3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

Following the Vedic model, the non-secular Newar world order combines the world of humans and the realm of the gods. This inclusion needs constant renewal through elaborate town rituals where music and ritual hold the world together. If that world order breaks, life becomes meaningless. Therefore the chief aim of processional music is, to actualise the Bhaktapur *maṇḍala,* the spiritual townscape, by means of playing musical invocations. In this way, being part of this *maṇḍala* becomes a direct experience for everybody to share.

For an ethnomusicologist, documenting processional music is one of the most demanding exercises—especially if one is interested in musical change. The chief requirements are plenty of time and the opportunity to watch events over the course of several years, both as an observer and as a participating musician or dancer. Even if working with a team of field assistants, plenty of time is needed to watch and grasp the detailed meaning of town rituals where thousands of people participate with different genres of processional music in simultaneous processions and ritual events. In the case of Bhaktapur almost everything can have several layers of meaning, depending on the musician's caste and role in the town rituals. Initially, the researcher tends to be overwhelmed and confused by a powerful surge of chaos. Obviously, this 'overkill' is an intended effect of Newar town rituals. Everybody appears to rejoice in the rule of chaos, which is such a wonderful antidote to the tightly regulated life in traditional Newar society.

During the Bhaktapur New Year festival *biskāḥ*[1], Bhairava's chaos-generating associate, Vetāla himself exercises his dangerous influence for eight days. To prevent him from going to excesses, his statue is safely secured to Bhairava's chariot with canes—to limited avail. On the first day, the forces that sustain the urban order of Bhaktapur weaken and break down—sometimes in seconds. This happens every year[2] when the tug of war between chariot pullers of the upper and lower town suddenly turns into real war, with both parties hurling bricks at each other, sometimes ripping out ammunition from temple foundations to brace themselves against the onslaught of the armed forces in combat gear who are uncomfortably waiting in the background to join the fun with a brutal *lathi* charge. Before that happens, it is wise to leave and postpone documenting things for a while.

A memorable variant of the proceedings happened in 2000. Eager to set the scene for a tame version of the town ritual for tourists and official guests to enjoy, the town council had recruited several hundred able young men of their choice, many among them well-trained body-builders,

1 in Nepali: *bisket jātrā.* For detailed accounts of this festival cf. Gutschow 1982, 2017 and Levy 1990
2 April the 9th or 10th

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Fig. 25: Pulling the Bhailakhaḥ, Bhairava's chariot with Vetāla tied to its crocodile head with canes. 1985

all dressed in white T-shirts with the label 'Bhaktapur Nagar Palika'. They drowned the festive crowds and the auspicious music of the Bhairavnāth *navadāphā* group with amplified instruction, "LET US SHOW OUR FOREIGN GUESTS HOW PEACEFULLY WE CELEBRATE OUR FESTIVAL! ONLY MEMBERS OF OUR TEAM IN WHITE T-SHIRTS ARE ALLOWED TO PULL THE CHARIOT!! BE CALM!!! BEHAVE!!!!"—After a stunned silence this resulted in the most spectacular brick fight in Bhaktapur's recent history. The white T-shirts left Taumadhi Square in twenty seconds, the tourists even faster. When the dust had settled, people celebrated their tug of war without further well-meaning interference. It was a most enjoyable and serene tug of war, after all. (Fig. 25)

Fig. 26: Bhaila *khaḥ* blocking Bhaktapur's main road at Tibukchẽ after an axle broke. 11th April 1988

In keeping with Bhairava's ferocious character, his chariot tends to leave a trail of destruction on its way. It rams into buildings, snaps electric wires, brings down plaster and roof sections. Almost every year, some intoxicated revellers are maimed by the dangerous wheels with their unpredictable speed and direction. Sometimes even the chariot meets with disaster. (Fig. 26)

The most spectacular annual processional music event is the climax of the New Year festival, *dyaḥ svagã biyegu* on the 4th of *Vaiśākh.* During the festival all the gods leave their *dyaḥchẽ* god houses where the golden statues are kept throughout the rest of the year. Each god is carried in a palanquin or—in the case of Bhairava and Bhadrakālī their chariots pulled through their respective area of influence to receive offerings. Finally each golden statue is arranged in front of the central aniconic stone in the *pīṭh* for *dyaḥ svagã biyegu* to proceed. On this day, every song group sings next to the shrine where they usually perform. Every single processional music group takes the round of the *pradakṣiṇā* that extends on this occasion to some extra loops, as not a single god should miss the musical and other offerings. *Dyaḥlhāygu* is played in front of every shrine and *svagã* offerings put to actualise the blessings of all the gods and goddesses for the coming year.

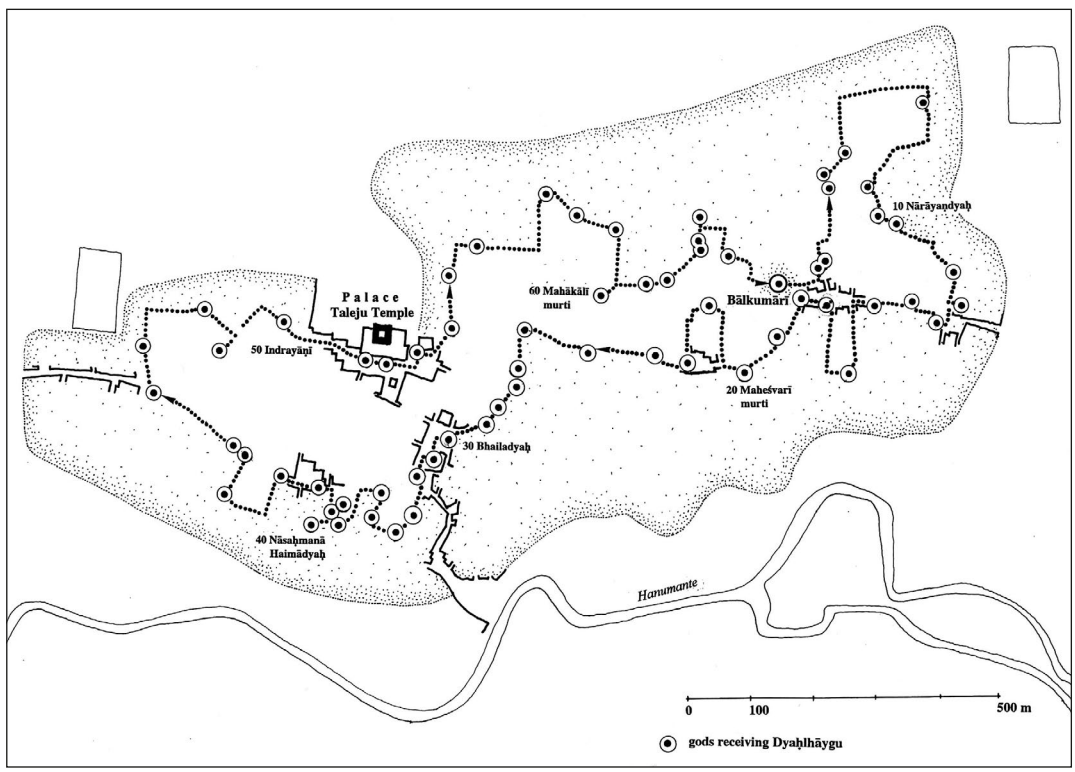
Gods receiving *tāhā dyaḥlhaygu* during a *dhimay* procession on the day of *dyaḥ svagã biyegu*

(starting from my home, see map 9 below)

Nāsāḥdyaḥ, Bālkumārī, Salã̃ Gaṇedyaḥ, Bhailadyaḥ, Kutipvakā Gaṇedyaḥ murti, Kutipvakā Gaṇedyaḥ degaḥ, Kamalvināyak Gaṇedyaḥ, Navadurgā, Bhailadyaḥ, Nārāyaṇdyaḥ, Gaṇedyaḥ, Sujamādhī Nāsaḥdyaḥ, Vākupati Nāṛāyaṇdyaḥ, Brahmayāṇī *dyaḥchẽ,* Talātũchi

Gaṇedyaḥ, Maḥcvaḥ Bhailadyaḥ (Seto Bhairav), Brahmayāṇī *murti* and Dattātreya (one invocation for both), Tacapāḥ Bhisīdyaḥ, Inācvaḥ Nāsaḥdyaḥ, Maheśvarī *murti,* Cvarcā Gaṇedyaḥ, Jhaurvahī Dipākarā (Gvaḥmādhī Ajājudyaḥ), Gvaḥmādhī Gaṇedyaḥ, Sukuldhvakā Bhisīdyaḥ, Tripurasundarī, Dahī Vināyak, Durupadyaḥ (Pārvatī), Kvāchẽ Nāsaḥdyaḥ, Kumārī, Bhailadyaḥ, Nārāyaṇdyaḥ, Gaḥhiti Bhailadyaḥ (Sabhũgaḥ Bhailadyaḥ), Kāsi Viśvanāth, Lākulāchẽ Gaṇedyaḥ, Ināre Gaṇedyaḥ (Suryavināyak Gaṇedyaḥ), Bvulucā Bhailadyaḥ (Sveta Bhairav), Gorakhnāth, Jyathā Gaṇeś, Gaṇeś, Nāsaḥmana Haimādyaḥ, Nāsaḥmana Nāsaḥdyaḥ, Maṅgalāchẽ Gaṇedyaḥ, Manakāmanā, Gaṇedyaḥ, Bārāhī *dyaḥchẽ,* Cvaṅā Gaṇedyaḥ, Phaitvakā Gaṇedyaḥ, Itāchẽ Gaṇedyaḥ, Lokeśvar, Indrayāṇī, Kabilās Nāsaḥdyaḥ, Taleju, several gods including Gaṇedyaḥ in one go, Bālākhu Gaṇedyaḥ *pith,* Bālākhu Gaṇedyaḥ *mūrti,* Cvachẽ Nāsaḥdyaḥ, Chumā Gaṇedyaḥ, several gods including Tuchimalā Bagavatī, Mahākālī *dyaḥchẽ* and *pith,* Mahākālī *mūrti,* Yāchẽ Gaṇedyaḥ, Haimāpvaḥ, Nāga, Sasudyaḥ and Mahādev in one go, Mahālakṣmī, Bhailadyaḥ, and Nāsaḥdyaḥ.

In response to massive demand on this day, some drums and cymbals take the round several times in different hands. The town vibrates with drumming and cymbal crashing in joyous communion with the gods. In every home, elaborate preparations are made for the next day when extended



Map 9: Dhimaybājā group playing *tāhā dyaḥlhāygu* during *dyaḥ svagā biyegu* on Vaiśākh 4 *gate.* The *pradakṣiṇā* is enlarged with a few added detours to include a maximum number of gods (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Fig. 27: Water-begging procession passing Dattātreya Square 6/7/1992

families get together for a grand New Year feast, *bhvãy*. This is, when Newars invariably go to non-vegetarian excesses.

The basic routine with gods carried along the *pradakṣinā* includes one or several processional music groups and in some cases also many torchbearers slowly moving in a long double line in front of the palanquin with the compulsory ritual umbrella behind. Women with offerings follow in a long line behind the palanquin, carrying lamps with burning wicks soaked in mustard oil. Processional music may include the percussion bands *dhimaybājā*, *dhãbājā*, and in special cases *nāykhībājā*. Instrumental processional ensembles with melody instruments could be transverse flutes with *dhalak* or *pachimā* drum accompaniment (*bãsurīkhalaḥ*), or mixed ensembles with transverse flutes, harmoniums, and violins with *maga̱ḥkhī*[3] drum accompaniment. Mobile song groups for processions with gods include the genres *dāphā*, *dhalcā* and *bhajan*.

When the monsoon rains do not start as expected during the second week of June and the dry season keeps extending, the nursery paddy runs dry and the rice harvest is in acute danger. Then only *nā phvã vānegu,* a water-begging procession can help. Boys from farming families walk along the *pradakṣiṇā* with pots and pans, shouting 'Hara Hara Mahādyaḥ*, vā vāye dyaḥ*!'[4]—People respond, pouring water from their kitchen windows into the street and the boys try to catch the water with their vessels. When I witnessed such an event in July 1992, this show of abundance

3 in Nepali: *māḍal*
4 'Lord Śiva, let it rain!'

Fig. 28: Farmers playing *dhãbājā* in Mūlāchẽ on the day of *gathãmugaḥ carhe*, July 1984. The demon's lovingly prepared organs are given a final touch, before the musicians accompany him to his cremation site.

did appeal to the absent-minded god[5]. Monsoon broke two days later and the harvest was saved. (Fig. 27)

The day of *gathãmugaḥ carhe* derived its name from *gathãmugaḥ* demons representing diseases that appear during the monsoon rains and need to be driven out of Bhaktapur. Straw effigies of such demons are prepared in ninety localities. *Dhãbājā* drummers have their turn to create the mood and accompany the rapid *gathãmugaḥ* processions to special cremation sites at the periphery of Bhaktapur where women will 'purify' their babies, swaying them in the smoke of the burning straw demons. The demons' male equipment could not have been made more obvious. Boys shout naughty ditties[6], proudly waving straw bundles with a tiny little straw phallus. What fun! (Fig. 28)

Buddhist processional music is one of the oldest surviving music traditions in the Kathmandu Valley. The first written version of the Svayaṃbhū *purāṇa* from the second half of the fourteenth century, mentions Buddhist groups from Kathmandu, visiting Svayaṃbhūnāth every morning during the Buddhist processional month of *gũlā* (Śrāvaṇ, July/August), to worship with animal horns and drums. Over six centuries later one would expect things to have changed. But in the 1980s, worship with animal horns and drums was still carried out every year by three *gũlābājā* groups

5 *Indra* is responsible for rain but addressing Mahādyaḥ (Lord Śiva) helps even better.
6 I collected over ninety samples in one hour, definitely hardcore and unfit for publication

Fig. 29: Cow effigies for the dead passing Taumādhi square during *sāpāru*

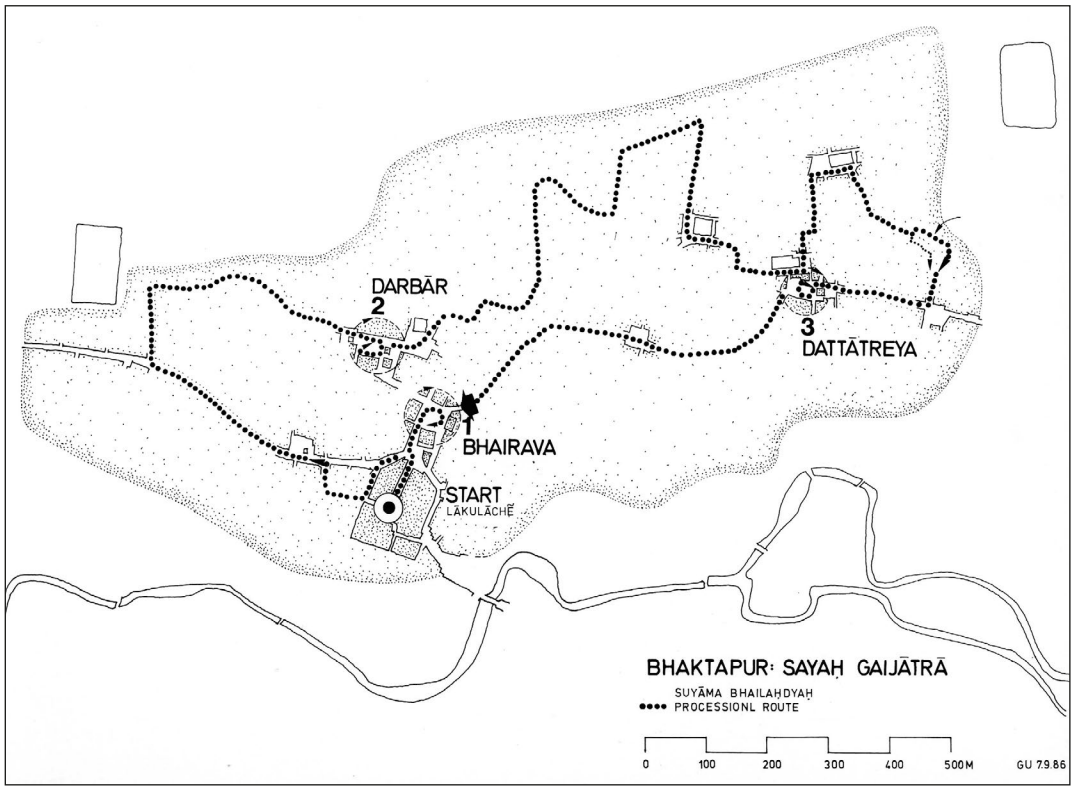
organised by Sāymi oilpressers of Bhaktapur and two oilpresser groups of Banepa[7]. Buddhist Vajrācarya priests and Sākya gold- and silversmiths organise a different kind of *gũlābājā* with drums accompanied with Western trumpets and clarinets played by Jugi tailor-musicians. The aim of Buddhist *gũlābājā* is, to accumulate merit by playing musical offerings, circumambulating all Buddhist monuments and monasteries. These processions actualise the Buddhist *maṇḍala* that extends far beyond Bhaktapur to Namobuddha, Bungamati, Svayaṃbhū and other places. These groups and their ritual and processional activities are examined in chapters 3.4 and 3.5.

Depending on the nature of a festival, many processions unfold at least in part along the *pradakṣiṇā,* the processional route proceeding in a big loop, touching a maximum number of temples and shrines[8]. Invocations for *Nāsaḥdyaḥ* are played at the beginning and end of every procession. For example, cow processions with *ghẽtãgiśi* stick dances during the *sāpāru* festival[9] on the day after Śrāvaṇ fullmoon proceed exactly along the *pradakṣiṇā.* To remember the dead and lead them to heaven, *tāhāsã̄* cow effigies are carried around, with stick dances performed in front along the way.[10] (Fig. 29)

7 also Patan *gũlābājā* includes horns and drums
8 cf. chapter 1.
9 in Nepali *gāĩjātrā*
10 cf. chapter 4.3, Grieve 2004, Widdess 2006

Fig. 30: Little girl in cow costume walking the processional route (four long hours)

Fig. 31: Bhairava as *tāhāsā̃* straw cow leading the final group of cow effigies along the *pradakṣinā* (photo courtesy of Bikas Rauniyar)

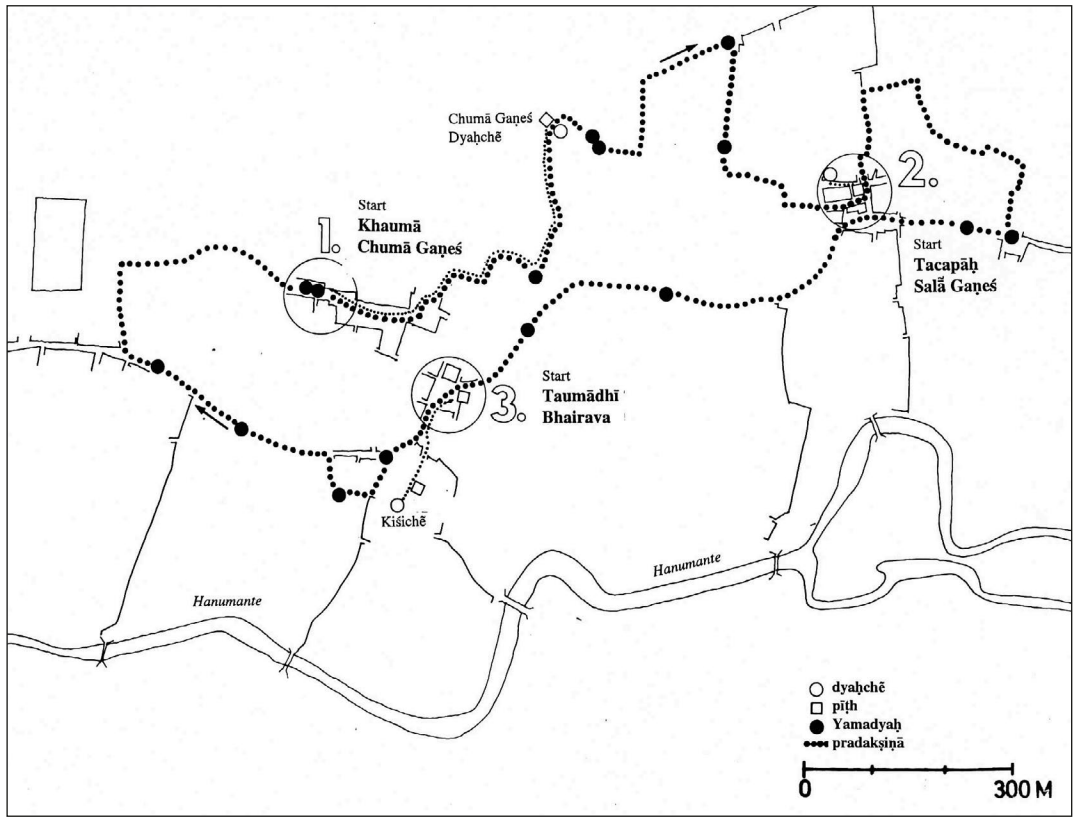


Map 10: Sāpāru procession of Bhairava as *tāhāsā̃* straw cow along the *pradakṣiṇā*, with three extra rounds in each of the numbered squares (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Cows can be of six varieties, tall effigies made of bamboo, saris, straw horns and grinning cow faces painted on paper for dead grown-ups, small effigies for dead infants put onto peoples heads and quietly walked around early in the morning, a clay bull carried on a tray, a child in cow costume dragged along by parents or, in rare cases, a real cow driven along the processional route. (Fig. 30)

The sixth variety is the tallest cow effigy of all, made of bamboo poles, straw bundles, straw horns, and a grinning bull face. This is Bhairava himself, taking the shape of a straw bull to participate in the procession towards its end and to show the bereaved families that the gods protect the souls of the dead. In the evening, the last group of 'cows' is lead by Bhairava and his female consort, Ajimā. Contrary to the earlier groups of cows with stick dancers, Bhairava's group takes three rounds in the three main squares of Bhaktapur, honouring Bhairavnāth, Taleju (temple inside the palace) and Dattātreya. During the cow festival day in 1989, we counted exactly five hundred cows taking the round of the *pradakṣinā*. (Map 10, Fig. 31)

One month later, during Indra *jātrā* one mother goddess and three gods proceed along the *pradakṣinā,* Indrāyaṇī (1st day), Salā̃ Gaṇeś (3rd day), Chumā Gaṇeś (4th day) and Akāś Bhairav (5th day). The palanquins with masks or statues of the gods are preceded and announced by *dhimaybājā* drumming and song groups of their neighbourhood. Women living around the shrine



Map 11: Processions of Indrāyaṇī (1st day), Salā̃ Gaṇeś (3rd day), Chumā Gaṇeś (4th day) and Akāś Bhairav (5th day) during Indra *jātrā* (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

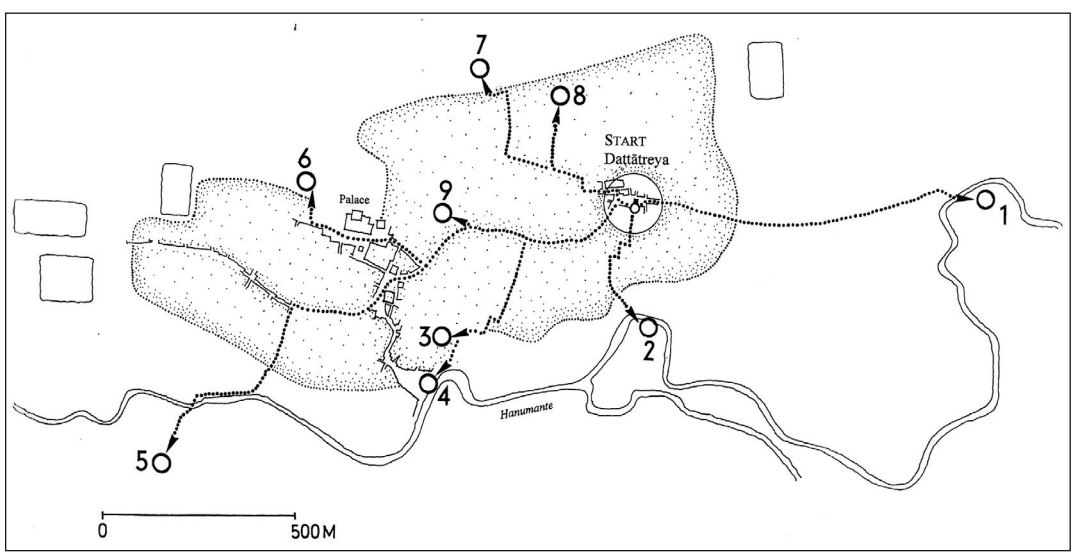
Fig. 32: Kajilal Shahi (*nāykhī*) and colleagues playing *nāykhībājā* in front of a painting of Ākāś Bhairav, 1985

of Chumā Gaṇeś, use this opportunity to walk behind the palanquin in a long row in their finery, carrying trays with oil lamps and offerings for other gods on the way. (Map 11)

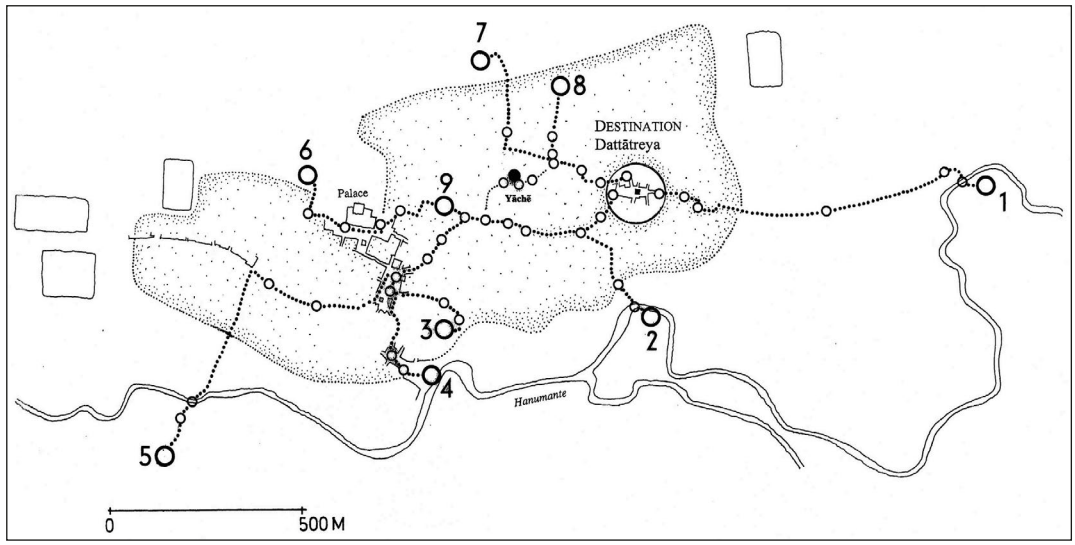
Some processions attract large numbers of penitents balancing clay cups filled with lamp oil and two burning wicks on their heads and shoulders, often holding additional lamps in their hands. The mustard oil used for this purpose is very hot and penitents need the assistance of their wives or mothers to refill and reposition the cups. This exercise is said to ward off evil that threatens a family or to help make a wish come true, a son to be born, etc. Occasionally, a tough penitent may roll himself sideways along the entire route, his head, knees and elbows protected with bandages.

A painting on a bamboo mat showing Ākāś Bhairav is attached on the right side of the front of the Bhairavnāth temple in Taumādhi. For the procession on the fifth day of Indra *jātrā* it is taken down, sprinkled with sacrificial blood, decorated with flower garlands and blown-up intestines and carried along the processional route by two helpers. Two butcher drummers play *nāykhĩbājā* in front, announcing the arrival of the god. (Fig. 32)

Another type of procession includes convenient sections of the *pradakṣinā* whilst proceeding to a specific shrine on the periphery of Bhaktapur. Until the procession reaches that shrine, only a single *dyahlhāygu* invocation is played for Nāsaḥdyaḥ at the start of the procession. The next invocation follows at the destination, the shrine of the respective god or goddess. Only whilst returning home, gods on the way receive invocations as well. This happens for example during the *navarāt* processions of the *mvahani* town ritual, when the people of Bhaktapur visit the shrines of the protecting Aṣṭamātṛkā mothergoddesses, every night a different goddess in turn. This monumental build-up includes eight shrines, beginning with Brahmāyaṇī, then Māheśvarī, Kumārī, Bhadrakālī, Vārāhī, Indrāyaṇī, Mahākālī, Mahālakṣmī (nos. 1 to 8 on the map) and



Map 12: Navarāt processions of Dattātreya *dhimaybājā* during (numbered per day of the festival) to the Aṣṭamātṛkā shrines *(mvahani* 2006). Brahmayāṇī (no. 1) is visited again on *dasamī* (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)



Map 13: Navarāṭ processions to the Aṣṭamātṛkā shrines with all *dyaḥlhāygu* invocations played whilst returning, shown as small circles (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Fig. 33: Dhimabājā with Gāthā drummers (left: Dayārām Banmālā) playing their showpiece *mā*, directed by me as lead drummer at the shrine of Indrāyaṇī (no. 6 on Map 13) during *navarāt* processions 1988 (photo courtesy of Kevin Bubriski)

ends on Mahānavami with processions to Tripurasundarī (no. 9), in the centre of the Bhaktapur *maṇḍala*. In the morning of the following day of Vijayādasamī, all Bhaktapurians visit the shrine of Brahmāyaṇī (no. 1) for a purifying dip in the Hanumante river[11]. They also receive blessings from the Navadurgā dancers who spent the night out there with a *khame* buffalo sacrifice that entices the gods and goddesses to materialize in new Navadurgā masks for another annual dance cycle[12].

In accordance with the location of the Aṣṭamātṛkā shrines at the periphery, these *navarāt* processions unfold in a concentric manner. As illustrated on the second map, the invocations played whilst returning from the Aṣṭamātṛkā shrines to the starting point accumulate during the nine nights to *dyaḥlhāygu*-s for all the gods along the *pradakṣiṇā,* actualising the complete Bhaktapur *maṇḍala*. (Map 12, 13)

At the destination of the procession, the *guru* leads the group to a position near the shrine where they can be seen and heard by the festive crowd. The music stops briefly, allowing musicians to exchange instruments and position themselves in a circle for playing their most impressive piece *mā* as an offering and finally, *dyaḥlhāygu*. In such a peak situation, the music can become a focal point of fascination and inspiration to the crowd, pulling them into a whirlpool of joyous ecstasy—an experience that everybody remembers. This is called an event. (Fig. 33)

The month of Māgh is recommended for mortifying oneself in order to have a boon granted by the gods, for example to be blessed with the birth of a son. If you make a vow to the gods, limit your desires and suffer voluntarily for a cause, a reward is bound to follow. This is what the example of countless great ascetics teaches us. Participation in Mādhav Nārāyaṇa *vrata* is considered a time-consuming but highly beneficial exercise, as it includes special worship of Lord Viṣṇu[13], exposure to freezing cold for hours, strict rules of purity and a vegetarian diet. Daily observance begins with a bath near the sacred confluence at Hanuman *ghāt* where a special building is reserved for Mādhav Nārāyaṇa *vrata*. During this month, penitents visit the various places of Nārāyaṇa worship. Wearing only a small towel around their hips, they balance clay pots containing water on their heads. Hundreds of straws reach into those pots, looking like a headdress. When people ask for a little sacred water as a blessing, it is made to flow through those straws by tilting the head. A wooden base and two sticks keep the pot in position. Each of these scantily clad men enduring the cold holds a conch in the right hand and keeps sounding it as an announcement for others not to block the way. Dogs are not allowed to cross the street in front of the procession. The leader carries a portable shrine of Mādhav Nārāyaṇa. (Fig. 34)

If someone prefers to endure heat instead of cold as a penance, this can be arranged with maximum public attention during *mvahani* or *sakhimā punhi*. The penitent lies down near a temple and is covered with cow dung that carries one hundred eight clay cups filled with mustard oil and two burning wicks each. Female family members keep those lamps burning for hours. They cause great heat and discomfort to the penitent roasting below the illuminated dung bed. Suffering is guaranteed and might help to grant the desired boon—usually a son.

11 Today it may seem unbelievable, but in the 1980s this river was clean enough for ritual bathing
12 cf. chapter 4.2
13 Mādhava is one of Viṣṇu's mainfestations

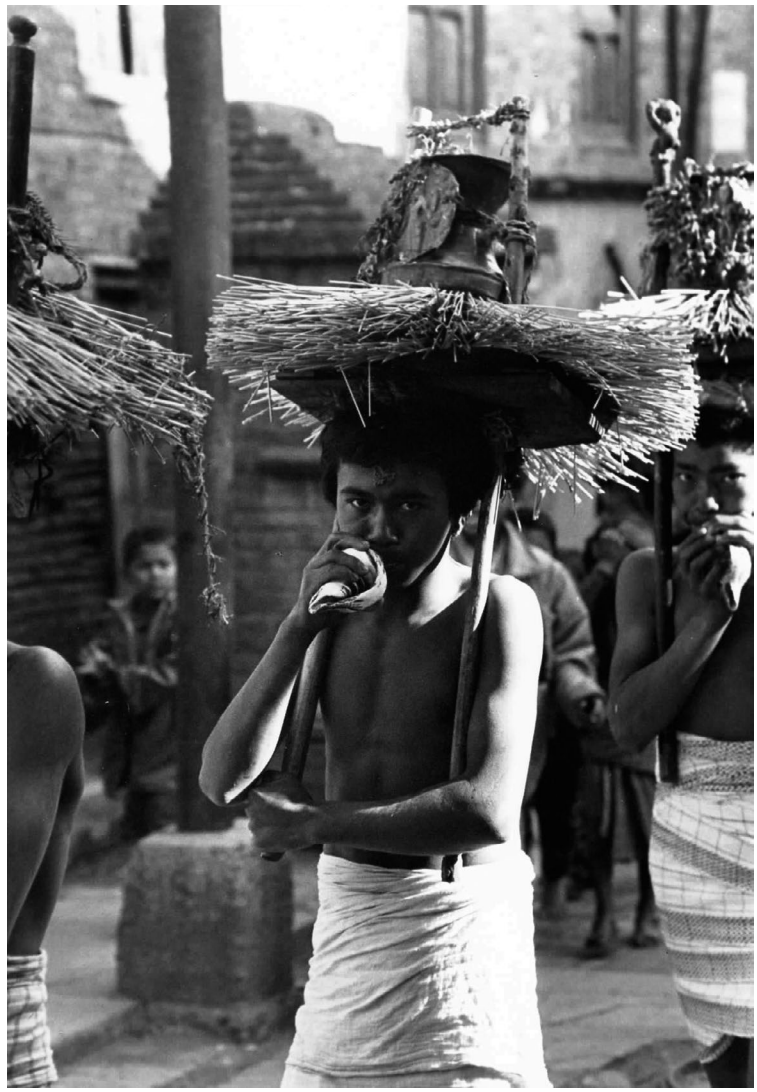


Fig. 34: Mādhav Nārāyaṇa *vrata*: Penitents playing conch, carrying sacred water on their heads

One of the most opulent processions where I was invited to participate in with our *dhimay* drum group, was the Caṇḍeśvarī *jātrā*. This included twelve music groups of all processional genres and penitents balancing oil lamps. Such a big and noisy procession announces itself fifteen minutes before it arrives in front of the house. When many groups play simultaneously but never together, the total musical chaos becomes an irresistible festive roar structured with the multiple crashing of many cymbals. It sends exciting tremors through the buildings, sometimes bringing the plaster down. People can comfortably interrupt their daily chores and rush down to stand in the street, ready to get a glimpse of the god or goddess passing their home. Girls prefer to look down from windows and balconies to offer their prayer and have a good view of the drummers.

It is a golden chance for young men to pick the most beautiful girls from the long queue of ladies with their one cheek illuminated by the oil lamps on a carried *pūjā* tray.

Jantabājā brass bands play the most common processional music for life cycle rituals, with the exception of death processions. During marriages they walk in front of the decorated vehicle carrying the bride to the bridegroom's house. Before she enters the car, she is expected to put on a noisy show of anguish and despair about leaving her *thaḥchẽ* (parents' house). It is not as if she was departing forever. She will be back after a few hours. The noise level of her show is supposed to demonstrate to the neighbours the degree of love and attachment she has for her parents and siblings. This invariably culminates in an exaggerated physical struggle against being gently pushed into the vehicle, accompanied with squeals as if a pig was about to be slaughtered. Mercifully, processional music is played to drown the drama. Marriage bands are local copies of fashionable Indian bands, with poor quality Western trumpets, clarinets, snare drums, maracas, etc., made in India. Musicians wear fancy uniforms and produce a boisterous clamour, playing Hindi film songs and sometimes a traditional marriage song. Until the 1960s marriage bands used traditional drums and shawms. In those days there were no taxis in Nepal. The bride either walked or was carried to her new home in a hammock fastened to a special pole carried by two men. There were traditional songs for different stages of the procession, one of them played when the groom's party was about to lean the hammock pole against the wall of the bride's home, announcing that the bridegroom and the time for farewell to her family had arrived. Some Jugi musicians also play in modern marriage bands and earn their major income from these activities during the marriage season. In the 1980s there were also a few marriage bands organised by farmers and by Nepali-speaking Damāi tailor-musicians living in villages near Bhaktapur.

When despite all life-shortening habits a Bhaktapurian manages to reach the age of seventy-seven years, seven months and seven days, his family organises a joyful procession led by a noisy *jantabājā* brass band or *dhimaybājā*. The old person sits on a decorated trolley that is pulled by numerous grandchildren along the *pradakṣiṇā*.

During the fullmoon night of Phālgun (February/March), a fertility ritual starts at the Bhīmsen temple bordering Dattātreya square, using only a section of the *pradakṣiṇā* to move on to Brahmāyaṇī *pīth* and back. For eight days prior to this event, an impressive, larger than life-like carved phallus weighing approximately 12 kg is suspended in the porch below the Bhīmsen temple bordering Dattātreya square.[14] With its oiled red tip pointed through a triangular 'female' opening in a piece of cloth, it can be set in a horizontal swinging motion by those desiring to play with it. There is no lack of volunteers. This is Bhīmsen's *cīr*, the powerful hero's phallus. During fullmoon night, a shy person unable to father a son arrives to carry the phallus all the way to Brahmāyaṇī *pīth*, bathe it in the river at the holy site, circumambulate the *pīth* three times and carry the *cīr* back to Dattātreya, before rushing home to resume his marital duty with renewed vigour. Members of the Bhīmsen temple song group have already sung *hvali me* songs for hours before the self-conscious client arrives. They give him noisy company along the way to Brahmāyaṇī *pīth,* shouting lecherous ditties. (Fig. 35)

14 During the 1990s, in an attempt to hide the obvious from touristic attention, it was decided to display the spectacular object in a less visible place on the first floor and move it to the groundfloor only on fullmoon.

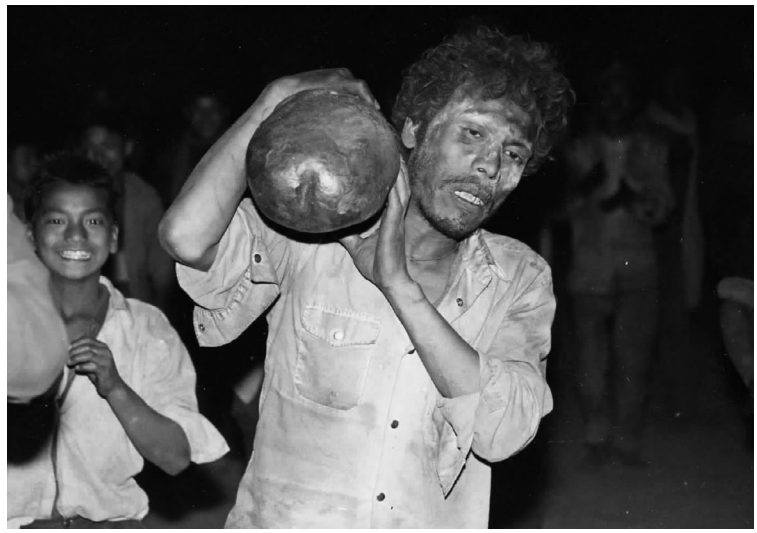


Fig. 35: Bhīmsen's *cīr* on the way to Brahmāyaṇī, 1985

After bathing the *cīr* with much splashing and ado, the mood changes abruptly to serene songs in praise of the gods. I was assured that this ritual had been unfailingly crowned with conception of a male heir. Only in one unfortunate case, the wife had already been pregnant with a girl.

Fig. 36: Nāykhībājā led by Kajilal Shahi playing *sībājā* during a funeral procession from Tacapāḥ to Brahmāyaṇī *ghāt* on 25/9/1984

During the playing of *sībājā* music for death processions of Nāy butchers from the house of the dead person to one of the three cremation grounds, the frequent change of patterns triggered by street crossings, etc. reveals a direct connection between musical patterns and locality. Bhaktapur's townscape functions as a music score that tells the *nāykhī* drummers where to play what and exactly where to change from one pattern to another[15]. (Fig. 36)

Depending on the locality of the dead person's home, the body is carried either to Cupī ghāt or to Brahmāyaṇī ghāt where the cremation proceeds upon arrival. If a person feels his or her death approaching, the person may ask to be carried to *Hanumān* ghāt. Situated opposite the confluence of two rivers, this is the most auspicious place for leaving this world, with both feet in the water. The body is then carried only twenty metres along the river to the cremation ground for low castes whilst the *nāykhībājā* group plays the complete sequence from **A** to **F** (Map 14). Every participant of the death procession needs to observe ritual purification after the cremation. After a death procession starts, carved *chvāsa* stones set in the pavement at major street crossings indicate the initial pattern changes of *sībājā*. *Chvāsa* are infested with evil spirits related to death and suicide. People place food offerings and used clothes of dead persons on top of a *chvāsa* near their house.

All funeral processions proceed in a completely similar manner. Street crossings with *chvāsa* stones and other places related to this ultimate rite of passage (burial sites, crossing bridges, etc.) indicate the exact places for change of musical patterns. The town is a musical score. The *sībājā* music is said to have evil qualities, if played or heard out of context. It is only taught at night in complete secrecy and isolation in a field hut. There is reason for respecting the taboo[16].

These examples of town rituals and ritual processions underline the meaningful role of music as a key element of such dynamic events. By actualising the Bhaktapur *maṇḍala* with the help of invocations, processional music opens a safe and direct link to the gods, focuses peoples' minds on the flow of inspiration and multiplies the festive joy of the entire population. With its unifying capacities, it helps Bhaktapurians to perceive themselves as part of a greater whole, it affirms and strengthens their cultural identity. Music certainly has the potential to transcend the limits of everyday perception by making it transparent to an all-embracing, joyous realisation of life's meaning.

The maps showing processional routes highlight the fundamental relationship of music and locality in a traditional Newar town. Whilst looking at these two-dimensional representations of dynamic processes, it is helpful to imagine another world projected on to these. It is the local mythology that occupies not only Newar towns but the entire Kathmandu Valley—more so in the perception of the older generation that is about to leave this world.

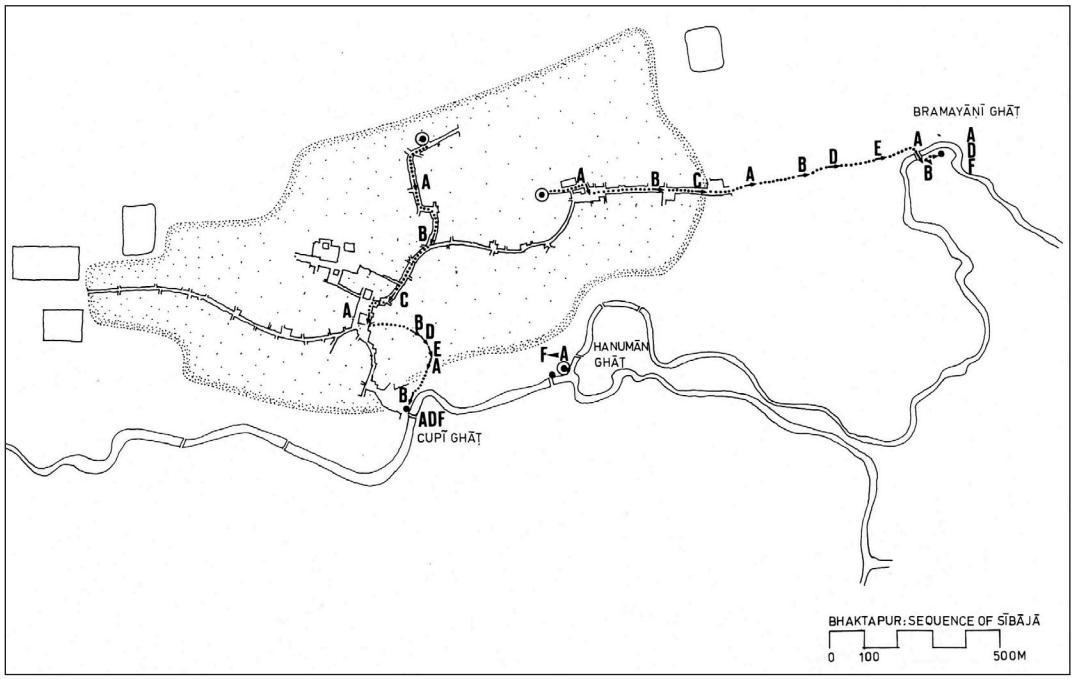
15 cf. Wegner 1988

16 cf. Preface in Wegner 1988, where a method for neutralising the black magic of *sībājā* is explained

Sībājā sequence in relation to locality

(death processions depicted in map 14 below)

Pattern	Destination: Cupĩ *ghāt*	Destination: Brahmāyaṇī *ghāt*
A	from the house to Cvachẽ *chvāsa* (major street crossing)	from the house up to Dattātreya *chvāsa* (major street crossing)
B	up to Sukul dhvakā *chvāsa* (major street crossing)	up to Sujamādhi *chvāsa* (major street crossing)
C	up to Kvāchẽ *chvāsa* (major street crossing)	up to the foundation stones of Bhaktapur's ancient town gate (old town ends here)
A	up to Calāku *chvāsa* (major street crossing)	up to Khyaḥ *pvukhu* (pond for bottom-wash after obeying nature's call)
B	up to Durgā *pīṭh*	up to Dyaḥ Ilãcā Gaṇeś *pīṭh*
D	up to lane leading to Bhadrakālī *pīṭh*	up to Brahmāyaṇī *khyaḥ*, burying site for infants (*mimapvumā mācā*)
E	passing this road crossing	up to path leading down to river bank (Brahmāyaṇī *ghāt kvahā vānegu lācā*)
A	up to *sītātāpvucā* bridge	crossing Brahmāyaṇī bridge
B	up to the path leading down to the funeral site. The *nāykhībājā* group and the women stop here.	up to Brahmāyaṇī *pīṭh.* The *nāykhībājā* group and the women stop at the southeast corner of the *pīṭh.*
A	The body is laid down. Everybody washes their face with river water and offer water to the deceased one. The eldest son chases evil spirits away with *preṭ śradda*. The body is lifted again, and the procession circulates the funeral pyre three times, before the body is placed on the pyre, the head facing east.	
D	The eldest son lights the cremation pyre by putting the straw torch at the head of the corpse.	
F	The music stops. The relatives wait at the *phalcā*. A few *sīguṭhī* members watch the body turn into ashes that are thrown into the river. It is a tributary of the holy Ganges.	



Map 14: Three different death processions of Nāy butchers with sequences of *sībājā* patterns A to F changing according to locality. Corpses of the eastern part of Bhaktapur are carried to Brahmāyaṇī ghāt. Those of central and western Bhaktapur are carried to Cupī ghāt. People wishing to end their lives at Hanumān ghāt are carried there to die at the most auspicious place. (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

The following chapters examine the different genres of Newar music, status and role of the musicians and the meaning of the repertoire.

3.1 *Dhimaybājā*

Dhimaybājā is the most popular genre of processional drumming among Newar Jyāpu farmers, Āvāḥ bricklayers and—more recently also Gāthā gardeners and Navadurgā dancers[17]. The ensemble combines cylindrical *dhimay* drums of the South Asian *ḍhol* type with two different pairs of cymbals. In 1986 I wrote,[18] 'No procession is complete without the deep rumble of *dhimay* and the crashing of *bhuchyāḥ* and *sichyāḥ.* This combination is considered to get the maximum number of girls hanging out of the windows.' (Fig. 38)

This still holds true in 2020, with the difference that nowadays it is also the girls banging the drums—sometimes in mixed bands, sometimes as girl groups. No doubt, processional music offers an excellent opportunity for showing off, for impressing onlookers of both genders with volume, speed and panache. Crowded street crossings and temple squares are ideal localities for

17 I trained two Gāthā groups, among others, during the 1980s.
18 Wegner 1986, p. 11

Fig. 37: My late Guruju Ganesh Bahadur Sijakhvā playing a *dhimay* made by a Tamaḥ brass maker of Maṅgalbajār, Patan and drum maker Bil Bahadur Kulu of Mūlāchẽ, Bhaktapur 1984

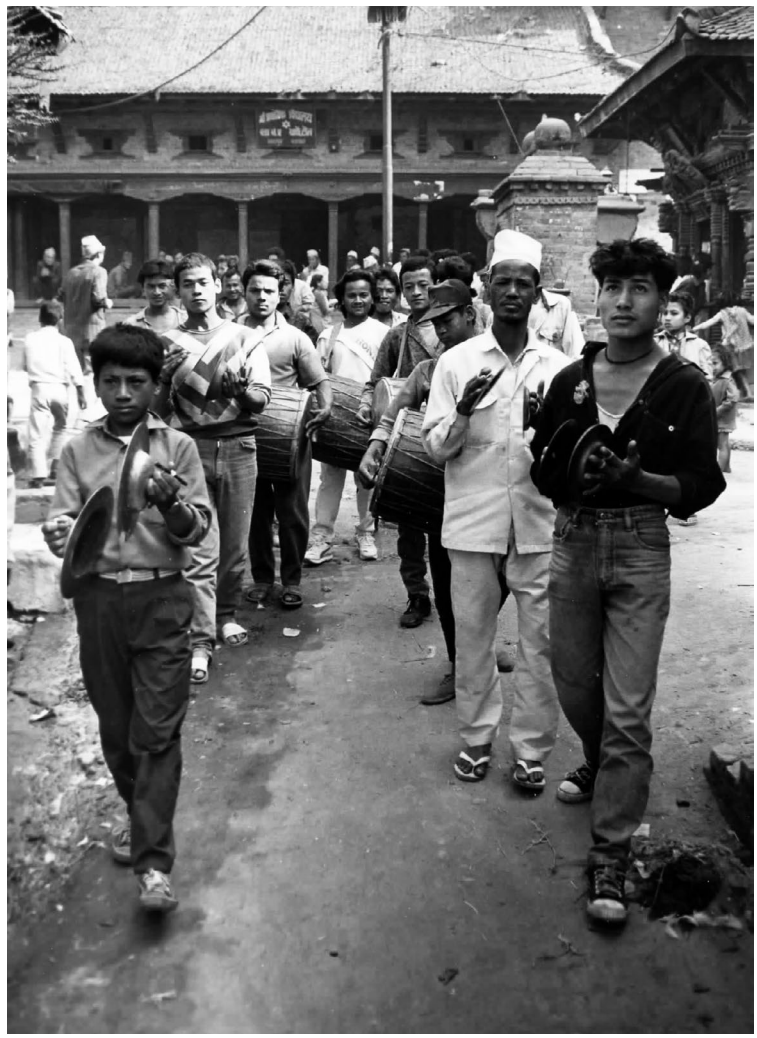


Fig. 38: Yāchẽ *dhimaybājā* with *sichyāḥ*-player (r.) checking the windows for girls, 1992

Fig. 39: Dhimaybājā in the good old days: Members of my first group of *dhimay* students, Nhuche Kumar Banmala and Dayaram Banmala—both in front—playing with me and other drummers at Indrāyaṇī during a *navarāt* procession 1988 (photo courtesy of Kevin Bubriski)

such displays. The respective patterns must be on the tip of the drummers' fingers, so that they can instantly react when spotting an adorable person. Compositions with naughty drum syllables are useful for teasing a rival group of drummers.[19] If necessary, the Guruju moderates students' exhibitionist antics. Despite a prevailing element of fun, musicians should proceed in a dignified manner. Body movements as a means of expressing drum patterns can be a suitable technique in *dhimaybājā*, if applied in a charming manner, suggesting that the drummers are led by the Lord of Music and Dance. Unfortunately contemporary *dhimay* playing has become an ugly display of wildly shaking young men and women going for speed and noise, as they are unable to play a single pattern clearly. They want to be seen and heard, without being able to give joy to others. They neglect gods on the way, sometimes forgetting to play *dyaḥlhāygu* as they pass a temple or a shrine. In their ignorance they have not even heard of the Bhaktapur *maṇḍala*. All this makes me sad, as this was different when we were young. Music should be an offering—NOT an exhibition.

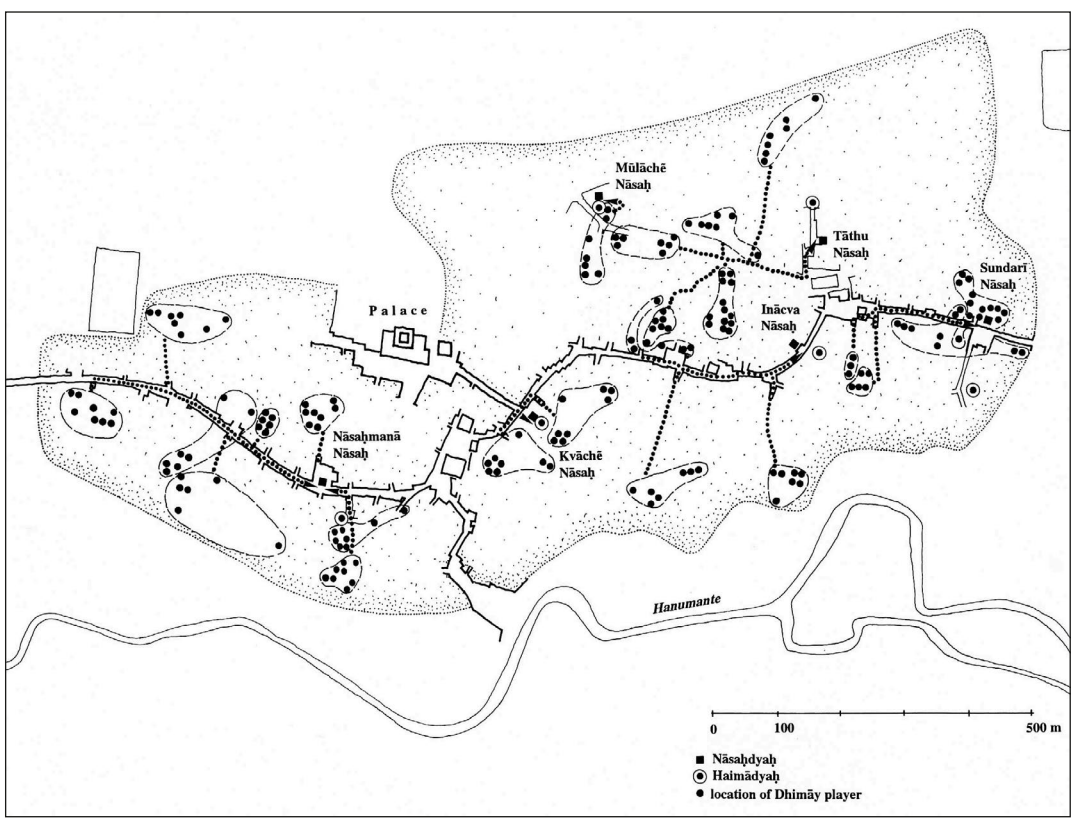
The photo (Fig. 39) shows another aspect of cultural change. Nhuche Kumar (left) wears a beautiful *survāḥ*[20]. In 1983 it was still common practice with Jyāpunī farmer women to weave at their loom cotton cloth in individual family patterns. This was tailored and presented to family members during festivals. When fashion changed to foreign industrial products, the busy click-clack of the looms disappeared from the farmers' quarters and the beautiful ancient patterns were

19 cf. Wegner 1986, p. 29
20 traditional trousers

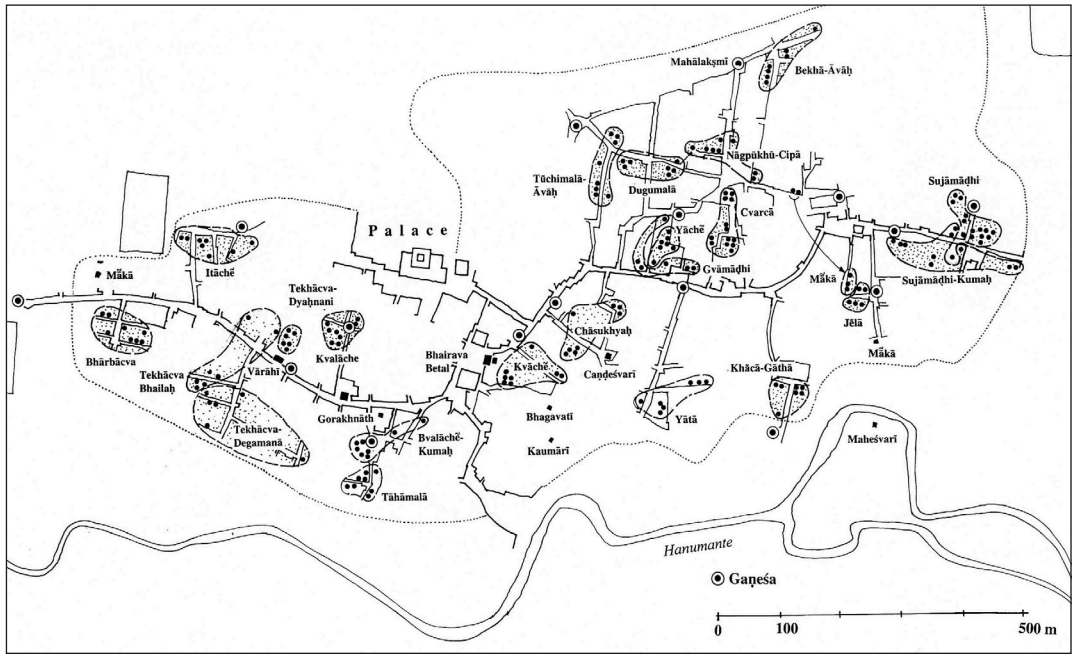
lost forever. In the 1980s, Newar culture still owned traces of an earlier age when people must have been gifted with a natural capacity of beauty and spirituality that pervades the astonishing cultural achievements of the past and that we can still sense today. Where did it go?

The maps 15–17 show the twenty-four *dhimay* groups of 1983 with the players' homes and routes to the shrines of the music gods worshipped during their apprenticeships. With my teaching activities I added five more groups, four in the upper town, one in the lower town. Two groups comprised of farmers and Sāymi oilpressers and two of Gāthā gardeners and Navadurgā dancers, and one mixed Sāymi and a Jyāpu farmer. My Guruju, Ganesh Bahadur Sijakhva of Yāchẽ was a very prolific teacher producing several excellent drummers of his Jyāpu caste. (Map 15)

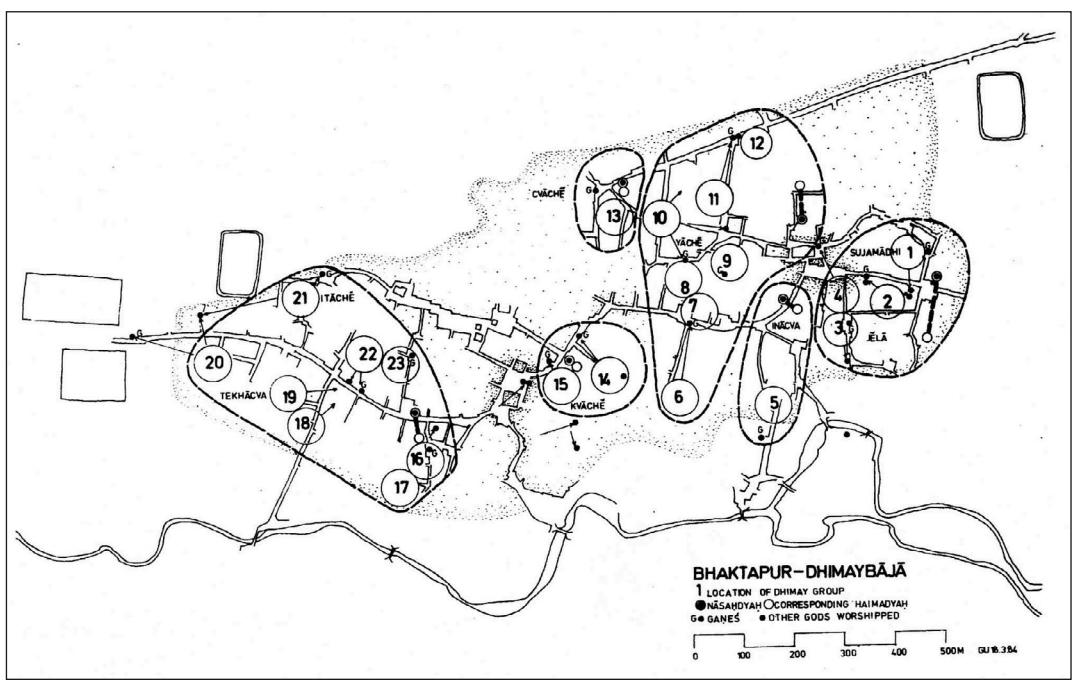
There is a rule about inclusion in drumming apprenticeships. If enrolling in a traditional apprenticeship with Nāsaḥ *sāle pūjā*, every student must complete the course—whatever the ability to learn music. For a teacher this can be a trying test of patience, but in the end everybody succeeds in learning the repertoire by heart, at least playing it in an acceptable manner. This effort should not be underestimated. Before I introduced written notation as a teaching aid, students had to chant the drumming syllables aloud, trying to fix everything permanently in their minds like a chain. During the initial processions it sometimes happens that the memory of a novice fails and he stops playing, with a pitiable expression as if drowning. In such an emergency situation,



Map 15: Dhimaybājā groups of farmers and bricklayers, 1983 (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)



Map 16: Dhimaybājā groups with shrines of Gaṇeśa and other gods worshipped during apprenticeship, 1983 (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)



Map 17: Dhimaybājā groups in relation to the pair of music gods Nāsaḥdyaḥ and Haimādyaḥ worshipped during apprenticeship, 1983 (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Fig. 40: Two *dhimay* drums, one made of brass (diameter of head: 40 cm, width: 53 cm), the older one of wood having a *dhimay pucā* secured with the strap (photo: Bernd Karl Rennhak)

the teacher has to jump to the rescue, shouting the drumming syllables into the lost person's ear. Thus saved from his blundering, the young drummer joins the other players with mixed feelings of shame and relief.

Map 17 reveals an insight into Bhaktapur's early history. The town grew together from a cluster of ancient villages, each having a pair of Nāsaḥ and Haimā shrines at its centre. The upper town shows *dhimay* groups worshipping the music god at five different shrines, with Thāthu Nāsaḥ as the most prominent one. Every *dhimay* group of the lower town uses a single pair of shrines, Nāsaḥmānā Nāsaḥ and the related Haimā. It depends on the immediate area of the god's influence, which one of the many shrines of Gaṇeśa is selected in the vicinity of the house where the drummers are taught. When we compare the use of Nāsaḥ shrines during apprenticeships of other music and dance genres in Bhaktapur, a similar picture evolves. Historically, the lower town was the latest addition to old Bhaktapur when it gradually extended towards west.

It must have been the need for security and for preserving as much valuable agricultural land for food production as possible that lead farmers to live with their life stock in a densely settled urban area. In contemporary Nepal there is now little agricultural land left in the Kathmandu Valley, definitely not enough to feed the current population of over three million. As the aftermath of the earthquake in April 2015 demonstrated, any disruption of transportation can lead to dramatic scarcity of food supply.

Before the 1980s, *dhimay* drums were carved out of tree trunks that often had an irregular shape. As such trees became unavailable near the Kathmandu Valley, the body of the drum is now made of tin or brass and in an exactly cylindrical shape. The two drumheads are X-laced together with a leather strap. (Fig. 40)

Fig. 41: Dhimay pucā made of cane in playing position—original size and ideal shape and weight

The right hand uses a *dhimay pucā* made of cane rolled in steam. This cane grows in the hot Tarāī flatlands bordering India. Cane is used during Bhaktapur's New Year festival for tying Vetāla to the Bhaila *khaḥ*. When the chariot is dismantled after the festival, *dhimay* players used to turn up, asking for used canes to make their *dhimay pucā*. Nowadays most players use a little stick instead. This straight *dhimay kachicā* produces a comparatively bad sound. If the steam-bending of a *dhimay pucā* seems a little more time-consuming, the advantage over the *kachicā* is obvious: Produced in the proper manner with a *pucā* on the Nāsaḥ drumhead, the *tā* sounds clear and crisp. The *pucā* is not held tight by index finger and thumb but given just enough freedom to move sideways, to conclude the impulse of the arm movement towards the drum. The range of the *pucā's* sideways movement is controlled by the ring finger at its lower end. The *pucā* touches the hide only briefly with the upper curve of the cane spiral. All this is impossible to achieve with a frail *kachicā* stick. (Fig. 41)

Right hand stroke:

Fig. 42

tā, ti, nā, nã, re, li

The Haimā head of the *dhimay* is played with the left hand. It has a *masalā* tuning paste[21] stuck to the inside centre of the hide. Owing to its components *sāl dhūp* (tree resin), *alapu* (castor seeds) and *tū cikã* (mustard oil), the oil seeps through the hide, showing a dark circular spot. It lends weight and resonance to the Haimā head, allowing for the production of two distinct sounds, *ghẽ* and *kha*. Every couple of years, this *masalā* tuning paste needs to be replaced by the drum maker who is asked to tighten the straps before festivals.

Left hand strokes:

Fig. 43

ghẽ, ghũ, jhĩ, kã

21 For a detailed documentation of *masalā* preparation and application see chapter 6.12

Fig. 44

kha, khu

Stroke combination:

dhã = tā + ghẽ

A special effect is achieved by first playing *tā*, then a resonant *ghẽ*. The *dhimay pucā* held by the right hand should remain in very loose contact with the drum hide. It helps, if the drum is tilted a little, with the left side down and the right side up. If done correctly, the *ghẽ* stroke causes the cane *pucā* to vibrate against the drum hide, causing a purring sound. This effect is only possible with a rolled cane, not with a straight dhimay *kachicā.* This purring sound appears only in a single short composition—*gu* no. 19—after every single *tā*.

In Bhaktapur, *dhimay* is accompanied with two different pairs of cymbals, *bhuchyāḥ* and *sichyāḥ*. The details and playing-technique of these instruments are described in chapter 6.10. Before touching these instruments, one has to learn how to play them without damaging the costly brass cymbals[22]. *Bhuchyāḥ* and *sichyāḥ* play a similar pattern, *bhuchyāḥ* in slow speed and *sichyāḥ* in double tempo. The strongest accent is on the first stroke (Fig. 45).

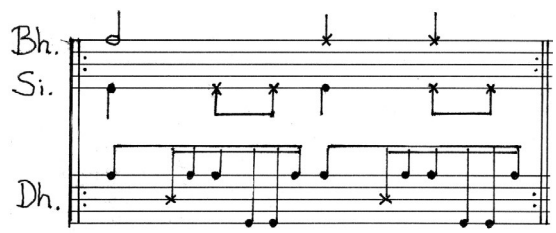


Fig. 45: Processional *dhimay* (DH.) pattern *nyāḥ* with *bhuchyāḥ* (BH.) and *sichyāḥ* (SI.) accompaniment above

22 see chapter 7.4

Fig. 46: Cvarcā flute ensemble with *dhimay* accompaniment 1985

All Bhaktapur *dhimay* groups use this combination with *bhuchyāḥ* and *sichyāḥ.* It adds a thrilling excitement to the performance. With the exception of three groups, all others play the repertoire transcribed in this publication. The repertoire of the potters of Tālākva is similar to that played by Kumāḥ potters in Thimi. The Cvarcā and Casukhyaḥ groups play *dhimay* with other patterns accompanying their transverse flute ensembles. The Cvarcā *dhimay* (length: 55 cm, diameter: 49 cm) happens to be the largest in Bhaktapur. It is unusually heavy, needing a strong player. (Fig. 46)

A *dhimay* procession may last for several hours. Drummers and cymbal players keep exchanging instruments to avoid too much strain. The best effect is achieved with an ensemble of four drums combined with two pairs of *bhuchyāḥ* and two pairs of *sichyāḥ*. With properly tightened drums, the effect is powerful and well balanced, making it possible to play together with maximum precision. A higher number of players may find it difficult to co-ordinate in a festive crowd with several groups playing next to each other, each one trying to dominate with extra loud cymbal strokes. To prevent damage to the ear, I strongly recommend the use of cotton balls to protect the delicate inner ears. If heard from a short distance, the combined noise of the cymbals can cause irreversible hearing problems that start with irritating tingling noises lasting for hours after the procession. They may never stop.

If a procession is caught in a rain shower, the sudden humidity may bring down the pitch of the drum hides. When the sound becomes too dull, people make a straw fire to dry the drums and revive their original sound quality.

The *dhimay* repertoire learnt from Ganesh Bahahadur Sijakhva includes the following compositions:

1. *Dyaḥlhāygu.* The long invocation *tāhā dyaḥlhāygu* is reserved for the beginning and end of a procession and for the god or goddess at the destination. If there are gods of special importance on the way back, the procession may stop for *tāhā dyaḥlhāygu.* It is never played when the procession passes a shrine without stopping. For that purpose, only the last four lines of *tāhā dyaḥlhāygu* are woven into the processional pattern. This short version is called *cicāḥhāḥgu dyaḥlhāygu.* The final strokes of *cicāḥhāḥgu dyaḥlhāygu* signal a stop to the other players, also at the end of *mā*.
2. *Nhyāḥ* is the basic processional pattern and its variants.
3. *Gu* and *chinā* are short pieces with repeated lines to be woven into the basic processional patterns according to the lead drummer's intention.
4. *Mā* is a long showpiece lasting for twelve minutes, an accumulation of many *chinā* arranged in an interesting development with several virtuosic climaxes and tempo changes. This piece is played for special occasions, for example at the shrines of the mother goddesses. It is followed by *tāhā dyaḥlhāygu*, before the procession returns home.
5. *Nhyāḥ thāyagu cvaḥ.* If there is a break on the way and the lead drummer wants to start again, he plays a slow *nhyāḥ thāyagu cvaḥ* that builds up the tempo stepwise for *nhyāḥ* and short processional pieces to follow.

The *mā* piece taught by Ganesh Bahadur Sijakhva[23] had a few serious flaws that invariably caused a brief musical chaos during performance. At these irritating stumble points, the cymbal players had to adjust their regular pattern to sudden irregularities caused by a few missing strokes or an additional stroke that disturbed the flow. I finally corrected those obvious mistakes that can easily enter during oral transmission. These corrections were quickly approved of by my teachers and all other players and were taught to the following generations of drummers. As is expected from an advanced drummer, I also composed a few short *chinā* and *gu* pieces that entered the repertoire. In the 1990s, a *gu* taken from the *dhã̄* repertoire by another group entered the *dhimay* repertoire and became an instant hit with all *dhimay* bands[24]. This and a few of my own compositions and corrections of *mā* are among the revised transcriptions included in this publication. For teaching and learning purposes I recommend using only this corrected version of the *dhimay* repertoire.

It would be a rewarding ethnomusicological research project to examine and compare the different *dhimay* traditions in the Kathmandu Valley[25]. Some localities in Bhaktapur and Thimi share somewhat similar patterns but organise them in a different manner, along with genuinely different patterns. It is absolutely fascinating how much variety of interesting and meaningful patterns can be created with only three basic strokes and one combination stroke. Limitation tickles the creative impulse. If one extended the focus of research to other varieties of *ḍhol*-type drumming traditions among other ethnic groups of Nepal, for example the Limbu and Mājhi people of East Nepal, one would discover radically different repertoires with different cultural meaning.

23 see Wegner 1986

24 I could not find out who came up with this idea. Adjusting drumming patterns from other genres is not uncommon.

25 In 2021, Abhaya Krishna Shrestha published a YouTube presentation 'Music Diaries Nepal' comparing Bhaktapur and Kathmandu *dhimay* repertoires.

Fig. 47: Baḍikhel *dhemā* group circumambulating the shrine of Buṅgadyaḥ at Buṅgamati 1992. The odd-shaped *dhemā* in the centre serves as a portable shrine of Nāsaḥdyaḥ, as the village is to small to have a shrine built of bricks.

In 1991 Nutan Sharma introduced me to the *bājā guṭhi* of Baḍikhel, a tiny village near Lele that may go back to the *vādittra gauṣṭhikā* mentioned in the seventh century stone inscription of Lele. The local Paharīs are descendants of the ancient Newars (Kirāta) settling in the Kathmandu Valley before the Licchavi conquered it. Their *dhemā*[26] repertoire includes a *dyaḥlhāygu* having similar patterns as in Bhaktapur but played at half tempo[27]. (Fig. 47)

Also other *dhimay* groups in the Kathmandu Valley play this essential pattern of *dyaḥlhāygu*—sometimes with minor variants. As Abhaya Krishna Shrestha pointed out[28], this exposes a very ancient basic element of Newar culture that is directly linked to the cult of *Nāsaḥdyaḥ* throughout the Kathmandu Valley.

Another aspect of *dhimay* drumming processions is dance, *dhimay pyākhã*. In Bhaktapur sometimes spontaneous dancing of inspired drunks erupts in front of the drums. As there are no standardised movements and gestures, these joyous outbreaks last only for a minute. Only once it happened that two boys aged ten and eleven started to dance with astonishing grace and variety in front of our drums after a picnic at Ināre. To our delight, they kept dancing all the way back to Inācva, Bhaktapur, covering the three kilometres in a state of bliss. (Figs. 48–50)

26 local pronounciation of *dhimay*
27 cf. Wegner 1994 and 1995
28 cf. his YouTube presentation ‘Music Diaries Nepal’

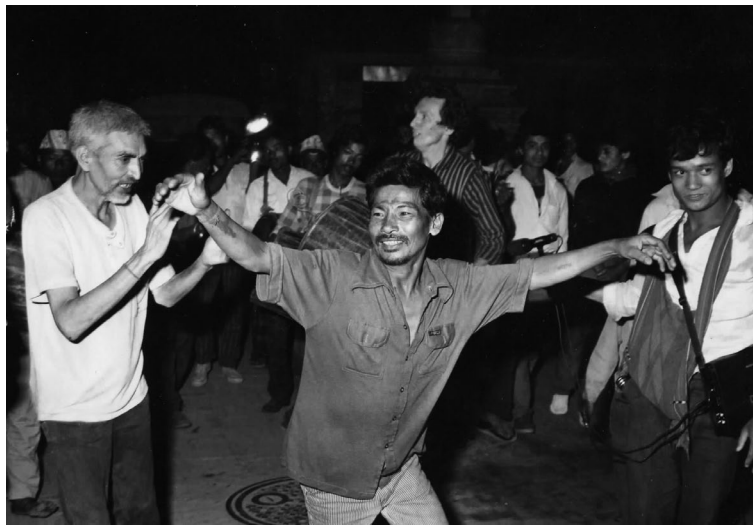


Fig. 48: Spontaneous dancing with *dhimay* during a *navarāt* procession recorded by Buddhalal Manandhar (r.), 1988 (photo courtesy of Kevin Bubriski)

Fig. 49: Farmers of Pāṅgā had a special tradition of vigorous and expressive *dhime pyākhā* (1987)

Fig. 50: Bhaktapur's biggest *dhimay* played by a farmer of Cvarcā at Yaḥsīkhyaḥ on 1st of Vaiśākh 1985

3.2 *Dhãbājā*

Dhãbājā combines one or two *dhã* barrel drums with *bhuchyāḥ* and *sichyāḥ* cymbals in an ensemble of processional music played by Newar farmers. The sound is loud and robust. The ancient use of this drum is illustrated by relatively simple compositions consisting of two lines each and by depictions of Nāsaḥdyaḥ flanked by two drummers, Nandi and Bhṛṅgi, one of them playing *dhã*. The other drum played for the god is *kvatāḥ*. The repertoires of both drums include *dyaḥlhāygu* invocations. During the New Year festival, members of the *dāphā* group playing for Thāthū Nāsaḥdyaḥ suspend a small painted *ilã* canopy under which they perform for the god. The painting on the lower side of this *ilã* shows Nāsaḥdyaḥ as half male and half female Ardhanareśvara in a dancing pose, accompanied by Nandi and Bhṛṅgi playing *dhã* and *kvatāḥ*. (Fig. 51)

Fig. 51: Canopy showing half male, half female Nāsaḥdyaḥ with Nandi and Bhṛṅgi playing *kvatāḥ* and *dhã* (painting on canvas: Purna Chitrakar)

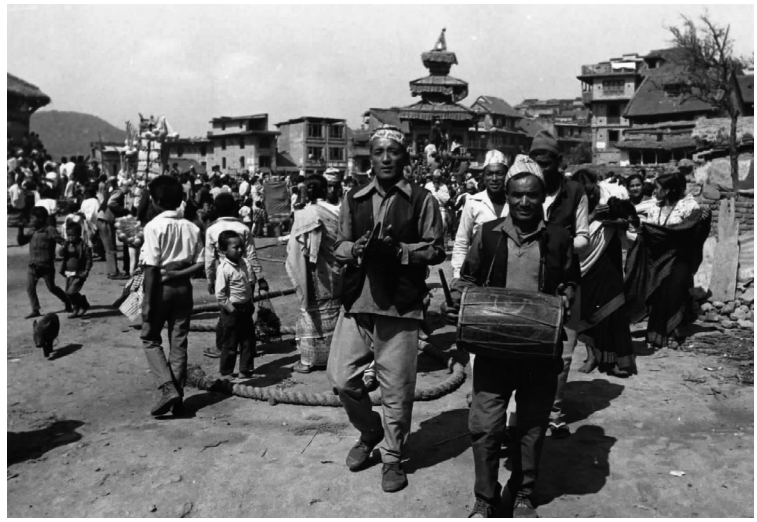


Fig. 52: Dhãbājā drumming in Yaḥsīkhyaḥ during New Year morning 1984

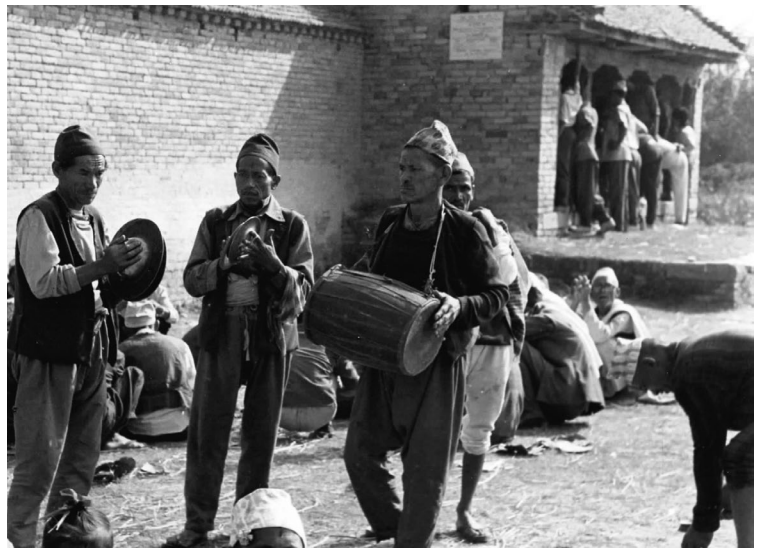


Fig. 53: Dhãbājā drumming at Brahmāyaṇī during Vijayādaśamī morning 1985

Presumably older but less popular than *dhimaybājā, dhãbājā* was mostly part of some *dāphā* groups that incorporated the set of instruments for specific processions. For example, *dhãbājā* and the *dāphā* drum *lālākhĩ* with thick-walled *taḥ* cymbals alternate in accompanying the stick dance *ghẽtāgiśi* that precedes cow effigies during the town ritual *sāpāru*. *Dhãbājā* combined with natural trumpets *pvaṅgā* accompanies some of the Bhaila *pyākhã* masked dances performed by Bhaktapur's potters. Also Buddhist processional music groups use the combination of *dhāḥ* with *bhuchyāḥ* and *sichyāh* but they reverse the drum, holding the *dhãkathi* drumstick playing the Haimā drumhead with the left hand. Farmers hold the *dhãkathi* with the right hand, playing the higher sounding Nāsaḥ drumhead with the left hand. (Figs. 52, 53)

The *dhãbājā* of Mūlāchẽ was not an addition to a *dāphā* group but independent. Mūlāchẽ farmers played *dhãbājā* for their local life cycle rituals and town rituals like *dyaḥ svagã biyegu, sāpāru, mvahani* and *gathãmugaḥ carhe.*

The processional *dhãbājā* repertoire shares several short compositions with *dhimaybājā*. They are repeated several times before returning to the basic processional pattern *nhyāḥ.* As with *dhimaybājā,* the *dyaḥlhāygu* invocation includes series of accelerated strokes:

/tāghẽ o /tāghẽ o /tāghẽ o / tāghẽ o /tāghẽ o /tāghẽ o /tāghẽ o /

The *dhimay dyaḥlhāygu* starts in a similar manner before proceeding with different patterns.

Dhã is the first one of the nine drums to be played in succession during a *navabājā* performance. Every *navabājā* performance starts and ends with a *dyaḥlhāygu* played by *dhã.* Following the *dyaḥlhāygu,* the solo dummer plays *cva* 1 and *gu* 1. During the following rounds of the nine drums, *cva* 2 could be combined with *gu* 2, or *cva* 3 with *gu* 3, etc. Most of the *dhã* pieces played during *navabājā* performances and processions are similar to those used for Bhaila *pyākhã* dance accompaniment and Nāsaḥ *pūjā* processions. They are transcribed in chapters 11.3, and 11.16.

Construction and playing technique of the *dhã* drum are explained in chapter 6.1.

3.3 *Nāykhībājā*

My Guruju, the late Kajilal Shahi was an outstanding *nāykhĩ* drummer with a virtuoso technique and impeccable memory (Fig. 54). He had learnt his repertoire by imitation, without using drumming syllables. Each piece was stored in his mind like a chain that cannot be interrupted. This excluded the ability to isolate patterns during lessons. He repeated complete pieces at full speed until he was sure that I played everything correctly.

Owing to their low social status in traditional Newar society, Nāy butchers lived at the periphery of the town, far from the Malla palace and important temples in the centre of Bhaktapur. During the Malla period, Nāy families were regularly disowned of their property. It was considered unsuitable for them to make a good living from selling meat, an injustice they had to bear with, in addition to other caste related suppression. Nāy women were frequently taken as concubines by wealthy members of the upper castes. (Map 18, 19)

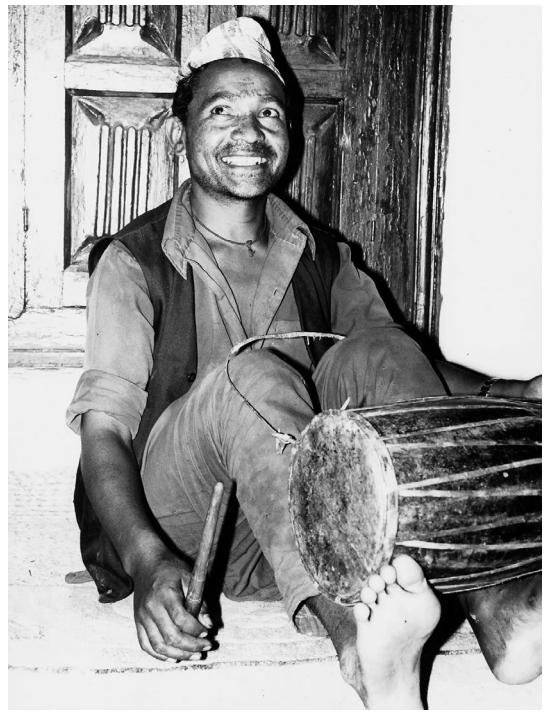


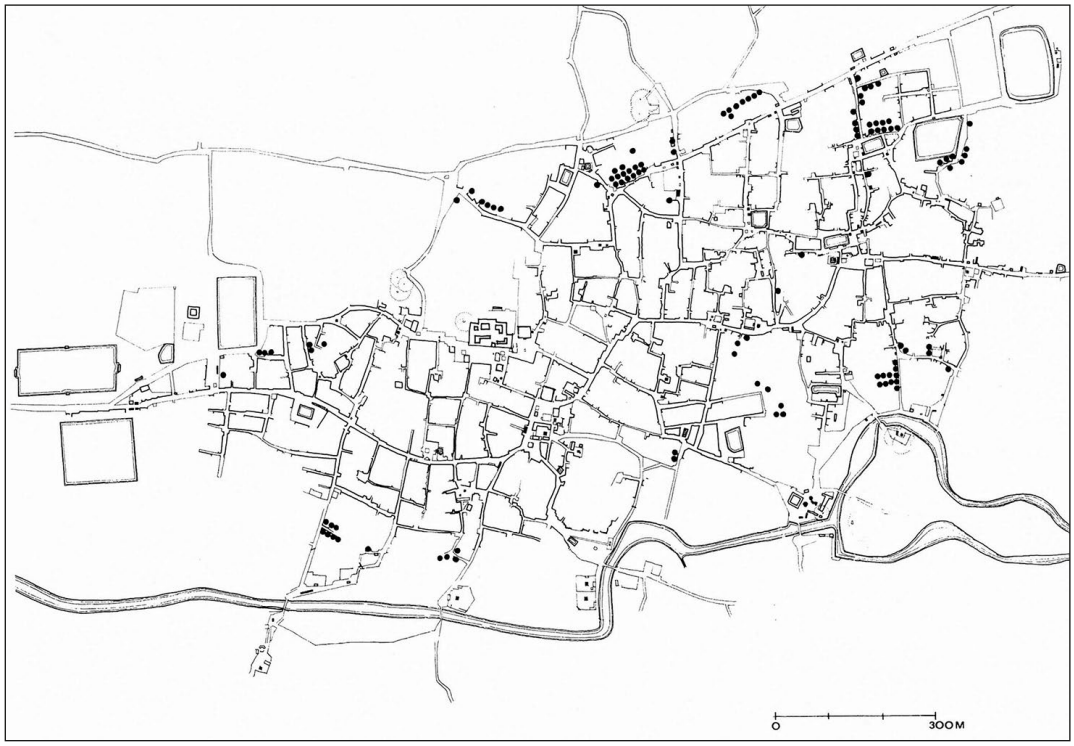
Fig. 54: My late Guruju of *nāykhībājā,* Kajilal Shahi 1985

In addition to slaughtering animals in the early morning hours and selling meat, Nāy had several ritual duties that involved them as players of processional *nāykhībājā* music. These playing duties ranged from accompaniment for life-cycle rituals to highlighting public announcements with the rapid *cvaykegu* piece to the detailed musical participation in several town rituals. The ten *nāykhībājā* ensembles[29] included one or several *nāykhī* drums and one or several pairs of *sichyāḥ* cymbals.[30] (Fig. 55)

Kajilal Shahi of Jēlā was responsible for playing the piece *bāre khī* during the procession of the five Dīpaṅkara Buddhas on *pañcadān carhe.* The Buddhas interrupted their procession at twenty-two places[31] to dance a respectful round for local gods to the accompaniment of an ensemble of Sāymi oilpressers playing *dyaḥlhāygu* with natural trumpets *pvaṅgā* and the compound drum *pastā*. Hindus perceive in those Buddha images the five Pāṇḍava brothers of the Mahābhārata epic. The leading Buddha's drooping head supports the Hindu interpretation, as it appears to express Yudhiṣṭhira's shame of his disastrous gambling passion[32]. (Fig. 56)

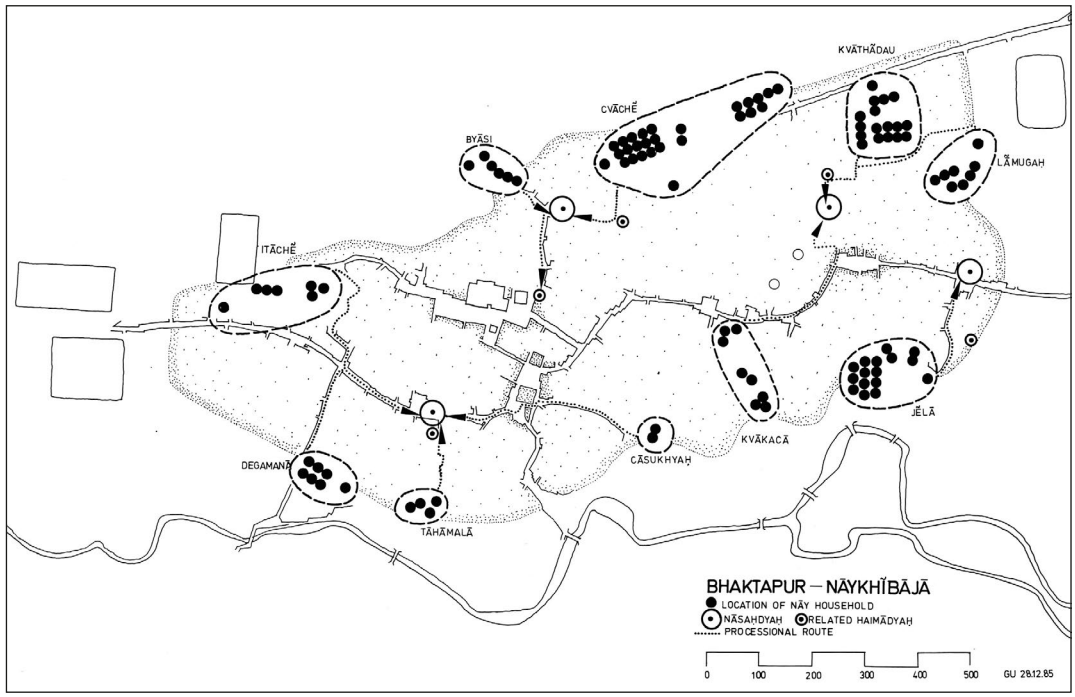
During Indra *jātrā*, Kajilal and a colleague had to play *nāykhībājā* during the procession of Ākāś Bhairav painted on a *pulu* mat made of bamboo leaves. It is carried along the *pradakṣiṇā*

29 survey 1984
30 details of instruments and playing technique see chapters 6.5 and 6.10
31 Until 2019 the number of such places had increased to thirty-eight
32 A Tibetan pilgrimage manual for Nepal offers a third identity of this Buddha as Dolma



Map 18: Homes of Nāy butchers situated at the periphery of Bhaktapur (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Fig. 55: Nāykhī drum and a pair of *sichyāḥ* cymbals (photo courtesy of Bernd Karl Rennhak)



Map 19: Nāykhībājā groups with music gods worshipped during apprenticeship, 1985 (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

processional route before being attached to the front of the Bhairavnāth temple in Taumādhi where it remains for a year. This route is documented in chapter 3.

Kajilal was also in charge of participating in processions of the Navadurgā dancers starting on the day of Mahāṣṭamī and ending on fullmoon after *mvahani*. Before the 1970s, an ensemble of eighteen large natural trumpets *kā* played by Sāymi oilpressers of Gvaḥmādhi preceded the Navadurgā during their procession to Brahmāyaṇī on Mahānavamī and back into the town on the following day. These instruments were mainly played during death processions of wealthy persons, producing a deep, ominous roar[33]. On the evening of Mahānavamī, Kajilal slaughtered the *khame* buffalo for the *Navadurgā* at *Brahmāyaṇī pīth* before the *Navadurgā* dancers 'stole' their masks in Yāchē and delivered a portion of the meat to the mask maker. This ritual duty alternated between Kajilal's Jēlā *nāykhībājā* and Byāsi *nāykhībājā,* but the colleagues in Byāsi were glad to leave this to Kajilal for a small fee. Whenever the Navadurgā attended invitations during the week after the sacrifice, it was Kajilal walking in front with another *Nāy*, simultaneously playing *nāykhībājā* and carrying on their shoulders a bamboo pole with the *khame* water-buffalo's severed head tied to it with a rope, dangling two feet above the ground. On Āśvin fullmoon 1986 I had the pleasure of helping out as a *nāykhī* drummer during the Navadurgā visit to Yātāchē. I had to play the *pūjākhī* pattern and carry one end of the heavy bamboo pole on my right shoulder. Kajilal

33 A *kābājā* ensemble was resurrected in 2019 and accompanied the Navadurgā to Brahmāyaṇī with a new set of *kā* trumpets made of copper

Fig. 56: Five Dīpaṅkāra Buddhas visiting Nāgpukhū on *pancadān carhe* 1986. Kajilal Shahi and his son play the *nāykhībājā* piece *bāre khī*, announcing the arrival of the five Buddhas. Hindus identify the Dīpaṅkāra Buddha walking in front as Yudhiṣṭhira, his face lowered in shame of his gambling vice that caused the great war of the Mahābhārata epic. The drooping head is also seen as a hint to Buddhist monks as the proper posture whilst begging for alms. This Buddha is identified as the Ādibuddha, the primordial Buddha. Another popular name alluding to the posture is Ajajudyaḥ, Grandfather God.

accompanied with *sichyāḥ*, carrying the other end of the pole on his left shoulder, the reeking buffalo head swaying between us in a cloud of flies[34]. Fortunately it takes only a few minutes from the Navadurgā *dyaḥchẽ* to Yātāchẽ, where the gods attended a ritual feast and a piglet sacrifice, to satisfy their lust for fresh blood. Having carried the *khame* head for a week, Kajilal received as a reward the neck portion of the buffalo meat. This duty ended on the day after full moon when the Navadurgā gather at night in Gachẽ square to perform spectacular individual dances, before drinking a cocktail of *khame* blood stirred with rice beer and eating the decaying brain[35].

The Nāy of Bhaktapur have six senior leaders. Every year these Nāy *nāyaḥ* have to carry out between thirty-two and thirty-six *thā pūjā* sacrifices of buffaloes and goats for Taleju. During the night between Mahānavamī and Vijayādaśamī, all six *nāyaḥ* gather for the annual main sacrifice, wearing white *ghāji nā* frocks, *jani* belt and *phaytā* hats. Having slaughtered and carved up

34 At times, the ethnomusicological fieldwork method of participant observation can lead to unforgettable experiences.

35 see chapter 4.2

Fig. 57: Nāykhībājā escorting the exhausted Nāy *nāyaḥ* home after a night of butchering for Taleju, Vijayādaśamī 1986. Each *nāyaḥ* carries a white bag with strips of buffalo meat to be distributed as a sought after ghost repellent.

twenty-five buffaloes for Taleju, they emerge from the Golden Gate before noon on the day of Vijayādasamī, where their local *nāykhībājā* groups await them, ready to escort them home. They play the piece *bārā dāygu* signalling 'return from a sacrifice'. (Fig. 57)

Exhausted after a busy night and their dresses soiled with sacrificial blood, the *nāyaḥ* are stopped every few steps by citizens begging for tiny strips of sacrificial meat that the *nāyaḥ* carry in white cotton bags, mixed with marigold[36] flower petals and ready for distribution. When roasted on charcoal fire, their fumes work as an excellent ghost repellent—if applied systematically in every room. Windows should remain shut for a while, making sure that even the most stubborn ghost suffocates before the extended family arrives for a grand feast.

During *mvahani, nāykhībājā* together with Jugi shawm players preceded the eleven Ekanta-Kumārī on their way from the main Kumārī's residence at Kvāthādau to their *āgamchẽ*[37] in Mulāchẽ (Fig. 58).

On the day of *pāsaḥ carhe*, a Duĩ carrier and a helper put rice grains sprinkled with sacrificial goat's blood on every *chvāsa* stone along the *pradakṣiṇā* route. The initial offering is placed on a massive rectangular stone slab in the *bekvacuka* palace courtyard. On this evil spot a Brahman

36 Tagetes erecta
37 ritual clan god house

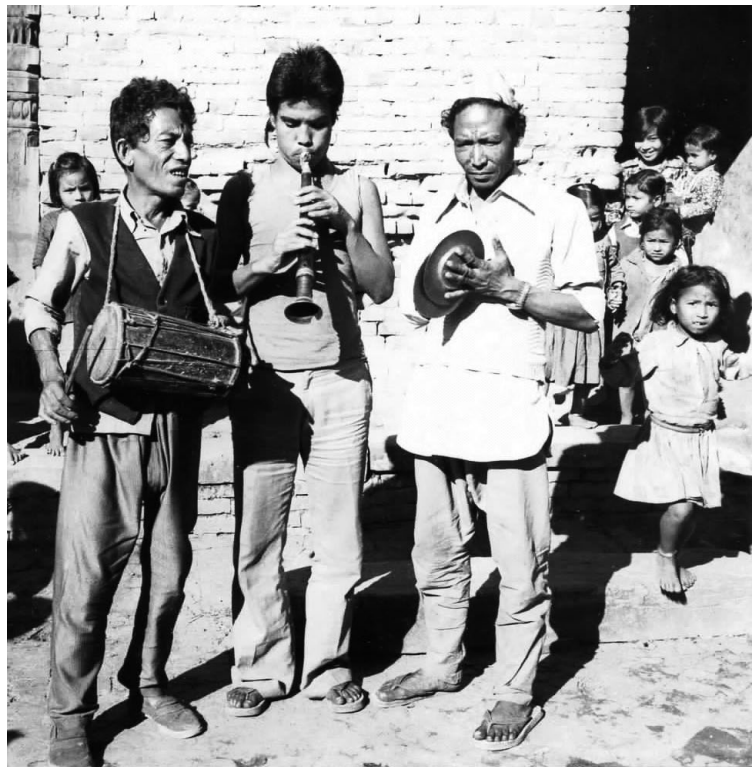


Fig. 58: Nāykhībājā and Jugi shawm-player accompanying the Ekanta-Kumārī during *mvahani* 1985

committed suicide, in protest against a king's greed for land belonging to the Taleju temple. His angry ghost affects the area until today—despite throngs of unaware tourists being herded through the courtyard during daytime. Mercifully, nobody is allowed to enter after dark when the ghost prowls about. The offerings do not really suffice for keeping his wrath under control and must be renewed every month. Until 1983, butchers played *nāykhībājā* in front of the annual rice distributing procession held to pacify this and all other suicide-inducing demons. Since then *nāykhībājā* stopped participating, as the musicians did not receive anything in return, following King Mahendra Shah's confiscation of the *guṭhi* land.

The most notorious musical duty of *nāykhībājā* is *sībājā,* the music for death processions of Nāy, earlier also of Malla kings and Rājopadhyāya priests of the Taleju temple[38]. During death processions for kings and priests, the Jugi shawm players had to play *rāg Dīpak* with their curved *pūjā mvālī* shawms. This remained the only occasion for performance of this 'fire-igniting' *rāga*. To date, some musicians in South Asia promote the belief of supernatural powers linked to specific *rāga* music. During August 1983 I recorded a Warli *bhagat*[39] in Palghar district of Maharashtra, India who played an ancient stick zither *ghāṅglī*, singing a song in the paddy

38 analysed processional routes of *sībājā* see chapter 3.
39 shaman of the local *ādivasi* ethnic group

fields to help the plants grow. It was for the same reason that Damāi musicians in central Nepal were hired to play *pañcaibājā* music in the fields and Newar Jyāpu women sang rice-sowing and -transplanting songs. The *sībājā* music of the Nāy is believed to exercise black magic, even cause people to die, if played out of context[40]. As explained in detail in chapter 3, this music is closely related to the locality leading the drummers to adjust their patterns, as if they were reading a musical score.

Besides *sībājā*, the *nāykhībājā* repertoire includes the following drum compositions:

dyaḥlhāygu:	invocation played at the start and end of a procession and during a ritual,
pūjā khī:	procession moves to a place of ritual action,
bārā dāygu:	procession returns from place of ritual action,
cvaykegu:	creating public attention for announcements or to highlight ritual action,
bāre khī:	played exclusively for processions of Dīpañkara Buddhas,
calti:	dance piece, and
sībājā:	music for death processions.

Calti is an open form comprising of several series of lively dance patterns held together by three main patterns that keep returning in between developments, giving unity to the piece. Usually players decide on the spot what patterns they play and how to combine them. They may leave out the slower introduction and start directly with any part of the fast main section. None of the performances that I saw had as many varieties as the version that I learnt from Kajilal and that is transcribed in chapter 11.2 of this publication. Nobody could play as fast and clearly as he did. When drummers felt tired of playing *pūjā khī* or *bārā dāygu* during long processions, they inserted a few sparkling *calti* episodes here and there. The happiest performances of *calti* did not happen in public but during private feasts in Nāy homes when the music moved people to dance in front of the drums.

The *nāykhībājā* repertoire of the butchers stands apart from all other drumming traditions in Bhaktapur. There is not a single pattern shared with any other group, not even with those that use the *nāykhī* drum in the different contexts of *navabājā* and *gũlābājā*. The name *calti* is used in other repertoires for pieces structured in four *mātrā* patterns. But this is where similarities end. I suspect the reason was general fear of the black magic associated with the death music *sībājā*. During my *nāykhībājā pirāne pūjā* at the shrine of Thāthu Nāsaḥdyaḥ I played the complete repertoire—with the exception of *sībājā,* of course. A senior Vajrācārya resident of that area happened to listen intently to my first public performance. He was surprised to hear most of these compositions for the first time in his life.

Kajilal did not use drumming syllables to teach the compositions. He remembered them as a sequence of movements and was not able to isolate patterns for didactic purposes. Instead he played an entire piece from beginning to end in full speed, expecting me to pick up whatever I could. I was taught at my home. For teaching the death music we had to rent an isolated straw-thatched field hut where nobody else could hear us at night. Whenever Kajilal played *sībājā* for me, he

40 As *sībājā* is included in my transcriptions, I repeat the warning not to play this piece out of context!

appeared to relive an entire death procession. The second pattern is fast and tricky, challenging my patience when I had missed it, having to wait for Kajilal's imagined procession to reach its destination, before I was given another chance. It took me six nights to learn the entire piece in the absence of drumming syllables.[41] In order to notate the compositions, I decided to apply the set of drumming syllables used by my *navabājā* teacher, Hari Govinda Ranjitkar to memorize his repertoire of *navabājā* compositions that included the similar drum *nāykhīcā.*

Kajilal Shahi was certainly the most phenomenal *nāykhī* drummer whom I ever met. But only a very limited circle of local caste members appreciated his supreme virtuosity. I believe I was his only student. During the initial years of Kathmandu University's Department of Music[42], concerned parents from Kathmandu made me promise that their children would not have to learn the butchers' drum, before allowing them to enroll as students.

The playing technique of the *nāykhī* is described in chapter 6.5, with the exception of the rubbing technique producing the *kvī* sound that is not used in *navabājā*, only in *nāykhībājā* and in Sākya *gūlābājā*. Before playing, the Haimā drumhead needs to be rubbed with *men*, wild bee wax. The player rapidly moistens the tip of the middle finger of his right hand in his mouth, before rubbing it across the prepared drum hide. The tip of the middle finger points vertically against the drum hide. The tip of the straight thumb touches the soft, fleshy part of the middle finger and shoves it across whilst the middle finger remains in light but continuous contact with the prepared drum hide. This causes a wail sounding like *kvī*. In the *calti* piece, *kvī* series can also form a hectic rhythmic pattern:

/kvī o o kvī/ o o kvī o /

/kvī o o kvī/ o o kvī o /

The drumstick remains in the right hand but is not used for this sound production. It requires a fair amount of practice, before all this is under control. The most difficult pattern to play clearly in fast tempo, is this:

/da na pā dā/ o dā pā dṛkha/

Again, separate practice is necessary to master this delicious imposition of the rapid *dṛkha* flourish. It starts with two open strokes with the drumstick, followed by a soft *pā* with the left hand:

dṛkha = danapā

Good luck!

41 Whatever the German esoterica entrepreneur Peter Hess wrote about my *nāykhī* apprenticeship in his publication *Klangschalen für Gesundheit und innere Harmonie,* is complete bogus.

42 opened in 1996

3.4 Sāymi *gũlābājā*

Gũlā, the Buddhist processional month starts on the day of new moon in July/August. As Buddha pointed out to his disciples, this time of year has always been considered beneficial for giving and accepting alms. During *gũlā*, musical activities of the Newar Buddhists in the Kathmandu Valley reach a monumental scale. Every morning, the men walk along processional routes to visit Buddhist monasteries *(bāhā* and *bāhī)*, and circumambulate monuments *(cībhāḥ, caitya)*, shrines *(degaḥ)*, and other places of Buddhist worship in the Kathmandu Valley and beyond. Whilst processing, they play the so-called *gũlābājā*-music that is mostly instrumental, dominated by drums.

The first written version of the *Bṛhad*-Svayaṃbhū *purāṇa*[43] mentions Buddhist processional music groups circumambulating the Svayaṃbhū Mahācaitya every morning of *gũlā,* playing animal horns and drums. In the 1980s, *gũlābājā* groups of Sāymi oil pressers from Bhaktapur and Banepa played invocations with horns and drums[44] at all Buddhist monuments of Bhaktapur and major Newar Buddhist monuments including Svayaṃbhū, Namobuddha, Buṅgāmati, and other localities. In Bhaktapur there are two different genres of *gũlābājā*, that of the Sāymi oil pressers and the Śākya and Vajrācārya gold- and silversmiths. Both of these different kinds of instrumental ensembles require participation of low-caste Jugi tailor-musicians. During *gũlā* in the 1980s, three Sāymi *gũlābājā* and three Sākya *gũlābājā* groups used to carry out their daily processions in and around Bhaktapur every year. (Fig. 59)

The invocations of Sāymi *gũlābājā* music could be part of an unbroken tradition predating the fourteenth century. I presume that drums other than the older *dhã, pastā, nāykhī* and *dabadaba*[45] were added to *gũlābājā* during the later eighteenth or nineteenth century, in an attempt to create a Buddhist *navabājā*, following the model of the early *navadāphā* groups[46] founded by King Bhūpatīndra Malla (ruled 1696–1722). For special occasions like *dhalāpa* grain offerings by pious Buddhist families, Bhaktapur's and Banepa's Sāymi *gũlābājā* groups played most drums used in *navabājā.* Jugi tailor-musicians accompanied these drums with shawms and fipple flutes. With the exception of short *pūjāmvālī* and *dyaḥlhāygu* pieces played at the beginning of the daily processions at the shrine of Nāsaḥdyaḥ, the longer compositions for these 'modern' drums and shawms are identical to those played during *navadāphā* performances.

An ancient oil presser of Gvaḥmādhī recalled the following story about the origin of *gũlābājā*: Once there was a continuous drought for twelve years. People were starving. They wanted to call 'Bhagavān' for help and tried to arouse him from deep meditation with a friendly fanfare of *pvaṅgā* (natural trumpets). No response. Finally the oil pressers were asked to come to the rescue with an ear-splitting blast of their goat and buffalo horns. With a start the god awoke and so did the rain clouds. Since then, this effective horn blast is re-enacted during processions to Kasti-Bhagavān[47].

43 from the third quarter of the 14th century
44 for a detailed study of processional and ritual activities during *gũlā* see Wegner 2009
45 hourglass drum of the *damaru* type
46 cf. chapter 5.3
47 Śveta Matsyendranāth

Another reason for pious merit gathering during *gũlā* could be awareness of the approaching end of the world[48]. The last and shortest of the four world cycles, *kaliyuga* is currently running out, leading to complete dissolution of the entire creation. Our present world cycle lasts for four hundred and thirty-two thousand years, with only a few millennia to pass before the end of time. The final month of each *yuga* year coincides with *gũlā.* So this extra busy month could have been intended for Buddhists to face the inevitable not with despair or foolish excesses but with pious activities leading to a favourable rebirth in a future existence—hopefully as a human being that can again learn Buddha's teachings and live accordingly, practicing altruism and striving for enlightenment.

Fig. 59: Banepa *gũlābājā* with animal horns, shawms and different drums, visiting Sākvalã, Bhaktapur, 1985

In 1975 Gutschow and Kölver counted 129 Sāymi oil presser households in Bhaktapur. These families live in three neighbourhoods, Sākvalã/Kvāthādau, Inācva/Gvaḥmādhī (both located in the Upper Town), and Tekhācva/Bhārbācva/Vāṃśa Gopāl (Lower Town), where they pursue their traditional occupation of producing and selling mustard oil. They generate additional income by distilling *aylā*, a fiery beverage required for every Newar feast. It was not uncommon for senior Bhaktapurians to start their day with an inspiring peg or two. The three Sāymi *gũlābājā* ensembles in Bhaktapur are named after the residential areas Sākvalã, Gvaḥmādhī and Vāṃśa Gopāl.

48 Bernhard Kölver hazarded this fascinating conjecture during a discussion with me

Fig. 60: Sāymi boys with buffalo horns *ghulu,* 1987

Sāymi call their kind of *gūlābājā 'ṅakha dhalā'*, literally 'collective worship with horns'. The smallest boys blow buffalo horns *ghulu* (Fig. 60), and the older ones play two varieties of goat horns, *cāti* and *tititālā*. Their fathers and uncles play nine different drums, cymbals and natural trumpets *pvaṅgā*[49].

The Sāymi *gũlābājā* ensemble consists of three functionally different groups walking in a long procession of around sixty musicians:

1. Small boys with buffalo horns *ghulu* alternating with bigger boys and men with goat horns attached to bamboo tubes *cāti* and *tititālā*, several double-headed *dhã̄* drums and thin-walled brass cymbals *sichyāḥ* and *bhuchyāḥ*,
2. two different double-headed drums *pachimā* or *dhalak* accompanied by *Jugi* tailor musicians with appropriate melodies on shawms, and
3. natural trumpets *pvaṅgā* playing together with the compound drum *pastā*, comprising of two drums tied together, enabling the playing of three drum heads, accompanied with *tāḥ* cymbals.

Group 1 plays invocations when they reach and circumambulate a Buddhist monument on the way. The *dhã̄* drums play also processional music (with and without horns).

Musicians of group 2 walk in the middle of the procession, playing different processional music with shawms and other drums (*pachimā* or *dhalak*).

Group 3 (*pastā*, *tāḥ* cymbals and a pair of *pvaṅgā* trumpets) plays only invocations when the tail of the procession reaches the respective Buddhist monument (*cībhāḥ, caitya*).

49 Called *pañcatāla* in the *carya* dance context and *pvaṅgā* by other castes

Like other Newar processions including several music groups that play at the same time but not together, Sāymi *gũlābājā* processions passing a *caitya* present a musical chaos. It makes sense only in relation to the localities that induce groups 1 and 3 to powerful outbursts of *dyaḥlhāygu*. Extra instruments including *dhimaycā, nāykhĩ*, *kvakhĩcā*, the pair of kettledrums *nagarā*, the hourglass drum *dabadaba* and fipple flutes are taken along during pilgrimages to important Buddhist shrines in and near the Kathmandu Valley. They are also played during visits to other oil presser neighbourhoods and during ritual grain offerings in support of the *gũlābājā* group. Such *dhalāpa* grain offerings are organised by wealthy Buddhist families keen on improving their merit. A ritual specialist of the highest Buddhist Vajrācarya caste, a so-called Gubhāḥju manages all ritual details for the *gũlābājā* group. During grain offerings, he performs an elaborate ritual ensuring blessings for the musical instruments and for the donor family. (Fig. 61)

Fig. 61: Ritual specialist Gubhāḥju Gyān Ratna Vajrācārya playing a handbell with *vajra* handle during a Sāymi *gũlābājā* procession 1985

During *gũlā* 1986, the Sākvalā Sāymi *gũlābājā* group received three *dhalãpa* invitations in Banepa, six in Bhaktapur and three in Thimi. A *dhalãpa* offering includes five kinds of grain in large quantity, among other things:

jāki	husked rice
vā	unhusked rice
cvaḥ	unhusked wheat
tecvaḥ	barley
bāji	toasted beaten rice
chucũ	wheat flour
kaygu	dried peas
myā	red lentils
lāvjā	maize
musyā	fried soya beans
mārikasi bājã	pot with flat bread
gvapacā	pot with money
svāmā	flower garlands
janakvakhā	cotton threads

ita	wicks
dupãy	incense powder in curled paper rolls
dhũ	incense sticks
tāyẽ	fried unhusked rice
abīr	red powder
svã	flowers
phalphul	fruit
cikã	mustard oil
jāki	husked rice for *pūjā*
duru	milk
ghyaḥ	clarified butter
kasti	honey
dhau	yoghurt
dhaupatu	tiny brass or clay cup for yoghurt offering
sukunda	ritual oil lamp

Impressive mounds of five different grains are displayed in the donor's house when the group arrives. The musicians play a series of invocations. These *dyaḥlhāygu* are the same as those played before the daily start of the procession at the shrine of Nāsaḥdyaḥ. The Gubhāḥju invokes Nāsaḥdyaḥ, the five Buddhas Vairocaṇa, Akśobya, Ratnasambhāva, Amṛtāmbhāva, Amoghasiddhi, the four Tārās Locanī, Māmakī, Paṇḍurā, Aryā, and several emanations of Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, before blessing the musicians, the musical instruments, and the songbook of unaccompanied hymns (*tutaḥ)*. When offerings are carried out, the Gubhāḥju asks for the auspicious *pūjāmvālĩ* piece to be played by *nāykhĩ* and shawms. He places orange powder marks *(sinã tikegu*) on every musical instrument, adds flowers, cotton threads *(janakhvakhā)* and sprinkles unhusked rice grain, before placing marks of wet orange *sinã* and red *abīr* paste on the musicians' foreheads. The musicians receive a vegetarian meal *(samay)*.

An elaborate programme of music follows, starting with the *pastāḥ* drum playing the pieces *nhyāḥ*, *khĩpvu* and *dhãdiganã* and the *dhã̃* drums playing *cavã* with shawm accompaniment. It concludes with powerful horn incantations of the *mantra* 'Ārya Tārā Tārā—Buddha Dharma Saṅgha' played in unison with the drums. After this, each drum plays one or two long pieces with shawm accompaniment. *Dhimaycā* plays *calti*. *Nāykhĩ* plays *calti*. *Dhalak* plays *dehrā* and *tatali*. *Pachimā* plays *partāl*. *Dabadaba* plays a piece without name[50] with flute accompaniment. *Kvakhĩcā* plays *calti*. *Nagarā* plays *dehrā* and *brahmatāl*. *Dhalak* or *dhã̃* conclude with *cavã̃,* the piece that is most auspicious and said to have healing properties. With the exception of the *dabadaba* repertoire, all these compositions are also part of the auspicious *navabājā* repertory for nine drums.

The Sākvalã oilpressers learnt these pieces from the *navabājā* masterdrummer of the Dattatreya *navadāphā* group. Unlike the *navadāphā* groups who used to perform every month, the oil presser groups perform only during *gũlā* and need to refresh their memory of the appropriate drumming compositions. In 1988 Surya Shankar Manandhar, the most prominent drummer of the Sākvalã

50 This composition has been forgotten

Fig. 62: Buddhalal Manandhar playing *dhimaycā, pachimā, dhalak* and *nagarā* with shawm accompaniment (l. to r.: Marsya Dai, Satya Nārāyaṇa, ?) during a visit of his Vāṃśa Gopāl *gũlābājā* to Gvaḥmādhī, 1985

Sāymi *gũlābājā* group could not remember the longest *dhã̄* composition *cavã*. He had to refer to the solo drummer of Dattātreya *navadāphā* to restore the composition.

After playing a final round of *dyaḥlhaygu* invocations, the oil pressers carry the offerings to their *dhalãchẽ*. The grain is sold, the money spent on drinks and *pūjā* expenses. (Fig. 62)

During daily *gũlābājā* processions, Sāymi males living in Sakvalã gather at six a.m. at the near-by shrine of Thāthu Nāsaḥdyaḥ. One of the elders places offerings of grain and flowers at the shrine where they are instantly consumed by hungry chickens and dogs. A vermilion mark is applied to every participant's forehead. While musicians gather, senior oil pressers sing Buddhist

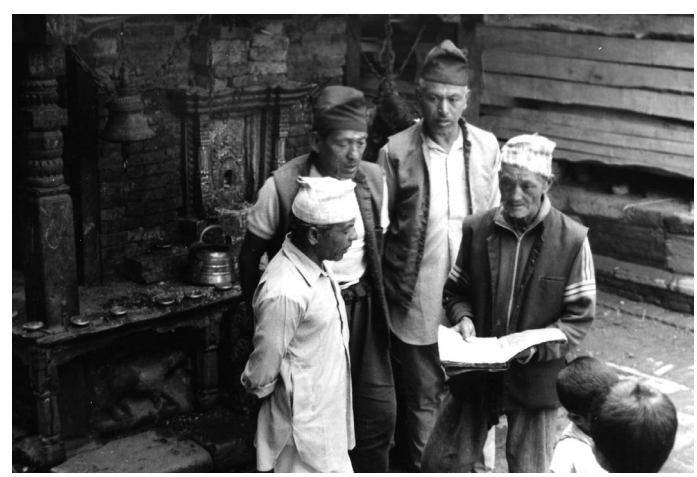


Fig. 63: Senior *Sāymi* oil pressers singing *tutaḥ* hymns at the shrine of Thāthu Nāsaḥdyaḥ during *gũlā* 1985

Fig. 64: Nhuchhe Bhakta Manandhar *of Sākvalā* playing the *nāykhī* piece *pūjāmvālī* with accompaniment by cymbals and three Jugi *Gujarāti mvālī* players (l. to r.: Chandranāth Darśandhāri, Marsya Dai, Prithvi Man) at Thāthu Nāsaḥdyaḥ, before the daily *gūlābājā* procession with horns and drums started. 1985

tutaḥ hymns[51] from a hand-written songbook containing the song texts (Fig. 63). A *nāykhī* drummer asks arriving Jugi tailor-musicians to accompany him with shawms, to lend dignity to the ongoing *pūjā*. Every morning they play the piece *pūjāmvālī*. (Fig. 64)

When everyone has arrived and the ritual offerings and prayer for the music god completed, Nāsaḥdyaḥ receives a comprehensive series of musical offerings. The player of the thick-walled, small bronze cymbals *tāḥ* ring out the first piercing notes by striking these together, leaving just enough time after each stroke for everyone to raise their right hand three times to their forehead, in a triple salute to the music god. Three *dyaḥlhāygu* for *pastā* drum and natural trumpets follow, alternating with three powerful *dyaḥlhāygu* for *dhã* and horns—resembling the wake-up call for Kasti-Bhagvān to put an end to the draught mentioned in the story above. It is quite effective of waking up neighbours who still happen to sleep at six a.m. (Figs. 65–67)

After this, the drums *nāykhĩ, dhimaycā, dhalak, pachimā, kvakhĩcā* and *dabadaba* each play one short *dyaḥlhāygu* for Nāsaḥdyaḥ, with the accompaniment of various cymbals. As soon as all invocations for the music god are completed, the procession starts to move, first circumambulating

51 Sanskrit: *stotra*

the Nasaḍyaḥ shrine with a piece called *dyaḥ cākā hulegu*, 'circumambulating the god'. They proceed with processional drum patterns to the monastery where the Dīpaṅkara Buddha of Kvāthãdau resides and further via Kvāthãdau, Gaḥchẽ, Sujamādhi and Tacapāḥ to the destination of the procession, the *dhalãchẽ* house in Sakvalã (no. 17 on map 20). The *dhalãchẽ* serves as

Fig. 65: Sākvalã oil pressers play *dyaḥlhāygu* with *dhã̃* drums and alternating animal horns at the shrine of Thāthu Nāsaḥdyaḥ. 1986

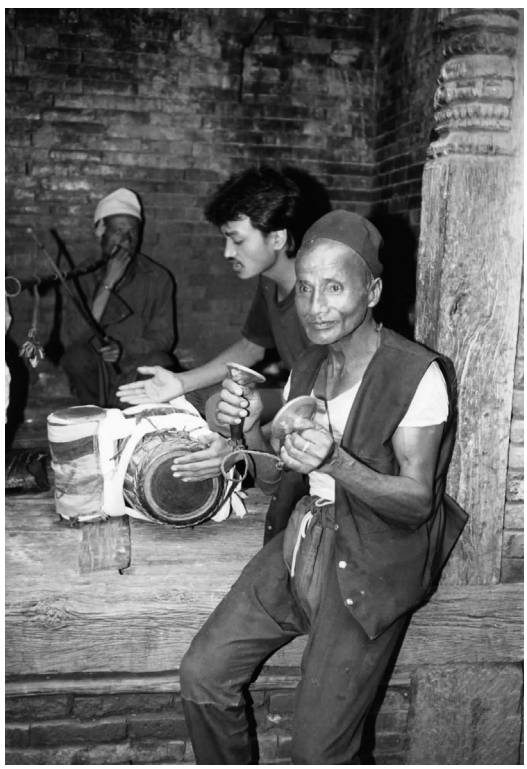
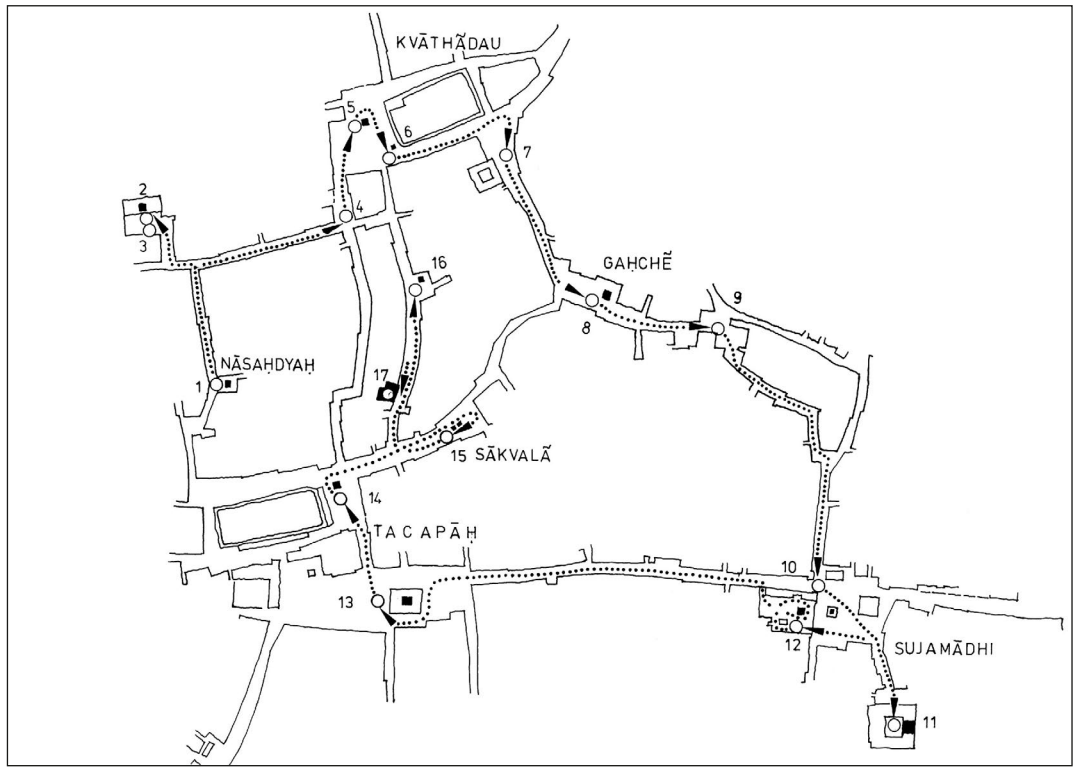
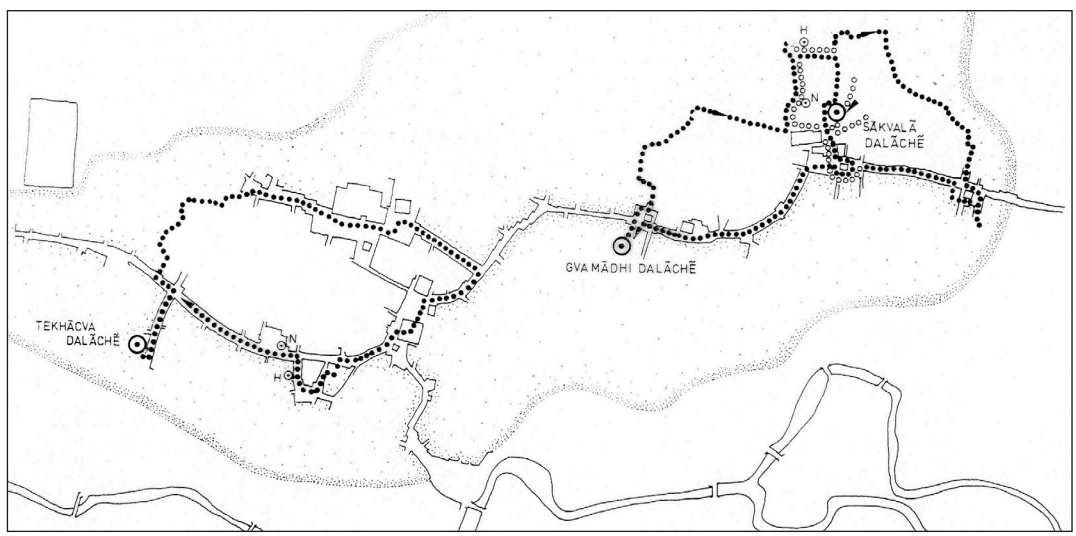


Fig. 66: Dyaḥlhāygu played by the compound drum *pastāḥ*, *pvaṅgā* trumpets and *tāḥ* cymbals. 1985

Fig. 67: Sākvalã oil pressers circumambulate Thathu Nāsaḥdyaḥ with *cāti* goat horns. August 1987



Map 20: Daily morning procession of Sākvalā oil pressers, with numbered musical offerings for Nāsaḥdyaḥ (1), Buddhist monuments and for a few Hindu gods on the way. The procession ends in the *dhalāchē* house (16). (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)



Map 21: Daily processions of the three Sāymi *gūlābājā* groups of Tekhācva, Gvaḥmādhi and Sākvalā, ending in their respective *dhalāchē* houses (N = Nāsaḥdyaḥ, H = Haimādyaḥ, circle with dot = *dhalāchē*; map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Fig. 68: Sāymi *gũlābājā* of Sākvalã (over sixty musicians) entering the courtyard in front of the Dīpākara Buddha in Kvāthādau, 1986

a temporary place for ritual gatherings during *gũlā*. Owing to the usual quarrel among Newar brothers demanding partition of their inherited home into equally small slices with separate staircases, there are now few houses with large enough rooms for carrying out the rituals.

As the morning air resounds with powerful fanfares reflected by the brick walls, the oil pressers invoke all the Buddhas in and near their residential area, Sākvalã, by means of playing dyaḷhāygu. In the course of the processional month, the *dhalāchẽ* becomes the temporary centre

Fig. 69: Cāti goat horns playing *dyaḷhāygu* for the Dīpākara Buddha in Kvāthādau, 1986.

Fig. 70: At the tail end of the procession, the compound drum *pastāḥ* and *pvaṅgā* trumpets play *dyaḥlhāygu*— here in the courtyard in front of the Dīpākara Buddha in Kvāthādau, 1985.

of a monumental protective Buddhist *maṇḍala*—actualised by the total sum of invocations played during *gũlābājā* processions. (Figs. 68–70)

Several among the older *dhã* and *pastā* compositions played during procession have syllables written above my drum notation[52], like for example:

/ TI DU / TI DU / TI - / DU - /

These syllables are used by oilpressers to imitate the sounds of the different animal horns that are played in a call and response manner.

TI: high sounding *cāti* and *titītālā* goat horns with bamboo mouthpieces
DU: *ghulu* low sounding buffalo horns in response

In a similar manner these horns are capable of playing the Buddhist invocation of Ārya Tārā[53] and the Triratna[54]:

/ ĀRYA / TĀRĀ / TĀ - / RĀ - / BUDDHA / DHARMA / SAṄ - / GHA - /

ĀRYA TĀRĀ TĀRĀ: goat horns calling in unison
BUDDHA DHARMA SAṄGHA: buffalo horns responding in unison

horn ensemble sounding:

/ TI TI / TI TI / TI - / TI - / DUDU / DUDU / DU - / DU - /

52 cf. chapter 11.13
53 female Buddha (in Vajrayāna Buddhism) or Bodhisattva (in Mahāyāna Buddhism) of compassion
54 Tiratna: The three jewels *Buddha, dharma* and *saṅgha* are the three aspects of refuge in Buddhism, representing the combined spiritual essence of all enlightened beings.

Nobody can possibly escape hearing this but the *mantra* is perceived only by the initiated. Having reached the *dhalāchẽ* house, the musicians announce their arrival, playing *dhalāchẽ sidhaykegu dyaḥlhāygu* ('invocation for arrival at the *dhalāchẽ'),* to be followed by the piece *svanã thã̄ vānebale* ('climbing the stairs'). The procession ends on the first floor of the building with *dyaḥlhāygu* in front of a growing mound of thousands of tiny clay *caitya*-s.

A *dhalāchẽ* house must have on the ground floor a small room *(nyāchĩ kvathā)* for storing holy water, another room *(cā kvatāḥ)* for keeping black clay, and on the first floor a very large room for gatherings. This large room has a secluded area with a temporary shrine *(dyaḥkuthi),* guarded and kept in a state of purity by six *dhyaḥbāri* attendants. These young oil presser men fast during the month of *gũlā*, eating only one vegetarian meal per day[55] after finishing the ritual duties, abstain from sex and have their heads shaved. If they are defiled by touching a dog or in any other way, they have to bathe and shave again. People place donations of rice grains for the attendants into the silver crown *kikāpā* of Lokeśvar[56] at Thāpālāchẽ. (Fig. 71)

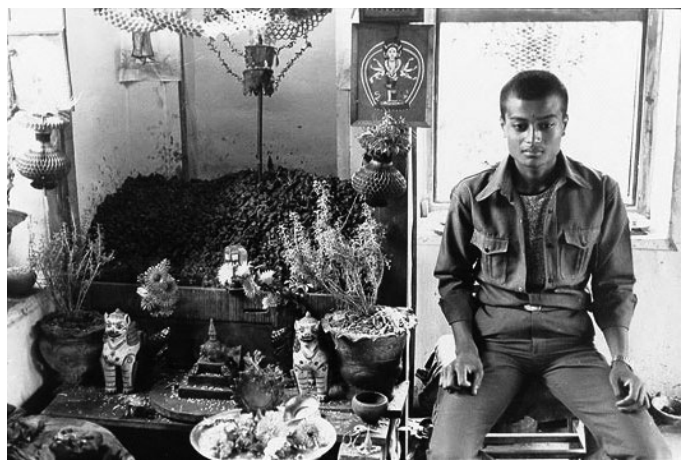
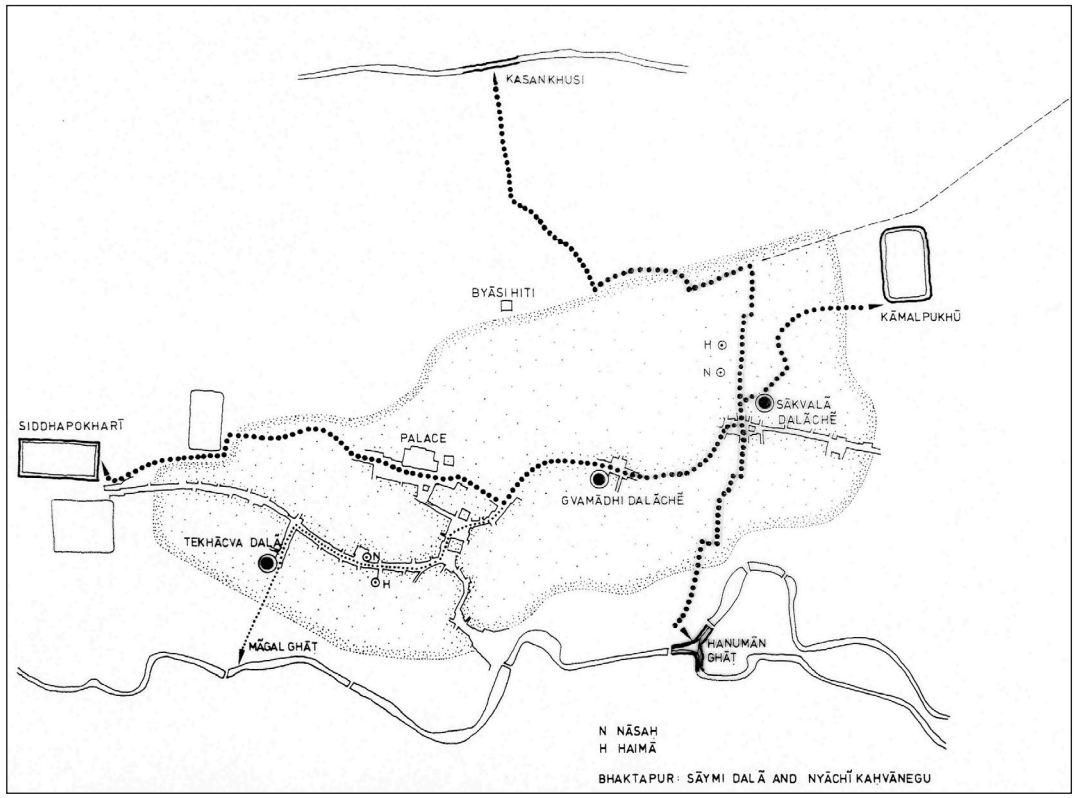


Fig. 71: Dhyaḥbāri in attendance of the *dyaḥkuti* containing the growing hill of black votive clay *caitya*-s, 1985

The *dyaḥkuti* shrine contains the daily growing hill of small *caitya*s (in Newari: *cibhā)*, moulded of black clay by oil presser women under the supervision of a Vajrācarya priest (Gubhāḥju). Under his expert guidance the women produce a total of one hundred and twenty-five thousand votive *caitya*s, to be submerged at the confluence of two rivers *(triveṇi)* at Hanumān Ghāt at the end of *gũlā*. At this confluence there resides a mighty Nāgarājā, snake guardian of all springs and rivers. He is present in the main room of the *dhalāchẽ* as a paper effigy *(nāgva)*, prepared by a member of the Citrakār painters' caste, looking like many intertwined snakes with a single split tongue

55 Even rice and nine beans soup *kvāti* are not taken up to fullmoon, only *mari* wheat bread and milk. After *sāpāru* sweet *khir* milk rice may be eaten without upsetting the restrictions.

56 Newari for Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva of compassion



Map 22: Collecting holy water from five sacred sites (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

in the centre. The *nāgva*'s presence ensures a peaceful atmosphere in the house where so many people gather during the month of *gũlā*.

Before the auspicious *caitya* production can start at the *dhalãchẽ,* ritual purification and collection of water and clay at prescribed localities needs to be accomplished. Having shaved their heads during the previous day *aũsi* (the day before the new moon), the *dhyaḥbārī* attendants collect holy water *(nyāchĩ kaḥ vānegu)* from five places on the periphery of Bhaktapur, Maṅgal Tirtha, Siddha Pvukhu, Hanumān Ghāt, Kamal Pvukhu and Kāsan Khusi.[57] (Map 22)

The five huge water pots are arranged in the centre of a meticulously cleaned small storage room (*nyāchĩ kvatāḥ)*, to resemble the cardinal points and respective Buddhist sites of pilgrimage in and beyond the Kathmandu Valley.

East:	Kamal Pvukhu (Vajrajogini)
South:	Hanuman Ghāt (Namobuddha)
West:	Siddha Pvukhu (Svayaṃbhū)
North:	Kāsan Khusi, (Khaḍgajogini)
Centre:	Maṅgal Ghāt

57 Only the oil pressers from Sākvalã leave out Maṅgal Tirtha.

The Sākvalã oil pressers who leave out Maṅgal Ghāt, place a second pot with water from Kamal Pvukhu in the centre of this *maṇḍala*

As soon as the five pots containing holy water are arranged in line with the cardinal points of the Buddhist sites, the Gubhāḥju performs an elaborate *pūjā* next to the pots. This is repeated every morning. The two girls assembling the offerings need to be substituted during their monthly menstrual cycle. For the initial *pūjā*, eight trays with offerings are arranged in a line. On the following days, clay cups (*kisali)* with uncooked rice and betelnuts take the place of the *pūjā* trays. A number of ritual items are placed in front of the eight trays/cups, a ritual mirror *(jvalā nhāykā)*, red powder *(tikka)*, a water-filled pot *(kalas)* with two hexagrammes sprinkled with rice flour on the floor next to it, cones of overboiled rice (*gvajā*), orange powder *(sinamu)* and holy soot. Five additional items are placed on the right side: a jug with rice liquor *(aylā)*, a ritual wick lamp *(sukundā)* containing mustard oil, three gods represented by three *kisali*—each resting on a *maṇḍala* sprinkled with rice flour on the purified floor. Three of eight *pūjā* plates are carried to the shrines of the local Gaṇeśa, Nāsaḥdyaḥ and Dīpaṅkara Buddha. The remaining five *pūjā* plates are carried to the roof terrace where the priest throws offerings in the direction of the following gods whose shrines are several miles away, Nīl Barāhi, Namobuddha, Vajrajogini, Svayaṃbhū and Karuṇāmaya of Buṅgamati. As the processional month proceeds, all these gods and holy places are circumambulated and musical invocations played by the *gũlābājā* group.

Those entering either the water-storage room (*nyāchĩ kvatāḥ)* or the clay room (*cā kvatāḥ)* must purify themselves by sprinkling a liquid called *pañcagapya* on their heads. This purifying concoction combines five cow products: urine *(sã̃cva)*, dung *(sau)*, milk *(duru)*, butter *(ghela)* and yoghurt *(dhau)*. It is kept in a clay pot from where it can be taken out with the help of a tuft made of cotton strips *(gutaḥ)* conveniently attached to a stick handle for those in need of a refreshing sprinkle.

In the middle of the moonless night preceding *gũlā*, the manager of the *dhalãchẽ* and the attendants walk to the site where black clay is collected. The Sākvalã oil pressers go to a place near Mulādhvakhā, the Tekhācva group to Khāpi. They offer *kisali* clay cups containing a betelnut on top of a mound of uncooked rice, before demarcating a border around the digging site with four sticks *(tĩ)* connected with a sacred thread *(pāsukā)*. After collecting the black clay, they carry it to the *dhalãchẽ* where it is put into the clay room (*cā kvatāḥ*) on the ground floor. Before they arrive, the Buddhist priest prepares a proper base for the clay, by arranging a lotus-shaped *maṇḍala* with eight golden *(lupale)* or silver *(vahapale)* petals. A mat *(pulu)* made of bamboo is placed on top of the *maṇḍalā*. The collected basket loads of black clay are put on top of this mat. The attendants knead the clay into an even consistency and the priest assembles twenty-one little mounds of clay on his *pūjā* tray.

During morning hours, a pleasant atmosphere of pious business prevails. Enveloped by fumes of aromatic shrubs and incense and by the sounds of the chanting and bell tinkling of the Gubhāḥju priest, the oil presser women engage themselves in *caitya* mass production. The procedure is simple but requires total concentration. The women use *caitya*-shaped brass moulds *(dyaḥpalã),* which are approximately 2,5 cm high. Following the priest's instructions, they roll the clay between thumb and index fingers, taking care not to touch it with their little finger or with their fingernails. They oil the clay roll, stuff it into the mould and insert a grain of uncooked rice into the clay, giving it

Fig. 72: A clay *caitya* is pulled out from a brass mould with the help of a piece of clay stuck to its base.

life. The emerging clay *caitya* is carefully placed on a tray, decorated with flowers and later on transported to the guarded *dyaḥkuti* shrine kept next to the eastern wall of the room. During this month, the women are not supposed to eat rice—with the exception of sweet *khīr* rice pudding on *sāpāru* day. (Fig. 72)

The Gubhāḥju chants prayers in Sanskrit followed by Newari instructions for preparing clay *caitya*-s (*dyaḥpalã thāyagu)*:

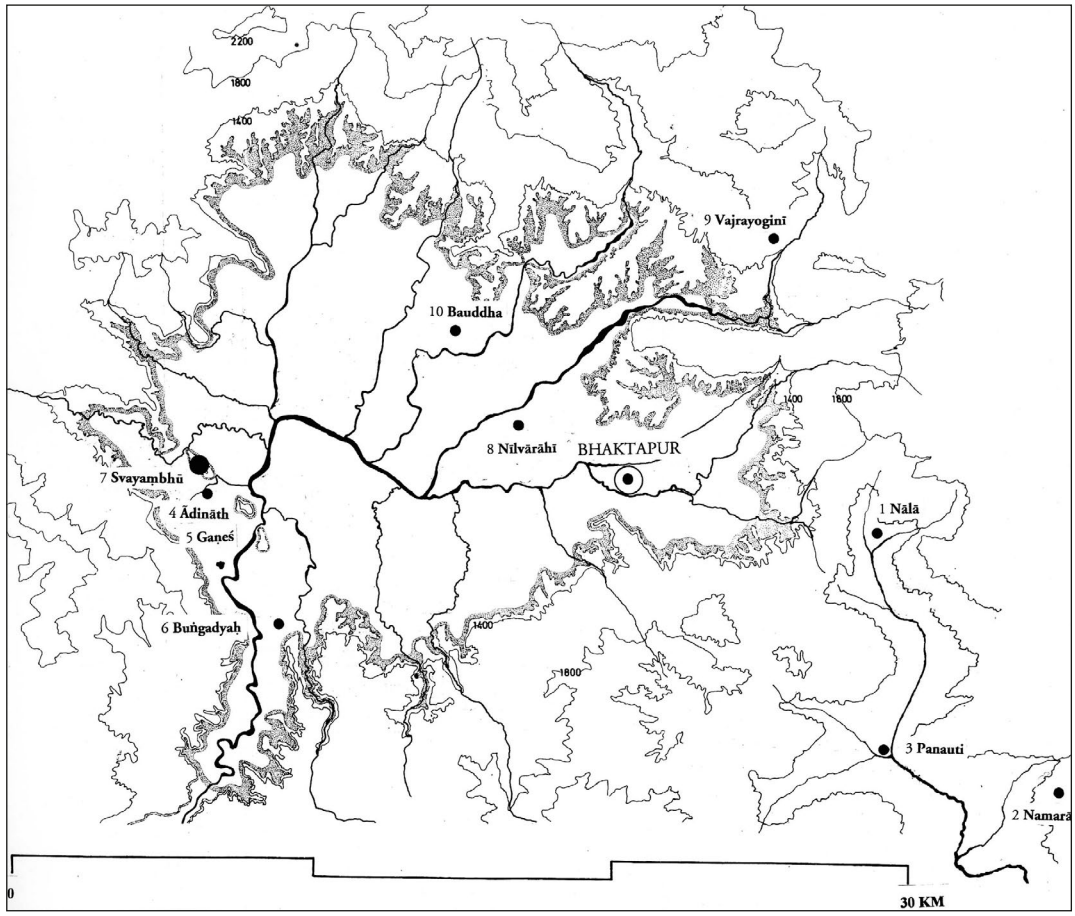
Om basudhye svāhā.	
Cāḥ likaḥ!	Take out the clay!
Om vajra bhavāye svāhā.	
Cāḥ gyalā gyalā yāy!	Roll the clay!
Om araje viraje svāhā.	
Cāḥ cikane ṭhuṇe!	Oil the clay!
Om vajra dhātu garbhe svāhā.	
Cāḥ thāsāsa duthane!	Put it into the mould!
Om vajra mudga rāḥ mākvataye mākvataye huṃphaṭ.	
Cāḥ thāsāsa kvatele!	Press it tightly!
Om vajra kāsṭaḥ chedaye chedaye huṃphaṭ.	
Cāḥ dhyene!	Cut off extra clay!
Om dharma dhātu garbhye svāhā.	
Cāḥ duthane!	Insert a grain of rice!
Om dharma ratne svāhā.	
Thāsā pikāye!	Take it out of the mould!
Om supratiṣṭhita vajra āsane svāhā.	
Āsane taye!	Put it on the tray!

When the tray in front of a woman is filled with one hundred eight clay *caityas*, she decorates them with flowers and red powder and burns incense, before asking one of the *dyaḥpalā* attendants to carry the tray to the temporary shrine (*dyaḥkuti)*. There he empties the tray and returns it to her. The growing mound of votive clay *caityas* in the *dyaḥkuti* shrine receives daily offerings of red powder and—on the arrival of the *gũlābājā* procession—musical offerings. Sākya and Vajrācārya groups may perform their *gũlā* processions without organizing elaborate *caitya* productions at home, but Sāymi oil presser groups have always combined men's musical processions with women's *caitya* production.

Those concerned with ritual activities in the *dhalāchẽ*—the sponsor of the house, the *dhyaḥbārī* attendants and the women producing miniature clay caityas—enjoy a special bonus. In the case of death happening in their families during *gũlā,* they are exempt from after-death purification rituals. Otherwise, oil pressers have to perform *nhenumā*, ritual rice offering on the seventh day after death. They keep cooked rice in front of their houses, presuming that departed souls must have a strong attachment to home-cooked food. Jugi tailor-musicians are supposed to collect these meals and lure away the ghosts, absorbing possible evil influences like a sponge. The other purification ritual on the tenth day includes bathing and shaving at one of the ritual bathing *ghāts* outside Bhaktapur. Both these purification rituals become obsolete when the concerned person is already purified by ritual activities in the *dhalāchẽ.* (Fig. 73)

Fig. 73: Oil presser women preparing votive clay *caityas* in the *dhalāchẽ,* 1985

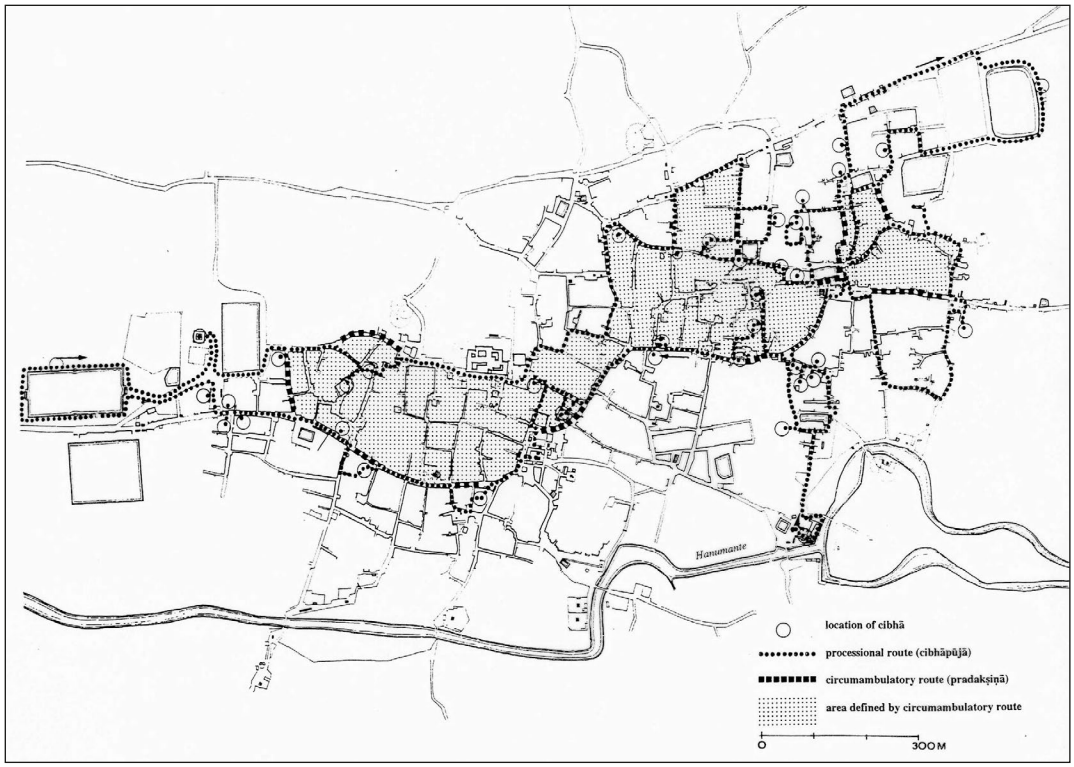
On Wednesdays and Saturdays the *gũlābājā* groups expand their processions to include the shrines of the eight mother goddesses at the periphery of Bhaktapur and Sūrya Vināyak Gaṇeś at Ināre. Long-distance pilgrimages to some important *caitya*s and *mahācaityas* in the Kathmandu Valley and beyond were carried out walking (Map 23). Nowadays the groups rent vehicles. These destinations include—usually in this succession:



Map 23: Buddhist pilgrimage destinations in and beyond the Kathmandu Valley (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

1. Nālā (Karuṇamāyi/Lokeśvar) and Banepā (1 *dhalāpā* invitation)
2. Namobuddha/Namarā Bhagvān
3. Panauti (2 *bāhās*, *caitya*)
4. Chobhar (Ādināth Lokeśvar)
5. Chobhar Gaṇeśa
6. Buṅgamati (Buṅgadyaḥ)
7. Svayaṃbhū
8. Nīlvārāhī and Thimi, (3 *dhalāpā* invitations)
9. Vajrayoginī and Saṅkhu (1 *dhalãpā* invitation)
10. Bauddha (rarely observed)

The second last day of the processional month is reserved for *cibhāḥ pūjā.* The Sāymi and Śākya *gūlābājā* groups followed by the Sāymi and Śākya women visit every single *caitya* in Bhaktapur,



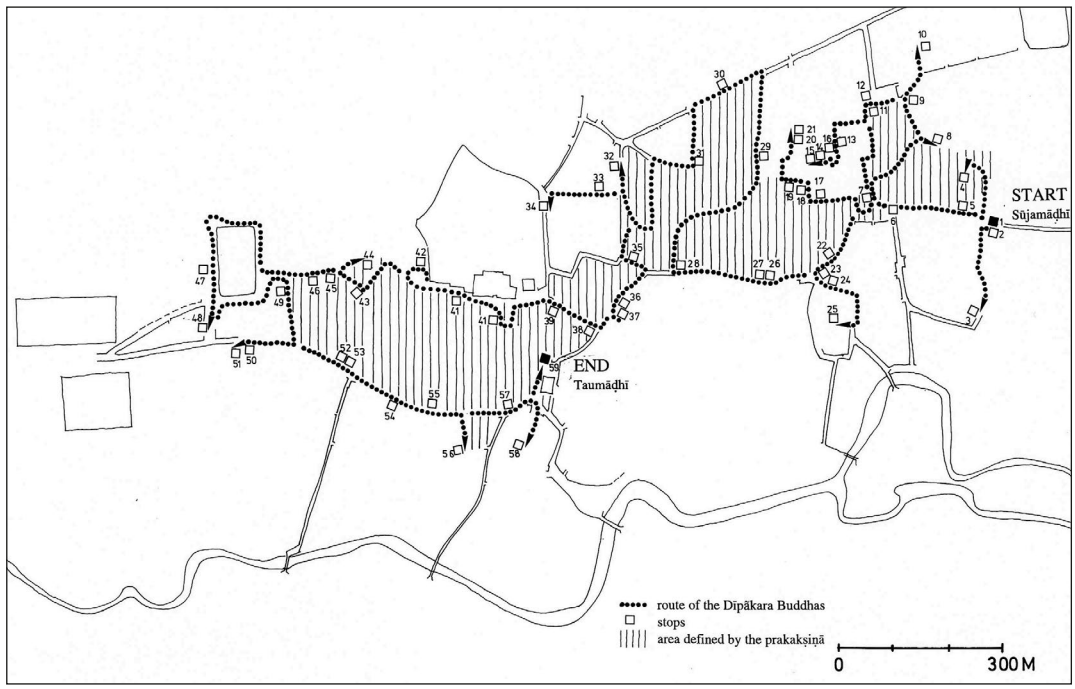
Map 24: Cibhā pūjā procession visiting every single *caitya* in town (in Gutschow 1982, p. 77)

the men offering *dyaḥlhāygu*, the women placing small clay cups with oil and burning wicks and rice grain. From their windows, local people sprinkle rice grain on the procession. In a stupendous final effort in offering and receiving symbolic alms, this procession completes the actualising of the Buddhist *maṇḍala* of Bhaktapur. (Map 24)

The complete Buddhist *maṇḍala* begins with the innermost layer, its centre established by the Buddhist priest and the four pots with water collected from four sacred sites and arranged in four cardinal directions in the water storage room *nyāchĩ kvatāḥ* in the *dhalāchẽ*. The next layer is established with the help of *gũlābājā* during daily morning processions in the area near the *dhalāchẽ*[58]. Other layers include all *caityas* in Bhaktapur, the shrines of the Aṣṭamātṛka at the periphery of the town, Sūrya Vināyak Gaṇeś and ten destinations in the Kathmandu Valley and further east. All this is achieved with the help of musical *dyaḥlhāygu* invocations played at the respective localities in the course of one month, *gũlā*.

On the following day of *pañcadān carhe,* the five Dīpākarā Buddhas leave their monasteries to meet at Sujamādhi where they receive offerings from a huge crowd of Hindu worshippers who perceive them as the five Pāṇḍava brothers from the Mahābhārata epic. The Dīpākarā Buddha of Kvāthãdau leads the other four Buddhas. As explained in chapter 3.3, the leading Buddha's

58 cf. map 20



Map 25: Processional route of the five Dīpaṅkāra Buddhas on *pañcadān carhe.* Numbered boxes indicate where the five Buddhas rest to receive worship and offerings. (in Gutschow 1982, p. 75)

drooping head supports the Hindu interpretation, as it appears to express Yudhiṣṭhira's shame of his disastrous gambling vice. The five Buddhas are announced by *nāykhĩbājā* playing the piece *bāre khĩ*[59]. The Buddhas visit fifty-eight more localities where they stop to receive offerings from local people. Before sunset they are arranged on a stone platform in Taumādhi square. All Śākya and Sāymi *gũlābājā* groups arrive to play simultaneously (but not together), a grand, ear-splitting finale, before escorting the Buddhas to their respective residences. (Map 25)

On the last day of *gũlā*[60], the clay *caityas* produced by the Sāymi women receive further blessings by way of an elaborate ritual carried out by the Gubhāḥju. After this, the *caityas* are ready for submersion at the confluence of two rivers into the Hanumānte. This sacred cremation site is called Hanumān ghāt (in Newari: Khvāre), the most auspicious place for Bhaktapurians to leave this world of suffering and misery. On this final day, the one hundred and twenty-five thousand clay *caityas* are arranged in baskets with a few spectacular big ones on a palanquin—and carried to Hanumān ghāt. In front of the procession a helper carries a long bamboo pole with the *nāgva* effigy of Nāgarājā the snake guardian tied on to it. *Dyaḥbāri* attendants carry the remaining holy water. The *gũlābājā* ensemble follows, also the priest and the women with the *pūjā* leftovers. (Fig. 74)

At the *ghāt* the men undress and enter the water. The bamboo with the effigy is placed at the exact point where Nāgarājā resides at this confluence. The palanquin is put down on the stone

59 see photo on p. 73
60 *Sāymi*: new moon, *Vajrācarya* and *Śākya*: the day after

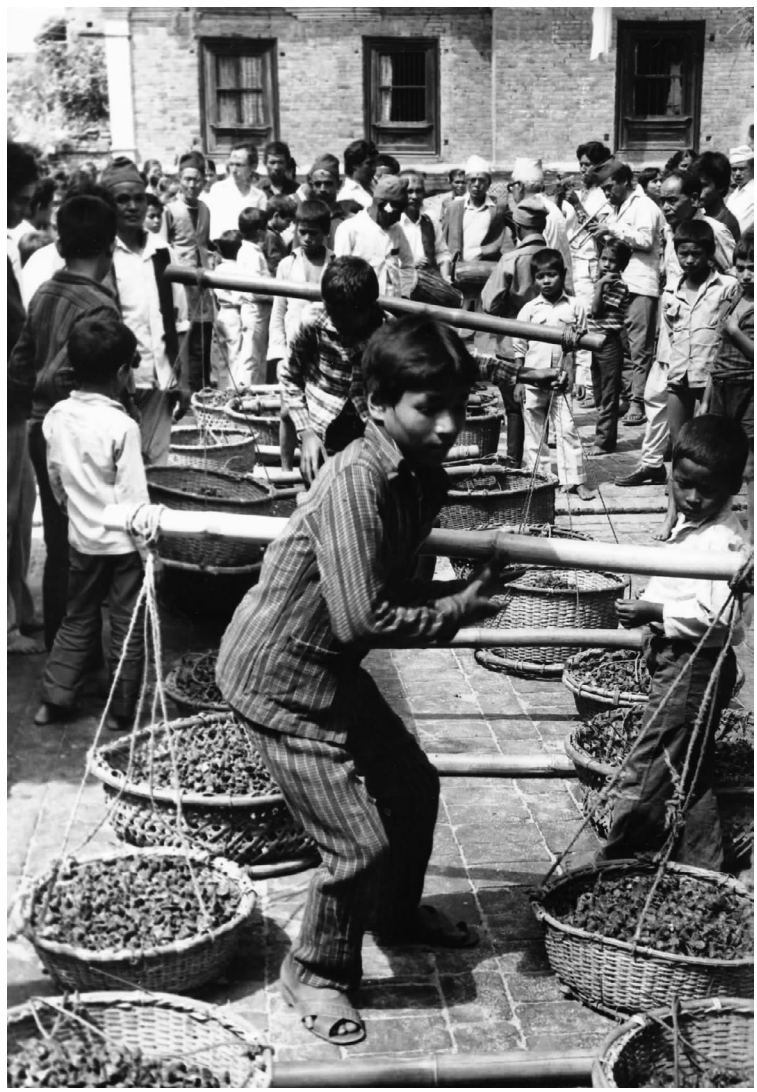


Fig. 74: 125.000 *caitya*-s on the move, 1986

Fig. 75: Submersion of 125.000 clay *caityas* at Hanumān ghāt, 1985

steps leading into the river. The musicians play a final set of invocations while the bathers splash water on the big *caityas* in the palanquin and empty all the baskets into the river, before taking a purifying dive. Merit achieved! (Figs. 75, 76)

When everything is over, the procession returns to Sākvalã with the music of the *pachimā* drum with shawm accompaniment. No horns are played. This is the end of *gũlā* activities.

For the past twenty-five years, the three Sāymi *gũlābājā* groups of Bhaktapur found it impossible to finance annual apprenticeships with the prescribed Nāsaḥ *pūjās*, *dhalãchẽ* rituals and processions. In several years not a single Sāymi group played, before one or another group made the effort again. If the annual performance cycle is further discontinued, the orally transmitted repertoire will be forgotten. To prevent that, all Sāymi *gũlābājā* compositions are included in chapter 11.13 of this publication—with the exception of the lost *dabadaba* pieces. Since 1986 attempts were made in Sākvalã to restore some of those pieces. (Fig. 77)

The drum repertoire of Sāymi *gũlābājā* derived from various sources and different strata of the musical history of the Kathmandu Valley. The combination of animal horns and *dhã̃* drums for playing invocations may go back to the early practice of Buddhist processional music mentioned in the *Bṛhad*-Svayaṃbhū *purāṇa.* The combination of the compound drum *pastā* and *pvaṅgā* trumpets for playing invocations suggests a Buddhist Vajrācārya influence with their similar compound drum *pañcatāla* played in combination with pairs of *pāytā* natural trumpets. Oilpressers play the *dhã̃* drum in a way similar to the Śākya *gũlābājā* practice where the right hand plays the higher sounding Nāsaḥ drumhead and the left hand holds the drumstick. This is the reverse way of playing *dhã̃* in the Hindu context of *dhã̃bājā, navabājā* and accompaniment of masked

Fig. 76: Submersion of the palanquin with the bigger clay *caitya*-s at Hanumān Ghāt, 1986

Fig. 77: Dabadaba player, Tāpālāchẽ 1985

dances. If we examine the non-Buddhist influences, the use of *navabājā* drums in combination with shawms and fipple flutes must have been a much later addition to the Sāymi *gũlābājā* repertoire with those advanced compositions directly derived from *navabājā* groups playing at the most important Hindu temples since the early eighteenth century. Some simply structured invocations and processional patterns played by *dhã* and *pastā* could hint at a certain influence of invocations played by Śākya *gũlābājā.* All these influences result in a typical Newar stylistic hotchpotch that becomes even more colourful when we consider that oilpressers sing *dāphā* songs with Hindu song texts. They also sing Buddhist *tutaḥ* hymns and play Newar folk melodies with their *bãsuri* flute ensembles. During evenings of the month of Māgha, the head of the family may read the *Svasthānī Vrata Kathā*[61] to his family. Consequently, when you ask a Mānandhar (Sāymi) if he considers himself a Hindu or a Buddhist, the answer will be a big and contented

"YES!"

61 an episode of *Skanda Purāṇa*

3.5 Śākya and Vajrācārya *gũlābājā*

Vajrācārya and Śākya are artisans, Buddhist monks and householders. Some Vajrācarya work as tantric Buddhist priests (Gubhāḥju) and perform certain rituals for other castes. In a strict Buddhist sense, they belong outside the caste hierarchy, 'although in fact, in their life as householders, they are inevitably concerned with their caste status.'[62] Vajrācārya and Śākya intermarry. Most Vajrācārya work as gold- and silversmiths, artisans and shopkeepers and in this respect are not distinguishable from the Śākya who cannot be family priests. Their disposition is that of an old élite now dominated by others, but still knowing exactly what they are worth. The expensive and elaborate *gũlā* processions and rituals demand considerable physical and financial effort. They are a demonstration of an ancient minority's identity and wealth[63]. Gutschow and Kölver[64] counted two hundred and nine Buddhist priests and gold- and silversmith households in Bhaktapur. (Map 26)

Map 26: Sākya and Vajrācarya households in Bhaktapur (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Bhaktapur's Śākya and Vajrācārya organise three *gũlābājā* groups in the following localities: Inācva, Yātāchẽ (Upper Town) and Tekhācva/Vaṃsa Gopāl (Lower Town). The three ensembles use similar instruments and play a similar set of compositions that are taught to the youngest

62 Gellner 1992, p.59
63 Gutschow and Kölver (1975)
64 1975

group members during the months before *gũlā*. The *pirāne pūjā* at the completion of the drumming apprenticeship is performed on the day of *aũsi* (new moon), just before *gũlā* starts. (Fig. 78)

During *gũlābājā* processions, Śākya and Vajrācārya play only two kinds of two-headed drums, *dhã̄* and *nāykhĩ*[65]. When played in this context, these drums are decorated with golden Chinese 'long life' ideogrammes on a bright red background, pointing to the ancient trade link of the

Fig. 78: At the beginning of *gũlā* Śākya and Vajrācārya goldsmiths arrange offerings to the music god on their *gũlābājā* instruments at the shrine of Inācva Nāsaḥdyaḥ during August 1986 (right: my personal *dhã̄* drum)

Sākya artisans of Bhaktapur with Lhasa[66]. There are several *dhã̄* drums and at least one *nāykhĩ*. The louder *dhã̄* group includes two different pairs of cymbals called *bhuchyāḥ* and *taḥ*. The *nāykhĩ* drum is accompanied with a pair of light brass cymbals called *sichyāḥ*. *Dhã̄* and *nāykhĩ* do not play similar musical patterns simultaneously but, at specific localities, they play concurrently. One drum group plays a long composition with processional patterns and at the same time the other drum group addresses gods on the route by playing a *dyaḥlhāygu* invocation. In this way both

65 lit. butchers' drum

66 Before the Chinese PLA occupied Lhasa in 1951, the local Newar expatriate community was large enough to celebrate their annual *sāpāru* (*gāi jātrā*) procession of cow effigies along the Barkhor route.

drumming activities occur at the same time and place but in terms of musical patterns, tempo and instrumentation they are totally apart. Nobody seems to mind. The temporary musical chaos makes sense because of the locality—a Buddhist monument on the way. Newari language does not have a word for 'disturb'. This appears to be an alien concept to people who accept that life unfolds like a song with many different voices. All sounds are welcome sounds, because they are there.

Fig. 79: Punhī Rāj Śākya playing my red *dhã̄* drum with golden Chinese 'long life' decoration pointing at the special relationship of Śākya artisans with Lhasa, August 1986

Whenever *dhã̄* is played in the context of *gũlābājā,* the drummer holds the drumstick in the left hand to play the Haimā hide[67]. The Nāsaḥ hide is played with the right hand using several fingers to produce the *dṛ* and *ṛ* drum rolls. This is exactly the reverse of the way *dhã̄* drums are played in Hindu contexts like *navabājā*, accompaniment of masked dances and processions. Is the reason just to make a Buddhist difference from Hindu habit? Or does this clumsy use of finger technique point at something that made musical sense long ago and was half forgotten? I could not find a convincing answer. The Hindu way of holding the drumstick with the right hand definitely makes

67 This applies also to Sāymi *gũlābājā* and Prajāpati *gũlābājā* of Thimi.

Fig. 80: Punhī Rāj Śākya (centre) leads the *dhã̄* ensemble playing a processional pattern with Jugi (Kedār: trumpet, Chandranāth: clarinet). The *nāykhī* (front) plays a *dyaḥlhāygu* as the procession approaches Caturvarṇa Mahāvihāra in Sākvathā. The invocation aims at the Dipākarā Buddha and the Tārā kept in the *vihāra*. 1986

more sense when virtuosic *dṛkha* drum rolls and volume are called for.[68] When the *nāykhī* drum is played in *gũlābājā,* the sides are not reversed. This drum uses the same playing-technique as butchers and *navabājā* drummers do in their respective performance contexts with entirely different repertoires. Śākya and Vajrācārya *gũlābājā* combines several *dhã̄* drums playing the same processional patterns together, creating a loud, solemn impact. Moving at a stately gait, their *gũlābājā* signals disciplined presence and never makes people dance. (Figs. 79, 80)

When either *dhã̄* or *nāykhī* play processional patterns, two or three tailor-musicians accompany with a Western clarinet and one or two trumpets. Since the 1950s these now fashionable wind instruments have replaced the earlier shawms *rasan* (straight) and *bhamarā* (curved). The Jugis walk in front of the Buddhist drummers, simultaneously smoking cigarettes and playing the same serene Buddhist tunes every day—their minds fixed on the small remuneration that awaits them at the end of the month, a feast and grain or—more common these days—cash. During the final feast, the Śākyas would be horrified and vehemently protest, if a low caste tailor-musician expected to have food in the same house. Tailor-musicians are made to eat outside in the open by the toilet, of course.[69] When it comes to demonstrations of hierarchy, the Buddhist ideal of compassion is readily forgotten. (Fig. 81)

68 This applies to right-handed drummers.

69 When Simonne Bailey participated in Śākya *gũlābājā* processions as a *Jugi* trumpet player, people were confused how to treat her. As a British lady she was politely ushered upstairs to participate with the Śākyas

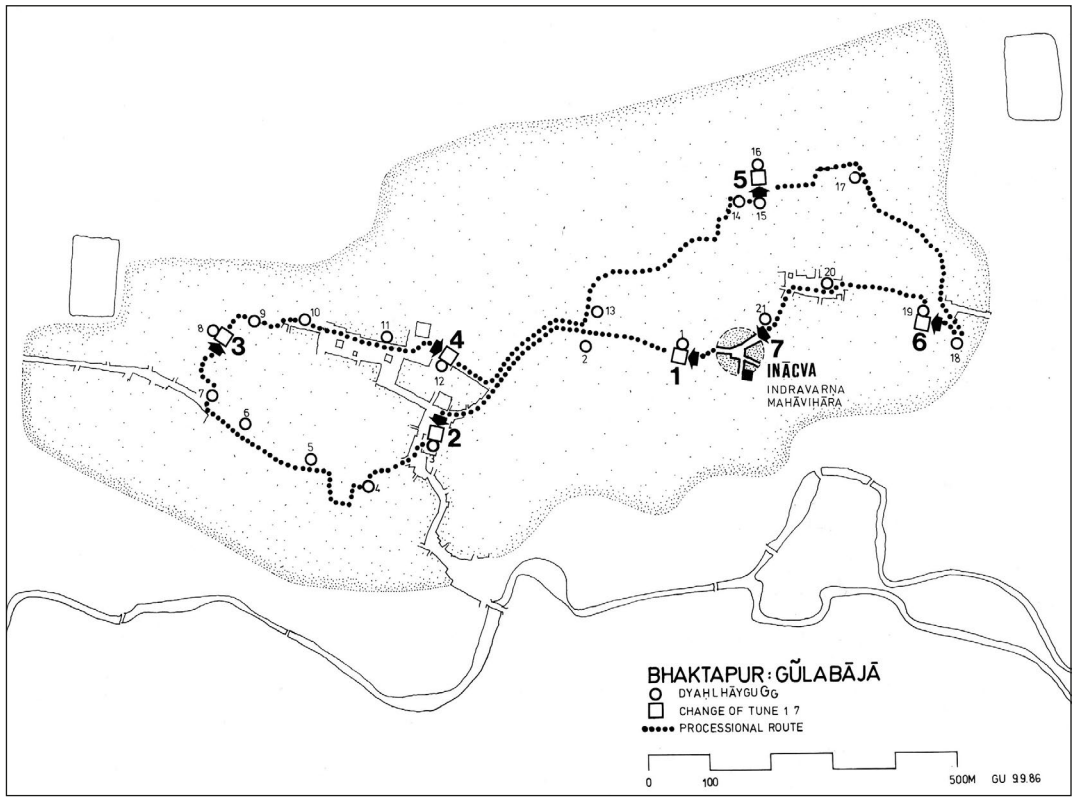
Starting in the late 1980s, some *gũlābājā* groups added more *dhã* and *nāykhĩ* drums than necessary, creating a very noisy, almost aggressive effect. With too many young drummers volume increases but co-ordination suffers. During the late 1990s, some Śākya and Vajrācārya groups started to include girls as drummers during processions—resulting in co-ordination suffering even more. This began after I trained the first girl in town as a *dhimay* drummer in 1995. Indira Machimasyu's public appearance as a processional *dhimay* drummer caused quite a stir, encouraging many girl groups to emerge in various genres and conquer ground hitherto held by men alone. Perhaps the time was ripe.

Fig. 81: Jugi tailor-musicians accompanying Yātāchẽ Śākya and Vajrācārya *gũlābājā* with trumpets and clarinet (l. to r.: Gunkaji, Rām Gopāl, Siddhi Nāth). 1986

Around six a.m. the Śākya and Vajrācārya of Inācva start their daily processions outside the Indravarṇa Mahāvihāra monastery with all *dhã* drummers playing three *dhyaḥlhāygu* invocations followed by one invocation played by *nāykhĩ*. For special occasions, the *nāykhĩ* repertoire includes the popular showpiece *tatali* that is also part of the *navabājā* and dance repertoires.

As the *dhã* group starts with the first pattern of the processional piece *calti*, the Jugi tailor-musicians join in with their trumpets and clarinet, accompanying the drummers with a serene melody whilst heading west along the main road to the Jhaurbahī monastery (no. 1 in map below). The procession walks into the courtyard and continues with processional music, as the *nāykhĩ* drummer plays his *dyaḥlhāygu* for the Buddha residing on the first floor. This distribution of two different musical functions among *dhã* drummers and *nāykhĩ* continues up to the Caturvarṇa Mahāvihār in Sākvathā (no. 4). Here, on completion of the third processional *dhã* piece, roles reverse. From now on the *nāykhĩ* drummer plays processional music and the *dhã* group becomes active only when they have to play invocations. At the Ādīpadma Mahāvihār in Sujamādhi (no. 6),

in their final feast. But in her temporary role as a loyal Jugi she preferred to have food with her colleagues outside by the toilet.



Map 27: Standard procession of the Inācva Śākya and Vajrācārya *gũlābājā.* Other groups use the same route but different starting points. (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

the *dhã* group resumes their earlier function, playing yet another processional piece, that leads the procession back to the starting point Inācva.

The map 27 shows the daily standard route of the Inācva *gũlābājā* group. The bold numbers stand for seven different processional pieces accompanied with trumpets and clarinets. The small numbers point to invocations played by the other drum.

With the exception of their different starting and ending points, the three Śākya and Vajrācārya groups of Bhaktapur use the same standard processional route. The Inācva group starts at Indravarṇa Mahāvihāra and proceed via Pasi Khyaḥ (Gvaḥmādhi), Sukul Dhvakā (Bhimsen), Taumādhi Nārāyaṇa Caukh (no. 2), Bvalāchẽ Bahī, Bārāhi, Vaṃśa Gopāl (Jethvarṇa Mahāvihār), Lokeśvar (Khaumā Bahā, no. 3), Caturvarṇa Mahāvihār (no. 4), Sukul Dhvakā, Yāchẽ, Nāg Pvukhu, Dipākarā Buddha (no. 5), Kvāthādau, Gvaḥchẽ, Sujamādhi (Ādīpadma Mahāvihār), Vākhupati Nārāyaṇa and Dattātreya back to Inācva. For the miniature clay *caitya* production[70] this group collects holy water at Hanuman ghāt and black clay at Bhvutti Pākva.

The group from Bikumachẽ (Yātāchẽ) starts at Paṣu Bahī and proceeds via Dipākarā Buddha (no. 5) and all other stations back to the starting point Paṣu Vihāra and up to their *dhalãchẽ*.

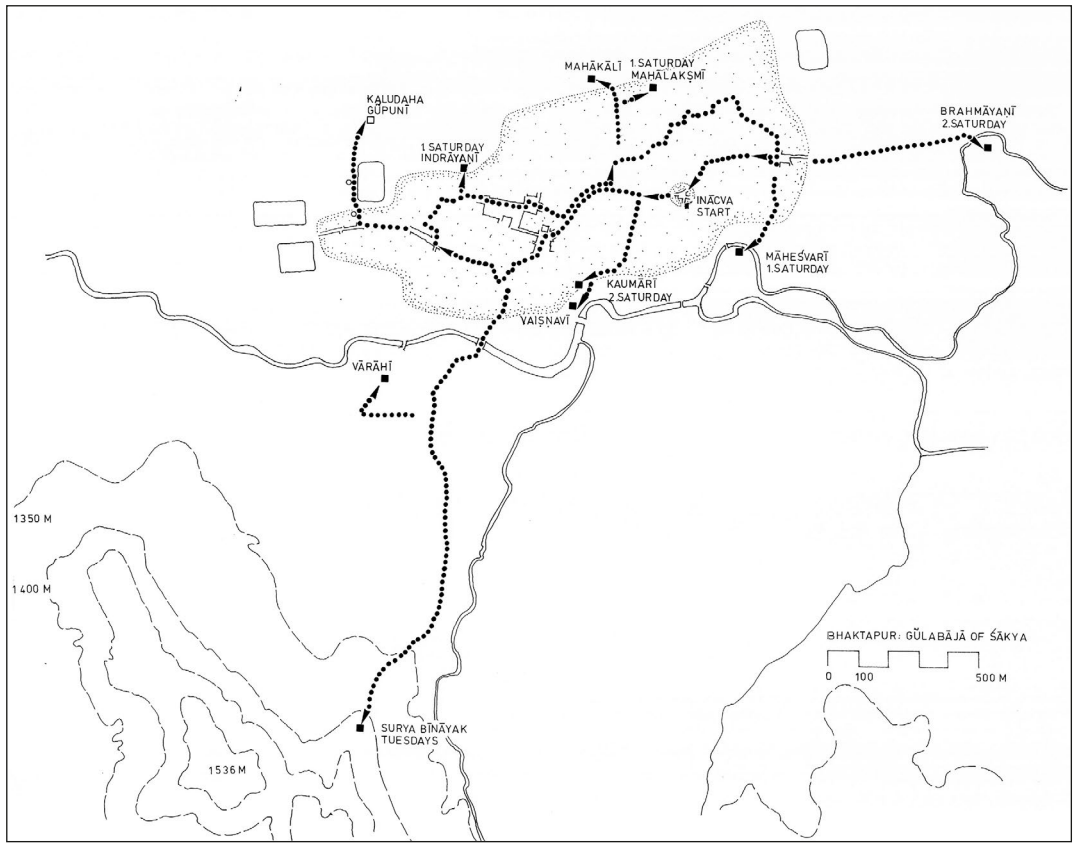
70 see chapter 3.4

The third group from Tekhācva, follows the same route. Their starting- and ending point is Jethvarṇa Mahāvihār. In 1986 they did not have a *dhalāchẽ*. Earlier they collected holy water from Hanumān *ghāt* and black clay from Khāpī south of Yātā.

Whilst following their daily standard routes that lead through all residential areas of Śākyas and Vajrācāryas in Bhaktapur, the three groups circumambulate a much larger area than the Sāymi oilpressers who restrict their daily rounds to Buddhist artifacts in the vicinity of their respective residential areas. With a few deviations, the Śākya and Vajrācārya follow the *pradakṣiṇā*, Bhaktapur's processional route for town rituals. When it came to visiting the compulsory far away pilgrimage destinations on day trips to Namobuddha, Nala, Vajrajogini, Nīlbarāhi, Karuṇāmaya (Buṅgadyaḥ) of Buṅgamati, Ādināth Lokeśvara of Chobhar, and Svayaṃbhū, a problem occurred in 1986, as the following procession schedule (*gũlā* 1986), of the Inācva group reveals.

date	**route/destination**	**shortcut/excuse**
5/8/ *aũsi*	Palikhyaḥ Nāsaḥ	
6/8 Wednesday to 8/8	standard route	
9/8 Saturday	Indrayāṇī, Mahākālī, Mahālakṣmī, Maheśvarī	
10/8 to 11/8	standard route	
12/8	Surya Vināyak, Barāhī	
13/8 Wednesday	standard route	
14/8	standard route with shortcut via Thāthu Nāsaḥ because of Chandranath Darśandhāri's sore foot	
15/8	standard route	
16/8 Saturday	Kumārī, Badrakālī, Brahmayāṇī	
17/8 and 18/8	standard route	
19/8 *guni pvuni*	Thāthu Bahī, Kuthu Bahī, Kālu Daha	
20/8 Wednesday, *sāpāru*	Thāthu Bahī, Kuthu Bahī	
21/8 to 25/8	standard route with shortcut (Chandranath's foot)	
26/8	Kamal Vināyak	
27/8 Wednesday	standard route with shortcut (rain)	
28/8 and 29/8	standard route	
30/8	standard route with shortcut (business at home)	
31/8	standard route	
1/9	morning: standard route, evening: *mātā biyu vānegu* (light offering procession: visiting all Buddhas)	
2/9 *pañcadān carhe*	morning: standard route, evening: Taumādhi	
3/9 Wednesday	picnic at Godāvarī, visiting Karuṇāmaya at Bāregāon	
4/9 *aũsi*	standard route with shortcut	
5/9	Hanumān ghāt, submersion of *caitya*-s	

1986 was a *ṅābvulāgu* (having five Wednesdays) *gũlā,* allowing for five Wednesday processions to the following far away destinations: Namobuddha, Vajrajoginī (near Sãkhu), Svayaṃbhū,



Map 28: Inācva Śākya and Vajrācārya *gũlābājā* visiting the Aṣṭamātrika and Sūrya Vināyak Gaṇeśa (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Karuṇāmaya (Buṅgādyaḥ at Buṅgmati), Ādināth Lokeśvara (on Chobhar hill). Owing to the delayed Nāsaḥ *pūjā*, the Inācva group missed the first long procession to Namobuddha and decided to drop all other Wednesday excursions. The delay was caused by confusion about different calendars identifying different days (19 and 20 Śrāvaṇ), as the fourteenth day of the lunar month, *carhe*. Such confusions are not uncommon in Nepal, when certain lunar phases apply to two days and even astrologers of high repute waver, delaying announcement of the proper day for ritual action to the last hour. In that profession it pays to be vague and ominous.

The procession schedule reveals the inclusion of the tantric mother goddesses Aṣṭamātṛka (Brahmāyaṇī, Maheśvarī, Kumārī, Badrakālī, Barāhī, Indrayāṇī, Mahākālī and Mahālakṣmī) residing in their shrines at the periphery of Bhaktapur. They constitute the outer circle of the Bhaktapur *maṇḍala* of gods and goddesses. Their importance as protectors of Bhaktapur makes their inclusion into otherwise Buddhist oriented processions mandatory. This applies also to Surya Binayak Gaṇeśa, one of the four guardians Gaṇeśas of the Kathmandu Valley. (Map 28)

During the final five days of *gũlā*, ritual activities accelerated. The *cibhā pūjā* procession on 1st of September (see 1986 schedule above), also called *mātā biyu vānegu,* combined the

Fig. 82: Annual guest appearance of *Prajāpati gũlābājā* from Thimi, led by Gopāl Prajāpati playing for the Dipākarā Buddha at Kvāthādau on *Pañcadān carhe,* before the Buddha is carried to Sujamādhi, 1996

Śākya men and their *gũlābājā* music with the women distributing rice grains and burning oil wicks at all Buddhist artefacts in town.[71] Stone *caitya*s in the streets and in the courtyards were decorated with oil lamps donated by the Buddhist households of the neighbourhood. Every single Buddha was activated and alive, highlighting the *triratna*, the three jewels of Buddhism, awakening (*buddha),* religious duty *(dharma)* and the community of initiates striving for enlightenment (*saṅgha)*.

Pañcadān carhe[72], the last day before new moon, sees hectic giving and taking of alms, involving thousands of Bhaktapurians. In the morning, the five Dīpaṅkara Buddhas are decorated and leave their monasteries to gather on a stone platform in Sujamādhi where they receive offerings of grain, fruit, flowers, yoghurt and music from a vast crowd of devotees, both Hindu and Buddhist. The leading Dīpaṅkara Buddha is also called Ajajudyaḥ, the grandfather god—another explanation for the drooping head. The Dīpaṅkara Buddhas are escorted throughout the town by *nāykhĩbājā* played by two butchers, to receive offerings in all areas where Buddhist families live. Members of the Gāthā caste (gardeners and Navadurgā dancers) carry baskets with offerings first given to the five Buddhas (Fig. 82, 83). At the end, the Gāthā are allowed to keep fruit and vegetables. The Śākya and Vajrācarya keep the grain. On the day of *Pañcadān carhe*, all Bhaktapur Buddhists eat the nourishing *kvāti* soup prepared with nine kinds of soaked pulses boiled with a large piece of

71 processional route see chapter 3.4
72 lit. the fourteenth day (of the lunar month) for giving five kinds of alms

Fig. 83: Śākya boys posing with their drums in Yātāchẽ 1988

peeled ginger root, then flavoured with red chillies, jī[73] and *imu*[74] seeds fried in oil.[75] Others take *kvāti* two weeks earlier, during fullmoon.

At sites of special religious significance and only, if in an exalted mood, the older Śākya and Vajrācārya may reveal a specially treasured part of their *gūlābājā* repertoire. Then they sing *gvārā*[76]. My teachers Punhī Rāj Śākya and Nucheraj Buddhacārya were willing to teach me Śrī Kṛṣṇa *gvārā* and Nityanāth *gvārā*[77], mentioning that these two would suffice for the entire month of *gūlā.* They were correct. In 1986 Śrī Kṛṣṇa *gvārā* was sung and played at the Aṣṭamātrika shrines and Nṛtyanāth *gvārā* in front of the Dipãkarā Buddha in Kvāthãdau. But there were more *gvārā*. During the following year, the senior members of the Inācva group suddenly got into the mood during *cibhā pūjā.* They stopped the procession and attempted altogether five or six *gvārā.* In the end, it was only one elderly person singing and scolding the fumbling Jugi musicians when all others had already given up. With their irregular meter and singing style, different drum patterns for each stanza, *gvārā* has much in common with *caryā/cacā* tantric Buddhist songs and

73 cumin
74 Trachyspermum ammi
75 I like it more tasty, stirring in soured cream, lime juice, *garam masālā* and a dash of Angostura Bitter in addition, finally decorated with chopped green coriander
76 Bhaktapur pronunciation: *gvarāḥ,* Kathmandu pronunciation: *gvārā*
77 Nṛtyanāth is another name for Nāsaḥdyaḥ and also used for Lokeśvar, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara

could be almost as old. They are accompanied with *dhã̄,* not *nāykhĩ.* The song texts of the two *gvārā* that I learned include the names of various gods and shouted or sung commands '*dye*' or '*hã̄ dye*'. These are meant to catch the attention of all musicians to come together on ONE. Such shouted commands are also a feature of *cacā* songs and dances. I was tempted to learn more of these *gvārā* songs with drum accompaniment but my teachers were keen on concluding the apprenticeship. So that was that.

Led by concern for their threatened heritage, in 1995 the Buddhist Heritage Society of Bhaktapur published a *gũlābājā* repertoire compiled and transcribed in letter notation by Puṣpa Ratna Śākya. This publication succeeds in preserving seven *gvarā* including text, correct pitch, rhythm and drumming syllables. It presents the following compositions:

8 *dyaḥlhāygu*

cautāl	4 *mātrā* (2 + 2)	cymbal strokes: TIN CHU
pratāl	7 *mātrā* (3 + 2 + 2)	CHU TIN TIN
jati	7 *mātrā* (3 + 2 + 2)	TIN TIN CHU
palemã̄	6 *mātrā* (2 + 2 + 2)	TIN TIN CHU
lātā	6 *mātrā* (3 + 3)	TIN CHU
graha	14 *mātrā* (2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2)	TIN CHU TIN CHU TIN TIN CHU
bramhatāl[78]	10 *mātrā* (2 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 2)	TIN CHU TIN TIN CHU

gvārā yā dyaḥlhāygu

Nityanāth *gvāṛā,* Ṣaṭapāramitā *gvārā,* Viśvantar *gvārā,* Lokeśvar *gvārā,* Maṇicuḍ *gvārā,* Mañjuśrī *gvārā,* Sã̄y *gvārā,* Saṅginī *gvārā*

In his publication 'Bailaḥ *va gũlā bājã yā bol*', Gopal Prajāpati[79] of Thimi transcribes one *gvarā* in letter notation, Bhūkhaṇḍa *gvārā*.

Nine *gvārā* can be resurrected from these publications. I suppose there must be quite a few more with senior Buddhists of Patan and Kathmandu. Before they disappear from memory, they should be systematically documented and recorded.

78 This spelling is used consistently. Aṣṭarā is mentioned as an alternative name for this *tāl*.
79 Prajāpati 2007

3.6 Flute, Harmonium and Violin Ensembles

Ensembles of wooden transverse flutes *bā̃surī*, drums and *sichyāḥ* cymbals play seasonal folk songs *me* during processions and life cycle rituals of Newar farmers and oilpressers. Usually such flute ensembles are an appendix to a *dāphā* or a *bhajan* song group where singers coveniently take the flute parts for such processions. (Figs. 84, 85)

Bā̃suri groups also accompany Nāgacā *pyākhā*[80] during the *sāpāru* week when small boys dressed as Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enact the courting of the divine lovers through dance (Fig. 86).

Fig. 84: Cvarcā *bā̃surī* group during a recording session in 1983

In the case of Sujamādhi *navadāphā* performances, their flute ensemble replaces the shawms and fipple flutes of Jugi musicians who would need to be paid, thus saving expenses.[81] In some processional ensembles, portable harmoniums, violins and a *magaḥkhī* drum are added to the transverse flutes or replace them completely. (Figs. 87, 88)

Dhalak, *pachimā* and *māḍal*[82] are the typical drums accompanying such songs. Either one of the drummers accompanies a section of the song, allowing the other drummers to rest until it is their turn. They play the simpler *tāls* among those used during *navabājā* performance, like

80 also called Rādhā Kṛṣṇa *pyākhā*
81 see chapter 5.3, p. 229
82 also called *magaḥkhī*, lit. 'drum of the Magar people', an ethnic group of West Nepal

Fig. 85: Cvarcā *bā̃surī* group at cupī ghāt during New Year morning, 1992

Fig. 86: Sujamādhi *nāgacā pyākhā* performing in front of the Dattātreya temple during *sāpāru* 1989

Fig. 87: Indian violins and harmoniums playing Newar folk songs during Vijayadaśamī 1990

Fig. 88: Arven (harmonium) players enriching the flute melodies with a thin wheeze during their coming-out procession after completion of *pirāne pūjā* 1987

Fig. 89: Bã̃surīkhalaḥ visiting Svayaṃbhū during *gūlā* 1986

calti, dehrā (8 *mātrā*), *rikhā* (6 *mātrā*) and *kharjati* (7 *mātrā*).[83] These are usually adjusted to the melodies that come in two stages and are repeated. *Me* song melodies start at a slow or medium tempo getting fast and very fast towards the end. The *bã̃surībājā* ensemble of Cvarcā plays also the more demanding *tatali* and *brahmatāl*. This is the only group that combines flutes with the *dhimay* drum. The melodies are played in parallel octaves. The long flutes *ghvar* play at the lower octave and the small transverse flutes *tīp* play the higher pitched notes. (Fig. 89)

There are hundreds of mostly undocumented folk songs that can be adjusted to their use in *bã̃suribājā* ensembles. These include seasonal songs, songs related to certain life cycle rituals, love songs, work songs, praise songs, drinking songs and ballads[84].

Whenever *bã̃surībājā* plays, local people of the older generation perceive not only pleasing melodies but also meaningful song texts or at least the refrains stored in their memory. These melodies were also used by *Jugi* shawm players during festivals such as *sāpāru.* They are played on request during feasts and picnics for old men to dance or just enjoy. Also brass bands play them during processions. It is high time for these songs to be documented in a systematic and comprehensive manner before they are lost.

83 The complete *tāl* are discussed in chapter 6.11
84 Dieter Sulzer (2005) transcribed a few songs in his Swiss MA thesis 'Bhaktapur *bã̃suri khalaḥ'*

3.7 Jugi Tailor-Musicians

Jugi[85] musicians arrived in the Kathmandu Valley during the 17th and 18th centuries as refugees from Gujarat where the shrines of their *kuldevata* clan gods are located. One of their straight shawms is called *Gujarāti mvālī*[86], pointing to their origin. These latecomers were assimilated into Newar society, but only just about. In Bhaktapur's hierarchy they range below the marginally clean subcastes, together with untouchable and essentially polluting butchers, washermen and drum-makers, just above the untouchable sweepers who were made to live outside the old city walls. Said to descend from Kānphaṭa[87] yogis, the Jugis are not cremated but buried[88]. They have this in common with Mahantās[89] and with the Giris of Central Nepal, who are also descendants of ascetics but enjoy a higher social standing. Ascetics are not cremated; having renounced this earthly life, they are considered socially dead. Jugis have a strong affinity with Gorakhnāth who received the special tantric teachings of the Nātha lineage via his guru, Matsyendranāṭh who in turn was taught directly by Lord Śiva as Ādinātha. In keeping with their mysterious origin, several Jugi families live close to the Bhairavnāth temple in Taumādhi and next to the Gorakhnāth shrine situated on a small hill in Tālākva.

Trying to capitalize on their ancestors' spiritual heritage, some Jugis went begging rice grain, dressed in the Mahādev outfit (*khaṅgi*) until the early 1980s. Going from house to house, they sang a begging song with *dabadaba* hourglass drum accompaniment (text mixed with drumming syllables):

/bhugumugu/bhũ tã̃ /chã tã̃ /ji tã̃ /kānemate/su tã̃ /	Come outside!
/talejāki/da thẽ /talejāki/da thẽ / talejāki/da thẽ /	There's rice upstairs, I hope.
/halathẽ /bilathẽ /chã tã̃ /ji tã̃ /kānemate/su tã̃ /	Give some more!
/jay tã̃ /jay tã̃ /chã tã̃ /ji tã̃ / kānemate/su tã̃ /	Bless you!
/jakithike/bajidã /	Rice is expensive, *baji*[90] cheap.
/jay tã̃ /jay tã̃ /chã tã̃ /ji tã̃ / kānemate/su tã̃ /	Bless you!

Refrain *kānemate su tã̃* meaning 'no talking' (= I won't tell how much/how little you gave).

In Bhaktapur the Jugis were allowed to live in small straw-thatched huts and in some public *sataḥ* gatehouses next to temples, in exchange for temple duties as caretakers and for providing ritual music. Musical duties included the playing of *sanyabhajan* music for waking up Bhairavnāth, the Aṣṭamātṛkā and Taleju (playing outside *lũdhvākhā*) in the morning and for evening *āratī*. In the 1980s, this was still observed at the Bhairavnāth temple in Taumādhi where they played six curved *pūjāmvālī* shawms, a *turībājā horn,* a *karnāl* natural trumpet, *khvālimāli* cymbals, a *dhalak*

85 Jvagi in Kathmandu Newari. They are also known under their Nepali names as Kusle, Kapāli and Darśandhāri
86 var. *mahālī*
87 lit. 'split ear', owing to their large earrings, cf. Unbescheid 1981
88 Bhaktapur's Jugi graveyard is called Jugi *gaḥ*. It lies in a small grove east of Chupin *ghāt*.
89 caretakers of magnificent *math* dwelling-places for ascetics
90 beaten rice

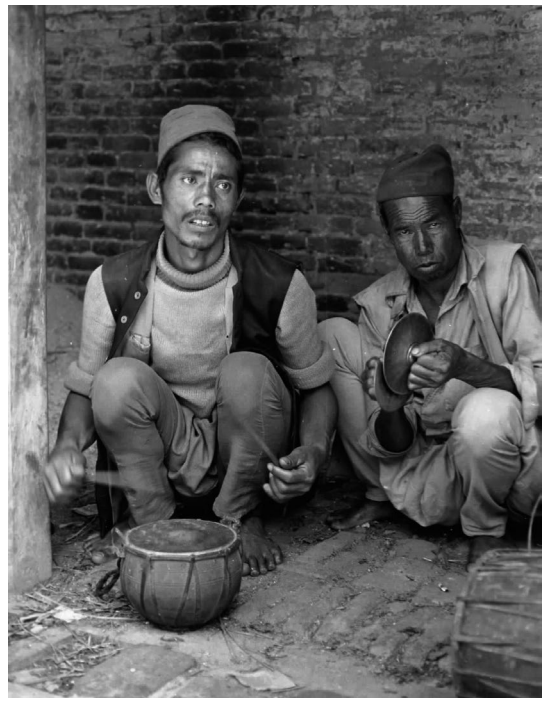


Fig. 90: Jugis playing *tamva* and *khvālimāli* at Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa 1985

Fig. 91: Four Jugi shawm players accompanying Yāchē Gaṇeś *navadāphā* (Tirtha Man Nāpit playing *pachimā*) with *Gujarāti mvālī* during a Nāsaḥ *pūjā* procession along Nāg pukhū in 1983

Fig. 92: Ganesh Man Kapali, Marsya Dai, Chandranāth Darśandhāri and ? (l. to r.) seeking shelter from rain whilst accompanying Yāchẽ *navadāphā* with straight *Gujarāti mvālĩ* shawms, 1985

Fig. 93: Remains of a broken *kahāl* played during Chumā Gaṇeś *jātrā* 1984

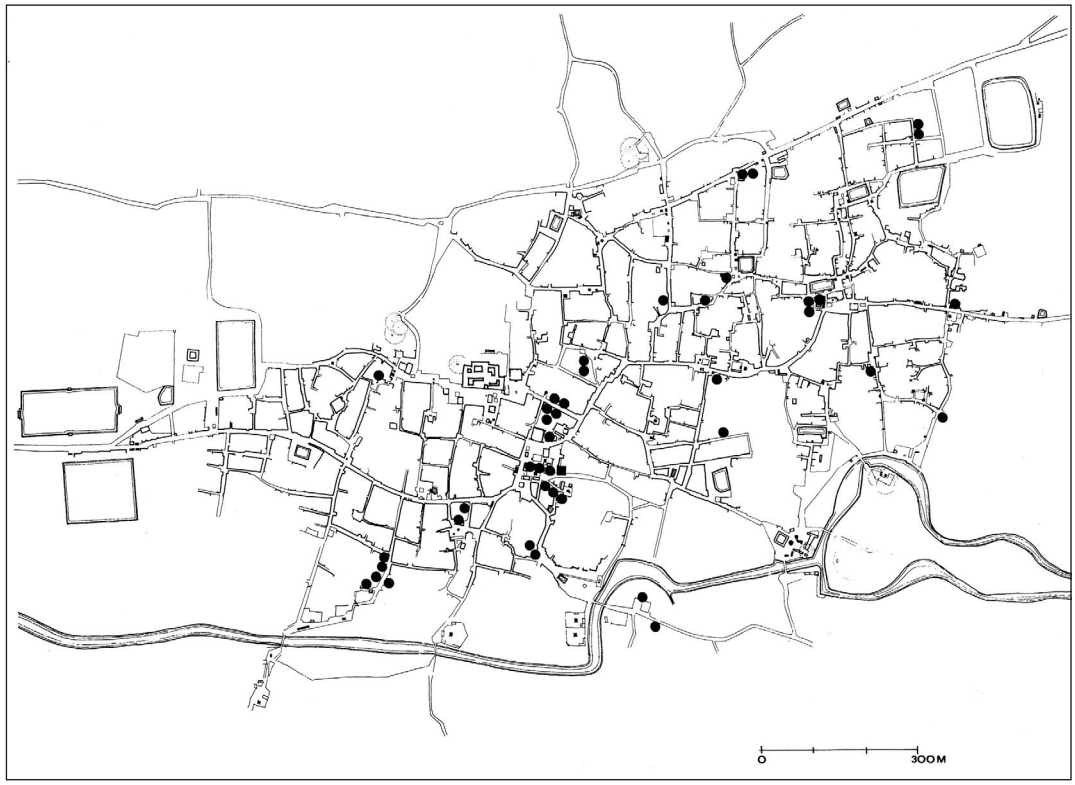
Fig. 94: Guṇakāji (clarinet), Dil Bahādur and Kancha Kapāli (trumpets) accompanying Śākya *gūlābājā* in Kvāchẽ 1983

drum and the small *tamva* kettledrum[91] made of clay[92]. This drum was also played by Jugis living in a small settlement west of the temple courtyard of Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa. (Fig. 90)

As tailors and players of auspicious music for town rituals and marriage music, Jugis made a meagre living. They played curved and straight shawms and fipple flutes for other instrumental ensembles like *navabājā, gūlābājā* and dance groups like Mahākālī *pyākhã*. (Fig. 92)

A broken *kahāl* (straight conical bore natural horn) was played in Bhaktapur to accompany Chumā Gaṇeś during his New Year *jātrā*[93], in a poor attempt to imitate a trumpeting elephant (Fig. 93).

91 also called tamvacā, *tukumuku* or *tunumuku*
92 Ideally, all these instruments should have been played together but only three or four Jugis arrived.
93 Tingey 1994 p. 74 mentions that *kahāl* is also played by Kānphaṭa ascetics



Map 29: The 41 Jugi households in Bhaktapur 1987 (map: Niels Gutschow, in: Levy 1990, p. 181)

Payment for musical services was very low and invariably disputed. Today (2021) there is only a single Jugi shawm player of the younger generation left in Bhaktapur. Guṇakāji Kapāli's younger son works for Kathmandu University's Department of Music and passed a BA in music. Owing to his caste, nobody was willing to let a room to this excellent young man and his small family. Being at the receiving end of social abuse, many Jugi musicians became alcoholics and died in misery and despair. Since the 1980s, much of their musical repertoire has been lost. Jealousy and suppression are the real demons of Newar society.

In contrast to other low castes, Jugi households are distributed all over Bhaktapur (Map 29). Gutschow[94] explains this with their ritual function as the city's 'internal absorbers of pollution'. Jugis had to serve higher castes in performing certain grisly aspects of their death rituals. Responsibilities for such client families were distributed among the Jugi families, On the seventh day after cremation of a client and then four times a year, a Jugi or his wife had to perform a so-called *cakrapūjā*[95] for the *preta*[96] in front of the house of the dead person, then accept and consume food prepared in the name of the deceased. This *Jugibvaḥ* food was offered with the hope to distract the

94 Gutschow and Michaels 2005, p. 49 ff.
95 Only Jugis can perform a *cakrapūjā*.
96 wandering souls of the dead, feared by the living who seal their homes with multiple charms

Fig. 95: Damāi jantabājā of Katunje (bandmaster Abhin Kumār Pariyār in cardinal red costume, holding clarinet) playing for a cow procession during *sāpāru*, Dattātreya 1985. Abhin Kumār learnt from his father who was a member of a Calcutta police band.

Fig. 96: Jyāpu farmers playing *jantabājā* music in Yāchẽ 1987

wandering soul from being drawn towards the earlier residence and from troubling the family's shattered peace of mind with disturbing apparitions. By swallowing this food, the Jugi was made to represent the ominous *preta*. He had to pick up used clothes and the mattress of the dead and discarded ritual offerings deposited on a carved *chvāsa* stone at a near-by road crossing. For everyone to see, these scapegoat acts stigmatised the Jugi with impurity. No wonder that this defiling duty as ritual impersonator of the dead was carried out without enthusiasm—although it fed the Jugi and his family at a time when deaths were frequent.

After much grumbling, Bhaktapur's Jugis gradually abandoned this service, now leaving it almost entirely to members of the bereaved families. When they stopped acting as ritual sponges for absorbing harm from the beyond, local people reacted with hate and jealousy. Some Jugi families were kicked out of public gate houses. As Jugis were paid less and less for their musical services, they gradually gave up playing shawms. Some struggle to make ends meet as tailors, some sell souvenirs to tourists or—during the marriage season—play clarinet, trumpet and snare drums in stylishly uniformed *jantabājā* marriage bands[97]. When there is a shortage of marriage bands, people hire outsiders, for example a non-Newar Damāi band from Katunje near Bhaktapur. As band music can generate a handsome income, several groups of young farmers jumped to the opportunity, founding their own bands after taking training with Guṇakāji Kapāli. Contrary to *mvālī* shawms, Western clarinets and trumpets do not affect caste purity, so the farmers found nothing wrong with this. The Nepali names for Western instruments used in the Damāi band: *iphoniyam, bhalb tramban, klāroneyaṭ, ḍram, saeḍ ḍram, ḍisko ḍram, slāiṭ tramban* and *ṭrampeṭ*. (Figs. 95, 96)

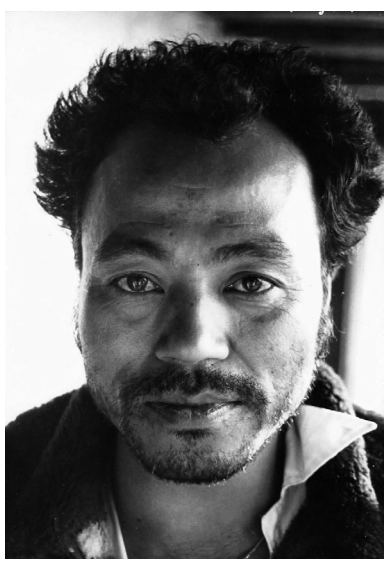


Fig. 97: Chandranāth Darśandhāri (1944–2002)

Gutschow[98] gives a detailed account of Chandranāth Darśandhāri's life, listing his numerous ritual duties as a Jugi and his attempts at making ends meet (Fig. 97). In 1990 Chandranāth and one of his colleagues participated in the first European tour of the 'Masterdrummers of Nepal'. We performed in several major music festivals in Germany, France, Holland and Switzerland. (Figs. 98, 99)

Abroad, the musicians ate and enjoyed themselves together. Caste distinction appeared absent. When I asked about this, the answer was: "These things matter only at home."—Free from the usual load of worries, these must have been Chandranāth's happiest four weeks.[99] After Chandranāth had passed away, his family was evicted from the Mahālakṣmī *sataḥ* in 2012 and not allowed to return after the Bhaktapur Municipality had completed restoration of the building. His widow camped rough under a plastic sheet at the Gorakhnāth shrine where she perished in 2019.

97 This Indian fashion was imported in the 1960s
98 Gutschow and Michaels 2005, p. 50 ff.
99 I had made it mandatory that alcohol consumption was restricted to two bottles of beer per day.

Fig. 98: Masterdrummers of Nepal with author in Versailles 1990, Chandranāth next to me (photo: Carol Tingey)

Fig. 99: Chandranāth Darśandhāri (in white dress) and three colleagues accompanying Yāchē *navadāphā* with straight Gujarāti *mvālī* shawms, 1985

To get an idea of their wide variety of musical and ritual duties and missing remuneration, Bhaktapur's Jugis of different locations were interviewed in 1983.

Thālāchẽ *sanyabhajan*
5 Jugis, 1 Duĩcā
Instruments: 4 *mvālĩ*, 1 *dhalak*, 1 *jhyālicā*

- Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* at Mahālakṣmī *pith* and Mahākālī *pith* (earlier payment: 28 *pāṭhī* grain) and Taleju (earlier payment: 23 *pāṭhī* grain from Taleju *guthi*) Baiśākh 2nd playing for Mahākālī-Mahālakṣmī *jātrā*
- *Mvahani* Navami: playing for Yāchẽ Gaṇeś *navadāphā* during viewing of Navadurgā masks
- Ekadasi: playing for the Navadurgā on their way from Tālākva to Navadurgā *dyaḥchẽ*
- Dvādasi: playing for the Navadurgā on their way from Bvalāchẽ to Navadurgā *dyaḥchẽ,* standing in front of Mahākālī *dyaḥchẽ* (payment: 1 *mānā* grain per day)
- During *gũlā*: Playing every morning with Inācva Śākya *gũlābājā* (Payment to be negotiated)
- Twenty-two times per year: playing for Yāchẽ Gaṇeś *navadāphā*
- Perform *cakrapūjā* after death and collect *chvāsa* offerings during fullmoon and festivals for 60 households in Inācva

Bulucā *sanyabhajan*
8 Jugis
Instruments: 6 *mvālĩ*, 1 *tamva*, 1 *jhyāli*

- Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* for Seto Bhairav (Bulucā Bhairav)
- Cait 30th and Baiśākh 1st to 3rd: playing for Seto Bhairav *jātrā*
- Perform *cakrapūjā* after death and collect *chvāsa* offerings during fullmoon and festivals for 40 households in Sākvathā, 40 households in Nāsaḥmānā, and 60 households in Tabyākhusi.
- Bālācarhe (Maṅgsir) to Baiśākh 1st: *khāṅgi* begging by impersonating Mahādev (stopped in 1982, owing to poor health)

1st Sākvathā *sanyabhajan*
12 Jugis
Instruments: 9 *mvālĩ*, 1 *tamva*, 2 *jhyāli*

- Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* for Taleju, Seto Bhairav and Dattātreya with different group members
- *Bhagasiti* and *mvahani*: playing in front of the Navadurgā
- Cait 27th: Playing in front of the sacred sword when it is carried from Salagāri to Taumādhi square

– *Gũ punhi*: Playing with the initial *ghẽtāgisi* stickdance organised by *Guṭhi saṃsthān* (payment: 25.- Rs. to be shared among group members)

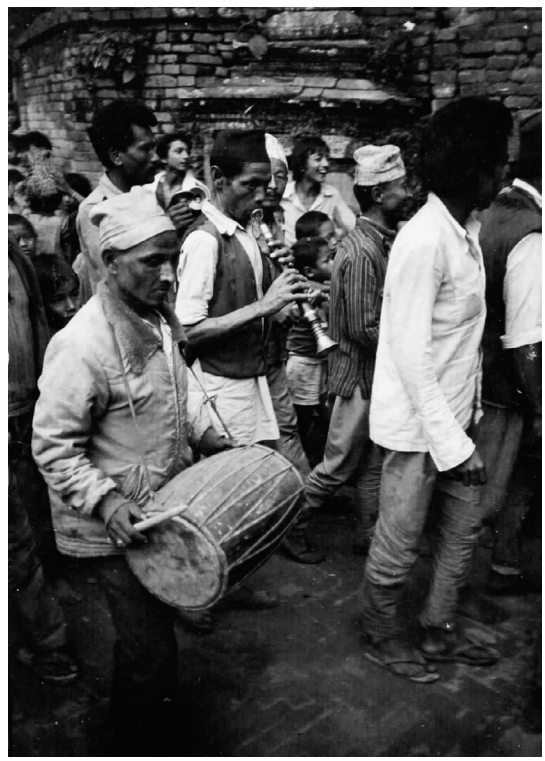


Fig. 100: Jugi with *Gujarāti mvālĩ* and Duĩ with *dhā̃* announcing the beginning of *sāpāru*, Sākvathā 1983. Until 1963, 32 Jugis played on this occasion. Later *Guṭhi saṃsthān* offered only 25 Rs. to the entire group. Since then, only 1 Jugi and 1 Duĩ participated with ill feelings.

2nd Sākvathā *sanyabhajan*
9 Jugis and 1 Duĩcā (torchbearer)
Instruments: 6 *mvālĩ*, 1 *kanhā* (*karnāl*), 1 *dhalak* (played by Duĩ), 1 *tamvacā*, 1 *jhyālicā*

– Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* at Surya Vināyak Gaṇeś (earlier payment: 4 *murī* grain) and Vārāhī *pith* (earlier payment: 1 *murī* and 3 *pāṭhī* grain)
– Cait 30th and Baiśākh 1st playing at Yāḥśīkhyaḥ
– Baiśākh 1st and 2nd playing for Vārāhī *jātrā,* 3rd for Duĩmāju *jātrā* (with Duĩ playing *dhā̃*)
– *Gũ punhi*: Playing with the initial *ghẽtāgisi* stickdance organised by *Guṭhi saṃsthān* (payment: 25.- Rs. to be shared among ten group members—even in 1983 this was a ridiculous amount) (Fig. 100)

Taumādhi *sanyabhajan* (Fig. 101)
9 *Jugis* and 1 Duĩcā (torchbearer)
Instruments: 6 *mvālĩ*, 1 *turī bājā*, 1 *karnāl*, 1 *dhalak* (played by Duĩ), 1 *tamva*, 1 *khvālimālī*

- Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* for *Bhairavnāth* (earlier payment: 29 *pāṭhī* grain)
- Performances with *Bhairavnāth navadāphā*
- Cait 27th leading *Bhairav* to his chariot
- *Sāpāru*: Bhairav *jātrā* (two days)
- *Mvahani*: Accompany the Ekanta Kumārī procession, playing *mārsi* (*mvālĩ*) and *cvakh* (*nāykhĩ*)
- Performing *cakrapūjā* after death and collect *chvāsa* offerings during fullmoon and festivals for 60 households

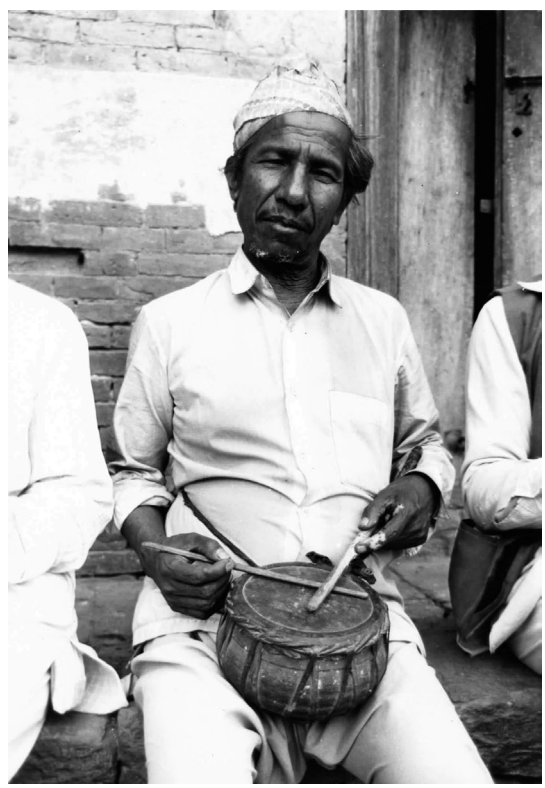


Fig. 101: Krishna Prasad Kapāli with *tamva* 1988

Ajimā (Vārāhī) *sanyabhajan*
10 Jugis
Instruments: 6 *mvālĩ*, 1 *karnāl*, 1 *dhalak*, 1 *tukumuku*, 1 *jhyāli*

- Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* at Vārāhī *pith* (earlier payment: 11 *pāṭhī* grain) Cait 30th and Baiśākh 1st playing at Yāḥśīkhyaḥ
- Baiśākh 1st and 2nd playing for Vārāhī *jātrā*
- Mvahani and Sākīmā punhi: playing for *Taleju* (earlier payment: 3 *murī* 10 *pāṭhī* grain)
- Throughout winter and spring: playing for the Navadurgā (earlier payment: 30 *pāṭhī* grain)
- *Gũ punhi*: Playing with the initial *ghẽtāgisi* stickdance organised by *Guṭhi saṃsthān* (payment: 25.- Rs. to be shared among 32 group members for having a feast—in reality this was the equivalent of a few bananas per person)
- Performing *cakrapūjā* after death and collect *chvāsa* offerings during fullmoon and festivals for 40 households in Tacapāḥ, 30 households in Byāsi, 20 households in Khãcā and 10 households in Yātā.

Yāchẽ *sanyabhajan*
6 Jugis
Instruments: 4 *mvālĩ*, 1 *tamva*, 1 *jhyāli*

- Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* at Vākupati Nārāyaṇa (earlier payment: 1 *murī* and 10 *pāṭhī* grain)
- Instead of grain, *Guṭhi saṃsthān* gives only 90.- Rs., to be shared.

Duĩcā pokharī *sanyabhajan*
10 Jugis
Instruments: 7 *mvālĩ*, 1 *tamvacā*, 2 *jhyālicā*

- Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* at Dattātreya (earlier payment: 18 *pāṭhī* grain) and Golden Gate (earlier payment: 18 *pāṭhī* grain)
- Dattātreya *jātrā* and with Dattātreya *navadāphā* (earlier payment: 7 1/2 *pāṭhī* grain)

Sujamādhi *sanyabhajan*
10 Jugis
Instruments: 8 *mvālĩ*, 1 *tamva*, 1 *jhyāli*

- Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* at Brahmayānī *pith* (earlier payment: 7 *murī* grain), also playing for Bhairav, Taleju, Mahākālī and Suryavināyak Gaṇeś

Fig. 102: Gaṇeś Mān Kapāli playing *rāga Dīpak* with *pūjā mvālī* and Puni Mān Duĩ accompanying with *dhã* at my home 1987

Despite being incomplete, this list reveals the economic catastrophe caused by the *guṭhi saṃsthān* act and the fact that remuneration in cash was never adjusted to inflation rates. In 1963 land endowments that financed most of the Jugis' musical duties were taken by King Mahendra Shah's state administration. The musicians were plunged into misery—despite all those deeds documented in countless temple inscriptions and hand-written documents. In 1990 I told Rishikesh Shah about the sad consequences for the entire Newar musical culture of the act that he had helped design. The answer was, "Oh! That was not what WE had intended." At the time the felt social distance between Nepal's royalty and a Jugi in Bhaktapur superseded that between sun and earth.

In the olden days, when a Malla king or a Rājopadhyāya Brahmin died, Jugis of all groups had to play *rāga Dīpak* for the funeral procession, along with Nāy butchers playing their ominous funeral music *sībājā.* In India this *rāga* is never performed, owing to every musician's fear of being consumed by flames that could be ignited by this *rāga*. The lore of supernatural power of music and its stunning demonstration by great masters of the past are a popular part of music transmission in South Asia. However, I was able to record *rāga Dīpak* when Gaṇeś Mān Kapāli played it at my home with his *pūjā mvālī* (Fig. 102). None of us suffered any burns. Astonishingly, the knowledge of performing this *rāga* was transmitted within the Jugi family tradition for more than two hundred years after its last ritual use[100].

Shawms used by Jugis included two curved varieties, *pūjā mvālī* and the smaller *bhamarā* with a more solid brass bell (Fig. 103). There were also four straight shawms, *Gujarāti mvālī*, the smaller *rasan* (Fig. 104), the smallest *kukicā mvālī* and a poor family member, *nvamat* made

100 Occasionally, *rāg Dīpak* was also played for expired descendants of Malla kings.

Fig. 103: Chandranāth Darśandhāri demonstrating the playing of the curved shawms *bhamarā* (l.) and *pūjā mvālī* (r.) 1987

Fig. 104: Chandranāth Darśandhāri demonstrating the playing of the straight shawms *rasan* (l.) and *Gujarāti mvālī* (r.) 1987

entirely of wood without metal bell. The use of *bhamarā* and *rasan* stopped in the 1950s or 1960s when Western trumpets and clarinets replaced them in their use for marriage processions and Śākya *gũlābājā*. Gaṇeś Mān Kapāli told me that long ago, the straight shawm *nvamat* was replaced by clarinet for use in marriage processions. In the 1980s, the curved *pūjā mvālī* went out of use with the end of *sanyabhajan.* Today (2021), the straight *Gujarāti mvālī* appears to be the only surviving shawm.

Fig. 105: Chandranāth Darśandhāri demonstrating the playing of *bāẽcā* fipple flute, two *rasan* flanked by two *Gujarāti mvālĩ*, the four mouthpieces having lip discs made of bone

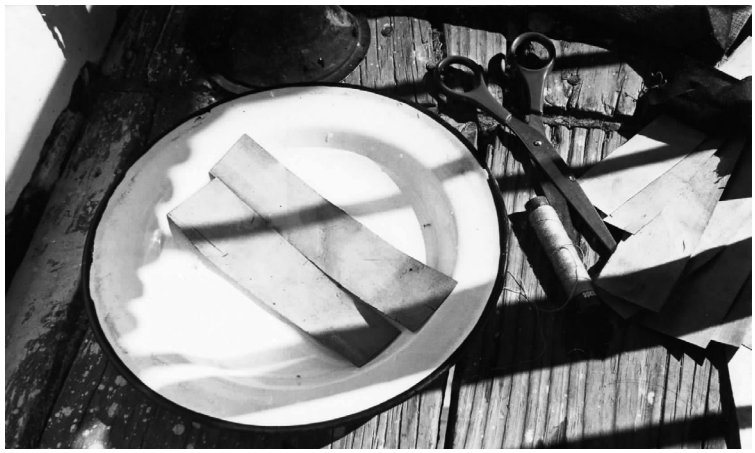
The six different shawms used similar sets of four reeds made by the musicians themselves of dried leaf of the *taḍgoḷa* palm, *Borassus flabellifer*. This very useful tree grows in the coastal areas of South Asia and also in the southern flatlands of Nepal. It produces excellent toddy, nourishing and refreshing nuts called 'ice apple' (refrigerate before serving!) and building material for tropical huts with leaf-thatched roofs. The high treetop provides nesting sites preferred by the white-headed Brahminy Kite, *Haliastur indus*.

The four different shawms in the photo documentation above do not have lip discs. During processions no *mvālĩ* player would dare to take part without a lip disc. Festive crowds tend to be thick and intoxicated. Musicians could wound their throats if by chance someone hits the instrument. Fipple flutes *bāẽcā* made of bamboo or wood were used to accompany *kvakhĩcā* during *navabājā* performances and *kvakhĩcā* and the hourglass drum *dabadaba* in Sāymi *gũlābājā*. (Fig. 105)

Chandranāth demonstrated how to make shawm reeds, *tuki* (Figs. 106–126):

You need basic tailoring skills,
tāḍipatta palm leaf cut into rectangular sheets,
a *kvẽku* wooden peg for supporting the reeds during the process,
two tufts of *kapāy* cotton,
two narrow strips of *kāpāḥ* cotton cloth,
sukā sewing thread, *kācikā* cotton yarn, and
a conical brass pipe *sãj*.

The tip of the wooden *kvẽku* peg should have precisely the same diameter as the narrow end of the *sãj* pipe.



Cut the palm leaf and an extra one. Moisten the strips to make them soft.

Fig. 106

Wrap a ball of cotton around the broad end of the brass pipe, leaving the opening free. Wrap a strip of cloth around the cotton. Tie it tightly with a thread into a cushion that does not slip off.

Fig. 107

Wrap another piece of cotton around the brass pipe, 1 cm below the narrow opening.

Fig. 108

Wrap a strip of cloth around the cotton.

Fig. 109

Tie it tightly with a thread into a cushion that does not slip off.

Fig. 110

Fold the moistened leaf into a packet with four layers. The two sides of the leaf are different, so the correct sides must correspond or the reed is unplayable.

Fig. 111

Cut it at both sides...

Fig. 112

...until it acquires the shape of...

Fig. 113

...a perfect trapezium (for American readers: trapezoid), with both legs of equal measure.

Fig. 114

Thread in sewing thread through the folded narrow edge of the trapezium. You could use a folded cut-off piece of palm leaf to help widen the aperture before pulling the thread through.

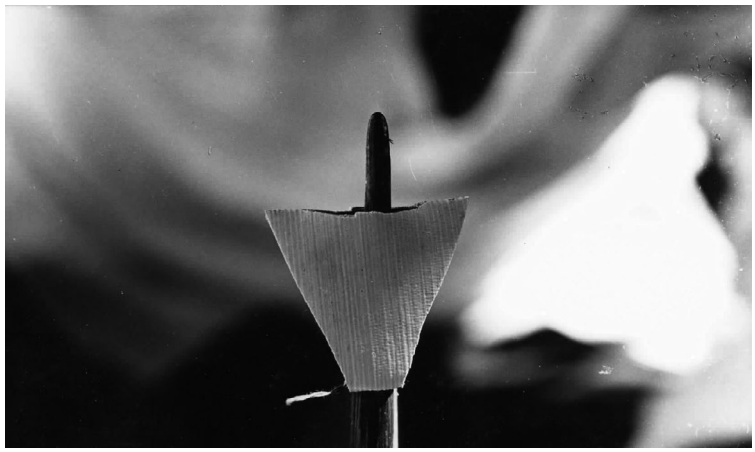
Fig. 115

If done correctly, this is the result. Pull both ends semi-tight, leaving long ends.

Fig. 116

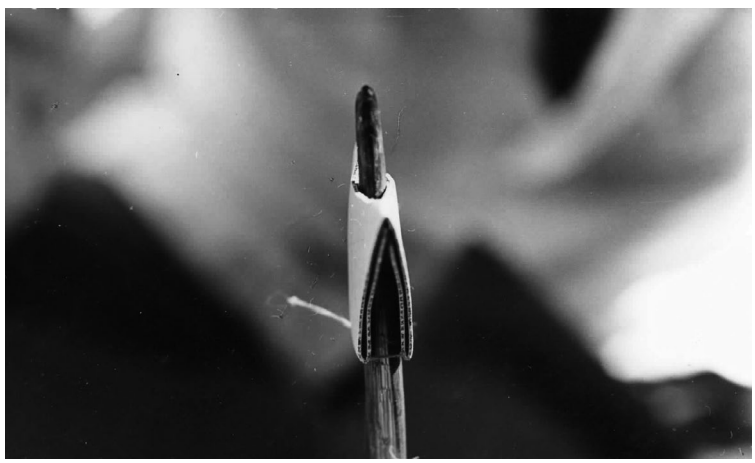
Use a sharp blade to cut out a tiny crescent-shaped wedge out of the broader base of the trapezium.

Fig. 117



Carefully slot the wooden peg up through from the cotton bound edge.

Fig. 118



The view from the side

Fig. 119

Tie a piece of cotton yarn around the narrow end of the trapezium, pull the ends tight and make a knot.

Fig. 120

Use your teeth to pull the knot tight.

Fig. 121

Pull the peg out and enter from the opposite side. Let the tip of the peg meet with the narrow end of the brass pipe and slide the reeds over the pipe until they reach the tied cotton ball. If you want a lip disc, this should come first and rest against the cotton.

Fig. 122

Use a sharp blade to make a final straight cut through the ends of the *tuki*.

Fig. 123

This should be the result.

Fig. 124

After moistening the reeds, blow hard. The pipe should emit a loud squawk.

Fig. 125

Now place the complete *tuki* set on the wooden body of the instrument and start playing.

Fig. 126

Oboists used to mouthpieces with double reeds will be surprised how much physical effort it takes to play shawms with two double reeds as the Jugis do. Four layers of reeds guarantee that it is impossible to play softly. *Mvālĩ* shawms are meant for outdoor use—no matter what strain they put on a musician's lungs. The Jugis' response to this problem was playing as a group of three or four, occasionally up to twelve players. So the flow of the music was not interrupted when a player needed to rest for a while. The melodic repertoire of the *mvālĩ* repertoire was vast. It included *rāgas* for use in temple ensembles playing for the gods (*sanyabhajan* and *navabājā*), Buddhist processional music and *gvārāḥ* songs, seasonal songs, songs related to specific town rituals and to life cycle rituals like *kāytā pūjā*, different stages of the marriage ritual and—only in the distant past—funeral music for Malla kings and their descendants. *Mvālĩ* melodies are played in accordance with the season.

The *tamva* kettledrum (approximate height: 14 cm, diameter: 17 cm) is made of clay and played with two bamboo sticks. The drumhead consists of two hides, the upper one ring-shaped. It has this in common with the *nagarā* used in *navabājā*, but the Jugi drummers don't apply any of the technical skills that *nagarā* players know. There is no difference in sound production of right hand and left hand strokes. So the result is a kind of monotonous tapping. (Fig. 127)

Fig. 127: Jugis played *tamva/tukumuku*, a small kettledrum

In 1987 I approached Krishna Prasad Kapāli, asking him to teach me his *tamva* repertoire. He was very shy and insisted that he needed his senior colleague Gaṇeś Mān Kapāli to support him with the appropriate *pūjā mvālĩ* (Figs. 128, 129) melodies. That would stimulate his memory. As it turned out, both of them needed other stimulants as well. I had to serve *aylā*, a strong spirit[101] distilled from rice beer. Very soon I came to know that they went into a lucid state after the first peg when their memory worked but for a brief period. After the second peg my chances of learning anything became dim—and much dimmer after the third peg. I was torn between my eagerness to learn and my duty as a polite host who keeps the glasses filled until his guests croak. I must

101 up to 80 % alcohol!

Fig. 128: Old *pūjā mvālī* with silver bell (photo courtesy of Christian Schneider)

Fig. 129: Jugis from Dhulikhel with curved *pūjā mvālī* shawms accompanying Banepa Sāymi *gũlābājā* during their annual visit to Sakvalā 1983

say, we had a lovely time and after many failed attempts I finally managed to learn the drum pieces. This was not made easier by the fact that there were no drumming syllables. My teacher remembered the pieces only as a chain, being unable to isolate patterns of longer pieces. Luckily there were also short pieces:

> *Svagamālĩ* was played long ago as part of the marriage ritual, when bride and bridegroom saw each other for the first time.
>
> *Pūjāmālĩ* was played on 27th *Cait* during the *pūjā* in the Bhairavnāth temple before the god is carried across the square to take seat on his chariot during the New Year festival. After this *pūjā* the Bhaila *Nāyaḥ* gives each Jugi a flower carrying Bhairava's blessings. The piece was also played during the *pūjā* preceding *Sāymi gũlābājā* processions.
>
> *Cvarā* was played during a goat sacrifice for Bhailadyaḥ (Bhairavnāth).
>
> *Likārāḥ* was played on the way home after a *pūjā*.

The longer pieces are *partāl*, *calti*, *dehrā*, *astarā*, *thata* and *cali*. Names and metric structure are similar to some *navabājā* and *lālākhĩ*[102] compositions but with that similarities end. In comparison,

102 *Cali* is an exception. For *lālākhĩ* the metre is 3 + 3 but for *tamva* it is 3 + 3 + 2. Names do get muddled up.

these *tamva* pieces look like faint shadows of the much richer and longer *navabājā* showpieces that were effectively structured with climaxes and embellished with dance patterns by experienced composer-drummers. To be fair, what I learnt was the last sigh of a drumming genre that must have seen brighter days. Another possibility is that those *tamva* pieces named after *navabājā* compositions were created by accompanying and listening to *navabājā* performances over twenty times per year as shawm players—later trying to remember little bits and pieces to create something fitting into those structures. Probably both guesses are not far from the truth. As there are neither stroke variants nor drumming syllables in use for *tamva* pieces, my notation uses l for left hand and r for right hand strokes. Triplets are indicated by a 3 above the respective *mātrā* box containing three syllables.

As Simonne Bailey informs me, a new genre of 'Jugi' music evolved during the past decade. In a few villages near Bhaktapur including Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa there has been a resurgence of interest in learning the shawm and a good number of *Kapāli* youth including girls have been trained. These groups are more like youth clubs and they play together in groups of twelve to twenty or more with the *dhalak* drum. The Kapāli youth whom Simonne helped to train were really keen and proud of their heritage and were in the main educated. The tunes they use are not the same, more the popular ones. They were keen to wear Newar farmers dress as a uniform. Most of the instruments they used were new, made in Kathmandu. They did not like the old instruments, finding them heavier and harder to play. They were not taking the place of existing players but rather forming a new genre.

The absence of public support for Jugi musicians and their disappearance from Bhaktapur's soundscape during our lifetime caused an irretrievable, catastrophic loss to the entire musical culture of the Newars. How could people allow this to happen?

3.8 *Kã̄bājā*

Kã̄bājā (var. *kāhābājā)* is an ensemble of large natural trumpets made of copper. They produce a deep, ominous roar that fits in perfectly with death processions and Aṣṭamātṛka processions. Eighteen Sāymi *kã̄*-players from Gvaḥmādhi (eight musicians), Tekhācva (four) and Sākvalā (six) used to accompany the Navadurgā during *mvahani* from *aṣṭhamī* to *bihi,* when the Navadurgā gather at Gvachẽ to perform spectacular individual dances, drink the decaying blood and eat the decaying brains of the *khame* buffalo that was sacrificed eight days earlier at the shrine of Brahmāyaṇī. They also played on Bhagasitī during the annual death procession of the Navadurgā from their *dyaḥchẽ* to Brahmāyaṇī where the masks were cremated. For this duty the *kã̄*-players were given five *pāṭhī* beaten rice and a feast per year. They also accompanied the mothergoddess Indrāyaṇī during her Indra *jātrā* procession and were given six *māna* rice grain and one *pāṭhī* beaten rice by the Indrāyaṇī *guṭhī.* There was another reward. Those oilpressers who played in this ensemble were exempt from *jhārāḥ vānegu.* This bone-breaking drudgery was forced on Sāymi and Jyāpu males during the Rāṇā period. It included the felling of trees in the Terai jungle and towing the timber all the way to Kathmandu where it was used for building Rāṇā palaces.

Fig. 130: Kã̃-players from several localities in the western part of the Kathmandu Valley gather during the Viṣṇudevī *jātrā* 1989. The goddess resides on a hill next to the Thānkoṭ road.

Fig. 131: Kāhābājā playing in front of Akāś Bhairav during Indra *jātrā* Kathmandu, 1990

Farmers had to supply straw to the *kã*-players for free. Sāymi *kã*-players also had to participate in death processions of Malla kings of Bhaktapur. (Figs. 130–132)

This ensemble ceased to play during the 1970s. In 1984 there were two old men left from Gvaḥmādhi, Śaṅkhalāl and Āīta Mānandhar who played their decrepit trumpets during the Navadurgā processions. In 1985 and 1986 they played only during *navamī* night for the *khame* sacrifice at Brahmāyaṇī. Then they stopped.

In 2000 Simonne Bailey gifted eight *kã* trumpets made by a coppersmith in Maṅgalbajār, Patan, to be used for special events at Kathmandu University's Department of Music. Our staff and students played the trumpets during the annual meeting of the World Wildlife Fund in December 2000 in Bhaktapur's palace square in the presence of royalty from Nepal, Britain and Arabia.

In 2019 eight young Sāymi of Gvaḥmādhi decided to revive the half forgotten tradition, had instruments made and played with the Navadurgā during their *mvahani* processions.

Fig. 132: Kã-players during the Viṣṇudevī *jātrā,* December 1989