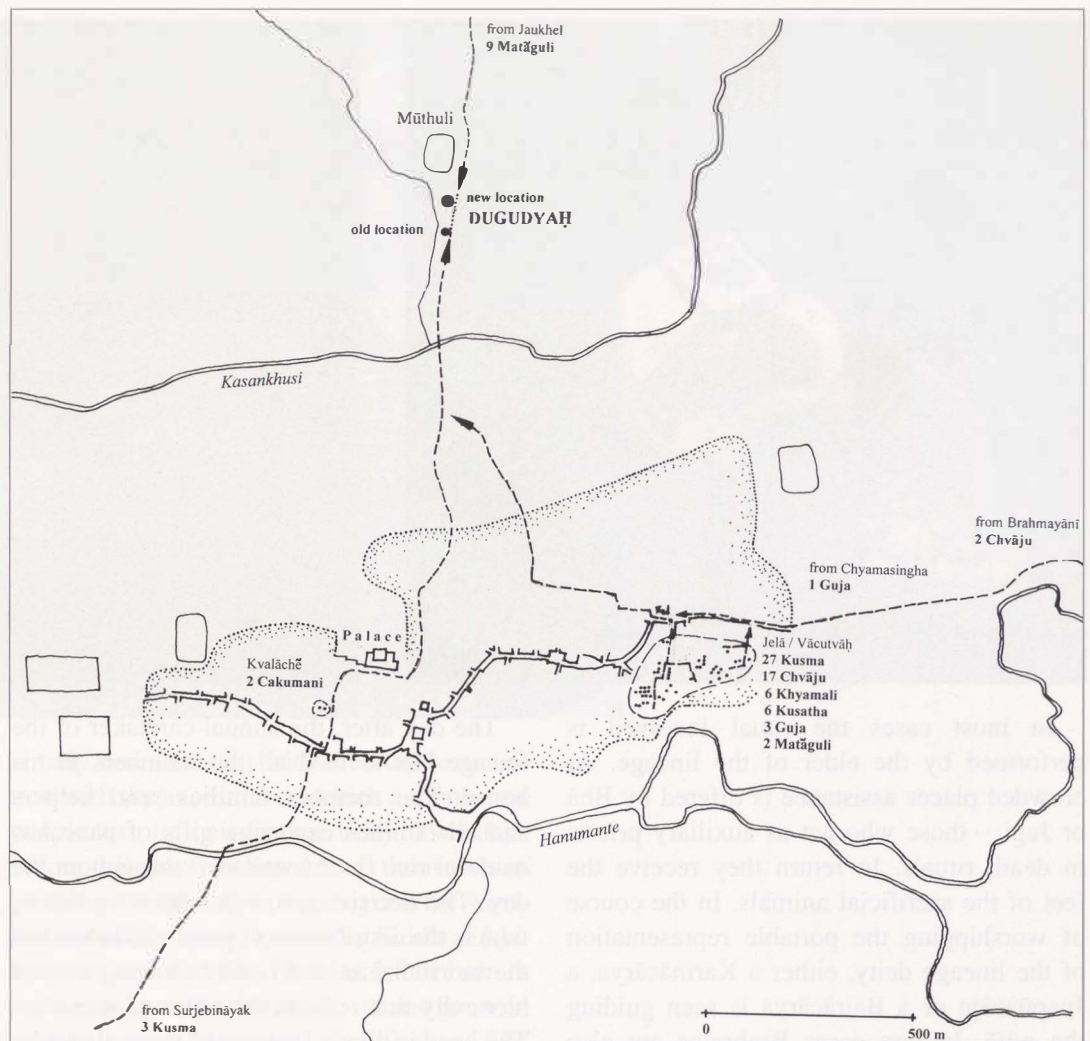
visit the same place; people virtually wade in blood.

Only in very few cases is it possible to gain an overview of all the lineages involved in one *dugudyaḥ*. In April 2003 a few stones representing the lineage god and the supplementary Nārāyaṇa were lifted from their original place on a steep slope which was threatening to slide. They were shifted to a new location some 50 metres north, just below the former pond of Mūthu. The eleventh day of the dark moon, four days ahead of the Indestructible Third, was considered auspicious enough for such a rare intervention, which also demanded the sacrifice of a goat. When a management committee decided to construct a large cemented shelter (*pauvā*) next to the new platform, a total of 74 families were traced and asked to contribute to the costs. The list of contributors reveals seven different sub-castes of farmer (*Jyāpu*) status, of which the majority live in the south-eastern quarters of Jēlā and Vācutvaḥ in a pattern (see map) that suggests a close relationship if not a common origin in the distant past. The fact that seventeen families had migrated to villages on the periphery documents a growing mobility that might have already started at the beginning of the 20th century.

In some cases well-defined membership and controlled access to the lineage deity is even more evident. The Karmācārya of the Tripuravidyāpīṭh do not worship any “external” lineage god. They consider their *dugudyaḥ* to be identical with their esoteric Tantric deity, the *āgādyah*, in all probability representing a female goddess, Kubjikā. Equally valid for this deity is the term *kuladevatā* or *iṣṭadevatā*. Whether it is the esoteric goddess of a clan, a family deity or a personal deity – all are represented as a single identity.

Relocation of an ancestor deity (*dugudyah*). A group of 74 farmers re-located a few field stones representing their ancestor deities at Mūthu on 26th April 2003.

The majority of them, such as Kusma and Chvāju, originate from the quarter of Jēlā and Vācutvaḥ in the upper town – only two families from the sub-caste of Cakumani are from the lower town; seventeen families have migrated to surrounding villages. The occasion of shifting the ancestor deity was the cause for tracing all of the lineages related to that particular location.



The *dugudyahpūjā* ritual

The day prior to the *pūjā*, the elder of the lineage has to have his head shaved, while all the other male members have their toenails symbolically pared. The house has to be cleaned, used clothes washed and fresh clothes prepared. In the evening only beaten rice is permissible for consumption, and no cooked food.

On the second day, the elder of the lineage leads the procession of all of the male members, carrying a brass container with a representation of the lineage god, duck eggs (one for every family of the lineage), unbroken

rice and incense. He is followed by a member carrying a plate with a number of clay cups (*kislī*) filled with unbroken rice, a betel nut, a coin and vermilion, one for every member of the lineage, male and female, initiated and uninitiated. A tiny ring with the representation of a flower (*jona daphaḥsvā*) is added as a peculiar offering, the meaning of which has still to be unveiled. Other members drag a goat to the sacrificial site and carry offerings to the deity such as radish, fruits and a specific flower for this occasion, *musvā*. Food and beer are also brought along for the ensuing ritual feast.



In most cases the ritual involved is performed by the elder of the lineage. At crowded places assistance is offered by Bhā or Jugi – those who act as auxiliary priests in death rituals. In return they receive the feet of the sacrificial animals. In the course of worshipping the portable representation of the lineage deity, either a Karmācārya, a Jyapūācāju or a Bajrācārya is seen guiding the *pūjā*. In rare cases Brahmins are also involved. The grand congregation of more than 100 lineages representing the majority of the potter's community from the eastern quarters of the town on the occasion of the Indestrustible Third engages a Bajrācārya when worshipping the lineage god, and at the same time a Brahmin when worshipping the complementary Nārāyaṇa.

The visit to the lineage deity is complete after the male members have received a vermilion mark on their foreheads and a black stroke (*mvaḥṇi*) signifying the sharing of the blood sacrifice. A limited feast with beer and a small piece of roasted meat from the sacrificial animal concludes the gathering.

The day after, the annual caretaker of the lineage has to feed all the members in his house. The member families send helpers and all families exchange gifts of pancakes made of rice flour (*catāmari*) throughout the day. The decisive act of this feast (*syūkābh-vay*) is the distribution of parts of the head of the sacrificial animal (*syū*) following a strict hierarchy that reflects the order of seniority. The head is divided into eight parts: the elder receives the right horn and the right eye, the second one the left horn and eye, the third one the right ear, the fourth one the left ear, the fifth one the snout, the sixth the tongue, the seventh the right jaw, the eighth the left jaw and the ninth the tail. The remaining members receive a portion of meat. The feast ends with a special plate being offered to the new caretaker, who will house the lineage deity for the coming twelve months.

The non-iconic representation of the lineage deity is not regularly visited. But a sense of belonging exists and that causes individual members of a lineage to visit the place in an expression of obeisance. There

The ritual of worshipping the lineage deity (dugudyaḥpūjā) on full moon in September (Yanyāpunhi/Indrajātrā) at Siddhapūkhū.

Left a Śākya woman touching her head to the treasure vase representing Nairatna Guhyeśvarī, right a farmer, facing west towards Nārāyaṇa in an upright position with his arms outstretched.

Fotos 10th September 2003



The ritual of worshipping the lineage deity (dugudyaḥpūjā) within a period of 73 days between April and June.

An offering is brought to the lineage deity in the name of every member of the lineage, male and female, initiated and uninitiated.

Left

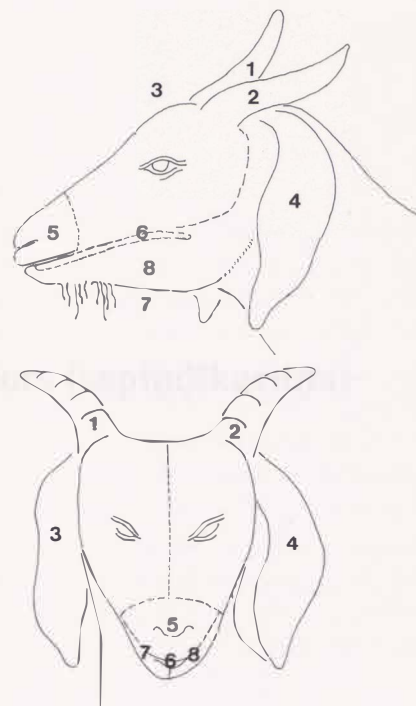
The offerings of a Bāsukala lineage with 20 members, brought to Kvathusubya at Cupīghāḥ.

Photo 18th May 1999

Right

Division and distribution of the head of the sacrificial goat to the members of a lineage on the occasion of dugudyaḥpūjā, or any other ritual involving a blood sacrifice.

is only one occasion with a certain connection with the ancestors on which a number of people turn to their lineage deity. Two days before full moon in September, thousands of people go to the large pond beyond the western tip of the town, known as Siddhapūkhū but also as Indradaha. It is said that Indra's mother begged the demons to release her son, who had come to earth to steal flowers. She promised to take with her all those who had died during the preceding 12 months. The long line of *pitṛ* was unable to cling onto her shawls and fell into Indradaha. After having worshipped Indrāyaṇī, Indra's female representation at the pond, many people visit their lineage deity as if to remember the unhappy ancestors who could not make the journey into heaven.



THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND

In the following we shall concentrate on giving one particular ritual in detail, the *latyā* or *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* ritual for Rabi Svāgamikha performed on 22nd of August 2002 in Bhaktapur. For this purpose we must first add a few remarks on his family, the bereaved ones, the ritual specialists involved and the funeral association concerned.

The family of Rabi Svāgamikha

Rabi was born as the eldest son of Narain Kumār Svāgamikha in 1967. In 1969 Rāju followed, in 1972 Ramesh and in 1974 the daughter Ramila. At the age of 14 Rabi moved with the entire family from their ancestral home in Tekhacvā to a new location near the new road built in 1972 that passes Bhaktapur to the south. Earlier, all the traffic from Kathmandu to Banepa and Dhulikhel in the east passed through Bhaktapur, crossing bridges that were built by Candra Śaṃśer Rāṇā at the beginning of the 20th century. The new ring road passed through rice fields that were turned into building plots within ten years. The area was earlier named after an old arcaded building, Dvakhaphalcā, but is now known under the name of Pandau Bazar.

This shift to a new location had severe ritual consequences. The funeral procession from Narain Kumār's house cannot enter the city across a bridge and turn south by crossing a second bridge. Corpses from across the ritual boundary defined by the seats of the Eight Mother Goddesses, the Aṣṭamātrkā, cannot enter their realm, and have to avoid it. Members of other communities have their designated cremation ground across the

Kvaḥre, i.e. the junction of two rivers (Nep. Hanumanghāt). Newars, however, aim for their traditional cremation ground, the one assigned to their ancestral house, the *kulchē*. In the case of Narain Kumār, this means that he had to reach the main cremation ground at Cupīghāt from the south along the new road. The performance of other death rituals is, however, not hampered. The purificatory rites on the 10th day are performed at Maṅgalghāt, but for the placement of the trap on the evening of the same day the procession had to pass the bridge first and then cross through the river in order to install it on the bank to the south, the direction of the realm of death.

After passing the school leaving certificate together with his younger brother Rāju, Rabi joined the Bhaktapur Campus for further studies. In 1987 he and his father opened up a stationery shop on Exhibition Road in Kathmandu. The aim was to have a registered firm which would be eligible to compete in tenders for stationery required by the government. The shop subsequently moved to the ground floor of a house they constructed in 1983 at Pandau Bazar, Bhaktapur, where they made a small profit selling electrical goods, although it was still mainly intended as a meeting place to engage in tenders. It was finally closed down in 1991.

Rabi married Lakṣmī Gvacā in December 1993 and they had a daughter, Briyesa, in 1995. A son was born on New Year's Day of 2060 Bikram Samvat (14th April 2002), three months before the father died. In early 2002 Rabi went for treatment at the local Cancer Hospital. He was diagnosed with lung cancer and as the situation worsened he was admitted to the hospital on 7th July. Two days later he

died. The members of the funeral association were called to carry the corpse immediately to the cremation ground of Kvaḥre – the place designated for those who die in hospital.

Rabi's wife lives with her husband's family, which prevents her from re-marrying. Had she not had any children she would probably have returned to her mother, and had a slight chance of remarrying. She has had some training as a health worker and works as an assistant nurse in a hospital nearby.

Narain Kumār Svāgamikha, who acts as the chief mourner in the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* ritual documented here, died on 4th March 2004. His eldest son, Rāju, acted as his chief mourner and performed the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* rituals after the 45th day on 17th April. Narain Kumār's daughter, who was undergoing training in the Netherlands, arrived a couple of hours too late to perform the *nhenumhā* ritual on the 7th day. The sister of the deceased, Narain Devī Suvāl, had to step in. On the occasion of Gāijātrā (31st August), a bull in clay (*dvāsācā*) was dedicated to the deceased and collectively paraded by the Hari Bol group along the processional path accompanied by effigies of four other deceased. On the wish of his widow, Jagat Lakṣmī, his son led the representation of the bull to the tune of "Hare Kṛṣṇa, hare Rām". The final death ritual, *dākilā*, is scheduled for 20th February 2005. But as the year 2004 (Bikram Saṁvat 2061) included a leap month, the ritual has to be repeated on 22nd March. On this second occasion, however, only *phukī* members will participate.

Contributions for the sacrificial balls (*piṇḍa*)

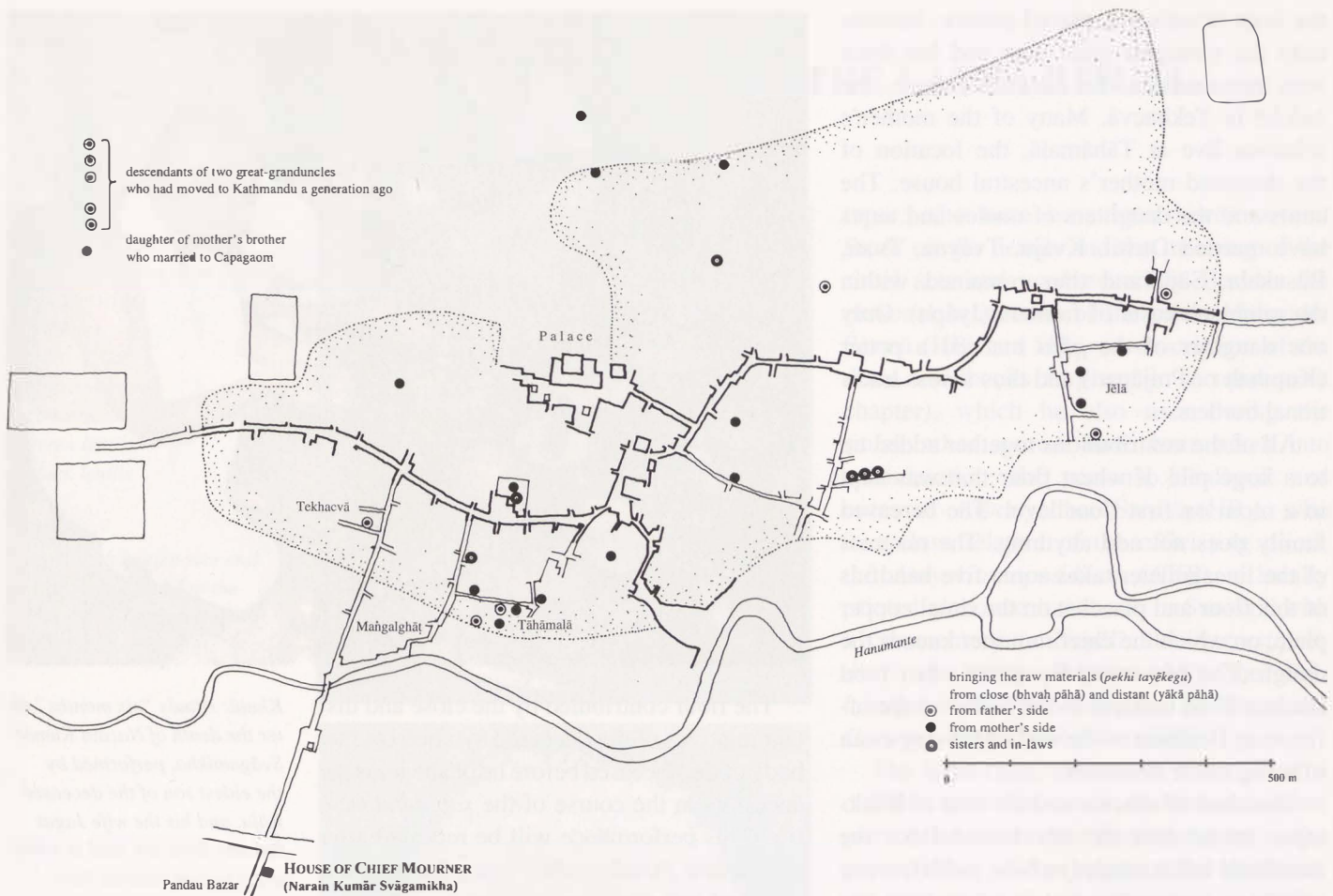
In the early morning *pekhi*, the raw material for making the balls, is brought from related families (*bhvaḥ pāhā* and *yākā pāhā*), which are scattered all over the town. Three distinc-



tive groups can be identified: those who are related by patrilineal relationships, those who are related by matrilineal relationships, and finally sisters as well as in-laws. In the case of Rabi Svāgamikha there were 34 families from which rice flour, unbroken ritual rice, beaten rice and two types of flowers (*sinasvā* and *dhācāsvā*) were brought. From the patrilineal side only ten families contributed, because the sons of the eldest great uncle joined the neo-Hindu sect Om Śānti and therefore refuse to join in the traditional rituals. In a somewhat similar way three sons of the youngest great uncle brought contributions for the *latyā* (one and a half months), *khulā* (six months), and *dākilā* (twelve months) rituals, but refused to join the ensuing feast – remembering and demonstrating in this way the ownership dispute between their father and the deceased grandfather. One

The union with the ancestors: sapiṇḍikaraṇa on the 45th day: Plate with offerings for the sacrificial balls. Clockwise: cup with milk, yellow flowers (marigolds), leaves of sinasvā, talāy and bhyalāy, beaten rice, a coin, unbroken wetted rice, and wheat flour with a basil leaf on top.

Photo 26th December 2002



Location of those 33 households from which the raw material was provided for Narain Kumār Svāgamikha to make the sacrificial balls on the occasion of the union of his son Rabi with the ancestors (*sapiṅḍikaraṇa*), performed on the 45th day after death on 22nd August 2002.

Ten households belong to the lineage (of which five have moved to Kathmandu), seventeen to matrilineal relatives, and six to the married sister and the in-laws of the deceased.

cousin joined from the second great uncle, two cousins from the younger great aunt, and two great aunts. Five more contributions came from Kathmandu from the descendants of the two younger brothers of the great-grandfather. From the matrilineal side, the *pājukhalaḥ*, seventeen families contributed, ranging from the mother's two sisters, her brother, and their sons and daughters. Finally, the married sister of the deceased contributed, as did the mother of his brother's wife, his mother in-law, her brother and the two brothers of his father-in-law.

These 34 families are split into two groups. The direct patrilineal and matrilineal relatives as well as the in-laws, making a total of 16 families are identified as *bhvaḥ pāhā*,

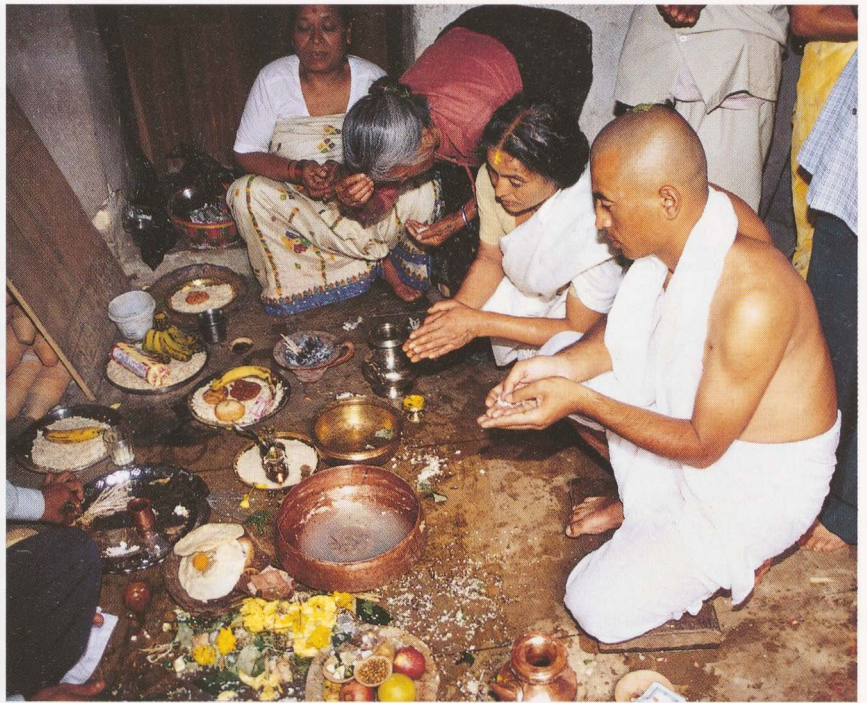
and as such their entire family (*bhvaḥ*) will be guests (*pāhā*) at the feast that concludes the day. The remaining 18 families, invariably female offspring of uncles or great-uncles, aunts or great-aunts are classified as *yākā pāhā*. In this case there were three daughters of the mother's brother (*pāju*), one of whom married to and moved to Capagaon; four daughters of the eldest aunt, one daughter of the second aunt and the two daughters of the great uncle's son and his sister. Of these only the person who brought the contribution (*yākā* – single) is supposed to join the feasts. In the case of Narain Kumār about seventy to eighty guests were expected.

A glance at the distribution of the 34 mapped residences of the guests who joined

the feast reveals a scattered pattern, because only the youngest great aunt and her three sons remained in the ancestral house, the *kulchē* in Tekhacvā. Many of the mother's relatives live at Tāhāmalā, the location of the deceased mother's ancestral house. The aunts and the daughters of uncles and aunts have married Duvāl, Kvaju, Tvāyna, Tvati, Bāsukala, Sāju and thus remained within the same sub-caste of farmers (Jyāpu). Only one daughter of the *pāju* married a potter (Kumhaḥ or Prajāpati) and thus across traditional borders.

All of the contributions together added up to a large pile of wheat flour that was kept in a room on first floor level. The bereaved family does not add anything. The mistress of the lineage later takes some five handfuls of this flour and places it on the ritual copper plate, on which the chief mourner kneads the dough. The remaining flour and other food items will be brought to the house of the officiating Brahmin at the end of the day as an offering to the deceased.

The chart of descent and the map of Bhaktapur reveal that the raw material for the sacrificial balls, *piṇḍa* (or Nev. *pekhi*), is not simply a commodity that is taken from the stock of the bereaved household. It is contributed from an extended group of relatives whose residences represent the urban community. The narrow confines of the lineage, the *phukī*, and the funeral association are decisively overcome.



The flour contributed by the close and distant relatives of the deceased symbolizes the body of the deceased before he or she joins the ancestors in the course of the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* rite. This performance will be repeated after six months (*khulā*), after one year (*dākilā*), and after two years (*nyedātithi*).

The *bhvaḥ pāhā* have to fulfil another obligation on the occasion of the 7th day rite. *Nhenumhā yēkegu* needs contributions of beaten rice and vegetables which is believed to nourish the deceased and at the same time to represent his or her body.

Khulā: rituals "six months" after the death of Narain Kunār Svāgamikha, performed by the eldest son of the deceased, Rāju, and his wife Jagat Laksmī. Both are clad in white dress to demonstrate their mourning.

Photo 27th August 2004

DESCRIPTION OF THE LATYĀ RITUAL

Above

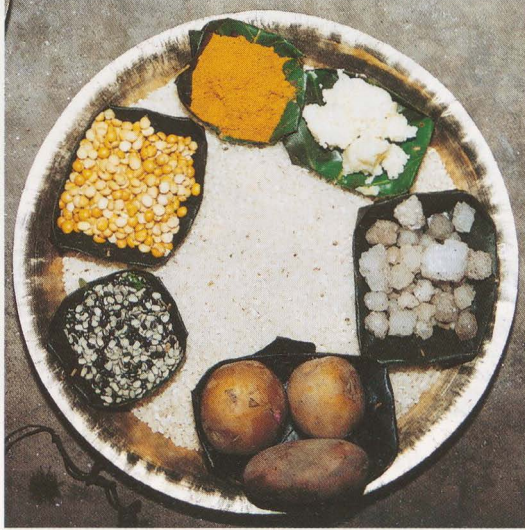
A plate to be offered to the priest, containing from bottom anti-clockwise

- 1 potatoes
- 2 salt
- 3 clarified butter
- 4 turmeric
- 5 green lentils
- 6 black lentils

Below

A plate with beaten rice and sweets to be offered to the priest.

Photo 22nd August 2002



The *latyā* or *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*⁴ ritual described in the following took place on 22nd August 2002 in Bhaktapur. Its description is based on field observation, a filmed documentation (see the attached DVD), the field notes of Niels Gutschow, comments of Nūtan Śarmā as well as of the involved priests of Bhak-

tapur, who have been interviewed several times on the details and the meaning of the ritual acts and used materials. Besides the personal handbooks of the priest Mahendra Śarmā (HB₁ and HB₃ – a description of the ritual handbooks is given in a subsequent chapter), which he also uses during the ritual, other sources have been taken into consideration: the personal handbook and notes of Aiśvaryaḍhar Śarmā (HB₂), who is a close relative of the officiating priest, the *Antyakarmapaddhati* (AKP) a locally printed elaborate handbook in Sanskrit with a commentary in Nepālī, the *Antyeṣṭipaddhati* of Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa (AP), the *Pre-takalpa* of the Garuḍapurāṇa (GP) and the *Garuḍapurāṇasāroddhāra* (GPS).

The *latyā* ritual consists of a sequence of different rites that can be divided into seven parts, of which the first four take place on the ground floor of the house of the deceased: the preparatory rituals (*pūrvāṅga*), the offering of fifteen balls (*pañcadaśapiṇḍadāna*), the unification of the deceased with his or her forefathers (*sapiṇḍikaraṇa*), and the offering of water jugs (*jaladāna*). The offering of a bed (*śayyādāna*) as the fifth is performed in front of the house and the last two, i.e. the dismissal of the balls (*piṇḍavisarjana*) and the worship of a *śivaliṅga* (*śivaliṅgapūjā*), are performed at the nearby river Hanumante. The rituals are mainly performed by the officiating priest, Mahendra Śarmā (hereafter Mahendra) and the chief mourner, Narain Kumār Svāgamikha (hereafter Narain Kumār), who follows the priestly instructions, sometimes assisted by his cousin Narain Devī, the *mhāymacā* (hereafter Narain Devī). The term Nev. *mhāymacā* denotes a

⁴ If not otherwise indicated, the terms in this and the following chapter are in Sanskrit.

female relative such as a sister or daughter of the deceased who has married and thus belongs to another family.

The rituals serve to help the deceased (*preta*) on his one-year-long journey through the netherworld by providing him with food, water and other gifts, and to unite him with his forefathers (*pitaraḥ*). All of the rituals described in the following passages usually take place on the 45th day (Nev. *latyā*) after death. This means that some of the offerings are given in advance and some retrospectively for the one-year-long journey, of which 45 days have already passed, e.g. 360 water pots are given before the offering of a bed for the whole year although 45 days have already passed. The divergence of the ritual time and “real” time is most striking in the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* sub-ritual, which marks the union of the deceased with his ancestors and the end of his or her one-year journey to Yama’s world. In the ritual practice of *latyā*, however, this crucial moment is anticipated on the 45th day, which implies that the deceased has already reached his or her forefathers before the end of the journey. In other words, his journey is over and yet has still to be finished. Ritual thinking offers such short-cuts.

Preparations and introductory rites (*pūrvāṅga*)

The day before the main *latyā* ritual on the 22nd of August, 2002, Narain Kumār, the chief mourner, had been shaved, taken a purifying bath and observed a fast. The household had also been cleaned. On the morning of the same day, representatives of thirty-nine related families had brought their contributions for the ritual on the following day: wheat flour, unbroken rice (*akṣata*), beaten rice and two flowers (Nev. *sinasvā*, Nep. *bhīmsenpāti*, and *dhācāsvā*).



On the main day a ram is tied up in the courtyard of the house of mourning. It will later be killed since parts of the meat from its neck are to be mixed into the balls (*piṇḍas*) during the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*. The area of the floor on which the ritual will be performed, i.e. the sacrificial arena, has already been purified by covering it with cow dung.

Mahendra, the Brahmin priest, is now sitting on the floor. Set out on his right side are: water vessels, plates, copper bowls filled with flowers or leaves, wheat flour, fruits and other materials that will be offered later. Besides the copper plate with flour for the *piṇḍas* and other ingredients taken from the contributions of the related families, some plates have also been arranged as offerings to the Brahmin: two plates of rice, two plates with beaten rice and sweets, two plates with wheat flour, and two plates with rice, salt, clarified butter, potatoes, black and yellow lentils and turmeric. Placed in front of the priest is a plate with materials used during the worship, including ritual, i.e. unbroken (and often unhusked) rice (*akṣata*) as a sign

The priest Mahendra Śarmā is sitting on the left, the chief mourner Narain Kumār on the right. Visible at the top of the photo are the earthen pots in which at the beginning of the latyā ritual five deities will be invoked. The ritual arena between the two main ritual agents has been prepared with cow dung and different maṇḍalas, such as a diagram with fourteen fields on which piṇḍas will later be placed. Below it can be seen a black ammonite, representing Viṣṇu. Various other deities will be placed on the maṇḍala below the ammonite and remain there until the end of the ritual.

Photo 22nd August 2002

Overview of the ritual sequences performed during the *latyā*

ritual actions (Skt.)	place	agents	short description
preparations and preparatory rituals	room on the ground floor in the house of mourning	performed by the priest, partly together with the chief mourner, assisted by his cousin (<i>mhāymacā</i>) who provides the required materials	providing materials, preparing the floor and the ritual place, establishing and worshipping the deities
offering of fifteen balls (<i>pañcadaśa-piṇḍadāna</i>)	same place	mainly chief mourner directed by the priest	kneading the dough, preparing and offering fifteen <i>piṇḍas</i> . Fourteen are given as food to the deceased, the last to ghosts or pre-great-grandfather generation
uniting the deceased with his three forefathers (<i>sapiṇḍīkaraṇa</i>)	same place	mainly chief mourner directed by the priest, assisted by <i>mhāymacā</i>	offering of a single <i>piṇḍa</i> (<i>vikalapiṇḍa</i>) to unknown ghosts, offering of <i>nāḥkāpāḥ</i> (white cloth representing the <i>preta</i>), mixing a large single <i>piṇḍa</i> representing the <i>preta</i> , and three other <i>piṇḍas</i> , representing the <i>pitarah</i>
gift of water (<i>jaladāna</i>)	same place	same agents	two water jugs are worshipped and offered to the priest as a representative of the <i>preta</i>
gift of the bed (<i>śayyādāna</i>)	in front of the house on the road	chief mourner directed by the priest, wife of the deceased, mother of the deceased, <i>mhāymacā</i> and other male family members	360 small water pots are offered to the deceased for each day of the year. A bed and other gifts constituting an entire household are given to the priest and his wife, representing the deceased
casting away the balls (<i>piṇḍa-visarjana</i>)	at the river Hanumante	chief mourner, cousin (<i>mhāymacā</i>) and her husband, great-uncle's son	all <i>piṇḍas</i> and other food-stuffs used in the rituals are thrown into the river, a plate with food is offered and eaten by crows
worship of a śivaliṅga (<i>śivaliṅgapūjā</i>)	at the river-bank (<i>ghāṭ</i>)	chief mourner	worshipping <i>śivaliṅga</i> with ritual services (<i>upacāras</i>) and pouring water

of completeness and auspiciousness (cf. Bühnemann 1988: 160), flowers, and yellow paste, which is partly used as *ṭikā* (Nev. *mhāsusinhaḥ*), but also as sandalwood paste (*candana*). This becomes evident when Mahendra later recites *candanam upatiṣṭhatām* while applying the paste on the *piṇḍas*. The yellow paste is mostly applied with the ring finger of the right hand, which is used for offerings to deities (Bühnemann 1988: 160). The deities, forefathers and ritual tools are worshipped during the *latyā* as in the Hindu *pūjā* with ritual services (*upacāra*, cf. Müller 1992: 69-72, 91).

Mahendra draws various designs with rice powder (*maṇḍalas*), which sometimes serve as an altar or pedestal (*vedi*) on the ritual ground: a lotus *maṇḍala* and a diagram (*piṇḍavedi*) for the offering of fifteen *piṇḍas* (*pañcadaśapiṇḍadāna*). The *piṇḍavedi* consists of fourteen squares (three rows of four fields each, with two additional fields attached to the middle row). Moreover, he draws five circles (*kumbhakeśvaravedi*) for five small spouted pots (*kumbha*) above the *piṇḍavedi* and in front of them a circle for the light (*dīpa*, Nev. *matā*). He then draws another lotus *maṇḍala* for the black *śālagrāma* stone, a black ammonite with a petrified conch, which represents Nārāyaṇa. According to the local tradition it is Gadādhara, i.e. Nārāyaṇa with a club, representing Gayā, an important pilgrimage centre especially for the performance of *śrāddha* rituals. Left from the *śālagrāma* Mahendra draws two rectangular rows with three fields and five fields. On the first three fields Gaṇedyah/Gaṇeśa, (Nep.) *gogras* (food for the cow) and Kumārī or Aṣṭamātrkā will be worshipped; on the other five fields Sūrya, Nārāyaṇa, Sadāśiva, Gṛhalakṣmī, *iṣṭadevatā* (Nev. *āgādyah*) or (Nev.) *dugudyah*, the lineage deity.

The *piṇḍavedi* and the *kumbhakeśvaravedi* will be replaced later on by other designs necessary for particular parts of the rituals. Ac-

ording to a widespread belief, it is forbidden to place idols and *pūjā* utensils on the bare ground, because this direct contact destroys their power. Gudrun Bühnemann (1988: 165) also refers with respect to the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa to the “common belief” that the food offerings (*naivedya*) will be taken away by evil spirits if they are not placed on and protected by a *maṇḍala*.

While the priest is drawing the lines of the *maṇḍalas* Narain Kumār enters and places a clay cup with the *śālagrāma* on the left side. Mahendra scatters popped rice over all of the *maṇḍalas* except the five circles for the small spouted pots. Narain Kumār sits down opposite Mahendra. He will not leave this position until the end of the offering of two water pots (*jaladāna*). His head has been shaved except for a tuft (*śikhā*), which is important in the initiation of boys (*upanayana*) as a characteristic of the paternal line. Moreover, it is believed that the soul of virtuous people leaves the body from there. He only wears a white *dhoti* and a white scarf on his left shoulder since the colour white is the prescribed colour of mourning.

Mahendra splits *kuśa* grass, a purifying means used in almost every Hindu ritual. It is attributed to Brahmā as the personification of the eternal principle of *brahman*. The Brahmin is also identified with it by virtue of his Vedic knowledge. As an evergreen plant it represents immortality.

The priest then asks for rice flour and says that if they do not have any, they can use wheat flour and mix it with water to use as *ṭikā* for the water jug. After asking for leaves of the *sāl* tree (*Shorea robusta*), the priest receives a leaf-plate from which he breaks off pieces, placing them on each field of the two rows left of the *śālagrāma*. He places popped rice mixed with water on the leaves as a food offering (*naivedya*). On the right hand side Narain Devī readies five small spouted pots (*kumbha*, Nev. *gaḥpacā*) filled with water, and

clay cups (Nev. *salī*) filled with pieces of banana, peas and apple. Mahendra explains that the *kumbhas*, also called *kalaśasa*, represent all the gods.

According to him, the mourners should have brought three dried fruits called *triphalā* (Nep. *harro*, *barro*, and *amalā*) for the pots. However, since these fruits were unavailable or forgotten to be bought, he allows Narain Kumār to replace them by the other fruits. Mahendra places the pots from left to right on the drawn circles and explains which pot represents which deity by pointing with the finger to each vessel: Sūrya, Nārāyaṇa, Gaṇapati, Sadāśiva and Varuṇa. It is not clear, not even to Mahendra, why these five gods are worshipped. It would seem to be a kind of alteration of the *pañcāyātanapūjā* worship, including Varuṇa instead of Devī.

Narain Kumār hands the fruit-filled clay cups to the priest, who places them from left to right on the pots. Another clay cup is placed in front of the five pots. The priest breaks off a part of its rim in order to insert a wick in it and use it as a ritual light (*dīpa*, Nev. *matā*).

Mahendra places a Sacred Thread (*yajñopavīta*) on each of the five fruit-filled clay cups. Then he puts two leaf-plates with unboiled rice one on top of the other and on top of them a *sukunḍā* lamp. He then takes out some clarified butter from the ritual lamp and puts it in the clay cup serving as a light. Narain Kumār takes a gas lighter and lights first the *sukunḍā* lamp and then the clay lamp. At this point Mahendra is asked by the family members whether they can go to the shrine of Gaṇeśa, and replies by telling them that they can go after they have finished the ritual. After the *latyā* ritual the pots will be taken to several different places, i.e. Sūryakumbha in the courtyard, Nārāyaṇakumbha at a Nārāyaṇa temple nearby, Sadāśivakumbha at a *liṅga* at Maṅgalhāt at the end of the ritual, Gaṇapatikumbha at a new Gaṇeśa shrine

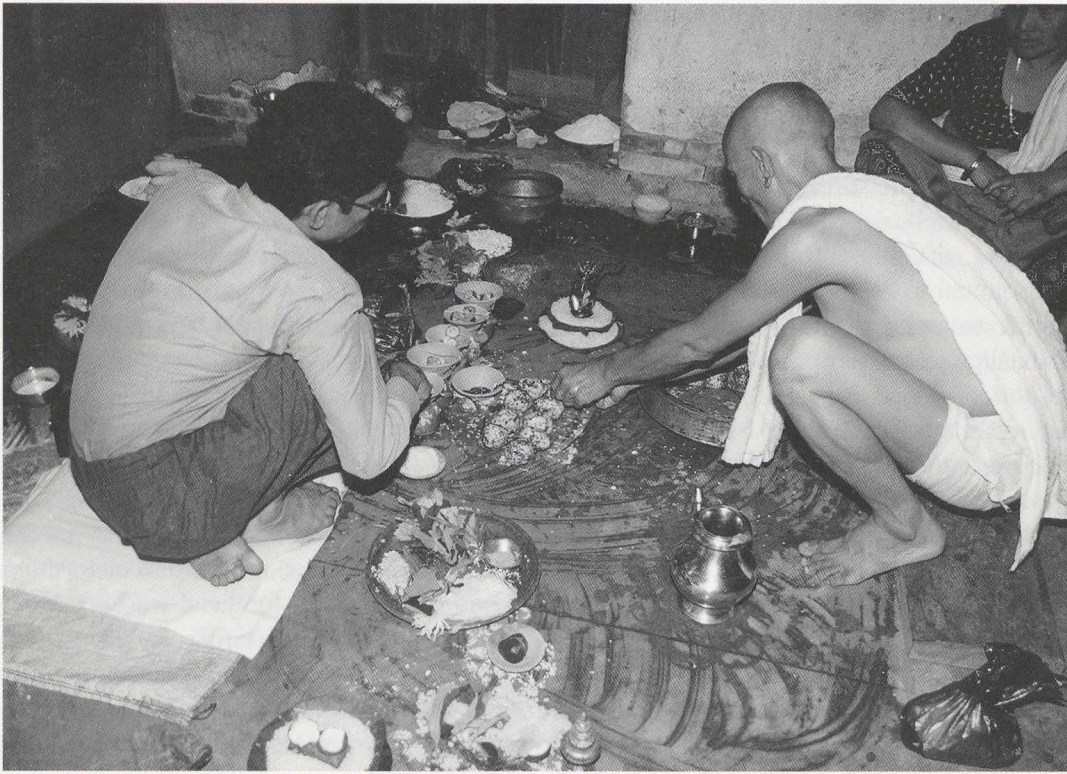
nearby, and Varuṇakumbha at the *pikhālākhu* stone in front of the house.

The priest formulates and recites the declaration of ritual intent (*saṃkalpa*) for the chief mourner, who holds pieces of a leaf, probably basil, and water in his right hand. He instructs him to offer leaves, rice and water for feet-washing (*padārghya*) to Sūrya in front of the five pots. While doing so the priest recites the respective formulas for dedicating the offerings: *puṣpam upatiṣṭhatām, padārghyam upatiṣṭhatām, hastārghyam upatiṣṭhatām* etc. Mahendra then takes out his personal handbook to make sure of the proceedings or recitations. Together with Narain Kumār he makes offerings to the five deities in the pots: flowers (*puṣpa*), water for feet-washing (*padārghya*), water for hand-washing (*hastārghya*),⁵ unbroken rice (*akṣata*) and yellow paste – once again reciting the appropriate dedications: *puṣpam namaḥ, padārghyam namaḥ, hastārghyam, candana, akṣata, puṣpāya namaḥ* (*sic!*).

The gift of five pots prior to the *pañcadaśaṅgaṅgā* is not mentioned in the prescriptions of the AP, nor in the AKP. But they are mentioned in the notes of Aiśvarya-dhar Śarmā. He names the five gods as Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Gaṇeśa and Nāgarāja. His notes include a sketch of the arrangement for the *piṇḍavedi* and the circles for the five pots, which is in accordance with the arrangement in the described *latyā* ritual. All that is mentioned in his prescription is that the five pots have to be installed and worshipped prior to the offering of the fifteen balls, which he names *caturdaśakalāpiṇḍadāna* (HB₂: 41).

The origin of the worship of the five pots in the *latyā* ritual is not clear. Mahendra Śarmā simply took them as representatives of all the gods. It would seem that this kind of worship is a kind of ritual transfer from the widespread *pañcāyātanapūjā* (cf. Bühnemann 1988: 51). Moreover, there are some references to the worship of jugs in the AP and AKP as well as

⁵ The different water offerings can be water for washing hands (*hastārghya*), for washing feet (*padārghya*) or libations (*tarpaṇa*). Only when it was clearly identifiable on the basis of the priestly recitation or the context have we specified them in the present description. Otherwise we have referred to an “offering of water” or a “libation”.



The chief mourner places fifteen pinḍas on the mandala according to the instruction of the priest. Fourteen pinḍas serve as food for the deceased on his journey through the underworld. The fifteenth is offered to the pre-great-grand-father-generations.

Photo 22nd August 2002

in Newar ritual practice. Thus, the worship of five water jugs within the death ritual is prescribed in the AP as part of the *nārāyaṇabali* (Müller 1992: 203-205), a special pacifying ritual to be performed for those deceased who have suffered what is termed a bad death, e.g. a violent death through animals, murder or suicide. It is also to be performed when there is no corpse for a regular death ritual. In this ritual five jugs (*kalaśa*) have to be filled with water. On top of them plates with images (*mūrti*) of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Yama and the deceased are placed and worshipped with ritual services (*upacāras*), among them the offering of three types of fruits. The AKP (AKP: 217) also mentions the *nārāyaṇabali* with which these four gods and the *preta* are to be worshipped.

Moreover, the worship of the five gods is a common block of Newar rituals. Gellner (1992: 151) and Locke (1980: 95) call the *kalaśapūjā* in the rituals of the Buddhist

Newars the “basic *pūjā* of the Vajrācāryas.” During the worship, the Five Buddhas are invoked in the *kalaśa*. The *kalaśapūjā* is also performed by Newar Brahmins to invoke five different deities.

Offering of fifteen balls (*pañcadaśapiṇḍadāna*)

Mahendra hands over a big copper bowl (*piṇḍapātra*, Nev. *kvalā*) filled with wheat flour to the chief mourner and adds a cup of milk. The preparation of the *piṇḍa* dough starts: Narain Kumār carefully kneads all the ingredients of the *piṇḍapātra*, which consists of wheat flour, a banana, wet rice, milk, water, and butter mixed with honey. While slowly adding water he prepares a solid dough, on which he works powerfully with both hands and shapes into a large ball.

Meanwhile some women prepare flower garlands in the courtyard for the offering of a bed (*śayyādāna*). On the instructions of Mahendra, Narain Kumār divides the dough and shapes fifteen equal-sized round *piṇḍas*. Two women and a man standing in the door watch how the preparations are going on. Mahendra explains how to do it. He says: “In this case [kneading the dough for the *piṇḍa*] it is okay to take more time. Make it slowly, make it carefully!” Narain Kumār rolls and kneads with his fingers and palms, making one *piṇḍa* after another. Afterwards Mahendra spreads black sesame seeds (*tila*) on them. Such seeds are used throughout Hindu death and ancestor rituals. According to GPS (8.35), they are purifying because they are the sweat of Viṣṇu. Another interpretation is that they remove all sins because they originated from the *gotra* of the *ṛṣi* Kāśyapa (Müller 1992: 160).

Narain Kumār continues to roll the *piṇḍas* in the seeds in order to cover each of them completely. Guided by the priest, Narain Kumār places fourteen *piṇḍas* on the fields of the *piṇḍavedi*. Mahendra then counts and dedicates the *piṇḍas* to the deceased. He says: “There, the second of sixteen *piṇḍas* should fall to the share of (him) who is named ‘son’” (*asmin putranāmne dviṭiyakālapīṇḍam upatiṣṭhatām*).⁶

Mahendra ritually dedicates each *piṇḍa* starting with “the second of sixteen *piṇḍas* (*dviṭiyakālapīṇḍa*)” and ending with “the fifteenth of sixteen *piṇḍas* (*pañcadaśakālapīṇḍa*)”. He then advises Narain Kumār to keep one more *piṇḍa*, which is not counted, silently on top. In HB₁ fol. 4^v only fourteen *piṇḍas* named *māsikapīṇḍas* plus an uncounted *piṇḍabhāga* are mentioned, but in the ritual the priest also counts the 15th.⁷ It is meant for the “unknown *pitr*” or cumulatively for the pre-great-grandfather generations.

The counting of the *piṇḍas* in the dedication refers to a set of altogether sixteen *piṇḍas*. The first of these sixteen *piṇḍas* had

already been offered on the 11th day. That is why Mahendra starts with the second. Although the total number of *piṇḍas* offered in the actual *latyā* ritual is not sixteen, Mahendra is aware that it should be sixteen.

The number sixteen denotes the number of ancestor rituals (*śrāddha*) which have to be performed up until the end of a year or prior to the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*. However, it is not clear which rituals belong to these sixteen. In the Purāṇas and Dharmasmṛtis various lists of these sixteen *śrāddhas* are mentioned (cf. Müller 1992: 197, Kane 1991/IV: 518-520). The GPS (12.66ff.) names three sets of sixteen *śrāddhas* to be offered during the death rituals up until the performance of the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*, of which the third set are the *māsikapīṇḍas*. The three sets of sixteen are also mentioned in the appendix of the AKP (p. 222) where the author cites a passage from the twelfth chapter of the GPS, but also points out in his commentary that the middle set is often omitted.

The (Newar) Brahmin priests of Nepal thus know of these three sets, saying that a total of 48 (3 x 16) *piṇḍas* have to be offered within a year. However, in the present *latyā* ritual only the second to the fifteenth *piṇḍa* are counted. The *piṇḍa* placed silently on top of the other fourteen is not counted, so that the 1st and the 16th are not clearly identifiable. According to the local Newar Brahmin tradition, the sixteen *piṇḍas* which are offered on the 11th day count as number one, whereas the *pretapiṇḍa* in the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* is considered to be the 16th. In HB₁ the first *piṇḍa* is explicitly excluded⁸, and the recitation referring to the 16th *piṇḍa* called *śoḍaśakālāstotra* is presented together with the recitations for the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* (HB₁ fol. 9^v). In the notes of Aiśvaryadhara Śarmā the *piṇḍa* which is offered immediately before the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* is identified as the 16th, although it is not perceived as a food offering for the deceased but as a special offering to release the unpaci-

⁶ In HB₁ fol. 4^v the wording is: *amu[ka]nāmne dviṭiyakālāmāsikapīṇḍam tasmāi upatiṣṭhatām*. The priest replaces the name of the deceased with *putra*.

⁷ This counting is explained in detail in Michaels/Buss forthc.

⁸ *kalāprathamaparyantam unmāsādikapīṇḍakam* (fol. 3^v).

fied spirits of deceased family members. On the basis of the available sources it remains therefore open which *piṇḍa* has to be counted as the 16th. Moreover, during the ritual there is a further reference to the sixteen *śrāddhas*, for after the worship of the *pretapiṇḍa* and the *pitṛpiṇḍas* but prior to the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* Mahendra asks Narain Kumār to prepare sixteen coins as *dakṣiṇā*, and explains that these symbolically represent the sixteen *śrāddhas* (*soraśrāddha*).⁹

Narain Kumār worships the fifteen *piṇḍas* with water taken from the *piṇḍapātra* and flowers. He then pours with both hands *kuśa*-water three times over the *piṇḍas* while holding a *kuśa* blade in his right hand. He also offers three Sacred Threads on the three rows of *piṇḍas*.

Mahendra asks for a piece of white cloth from which he tears off a strip. It is wetted in the water of the *piṇḍapātra* and offered as cloth (*vastra*). The clothes worn during the ritual have to be new and freshly washed, which explains perhaps why the strip which is offered as cloth is wetted before the offering (cf. Müller 1989: 37 n. 85).

Mahendra then recites “sandalwood paste should be offered” (*candanam upatiṣṭhatām*) and hands some yellow powder on a leaf over to Narain Kumār, who scatters it with his forefinger over the *piṇḍas*. Afterwards he throws unbroken rice on them. Mahendra asks for *taṅgarāja* and *bhr̥ṅgarāja* flowers, which he hands over to Narain Kumār, who places them on the *piṇḍas*. While Narain Kumār offers these gifts according to the priestly instructions, Mahendra recites the dedication of each ritual service (*upacāra*), ending with “should be offered” (*upatiṣṭhatām*). All these gifts are given generically on a spot for all the *piṇḍas*. This form of collective offering of the *piṇḍas* is also mentioned as an option in the AKP (pp. 106-110).

After a while Narain Devī prepares small threads to be offered as Sacred Threads,



while Narain Kumār pours water from the *piṇḍapātra* on the *piṇḍas* while once again holding a *kuśa* blade. He pours the water on his right hand and lets it run over the part of his hand which is dedicated to the forefathers (*pitṛtūrtha*), i.e. the part between thumb and forefinger.¹⁰ After Narain Kumār has placed the *kuśa*-blade on the *piṇḍas* he turns the *piṇḍapātra* upside down. While Mahendra recites *stotras* from his handbook, Narain Kumār scatters unbroken rice on the *piṇḍas* and on the *piṇḍapātra*. Afterwards Narain Kumār removes the *piṇḍas* and places them in the *piṇḍapātra*. He carefully wipes the ground with his hand to remove any grains of rice and leaves, which he puts in the *piṇḍapātra*.

Mahendra tells him to draw a circle with his hand on the floor and speaks about the removal of the five pots. Narain Kumār draws a circle in the water of the wet floor with his finger, throws some unbroken rice on it and deposits the *piṇḍapātra* on the circle. Afterwards he washes his hands and pours water three times from the water jug (*kalaśa*) around the *piṇḍapātra* while Mahendra recites *stotras* that could not be identified. Then he turns the *kalaśa* upside down on the floor

Narain Kumār on the right places the fifteenth ball on top of the other fourteen balls.

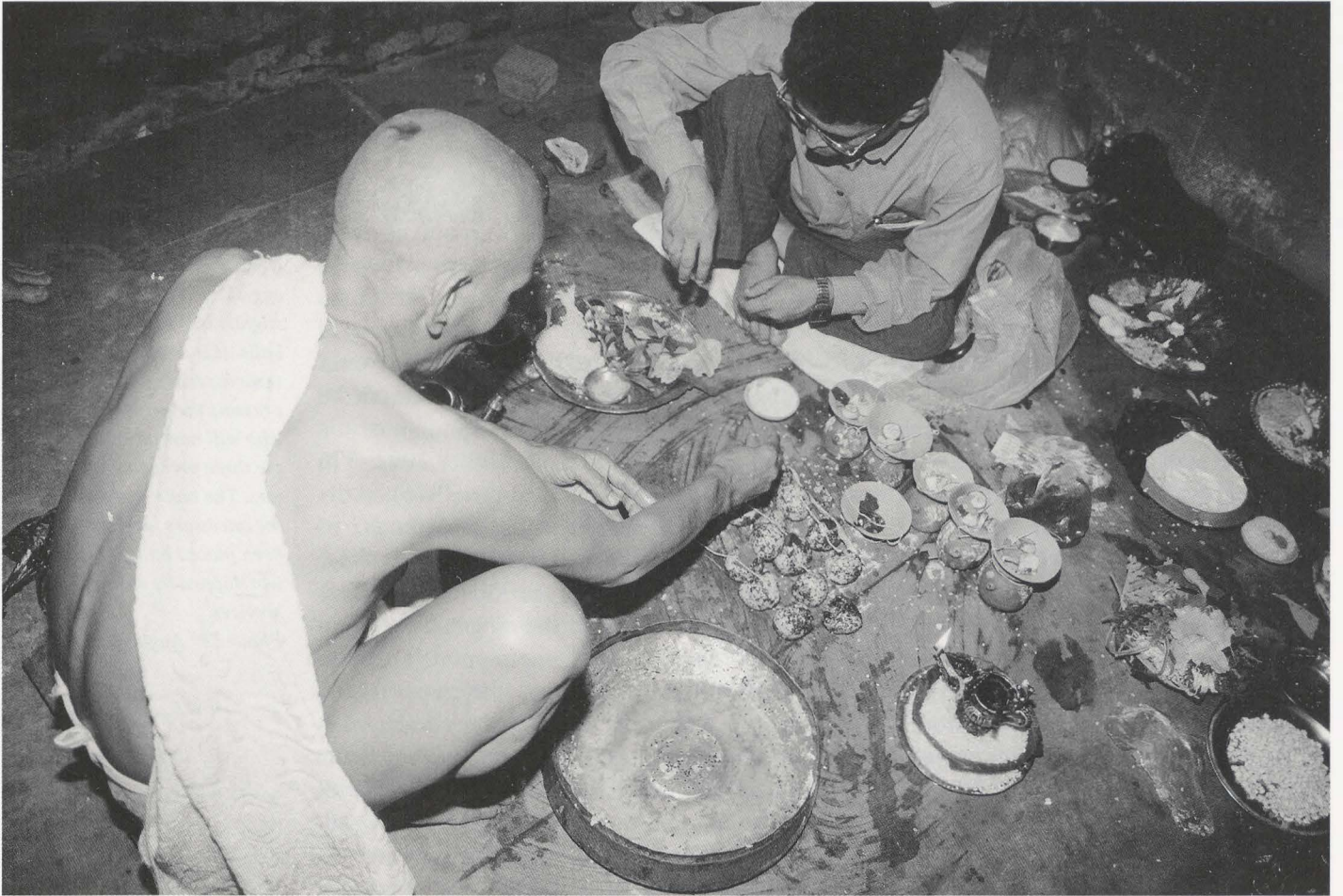
Photo 22nd August 2002

Opposite
Worship of the fifteen balls: fifteen balls have been placed on a diagram between the chief mourner and the priest. These are worshipped with the Sacred Thread lying on the balls. Behind the balls are five earthen pots covered with small cups: five different deities were invoked in them at the beginning of the ritual. To the right of the balls a ritual lamp has been placed on two leaf plates bearing rice.

Photo 22nd August 2002

⁹ For an examination of the *vikalapiṇḍa* cf. Buss 2005a, and for an interpretation of the sixteen *śrāddhas* cf. Buss 2005b.

¹⁰ For the dedication of the different parts of the hand to gods and ancestors cf. Bühnemann 1988: Ills. no. 6 and p. 231.



and worships it with unbroken rice as well as the *piṇḍas* in the *piṇḍapātra*, the light in front of the five pots and the five pots. Mahendra says that it is now time to worship the Gaṇeśa shrine and somebody should go there with the Gaṇeśakumbha.

The *pañcadaśapiṇḍadāna* sub-rite is concluded by Narain Devī, who hands over the Sacred Threads she has prepared in the meantime to Mahendra. A daughter of the family wipes the floor with a cloth. Narain Devī takes out the pots and the lamp, but not the *sukunḍā* lamp and the *piṇḍapātra*, which is kept aside until it is taken later to the river, where the *piṇḍas* are finally discarded.

The unification with the ancestors (*śoḍaśapiṇḍa* and *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*)

Mahendra draws new designs on the cleaned floor. He says that the main *maṇḍala*, on which the water will now be poured from water cups (*arghapātra*), represents the ocean (*samudra*). Meanwhile Narain Kumār has left his place standing beside Mahendra and watches as the designs are drawn. Then he sits back down on his place and puts three small water cups on the rectangular *maṇḍala*. The pattern for this is as follows (from left to right): the first and smallest cup is made of brass and meant for the *preta* (*pretapātra*). Mahendra says that it would have been better to use a vessel made from rhinoceros horn instead of brass.¹¹ The second, medium-sized cup is made from rhinoceros skin and set in silver. It is meant for the (three) forefathers of the deceased (*pitaraḥ*). In Hindu ancestor rites it is common that the three forefathers (*pitaraḥ*) or a certain number of the *viśvedevāḥ* are represented or substituted by just one priest or a vessel. The Brahmins themselves can also be substituted for instance by blades of *kuśa* grass. The third and largest water cup is made from copper and



meant for the “all-gods” (*viśvedevāḥ*, also called *kulaguru*). Narain Kumār cleans the three water cups with some water from the *kalaśa*. Mahendra explains that the water cup made of rhinoceros skin should not be wetted for a long time. According to the AP and other ritual texts (Müller 1992: 176 and Kane 1991/IV: 522, Knipe: 1976), in the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* not only the three *piṇḍas* of the *pitaraḥ* are unified with the *pretapiṇḍa*, but the unification is also done with water prior to the mixing of the *piṇḍas* by pouring water from a water cup representing the *preta* into three other water cups representing the *pitaraḥ*. In the present case three water cups are used, but at this stage there is no reference to the unification of the deceased with his forefathers.

Mahendra offers Sacred Threads to the remaining deities on the left of the new *maṇḍala* (*śālāgrāma*, Gaṇeśa, *gogras*, Kumārī or Aṣṭamātrkā, Sūrya, Nārāyaṇa, Sadāśiva, Gṛhalakṣmī, *iṣṭadevatā* or (Nev.) *dugudyah*, the lineage deity). On the instructions of the priest Narain Kumār sprinkles water from the water jug over himself for purification (*prokṣaṇa*). Mahendra also applies a *ṭikā* on Narain Kumār’s forehead and places a leaf on his own head. It is *prasāda* from that Gaṇeśa to whom the ram is to be sacrificed.

Narain Kumār forms a large egg-shaped ball which is slightly bigger than the other balls. It is covered with black sesame seeds. This ball represents the deceased (preta), who will now be united with the three preceding ancestors. The balls representing the ancestors have already been placed on the floor and worshipped by means of ritual services.

Photo 22nd August 2002

¹¹ For the use of vessels for *arghya* see Kane 1991/IV: 419.

The worship performed by Narain Kumār starts with offerings to the *viśvedevāḥ*, then to the *pitarāḥ*, and finally to the *preta*. In the beginning Narain Kumār offers them water mixed with black sesame seeds. Mahendra invokes Viṣṇu three times and studies the calendar. Narain Kumār pours the water onto the floor and turns the first water cup upside down. Mahendra throws some popped rice onto it and Narain Kumār scatters unbroken rice on the water cup and on the *sukunḍā* lamp. Then he sprinkles some water and again unbroken rice on the water cup.

Mahendra asks for the *nāḥkāpaḥ*, the white cotton strip Narain Kumār had worn around his waist until the tenth day after cremation. Some part of the soul of the dead is believed to be present in the cloth, which has been washed in the river where the ashes of the dead were floating. It is believed that the airy body (*vāyusaṅgā*) of the dead is present in the ashes and jumps onto the two strips of cloth in the river.

The *nāḥkāpaḥ* is kept aside for a moment while the worship with the second water cup continues: water from the water jug is poured into the second water cup, to which Mahendra adds black sesame seeds. Narain Kumār holds the cup with both hands while Mahendra touches it with his thumb, and both pour the water onto the *maṇḍala*. Mahendra takes away the second water cup and Narain Kumār throws unbroken rice onto the *maṇḍala*.

After the worship of the *viśvedevāḥ* with the first water cup and the *pitarāḥ* with the second water cup, the deceased (*preta*) will be worshipped. For this purpose not only the third water cup is used but also the *nāḥkāpaḥ* representing the *preta*. Narain Kumār holds the *nāḥkāpaḥ* and Mahendra places unbroken rice and flowers on it. Then Narain Kumār puts a coin on it. He places the *nāḥkāpaḥ* on the *maṇḍala* at the upper left-hand side of the *maṇḍala*. Then Narain Kumār holds the third water cup with both hands and pours water

onto the *nāḥkāpaḥ*. He offers three times water and puts unbroken rice on it.

Then Narain Kumār worships the *śālagrāma* with unbroken rice and water and again with unbroken rice. Mahendra gives a *ṭikā* to Narain Kumār and tells him to rub both hands and utter the word “Gajādharma” (i.e. Nārāyaṇa with a club). Narain Kumār offers unbroken rice to the water jug (*kalaśa*). Three small heaps with rice and leaves have been placed in front of the square *maṇḍala* for the *viśvedevāḥ*, the *pitarāḥ* and the *preta*.

Now Mahendra splits some *kuśa*-grass, which Narain Kumār puts in the water jug from which he pours three times water in his hand and then back into the water jug while invoking the rivers Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. Then he worships the water jug using yellow paste and unbroken rice, as well as himself (*ātmapūjā*) using water from the same water jug, yellow paste, flowers, and rice. Meanwhile Mahendra recites the dedication: “Honour to the self with sandalwood paste etc.” (*ātmane candanaṃ namaḥ* etc.)

Once again Mahendra recites *mantras*, which could not be identified, while Narain Kumār touches the plate bearing ritual utensils with his right hand. Afterwards he takes some unbroken rice from the plate and offers it together with water to the remaining deities (*śālagrāma* etc.). Then Narain Kumār offers water and leaves on the first water cup, on the main *maṇḍala*, to the *nāḥkāpaḥ*, and to the deities on the left.

Afterwards he again touches the plate, and Mahendra recites the ritual intention for the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*.¹² Mahendra puts the first water cup back on the *maṇḍala*. Narain Kumār fills it with water and Mahendra adds a blade of *kuśa*. Narain Kumār worships it with unbroken rice, flowers, and yellow paste, which he throws on it all at once.

Mahendra lights some incense sticks which he has asked for. Narain Kumār again

¹² [...] *ṣoḍaśakalāpīṇḍa sapīṇḍikaraṇaśrāddham kartum* [...]. This *saṃkalpa* is not mentioned in the priest's handbooks.

pours water from the first water cup (on the right side). Then he worships the second (silver) water cup with *kuśa*-grass, unbroken rice, flowers, incense and yellow paste.

Narain Devī enters, carrying a plate with the head of the ram, which was sacrificed shortly beforehand. She also brings a green plant which she places on Narain Kumār's head – on the leaf which is still sticking there above his tuft of hair (*sikhā*). Mahendra offers curds, water, yellow paste, unbroken rice, and flowers on the *śālagrāma* and invokes Viṣṇu. Narain Kumār worships the main *maṇḍala* and offers water (*gaṅgajala*). While Narain Kumār crouches on the floor holding the *piṇḍa* vessel in his left hand, Narain Kumār worships the *śālagrāma* with unbroken rice.

Then the preparation of the dough for the *sapiṇḍīkaraṇa* begins. Mahendra gives another *piṇḍapātra* to Narain Kumār, into which wheat flour, deep fried small loaves of fine wheat flour (*māricā*), sweets, and a banana have already been placed. After Mahendra has muttered the ritual intention “I will do the offering of *piṇḍas*”¹³, Narain Kumār starts preparing the *piṇḍas*. Mahendra worships the *piṇḍapātra* using yellow paste and rice. Narain Kumār carefully prepares the dough. He breaks the bread into small pieces and mashes the banana. While he adds water from the water jug he mixes the wheat and the other ingredients and afterwards carefully kneads them with both hands to achieve a smooth dough. His attention is completely absorbed by the activity of his both hands as he calmly continues.

During the preparation of the dough Narain Devī brings wicks and an earthenware cup with glowing coals for burning incense sticks. While Narain Kumār prepares the dough, the family members who are present talk about the pots which were taken to the different shrines, and also about the pot for Varuṇa, which was taken to a water tap.

Mahendra mentions that the pot for Sadāśiva will be taken later to Mahādeva when he is worshipped at Śivaliṅga in the concluding sub-ritual. Narain Devī lights some incense sticks from the *sukuṇḍā* lamp. The preparation of the dough continues slowly.

Then Narain Kumār prepares a large single lump of dough, adding some water to it in order to smoothen its surface. Mahendra instructs him how to divide the dough with his ten fingertips into eight separate parts (numbered in the following account). He also asks for some meat from a sheep. When he realises that it has not been brought he agrees that the meat of the ram can be used. He instructs Narain Devī not to cut the meat with a knife, which he describes as harmful, but to do it with her hands. Then he comments that it is not compulsory to offer the meat of a ram together with the *piṇḍas*. The woman tears some of the ram's flesh into pieces and puts them one after the other into the *piṇḍas*. It is not clear whether the offering of meat is a remnant of older ritual traditions or special to the Newars.¹⁴

The *piṇḍas* which include meat are denoted as *vikalapiṇḍa* (1), *pretapiṇḍa* (2) and three *piṇḍas* for the *pitarah* (3-5). The three remaining lumps of dough (6-8) are neither shaped into a round form, nor covered with black sesame seeds, nor mixed with meat.

Narain Kumār forms the first *piṇḍa* (1) by rolling it cautiously in his hands and shaping it into a round ball. Then Mahendra covers it with black sesame seeds and Narain Kumār places it on the *maṇḍala*. It is worshipped with water, unbroken rice, fruits, flowers, incense, and a Sacred Thread. Mahendra tells Narain Kumār to join his wrists. Afterwards the *piṇḍa* is kept aside in a brass bowl which will also be taken to the river in the concluding ritual (*piṇḍavisarjana*).

According to Mahendra, the first *piṇḍa* is called *bikala-*, *bikva-* or *birikipiṇḍa* (= *vikalapiṇḍa*), which literally means “*piṇḍa* for the

Opposite

After placing the ball of the deceased next to the three balls representing the forefathers and three unshaped lumps, Narain Kumār offers leaves, Sacred Threads, water and rice to the balls.

Photo 22nd August

¹³ *piṇḍadānaṃ ahaṃ karisyāmi*. (Not mentioned in the priest's handbooks).

¹⁴ According to Kane 1991/IV: 422 f., the use of flesh in the *śrāddha* is prescribed by Manu, Yājñavalkya and in several Purāṇas, but was totally condemned in the works of the 12th and 13th centuries. The notes of Aiśvaryaḍhar Śarmā list different varieties of meat for each of the monthly ancestor rituals (*māsikaśrāddhas*) (HB₂ p. 56).



sorrowful (deceased)”. This *piṇḍa* is regarded as an offering especially for miscarriages and children who died prematurely. According to Aiśvaryaḍhar Śarmā (HB₂ pp. 46-50), this first *piṇḍa* is the 16th of the *māsikapīṇḍas* which is dedicated in the *ṣoḍaśīpīṇḍadāna-mantra* to different unpacified spirits of the family, but has not yet been offered.

Now Narain Kumār cleans the floor with his hands. Mahendra gives him some water and tells him to clean his eyes with it and to sprinkle some over his head. He receives a *pavitra* ring¹⁵ made of *kuśa* grass, which he wears on his right ring finger. Throughout the ritual he has already been wearing a ring on the same finger made of rhinoceros horn, which belongs to his household. It is believed that the rhino stands for longevity.

Narain Kumār also receives *kuśa* grass from Mahendra, takes some water, and performs the mental assignment of body parts to various deities (*nyāsa*) – touching his nose and ears while Mahendra invokes three times Viṣṇu. Still holding the *kuśa*-blade, Narain Kumār smoothens the side of the *piṇḍa* dough at the point where he had taken the first *piṇḍa*. Mahendra adds some black sesame seeds and yellow paste to the dough.

After first marking a dividing line with a *kuśa* blade, Narain Kumār divides the dough into two halves. The first half is kept aside. Later on the *pretapiṇḍa* (2) will be formed from it. With the second half he prepares three *piṇḍas* for the *pitaraḥ* (3-5). Each of them is covered with black sesame seeds while reciting *mantras* and kept on the floor on the diagram where the worship with the three water cups had previously been performed. Narain Kumār pours water over the *pitṛtīrtha* of his hand (the part between thumb and index finger) and onto the *piṇḍa*, and Mahendra offers flowers on it. Narain Devī puts a piece of meat into each *piṇḍa*. Mahendra remarks that this meat is like *prasāda*. He instructs Narain Kumār to separate the remaining dough into

three unshaped lumps called leftover (*śeṣa*) (6-8) and to keep them on the right hand side of the *pitṛpiṇḍas*. There are competing interpretations regarding the meaning of these lumps: Mahendra insists that they have to be given for the generations of ancestors prior to his great-grandfathers; he says that according to his father they are also a kind of *pitṛ*, older than the three preceding generations, who are not worshipped by spelling out their names. (The *pitaraḥ* of the three preceding generations are usually worshipped by uttering their respective names and the name of the *gotra*.) However, according to another priest they form a *śimā*, a ritual border separating the ritual from the space outside.

After washing his hands and calling the names of the three forefathers, Narain Kumār worships the three *piṇḍas* with *kuśa* water (offering water while holding *kuśa*-grass in his hand), three Sacred Threads, a strip of wettened white cloth (*vastra*), yellow paste, unbroken rice, different leaves (*tulsī*, *bhṛṅgarāja*, *campaka*), *dūrvā*-grass, incense sticks, light, food offerings, fruits and once again water.

Then Narain Kumār takes the lump of dough (2) which he had previously put aside and forms a large *pretapiṇḍa* from it, which is oval-shaped rather than round. Mahendra tells and demonstrates that the *piṇḍa* should be twelve fingers long and should have the shape of a grinding stone and not be pointed at the ends. Narain Devī adds some meat. He instructs Narain Kumār to level out the uneven parts and to shape it into a perfect form. Narain Kumār smooths and forms the *piṇḍa* again and again with his two hands and thumbs until Mahendra is satisfied. He then adds black sesame seeds to it, before placing it on the left side of the three *pitṛpiṇḍas*. Narain Kumār washes his hands and uses the same water afterwards as an offering for the *piṇḍas*. He again makes ritual offerings (*upacāra*): water, flowers, cloth,

Opposite

Above

Narain Kumār on the right divides the ball of the deceased into three parts with the help of the priest on the left.

Below

Narain Kumār carefully merges the first part of the divided ball with the first ball representing the father. In the same way he will merge the other balls with the other parts of the divided ball. On the left in front of Mahendra's hands are banknotes which have been offered by family members to the forefathers and the deceased.

Photos 22nd August

¹⁵ For the use of *pavitra* rings see Abegg 1921: p. 145, note 7, Müller 1992: p. 37f., and Michaels 2005.



yellow paste, unbroken rice, leaves (*tulsī* and *campaka*). Narain Kumār takes water in his cupped hands and allows it to drip onto the floor. Then he takes a *kuśa* blade, touches the water on the ground and sprinkles it on the *pretapiṇḍa*.

Meanwhile Mahendra recites three times “Be in peace!” (*śāntir bhava*) for the *preta*. Narain Kumār takes the smallest water cup and uses it to pour first milk and then water onto the *pretapiṇḍa*. Mahendra tells Narain Kumār to take out sixteen coins for an offering, which as he explains constitutes the *soraśrāddha* rite.¹⁶ Narain Kumār offers first one coin to the deities on the left. Then he takes out some more coins from a plastic bag with money, counts them and offers them to the *pretapiṇḍa*. Narain Kumār takes out a 50 rupee bank note and offers it to the *nāhkāpaḥ*, which is still lying there, and to the unbroken rice on the *piṇḍa* and the *nāhkāpaḥ*. Mahendra recites *mantras*, such as *pretatvaṃ pretasamyuktaṃ pretarūpaṃ mayā prabho, pitāmahāprasādena pitṛlokam sa gacchati*. This is a variation of the verse in HB₁ fol. 9^v translated as: “Lord, through me the prethood of the *preta* will become pitṛhood. Through the grace of the grandfather he (the *preta*) goes to the realm of Viṣṇu.” Anyhow, Mahendra recites according to HB₃ fol. 3ⁱ *pretarūpam* instead of *pitṛrūpam*, and *pitṛlokam* instead of *viṣṇulokam*, so that the verse loses its meaning of transferring the deceased into the state of a forefather. Meanwhile some of the members of the family, who have gathered in the room, worship the *pretapiṇḍa* with rice and popped rice that the priest has given to them. Mahendra asks whether the family has brought gold and silver pieces. If not, money could also be used as a substitute. In fact, everyone offers coins and banknotes. Mahendra warns them not to hit the *piṇḍa* with the coins, because this would hurt (it or the deceased).

Both Narain Kumār and Mahendra hold the water jug and pour water on the *pretapiṇḍa*. Then Mahendra removes all the offerings from the *piṇḍas*, keeping them for himself.

Holding a banknote, Narain Kumār divides the *pretapiṇḍa* into three separate parts while Mahendra recites *mantras*. It is believed that the cutting should be done by a gold thread, which is substituted here by a banknote. Besides other verses he recites: *eṣa vo 'nugata pretapitaras tvaṃ dadāmi te, śivam astu viśeṣānāṃ jāyatāṃ ciraḥjīvinām* (cf. HB₁ fol. 8^r). While reciting, Mahendra consults his small handbook for the exact wording of the *mantras*.

After some moments Mahendra asks whether the dead person has a son or not. When Narain Kumār confirms this he says: “However, if he has a son it is not necessary to make (mix) all (the *piṇḍas*) into one. If he had not had a son, all (of the *piṇḍas*) would be made one.”

While tearing apart the second part he recites: “Go, go, oh grandfather!” (*gaccha gaccha mahātāta*, cf. HB₁ fol. 8^v). All three parts of the divided *pretapiṇḍa* (2) are now merged together with the three *pitṛpiṇḍas* (3-6) and put back in the previous place according to the instructions of Mahendra, who carefully demonstrates and explains how to do it. In this way the *preta* has become one with his three ancestors and his existence as a single helpless spirit has come to an end. The gathered family watches attentively the auspicious unification of the *preta* with the ancestors. The *preta* has now entered the new status as a *pitṛ* and will from now on be worshipped only together with his two prior ancestors.

In the case described here, the father (Narain Kumār) performs the ritual for his son Rabi, so the problem arises of how to identify the *piṇḍas*: who is represented in the father’s *piṇḍa* with whom the father shall

¹⁶ The *soraśrāddha* is performed within a period of sixteen days following full moon in September. It is not clear whether the coins refer to this ritual or to the above mentioned set of sixteen *śrāddhas* which has to be performed within a year after death.



The sacrificial ball representing the deceased has been merged with those three sacrificial balls which represent the father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. The deceased is now a forefather and has abandoned the insecure state of a disembodied ghost.
Photo 22nd August

be united after his death? In the legal texts, there are special rules for cases of a son dying earlier than the father. According to these rules it is strictly forbidden for a father or elder brother to perform the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* for the son or younger brother (see Kane 1991/IV: 257, GPS 11.19) However, in the present ritual this problem was not raised. The agency to continue the ritual was entirely with the priest.

Mahendra first pours water onto the three *piṇḍas* and then adds black sesame seeds until they are completely covered. The three previous leftover lumps (6-8) are kept in a triangular arrangement around the *piṇḍas*. This positioning of the *piṇḍas* was interpreted by one of the local priests as forming a border (*sīmā*) to create an interior space. The *piṇḍas* are again worshipped with ritual offerings: unbroken rice, Sacred Thread, *dūrvā*-grass, cloth, yellow paste, flowers, incense, light, fruits, food, and water. Finally, Narain Kumār and Mahendra offer water and milk, pouring it with the water cups onto the *piṇḍas*.

While the worship of the *piṇḍas* is going on, Narain Devī is already busy preparing two big water pots and clay cups for the subsequent offering of water (*jaladāna*). Mahendra tells Narain Kumār to remove the ritual ring and to put on another one made of

kuśa, and to offer the main *dakṣiṇā*. Narain Kumār worships Mahendra with unbroken rice. Mahendra mixes barley, rice, black sesame seeds and puffed rice in a clay cup and gives it to Narain Devī, who distributes it to the family members so that they can worship the *piṇḍas*.

Offering of water (*jaladāna*)

Mahendra asks for betel nut. He explains that without *dakṣiṇā* the jug (which is now to be offered) is only considered to be a piece of clay. Two water jugs (Nev. *jaladān gaḥpacā*) that have been specially prepared are brought into the room. They are filled with water and a piece of white cloth is tied around their necks. On top of each a small cup (Nev. *sali*) is placed filled with rice, a coin and a betel nut. The two jugs are an offering for the deceased on his one-year-long journey to Yama's city in the underworld. The deceased receives offerings of *piṇḍas* and water at different stages of his journey. The two water jugs are the water offerings for the 30th day and the 45th day, as was clearly indicated by Mahendra before. They are given to the priest, who now represents the deceased. Narain Kumār worships the jugs with ritual offerings: unbroken rice, water, yellow paste, a Sacred Thread, flowers, and light.

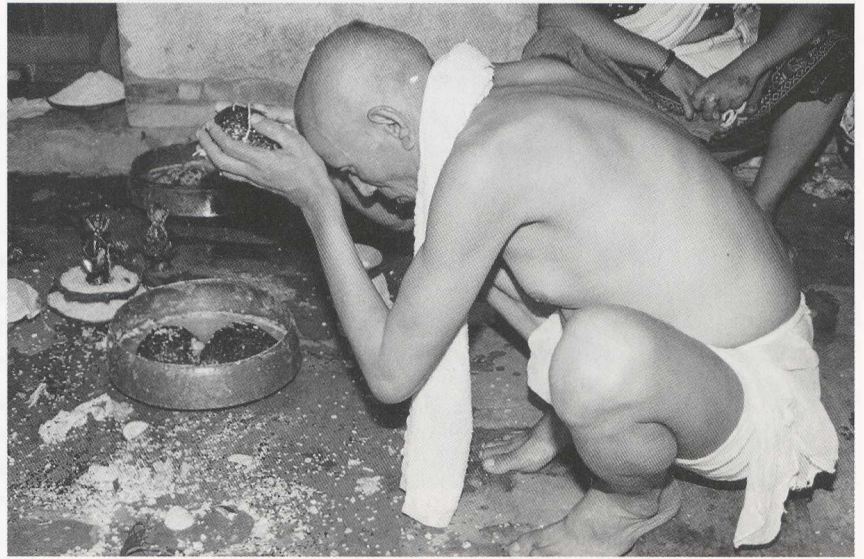
Narain Devī wraps two pieces of wood in white cloth. They represent an offering of beds.¹⁷ Two coins are put into the jugs and Mahendra recites *mantras*. The "beds" are kept on two small cups with rice in front of the jugs; two coins are placed on top and they are worshipped with rice. Narain Kumār holds unbroken rice and sesame in his right hand and touches both jugs while Mahendra recites. Then Narain Kumār scatters the unbroken rice and sesame on the two jugs and the two "beds". Afterwards he hands the two jugs over to Mahendra, who also receives a

¹⁷ According to the priest, a bed has to be given three times: at *latyā* (45th day), *khulā* (after six months), and *dākilā* (12 months).

plate with potatoes and flour and another plate with vegetables and lentils.

Mahendra sprinkles some water as *prasāda* from the water cup on the family members who are still present and observing the ritual. He gives a *ṭikā* with the yellow paste to Narain Kumār. Then he hands over the pot with the yellow colour to Narain Devī, who takes a *ṭikā* for herself and passes the pot on to the other family members to apply *ṭikās* to their foreheads. While Narain Kumār sits with his joined but open hands (*añjali*), Mahendra invokes the forefathers with the exclamation *svadhā* and recites *mantras* such as *punantu mā pitarah̄ somyāsaḥ punantu mā pitāmahāḥ punantu prapitāmahāḥ pavitreṇa śatāyuṣā, punantu mā pitāmahāḥ punantu prapitāmahāḥ pavitreṇa śatāyuṣa viśvam āyur vyaśnavai*. “Cleanse me the Fathers who enjoy *Soma*! Grandfathers make me clean. May great-grandfathers cleanse me with a sieve [of life] that brings a century [of life]. May my grandfathers cleanse me, may my great-grandfathers make me clean. With a sieve that brings a century may I obtain a full length of life.”¹⁸

Then Narain Kumār receives a floral garland and gives flowers to the members of the family. The priest receives coins and banknotes from them as *dakṣinā*. In return he presents Narain Kumār with flowers and a colourful cap (Nep. *ṭopi*), which he receives on the 45th day because this is a death ritual for a son. When a death ritual for a father is performed, the chief mourner receives the cap after 360 days. He also gives unbroken rice to the family members and to Narain Kumār, which they all scatter over the ritual arena. Mahendra shows Narain Kumār a ritual position of the hand that involves holding the thumbs in the palm (*muṣṭivat*). Narain Kumār holds the towel which is hanging around his neck in position by two corners and bows down. Then Mahendra receives *dakṣinā* from Narain Kumār and the family



members who are present: *nislā* (beaten rice, fruits, sweet), money, and plates with sweets and rice.

Narain Kumār offers a piece of cloth (*vastra*) and food offerings (*sidhā dāna*) on a brass plate to Mahendra, who also collects the money on the floor that had been given during the ritual. Throughout the room plates with rice, fruits and other edible items can be seen, all of them gifts to the priest. Narain Kumār places the *piṇḍas*, the unshaped lumps of the dough, the *nāḥkāpaḥ* and the other materials used for the ritual services (*upacāra*) into the *piṇḍapātra*. They will also be cast into the river in the concluding ritual, together with the other *piṇḍas*.

Mahendra then asks for a lump of cow dung which Narain Kumār rolls out on the floor for purification. Mahendra tells Narain Kumār to offer a water libation (*tarpaṇa*) and Narain Kumār pours water from a water cup onto the *piṇḍas*.

Finally the *piṇḍapātra* is worshipped by pouring water around it three times from the water jug (*tribhramaṇa*). While the water is being poured around the *piṇḍapātra* Mahendra holds his hands under the water in order to wash his hands. Narain Kumār leaves the

Narain Kumār takes the balls from the ritual arena and again worships them by touching them to his forehead. Afterwards he places them in a copper plate, where they remain until they are cast into the river Hanumante.

Photo 22nd August 2002

Opposite
Narain Kumār offers two jugs filled with water to the deceased (*jāladāna*). They are worshipped by means of ritual services and later on handed over to the priest.

Photo 22nd August 2002

¹⁸ YV 19.39, transl. Griffith/Arya.



jug upside down on the floor and worships it with rice. Mahendra gives (Nev.) *sinhamu* (pot with red powder) to Narain Devī so she can place vermilion on her forehead. She keeps it and gives some money to Mahendra and fixes the flower he gives to her in her hair. All of the women and one man take vermilion from the pot. One of the women takes the *śālagrāma* to the *pūja*-room (*pūjākvathā*) in the attic of the house.

Offering of the bed (*śayyādāna*)

After some time in front of the house of mourning, the relatives of the deceased set up a bed and prepare the equipment which will be offered together with the bed. The ritual is called the “offering of the bed” (*śayyādāna*, Nev. *sarja* or *sayaḥsāma*). Male and female relatives are present during the ritual, assisting the chief mourner Narain Kumār, the priest Mahendra Śarmā and his wife, who in the meantime has been called in. Sometimes they also offer unbroken rice or the ritual fee (*dakṣiṇā*) to the priest or the deceased. The gifts include a mattress, a bed sheet, a mosquito net, a picture of gods, and a stove with different kitchen utensils: pots, ladles and different edibles. The bed is adorned with a floral garland that has been prepared beforehand in the courtyard of the house.

Mahendra draws four *maṇḍalas* at the corners of the bed and three additional *maṇḍalas* in front of it. Another man places four small pots filled with water on the *maṇḍalas* at the four corners. The preparations for the *śayyādāna* continue; Mahendra checks the offerings and examines a small package of rings. The relatives bring more offerings and keep them beside, under and on the bed. An earthen stove with kitchen utensils stands in front of the bed. Some wheat is placed under the bed, later on barley as well.

Order of the monthly offerings (*māsikadāna kramaḥ*)

Month (<i>māsah</i>)	Offerings (<i>dānadravayāṇi</i>)	Names of underworld cities (<i>yamapurāḥ</i>)
1	Water vessel made of copper (Nep. <i>tāmāko jalpātra</i>) a seat for the jaladāna rite (<i>āsani jaladānam</i>)	<i>saumyam</i>
1 1/2	golden ring, rice pudding [cooked with milk to feed the family members] and clothing (<i>suvarṇāṅgulīyam, kṣīrabhojanaṃ paridhānāni ca</i>)	<i>sauripuram</i>
2	a pair of shoes (<i>upānahau</i>)	<i>nagendrabhavanam</i>
3	garment (<i>vastram</i>)	<i>gandharvapattana</i>
4	umbrella (<i>chatram</i>)	<i>śailāgamapuram</i>
5	[a]weapon (<i>astrāśastram</i>)	<i>krauñcapuram</i>
5 1/2	various valuable objects (<i>dhanadravyāṇi</i>)	<i>krūrapuram</i>
6	gift of a cow together with a small golden boat and garments (<i>suvarṇanau kāsahitagaudānam paridhānāni ca</i>)	<i>vicitrabhavanam</i>
7	grain [food etc.] (<i>annādikāni</i>)	<i>bahvapatapuram</i>
8	ornaments (<i>ābharaṇaṃ, Nep. gahanāguriyā</i>)	<i>duḥkhadapuram</i>
9	a golden lion-seat (<i>suvarṇasiṃhāsanam</i>)	<i>nānakrandapuram</i>
10	a pair of shoes (<i>upānahau</i>)	<i>sutapabhavanam</i>
11	a walking stick with a silver design on it (<i>laguḍaṃ rajatā jaḍitam</i>)	<i>raudrapuram</i>
11 1/2	gift of an umbrella (<i>chatradānam</i>)	<i>payovarṣaṇapuram</i>
12	gift of a woollen garment and other garments (<i>ūrṇavastradānam anyāni paridhānāni ca</i>)	<i>śītādhyapuram</i>

In the notes of Aiśvaryadhar Śarmā, this table is given with the names of the different cities the deceased has to pass through during one year, the timing when he will reach each city and the offerings that have to be given to him. The list of the cities is congruent with the names given in GPS 1.59 except for the city of Yama, which is missing in the table, so there are only 15 cities and timings given.



Offering of the bed (śayyādāna)
360 small water pots are filled with water as an offering to the deceased, who will set out on a year-long journey to the other world. Narain Kumār on a wooden āsana, Mahendra leaning against the bed.
Photo 22nd August 2002.

Mahendra places 360 small water pots (*udakakumbha*) on the floor in front of the bed and fills them with water. He is assisted by two men and a woman. These water pots are gifts for the deceased, one pot for each day of the lunar year. This happens despite the fact that the *preta* has already been unified with his ancestors in the *sapinḍikaraṇa*.

A *sukunḍā* lamp burns in front of the stove. After filling all of the 360 pots with water Mahendra crouches down in front of the bed, holding his small handbook, and directs the family members as to how and where to place the different items. Narain Kumār squats on a wooden footstool opposite him. He wears a *pavitra* ring.

Now the actual *śayyādāna* begins. A small icon of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa is worshipped with libations of milk and water, unbroken rice, and money. Some men place an earlier prepared umbrella made of leaves on top of the mosquito-net. A pot full of unhusked rice is brought in for the rice offering (*annadāna*). On top of it two nuts and a coin have been kept previously.

A stick from the Nep. *paiyū* (Nep. *pvā-sima*) tree leans against the bed. According to Mahendra a similar stick is used on the evening of the tenth day. Mahendra gives a *kuśa* blade to Narain Kumār, who touches the stick with his right hand while Mahendra is reciting the ritual intention and *mantras*, which could not be identified due to the noise outside on the road. Mahendra splits *kuśa* grass. Narain Kumār places banknotes and coins on the bed. Holding sesame, rice and water, which is slowly dripping from his right hand, he again touches the stick and Mahendra recites long passages.

Meanwhile Narain Devī lights the ghee lamp from the burning *sukunḍā*. After finishing the recitation Mahendra directs Narain Kumār to scatter the sesame seeds, rice and water which he has been holding on the ritual arena in front of the bed. Narain Kumār worships the Brahmin couple (Mahendra and his wife), which is now sitting on the bed, and offers dresses, shoes, money and a cap (*ṭopi*) to the Brahmin. The wife of the deceased man washes the feet of the couple, offers *ṭikā*, gives a plate with potatoes, turmeric (Nep. *haldī*), salt etc. and the ritual fee. Narain Devī as well as other female family members

also ritually wash their feet by placing them on a dish and pouring some water over them. Everyone worships the couple.

Narain Kumār presents Mahendra with the dish with rice (*annādāna*) and a plate with salt, potatoes, rice, black and yellow lentils, turmeric and clarified butter. Then he offers bangles and the two rings to the couple. Once again Mahendra consults his handbook for the recitations. Shoes, fruits and money are presented to him. He then sprinkles water on the family members (*abhiṣeka*) who are present. Narain Kumār offers a floral garland to Mahendra, who is still sitting on the bed next to his wife reciting Sanskrit verses which could not be identified.

Finally Mahendra gives pieces of a flower first to Narain Kumār, then to the other family members (*prasāda*). Everyone pays a ritual fee (*dakṣiṇā*) to Mahendra. After clearing the ritual arena, Mahendra and his wife quickly return home.

Casting away the sacrificial balls (*piṇḍavisarjana*)

After the *śayyādāna* a procession of relatives walks to the Maṅgaltīrtha at the river Hanumante to cast away the *piṇḍas* (*piṇḍavisarjana*, Nev. *phēki vāygu*). The *piṇḍas* are carried in the three different *piṇḍapātra* in which they have been kept during the foregoing rituals. The first person – who is carrying the single *piṇḍa* (*vikalapiṇḍa*) in a brass vessel – is the husband (Nev. *jicābhāju*) of Narain Devī, the second copper vessel with fifteen *piṇḍas* is carried by a member of a split lineage (Nev. *phukī*), and the third vessel, also made of copper and containing the three *pitṛpiṇḍas*, is carried by Narain Kumār who walks behind the other two. They are accompanied by Narain Devī. The *piṇḍas* are thrown in the same order into the river. Carefully they walk barefoot on the

slippery and muddy river bank, taking care not to fall.

Finally Narain Devī offers a plate of food (Nev. *khusibvaḥ*) to the crows at the river. As soon as she has left the plate the crows pounce on and fight over the food. They can be sure to be fed again soon when the next party of mourners comes.

Worship of Śiva (*śivaliṅgapūjā*)

Narain Kumār performs the last rite of the *latyā* ritual at the Maṅgaltīrtha on the banks of the river Hanumante. He worships Śiva, who is represented there in the form of a *liṅga*. The pot of Sadāśiva which was used in the previous ritual is brought for the purpose. Food offerings and the pot are kept beside the *liṅga*. First offerings are made of yellow paste, unbroken rice, flowers, fruits and a coin, then water is poured 45 times over the *liṅga*, representing libations for each of the first 45 days. The water has not been taken from the river, but collected from a nearby well by one of the family members.

Back at the house the Kāpalī woman comes to collect her share from Narain Devī. First four plates of food, later on a fifth is given to her, as well as money and some rice beer. This concludes the series of death rituals performed on the 45th day after the death of Rabi Svāgamikha.

Opposite

Offering of a bed (śayyādāna) to the deceased on the 45th day after death. The widow of the deceased, Lakṣmī, washes as do other relatives the feet of the Brahmin couple.

Photo 22nd August 2002.

THE RITUAL HANDBOOKS





THE RITUAL HANDBOOKS

Introduction

The following edition of a “Handbook of the Latyā Ritual” is based on a personal handbook belonging to the Brahmin priest Mahendra Rāj Śarmā, Bhaktapur (HB₁). HB₃ which also belongs to Mahendra Rāj Śarmā, contains excerpts of some of the stotras of HB₁. A transliteration and concordance of HB₃ is attached to the translation of HB₁. Additionally another handbook (HB₂) belonging to his brother-in-law Aiśvaryadhar Śarmā has also been consulted, as has the *Antyakarmapaddhati* (AKP), a printed manual in Sanskrit with a Nepālī commentary:

AKP *Antyakarmapaddhati* by Dadhi Rāma Marāṣini, with a commentary by Rṣi Rāma Śarmā Ghimire. Kathmandu: Mahendra-Saṃskṛta-Viśvavidyālaya, V.S.2056. – XVIII, 285 pp. (Mahendra-Saṃskṛta-Viśvavidyālaya-Granthamālā, vol. 38).

HB₁ Personal handbook of the priest Mahendra Raj Śarmā, Bhaktapur, dated [vikrama] *saṃvat 1997 phālguna śudi 10 roja 7*, i.e. 1940 AD, Nepālī paper, 31 fol., no title, size: 11.5 x 7 cm, 5-7 lines per folio, Devanāgarī script, black ink, occasional underlining in yellow (*kumkuma*) and red (*haridrā*), some additional remarks on the margins. The manuscript belongs to the family of Mahendra Rāj Śarmā. According to him it is the only source to be used for performing the *latyā* ritual. The author, who identifies himself on fol. 31' as the Brahmin Devadhara, was not a family member.

HB₂ Handbook of Aiśvaryadhar Śarmā, Patan, untitled, undated, written in the 1990s. The book deals with death rituals, *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* (*latyā*) and *śayyādāna*. Modern stationery copy book, 124 pages, approx. 25 lines on each page; Devanāgarī script, occasional underlining in fluorescent or coloured text markers. The HB₂ consists for the most part of verses for recitations or *saṃkalpas*. Only occasionally are ritual prescriptions given. Pages *kha-ṭa* deal with the *śayyādāna* and the connected rituals, pages 1-110 with the death ritual starting with the treatment of the dead body until the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* and *śrāddha*. Additionally lists of materials to be used in the rituals are mentioned, as well as tables for the timing of the *māsikapinḍas* and the stations of the underworld which the deceased has to pass, as well as drawings of the diagram for the *māsikapinḍas* and of the arrangement of the pots at the *śayyādāna*.

HB₃ Personal handbook of the priest Mahendra Śarmā, Bhaktapur. A collection of the main *stotras* used during the *latyā* ritual; undated, untitled, size: 5.8 x 9 cm, 10-14 lines per folio, Devanāgarī script, black ink. From the handbook 6 foll. contain a selection of *stotras* and *vākyas* serving as memory aids for the recitations in the *latyā*, which are for the most part congruent with the verses given in HB₁. Mahendra Śarmā used this handbook several times during the performance of *latyā*.

Opposite

All of the balls that have previously been offered are brought to the river Hanumante and cast into it. The *jicābhāju* casts the *vikalapiṇḍa*, a member of a *phukī* casts the fifteen balls, and *Narain Kumār* casts the balls of the forefathers with the unshaped lumps. Afterwards the *mhāyamacā* offers a plate of food (*khusibvaḥ*) to the river and the crows.

Photo 22nd August 2002

Sigla and abbreviations:

,	<i>daṇḍa</i>
.	double <i>daṇḍa</i>
	end of line
	new folio
–	(underlining:) Nevārī words (in fol. 16 ^v and 31 ^r : Nepālī)
x	Unreadable <i>aḥṣara</i>
Nev.	Nevārī
Nep.	Nepālī
[]	References of verses which are quoted in an abbreviated form; quotations from the Yajurveda are from Griffith/Arya 1997.

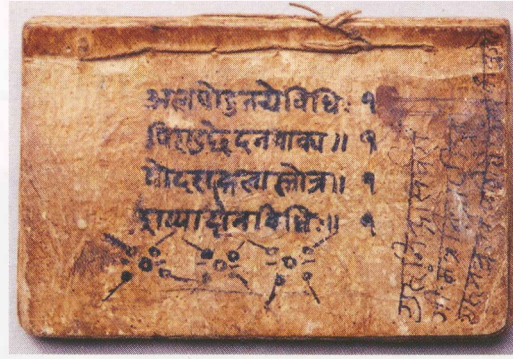
Abbreviations used in HB₁:¹⁹

⁰	abbreviation (e.g. <i>u⁰</i> : <i>upatiṣṭhatām</i>)
2	either <i>namaḥ</i> (with dative) or <i>upatiṣṭhatām</i> (with accusative)
3	repetition (three times)
•	dot to separate words or <i>namaḥ</i> (see fol. 17 ^r ff.)

In the following edition, spelling peculiarities and variants of HB₁ – e.g. s for ś and ṣ, ṁ for nasals, yy for y etc. – have not been amended.

The Sanskrit text, partly mixed with Nevārī, is often corrupt. Given that it was written for the personal use of the priest and certainly not meant for publication or translation, we have not “corrected” the text. Emendations which concern our translation are given in the notes. However, we did not aim at a literal translation which would mirror all the “mistakes”, inconsistencies and *lacunae*. Rather we tried to present a readable and practical translation. Thus, we often have translated the gerund by finite verb forms in the imperative or optative mood in order to underline the prescriptive character of the text.

The reader should take into consideration that such texts are often written by authors who are more interested in the ritual practice than transmitting a learned textual tradition,



Title page of the manuscript HB, written by Devadhara in 1940 AD, size 11.5 x 7 centimetres.

Source: collection of Mahendra Śarmā.

and thus care more about getting the ritual right rather than the texts. There is also a significant discrepancy in the distribution of topics: while the focus of the *latyā* ritual is on the *piṇḍas*, the handbook (HB₁) is more concerned with the gift of the bed (*śayyādāna*), which takes a comparatively short time in the actual ritual.

Edition

fol.

[Table of contents]

alapodutayevidhiḥ | *piṇḍachedanavākya*. | *ṣo-daśakalāstotra*. | *śayyādānavidhiḥ*.²⁰ |

[Pūrvāṅga]

1^r *śrīgaṇeśāye namaḥ*.²¹ | *atha caturdaśakalā alapodutaye vidhiḥ. nhāpām alapo-voye. 5 • 7 • 9 • 11 • 21 • vā taye. lācamana 3. śrīsūryārgha. vākya. lamukagotra amukoddeśacaturdaśakalā-*

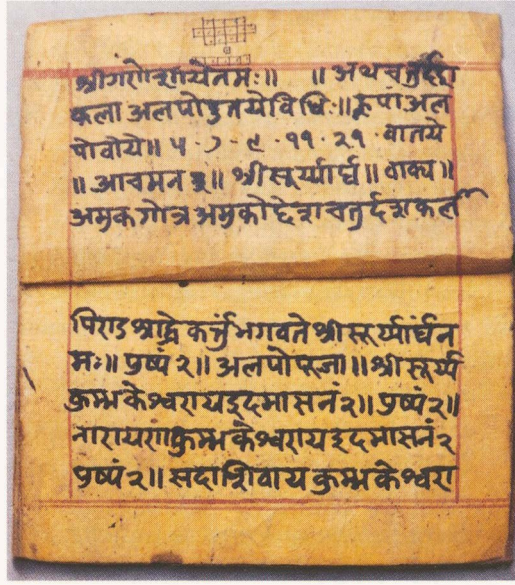
1^v *piṇḍaśrāddhe karttuṃ bhagavate śrīsūryārghaṃ namaḥ. puṣpaṃ 2. alapopūjā. śrīsūryakumbhakeśvarāya idam āsanaṃ 2. puṣpaṃ 2. Inārāyaṇam-kumbhakeśvarāya idam āsanaṃ 2 | puṣpaṃ 2. sadāśivāya kumbhakeśvarā-*
 2^r *ya idam āsanaṃ 2. puṣpaṃ 2. gaṇapatikumlbhakeśvarāya idam āsanaṃ 2. puṣpaṃ 2. Ivaruṇakumbhakeśvarāya idam āsanaṃ 2. | puṣpaṃ 2. vahi-*

¹⁹ The figures are written in Devanāgarī in HB₁.

²⁰ On the right margin of the first page three lines have been added, illegibly.

²¹ On the top margin is a small diagram for placing the *pañcadaśapiṇḍas*, similar to HB₂, p. 41.

First page of manuscript HB₁.
Source: collection of Mahendra Śarmā.



²² Last line written on the margin, probably by the same scribe.

²³ HB₃ fol. 1^r-1^v: *sarvatīrthamalyīmūrtikum̐bhakeśatṛtīyamāmāmi śiva śatataṃ xi śsarvā jiveṣu tāraṇam. lvidhiḥ viṣṇu haraś caiva ltrimūrtibhava-tāraṇam. śyāmaraktāti varṇas tvam pūrṇakumbham namo stu te.*

²⁴ Read *ūnamāsika*-.

²⁵ HB₃ fol. 1^r: *kravyādāgni-stotrakunḍa lkarpūrasam̐kāsa ekavaktraḥ trilocana. pañcadaśakalāśrāddhe kravyādāgne namo lstu te.* Verse not verified.

²⁶ *stotra... astu* written on the bottom and the margins of fol. 3^v and 4^r.

²⁷ Verse not verified.

²⁸ Read *amukanāme*-.

²⁹ Read *trītyakalā*-.

³⁰ Read *ṣaṣṭha*-.

³¹ Read *uṣṇānāmāsikapinḍam*.

³² *taṃkarājabhṛṃgārāja* added on the right margin.

³³ *kolā... bhopye* written on the left, bottom and right margins.

³⁴ HB₃ fol. 1^r: *parataḥ śivakumbhena namas te pitṛdevatā.*

³⁵ Read *amukanāma*-.

- dvārāṃgaṇebhyo idam āsanaṃ 2. puṣpaṃ 2. evaṃ pādārghaṃ 2. hastārghyaṃ 2. pratyarghyaṃ 2. candanaṃ 2. yajñopavītakapuṣpaṃ 2. dhūpaṃ 2 dīpaṃ 2. atra gandhādi.. stotra.*
- sarvatīrthamalyīmūrtikum̐bheśvara-trītyake. namāmi satataṃ devapūrṇakumbham namāmi te.*
- lvidhir viṣṇuharaś caiva trimūrtibhava-tāraṇam.*²²
- 3^r *śyāmaraktādikavarṇam praṇāmāmi sadāśivam.*²³ *kalāprathamaparyyaṃtam unmāsādilka*²⁴ *piṇḍakam. dvisaptāditrimūrtitvam lpūrṇākumbhakam īśvaraṃ.*
- atra gandhādil.. matāpūjā. siddhikeśvara amu-*
- 3^v *lkanāmakravyādāgnaye idam āsanam upatiṣṭhatām. puṣpaṃ upatiṣṭhatām. evaṃ pādārghyaṃ u⁰. hastārghyaṃ u⁰. candanākṣaltayajñopavītakapuṣpaṃ upatiṣṭhatām. dhūpaṃ • dīpaṃ • naivedyaṃ u⁰. atra gaṃdhādi. stotra*
- kunḍam karpūrasam̐kāsam̐ ekavaktraṃ trilocānam. pañcadaśakalāśrāddhe kravyādāgnimūrtitaye namaḥ.*²⁵
- atra pūjā*

- 4^r *lvidhānaṃ tatsarvaṃ vidhiparipūrṇam astu.*²⁶ *l**stotra.*
- siddhikeśa namas tubhyaṃ bhūtanāthāya te namaḥ. sarvasiddhikaram devaṃ bhūtanātham namo stu te.*²⁷.

[Pañcadaśapiṇḍādāna]

caturdaśakalāpiṇḍāsanam upatiṣṭhatām. piṇḍapātrālsanam ca. vāle pinḍathāye. adyetyādi • vākya. amukagotra amukodde-

- 4^v *śacaturdaśakalāpiṇḍāśrāddhe amulnāme*²⁸ *dvtīyakalāmāsikapinḍam l**tasmai upatiṣṭhatām. trītya*²⁹ *tripakṣelmāsikapinḍam*⁰. *caturthakalādvīṭīyamāsikapinḍam*⁰. *pañcamakalātrī-*
- 5^r *lyamāsikapinḍam. ṣaṣṭhakalācaturthamālsikapinḍam*³⁰. *saptamakalāpañcamamāsikapinḍam. aṣṭamakalā uṣṇānamāsikapinḍam*³¹. *navamakalāṣānamāsikapinḍam. dasamakalāsapta-*
- 5^v *pinḍam. ekādaśakalā aṣṭamamālsikapinḍam. dvādasakalānavamamālsikapinḍam. trayodasakalādasamamālsikapinḍam. caturdasakalā ekādasamālsikapinḍam. kolā*³² *lhā si-*
- 6^r *lye. piṇḍabhāga. caturdasakalāpiṇḍe lpinḍabhāgam upatiṣṭhatām. tilodaka. l**caturdasakalāpiṇḍe tilodakārghyaṃ lupatiṣṭhatām. candanayajñopavītakamkarāja bhṛṃgārāja*³² *lpuspaṃ upatiṣṭhatām. atra gaṃdhādi*
- 6^v *kolā*³³ *lhānā piṇḍasa tonake. piṇḍapātrodakena tilodakārghyaṃ upatiṣṭhatām. kolā bhopye*³³. *stotra.*
- caturdasakalāpiṇḍe trptilr bhavati sāsivatam. pitaraśivakumbham*³⁴ *lca namas te pitṛdevatā.*
- atra gandhādi l. kumbhakeśvarebhyo puṣpaṃ upatiṣṭhatām. l**caturdasakalāpiṇḍe puṣpaṃ upatiṣṭhatām l. siddhikeśvarāya amuka*³⁵ *kravyādāgne-*
- 7^r *ya puṣpaṃ upa*⁰. *caturdasaka-*

*lāpiṇḍasvalsthānavāso bhavatu. piṇḍa
ṇoye. piṇḍa jalena tribhramaṇam.
sarvāni pāpāṇi purā kṛtāni samviṣṭi-
pāpā ca dilvaṇ prayānti.
7^v yogikṛtā tvam nijaṇ vīnudānaṇ
bhāgīrathi tvam śaraṇam prayānti.³⁶
alapo dutayeke choye. gaṇeśalpūjā
choye. piṇḍa khumśa cuyake choye |. iti
caturddasakalā alapodutaye vidhiḥ.*

[Sapiṇḍikaraṇa/Latyā]

8^r *latyāyā piṇḍachedana. vākya. |
eṣa vonugatapretapitaras tvam dadāmi
te. śīvam astu viśeṣānāṇ jāyatām³⁷
cirajīvinām³⁸. gṛhyatām tatsvarūpeṇa
piṇḍarūpeṇa samsthitaṇ³⁹.
8^v gacha gacha mahāllītā pitarau śara-
ṇam tava. samānapadalpiṇḍam tu
pitṛloke sthiro bhava⁴⁰.
vākya.
ihalokaṇ parityajya gatosi⁴¹ paralmām
gati⁴². pretarūpaṇ⁴³ parityajya divya-
lokaṇ sa gacchati. 1.
9^r tava vaṇśasamudbhūtalprapautrohaṇ
pitāmaha⁴⁴. pretatvagatiṇ⁴⁵ āpannaṇ
śāmṇidhyaṇ kṛiyatām⁴⁶ tvayā.
vākya.
ihalokaṇ pari⁰. 2..
prapautras tvam kule jāltā śṛṇu
vṛddhapitāmaha. yāvac candrārkkau
lmedinyāṇ⁴⁷ tāvat tvam susthiro⁴⁸
bhava.
9^v ihalokaṇ pa⁰. 3..⁴⁹
śodaśakalāstotra⁵⁰.
pretatvaṇ pretasamyuktaṇ
pitṛrūpaṇ⁵¹ mayā lprabho⁵². pitāma-
haprasādēna viṣṇulokaṇ⁵³ śa gac-
chati.
iti śodasakalāstotra⁵⁴.|*

[Śayyādāna]

*atha śayyādānavidhiḥ.. tataḥ bhumau
10^r gomayena lipya · pitacūrṇena
aṣṭadalapaldmaṇ lekhyā. tataḥ
prasthaikapātre nidhāya l. tasyopa-
ri sārādārumayiramyaṇ dṛḍhāṇ
ldantapatravicitritām śayyāṇ āsthiryāya
ltasyopari hamsatūlisa⁵⁵śīrṣapidhā-
10^v nikāṇ pracchādāna paṭṭi⁵⁶pañcavarṇa-
viciltrānakaṇ bhidyā⁵⁷ chādāna-
nāṇvara⁵⁸yutām śayyāṇ saljīkṛtyā.
tadupari niṣkadvayasavarṇalpariyutām.
lakṣmīnārāyaṇapratimāṇ sthālpyā. pañ-
cakumbhapramāṇam. īśāṇe gṛhṭakum-
11^r bhaṇ ca āgneyāṇ kuṇkumas tathā.
nairītyāṇ⁵⁹ goldhūmakumbhaṇ vā-
yavyāṇ jalapūritaṇ. nidrākuṇbha-
ghṛta śīrṣe sthāpyā. pañcakum-
bheṣu lpūrṇapātraṇ nidhāya. tataḥ
śayyāpālśve saptadhānyāṇ samsthā-
pyā. pramāṇa.
11^v dhānyāṇ yavaṇ ca godhūmaṇ mudgā
māśā kulumṭhaka⁶⁰. canakā⁶¹ cetivi-
jñeyā saptadhānyāni vai budhaiḥ..
tataḥ tāmbūlakamaṇḍalu ādarśakuṇ-
kumaḥśaudrakarpūra agulrukrṣṇā-
guruśīrikhaṇḍadīpikāchatra ulpānahau
cāmaravyajanapāna āsanapāka-
12^r bhāṇḍasadarvivyāñjanādi yathāyo-
gopakalraṇāni śayyāpālśve yathā
saṇbhavasāmālgrīn sthāpayet.
strīpumbhedena vastrālalīkā-
rādiyathāyogyavastuni sthāpyā. ltataḥ
prāṇmukhopaviśya. śayyopari-
sthitā lakṣmīnārāyaṇapratimā⁶²
· śālligrāmaṇ pūjayet.. ādau
saṇkallpaḥ. ācamana 3. tilakuśaja-
lāny āldāya. vākya. oṇ tatsat 3 viṣṇu
3. adyalbrahmaṇetyādi⁰. deśakālau
saṇkīrttyā. alṇmukagotrāsmatpitaramu-
kaśarmmaṇojñā-
13^r tājñātākāyavānmanojanitāśeṣapāpa-
l kṣayapūrvakāpsarogaṇasevyamāna
vimāṇnādhikaraṇakendrapuragama-*

³⁶ HB₂ p. 39: *sarvāni pāpāni purā kṛtāni pūrvaiḥ kṛtāni pralayaṇ prayāntu, kṛtaiḥ suputrain jalabindupātair bhāgīrathi tvac charaṇam prayāntu.* The metre is *upajāti*, though irregular.

³⁷ -tām added by a different scribe.

³⁸ Read *eṣa vo 'nugata-*; HB₂ p. 43: *eṣa vonugataḥ pretaiḥ pitaras tvam dadāmi te, śīvaviṣṇumaheṣānāṇ jāyatām cirajīvinām.*

³⁹ HB₂ p. 43: *gṛhyatām tvat sutoṭpannaṇ piṇḍarūpeṇa samsthitaṇ, samānapadavīm vāstu prasīdatu pitāmahaḥ.*

⁴⁰ HB₂ p. 43: *gacha gacha mahāpreta pitarau śaraṇam tava, samānapadam ārabhya pitṛloke sthiro bhava.*

⁴¹ Read *gato* 'si.

⁴² Read -*gatiṇ*.

⁴³ HB₂ p. 43 and HB₃ fol. 2^v: *pretalokaṇ.*

⁴⁴ HB₂ p. 43: *pautroyaṇ prāpitāmaha.*

⁴⁵ Read *pretatvagatiṇ*.

⁴⁶ Read *kṛiyatām*.

⁴⁷ HB₂ p. 44: *candrārka-medinyāṇ.*

⁴⁸ HB₂ p. 44: *ca sthiro.*

⁴⁹ The verses from fol. 8^r should be repeated for the father, the grandfather, and the great-grandfather. Here the beginning of the verse *ihaloka* is abbreviated, but from the context it can be assumed that this verse is addressed to the great-grandfather.

⁵⁰ Read *śodaśa-*.

⁵¹ HB₃ fol. 3^v: *pretarūpaṇ.*

⁵² HB₂ p. 43: *pretas tvam pretasamyuktaṇ pretarūpaṇ prasīdhyati, pitāmahaprasādēna viṣṇulokaṇ sa gacchati.*

⁵³ HB₃ fol. 3^v: *pitṛlokaṇ.*

⁵⁴ Read *śodaśa-*.

⁵⁵ Read *hamsatūlikā*.

⁵⁶ Read *paṭṭi*.

⁵⁷ Read *bhītvā?*.

⁵⁸ Read *chādānāmbara-*.

⁵⁹ Read *nairītyāṇ*.

⁶⁰ Read *kulattha*; HB₂ p. *ga: kulatthaka.*

⁶¹ Read *caṇaka*.

⁶² Read *-pratimāṃ*.

⁶³ HB₂ p. gha: *oṃ adyetyādi. amukaḡotrotpannasya amukasambandhasya nāmnah jñātājñātākāyika vācika mānasika sām̐sargikār̐bhikādi-aneka janmajanmāntarīya-aśeṣapāpaparikṣayapūrvaka apsarogaṇasevyamānakendrapuragamanottaraśaṣṭhīsa-hasravarṣa tadadhikaraṇa-kriḡānastrisaḡhasrasaṃvarāṇa-sahita svargalokamahitvataduttaraśaṣṭhīyojanamaṇḡalārājyantarāśivaikyakāmāhyathāśaktisajjīkṛtagṛhopaskaraṇasahitāṃ śayyāṃ imāṃ dānam ahaṃ kariṣye. RBKS fol. 399^v: pitṛadeḡ samas-tapāpakṣayapūrvakāpsarogaṇasevāyutavimānakaraṇa-kendrapuragamanottaraśaṣṭi-sahasravarṣādhikaraṇakriḡānastrisaḡghasamāvṛtasarvalokamahimatvaduttaraśaṣṭīyojanamaṇḡalārājyabhogānanta-raśivasāyujyāvṛpti kāmāḡ śayyādānam ahaṃ kariṣye.*

⁶⁴ Read *śayyādānam kartum*.

⁶⁵ RV I.35.2, YV 33.43.

⁶⁶ Quoted from the memory of Pandit Aiśvaryaḡhar Śarmā; cf. Siddhāntakaumudī, Pāṃinīyaśikṣāverse 59: *ajñānāndhasya lokasya jñānāñjanaśalākayā, cakṣur unmilitaṃ yena tasmai pāñinaye namaḡ..*

⁶⁷ Read *-āsanāya*.

⁶⁸ HB₃ fol. 4^v: *vīgṛaham*.

⁶⁹ Read *urasā-*. HB₃ fol. 4^v:

urasā kaustubham vibhṛt.

⁷⁰ HB₂ p. gha: *-prabhum*.

⁷¹ HB₃ fol. 4^v: *padmam mukuraṃ.*

⁷² HB₂ p. gha: *-kūrmāu*.

⁷³ Read *bhagavan*.

⁷⁴ Read *bhava*.

⁷⁵ YV 25.19.

⁷⁶ YV 18.36.

⁷⁷ YV 23.32.

⁷⁸ YV 13.27-29.

⁷⁹ *ghṛta* written on the top margin.

⁸⁰ YV 6.19.

⁸¹ YV 16.41.

⁸² YV 16.61.

nottaraśaṣṭisahasrasaṃvaranasahita-svarlokamahitvaṃ | taduttaraśaṣṭīyojanamaṇḡalārājyānaṇita-

13^v *raśivaikyakāmāḡ śayyādānapūjānimittyartheṭi saṃkalpaḡ⁶³.. tad eva vākye-l naśayyādānakartuṃ⁶⁴ bhagavate śrīsūryyālya arghyaṃ namaḡ. puṣpaṃ 2. oṃ ākrṣṇe⁰ |*

[ā krṣṇena rajasā varttamāno nīveśayann amṛtaṃ martyaṃ ca, hiranyayena savitā rathenā devo yāti bhuvanāni paśyan.⁶⁵]

gurunamaskāra.

ajñānatimirāndheti⁰ |

[ajñānatimirāndhasya jñānāñjanaśalākayā, cakṣur unmilita yena tasmai śrīgurave namaḡ.⁶⁶]

nyāsaśaṅkhārgḡhapūjā. ātmapūjāntaṃ.

14^r *tataḡ śayyoparidevasyāsanapūjā. oṃ āldhāraśaktaye namaḡ. oṃ antāsanāya 2 loṃ skandāsanāya 2. oṃ nālāsanāya |2. padmāsanāya 2. patrāsanāya 2. lkeśārāsanāya 2. karṇikāsanāya 2 |.*

14^v *oṃ garuḡḡdanāya 2. kūrmāsanā⁶⁷ |2. dhyānaṃ.*

oṃ vidyutpuñjanibhaṃ dehaṃ lakṣmī-vāmāṅgasamṣṭhitaṃ. pravibhakta-vilbhūśādhyaṃ śrīvatsāṅkita-vakṣasaṃ⁶⁸. daralsā⁶⁹ kaustubhaṃ vibhratsmitavakraṃ jagatpraḡbho⁷⁰.

15^r *śaṅkhacakraḡadāpadmaṃ dakṣahaste villrājitaṃ. pustakakalaśaṃ padmakumudaṃ⁷¹ vāmāḡhastake. tārkṣakūrmā⁷² samārūḡdhaṃ lakṣmīlnārāyaṇaṃ bhaje.*

lakṣmīnārāyaṇāya dhyālnapūṣpaṃ namaḡ.. tato āvāhanaṃ.

oṃ ālgaccha bhagavān⁷³ viṣṇo sarveśa sarvaḡṛg vilbho.

15^v *kr̐payā devadeveśa madagre sam̐nildho bhavaḡ⁷⁴.*

lakṣmīnārāyaṇāya āvāhanaṃ samarpa-yāmi 2. pādyaḡdi. śrīnālṛāyaṇāya pādyaṃ namaḡ. evaṃ hastārgḡhaṃ • praḡtyar-

ghaṃ. snānaṃ.

oṃ svasti indro⁰.

[svasti na indro vṛddhaśravāḡ svastinaḡ pūṣā viśvavedāḡ, svastinas tārkṣyo ariṣṭanemiḡ svasti no bṛhaspatir dadhātu.⁷⁵]

dugdha |

oṃ payaḡ pṛthivyāṃ⁰.

[payaḡ pṛthivyāṃ paya oṣadhīṣu payo divyantarikṣe payo dhāḡ, paya-svatīḡ pradīśaḡ santu mahyam.⁷⁶]

dadhi.

oṃ dadhikrāl̐pno⁰.

[dadhikrāv̐no akārīṣaṃ jīṣṇor aśvasya vājinaḡ, surabhi no mukhā karat praṇa 'āyūṃṣi tāriṣat.⁷⁷]

madhu.

oṃ madhuvātā⁰.

[madhu vātā ṛtāyate madhu kṣaranti sindhavaḡ, mādhvīr naḡ santv oṣadhīḡ. madhu naktam utosaṃ madhumat pāṛthivaṃ rajaḡ, madhu dyaur astu na pitā. madhumān no vanaspatir madhumāṃ astu sūryaḡ, mādhvīr gavo bhavantu naḡ.⁷⁸]

ghṛta.

16^r *oṃ ghṛl̐taṃ ghṛta⁷⁹ pāvāna⁰.*

[ghṛtaṃ ghṛtapāvānaḡ pibata vasāṃ vasāpāvānaḡ pibatāntarikṣasya havir asi svāḡ, diśaḡ pradīśa ādiśo vidīśa uddīśo dig̐bhyaḡ svāḡ.⁸⁰]

śarkkarā.

oṃ namaḡ śambhavāya |c⁰.

[namaḡ śambhavāya ca mayobhavāya ca namaḡ śaṅkarāya ca mayakarāya ca namaḡ śivāya ca śivatarāya ca.⁸¹]

gaṃgodaka •.

ye tīrthāni⁰.

[ye tīrthāni pracaranti sṛkāhastāniṣaṅgiṇaḡ, teṣāṃ sahasrayojane 'va dhanvāni tanmasi.⁸²]

vastra.

valsoḡ pavitram asi⁰.

[vasoḡ pavitram asi śatadhāraṃ

vasoḥ pavitram asi sahasradhāram,
devas tvā savitā punātu vasoḥ pa-
vitreṇa śmatadhāreṇa supvā kāma-
dhukṣaḥ.^{83]}

candana.

oṃ yad adyaka⁰l.

[yad adya kacca vṛtrahannudagā
abhi sūrya, sarvaṃ tad indra te
vaśe.⁸⁴ taraṇir viśvadarśato jyotiṣkṛd
asi sūrya, viṣvamā bhāsi rocanam.^{85]}

sindūra.

tvañjaviṣṭadā⁰.

[tvaṃ yaviṣṭha dāśuṣo nṛṇḥ pāhi
śṛṇudhī girah, rakṣā tokamutat-
manā.^{86]}

yajñopavīta.

yajñopavītaṃ paramaṃ⁰.

[oṃ yajñopavītaṃ paramaṃ pavitraṃ
prajāpater yat sahaḥ purastāt, āyuṣ-
yam agryaṃ pratimuñca śubhram
yajñopavītaṃ balam astu tejaḥ.^{87]}

akṣata.

akṣannamīva⁰.

[akṣannamīmadanta hy ava priyā
adhūṣata. astoṣata svabhānavo vi-
prā naviṣṭhayā matī yojā nv indra te
hari.^{88]}

yava.

yavosi⁰.

[oṃ yavo 'si yavayāsmad dveṣo
yavyayārātīḥ,^{89]}

tila.

16^v oṃ tilo si soma⁰.

[oṃ tilo 'si somadevatyo gosave
devanirmītaḥ, pratnavadbhiḥ prattaḥ
svadhayā pitṛlokāṃ prīṇayā hi naḥ
svadhā nama iti.^{90]}

puṣpa.

yāḥ phallanī⁰..

[yāḥ phalinīryā aphalā apuṣpā yās
ca puṣpiṇīḥ, brhaspatiprasūtās tā no
muñcantv aṃhasaḥ.^{91]}

tato svasvavedena viṣṇulmantreṇa triyāñ-
jalīḥ. ṣaḍaṅga. dhūpa. |

oṃ dhūr asi⁰.

[dhūr asi dhūrva dhūrvantaṃ dhūrva
taṃ yo 'smān dhūrvati taṃ dhūrva
yaṃ vayaṃ dhūrvāmaḥ, devānām asi
vahnitamaṃ sasnitamaṃ papritamaṃ
juṣṭatamaṃ devahūtamam.^{92]}

dīpa.

oṃ tejosi⁰.

[tejo 'si tejo mayi dhehi vīryam asi
vīryaṃ mayi dhehi balam asi balaṃ
mayi dhehy ojo 'sy ojo mayi dhehi
manyur asi manyuṃ mayi dhehi saho
'si saho mayi dhehi.^{93]}

naiveldya.

oṃ annapate⁰.

[annapate 'nnasya no dehy ana-
mīvasya śuṣmīṇaḥ, prapra dātāraṃ
tāriṣa ūrjaṃ no dhehi dvipade ca-
tuṣpade.^{94]}

phala.

yāḥ phalanī⁰l.⁹⁵

pūgiphalatāmbūla⁹⁶.

17^r oṃ namaḥ parṇāya llca⁰.

[namaḥ parṇāya ca parṇasādāya ca
nama udguramāñāya cābhighnate
ca nama ākhidate ca prakhidate ca
nama iṣukṛdbhyo dhanuṣkṛdbhyaś
ca vo namo namo vaḥ kirikebhyo
devānām hrdayebhyo namo vicinvat-
kebhyo namo vikṣiṇatkebhyo nama
ānirhatebhyah.^{97]}

oṃ lakṣmīnārāyaṇāya idamaṃ dhūpadī-
palnaivedyāni phalasaṃkalpasiddhir
astu.. ltataḥ śayyopari pūrvadiśāyāṃ
pūjayet. l. oṃ indrāya namaḥ. agnaye
2. yamāya 2 lnaīṛtyāya⁹⁸ 2. varuṇāya
2. vāyavye 2. lkuberāya 2. īśāñāya⁹⁹ 2.
anantāya 2.

17^v brahmaṇe 2. oṃ ādityāya namaḥ.

solmāya 2. aṃgārāya • vudhāya¹⁰⁰ •
brhalspataye • śukrāya • śaniśvarāya
• lrāhave • ketave • janmane • oṃ
vinālyakāya 2. oṃ durgāyai 2. vāyavye
2. dilgbhyo 2. aśvinyādinakṣatrebhyo 2.
vi-

18^r ṣkumbhādiyogebhyo¹⁰¹ 2. meṣādidvādaśa-

⁸³ YV 1.3.

⁸⁴ YV 33.35, RV VIII. 82.4.

⁸⁵ YV 33.36, RV I. 50.4.

⁸⁶ YV 13.52.

⁸⁷ PāraskaraGS 2.3.

⁸⁸ YV 3.51.

⁸⁹ AKP p. 30, see also YV 5.26.

⁹⁰ AKP p. 30, see also ĀśvalāyanaGS 4.7.11^a.

⁹¹ YV 12.89.

⁹² YV 1.8.

⁹³ YV 19.9.

⁹⁴ YV 11.83.

⁹⁵ Cf. fol. 16^v.

⁹⁶ pugī (Nep.), “betel nut”.

⁹⁷ YV 16.46.

⁹⁸ Read nairṛtyāya.

⁹⁹ Read īśāñāya.

¹⁰⁰ Read budhāya.

¹⁰¹ Read viṣkambha.

rāṣibhyo¹⁰² 2. pratipadādipañcadaśa-
tīlthibhyo 2. oṃ keśavāya śrīśahitāya ।2.
nārāyaṇāya vāgīśvarīsa⁰. māldhavāya
kāntisa⁰. govindāya kri lyāsa⁰. viṣṇave
śāmtisa⁰. madhusū-

18^v danāya dhṛtisa⁰. trivikramāya ichālsa⁰.
vāmanāya prītisa⁰. śrīdharāya ।ratisa⁰.
ṛṣikeśāya māyāsa⁰. ।padmanābhāya
dhīsa⁰. dāmodarāya mahimalsa⁰. pu-
ruṣottamāya lakṣmīśahitāya namaḥ ।ca-
tuḥṣaṣṭhiyoginūbhyo 2. atra gandhādi..

19^r arghaṃ kārayet. śāṅkhegokṣīrakuśa-
yavalsarṣapadūrvākṣatagandhapuṣpa-
nārikelalhirāyāratnajaṭāni dhāya¹⁰³.
pāñibhyāṃ ।śaṃkham ādāya śīrasā
dhṛtvā. jānubhyāṃ ।dharāṇīm gatvā
arghaṃ dadyāt. vākyapūrvavalt.

19^v yathāṃ tvam kṛṣṇaśayane aśvinyāk-
ṣīllrasāgare. śayyābhūyānayaśayyāṃ
malma janmani janmani.¹⁰⁴

idam arghyaṃ gahāṇa¹⁰⁵ svālhā. jāpa.
stotra.

namo stv¹⁰⁶ anantāya⁰. ।
pāpo haṃ⁰.

[pāpo 'ham pāpakarmāhaṃ pāpātmā
pāyasambhavaḥ, trāhi mām kṛpayaṃ
deva śaraṇāgatavatsala.¹⁰⁷]

atragandhādi. dakṣiṇā. śalyyācaturvā-
raṃ pradakṣiṇā. oṃ pramāṇyai devyai
2 ।. brāhmaṇapūjā. lakṣmīnārāyaṇa¹⁰⁸
svarūpa-

20^r patnikabrāhmaṇāya idam āsana¹⁰⁹ 2.
puṣpa ।2. evaṃ pādārghyaṃ 2. hastār-
ghyaṃ 2. pratyārghyaṃ 2. candanaṃ
2. akṣataṃ 2. yajñopavīltakapuṣpaṃ 2.
dhūpaṃ 2. dīpaṃ 2. atra gaṃldhādi..
utsargaḥ.

yathā daśunyaśalyane keśavasya
śivasya ca.

20^v śayyomavāllpy aśunyasya dattā
janmani janmani.¹¹⁰ pulraṃdagrhe
sarve sūryaputragrhe tathā.
ulpatiṣṭhet sukhaṃ janto śayyādāna-
prabhāvataḥ.¹¹¹

brāhmaṇahaste kuśadvayaṃ dadyāt.

eltat yathāśaktīśopaskaraṇa¹¹² śayyādā-
naṃ dātavyaṃ. brāhmaṇena dadasva..
saṃka-

21^r lpa. vākyam pūrvavat.

dantapatraracitāṃ helmapaṭṭair alam-
kṛtā imāṃ śayyāṃ prajāpatīdaivatāṃ
īśāñādicatuḥkoṇeṣu¹¹³ sthālpitāṃ
ghṛtapūrṇakumkumagodhūmajala ।pū-
ritakumbhān saṃpūrṇapātraṃ
kāśyaśīrṣa-

21^v pradeśāsthāpitaghṛtapūrṇanidrārūpa-
kumbhasaṃyutāṃ haṃsatūlipra-
channāṃ śubhalśīrṣopadhānikāṃ
prachāchanapaṭṭiyutāṃ¹¹⁴ ।pañ-
cavarṇasavitānikāṃ¹¹⁵ suvarṇanir-
mītalakṣmīnārāyaṇapratimāṃ
aṅgirodaivaṭtāṃ yamapurānivaśina
dharmadhvajapatihā-

22^r rādisarve saṃtuṣṭakāma¹¹⁶ tadanāṅāni
saptadhānyāni prajāpatīdaivatāni.
yamapūre ।durlabhena yamādisaṃ-
tuṣṭakāmo viṣṇulbrahmāśivātmakāni
śrīkaraṃ tāmbūlaṃ ।vidyādhara-
daivataṃ. darśanatvanṛṇāṃ
maṃgalaltvayaśasasaubhāgya
satkīrttinirmala-

22^v jñānatva yāvac candradivāka-
raparyyaṃtaṃ ।rudralokaprāp-
tikāmo darppaṇaṃ indradaivataṃ ।.
kumkumakṣaudraṃ yakṣadaivataṃ.
tathā ca. malhāṃdha kāramārga
gamanādyotanamārgena sulkhena
gamanaprāptyarthe dīpikāṃ
vahnīdaivataṃ ।. kṣuradhārāpradip-
tāṃgārāpratāptabālu-

23^r kādidurgamabhāvanābhāvaturaṅgā-
rūḍhasvargalokaganaprāptyar-
thaṃ ixxx māṃ¹¹⁷ upānahau ulttānāṅgi-
rodaivataṃ. dvādasādityatapod-
bhalvaśramānivaṃ raṇārthaṃ
asīpatravanapālśāṇavarṣaṇa-
mahādūkhahātapanivāraṇārthaṃ
imāṃ chatraṃ ।mdradaivataṃ.
prātaḥ saha-

23^v srāpsarogaṇacāmaravijyamāna¹¹⁸-

¹⁰² Read -rāśi-.

¹⁰³ Read -jalāni nidhāya.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. GPS 13.71: yathā
kṛṣṇa tvadīyāsti śayyā kṣīro-
dasāgare, tathā bhūyād
aśunyeyaṃ mama janmani
janmani. Cf. AKP, p. 69f.:

yathā na kṛṣṇaśayanam
śūnyam sāgarajātayā, śayyā
pretasyāśūnyās tu (pretāyā
aśunyā) tathā janmani
janmani, yasmād aśunyaṃ
śayanam keśavasya śivasya
ca, śayyā pretasyāśūnyās
tu (pretāyā aśunyā) tasmāj
janmani janmani.

RBKS, 399: yathā na
kṛṣṇaśayanam śūnyam sāgara-
jātayā. tathaitasyāpy aśunyās tu
śayyā janmani janmani.

¹⁰⁵ Read grahaṇam.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Mbh 13.135.142.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted from memory by
Pandit Aithal.

¹⁰⁸ -ṇa- added by a different
scribe.

¹⁰⁹ Read āsanaṃ.

¹¹⁰ AKP, p. 70: yasmād
aśunyaṃ śayanam keśavasya
śivasya ca, śayyā preta-
syāśūnyās tu (pretāyā aśunyā)
tasmāj janmani janmani.

¹¹¹ GPS 13.79: purandara-
grhe divye sūryaputrālaye 'pi
ca, upatiṣṭhen na sandehaḥ
śayyādānprabhāvataḥ.

¹¹² Read -śaktīśopaskara-.

¹¹³ Read -catuṣkoṇeṣu

¹¹⁴ Read pracchādāna-.

¹¹⁵ Read vitānakāṃ.

¹¹⁶ Read -saṃtuṣṭakāmas.

¹¹⁷ Read ime.

¹¹⁸ Read -vijyamāna-.

- surabhīlokagamanaprāptyārthaṃ
imām¹¹⁹ cāmaraṃ kāmaldhenudaiva-
taṃ. tappādinivāraṇapūrvaka-
vyajanaṃ vāyudaivatam.
yamapaṃthagamanakāle ladho-
sukhaḥprāptikāmo¹²⁰ yaśṣīm
viśvakarmādaivatam. yatra tatra
sukhanivāsakāmaḥ lpīṭhikāṃ viśva-
karmādaivatam. yatra yatra yama-
panthe pi sukhānivāsakāmaḥ idaṃ
24^r āsanaṃ vulttānāṃgirodaivatam¹²¹.
yatra tatra sadā ṛptikṣutpīpāsādini
vāraṇayamadūtādisaṃtuṣṭhakāmo
yamapaṃthe sukhaḥprāpti-
kāmalnārthaṃ idaṃ jalakumbhaṃ
varuṇadaivatam. raityanirma-
24^v odanapākāpātraṃ sadarviṃ vi-
śvakarmādaivatam. raityanir-
mitavyañjalnapākāpātraṃ sadarviṃ
viśvakarmādaivatam. llohanirmīta-
sākādipākāpātraṃ. hastalpādapra-
kṣālyanārthe suciprāptiraityanir-
milpātraṃ¹²² viśvakarmādaivatam.
raityanirma vā kāṃṣyanirma-
dugdhapātraṃ viśvakarmādaiva-
vataṃ ldugdhaṃ samudradaivatam.
yamapaṃthagamanakāle
25^r himaśītanivāraṇaprāptikāmaḥ
indhanaṃ valnaspatidaivatam
mṛttikānirma aṃgāragraha-
ṇabhāṇḍam vahnibhāṇḍam
āgnidaivatam. llohanirmītatri-
padicūlikāṃ yamadaivatam.
llohanirmītakhaḍgabhairavatam¹²³.
llohanirmītalchūlikāṃ viśvakarmādaiva-
vataṃ. llohanirmi-
25^v ta aṃgāragrahaṇabhāṇḍam viśvakar-
mādaivatam. llohanirmītasākādi-
grahaṇabhāṇḍam lviśvakarmādaiva-
vataṃ. nārikeladhūmapānasaldāseva-
niya¹²⁴ tatbhāṇḍam vahnidaivatam.
śṛṅgāloparaskaraṇārthe raityanirma-
tailovarttanam¹²⁵ viśvudaivatam.
jalagrahaṇārthe ṛṇanirmītasū-
traṃ varuṇadaivatam. kāṣṭhanir-
mita¹²⁶ vastradravyāni lsthāpani-
yadvāramañjūsam¹²⁷ viśvakarmā¹²⁸
daivatam. yamapaṃthagamanakāle
vimānārūḍhakāmaḥ lolāṃsadaṇḍān
viśvakarmādaivatam. kāṣṭhanirma
aṅgasthāpaniyam¹²⁹ icham vanalspa-
tidaivatam. yamapaṃthagamana-
kāle ya-
26^v mapūranivāsītādisarve saṃtuṣṭakā-
maḥ ltaṇḍūlāsuddhaprāptikāmaḥ
sūrpam vāyudaivatam. reṇukāni-
vāraṇārthe¹³⁰ grhaśuddhaprāptikāma
mārjjanim¹³¹ vanaspatidaivatam.
yamaldūtādisarve saṃtuṣṭakāma-
lohanirmītam aṃjalsalākāṃ¹³² sa
aṅjanaṃ¹³³ viśvudaivatam. sindūra-
27^r candanāśṛṅgāropaskaraṇāni¹³⁴
tilakadravyāni tatbhāṇḍam sacīdai-
vatam. kaṃkaṭikālprasādhinyādini¹³⁵
śṛṅgāropaskaraṇāniṃ lvanaspatidai-
vatam. kāṃcanirmītam vā suvalrṇam
vā kaṅṭhabhūṣanam viśvudaivatam.
suarṇal nir mitakarṇabhūṣanam
agnidaivatam. ya-
27^v mapathagamanakāle yamādayacitra-
guptāldidūtādaya sarve saṃtuṣṭa-
kāmaḥ suvarṇanirmīta vā rajatanir-
mīta vā mudrikāṃ agnidaiivatam.
yamapaṃtha gamanakāle hima-
śītanilvāraṇasukhaḥprāptikāma
aṅgaposakaparildhānavastram
colakam bṛhaspatidaivatam. yama-
28^r panthe sarve saṃtuṣṭakāma hari-
nāmāni vācakelna gandharvādināra-
darāgiṇi¹³⁶ saṃtuṣṭa savastralkīsaḥita
adamṛdamgādīn¹³⁷ sarasvatīdaiva-
tam. pustakādiḥparameśvaralekhani-
yam kuñjallobhāṇḍam bhūmikādi-
sarasvatīdai vatam¹³⁸. llyamapūre
nivāsīnādisaṃtuṣṭakāmaḥ a-
28^v mukapustakam sthitākṣarasamasam-
khyālparyyanta¹³⁹ svargalokāvachin-
na¹⁴⁰ sarasvatīlokaprāptyarthaṃ
pustakam sarasvatīdaivatam. kāla-
l kramena śṛīsūryyasvadinaghaṭikāyan-

119 Read imam.

120 Read adhomukhaḥ-

121 Read uttānāṃgirodaivatam.

122 Read -raityanirma-.

123 Read -bhairavadaivatam.

124 Read -sevanīya-.

125 Read -tailodvartanam.

126 Read -nirmītam.

127 Read sthāpanīya-.

128 -mā added on the top margin.

129 Read -sthāpanīyam.

130 Read -reṇunivāraṇārthe.

131 Read -mārjjanim.

132 Read aṅjanaśalākāṃ.

133 Read sāñjanam.

134 Read -candana-.

135 Read -ādini.

136 Read -rāgiṇi.

137 Read -adīn.

138 Read -sarasvatī-.

139 Read -paryyantam.

140 Read -avacchinna-.



Five spouted pots (kumbha) representing (from the left) Sūrya, Nārāyaṇa, Sadāśiva, Gaṇapati and Baruṇa (Varuṇa), on top small plates with pieces of apple, banana, and peas.

Photo 22nd August 2002

¹⁴¹ Read -ācchādanārthe.

¹⁴² Read utsṛje.

¹⁴³ YV 7.48.

¹⁴⁴ Read sarvasamāgrīṃ.

¹⁴⁵ Read kṛtāitat.

¹⁴⁶ Read -tāmrasya-.

¹⁴⁷ Read -suragaṇair.

¹⁴⁸ Read tasmāc chayyāpradānena.

¹⁴⁹ Quoted from memory by Pandit Aithal.

¹⁵⁰ Nep.

¹⁵¹ Read likhitam.

- 29^r traṃ viṣṇudaivatam. prastaranirmitanetrāchādanārthe¹⁴¹ lupanayanam viśvakarmādivatam. raityanirmitam vā kāśyanirmitam vā gaṇḍūkapātram viśvaldivatam. raityanirmitam vā kāśyanirmitam vā lbhojanapātram viśvakarmādivatam. rūpadarśalnārthe amukalekhanīyacitrārpitādārpaṇam viṣṇudaivatam. anyāni dravyāṇi gr-
- 29^v hopaskarasarvam viṣṇudaivatāṇi llakṣmīnārāyaṇasvarūpāya amukalśarmmaṇe brāhmaṇāya sapatnikāya dātum laham utsṛjyet¹⁴². brāhmaṇena.
- om svastīlkodāṭ⁰. [ko 'dāt kasmā adāt kāmo 'dāt kāmāyādāt, kāmo dātā kāmah pratigrahītā kāmaitat te.¹⁴³] sarvve sāmāgrī¹⁴⁴ dadyāt. dānapraltiṣṭhā.
- 30^r kṛtetat¹⁴⁵ sopaskaraṇasāyādāna-ll

pratiṣṭhārtham raupyam candradai-
vatam tāmrasxx¹⁴⁶ khaṇḍam sūrya-
divatam yathāśraddhādakṣiṇām
tubhyam aham sampradade.
sarvālamkāram ldadyāt. śayyāyām
upaviśya. pradakṣiṇā.

- 30^v śriviśṇo pratimā hy eṣā sarvopallskaraṇair yutā. sarvaratnasamāyuktā tava vipra niveditā. ātmāsambhulśivā gaurīśakraḥ suragaṇai¹⁴⁷ saha. tasmāc chaxxyāpradānena¹⁴⁸ ātmā hy eṣa prasīdatu.

pūjanam. daṇḍavat kṛtvā. bhūyasildakṣiṇā. godānam. vācanam. āśi-

- 31^r rvādaḥ. sūryasākṣi thāye. kāyena vālcā⁰. [kāyena vācā manasendriyair vā buddhyātmanā prakṛteḥ svabhāvāt, karomi yad yat sakalam parasmai nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayāmi.¹⁴⁹] samvat 1997 sālā¹⁵⁰ phālgūṇa śuldi 10 roja 7 sa taddine śayyādāna viṣṇupradeva-dharo likhit¹⁵¹.. śubham..

Translation

fol.

[Table of contents]

Rule for installing water pots. Ritual decision for the separation of *piṇḍas*. Recitation for the (offering of the) sixteenth of the sixteen (*piṇḍas*). Rule for the gift of the bed.

[Pūrvāṅga: Preparation of the Sacrificial Arena]

- 1^{r152} Salutation to Gaṇeśa. Now the rules (*vidhi*) of the *caturdaśakalāpiṇḍa (śrāddha)*¹⁵³ (and) the installing of the water pots (*kumbha*, Nev. *alapo*).¹⁵⁴ At first the water pots are to be placed. Keep 5, 7, 9, 11 or 21 (*kumbhas*).¹⁵⁵ Three times *ācamana* (for the *yajamāna*, Nev. *mitamha*)¹⁵⁶.¹⁵⁷ *Argha* to Sūrya (proclaiming) the ritual decision (*vākya*)¹⁵⁸: “I (am) to do (the following) in the *caturdaśakalāpiṇḍaśrāddha* for the (deceased) from *gotra* so-and-so (and) from place so-and-so”¹⁵⁹
- 1^v Salutation to Lord Śrī-Sūrya.¹⁶⁰ Flowers (*puṣpa*) should fall to the share of¹⁶¹ (Sūrya). (Now) the worship (of the deities in the) water pots (Nev. *alapopūjā*). This¹⁶² seat (*āsana*) should fall to the share of Sūrya, who is (in the form) of a god residing in the *kumbha*. Flowers should fall to the share of (Nārāyaṇa). This seat should fall to the share of Nārāyaṇa, who is (in the form of) a god residing in the *kumbha*. Flowers should fall to the share of (Sadāśiva). This seat should fall to the share of Sadāśiva, who is (in the form of) a god residing in the *kumbha*.
- 2^r Flowers should fall to the share of (Gaṇapati). This seat should fall to the share of Gaṇapati who is (in the form of)

a god residing in the *kumbha*. Flowers should fall to the share of (Varuṇa). This seat should fall to the share of Varuṇa,¹⁶³ who is (in the form of) a god residing in the *kumbha*. Flowers should fall to the share of (the deities residing outside). This seat should fall to the share of the deities (*gaṇa*) residing outside of the compound. Flowers should be offered. In this way (*evam*), water for washing the feet (of the *brāhmaṇa*,¹⁶⁴ *pādārgha*) should be offered.

- 2^v Water for washing the hands (of the *brāhmaṇa*,¹⁶⁵ *hastārghya*) should be offered. Again water (*pratyarghya*) should be offered. Sandalwood paste (*candana*)¹⁶⁶ should be offered. The Sacred Thread (*yajñopavīta*) and flowers should be offered. Incense (*dhūpa*) should be offered. Light (*dīpa*) should be offered. Fragrant materials etc.¹⁶⁷ Recitation (*stotra*):

I greet the Lord of the Kumbhas, whose form (*mūrti*) is (in) all holy places (*tīrtha*). I greet you, (who has the form) of a filled *kumbha*.¹⁶⁸

(Now) the rules (for worshipping) Viṣṇu and also Śiva (leading to the) transgression into the state of being (in the union) of the Hindu triad.¹⁶⁹

- 3^r I honour Sadāśiva who has the colours black, red etc.

The ball (*piṇḍaka*) starting with the first excluding the first of the sixteen (*piṇḍas*, i.e. the *māsikapīṇḍas*) is the Lord who is the filled water pot (and) who has the form of two, seven etc.¹⁷⁰

Fragrant materials (*gandha*). Worship of (or with) the light (Nev. *matā*).¹⁷¹

- 3^v Oh Siddhikeśvara, this seat should fall to the share of Agni who has consumed the meat of so-and-so (i.e. the deceased).¹⁷²

Flowers (*puṣpa*) should be offered. In the same way water for washing the feet (*pādārghya*) should be offered. Water for washing the hands (*hastārghya*) should

¹⁵² Due to syntactical overlaps, the paginations of the text and the translation do not exactly correspond.

¹⁵³ The offering of 14 of altogether 16 *piṇḍas*. For a discussion of the number of *piṇḍas* used in death rituals, see Michaels/Buss forthc.

¹⁵⁴ In the ritual several *kumbhas* are installed in order to invite deities to protect the event.

¹⁵⁵ Nowadays, mostly five *kumbhas* are installed.

However, Mahendra Śarmā insists that up to 21 *kumbhas* could be used. In HB₂ p. 41 five *kumbhas* are also prescribed.

¹⁵⁶ Lit. “fire giver”, i.e. the chief mourner who lights the funeral pyre and also performs the *latyā* or *sapīṇḍikaraṇa* rituals.

¹⁵⁷ Below several *upacāras* (mostly without *mantras*) are prescribed: *namaskāra*, *ācamana*, *āsana*, *puṣpa*, *pādārghya*, *hastārghya*, *arghya*, *candana*, *yajñopavīta*, *vastra*, *dhūpa*, *dīpa*, *gandha*, and *naivedya*.

¹⁵⁸ HB₁ mostly uses *vākya* for *saṃkalpa*. For an elaborate discussion of *saṃkalpa* see Michaels 2005.

¹⁵⁹ In accordance with the standard formula of *saṃkalpas*, another meaning could be: “(I) from *gotra* so-and-so (and) place so-and-so. (am) to do (the following) in the *caturdaśakalāpiṇḍaśrāddha*.”

¹⁶⁰ Sūrya is considered to witness the ritual.

¹⁶¹ The verb *upa-sthā* is predominantly used in death rituals for dedicating the offerings. The most frequent form *upatiṣṭhatām* literally means “should fall to the share of”, “should stand by the side of”. For the sake of comprehensibility we translated the passages where *upatiṣṭhatām* has an object as “fall to the share of”

and the passages without an object as “should be offered”.

¹⁶² *idam* refers to the sacrificial arena and the *maṇḍala* prepared as a seat for the *kumbha*.

¹⁶³ In HB₂ p. 41, Nāgarāja is listed instead of Varuṇa.

¹⁶⁴ According to AKP p. 20 the water is for washing the feet of the *brāhmaṇa*: (Nep.) *brāhmaṇako pāu dhune arghapatra*; according to Tachikawa (1983: 139), however, the water is for washing the feet of the deity.

¹⁶⁵ See AKP p. 20: (Nep.) *brāhmaṇako hāt dhune arghapatra*.

¹⁶⁶ During the ritual performance, all of the participants including the priest insist that not *candana* is used but a yellow paste called (Nev.) *mhāsusinhaḥ*.

¹⁶⁷ Lit. “Here fragrant materials (*gandha*) etc. (should be offered).” However, according to Aiśvaryaśarmā *atragandhādi* has to be taken as a technical terms for several *upacāras*, e.g. *candana*, *akṣata*, *dhūpa*, *dīpa* etc.

¹⁶⁸ Verse not verified. The meaning of *trītyake* is not clear in this context.

¹⁶⁹ This line is written on the bottom margin. *Brahmā* is missing.

¹⁷⁰ The source of the *śloka* could not be verified. Its exact meaning remains obscure. The context, however, seems to refer to the first of the sixteen *māsikapīṇḍas*, which in Nepal is generally offered on the 11th day and which is to be excluded from the fifteen *piṇḍas* that are later prepared. It also seems that this verse has (“mistakenly”?) been included in the rules for the preparation of the sacrificial arena.

¹⁷¹ The light kept in an earthenware pot.

¹⁷² In death rituals, *kravyāda* is an epithet for Agni consuming the corpse on the funeral pyre.

be offered. Sandalwood (*candana*), rice (*akṣata*), Sacred Thread (*yajñopavīta*) (and) flowers (*puṣpa*) should be offered. Incense (*dhūpa*), light (*dīpa*), food¹⁷³ (*nai-vedya*) should be offered. Fragrant materials (*gandha*) etc. (should be offered). Recitation (*stotra*):

Oh Kuṇḍa, (who is) looking like camphor, one-faced, three-eyed salutation to (you), in the form of the meat-consuming Agni in the *pañcadaśakalāśrāddha*.¹⁷⁴

Now the *pūjā* should be performed, all this completely complying with the rules (*vidhi*).

4^r Recitation (*stotra*):

Oh, Siddhikeśa, salutation to you, salutation to you, Bhūtanātha. Salutation to you, Bhūtanātha, who makes (i.e. fulfills) all (kinds of) perfections (*siddhi*).¹⁷⁵

[Pañcadaśapiṇḍadāna: The Gift of the Fifteen Balls]

A seat for fourteen of sixteen *piṇḍas* should be offered. And a seat for the *piṇḍa* vessel (*piṇḍapātra*, in which the dough for *piṇḍas* is prepared, should fall to his share). (Now) the preparation of the *piṇḍas* from the dough. The ritual decision (*vākya*) beginning with “Now etc...”¹⁷⁶ In the *caturdaśakalāpiṇḍaśrāddha* the second of sixteen *piṇḍas* should fall to his (i.e. the deceased) share in the name of so-and-so, from this and that *gotra*

4^v and this and that place.¹⁷⁷ The *piṇḍa* of the third half month (*pakṣa*), which is the third (of sixteen *piṇḍas*, should fall to his share).¹⁷⁸ The *piṇḍa* for the second month, which is the fourth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share). The *piṇḍa* for the third month, which is the fifth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share).

5^r The *piṇḍa* for the fourth month, which is the sixth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to

his share). The *piṇḍa* for the fifth month, which is the seventh of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share). The *piṇḍa* for the fifth and a half month, which is the eighth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share). The *piṇḍa* for the sixth month, which is the ninth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share). The *piṇḍa* for the seventh month, which is the tenth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share).

5^v The *piṇḍa* for the eighth month, which is the eleventh of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share). The *piṇḍa* for the ninth month, which is the twelfth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share). The *piṇḍa* for the tenth month, which is the thirteenth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share). The *piṇḍa* for the eleventh month, which is the fourteenth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*, should fall to his share).¹⁷⁹ (Now) the washing of hands over the *piṇḍa* vessel (*piṇḍapātra*, Nev. *kolā*).

6^r (Now) the portion of the *piṇḍas* (for the unknown *pretas*).¹⁸⁰ The portion of the *piṇḍas* should be offered on the fourteenth of the sixteen *piṇḍas*. (Now) water with black sesame seeds (*tilodaka*). *Tilodaka* as *arghya* should be offered (i.e. poured) over the *caturdaśakalāpiṇḍas*. Sandalwood (*candana*), Sacred Thread (*yajñopavīta*), *taṅgarāja*- (and) *bhṛṅgārāja* flowers¹⁸¹ should be offered (i.e. placed on the *piṇḍas*). (Now) fragrant materials (*gandha*) etc.

6^v Raising up the *piṇḍapātra*. Water shall be poured on the (fourteen) *piṇḍas*. *Tilodaka* should be offered as *arghya* (together) with the water from the *piṇḍapātra*. The empty *piṇḍapātra* should be placed upside down. Recitation (*stotra*):

In the *caturdaśakalāpiṇḍa* (*śrāddha*) is always satisfaction. Salutation to you, the god of the ancestors, the Śiva-kumbha for the forefathers.¹⁸²

(Now) fragrant materials (*gandha*) etc.

Flowers should be offered to the gods in the *kumbhas*. Flowers should be offered on the fourteen *piṇḍas*. Flowers should fall to the share of Siddhikeśvara (who is) Agni who has consumed the meat (i.e. corpse) of so-and-so (i.e. the deceased).

7^r The *caturdaśakalāpiṇḍas* may stay in their own place (*svasthāna*).¹⁸³ (Now) collecting the *piṇḍas* (in the *piṇḍapātra*). Three times encircling the *piṇḍas* with water (*tribhramaṇa*).

All evil deeds which have been committed before in earlier (lives) should be annihilated. Through the fall of water drops, done by virtuous sons, oh Bhāgīrathī (i.e. Gaṅgā), they (the deceased/forefathers) should enter into your refuge.¹⁸⁴

(Now) the sending of the *piṇḍas* (out of the house). Sending for the Gaṇeśapūjā.¹⁸⁵ Sending the *piṇḍas* in order to throw them in the river. This is the rule (*vidhi*) of the *caturdaśakalā(piṇḍasrāddha)* and the offering of the *piṇḍas*.

[Sapiṇḍikaraṇa: The Joining of the Ancestors]

8^r (Now) the separation of the *piṇḍas* of *latyā* (i.e. *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*). Ritual decision (*vākya*):

This *preta* who is gone to you, oh forefathers, I give to you. May he be (re-)born among the long-living great gods Śiva and Viṣṇu.¹⁸⁶ May he take rest (*saṁsthita*) (among you) through his own form which is the form of a *piṇḍa*.¹⁸⁷

8^v Go, go, oh great *preta*, your shelter (is) with the two (other) *pitarah*.¹⁸⁸ Be firm in the world of the *pitarah* after gaining the same status.¹⁸⁹

Ritual decision ([*samāna*-]*vākya* for the grandfather).¹⁹⁰

After leaving this world you have gone

to the highest state. After having abandoned the form of a *preta*¹⁹¹ he goes to the heavenly world.

9^r Oh great-grandfather, this grandson comes from your lineage (*vamśa*).¹⁹² He has entered the state of pretahood (before). (Now) he should be near to you (i.e. in the state of pitṛhood).¹⁹³

Ritual decision ([*samāna*]*vākya* for the great-grandfather).¹⁹⁴

After leaving this world...¹⁹⁵

Listen great-grandfather, this great-grandson comes from your lineage. As long as moon and sun are (shining) on the earth, you should be very firm.

[Ritual decision ([*samāna*]*vākya* for great-grandfather)].¹⁹⁶

9^v After leaving this world...¹⁹⁷

(Now) the *stotra* of the sixteenth of sixteen (*piṇḍas*) (*ṣoḍaśakalāstotra*):

Lord, through me the pretahood concerning the *preta* will become pitṛhood.

Through the grace of the grandfather he (the *preta*) goes to the realm of Viṣṇu.

So far the *ṣoḍaśakalāstotra*.

[Śayyādāna: The Gift of the Bed]

Now the rules (*vidhi*) for the gift of the bed (*śayyādāna*).

10^r Then the ground is besmeared with cowdung and an eightfold lotus (*maṇḍala*) is drawn with yellow powder. Then, having placed (it, i.e. the *maṇḍala*?) under a pot of one *prastha*,¹⁹⁸ a bed (should be established) on top of this (*maṇḍala*) out of strong wood, beautiful (and) stable, plated with ivory (*dantapattra*),¹⁹⁹ spread with a bed cover, the top (i.e. pillow?) of which is filled with goose down,

10^v (and one should) separate it with a cloth of five different colours,²⁰⁰ prepare the bed with a quilt (*chādana*) and a (night?) dress. On top of this (bed), an icon of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa should be placed to-

¹⁷³ In Nepal generally sweets are offered as *naivedya*.

¹⁷⁴ Transl. follows HB₃, where the accusatives of the first part of the verse are vocatives. Agni is addressed here with epithets of Śiva.

¹⁷⁵ Verse not verified.

¹⁷⁶ Abbreviation for the *saṁkalpa*, cf. Michaels 2005.

¹⁷⁷ According to AKP p. 14, the first *piṇḍa* for the first month (*ūnamāsikapīṇḍa*) is to be offered on the 29th day, and the second (*dvitīyamāsikapīṇḍa*) on the 30th day after death.

¹⁷⁸ In the actual ritual, the priest Mahendra Śarmā recites *dvitīyakalāpiṇḍam upatiṣṭhātām* etc. Asked about the difference, he said that he follows a tradition which does not relate these *piṇḍas* to the *māsikapīṇḍas*.

¹⁷⁹ Only thirteen *piṇḍas* are mentioned, although in the ritual fifteen are counted and offered.

¹⁸⁰ Some ritual specialists claim that this portion is for three generations before the *pitarah*.

¹⁸¹ *Taṅgarāja* (Nev. *talāy*) is a large-leaved plant with white flowers; *bhṛṅgarāja* (Nev. *bhyalāy*) is *Eclipta prostrate* Ait.

¹⁸² Apparently the *piṇḍa*-vessel is addressed as Śivakumbha.

¹⁸³ These are the cities in the afterworld on the way to Yama.

¹⁸⁴ Transl. follows HB₂ p. 39.

¹⁸⁵ A member of the family is sent to worship Gaṇeśa in a nearby shrine.

¹⁸⁶ In the second half of the verse, the transl. follows HB₂ p. 43.

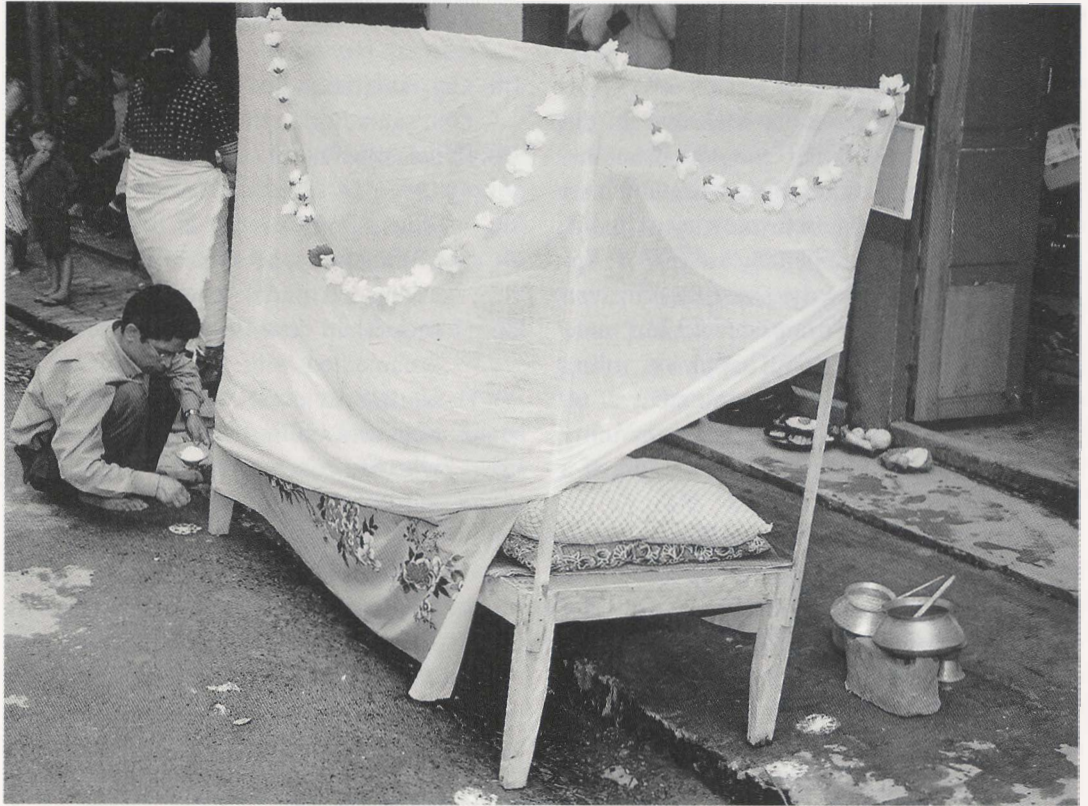
¹⁸⁷ HB₂ p. 43 speaks of the form which “was produced by your son” (*tvat sutotpannaṁ saṁsthitaṁ*).

¹⁸⁸ From this point onwards the *preta* becomes the first of the three *pitarah*, i.e. the father, which implies that the previous “father” of the *pitarah* becomes the grandfather etc. up to great-grandfather.

The ritual of offering a bed and household items on the 45th day after death:

sayah saman – offerings to the Brahmin including a bed and a hearth are being acknowledged by placing a small plate with rice, a coin and a betel nut with *akṣata* and *daḥṣiṇā* and a small water pot at the four legs of the bed by the priest.

Photo 22nd August 2002.



¹⁸⁹ The transl. follows the v.l. of HB₂ p. 43: it makes no sense to address great-grandfather (*mahātāta*), and *samānapadapiṇḍa* seems to be equally incomprehensible. Cf. the verse RV 14.7: “Hasten, hasten by the ancient paths (to that place) where our forefathers that went before us passed. May you (the departed) see the two kings Yama and god Varuṇa rejoicing as they will.” Transl. Kane (1991/IV: 192f.).

¹⁹⁰ The *saṃkalpa* is missing. According to HB₂ p. 43 it should be: *adyetyādi amukagotra asmat pitṛ... yathā nāmnah... pretasya piṇḍam asmat pitāmaha yathānāmnah piṇḍena saha samāno bhava*.

¹⁹¹ HB₂ p. 43 has “*preta*-world” instead of “form of a *preta*”.

¹⁹² Transl. follows the v.l. of HB₂ p. 43.

¹⁹³ The first *piṇḍa* representing the grandfather is now separated.

¹⁹⁴ Again a ritual decision (*saṃkalpa*) should be inserted.

¹⁹⁵ According to HB₂ p. 43 all of the verses from *fol. 8^r* should be repeated. The second *piṇḍa* representing the great-grandfather is now separated.

¹⁹⁶ According to HB₂ p. 43 all of the verses from *fol. 8^r* should be repeated.

gether with two golden *niṣka* coins. (Now) the tradition (*pramāṇa*) (of placing) five *kumbhas*.

11^r Northeast the *kumbha* (filled) with clarified butter, in the same way southeast the (*kumbha* filled with) saffron, southwest the *kumbha* (filled) with wheat (and) northeast (the *kumbha*) filled with water. Having placed on top a *kumbha* (filled with) clarified butter for the night,²⁰¹ a *pūrṇapāttra*²⁰² is laid down on top of the five *kumbhas*. Then, at the side of the bed seven kinds of grains are placed, according to the tradition:

11^v unhusked rice, barley, wheat, green lentils, black lentils, horse-gram (*kulattha*)²⁰³ and chick-peas (*caṇaka*) – thus are known the Seven Grains by the wise (men). Then betel nut, a water pot, a mirror, saffron, honey, camphor, a kind of wood (*aguru*²⁰⁴), black *aguru*,

sandalwood, a lamp, an umbrella, a pair of shoes, a yak tail, a fan, a mug, a seat, cooking pots

12^r and dishes, together with a ladle, (and other things used) for cooking etc. One should place these utensils (and) things, as far as possible, at the side of the bed (or) wherever possible.²⁰⁵ He (the *yajamāna*) should place, according to his capacities, clothes, ornaments etc. distinguishing between woman and man (i.e. wife and husband). Then, directed towards the east,

12^v he should worship the icon of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa and the *śālagrāma* placed on the bed.

First the ritual decision (*saṃkalpa*). Three times *ācamana*, after placing black sesame seeds and water with *kuśa* grass on the ground. Recitation (*vākya*): three times *om tatsat* and three times

“Viṣṇu”. Now *brahmaṇa* etc. having defined place and time (*deśakālasamkīrtana*²⁰⁶):

13^r [Because I have the wish that all the sins of my father should be annihilated and he therefore ascends with a heavenly vehicle to the city of Indra, which is inhabited by troops of Ap-saras, enjoying the size of the heaven together with troops of women more than 6000 years with happiness, ruling over a kingdom with an extent of 60 yojanas, and afterwards attains unity with Śiva, I will perform the gift of a bed.]²⁰⁷

13^v In this way (and) through this ritual decision the gift of the bed is to be performed. (Now) salutation (and) water (*arghya*) for Lord Śrī-Sūrya. Flowers (*puṣpa*) should fall to the share of (Sūrya) with (recitation of) *om ākṛṣṇe...*:

[“Throughout the dusky firmament advancing, laying to rest the immortal and the mortal, Borne on his golden chariot he cometh, *Savitā*, God, be-holding living creatures.”]²⁰⁸

Salutation to the *guru* with (recitation of) *ajñānatimirāndha...*:

[“Salutation to that Śrīguru who opens the eye which was blind through the darkness of ignorance with the help of collyrium (*añjana*).”]²⁰⁹

Worship with *nyāsa* (using) conch and water.²¹⁰ In the end worship of the self (i.e. taking a *ṭikā* etc.).

14^r After this, worship of the seat of the deity on the bed (i.e. Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa and *śālagrāma*). *Om*, salutation to the power of the vessel. *Om*, salutation to the seat of Ananta (i.e. Viṣṇu). *Om*, salutation to the seat of Śiva (Skanda). *Om*, salutation to the seat of the stem (*nāla*). *Om*, salutation to the seat of the lotus (*padma*). *Om*, salutation to the seat of the leaf (*patra*). *Om*, salutation to the seat of the filament

(*keśara*). *Om*, salutation to the seat of the pericarp (*karṇika*).

14^v *Om*, salutation to the seat of Garuḍa. *Om*, salutation to the seat of Kūrma.

(Now) meditation (with recitation of):

Om, I honour Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa whose body (*deha*) is like a mound of light and who appears with Lakṣmī as his left parts, who is rich in distinguished jewels, whose chest²¹¹ is ornamented with *śrivatsa*,²¹² and the *kaustubha* jewel, whose face is luminous and smiling, lord of the world,²¹³ who has conch, discus, club and lotus in his right hand (and)

15^r a book, a (nectar) pot (*kalaśa*), and a red lotus (*padmakumuda*)²¹⁴ in his left hand, (and) who has ascended Garuḍa and Kūrma²¹⁵ (tortoise).

Salutation to Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa with flowers and meditation (*dhyāna*). Then invocation (*āvāhana*) (with recitation of):

Om, come (here), oh Lord Viṣṇu, oh Lord of Everything, oh All-Seeing Lord, please, oh Lord of Gods, be present in front of me.

15^v I send my invocation to Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa. Salutation. Water for washing the feet (*pādyārghya*) etc. Salutation to Śrīnārāyaṇa with water for washing the feet (*pādyārghya*). Now water for washing the hands (*hastārghya*). Again water (*pratyārghya*). Bath (*snāna*) (with recitation of): *om svasti indro...*:

[“Illustrious far and wide, may *Indra* prosper us: may *Pūṣan* prosper us, the Master of all wealth. May *Tārṅṣya* with uninjured fellies prosper us: *Bṛhaspati* vouchsafe to us prosperity.”]²¹⁶

Milk (*dugdha*) (with recitation of): *om payaḥ pṛthivyām...*:

[“Store milk in earth and milk in plants, milk in the sky and milk in air.

¹⁹⁷ According to HB₂ p. 43 all of the verses from *fol. 8^r* should be repeated. The third *pinḍa* representing the great-great-grandfather is now separated. ¹⁹⁸ 1 *prastha* = 1 (Nep.) *pāthi* (4,54 litre). The meaning is obscure since the object of the sentence is missing.

¹⁹⁹ Lit. “ear-ornament”, according to the priest, however, it should be ivory.

²⁰⁰ Cf., however, *fol. 21v*, v.l. *viānika*, “canopy”; in Bhaktapur, a mosquito net is hung over the bed which separates it in a way from the outside world.

²⁰¹ The meaning of *nidrā-kumbha* remains obscure.

²⁰² A small earthenware plate filled with rice, coins and a betel nut.

²⁰³ According to AKP p. 21, the *saptadhānya* are (Nep.) *dhāna*, *gahūṃ*, *jau*, *til*, *māsa*, *mūṅga*, *kāḡunu*.

²⁰⁴ *Aloe*, *Aquila Agaloccha*.

²⁰⁵ These things are given to the priest, who represents the *preta* on his one-year journey after death. Nowadays they are mostly placed on or before the bed.

²⁰⁶ See Michaels 2005 for the details of the *saṃkalpa* formula.

²⁰⁷ Due to the very corrupt text, the transl. follows K.-W. Müller’s German translation of the *Antyeṣṣipaddhati* of Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa p. 171, which has by and large the same wording.

²⁰⁸ YV 33.43, RV I.53.2.

Quotations from the Yajurveda are from Griffith/Arya 1997.

²⁰⁹ Quoted from the memory of Aiśvaryaadhār Śarmā; cf. Siddhāntakaumudī, Pāṇiniyaśikṣā verse 59. The similarity of the words collyrium (*añjana*) and ignorance (*ajñāna*) is used as a wordplay, similar to the two meanings of “eyewash” in English. The verse is a famous prayer for teachers.

Teeming with milk for me to be all the regions.”]²¹⁷

Curd (*dadhi*) (with recitation of): *om dadhikrāpno...*:

[“Now have I glorified with praise strong *Dadhikrāvan*, conquering steed, Sweet may he make our months: may he prolong the days we have to live.”]²¹⁸

Honey (*madhu*) (with recitation of): *om madhuvātā...*:

[“The winds waft sweets, the rivers pour sweets for the man who keeps the Law: So may the plants be sweet for us. Sweet be the night and sweet the dawns, sweet the terrestrial atmosphere: Sweet be our Father Heaven to us. May the tall tree be full of sweets for us and, and full of sweets the Sun: May our milch-kine be sweet for us.”]²¹⁹

16^f Clarified butter (*ghṛta*) (with recitation of): *om ghṛtaṃ ghṛtapāvanā...*:

[“You drinkers-up of fatness, drink the fatness; drink up the gravy, drinkers of the gravy! You are the oblation of the air’s mid-region. All-hail!”]²²⁰

Sugar (*śarkkarā*) (with recitation of): *om namaḥ śambhavāya ca...*:

[“Homage to the source of happiness and to the source of delight, homage to the causer of happiness and to the causer of delight, homage to the auspicious, homage to the most auspicious.”]²²¹

Ganges water (*gaṃgodaka*) (with recitation of): *ye tīrthāni...*:

[“Those who with arrows in their hand, and armed with swords, frequent the fords. Of these do we unbend the bows a thousand leagues away from us.”]²²²

Cloths (*vastra*) (with recitation of): *vasoḥ pavitraṃ asi...*:

[“You are the strainer, hundred-

streamed, of *Vasu*. You are the strainer, thousand-streamed, of *Vasu*. May *Savitā* the God with *Vasu*’s strainer, thousand-streamed, rightly cleansing, purify you.”]²²³

Sandalwood (*candana*) (with recitation of): *om yadayaka...*:

[“Whatever, *Vṛtra*-slayer! you *Sūrya* have risen on to-day, that, *Indra*, all is in your power.²²⁴ Swift, visible to all are you, O *Sūrya*, maker of the light, illumining all the radiant realm.”]²²⁵

Vermilion (*sindūra*) (with recitation of): *tvañjaviṣṭadā...*:

[“Do you, Most Youthful God, protect the men who offer, hear their songs, Protect his offspring and himself.”]²²⁶

Sacred Thread (*yajñopavīta*) (with recitation of): *yajñopavītaṃ paramaṃ...*²²⁷

[*Om*, the Sacred Thread is the highest means of purification, which was created formerly at the same time as *Prajāpati*. Put on the best and radiant Sacred Thread, which gives longevity. It should (bestow) strength and splendour.]

Rice (*akṣata*) (with recitation of): *akṣanamīva...*:

[“Well have they eaten and regaled: the friends have risen and passed away. The sages, luminous in themselves, have praised you with their latest hymn. Now, *Indra*, yoke your two Bay steeds.”]²²⁸

Barley (*yava*) (with recitation of): *yavosi...*:

[“Barely are thou. Bar off from us our haters, bar our enemies.”]²²⁹

16^v Black sesame seeds (*tila*) (with recitation of): *om tilosisoma...*:

[“Sesame are you, dedicated to *Soma*, created by the gods at the *gosava*, given in the offering by the elders, with *svadhā* delight the forefathers,

²¹⁰ Ritual assignment of body parts to the deities, usually accompanied with recitations and gestures.

²¹¹ The transl. follows here HB₃ fol. 4^v: *urasā*.

²¹² Sign of the goddess Śrī or Lakṣmī.

²¹³ The translation here follows HB₂ p. *gha: jagatprabhum*.

²¹⁴ Lakṣmī is generally depicted – besides with a book and nectar – with either two lotuses or a mirror and lotus. HB₃ fol. 4^v reads “lotus (and) mirror”.

²¹⁵ Transl. follows HB₂ p. *gha: tārksakūrmau*.

²¹⁶ YV 25.19.

²¹⁷ YV 18.36.

²¹⁸ YV 23.32.

²¹⁹ YV 13.27-29.

²²⁰ YV 6.19.

²²¹ YV 16.41.

²²² YV 16.61.

²²³ YV 1.3.

²²⁴ YV 33.35, ṚV VIII.82.4.

²²⁵ YV 33.36, ṚV I.50.4.

²²⁶ YV 13.52.

²²⁷ Quoted from memory by Pandit Aiśvaryaḍhar Śarmā; Cf. *PāraskaraGS* 2.3.

²²⁸ YV 3.51.

²²⁹ YV 5.26.

this world and us. Blessing (and honour!”]

Flowers (*puṣpa*) (with recitation of): *yāḥ phalanī...*:

[“Let fruitful plants, and fruitless, those that blossom, and the blossomless, Urged onward by *Bṛhaspati*, release us from our pain and grief (sic!).”]²³⁰

Then together with a Viṣṇumantra according to the respective Veda (tradition) three times (the gesture of) *añjali*. Six auspicious (cow?) products (*śadaṅga*). Incense (*dhūpa*) (with recitation of): *om dhūraṣi...*:

[“You are the yoke. Injure you him who injures. Harm him who harm us. Harm the man we injure. You are the Gods’ best carrier, bound most firmly, filled fullest, welcome, Gods’ best invoker.”]²³¹

Lamp (*dīpa*) (with recitation of): *om tejosi...*:

[“You are lustre: give me lustre. You are manly vigour: give me manly vigour. You are strength: give me strength. You are energy: give me energy. You are passion: give me passion. You are conquering might: give me conquering might.”]²³²

Sweets (*naivedya*) (with recitation of): *om annapate...*:

[“A share of food, O Lord of Food, vouchsafe us, invigorating food that brings no sickness. Onward, ever onward lead the giver. Grant us maintenance both for quadrupeds and bipeds.”]²³³

Fruits (*phala*) (with recitation of): *yāḥ phalanī...*²³⁴

Betel nut (*pūgiphalatāmbūla*)²³⁵ (with recitation of): *om namaḥ parṇāya...*

[“Homage to him who is in leaves and to him who is in the falling of leaves. Homage to him with the threatening

voice and to him who slays, homage to him who slays, homage to him who troubles and to him who afflicts. Homage to you arrow-makers, and to you bow-makers, homage to you sprinklers, to the hearts of the Gods. Homage (sic!) to the discerners, homage to the destroyers; homage to the indestructible.”]²³⁶

17^r *Om*, the incense, light and sweets for Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, may the fruitful ritual decision (*saṃkalpa*) be successful. Then he should worship (Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa) on the bed in the direction of the east. *Om*, salutation to Indra. Salutation to Agni. Salutation to Yama and salutation to Nairṛtya. Salutation to Varuṇa. Salutation to Vāyu. Salutation to Kubera. Salutation to Īśāna. Salutation to Ananta.

17^v Salutation to Brahmā. Salutation to Āditya. Salutation to Soma. Salutation to Aṅgāra. Salutation to Budha. Salutation to Bṛhaspati (and) salutation to Śukra. Salutation to Śanaīścara. Salutation to Rāhu. Salutation to Ketu. Salutation to Janman (planetary constellation at birth). *Om*, salutation to Vināyaka. *Om* salutation to Durgā. Salutation to Vāyavi. Salutation to the directions. Salutation to the lunar mansions (*nakṣatra*) beginning with Aśvinī.

18^r Salutation to the conjunctions (*yoga*) beginning with Viṣkambha. Salutation to the solar mansions (*rāśi*) beginning with Aries (*meṣa*). Salutation to the fifteen lunar days (*tithi*) beginning with the new moon (*pratipad*). *Om*, salutation to Keśava with Śrī. Salutation to Nārāyaṇa with Vāgīśvarī. Salutation to Mādhava with Kānti. Salutation to Govinda with Kriyā. Salutation to Viṣṇu with Śānti.

18^v Salutation to Madhusūdana with Dhṛti. Salutation to Trivikrama with Ichā. Salutation to Vāmana with Pṛiti. Salutation to Śrīdhara with Rati. Salutation to Ṛṣikeśa

²³⁰ YV 12.89.

²³¹ YV 1.8.

²³² YV 19.9.

²³³ YV 11.83.

²³⁴ See fol. 16^v.

²³⁵ (Nep.) *pugi* or *pugiphal*.

²³⁶ YV 16.46.

with Māyā. Salutation to Padmanābha with Dhī. Salutation to Dāmodara with Mahimā. Salutation to Puruṣottama with Lakṣmī. Salutation to the sixty-four Yoginīs. (Now) fragrant materials (*gandha*) etc.

19^r He should prepare water (*argha*). Having placed two conches, cow milk, *kuśa* grass, barley (*yava*), mustard seeds, *dūrvā* grass, rice (*akṣata*), fragrant materials (*gandha*), flowers (*puṣpa*), coconut (*narikela*), gold (*hiranya*), valuable gifts (*ratna*), (and) water (*jala*), having taken the conch with his hands, holding it by its top, kneeling on the earth, he should give water (*argha*). Recitation (*vākya*) as before.

19^v As your bed in the ocean of milk is not empty, oh Kṛṣṇa, so should mine not be empty from birth to birth.²³⁷

(Now) raising of this water (*arghya*), (proclamation of) *svāhā*, muttered prayer (*jāpa*), recitation (*stotra*) of *namo 'stv anantāya...* (and) *pāpo 'ham...*

[Evil am I, an evil-doer, evil-minded, arisen from evil. Please save me, o god, he who has taken refuge in you is dear to you.]

(Now) fragrant materials (*gandha*) etc., sacrificial fee (*dakṣiṇā*), (then) four times²³⁸ circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇā*) of the bed. *Oṃ*, salutation to the authoritative Devī. Worship (*pūjā*) of the *brāhmaṇa*. A seat should be offered for the *brāhmaṇa* with his wife in the form of (i.e. representing) Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa.

20^r Flowers (*puṣpa*) should be offered. In this way water should be offered for washing the feet (*pādārghya*). Water should be offered for washing hands (*hastārghya*). Again water (*pratyaarghya*) should be offered. Sandalwood paste (*candana*) should be offered. Unbroken rice (*akṣata*) should be offered. Sacred Thread (*yajñopavīta*) and flowers (*puṣpa*) should be offered. Incense (*dhūpa*)

should be offered. Light (*dīpa*) should be offered. Fragrant materials (*gandha*) etc. should be offered. (Then) libation (*utsarga*) (taking barley, black sesame seeds, *kuśa* grass and water in the right hand and recitation of):

As long as the bed of Śiva and Keśava is not empty, so long the bed of the *preta* is not empty from birth to birth.²³⁹

20^v Through the power of the gift of the bed he should stay without doubt in the house of Indra and also in the heavenly house of the son of the sun.²⁴⁰

He should place two blades of *kuśa* in the hand of the *brāhmaṇa*. This gift of the bed together with household utensils is to be given according to one's capacities. Give (it) through the *brāhmaṇa* (to the *preta*). Ritual decision (*saṃkalpa*). Wording (*vākya*) (of the *deśakāla-saṃkīrtana*) as before:

21^r (I shall give)²⁴¹ this bed plated with ivory, ornamented with golden coins, addressing it to Prajāpati, erected at the four directions (lit. corners) beginning with north-east with (four) *kumbhas* full of clarified butter (and) filled with saffron, wheat (and) water, together with one *pūrṇapātra*²⁴² (each), (and) with a *nidrā-rūpakumbha*²⁴³ filled with clarified butter placed at the shining head (of the bed),

21^v covered with goose down, (and) a pillow as a pleasant head (of the bed) with a special blanket (*paṭṭi*) as bed cover and a five-coloured canopy with a golden icon of Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, addressing it to Aṅgiras. Wishing to satisfy all, beginning with the inhabitants of Yama's city (and) the doorkeepers (of Yama's city) whose flag is *dharma* (I shall give) the Seven Grains (and)

22^r their supplements addressing it to Prajāpati.

²³⁷ Transl. follows GPS 13.71.

²³⁸ During the ritual the bed is only circumambulated three times. According to Pandit Aithal, the number of circumambulations for Viṣṇu is four.

²³⁹ Transl. follows AKP, p. 70.

²⁴⁰ i.e. Yama. Transl. follows GPS 13.79.

²⁴¹ See fol. 29^v.

²⁴² A small earthenware plate filled with rice, coins and a betel nut.

²⁴³ It is unclear what "nidrā" means in this context.

- Wishing to satisfy Yama etc. in the city of Yama (which) is difficult to reach, (I shall give) an auspicious betel nut which consists of Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Śiva addressing it to Vidyādhara.
- 22^v (I shall give) a mirror wishing to reach the world of Rudra, addressing it to Indra, the sight of which (grants) bliss, splendour, welfare, good reputation (and) pure knowledge to the people until the end of the sun and the moon. (I shall give) saffron and honey addressing it to Yakṣa. And then (I shall give) a lamp addressing it to Vahni in order to successfully and easily proceed on the way of great darkness (in order to) illuminate the departure.
- 23^r (I shall give) these shoes addressing them to Uttānāṅgiras (thus) successfully proceeding to the heavenly world, having ascended a horse (that) overcomes the difficulty of traversing (the hells named) “edge of a razor-blade”, “burning coals” (and) “blazing sand”.
(I shall give) this umbrella addressing it to Indra in order to prevent the exhaustion that stems from the heat of twelve suns (and) in order to prevent the heat and remove the great pain (of the hells named) “forest of sword-blades” (and) “deluge of stones”.²⁴⁴
- 23^v (I shall give) this yak-tail addressing it to Kāmadhenu in order to proceed successfully to the world of Surabhī while being fanned in the early morning by a troop of one-thousand Apsaras.
(I shall give) a fan addressing it to Vāyu preventing heat etc.
(I shall give) a stick addressing it to Viśvakarman for the time when proceeding on the way to Yama in the wish of attaining Viṣṇu.
(I shall give) a bench addressing it to Viśvakarman in the wish of dwelling in happiness wheresoever.
- 24^r (I shall give) this seat addressing it to Uttānāṅgiras in the wish of dwelling in happiness wheresoever, also on the way to Yama.
(I shall give) this waterpot addressing it to Varuṇa out of the desire of attaining happiness, wheresoever on the way to Yama, wishing to satisfy the messengers of Yama by preventing hunger and thirst etc. by perpetual satisfaction.
(I shall give) a brazen pot for cooking rice together with a ladle addressing it to Viśvakarman.
- 24^v (I shall give) a brazen pot for cooking side dishes together with a ladle addressing it to Viśvakarman.
(I shall give) a pot made of iron for cooking green vegetables.
(I shall give) a brazen plate addressing it to Viśvakarman for the purpose of washing hands and food and attaining purity.
(I shall give) a plate made of brass (*raitya*) or bell-metal (*kāṁsya*) with milk addressing it to Viśvakarman.
(I shall give) milk addressing it to Samudra.
- 25^r (I shall give) fuel addressing it to Vanaspati during the time of proceeding to Yama with the wish of preventing the freezing cold.
(I shall give) a vessel made of clay, containing charcoal, and a fire-vessel addressing it to Agni. (I shall give) a three-legged stove made of iron addressing it to Yama. (I shall give) a sword made of iron addressing it to Bhairava. (I shall give) a stove made of iron addressing it to Viśvakarman.
- 25^v (I shall give) a vessel made of iron, containing charcoal addressing it to Viśvakarman. (I shall give) a vessel made of iron containing green vegetables etc. addressing it to Viśvakarman. (I shall give) a vessel with coconut and smoke for inhalation to be always served address-

²⁴⁴According to GPS 2.1 ff. the deceased has to suffer from the heat of twelve suns on his way through the underworld. He tries to take refuge in the nearby shady forest, which consists solely of sword-blades, cutting the deceased into pieces.

The entire household presented to the spirit of the deceased, is displayed in front of the house of the chief mourner and offered to the priest.

Photo 22nd August 2002.



ing it to Vahni. For the sake of erotic decoration (I shall give) a vessel made of brass with oil for application addressing it to Viṣṇu. For the sake of holding water (I shall give) a thread made of grass addressing it to Varuṇa.

- 26^r (I shall give) a wooden door-box for clothes and things to be placed in addressing it to Viśvakarman. While proceeding to Yama and wishing to have ascended a vehicle (I shall give) crutches addressing it to Viśvakarman for (support in case of) shaking. (I shall give) an *icham*²⁴⁵ addressing it to Vanaspati to be placed on the limbs.
- 26^v While proceeding on the way to Yama wishing to satisfy all, beginning with those who live in the city of Yama, wishing to attain pure rice (I shall give) a winnowing basket addressing it to Vāyu. For the sake of preventing dust in the wish of attaining a pure house (I shall

give) a broom addressing it to Vanaspati. Wishing to satisfy all, beginning with the messengers of Yama, (I shall give) a stick made of iron for the application of collyrium together with collyrium addressing it to Viṣṇu.

- 27^r (I shall give) articles for erotic decoration (such as) vermilion and sandalwood paste and substances for the mark on the forehead, (and) a vessel for these (materials) addressing it to Śacī. (I shall give) a comb for adorning etc. (and) other articles for erotic decoration addressing it to Vanaspati. (I shall give) a necklace made of crystal (*kāca*) or gold addressing it to Viṣṇu. (I shall give) ornaments for the ears made of gold addressing it to Agni.
- 27^v At the time of proceeding on the way to Yama wishing to satisfy all, beginning with Yama, Citragutpa etc., the messengers (of Yama) and others (I shall give)

²⁴⁵ Meaning of *icham* obscure.

a ring made of gold or silver. At the time of proceeding on the way to Yama, wishing to attain happiness (by) preventing the freezing cold, (I shall give) an upper garment to support the limbs (and) a jacket addressing it to Brhaspati.

28^r On the way to Yama wishing to satisfy all, with recitations of the names of Hari (wishing to) satisfy Gandharvas, Nārada and Rāgiṇī (I shall give) together with cloth a drum²⁴⁶ etc. addressing it to Sarasvatī. (I shall give) a book etc. to be written by the highest lord addressing it to Sarasvatī.

28^v Wishing to satisfy the inhabitants of Yamas city (I shall give) the book so-and-so (with) fixed letters and bounded by the right number wishing to reach the world of Sarasvatī, which is different from the heavenly world, (I shall give) a book addressing it to Sarasvatī. In the process of time (while proceeding on the way) (I shall give) a *sūryasvadina*²⁴⁷ addressing it to Viṣṇu. For the sake of covering the eyes (I shall give) a *upana-yana*²⁴⁸ made from a handful of *darbha* grass addressing it to Viśvakarma.

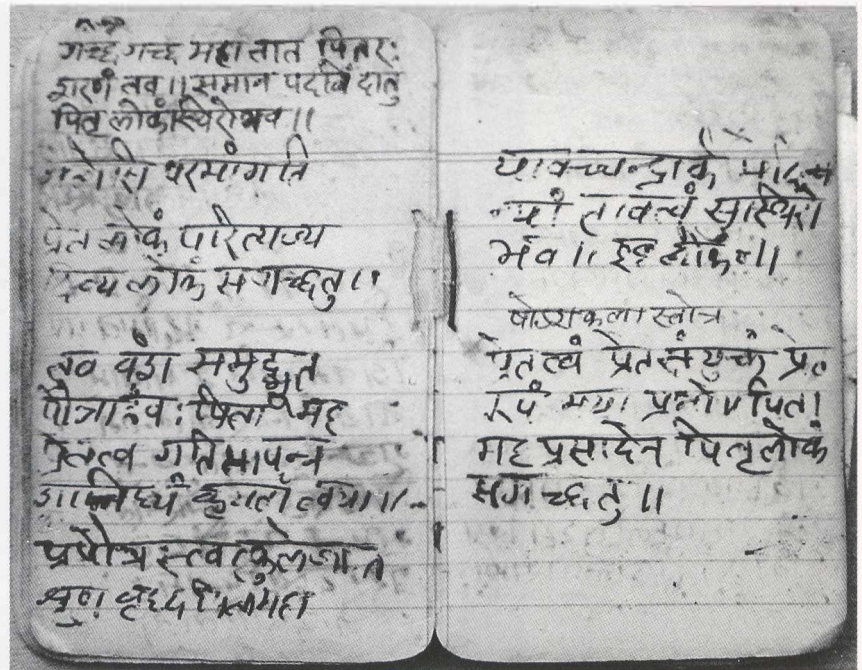
29^r (I shall give) a pot for oil made of brass (*raitya*) or bell-metal (*kāṁsya*) addressing it to Viśva(karma). (I shall give) a pot for eating made of brass (*raitya*) or bell-metal (*kāṁsya*). In order to see the figure (I shall give) a mirror for so-and-so to be drawn and represented in a picture addressing it to Viṣṇu.

29^v I shall give other materials and all domestic utensils addressing it to Viṣṇu to the Brahmin so-and-so Śarmā, together with his wife, being the form of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa.

(The following *śloka*) should be said by the *brāhmaṇa*:

oṃ svasti kodāt...

[“Who has bestowed it? Upon whom bestowed it? Desire bestowed it, for



desire he gave it, desire is giver and Desire receiver, This, O Desire, to you is dedicated.”]²⁴⁹

He should (now) give all the utensils (to the *brāhmaṇa*).

30^r (Now) the dedication of the gifts.

Given in this way, I hand over to you as the sacrificial fee (*dakṣiṇā*) according to (my) faith (a) silver (coin) representing the moon (and a) copper (coin) representing the sun in order to firmly establish the gift of the bed together with the cooking utensils.

He should give all the ornaments. He (the *brāhmaṇa*) should sit on the bed. Circumambulation (of the bed).

30^v Oh Śrīviṣṇu, this very icon together with all of the utensils, provided with all (kinds of) valuable gifts is given to you, oh Brahmin. Because of this, by means of the gift of a bed, the self, Śambhu, Śiva, Gaurī (and) Śakra together with troops of gods, (and) this very self should be satisfied.

Worship, lying on the ground and touch-

Page of Mahendra Śarmā's personal handbook (HB₃), which he uses during the performance of the *latyā* ritual on the 45th day after death. Cp. fol 8^v of HB₁ and the *samānapadavākya* of HB₃ in the concordance on p. 174.

²⁴⁶ Special meaning of *adamaṛḍaṅga* not clear, most probably a kind of drum.

²⁴⁷ Meaning obscure, maybe a clock.

²⁴⁸ Meaning obscure in this context.

²⁴⁹ YV 7.48.

ing the feet of the *brāhmaṇa*, sacrificial fee (*dakṣiṇā*).

[Godāna]

(Now) the (symbolic) gift of a cow (*godāna*). Recitation (*vācana*).

- 31^r Benediction (reciting couplets of *ṛcas* of the Veda). Keep Sūrya as a witness. (Recitation of) *kāyena vācā...*²⁵⁰
[Whatever I do with body, speech, mind or the senses with intellect or the

self, or due to the natural disposition, everything I dedicate to the highest Nārāyaṇa.]

In the (Vikrama) era, in the year 1997 in the month of *phālguna*, the tenth lunar day of the bright half, the seventh day of the week, on that day (this) *śayyādāna* was written by the *brāhmaṇa* Devadhara. Hail.

- 31^r (indecipherable sketch for placing the *kumbhas* at the four corners of the bed)

Concordance of Mahendra Śarmā's personal handbooks (HB₃ and HB₁)

Transliteration of HB₃ and concordance to HB₁.

Name of the stotras (the names in square brackets are not written in HB₃).

1. <i>kravyādāgnistotra</i>	fol. 1 ^r
2. <i>kumbhakeśvara</i> [<i>stotra</i>]	fol. 1 ^r - 1 ^v
3. <i>piṇḍastotra</i>	fol. 1 ^v
4. [<i>āśīrvacana</i>]	fol. 1 ^v
5. [<i>samānapada vākya</i>]	fol. 2 ^r - 3 ^r
6. <i>ṣoḍaśakalāstotra</i>	fol. 3 ^r
7. [<i>śayyādāna kumbha pramāṇa</i>]	fol. 3 ^v
8. <i>prārthana</i>	fol. 3 ^v - 4 ^r
9. <i>dhyāna</i>	fol. 4 ^r - 4 ^v
10. <i>arghya</i>	fol. 5 ^r
11. <i>śaṃkha pūjā</i>	fol. 5 ^r - 5 ^v
12. [<i>kṛṣṇa stotra</i>]	fol. 5 ^v

HB₃

fol. 1^r [1.] *kravyādāgni stotraḥ* – *kuṇḍa karpūrasaṃkāsa ekavaktrals trilocana. pañcadaśakalāśrāddhe kravyādāgne namo lstu te.*

fol. 1^r [2.] *kuṃbhakeśvaraḥ* [*stotra*] – *sarvatīrthamayīmūrtikuṃbhakeśatṛtīya lnamāmi śiva śatataṃ xi lsarva jiveṣu tāraṇam. vidhiḥ viṣṇuharaś caiva ll (xxx ltilāraścana santu māyānixṣa letā satyāśiva santu)*²⁵¹ *trimūrtibhavatāraṇam. syāmaraktāti varṇas tvam pūrṇakumbhaṃ namo stu te.*

HB₁

fol. 3^v *kuṇḍaṃ karpūrasaṃkāsaṃ ekavaktraṃ trilocānaṃ. paṃcadaśakalāśrāddhe kravyādāgnimūrttaye namaḥ.*

fol. 2^v *sarvatīrthamayīmūrtikuṃbhakeśvaraḥ tṛtīyake. namāmi satataṃ devapūrṇakumbhaṃ namāmi te. lvidhir viṣṇuharaś caiva trimūrttibhavatāraṇam. śyāmaraktādikavarṇam praṇāmāmi sadāśivaṃ.*

²⁵⁰ Quoted from the memory of Pandit Aithal.

²⁵¹ In brackets: three lines added on the top margin.

fol. 1^v [3.] *piṇḍastotraḥ – caturdaśakalāpiṇḍe tṛptir bhavati sāsvatī |parataḥ śivakumbhena namas te |pitṛdevatā. iti.*

fol. 1^v [4.] [*āśīrvacana*] *pūjāṃ dhana vidyāṃ svargaxxx |va. prayakṣatu tathā sarjya xxx |pitāmahāṃ. āyurvṛddhi yasorvxxx |nāṃ sukhaśṛya. dharbharitāna xxx | xxx ||*

fol. 2^r [5.] [*samānapadavākya*] *gaccha gaccha mahātāta |pitarau śaraṇaṃ tava. samāna- | padaviṃ dātu pitṛlokaṃ sthiro |bhava. leṣa vo nugata pretah |pitaras tvaṃ ḍadāmiva |śivam astu viśeṣānāṃ |jāyatāṃ cirajīvināṃ |grhyatāṃ tvatsuto yantu |piṇḍarūpeṇa saṃ- |sthitā |samānapadaviṃ dātum |prasadaśva pi- |tāmaha |ihalokaṃ parityajya ||gaccha gaccha mahātāta |pitarah śaraṇam tava. samānapa- |daviṃ dātu |pitṛlokaṃ sthiro bhava.²⁵² |gato si paramāṃ gati pretalokaṃ parityajya |di- |vyalokaṃ sa gacchatu. |tava vaṃśasamud- |bhūta |pautrāhavaḥ |pitāmaha |pretatvagatiṃ |āpanna |śannidhyaṃ |kryatāṃ tvayā. |prapau- |tras tvatkule jāta |śṛṇu vṛddhapitāmaha |lyā- |vac candrārka medinyāṃ |tāvat tvaṃ susthiro |bhava. |liha lokaṃ. |*

fol. 3^r [6.] *ṣoḍaśakalāstotra |pretatvaṃ preta- |saṃyuktaṃ preta |rūpaṃxx |prabho. |pitā |maha- |prasādena |pitṛlokaṃ |sa gacchatu. ||*

fol. 3^v [7.] [*śayyādānakumbhapramāṇa*] *iśā- |ne |ghṛtakuṃbhaṃ ca |lāgneyāṃ |kumkumam tathā |nairṛtyāṃ |caiva |godhūmaṃ |lvāyavye |jalapūritam.*

fol. 3^v [8.] *prārthanā |śrīviṣṇu |pratimāheṣā |sarvopakaraṇair |yutā. |sarva |ratnasamāyuktā |tubhyaṃ |vipra |niveditā. |ātmāsambhu |śivā- |gaurīsakrasuragaṇai |saha. |tasmāt |śayyā- |pradā |nena |ātmā |hy eṣa |prasādatu |*

fol. 6^v *caturdasakalāpiṇḍe tṛptir bhavati sāsvatam. |pitarasīvakumbhaṃ |ca namas te |pitṛdevatā.*

fol. 8^r *eṣa vonugatapretapitaras tvaṃ da- |dāmi te. |śivam astu viśeṣānāṃ |jāyatāṃ cirajīvināṃ. |grhyatāṃ tatsvarūpeṇa |piṇḍa- |rūpeṇa saṃsthitam. |gacha gacha mahātāta |pitarau śaraṇaṃ tava. samānapada |piṇḍam tu |pitṛloke |sthiro bhava. |vākya. |ihalokaṃ |parityajya |gatosi |paral |māṃ gati. |pretarūpaṃ |parityajya |divyalokaṃ |sa gacchati. |1. |tava vaṃśasamudbhūta |prapautrohaṃ |pitāmaha. |pretatvagatiṃ |āpannaṃ |śāmnidhyaṃ |kṛiyā- |tāṃ tvayā. |vākya. |ihalokaṃ |pari°. |2. |prapau- |tras tvaṃ |kule |jātā |śṛṇu |vṛddhapitāmaha. |yāvac |candrārkkau |medinyāṃ |tāvat tvaṃ |susthiro bhava. |ihalokaṃ |pa°.*

fol. 9^v 3. *ṣoḍaśakalāstotra. |pretatvaṃ preta- |saṃyuktaṃ |pitṛrūpaṃ |mayā |prabho. |pitā- |mahaprasādena |viṣṇulokaṃ |sa gacchati. |iti |ṣoḍasakalāstotra.*

fol. 10^v *pañcakumbhapramāṇaṃ. |iśāṇe |ghṛta- |kuṃbhaṃ ca |āgneyāṃ |kuṃkumas tathā. |nairṛ- |tyāṃ |goldhūmakuṃbhaṃ |vāyavyāṃ |jalapū- |ritam*

fol. 30^v *śrīviṣṇo |pratimā |hy eṣā |sarvopas- |l |karaṇair |yutā. |sarva |ratnasamāyuktā |tava |vipra |niveditā. |ātmāsambhu |śivā |gaurī |sakraḥ |suragaṇaisaha. |tasmāc |chayyā |pradānena |ātmā |hy eṣa |prasādatu.*

²⁵² This verse is the same like that on fol. 2^r. It is added on the top margin and written much more clear than the writing on fol. 2^r.

fol. 4^r [9.] *dhyāna* |vidyutpuñjānibham deham
|lakṣmībāmāṅgasamsthitam |pravibhakta vi-
bhūṣādhyam |śrīvatsāṅkita vighrahaṃ |urasā
kaustubhaṃ vighraṭ|smitavaktrama jagatpra-
bhūṃ |śaṅkhaṃ cakram gadāṃ padmaṃ
|dakṣahaste virājitam |pustakaṃ kalaśaṃ
padmaṃ |mukuraṃ vāmahastake tārṣya |
kūrma samārūḍhaṃ lakṣmī |nārāyaṇabhaje.
iti. ||

fol. 5^r [10.] *arghyaḥ* – *oṃ jāto daitya* |vad-
yārthāya devānāṃ pālanāya ca. tasmai de-
vāya |satyāya devāya saguṇātmane. vyaktā
|vyuktasvarūpāya hr̥ṣīkapataye namaḥ |grhā-
ṇārghyam mayā dattaṃ ramayā |sahita pra-
bho.

fol. 5^r [11.] *śaṅkhapūjāḥ* – *tvaṃ purā*
sāgarotpānnā viṣṇunā vidhṛtaḥ kare. ||na-
mitaṃ sarvadaivatyaṃ pāñcaljanma namo
stu te. ||jātaḥ kamsabadhārthāya devānāṃ
|pālanāya ca. tasmai devāya |kṛṣṇāya saga-
ṇāya mahātmane.

fol. 5^v [12.] [*kṛṣṇastotra*] *kṛṣṇāya vāsudevā-*
ya devakī |nandāya ca. nandagopakumārāya
govindāya namo namaḥ. || kastūrīti lakaṃ la-
lāṭaya|tale vakṣasthale kaustubhaṃ |nāsāge
gajamauktikaṃ|karatale veṇaḥ karer kaka-
ṇam. sabāṅge hari canyā |na ca tulasā
kaṇṭhe |ca muktāvalī gopa |strī pariṣeṣṭito
vijayate gopāla cūḍā|mañiḥ. ||

fol. 14^v *dhyānaṃ. oṃ vidyutpuñjani-*
bhaṃ dehaṃ lakṣmīvāmāṅgasamsthitaṃ.
pravibhaktavilbhūṣādhyam śrīvatsāṅkitava-
śasaṃ. darasā kaustubhaṃ vibhratsmi-
tavaktraṃ jagatprabho. śaṅkhacakra-
gadā-
padmaṃ dakṣahaste villrājitam. pustaka-
ka-
laśaṃ padmakumudaṃ vāmalhastake. tārṣa-
kūrmmā samārūḍhaṃ lakṣmī|nārāyaṇaṃ
bhaje.

Textuality and Contextuality

Seen from a textual perspective, especially from the Sanskritic point of view, Hindu death rituals appear to be rather static, prescribing a fixed order of actions and using more or less fixed ritual elements (e.g. Vedic recitations, *mantras*, *maṇḍalas*) as well as ritual objects. Thus they are often contrasted with the great range of local, regional, and historical variations (see, for instance, Evison 1989). However, on closer inspection it becomes evident that even within a narrow contextual framework, death rituals and rituals in general offer possibilities of change and variation that have mostly been overseen by scholars of (domestic) rituals (in South Asia). It is this aspect of the dynamics of Hindu death rituals that we wish to elaborate on in the following conclusions by concentrating on notions of textuality and contextuality, impurity, pollution and purification, tactility and embodiment, deification and pacification, memory and mourning, continuity and change. We shall try to see the Newar death rituals, especially the *latyā* or *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* ritual, “in their own right”, i.e. from all the aspects that come together at a specific point of time and place and that do not easily allow deductions and generalizations. However, we assume that the conclusions we draw also hold true for similar cases, although all theorising on death is obviously limited by the uncertainty of death.

As we have shown elsewhere (Michaels/Buss forthc.), the great formal variety within both ritual practice and ritual texts concerns the fact that, as we see it, ritual action must be understood as a kind of grammar which allows a creative use of its basic elements and structures. The idea of studying rituals in terms of linguistic models has already been proposed by Franz Boas and has been brought up since then by several scholars, e.g. Susanne Langer (1963), Edmund Leach

(1968), Staal (1989), and Lawson/McCauley (1990). However, most of these writers emphasise that rituals are composed of ritual sequences that can be understood as the smallest units of rituals. Staal alone developed a kind of ritual syntax in which special modes of action such as repetitions, breaks, rhetorical questions, ritual abbreviations etc., as well as pragmatical aspects such as expressivity, performativity, and habituality would have to be considered. It remains an open question then whether a kind of universal logic of ritual, a “sense of ritual” (Bell 1992), or a kind of “interrituality” (Gladigow 2004) could be developed.

As for the *latyā* ritual of the Newars, we pin-pointed eight methods for creating variation, which are: (1) substitution; (2) alteration (i.e. alternatives or options are explicitly mentioned, which gives the priest the option to modify the ritual according to the situation); (3) shifting, postponement, or interpolation; (4) omission; (5) fusion and merging; (6) reduction or abbreviation; (7) re-duplication and repetition; (8) invention of new ritual elements or sub-rites (Michaels/Buss 2005).

All of these forms of variance are means for adapting ritual liturgy to the actual situation, depending on the macro-, meso- or micro-level of comparison. Adaption of rituals and thus variability rather than strict formality has always been accepted by the Dharmaśāstrins, priests, and theologians, because rituals often had to be reduced and modified in times of distress (Skt. *āpad*) or adapted to the specific circumstances of the region and the time (Skt. *deśakālānucāra*).

However, there is a limit to the variability of rituals because their core elements can almost never be exchanged or substituted. They make up the particular character of the ritual. Thus *saṃkalpa*, *piṇḍa*, *pūjā*, *dāna* or *homa* appear in all of the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* rituals. Among these, only the *piṇḍas* are specific to death rituals, whereas *saṃkalpa*, *pūjā*, *dāna*

and *homa* are also found in other rituals. Yet not even the *piṇḍas* and other core elements are prepared or used in a fixed and homogeneous way.

In addition, the agency of the priest in rituals seems to be much greater than is generally assumed. This becomes clear in the surprising substitution of the (prescribed) son of the deceased by his father during the ritual of 22nd of August 2002. Here it is the father of the deceased who performs the death ritual, even though the deceased had himself a son – too young to already have ritual capacity himself. During the ritual, when the father kneads the *piṇḍas*, the priest says: “It is (still) not allowed to raise the *piṇḍa* from the ground.... Is there a son (born from the dead person)? [The father confirms this]... However, if he has a son, it is not necessary to make (mix) all (the *piṇḍas*) into one. If he had not had a son, all (the *piṇḍas*) would be made one... Don’t worry if it (the *piṇḍa*) gets broken... Now turn it round this way... Make (it) a little thinner at the top. Now fold it like this. Now, turn it round again. Keep pressing it this way [demonstrates]. (Be careful) it is going to break. It is not allowed to break the *piṇḍa*.”

To be sure, the son mentioned by the *yajamāna* was born shortly before his own son died. Consequently he was too young to perform the death rituals. In most if not all texts²⁵³, it is explicitly forbidden for a father to perform the *antyeṣṭi* and *śrāddha* rituals for his son since that would imply that the succession of the ancestors had broken down. However, the agency of the priest in the ritual is remarkable. He can alter the presumptive rules according to the situation, even though the ritual succession of father and son is firmly established since Vedic times.

Neither symbolism nor meaning can explain these possibilities of variation in rituals. Clearly, there is a relation between a core action or the plot of a ritual (*pradhāna*), and the sub-rituals (*aṅga*), but the formality is not



fixed by a limited and restricted procedure and protocol or liturgy, but by using more or less deliberately a known set of ritual elements and decorum from various sources. This can be seen in Hindu Newar death rituals – and most likely in other life-cycle rituals as well – on several levels. However, for many domestic rituals in non-Brahmanic communities of South Asia it now becomes clear that the varieties and the possibilities for change are far greater than the restrictions, established rules, and limitations. In other words, ritual formality refers to a kind of floating inventory of ritual actions and decorum that has to be bound and mixed by several agents to produce more or less meaningful action. Thus, it is not the formality but the variability in the use of forms that explains the dynamics of rituals. From this point of view, priests and other ritual specialists for domestic rituals in South Asia should be regarded as ritual artists rather than as ritual administrators. Ritual is indeed a form of art!

New moon in September (Gokarṇaaṁsī). Gaṇeś Bahādur Jati from Bhvalachē, 83-years-old, at the worship of the forefathers (śrāddha).

Photo 14th September 2004

²⁵³ See Kane 1991/IV: 257, GPS 11.19.



Hands of Gaṇeś Bahādur Jati with black sesame seeds on a small dish.
Photo 14th September 2004

Pollution and Purification²⁵⁴

Death means a certain period of impurity (*aśauca*, *mṛtakasūtaka*, *sūtaka*; Nep. *juṭho*) for the survivors. This generally lasts between ten and thirteen days for the close relatives, requires various purification measures, and is “contagious”. According to the Brahmanical legal texts, only a few persons cannot be polluted or will only be polluted for a short time; these include ascetics, Brahmins who maintain a sacrificial fire, and occasionally the king. The chief mourner, however, remains impure for at least ten to eleven days, during which he is not to shave, cut his nails, comb his hair, and must sleep only on the floor, avoid sexual intercourse, and wear neither shoes nor sewn garments. He is to cook his food himself on a separate fire. On the tenth or eleventh day he bathes, is shaved, and he receives a new Sacred Thread.

On several occasions, especially after the *latyā/sapiṇḍikaraṇa*, Brahmins must be

given presents and entertained again (*brāhmaṇabhojana*), even though they accept the offered meal with reluctance. Relatives and neighbours are also invited to meals which form the conclusion of the death rituals and the especially impure period; this demonstrates the reintegration of the mourning family into the community, even though many observances have to be followed during the subsequent year.

The degree of impurity for the survivors depends mainly on their class and caste as well as their kinship. Usually it is the patrilineal relatives who perform the death rites, in most cases the first-born son, or the brother or husband. During this time, the chief mourner – in Nevārī he is called the “giver of the fire” (*mitamhā*) – is treated almost as an Untouchable, clearly separated from his relatives. Widows smash their bracelets, remove their jewellery, and no longer wear stripes of vermilion in their parting. Brothers living in the household and all male relatives of the male line are also affected, and even distant relatives often perform a brief ritual purification upon receiving news of the death. At any rate, impurity is to be understood ritually in the death ritual. It has little to do with the emotional relation to the deceased.

Periods of death pollution

In Bhaktapur the periods, categories and degrees of pollution that reflect the nature of the relation of the relatives to the chief mourner can be summarized as follows: in all cases the activity involves *byēkegu*, the process of regaining purity.

One-day impurity:

least-affected distant relatives

Distant male and female relatives, collectively called *yākā pāhā* – literally “single guests” – are marginally affected. These

²⁵⁴ In the following section we have deliberately taken passages from Michaels 2004: 131ff.

are the daughters of great-uncles and great-great-uncles of male ancestors whose male descendants are either close agnates up to the third generation (*phukī*), or distant agnates up to the fifth generation. These distant agnates remember that a generation ago their fathers were members of the same lineage. Even granddaughters of great-great-aunts classify as *yākā pāhā*. In the case of the death of Jagat Mān Suvāl (to whom we frequently refer in our study), only five females were classified as such.

Many more, altogether 56 male and female *yākā pāhā*, were affected from the in-laws: from the wife of the deceased, his mother, his grandmother, his daughter-in-law, and his two granddaughters-in-law. Their nieces and the daughters of their nephews, their grand-nephews and the sons and daughters as well as grandsons and granddaughters of their uncles also qualify as *yākā pāhā*.

All of these relatives are polluted by the death, but a simple *byēkegu* procedure allows them to regain purity: pulverized oil cake (*khau*) from mustard seeds (produced by Sāymi) is used as a cleansing agent while taking a bath the morning after the death and cremation of a distant relative. On the 13th (*teradin*) or 45th day (*latyā*) after death, as well as on the 180th, 360th and 720th day, all these individually named persons are invited to join the feast marking the restoration of the purity of the chief mourner's house, a process called *suddha vākegu* – “having attained purity”.

Impurity for four days: near relatives

Near relatives called *bhvaḥ pāhā* – literally “family guests”, implying that all members of the family concerned – are invited to join the feast on the 13th or 45th day (*sapiṇḍikaraṇa*) after death.

These consist of the married daughters of the chief mourner, his sisters, male and

female children of his brothers and sisters, his married female cousins, and the married daughters of his uncles. Distant agnates from the great- and even great-great-grandfather are also involved as they are closer to the lineage. Then the non-agnates; in the case of Jagat Mān Suvāl 19 such households were identified.

From the in-laws, 35 households were involved: brothers, their sons and daughters, male cousins, father, uncles and grandnephews.

All of them undergo the *byēkegu* process on the day after death.

Impurity for four days: distant relatives

Among the *bhvaḥ pāhā* there are a few exceptions: the husband of the daughter of the deceased or the husband of the sister, a category termed *jicābhāju*, will already have his hair trimmed and toenails pared on the 4th day as part of the *byēkegu* process, because his services are needed during the eight days to come. The *pāju*, the brother of the mother of the deceased (or his sons in case he is not alive), may also undergo purification on the 4th day, but this is now rarely done. The third group of potential relatives for *byēkegu* on the 4th day comes from distant agnates, up to six generations, i.e. the descendants of the great- or great-great-grandfather. They no longer belong to the lineage of the chief mourner, and in many cases they can not clearly define their relationship, but they cherish a faint idea of relationship. What they wish to express by this is respect to the common ancestors and probably solidarity with the mourners. In the case of Jagat Mān Suvāl, three great-grandsons of his great-grandfather underwent the purificatory ritual on the 4th day.

Overview of periods of mourning and pollution of diminishing intensity.

Overt mourning is expressed in wailing during the first 10 days, on the occasion of *Sāpāru*, and on the 361st day. While distant agnates undergo purification on the 4th day, lineage members do so on the 10th day and complete the purification of the households on the 12th day.

Lineage members have to observe a restricted diet until the 45th day, the chief mourner wears white clothes, follows mild dietary restrictions until the 360th day, and receives vermilion and oil for the first time again on the 361st day.

Mourning and Pollution: Stages of Purification

Day	Performance	Ritual (Nev.)	
1 st day:	distant male and female relatives undergo purification	byēkegu	period of overt mourning: wailing impurity of the body (mihā)
4 th day:	distant agnates (up to six generations) undergo purification	laksa: byēkegu	
10 th day:	close agnates (<i>phukī</i> , up to three generations) undergo purification, chief mourner receives white clothes for women of the household period of wailing ends	du byēkegu	
12 th day:	close agnates, female members and household undergo purification through fire ritual	lhā panegu	period of ritual constraints restricted diet
45 th day:	chief mourner undergoes purification (<i>byēkegu</i>) a day in advance; he receives a cap as a token of reintegration; close and distant relatives join feast	latyā (<i>sapiṇḍikaraṇa</i>)	
180 th day:	chief mourner undergoes purification (<i>byēkegu</i>) a day in advance; close and distant relatives join feast	khulā: byēkegu	chief mourner in white clothes, mild restriction of diet (ritual constraints in case of death of the elder of the <i>phukī</i>)
the day after full moon in August	offering of a cow (<i>godāna</i>) to the deceased (<i>preta</i>) women of the mourning household are wailing	Sapāru (<i>Gājātrā</i>)	
360 th day: 12 months	chief mourner undergoes purification (<i>byēkegu</i>) a day in advance; he takes off white clothes; close and distant relatives join feast	dākilā: byēkegu	
361 st day:	in an act of final purification close relatives (<i>phukī</i>) apply oil to their hair; women are wailing for the last time; the chief mourner receives vermilion	cikā taygu	
720 th day:	chief mourner undergoes purification (<i>byēkegu</i>) a day in advance; close and distant relatives join the feast	nedatithi: byēkegu	

Impurity for ten days:
members of the lineage (*phukī*)

The *phukī* are close agnatic relatives with links up to the third generation. This is a small group, because usually it only comprises descendants of the same great-grandfather of the deceased. The tracing of three generations reflects the making of *piṇḍas* for three generations: father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

The chief mourner rarely remembers his great-great-grandfather, but not all descendants of this distant forefather are members of the same lineage. After three generations new *phukī* are set up, which perform their annual ancestor worship (*duḡudyahpūjā*) separately. However distant the relations may be, in case of death the great-granduncles express their respect by joining the *phukī* concerned on the 4th day.

Members of the lineage, the brothers, uncles, nephews and sons of the deceased perform *du byēkegu*. The term “*du*”, expresses the notion of impurity that adheres to the body (*mhā*). All lineage members are *dumhā* for a period of ten days. The *byēkegu* activity on the 10th day after death includes having one’s hair trimmed and toenails pared by a barber, a bath in the river, using not only *khau* (pulverized oilcake) as do all near and far relatives on the first day after death, but also a mixture of *āmvaḥ-hāmvaḥ*, that is dry myrobalan and black sesame.

Although *āmvaḥ* (or Nep. *amalā*) is said to have a detergent quality, its significance reaches far beyond. The small green fruit is extremely sour and used to make pickles. It is a prominent offering to Śiva and represents the celestial world in general. The tree that bears these fruits is considered to be the primordial tree, the first ever to grow in the world. Black sesame is of no less importance. Considered to represent the sweat of Viṣṇu, it is used to cover the *piṇḍas* and, mixed with

barley, it also represents purificatory qualities.

In the case of Jagat Mān Suvāl, his only son, the chief mourner, and two grandsons, as well as his nephew and the nephew’s two sons were considered to be *dumhā*, “impure bodies”.

The chief mourner and his brothers will receive new, white clothes from the hands of the Brahmin. In a concluding act they will look into a mirror of brass (*javālānhāykā*) which is first exposed to the sun. The *dumhā* were not supposed to see their face for a period of ten days – all the mirrors in the house were veiled to avoid an improper confrontation. Once this confinement is overcome, the body reaches a preliminary stage of purity. Although the mirror is brought by the barber, who also has command over the other tools which bring about purity, it is the Brahmin who holds the mirror. As an agent of purity, he enables the reintegration of the *dumhā*.

Impurity for twelve days: the house

A further stage of purity is finally achieved on the 12th day after the sacred fire has cleansed the household and the hands of the affected persons, both male and female: a process called *suddha vākegu* – to attain purity. *Lhā panegu* – literally “the hands exposed above a fire” which is fed by an auxiliary priest from the sub-caste of Tinī, whose status is somewhat lower than a Brahmin. The offering of *samay*, a dish which includes egg, meat and fish, is meant to purify the house. All participants also receive this dish to end the period of restricted diet.

Impurity for one year: the chief mourner

For the chief mourner, the process of purification extends over 361 days and is experienced in steps. Through death it is immediately clear who will be the chief mourner;



Purificatory ritual on the 10th day after death (*du byēkegu*): all 38 members of the lineage group of Yakami (sub-caste of farmers) get shaved.

Photo December 2003

i.e. who will give fire to the pyre and as such is called *mitamhā*. Like the members of his patrilineal lineage group, he is also classified as a *dumhā*, a “polluted body”.

The purificatory ritual of the 10th day when they have their hair trimmed, their toenails pared, and put on white clothes frees the chief mourner as well as other lineage members from the *dumhā* status. Two more purificatory rituals are needed to arrive at a status of purity (*suddha vākegu*) that allows him once again to prepare food and enter temples.

At the end of the 13th or 45th day ritual, which aims at unifying the spirit of the deceased (*preta*) with the ancestors, the *pitṛ*, the chief mourner receives a colourful cap which indicates the end of mourning as it were. The cap is not actually worn because white clothes are mandatory. It is a peculiarity of death rituals among the Newars that the deceased joins the ancestors early on. Brahmanical traditions place this event at the end of a 12 month-long journey to Yamaloka, the realm of the Lord of Death. For practical

reasons the Newars have given priority to the union with the ancestors before the outset of the journey or, strictly speaking, after having already embarked upon it. Immediately after having been unified with the ancestors, the *pitṛ* of the deceased receives the offering of a bed (*śayyādāna*) which signifies his arrival in Sauripura after having crossed the mythic river Puṣpabhadra. At the same time two offerings of water (*jaladāna*) are performed, dedicated to the 30th and 45th day of the journey. To add another “inconsistency”, 360 small pots are filled with water, one for each day of the 12 lunar months of 30 days.

Until the 13th or 45th day the diet is extremely restricted, and until the first anniversary of death (*dākilā*) the chief mourner is not supposed to eat curds in case his father died, and milk in case his mother died. He should also not sit on chairs or sleep in beds – “modern” furniture that rests on four legs. It is said that the ancestors, the *pitṛ*, would be embarrassed to see the chief mourner behave in an “unusual” way that was strange to them. He is also neither allowed to entertain guests in his house on the occasion of annual festivals, nor can he join others. On five occasions, the household is supplied with festive food by the married sisters (or their sons) and daughters of the chief mourner. The household remains polluted to such an extent that no other life-cycle ritual can be performed during this first year. Whatever has been planned – regardless how long in advance – has to be postponed.

The ritual after 12 months includes the making of three *pinḍas* and the offering of cloth and a miniature bed to the deceased, who in that moment has reached the 15th city located in the topography of death. In a final act, the Brahmin hands over new clothes to the chief mourner and once again a colourful cap, which this time he immediately puts on, heralding the end of a long period of mourning and marginal impurity.

Only after having received vermilion for the mark on the forehead and oil for the hair on the 361st day has the body returned to the state of purity. On that same day the women of the household wail for the last time, thus withdrawing from overt mourning and bidding farewell to the deceased.

Removing impurity

To a large extent, the Brahmin ritual of death and dying is a gradual removal of impurity and mortality, as well as the creation of a new body in the next world (see below). For a certain period, the deceased still has a vital energy, which again will result in death. Thus he needs a body and a place to live so that – according to the traditional belief – he can be reborn after temporarily being in heaven(s) or hell(s). If he had no vital energy – like an ascetic – he would not have to be reborn and therefore not die again. But he also leaves behind or transmits this death – bringing negative energy to the survivors, who must protect themselves and the deceased mainly by the purifying forces of water and fire, especially the cremation fire, but also by other means such as gifts, oil, vermilion, new clothes, or the *āmvah* (or Nep. *amalā*) fruit. Moreover, special forces (e.g. Brahmin, *kuśa* grass, basil, gold, fire offerings, Veda recitations) are seen as eternal, immortal and indestructible and as therefore capable of neutralizing and filtering out the death and bringing vital energy. But despite all ritual cautionary measures, they cannot completely dissolve or remove death. The deceased also retains a remnant of it, which lets him become the almost deified ancestor, but also leads to his rebirth.

Ideally, Brahmins are to digest the impurity of death (see Parry 1980). But it is not only they who remove the evil of the deceased. Other “para-priests” (Levy 1990: 363) and ritual care-takers such as Jugi, Bhā, or Nau are said to take or even consume the

favourite food or parts of the brain as well as the impure clothes of the deceased. Moreover, the barber cuts the mourners’ nails and hair, thus also removing impurity. But they only do all this with reluctance and with constant demands for money and gifts, for the impurity is considered by them hard to digest and thus stigmatising. This reluctance causes severe changes in Hindu death rituals (see below) even though it is part of an ancient Brahmanical notion: the evil – which is conceived of as a kind of negative subtle material – and likewise the evil of a gift cannot be extinguished but only removed, transferred or chased away (cf. Michaels 2004: 197-200 and 2003 for further references).

Pollution thus represents a constant threat that calls for techniques to overcome a problematic situation in order to return to the state of purity. Food enters the state of impurity (*cipa*) if it is either touched or simply left over: such food has to be discarded, for it cannot be eaten by others. In case an individual is impure (Skt. *āsuddha*), it is the physical body (*mhā*) that has to attain purity again, in most cases by taking a bath. He or she washes the feet, then hands, rinses the mouth, washes the face and on rare occasions washes the entire body by finally submerging it in the river.

There are a number of annual and life-cycle rituals that cause minor pollution. In all cases the procedure of purification is called *byēkegu*, a Nevārī verb which Robert Levy (1990: 391) literally translates as “to cause to become untied”. It is a process that frees the body or an environment (the household) from restrictions imposed by an extraordinary occurrence that has to be brought under control. Ritual provides the mechanism for returning to the state of purity.

However, there are only four cases that make the process of *byēkegu* absolutely mandatory. All of these have been classified by Levy as “major purifications”.

Women undergo such purification on two occasions. On the 5th day after giving birth (*macabu byēkegu*), on the occasion of cutting the umbilical cord, when the mother has to take a bath and the Naunī, the wife of a barber, has to come to pare her toenails (1). And on the occasion of the menarche ritual (*bārḥā taygu*), when girls leave their dark room unseen in the early morning of the 12th and last day of the ritual to take a bath, and a Naunī comes to pare her toenails (2).

Besides birth and the occasion that signals the potential of giving birth, it is death that necessitates major purificatory rituals. Every *śrāddha* dedicated to the deceased father or mother (3) is preceded by *byēkegu*, which makes not only a bath in the river mandatory, but also having the hair trimmed (*sā khāygu*) by the barber to whom he is bound by a hereditary relationship. In case of a *soraśrāddha* (4), the elder of the lineage takes a bath on the preceding day and has his hair trimmed. Other members (male as well as female) also undergo the process of *byēkegu*, but in their case the Nau will just touch their feet in a symbolic gesture of paring the toenails.

Embodiment and Tactility

Where and what is a dead person? This question is crucial for all survivors, and the answers given in Hindu death rituals of the Newar farmer community of Bhaktapur are highly ambivalent and polyvalent. The departed person is believed to reside in sacrificial balls (*piṇḍa*), animals, the wind or air, stones, cotton strips, or the *liṅga*. It seems that he has no fixed realm, and that rituals have to build places of refuge for him.

Piṇḍas and other bodies

The goal of the *latyā/sapiṇḍīkaraṇa* ritual is the composition of a body for the deceased

to allow him to reach the forefathers and ancestors. This is done ritually with sacrificial balls (*piṇḍa*) – a mixture of barley or wheat flour or cooked rice that is made with the hands. Tactility is one of the most significant features of this ritual. Death is literally taken into one's hands. Thus, in the *latyā* ritual the chief mourner takes great care kneading the dough for the *piṇḍas*, which in this case are the deceased and his forefathers, assisted by the priest who again and again advises him how to shape them and not to hurt them. Through kneading the dough, pasting it, and pouring water or scattering sesame seeds over it, the deceased attains a new body. In handling death this way emotions are moved from inside to the outside, from imagination to form. For the transformation from a living human being into an ancestor, the deceased has to be newly formed and shaped.

Moreover, *piṇḍas* constitute a social body. "Bound by the sacrificial ball" (*sapiṇḍa*) is a sign of kinship, which is not only taken into account at birth, but also in determining endogamy and exogamy. *Sāpiṇḍya* relatives form a common body because one is linked by forefathers (seven generations on the paternal side and five on the maternal side). Among the Newars of Bhaktapur, *piṇḍas* or the material for them are brought by the relatives.

Moreover, it is important to see how even the female and agnatic side of kinship is involved in the death rituals: It is the daughter or sister of the deceased (*mhāyamacā*) who prepares the *nhenumhā* food and assists in the *latyā* rituals by handing, for example, the chief mourner the piece of meat (!) that is mixed with the *piṇḍa*. And it is the *jicābhāju*, the non-polluted son-in-law or brother-in-law of the deceased who takes on many purificatory tasks. In this way the social bodies of family and clan bonds are re-established.

However, *piṇḍas* are offered during all stages of the death and ancestor rituals, having different functions and being offered to

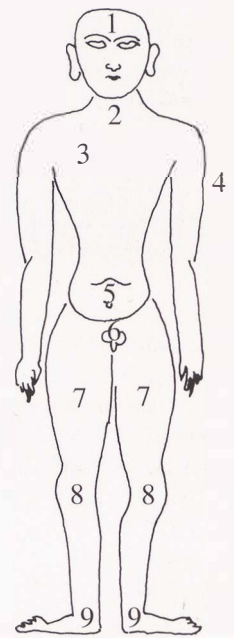
different addressees, not only to the deceased and the ancestors but also to gods and the servants of Yama. The offering of *piṇḍas* is also not restricted to the death ritual. After merging the deceased with his three paternal ancestors in the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* he is worshipped in the regular *śrāddhas*. The number of *piṇḍas* which have to be offered during the death rituals varies considerably. According to the highly influential *Garuḍapurāṇasāroddhāra* (GPS) three sets of sixteen *piṇḍas* have to be offered. With reference to the gradually decreasing impurity, the first set is called *malinaṃ śoḍaśaṃ*, the second *madhyam śoḍaśaṃ* and the third *uttamaṃ śoḍaśaṃ* (GPS 12.66 ff.).

The first six *piṇḍas* of the first set are placed on the ground on the way to and at the cremation ground, the other ten of the first set are offered during the first ten days or – as in Bhaktapur in the *du byēkegu* ritual – collectively on the 10th day. *Piṇḍas* are often meant to create a transcendental body for the deceased. Through them, the dead person receives a new body, for the ten *piṇḍas* mostly stand for the various parts of the body (see figure on the margin). This composition corresponds to Ayurvedic ideas of the development of the embryo and the formation of the foetus in the mother's womb.

The second set of sixteen *piṇḍas* is offered almost in its entirety to the gods, for only one is offered to the *preta*. And the final set of sixteen, called *māsikaśrāddhas* or *māsikapīṇḍas*, are meant to be food for the one-year-journey to Yama's world after which the *preta* becomes a forefather (*pitṛ*). The term *māsikapīṇḍa* thus refers to the monthly offerings for the deceased during the first year after his death before the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*. Previously the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* was apparently held after twelve days. In most normative texts, however, it is prescribed after a year – although in practice this period came to be shortened again to twelve or thirteen days.

The sixteen monthly *piṇḍas* are meant to feed the deceased during his one-year-long journey to Yama's world in which he passes through 16 different cities, where he eats the *piṇḍas*. For his journey he also receives during the ritual a bed (*śayyādāna*) and several gifts, such as a seat, sandals, an umbrella, a ring, a *kamaṇḍalu* water pot, a Sacred Thread, clarified butter, clothes, food, and a plate for food. The number sixteen includes the twelve months and four additional points of time. These sixteen *piṇḍas* are mostly offered in advance for the following year on the 10th or 11th day after death. In the special case of the *latyā* ritual the timing is different: the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* is performed on the 45th day (= *traipakṣe*) after death, which according to the ritual handbooks is another possible point of time for the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*.

The third set of sixteen *piṇḍas* should be distributed throughout the year of mourning, but in fact this ritual takes place, if at all, as a preliminary rite for the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*, which celebrates the arrival of the deceased among the ancestors. In the process, the chief mourner divides one of the *piṇḍas*, which is somewhat lengthened, into three parts using gold (or money) and *kuśa* grass and mixes the whole thing with three *piṇḍas* that represent the father, the grandfather, and the great-grandfather. Here again, the chief mourner and the Brahmin priest take the balls as representatives of the forefathers (*pitarah*), ancestor-gods (*viśvedevāḥ*) and the deceased (*preta*). This is the crucial moment when the deceased, abandoning his former name, is brought into the band of forefathers (*pitarah*), thus forming a commensal community with them and no longer being the helpless outsider he was as a *preta*. All this is done by the hands of the chief mourner. He touches the deceased and his forefathers, and moulds and unites them with his fingers. Thus the deceased and the forefathers are both close to him and far away.

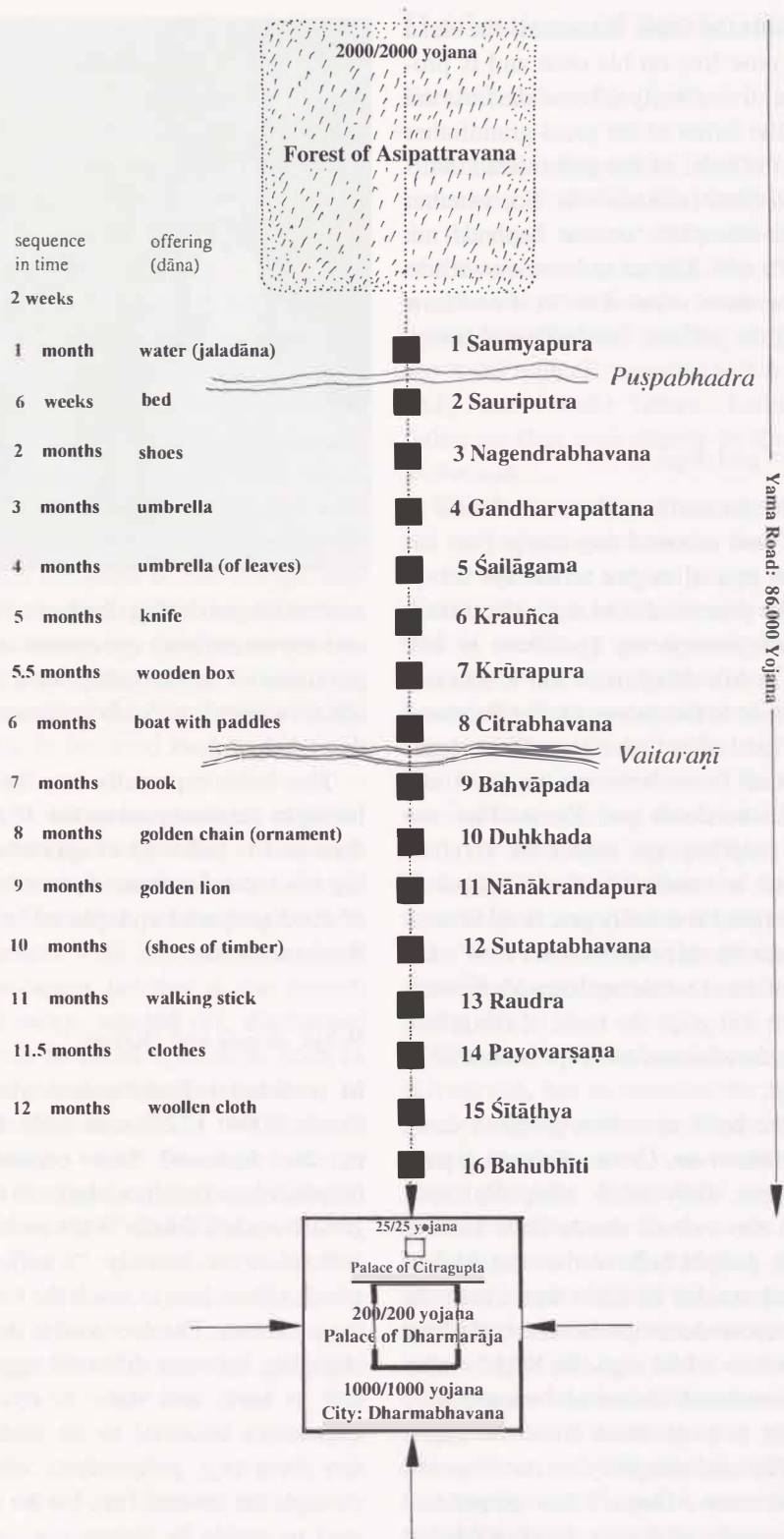


After six balls have been offered on the way to and at the cremation ground, the following ten constitute a transcendental body for the deceased:

- 1 head
- 2 neck, shoulders
- 3 heart
- 4 back
- 5 navel
- 6 hips, sexual organs
- 7 thighs
- 8 knees
- 9 feet
- 10 hunger and thirst

Passage through the sixteen cities of the underworld

According to the *Pretakalpa* of the *Garuḍapurāṇa*, second, third and fourteenth *adhyāya*. The road measures 86,000 *yojanas* not including the *Vaitaraṇī*. Shaped as a *piṇḍa*, the *pitṛ* has to cover 247 *yojanas* a day. The *Asipattravana* forest measures 2,000 *yojanas* and is located "anywhere" – the diagram locates it at the beginning. On the 18th day the *pitṛ* reaches *Saimyapura*, where the *Puṣpabhadra* river and the *Priyadarśana* tree are found. The *pitṛ* enjoys the first *piṇḍa* and proceeds to *Sauriputra* and the following cities. In *Śailāgama* the *pitṛ* is exposed to a rain of rocks. In *Citrabhavana*, where *Yama*'s younger brother *Vicitra* reigns, the *pitṛ* receives a boat and paddles as an offering from the bereaved ones. The use of a boat to cross the terrible river *Vaitaraṇī* requires, however, the gift of a cow to the officiating Brahmin. Otherwise the *pitṛ* will undergo extreme tortures while crossing the river. To reach *Duḥkhada*, the *pitṛ* has to fly and is exposed to severe cold in *Śītāṭhya*. Before reaching the 16th city, *Bahubhīti*, the *pitṛ* leaves the *piṇḍa* body and reaches the city of death, *Dharmabhavana*, to repent his evil deeds. Those who had been evil enter the city from the southern gate. The righteous enter through the other three gates: from the east the demi-gods and those of good character and pure faith; from the north those who were familiar with the Vedas, who died in *Vārāṇasī* or in the waters of a *tīrtha*, who made large offerings or were killed by a collapsing idol; from the western gate those who are exclusive devotees of *Viṣṇu*, or who consider lumps of earth, stones and gold to be equal, or who perform sacred acts and utter prayers.

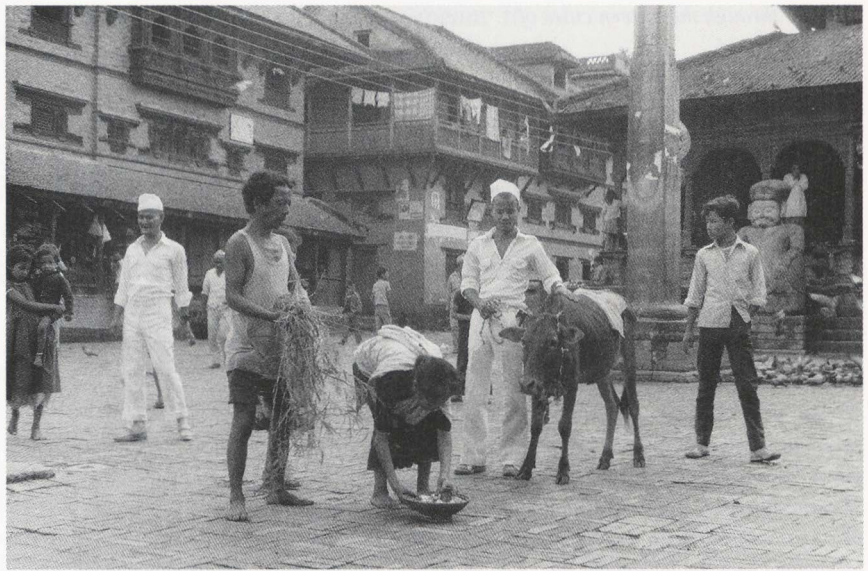


United with the other deceased, the dead person can now live on his own and is provided with a divine body (*divyadeha*). At the same time, the father of the great-grandfather moves into the band of the generalized, half-divine forefathers (*viśvedevāḥ*). So, whether one reaches this place or not depends not only on one's own Karma and one's own acts – on guilt or merit – but also on if and how the descendants perform the death and ancestor rituals.

Cows, crows and dogs

According to the traditional texts, a bull is to be branded and released (*vr̥ṣotarga*) on the eleventh day or earlier, but nowadays this is almost never practiced. On the other hand, the ritual of cow-giving (*godāna*) is still common. On his dangerous and extremely painful journey to the ancestors, the deceased comes to a kind of hellish river of blood and excrement that flows between the earth and the realm of the death god Yama. The cow is given to help him get across the river. A similar motif is enacted in the *Gājātrā* of Nepal. This ritual is usually practiced in such a way that the death priest holds a cow's tail and a leaf of basil while reciting Vedic sayings, and the son grips the hand of the priest. Once again, the son acts as a representative of the deceased.

Part of the balls are often given to cows or cast into the river. Crows also get a part. As scavengers, they have allegedly been linked with the cult of death since ancient times. Thus, people believe that the soul of the deceased resides in birds that circle the house. If a crow does not eat the balls, this is interpreted as a bad sign. In Nepal crows are also considered immortal because they are supposed to have drunk from the nectar of immortality and allegedly no one has ever seen a dead crow. Dogs, often considered as the messengers of Yama, receive food at



several stages during death rituals. Both dogs and crows are also sometimes seen as incorporations of the deceased, such as during the ritual removal of death pollution on the 10th day (*du byēkegu*).

This holds especially true for the food offering to the deceased on the 7th day when the deceased is believed to appear as a dog eating his most favourite dishes from the heap of food prepared and placed in front of the bereaved house.

Wind, stones and clothes

In traditional Brahmanical ideas (see Michaels 2004: 132ff. and table 12) the body of the deceased first consists of wind (*vāyusaṛīra*), then is as large as a thumb (*liṅgaṣarīra*), and finally is the size of a forearm (*yātanāṣarīra*, literally: “a suffering body”), which allows him to reach the forefathers and the ancestors. The deceased is thus constantly changing between different aggregates from soft to hard, and static to dynamic. He is sometimes believed to be embodied in an airy form (e.g. *prāṇavāyu*), which he takes through the funeral fire, but he is also imagined to reside in stones, e.g. *pikhālākhu* in

Symbolic offering of a cow (godāna) on Dattātreya square in Bhaktapur on the occasion of Sāpāru, full moon in August. Photo 31st August 1985

front of the house or – at a different level – in the *dugudyah* stone or, in case of an untimely or unpacified death, in *dhvākā* stones indicating the presence of evil spirits on crossroads. On other occasions he flies around in the form of a crow or in his soul, threatening to leave the bereaved relatives, or to float away on the river.

These ambiguous forms of embodiment are represented at several stages during the death and ancestor rituals in which there is a dynamic change between spatially limited actions at a specific sacrificial arena and moving around. Thus, in the *latyā* ritual almost everything happens within the limited area (*maṇḍala*) of one square metre, and in the *dugudyah pūjā* the seats of the lineage deities are deeply rooted in the soil. However, on several occasions, e.g. the funeral procession, the *dugudyah pūjā* or the *Gāijātrā* the relatives move around, sometimes with the deceased who is believed to be present at such occasions.

This change between presence and absence of the deceased might have to do with the ambivalence expressed in many forms in death rituals. The dead person is mourned, and the mourners wish that he comes back and is present again, but this is also feared: he is chased away, warded off, discharged or handed over to ritual specialists such as the Bhā or Brahmin when, for instance, he is believed to be embodied in two strips of cotton (*nāhkāpaḥ*) which the chief mourner wears around his waist and his head in the *du byēkegu* ritual on the 7th and 10th day.

Deification and Pacification

Forefathers and demi-gods

Brahmanical-Sanskritic death rituals are processes of deification. Only after a year do the dead achieve the semi-divine status of the ancestors (*pitaraḥ*). The plural of this word means “forefathers, forebears,” but also “great-grandfathers”; in the singular (*pitṛ*), the word typically means (and is etymologically related with) “father”. Father and forefather are thus seen ritually on the same level as the son.

The dead remain in the status of ancestors for only three generations, then they move up to the rather vague groups of heavenly creatures (*viśvedevāḥ*; literally: “all gods”), and as such they are worshipped only collectively in a de-individualized manner. In a way, the three generations of the deceased form a ladder of rising status but decreasing proximity to the survivors. Therefore, sons are important for the salvation of one’s own soul, for only they can perform the rituals. Consequently, in Sanskrit the son (*putra*) is described as someone who saves the father from hell. In contrast, the living man traditionally has obligations to seers, ancestors, and gods.

The dead – either forefathers, ancestors or *viśvedevāḥ*, not to mention the spirits of the dead – are ubiquitous in South Asia. No domestic ritual is carried out without them getting their share. Often they are worshipped every day. They are closer to the house, they are dangerous and dissatisfied, they always demand respect. Only the ascetic, who has paid his debt to the gods, ancestors and men, is free of the pressure of the deceased.

There are marked differences in the worship of the *viśvedevāḥ* and the *pitaraḥ*. Thus, the *viśvedevāḥ* are invoked with *svāhā* and the Sacred Thread is placed on the left shoulder. While invoking the *pitaraḥ* with

svadhā the Sacred Thread is kept on the right shoulder; with the ancestor-gods, the preferred number is even, with the forefathers it is odd; the ancestor-gods receive grains of barley or rice, the forefathers sesame seeds (whose significance in the death cult is still to be studied – and recalls the “open sesame” of the Thousand-and-One Nights); the one performing the sacrifice looks east in the case of the ancestor-gods, south in the case of the forefathers; the form of the sacrificial place (*maṇḍala*) is square for the ancestor-gods, round for the forefathers.

The changes in the *ekoddiṣṭaśrāddha* are of two kinds: first, only the deceased is worshipped and receives a single *piṇḍa*. No fire-offering and worship of *viśvedevāḥ* is performed. The use of the words “*svadhā*”, “*namah*” and “*pitṛ*” as well as some of the Vedic recitations and *mantras* are forbidden. Secondly the *śrāddha* for the deceased has its own features. Thus the *maṇḍala* for the deceased is triangular, the tuft of grass (*kūrca*) has one blade for him instead of three as for the *pitaraḥ* or two or four blades for the gods. But although being in a liminal and impure status, which is different from the *pitaraḥ* and ancestor-gods, characteristics of the worship for both *pitaraḥ* and *viśvedevāḥ* are also adopted in the ritual for the deceased. As in the worship of forefathers, the performer wears the Sacred Thread on his right shoulder and sesame seeds are used. And as in the case with the ancestor-gods the deceased is addressed with *svāhā*. Finally, the *piṇḍa* is placed on the top of the *darbha* blade, not on its roots as is the case with the forefathers.

The close relationship between gods and ancestors (*viśvedevāḥ*) is constantly re-established. They are both considered deities (*devatā*), though there are marked differences in the ancestor rituals. But here, too, when a ritual counter-world is constructed the ancestors are associated with the gods,

but only because they too have a heavenly body (*divyadeha*).

The unpacified dead

As long as the deceased have not yet found their place as forefathers, they are powerful and potentially dangerous, and mainly wander around feeling hungry. But, as ancestors, the dead are sometimes seen on a level with the high gods – ancestors and gods once lived together, it is said – sometimes in a separate class (with *Vasus*, *Rudras*, and *Ādityas*). In any case, they have a semi-divine status. Thus, the place of the forefathers is a kind of heaven, not the heaven of the gods (*svarga*), but not the earthly world of humans (*bhūloka*) or that of the spirits (*antarikṣa*).

If the deceased does not die a natural death, if he is killed for example in a traffic accident, in a crime, or in early childhood, or if he commits suicide, and likewise if the death rituals are not performed or are carried out incorrectly, he is threatened with remaining a *preta* or restless spirit (*bhūta*, *piśāca*). The Sanskrit word for a deceased person, *preta*, is often used in Indian idioms together with a word for spirit: *bhūt-pret*. These spirits can also be the unpacified dead, not only the ritually escorted dead. They populate the realm of the living and are sometimes fed collectively, e.g. on the day before new moon in March (*Pasacahre/Piśācaturdaśī*).

As was described above, as long as their *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* ritual has not yet been performed, that is a maximum of one year, *pretas* often have only a fine material thumb-sized body without a mouth. They have consciousness and feelings, but no accompanying bodily organs. Like the survivors, they are in a marginal situation, full of ambivalence, pollution, weakness, and low vitality. They are hungry and – because of their internal heat (*tejas*) – thirsty: they hang around the house of the survivors, envy them their life, and



The gifts of the sixth month: a boat of silver and a paddle of gold floating in a brass vessel. Photo 21st July 2002.

want to inflict illnesses on them. However, there are special Brahmanical death rituals (*nārāyaṇabali*, *pālāśavidhi*, *vṛṣōtsarga*, *sarpabali* etc.), for direct deification, without the long road through forefatherhood, which is also used for those who cannot have the normal death rituals because they are missing, for example.

The unpacified dead have to be brought to a place where they can do no more harm to the survivors. This is done by several rituals, at times even with tricks such as the trap for the deceased on the 10th day (*svanecā taye byēkegu*) or with obscene words, as during Holi or Ghatāmugaḥcahre. Even when the deceased is believed to reside in cotton strips.

In such rituals everything is direct and concrete, little is symbolic. It is the deceased who falls into the trap, or who gets the tiny boat with paddles that should help him or her to cross the fetid river Vaitaraṇī in order to reach Yama's realm.

Memory und Mourning

Śrāddha – remembering
and feeding the ancestors

The temporal and kinship distance to the dead person affects the frequency and intensity of ancestor worship. It can be observed that the frequency of joint death ceremonies increases the farther back in time the death occurred and the more faded the memory of the deceased.

The common term for Brahmanical-Sanskritic ancestor worship, *śrāddha* (cf. Michaels 2004: 144ff. with references), which is derived from a religious attitude (*śraddhā*) referred to as early as the Vedic Epoch (1750-500 B.C.), indicates – even in the opinion of Brahmanical legal scholars – various parts of rituals, three of which are especially important: the fire offering (*homa*), the balls (*pinḍa*), and feeding the Brahmins. In addition, gifts to Brahmins (*dāna*), and worship (*pūjā*) of the gods, especially Viṣṇu as a saviour in death, are significant sub-rituals. In popular parlance, *śrāddha* denotes both death rituals and ancestor rituals, even though death rituals are considered impure, while ancestor rituals, on the other hand, are not. However, what certainly has to be noticed in the history of death and ancestor rituals is their “pūjaisaition” (see Michaels/Buss forthc.).

Traditionally there are different classifications of the *śrāddha* based on the occasion for which they are performed, or the general division of Sanskrit rituals into *kāmya*, *naimittika* and *nitya*, and others. The main distinction, which concerns us here, is of two types: the *pārvaṇaśrāddha*, considered as the basic (*prakṛti*) form according to which all other *śrāddhas* are modelled, and the *ekoddiṣṭaśrāddha*. The main difference – as indicated in the name *ekoddiṣṭa* („determined for a single (deceased)”) – is the number of the worshipped as well as the status of the wor-

shipped that results from the decreasing impurity – as achieved through ritual acts – and leads to different treatment for the deceased (*preta*), the forefathers (*pitaraḥ*) and the ancestor-gods (*viśvedevāḥ*).²⁵⁵ All offerings of *piṇḍas* prior to the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* usually follow the rule of *ekoddiṣṭaśrāddha*, while in the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* both forms are performed, and after the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* the offerings follow the *pārvaṇaśrāddha*.

The model form of the *pārvaṇaśrāddha* has three basic features: the fire-offering (*agnaukaraṇa*), the feeding of Brahmins (*brāhmaṇabhojana*), and the worship and offering of *piṇḍas*. For that purpose at least three Brahmins are traditionally invited, who are worshipped with offerings (*upacāras*) as representatives of the *viśvedevāḥ* and the forefathers, who are always three (i.e. father, grandfather and great-grandfather of the *yajamāna*).

These traditional rules are also basically followed by the Newar farmers of Bhaktapur. However, for them the aspect of the *viśvedevāḥ* is almost non-existent, at least terminologically. The concept of “All-gods” representing a certain status of the deceased is perhaps too abstract for them. In the *śrāddhas* they worship the forefathers who are remembered, or the ancestors in general whose memory has more or less faded.

The *śrāddha* rituals can also be seen as a kind of feeding of the ancestors – through the fire and the sacrificial balls. Memory and sympathy is often expressed by food and feeding. The *nhenumhā* ritual, for instance, is structurally a kind of *śrāddha* intended to feed and nourish the deceased and to strengthen his or her diminished vitality. Moreover, on several occasions food is brought to the polluted home by relatives or others, and the priest(s), relatives or neighbours are invited for feasts. All this is done in the more or less explicit memory of the deceased.

Hindu mourning

There is no terminological equivalent in Hinduism for what we call “bereavement” or “mourning”. Where we talk of mourning rituals or ceremonies, one speaks in India and Nepal of rituals (of removing) impurity (*aśauca*), sacrifice (*pitṛmedha*), last rites (*antyeṣṭi*), ten-days-duty (*daśakriyā*, Nep. *kājkiriyā*), embodiment (*sapiṇḍikaraṇa*), and faithful welfare service to as well as commemoration of the ancestors (*śrāddha*), but rarely of emotions or personal feelings. It goes without saying that Hindus also feel deep sorrow and pain after a near or loved one dies, but even close relatives or friends seldom ask them about their inner states.

A more or less clear indication of mourning is weeping. This certainly happens in Hindu traditions as often as in other cultures, depending on the emotional relation between the deceased and the survivors. However, it should not occur at the cremation ground, and only in public at fixed times, for it is believed that otherwise the deceased has to eat the mucus and tears. In the Nepalese Mulukī Ain of 1854 people are even to be punished when they cry on their way to the death house:

“The Newar women shall not cry on the way while visiting the place where a Newar dies. Cry only when you reach the place of death. If the women cry on the way while walking in the lanes, a fine of 8 *ānā* shall be imposed on each of them. If the rupees are not paid, imprison [them] according to the Ain.” (MA para. 97.7)

The rule that mourners should not cry can also be found in ancient Dharmaśāstra sources.²⁵⁶ In the *Garuḍapurāṇasāroddhāra*, one of the most influential texts for Hindu death rituals, it is mentioned that any kind of lamenting on the loss of somebody is useless. It is worth having a closer look at this passage, since it ultimately leads to the statement

²⁵⁵ Cf. Kane 1991/IV: 516 and Müller 1992: 48, 87 and 89.

²⁵⁶ Manu III.229, Viṣṇu LXXIX.20.

that rituals are more important than sorrow and mourning.

“The son should give up his sorrow, he should remain resolute in his true steadfastness (*sāttvikī dhṛti*), then he should make the balls (*piṇḍa*) etc. for (his) father, (but) not shed tears.

Since the deceased (*preta*) is forced against his will to consume (*bhuj*) the mucus and tears that are shed by his relatives, one should not show sorrow without reason (*nirarthakāt*).

Even if a man would mourn (*śuc*) day and night for thousands of years, the deceased would never see his final place (*nidhana*).

Anyone who is born must also die, anyone who is dead must be reborn; therefore a wise man should not mourn the unavoidable.

The food prepared in the morning is already bad in the evening; how can a body that is nourished from the juice of such cooked food (*tadannarasasampuṣṭa*) be more constant!

The son considering that (all) this could be a medicine (*bhaiṣajya*) against the pain (*duḥkha*) should abandon the sorrow (*śoka*) which comes from ignorance (*ajñāna*) – and he should do what has to be done (*kriyām kuryāt*).” (GPS 11. 3-12)

As it seems, Hindu mourning is primarily concerned with what is to be done, i.e. rituals, rather than what is to be felt. However, although precise prescriptions suggest clear norms of behaviour, Hindu mourning remains as ambivalent as mourning in Western and other cultures. Rituals do not make things any easier (see also Michaels 2005c).

Seen from the emic perspective, the following interlaced aspects are prevalent: purification (i.e. removal of *aśauca*), embodiment and transformation (*sapīṇḍīkaraṇa*), deification and pacification (from *preta* to *viśvedevāḥ*) as well as welfare (*śrāddha*) and commemoration of the deceased and the ancestors. Whether one should call this mix-

ture “Hindu rituals of mourning” is a matter of terminology and debate, but it certainly means reducing an extremely complex set of actions to just one aspect.

In Judaism and Christianity the fate of the dead is comparatively independent of the world of the living, whose influence seems to be low. The ancestors are gone. Thus, the mourners are in the focus. In Hinduism it is almost the other way round: the focus is on the deceased. But, as we have seen before, the temporal and kinship distance to the dead person affects the frequency and intensity of ancestor worship. It is by the *damnatio memoriae* that the deceased die (again).

Continuity and Change

Three categories of change can be observed to heavily influence the tradition of death rituals. (a) Stigmatisation: A number of purity specialists of low status have ceased to carry out their duties. They consider the duty to be beneath their contempt. (b) Economic mobility and the change of values: Extensive feasts are considered a burden imposed by a rigid society. Committees are formed to denounce such obligations. (c) Religious innovations: Since 1990 Nepal’s constitutional monarchy ensures freedom of thought; new religions along with new Hindu reform movements are often anti-ritualistic. Guided by vegetarianism, many groups still perform rituals but strictly without blood offerings and alcohol – once the core of Newar rituals that define the acting group on the basis of commensality.

Stigmatisation and ritual discontinuity

Almost all those whom Robert Levy calls purity technicians engaged in “stigmatised ritual-symbolic activities” (1990: 98) have been exposed to the growing impact of change.

Modernists from a wide range of political and religious backgrounds were successful in shaking off the oligarchic rule of a single class. The revolution of spring 1990 resulted in a multi-party democracy which led to the ban on missionary activities being lifted and the increase in ethnocentric particularization. As the hitherto unquestioned “Hindu-Monarchy” lost its grip on a superficially and at times forcefully unified society, a new “freedom” allowed a number of absolutely new promises of liberation to surface – both religious and secular. The beginning of the 21st century witnessed the revival of the radical belief system of Maoism which, by the end of 2004, dominated more than 80 per cent of the country. The radical anti-ritualistic stance of this movement denounces rituals in general. It intimidates people to such an extent that Brahmins of villages on the periphery of Bhaktapur do not dare to wear a *dhoti*, the obligatory dress for the performance of a death ritual when called on to conduct it in town.

In the 1950s, members of the Jugi (or Kusle) sub-caste staged demonstrations to gain access to temples and to overcome the stigma of impurity. Only a generation later the Jugi started to question their ritual obligations in general. By the end of the 20th century the Bhā had joined the Jugi in their protest, while the washermen (Pasi) and torch bearers (Cālā) had already fully withdrawn from their ritual duties. The barbers (Nau) had turned their trade into a regular profession, demanding cash. They regard their ritual duties as a side job which provides an additional income – no longer done in kind but for cash.

The Jugi constitute by far the largest community stigmatised by impurity. Until recently they had to collect ritual waste from the *chvāsaḥ* stones, accept offerings of cooked food (*jugibvaḥ*²⁵⁷) made to the forefathers, and absorb pollution from the higher castes. Beyond simply suffering from pollution, Ge-

rard Toffin even sees the Jugi as playing “the role of scapegoat” (Toffin 1987: 230). In an interview with Basala Jugi, who in 2002 and 2003 acted for those Svāgamikha, Bāsukala and Suvāl families whose death rituals are documented in the previous chapter, she expressed considerable reservation and even contempt towards her ritual obligations. She said that “in a democracy people are equal – if we continue our work, the stigma of impurity will persist”. She considered her work to be lacking in “respect” or “prestige” by using the Urdu word “*ijjat*” which is widely used in a Nepālī context. According to her, wealth does not provide prestige because it can be stolen. But since low status work (Nep. *ijjat jane kām*) can be seen by others it fosters disrespect.

In all towns the Jugi have formed committees which have issued statements of contempt, calling upon their members to discontinue their services. Fines have even been discussed. But in reality a few members still follow the call of their clients to take advantage of the cash that is offered. In the long run the married daughter or sister of the deceased (*mhāymacā*) will have to step in and cast the offerings of the 7th day into the river. Since she had already cooked the food she is destined to touch the food again and dispose of it. In cases of *jugibvaḥ* a person without parents will discard the offering to the *pitṛ* either on the *pikhālākhu* in front of the house or in the river.

Similar to the Jugi the Bhā (or Kārāñjit) acts as a para-priest. The actions of the Bhā are instrumental in restituting a new body for the deceased; he is even identified with the spirit. From ten families of Bhā (in 2003) only two, slightly disturbed persons follow the calls of bereaved families. For a long time now there has been no more relationship to a defined group of clients. People are unable to remember a Bhā ever coming to a client’s house to receive the cotton strip (*nāḥkāpaḥ*)

²⁵⁷ Toffin (1987: 224), whose study is mainly based on fieldwork in Pyangaon and Panauti, calls the offering of the 7th day *jugibau*. In Bhaktapur this offering is simply called “*nhenhumhā*”. Other offerings to the crow on the 7th day are called *kvajā* while the annual offerings to the Jugi are called *jugibvaḥ*. “*Bvaḥ*” includes cooked rice (nowadays also beaten rice), a variety of vegetable, sweets, and also beer and alcohol. “*Bau*” includes grains, husk and mash offered to the spirits on crossroads or to *pitṛ* on plots of agricultural land (*bhulā*).

and eat in their presence in order to demonstrate his identity with the spirit of the deceased. The term *kāṭṭo nakegu*, “to feed with a dish that includes a piece of the skull of the corpse” is known only from a royal context.

Within a few years Bhā may no longer officiate in Bhaktapur. The *jicābhāju*, the non-polluted son-in-law will probably one day take over the duties of the Bhā.

The purifying fire of the 12th day (*lhā panegu*) is rarely performed by a Tinī, as only one member of the group of these “lower Brahmin” continues to offer his services. His task has largely been taken over by Parbatiya Brahmin or simply by the *jicābhāju*.

The Pasi have discontinued their duty of washing the two cotton strips worn by the chief mourner during the ten day period of pollution. The duty of these purity specialists is only vaguely remembered by people over the age of seventy.

Likewise the Cālā, who lead the procession to the cremation ground carrying a torch and cymbals, are no longer seen performing their duty. The torch is now carried by a member of the funeral association.

Ritual – an economic burden

Complaints about the economic burden imposed by ritual activities are perhaps almost inevitably an expression of life when it has started to turn sour. The opposition between duty and burden is a familiar stress which often is admitted with a sense of humour. In the case of death rituals, a number of simplifications are remembered by the present generation, introduced in order to save time and resources.

While “years ago” the chief mourner had to turn to the respective embankment at the rivers on ten successive days after cremation in order to constitute the body of the *preta*, the disembodied ghost of the deceased, today this is done collectively on the 10th day

because nowadays it is allegedly too difficult to move to the river without touching and thus polluting other people. Likewise, the fourteen offerings of water along the journey through the underworld, the annual death rituals for the deceased parents (*śrāddha*), and even the annual death ritual for the ancestors (*soraśrāddha*) are now rarely done in a “proper” way by inviting the Brahmin to the house involved. Rather the chief mourner or the head of the lineage will visit the house of the Brahmin in the early morning, hand over water, a *nislā* plate, the prescribed food offerings and a small *dakṣiṇā* of just ten rupees. As more and more people are employed and wage-dependent, a visit to the Brahmin’s house for a few minutes is considered manageable, while an elaborate hour-long ritual with many participants and the ensuing feeding of guests is considered a burden that has to be avoided.

The most sorely felt burden is the offering of the feast on the 13th or 45th day to celebrate *sapiṇḍīkaraṇa*, the merging of the deceased with the ancestors. Inviting a wide range of related families – those whole families (*bhvaḥ pāhā*) and single persons of certain families (*yākā pāhā*) who contributed the raw material to make the balls (*piṇḍas*) – remains unquestioned to this today. Those who contributed are in fact duty-bound to appear. In case somebody fails to join the feast, the chief mourner has to ask the others repeatedly why that person did not come.

The imperative to invite friends and neighbours, however, easily doubles the costs incurred. As young people tend to avoid the feast, and as the household concerned wants to reduce the costs, the mandatory character of the funeral meal is fading away.

An open discussion started in a few neighbourhoods of farmers for the first time in the year 2000 AD. In June 2003 fourteen young people from Byāsi – invariably from sub-castes of farmers – joined in wording an

“appeal” to “the brothers and sisters” of their quarter not to “offer a feast to neighbours after the death of a person” (Nep. *mṛtyu pa-chi ṭolabāsikarulāi khuvāindai āeko bhoj*). Everybody in the quarter concerned felt relieved by this idea, so hundreds of people signed the appeal. It is not quite clear whether it is more the social burden of appearing and spending time, or the economic burden, the cost of the feast, that caused people to join the appeal, as it is considered improper to show signs of miserliness. In disregard of the appeal, printed invitations are still handed out in Byāsi to more than 100 families. But few people nowadays consider such an invitation to be binding.

Furthermore, many ritual specialists now demand cash payment as compensation instead of being paid in kind, as was previously the case. Thus, since the 1970s the barber refuses to absorb the pollution of his clients by receiving his clothes. Instead, he receives some cash as compensation. And the newly-established association of barbers (*nāpit saṅgha*) asks their members to accept unhusked rice or cash from their clients rather than their annual share of the crops, since that is considered humiliating.

Despite the economic burden, rituals are not easily altered, reduced or given up. They are not just instrumental acts or “prescribed formal behaviour for occasions not given over to technological routine” (Turner 1967: 19), for they guarantee security of social relations, the authority and legitimisation of ritual specialists, and they perhaps fulfil a need for ludic and mimetic imitation (cf. Michaels 2003a). Thus they constitute a form of symbolic or cultural capital (Bourdieu 1998) that cannot easily be given up. This is only possible when the socio-cultural ground is prepared by other means of security and legitimisation – such as modern social security systems, media, class organisations etc. Then rituals are criticized and anti-ritualism arises.

हार्दिक अपिल

“मानिस मरनशील प्राणी हो” सुखको साथै दुःख पनि आउनु स्वभाविक प्रकृया भएकोले मानिस जन्मेपछि मृत्युलाई पनि स्वभाविक रूपमा लिन सक्नु पर्छ । त्यस कारण आदरणीय टोलवासीहरू हामी विभिन्न व्यवहारले गर्दा हामी भन-भन गरिवको चपेटामा पर्दै आएको छ । सामाजिक व्यवहारमा कुनै भोज भत्तेर गर्नु पर्दा तडक भडकमा नगई साधारण रूपमा मात्र मनाउन हुन हार्दिक अनुरोध गर्दै मिति २०६० साल आषाढ २४ गते **सुनौलो टिम वाचनालय** को कृयाशिलतामा स्थानिय टोलका दाजु भाई तथा दिदि बहिनीहरूसंगको परामर्श पश्चात कुनै व्यक्तिको मृत्यु पछि टोलवासीहरूलाई खुवाइन्दै आएको भोज भत्तेर परम्परालाई हटाई सुखःमय जीवनयापन गर्न हुन हार्दिक अपिल गर्दछौं । साथै आवश्यक छलफल गर्दै उक्त कार्य कार्यान्वयन गर्न गराउनको लागि निम्न व्यक्तिहरु रहेको एउटा कमिटी गठन भएको ब्यहोरा सहर्ष जानकारी गराउदै छौं ।

धन्यवाद !

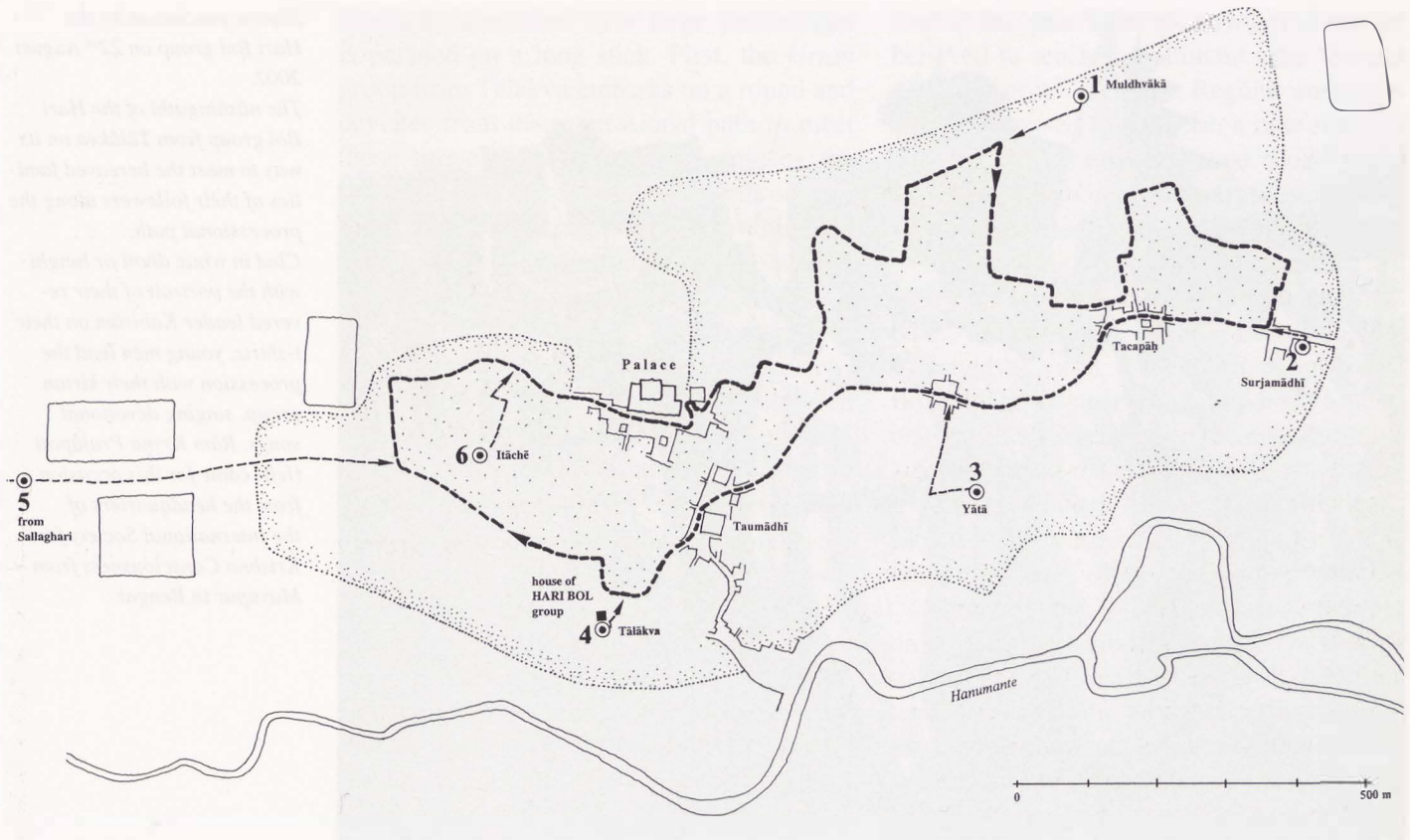
रमेश राजचल	-	संयोजक
सिद्धि राम कासुला	-	सदस्य
रोसन सुनु		
तुल्सि राम सुवाल		
शंख बहादुर कासुला		
राजबाम दशेपुथे		
राजेन्द्र दशेपुथे		
कृष्ण सुन्दर दशेपुथे		
विश्वराम सुवाल		
सत्यराम सुवाल		
बलराम राजचल		
कृष्णराम पछिजु		
राजन पछिजु		
धन्नबहादुर राजचल		

Modernity and anti-ritualism

The revolution of March 1990 and the subsequently promulgated constitution brought about a multi-party democracy based on political and religious freedom. While Christian missionaries were previously denied access to Nepal, a number of Christian sects immediately stepped in to establish their churches – the majority being protestant sects from North America. In 2003 five sects were present south of Bhaktapur, in Surjebināyak,

Appeal to discontinue the tradition of inviting neighbours and friends to join the funerary feast in completion of the rituals on the 13th or 45th day after death. Phrased in Nepālī and signed by the 14 members of the “Library of the Golden Team” (sunaulo ṭim vācanālay) in Byāsi on 8th July 2003.

With the slogan “man has to die” (manis maranaśil prāṇi ho) the authors of the “apil” blame the performance of the ritual for increasing poverty.



Sāpāru procession by the Hari Bol (International Society for Krishna Consciousness) group on 13th August 2003.

The narainguthī of the group from Tālākva headed the procession for six bereaved families of their followers. In a first round the individual families are met at the threshold of their residences. Then the women's group singing devotional songs joins the procession at Tālākva for one full circumambulation, while the male group completes a second circuit before returning to the meeting place of the Hari Bol group.

while the Brothers In Christ (BIC) established a prayer room under the name of Hope Church in the quarter of Byāsi in 2002 and the Friends Church in Bharbacva in 2003.

The Brothers In Christ community claims to have more than 1000 baptized followers in Bhaktapur alone. But obviously only a few followers joined with their entire families, and were thus able to effectively cut their traditional ties, represented by the bonds of lineage and the funeral associations. The new Christian community promises truly baptized followers a proper burial at the ground provided by a follower on his plot in the village of Gundu, a few kilometres southwest of Bhaktapur. No more than three people were buried there in 2003.

Similar to the Christian sects, new religious reform movements have reached Bhaktapur from India since the early eighties. Although

they can only claim to have attracted a much smaller community than the Christians, they perform processions which allow the public to take notice of them.

The binding basis of the reform movements is the propagation of non-violence, Skt. *ahimsā*. "Non-harming" or "non-injury" indeed ranks among the foremost ethical codes of Hinduism, for it expresses the sacredness of life. "Non-harming" is in turn the basis for a strict vegetarianism that also excludes onions, garlic and eggs from the diet.

Since all of the important annual urban rituals as well as death and ancestor rituals prescribe blood sacrifices, the followers of the reform movements are faced with problems to varying extents. The followers of the "International Society for Krishna Consciousness", locally known under the name "Hari Bol", are strict vegetarians, but they do



Sāpāru procession by the Hari Bol group on 22nd August 2002.

The nārāinguthī of the Hari Bol group from Tālākva on its way to meet the bereaved families of their followers along the processional path.

Clad in white dhoti or lungi with the portrait of their revered leader Kabirām on their t-shirts, young men lead the procession with their kirtan group, singing devotional songs. Rām Kṛṣṇa Prajāpati (left) came for this occasion from the headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness from Mayapur in Bengal.

not reject the rituals of Newar society. Belonging predominantly to occupational sub-castes such as farmers and potters, they have developed a skill for reconciling the existing rituals with *ahimsā*. In principle, all rituals are performed without blood offerings. No flesh is mixed into the *piṇḍa* in their death rituals, and no cooked meat is offered to the Jugi who collects the share of food dedicated to the deceased or the ancestors.

Few followers have been radical in breaking the ties with their lineage and their funeral association. In such cases the newly formed *nārāinguthī* offers help in the process of cremation. The decisive change is reflected by the presence of a *kīrtan* group, which performs choral singing interspersed with chanting the names of deities such as Hari, Kṛṣṇa and others to the sounds of drums, cymbals and harmonium.

Another *vaiṣṇava* sect, the “Krishna Bhakti” movement, was established in Nepal by one Kabirām as early as 1927 AD, with reference to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhū, the founder of the *vaiṣṇava* sect, born in 1485 in Nadia, Bengal. Rājmaya Prajāpati from the potters’ caste in Tālākva was instrumental in establishing a branch of Hari Bol in Bhaktapur in 1981 AD. Since that time more than 400 people, the majority from sub-castes of farmers and potters, have joined the sect.

On the occasion of *Gāijātrā* in August, when all those who had died within the preceding twelve months are dismissed by the urban community in a collective procession, the Hari Bol group offers a slightly “modernized” alternative. The otherwise compulsory symbolic cow which is fabricated from a basket or a skeleton of bamboo is no longer mandatory. Instead, the deceased

is simply identified by a large picture that is paraded on a long stick. First, the *kīrtan* group from Tālākva embarks on a round and deviates from the processional path to meet those bereaved groups who accompany the picture of their deceased. Once all those who had earlier signalled their wish to join have been met, the *kīrtan* group of Tālākva joins the collective funeral procession. All indications of the playful and satiric character of the procession are replaced with expressions of devotion to Kṛṣṇa. The *kīrtan* group is led by young men in a *dhoti*, and all of them wear t-shirts with a portrait of their beloved founder, Kabirām. A few of them come for this occasion from Mayapur in Bengal, the headquarters of the Kṛṣṇa Bhakti movement. Large banners saying “Hare Kṛṣṇa, hare Kṛṣṇa – Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, hare, hare, hare – hare Rām, hare Rām – Rām, Rām, hare hare” are carried at the head of the procession. A smaller poster carried on 23rd August 2002 in memory of Indra Kumārī Śarmā from Cvāchē said:

bha pu bhaḥ puḥ coche ṭola basne janma miti 1984 sālāmā janma bhayako svargīya miti 2058 sālā barṣa 12/6 gate mā īndra kumārī sarmā barṣa 75 ko coche ṭola harināma ko prabhāvāle samasta piṭṛ udhāra hos (parikramā) (hari bola) nāmai japdā mīldacha gati (jaya rādhe) nārāyaṇa.

“Living in the quarter of Coche in Bhaktapur and born in the year 1984 [BS] gone to heaven (*svarga*) in 2058 on the 6th day of the 12th month [21st March 2002 AD] Īndra Kumārī Śarmā at the age of 75 of the quarter of Coche by the power of the name of Hari may all ancestors (*piṭṛ*) be lifted up! (Procession) (*hari bola*) by reciting the name alone one will achieve liberation (*gati*). (Hail Rādha) Nārāyaṇa.”

While the Kṛṣṇa Bhakti movement tends to incorporate and transform existing rituals, the Om Śānti sect outrightly rejects rituals of any kind. Collective meditation sessions (fol-

lowing the principles of *rājyoga*) alone are believed to reach the ultimate aim, “correct consciousness” (*cetanā*). Regular congregation is supposed to establish a new sense of community that does not need rituals to renew any links to the lineage or the ancestors, or to place oneself in time and space.

In 1990 this sect established a place for collective meditation and instruction in Bhaktapur, the Prajāpīṭha Iśvarīya Brahmakumārī Viśvavidyālaya at the eastern periphery of Bhaktapur. Almost three-hundred followers join in an annual procession (*śantijātrā*) along the main road. In February 2003 some 67 women joined the procession carrying sacred water vases (*kalaśa*) on their heads while constantly chanting “*om śānti*”.

In theory, the followers of this sect not only have to practice *ahimsā*, they also have to avoid death rituals and other life-cycle rituals. In reality, few individuals and very few families have left their lineage in order to become fully devoted to the nameless god, *bhagavān*. Most members reconcile their devotion with the need to meet the expectations of society in performing the necessary life-cycle rituals. A total break-up would have far-reaching consequences as only the daughters of other followers would qualify as a potential bride. Cutting across the strict boundaries of sub-castes, hitherto unknown matrimonial alliances would give birth to a new sub-caste.

The process of the individualization of death

It was mentioned earlier that the dead were and still are offered a tiny plot, a “field”, as it were. The soil was to make sure that there was enough food to last forever. The plot is offered on the 7th day after death and never touched again. The name of the deceased to whom such a plot has been dedicated is remembered for three generations. For older plots the name is no more remembered and

thus a general term like *ajimā* (“grandmother”) is used.

The deceased began to attain a “face” and be named slightly less than two generations ago, when portrait photographs became fashionable. Made in local studios in front of fancy settings that served as a backdrop, these photographs adorned the reception rooms on first floor level. These photographs used to be attached to the cow structures or the palanquins bearing the clay bulls on the occasion of *Sāpāru*, the collective dismissal of all the deceased on the day after full moon in August.

More recent is the custom of publishing a photograph of the deceased in an expression of bereavement. Often this is organized by the institution to which the deceased was affiliated, and a few days later the newspaper publishes a photograph of prominent visitors paying their condolences. Only very recently have such public announcements reached the community of farmers of Bhaktapur. For example, the demise of Rām Bāsukala (whose cremation is documented in a previous chapter) was announced in the *Kathmandu Post*. His second son and one of his sons-in-law work in the Gulf. Obviously the family felt obliged to demonstrate a new economic status. The same picture, supported by a lotus flower, graced a souvenir that was handed out on the occasion of *Sāpāru* on 31st August 2004 in memory (*lumantī*) of the deceased. Rām Bāsukala was presented as the one who has reached heaven (*svarga*). Titled “Rāmāyaṇa”, the brochure suggests the renowned story or the life of Lord Rāma. The following eight pages, however, are dedicated to the life of Rām Bāsukala and address in ever new variations the sorrow and tears suffered by the bereaved ones.

The first of seven poems – a *doha* which normally will be sung while walking – is dedicated to Rām Bāsukala’s life, condensed into 16 lines. His marriage with Ratna Māyā

is mentioned and the birth of two sons and four daughters. A pious man is presented:

“Always keeping *dharma* and *karma* in mind/ after [visiting] Palāñcok Bhagavatī he has been/ visiting Kāsāghāṭ every day throughout one year/ [to the effect] that all kinds of diseases vanished”.

*dharma karmay matī tayā
pālañcoka bhagavatī th kājhāyā
kāśāghāṭa dachī tāka nhi nhī jhāyā
roga phukkā tākā diyā.*

The poem ends with the statement that Rām’s death, his journey into heaven (*svargavāsa*) on 21st October 2003 made the family cry. In Nevārī the verb *khvaygu* for “crying” remains rather unspecific in this context. It denotes weeping as well as ritual wailing. To our surprise, none of those who accompanied the ensemble was aware of the text of the song. It was said that the visual experience of that day was so overwhelming that grasping the meaning of words was beyond the capacity of an individual.

The subsequent poems are dedicated to Gaṇeśa, by whom the bereaved seek refuge, and Nityanātha. Although in a Buddhist context the latter is the “eternal protector”, we must assume that Nṛtyanātha, the Lord of Dance and Music is being addressed. A few times, the lines address the picture (*kipāḥ*) or the face (*khvaḥ*) of the deceased, which arouses “tears of love” in those who look at it. The loss is experienced as something beyond one’s wildest dreams.

The booklet with the poems was handed out to eight granddaughters of the deceased, who had specially learnt to dance and sing over a period of six weeks. To this end a teacher was hired along with musicians playing harmonium, violin and tabla. A cart had to be rented and a sound technician engaged with his amplifier and speakers. In this spe-

cific case a professional event manager, a Karmācārya from Bālākhu, was engaged. He provided the technical equipment, the musicians, the phrasing of the songs and finally a video coverage. A considerable sum of around 40,000 rupees was spent in preparing this prestigious performance. In addition, food was made for the more than 300 guests in a hall rented for the purpose.

The entire performance was to last for 14 hours. The decoration of the cart, however, seems to have transcended the abilities of the family to coordinate the actors. It started six hours late, the girls only danced on nine prominent squares along the processional route, and late in the night nobody joined the feast except the family members.

The performance during the procession demonstrates a considerable shift of performative actions during *Gāijātrā*. Until the early nineties, scenes from the *Rāmāyaṇa* and a variety of dances or humorous sketches were performed on the seven days following the collective procession. The vital centres of the urban quarters served as the stages. One group might cover up to five such stages in one night. For almost ten years now there have been no more street theatre groups of this kind. Performances are now exclusively produced along the single, linear processional route. For one week not only five deities are paraded along this route, but thousands of women and girls literally march along the circumambulatory route, arranged in rows of two, with a *sukunḍā* lamp directed outwards and incense sticks inwards. Occasionally men and boys are kept between the two rows, with lights on their heads and their shoulders and hands in a gesture of devotion. Each evening hosts of increasingly beautiful women and increasingly devout men from precisely defined quarters of the town appear along the route which almost serves as a promenade demonstrating the mobilization of the participants.

However disappointingly the presentation of the above-mentioned presentation of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of a recently deceased individual ended, the family tried hard to present their situation, the loss of a devout man who never played an important role in the farming community. The performative presentation of the poems was certainly meant to provide an individuality to the deceased, allowing him to rise above the otherwise anonymous cows, stylised according to the aspirations of the chief mourner. No doubt, the individuation of a deceased heralds the advent of hitherto unknown funerary rituals which mirror growing globalisation: memory (*lumantī*), memorial services and finally memorials will replace the pervasive silence of a society that rarely remembers a forefather beyond the great-grandfather, as a clan normally does not reach beyond three generations.

The collective dismissal of all the deceased on the occasion of *Sāpāru* presented a variety of changes in 2004. While the year before a group of activists from the farming community phrased an “appeal” not to accept invitations to feasts involved in death rituals, other sub-castes issued printed individual invitations to join the circumambulatory procession (*nagara parikrāma*) in the morning at seven and the concluding feast in the evening at seven. In the case of a respected teacher, Gajendra Baidya, the invitation was signed not by the chief mourner but by the widow.

The Uncertainty of Death

It is by rituals that people try to find a hold in life, but they grant neither security nor certainty, only the suggestion of both. Rituals do not really help to overcome uncertainties about the meanings of death and afterlife, rather they are expressions of such uncertainties.

In the legal texts and in popular notions there is also some uncertainty about who the offerings and sacrifices apply to or what meaning they have. It is sometimes stated that the food is intended for the Brahmins themselves, but elsewhere that latter represent the forefathers or ancestors. The *pinḍas* are sometimes considered to be provisions for the journey of the dead, and sometimes as part of his body in the next world. The uncertainty about the status of the survivors also involves the uncertainty about the future of the deceased: will he or she get to heaven, has he or she earned it?

Uncertainty about the inherent meanings of the rituals of death and the ancestors (cf. Michaels 2004b) does not mean that the people involved are unable to gain clarity. Rather, rituals are expressions of the fact that there can be no clarity. Life-cycle transition rituals are, on the one hand, always meaningful, for they have reasons and an obligatory formal resolution (*samkalpa*) that makes the ritual effective and confirms its intention in clear words. On the other hand, ritual acts are meaningless (cf. Michaels 2005b) and rigid because something else could also and often is done: sequences of actions from other rituals are forever being substituted. It is precisely this that creates the special dynamics of rituals and the constant alteration of ritual procedure. It is this aspect of constant dynamic change which helps to revise what seems to be one of the firmest aspects of ritual theory: the formality of rituals. Given the evidence from our material, rituals now no longer appear to be strict, stereotypical events, but to be action modules which can be substituted, altered, shifted, postponed, interpolated, omitted, mixed, duplicated, or invented and re-invented.

Although this indicates an astonishing continuity in death rituals from the Vedic Epoch to the present, a significant change of meaning has also taken place. While in the

Vedic-oriented death ritual, the focus is on the path to the ancestors and reaching heaven or immortality, ever since the Ascetic Epoch (500 BC - 200 BC) the idea of repeated re-incarnation has emerged, along with the fear of a return of the dead and of hell in popular religious and Puranic concepts of afterlife. Whether the dead person goes to an intermediate realm or is reborn immediately after death, whether he or she becomes an ancestor or a de-individualized soul-body, whether life in this world affects life after death or whether the last thoughts at the moment of death do so – all these considerations and differing ideas are anything but harmonized. Thus, in the Brahmanical-Sanskritic death ritual, various conceptions of the afterlife are mixed together, leaving the path of the dead person as that which it must be: an uncertain path.

Indeed, death in Hinduism is not the end of life, but rather a change from one form of existence to another. A spiritual body remains. Only when it is completely “de-individualized”, when it is identical with the Absolute, is it really “dead” – which is to say without return. In Upanishadic and Vedantic terminology, mortality is *Ātman*-lessness, when the *ātman* (the individual soul) is identical with the *brahman* (the All or Absolute); this forms another counter-world to life. Death leads to rebirth. Anything that changes, that alters is mortal. *Kāla* means both “time” and “death” in Sanskrit. Thus death also leads to re-death, but not to an end to life, for the spiritual body is always seeking new existences.

The pyre burns away the impurity of the mundane body, as many people believe, carrying the spiritual body to heaven. The death priest “eats up” the impurity of the dead. But seen from a salvational point of view, the dead always remain in the realm of mortality through the possibility of rebirth, even as demigods (*viśvedevāḥ*). Through their life itself, they have accumulated death-bringing



Dogs sleeping on a cremation platform along the Bāgmatī river in Deopatan, Nepal. Photo February 1981

forces. The older they were, the more they had accumulated. When one is still young, i.e. uninitiated, there is only a need for a few rituals. Only timelessness or immutability is eternal, and the preferred means to achieve these are ritual and spiritual identifications with what is not subject to change and therefore to time.

These notions of salvation have many effects on the cult of death: it has many variants, corresponding to the various forms of Hindu religiosity. But, on the whole, it is not surprising that Brahmanical-Sanskritic Hindu religion has hardly any places of death worship, no photos, tombstones, death masks, or the like. Such individual worship of the dead implies a debasement of the deceased. Therefore, in Hindu death ritual, the individual becomes the sacrifice, which always was and does not die, becomes the de-individualized ancestor through the father-son identification, as the ascetic is himself the sacrifice and therefore immortal. Death – in the extreme Brahmanical view – is not fate, but rather inability, error in ritual or the incapacity to take the ascetic path and thus achieve immortality in one's lifetime.

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GLOSSARY

- ācā luyegu* second Tantric initiation of a Bajrācārya which empowers him to perform life-cycle rituals
- āgāchē* temple housing an esoteric deity
- āgādyah* esoteric deity of a clan, often of all members of a caste
- āgusā* tuft of hair (Nep. *ṭuppi*)
- ahimsā* not to injure or harm, the principal of non-violence
- ajimā* grandmother, evil spirit
- ākās* the aether (one of the five elements) or blue sky as the abode of Bhairava and spirits
- ākās dip* offering of lights dedicated to the ancestors in the month of Kārttik
- akṣata* (Nep.) see Nev. *kigaḥ*
- akṣaya trītyā* Indestructible Third, the third day of the bright moon in April/May
- amalā* (Nep. *āmvaḥ*, Skt. *āmalakī*) is *Emblica myrobalan*; *Phyllanthus emblica* L. (*Euphorbiaceae*)
- āmvaḥ-hāmvaḥ* a mixture of dried *Emblica myrobalan* (*Phyllanthus emblica* L. *Euphorbiaceae*) and black sesame
- asuddha*, (Skt. *aśuddha*) polluted, referring to persons (like *dumhā*) or objects (clothes, houses)
- atāli* terrace on top floor level of a house
- aūsī* new moon (Skt. *amāvāsya*)
- baigaḥ* top floor of the house, with kitchen and shrine room for the ancestor deity
- baji* beaten rice
- bajimā* wet or dry rice husk, offered to the *preta* before cremation
- bājyā* grandfather
- Bālācahre (Nep. Bālācaturdaśī) the 14th day of the dark half in Mangsir
- bandh* strike
- bāre chuyegu* initiation ritual for the sons of Bajrācārya
- bārḥā taygu* menarche ritual
- barro* (Nep. *hala*, Skt. *vibhūṭaka*) is *Belleric myrobalan*; *Terminalia nelleriva* Roxb.
- batāḥ* container of brass (to carry the *vikalapiṇḍa*)
- bau* offering to the spirits: either wetted husked rice with turmeric or rice husk with red pepper
- bhailaḥguthī* funeral association of painters (Citrakāra)
- bhailaḥthvāpi* beer pot of clay, object of worship by funeral associations
- bhajā* earthenware pot to heat up rice or to cook
- bhēcāpūjā* worship of nephews by the chief mourner
- bhr̥ṅgarāja* see *bhyalāy*
- bhulā* small plots of two square metres dedicated to an ancestor
- bhusadhā* anniversary rituals („birthday,,)
- bhuti* white beans
- bvvaḥ pāhā* families whose entire members are invited to join the feasts at the conclusion of death rituals
- bhyalāy* (Skt. *bhr̥ṅgarāja*) *Eclipta prostrate* Ait., small-leaved plant with yellow flowers and leaves, inevitable part of any death ritual
- bibau* offering of seven different grains to the spirits (for example on the occasion of Bālācahre), also beaten rice, black soybeans and fish offered to *chvāsaḥ* stones in cases of illness
- bikalapiṇḍa* see *vikalapiṇḍa*
- bikva* short form of *bikalapiṇḍa*
- Bisketjātrā New Year festival, 12th to 18th April
- bvaḥ* one portion of food on the occasion of a feast
- byāḥ yēkegu* food brought to the bereaved family on the 4th, 5th and 6th day after death
- byēkegu* to cause to be untied, to purify oneself by taking a bath
- cahre* the 14th day of the dark or bright half of the lunar month
- caitya* (Skt.) see *cibhāḥ*
- cakrapūjā* (Skt.) ritual performed by the Jugi on the occasion of *nhenumhā* (7th day death ritual)
- cāku* raw sugar
- canā* chick peas
- capu* grass sod
- catāmari* flat bread of rice flour
- cetanā* (Skt.) pure consciousness
- chē* house
- chēḍi* ground floor
- chucū* wheat flour
- chvāsaḥ* protective stone with a defined catchment area of households, absorbing ritual waste
- chvāsaḥvāimhā* the mistress of the household (*nakhī*) in the act of discarding the belongings of the deceased on to the *chvāsaḥ* stone
- cibhaḥ* Buddhist votive structure (Skt. *stūpa*)
- cikā* mustard oil or rape oil, used to rub the corpse immediately after death
- cikā taygu* ritual of applying mustard oil to the hair on the 361st day after death
- cipa* polluted food (leftover or touched by others)
- cuka* confined courtyard, more often square in plan
- cvakiajimā* stone in public space that absorbs after-birth

cvatā second floor level of a house
cvaykaḥ vanegu to inform all Jugi in town of a case of death
dabu platform on a square
dāg torch of straw carried to the cremation ground
dākīlā death ritual after 12 months
dakṣiṇā (Skt.), Nev. *dachinā*, a gift presented by a client (*jajmān*) to the priestly officiant
dalā open arcade on ground floor level of a house
daphaḥsvā (Skt. *kuṇḍāpuṣpa*), jasmine.
 Dasāī festival in autumn for a period of 15 days to celebrate the mythic victory of Durgā over the demon Maḥiṣa
daśakriyā (Nep., Skt.) “the ten works”, death rituals of the first ten days
debā see *dyaḥbā*
degudyaḥ see *dugudyaḥ*
dekhā Tantric initiation
devāliguthī association to perform the worship of the ancestor’s deity
dhācāsvā (Skt. *damanakaḥ*), Indian wormwood, artemisia Indica.
dharmadhātucāitya (Skt.) type of *stūpa*
dhau curds
dhaupatu stand with two small cups for curds and ritual rice
dhoti (Nep.) dress for males
dhuni (Nep.) eternal fire
dhūp (Skt. *dhūpa*) incense
dhvākā stone on street crossings signifying places haunted by spirits
digudyaḥ see *dugudyaḥ*
dīp cremation ground
divā torch carried by Cālā, heading the death procession
ḍubo (Nep., Skt. *dūrvā*, Nev. *situ*) a species of grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) common to marshland which survives the dry season, considered to be one of the substitutes for the soma plant
du byēkegu purificatory ritual on the 10th day after death
dugu goat
dugudyaḥ ancestral god
dumhā male and female members of the *phukī* polluted through death for the first ten days
dupā taygu admission of boys at the age of 4 or 5 to (du = inside) the lineage (*phukī*)
duru milk
dūrvā (Skt.) see *ḍubo*
dyaḥ deity
dyaḥbā shroud, red or yellow cloth covering the corpse during the death procession
dyaḥpālāḥ caretaker (*pālāḥ*) at a non-iconic representation, the seat (*pīṭha*) of a deity
dyaḥpālīcā see *pālimhecā*
ekādasīcā bvaḃyegu offering of food to the *preta* on the 11th day of death rituals

gaḥpacā spouted pot used to offer water to the corpse
 Gājātrā cow festival, Nep. for Sāpāru
gaṅgājal (Nep.) pure water, originated from the Gaṅgā
garbha (Skt.) womb, interior of a *caitya* or temple
gayālvahā stone representing Gāya, installed at cremation grounds
godāna (Skt.) ritual offering of a cow
 Gunipunhi (Nep. *Janaipūrṇimā*), full moon in August
gusīpakva storehouse for wood used for cremations
guthī (funeral) association; designation of the annual congregation
guthīchē house (*chē*) of a funeral association
gvē betel nut
gvēsabhvay feast on the occasion of marriage
gyaḥ (Nep. *ghī*) clarified butter
gyaḥ-kasti purified butter and honey, added to the *piṇḍa* and put into the fire on the 12th day after death
gyaḥcāku a dish of butter and sugar, ritually consumed on 15th January (*Māgha saṅkranti*)
hāku hāmvaḥ black (*hāku*) sesame (*hāmvaḥ*), said to represent the sweat of Viṣṇu
hāmvaḥ-techva a mixture of black sesame and barley, used for the purificatory bath on the 10th day ritual (*du byēkegu*)
harro (Skt. *haritakī*) is *Chebulic myrobalan*; *Terminalia chebula* Retz. (*Combretaceae*)
hīti step-well
hyāgaḥ charcoal
hyāūsinhaḥ vermilion used to mark the forehead
ihi initiation ritual for girls, mock marriage with the bel fruit
ijjat (Nep., Urdu) respect, prestige
ikā (Nep. *sarsun*) rape, *Brassica napus*
ilākā segment of urban space centering around an essential shrine which receives blood offerings
iṣṭadevatā (Skt.) the deity (chosen by the worshipper himself)
jaḥdhū drinking fountain
jajmān (Skt. *yajamāna*) client of a priest, sacrificer
jāki wettened husked rice
jākva old-age celebration
jalasi kidney
jaldān (Nep., Skt. *jaladāna*) ritual offering of water
jaldān gaḥpacā pots used in death rituals for the offering of water from the 30th day offering onwards
jātaḥ horoscope
jicābhāju the brother-in-law or husband of a sister of the deceased, who has no more parents
jugibvaḥ offering to the ancestors, handed over to the Jugi four times a year and after death rituals
jugigaḥ cremation ground for Jugi
 Juginī female Jugi who collects offerings

- jvālānhāykā* mirror, brought by the barber on the 10th day death ritual
- kāciapā* unfired, sun-dried brick
- kāciapā vāygu* to discard unfired bricks on a *chvāsaḥ* stone
- kācikā* raw cotton, to bind the bier
- kākābali* (Nep.) offering of ten *piṇḍas* dedicated to the crows on the 10th day
- kalāḥajimā* stone in public space that absorbs offerings to the spirits in case of illness
- kalāḥ vāygu* to discard the food offerings dedicated to the *pitṛ* on the occasion of a feast of the lineage at a *chvāsaḥ* stone
- kalas* (Skt. *kalaśa*) ritual vase containing water
- kapāyṣu* cotton seeds
- kasu* green peas
- kāṭṭo nakegu* to feed with a dish that includes a piece of the corpse's skull
- kaytāpūjā* initiation ritual of boys
- kegu* peas
- khalu* (Skt. *kirātatikta*) bitter herb, usually prescribed in case of malaria and diabetes (*Agathotes chirayta*)
- khāme* name of the sacrificial buffalo offered on the eve of *vijayadaśamī* during Dasāi
- khau* crushed oil cake (from mustard seeds)
- khukuri* (Nep.) large knife, carried by a member of the funeral association to intimidate the deceased
- khulā* death ritual after six months
- khusibvaḥ* offering to the *preta* on the 7th and 45th day after death, discarded into the river (*khusi*)
- khyaḥ* open ground (Nep. *khel*)
- kigaḥ* unbroken rice, used in rituals (Nep., Skt. *akṣata*)
- kijāpūjā* worship of brothers by their sisters and aunts (the *māmhā pitṛ*)
- kikīpā* a crown, symbolizing the ancestor deity
- kīrtan* (Nep.) group engaged in devotional songs
- kriyāputra* (Nep., Skt.) see Nev. *mitamhā*
- kṣetrapāla* (Skt.) tutelary deity, guardian of a courtyard or square
- kuchi* measurement of volume, equal to two *mana*
- kuchibhvay* feast (including two *mana* of beaten rice) on the eighth day of Dasāi in October
- kūcū* short handle of a spade
- kula* (Skt.) descendants of a family, lineage
- kuladevatā* (Skt.) lineage deity (see *dugudyaḥ*)
- kulchē* house of origin of a patrilinear group
- kulehoma* (Nep.) symbolic fire in front of the house of a deceased before the corpse is carried to the cremation ground
- kumbha* (Skt.) small spouted pot, used in the *latyā* death ritual
- kus* (Skt. *kuśa*) grass (*Desmostachys bipinnata*), the most sacred of Indian grasses, used in death rituals, at times representing the Brahmin
- kusā lapte* (Nep. *mālu*) climber found in *sāl* forests, *Bauhinia vahlii* Wight & Arn.
- kutva* bier to carry the corpse
- kvācā* large earthenware pot used for the 7th day death ritual
- kvajā* see *khusibvaḥ*
- kvalā* copper bowl, exclusively used in rituals
- kvāpāḥḍyaḥ* central deity of a Buddhist monastery
- lā lane*
- lāchi* small square
- lakca* ritualised mourning of male and female members of the *phukī* as well as friends and neighbours on the 4th day after death
- lakcabaji* an offering of beaten rice (*baji*) on the 4th day after death
- lakca vanegu* to approach the house of the chief mourner wailing
- latyā* (Skt. *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*) union with the ancestors on the 13th or 45th day of death rituals (lit. "one and a half months").
- latyā vāygu* to perform the death ritual of the 13th or 45th day
- laukā* gourd
- lhā* hand
- lhā panegu* purifying the hands above a fire, ritual on the 12th day after death
- lūdhvākā* golden gate, especially of Bhaktapur Palace
- lukkāpūjā* ritual performance at a door before entering the house
- macabu byēkegu* purification ritual after birth (on the 4th or 5th day, cutting the umbilical cord)
- macāgaḥ* = *macāphvāgaḥ* burial ground for children who died before the rice-feeding ceremony
- mahantā* (Nep.) head of a *maṭh*, in Bhaktapur a group of Non-Newars who are considered *san-nyāsi*, who are not cremated but buried in a seated, cross-legged posture, as though engaged in meditation
- māitī ghar* (Nep.) see *thaḥchē*
- māling* kind of shawm played by Jugi
- māmhā pitṛ* daughters, aunts and grandaunts who are invited to feast, lit "living ancestors"
- mana* volumetric measure, equal to half a *kuchi*
- māricā* deep fried small loaf of fine wheat flour, with no taste
- masānta* the last day of the month according to the solar calendar
- matā* light (Nep. *dīp*)
- mātā* first floor level of a house
- maṭha* religious institution (of *mahantās*)
- māy* black lentils
- mhā* body
- mhā gekegu* to prepare the corpse before being carried to the cremation ground
- mhāpūjā* worshipping the body on the first day of the bright moon in October/November, the first day of the Year according to Nepāl Saṃvat
- mhāsusinhaḥ* yellow colour used to mark the forehead in the course of death rituals

mhāymacā daughter or sister of the deceased, who prepares the *nhenumhā* food
mhecā small bag containing offerings
mi fire
mī mapumhā children who have died before the age of rice-feeding ceremony, lit. “bodies that are not exposed to fire”
mi salī incense, a special variety liked by ancestors
mipunāli torch of straw
mitamhā the chief mourner, who gives fire to the pyre
mūdīp principal cremation ground at Cupīghāt
mulu long needle, used to hurt the *preta* on the 10th day
murdā (Nep.) corpse, death
murdāguthī funeral association
murdāsamssthā funeral association (in Satepa)
musvā (Skt. *mulapūṣpa*) flower used for ancestor worship (*dugudyahpūjā*)
musyā soy beans
musyāpvā torch supplied by the family of the chief mourner and the households of the married daughters to accompany the death procession
mutumāri cones of steamed rice flour
mva luyegu to take a purifying bath, on the 11th day of death rituals
mvaḥni black stroke on the forehead signifying the sharing of a sacrifice, especially on the occasion of *vijayadaśamī*
nāgarājā the King of Serpents
nāḥbatāḥ brass container (*batāḥ*) used for water (*nāḥ*)
nāḥkāpaḥ cotton strips worn by the chief mourner around head and waist
nakhī mistress of a household, or of a group
nani spacious courtyard
napaḥ (Nep. *narkaṭ*) local variety of reed
naraṅguthī association of Kṛṣṇā *bhakti* assisting in death rituals
Naunī wife of a barber (Nau)
nāyaḥ head of a group, a congregation, a clan
nāykhī the drum played by butchers
nhenumhā death ritual on the 7th day (*nhenu*)
nhenumhā bvaḥ offering of food to the *preta* on the 7th day of the death rituals
nhenumhā kāygu receiving the offerings to the *preta* on the 7th day by the Jugi
nhenumhā thuiḥhā the cook of the food offered to the *preta* on the 7th day, invariably the *mhāymacā*
nislā biyegu the carrying of the *nislā* offering (wheat flour, ginger, betel nut and coin) to the Brahmin’s house
nityapūjā (Skt.) celebration at the end of the day
nyedātiṭhī death ritual performed after two years
pācā grey clay
pāju uncle: mother’s brother
pājukhalaḥ matrilinear relatives

pakā (Nep. *rāyo*) broad leaf mustard with reddish brown seeds, *Brassica juncea* (L.) Czern.
pākhā eaves
pākhājā offering of food to the *preta*, placed below the eaves on the 7th day after death
pālāḥ caretaker, the present incumbent of the post on the basis of annual rotation
palesvā lotus flower
pālīmhecā treasure box of the funeral association, which accompanies the death procession
pañcabali (Nep., Skt.) five offerings
Pañcadānacahre the 14th of the dark moon in September
pañcadaśakalāpiṇḍadāna (Skt.) the offering of the 15th *piṇḍa* prior to the *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*
pañcagavya (Nep., Skt.) the five products of a cow: cow dung, urine, milk, curds and butter
pāp (Skt. *pāpa*) evil, harmful, sin
pāsā friend, helper (in death rituals the *jicābhāju*)
Pasacahre (Skt. *piśācacaturdaśī*) Goblin’s Fourteenth, the 14th day of the dark moon in March, an occasion to propitiate the spirits
pasah shop
pecā straw ring used to support pots
pekhi (Nep.) = (Skt.) *piṇḍa*, sacrificial ball
pekhilācā lane or path to the river
pekhi tayyēkegu to carry the ingredients for *piṇḍa* to the house of the chief mourner
pekhi vāygu to discard the offerings of *piṇḍa*
penhu dukha cvanegu to express grief on the 4th day after death
phukī lineage group, close agnates up to the third generation, shares the same *dugudyah*, all members are *dumhā*, polluted for a period of ten days
picā small basket made of reed, used for the 7th day death ritual
pikhālākhu stone guarding the threshold of houses and temples, absorbs ritual waste on various occasions
piṇḍa (Skt.) balls of cooked rice, wheat or barley, offered to the ancestors (*pitṛs*)
piṇḍapātra see *kvalā*
piṇḍavedi (Skt.) place designated for lining up the *piṇḍas*
piśāc (Skt. *piśāca*) demonic beings, spirits that congregate at cremation grounds and on crossroads
Piśācacaturdaśī (Skt.) see *Pasacahre*
pitaraḥ (Skt.) forefathers (cf. *pitṛ*)
pīth (Skt. *pīṭha*) seat of a deity in non-iconic form
pitṛ (Skt.) ancestor of a family or clan, manes (cf. *pitaraḥ*)
pi vāy yēkegu to discard the afterbirth and the umbilical cord (on a *cvakiajimā* stone)
prāṇa (Skt.) breath, vital force
praṇavāyu (Skt.) the breath of life or life principle; the five life winds
prasād (Nep., Skt. *prasāda*) divine grace, the offering returned by a priest to the client

- preta* (Skt.) ethereal form assumed by a dead man during the period between death and union with his or her ancestors (*pitṛ*)
- pretabali* (Skt., Nep.) offering of 10 *piṇḍas* on the 10th day
- Pretakriyāpaddhati* notebook to guide the priest in death rituals
- pretaśāntihoma* (Skt.) see *kulehoma*
- pūjākvathā* shrine room on top floor level
- pulu* woven bamboo mat on which the corpse is placed
- putugvē* relationship to the bereaved family expressed through the acceptance of betel nuts (*gvē*) on the occasion of a marriage ceremony
- Pvaylāpunhi full moon in December
- sā* (Nep. *gāi*) cow
- sā khāygu* to shave the head in an act of purification
- sadatīhi* death ritual after three years
- sāduru* cow milk
- sāl* the *Sal* tree (*Shorea robusta*)
- salā vānegu* to proceed along a route towards the cremation ground
- sali* small earthenware cup
- samādhi* (Skt.) posture of meditation, cross-legged
- samaybaji* the first food containing rice, soy beans, ginger, egg and fish handed out by the priest on the 12th day after death
- sanāḥgu* funeral association (also *sanāguthī*)
- saṅgha* (Skt.) congregation, monastic order
- saṅkalpa* or *saṃkalpa* (Skt.) ritual declaration of intent
- śānti* (Skt.) tranquillity, absence of passion
- śāntijātrā* (Skt.) procession demonstrating the values of the Oṃ śānti sect
- sanyāsi* (Skt. *saṃnyāsin*) ascetic, one who has relinquished all worldly attachments and values
- Sāpāru festival of the cow (*sā*) on the first day (*pāru*) of the dark half of the moon in August/September
- sapiṇḍikaraṇa* (Skt.) see Nev. *latyā*
- śayyadāna* (Skt.) offering of a bed on the 45th day after death
- sesthe* (Skt. *śeṣa*) remaining lump (of *piṇḍa* dough)
- sibājā* “the music of death,, played by butchers
- sichyāḥ* flat cymbals played by butchers
- siguthī* funeral association
- silā* lanes reserved for death processions
- simānā* boundary
- sinasvā* (Nep. *bhīmsenpati*) longish leaf essential for death rituals, *Buddleja asiatica*,
- Sithīnakaḥ the 6th day of the bright half of the moon in June
- śivaliṅga* (Skt.) non-iconic, phallic representation of Śiva
- soraśrāddha* (Nep.) period of sixteen (*sora*) days in September for performing the death ritual for the ancestors by the head (*nāyah*) of the clan
- śrāddha* (Skt.) ancestor ritual
- śrī pañcamī guthī* congregation of a funeral association on the 5th day of the bright moon in February („beginning of spring”)
- subyā* Thursday after full moon in April
- suddha* (Skt. *śuddha*) not polluted, pure
- suddha vākegu* attaining purity (on the 12th day)
- śūdra* (Skt.) untouchables
- sukunḍā* ritual lamp, symbolizing the sun (*Sūrya*)
- supāri* (Nep.) see Nev. *gvē*
- svaḡāki* plate with rice
- svamva luyegu* purificatory ritual on the 11th day after death
- svānabali* (Nep.) offering of ten *piṇḍas* dedicated to the dogs on the 10th day
- svāri* bread of fine wheat flour, deep fried in butter
- svāvā* (Nep. *jungadhan*) variety of rice used as offerings for the ancestors, *Oryza sativa*
- syū* head of a sacrificial animal
- syūkābhvay* feast in conclusion of the *dugudyaḥpūjā*
- taḥdhāguthī* funeral association of the painters
- talāy* (Skt. *taṅgarāja*) large-leafed plant with white flowers, inevitable part of any death ritual
- taṅgarāja* see *talāy*
- taḥḍī* “the great day”, the first Sunday or Thursday after *aḡṣaya tṛtīya*, the most intensive day for the worship of ancestor deities
- taḥsi* auspicious citrus fruit, offered on the occasion of *mḥāpūjā* and by the Navadurgā
- tapābājyā* great-grandfather
- tarul* sweet potato
- tāy* popped rice
- techva* barley
- thaḥchē* (Nep. *maiti ghar*) designation of the maternal home of women
- thvā* rice beer
- thvāpicā* beer sieve
- tila* black sesame seeds (*Sesamum indicum*)
- triphalā* (Skt.) a mixture of emblica (*āmvāḥ*), chebula (Nep. *harro*, Skt. *haritaki*) and belleric (Nep. *barro*, Skt. *vibhūtika*) myrobalan
- tripiṇḍa* (Skt.) three parts of the *pretapiṇḍa* which are joined with the *piṇḍas* representing the ancestors
- trisul* (Skt. *triśūla*) trident, emblem of Śiva
- tulsī* basil, *Ocimum sanctum*
- tulsivedī* platform for basil plant
- tvah* (Nep. *ṭol*) well-defined quarter of a town
- tvalā* (Skt. *torāṇa*) tympanum
- vā* unhusked rice
- vākijāki* a mixture of husked and unhusked rice
- vikalapiṇḍa* (Skt.) *piṇḍa* reserved for unknown deceased and miscarriages
- viśvedevaḥ* (Skt.) semi-divine forefathers, demigods
- yaḥmāri* cone-shaped sweets offered on the occasion of birthdays and on full moon in November
- yaḥmāripunhi* full moon in November

yākā pāhā families of which only one member is invited to join the feast that concludes death rituals
yamaḍhārā Yama's spout, cooling the *preta* repre-

sented by the Hāṭakeśvara *liṅga* on the 10th day after death
yanyāpunhi full moon in September